



# **DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY**

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL & STATE FIRE ACADEMY

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[www.vtfiresafety.org](http://www.vtfiresafety.org)

## **NOVEMBER 2005**

### **Director's Message**

*John G. Wood, Director*

The Vermont Fire & Building Safety Code and the Rules for Automatic Fire Suppression Systems at Gasoline Stations have been approved by the legislative rules committee. The fire rules took effect October 22, 2005 and the suppression rules take effect November 1, 2005. The section of the rule requiring residential sprinklers in Town Houses with direct access to the outside was removed prior to the committee hearing the rule. Sprinklers are still required in Town Houses that do not have direct access to the outside. Service stations with an attendant on duty will not be required to have automatic suppression systems installed. However, the rule gives the fire marshal more authority to enforce the rules at fueling stations when customers are not following the safety procedures, such as; smoking within 20' of the pumps, filling containers while they are still in the vehicle, and leaving the pump unattended. It also requires that the employer train the attendant to shut down the pump when one of the above happens, and what to do if there is a fire. We anticipate through education and enforcement that the public will be safer.

The Vermont Fire Academy presented the first Fire Officer I & II class at the Burlington Fire Department last month. Burlington Fire Department made this class possible through a Fire Act grant they had received. The class took three weeks to complete. Chief of Training, Jim Litevich was the class coordinator. Fire Officer I & II classes can be taken in smaller hourly blocks for those of you that cannot commit that many hours at one time. "Spec Rescue" has been providing technical rescue classes throughout the State over the past few months including operation level rope, confined space, and trench rescue. We have been including our instructors in the classes as "Train the Trainers" with a goal of being able to provide these classes in the State without having to hire outside contractors. In addition, we have reallocated \$39,000 of the Homeland Security(HLS)

money so that we can provide additional training to those departments that had requested the flashover trailer and were denied because we did not have enough funds. Those of you that requested a class and were denied will get a letter in the mail with notification. On the first round we committed to the first 20 requests, but received 39 requests, that left 19 that we could not provide free of charge. The additional money will allow us to do a portion of those 19 requests. We must spend this money by the end of May so your ability to get a full class is very important. We cannot cancel and reschedule classes, there is not enough time, you must have enough students or we will be forced to select another department. This training cost is \$1800.00 for each class. We want to use all the HLS money we have.

The Training Council is in the process of updating the rules that govern how training will be conducted in the State. Contact your representative on the council for more details and to give comments.

The Division of Fire Safety was involved in the Cross Border exercise on October 13, 2005. This was a full scale Weapons of Mass Destruction drill with hazardous material involved. We had staff at the State Emergency Operation Center and the Hazardous Materials Team participated at the scene of the crime. This was an effort put forward by the Vermont HLS and Canadian government.

Things to watch for in the future are the 2006 HLS grants, credentialing and typing efforts by Emergency Management that will recognize available resources and fire service training opportunities, of which there are many. We are planning a NFPA Inspector One certification class and should have the dates for the class by next month.

We anticipate a busy winter with the cost of fuel going up and people going to alternative heating devices. Creating additional fires and CO problems. Stay safe and be alert.

## **New Law on Carbon Monoxide Detectors Saves Family of Five**

*Robert Howe, Chief Fire Prevention Officer*

New requirements for carbon monoxide (CO) detectors in all buildings where people sleep, signed in to law May 11, 2005, by Governor James Douglas, have already saved a family of five in Killington.

"There is no question that the carbon monoxide poisoning would have been fatal to all five family members if it had not been for the carbon monoxide detector" explained Fire Chief Steve Finer.

Killington Fire and Rescue responded to a call from the Sunrise Mountain Village on Friday evening October 14th, to find the carbon monoxide detector was sounding an alarm. Investigation by the fire department found carbon monoxide readings over 400 parts per million, a level that can be fatal within hours of exposure. The carbon monoxide detector had just been installed a few weeks earlier by the condominium association to meet the new statewide requirements for carbon monoxide detectors.

The family arrived at the condominium Friday and turned up the heat. The CO detector responded with an alarm in minutes. After an investigation by Killington Fire and Rescue, and the Division of Fire Safety, the source of the CO was determined to be an obstructed vent for the unit's boiler, due to work on the chimney that had occurred over the summer. For additional details on the incident contact Bruce Martin at [bmartin@dps.state.vt.us](mailto:bmartin@dps.state.vt.us).

New rules for the installation of CO detectors are now part of the Vermont Fire & Building Safety Code. CO detectors are required in all types of buildings where people sleep. CO detectors are required to be located where people sleep but the exact location varies somewhat depending on the different types of building use and operational features. More detailed information on the code including the placement of CO detectors, power supply for CO detectors, symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning and response to carbon monoxide incidents is available at <http://www.dps.state.vt.us/fire/co.htm>.

## **Major Code Developments To Impact Propane Industry**

*Submitted by Bruce Martin, Springfield Regional Manager & Certified Gas Technician*

Recently adopted editions of the nationally-recognized codes that apply to the storage and use of propane will result in significant safety improvements to new and existing facilities. The 2001 edition of the National Fire Protection Association's Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code (NFPA 58) has several provisions that will require retroactive improvements to existing bulk storage sites.

These retroactive provisions include a written fire safety analysis for all locations with an aggregate water capacity of over 4000 gallons, written operations and maintenance plans for all bulk plants, and the installation of redundant product safety controls on bulk storage tanks.

The fire safety analysis includes consideration of overall product control measures, location of facility (whether located in a congested area) and resources available to respond to an incident. Existing facilities are required to file an analysis within 3 years of the effective adoption date, which in Vermont was January 1, 2003.

The retroactive installation of redundant safety controls has great significance in minimizing future propane incidents. Section 3.3.3.6 requires safeguards against the uncontrolled release of propane from bulk containers. Existing containers must be retrofitted by July 1, 2011, or earlier based upon the results of the fire safety analysis.

Retroactive provisions are adopted by N.F.P.A. only where serious safety problems have been recognized.

## **VFIRS - NOTICE - 2005 REPORTS DUE JANUARY 15, 2006.**

*Submitted by Stan Baranowski, Assistant State Fire Marshal  
Barre Office*

All 2005 Incident Reports must be submitted to this office by January 15, 2006. Reports can be submitted electronically as an email attachment; a CD or disk via US Mail; or by using the web based bulk import or data entry tools. (Reminder: NFIRS 4.1 format is no longer accepted). To check on your current status of reporting or if you have questions, the Chief or Reporting Officer can contact Stan Baranowski at (802) 479-7575 or [sbaranow@dps.state.vt.us](mailto:sbaranow@dps.state.vt.us).

## **VFIRS - Vermont Fire Incident Reporting System**

*Submitted by Stan Baranowski, Assistant State Fire Marshal*

*Barre Office*

Current statistics (as of October 18, 2005)

Total incidents reported 20,350

Fires 1827 - EMS 10,021 - Other 8481

Fire Departments reporting: 127

## **Chimney Fire -- Incident Coding:**

The NFIRS 5.0 system has two different coding methods for the reporting of Chimney Fire related incidents.

- **CONFINED CHIMNEY FIRES** - The incident type code 114 is used to report only chimney fires that do not extend beyond the chimney. Only the Basic module must be completed. If the structure suffers any fire damage beyond the chimney the incident must be coded as a structure fire, incident type 111.
- **NON-CONFINED CHIMNEY FIRES** - If a chimney fire causes damage to the structure beyond the chimney it must be coded as a structure fire, incident type 111. The Basic, Fire and Structure Fire modules must all be completed. The area of origin field on the fire module is then coded as the area in the structure where the fire escaped the chimney. NFIRS 5.0 treats a chimney as a piece of equipment and not an area of origin; this is different than in the 4.1 NFIRS coding. The type of chimney must be coded in the "equipment involved in ignition" field on fire module.
- Historically chimney fires, both confined and those that spread to the structure have been a high percentage of fires in Vermont. The change in the coding procedure within NFIRS makes the proper coding of chimney fires more important to maintain an understanding of the chimney fire problem.

If you have any questions about fire incident reporting contact Asst. State Fire Marshal Stanley Baranowski at (802) 479-7575 or sbaranow@dps.state.vt.us.

## **Job Opening** **Electrical Inspector** **Williston Regional Office** **Pay Grade 21 (\$16.73 per hour)**

Electrical inspector Jake Sartwell is retiring soon. This position is based in Williston with the primary area of inspection responsibility for northern Chittenden County, Grand Isle and Franklin Counties. The position is now open for hire. If interested, you must contact the Department of Human Resources at Employment Services, 103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671-1657, phone 800-640-1657 or (<http://www.vtstatejobs.info>).

### **Examples of Work:**

Provides complete inspection of all electrical installations in new or existing buildings and at construction sites, which generally includes any public or privately owned building or structure which is constructed, adapted, or used for any commercial, industrial, agricultural, governmental, institutional, recreational, or charitable use, barring single residences or dwellings and related buildings.

### **Education and Experience:**

High school or trade school graduation and a Vermont Master Electricians License are required.

OR

Certified IAEI Electrical Inspector with four years of experience.

*Submitted by Robert Patterson*  
*Williston Regional Manager*

## HAZMAT TEAM PERFORMS IN DOUBLE IMPACT EXERCISE

*Submitted by Chris Herrick, Chief, VHMRT*

On Thursday, October 13th the Homeland Security Unit sponsored a full-scale exercise in Highgate, VT. The exercise was designed to test the response capabilities of the local and state response groups as well as their ability to coordinate during a complex event.

The State HAZMAT Team has a major role as the event focused around terrorists using chlorine as a weapon. As a result of the actions taken by the "terrorists" there were in excess of 25 victims injured by the blast from an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and the subsequent release of chlorine.

Swanton FD used their HAMZAT/Decon trailer at the scene to provide both emergency and technical decontamination. The HAZMAT team made multiple entries and extracted non-ambulatory victims. The HAZMAT team utilized a matrix of detection instruments to rule out WMDs and radiological elements as well as to detect the chlorine.

The coordination among HAZMAT, the local FD, VSP, and EMS went very well. Each area was able to perform their function in the larger unified command system. This level of coordination was critical to the safe and efficient use of the limited resources that were available.



### Message from the Barre Regional Office

*Michael Desrochers, Barre Regional Manager*

The Barre Regional Office sponsored a carbon monoxide seminar to local contractors in Lamoille County. The class provided local business owners, contractors, developers, and landlords an opportunity to better understand the carbon monoxide laws.

The Barre Regional Office also participated in the 2005 Vermont Downtown Conference on October 13, 2005 in Burlington. Michael Desrochers, Barre Regional Manager

participated in an educational program that focused on building codes and how they interact with historic preservation concerns. The class was well attended by approximately 35 persons including; City Managers, Town Clerks, Zoning Administrators, Historic Preservation, and Architects. Offering technical assistance and providing business owners with the opportunity to participate in preliminary construction meetings proved to be beneficial to all stakeholders. Preliminary construction meetings allow us to identify life safety features that need to be implemented into the project before plans are completed. Identifying code issues far in advance provides an excellent opportunity to resolve conflicts and provide for a safer structure.

## **Fire Prevention Week, 2005**

### **"Use Candles with Care: When you Go Out, Blow Out"**

On October 14, 2005 Governor James Douglas signed the proclamation for Fire Prevention Week, October 9 - 15, 2005, in front of an enthusiastic group of pre-school children and their parents at the Montpelier Fire Station for a fire safety program as part of fire prevention week activities by the Montpelier Fire Department, in co-operation with a reading program from the Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Montpelier.

The Governor clearly enjoyed sitting down with the children and their parents to talk about fire safety. "The fire department can help us if there is a fire", Governor Douglas explained, "but we can do a lot at our homes to prevent fires from starting. If there are candles at home we should be sure when your family goes out to blow the candles out. Never leave candles unattended. We want to make sure you stay safe".

Candle safety is the focus of Fire Prevention Week this year. According to the National Fire Protection Association there has been a significant increase in home candle fires, even as more other causes of home fires have declined.

"Fire Prevention Week has been recognized since 1920 by the President of the United States", indicated John Wood, Director of the Division of Fire Safety, "Some of the fire safety topics discussed back then are still important today. We need to get these safety messages to each new generation to make sure they can stay safe from fire".

The proclamation signed by Governor Douglas emphasized the importance of thanking all members of Vermont's fire service for their dedication, their professionalism and their continuing efforts to help make fire safety a part of daily life throughout the year.



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