



DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL & STATE FIRE ACADEMY

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www.vtfiresafety.org

March 2007

2006 REPORT OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

KERRY SLEEPER—COMMISSIONER

Director's Message - *John G. Wood, Director*

The Division of Fire Safety, March Newsletter, contains the abridged version of the "2006 Report of the Fire Marshal". By using the newsletter format and mailing list the report will reach thousands of people in the fire service, related professionals and other interested people. The abridged version of the report contains summary data on fire incidents, division programs and highlights of many important changes during 2006 that affected the fire service. The complete version of the report also contains additional analysis of fire incident data, an individual breakdown of statistics for each reporting fire department and statistics on firefighter injury. Having accurate data from the fire service on fires and incidents that occur in their communities is an indispensable tool in fighting fire in Vermont. We currently have 187 out of 237 fire departments reporting for 2006. To improve this report we need all fire departments to report to have a complete baseline for statistics. The laws, resources, grants, code changes, educational programs, training, emergency response, investigations and safety equipment for firefighters are all impacted by fire data and statistics.

The statistics continue to indicate that the highest death and injury rate from fires in Vermont, and nationwide, is from fires in multi-family and single family dwellings, but we have not been focused on inspections for multi-family dwellings or public fire safety education programs that can affect the safety for a greater number of people. During 2006 we reassigned the inspection duties of two boiler inspectors to conduct fire code inspections and we assigned two temporary assistant fire marshals to focus on inspections of existing multi-family dwellings, setting a target goal for inspections for each regional office. Our public education program has become more focused on the fire problem in existing multi-family and single-family dwellings.

Beginning in October, the Division of Fire Safety and the Vermont State Police combined resources together to form a statewide fire investigation unit. This fire investigation unit brings together the strengths of both divisions, increases the resources and expands the knowledge available.

The new law requiring fire-safe cigarettes to be sold in Vermont went into effect part way through the year making Vermont the second state after New York to have such a law. Since that time Canada, New Hampshire and Massachusetts have all passed similar laws. We anticipate a significant

decrease in fires caused by cigarettes in Vermont.

In 2005, the state HAZMAT team increased the number of emergency response vehicles to include vehicles based in Essex, Brandon and Windsor, including improved communications capabilities. We are now in the process of increasing the size of the state HAZMAT team and providing technician training for all members. New electronic diagnostic equipment is now available to help identify unknown substances.

On Friday April 14, 2006, Governor James Douglas signed into law Senate Bill 251 that includes all firefighters in Vermont under the presumption that a heart attack or heart disease, that becomes symptomatic within 72 hours of service in the line of duty, is a compensable injury under Worker's Compensation laws. The Coalition of Fire and Rescue Services worked on this bill with the four fire service groups that make up the Coalition to obtain passage of this significant legislation that will protect the rights of firefighters and their families in the future. This year the Governor has supported a study of ideas and proposals to help with recruiting and retention for fire departments. A summit has been held to get input on the ideas and a report will be available soon.

The rules that establish the process for issuing fines and the amount of the fines, for violations of division laws and rules, were updated this past year to improve enforcement. The rules for the Fire Service Training Council were also updated and now offer the opportunity to challenge the tests for Firefighter I and Firefighter II, without taking all of the required courses, when approved by the chief of the fire department.

The much anticipated fire science program will begin this fall at Vermont Technical College. The 2-year associate degree program is a great opportunity for new high school graduates, or for people already in the work force, to obtain a fire science degree and advance their career. Vermonters will no longer have to leave the state to get this education. We anticipate that a 4-year degree program will be discussed once the 2-year program is up and running.

A lot of the progress the division has made is due to the strong support for fire safety from Commissioner Kerry Sleeper, Deputy Commissioner Marc Metayer and the Administration of Governor James Douglas, and the support of the fire service. We can all achieve more by working together for fire and building safety. For more information on any topic covered in this report or for assistance with any problem, contact the resources listed on the back page of the report.

FIREWORKS & SPARKLERS – Regulations & Annual Report

Protecting the public from risks associated with fireworks and sparklers takes a combined program of public safety awareness and education, code enforcement regarding the storage and use of fireworks and sparklers and enforcement of the laws regarding permits for public fireworks displays, sales and the use of fireworks and sparklers.

Public awareness and education information on fireworks and sparklers is an integral part of the fire safety educational programs conducted by the Division of Fire Safety and includes direct mailings to fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency departments, ambulance services, retail grocers, television, radio and cable channels. Fireworks and sparkler safety is featured in the month of July as part of the 2007 Vermont Fire Safety Calendar distributed to 25,000 elementary school children state-wide.

The Division of Fire Safety regulates the safekeeping, storage, use, manufacturing, sale, handling, and other disposition of explosive material including fireworks and sparklers under the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code. The division also regulates the construction, manufacturing, storage, handling and use of fireworks for supervised public displays and the use of pyrotechnics before a proximate audience. Consumer fireworks retail sales facilities or stores where the fireworks and sparklers are in packages in accordance with the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, and where the total quantity of consumer fireworks and sparklers in the building does not exceed 125 lb (net) of pyrotechnic composition, are exempt from certain code requirements. Where the Division of Fire Safety receives information regarding the storage of 125 lb or more of pyrotechnic composition the responsible fire department is notified.

It is unlawful for any person to offer for sale, sell at retail or wholesale, possess, use or explode any fireworks except as permitted for a supervised public display of fireworks. A permit for a supervised public display of fireworks may be obtained from the Chief of the Fire Department, or in towns where there is no Fire Department from the board of selectmen, where it is determined the display would not be hazardous to property or endanger the public.

Sparklers less than 14 inches long with no more than 20 grams of pyrotechnic mixture and novelty sparkling items limited to snakes, party poppers, glow worms, smoke devices, string poppers, snappers, or drop pops with no more than 0.25 grains of explosive mixture, that are in compliance with United States Consumer Product Safety Commission regulations, are legal for sale and use in Vermont and do not require a permit.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reported 10,800 fireworks/sparkler related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments in 2005 with the majority of the injuries occurring to people under the age of 20. As required under 20 V.S.A. 3132, the Division of Fire Safety has gathered information on injuries and property loss in Vermont through the National Fire Incident Reporting system (NFIRS) and a separate survey of emergency departments and ambulance services. During 2003, 2004 and 2005 the surveys covered 30-day periods around the Fourth of July. Those surveys indicated there were 15 fireworks injuries reported and 13 fires caused by fireworks/sparklers. Reports on injuries were received from 63% of the emergency departments and 42% of the ambulance services. For 2006 the survey was extended to cover the entire year to get a better understanding of fireworks injuries in Vermont. The response to the survey decreased significantly with only four emergency departments responding to the survey including: Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Copley Hospital, Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital and Southwestern Vermont Health Care. Only 37% of the ambulance services responded.

The response to the survey from emergency departments and ambulance services has dropped to a point that the data received is not representative of injuries occurring in Vermont. There were six injuries from fireworks/sparklers reported from the 2006 survey. These low numbers are not consistent with the information provided from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Fire Protection Association that indicate there has been a statistically significant upward trend in fireworks related injuries requiring hospital care over the past 10 years.

CAUSES OF CIVILIAN FIRE DEATHS 1997-2006

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	% of total '97-'06
Smoking Materials	4	5	5	5	2	1	2	0	1	2	24%
Heating Equipment	3	1	0	0	1	2	6	0	0	1	13%
Open Flame	3	3	5	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	12%
Vehicle Collision	1	0	1	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	9%
Electrical	1	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	1	8%
Cooking	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	6%
Explosion	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3%
Unintentional	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2%
Undetermined	2	0	1	11	1	1	1	0	8	1	23%
Totals	17	14	12	22	9	5	18	0	9	6	100%

FIRE RELATED INJURIES – Emergency Department Statistics

Over 1,000 people are treated at Vermont hospitals each year due to fire and burn related injuries. Under the Vermont Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Data, the injuries are classified as either “fire/burn” or “fire/flame” injuries. The “fire/burn” category includes injuries caused by fire, combustion, burning, smoke and gases from fire, explosion, conflagration and controlled fires; and contains injuries other than burns. For 2004 there were 47 hospitalization and 342 emergency department discharges for “fire/burn” injuries. More than twice as many males (247) as females (95) were seen in the emergency department for “fire/burn” injuries. Fire/burn emergency department dis-

charges occurred more frequently among people between ages 25-54.

The “fire/flame” category includes injuries caused by hot liquids and vapors, steam, hot objects, heating appliances and similar objects. Most of the fire/flame injuries were seen in the emergency department, 714, compared with 30 hospital discharges. The number of injuries for females (367) was slightly higher than for males (347). The age groups 25-34 (129) and 35-44 (110) had the highest number of emergency department visits. The higher frequency of fire and burn related injuries for young and middle age adults may relate to the frequency of risky behavior for these age groups. National statistics show that the very young and very old are more apt to die from fire related injuries than other age groups.

PROPERTY LOSS FROM FIRE Fire Department & Insurance Company Reporting

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) provides a large amount of information on fires and other types of incidents that fire departments respond to, including what causes fires, property loss, injuries and death. NFIRS provides the big picture, but to get more specific information on important issues the division uses other sources as well. The Chief Medical Examiner’s Office provides information on fire deaths, the Department of Health provides information on injuries from fire and burns through the Hospital Discharge Data and the Department of Labor provides specific information on injuries to firefighters through workers compensation data. This year the division conducted a separate survey to collect data from insurance companies to obtain more specific information on property loss. The NFIRS and insurance company data is compiled in the table below for 2003 through 2005. Even though the reporting is incomplete it shows the significant impact of the property loss from fire in Vermont. What the figures don’t show is the additional loss in wages to employees who are out of a job after a fire, the loss in tax revenues to municipalities when a building is burned, the loss of business in a community when a business is forced to close after a fire or the cost of health care for the treatment of fire and burn injuries.

Year	Fire Departments Reporting	Structure Fires Reported	Dollar Loss Fire Departments	Insurance Companies Reporting	Fire Claims Reported	Dollar Loss Insurance Companies
2003	149	1696	\$20,489,289	118	2556	\$54,425,886
2004	155	1780	24,023,358	118	2387	63,405,898
2005	179/237	1927	21,816,250	118/179	2123	56,652,195

CODE ENFORCEMENT, EDUCATION, INVESTIGATION, HAZMAT INFORMATION AND TRAINING STATISTICS

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Fire Inspections	4240	4280	5220	5500	5600	6340
Plan Review	2680	2540	2580	2700	2800	2870
Fire Protection System Inspections	8500	7500	12,100	14,500	12,000	11,260
Electrical Inspections	5160	5200	6000	6600	6450	6650
Fire Safety Trailer Educational Programs	71	76	94	73	82	79
Fire Safety Calendars Distributed	20,800	20,000	26,000	14,000	20,000	25,000
Fire Investigations (VSP)	273	292	250	232	228	202
Arrested & Juvenile Arson	44	32	47	60	39	22
Hazardous Material Incidents					97	127
Hazardous Material Training - Students	463	843	1033	1034	1000	656
Total Certified Firefighter I	493	537	1119	1368	1590	1845
Total Certified Firefighter II	26	26	26	26	321	378
Firefighters Attending Training	3547	3476	3075	3083	3653	2750

FIRE INVESTIGATION UNIT State Police and Fire Safety

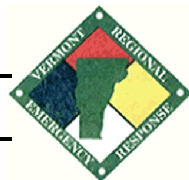
Beginning in October, the Division of Fire Safety and the Vermont State Police combined resources together to form a statewide fire investigation unit. This unit brings together the strengths of both divisions to address the issues identified in fire investigation. The detective sergeants from state police work together with division of fire safety investigators on the origin and cause. If the fire is an arson fire or looks like it might be an arson fire then the state police investigator will be the lead investigator. If the fire is accidental or undetermined then the division of fire safety investigator will take the lead. They will work together in either case.

It is still the fire chief's responsibility by law to investigate all fires. The fire chief should call for assistance when he/she cannot determine what started the fire or for help determining the origin and cause.

The exceptions are when there is injury or death caused by a fire, or when arson is suspected. In these cases the fire chief should call the fire investigators immediately for assistance.

Nothing has changed for calling the fire investigators for assistance. The fire chief should call the State Police dispatcher when requesting assistance, as has been the standard practice. The dispatchers have a policy and call out list for the investigators. There are 6 state police and 4 fire safety investigators, each taking a week of on-duty call out. The Department of Public Safety is committed to working with and assisting the fire service in its goal of protecting life and property in the state. The fire investigation unit is one way of making Vermont a safer place to live, work, and visit. The contacts for the unit are Regional Manager Robert Patterson, Williston Office and Sgt. Gerry Charbonneau, St. Albans Office, State Police.

Report of The State HAZMAT Team



Chris Herrick, Chief

The past year was one that saw more growth for the State of Vermont Response Team. The team continued to improve its abilities through the acquisition of new equipment, advanced training for the HAZMAT technicians and greater experience due to increased call volume. The next year will see the team improving its capabilities and strength.

The HAZMAT Team will be adding more HAZMAT technicians over the next year which will allow for quicker technical assistance to all areas of Vermont. The increase will move the total from twenty-five to over thirty. With the increase in numbers will also come an increase in technical capabilities. Specifically, the team will be acquiring two RAMAN technology IR diffusion analyzers that will allow us to identify unknown substances in a matter of minutes. These could be used at most HAZMAT incidents-including identification at potential methamphetamine labs.

The whole HAZMAT Team will be re-trained at the HAZMAT Technician level using a new curriculum. The Chief, Deputy Chief and all Crew Chiefs have become Technician level instructors to enable this high level of training to occur. Additionally, the team will continue to receive training in radiological response to bolster its capability in response to any and all such events.

VERMONT FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM

The Vermont Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) has been using the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) Version 5.0, fire data reporting system, for the last 8 years. Vermont has been reporting using NFIRS for over 20 years. As of January 1, 2006, the older version of NFIRS, Version 4.1 was not accepted for submitting incident reports.

Currently, there are over 260,000 incidents in the state database; of these over 16,000 are structure fires. The remaining incidents are other fire department responses, with about half being EMS related.

The data collected over the years has been used to support the need for "fire safe" cigarettes and carbon monoxide detection legislation. Requests for data and information have also come from the media and general public, from other state agencies such as Forest Protection, and from local fire departments for grant request data or other local issues like response times. In 2006, VFIRS added more specific coding for fires caused by cigarettes

and fireworks. More details can be found on the VFIRS webpage. This report only list; general information, more specific information and analysis can be done for special requests on a local, regional or statewide basis.

The Division of Fire Safety would like to thank those departments that continue to submit valid, timely and useable reports. By submitting timely reports, that data is able to be used for analysis of season issues like wildland fires or firework incidents.

The Division of Fire Safety's web site www.vtfiresafety.org has a page for VFIRS. This page contains useful information for fire departments on such things as reporting status, FDID number for other departments, and general statistics.

To send in fire data, or for assistance and information, contact assistant state fire marshal Stan Baranowski at sbaranow@dps.state.vt.us or 802-479-7575.

INCIDENT TYPE REPORTED

Count of IncidentID	year										Grand Total
Value	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Grand Total
EMS	6401	8425	9107	8880	9224	10496	11223	14662	16344	15945	110707
False alarm	2442	2518	2516	2712	2949	3219	3336	4194	4850	4541	33277
FIRE	2748	2804	2667	1965	2717	2667	3062	3383	3771	3451	29235
Hazard condition	1547	2083	1861	1822	2051	2563	2796	3684	4549	4083	27039
Service	1449	1471	1587	1688	1762	1660	2149	2898	3170	3923	21757
Assist	1842	1954	2011	1586	1842	1838	2060	2640	2663	2553	20989
Other	39	73	153	123	131	261	253	253	313	246	1845
Unknown	263	243	160	22	62	64	41	59	74	0	988
Explosion	17	40	71	128	68	64	116	119	110	101	834
Weather	0	0	8	55	61	60	44	105	129	128	590
Grand Total	16748	19611	20141	18981	20867	22892	25080	31997	35973	34971	247261

TYPES AND NUMBER OF STRUCTURE FIRES

Count of IncidentID	year										Grand Total
IN_PropertyUse2	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Grand Total
1 & 2 Family	753	749	598	524	547	524	634	759	749	741	6578
Unknown	131	91	101	139	193	311	442	538	524	505	2975
Multi-Family	177	152	169	182	174	206	189	199	193	261	1902
Other Residential	39	39	44	47	86	129	172	162	185	139	1042
Storage	56	90	52	44	45	50	64	79	77	63	620
Business Mercantile	42	53	62	44	44	46	64	50	59	55	519
Assembly	35	25	30	33	27	28	38	20	44	28	308
Manufacturing	33	45	59	24	33	7	26	17	17	19	280
Outside/Roadway	14	15	16	15	19	30	37	31	18	22	217
Health Care/Correctional	13	10	19	13	30	19	23	23	18	25	193
Educational	11	12	14	10	14	12	18	19	22	26	158
Industrial	13	6	16	16	21	10	16	24	21	9	152
Grand Total	1317	1287	1180	1091	1233	1372	1723	1921	1927	1893	14944

FIRE ACADEMY – Statistics & Information

The Fire Academy has taken many steps to increase the delivery of training programs for first responders and make the training meaningful and consistent. The Fire Academy has increased the number of certified instructors to improve course delivery and availability, but is continually looking for new candidates for fire training instructors. Please contact the Fire Academy if you are interested in being an instructor. In addition to expanded training opportunities, the Fire Academy now offers the opportunity to challenge the tests for Firefighter I and Firefighter II without taking all of the required courses, when approved by the department chief.

There are now close to 1900 firefighters in the state certified as Firefighter Level I. Over 250 firefighters each year complete the Firefighter I training program while other firefighters train in separate courses or “modules”. Approximately one-half of the firefighters in the state attend Fire Academy programs. A number of the programs have been provided at no cost to the fire service through funding by Homeland Security. The Fire Academy coordinated technical rescue programs to 270 students, including rope operations and technicians, confined space operations and technicians, and trench rescue operations.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Firefighter I Training Programs	11	8	10	11	13	11
Firefighters Completing Firefighter I	239	211	176	296	209	234
Total Certified Firefighter I	493	537	1119	1368	1590	1845
Total Certified Firefighter II	26	26	26	26	321	378
Total Certified Driver/Operator	0	0	0	0	0	16
Total Certified Fire Officer I	27	27	27	27	69	104
Total Certified Fire Officer II	0	0	0	0	0	104
Total Certified Fire Instructor I	10	21	21	30	42	79
Total Certified Haz Mat Awareness	450	1213	1576	2135	2473	3080
Total Certified Haz Mat Operations	13	61	120	287	455	539
Hazardous Material Training Programs	35	53	60	63	62	36
Hazardous Material Training Students	463	843	1033	1034	1000	656
Total Firefighters Attending Programs	3547	3476	3075	3083	3653	2750

The Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Hazardous Materials Awareness, Hazardous Materials Operations, Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II training curriculums are recognized by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro-Board). This means that these seven programs are compliant with NFPA 1001 and 472, and are recognized by 44 other fire-training agencies nationwide and in Canada.

The planning and curriculum development for the Fire Academy is through the Vermont Fire Service Training Council. The minutes of each council meeting is available at vtfiresafety.org. The members of the council and staff of the Fire Academy express their thanks to the students and the instructors for their time in improving training for themselves and for their departments.

OVERVIEW OF THE FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION SECTION

EDUCATION = PREVENTION

Over the past few years fire code enforcement, smoke detectors, sprinklers, and public education have saved countless lives in Vermont. There have been several instances where children and adults have saved their entire family by using their fire safety knowledge to respond properly and swiftly in a fire situation.

The fire service has made significant progress in improving the delivery of fire safety education programs in Vermont. The division of fire safety continues to build on these efforts, by working in conjunction with other agencies and local fire departments, to identify needs and provide resources to enable local fire departments to implement effective programs in their communities.

In 2006, the division supported several programs including over 79 programs of the Vermont Fire Safety House at local events throughout the state and the 16th year of the State Fire

Prevention Calendar Program that provided 25,000 calendars to schoolchildren. We made available custom educational programs & resources in addition to providing assistance to fire departments with their grant requests. We also provided numerous fire safety talks to various groups in addition to providing general fire safety information to the public.

Last year we were able to co-sponsor several specialized training sessions for prevention educators, fire and building inspectors and the emergency services. These sessions we made possible through support and grants from the federal government and other alliance organizations in a combined effort to continue important prevention efforts in the state.

These are a handful of the ongoing programs that the division employs each year to address a wide range of special audiences, including children, adolescents, parents, the elderly, and people with disabilities, in an attempt to achieve a significant and continuous reduction of deaths, injuries, and property losses due to fires in Vermont.

VERMONT FIRE ACADEMY TRAINING SCHEDULE

MARCH 07		
Assistance to Firefighter Grant Workshop	Barre City	March 1
SCBA Mask Fit Testing ----- VFA INSTRUCTORS ONLY	Bellows F.D.	March 3
National Fire Academy - Emergency Response to Terrorism:	Brattleboro F.D.	March 10 & 11
Assistance to Firefighter Grant Workshop	Underhill/Jericho F.D.	March 7
Assistance to Firefighter Grant Workshop	St. Johnsbury F.D.	March 8
Hazardous Materials Decontamination	Windham County @ Putney F.D.	March 13, 15 & 17
Colchester Tech Rescue Site	Rope Operations Train the Trainer	March 17 & 18
National Fire Academy - TWO STATE WEEKEND - go to: http://www.vtfiresafety.org/vfstc/calendar.html#twostate for	VT/NH @ Emmitsburg Maryland	March 24 & 25
APRIL 07		
Advanced Fire Behavior - Flashover Recognition	Moretown	April 7
Hazardous Materials Operations	Essex Junction	April 12, 14, 18 & 19
Advanced Fire Behavior - Flashover Recognition	Northeast International Mutual Aid	April 14 & 15
FF I Protective Equipment	NEIMA RFS	April 14 & 15
Strategies & Tactics for Initial Company Operations	NEIMA RFS	April 14 & 15
Emergency Vehicle Operations for the Pumping Apparatus	NEIMA RFS	April 14 & 15
Rope Rescue Operations Level	Colchester	April 21, 22 & 28, 29
Rope Rescue Operations Level	St. Johnsbury F.D.	April 23, 24, 25, 26
Southern Vermont Regional Fire School @ MSJ- Rutland:	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 28
Hazardous Materials Awareness	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 28
Fire Department Communications (Firefighter I)	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 28
Communications II (Firefighter II)	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 29
Building Construction (Firefighter II)	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 28
Fire Prevention II - Pre-Incident Survey (Firefighter II)	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 29
Advanced Fire Behavior - Flashover Recognition	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 29
Personal Protective Equipment (Firefighter I) w/ Draeger	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 28 & 29
National Fire Academy - Arson Detection for the First Re- sponder	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut- land, VT	April 28 & 29
Water Supply for the Pumping Apparatus Driver/Operator	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 28 & 29
Flammable Gas Fire Control	Mount St. Joesph's Academy - Rut-	April 28 & 29
MAY 07 - Courses to be announced		

VERMONT ACCESS RULES – Comments on Proposed Rules

The Vermont Access Rules that govern access to buildings for people with disabilities are being updated to incorporate changes in federal law concerning transportation facilities such as bus stations and airports, and to incorporate changes in state law concerning housing. The rules will now include more specific language from federal law to assist users who may not have easy access to federal law. The annex to the rules is being expanded to include information from the Federal Fair Housing Act, special provisions for childrens' use, specifications for ramp design and additional technical assistance. Clarification is provided for the use of elevators and platform lifts, the design of adaptable and visitable dwelling units, as well as the process to obtain a variance from the rules. Altered elements, spaces or features to existing dwelling units are required to meet the rules but selected units are not required to be retrofitted.

A public hearing is scheduled on the proposed rule for 10:00 a.m. on March 12, 2006, at the Berlin office of the Division of Fire Safety. Comments on the proposed rules must be received by March 19, 2006. A copy of the proposed rule is available on line at <http://www.dps.state.vt.us/fire/Access.htm> .



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Vermont Department of Public Safety

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DIVISION OF STATE POLICE—FIRE INVESTIGATION

Waterbury—103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671-2101— (802) 244-8781—Fax (802) 241-5371