



DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL & STATE FIRE ACADEMY

Central Office Berlin 802-479-7561 **State Fire Academy Office** Pittsford 802-483-2755

Regional Offices Barre 802-479-4434 * Rutland 802-786-5867 * Springfield 802-885-8883 * Williston 802-879-2300

www.vtfiresafety.org

MAY 2006

Director's Message

John G. Wood, Director

Heart Bill

On Friday April 14, 2006, Governor James Douglas signed into law Senate Bill 251 that now includes all firefighters in the State 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. Once again it proves that being united as emergency service providers and speaking with one voice can demonstrate the effectiveness of the Coalition. As the old saying goes "united we stand, divided we fall". The legislators and the Governor support the emergency services and it is our job and duty to send a clear message with one voice to them or we stand to lose the battle based on our own presentation and confusion. We must work out any differences between ourselves and agree on matters before moving forward with a political agenda. We have all witnessed what happens when we are not speaking from the same sheet of music. The benefit of speaking with one voice will be witnessed with our Governor signing significant legislation that will protect the rights of firefighters and their families in the future.

Setting Division Priorities

We have been reviewing the different programs within the Division of

Fire Safety over the past year. The timing seems to be right because the State is also working on a Strategic Enterprise Initiative that takes into consideration how State government can be more efficient and streamlined - doing more with less and still providing services that are needed.

In our review process we took into consideration the services provided, the effect of the programs in relation to services, the safety aspects of the programs, the staff available to carry out the services for the programs, and the success of the programs. Based on that review we are currently in the process of hiring a plumbing/heating inspector to assist the one that we have and we expect an improvement in safety for the public as well as a more consistent plumbing permit and inspection program. We have just hired a public fire safety education person, the only one in the division, to assist local communities with fire safety and community risk reduction education. We anticipate this program will have a big impact in reducing injuries and deaths throughout the State.

Last month there was an article in the newsletter about using the two state boiler inspectors for fire safety inspections in existing multi-family dwellings. When we reviewed the boiler program we found that 75% of the boiler inspections were done using qualified insurance company inspectors. The two state inspectors were, for the most part, doing the same boilers that the insurance company inspectors would do. The frequency of boiler inspections is working better than any other program in the division. When we

looked at the fire code enforcement in existing multi-family dwellings we found that inspections were occurring primarily as a result of renovation projects or complaints by tenants or local officials. The highest death and injury rate from fires in Vermont, and nationwide, is from fires in multi-family and single family dwellings, but we were not focused on inspections for multi-family dwellings or public fire safety education programs that can affect the safety for a greater number of people. Using current staff, and shifting the two boiler inspectors into fire code inspections, we have expanded our ability to address the fire problem in existing multi-family and single-family dwellings. We have established a high priority for inspections in existing multi-family dwellings and have set a target for each office to perform no less than 150-300 inspections in existing multi-family dwelling buildings. That would mean no less than 600 multi-family dwelling inspections per year and reaching for 1200 or more. We have no sure way of knowing the exact number of existing multi-family dwellings but the best estimate is that there are 80,000 multi-family dwelling units.

As you can see we need to do more to protect people where they live and sleep. We have a duty to evaluate how we can do a better job using the resources available to us within the division before requesting additional staff. Simply put, the division's priority is to reduce the number of fire deaths and injuries in this State by reallocating current resources with continued evaluation of additional resources.

Electrical Safety Month-May 2006

*Submitted by Pete Olney, Electrical Inspector
Rutland Office*

The Green Mountain Chapter of International Association of Electrical Inspectors urges all residential home occupants to look for and correct electrical safety hazards in their places of residence. The latest statistics from the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission says there were over 140,000 electrical-related fires accounting for an average of 500 deaths,

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nearly 5,000 injuries, and \$1.6 billion in property damage. Each year, there are an estimated 150 accidental electrocutions related to consumer products.

To help prevent more electrical-related deaths, injuries and property damage, the Green Mountain Chapter of IAEI helps promote May as National Electrical Safety Month in conjunction with the CPSC and the Electrical Safety Foundation.

The key to preventing potentially fatal, destructive and traumatic electrical fires, shock injuries and electrocution is awareness. "Awareness is the first step in a good electrical safety program, both at home and at work" according to ESF President Brett Brenner.

The Green Mountain Chapter of IAEI offers the following safety tips to look for and correct any unsafe wiring and equipment found in your home.

- Check for frayed or cracked extension cords, these can cause fires. Only use extension cords for temporary use, never for the replacement of permanent wiring. If using extension cords make sure they are listed and rated for their intended use.
- Check fuse sizes, the fuse should not be larger than 20 amperes except for ranges and dryers. In older homes, 15-ampere fuses should be the largest. Oversized fuses can overheat wires and start a fire.
- Check circuit breakers by feeling the outside by the switch handle. If the circuit breaker is warm; have the circuit breaker checked for proper operation. Overloaded circuits can overheat wires and start a fire.
- Check outlets and switches, if they are discolored or damaged have them professionally checked and/or replaced. Plugs should fit fully and securely into outlets, but should not be forced. Install safety covers on all unused outlets to protect children.
- Look for Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) in your home. They are required to protect all receptacles in bathrooms, kitchen countertops, garages, basements and outdoors. If you don't have GFCI's in these locations have them installed. The upgrade of these devices save lives by protecting against electrical shock. Test these devices monthly or after a major electrical storm.
- A new device called an Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) will detect shorted and broken wiring in your home and shut off the circuit until corrections can be made. If new wiring is being installed in your home or a new home is being built, make sure your contractor is installing AFCI's in all bedroom and living area circuits.
- Check your **SMOKE DETECTORS** at least once a month. Replace the batteries every time you reset your clock in the spring and fall. Smoke Detectors should be installed on every level of the home, the basement, outside each sleeping area and in the sleeping room. They should be interconnected so the activation of one sounds the audible in all other detectors. **REMEMBER** that working smoke detectors will wake you up and save your life.
- A new detection device called Carbon Monoxide Detector should be installed your home to protect you from CO poisoning. These detectors should be installed outside of the sleeping areas, and if you have a fuel burning appliance in the sleeping area you should install one there as well. As of Oct. 1, 2005 CO Detectors must be installed in all buildings where people sleep. Co poisoning has been on the rise over the last 5 years, so contact your Fire Department, Local Building Inspector or the Vt. Department of Public Safety: Division of Fire Safety for more information.
- If you have an older home 30 years or more, you should have your home inspected by a qualified electrician to look for any unsafe equipment or wiring. If any unsafe wiring or equipment is found have it removed or replaced.

Let's make Electrical Safety Month a safer place to live. A few minutes of your time to check these simple safety tips could save your lives.

Smoke Alarm Save in Brattleboro

*Submitted by Bruce Martin, Regional Manager
Springfield Office*

Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms saved the three occupants of single family home on Monday, March 27. An early morning fire at 681 Western Avenue in Brattleboro inflicted heavy damage to the basement and first floor, and cost the lives of 2 cats. Assistant Chief Michael Bucossi reported that the Brattleboro Fire Department received the first alarm at 5:19 a.m.

The fire apparently started in the basement near a woodstove, according to Asst. Chief Bucossi. The first arriving unit reported heavy smoke showing, and called for a second alarm. Over 1000 feet of 4 inch supply line were required due to access restrictions.

Battery-powered smoke alarms had been installed in the cellar stair and in the second floor stair, providing early warning for the occupants. They encountered heavy smoke filling the house, with fire through the kitchen floor.

Vermont HAZMAT Team
Chris Herrick, Chief, VHMRT

Multi-Gas Meters
Relative Response

As I travel around Vermont and meet with different fire departments I have noticed that an increasing number of them have acquired **Multi-Gas** meters. This is due in part to the increased awareness of Carbon Monoxide (CO) as well as greater funding for the first responders.

There are two critical issues associated with these meters that have caused some confusion and are important to insure the safe use of the instruments. These are calibration and relative response.

Let's look at calibration first. Calibration is when the sensors, usually Oxygen, Hydrogen Sulfide, Lower Explosivity and CO are adjusted by applying a known quantity of each and adjusting the sensors. This should not be confused with 'bump testing' which is simply applying a known quantity of gas to check if the sensors are reading correctly. If the bump test shows they are not then the instrument should be re-calibrated.

Calibration should be done according to the manufacturer's recommendation but a good practice is to bump

test the instrument before each use. This is to insure that the readings taken are accurate.

The issue of relative response is just as important as proper calibration. Relative response is a factor only for LEL. Instruments are calibrated to a flammable gas, pentane for instance in some. Pentane reacts differently than methane as it is burned in the instrument. The result being that a reading of 20% of the LEL in a methane environment is not accurate. The 20% needs to be multiplied by the specific conversion factor for methane. In the case of the meters used by the HAZMAT Team and calibrated using pentane is a factor of 0.5. So, in reality the 20% LEL reading for methane is really 10%.

It is important to note that some flammables will have a conversion factor that will make the actual reading higher than what is indicated on the meter. Again, with our meters and cal gas the conversion factor for gasoline is 1.3. This means a reading of 8% is in reality 10.4%.

Each meter has a recommended cal gas for flammables and the owner's manual should have the relative response conversion chart for many of the common flammables. You should familiarize yourself with this and all those using the meter should adjust their action levels accordingly.

Please call me if you have any questions about this or any HAZMAT related issue, and be SAFE.

**The Vermont Fire Safety House Hits the Road:
Fire Safety Education to Go!**

For years, local fire departments and teachers have presented fire prevention programs to schoolchildren. In some cases, the only time the students learned about fire safety is when the "Firefighters" came to the class. With the two-fire safety houses fire departments can expand fire prevention education programs to community events during the summer.

The Fire Safety House first put on the road in the mid 1990's is set up with a realistic kitchen, living and sleeping areas that provide hands on educational experience with fire safety. This Fire Safety House is especially appealing for children because the living and sleeping areas are kid sized and the arrangement of space means more children can take part in the educational programs. The newer Fire Safety House received in 2001 also has space for training programs for the children but has more space for educational programs for senior citizens and also features a demonstration area for residential fire sprinklers.



To schedule the Fire Safety House for your community event, or for additional information or assistance contact Micheal D. Greenia at 1-800-640-2106. Or visit www.vtfiresafety.org

VFIRS News:

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

- The VFIRS web page has been updated with many useful resources for incident reporting. Please check the page at www.dps.state.vt.us/fire/vfirs/ to see the updates.
- Reminder: The Wildland Fire module must be used to report fire incident types 140-143 and 170-173. See the February 2006 newsletter for more information.

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.

Vermont Fire Academy Training Schedule

| May 2006 — Course & Events | Location | Date |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Emergency Response to Terrorism: Basic Overview | Vt. Police Academy | May 3 & 4 |
| Hazardous Materials Awareness | Hartford | May 6 |
| Advanced Fire Behavior/Flashover | Shaftsbury | May 6 |
| FFII - Fire Detection, Alarm & Suppression Systems | Addison County Regional Fire School | May 6 |
| PPE with Draeger Trailer | Addison County Regional Fire School | May 6 & 7 |
| Advanced Fire Behavior/Flashover | Addison County Regional Fire School | May 7 |
| FFII - Fire Prevention/Pre-incident Survey | Addison County Regional Fire School | May 7 |
| Emergency Vehicle Driver Training | Chelsea | May 8, 11 & 13 |
| IS-700, Introduction to National Incident Management System | East Montpelier | May 9 |
| Introduction to the Fire Academy - Stafford Technical Students | Vermont Fire Academy | May 10 |
| Advanced Fire Behavior/Flashover | Proctorsville | May 13 |
| Twin State Regional Fire School | Wells River - Info. #: 802.633.2595 | May 20 & 21 |
| Hazardous Materials Awareness | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 |
| Advanced Fire Behavior/Flashover | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 |
| Arson Detection for the First Responder | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 & 21 |
| Emergency Vehicle Driver Training | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 & 21 |
| Incident Safety Officer | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 & 21 |
| NIMS Incident Command System for Fire Service | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 & 21 |
| Preparation for Initial Company Operations | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 & 21 |
| Strategy & Tactics for Initial Company Operations | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 & 21 |
| Training Operations for Small Departments | Twin State Regional Fire School | May 20 & 21 |
| Bennington Firefighter I Certification Exam | Bennington | TBD |
| Newfane Firefighter I Certification Exam | Newfane | TBD |
| Orleans Firefighter I Certification Exam | Orleans | TBD |
| Poultney Firefighter I Certification Exam | Poultney | TBD |
| St. Johnsbury Firefighter I Certification Exam | St. Johnsbury | TBD |
| IS-700/ICS-100 Training: For Fire Chiefs & Training Officers | Essex High School | May 17 |
| IS-700/ICS-100 Training: For Fire Chiefs & Training Officers | Arlington Fire Station | May 17 |
| IS-700/ICS-100 Training: For Fire Chiefs & Training Officers | St. Johnsbury Fire Station | May 22 |
| Emergency Response to Terrorism: Basic Concepts | Camp Johnson | May 23 & 24 |
| IS-700/ICS-100 Training: For Fire Chiefs & Training Officers | Poultney Fire Station | May 24 |
| IS-700/ICS-100 Training: For Fire Chiefs & Training Officers | Westminster Fire Station | May 25 |
| IS-700/ICS-100 Training: For Fire Chiefs & Training Officers | Hartford Fire Station | May 30 |
| IS-700/ICS-100 Training: For Fire Chiefs & Training Officers via Vermont Interactive Television | Sites: Bennington, Brattleboro, Castleton, Johnson, Lyndonville, Middlebury, Newport, Randolph, Rutland, Springfield, St. Albans, Waterbury, White River Jct, Williston | May 31 |
| June 2006 — Course & Events | Location | Date |
| North Country International Fire Training School | http://www2.northcountryfireschool.org/ | June 3 & 4 |
| Firefighter I - Personal Protective Equipment w/ Draeger Trailer | North Country Intl. Fire Training School | June 3 & 4 |
| Hazardous Materials Decontamination | North Country Intl. Fire Training School | June 3 & 4 |
| Incident Safety Officer | North Country Intl. Fire Training School | June 3 & 4 |
| NIMS Incident Command System for Fire Service | North Country Intl. Fire Training School | June 3 & 4 |
| Strategy & Tactics for Initial Company Operations | North Country Intl. Fire Training School | June 3 & 4 |
| Training Operations for Small Departments | North Country Intl. Fire Training School | June 3 & 4 |
| Pomfret Firefighter I Certification Exam | Pomfret | June 10 |
| | | |
| Firefighter II Challenge Exam | Vermont Fire Academy | September 23 |

VFIRS – Vermont Fire Incident Reporting System

Current statistics (as of April 19, 2006)

Total incidents reported: 5155

Fires: 570 - EMS: 2145 - NonFire/NonEMS: 2423

Fire Departments reporting: 120

Dates and Times:

For 2005, the average response time in the State of Vermont was 2 hours 59 minutes. This very skewed number is the result of incorrect data entry in the time and date fields.

- As an example (real): a department with about 250 incidents had an average response time of over 65 hours. This was the result of 3 calls in which the difference between the alarm date and the arrival date was over 6 months >> January, February, May alarm dates to a November arrival date. Without those 3 calls the average becomes more realistic...3 minutes.
- The above shows the effect of 3 outliers that were so extreme that they could easily be identified. Errors of only a day or a few hours are much harder to identify, and will cumulatively cause skewed data over time.
- Care needs to be taken to enter the correct times and date of an incident. This is especially important when entering past calls.
- Response times are not something looked at Statewide, but this office has provided response time data for requests on the local or regional level for study and planning issues. While extreme outliers are “cleaned” without affecting the overall data, not all errors can be corrected.
- The time and date fields are unique. They are not coded and alpha/numeric fields like Incident Type or the Address. The system will accept any time and date entered (except future ones – and this was only recently put in the system as a edit check). Therefore, to provide the best possible data for analysis, the time and date fields need to be filled in accurately.

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

CODE HIGHLIGHTS – *technical assistance*

Fire – Safe Cigarette Information & Enforcement –

This new safety law, effective May 1, 2006, requires that all cigarettes sold or offered for sale in Vermont meet the criteria for fire-safe cigarettes (also called reduced ignition propensity cigarettes). The same criteria have now been in effect for almost two years in New York State. This new law is expected to significantly reduce the number of people killed or injured by fire in Vermont and is designed to limit the risk that a cigarette will ignite upholstered furniture, a mattress, household furnishings or other combustible material.

The new cigarettes are designed to stop burning when left unattended, but otherwise have the same characteristics as other cigarettes. The cost of the fire-safe cigarettes to consumers is not expected to change and the law contains provisions for stores to sell their existing inventory of cigarettes.

A list of fire-safe cigarettes approved for sale in Vermont is now available at <http://www.dps.state.vt.us/fire/cigarettes/index.html>. Cigarettes on the list have markings on each package, carton and case to indicate the cigarettes meet the fire safety criteria. Each manufacturer has a distinct marking system. This marking is important for enforcement of the law regarding the sale of fire-safe cigarettes. The marking is also important when investigating a fire to determine if cigarettes involved were designed to meet the fire safety criteria or not.

Enforcement of the new law is a cooperative effort between the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Liquor Control and the Office of Attorney General.

For additional information on package marking or other questions contact *Robert Howe, Assistant State Fire Marshal*, as noted below. For information needed to support an investigation of a fire outside of regular business hours page 250-2827.

[phone] (802) 479-7566 [email] rhowe@dps.state.vt.us [fax] (802) 479-7562

Department of Public Safety
Division of Fire Safety
1311 US Route 302—Berlin
Suite 600
Barre, VT 05641-2351

Vermont Department of Public Safety
Division of Fire Safety

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL & STATE FIRE ACADEMY

Central Office

1311 US Route 302—Berlin, Suite 600
Barre, Vermont 05641-2351
Phone (802) 479-7561 Fax (802) 479-7562
Toll Free (800) 640-2106
Fax (802) 479-7562

HAZMAT Response Team

(802) 479-7586 Fax (802) 479-7562
Toll Free (800) 641-5005

Barre

McFarland State Office Bldg.
5 Perry Street, Suite 200
Barre, VT 05641-4271
Phone (802) 479-4434 Fax (802) 479-4446
Toll Free (888) 870-7888

Springfield

100 Mineral Street, Suite 307
Springfield, VT 05156-3168
Phone (802) 885-8883 Fax (802) 885-8885

Vermont Fire Academy

317 Sanitorium Road
Pittsford, VT 05763
Phone (802) 483-2755 Fax (802) 483-2464
Toll Free (800) 615-3473

Regional Offices:

Rutland

430 Asa Bloomer Office Bldg.
Rutland, VT 05701-3449
Phone (802) 786-5867 Fax (802) 786-5872
Toll Free (888) 370-4834

Williston

372 Hurricane Lane, Suite 102
Williston, VT 05495-7151
Phone (802) 879-2300 Fax (802) 879-2312
Toll Free (800) 366-8325



*Franklin County International
Firefighters' Association*

Invites You To

The 117th

**Annual Meeting and Conference
Of the
Vermont State Firefighters' Association**

To be held on

July 28th, 29th, and 30th, 2006

At the

**Collins-Perley Sports Complex
St. Albans, Vermont**

Emergency Telephone (802) 524-2131 or (802) 524-2166

This year's theme

“Celebrating Fire Auxiliary Support”



www.vtfirefighters.org

Vermont State Firefighters' Association Conference
July 28-30, 2006

Schedule of Events

FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2006

Golf Tournament

Bakersfield Country Club, Bakersfield
Registration 9:00 am
Shotgun Tee Off at 10:00 am

Welcome Center/Hospitality Room

Open 4:00 – 8:00 pm
Comfort Inn – Fairfax Road – St. Albans Town

Executive Board Dinner

Old Foundry Restaurant – Federal St., St. Albans City
Cocktails 6:00 pm - Dinner 7:00 pm

SATURDAY, JULY 29, 2006

Vendors

Collins-Perley Sports Complex
Inside & Out starting at 7:00 am

Conference Registration

7:00 am at the Collins-Perley Sports Complex
890 Fairfax Road, St. Albans Town

Memorial Service

Collins-Perley Sports Complex
8:00 – 8:30 am

Annual Meeting

Collins-Perley Sports Complex
8:30 – 10:30 am

Auxiliary Meeting

Collins-Perley Sports Complex
8:30 – 10:30 am

Sports Committee/Captains Meeting

Collins-Perley Sports Complex
10:30 – 11:15 am

Hospitality Room

Comfort Inn – Fairfax Road – St. Albans Town
11:00 am – 4:00 pm

VSFA Sports Judges Meeting/Luncheon

Collins-Perley Sports Complex
11:15 am – 12:00 pm

All members must register to receive vendor
check-off forms to be eligible for door prizes

Sports (Muster Games) Events

Collins-Perley Athletic Field Area
11:30 am – Lineup for sports parade
12:00 pm – VSFA sports parade/opening ceremony
12:30 – 4:30 pm – VSFA sports muster games
4:30 pm – Muster games awards presentations

VSFA Annual Banquet

Elks Club – Grice Brook Road – Route 104, St. Albans
6:00 pm – Social Hour
7:00 pm – Dinner
Awards Presentations to Follow

Tickets should be purchased in Advance

Price \$22.00 per person

Contact:

Terry Wright
8333 Chester Arthur Road
Enosburg Falls, VT. 05450
802-933-8949

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2006

Vendors

Collins-Perley Sports Complex
Open at 8:00 am

VSFA Registration

Collins-Perley Sports Complex
8:00 am – 10:00 am

Apparatus Judging

Front Parking Lot
Collins Perley Sports Complex
10:00 am

VSFA PARADE

10:00 am – Lineup starts
Fonda Container, Lower Newton Street

12:00 pm – Parade starts
Downtown St. Albans

Reviewing stand at Taylor Park

Parade ends at C.C.V.

Battle of the Bands

Collins-Perley Athletic Field
2:30 – 3:30 pm (approx)

Presentation of Awards

(Parade – Apparatus Judging – Band competition)
Collins-Perley Sports Complex
4:00 pm (approx)