



DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL & STATE FIRE ACADEMY

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

www.vtfiresafety.org

NOVEMBER 2006

Director's Message

John G. Wood, Director

Fall is here and so is the time to celebrate the holidays, take in the harvest, and for some prepare for the hunting season. It is also the time of year for an increase in automobile accidents, medical emergencies, and fires. Fuel prices are causing people to look for alternative heating devices, which means more solid fuel heating appliances. There have already been fires this fall because of wood stoves. This is a good time for fire chiefs to get into their communities with public education for installations and good practices while using these winter heating appliances.

Beginning last month, the Division of Fire Safety and the Vermont State Police fire investigation team will investigate fires on request by the fire chief. The state police and division of fire safety investigators will work together on cause and origin. If the fire is an arson fire or looks like it might be 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 to investigate all fires by law.** The fire chief should call when he/she cannot determine what started the fire or needs help determining the cause and origin, but should make an attempt to determine the cause and origin before calling for the fire investigators. The exceptions are when there is injury or death caused by a fire, or when arson is a suspected or known cause. In these cases the fire chief should call the fire investigators immediately for assistances. Nothing has changed for calling out the fire investigators. The fire chief will call the State Police dispatcher when you need assistance just like you always have done. The dispatchers have a policy and call out list for the investigators. The teams have already been working together in the field. 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. This task force is one way of making Vermont a safer place to live, work, and visit. The contacts for the task force are Regional Manager Robert Patterson, Williston Office and Sgt. Gerry Charbonneau, St. Albans Office, State Police. Other team members include from the Division of Fire Safety Scott Adnams, Springfield; Stan Baranowski, Barre; Chris Boyd, and Joe Bernard, Williston. From the State Police are Sgt's Mike O'Neil, Bethel; James Cruise, Rutland; Fred Cornell, St. Johnsbury; Mark Galle, Williston; Tom Williams Rockingham.

On behalf of the division staff we wish you all a pleasant, safe, and happy holiday season.

RUTLAND REGIONAL OFFICE HAS MOVED

The Rutland Regional Office of the Division of Fire Safety, moved to their new office space on October 27th & 30th. Phone numbers will remain the same.

The new mailing address is:
56 Howe Street
Building A, Suite 200
Rutland, VT 05701

Reminder to Register Elevators and Other Conveyances

*Submitted by Peter Kopsco, Staff Attorney
Central Office*

The Vermont Legislature created the elevator safety program in 2001. All elevators, lifts and escalators in public buildings must be registered with the division of fire safety. Registration is free, and forms are available on the division's web-site (www.vtfiresafety.org) and offices. Elevators must also be inspected annually by a licensed inspection. A list of licensed inspectors is also available on the web-site.

To date, the only 1650 conveyances are registered, far short of the estimated 3000 conveyances in Vermont. Please share this information with elevator owners, and let's get all the conveyances registered.

Should you have any questions regarding the Elevator Program in Vermont you can contact Richard Schlieder at 802-885-8970 and also at rschlied@dps.state.vt.us.

Vermont Fire Academy Update

Jim Litevich, Chief of Training, Vermont Fire Academy

Currently there 6 Firefighter I programs that have already begun, two to start in November and the balance on the way to formalizing their schedules. Things at the office are pretty busy right now as you can imagine. Please contact us if you have any questions on a program that might be near you as new information comes in very frequently.

We are also in the process of completing the third Fire Officer I and II program in Rutland City. By the end of October, we should be able to add another 16 firefighters to the certified fire officer list. Congratulations and thank you to all the student and Instructors that were able to participate.

On the personnel side at VFA, we have a new employee, Ms. Jessica Pomainville. Jessica has been hired to fill the slot vacated by Joanne Dion this past August. Jessica is getting up to speed and is available to assist you with any

of your questions concerning training programs. Welcome, Jessica!

The final steps in updating the Vermont Fire Service Training Council rules are being completed. Once the formal rulemaking process runs its course, we will be constructing a challenge process for Firefighter I and Firefighter II. We are striving to have a process in place after January 1, 2007. The process will include both written and practical (skills demo) portions, generally speaking, much like the current evaluation process after completion of the sponsored programs.

Good News - the design process for the addition to the fire station is underway. The preliminary drawing includes men's and women's locker room, showers and lavatories, a small classroom in which to hold class briefings and store structural gear, and a gear laundry area complete with a dryer and extractor. The estimated time to complete this 1500 square foot addition is the summer of 2007.

Stay safe and never stop learning.

VFIRS News:

- ⇒ **2006 FIRE INCIDENT REPORTS DUE JANUARY 16, 2007.** All fire incident reports must be received in this office by January 16, 2007 to be included in the Annual Report of the Fire Marshal. Also, a list of reporting departments will be generated to verify reporting as a requirement of federal and state grants.
 - ⇒ The US Fire Administration has announced to State Program Managers that there will be no specification changes to the NFIRS system scheduled for release in January 2007. The release will only include documentation corrections and updates.
 - ⇒ If you have any suggestions for NFIRS or VFIRS topics to be included in future newsletters please those to the email below.
 - ⇒ The VFIRS web page can be located at www.dps.state.vt.us/fire/vfirs/
- 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.

CODE HIGHLIGHTS - *technical assistance*

Reporting of Fires – The owner, manager, occupant or any person in control of a building, must notify the fire department upon discovering an unwanted fire, regardless of the magnitude of the fire, or even if the fire has been apparently extinguished. The code prohibits any regulation or order that would require a person to take any unnecessary delaying action prior to reporting a fire to the fire department. It is a violation of the code to willfully make any misleading or false statements that mislead fire department personnel or interferes with fire department operations. [NFPA 1 section 10.7]

Inspection and Test of Fire Alarm Systems and Emergency Generators – To correlate the requirements for periodic inspections and tests of fire alarm systems and emergency generators between the Vermont Fire & Building Safety Code – 2005, adopted under 20 V.S.A. chapter 173, and the Electricians and Electrical Installation law, under 26 V.S.A. chapter 15; a certificate of fitness, under the Vermont Fire & Building Safety Code, is only required for a licensed electrician to inspect and/or test a fire alarm system, or an emergency generator. A certificate of fitness is not required for a licensed master, journeyman or type S journeyman (commercial fire alarm) electrician to design, install or maintain a fire alarm system, detection system or equipment. A certificate of fitness is not required for a licensed master or journeyman electrician to install, maintain or repair an emergency generator. A certificate of fitness (NFPA 1 section 1.13.1) can be obtained by an appropriately licensed electrician by submitted an application, tax and child support forms to the central office. There is no fee for the certificate of fitness. Eight hours of approved related instruction is required to renew a certificate of fitness for fire alarm systems or emergency generators. Related instruction may be approved for both license and certificate renewal.

Determining Disproportionate Costs for Accessible Features – Section 4.1.6(2) of the ADAAG, adopted under the Vermont Access Rules, requires that when a primary function area of a building is altered that the path of travel to the altered area, and the restrooms, telephones and drinking fountains serving the altered area, be made accessible, unless the costs are disproportionate. The costs are disproportionate if they exceed 20% of the total cost of the overall alteration. Alteration work limited solely to the electrical, mechanical, plumbing or fire sprinkler systems, or hazardous material abatement, or normal maintenance, re-roofing, painting or wallpapering or asbestos removal do not initiate accessibility requirements for the path of travel, the restrooms, telephones and drinking fountains, serving the altered area (ADAAG section 4.1.6(1)(i)).

Costs that may be counted as expenditures in determining if costs are disproportionate may include:

- (i) Costs associated with providing an entrance and accessible route to the altered area, for example, the cost of widening doorways, installing ramps, elevators or lifts.
- (ii) Costs associated with making restrooms accessible, such as installing grab bars, enlarging toilet stalls, insulating pipes or installing accessible faucet controls.
- (iii) Costs associated with providing accessible telephones, such as relocating the telephone to an accessible height, installing amplification devices, or installing a telecommunications device for people with hearing disabilities.
- (iv) Costs associated with relocating an inaccessible drinking fountain.

The criteria for determining disproportionate costs where an addition to a building contains a primary function area, or effects a primary function area in the existing building, is the same as for alterations. Where an addition has an accessible path of travel, restrooms, telephones and drinking fountains, the construction of the addition does not require changes to provide access for the existing building. Where an addition lacks an accessible path of travel, restrooms, telephones and drinking fountains, changes are required for the existing building using the same criteria as used for alterations (ADAAG section 4.1.5).

Robert Howe, Assistant State Fire Marshal

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

Sprinkler Stops Fire In Nursing Home

*Submitted by Robert Patterson, Regional Manager
Williston Office*

At approximately 4:10 PM, on September 26, 2006 a fire occurred at Burlington Health and Rehab located at 300 Pearl Street in Burlington. The 5 story building is a licensed health

care facility for 168 patients. The fire originated in the maintenance area located on the first floor of the building, when a worker using a torch ignited nearby combustibles on a work cart. A single sprinkler head operated and extinguished the fire. There was smoke on the first floor level, but no injuries reported. Staff did respond appropriately by relocating patients to the west of the building during the event.

VFIRS – Vermont Fire Incident Reporting System

Current statistics (as of October 18, 2006)
Total incidents reported: 18,163
Fires: 1809 -- EMS: 8255 -- NonFire/NonEMS: 8068
Fire Departments reporting: 150

2006 FIRE INCIDENT REPORTS DUE JANUARY 16, 2007

This year several requirements for reporting of incidents have been included in past newsletters. They are listed here in general, more details can be found in the specific newsletter. The newsletters can be found on the Division's website: www.vtfiresafety.org

- Plus-One codes cigarettes and fireworks: Plus-One codes have been added to Heat Source field for cigarettes and fireworks to capture information on Fire-Safe Cigarettes and Legal/Illegal Fireworks. Additional details can be found in the June 2006 newsletter.
- Wildland module: The Wildland module must be completed for all Incident Types that are coded as 140-143 or 170-173. Additional details can be found in the February 2006 newsletter.
- 100 Incident Type: Incident Type 100 "Fire, Other" is not an acceptable code for incident types in the Vermont Fire Incident Reporting System. Additional details can be found in the March 2006 newsletter.
- Submittal options: 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. Additional details can be found in the July 2006 newsletter.
- Version update 5.4.1: The latest version of NFIRS, version 5.4.1, was released in March. Additional details can be found in the April 2006 newsletter.
- Reminder: 4.1 format files and reports will not be accepted for 2006 incidents.

- ⇒ Incident reports need to be submitted in a timely schedule. As of this date in 2005 –28,984 incidents were submitted from 189 depts. Submitting on a monthly (or shorter time period) will help identify and correct problems in the file transfer before many months or a year of data is effected. Several departments had problems last January trying to submit 2005 reports. These problems could have been identified and corrected months before, so that data would not have been lost. If useable data is not submitted and accepted in the state and federal database, for whatever the reason, that department is not reporting.
- ⇒ Each fire department should check on their reporting status NOW to make sure the reporting is up to date. A complete listing of the reports received by the Division of Fire Safety is located under the Vermont Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) link on the left side of the division homepage at www.vtfiresafety.org. A copy is also available as an attachment to the electronic version of this newsletter.

2006 FIRE INCIDENT REPORTS DUE JANUARY 16, 2007

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

Governor Douglas Signs Proclamation for Fire Prevention Week

STATE OF VERMONT
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
A PROCLAMATION


- WHEREAS,** last year, Vermont fire departments responded to more than 2,000 structure fires, and there were 9 deaths due to fires, and over 1,000 fire and burn injuries; and
- WHEREAS,** Vermonters understand that simple actions they can take will significantly reduce the risk of fire; and
- WHEREAS,** through its research, the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) has documented that cooking is the leading cause of fires in the home; and
- WHEREAS,** Vermont is joining the NFPA in reaching out to its residents with a message of fire safety to use care when cooking; keep potholders, wooden utensils, paper and plastic bags, towels, and anything else that can burn away from your stovetop; clean up food and grease from burners and stovetops; wear clothing with tight-fitting sleeves when you cook; turn off the stovetop if you must leave the room, even for a short period of time; use the stove's back burners if you have young children in the home; turn off the microwave oven if you have a fire inside it, and keep the door closed until the fire is out; slide the cover onto a pot or pan if you have a fire in a cooking pot or pan; if you are in doubt about any cooking fire, get out of the home and call the fire department; and
- WHEREAS,** Vermont Fire Departments, the Department of Public Safety's Division of Fire Safety and other safety advocates, in conjunction with the NFPA, are commemorating and supporting public safety efforts to promote this message of fire safety during National Fire Prevention Week 2006, and we thank all members of Vermont's fire services for their dedication, their professionalism, and their continuing efforts to help make fire safety a part of daily life throughout the year; and
- WHEREAS,** the Fire Prevention Week 2006 theme, "Prevent Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat" is an important message for all residents of Vermont.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, James H. Douglas, Governor, do hereby proclaim **October 8-14, 2006** as

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

in Vermont and urge all Vermonters to heed the advice to take the appropriate steps to prevent cooking fires.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the
State of Vermont this 11th day of October, A.D. 2006.


James H. Douglas
Governor

By the Governor:


Kiersten Bourgeois
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs



FIRE PREVENTION WEEK 2006

Fire prevention week is now in the books for this year. The division would like to commend all of the fire departments that put on special events during this week.

During fire prevention week several fire departments held an open house at the fire station. An open house is an excellent way to communicate with your community and it's also an excellent way to market your organization, not only to showcase your fire safety education program, but also to convey additional information about the department to the town's people and parents who accompany the children.

I continue to be impressed with the wonderful and truly innovative fire safety education programs that are put together. The Division is also continuing to work on ways to provide resources to help departments teach fire prevention all year long. And get people to think fire safety 365.

FIRE SAFETY HOUSE TRAILERS

As winter approaches is time to put the trailers away. As most you know, the fire safety house trailers are a wonderful interactive educational tool that's very effective in delivering fire and life safety messages to a wide age group. The division provides the trailers for your fire department to use to teach various scenarios to highlight a particular home safety messages.

We will start booking the trailers for 2007 in January. We want to give every one a fair chance to get the trailers for their events. The season is dependant on the weather but it will usually run from May to October. The trailers do book up fast, so please plan early and visit our web page for updated information and the sign out form.

STATE FIRE SAFETY CALANDER UPDATE

The judging of the artwork for the 2007 state fire safety calendar will take place on Nov 3rd. Every year for the past 16 years, we have select 13 fire safety posters from 3rd grade students to appear in the calendar.

The fire safety calendar provides an important educational link to fire safety in the home. By having fire safety messages learned in school and repeated at home through out the year, because of the calendar, we can make a difference in fire deaths, injury and property loss.

Each year we try to provide calendars to as many elementary students throughout Vermont as possible. Almost all of the cost of the printing for the fire safety calendar is paid for by contributions.

For more information about the state fire safety calendar project please contact the central office.

IS THIS A TOOL OR A TOY?

For years we have been teaching our young people that lighters are tools for big people to use, not toys for children to play with. But what happens when a lighter looks like a toy? In our stores there are a large amount of novelty lighters that resemble toys.



Although children as young as 2 years old are capable of operating lighters, the majority of children who start fires by playing with lighters are ages 3 and 4. At these ages, children are curious about fire but don't understand the danger. Typically, when children start a fire, they will leave the room without telling anyone about the fire.

We need to alert parents and teens about the danger of these novelty lighters. We should urge them to:

- Purchase child-resistant lighters. Remember, these lighters are child resistant, not childproof.
- Keep all lighters and matches out of the reach of children
- Never use a lighter as a source of amusement for children. It may encourage children to think of lighter as a toy and try to light one on there own.
- We also need to remind parents of ways they can best protect their family.
 1. Install and maintain smoke and CO alarms.
 2. Do a home hazard inspection and repair any issues found. also maintain home heating systems.
 3. Prepare and practice a home escape plan.



Rules Updated for Penalties of Safety Violations

The "Rules for Administrative Citations and Penalties" by the Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Safety, have been updated effective December 1, 2006. These rules establish the procedure for issuing administrative citations, assessing penalties and appealing citations. All enforcement programs are now covered by these rules including violations regarding the prevention of carbon monoxide poisoning, fire-safe (reduced ignition propensity) cigarettes and elevators and the programs will have a consistent process for citations and penalties. The purpose of these rules is to encourage compliance with the codes and laws that will result in improved public safety and access.

The penalty amounts in several categories have been increased to encourage compliance. The largest increases were for violations regarding failure to obtain a construction permit and for failure to obtain a rough inspection for electrical or plumbing work. Another change allows fines to be doubled where a person has been fined for the same or similar violation in the past. All comments received during the public hearing and comment portion for the rules were in favor of the increased amounts for fines. Over the past two months 8 administrative citations and penalties were issued for fines totaling \$10,850.

For additional questions contact *Robert Howe, Assistant State Fire Marshal*,
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What is the Northern New England Poison Center?

The Northern New England Poison Center is located at Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine. The call center manages approximately 200 calls a day from the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. The center is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with nurses, pharmacists and other medical personnel. Two board certified toxicologists trained in pharmacy and emergency medicine are on call 24 hours a day.

What type of calls does the center receive?

NNEPC receives many types of calls. Most are exposure questions. For example, a mother may call if her child drank some medication or a piece of a plant. If a person needs further medical intervention in a hospital, the NNEPC works closely with the hospital to provide toxicological support. The NNEPC staff will also answer information requests such as general poison prevention questions, pill identifications or information on possible medication interactions.

How does the NNEPC provide poison prevention education?

The center is committed to providing poison prevention information to the people in the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. In addition to information and advice given to callers, each state has an educator with dedicated time for providing poison prevention outreach. Some of the educational endeavors are:

- Presentations and lectures
- Health fair booths
- Brochures, phone stickers and magnets mailed upon request

Poison prevention includes:

- General poison prevention tips
- Senior medication safety
- Drug abuse (i.e., street drugs, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, current trends, etc.)
- Inhalant abuse
- Weapons of mass destruction and bioterrorism
- Environmental exposures

For any questions or further information about the Northern New England Poison Center or to request poison education assistance, please call 1-800-222-1222.

Northern New England Poison Center, Maine Medical Center, 22 Bramhall St, Portland, ME 04102

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Vermont Department of Public Safety
Division of Fire Safety

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