The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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MEMORANDUM

To: **Heads of Fire Departments**

From: **Stephen D. Coan**
State Fire Marshal

Date: **June 1, 2015**

RE: **Summer 2015 Fireworks Season**

With the summer fireworks season fast approaching, final plans for weekend fireworks displays are taking place and precautionary planning for these events becomes increasingly important. Advance planning is necessary for the Department of Fire Services to respond appropriately, should problems be encountered the day or evening of a fireworks display. While the primary concern is the prevention of accidents that have the potential to injure, other issues of non-compliance may occur on the day of the display.

The Division of Fire Safety has reminded our licensed fireworks shooters of their responsibilities to the public for safety as well as an obligation to abide by the state's laws and regulations on fireworks. Licensed fireworks shooters have also been reminded that being involved in an unsupervised and/or un-permitted fireworks display is, in addition to being a violation of law and the fire code, a violation of the terms and conditions of their license, which could result in suspension or revocation of their Certificate of Competency. If you become aware of such activity in your municipality, please contact our office immediately.

The Division of Fire Safety grants natural barrier approvals when needed. If you have previously received an approval and nothing has changed in the plans submitted to you by the fireworks shooter, you do not need another approval. If you need a site inspection for approval, please contact (978) 567-3375, at least thirty (30) days before the proposed date of the display.

Once again, it is strongly recommended that the same procedures used last year be followed again this year. A representative of your department should take a close look at the display during the

setup process during daylight hours in the late afternoon. This procedure provides the best opportunity to inspect and correct any compliance issues, and insures a safe and successful fireworks display.

Please be assured that, once again, the Division of Fire Safety stands ready to provide the highest possible level of technical, compliance, and enforcement support during the summer fireworks season. In an effort to provide additional inspection guidelines, please find attached to this memo a suggested checklist for the three stages of a fireworks program.

We also want to advise you that there have been changes to the permitting process, most notably that there are two separate application/permit forms that distinguish fireworks displays and special effects before a proximate audience.

The requirements of the separate application/permits are as follows:

FW display applications require the following and will be considered incomplete if all the requirements are not met:

- Diagram/site plan showing points where fireworks are to be discharged, location/distance to the audience, buildings, highways, overhead obstructions, etc. (handwritten maps are not acceptable; Maps must be Google, Bing, GIS)

- The number and description of the fireworks/pyrotechnics including the diameter of the shells.

- A copy of the natural barrier letter from the State Fire Marshal's Office (if applicable)

- FAA, Coast Guard, or other agency approvals/notifications (if applicable)

Special Effects applications require the following and will be considered incomplete if all the requirements are not met:

- Letter from owner, operator or manager of the indoor entertainment venue or theater acknowledging the proposed use of pyrotechnics within their facility.

- A plan in accordance with NFPA 1126, Section 6.3.2 (2006 Edition)

If you have any questions about Users Certificates, Certificates of Competency, or related licensing issues, please contact our Licensing Desk at (978) 567-3700, or by email at dfs.licensing@dfs.state.ma.us.

Division of Fire Safety Code Compliance and Enforcement Officers are available, 24 hours a day, to respond to your communities should the need arise. During normal business hours, please call the Division of Fire Safety at (978) 567-3375.

Should it be necessary to contact a Code Compliance and Enforcement Officer during a pre-display setup inspection by your department, or to report an accident, you should call the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency at (508) 820-2000 and ask that a DFS Code Compliance and Enforcement Officer be paged.

During regular business hours (weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) call the Code Compliance and Enforcement Unit, Division of Fire Safety at (978) 567-3375.

Outside of regular business hours, call the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency at (508) 820-2000.