

# All Hands Herald

Massachusetts Department of Fire Services

September 2022

## *Tech Rescue Update:* Structural Collapse Technician Training

Tackling the Illegal Fireworks Hazard  
DFS Participates in Multi-Hazard Exercise  
A History of the MA State Fire Marshal's Office

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The *All Hands Herald* is published three times a year by the Department of Fire Services. Our title incorporates the traditional fire service meaning of all hands working to extinguish a fire. In this publication, all hands is DFS staff providing information, training, and assistance with issues that affect all levels of the fire service.

Let us know how you like the *All Hands Herald* and what we can do to make it even more useful to you – our dedicated fire service members and customers.

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# From the Fire Marshal

## Fire Code Update

On July 14, the Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (BFPR) voted to begin the promulgation process for the next edition of 527 CMR 1.00, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code. As proposed, the Code would adopt the 2021 edition of NFPA 1 with certain Massachusetts amendments.

Among the changes expected in the next edition of the Code are updates to, or addition of, chapters dealing with buildings under construction, alteration, or demolition; fire and electrical hazards at marinas, boatyards, marine terminals, piers, and wharves; protective measures in open and enclosed parking structures; proper handling of combustible dust and metal powders used in 3D printing; the installation and protection of energy storage systems; and more.

The July 14 vote began a regulatory review process that will include the Building Code Coordinating Council, the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office, and public hearing and comment. In the meantime, I would like to thank the Board and its code committee members for their hard work to keep the Massachusetts Fire Code up to date and consistent with nationally recognized standards.

## Sprinkler Legislation Progress

On July 28, about two months after the Board of Building Regulations & Standards voted to delete the International Code Committee's residential sprinkler requirement from the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the State Building Code, the Massachusetts House passed H.2417, "An Act relative to enhanced fire protection in new one- and two-family dwellings." The bill would require automatic fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family homes within communities that adopt it. According to MFIRS data, these occupancies accounted for about 35% of residential fires but 52% of fire-related injuries and 63% of fire-related deaths from 2011-2020. We will be closely monitoring the bill's progress as an important step toward reducing the property damage, injury, and death associated with home fires in Massachusetts.

## Drought Conditions

At this writing, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has declared a critical drought throughout most of Massachusetts. These conditions have contributed to major brush fires in Townsend, Granby, the Blue Hills

Reservation, Gloucester, and elsewhere, but the danger isn't limited to vegetation. About 40% of Massachusetts homes are in Wildland-Urban Interface or Intermix zones, presenting a reciprocal hazard: wildland fires put homes at risk, and residential fires can easily spread to surrounding wildlands.

These fires take a toll on firefighters, fire departments, and their communities. Battling a wildland fire in the summer's scorching heat presents health and safety risks to firefighters, who must often work for days to contain fires that burn wider and deeper than in non-drought conditions. These fires can draw local and regional apparatus deep into wooded areas without easy access to water, making it harder to respond to other calls quickly. In addition to reminding your communities to practice fire safety indoors and out, remember that DFS Special Operations resources are always available, from Rehab units that support firefighters' health to Incident Support Units (ISUs) that assist incident commanders to Drone units that can give you a bird's eye view of the fireground.

## Youth Firesetting

Recent investigations by local and state fire investigators have identified juveniles as the individuals responsible for a massive mill fire in Orange and a fire in a vacant school, as well as possible suspects in fires under investigation. These are just some of the most visible examples of an ongoing problem in Massachusetts and across the country.

In August, the Department of Fire Services and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy partnered with the National Fire Academy to host a six-day Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (YFPI) course here in Massachusetts, providing attendees from local departments with the tools to begin establishing additional YFPI programs in their communities. In September, youth firesetting will be a key subject for general sessions and panel discussions at our Fire & Life Safety Education Conference in Southbridge. And in November, "Understanding Youth Firesetting" will be the theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> annual NoFIRES conference.

Youth firesetting is an issue that isn't going away: in fact, between 2018 and 2020, reports of youth-set fires increased



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# Structural Collapse Technician Training

A delivery truck crashes into the ground level of a multi-story commercial structure. A hurricane causes a roof collapse at a school being used as a shelter. A catastrophic failure occurs at a building under construction. How do rescuers safely extricate patients from these conditions without injuring themselves or others?

Over the past three years, through hard work and long hours, members of the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's (MFA) Technical Rescue Training Program developed an 80-hour curriculum to help firefighters respond to these crisis conditions — and they recently conducted a back-to-back series of train-the-trainer courses as part of its implementation. The new program will give students the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to operate as Structural Collapse Rescue Technicians consistent with Chapter 6 of NFPA 1006, *Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications*.

During the eight-day program, students will learn to recognize and size-up a building collapse. They will learn to develop objectives, strategies, and tactics; request the appropriate resources; assign tasks to secure unstable structural components; and conduct the subsequent search and rescue of patients.

Throughout the course, students will gain hands-on experience in a variety of critical tasks. They will learn to

measure and cut lumber with electric and gas-powered saws, then utilize that lumber and commercially made mechanical struts to hold up partially collapsed walls, floors, doors, and windows, allowing rescuers to make safe entry and conduct search and rescue while reducing the risk of further collapse.

In addition to securing debris, students will learn to breach and break large pieces of concrete, cut and burn through steel, and lift and move heavy objects to access the inside of a collapsed structure. Students will use tools including heavy-duty drills, saws, rebar cutters, petrogen and oxygen/acetylene torches, search cameras, and hydraulic jack hammers.

To lift and move debris such as concrete, wood, and metal, students need to know how much it weighs. They will learn how to calculate accurate estimates by measuring the thickness, length, and width of the debris, then use this knowledge to determine the proper technique for lifting and moving it with levers, air bags, and cranes. The students will learn to secure a load of debris with concrete bolts, shackles, and rigging material so that a crane operator can lift the debris away from the area to be searched. Students will also learn hand signals for directing the crane operator to remove the debris.

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# Tackling the Illegal Fireworks Hazard

In Massachusetts, the weeks surrounding July 4<sup>th</sup> are the most common period for fires and injuries related to illegal fireworks. The Office of the State Fire Marshal and Massachusetts State Police undertook efforts throughout the 2022 fireworks season to reduce the risk of fire and injury.

“The fire service and law enforcement communities sent a strong and unified message this year to leave fireworks to the professionals,” said State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey. “That message came through loud and clear on social media, in the news, through community partnerships, and in targeted enforcement efforts like these.”

## A Busy Time

From late June through early July, personnel from the State Police Division of Investigative Services and the State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit (F&EIU) assigned to the State Fire Marshal’s office targeted fireworks that were purchased in other states and brought into Massachusetts, where possession, use, and sale of fireworks are illegal. Team members included officers at the rank of lieutenant or above, uniformed troopers, fire investigators, and bomb technicians. Together, through a series of investigative steps, they developed probable cause to stop numerous vehicles transporting illegal fireworks into the state.

This year’s operations took place on several dates and led to about 40 criminal summonses for violating Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 148, Section 39. They also led to the seizure of nearly 3,000 packages of aerial shells, fountains, large rockets, roman candles, sparklers, and other dangerous, illegal devices worth about \$46,000. The seized fireworks were secured for destruction.

## Fireworks Fires, Damage, and Injuries

Massachusetts fire departments reported more than 900 fires related to illegal fireworks between 2012 and 2021. The incidents caused 43 fire service injuries and \$2.1 million in damages. During the same 10 years, Massachusetts medical facilities reported 31 severe burn injuries extending to 5% or more of the victims’ bodies that were caused by illegal fireworks.

One such incident took place on June 10, 2022, when the Rowley Fire and Police Departments, and the F&EIU responded to 870 Haverhill Street after an alarm activation. Though there was no fire, witnesses reported hearing an explosion and seeing heavy smoke.

Investigators found that a man had accidentally ignited a 1.4G mortar shell inside his apartment. He injured himself trying to extinguish the fuse before the device exploded. The explosion damaged the floor and



walls in two rooms. Smoke flooded the apartment and activated smoke alarms. The F&EIU recovered additional live shells from the bedroom and seized them for destruction. The man was summonsed to Newburyport District Court for possessing illegal fireworks.

## Fireworks Hazards

Fireworks, including sparklers and firecrackers, are especially unsafe around children. Sparklers burn at temperatures of over 1,800° Fahrenheit — hotter than the melting points of glass and aluminum. According to a report from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, an estimated 1,600 emergency department-treated injuries associated with firecrackers and 900 with sparklers were reported nationwide in 2020, accounting for almost 10% of all fireworks-related injuries that year. Of the 900 injuries from sparklers, 44% were to children under age 5.

Sparklers in a trash can caused a three-alarm house fire in Dracut that displaced nine people. Early on July 5, Dracut firefighters responded to a call on Arlington Street and found heavy fire and smoke coming from a single-family dwelling. All occupants escaped safely, but the fire caused significant damage.

A joint investigation by the Dracut Fire Department and the F&EIU determined that the fire began behind the home near the trash barrels, where sparklers were thrown away after an Independence Day barbecue.

The Department of Fire Services and the State Police urge Massachusetts residents to enjoy fireworks at professional, supervised displays. DFS posts a list of these professional displays and updates it each week through the summer. Visit [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) to see the list and to share it in your town.

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# DFS Participates in Multi-Hazard Exercise

## *Project Punch Simulates Attack on First Responders and Civilians*



On June 20, 2022, the Department of Fire Services took part in *Project Punch*, a full-scale multi-agency exercise at Anna Maria College in Paxton. The exercise presented a multi-hazard scenario that brought local, regional, and state public safety resources to a simulated attack on civilians and first responders.

The scenario consisted of an explosion with multiple adult and pediatric “victims.” A short time later, as first responders arrived to treat the wounded, a drone released a “carfentanil” payload over the crowd. The result was a simulated Level 3 Mass Casualty Incident and a Tier 2 Hazmat incident.

David DiGregorio, Director of the DFS Hazardous Materials and Emergency Response Division, is adjunct faculty for the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Fellowship in Disaster Medicine, which facilitated the exercise.

“The purpose of the exercise was two-fold,” DiGregorio said. “First, to evaluate the Disaster Medicine Fellows on their ability to plan and execute a full-scale, multi-agency exercise. Second, the drill was held to display to those agencies involved the real issues with such an incident. This was not a drill where responders would pat themselves on the back at the end. To the contrary, it highlighted for the responder community the urgency of preparing, planning, and training for the intentional release of a pharmaceutical-based agent.”

DFS deployed all the assets that would respond to a Chemical/Biological/Radiological/Nuclear/Explosive (CBRNE) event. These included Incident Support Unit 1, a mobile command post that provides communications resources to incident commanders in the field; Rehab 7, providing first responders with a place to cool off and stay hydrated; Hazmat teams and apparatus assigned to District 3 and District 6; and drone units that took part in and documented the day’s events.

The Paxton Fire Department, West Boylston Fire Department, Worcester Fire Department, MedStar Ambulance, STAT Southcoast EMS, Worcester EMS, Central Mass EMS, Worcester CMED, UMass Memorial LifeFlight, the Paxton Police Department, Massachusetts State Police, and other agencies also participated.



by more than 40% in Massachusetts. No single agency or discipline can address and prevent this phenomenon alone. In the months ahead, I look forward to working with partners in the fire service, law enforcement, social service agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance our strategies for addressing and reducing the phenomenon.

### Senior Fire Officer Forums Return

After two years offline during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were very happy to resume our *Senior Fire Officer Forum* program this year—and even happier at the reception they received. The demand for seating at the May and June events was so high that the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy opened up additional sessions to accommodate interested attendees, and we have a third scheduled for September. Many thanks to Chief William “Billy” Greenwood of the Rhode Island TF Green International Airport Fire Department, who presented *Extreme Leadership*; Christopher Naum, chief of training for the Command Institute, who presented *The Influence of Building Construction, Occupancy Risk, and Research on Command Decision-Making for Fire Officers and Commanders*; and FDNY Assistant Chief (ret.) Joseph Pfeifer, who will present *Crisis Leadership and Management for Extreme Events* later this month. Thanks also to the MFA staff who have worked so hard to bring this informative and educational program back to our customers in the Massachusetts fire service.

### July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration and Tragedy

Cities and towns across Massachusetts resumed municipal fireworks shows to observe the Fourth of July this year, a

return to tradition that drew crowds of families to parks, commons, ball fields, and other venues—including the world-famous Boston Pops concert in Boston. The Department of Fire Services deployed numerous assets to support local officials before, during, and after the holiday, including Code Compliance & Enforcement officers to inspect permitted displays, Rehab units and ISUs to support large-scale events, and Hazmat and Bomb Squad technicians to ensure that the venues were safe and secure.

Tragically, an accident involving one of these displays resulted in serious injuries to an off-duty firefighter who was working as a pyrotechnician in advance of a fireworks show. Groton Firefighter Walter “Wally” Shaw was badly injured while setting up the display in North Andover, and we are deeply fortunate that firefighters at the scene were on-hand to provide immediate medical assistance before he was transported to an area hospital for further treatment. After three weeks and several surgeries, he is finally back home.

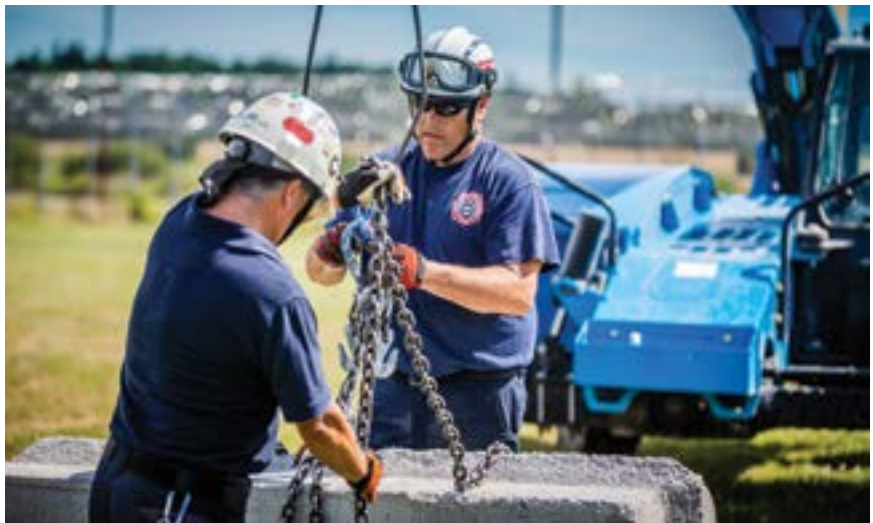
We are extremely relieved that Wally is recovering, and his experience should serve as a reminder to all of us that fireworks are inherently dangerous – even to a brother firefighter who is also a licensed, experienced technician. This year’s fireworks season is over, but 2023 will soon be here and it’s our responsibility to dissuade members of the public from putting their lives, safety, and property at risk by using illegal fireworks. DFS will always be a partner in your public education messaging on this front, and please feel free to reach out for any data, trends, or social media imagery you may need.

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## Structural Collapse Technician Training, continued from page 2

The MFA is excited to be working toward offering a pro-board certification based on the Structural Collapse Rescue component of NFPA 1006. By the end of this intensive, specialized training students will have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to operate at a structural collapse incident with confidence.

The Structural Collapse Rescue Technician course is expected to debut in October at the DFS Bridgewater campus, where it will be part of the Academy’s broader Technical Rescue offerings. Stay tuned for more tech rescue news in future editions of the *All Hands Herald*!



# A History of the MA State Fire Marshal's Office

*On March 16, 1631, two homes were consumed in Massachusetts' first recorded structure fire. The incident began when the wooden chimney of the first dwelling caught fire, extended to the thatched roof, and was driven by wind to the second dwelling. In response, the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered that "noe man there shall build his chimney with wood, nor cover his home with thatch." This was likely the first fire protection order in the New World, and it set the stage for Massachusetts' pioneering work in fire prevention, protection, and investigation. This ongoing series will examine the state's fire protection history through the Office of the State Fire Marshal.*

John Stanhope Damrell, the respected chief engineer of the Boston Fire Department from 1866 to 1873, was among the Commonwealth's most visionary advocates for fire protection. His work to organize and professionalize the fire service is well known, and his commitment to fire and life safety through building codes is still evident today. Shortly after he was named to his position, Chief Damrell recommended that the City of Boston appoint a dedicated fire marshal to investigate the causes of the fires that he and his department battled so often. That knowledge, after all, might help prevent future tragedy.

The Chief's advice went unheeded, even after the Great Chicago Fire revealed the urban vulnerability to fire in 1871 and the Great Boston Fire underscored it locally a year later. In fact, it would take more than 20 years – and some high-level prodding from the insurance industry – before the Massachusetts Legislature established the Office of the Fire Marshal of the City of Boston on June 30, 1886.

## A Fire Marshal for Boston

As described by the legislation, the fire marshal's first duty was to "examine into the cause, circumstances, and origin of fires occurring within the municipal district of Boston ... and specially to examine and decide whether the fire was the result of carelessness or the act of an incendiary." The marshal had the authority to subpoena witnesses, take testimony, and in cases of arson to charge the suspect and provide evidence and testimony to the district attorney.

Governor George D. Robinson appointed a 31-year-old lawyer named Charles W. Whitcomb to this important role. Whitcomb was a Boston resident, and his father was president of the Massachusetts Builders Association. He attended Dartmouth College, the University of Gottingen



Charles Whitcomb, the nation's first state fire marshal, c. 1892. (Boston of To-day: A Glance at its History and Characteristics)

in Germany, and Boston Law School, and had served on the Boston Common Council. He became the city's first fire marshal on October 27, 1886, with a salary of \$3,000 per year.

In December 1886, just a few months into Marshal Whitcomb's first three-year term, the powers of his office were tested when the state's Supreme Judicial Court, in an ongoing investigation, noted that he had the power to summon witnesses but no authority to imprison them for refusing to testify. Nonetheless, Marshal Whitcomb was successful in prosecuting his first arson case in May 1887. Under his leadership, the Boston Fire Marshal's office investigated 344 fires in its first year, finding that the majority of them were due to carelessness.

## High Marks for the Marshal

Insurers, who often paid the financial price for the fire problem, immediately saw the value of a dedicated fire investigator and repeatedly suggested that Boston's successes be replicated statewide. In 1888, Insurance Commissioner George S. Merrill praised the Boston Fire Marshal's office and Marshal Whitcomb in particular, writing that he had "initiated a commendable work in the direction of searching investigation into the causes of fires in that city, and instituted a number of prosecutions, securing several convictions." In fact, Merrill wrote, the office was so successful as to "demand its practical extension, in a simplified form, to the entire Commonwealth."

It was not the first or the last time that the insurance industry would advocate for a broad and effective statewide system of fire investigation. By 1894, Commissioner Merrill's brief suggestions for a statewide fire marshal's office had grown to nearly three pages in his annual report.

In a section bluntly titled “The Need for a State Fire Marshal,” he also outlined suggestions that we now recognize in Massachusetts law: a requirement that local officials investigate fires within their cities and towns; that the fire marshal investigate when these officials are unable to determine the cause or believe it to be suspicious; and that the fire marshal have the authority to order fire hazards removed or corrected.

In the meantime, Marshal Whitcomb took his job seriously and was seemingly fearless of political ramifications. He took on insurance companies, builders, architects, and manufacturers of kerosene and other heating oils. He was also genuinely curious about the fire problem, as illustrated by an 1888 experiment he undertook to test whether rats were capable of starting building fires, as commonly claimed, or whether they were scapegoats for the human occupants.

The experiment placed three rats in a cage with a quantity of phosphorus-tipped matches. Sure enough, there were four fires on the very first night of the experiment and more in the days that followed. Marshal Whitcomb found that the rats would even carry the matches away and gnaw on the phosphorus in another location, igniting just the sort of fires that some insurers believed residents had caused.

Within five years of taking office, Marshal Whitcomb's efforts had led to a 400% increase in arson convictions and a dramatic reduction in intentional fires. By every account, he was a remarkably effective investigator and deeply committed to his duties. Unfortunately, he also held racist and antisemitic beliefs, perpetuating stereotypes that are repugnant to modern readers and sadly faced little challenge during his own era.

Controversy caught up with Marshal Whitcomb early in 1893. After three large loss fires in as many weeks, he was called to appear in front of the City Council for a committee investigating the Boston Fire Department, leading to contentious and public fighting over building codes and fire prevention methods. In what was described as a “genuine surprise,” Governor William E. Russell nominated Edward J. Flynn, a lawyer and former state representative, as Boston Fire Marshal on Aug. 3, pending approval by the Governor's Council.

On August 31, 1893, Marshal Whitcomb was arrested on drunk and disorderly charges. He disputed them and filed a complaint against the arresting Boston Police officer. Less than a month later, the Governor's Council confirmed Flynn, who took office on December 1 of that year. It was



5 Pemberton Square, Boston. Boston Fire Marshal's office, c. 1855-1895 (DigitalCommonwealth.org)

not long, however, before outside observers criticized Marshal Flynn as a “political appointment” and said Whitcomb was “universally recognized as the best man in this country” for the job.

### The First State Fire Marshal

Whitcomb's drunk and disorderly case was never brought to court, and it doesn't appear to have affected his professional career. When the Massachusetts Legislature abolished the Boston Fire Marshal's Office in favor of a statewide office in 1894, Gov. Frederic T. Greenhalge appointed him to fill the position. Charles Whitcomb became the nation's first State Fire Marshal and Edward Flynn returned to private practice.

Foreshadowing later events, the Governor also appointed Joseph E. Shaw as Whitcomb's deputy. Shaw was drawn from the Massachusetts District Police, a predecessor agency to today's Massachusetts State Police. At that time, the District Police provided investigative services to the state's district attorneys, enforced the state's labor laws, and were responsible for inspecting steam boilers.

With Deputy Shaw by his side, State Fire Marshal Whitcomb's leadership was every bit as effective statewide as it had been locally. By the end of 1895, his first full year in office, he had reported 86 arrests for 84 arsons, with 46 convictions and 15 still pending in court. Members of the Boston law enforcement community continued to praise

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# Legislators View Sprinkler Trailer Demonstration

On June 27, members of the Joint Committee on Public Safety & Homeland Security and their staff visited the Department of Fire Services' Stow campus. Wet weather put a damper on plans for a full tour of the campus, but there was no stopping the main event: a demonstration of the side-by-side sprinkler trailer.

As many readers may know, the trailer was donated by the National Fire Sprinkler Association and is used as a public education tool to demonstrate the power of home fire sprinklers in protecting life and property. It features two compartmentalized "rooms" that are identically furnished and both contain smoke alarms, but one is protected by sprinklers and the other is not.

Before the visitors' eyes, the fire in the first room activated its sprinkler system and suppressed the fire. Under real-world conditions this gives residents more time to escape and contains the fire until firefighters arrive. In the second room without sprinklers, the fire went to flashover in about three minutes, presenting a deadly condition that no one can survive.

As State Fire Marshal Peter Ostroskey told the crowd, the time it takes for a residential fire to reach untenable conditions has shorted dramatically over the past several decades. Observers saw for themselves that smoke alarms can warn you of danger, but only fire sprinklers buy time—and time buys life. At a time when housing is at a premium in Massachusetts, sprinklers also prevent the kind of massive property damage that can take housing units out of use for months or years.

The fire sprinkler trailer is available for local fire departments to use in fire safety presentations. To request the trailer, visit [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and search for *sprinkler trailer*.



*On the left: minor damage in a room protected by home fire sprinklers. On the right: deadly conditions and massive property damage in an identical room without them.*



*State Fire Marshal Peter Ostroskey discusses the power and benefits of home fire sprinklers with House Chair Carlos González and Senate Chair Walter Timilty of the Joint Committee on Public Safety & Homeland Security.*



*Thanks to DFS Crib Room personnel who set up the sprinkler trailer and ensured our visitors' safety! Left to right: Sean Roy, Steve Brotherton, Ed Loder (front), Craig Alden-Burns (rear), John Hathaway, Rep. Carlos González, Sen. Walter Timilty, Doug Hanks, State Fire Marshal Peter Ostroskey, T.J. Deptula, FCAM Assistant Government Affairs Director Gene Doherty, and Mark Daly.*

# Introducing Students to Fire Service Careers

## *MFA Pilots a High School Program*

The Department of Fire Services (DFS) and the Massachusetts Fire Academy (MFA) recently piloted a one-day immersion program that allowed local high school students to begin exploring a career in the fire service.

The idea started last year, when MFA Assistant Coordinators Bob Escott and Rich Craven needed a location for Springfield recruits to conduct water rescue training. A local high school granted access to its swimming pool, and to show their appreciation Bob and Rich offered the opportunity for students to learn about the fire service through the Academy. The school agreed, and in January Rich gave a two-hour presentation to a group of students, followed by the opportunity to observe recruits in training.

Dr. Sara J. Praguski Walsh, Instructional Design and Curriculum Development Specialist for the MFA, was influenced by their experience. Using her experience as a graduate of the Academy's Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training Program, she wanted to expand this idea to create a full-day experiential and academic endeavor for a select group of students. She worked with a former colleague at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) and MFA Recruit Training Program staff on a plan that could accommodate up to 10 juniors whose interests aligned with the fire service.

Dr. Walsh designed a full day of fire service exposure with the support of Recruit Program Coordinator Dennis Ball and Senior Fire Instructor Mike Gelinas for the eight students who took part. On June 8, the students spent part of the day observing recruit firefighters in training to understand the importance and difficulty of the work. Then they learned and practiced selected recruit skills, including donning and doffing turnout gear, auto extrication, burn building hose movement, forcible entry, donning SCBA, and search and rescue. The students eagerly dove into each activity and quickly came together as a team, supporting each other to accomplish tasks – just as recruits are trained to do.

"If I had experienced this in high school, I might be in a different career now," one SHS guidance counselor said while watching the students on the drill yard.

In the course of the day, the students also had a chance to observe training at the Gas School and had a lunchtime question and answer session with State Fire Marshal Peter Ostroskey—a graduate of Shrewsbury High's rival, St. John's High School—and Deputy Marshal Maribel Fournier, the acting Academy Director.

Many people collaborated to make the day's events possible. Registration Assistant Christine Dansereau



*MFA Instructor Mike Gelinas introduces Shrewsbury students to hose stream management.*

secured the training resources. Crib Room staff supported the students throughout the day and Craig Alden-Burns coordinated all turnout gear for the students. Senior Instructor Mike Gelinas began the day with a short foundational presentation and taught brief lessons before each activity. He quickly had students practicing skills while providing guided instruction. Gas Program Instructor Jim Blanchard engaged students, asking them to explain what they saw and understood, and what they thought the recruits were experiencing. Media Specialist Coordinator Christina Mitchell photographed the students' successes to create lasting memories. Shrewsbury High School staff also worked hard to make this collaboration happen, especially Principal Todd Bazydlo and Guidance Counselors Sean Russell and Frank Flynn.

As the MFA team reviewed the day with an eye to expanding the program, they noted the successful collaboration and support by multiple programs and staff to provide this life-changing opportunity for the high schoolers. As a pilot project, Dr. Walsh deliberately kept the initiative small, but in the long term it could take place at all three DFS campuses and welcome high school students from across the state.

Some of the most important reviews came from the students themselves. Their favorite parts of the day ranged from putting on the SCBA to feeding a hoseline through the burn building to observing the gas school.

It was "super cool to see up close," one student remarked, "a once in a lifetime opportunity."

# Fire Investigation News

## Arson

### Three Juveniles Face Charges in Massive Orange Mill Fire

A multi-building fire drew dozens of fire departments to Orange on June 4, 2022. It was started by three juveniles. The fire consumed an unoccupied mill complex and activated the Statewide Fire Mobilization Plan.

The youths were identified in a joint investigation by the Orange Fire and Police Departments, and State Police assigned to both the State Fire Marshal's office and the Northwestern District Attorney's office.

Orange firefighters found heavy smoke and flames at the vacant mill building at 16 West River Street and three other buildings in the area. The fire officially reached five alarms, but the response from regional departments was equivalent to a six- or seven-alarm fire. Companies from dozens of departments assisted at the scene or provided station coverage, and statewide task forces also responded to support the massive effort. Crews worked through the day and night to contain the fire. Two people were treated for injuries at the scene. No one was displaced.

"I would again like to thank the residents of Orange and our surrounding towns for their support since Saturday," said Orange Fire Chief James Young. "I'd also like to express our gratitude for the tremendous mutual aid response by our brother and sister firefighters from across the region and the state."

In addition to regional resources, the Department of Fire Services deployed two Rehab units to support firefighters at the scene, an Incident Support Unit to assist commanders, a Drone Unit to obtain aerial imagery of the structures, and a Hazmat team to conduct air monitoring for health hazards.

### Youth Charged in Great Barrington School Fire

On Sunday, June 19, the Great Barrington Fire Department responded to a report of smoke at 79 Bridge Street, the site of the former Searles School. Firefighters observed smoke coming from the second floor of the vacant school. They found combustible materials on fire in one room and quickly extinguished the fire.

The investigation was jointly conducted by the Great Barrington Fire and Police Departments and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office. They determined that a piece of furniture had been set on fire by a juvenile, who was summonsed to court.

"Every fire has the potential to hurt someone," said Great Barrington Fire Chief Charles Burger. "We're fortunate that this particular incident didn't grow larger and put

the community or the firefighters who serve them at risk."

Juvenile firesetting is a serious issue that contributes to dozens of fires each year in Massachusetts. To learn more about responses to youth firesetting, visit [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and search for *juvenile firesetting* or [www.NoFIRES.net](http://www.NoFIRES.net).

### Five Fires, Four Dates, Two Cities, One Suspect

A Webster man was charged with arson and other offenses for allegedly setting a series of fires in Belchertown and Springfield earlier this year. His arrest followed a joint investigation by the Belchertown Fire and Police departments; the Springfield Arson & Bomb Squad, comprised of firefighters and police detectives; and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office.

John J. Noga, 58, was charged with four counts of burning of property and one count of arson of a dwelling for allegedly setting a March 29 fire in Belchertown, a May 31 fire in Springfield, a June 1 fire in Springfield, and two fires in Belchertown on June 1, 2022. Four of the fires burned brush, trash, or debris outdoors. One damaged the exterior of a dwelling.

There were more than 600 arsons reported in Massachusetts last year, causing over \$3 million in damages and injuring nine firefighters and five civilians. Anyone with information on an arson in Massachusetts is asked to share it with investigators by contacting the Arson Watch Reward Program at 1-800-682-9229. Tipsters may remain anonymous if they wish.

### Officials Seek Public's Help in Rectory Fire

At about 1:30 a.m. on June 21, 2022, a police officer observed smoke in the area of 22 Appleton Street in Arlington. Firefighters responded to the rectory of St. Athanasius Church and found heavy smoke inside the unoccupied structure. They located a fire in the basement of the building and quickly extinguished it.

"We're asking anyone with information on this fire or how it started to share it with investigators," said Arlington Fire Chief Kevin Kelley. "You can remain anonymous if you wish."



There were more than 600 arsons in Massachusetts last year, causing over \$3 million in damages and injuring nine firefighters and five civilians.

If you have information on an arson, call the *Arson Watch Reward Program* at 1-800-682-9229.

“There are few fire incidents more concerning than those affecting houses of worship,” said State Fire Marshal Ostroskey. “We want the community to know that we take this fire, and any fire at a place of worship, seriously.”

The fire is being jointly investigated by the Arlington Fire and Police Departments, State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal’s office, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

#### **Brockton Man Indicted for 2021 Fires, Break-In**

On June 30, 2022, a Plymouth County grand jury returned a five-count indictment charging Brian Leite, 29, with setting multiple fires and breaking into a mall last year. The indictment and July 8 arrest followed a joint investigation by the Brockton Fire and Police Departments and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal’s Office.

The charges reflect a series of fires in Brockton during the early morning hours of March 17, 2021, that were allegedly set to distract public safety officials from a break-in at the Sears in the Westgate Mall. The fires took place at the Old State House, the Brockton West Middle School, D.W. Fields Park, Brockton High School, and the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Leite allegedly set the fires and broke into Sears, then fled when Brockton Police responded. As he fled, Leite dropped clothing. The clothing was submitted to the State Police Crime Lab, which found DNA evidence that matched Leite’s profile. The clothing also matched the clothes worn by the suspect captured on video by cameras near the fire scenes.

Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy Cruz’s office is prosecuting the case.

#### **Oily Rags a Potential Factor in Northbridge Blaze**

The cause of a four-alarm fire that destroyed an historic Northbridge home on Linwood Avenue will remain officially undetermined but does not appear suspicious. Investigators believe oily rags used for staining a stairway may have been a factor.

On April 29, 2022, Northbridge firefighters found heavy smoke and flames on the second and third floors and the rear of the home. The residence was unoccupied except for a dog that a Northbridge police officer rescued through a first-floor window. One firefighter sustained injuries in a ceiling collapse and was transported from the scene; her injuries were not life threatening.

The fire was investigated by the Northbridge Fire and Police Departments, the District 7 Fire Investigation Unit, and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal’s office. Investigators learned that a stairway was stained two days before the fire, and rags used in the project were left in a cardboard box.

Oily rags have caused several major fires this year, including one that claimed a teenager’s life in Agawam. Fire officials reminded residents, contractors, and do-it-yourselfers to dispose of them safely.

“The oils in some paints, stains, and varnishes release heat as they dry,” said Northbridge Fire Chief David White. “If oily rags or applicators are left in a pile or confined space, the heat can build up and cause them to ignite. To prevent a fire, always dry these rags outdoors and individually. Then place them in a can with water and detergent, cover it with a tight-fitting lid, and dispose of it at a hazardous materials disposal event in your community.”

#### **Electrical Event Causes Fatal Taunton Fire**

An accidental electrical event claimed one person’s life and started a fire at an apartment building on June 23, 2022

The adult male victim was removing an antenna from the three-story Danforth Street building in Taunton. The antenna made contact with a nearby power line, causing fatal injuries to the man and igniting the exterior of the dwelling. Taunton firefighters responded and quickly extinguished the fire with no other injuries.

The incident was investigated by the Taunton Fire and Police departments, and State Police assigned to the offices of the State Fire Marshal and the Bristol District Attorney.

#### **Fatal Three-Alarm Fire in Groveland**

One person died and two people were rescued from a June 24, 2022, fire on Manor Drive in Groveland. The three-alarm fire in a four-unit apartment building was the first fatal fire in the Town of Groveland since 1966.

Groveland Police were the first to arrive on scene. They found people trapped in the rear of the building on the second floor. Police and firefighters worked together to rescue the occupants. Firefighters found an adult male in a

*Continued on next page*

first-floor apartment who was pronounced dead at the scene. While the cause of the fire will remain officially undetermined, investigators observed that the victim was a smoker who used home oxygen—a deadly combination that has claimed many lives in Massachusetts and elsewhere.

The fire was jointly investigated by the Groveland Fire and Police Departments, and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office and the Essex District Attorney's office.

## **Smoking Materials Likely Cause of Hotel Fire**

An early-morning fire at Nantucket's Veranda House hotel on July 9, 2022, was likely caused by the improper disposal of smoking materials.

"We're extremely fortunate that everyone made it out safely, and I want to recognize the heroic efforts of community members whose immediate action under dangerous conditions helped to save lives," said Nantucket Fire Chief Stephen Murphy.

The fire at the three-story, 18-room hotel began at about 6:45 a.m., beneath the front porch, where indoor smoke alarms did not immediately detect it. The fire spread to two nearby buildings, and all three buildings were declared total losses. Firefighters battled the fire for more than 12 hours. Four firefighters were transported for medical care and were later released.

The fire was jointly investigated by the Nantucket Fire and Police Departments and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office.

## **Fatal Outdoor Fire Started with Propane Torch**

A Chelmsford man died on July 22, 2022, after sustaining injuries in a fire outside his home the previous day. The man was using a propane torch near a detached shed, which started a fire that grew out of control.

Chelmsford firefighters responded to the Stearns Street home shortly after noon. They found two injured parties and a shed that was fully involved. One older adult male was transported for care but succumbed to his injuries. The fire was knocked down quickly.

The incident was investigated by the Chelmsford Fire Department, and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office, and the Middlesex DA's office.

## **Russell Mill Fire Started with Oxy-Acetylene Torch**

The owner of an unoccupied mill building in Russell was issued a notice of violation for using an oxy-acetylene

**Fire Chief Renauld issued a reminder: "Cutting, welding, and other hot work require a permit in advance through the local fire department. Taking that simple step would have ensured adequate safety measures and could have saved the property owner from a total loss."**

torch without a hot work permit, causing a four-alarm fire that destroyed the structure on July 25, 2022.

Russell Fire Chief Edward Renauld thanked local and regional fire departments and law enforcement officials for their support and also issued a reminder: "Cutting, welding, and other hot work require a permit in advance through the local fire department. Taking that simple step would have ensured adequate safety measures and could have saved the property owner from a total loss."

The joint investigation by the Russell Fire and Police Departments, and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office determined that the fire began near a catwalk between 268 Woronoco Road and another building. The oxy-acetylene torch ignited combustible materials in the area. The fire quickly grew to four alarms, consuming the first building and damaging the second. Efforts to suppress the fire were hindered by a lack of water, requiring numerous mutual aid companies and a task force to shuttle water to the scene under the Statewide Fire Mobilization Plan.

## **Lithium-Ion Battery Starts Fire at Tesla Service Center**

A technician working on an electric vehicle accidentally pierced its battery cell, causing a fire at a Norwell Tesla service center that also prompted a Hazmat response. Norwell Fire Chief David Kean reported no injuries and no significant damage to other vehicles in the service bay.

On July 29, 2022, a technician was drilling through the floor of a vehicle. The drill pierced the battery cell, causing rapid failure and overheating that ignited combustible materials nearby. The Norwell Fire Department rapidly responded and extinguished the fire. A District 1 Hazmat team responded to monitor air and water runoff and found no hazards. Rehab 6 supported firefighters at the scene, who were working in high temperatures that day.

The Norwell Fire and Police Departments and State Police assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office determined that the fire was accidental.

# Occupational Cancer

## *A Firefighter's Call to Awareness, Prevention, and Detection*

Occupational cancer is the most dangerous and least recognized threat to firefighter health and safety today. When Captain Patrick “PJ” Roy of the Fitchburg Fire Department was asked to join the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) instructors who teach the *Taking Action Against Cancer in the Fire Service* program, he couldn’t wait to spread the word.

“My father was a Fitchburg firefighter before me,” Captain Roy said. “He was diagnosed with occupational cancer and passed away at the age of 62. That loss, and what it meant for my family and my calling, motivated me to spread the word about early detection and prevention. *Taking Action Against Cancer in the Fire Service* helped me bring that message to the people who needed to hear it most—our firefighters.”

Over the course of the past six years, the staff and leadership of the Department of Fire Services (DFS) and the MFA have steadily moved the Academy’s cancer prevention programming forward. The *Taking Action* program is now part of the recruit curriculum, offered online, and presented on-site at local fire departments. It has been presented at town meetings and retired firefighter meetings. DFS and the MFA have partnered with medical professionals to make free skin cancer and oral cancer screenings available at local firehouses, and to fund chest CT scans and PSA blood tests for eligible firefighters.

“We are lucky to have some of these life-saving initiatives in Massachusetts to stay healthy in our careers,” Capt. Roy said. “Many states do not.”

But even a passionate advocate for firefighter health must confront his fears when it comes to cancer. Last year, MFA Program Coordinator Abby Baker told Capt. Roy about a program allowing firefighters to receive vouchers for free CT scans through the Academy. The scans use X-ray and specialized software to create detailed internal images of the chest and upper abdomen that can help identify cancer and other anomalies.



Captain Patrick “PJ” Roy of the Fitchburg Fire Department and the Mass. Firefighting Academy.

“I knew how important the scans were,” Capt. Roy said. “I was teaching that CT scans can help firefighters with early detection, but I was also terrified of the results. I had been involved in the program for more than five years, but I had talked myself into not getting a scan because I was afraid it would find something, or I wouldn’t be able to do a job I love so much. It was a tough situation.”

After some reflection and careful thought, Capt. Roy committed to the test—for his own health and as an example for the colleagues he cares deeply about. He reminded himself that the test results are only shared with the patient and the doctor.

“The whole point is to catch cancer early, while we can still do something about it,” he said. “How could I ask other firefighters to embrace early detection and not do it myself? After all, a chest CT scan could have saved my father. He could have met his grandkids and been around for his family. I want that for myself and the people I love.”

Capt. Roy had his CT scan in February of 2021, and he was deeply relieved when it came back negative. All the same, he’s still cautious and continues to take daily precautions like using SCBA during overhaul and wiping down his skin with wipes immediately after a fire. He showers, changes his clothes, and washes his gear as soon as he gets back to the firehouse. He also talks to his doctor about his unique risk factors and gets a comprehensive firefighter physical exam each year, with emphasis on cancer screening.

“The MFA has one of the best cancer programs in the country,” he said. “If we follow all we have been taught about the fire service cancer epidemic, our brothers and sisters will ultimately be taking care of themselves and staying healthy.”

If you are interested in any of the MFA’s cancer programs visit the DFS website at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and search for *Occupational Cancer*. The site is updated regularly and will reflect new early detection options such as mammograms and ultrasounds in FY23.

# Cooking Fire Safety and Risks

Cooking is the leading cause of structure fires and non-fatal fire injuries in Massachusetts and the nation. Cooking fire data can help us understand how and where to focus public education, social media outreach, and other community risk reduction efforts.

## Cooking Fire Deaths, Injuries, and Damages

In the 10 years from 2012 to 2021, unattended cooking, other unsafe cooking practices, and defective cooking equipment caused 117,151 fires, 26 civilian deaths, 752 civilian injuries, 362 firefighter injuries, and an estimated dollar loss of \$123.9 million. The average dollar loss per fire was \$1,057. Cooking fires accounted for about 40% of all fires statewide during this time period.

Almost all of these fires occurred in structures, and the great majority took place in residences. Of the total number of cooking fires in the past 10 years, 115,423 (or 98.5%) were structure fires and 100,457 (or 86%) were in residential buildings. The fires caused 25 civilian deaths, 661 civilian injuries, 320 firefighter injuries and \$88.7 million in estimated damages.

More than 95% of cooking fires were confined to a non-combustible container such as an oven. These fires represent the most common type of fire in Massachusetts.

Human error, specifically unattended cooking, was responsible for the majority of cooking fires. The Department of Fire Services' (DFS) *Stand By Your Pan* public education campaign was developed to draw attention to and reduce this risky behavior, and materials for social media and outreach are available on the DFS website. Visit [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and search for *Cooking Fire Safety Campaign*.

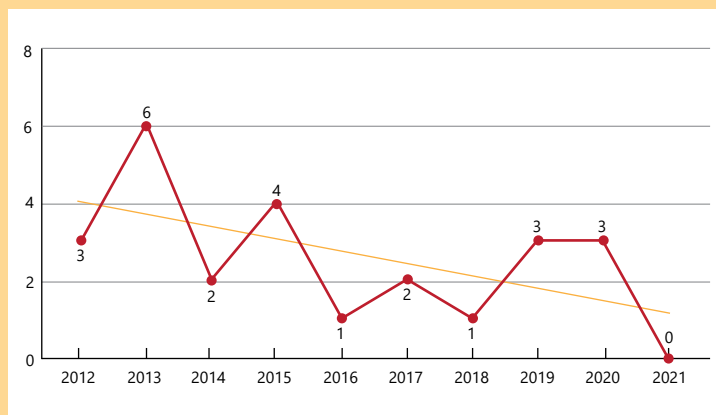
## Cooking Fire Deaths in the Last 10 Years

While cooking is the leading cause of residential building fires, it has not historically been a leading cause of civilian fire deaths. Unlike smoking or electrical fires, most people quickly become aware of a fire in the kitchen. There have been 25 residential cooking fires in the last 10 years, and they have occurred at a declining rate. There were no cooking fire deaths in 2021.

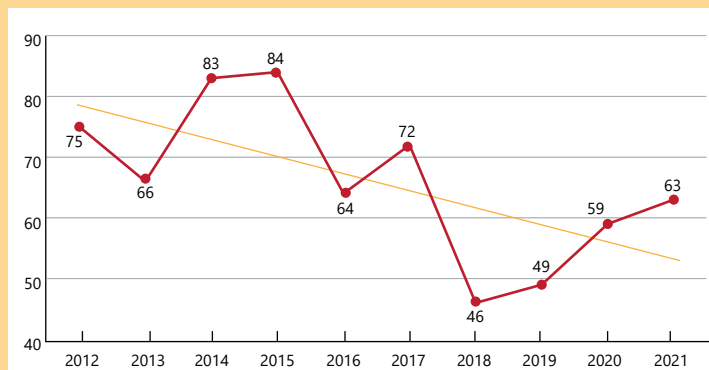
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**Massachusetts Residential Cooking Fire Deaths 2012–2021**



**Massachusetts Residential Cooking Fire Injuries 2012–2021**



Unattended cooking is the #1 cause of cooking fires. DFS has a public education campaign—*Stand By Your Pan*—to reduce this risky behavior. Visit [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and search for *Cooking Fire Safety Campaign*.

## Sergeant Michael Mazza



On the day that a serial arsonist was sentenced to 20 years in prison for a series of fires that claimed the life of a father and son, the prosecutor assigned to the case highlighted the talents of a certain Massachusetts State Police

investigator assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office.

"There is no finer police interviewer than Michael Mazza," said Special Prosecutor Brett Vottero after the defendant pleaded guilty rather than face trial for setting more than two dozen fires in Northampton between 2007 and 2009.

After more than three decades investigating crimes like these, Sergeant Michael Mazza retired from the State Police in June 2022. Sgt. Mazza was a fixture in western Massachusetts throughout his career, working with local officials on countless investigations into arsons and other serious crimes.

Sgt. Mazza joined the Massachusetts State Police in 1986, working as a uniformed trooper in the Cheshire and Lee barracks. Beginning in 1989, he took on a series of assignments in what were then known as the Crime Prevention and Control (CPAC) units assigned to the Berkshire and Hampden district attorneys' offices. Sgt. Mazza was the State Fire Marshal's representative in Berkshire County from 1989 to 1992, and in Hampden County from 1992 to 1993, when the Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit (F&EIU) was established and assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office. He would remain with the F&EIU for the next 29 years.

Just days before beginning his retirement, Sgt. Mazza was part of the team that worked around the clock to investigate a suspicious fire in Orange that consumed four buildings and drew dozens of mutual aid companies to the scene. Their dogged efforts solved the case and identified three juveniles as the responsible parties. We thank Sgt. Mazza for his decades of service to the State Fire Marshal's office, the State Police, and the interests of justice across the Commonwealth. Enjoy your retirement, Mike!

## Administrative Compliance Officer

### Rich Maimone

On June 28, the Department of Fire Services' (DFS) Fire Safety Division bade farewell to longtime Administrative Compliance Officer Rich Maimone.

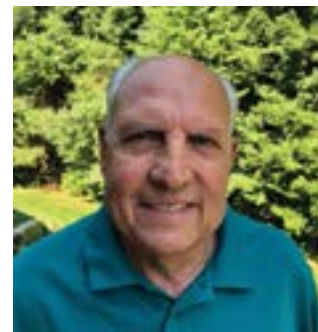
Rich served the Arlington Fire Department for thirty-two years, including six years as chief. In 2007, he retired and joined DFS. His first job was as an underground storage tank inspector. Less than a year later, the responsibilities for the Underground Storage Tank program were transferred from DFS to the Department of Environmental Protection.

Rich then transitioned into the role of administrative compliance officer. He was "on the desk," answering questions about code compliance and fire safety from local fire departments, the regulated community, and the public on a variety of important issues.

For the past 14 years, Rich has been one of the agency's most recognized voices, putting his detailed and expansive knowledge to work in the interests of public safety.

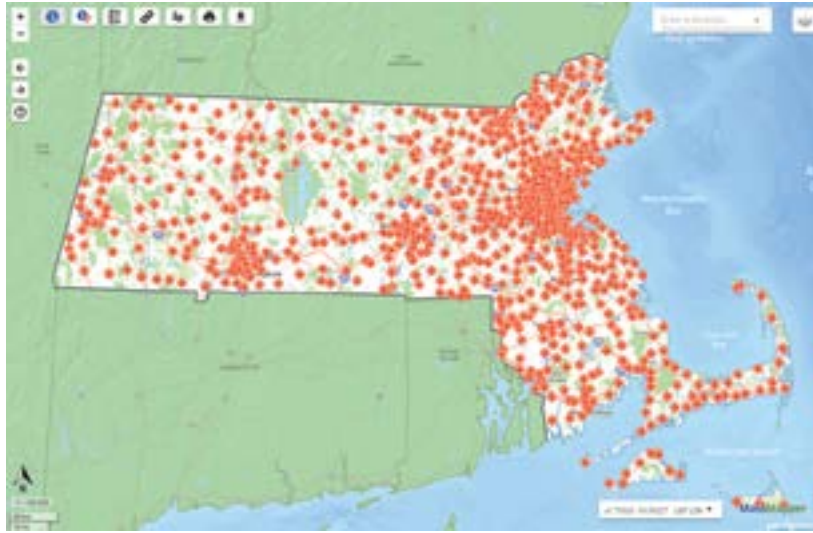
Rich exemplified the DFS philosophy of customer service. Every caller was treated with respect, and every question answered or referred to the most appropriate person or agency. Rich was one of the people who kept the desk running smoothly during the height of COVID-19, ensuring that all calls were returned promptly. Many users complimented the desk on their efficient, effective response during that difficult time.

We wish Rich the best in his second retirement, with plenty of time to spend with his grandchildren!



# MassGIS Seeks Firehouse Location Updates

MassGIS, the Commonwealth's Bureau of Geographic Information, is the state's one-stop shop for interactive maps and related descriptive information. In June 2022, MassGIS used the latest data from a variety of sources to update its Fire Station layer, which shows the locations of more than 700 firehouses on a detailed map of the state.



MassGIS updates the layer periodically using information from the Department of Fire Services, municipal websites, local fire chiefs, and publicly available sources such as Google Streetview and [www.massfiretrucks.com](http://www.massfiretrucks.com). To ensure the most reliable mapping experience, MassGIS is asking Massachusetts fire departments to update them when a new firehouse opens, an old one closes, or when one changes location.

"It would be very useful to be directly notified of any station changes," said GIS Technician Sula Watermulder. "We did updates in 2015 and 2017, but regular notification of changes would help us make annual updates."

Fire departments can notify MassGIS of firehouse location updates at [massgismail@mass.gov](mailto:massgismail@mass.gov). You can view the current Fire Station layer at [www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-fire-stations](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-fire-stations).

## Cooking Fire Safety and Risks, *continued from page 14*

### Cooking Fires Injuries

However, cooking was the leading cause of injury in all types of fires in the past 10 years. People aged 25 to 54 accounted for 59% of those injured in cooking fires. Older adults from 65 to 74 were disproportionately likely to be injured in cooking fires during 2021: they represent about 7% of the population but suffered 13% of the injuries.

When the victim's activity at the time of a cooking fire injury is known, 60% were hurt while attempting to control the fire. The *Put a Lid on It* cooking safety campaign delivers a clear, easily understood safety tip for stovetop fires. Like the *Stand by Your Pan* campaign, public education materials are available on the DFS website.

Stovetop fires produce a lot of heat in a small area and people run a great risk of being burned when trying to extinguish them. The majority (59%) of civilian injuries in cooking fires were burns. Most of these injuries can be prevented through safer cooking practices and safer methods of extinguishing fires when they occur.

**Borrow a DFS kitchen prop to teach about how to prevent and respond to kitchen fires.**

### Cooking Fire Safety Education

DFS has a Cooking Fire Safety public awareness campaign that promotes the messages: *Stand By Your Pan* to prevent cooking fires, and *Put A Lid On It* to extinguish stove top fires. The campaign features two firehouse chefs and their recipes and also includes:

- TV spots (1 English, 1 Spanish)
- Radio spots (1 English, 1 Spanish)
- Cooking safety recipe cards (English and Spanish)
- Logos
- Tri-fold pamphlet in 3 languages
- Newspaper ads
- Customizable local press release
- A lesson plan
- Bookmark artwork

Download and use the resources in your local education efforts. Visit [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and search for *Cooking Fire Safety Campaign*.

DFS also has kitchen props for hands-on teaching about how to prevent and respond to kitchen fires. Contact the Fire Data & Public Education Unit at 978-567-3381 to borrow a kitchen prop or for advice on planning your education program.

# National Fire Academy Programs at MFA

*The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy is pleased to offer the following National Fire Academy Programs. For more detailed information and to register, visit [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and click on the DFS Learning Management System.*

## **Strategy and Tactics for Initial Company Operations F0455**

**October 4 & 5, 2022**

For company officers (COs) responsible for managing the operations of one or more companies during structural firefighting operations. The course focuses on the management skills needed by COs to accomplish assigned tactics at structure fires.

## **Fire Investigation: First Responders F0770**

**November 1 & 2, 2022**

An overview of fire investigation. Students review fire chemistry and learn the role of the first responder in fire suppression and fire investigation. The course stresses the importance of fire scene awareness, evidence identification, preservation, and the basics of a fire investigation.

## **Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist (YFPI – Level I) F0633**

**November 15 & 16, 2022**

Based on the requirements of NFPA Standard 1035 on Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialists. The course focuses on how identification, intake, screening, disposition, and follow-up are used to mitigate youth firesetting behavior for those providing services at the program level.

## **Youth Firesetter Program Manager (YFPI – Level II) F0634**

**December 6 & 7, 2022**

Based on the requirements of NFPA Standard 1035 on Youth Firesetting Program Managers. The course focuses on how to develop, implement and evaluate a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program for leaders of those programs.

## **Shaping The Future F0602**

**March 7 & 8, 2023**

Teaches first- and second-level supervisors and company officers contemporary approaches to organizational problem-solving. Topics include: creative approaches to identifying trends in organizations; applying problem solving methodologies; the importance and application of continuous improvement in organizations; quantifying problems and solutions; organizational and individual resistance to change; and strategies for implementing change.

## **Decision Making for Initial Company Operations F0457**

**April 4 & 5, 2023**

Develops the decision-making skills needed by company officers (COs) to accomplish assigned tactics at structure fires. With the possibility of being the first to arrive at an incident, a CO's initial decisions have an impact throughout the incident. COs must be able to make good management decisions that have positive impacts on outcomes. A CO may also be assigned a subordinate position in an Incident Command System. COs need a clear understanding of the system, as well as their own position and role in order to function effectively and help make the system work.

## **Residential Sprinkler Plan Review F0142**

**May 2 & 3, 2023**

This program covers the following as the primary guidance for the approval of residential sprinkler systems: National Fire Protection Association 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*; NFPA 13D, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One- and Two-Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes*; NFPA 13R, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Low-Rise Residential Occupancies*; International Residential Code Standard P2904; and manufacturer's data sheets.

## **Fire Service Safety Culture: Who Protects Firefighters from Firefighters? F0349**

**May 23 & 24, 2023**

Assists emergency services personnel in defining and advocating for organizational change in the fire service. Topics include: safety and risk cultures in organizations; influences on safety culture and risk categories; and concepts, goals, and processes of risk management.

## **Campus Fire and Life Safety I: Risk Assessment F0193**

**June 6 & 7, 2023**

Enables students to begin creating comprehensive campus fire and life safety programs, starting with conducting a risk assessment and developing and evaluating an emergency plan, and building partnerships to sustain emergency programs and plans.

# Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Graduations



Class #301



Class #302



Class #303



Class #S27

## Career Recruit Firefighter Training

In the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighter Training Program, students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor and multiple-room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the Career Recruit Program, all students have met the standards of National Fire Protection Association 1001 and are certified to the level of Firefighter I and II, and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operational Level by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications. Training is held at the Stow headquarters of DFS, the Springfield campus, and the Bridgewater campus.

### Class #301

On May 20, 2022, members of Career Recruit Firefighter Class #301 graduated at the Stow Campus. The 24 firefighters represent the 10 fire departments of Arlington, Bellingham, Chelsea, Ipswich, Lynn, Malden, Natick, Plymouth, Stoughton, and Tewksbury.

### Class #302

On June 24, 2022, members of Career Recruit Firefighter Class #302 graduated at the Stow Campus. The 23 firefighters represent the 11 fire departments of Arlington, Attleboro, Chelsea, Concord, Fitchburg, Lexington, Medway, North Andover, Tewksbury, Watertown, and Westwood.

### Class #303

On August 5, 2022, members of Career Recruit Firefighter Class #303 graduated at the Stow Campus. The 22 firefighters represent the 14 fire departments of Amesbury, Cambridge, Chelsea, Concord, Haverhill, Holden, Hudson, Methuen, Needham, Randolph, Revere, Wakefield, Weston, and Winchester.

### Class #S27

On May 20, 2022, members of Career Recruit Firefighter Class #S27 graduated at the Springfield Campus. The 19 firefighters represent the 13 fire departments of Agawam, Amherst, Charlton, Chicopee, Greenfield, Holden, Holyoke, North Adams, Northampton, Southbridge, Southwick, Westborough, and Westwood.

### *Class #S28*

On August 5, 2022, members of Career Recruit Firefighter Class #S28 graduated at the Springfield Campus. The 21 firefighters represent the 14 fire departments of Agawam, Ashburnham, Dalton, Falmouth, Gardner, Monson, Newton, Orange, Southwick, Sturbridge, Ware, West Springfield, Westfield, and Wrentham.

### *Class #BW19*

On May 20, 2022, members of Career Recruit Firefighter Class #BW19 graduated at the Bridgewater Campus. The 17 firefighters represent the 8 fire departments of Abington, Belmont, Concord, Foxborough, Hanson, Hyannis, Norwell, and Peabody.

### *Class #BW20*

On June 24, 2022, members of Career Recruit Firefighter Class #BW20 graduated at the Bridgewater Campus. The 16 firefighters represent the 11 fire departments of Attleboro, Brewster, Cambridge, Canton, Foxborough, Hull, Orleans, Sandwich, Walpole, Waltham, and Yarmouth.

### *Class #BW21*

On August 5, 2022, members of Career Recruit Firefighter Class #BW21 graduated at the Bridgewater Campus. The 18 firefighters represent the 11 fire departments of Attleboro, Bourne, Eastham, Medfield, North Attleboro, Norwood, Somerset, Taunton, Walpole, Wellfleet, and Weymouth.

## **Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighting Training**

The Call/Volunteer Firefighter Recruit Training program is unique in that it delivers a standard recruit training curriculum, meeting national standards, on nights and weekends to accommodate the schedule of firefighters in suburban and rural areas. Graduates complete 240 hours of training. The program uses an online format that has students doing more work outside of class and taking quizzes online. This allows students more time to practice training skills with instructors and to better control their own workloads and time commitments. Upon successful completion of this program, all students have met the standards of National Fire Protection Association 1001.

### *Class #97*

On May 23, 2022, members of Call/Volunteer Firefighting Class #97 graduated at the Bridgewater Campus. The 35 graduates represent the 16 fire departments of Acushnet, Berkley, Chatham, Dartmouth Fire District 1, Fairhaven, Halifax, Lakeville, Marion, Medway, Plympton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Rochester, Truro, Wareham, and West Bridgewater.



*Class #S28*



*Class #BW19*



*Class #BW20*



*Class #BW21*

*Continued on next page*

**Class #98**

On June 28, 2022, members of Call/Volunteer Firefighting Class #98 graduated at the Springfield Campus. The 25 graduates represent the 17 fire departments of Belchertown, Cummington, Granby, Hampden, Hatfield, Lee, Lenox, Monson, North Brookfield, Palmer, South Hadley District #2, Southwick, Three Rivers, Wales, Ware, Warwick, and Williamstown.

**Class #99**

On June 21, 2022, members of Call/Volunteer Firefighting Class #99 graduated at the Stow Campus. The 28 graduates represent the 17 fire departments of Boxborough, Douglas, Dover, Grafton, Hardwick, Haverhill, Lunenburg, Mendon, Northbridge, Paxton, Princeton, Royalston, Sherborn, Shrewsbury, Stow, Tisbury, and Weston.

**Today's Firefighters Do Far More than Fight Fires**

Today's firefighters do far more than fight fires. They train to respond to all types of hazards and emergencies. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies, ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to fentanyl overdoses or a gas leak. They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice or who has locked himself in a bathroom. They rescue people from stalled elevators and those who are trapped in vehicle crashes. They test and maintain their equipment including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), hydrants, hoses, power tools, and apparatus. At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, they learn all these skills and more.

**"First responders are on the front lines protecting their communities, and these newest firefighters are needed now more than ever."**



*Class #97*



*Class #98*



*Class #99*

**Tackling the Illegal Fireworks Hazard**, *continued from page 3*

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**Assistance to Municipal Departments**

DFS provides technical, compliance, and enforcement support, 24/7. For immediate help call 978-567-3375 (Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) or 508-820-2000 (outside regular business hours). These numbers are for fire departments only. Residents with complaints about the illegal sale or use of fireworks can call their local police department at 9-1-1.

To notify the State Police Bomb Squad of confiscated fireworks, fire and police departments should call 978-567-3310 during business hours. For 24-hour emergencies or large quantities, call your State Police Troop Duty Officer directly or call State Police Dispatch at 508-820-2121 and ask to be connected. Tell the Troop Duty Officer to have the on-call Fire Investigator or the State Police Bomb Technician contact you immediately.

# 2022 License Examination Schedule

## Fire Safety Division

The Department of Fire Services' Fire Safety Division issues licenses, permits, and certificates of competency (licenses) to people and companies engaged in fireworks, blasting, explosives, special effects, cannon and mortar firing, commercial cooking exhaust system cleaning and inspection, hood cleaning, special hazard systems, portable fire extinguishers, marine fueling facilities and above ground tanks. Register for exams and see detailed information at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs). Search for *DFS Licensing*. For questions, contact the Licensing Desk at 978-567-3700 or at [dfs.licensing@state.ma.us](mailto:dfs.licensing@state.ma.us).

## Boiler and Pressure Vessel Program

The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Program offers monthly license exams for oil burner technician and all classes of fireman and engineer licenses. Register for exams and see detailed information at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs). Search for *BPV Exams*. For questions contact the Boiler & Pressure Vessel Program at (978) 567-3780 or at [BPV.Exams@MassMail.State.MA.US](mailto:BPV.Exams@MassMail.State.MA.US).

## Licensing Status

To see the licensing status of an individual or company, visit the DFS License Look Up at <http://elicense.chs.state.ma.us/Verification/> or go to [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and search for *DFS licensing*.

Examination Schedule	Examination Dates	Deadlines for Applications
FSD Exams	Exams start at 10:00 a.m.	
Fire Suppression and Commercial Hood Cleaning	November 9, 2022	October 14, 2022
Cannon/Mortar, Fireworks, Special Effects, Blasting, Blasting R&D	October 19, 2022	September 23, 2022
BPV Exams	Exams start at 9:00 a.m.	
Oil Burner, Fireman & Engineer (all classes)	October 26, 2022 November 30, 2022 December 28, 2022	September 30, 2022 October 28, 2022 November 25, 2022

## A History of the State Fire Marshal's Office, *continued from page 7*

him, writing that "the moral effect of the existence of the office has accomplished much in deterring incendiaries and preventing crime."

As State Fire Marshal, Whitcomb was emphatic in his support for and gratitude to statewide officials who fought and investigated fires. He was aggressive in pursuing arsonists, including those engaged in insurance fraud schemes. He remained independent of the industry, however, and even blamed some of its processes for many arson-for-profit crimes.

"A system which allows an agent to place such over-insurance is most pernicious and offers a standing premium for the commission of crime," he wrote. "When it is considered that this is done for the purpose of putting a few dollars into the pockets of an agent in the shape of commissions on

his business, thereby endangering the lives and property of the people of the Commonwealth . . . it is evident that some steps should be taken for remedying the evil."

## The End of an Era

In 1902, the Legislature abolished the State Fire Marshal's office and transferred its primary duties to the Massachusetts District Police. Joseph Shaw returned to the District Police as a deputy chief, leading what became known as the Fire Marshal's Department. As for Charles Whitcomb, the first state fire marshal in American history retired to New Hampshire, where he bred racehorses before departing for warmer weather. He moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, where he worked in the timber, mining, and oil and gas industries before he passed away on February 10, 1922.



**Department of Fire Services**  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
978-567-3100

[www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs)



## New Pumper Trucks for Bridgewater

The Department of Fire Services recently took delivery of Engine 9, the first of three pumper trucks for the Bridgewater campus. Engines 10 and 11 will be delivered soon. The engines are commercial-style builds, mounted on International chassis. Each is equipped with Hale Q-Flo 1250 GPM pumps, and is configured for Massachusetts Firefighting Academy training needs. One of the engines will have a Waterous Compressed Air Foam System.

