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MFSI Update for County Meetings: May & June 2022

Folks,

Spring is finally here after a long, cold, and hard Maine winter - and with that, it is fire training season in Maine! MFSI staff and instructors are currently traveling all across the state and making sure that fire service professionals everywhere are ready for whatever they may be faced with. We have a lot of new things coming to all those that are interested in improving their skills and abilities.

This time of year brings back many memories for me. It was 1985 when I began my fire service career and met so many great influences in my life - all of whom have taught me so much, and made me want to learn all I could about the job. If you have the opportunity to positively influence another firefighter's career I would strongly encourage you to do so. The best part of this job is passing on skills, knowledge, and experiences to those who will shape its future.

If I had an unlimited budget and could prepare every single firefighter and fire officer for any situation they would be faced with - I would do so in a heartbeat. Every one of you is a precious resource to our cities, towns, and the State of Maine as a whole. You have the courage to stand up and meet the challenges that you all are currently faced with as first responders.

Your safety is our utmost priority. With that in mind, I hope that all of you have a wonderful and safe summer and enjoy time with family and friends, in addition to the important work that you all do in service of your communities. I imagine we will have lots of summer visitors who travel great lengths to see the beautiful state that we are lucky enough to call home.

Be safe when the bell rings,

Director Jimmy Graves

1. Fire Officer I & II 2020 Update

The NFPA 1021 Standard for Professional Fire Officer Qualifications has changed and MFSI will be at work to upgrade the program and get it out as soon as we can. We have been meeting with the build-out team to get the online program up to speed and make adjustments to the delivery model - at some point in late fall 2022, we should be ready to go live with this new program. We are incredibly grateful for all of the staff, State Fire Instructors, and subject matter experts who have helped make this possible. A tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work goes into a transition of this nature and we couldn't do it without all of your support.



2. NFA In-State Weekend

This year's NFA In-State Weekend is being planned for September 17 & 18, 2022, at MFSI headquarters in Brunswick, as well as a free course in Ellsworth. The following programs will be offered:

- F0648 - Leadership in Supervision: Frameworks to Success (MFSI/Brunswick)
- F0762 - New Fire Chief: Contemporary Issues (MFSI/Brunswick)
- NFA Incident Safety Officer Program (Ellsworth City Hall)

The ISO program in Ellsworth is offered free of charge with support from the National Fire Academy Training Grant. Visit [our website](#) for complete registration packets and program details.



3. Ventilation Prop



The new Ventilation Prop has been ordered and we anticipate that it will be delivered this fall, barring any delays.

This prop was purchased via grant funding and will be provided by FireVent, LLC. FireVent is the leading manufacturer of mobile and stationary ventilation training props for the fire service.

4. Class B Foam Issue

Please see our recent [memo](#) on the legal issues surrounding the use of Class B foam during fire training. MFSI is working on responsible ways to meet the objectives in NFPA 1001 and 1002 Standards while best protecting Maine's citizens and environment.

5. Car Fire Prop - Out of Service

Due to unforeseen complications, our Car Fire Prop will be out of service for longer than anticipated. The prop's electronic gas control system has failed and will need to be completely replaced, which will take some time due to the current situation of commerce in the U.S. today. We'll keep everyone apprised of any developments as soon as they become available, including the date that we anticipate having the prop back in circulation.

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6. New SCBA Air Confidence Trailer (Red Maze)

We are thrilled to announce that our new SCBA Air Confidence Training Trailer (aka the “Red Maze”) has arrived and folks are already being trained on its use. Our staff participated in a fantastic initial Train-the-Trainer event with a representative from Draeger, and the prop itself will be ready for action soon.

Our current next steps are to transport it out to four locations for a second round of Train-the-Trainer sessions, with the intent of covering different geographical areas so that this prop can be utilized as much as possible throughout the state. We will share additional details about these training opportunities as soon as they are finalized.



7. Transition to Online Testing | QuestionMark

A team of MFSI staff and State Fire Instructors recently participated in a two-day training with a representative from QuestionMark, the software that we will be using to transition to paperless written exams. QuestionMark is a very robust and user-friendly testing platform, with extensive reporting options, and we can't wait to get the new system fully implemented.

Many aspects of our written testing process will remain exactly the same - there will still be a live proctor in the room with all candidates, for example, and we will still be using PTS as our source for test banks - but there are also many advantages and improvements that come with switching to an online delivery method.

We look forward to sharing more updates with you all as they become available! And of course, one of our top priorities will be ensuring that all test-takers, program coordinators, proctors, and other stakeholders have all the tools & information that they need for success.

8. National Fire Academy 6 Day

The 6-Day NFA program in May was a great success. Firefighters and Fire Officers from all over Maine worked with two NFA facilitators to make the Leadership in Supervision program run smoothly. We want to thank the two NFA Instructors for providing a solid learning experience for the students, as well as a special thank you to the Town of Topsham, Fire Rescue Chief McLaughlin, and Topsham's crews, for their support and for allowing us to utilize their training room for this week-long event.





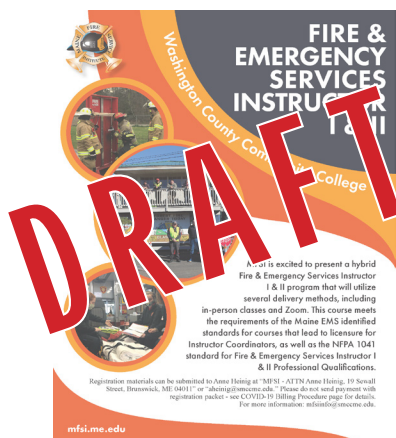
9. Oxford County Basic Pumps Program

MFSI recently delivered one of the largest Basic Pumps programs to date, with 30+ candidates from all over Oxford County at the Fryeburg Fairgrounds. We had a great time in the Western Mountains of Maine with all the good people of that region.

Check out more pics from this training event on our [Facebook page!](#)



10. Fire Instructor I & II / Bridge Programs



We have several Fire Instructor programs that we are currently lining up for the summer & fall of 2022, as well as the start of 2023.

- Fire Instructor II Bridge Program (EMCC Bangor)
- Fire Instructor I & II (Washington & Cumberland Counties)
- Live Fire Instructor & Instructor In-Charge Maine State Certification (non-ProBoard)

Details and flyers will be released as soon as the logistics for these programs are finalized.

11. MFSI's 75th Anniversary

In 2023, MFSI will celebrate 75 years of fire training in Maine. After the 1947 wildfires, our state's political leaders recognized the urgent need to better train firefighters and ensure their safety during firefighting operations. We have come a long way in the past 75 years, and we are proud to continue working to make MFSI better each day.



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12. Skills Exams Update



Upcoming 2022 Skills Exam dates & locations are as follows:

- June 4th & 5th, Hollis Fire Training Facility
- June 26th, Yarmouth Fire Training Facility
- July 9th, Hodgdon Fire Training Facility
- August TBD, Ellsworth Fire Training Facility
- October 16th, Bangor Fire Training Facility
- December 22nd, Yarmouth Fire Training Facility

Altogether, these exams will provide opportunities for over 250 firefighters to achieve ProBoard Certification.

13. Advisory Committee

The SMCC/MFSI Advisory Committee will be convening on June 10th for its biannual meeting. We've had a very busy 6 months and the group will have much to discuss.

We wanted to take a moment to introduce our readers to the folks who comprise our Advisory Committee, since we could not succeed in delivering our mission without their guidance and support. These are the fire service professionals that currently serve on the SMCC/MFSI Advisory Committee:

Voting Members:

- Committee Chair – Chief Ken Brilliant, Brunswick.
- Committee Vice-Chair – Chief William Gillespie, Liberty
- Chief Robert Chase, Auburn
- Chief Matthew Bartlett, Bar Harbor
- Chief Chris Lavoie, Glenburn
- Chief Darrell White, Presque Isle
- Chief Brent Libby, Windham
- Ken Desmond, Maine State Federation of Firefighters
- Gerry Gay, Professional Firefighters of Maine
- Senator Chip Curry, Maine Fire Protection Service Commission
- MFSI Director, James A Graves (tie-breaking vote only)

Non-Voting Members:

- Director Steven Greely, Maine Bureau of Labor
- Charles C. Soltan, Insurance Industry
- Faith E. Staples, Maine Emergency Management Agency
- SMCC President, Joseph Cassidy
- State Fire Marshal, Joseph Thomas

MFSI Staff: Non-Voting Members:

- MFSI Deputy Director, James Roy
- Training Program Manager, Frank Hammond
- Training Program Manager, Walter Morris
- Certification & Curriculum Assistant Manager, John Churchill



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- Marketing & Certification Software Manager, Gwen Fraser

Emeritus Status:

- Retired Chief William St. Michel, Town of Durham
- Retired Chief Michel Lajoie, City of Lewiston

If you have concerns or questions about MFSI, the voting members can be contacted and will direct questions to us - or you can simply call Director Graves who is always willing to speak with folks about our mission and its course and direction.

14. Recent damage to MFSI Props and Equipment

Folks, we wish to see all our props remain available to assist and support fire training efforts around Maine. However, many of these props have recently sustained significant damage and will require repair and/or be taken fully out of service due to the damage. We simply ask you to do all you can to prevent damage and see that the prop is returned in good order. We know and realize things happen; kindly call or email Support Services Manager, Ray Bishop, of any issues or damage as soon as possible. Our concern is that if our equipment is not utilized with proper care, we may not be able to sustain some of the props we have in the future. We appreciate your continued cooperation on this matter.

15. Live Fire Training Facilities Engineering Inspections

MFSI and the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission collaborated to have seven regional fire training facilities inspected by a licensed engineer in accordance with the NFPA 1403 Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions. This will also support efforts to improve and increase our statewide capacity in that end. MFSI and the Fire Commission sincerely thank all that made this possible, specifically our local partners in the following communities: Auburn, Bangor, Caribou, Ellsworth, Farmington, Hollis, Yarmouth, and coming soon, Fairfield!



16. VFIS EVOC Train the Trainer

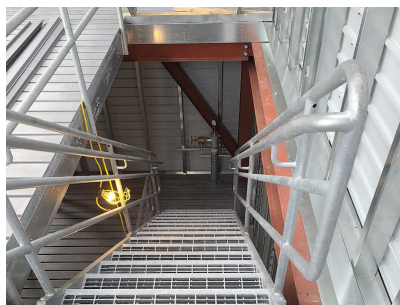
Planning is well underway for a VFIS EVOC Train the Trainer to be held in Augusta in collaboration with Maine BLS. More information will be forthcoming. Please contact Certification & Curriculum Assistant Manager John Churchill at jchurchill@smccme.edu or 207-844-2074 for more information.



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17. New Fairfield Facility

Great work is underway on the new Live Fire Training Facility in the town of Fairfield! Check out the latest progress pics below, courtesy of Fairfield Chief Duane Bickford. This was one of multiple awards made by the Maine Fire Services Protection Commission Grant Program, which is administered by SMCC/MFSI. These valuable assets are constructed with the goal of attracting more individuals to the fire service, and improving firefighter training around the state of Maine. We can't wait to start using this facility for training programs.



18. Maine Fire Service Icon Retires

Steve Willis's name is synonymous with fire training and education here in Maine: a pioneer of Maine's fire service who wrote training safety techniques that became national standards is retiring. Steve Willis is the chairman of Southern Maine Community College's Fire Science Department. He has spent 40 years coordinating the program to train hopeful and in-service firefighters to get their associates degrees. The program is 54 years old. "I've seen our program grow



from just 6 full-time students when I was a student to 120 students," Willis said during a speech at his retirement celebration. SMCC's website describes the program as focused "on developing skills in comprehensive approaches to fire protection that utilize cost-effective proactive, reactive, and management methods. The ultimate goal is to help the student develop the appropriate skills and knowledge for professional fire protection." All of us wish Steve the very best in retirement. We thank you, sir, for all you have done.

That concludes our May & June update. We want you all to know we are here to assist you in your training needs so you all go home at the end of the alarm. Kindly submit a report to Director Graves and Deputy Director Roy in an email stating items of concern that result from your county's meeting. We will address them as soon as possible. THANK YOU.

Please stay safe out there, we need you all.

With much respect,

Director Jim Graves