

NEW: Fire Fighter I & II Program Board on MFSI Website Aims to Help Interested Candidates to Find Programs Nearby. Is a program not listed? Let us know and we will post it.

FYI: MFSI staff email addresses have changed. Please find updated Staff Directory on the last page.



*Celebrating 75 Years of Service
1948 - 2023*

THE BUGLE'S ECHO

Maine Fire Service Institute November - December 2024

December 3rd, 1999, was a somber day in New England, as people awoke to the news that six City of Worcester Fire fighters had been lost in a fire in an abandoned warehouse.

We proudly dedicate this volume of the Bugles Echo to "Worcester 6" — Lt. Thomas Spencer, Lt. James Lyons, Firefighter Timothy Jackson, Firefighter Paul Brotherton, Firefighter Jeremiah Lucey, and Firefighter Joseph McGuirk. May they forever rest in peace.

In a news article from NBC Boston in 2023, acknowledging 24 years since this tragic fire, Lt. Thomas Spencer's son remembers his father's sacrifice. "... with his father tattooed on his leg, Dan Spencer – like his dad – is a lieutenant with the Worcester Fire Department. He says as a kid, he always thought about following in his father's footsteps. "I used to come visit him at the station all the time and I think at that age you're still in that ...



'I'm gonna be a firefighter', every kid goes through that, but I think that's where it cemented it and you just don't grow out of that phase after that," he said.

Dan Spencer is far from the only one to continue his father's legacy in the department. He's one of the seven sons of those firefighters now doing the same job.

TIMING OF NEW FIREFIGHTER I & II CURRICULUM UPGRADE

MFSI will test to the current fourth edition of the Fire Fighter I & II curriculum from Jones & Bartlett for the 2025 testing cycle. Locals can upgrade to the fifth edition, but will have to use our current paperwork for certification exams. We will begin the heavy lift of upgrading our documents to the new NFPA standard by December 2024.

Once this process begins, per accreditation procedures, MFSI will submit updated materials to Pro Board. Once verified, MFSI will provide the new curriculum packages for Maine State Fire Instructors, as well as local municipal fire training coordinators and additional folks involved in training firefighters here.

It is projected that MFSI will begin testing to the new standard in 2026.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Maine Fire Service Professionals:

As we reflect on the past year, the training and certification efforts made by everyone involved in the Maine Fire Service have had a tremendous impact. From our local fire departments, program coordinators, apparatus operators, to our skills testing and certification teams, all the municipal and State Fire Instructors that sacrifice time with family and friends to pass along the trade we so dearly love, to the support services folks that tirelessly transport trailers and props, each and every one of you plays an essential role in ensuring our firefighters are prepared to protect our communities across Maine.

The dedication displayed by all—whether you are on the ground providing local training, driving an apparatus to a training, providing other support, overseeing coordination, or managing the administrative responsibilities —has been nothing short of extraordinary. Your hard work ensures that our firefighters not only meet but exceed the rigorous standards required to keep our firefighters safe, but also the citizens they serve.

There is truly no way to quantify the positive impact you all have had. Every firefighter trained, every certification earned, and every skill perfected directly affects the safety of our communities, from the smallest towns to our largest cities here in Maine.

On behalf of the entire Maine Fire Service Institute, I thank you. Your work may often go unrecognized by the public but know that your contributions have an immeasurable effect on the safety and well-being of the people we serve in the State we love.

Together, we continue to uphold the values of excellence, dedication, and service that define the Maine Fire Service. I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you in the years to come. Please have a safe and happy holiday season and enjoy it with family and friends.

With the highest level of respect,



Director Jim Graves

LETTER FROM TRAINING PROGRAM MANAGER FRANK HAMMOND JR.

The vast majority of fire service provision to a community or other entity is an act of accountability. Firefighters in a community are expected to meet the highest standards in preparation, operation, and effectiveness by the residents in the community. For this to occur, accountability at all levels of Fire Service Training must also be held to the highest levels, as substandard preparation leads to substandard service delivery. Any response by firefighters that results in unnecessary injury or property loss can arguably be linked directly to a failure of accountability either on the part of the entity, the firefighter(s) involved, or both.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Accountability as an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. These obligations and willingness to accept responsibility are indelibly cast upon and within all levels of fire service leadership, management, and each firefighter. Without a willingness to accept any expected degree of proficiency or accountability, the fire service can quickly diverge into a state of failure, loss, and intense scrutiny from both within the industry and from the public.

Fire Service Leadership and Management are bound by state and local statutes and nationally recognized standards set forth by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to provide regular, relevant, and recurring training to all responders at all levels within their respective organizations. Situations for future failures occur when leadership and management, by act or omission, fail to provide regular, relevant, in-context training to their firefighters.

As reported in a multitude of Firefighter Fatality Investigation Reports issued by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), recurring training-related shortcomings incurred by leadership and management are many from issues concerning a lack of instructional objectives that specify actions to be taken by instructors and recruits during training evolutions, or a lack of a written and shared risk management plan to address manufacturer-recommended training on limitations of personal protective equipment, or training programs for heat-related illness recognition and reporting based on the institution's written Job Performance Requirement (JPR).

Some fire service leaders and managers do not believe that they will be held to standards that they fail to meet; those leaders and managers are wrong. As suggested in Schlenker's Model, one of the employer's quintessential obligations is regular, relevant, in-context training (Wiley, 2022).



MFSI Instructors leading Live Fire Instructor/LFIC, 2024

MFSI WELCOMES THE PRO BOARD COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION

MFSI is the statewide authority on Pro Board certification for fire training in Maine. On 10/28-29, members from the Pro Board Committee on Accreditation (COA) conducted a site visit at MFSI as part of the re-accreditation process for FFI/II, FI I/I, FOI/II, and FLSE I. This process occurs every few years and ensures that MFSI processes comply with NFPA 1000. MFSI must also file program updates to Pro Board every time NFPA standards are updated. We are excited to share official news shortly.

UPCOMING VFIS/EMSVO TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

VFIS needed to reschedule the October 5 - 6th program. With a new edition coming out, this means all trained since 2016 will need information on keeping their program delivery credentials.

We will make this a program a priority as we need all to help deliver training across the state.

BLACK AIR MANAGEMENT SCBA CONFIDENCE MAZE UPDATE

After more than a year out of service the 2014 'Black Maze' is back in service with an 80% rehab of the unit.



IMPORTANT: Beginning this month, a number of training props that utilize water will be shutdown for the winter. Check website for the list.

STORIES 'FROM THE FIELD' ON FACEBOOK

Firefighters from Vinalhaven and North Haven joined MFSI Instructor Rob Hendrick for a Vehicle Extrication class last weekend. [Vinalhaven Emergency Services](#)

Continued focus on extrication techniques can reduce rescue times, increase safety, and provide better access to the individual/s involved in the crash. Way to train [#Maine](#) [#FireTraining](#)



FROM THE FIELD: This season, Chief Smeltzer completed a Train-the-Trainer for the new SUV car fire prop. [Waldoboro Fire Department](#) After borrowing the prop to train his department, he shared that training worked great! "I truly enjoyed using it and I look forward to teaching more with it. Thank you to all who made it possible for us to have it." If your department is interested in utilizing the SUV prop but don't have anyone on staff that's been trained to run it, reach out t... See more

FROM THE FIELD: Basic Pumps Operator Course with MFSI Instructors Rob Hendrick and Mike Azevedo at sponsoring department, [Dover-Foxcroft Fire Department](#). Students from [Sangerville Fire Department](#) and [Sebec Fire Department](#) also attended the BPOC training.

Thanks to [Milford Fire/Rescue](#) and [Carmel Fire & Rescue](#) for sharing their team with other departments and improving local training and capacity! [#firetraining](#) [#Maine](#) [#firefighter](#)

FROM THE FIELD: The SCBA Air Management "Red Maze" Trailer has been out in the field training firefighters. Thanks for MFSI State Fire Instructor Surdick for sharing these photos of firefighters from Sebec, Hudson, and Bradford who were in attendance. Once the normal air management and survival skills were practiced, further training was initiated by the officers involved. "This is when officers see a chance to train where they can, above what is planned."

[Sebec Fire Department](#) [MiloFire Dept](#) [Hudson Fire & Rescue](#) [Friends of Bradford Fire](#)

FROM THE FIELD: Thanks to MFSI Instructor Ray Gale for leading the training on the blue forcible entry door prop at [Surry Volunteer Fire Dept.](#)

FIRE OFFICER I in Gorham completed its 5-day delivery of the current FOI curriculum, with students from the Mid Coast to York County, predominantly career firefighters. Congratulations to all candidates on their hard work and dedication to professional growth and commitment to community. Thank you to MFSI Instructors Chief Schools and Bill Dingee. [#firefighter](#) [#fireofficer](#) [#firetraining](#) [#Maine](#)

[Gorham Fire Department](#) [Buxton Fire & Rescue](#) [Oxford Fire/Rescue](#) [Biddeford Fire Dep...](#) See more





SUV CAR FIRE PROP TRAIN-THE-TRAINERS

To be able to request and use this prop, you must be an active participant in this Train-the-Trainer and show proficiency. If your region desires this training, please contact Deputy Roy, 207-844-2076, with as busy as MFSI has become, we ask your patience. **Northern counties will be prioritized for the next round of training sessions in Spring 2025.**

- Saco Fire - Sept 11
- Bangor Training Facility - Sept 17
- Fairfield Fire - Sept 22
- Brunswick Emerson Station - Oct 2

We thank all that assisted us in the mission, and we will be back at it in the spring with a few locations in mind. Aroostook, Franklin, Washington Counties. Special thanks to Deputy Chief Dave Hamel, Assistant Chief Chandler Corriveau, Chief Travis Leary, and Deputy Chief James Millson for the support.

UPCOMING NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY

Planned for March 8th & 9th, 2025 at MFSI HQ in Brunswick. A minimum of 12 to run. Fliers available online.

- Executive Skills Series: Exercising Leadership through Difficult Conversations - F0522
- Command & Control of Wildland Urban Interface Fire Operations for the Structural Chief Officer - F0612

NFA MAINE-FLORIDA STATE WEEKEND 2025

Save the Date: April 5-6, 2025
Point-of-Contact: Paul Froman
Email: pfroman@mainecc.edu
Info & Registration: December 2024
[Link to NFA Website on Courses](#)

FIRE TRAINING SCHEDULE HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED FOR PRO BOARD FIRE INSTRUCTOR & FIRE OFFICER PROGRAMS TO MEET DEMANDS

The basic premise of the planned schedule is to commit to a fair statewide approach and provide folks with some ability to plan their professional certification needs.

We will do all we can to provide an opportunity in each region at a minimum every four years. Some of the larger populated regions will have a two-year opportunity as the demand is higher. The proposed schedule through 2026 is available on the MFSI website. To the right is a list of 2025 programs that are *subject to change if necessary*.

2025 Fire & Emergency Services Instructor I/II

- Aroostook County (Presque Isle)
- Cumberland County (Brunswick)
- Cumberland County (Scarborough)
- Penobscot County (Bangor)

2025 Fire Officer I

- Hancock County (Ellsworth)
- Lincoln County (Waldoboro)
- Aroostook County (Caribou/Presque Isle)
- York County (Alfred)

Additional 2025 Proposed Programs

- Fire Officer II Academy: Cumberland County (MFSI)
- Live Fire Instructor/LFIC: Hancock County (Ellsworth)

FIRE OFFICER III

To further support the demand in Maine, the Regional Alliance for Firefighter Training (RAFT) is providing Fire Officer III Pro Board programming to multiple locations next year. Dates will be announced on the MFSI website.

NEW F-450 FOR PROPS

A new F-450 was added to help move props and equipment around the State as our Support Services division has become extraordinarily busy in the last few years.



BASIC PUMPS TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

With an overwhelming response to the Kennebunk program, we will continue to do all we can to meet demand and are aiming to deliver another program in the spring in the Bangor area.



SFI Tracy and LEI/LFIIC candidate during live burn, Yarmouth, 2024

CHIEF JOHN DUROSS RETIRES FROM THE CITY OF SACO FIRE DEPARTMENT

MFSI extends our deepest respect and heartfelt congratulations to Chief John Duross for his remarkable career with the Saco Fire Department. Chief Duross has been a pivotal force in advancing the Maine Fire Service, making contributions that cannot be accurately measured, even with the most precise methods. His leadership within the York County Chiefs Association significantly bolstered training efforts across the greater York County region.

As a champion at the Maine Fire Chiefs Association, he played a critical role in shaping the Fire Chiefs Workshop. His dedication to Maine Fire Training & Education and MFSI (MFT&E, now MFSI) has left an indelible mark on fire training in Maine, ensuring that his efforts will continue to benefit future generations.



Director Graves shares, "We wish Chief Duross all the best in his future endeavors, especially on the golf course, where we hope the golf gods bless him with a solid 75 on 18 holes. Personally, I recall a memorable moment from the 1990s when Chief Duross tested Deputy Roy and I for our Driver Operator Certification. His stoic demeanor was both intimidating and encouraging, but he was always proud to see growth in others and offered unwavering support. The fire service is truly fortunate to have an exemplary leader in Chief John Duross. Congratulations, Chief! From all of us at MFSI."

SMCC-MFSI ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS ON DECEMBER 6 @ 10:00AM

Held at MFSI HQ on the SMCC Mid Coast campus in Brunswick, the public is welcome to attend. Please let MFSI know if attending so that ample seating is arranged. An agenda is submitted to all members of the committee two weeks prior. There is a five-minute public comment period.

A SPOTLIGHT ON MFSI SENIOR FIRE INSTRUCTOR HAROLD SMITH



Harold with future 4th generation firefighter checking out wildland training.

"When I was a kid, my dad was the Fire Chief in Acton. I was always going to the station with him and going on calls with him. I couldn't wait to turn 18 to join the department so I talked my dad into starting a Junior Fire Department so that I could join when I was 14. Since then, I have been every rank in the **Acton Fire Department**, including the Chief for 13 years.

I am the last EMT on Acton that started when they formed in 1980. I was a Critical Care EMT from 1987 until 2016 when the state did away with that license level. I am currently an Advanced EMT.

After 30 years as a career Firefighter in Sanford, I retired so that I could teach the Fire Fighter I & II program at the **Sanford Regional Technical Center (SRTC)** where I am starting my 12th year as a teacher.

started going out West fighting wildland fires in 1988 with the Maine Forest Service, then to the White Mountain National Forest in 2000 where I am a qualified crew boss.

I have seen many beautiful parts of our great country and worked with many dedicated wonderful firefighters, including the Montana State prison crew. I earned an Associates degree in Building Construction, Associates in Fire Science, and a Bachelor's degree in Applied Technical Leadership.

In the early 1990's when I was taking classes for my **Fire Science** degree, a well-respected instructor named Dave McLean said to me *"Harold, it is great that you take all these classes but its time you start giving back. You need to become an instructor."* So, in 1995 I joined MFT&E, now MFSI. I found my niche in teaching Wildland Firefighting, EVDT and BPOC. I stopped counting the number of BPOC students when I reached 600 and that was many years ago.

I was part of Maine's very **first Fire Officer I** class in 2001 along with Director Graves and Deputy Director Roy. Tim Campbell and I were roommates. We both had a lot in common including the gift of gab. I remember one night, we were solving the world's problems when I looked at my watch and it was 0400 hrs. I said, "Timmy we have to go to sleep Dave McLean is going to be playing the bagpipes in an hour.

If you are just getting into teaching: find your niche, teach it, perfect it, and teach it some more. If you are considering teaching, well, in the words of Dave McLean, it's time to start giving back.

If you have never taught teenagers, you should give it a try. Every year when I get firefighters to help with my Class A and B burns, they always want to come back and help in future years. This age has a desire and drive to learn that is irresistible to any good fire instructor. When I go to a large fire now and see how many other firefighters that were students of mine, it is pretty rewarding."