



2024 REPORT

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

**FROM ALL OF US AT THE
MAINE FIRE SERVICE INSTITUTE**

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Maine Fire Service Institute is to assist in the development of skills and abilities in support of Maine’s Fire Service at the local, regional and state level in collaboration with the Fire Chiefs of Maine.

VISION STATEMENT

Partnering with the Fire Chiefs, Maine Fire Service Institute shall focus on customer service, quality, and safety. MFSI shall collaborate to deliver standardized and integrated training and education by leveraging technology, innovation and funding opportunities to meet the needs of a dynamic Fire Service.



OVERVIEW OF 2024

MFSI successfully delivered a variety of essential training and certification programs aimed at strengthening the capabilities of fire service professionals across the state. The year saw increased demand for both certification programs and support services, reflecting the evolving needs of Maine’s fire service personnel.

2024 has been a year of both significant achievement and notable challenges for MFSI. We have successfully delivered a wide range of training and certification programs, meeting the growing demands of Maine’s fire service, while navigating increased pressure from regulatory bodies, operational constraints, and staffing concerns. Our ongoing efforts toward Pro Board accreditation reflect our commitment to maintaining high professional standards, despite the administrative burden it places on the team.

Collaborations with key stakeholders such as Maine BLS, the Fire Chiefs, and the Maine Forest Service have yielded positive results, further strengthening the fire service in our state. However, the emergence of new technology-related fire hazards underscores the need for additional specialized training programs, which will require careful planning and resource allocation. As we move forward, balancing these expanding demands with sustainable operations remains a top priority, ensuring we continue to provide the essential services that Maine’s fire service professionals rely on.



SUPPORT SERVICES

MFSI saw an increase in requests across the state. This increase in demand shows the growing reliance on MFSI's fire training props and equipment along with other resources in support of regional training efforts.

MOST REQUESTED TRAINING PROP

1. **Forcible Entry Blue Door** - 97 uses
2. **EVDT** - 60 uses
3. **Car/System 64** - 36 uses
4. **Red "SCBA Air Management" Maze**
32 approved but more requested, less approved due to availability.
5. **Air Cascade** - 31 uses
6. **Doll Houses** - 18 uses

REMINDER: Certain training props are OOS during the winter/cold months. A list is available on the MFSI website. Spring requests can still be made now.



BURNOUT & STAFFING CONCERNS

A major concern for MFSI leadership is staff burnout. The team has consistently risen to meet increasing demands, but this has led to a lack of time for staff to focus on other critical work-related tasks. The workload shows no signs of decreasing, creating potential long-term sustainability issues for the organization. There must be an urgency to find ways to relieve these pressures.

EQUIPMENT & PROP MANAGEMENT

Damage to MFSI props and equipment has decreased compared to previous years, but challenges remain. Instances of unnecessary damage due to improper use persist, indicating a need for increased emphasis on prop handling and care.



NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY PROGRAMS

Hand-off programs did not fill up this year. It is beginning to feel we have met much of the demand for Initial Company Officer series and Leadership in Supervision series. Two (2) locations (Brunswick and Bangor) were *canceled due to low enrollment*.

In-State Six Day: MFSI was again awarded a six-day program for Command & Control of Incident Operations (O0312), which ran in May and was well received by all in attendance, including the visiting NFA instructors.

In-State Weekends (Spring/Fall) were well attended.

- Shaping the Future O0602
- Leadership Series F0521
- PICO F0458
- DMICO F0457
- ~~ICS & RM F0376~~ *canceled due to low enrollment*

Maine-Florida State Weekend at NFA in Maryland will be held April 5-6, 2025. Classes announced on MFSI website.



TRAIN-THE-TRAINER: SCBA RED MAZE AIR MANAGEMENT TRAILER

SFI Poremby led train-the-trainers in Saco (16 participants), South Portland (11), Waterville (4), Augusta (5), Houlton (12), Farmington (8), Bangor (19), and Brunswick (12) for a total of 87 participants.



TRAIN-THE-TRAINER: SUV CAR FIRE PROP WITH DEPUTY DIRECTOR ROY

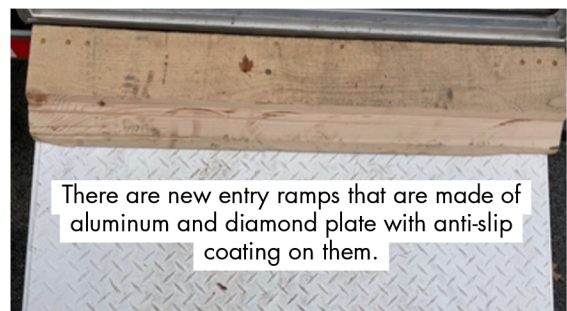
Jim Roy led trainings for the operation of the new Symtech SUV Car Fire Prop. A total of 47 participants across six locations attended these train-the-trainers. Planning for training sessions in northern and eastern locations across Maine will be set for spring deliveries.

Senior State Fire Instructors Chris McLaughlin and Howard Rice are part of a team of MFSI instructors that are integral to the success and continued improvements of the heavily demanded Pro Board-certified Fire Instructor and Officer programs.



SCBA 'BLACK MAZE' AIR MANAGEMENT TRAILER IS BACK IN SERVICE

After over a year of extensive repairs and costly improvements, the 'Black Maze' is back in service. On the website and within the trailer, there is a list of the major updates that were made to help maintain the durability and longevity of this valuable training prop.



There are new entry ramps that are made of aluminum and diamond plate with anti-slip coating on them.

CERTIFICATION TESTING

Certification programs again saw high numbers of participants testing for various qualifications. The trend highlights MFSI's ongoing commitment to maintaining high professional standards within Maine's fire service community. All written exam dates are published on the website.

2024 PRACTICAL SKILLS END TESTS

- Bangor - 35 Participants
- Caribou - 23 Participants
- Hollis - 83 Participants
- Ellsworth - 48 Participants
- Yarmouth - 77 Participants
- Farmington - 57 Participants

PRO BOARD ACCREDITATION

Over the past year, a significant portion of MFSI staff have been dedicated to preparing for the Pro Board re-accreditation site visit, working diligently to meet and exceed standards and expectations set forth by the accreditation agency and NFPA 1000.

MFSI has taken numerous steps to enhance the certification process, including a comprehensive review and upgrade of all certification policy manual. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to maintaining the highest levels of quality and professionalism in fire service training.

As of November 14, 2024, MFSI has been awarded reaccreditation for Fire Fighter I & II, Fire Instructor I & II, Fire Officer I & II, and has been granted an extension on the 2015 standard for Fire & Life Safety Educator I.

Over the next several months, MFSI staff will be upgrading Fire Fighter I & II to the new 2024 standard under NFPA 1010, which entails bringing in subject-matter-experts to support new test banks and aligning progress charts with the new J&B textbook, fifth edition.

Beginning in 2026, FF programs will begin testing to the new 2024 NFPA standard.



BASIC FIRE SCHOOL

BFS continues to be one of the most in demand programs for many regions in Maine. MFSI provides significant funding for these Basic Fire School programs through funding from the Fire Commission (MFPSC):

- Lincoln County
- Waldo County
- Milo Regional
- Jefferson
- Chebeague Island
- Sherman Regional

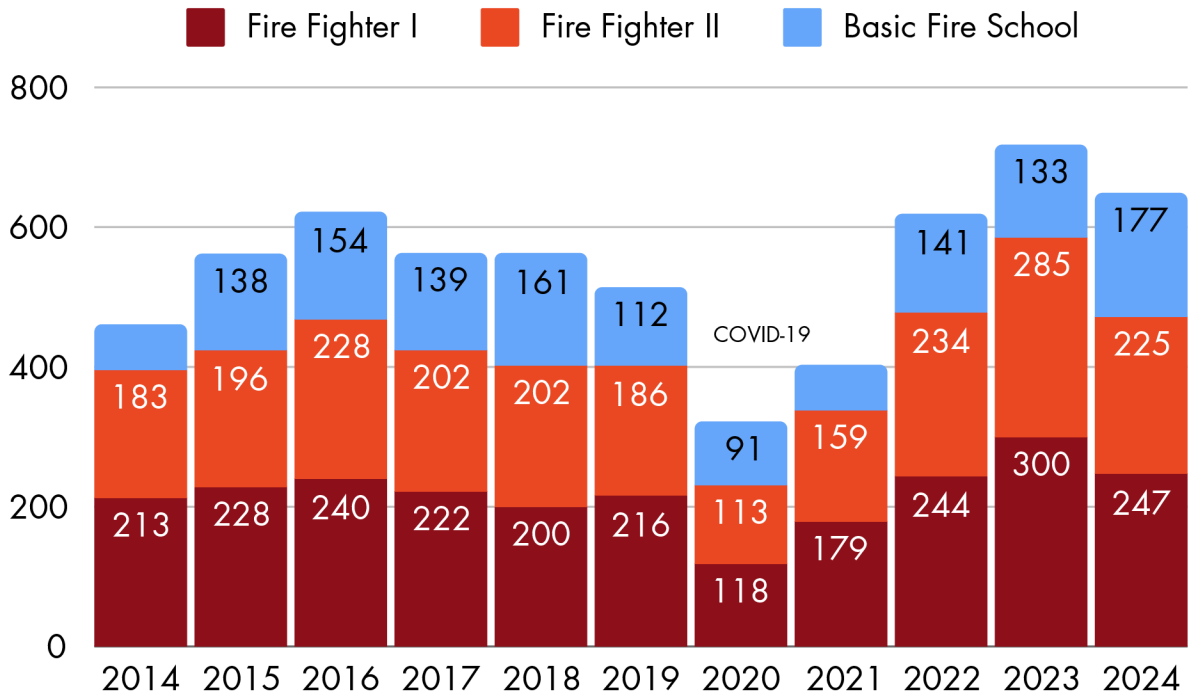


FIRE FIGHTER I & II

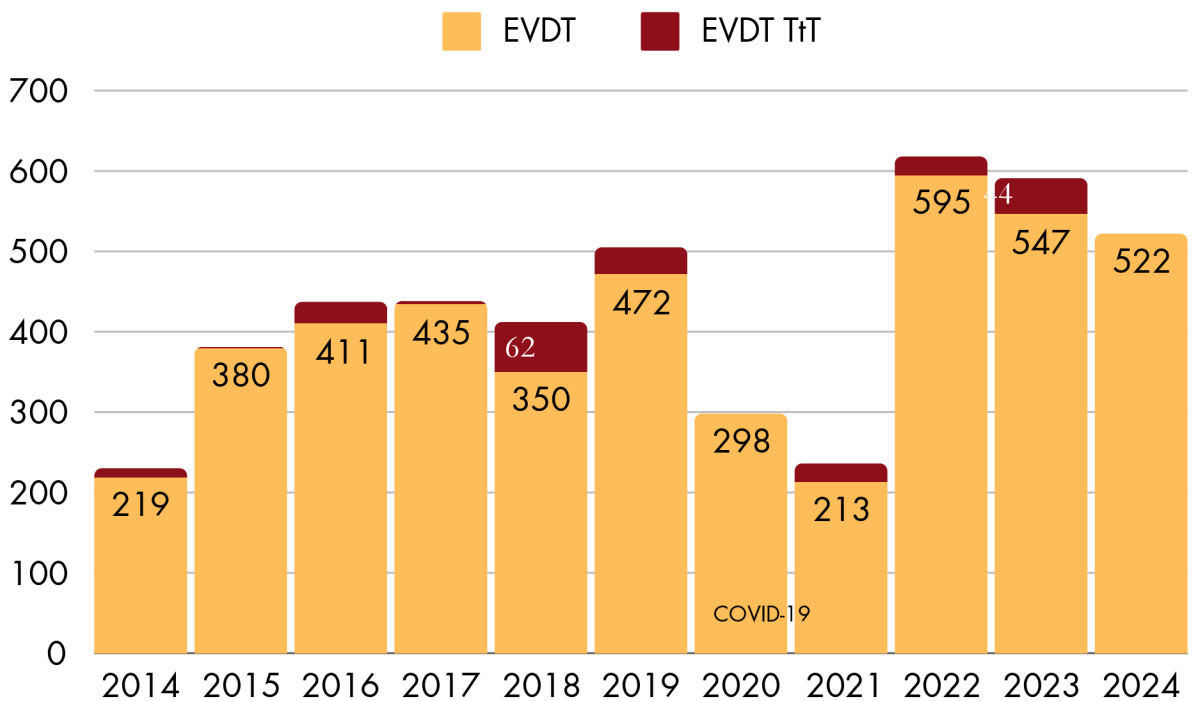
MFSI worked closely with several programs across the state due to the MFPSC funding.

- Katahdin Area (Penobscot County)
- Aroostook County
- Penobscot County
- Hallowell Regional Program
- Twin Rivers
- Knox County
- Gouldsboro Regional

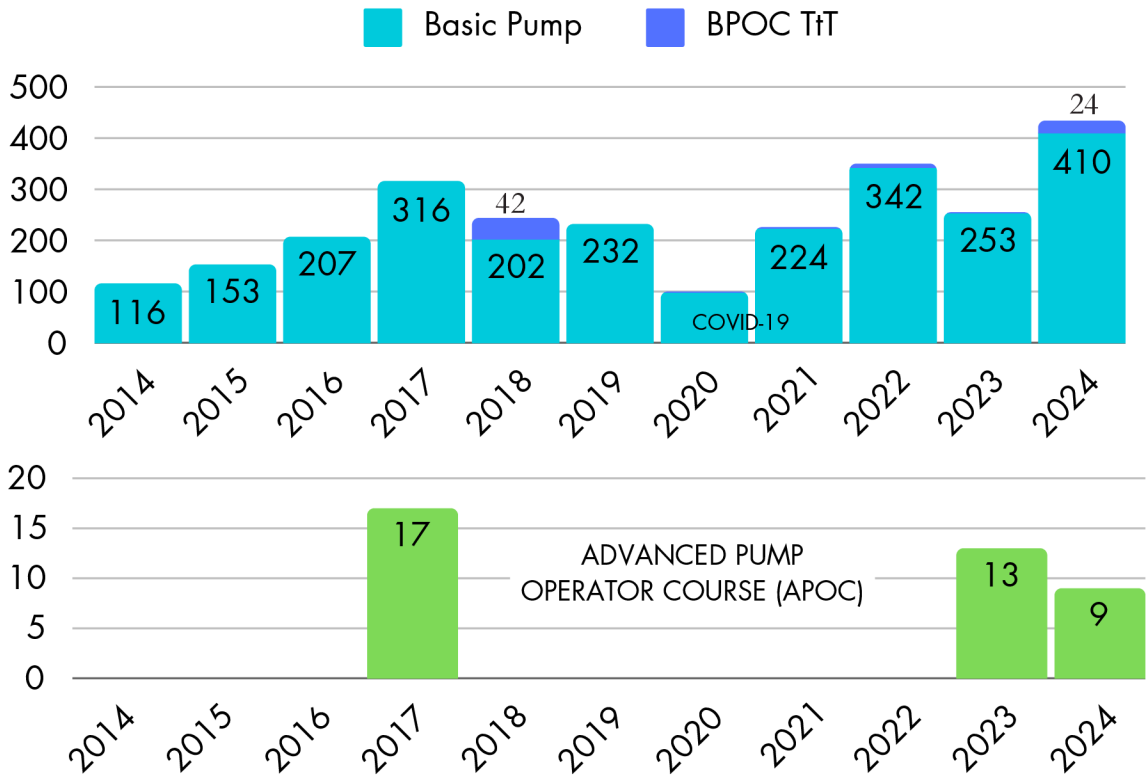
FIRE FIGHTER CERTIFICATION DATA THROUGH THE YEARS



EMERGENCY VEHICLE DRIVER TRAINING (EVDT) CERTIFICATIONS & VFIS CURRICULUM



PUMP OPERATOR COURSES THROUGH THE YEARS



MFSI Instructor Ray Gale has been active leading October trainings for 14 students from Trenton, Castine, Tremont, Mariaville, and Southwest Harbor ambulance for EVDT. 17 students also received BPOC training with the addition of Ellsworth and Orland.



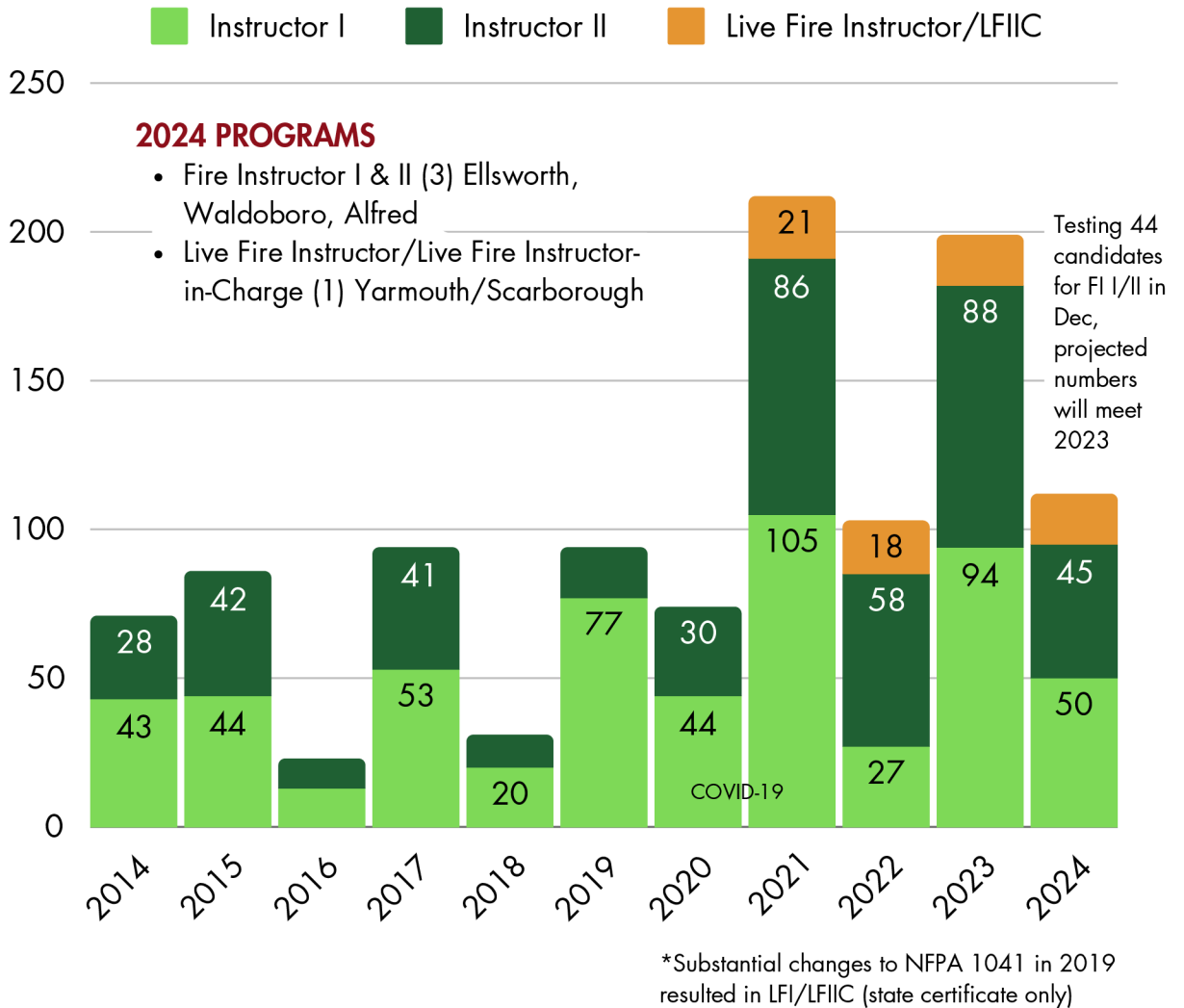
EVDT & BPOC PROGRAMS

The Basic Pumps Operator Course (BPOC) and Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT) programs continue to experience high demand across the state, highlighting the critical need for this specialized training in the fire service community. In response to this demand, efforts are ongoing to expand the pool of qualified instructors by focusing on Train-the-Trainer initiatives. These initiatives are designed to empower local municipal instructors with the skills and certifications necessary to deliver these programs, ensuring that training is both accessible and sustainable at the local level. By investing in local trainers, MFSI is helping to meet the growing needs of Maine’s fire service while promoting greater self-sufficiency in delivering essential safety training.

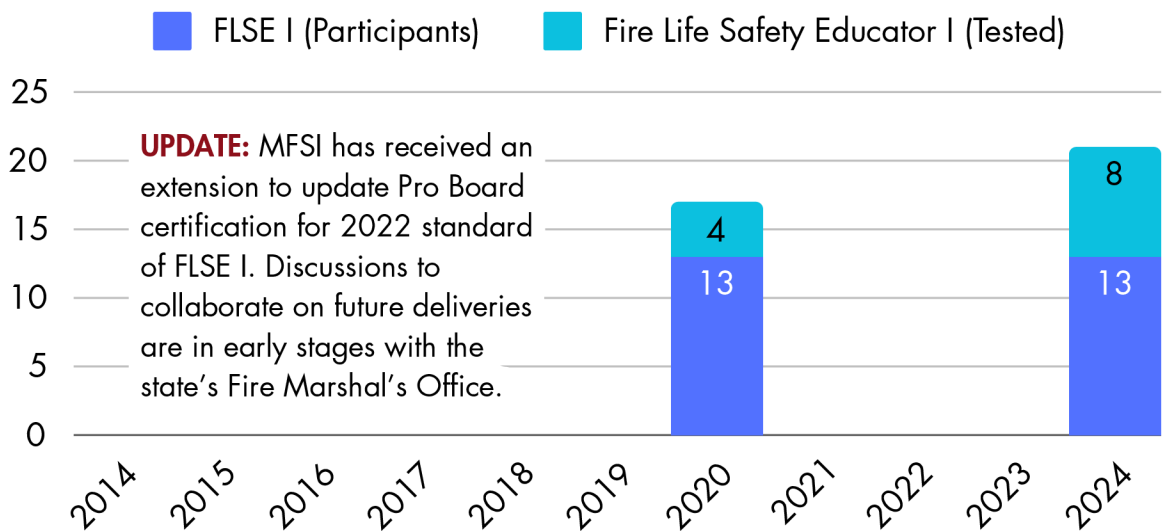


Senior State Fire Instructor Cory Wyman who serves full-time as a City of Bangor Fire Lieutenant worked with the Camden Fire Rescue Department. This photo speaks volumes of his steadfast dedication to firefighter training.

FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES INSTRUCTOR AND LIVE FIRE INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION DATA THROUGH THE YEARS

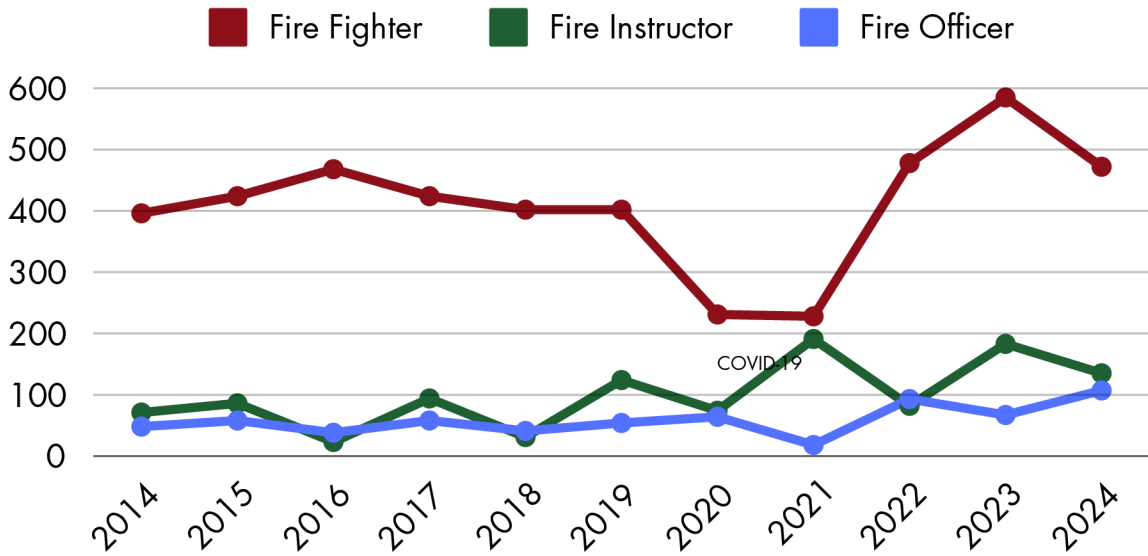


FIRE & LIFE SAFETY EDUCATOR I PROGRAM DATA THROUGH THE YEARS

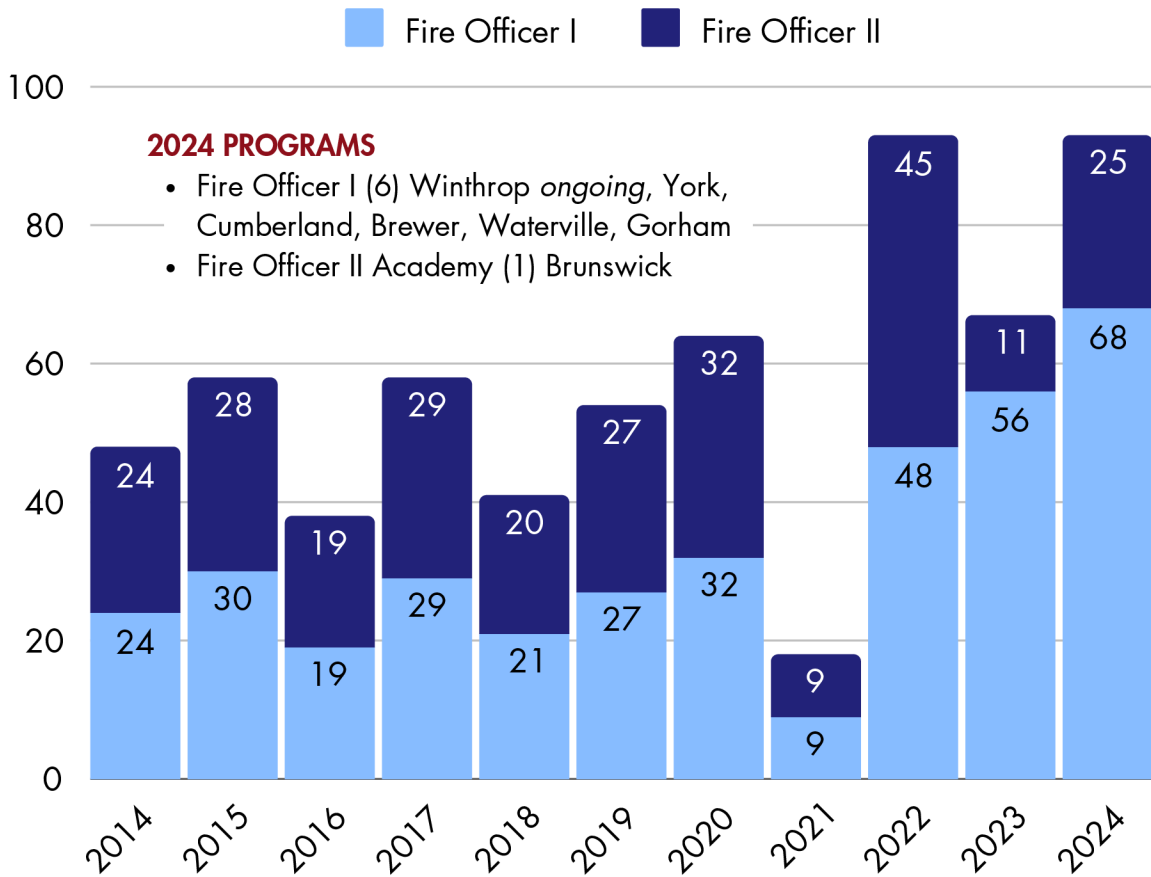




FIRE TRAINING CERTIFICATION TRENDS THROUGH THE YEARS



FIRE OFFICER CERTIFICATIONS THROUGH THE YEARS



COVID-19 affected enrollment and delivery. The NFPA standard was updated in 2020 and curriculum launched for FO I in 2022 and FO II Academy in 2024. For 2022-23, certification levels reflect overflow and testing of previous year programs.

**FIRE OFFICER II ACADEMY
LAUNCHES WITH GREAT
SUCCESS
AND FUTURE PLANS**

Candidates representing at least 24 municipalities across the state dedicated over 120 hours to completing Fire Officer II. From early mornings to late nights in the classroom, on active simulations, studying for examinations, and focusing within small groups, these candidates will no doubt bring home invaluable skills to better support their communities across the State of Maine. We are proud to be able to provide this Pro Board-accredited program and are committed to continuous growth and improvement to better serve future cohorts. The amount of course preparation from our instructors to adapt the curriculum, create simulations, and foster relationships across towns is also a testament to the commitment the fire service has to strengthen our response and training.

Congratulations to the Fire Officer II Academy candidates for successfully completing and excelling at the tasks put in front of you! Continue to train and lead with professionalism, dedication, and excellence. Represented: Rockland, Auburn, Winthrop, Easton, OOB, Bangor, Saco, Windham, Brunswick, Rockland, South Thomaston, Augusta, Waterville, Westbrook, Addison, Trenton, MDI, Gardiner, Waterboro, Orrington, Kingfield, Farmington, Windham, Bowdoinham, Scarborough, and Standish.

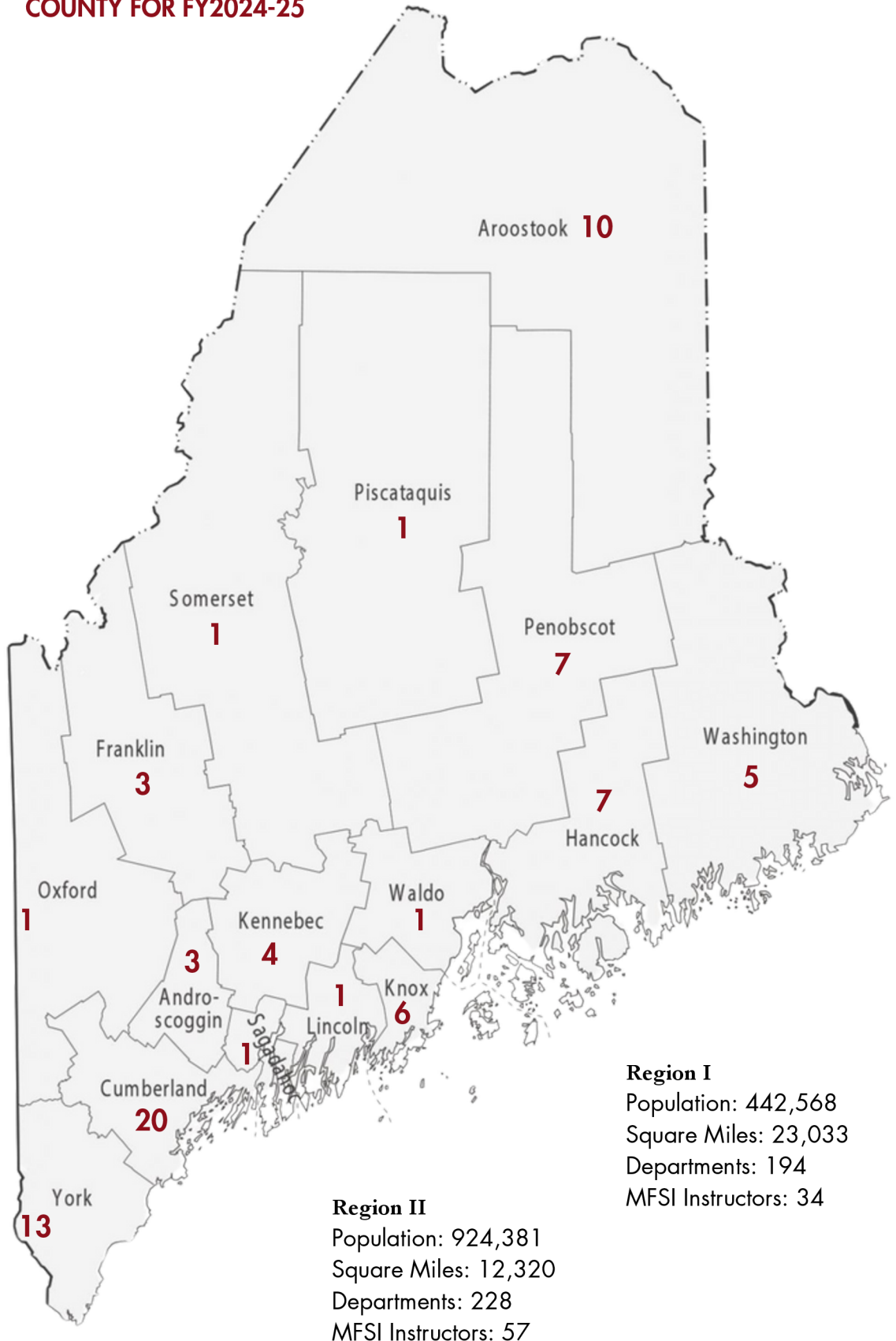


Senior Fire Investigator Jeremy Damren with arson dogs Harry & Dallas



Thank you to TPM Hammond with simulation preparation by SFI Poremby, and to Instructors McLaughlin, Rice, Harris, Brooks, Schools. With testing support by Instructors Whytock, Hooper, Heckman, Sullivan, Bouchard, and Hardy. And congratulations to SFI Stewart and Hernandez.

**NUMBER OF MFSI STATE
FIRE INSTRUCTORS PER
COUNTY FOR FY2024-25**



TECHNOLOGY FIRES AND TRAINING

A growing concern within MFSI is the lack of training on emerging fire hazards, particularly related to solar panels, energy storage systems (ESS), and electric vehicle (EV) fires. As the use of renewable energy technologies and electric vehicles rapidly increases, fire service professionals are underprepared to handle the unique risks these systems present. Solar panels and ESS can complicate fire suppression efforts due to high voltage dangers, while EV fires involve challenging thermal runaway scenarios. This training gap places significant pressure on MFSI to develop specialized programs that equip firefighters with the necessary knowledge and skills to safely and effectively manage these incidents. However, MFSI is already stretched thin with limited resources and staffing, further compounding the challenge of addressing these critical training needs.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES 1-DAY TRAINING / FEE \$25

RESPONDING TO FIRES INVOLVING SOLAR PANELS & ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Two Options To Attend:

- Saturday, April 27**
MFSI HQ, 19 Sewall St., Brunswick
- Sunday, April 28**
EMCC, Rangeley Hall, Rm 105/107, Bangor

Training Schedule

- 0730 - Arrival & Check-In
- 0800 - EV Emergency Response with Ron Butler, NFPA
- 1200 - Lunch Provided
- 1300 - Solar Emergency Response with Capt. Richard Birt, S.A.F.E.J
- 1600 - Dismissal

Registration forms available at mfsi.me.edu/events.
Submit form to aheinig@smcme.edu.

50 SEAT LIMIT PER DAY

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES FIRE TRAINING PROGRAM

A one-day program was offered in the spring in both Brunswick and Bangor, with folks from the NFPA on Electric Vehicle Fires and a subject-matter-expert on Energy Storage Systems and Solar Panel Emergencies. Both locations were filled to capacity.

REGIONAL ALLIANCE FOR FIREFIGHTER TRAINING (RAFT)

Offered one (1) Incident Safety Officer program. Planning for two (2) in 2025. MFSI will post outside agency program dates on website to show support of RAFT.

OSHA CHALLENGES & OFFICER CERTIFICATION

MFSI faced significant pressure from the potential OSHA mandates, particularly in officer-level certification. This has led to the creation of a Bi-Annual Schedule, designed to be balanced and equitable while addressing the state's certification needs. However, ongoing challenges arise from individuals demanding programming tailored to their specific schedules, putting strain on the Institute's planning efforts.

COLLABORATIONS WITH STATE AGENCIES

MFSI continues to work hard with all fire service stakeholders to see the betterment of our state's fire service become a reality. Efforts with Maine BLS, Maine Fire Chiefs, and State Forest Service has seen some great improvements over the past year. Strategies and relationship building continue to be at the forefront of engagement across silos.

MFSI FIRE TRAINING RECORDS HAVE BEEN DIGITIZED

After several years, we have completed the digital scanning of MFSI-related training files - from individual to program files and more. Records are now a few mouse clicks away. This is extremely time-saving when MFSI receives a record request (at least twice a week). Currently, digital deliveries are at no cost, while paper delivery costs \$10.

FIRE CHIEF WORKSHOPS

Two (2) workshops held in Bangor and Caribou ran in collaboration with the MFCA for a total of 34 participants.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

We have significantly enhanced communication with our instructors by implementing a more streamlined approach that includes text messaging, emails, and quarterly virtual meetings. The use of text communication allows for quick, efficient updates and immediate responses to urgent matters, ensuring instructors stay informed in real time. Emails continue to serve as a formal channel for detailed information.

Quarterly virtual meetings (switching from Zoom to Microsoft Teams software) are open to all MFSI instructors and seek to foster better engagement and collaboration among instructors from across the state. These virtual meetings provide an opportunity for real-time discussions, feedback, and problem-solving, which have greatly improved instructor involvement and strengthened our overall communication network.

The next virtual meeting will be held in early Spring 2025.



SWITCH IS STILL ONGOING

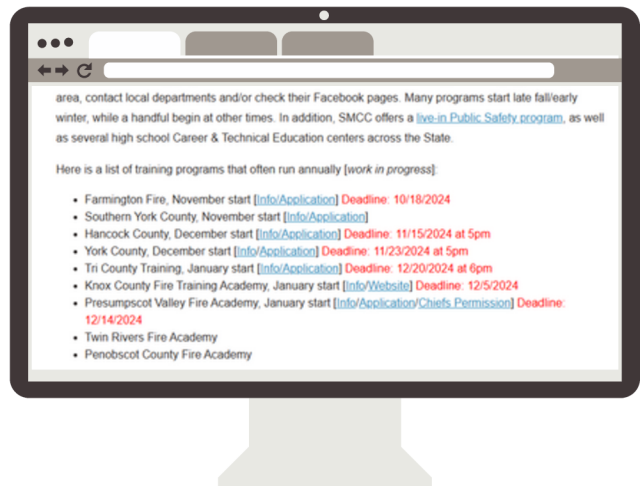
All MFSI staff and instructors have switched over to Microsoft from Google. This transition has not been seamless and many instructors have requested to use their personal or department emails instead. About half utilize MaineCC emails and the others use another preferred email. Another challenge to this switch is that the Portal is still attached to the old SMCC login for an unknown amount of time.

However, the Portal will be reduced to one-page with the bare minimal policies and common forms, especially as the new FF standards are adapted. Instructors are being encouraged to reach out to TPM or Certification department for the most updated setup forms.

This transition also continues internally as the database used for course registration and student tracking is moving to a completely new software platform. MFSI administrative staff are being trained on this over the winter/spring. Expected to have little to no effect on student experience.

PROMOTING FIRE FIGHTER I & II PROGRAMS ON MFSI WEBSITE

MFSI fields a handful of inquiries each week on where to find Fire Fighter programs and what steps to take to become a firefighter. In response to this, there is a list of regional fire trainings with application and information shared. Program coordinators are welcome to email flyers to MFSI to be sent out to the subscribers on FB and email. Send directly to sels@maineccc.edu.



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."



Pictured below, Senior State Fire Instructor JR Wallace is bestowing his many years of experience and knowledge on the skills of pump operation. JR serves the City of Lewiston as a Captain and takes time to assist MFSI with the mission of firefighter training.

Giving back is all part of being a professional fire instructor. Working closely with JR is Chief Timmy (TD) Hardy of the Town of Farmington Fire Department. Lieutenant Eric Watson of the City of Lewiston Fire Department, again giving back to the good folks of Oxford County. Thank you to all involved.



In conclusion, 2024 has been a year of both significant achievement and notable challenges for the Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI). We successfully delivered a wide range of training and certification programs, meeting the growing demands of Maine's fire service community, while navigating increased pressure from regulatory bodies, operational constraints, and staffing concerns. Our ongoing efforts toward Pro Board reaccreditation reflect our commitment to maintaining high professional standards, despite the administrative burden it places on our team.

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