

STATE FIRE TRAINING NEWS

THE BUGLE'S ECHO

MAINE FIRE SERVICE INSTITUTE

We dedicate this issue to all fire service members across the United States who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Their courage, their service, and their legacy will never be forgotten.

From April 27th through May 4th, the Maine Fire Service Institute will pause to honor these heroes by participating in Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters, a nationwide tribute in partnership with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF).

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the NFFF and the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend—a solemn reminder of those who gave everything for their communities. Since its inception, Light the Night has grown to include fire departments and families across the country lighting their homes and stations in red to show respect and remembrance.

We encourage every department, firefighter, and citizen to join us in lighting up the night. Let Maine—and the nation—shine bright in tribute to our fallen brothers and sisters.

For more information, please use the link:

[Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters - Memorial Weekend](#)



Fire Investigator led by Maine State Fire Marshal's Office had almost 40 candidates.

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HIGHLY ANTICIPATED EVOC/EVDT UPDATE

At this time, the EVDT program is in a holding pattern as we await key updates from VFIS and their online portal. TPM Azevedo will be stepping up to assist with the transition and upgrade to the revised VFIS-EVDT curriculum. We appreciate everyone's patience during this process. We'll be back in touch as soon as next steps are clear. In the meantime, until you hear otherwise, please continue to use the current 2nd edition of VFIS's EVDT to fulfill your training needs.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

FACING THE FIRE SERVICE OF TOMORROW – TOGETHER

April 25, 2025

Dear Maine Fire Service Professionals,

The modern fire service is standing at a crossroads.

Today's challenges aren't just about fires, motor vehicle crashes, or medical calls. They're about preparing the next generation to handle all of it—and to do so with the knowledge, skill, and professionalism that today's fireground and legal environment demand. But we're seeing a troubling trend emerge with the "right now generation"—a growing impatience with process, a desire for immediate results, and at times, a lack of appreciation for the depth of responsibility that comes with wearing the badge of a fire officer.

At the Maine Fire Service Institute, we know that meaningful training takes time. It takes careful planning, review, and alignment with evolving NFPA standards—many of which change every five years. Each change must be studied, absorbed, and reflected in our curriculum. That's not something you rush if you care about quality. That's something you *build*. And we're building it with purpose—Maine purpose.

Our programs aren't cut-and-paste national templates. They carry real Maine flavor. That means when you're serving as a fire officer and responding to incidents, you aren't just thinking about how to stretch a line or run a command board – you're thinking about Maine law. You know when to notify the State Fire Marshal's Office. You know how to engage with Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, DEP, DHHS, Maine Forest Service and more—because missing a step in that process can land your department in legal hot water faster than any fire ever will.

Let's be crystal clear: ignorance of the law or operating standards is not an excuse in today's fire service. When you're in a position of responsibility, you're expected to know your job—and do it well. MFSI is committed to giving you every tool to succeed, but it's up to each of us, individually and collectively, to embrace the commitment to train hard and train right.

We need to raise the bar in fire service training across Maine—not lower it for convenience. This is about protecting each other, our departments, and the people we serve. It's about building a future where the next generation is not only capable, but confident, competent, and fully prepared for the realities they will face. So let's stay the course. Let's be patient where patience is required. And let's never stop demanding excellence of ourselves and those who stand beside us.

Train hard. Train smart. And never forget who's counting on us.

With the highest of respect, and a reminder to be safe when the bell sounds, we need you all.

Jimmy



PERSONNEL NEWS

A FOND FAREWELL – AND A FUTURE WELCOME BACK TO JOHN CHURCHILL

As many of you know, Assistant Certification Software Manager John Churchill has officially retired from the workforce. We're all thrilled for him as he enjoys more time with his family and working around his home—something he's truly earned. We want to sincerely thank John for his unwavering support of MFSI operations over the past three years. His contributions have been many, but one of the most impactful was implementing the cloud-based written exam software known as QuestionMark. Thanks to John's leadership, we experienced something rare in this field: not a single complaint about the new process—and in fact, we received several compliments. That speaks volumes. Thank you, John. We wish you all the best in retirement—and we're looking forward to the possibilities of having you back in the field.

RECAP OF 2025 MFCA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The 2025 Maine Fire Chiefs' Association Professional Development Conference at Sunday River didn't just hit the mark—it blew the doors off. With over 80 vendors and record-breaking attendance, it officially became the biggest and best in the history of the event. This kind of success doesn't happen by accident—it's the result of strong partnerships, shared goals, and a collective commitment to moving the fire service forward. Let's keep that momentum rolling. Next year's conference is already in the works with Maine Fire Chiefs' Association leadership to line up speakers and expand the impact of the workshops. For the last two years, MFSI sponsored Deputy Chief Frank Viscuso (ret.), who recently earned FDIC's 2025 Instructor of the Year Award.

Instructor of the Year: At the conference, Cory Wyman received the Deputy Chief Marc Bellefeuille State Fire Instructor of the Year Award. Cory is an MFSI State Fire Instructor and City of Bangor Lieutenant who has been instrumental in delivering Basic Pumps programs across the state, equipping firefighters with the critical skills they need to operate safely and effectively. His programs consistently receive outstanding evaluations — not only because of his deep knowledge but because of his ability to truly connect with his students.



State Fire Instructor Phil Meunier has retired from MFSI as an Instructor & Evaluator after many years of devoted service. Phil dedicated countless hours to firefighter training and served as an Evaluator for skills exams, helping to prepare firefighters of the future.

His passion and expertise have made a significant impact on MFSI and the firefighting community. Thank you, Phil, for your many years of dedication and service. Fire training continues to be equipped by Phil's handiwork and carpentry skills as even in retirement, he continues to create dollhouses, a valuable training resource that departments from across the state utilize.

STATE & NATIONAL

STRENGTHENING WILDLAND FIRE RESPONSE

As part of our ongoing commitment to fire service training in Maine, MFSI is collaborating with the **Maine Forest Service** under the state agency agreement to enhance **Basic Forest Firefighter Training** across the state. In partnership with **Chief Gross and Maine Forest Service leadership**, we are working closely with **Regional Forest Rangers** to deliver these critical programs where and when resources allow.

This training The Maine Basic Wildland Training Course is designed to meet **NFPA 1001 Standard on Professional Qualifications for Firefighter** and, in the near future, will align with **NFPA 1010 and NFPA 1051 Wildland Firefighting Personnel Professional Qualifications – Basic Level**. Participants who complete the program will receive a **certificate from MFSI**, recognizing their achievement in wildland firefighting fundamentals. The Maine Forest Service regularly offers the national S130/S190 course as well for those interested. These programs will be scheduled regionally based on need and availability. For more information on upcoming courses, stay connected with MFSI and MFS.

ENHANCING STATEWIDE TRAINING INITIATIVES

Through a collaborative agreement with state agencies, the Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI) is thrilled to assist the Fire Marshal's Office (FMO) in expanding Fire Investigation training across the state. We are working closely with State Fire Marshal Esler, Investigators Roberts and Damren, along with Kevin Connelly from the ATF, to coordinate efforts. We aim to provide up to four (4) 40-hour Fire Investigation courses each year, contingent upon available resources and scheduling. This includes two courses within the Community College Fire Science Programs and two offered at regional locations. Participants will receive State of Maine Certification (not Pro Board), adhering to the NFPA 1033 Standard on Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigators and the NFPA 921 Guide for Fire & Explosion Investigations. We employ the Jones & Bartlett curriculum, Fire Investigator: Principles & Practice, Sixth Edition, to guarantee a high standard of proficiency in fire origin and cause investigation. Each course concludes with a formal assessment.

Please note that Fire Investigator programs are not available upon request, as demand currently exceeds our capacity. They will instead, be scheduled based on statewide demands and agency priorities.

For further details, please contact Director Graves. MFSI remains committed to supporting the FMO in delivering this critical training to Maine's fire service professionals.



MFSI STATE FIRE INSTRUCTOR & LEWISTON FIRE LIEUTENANT ERIC WATSON DEPLOYS FOR WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS

SFI Eric Watson recently traveled to Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri to assist in wildland firefighting operations as part of a Fire Service deployment for Maine. Once again, Eric demonstrated exactly how Maine gets the job done — with grit, determination, and no excuses. When asked on the line, "Can you guys hold this line?" Eric gave the kind of answer that makes Mainers nod with pride: "Yeah, us Maine boys have been holding lines since 1863." No doubt he would've made Colonel Joshua Chamberlain proud. "Stand firm, ye boys from Maine."

STATE & NATIONAL

REGIONAL FIREFIGHTER TRAINING SUPPORT

Director Graves testified in front of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety at the Maine State House on February 4th to speak in favor of the continued general funding support for \$200,000.00 in the general fund budget that supports a firefighter training program made possible by MRS Title 20-A §9005 Regional Fire Service Training Fund. There were a few questions and Representative Ken Fredette of Newport requested a report on training which Director Graves has submitted.

Please understand that these funds have been instrumental in allowing MFSI to push Fire Officer and Fire Instructor programs out to the Maine Fire Service. If we lose these funds we may need to cut programming. MFSI Finance and Director Graves are working on a strategy to continue operations as long as we can.

NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY

At this time, we have limited information regarding when the National Fire Academy (NFA) will resume in-person attendance. The current rumor suggests operations may restart in late July or early August. As a reminder, the federal fiscal year runs from October 1st to September 30th. With that in mind, we encourage everyone to continue advocating for the NFA by contacting your federal representatives.

The National Fire Academy plays a vital role in shaping the future of fire service training—both here in Maine and across the country. Let's make sure they hear how much we value this institution.

The NFA Six-Day program is scheduled to take place from May 12-17, 2025, at MFSI HQ in Brunswick. This Leadership in Supervision Series is comprised of three courses:

- (O0646) Creating Environments for Professional Growth
- (O0647) Perspectives in Thinking
- (O0648) Frameworks to Success

We have been extremely fortunate to obtain these programs in Maine over the past few years as we share with the five other New England States. NOTE: MFSI is working this all out to deliver the program as three 2-Day programs here in Maine the program will meet the intention of the original plan. Nothing stops Maine people when they are determined. #dirigo

FIRE FIGHTER I & II UPGRADE

At this time MFSI is remaining with the 4th edition of Jones & Bartlett Fire Fighter Curriculum, locals can upgrade but will have to use our current paperwork for certification. We must get through our reaccreditation and then we will begin the heavy lift of upgrading our documents and submitting to Pro Board the new materials for the certification process.

We will purchase curriculum packages and provide updates to the local fire training program coordinators and all folks involved in the fire fighter training system here in Maine.

UPCOMING EXAMS

- May 10 FO I Exams – Bangor
- May 17 – FF Skills – Ellsworth
- May 20 – FF Skills – Farmington
- June 7 & 8 – FF Skills – Hollis
- June 21 – FF Skills – Ellsworth
- June 27 FI I & II Exams – Brunswick

The road to excellence in the Maine Fire Service runs through every skill we teach, every exam we conduct, and every life we impact. Deputy Roy has planned several skills exams for the spring, and as always, we'll need the best of the best to ensure these exams are executed flawlessly.

For make-up exam times, please check the Upcoming Events page for dates. Remember, candidates must wait 30 days between testing.

To sign-up for a test or ask questions, contact Certification via Jim Roy: jroy@mainecc.edu 207.844.2076.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR FIRE INSTRUCTOR & OFFICER PROGRAMS

The planned schedule for professional certification promotes a fair statewide approach, enabling individuals to plan accordingly. Each region will have opportunities every four years, while densely populated areas will offer them every two years due to demand.

FIRE OFFICER I

Both of our current Fire Officer I programs are running strong, even after a brief setback thanks to some untimely flu bugs knocking out key State Fire Instructors. These things happen—we're human. But to their credit, all candidates were promptly informed and showed nothing but professionalism and understanding.

We're back on track. Waldoboro's program tested on April 17 and Ellsworth's should test out by May 10th. With that, we expect to welcome another 24 Certified Fire Officers into the ranks—strong leaders ready to step up and serve.

Looking ahead, two (2) more Fire Officer I programs are already in the queue, slated for Fall 2025 delivery in Aroostook and York County. This keeps us right on schedule with our bi-annual delivery plan and ensures we continue building leadership capacity across the state.

Projected FOI Programs for 2026:

- Cumberland County (Scarborough) Winter
- Penobscot County (Bangor) Winter
- Franklin County (Farmington) Fall
- TBD Fall

FIRE OFFICER II ACADEMY

The Maine State Fire Officer II Academy is set to launch at Eastern Maine Community College in Bangor. This Academy represents another step forward in building strong, capable leadership within our fire service ranks. Special thanks to former MFSI employee Cheryl Briggs-Fox for her continued noble and generous support—her dedication to fire service training still runs deep.

FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES INSTRUCTOR I & II

The Fire Instructor I & II programs in both Scarborough and Presque Isle have wrapped up and tested out with great success. That kind of outcome doesn't happen without solid commitment and grit from those on the ground. A special shoutout goes to four outstanding State Fire Instructors who stepped up to the plate and knocked it out of the park: Chief Howard Rice, Chief Chris McLaughlin, Chief Dan Brooks, and retired Chief William Dingee. These leaders didn't just teach—they led. They understand the true meaning of "giving back" and "paying it forward," and they've gone above and beyond to help build a stronger, smarter, and more prepared Maine Fire Service.

With demand for these programs at an all-time high, we're already planning the next two offerings: one in Penobscot County and another in Cumberland County. The mission continues—and so does the momentum.

- Aroostook County (Presque Isle) Completed
- Cumberland County (Scarborough) Completed
- **Cumberland County (Falmouth) Fall 2025**
- **Penobscot County (Bangor) Fall 2025**
- Franklin County (Farmington) Winter 2026
- York County (Alfred) Winter 2026
- Oxford County (Oxford) Fall 2026
- Kennebec County (TBA) Fall 2026

Standing alongside her is Zach Cronkhite, Chair of EMCC Fire Science, who is teaming up with Training Program Manager Frank Hammond and his staff to ensure a high-quality, no-compromise delivery of this vital program. Looking ahead, the Fire Officer II Academy will return to Brunswick or Farmington in 2026, keeping us on track with our regional rotation and bi-annual delivery commitment. Let's keep building Maine's next generation of fire service leaders—one academy at a time.

TRAININGS & PROP UPDATES

WATER TRAINING PROPS ARE READY TO USE

All MFSI water training props are now back in service following thorough inspections by the original manufacturers. These props are vital tools for realistic, high-quality training—and we want to ensure they stay that way. **When requesting use of these props, please be aware:**

- You must be trained in their proper setup, operation, and takedown.
- Alternatively, you may request an MFSI State Fire Instructor to assist with the training session and ensure safe, correct use.

These are high-value assets and very costly to replace, so we ask all users to treat the equipment with the respect and care it deserves. Your attention to proper handling helps protect these tools for future firefighters across Maine.

LIVE FIRE INSTRUCTOR & LIVE FIRE INSTRUCTOR IN-CHARGE

Upcoming in Hancock County (Ellsworth). Applications Open! Apply by June 18. Mandatory Orientation: July 10. Looking ahead to Fall 2026, the plan is Aroostook County in Caribou.

FIRE OFFICER III (RAFT DELIVERY)

A program in Augusta has just been completed. The current plan is to bring another Pro Board-certified Fire Officer III to the Bangor area in September/October 2025. More information TBA in the summer.

NOTE: OUTSIDE PROGRAMS

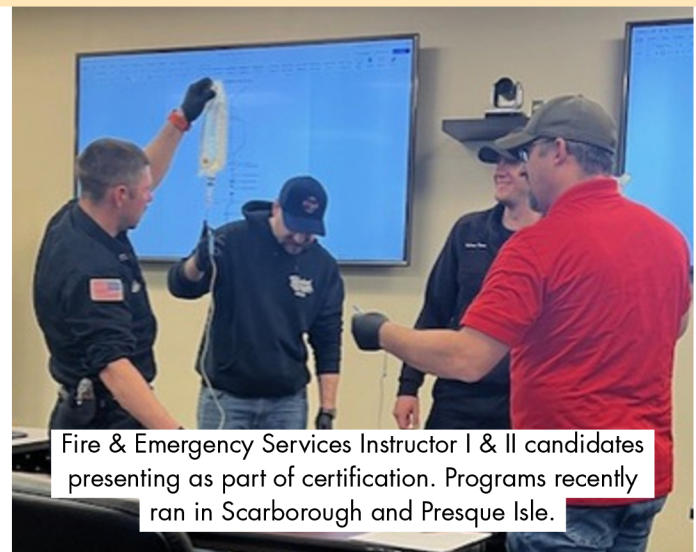
Collaborations with outside organizations like RAFT and FDSOA are planned months out, so they are not included in the lists to the left.



Biddeford FD utilizing the Symtech SUV Fire Prop in April.

SMCC/MFSI ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date Reminder: The next meeting will be held on **June 6, 2025 @ 10AM** at MFSI HQ in Brunswick.



Fire & Emergency Services Instructor I & II candidates presenting as part of certification. Programs recently ran in Scarborough and Presque Isle.



Instructors Schools & Dingee led NFA O0635 Best Practices in Community Risk Reduction in March.

IN CONCLUSION

TO OUR VALUED STATE FIRE INSTRUCTORS

Whether you're an Instructor, Evaluator, or simply passionate about ensuring our fire service members are trained to the highest standards, your support is crucial. This is our chance to show the entire state just how dedicated we are to building a stronger, safer Maine.

Your expertise helps mold the future of Maine's fire service, and there's no greater pride than knowing we've all played a role in preparing the next generation of leaders.

If you're willing to lend your support and step up to help, please reach out—we'd be proud to have you join the team to make our skills exams a success.



TO OUR VALUED PARTNERS IN THE MAINE FIRE SERVICE

I want to take a moment to address the current workload and operational capacity of the Maine Fire Service Institute. As many of you know, demand for our programs has never been higher, and we are fully booked with commitments through July 1st.

With the recent retirement of John Churchill—whose contributions over the years have been immense—we are now navigating the transition of that role. Whoever steps into that position will need time to learn, adapt, and get up to speed. This will naturally slow our pace in the short term.

Let me be clear: this is not due to a lack of effort, drive, or dedication from our team. It's simply a matter of bandwidth and capacity. We're committed to quality, and to maintaining the standard that Maine's fire service professionals expect and deserve. We're asking for your understanding and patience as we manage this critical workload. We're not saying "no" forever—just "not right now" to new additions. Rest assured; we're doing everything we can to keep moving forward without compromising the integrity of our programs.

Thank you for your continued support and for all you do in service to our communities.