

The Maine Fire Service Institute respectfully dedicates this issue to the memory of **Deputy Chief Wayne Woodbury** of the Searsmont Fire Department.



Deputy Chief Woodbury exemplified the values that define the fire service, selfless service, unwavering commitment, quiet leadership, and dedication to his community. His loss is deeply felt throughout the greater Waldo County area, and his legacy will continue to inspire those who answer the call.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Deputy Chief Woodbury's family, the members of the Searsmont Fire Department, and the many firefighters and friends whose lives he touched. May they find strength in one another and comfort in knowing that his service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Our Thoughts are with the Robbins Family

The Maine Fire Service Institute also extends its deepest sympathies to the **Robbins family** following the loss of **Alden Robbins**. During times of loss, words can never fully ease the pain experienced by family and friends. We hope they find comfort in the love that surrounds them, in the memories they shared, and in the support of their community during this difficult time.

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LETTER FROM MFSI DIRECTOR

Dear Fellow Maine Fire Service Members,

As we turn the calendar to August, I want to begin by thanking every firefighter, instructor, evaluator, training program manager, and fire chief who has supported the Maine Fire Service Institute throughout what has already been an exceptionally busy year.

Summer is always one of our busiest seasons. While many families are enjoying vacations and time on Maine's lakes and coastlines, firefighters continue responding to emergencies, completing certification programs, and preparing for another demanding fall training season. Your dedication to professional development, while balancing careers, families, and volunteer commitments, continues to impress us at MFSI.

Over the past several months, we have witnessed an unprecedented demand for Fire Officer, Fire Instructor, certification testing, Basic Pumps and Emergency Vehicle Driver Training programs. That demand reflects something very positive; it demonstrates that Maine's fire service recognizes the importance of education, leadership, and firefighter safety. It also reminds us that the expectations placed upon today's firefighters continue to grow.

At MFSI, we remain committed to providing quality training opportunities to every corner of our state. Whether instruction is taking place in Aroostook County, Washington County, York County, or anywhere in between, our mission remains unchanged: to provide equitable, professional fire service education that supports every community we serve. We are continually evaluating our statewide delivery system to ensure our resources are used wisely while maintaining fairness and accessibility for all sixteen counties.

This fall promises to be one of the busiest training seasons in recent memory. Fire Officer, Fire Instructor, National Fire Academy, Live Fire Instructor, and numerous firefighter certification programs are already filling rapidly. I encourage departments to begin planning now and to submit applications early whenever possible.

I also want to recognize our **State Fire Instructors**. These dedicated men and women commit to countless hours away from their families to teach, mentor, evaluate, and prepare the next generation of Maine firefighters. Their professionalism, experience, and commitment are the backbone of our statewide training system. Every successful class is a direct reflection of their willingness to serve others.

As we continue through the remainder of the year, we are also focused on strengthening our programs through accreditation, curriculum updates, instructor development, and improvements to certification services. Fire service education continues to evolve, and MFSI is committed to remaining at the forefront of those changes while never losing sight of the traditions and values that define the Maine fire service.

Finally, I encourage every firefighter to take care of one another. Summer operations present unique hazards, including heat stress, fatigue, wildland fire potential, and increased emergency call volume. Watch out for your crew members. Train safely. Hydrate. Wear your PPE properly. Most importantly, make sure everyone goes home after every response and every training evolution.

On behalf of everyone at the Maine Fire Service Institute, thank you for everything you do each day in service to your communities. Your dedication continues to make Maine's fire service one of the finest in the nation.

Stay safe, stay trained, and never stop learning.

Respectfully,
James A. Graves
Director, Maine Fire Service Institute

SMCC-MFSI ADVISORY MEETING

The next meeting of our SMCC-MFSI Advisory Committee will be held on **December 4, 2026, at 10AM at MFSI headquarters in Brunswick.**

The SMCC/MFSI Advisory Committee plays a vital role in shaping the future of fire training in Maine. Comprised of Fire Chiefs in good standing and seasoned subject matter experts from key fire service agencies, including the State Fire Marshal's Office, the Chief of the Maine Forest Rangers, and representatives from the Professional Firefighters of Maine and the Maine State Federation of Firefighters, this committee provides critical guidance on training standards, programs, and statewide fire service needs. The Advisory Committee's mission is to ensure that Maine's fire training remains effective, relevant, and aligned with both professional expectations and public safety demands. We encourage participation from anyone with a vested interest in the advancement of fire service training across our great state. All meetings are open to the public. To ensure sufficient seating is available, please RSVP.

NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY (NFA)

We're excited to announce that the National Fire Academy has offered Maine three additional programs to help offset the training opportunities lost earlier this year during the federal shutdown. As a result, we are proud to host five outstanding NFA programs at MFSI in Brunswick on the weekend of September 19 & 20, 2026. Register early!

This is more than just another weekend of training. This is an opportunity to learn from some of the finest National Fire Academy instructors from across the United States while building connections with fellow firefighters, officers, instructors, and emergency service professionals from every corner of Maine.

- ☐ Best Practices in Community Risk Reduction
- ☐ New Fire Chief: Contemporary Issues
- ☐ Exercising Leadership Within Communities
- ☐ Preparation for Initial Company Operations
- ☐ Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist

A SINCERE APOLOGY

The Maine Fire Service Institute extends a sincere apology to the Maine State Federation of Firefighters (MSFFF) for the scheduling conflict created by holding a training program on the same weekend as the Maine State Firefighters Convention in Skowhegan. MFSI must select dates for National Fire Academy in-state deliveries as much as eighteen months in advance. Unfortunately, the dates selected for this year's program created an unintended conflict with the convention. We recognize the importance of the annual convention and regret that our scheduling placed firefighters, instructors, and departments in the difficult position of having to choose between two valuable opportunities.

MFSI will work more closely with the Federation and other statewide fire service organizations when planning future programs to ensure that a similar conflict does not occur again.

EXTERNAL TRAININGS

Regional Alliance for Firefighter Training (RAFT)

Candidates will have the opportunity to seek Pro Board certification at the end of the program.

- ☐ Fire Officer III – Augusta (Dec 7–10, 2026)
- ☐ Fire Officer IV – Brunswick (Jan 25–27, 2027)
- ☐ HSO/ISO Program – Augusta (Feb 20–24, 2027)

York County Regional Training Center (schedule)

VFIS EVDT CURRICULUM

A reminder that VFIS updated their EVDT (EVOC) program in late 2024/early 2025. The biggest change is that course administration has moved to an online Learning Management System (LMS) called *VFIS University*. These changes were made effective on **February 1, 2026**, and have been published online and in previous newsletters. For the complete list of updates and changes, refer to the EVDT page on the MFSI website and/or contact MFSI directly.



MFSI PROGRAMS

Due to high demand, Fire Instructor I/II and Fire Officer Pro Board programs have been placed on an annual schedule. Applications for the following Fall/Winter programs are live on the MFSI website under Upcoming Events.

- Fire Instructor I/II – Knox County (Rockland)
- Fire Instructor I/II – Kennebec County (Augusta)
- Fire Officer I – Franklin County (Farmington)
- Fire Officer I – Oxford County (Oxford)

MFSI is currently working on the application of extension of accreditation on Fire Instructor I & II. With the recent changes in the NFPA 1020 Standard along with NFPA 1400, we will also be reviewing and upgrading our Live Fire Instructor/Instructor In-Charge program to make sure we are on the cutting edge of these important professional credentials. The plan is to pursue Pro Board accreditation with the Live Fire Training program as soon

as we have had time to review, upgrade, and exercise the program.

Live Fire Instructor / Live Fire Instructor-In-Charge Program

Interest in the upcoming **Live Fire Instructor/Instructor-in-Charge** program has exceeded all expectations. MFSI received **22 applications** from highly qualified candidates representing fire departments from across the State of Maine, as well as several applicants from our neighboring Canadian provinces. We are truly honored by the interest shown from our neighbors to the north and greatly appreciate their desire to participate in this nationally recognized program. While we would welcome them with open arms, MFSI's mission is to prioritize the training and professional development needs of Maine's fire service. As a result, enrollment priority is provided to firefighters serving Maine communities.

Following a competitive selection process, **16 candidates** have been accepted into this year's program. The class officially started with an orientation session on **July 30**. Candidates were introduced to program expectations, safety requirements, and the professional responsibilities associated with serving as Live Fire Instructors.

We are proud of every individual who submitted an application. Their willingness to pursue advanced professional qualifications demonstrates a commitment not only to their own development but also to improving firefighter safety within their departments and communities. Live fire training represents one of the most demanding and highest-risk environments in the fire service. Seeking the education and credentials to conduct these evolutions safely and in accordance with nationally recognized standards reflects the professionalism and dedication that continue to strengthen Maine's fire service.

Congratulations to the selected candidates, and thank you to everyone who applied. We look forward to working with this outstanding group as they prepare to become the next generation of Maine's Live Fire Instructors and Instructor-in-Charge personnel.

Written Certification Exams

There are currently eight Fire Fighter I & II programs underway across the state, all making good progress toward completion this Summer/Fall. For those programs, five dates for written exams have already

been scheduled, with more expected to be added in the coming weeks. There are currently makeup exams scheduled at MFSI and EMCC. For more information on who is eligible to sign up for these make-up exams, visit the MFSI website under Upcoming Events/Written Exams.



MFSI State Fire Instructor Recruitment

The Maine Fire Service Institute continues to make excellent progress in recruiting the next generation of State Fire Instructors. Over the past several weeks, MFSI staff have been conducting interviews and instructional assessments with numerous highly qualified candidates from across the State of Maine. We have been encouraged by the caliber of applicants and their commitment to advancing fire service education.

Beginning in August, MFSI will initiate background investigations for candidates who have successfully completed the interview and assessment process. Candidates meeting all established employment and qualification requirements will receive a **conditional offer of appointment** as a State Fire Instructor.

As part of the final onboarding process, each conditional appointee must successfully complete a medical review to ensure they can safely perform the duties associated with instructing fire service programs. In addition, all newly appointed instructors will attend the **MFSI Fire Instructor Workshop**, scheduled for October 16–18, 2026, where they will participate in instructor orientation, policy review, professional development, and mentoring sessions alongside our current instructional staff.

This comprehensive selection process reflects MFSI's commitment to maintaining a highly qualified statewide instructional cadre while ensuring that every State Fire Instructor is prepared to deliver safe, professional, and nationally recognized fire service education. We look forward to welcoming these new instructors to the MFSI family and thank all applicants for their interest in serving the firefighters of Maine.

STATE & FEDERAL UPDATES

The **Maine Fire Protection Services Commission** (MFPSC) continues to remain actively engaged this summer as it addresses a wide range of issues affecting Maine's fire service. Through the dedication of Commission members, legislative partners, and numerous fire service stakeholders, significant progress has been made over the past six years in the areas of live fire training facilities, firefighter cancer prevention, and statewide fire service training support.

Firefighter Cancer Reduction Grant

One of the Fire Commission's most successful initiatives has been the Firefighter Cancer Reduction Grant Program, funded through the **131st Maine Legislature**. This important program provided **\$250,000** to assist Maine fire departments in reducing firefighters' exposure to carcinogens. The program supported **41 fire departments** throughout the state by funding critical equipment designed to reduce occupational cancer risks:

- **33 departments** received grants for PPE extractor washing machines.
- **8 departments** received grants to install or improve fire apparatus exhaust capture systems.

Two departments received multiple awards based on their demonstrated needs:

- **Boothbay** received funding for exhaust capture systems at two separate fire stations.
- **Clinton** received funding for both a PPE extractor and an apparatus exhaust removal system.

These investments represent an important step toward protecting the long-term health of Maine's firefighters by reducing exposure to known carcinogens both on the fireground and in the station.

Live Fire Training Facilities Grant

The Commission has continued its commitment to improving Maine's regional live fire training infrastructure. Grant awards include:

- **Town of Yarmouth:** **\$129,600** for repairs and improvements to the existing fire training facility.
- **Town of Farmington:** **\$79,650** for safety enhancements and training facility upgrades.
- **City of Ellsworth:** **\$4,200** for roof repairs to the existing training facility.
- **City of Auburn and City of Bangor:** approximately **\$1.1 million** combined for the construction of two new regional live fire training facilities.

These investments continue the Commission's long-term vision of providing safe, modern, and accessible live fire training opportunities throughout Maine while ensuring compliance with nationally recognized training standards.

Although tremendous progress has been made, our work is far from complete. Additional regional live fire training facilities are still needed to better serve firefighters in Washington County and Aroostook County. Expanding access to quality training remains essential to developing competent firefighters while reducing travel demands on local departments.

The Maine Fire Service Institute and the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission remain committed to working collaboratively with fire departments, municipalities, legislators, and our many statewide partners to continue strengthening Maine's fire service training system. Together, we can build the facilities, programs, and resources needed to ensure every firefighter in Maine has access to safe, high-quality training, today and for generations to come.

Emerging Energy Committee with the Maine Fire Commission

As the fire service continues to evolve, we find ourselves at a moment in time that is both exciting and challenging. New technologies, including energy storage systems, rooftop solar panel installations, residential battery backup systems, and electric vehicles, are becoming part of our communities, businesses, and infrastructure at a rapid pace. As firefighters, inspectors, code officials, and emergency responders, we have always adapted to change, and this is no different.

While these technologies bring new opportunities in energy efficiency, sustainability, and resiliency, they also

introduce hazards and operational considerations that require education, planning, and preparation. Solar panel systems on residential and commercial buildings can create unique firefighting challenges involving electrical hazards, roof access, ventilation operations, and system shutdown procedures. Home energy storage systems and battery backup units introduce concerns related to thermal runaway, off gassing, explosion potential, and prolonged fire suppression operations. Likewise, electric vehicle incidents continue to raise important operational questions surrounding battery fires, reigniting risks, towing, storage, and responder safety.

One important resource available to departments and stakeholders is the National Fire Protection Association's Standard 855, the Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems, 2026 Edition. This standard provides guidance on the safe installation and protection of these systems and will continue to shape discussions around fire prevention, inspection, suppression, and emergency response. Additional standards, including NFPA 70, NFPA 70B, NFPA 70E, and NFPA 1, also play important roles in addressing electrical safety, inspections, and emergency operations involving these technologies.

Here in Maine, the Maine Fire Commission is actively working with partners and stakeholders to identify the best path forward for our state. These conversations are ongoing and productive, with a strong focus on firefighter safety, community protection, code compliance, public education, and practical training solutions. The best thing we can do as a fire service is prepare ourselves through education, awareness, pre-incident planning, and training.

Training in these areas is complex and costly, and it will take time to fully build and deliver programs statewide. However, planning efforts are already well underway. There are many dedicated leaders within Maine's fire service working behind the scenes to ensure departments receive the information, guidance, and training they need to safely respond to incidents involving these evolving technologies. The fire service has always risen to meet new challenges, and with collaboration, professionalism, and a commitment to learning, we will continue to do so here in Maine.

MFSI EDUCATIONAL BRIEF: PREREQUISITES

Why Can't I Skip Ahead? One of the most common questions received by the Maine Fire Service Institute is:

"Why do I have to complete Fire Instructor I before attending Fire Officer I?"

The answer is simple: the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Professional Qualification Standards were intentionally designed to build knowledge and leadership gradually, not randomly.

Professional qualification standards establish the minimum job performance requirements necessary for firefighters and fire officers to safely and effectively perform their duties. These standards are not simply academic requirements; they represent decades of experience, firefighter fatalities, lessons learned, and national consensus among fire service professionals.

For example, NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, requires candidates for Fire Officer I to possess previous knowledge and competencies, including Firefighter II and Fire Instructor I. These are not arbitrary requirements. A company officer is expected to supervise firefighters, conduct company training, evaluate performance, communicate effectively, and ensure crews operate safely. Before someone can successfully lead others, they must first demonstrate the ability to teach and evaluate firefighters.

The same philosophy applies throughout the entire Professional Qualification System. Firefighters first develop the technical skills necessary to perform emergency operations. Driver/Operators master apparatus operations before taking responsibility for specialized equipment. Fire Officers develop supervisory skills before advancing to higher levels of organizational leadership. Fire Instructors study adult learning principles before they train others.

Each certification builds upon the one before it.

Attempting to bypass these prerequisites is similar to asking a student to enroll in advanced college courses before completing the introductory classes. While experience is extremely valuable, professional qualifications ensure that every candidate has demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to succeed at the next level.

At the Maine Fire Service Institute, our responsibility is to administer nationally recognized certification programs fairly, consistently, and in accordance with NFPA standards and Pro Board accreditation requirements. These prerequisites help ensure every graduate possesses not only technical competence, but also the leadership, instructional, and decision-making skills expected of today's fire service professionals.

As our profession continues to evolve and the demands placed upon firefighters increase, education has never been more important. The fire service is built on experience, strengthened through education, and sustained by leaders who commit themselves to lifelong learning. **Remember** professional qualifications are not obstacles, they are stepping stones toward becoming a safer and more effective fire service professional.

MFSI STAFFING ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with mixed emotions that the Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI) announces that Training Program Manager **Chris Azevedo** has accepted a new opportunity with Southern Maine Community College EMS, where he will help educate and prepare the next generation of EMS professionals.

During his two years with MFSI, Chris made significant contributions to our statewide training mission. He played a key role in the development and implementation of the **VFIS Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT)** program and provided invaluable support for numerous certification skills examinations and testing events for Fire Officer, Fire Instructor, and Firefighter I & II programs throughout Maine. Chris' dedication, professionalism, and commitment to the fire service have had a lasting impact on our organization and on the students and instructors he has served. While we are certainly saddened to see him leave MFSI, we are pleased that he will continue to serve the public safety community through education at SMCC EMS.

We are also grateful that Chris plans to remain involved with MFSI as a **State Fire Instructor**, continuing to support our statewide training mission whenever possible. Although his role is changing, he remains an important part of Maine's fire and emergency services education community. Please join all of us at the Maine Fire Service Institute in thanking Chris for his outstanding service and wishing him every success and happiness as he begins this exciting new chapter in his career.

FIRE SERVICE HISTORY

Why did MFSI choose the name The Bugle's Echo?
Because communication remains at the heart of everything we do. Furthermore, the answer lies deep within the proud traditions of the American fire service. Long before portable radios, mobile phones, and incident command systems, communication on the fireground was one of the greatest challenges facing firefighters. The noise of roaring fire, collapsing buildings, steam engines, horses, and large crowds often made it nearly impossible for officers to direct their crews.

Beginning in the 18th century, fire officers carried what was known as a **speaking trumpet**, a cone-shaped device designed to amplify the human voice so commands could be heard across a busy fireground. Before electronic amplification existed, this simple tool was one of the most important pieces of equipment a chief officer carried. It allowed fire officers to coordinate operations, direct hose companies, protect firefighters, and maintain order during rapidly changing incidents. Over time, the speaking trumpet became much more than a communication device. It evolved into one of the most recognizable symbols of leadership in the fire service.

Today, the crossed "bugles" displayed on fire officer badges and helmet shields represent these historic speaking trumpets. Although most firefighters commonly refer to them as "bugles," historians point out that they originated as speaking trumpets rather than musical bugles. Their purpose was to project the spoken word, not to play music.



The Bugle's Echo is intended to carry the voice of the Maine Fire Service Institute throughout our state.

Through these pages, we share important information, educational opportunities, fire service history, safety initiatives, professional qualifications, and the accomplishments of the dedicated first responders who serve Maine's communities.

An echo is more than a repeated sound, it is a message that continues to travel. Our hope is that every issue of *The Bugle's Echo* echoes the traditions of those who came before us while inspiring the firefighters who will carry our profession into the future. As firefighters, we stand on the shoulders of those who built this profession. Their voices may no longer be heard through a speaking trumpet on the fireground, but through our actions, our training, and our dedication, *their echo continues today.*

SAFETY MESSAGE

On Sunday, July 12, as I watched reports of the multiple-alarm apartment fire in the City of Lewiston, my first thoughts were not about the building; they were about

the firefighters. I couldn't help but think about what it feels like to pull on turnout gear on a hot July afternoon. The bunker gear, the SCBA, the humidity, the heat coming off the fire, and the long hours that often accompany a working fire. Those of us who have experienced summer firefighting know it is one of the toughest environments we'll ever work in.

It also reminded me of something one of my Captains, **Dana Rossignol**, used to tell us on hot summer days back when we were protecting the Elm City of Waterville in the 1990s.

"Stay cool. Stay hydrated. Be ready when the alarm sounds."

It was simple advice, but it was good advice then, and it's even more important today. Hydration doesn't begin when you're dispatched to a fire; it begins hours before the pager activates or the station's tones sound. Drink water throughout the day. Replace electrolytes when you've been working hard. Find ways to cool your body between calls, training sessions, and station duties. If you wait until you're thirsty, you're already behind.

Company officers, keep an eye on your crew. Firefighters are proud people, and many will push themselves long after their bodies are telling them to slow down. Make rehabilitation part of the operation, not an afterthought. Rotate crews, encourage hydration, and don't hesitate to pull someone out who needs a few minutes to recover.

To the members of the Lewiston Fire Department, and to every firefighter across Maine who answers the call during these hot summer days, thank you. We know the work isn't easy, and we appreciate your professionalism and dedication to protecting your communities.

Captain Rossignol's words have stayed with me for more than thirty years because they were never just about hydration. His words meant to be prepared, physically and mentally, to answer the next call.

As another Maine summer rolls on, I encourage every firefighter to also remember that simple message: **Stay cool. Stay hydrated. Be ready when the alarm sounds.**

Take care of yourselves. Take care of each other. The citizens of Maine are counting on you, but so are your families. **Be safe, we need each of you.**

Respectfully and most sincerely,
Jimmy