

The Maine Fire Service Institute respectfully dedicates this issue to the memory of the following Maine Firefighters that gave the ultimate sacrifice in the Line of Duty. Along with the 343 FDNY firefighters that were lost on 9/11/01.

October

October 2 — Hoseman Charles W. Barrett, Portland Fire Department — 1908

Barrett was 41 and assigned to Engine Company 1. Portland's official historical account states that he died as a result of an electrical shock. He is one of the firefighters memorialized by the city for making the supreme sacrifice.

October 16 — Chief Linwood J. "Tug" Nedeau, Kennebunk Fire Department — 1974

Nedeau was responding to a working fire in West Kennebunk. He was driving back to the station to obtain the department's 10,000-gallon tanker when he suffered a fatal heart attack. Kennebunk held a 50th-anniversary ceremony in his honor on October 16, 2024.

October 19 — Firefighter Carl S. Spiller, Kennebunk Fire Department — 1951

Spiller was riding the rear tailboard of a Kennebunk fire engine responding to a fire. He fell from the apparatus, suffered a fatal head injury and died at age 45. Kennebunk specifically notes that tragedies such as Spiller's helped lead to safer apparatus and the eventual elimination of tailboard riding.

October 31 — Captain Willis F. Millett, Auburn Fire Department — 1952

Millett was injured during an October 27 structure fire at **316 Main Street in Auburn** and subsequently died from those injuries on October 31. Auburn fire-service historical material documents the October 27 incident, while LODD memorial records place his death on October 31.

November

November 18 — Lieutenant William E. Nugent Jr., Portland Fire Department — 1970

Nugent was 47, Badge 44, assigned to Engine Company 1. Portland's official historical record identifies November 18, 1970, as his date of death, and he is included on Portland's memorial honoring firefighters who died while responding to emergencies.

"Maine Remembers."

MFSI Pauses on 9/11 in Remembrance

On Friday, September 11th, MFSI staff and guests held a short remembrance in honor of the fallen on the 25th Anniversary of that tragic set of events. A bell was rung for each of the seven major events that took place that day. We shall never forget.



This edition of the Bugles Echo

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LETTER FROM MFSI DIRECTOR

Each October, the American fire service observes Fire Prevention Week, a tradition rooted in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Most of us have heard the story of Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicking over a lantern and starting the fire. It makes for a memorable story, but history has never established that the cow actually caused the fire.

Perhaps there is a lesson in that.

For generations, the fire service has learned that preventing tragedy is far more important than assigning blame afterward. Fire prevention has evolved through better building codes, inspections, public education, smoke alarms, sprinkler systems, firefighter training, and a greater understanding of fire behavior.

That national commitment grew significantly following the landmark *America Burning* report in 1973 and the establishment of the National Fire Prevention and Control Administration in 1974, which later became the U.S. Fire Administration.

More than fifty years later, the mission remains remarkably simple: prevent fires, reduce loss, educate our communities, and protect the people we serve.

During Fire Prevention Week, take a few minutes to talk with your community about smoke alarms, escape plans, cooking safety, heating equipment, and the everyday choices that prevent fires before they happen.

We may never know exactly what started the Great Chicago Fire, but we certainly know enough today to prevent many of tomorrow's fires.

Fire prevention is everyone's responsibility. And maybe, after 155 years, we can finally give Mrs. O'Leary's cow a break.

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)

MFSI held the Bi-Annual National Fire Academy Program at MFSI on September 19 & 20 with over 30 fire service professionals in attendance.



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](#)) Many new and exciting opportunities await at the York County Training Center. Check them out here.

LOCAL FIRE TRAINING



Town of Baldwin Fire Department along with mutual aid partners train on SCBA and Air Management. September 2026



Lincoln County Firefighters conducting vehicle fire training with the SUV Car Fire Prop



Town of Limington Fire Department train with our Forced Entry Training System. September 2026



MFSI PROGRAMS

Due to high demand, Fire Instructor I/II and Fire Officer Pro Board programs have been placed on an annual schedule. The following are currently in progress:

- **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.

Winter/Spring Programs Being Planned

- **Fire Instructor I & II** - Cumberland County (TBD)
- **Fire Instructor I & II** - Washington County (Calais)
- **Fire Officer I** - Washington County (Calais)
- BONUS PROGRAM**
- **Fire Officer I** - Kennebec County (Augusta)
- **Fire Officer I** -Cumberland County (Raymond)

These are in the early planning stages, and fliers will be available between November and December.

Live Fire Instructor / Instructor-in-Charge Program a Success



The Maine Fire Service Institute recently completed another successful **Live Fire Instructor/Instructor-in-Charge (LFI/LFIIC) Program**, with a full class of highly qualified fire service professionals committed to improving the safety and quality of live fire training.

Interest in this year's program exceeded expectations, demonstrating the continued need for advanced instructor development throughout Maine's fire service. Live fire training is among the most demanding and highest-risk training conducted by fire departments, making properly trained and qualified instructors essential to ensuring these evolutions are conducted safely, effectively, and in accordance with nationally recognized standards.

MFSI was also pleased to welcome a **special guest from the Connecticut State Fire Academy**, who attended the program to observe how Maine delivers and manages its Live Fire Instructor and Instructor-in-Charge training. We were honored to share our approach with a fellow state fire training organization and to exchange ideas about how

programs such as this can positively impact firefighter safety during high-risk live fire training operations.

Programs of this caliber are successful only because of the commitment of many people. MFSI extends its sincere appreciation to **our instructors, program staff, host agencies, supporting organizations, and, most importantly, the firefighters who participated in the program.** Their professionalism, preparation, and willingness to learn made this year's program a success.

The knowledge and experience gained through this program will extend well beyond the classroom and training ground. These instructors will return to their departments better prepared to manage live fire evolutions, mentor other firefighters, recognize and control hazards, and help ensure that realistic training is conducted without compromising safety.

Congratulations to everyone who successfully completed the program and thank you to all who helped make it possible. Your commitment to safe, professional live fire training continues to strengthen Maine's fire service.

MFSI WELCOMES 14 NEW STATE FIRE INSTRUCTOR CANDIDATES

The Maine Fire Service Institute is pleased to announce that **14 Maine fire service professionals have accepted offers to join the ranks of our State Fire Instructors (SFI).**

These individuals bring a wide range of experience, knowledge, and dedication to Maine's fire service. They will attend the **MFSI State Fire Instructor Orientation on October 16-17, 2026, at MFSI in Brunswick**, where they will learn more about our instructional expectations, policies, programs, safety

culture, and commitment to providing consistent, high-quality training throughout the State of Maine.

In the next edition of **The Bugle**, we look forward to introducing each of these new instructors and sharing a little about their backgrounds and the experience they bring to our team.

Following orientation and completion of the onboarding process, our goal is to get these new instructors into the field, working alongside our experienced SFI cadre and **making a positive impact on fire service training at every level across Maine.**

We are excited to welcome them to MFSI and appreciate their willingness to step forward, share their knowledge, and serve Maine's firefighters and communities.

Welcome to the MFSI team. We look forward to working with you!

MFSI EDUCATIONAL BRIEF



UNDERSTANDING NFPA, PRO BOARD and the MFSI CERTIFICATION PROCESS

For many Maine firefighters, earning a Pro Board certification represents an important milestone in their professional development. Behind that certificate, however, is a much larger system of

standards, testing, documentation, security and quality assurance that must be maintained every day.

At the **Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI)**, protecting the integrity of that system is one of our most important responsibilities.

What is the Relationship Between NFPA and Pro Board?

The **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)** develops nationally recognized professional qualification standards for Fire and Emergency Services. These standards establish the knowledge, skills and Job Performance Requirements used to define professional competency in areas such as Firefighter, Fire Officer, Fire Service Instructor, Fire Inspector, Fire Investigator, technical rescue and other disciplines.

The **National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications, better known as the Pro Board**, serves a different but equally important role. Pro Board accredits eligible agencies that certify fire and emergency service personnel against applicable professional qualification standards. Its focus is on the integrity of the **testing and certification process**, not simply whether someone attended or completed a training program.

That distinction is important:

Training prepares the firefighter. Certification verifies the firefighter. Accreditation provides independent assurance that the certification system meets established requirements.

MFSI's Pro Board Certification Levels

The **Maine Fire Service Institute serves as Maine's Pro Board accredited certification**

agency for several important fire service professional qualification levels.

Under MFSI's Pro Board accreditation and certification administration, MFSI currently maintains accreditation for:

- **Firefighter I**
- **Firefighter II** (tested as FF I & II)
- **Fire Service Instructor I**
- **Fire Service Instructor II** (tested as FI I & II)
- **Fire Officer I** (tested alone)
- **Fire Officer II** (tested alone)
- **Fire & Life Safety Educator I** (tested alone)

Each of these certification levels carries a significant responsibility for MFSI. Maintaining Pro Board accreditation requires far more than offering a class, administering an examination and issuing a certificate.

For each accredited level, MFSI must maintain appropriate certification policies, examination and practical skills-assessment processes, documentation, security, quality assurance, records and administrative controls necessary to maintain the integrity of the certification system.

A Pro Board Certificate Means More Than Completing a Class

A candidate seeking certification must successfully demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and abilities associated with the applicable professional qualification standard.

For the accredited certification agency, this means maintaining a defensible system addressing prerequisites, written and practical examinations, assessment methodologies, evaluator consistency, examination security, candidate records, fairness and quality assurance.

Pro Board accreditation also requires agencies to undergo a formal accreditation process. Maintaining that accreditation requires continuing attention, documentation and periodic review. It is not something an organization earns once and simply places on the wall.

Accreditation must be protected and maintained.

Why Does This Matter to Maine Firefighters?

Nationally accredited certification provides Maine firefighters with two particularly important things: **credibility and portability.**

When a firefighter successfully completes an accredited certification process, that individual has demonstrated competency through an established assessment system based upon recognized professional standards.

It also provides confidence to Maine's fire chiefs, municipalities and fire departments. When they receive an MFSI certification carrying Pro Board recognition, they can have confidence that the candidate was evaluated through an established certification system designed to measure competency fairly and consistently.

There is another important consideration. MFSI is responsible not only for the firefighters seeking certification today, but also for **protecting the integrity and continued value of the certifications already earned by thousands of Maine firefighters.**

That responsibility cannot be taken lightly.

MFSI's Responsibility: Protecting the Integrity of the Process

There is a tremendous amount of work occurring behind the scenes that candidates may never see. MFSI's responsibility includes maintaining several fundamental principles:

- **Consistency:** Candidates pursuing the same certification must be evaluated against the same applicable requirements.
- **Fairness:** Every candidate deserves an equitable, professional and defensible certification process.
- **Security:** Written examinations, practical testing materials, candidate information and certification records must be appropriately protected.
- **Qualified Evaluation:** Skills assessments must follow established procedures and be conducted by personnel prepared to evaluate candidates consistently.
- **Standards Alignment:** Certification examinations and assessment methodologies must remain aligned with the applicable professional qualification requirements.
- **Documentation:** Certification decisions must be supported by appropriate records and quality-control processes.
- **Continuous Compliance:** Accreditation requires ongoing attention as professional standards, policies and certification requirements evolve.

These safeguards occasionally mean that MFSI must require additional documentation, enforce prerequisites, protect examination materials, follow specific testing procedures or tell someone that a process cannot be altered for convenience.

Those requirements are not intended to create unnecessary barriers.

They are there to protect the integrity of the credential.

The Credential Belongs to Everyone Who Earned It

Every Maine firefighter who has worked hard to earn a professional certification has a stake in maintaining the credibility of Maine's certification system.

When one firefighter earns a Pro Board certification today, that credential joins those earned by Maine firefighters who came before. Maintaining the integrity of today's certification process therefore helps protect the value of every credential already issued through the system.

That is why changes involving curriculum, testing, certification standards, administrative processes or the organizational structure responsible for certification must be approached carefully and deliberately. **Continuity of accreditation and certification must remain a priority at all times.**

Our responsibility at MFSI is to ensure that when **Maine Fire Service Institute** and **Pro Board** appear on a firefighter's certification, whether Firefighter, Fire Service Instructor, Fire Officer or Fire & Life Safety Educator, those names continue to represent a credential earned through a credible, consistent and nationally accredited certification process.

Standards matter. Testing integrity matters. Accreditation matters. Continuity matters.

Most importantly, **Maine's firefighters matter.**

Those who have already earned these credentials, those working toward them today and the

generations of Maine firefighters who will follow deserve nothing less than a certification system whose quality, credibility and integrity are always protected.

Maine Fire Service Institute, Certification Division

MFSI STAFFING ANNOUNCEMENT

MFSI is pleased in welcoming Michael Dovinsky to the team. Michael has joined us as our Fire Training Support Services Specialist. Michael has more than 30 years of experience in operations. He has also been working with both Hallowell and West Gardiner fire departments for many years in a variety of roles (Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Chief, Captain and Training Officer). He has his Bachelor of Science, Political Science from USM.



MFSI continues to seek a replacement for our Marketing & Software Manager along with Region 1 Training Program Manager.

FIRE SERVICE ADVICE

To the Firefighters of 2026, from a Firefighter of 1986 – 40 years of change and progress

Learn the new technology but **master the basics**. Water still puts out fire. A properly placed ladder still saves lives. A charged hose line in the right place still changes everything.

Wear your gear. Wear your SCBA. We didn't always understand what the smoke was doing to us. We do now. Don't throw away knowledge that firefighters before you paid dearly to obtain.

Take care of your body. You may think you're indestructible at 22. You're not. Protect your hearing, your back, your knees, your heart, and your lungs. And don't be embarrassed to take care of your mind.

Know your response district. Get off the screen and walk through buildings. Learn the hydrants, the sprinkler connections the dead-end water mains and the dead-end streets, the long driveways, the farms, the mills, the nursing homes, the schools, and the places where somebody is going to need you at three in the morning.

Don't confuse **certification with competence**. Collecting certificates doesn't make you a firefighter. Training, repetition, experience, humility, and being willing to learn from others will.

Listen to the old firefighters, but don't assume everything we did was right. Keep the traditions that built character and brotherhood. Have the courage to leave behind the practices that injured firefighters unnecessarily.

Train when nobody is watching. Pull hose. Throw ladders. Tie knots. Force doors. Pump the truck. Learn your tools in the dark, wearing gloves, when you're tired and frustrated. The fireground is a terrible place to discover what you don't know.

Treat the rookie with respect. Someday that rookie may be the firefighter crawling down a hallway looking for **you**.

Treat the public even better. The flooded basement that seems insignificant to you may be the worst thing that has happened to that homeowner all year. **Their emergency doesn't have to be your emergency for it to deserve your best.**

Never become too important to wash the truck, roll hose, clean the station, or help the newest member.

Don't chase glory. Most of this profession isn't dramatic. It's checking equipment, training, helping somebody back into bed, changing smoke-detector batteries, standing by at an accident, and being ready for the five minutes when everything suddenly matters. Learn to recognize when conditions are changing. Buildings are different now. Fires are different. Fuels are different. **Be aggressive, but smart.**

Remember your family. The fire service will take every hour you are willing to give it. Your children will only be children once. Your spouse shouldn't have to compete with the firehouse.

And when you eventually become the old firefighter sitting at the kitchen table, **don't become bitter about the next generation. Teach them. Encourage them. Give them what someone once gave you.**

Because apparatus will change. Standards will change. Technology will change.

But courage, competence, humility, service, and taking care of one another will never go out of date.

And one last thing: **Enjoy it.**

Someday you'll walk out of the station for the last time, and you'll realize that the calls you complained about, the midnight alarms, the terrible coffee, the training nights, the laughter, and the people sitting around that table were some of the best days of your life. **Leave the fire service better than you found it.** *A Firefighter, Class of 1986*

**Where We Have Been and Where We Are
Going**

Some buildings are made of concrete, steel, and wood. Others are built from memories, lessons, sweat, smoke, and the people who passed through their doors.

For more than 40 years, the old Auburn burn building has quietly served Maine's fire service. It is not large. It is not modern. By today's standards, it is remarkably simple. But within those walls, thousands of Maine firefighters learned lessons that followed them back to their departments and, in many cases, throughout their entire careers.

For decades, the City of Auburn and the Auburn Fire Department have maintained an exemplary partnership with Maine's statewide fire training system from the days of Maine Fire Training & Education (MFT&E) to today's Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI).

That partnership represents something special about fire service training in Maine. Communities open their doors. Departments share their facilities. Instructors give their time. Firefighters travel from across the state to learn beside one another. We build something together that no single department or organization could build alone.

This little building played an important part in that history. Live-fire evolutions were conducted here. Firefighter skills were taught and tested here. Recruits crawled these narrow hallways, stretched hose, climbed ladders, searched rooms, practiced rescue, and learned to trust their equipment and one another.

For me, this one is personal. As Director, I can look at this building and remember the many times I crawled those same narrow halls with new firefighters. I remember conducting RIC drills here with fire service professionals who, over the years, became trusted colleagues and good friends. I

remember instructors standing outside preparing the next evolution and young firefighters walking out those doors tired, dirty, and a little more confident than when they entered.

There are a lot of memories inside those walls. And now, the time has come for another chapter. We are both sad and excited to see a new live-fire training facility being constructed at the Auburn Fire Department. It represents progress, improved capabilities, and another important piece of Maine's larger statewide fire training network. We believe the new facility will serve generations of firefighters just as this old building has.

But progress should never require us to forget. Long before today's training standards, modern facilities, certification systems, and statewide programs, there were people who believed Maine firefighters deserved better training. They found locations. They built facilities. They volunteered as instructors. They hauled equipment, burned buildings, cleaned up afterward, and came back the next weekend to do it again.

They poured more than concrete foundations. They poured the foundation of the fire training system we have today.

To the City of Auburn, the Auburn Fire Department, its current members, its retirees, and all those who welcomed MFT&E and MFSI here over the past four decades: thank you. Thank you for thousands of hours of cooperation, hospitality, instruction, and service to firefighters from communities far beyond Auburn.

As Maine fire training continues to move forward, we should occasionally look behind us, not because we want to go backward, but because we need to remember whose shoulders we are standing on.

The buildings will change.

The apparatus will change.

The equipment, standards, and science will continue to change.

But the mission remains remarkably simple:

Prepare firefighters to take care of one another and to serve the people who are counting on them when the alarm sounds.

This old building did that for more than 40 years. Small building. Narrow halls. Countless memories. An enormous legacy. We will miss it.

But because of what happened within these walls, Maine's fire service is better prepared for what comes next. Never forget where we have been as we build where we are going.



Lewiston and Auburn Fire Departments Conduct Ventilation Training on the Auburn Fire Training Facility for the last time early August 2026

Stay safe out there, and have a Happy and Safe Halloween and Thanksgiving