



Division of Fire Safety Organizational Overview Firesafety.Vermont.Gov

**Vermont Town and City Management
Association Fall Conference**

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Quick Overview of Who We Are

The Division of Fire Safety is housed in the Department of Public Safety. The Department of Public Safety consist of 6 divisions-

- Vermont State Police
- Emergency Management
- Division of Fire Safety
- Forensic Lab
- Vermont Criminal Information Center
- Radio Technology

What We Do at Fire Safety

- Plan review/ permitting for all public buildings as defined in 20 V.S.A. Chapter 2730
- Code Enforcement- Conduct Building Inspection
- Licensing/Certification: We license electricians and plumbers and certify gas and oil technicians, sprinkler system designers/installers, fire alarm installers, generator installers, elevator mechanics and suppression system installers.

What We Do

- **Hazardous Material Response/Tier 2 Reporting**
- **Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)- Swift water rescue, trench rescue, structural collapse and confined space rescue**
- **Fire Investigation- we work along side Vermont State Police. We conduct approximately 150 investigations annually and investigate all fire related fatalities.**

Who We Are

- **Fire Service Training:** We train all fire fighters (volunteers and career). This training is delivered to the first responders at virtually no cost.
- **Public Fire Education-** We provide valuable resources to local fire departments to support public education efforts. (Fire Safety Trailers and other training props) at no cost.

Logistics

- **4 District Offices: Williston, Berlin, Springfield and Rutland and our Fire Academy is located in Pittsford with the police academy.**
- **Each regional offices has a minimum of one central plan reviewer, 2 electrical inspectors, 4 - 6 assistant fire marshals, a regional assistant and our Williston and Berlin offices have a plumbing inspector and our Berlin Office has a fire safety building engineer.**

Logistics

- We are represented at the State Emergency Operations Center on Multiple State Support Function Groups.
- We conduct rapid building inspections in response to floods and other natural disasters.
- We have our own Emergency Operation Center within Fire Safety to enhance our communications and response capability.
- We provide structural assessments of damaged buildings at no cost to locals.

Affiliations/Boards/Rules

- Elevator Safety Board
- Handicap Access Board
- Electrician's Licensing Board
- Plumbers Examining Board
- Fire Service Training Counsel
- Vermont Fire and Building Safety Rules
- Electrical/Plumbing Rules
- Access Rules
- Training Council Rules

Our Role in Rental Housing

- **Fire Safety has authority to inspect all rental property at any reasonable time.**
- **We enforce the National Fire Protection Association Standard 101- Life Safety Code.**
- **We inspect existing apartments in response to complaints of alleged unsafe conditions/hazards.**
- **Very limited pro-active inspections.**

Our Role in Rental Housing

- Most inspections are conducted in response to new building construction, renovations, additions or alterations. Typically a building permit or work notice is received.
- Administrative fines/warnings are issued for working without permits or work notices.
- Risk indexes are assigned to buildings on a scale from 1-5. A hazard index of 1 is minor violations a hazard index of 5 is a building closure. Hazard Index of 3 or higher tracked.

What do Our Fire Marshals Look For?

- **Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms**
- **Second Means of Escapes from every sleeping room (window meeting rescue and ventilation requirements). Bedrooms in basements without a second means of escape is common and a serious life safety hazard.**
- **Guards and handrails (stairs and balconies)**
- **Electrical- GFI, extension cords, exposed electrical conductors and overcurrent protection.**

What do Our Fire Marshals Look For?

- Heating system- clearance to combustibles, proper venting, combustion air, inspection or service up to date.
- Proper exiting and protection of vertical openings (stairs or floor openings).
- If equipped with a sprinkler or fire alarm systems are the systems being maintained, tested and inspected as required.

Municipal Inspection Authority

- The Commissioner of Public Safety may assign a municipality inspection authority under 20 V.S.A. 2736.
- The Commissioner through the Division of Fire Safety, reviews the qualifications of the inspectors.
- The municipality may establish and collect reasonable fees for its own use, and no fee shall be charged for the benefit of the state.

Municipal Inspection Authority

- **Currently we have 11 municipal inspection agreements; Barre, Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, Fairfax, Hartford, Montpelier, Putney, So, Burlington, St. Albans and Winooski.**
- **Each agreement is customized to meet the needs of the municipality. Some inspect existing buildings while others do plan review, permitting, electrical and plumbing.**
- **We are not entering into plan review agreements because of budgeting. We are supporting existing building inspections.**

Rental Housing Safety- Act 188

An Act relating to improving rental housing safety

- Department of Housing and Community Development shall create the Rental Housing Advisory Board consisting of 11 members, each being a resident of Vermont.
- 3 members representing tenants
- 3 members representing landlords
- 3 members representing municipalities
- 2 members of the public

Rental Housing Safety- Act 188

Authority of the Board

- Act as an advisory group to the Governor, general assembly and appropriate state agencies on issues related to rental housing
- Reports to the Housing Council
- To work with appropriate state agencies on the location and condition of Vermont's housing stock.

