



PREVENTION \* LAW ENFORCEMENT \* RESEARCH

# Maine Fire Marshal News

Maine State Fire Marshal's Office • Fire Research  
Maine Department of Public Safety  
Mainefiremarshal.com

April 2007

Spring 2007 Vol. 1, Issue No.5

## WELCOME!

Welcome to another edition of the Maine Fire Marshal News. This edition marks the first anniversary of this publication to an ever-increasing audience. As always we hope you enjoy the newsletter, find it of value and will feel welcome to contribute an article in a future edition.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

Spring is supposed to commence in March but 2007 appears to be an exception to the rule. It will arrive (I hope) and with it spring related fires. I'd like to take this time to discuss this in addition to the "Fire Safe Cigarette" bill presented to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee earlier in this legislative session.

The Fire Marshal's Office would like to thank all parties who supported the proposed "Fire Safe Cigarettes" legislation before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. The bill was voted out of Committee with a unanimous "ought to pass" message and is awaiting review before the entire legislature.

### *In this issue...*

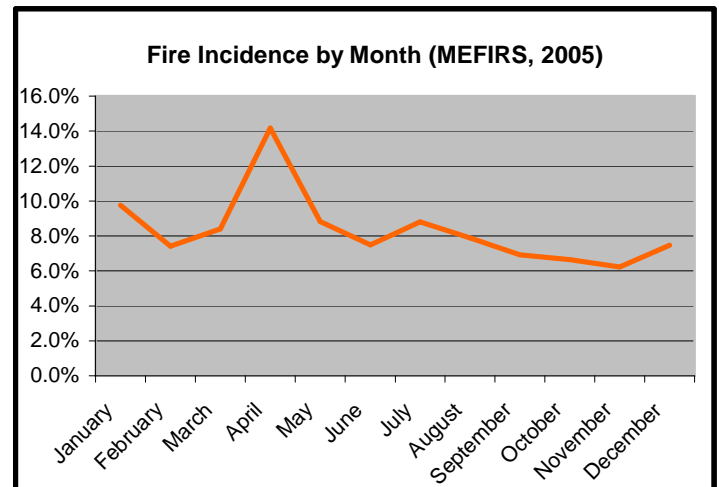
<i>A Message from the Fire Marshal.....</i>	<i>1-2</i>
<i>Fire/Flame Related Burn Injuries in Maine.....</i>	<i>2-3</i>
<i>60th Anniversary of Trumans Fire Conference.....</i>	<i>3-4</i>
<i>Legislative Update.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Bean's Fire Safety School.....</i>	<i>4-5</i>
<i>Local Assistance State Team.....</i>	<i>5-6</i>
<i>SFMO Senior Citizens Fire Safety Program.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>SFMO to Host NFPA Training in July.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Welcoming DPS Commissioner Anne Jordan.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Upcoming Events.....</i>	<i>8</i>

Having been unable to get this legislation beyond the committee the past two sessions, we were pleased to see it being supported unanimously. Let's hope Maine will join the growing list of other states that have already passed this important safety measure into law.

As you know, fire has a seasonal nature. In fact, it's so seasonal that statisticians often use time of year as a variable when building models to predict the frequency of fire incidents. Our office constructed a model using time of year as a variable to forecast fire fatalities and we were off by only one incident. For fire incidents in general, we see the highest daily average of fires nationwide, in the spring.

In Maine as well, our MEFIRS data show that March, April and May are months where we see the spike in fire incidents. Figure 1 below illustrates the spring fire experience in Maine during the year 2005.

Figure 1



Why the spike in spring fires? Nationally the increase in fires is attributed largely to outdoor fires---particularly tree, brush, and grass fires. In Maine, we believe outdoor activities may also contribute to the spike. However, since we do not see the same spike in fall, the other season in which the combustible load of outdoor materials also peaks, we need to dig a little further into our MEFIRS database to ascertain why we see the spring spike but not a similar development in the fall. Such an investigation will likely tell us more about nature of the spring fire spike.

We do know that people are eager to get out, clean up the yard, burn brush and get ready for the summer. So be careful and remember to never, under any circumstances use an accelerant to burn brush. Balled up newspaper or commercial fire logs will work just as well and is much safer. Burn the brush when it is wet and have your hoses, buckets of water, and hand tools ready to limit the fire spreading beyond the planned area of the burn.

For now, enjoy the most welcomed season of all seasons in Maine. Spring!

Sincerely,  
John C. Dean  
Fire Marshal

## **FIRE/FLAME RELATED BURN INJURIES IN MAINE**

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

Understanding burn related injury is a critical element of understanding the cost of fire in Maine. It is a new frontier of research the Fire Marshal's Office has only recently begun to pursue with the help of Maine's CDC (DHHS), Maine Medical Center, and other organizations. This is a brief look at what we've discovered.

Maine's Center for Disease Control now provides the Fire Marshal with data on unintentional fire/flame related hospital discharges. With this data we are beginning to

understand the distribution of such injuries by age, gender, burn diagnosis, and month of the year. The basis for the information is the hospital emergency discharge codes E890.0-899. Figure 2 below is a bar graph illustrating the distribution of fire/flame related emergency room discharges, by age, for the years 2004-05.

Figure 2

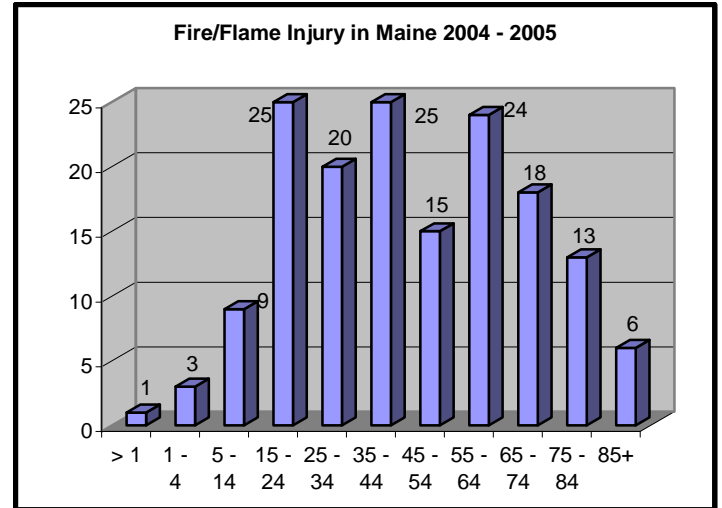
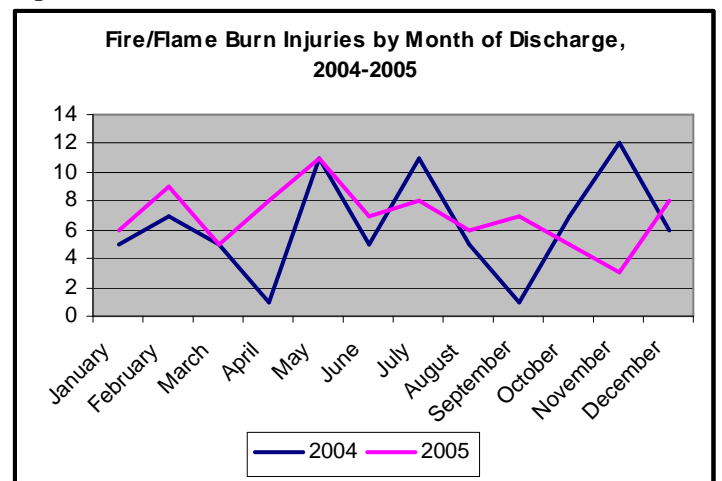


Figure 3 below is a line graph illustrating the monthly frequency and distribution of fire/flame related injuries.

Figure 3



In terms of burn diagnosis and location on the body, the following table ranks the top eight by count for 2004-05. The data as it comes to us does not provide us with details about what happened to the injured in terms of the cause of the fire or other details regarding human proximity. However, by combining the toxic effect of gas, fume, and vapor with acute and

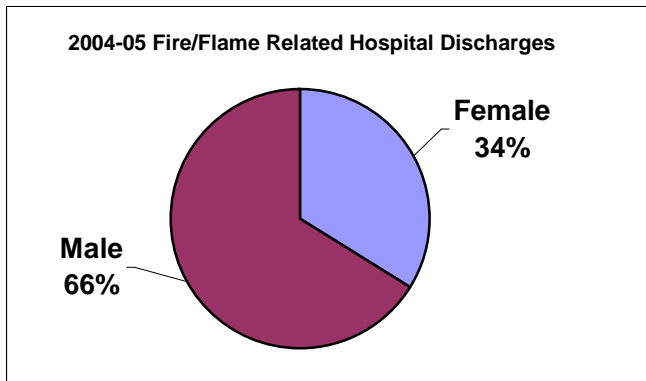
Table 1

Burn of face, head and neck: second degree	22
Burn of lower limb(s): third degree NOS	18
Toxic effect of unspecified gas, fume, or vapor	11
Burn of upper limb, except wrist and hand: second degree	11
Burn of wrist(s) and hand(s): second degree	10
Burn of lower limb(s): second degree	10
Other acute and subacute respiratory conditions due to fumes and vapors	9
Burn of trunk: second degree	6
Other 26 diagnosis combined	62

subacute respiratory conditions due to fumes and vapors, we might infer that just as smoke inhalation kills most victims, it is also a leading cause of fire/flame related unintentional injuries.

Finally, as is the case with fire fatalities, males lead the way by an even wider margin when it comes to unintentional injuries due to fire/flame. Figure 3 below demonstrates the considerable gap in injury by gender. Males appear to be twice as likely to be injured from fire than females.

Figure 3



## **60TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENT TRUMAN’S CONFERENCE ON FIRE PREVENTION**

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

This May will mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President Harry S. Truman’s Conference on Fire Prevention. President Truman, who brought World War II to an end, desegregated the military and told us where the “buck stops,” believed that fire was enough of an issue to

convene the best minds in the country to identify the best strategies to prevent fires.

The conference that met May 6 – 8, 1947 resulted in a report issued by the Committee on Fire Prevention Education that opens with President Truman stating that “The serious losses in life and property resulting annually from fires cause me deep concern. I am sure that such unnecessary waste can be reduced. The substantial progress made in the science of fire prevention and fire protection in this country during the past forty years convince me that the means are available for limiting this unnecessary destruction.” Truman’s perspective is as valid today as it was then.

The report centered on the three Es of safety—engineering, enforcement, and education. Twenty-six years later the landmark report, *America Burning*, was released with an emphasis on fire prevention, a better trained and educated fire service, public education efforts, and improved fire protection in buildings. The

*“The serious losses in life and property resulting annually from fires cause me deep concern. I am sure that such unnecessary waste can be reduced.”*  
*Harry S. Truman*

*America Burning* report, built upon Truman’s vision, resulted in the creation of the U.S. Fire Administration and the reporting system we now

know as NFIRS. Still, Truman’s actions were remarkable for two reasons.

To begin with, it was the first time the federal government focused on the fire problem in the United States. Second, the three Es as they were referred to then remain as the foundation upon which an effective fire service can combat the fire burden. We can engineer safety into all types of occupancies using interconnected fire alarm systems in homes and we can also introduce sprinkler systems that reduce property loss in addition to buying valuable escape time for occupants. There have been additional advances in materials that can slow fire spread considerably. We can ensure that these systems are in place through the regulatory authority of federal, state, and local level organizations.

However, we cannot always resort to legislative or regulatory efforts to reach optimum levels of fire safety. We must also make additional efforts to educate the civilian population about fire safety.

The report of 1947 discusses at length the many organizations, including the public education community, that should be involved in fire prevention. As I read the report and thought of the success European nations have had with regard to fire safety I wondered if Truman may have given Europe more than just the Marshal Plan. Perhaps he gave them the *Report of the Committee on Fire Prevention Education* as well.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

Though the legislative session has not ended, the Fire Marshal's Office is optimistic we will be successful in four of the five departmental bills we've presented and others in which we have served as the lead agency.

LD 70, *An Act to Require Cigarettes Sold in Maine to Be Fire-Safe*, made it through the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee with a unanimous ought to pass vote. If passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Baldacci, Maine will now join the growing number of states that are requiring that only the reduced ignition propensity cigarettes be sold. Because cigarette smoking related fires, though low in frequency, are the most lethal and have been for decades both in Maine and across the nation, this bill is welcome news.

LD 907, *An Act to Ensure the Safety of Facilities Dispensing Flammable Liquids*, also passed the Committee with a unanimous vote. This bill will require all prospective gas stations built in Maine to have the NFPA required fire suppression and mitigation systems essential to prevent a disaster at today's convenience store/gas station environment.

LD 886, *An Act to Clarify Certain Laws Related to Fire Safety* also received a unanimous ought to pass from the Committee. This bill simply clarified the section pertaining to fire department reporting by inserting language that will require departments to report using the NFIRS/MEFIRS format. The fire service in Maine and our office have been doing this for years. This is important to all fire departments as we grow to realize the value of having data for grant writing, budget development, and other purposes fire departments and the Fire Marshal's Office find useful.

LD 362, *An Act to Affect the Seizure and Disposal of Contraband Fireworks* also passed the Committee unanimously and LD 1326, *An Act to Increase Civil Penalties for Violations of Fire Code Laws Applicable to Fire Escape Installment and Maintenance* is scheduled for a hearing Friday, May 11th, at 9:30 before the Committee. All members of Maine's fire service wishing to support this legislation are encouraged to do so.

The Fire Marshal's Office would like to thank all individuals from Maine's fire service and other organizations for testifying in support of these bills. We hope the legislature will follow the recommendations of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. The Committee asked good questions that will assist us in preparing future legislative proposals.

## **BEAN'S FIRE SAFETY SCHOOL**

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

Thousands of American's are killed or injured in residential fires each year. These fires are due to a complex set of variables involving both the behavioral and physical environment of the home before and after the fire starts. Dan Bean, a fire educator from the Old Town Fire Department, understands this and is taking a proactive approach to reduce the frequency of these tragedies. Dan is sick of hearing about Fires that kill people and is out teaching children about fire safety and prevention. Teaching children about fire safety and prevention is perhaps our best bet to reduce the

frequency of tragic fires. Children learn and retain much more than adults.

Dan Bean uses the Modeltech *Hazard House*® to show children the various fire hazards every house has, to varying degrees, and how to avoid them. Such hazards include overloaded electrical sockets, flammable liquids, smoking, etc. and where we see them in each room of a home. This part of the presentation focuses on prevention but Dan moves beyond prevention to mitigation.

Dan points out how and why a well-planned escape plan is crucial. He talks about how smoke alarms can give you that critical time needed to escape. Dan believes the kids really understand but knows the same message needs to be conveyed to adults as well. Sometimes we learn more from those we teach. Hopefully Dan Bean's message will be shared at home and each child's parents will also learn about fire safety.

In Old Town the culture of fire safety is being nurtured. Hopefully more departments in Maine, in addition to those that already do so, will be able to do what the Old Town Fire Department and Dan Bean are doing. Residential fire death is preventable.

### **LOCAL ASSISTANCE STATE TEAM**

By Rev. Daniel C. Coffin, Phippsburg Fire/Rescue Chaplain

Everything that happens immediately after a line-of-duty death affects the way the family, the department, and the community recover from the loss. Lack of resources and planning often adds to the confusion and pain that occurs.

The National Fallen Firefighter's Foundation (NFFF) thinks the best place for a



department to turn for support is within its own state or region. So, we have developed resources and training to help establish state and regional line-of-duty response teams.

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am Chief Chaplain, Rev. Daniel C. Coffin, a local pastor in Phippsburg, Maine, serving the state of Maine fire service as Chief Chaplain for the Fire Chaplains of Maine, a division of the Maine Fire Chief's Association. We represent approximately 40 departments across the state with identified Chaplains appointed by the respective Fire Chief, and serving as a resource to the Chief and department.

I have been appointed as the Coordinator (C.A.S.T) of Maine's Local Assistance State Team (L.A.S.T). This role involves identifying various team members, training the team as a whole, as well as the alternates for each of the six positions on the team, and developing the support resources in readiness for the need to deploy to a department dealing with a Line of Duty Death (LODD) of a firefighter.

This program is intended to be in place within this calendar year, with the hope that we are never needed. As stated above, should you experience a LODD, we are available to walk through the tragedy with you and your department, as well to offer our support to the survivors of the firefighter, support to include – if requested – honoring the fallen comrade with all appropriate services, and to assist in preparing the voluminous paperwork involved in applying for the Public Safety Officer Benefit that may be due your firefighter's survivors (either spouse and/or qualifying children – shared). The current benefit amount is \$297,000 to qualified survivor/s.

We owe our departments, our communities, and especially the families of our firefighters, the utmost in care, training, and equipping before the call to service. It is only fitting that we also owe them the most dedicated care and honor should they sacrifice their lives for us.

For more information on what you can do to further this cause or should you consider being a part of this process, please contact me either by phone at (207) 389-2129 (office) 389-1049 (home) or email me at: [smallpointbc@suscom-maine.net](mailto:smallpointbc@suscom-maine.net). I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Thank you.

**SFMO SENIOR CITIZENS FIRE SAFETY PROGRAM SET TO BEGIN IN MAY**

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

In working to assess Maine's fire burden, the Fire Marshal's Office has become aware of changing population characteristics and the policy implications this has for fire safety and prevention. Maine's aging population, rural nature, the financial burden for some older citizens, combined with the desire to maintain quality of life into our senior years through independence, will require innovative approaches to keep seniors fire safe.

Historically, senior fire safety issues were addressed indirectly through standards applied to licensed nursing homes and assisted living facilities. These standards will remain in place and we still believe that many of our seniors should be encouraged to live in such settings. However, the data on fire fatality and injury in Maine and the growing number of seniors who will remain at home tell us regulatory action alone will not reduce the frequency of fire injury, death, and property loss for Maine's elderly population.

According to the United States Fire Administration, Americans ages 65 and older are three times more likely to die in a residential fire as the rest of the population. In Maine, the percentage of senior citizens lost in residential fires exceeds all other age groups by a significant margin and has, over the past twenty years, been more severe than the national experience.

In response, the Fire Marshal's Office has applied for and received a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to work with seniors on fire prevention and safety strategies that focus on fire before it starts and after. The program will be delivered in collaboration with the Office of Elder Services (DHHS), Maine's Area Agencies on Aging, TRIAD, and other non-profit organizations, to various locations throughout Maine beginning in May, 2007.

If you are interested in having this program delivered in your area or would like more information you are encouraged to contact:

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52 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333  
(207) 626-3873

**MANAGEMENT THOUGHT**

*Research indicates that by engaging citizens, government officials' decisions are considered more legitimate and challenged less frequently. Engaged citizens have an increased level of trust, and programs are typically more successful.*

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**FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE TO HOST  
NFPA TRAINING IN JULY**

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

The State Fire Marshal's Office will host a training on NFPA codes/standards. The training will held July 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> here at Florian Hall, Department of Public Safety, in Augusta. The schedule has been established as follows:

**July 23 – 24**

- NFPA 101, *Life Safety Code*
- NFPA 80, *Standard for Fire Doors and Windows*
- NFPA 220, *Standards on Types of Building Construction*

**July 25**

- NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*
- NFPA 13D, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One- and Two-Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes*

- NFPA 13R, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Residential Occupancies up to and Including Four Stories in Height*

**July 26**

- NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm Code*

At this time the registration database has not been developed nor the application materials and notice. Watch our website [www.mainefiresmarshal.com](http://www.mainefiresmarshal.com) for the application forms when they become available. Only an application *with* payment will secure a seat at the training.

In an effort to build increased fire prevention and safety capacity and enforcement, as it pertains to construction, the Fire Marshal's Office will be looking to seat a well rounded audience representing the fire service, code enforcement officers, and other relevant professions.

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**THE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE  
WELCOMES ANNE JORDAN AS  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC  
SAFETY**

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

We'd like to take this time to welcome Anne Jordan as the new Commissioner of Public Safety. Commissioner Jordan has taken the position vacated by Michael Cantara who was sworn in as a judge on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Jordan, University of Southern Maine and Maine Law School graduate, recently received the University's Community Service Award in 2007 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to public service. She is the first women to hold the position of Commissioner of Public Safety and brings with her a diverse advocacy and prosecutorial background. She has served on the Governor's Board on Executive Clemency and has been a member of Maine Harness Racing Commission and the Animal Welfare Advisory Council. She is currently a member of the American, Maine State and Cumberland County Bar Associations, the Maine Chapter for the International Association of Arson Investigators and the New England Association of Dispute Resolution Professionals. Commissioner Jordan drafted Maine's first-in-the-nation legislation to permit pets to be included in Protection from Abuse orders.

The Fire Marshal's Office is looking forward to working with Commissioner Jordan in our efforts at fire prevention and safety, law enforcement and our ongoing goal of assessing and reducing the social and economic costs of fire to Maine citizens and the visiting public. We join the fire service in welcoming Commissioner Jordan.

Finally, we'd like to extend our belated best wishes to former Commissioner and now Judge Michael Cantara. Judge Cantara served the Department well and was greatly appreciated by all staffers here at DPS regardless of rank or position.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### *19<sup>th</sup> Annual Pine Tree Burn Foundation Fire and Life Safety Conference* *“Safe At Home – 2007”*

**October 18 – 20, 2007**  
**Atlantic Oaks Resort**  
**Bar Harbor, Maine**

**For more information contact: Tom Malcolm,**  
**(207) 723-4193 or by e-mail at**  
**[301tm@verizon.net](mailto:301tm@verizon.net)**

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### **Fire Attack School**

**MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>, 19<sup>TH</sup>, & 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2007**

**THE BETHEL INN & CONFERENCE CENTER, BETHEL, MAINE**

**OPEN HOUSE VENDOR & FIRE SERVICE DISPLAY AREA**

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For more information on the Western Maine Fire Attack School you may e-mail: [info@frandford.org](mailto:info@frandford.org) website: <http://www.frandford.org> phone: 207-966-2280

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### *“Residential Sprinklers: Is Your Department Ready?”*

**May 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> at the Gorham Middle School**  
**106 Weeks Rd. in Gorham, Maine**

This 2-day seminar on fire sprinklers will be presented by Eric Ellis, Fire Protection Engineer  
Maine Fire Marshal's Office

For more information contact either Chief Lefebvre or Deputy Fickett at (207) 839-6762 or by e-mail: [mailto:flefebvre@gorham.me.us](mailto:mailto:flefebvre@gorham.me.us)

July NFPA Training  
NFPA 80, 220, 101, 13, 13D, 13R, & 72  
Florian Hall, Augusta, Maine  
(watch the Fire Marshal's web @  
[www.maine fire marshal.com](http://www.maine fire marshal.com))

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Editors: Richard E. Taylor & Lori L. Gunn

To submit articles for publication contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (207) 626-3870 and ask to speak with the editors. You may also e-mail an article or comment to [Richard.e.taylor@maine.gov](mailto:Richard.e.taylor@maine.gov)

All articles are subject to an editorial staff review prior to inclusion. For a copy of submission requirements contact the editorial staff.

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