



# **The Maine Fire Protection Services Commission**

***2018 Legislative Initiative (LD 1845)***

## ***Live Fire & Fire Training Facility FAQ's***

### **Why does Maine need improved Fire Training Facilities?**

Firefighters in the State of Maine are required by the Maine Bureau of Labor Standards to train, maintain, and be proficient in tasks before performing those tasks on the fire ground. Maine's firefighters are limited to six locations, primarily in the southern part of the state, that are suitable to conduct live fire certification training evaluations. These training facilities have been built and are maintained by local communities and fire service organizations with some assistance from the Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI). They are also the only locations where firefighters can train and certify for interior firefighting operations. While these sites have served Maine well they are all decades old; with the newest being constructed in 1995. Every fire training facility in Maine needs ongoing structural maintenance and repairs, some significantly. Additionally, no facility in Maine meets standards relevant to all of today's firefighting needs.

### **Why should firefighter training be certified?**

Firefighting is not only very challenging physically, it requires that firefighters train with and sustain a vast variety of knowledge and skills. Just a few of the tasks Maine's firefighters need to fully understand include water supply, hazardous materials, apparatus operation, and how differently constructed buildings react to different fire conditions. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sets recommended standards that all Fire Departments strive to obtain. Training and certifying to NFPA standards not only reduces insurance liability for the Maine communities that insure our firefighters, it reduces Workers Compensation injuries and also highly increases safety for our firefighters and the citizens we protect.

### **What are our current training fire training facilities lacking?**

Not only are our current training facilities lacking structurally, they are also lacking in geographic location with many of Maine's rural firefighters severely underserved. Additionally, no facility provides certified training for advanced operations, for example, those involving aerial apparatus. To properly train to aerial ladder standards you must have a minimum of 40 feet of vertical height; equal to a four-story building. All current facilities in Maine only offer two story vertical height. Even the ability to teach and train on basic firefighting skills such as water supply, propane fires, hazardous materials, and vehicle extrication are lacking at most of our current facilities. Additionally, many current facilities do not have fire training support services such as classrooms, restrooms, air supply stations, or warm/cool areas where firefighters can rehab between strenuous firefighting evolutions.

## **How will funding improve Live Fire & Fire Training in Maine?**

Data from the 2017 Survey of the Maine Fire Service showed that Maine Fire Chiefs agreed that sending their firefighters over a one-hour travel time to train was not efficient. With apparatus-drive-time analysis, the Fire Commission identified that eleven strategically placed fire training facilities would be required to serve 90% of Maine's fire departments within a one-hour travel time (current locations meet only fifty-seven percent of that need). Safe training operations require multiple personnel, equipment, and fire apparatus; the current travel time leaves communities unprotected while training out of town and adds significantly to fatigue factors for those firefighters traveling home after training. These factors, along with improved NFPA training compliance, are just a few of the reasons funding for strategically located live fire training facilities along with improved fire training options and capacity, will significantly improve fire training in Maine.

## **How will the funding be Administered?**

Funding for improved Live Fire and Fire Training Facilities will be administered by the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission. The funding will work to expand, establish, compliment, and leverage, local and regional collaborative fire training facility programs in Maine. There are currently no grant programs available for Maine municipalities that allow for this magnitude of fire training facility. The funding mechanism will mirror the current FEMA Assistance to Firefighters grant application and administrative process, currently familiar to fire departments and Maine Fire Chief Associations.

## **Will there be other benefits?**

Studies from the NFPA and the United States Fire Administration (USFA) have shown that access to convenient, professional, and certified fire training and certification reduces fire losses and injuries, improves moral, and supports recruitment, retention, and remotivation activities. Communities that establish fire training facilities also note increased economic benefit from firefighters who travel to the area for training. Local businesses and fire related corporations are also more interested in helping to leverage training with donations if the training meets NFPA standards and attracts regional firefighters.

## **How many firefighters are there in Maine?**

Approximately 9785 firefighters honorably serve the 1.33 million citizens in the State of Maine; this equals one firefighter for every 135 citizens. These firefighters include full time, per diem, volunteer, and on-call members. Our Legislative Initiative to establish a one-million dollar annual budget for 10 years will give Maine firefighters seventy-five cents per citizen per year toward their training.

*This FAQ is subject to updates. For additional information on the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission (MFPSC), our Live Fire and Fire Training Facilities Initiative, or other related Maine fire training questions please visit our webpage at: <http://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/commission/index.html> or contact MFPSC Chair Chief Dan Brooks at 207-462-2631*

*Link to LD 1845*

**[http://legislature.maine.gov/bills/display\\_ps.asp?snum=128&paper=HP1282&PID=0](http://legislature.maine.gov/bills/display_ps.asp?snum=128&paper=HP1282&PID=0)**