



THE NORTH
CAROLINA

FIRE MARSHAL JOURNAL

SECOND QUARTER | 2026



MESSAGE FROM BRIAN TAYLOR NC STATE FIRE MARSHAL



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...AND MORE!

As we move into the second quarter of the year, I want to thank the firefighters, inspectors, investigators, and emergency responders across North Carolina who work every day to keep our communities safe. The work of the fire service continues to evolve. From emerging hazards and new technologies to the growing need for training and prevention efforts, our mission remains the same: protecting lives, property, and the communities we serve.

This issue of the Fire Marshal's Journal highlights several important efforts underway across our state. The release of the 2025 North Carolina Fire Fatality Report reminds us why prevention and education remain critical priorities. Each loss represents a family, a community, and a reminder that our work matters. You will also read about the completion of statewide well water sampling at rural fire stations as part of our PFAS research partnership with the NC Collaboratory.

This effort helps us better understand potential risks and supports the long-term health and safety of our firefighters. Across North Carolina, we are also investing in training, leadership development, and the next generation of firefighters. Programs like the High School Firefighter Challenge, SkillsUSA competitions, and expanded training opportunities at the Emergency Training Center are helping build the future of the fire service.

Prevention remains a cornerstone of our mission. From fire sprinklers and smoke alarms to hot car awareness and poison prevention, simple safety steps continue to save lives every day. Thank you for your work and continued partnership with the Office of State Fire Marshal. Together, we will keep strengthening the fire service and protecting the people of North Carolina.

Brian Taylor
North Carolina State Fire Marshal



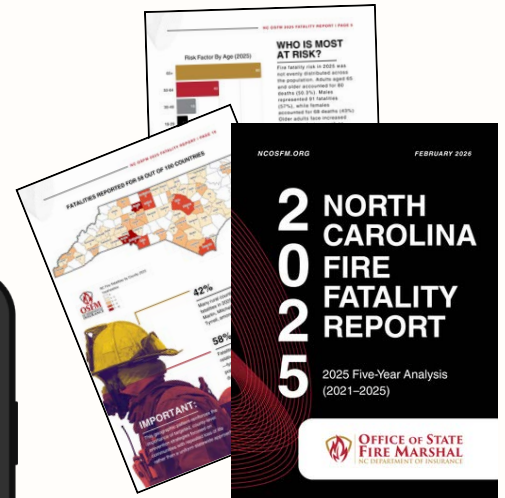
NC OSFM Oversees Pyrotechnics Safety Statewide

NC OSFM regulates and permits public fireworks and special effects displays statewide. Licensed pyrotechnic operators must obtain proper permits and meet North Carolina Fire Code requirements (including safe distances, approved equipment, and trained personnel) before any display can take place.

OSFM works with licensed pyrotechnic operators, event organizers, and local fire officials to review permit applications and verify that fireworks displays meet the safety requirements outlined in the North Carolina Fire Code. These regulations help protect spectators, property, and the professionals responsible for conducting the displays.

READ THE NC OSFM FIRE FATALITY REPORT (2025)

Scan the QR code to download our digital E-Book!



2025 NORTH CAROLINA FIRE FATALITY REPORT RELEASED

The North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal has released the 2025 North Carolina Fire Fatality Report, providing an important look at fire-related deaths across the state and the factors that continue to contribute to these tragedies.

In 2025, 159 people lost their lives in fires across North Carolina, occurring in 137 fatal fire incidents. The report also found that 18 of those incidents involved multiple fatalities, accounting for 40 deaths.

One of the most concerning trends continues to be the lack of working smoke alarms. In 84 of the fatalities, there was no smoke alarm present, or the alarm was not working. Only 15 fatalities occurred in homes where a working smoke alarm was confirmed, highlighting the life-saving importance of early detection.

As in previous years, older adults remain one of the most at-risk populations, with the majority of fatal fires continuing to occur in residential settings.

The annual report helps fire departments, community leaders, and public safety officials better understand fire trends and strengthen prevention efforts across North Carolina.

The 2025 North Carolina Fire Fatality Report is available on the Office of State Fire Marshal website. Scan the QR code listed above to download our digital E-Book.



OSFM INTERPRETATIONS TEAM SUPPORTS CODE GUIDANCE, TRAINING, AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

The OSFM Interpretations Section supports the consistent application of the North Carolina State Building Code statewide. The team provides official code interpretations and technical guidance to building officials, fire service professionals, contractors, and design professionals. In addition to responding to interpretation requests,

the section develops guidance papers on complex code topics and delivers continuing education training for building inspectors, fire officials, and code professionals.

The team also provides staff support to the North Carolina Building Code Council and the North Carolina Residential Code Council, assisting with the code development and update process.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Members of the Interpretations Section will present at several upcoming continuing education events. Presentations will cover building code updates, interpretations, and practical guidance for code officials and fire service leaders for the:

- North Carolina Building Inspectors Association
- North Carolina Fire Marshals Association
- North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs

UPDATES

STATEWIDE WELL SAMPLING AT RURAL FIRE STATIONS (PFAS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM)

As part of North Carolina's PFAS Research and Development Program, NC OSFM partnered with the NC Collaboratory and several universities to complete statewide well water sampling at 411 rural fire stations. The effort was directed by Session Law 2023-134.

University teams collected the majority of samples during summer 2025. OSFM assisted in completing the final 38 stations in fall 2025. All samples were submitted to the NC Collaboratory for laboratory analysis. This initiative is part of a broader statewide effort to address potential PFAS exposure linked to legacy firefighting foam (AFFF). In 2025, OSFM also completed a statewide AFFF inventory, removed and destroyed thousands of gallons of legacy foam, and established a centralized storage and staging facility in Haw River for safe disposal. As results are finalized, OSFM will work with fire departments to review findings and identify next steps as the AFFF takeback and disposal program expands in 2026.

FIRE DEPARTMENTS ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN SMOKE ALARM SATURDAY ON JUNE 5

Fire departments across North Carolina are encouraged to participate in Smoke Alarm Saturday on June 5. The annual initiative aims to reduce fire deaths and injuries by ensuring homes have working smoke alarms. Each year, more than 150 people die in fires across North Carolina, many in homes without working smoke alarms. Working smoke alarms can cut the risk of...(cont. pg 4)



BUILDING CODE UPDATE

The 2018 North Carolina State Building Code remains the current statewide code. However, the 2024 North Carolina State Building Code has now been approved and may be used by jurisdictions and industry professionals preparing for the upcoming transition. OSFM encourages code officials and industry partners to begin familiarizing themselves with the updates as North Carolina moves toward full implementation.



NATIONAL ARSON AWARENESS WEEK 2026: A NATIONAL EFFORT WITH A NORTH CAROLINA FOCUS

The U.S. Fire Administration has designated May 5 through 11, 2026, as National Arson Awareness Week. The annual campaign raises awareness about intentionally set fires and promotes prevention strategies across the country.

Arson remains a serious public safety threat, resulting in significant property loss and placing firefighters, first responders, and residents at risk. OSFM encourages fire departments, fire investigators, and prevention professionals to engage their communities through education and outreach.

This year's campaign focuses on practical prevention strategies, including:

- Recognizing and reporting suspicious activity
- Improving lighting around homes and businesses
- Securing dumpsters and combustible materials
- Keeping vacant structures monitored

Community involvement is one of the most effective tools in arson prevention. Fire departments play a key role in building awareness and encouraging residents to protect their neighborhoods.

...(cont.) dying in a home fire in half. Fire departments can participate by hosting installation events, canvassing neighborhoods, or distributing fire safety information to help ensure more families have the protection they need.

HOME FIRE SPRINKLERS: A PROVEN WAY TO SAVE LIVES

Fires can become deadly in less than two minutes, often spreading before the fire department arrives. In North Carolina, more than 150 people die in fires each year, with children, older adults, and people with disabilities at greatest risk. Home fire sprinklers help contain or extinguish a fire before firefighters reach the scene. Combined with working smoke alarms, they reduce the risk of death in a home fire by 82 percent compared to homes with neither.

Only the sprinkler closest to the fire activates, and 90 percent of home fires are controlled by a single sprinkler head. In new construction, the national average cost is approximately \$1.35 per square foot.

Modern residential sprinklers can also be installed flush with ceilings or walls, making them barely noticeable. Together, smoke alarms and home fire sprinklers give families the time they need to escape and significantly reduce fire related injuries and deaths.



Wildfire Community Preparedness Day – May 2, 2026

Communities will come together on Saturday, May 2, 2026, for Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, an annual campaign focused on helping neighborhoods prepare for and reduce wildfire risk.

Held on the first Saturday in May, the day encourages residents, fire departments, and community organizations to work together on simple projects that improve wildfire safety and build resilient communities.

Preparation efforts can include clearing brush and debris, removing dead vegetation around homes, creating defensible space, and educating neighbors about wildfire risks. Wildfire Community Preparedness Day is also an opportunity for local fire departments and community groups to host cleanup events, safety demonstrations, or neighborhood projects that raise awareness about wildfire prevention.

By working together and taking proactive steps, communities can reduce wildfire hazards and improve safety before fire season begins. More information about the 2026 campaign can be found at <https://www.nfpa.org/Events/Wildfire-Community-Preparedness-Day> to stay tuned for updates and opportunities to get involved.

NEWS FROM THE EMERGENCY TRAINING CENTER

The North Carolina Emergency Training Center (ETC) has provided training for more than 400 firefighters at the ARFF simulator and burn pit in recent months. The ARFF simulator offers interior cabin, cargo, and cockpit fire scenarios, providing realistic training for commercial and military firefighters. Exterior fires are also available for brake, high-wing, and jet-engine simulations, helping departments meet annual training requirements. The burn pit allows firefighters to train using environmentally friendly foam while extinguishing realistic Jet-A fuel fires.

In addition to ARFF and swift water training, the ETC's new classroom space has allowed the facility to host additional training courses including:

- Intro to Drones – Part 107
- School Director Training
- Written Qualification Testing

More information about scheduling training is available through the OSFM website.





HEIGHTS HOPE⁴

**EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON CHARLOTTE
CONCORD GOLF RESORT & SPA 5400 JOHN Q.
HAMMONS DR. NW | CONCORD, NC 28027**

On May 14th and 15th (during Mid-Winter Conference), firefighters, first responders, and community members will have the opportunity to rappel 11 stories down the Embassy Suites in Concord, all to support the North Carolina Firefighters Burned Children Fund. Heights 4 Hope isn't just a fundraiser. Sponsor a team member, or jump in yourself! It's a powerful way to stand up for child burn survivors and burn prevention programs across North Carolina.

LOOKING TO JOIN US ON THE LEDGE? HERE'S HOW:

1. **Register** using the official Microsoft link: <https://forms.office.com/g/YvyxsC1Gdi>
2. **Receive** your fundraising toolkit with tips, sample messages, and resources.
3. **Select** your preferred rappel time slot (tentative until the minimum is met).
4. **Raise** your donations by May 1 (check or official Venmo link accepted).

Once your fundraising minimum is met, your time slot is confirmed. Check in at the Embassy Suites lobby on event day. All safety equipment, professional rope support, and training will be provided. No experience is necessary! Just a willingness to step over the edge for a great cause.

Fundraising Minimums:

Firefighters & Emergency Responders – \$100
Community / Corporate Participants – \$250



SAVE THE DATES
THURSDAY, MAY 14
& FRIDAY, MAY 15



NC LOOKING FOR ZERO HOT CAR DEATHS IN 2026

As temperatures begin to rise, we are reminding families that no child should ever die in a hot car. The goal for this each year in North Carolina: Zero deaths. Dozens of children die from heatstroke after being left in a vehicle or gaining access to an unlocked car in the United States annually. These tragedies can happen quickly, but they are completely preventable.

Public awareness and simple safety habits can save lives. By working together, North Carolina can reach the goal of zero hot car deaths this year—ZERO.

Safety officials encourage parents and caregivers to follow these simple steps:

- 1. Look before you lock.** Always check the back seat before leaving your vehicle.
- 2. Leave a reminder.** Place a purse, phone, or briefcase in the back seat to prompt a check.
- 3. Lock your vehicle.** Keep cars locked and keys out of children's reach.
- 4. Act quickly.** Call 911 immediately if you see a child alone in a vehicle.



NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL FIREFIGHTER CHALLENGE

The North Carolina High School Firefighter Challenge offers high school students a week-long fire and rescue training experience each summer in Weaverville, North Carolina. The program is open to students enrolled in high school Fire Tech or Junior Firefighter programs.

Participants will learn skills in vehicle extrication, search techniques, fire behavior, ventilation, forcible entry, rescue ops, and rappelling. The experience builds confidence, teamwork, leadership, and professionalism, helping prepare students for careers in the fire service.



Register NOW at:

<https://ncosfm.gov/HighSchoolChallenge>



NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK PROMOTES SAFE MEDICINE DISPOSAL

National Poison Prevention Week held March 15–21, reminds families to take steps to prevent accidental poisonings.

During the week, North Carolina’s Operation Medicine Drop’s Spring campaign encouraged residents to clean out their medicine cabinets and safely dispose of unused or expired medications.

Even though the campaign has ended, residents can still dispose of medications year-round using permanent medication drop boxes located at many sheriff’s offices and law enforcement agencies.

Safety officials recommend the following measures for families: Store medications out of children’s reach, utilize original containers for medication storage, and properly dispose of any unused or expired medicines. In case of suspected poisoning, contact Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222**.



NEW CLASSES: FUNDAMENTALS OF FIRE INVESTIGATION

Firefighters and investigators across North Carolina will have several opportunities this year to strengthen their skills through the Fundamentals of Fire Investigation course offered by OSFM. This two-day introductory course includes classroom instruction and a live fire component, providing hands-on experience investigating real fire scenarios.

Students who complete the course receive 16 Certified Fire Investigator (CFI) credit hours. Upcoming locations include:

Durham, NC - April 29 & 30

Brunswick, and Union County

Departments should watch NC OSFM social media and our website for registration details.



FIREFIGHTER HEALTH REMINDER

Firefighters encounter considerable physical and mental challenges in their line of work. Prioritizing overall health is essential for ensuring long-term safety and effectiveness. To foster firefighter wellness, departments should promote:

- Consistent physical fitness
- Yearly medical check-ups
- Adequate hydration during training and emergencies
- Access to peer support and mental health services





SAFE KIDS | ANNUAL 2026 CONFERENCE

NORTH CAROLINA



May 4-7, 2026



Harrah's Cherokee Hotel
& Conference Center

The Safe Kids North Carolina Conference, scheduled for May 4-7, brings together injury prevention professionals, firefighters, public health officials, and educators.

Topics include Child passenger safety, Teen driver safety, Water safety, Fire and burn prevention, Bicycle and pedestrian safety, and more! The conference provides training and collaboration opportunities focused on preventing childhood injuries.



SCAN QR TO REGISTER

Or visit us at: <https://www.ncosfm.gov/community-risk-reduction/safe-kids/safe-kids-nc-conference>

XTRA UPDATES

FIRE DEPARTMENT RATINGS AND INSPECTIONS

The public hearing for updates to the North Carolina 9S Administrative Rules was held February 23, 2026. If no further comments are received, rules will move forward in the review process with tentative approval expected June 1, 2026.

2026 FIRE GRANT PROGRAM OPENED JANUARY 1ST, 2026

March 1 – Application deadline
May 15 – Grant recipients announced
September 30 – Invoices due
Documentation can be uploaded through the OSFM 24 portal.

MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMPLAINTS

Did you know that the OSFM Manufactured Building Division responds to questions and complaints regarding manufactured and modular homes? The division reviews complaints involving manufacturers, dealers, and setup contractors to determine if state laws have been violated.

For assistance, contact:

Manufactured Building Division
800-587-2716
MBDcomplaints@ncdoi.gov



NC OSFM ANNOUNCES NEW LEADERSHIP ROLES

NC OSFM is pleased to announce two new Division Chief appointments. Tony Bailey has been named Division Chief of Ratings and Inspections, and Kevin Gordon will serve as Division Chief of Training and Commission.

The Ratings and Inspections Division plays a critical role in evaluating fire departments across North Carolina, assessing equipment, staffing, and operational capabilities to help ensure communities are protected and that departments maintain strong ISO ratings. Under Tony Bailey's leadership, the division will continue supporting fire departments statewide in meeting the standards that directly impact both emergency response and community insurance rates.

The Training and Commission Division oversees firefighter training programs and certification standards across North Carolina, working to ensure fire and rescue personnel are prepared to serve their communities safely and effectively. Kevin Gordon will lead the division in continuing to expand training opportunities and uphold the certification standards established by the NC Fire and Rescue Commission.

Please join us in welcoming Tony and Kevin to their new roles. We look forward to the leadership and experience they bring to these important positions within OSFM.



INSURANCE SERVICES OFFICE (ISO) RATINGS

Several local fire departments are celebrating improved Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings this past quarter. Higher ratings reflect investments in training, modern equipment, and stronger coordination with neighboring agencies, and can lead to lower insurance costs for homeowners.

Departments	District	County	Previous Class	New Class
Todd Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department, Inc.	Todd	Ashe	6/9E	5/9E
Supply Fire & Rescue, Inc.	Supply	Brunswick	3/9E	2/9E
Westarea Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	Westarea	Cumberland	4/9E	3/9E
Total Community Fire Department of Berea	Berea	Granville	6/9E	5/9E
Cashiers-Glenville Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	Cashiers Glenville	Jackson	5/9E	4/9E
Sylva Fire Department	Sylva	Jackson	5	3
Sylva Fire Department	Sylva 1	Jackson	5/9E	3/9E
Maysville Fire and EMS, Inc.	Coastal	Jones	4/9E	3/9E
Maysville Fire and EMS, Inc.	Maysville	Jones	4	3
Ulah Volunteer Fire Protective Association, Inc.	Ulah	Randolph	5/9E	4/9E
Bryson City Fire Department	Bryson City	Swain	5	4
Bryson City Fire Department	Tuckasegee	Swain	6/9E	4/9E
Sandy Ridge Fire and Rescue Department, Inc.	Sandy Ridge	Union	6/9E	5/9E
Fall Creek Volunteer Fire Department of Avery County, Inc.	Northwest Avery	Avery	9/10/2026	5/9E



Departments (cont...)	District	County	Previous Class	New Class
Albemarle Fire Department	Albemarle	Stanly	4	2
Little Brushy Mountain Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	Little Brushy Mountain	Wilkes	9E	5/9E
Pasquotank-Newland V. F. D., Inc.	Pasquotank Newland	Pasquotank	5/9E	4/9E
South Point Fire Department	South Point FD	Gaston	4/9E	3
Southport Fire Department	Caswell Beach	Brunswick	3	2
Southport Fire Department	Yaupon Beach Rural	Brunswick	3	2
Southport Fire Department	Southport Rural	Brunswick	3/9E	2
Southport Fire Department	Southport	Brunswick	3	2
Spencer Mountain Road Volunteer Fire Department,	Spencer Mountain Road	Gaston	5/9E	4
Trinity Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	Trinity	Iredell	5/9E	4/9E
Allen Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	Allen	Cabarrus	3/9E	2
Goldston Rural Fire Department	Goldston	Chatham	5/9E	4/9E
Moncure Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	Moncure	Chatham	4/9E	3/9E
Dysartsville Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	Dysartsville	McDowell	6/9E	5/9E
East Howellsville Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	East Howellsville	Robeson	4/9E	3/9E



SOCIAL MEDIA TOPICS TO SHARE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

To help make public safety messaging easier and more consistent across the state, we've put together a Quarter 2 Social Media Communications Plan that local fire departments can use, share, or tweak to fit their communities. These monthly topics line up with seasonal risks, national awareness campaigns, and key fire service events.

APRIL

- **Distracted Driving Awareness Month**
- **World Health Day: April 7**
- **Youth Sports Safety Month**
- **Playground Safety Week: April 26–30**

MAY

- **Bicycle Safety Month**
- **Bike to School Day: May 5**
- **Wildfire Preparedness Day: May 1**
- **National Safe Boating Week: May 22–28**

JUNE

- **National CPR & AED Awareness Week: June 1–7**
- **Smoke Alarm Saturday: June 5**
- **Fireworks Safety**
- **Pool & Grilling Safety**
- **Hot Car Awareness**

Like & Follow on Social Media



NC OSFM



Safe Kids NC



OSFM Engineering



NC State Fire Marshal Brian Taylor



NC ETC



NC HILB

