



NORTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

BRIAN TAYLOR, STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Third Quarter 2025

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North Carolina Emergency Training Center Update

Construction is progressing on the NC Emergency Training Center at the Stanly County Airport in New London. Part of the center is already completed, and Phase One is expected to wrap up by September. So far, \$87 million has been invested in the project.

This new center is being developed in collaboration with the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM), Stanly County, and the NC Air National Guard Fire Department. It will provide firefighters and rescue teams with a facility to train for real-life emergencies.

The training areas will include:

- Aircraft firefighting, featuring a full-size crash simulator
- Swift water rescue, conducted in a safe and controlled environment
- Urban search and rescue
- Hazardous materials response
- Fire investigation certification

One of the center's standout features is its water rescue area, which is the only facility in the U.S. that allows motorized boats to be used for training. This will equip first responders to handle flooding and storm-related rescues, especially in light of the recent hurricanes and heavy rainfall experienced across the state. The center is already operational for FAA-required aircraft rescue training, drawing participation from emergency teams throughout North Carolina.

To facilitate the opening of the water rescue section, OSFM requested a waiver for over \$16,000 in water fees to provide five million gallons of water. The Albemarle City Council unanimously approved this request. This facility will serve as a crucial resource for training and preparing North Carolina's first responders for various types of emergencies.

Disaster Recovery Grant Program Update: Funding in Progress

The Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) began sending notifications for the Disaster Recovery Grant Program on June 30. In Round 1, 206 fire departments submitted funding requests totaling more than \$44 million, although only \$10 million was available.

Some applications included ineligible items or lacked detailed budgets. OSFM has contacted those departments to revise their submissions. In the meantime, placeholder award amounts have been issued to maintain momentum. As corrected budgets are received, any unallocated funds are being redistributed to the next departments in line. This ongoing process is why funding decisions are still being finalized.

Round 2 of the program, backed by new state funding (S.L. 2025-26), adds \$18 million and expands eligibility. This includes:

- Two additional counties (15 new fire departments eligible)
- Removal of five counties (affecting 31 departments)
- 36 rescue squads added to the eligibility list

The second round is designed to help departments repair or replace equipment and facilities damaged by Hurricane Helene or enhance their wildfire response capabilities. A total of 24 counties in Western North Carolina, including Buncombe, Henderson, and Watauga, are eligible.

Applications are being reviewed using a fair and transparent scoring system. Once both rounds are complete, OSFM will publish a full list of awards on its website.

Although the grant platform wasn't originally built for a program of this scale, OSFM staff are working diligently to manage the process. Departments that have not received prior OSFM grants may need to be added to the state payment system before receiving funds.

Funding will continue to be awarded and distributed until all available resources are allocated.

Fall Safety Campaigns: CPS Week & Fire Prevention Week

As the seasons change, fall brings two nationally recognized safety observances that are vital to protecting families and communities.

National Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Week: Mark your calendars! CPS Week runs from September 21–27, concluding with Seat Check Saturday on September 27. This is a perfect opportunity for registered fire departments certified as Child Passenger Safety (CPS) stations to take part by offering seat checks, sharing safety tips, and promoting child passenger safety in your community. Let's work together to keep our youngest passengers safe on the road!

National Fire Prevention Week: From October 5–11, fire departments and communities across the country will observe National Fire Prevention Week. This year's theme is: "Charge Into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home." We encourage everyone to use this week to educate families on the proper use, storage, and disposal of lithium-ion batteries—a growing cause of residential fires.

Thank You! Smoke Alarm Saturday

A huge thank you to all the fire departments that participated in this year's Smoke Alarm Saturday campaign. Your dedication to saving lives and spreading awareness about home fire safety is truly appreciated.

Grants and Governmental Services Updates

2025 AFFF Inventory is Underway: The annual inventory process for Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) is currently ongoing. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to the AFFF Analyst for your region:

- East: Steven Allred – 984-800-3551
- Piedmont: Chris Davis – 984-800-3534
- West: Todd Eury – 919-272-0438

Upcoming Training Opportunity: Join us for Hands-On Foam Training at the new Stanly County Emergency Training Center on July 24. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your skills!

Important Grant Deadlines:

- Fire Grant Invoices & Proof of Payment are due no later than September 30.
- Rescue Grant Application opens August 1—stay tuned!
- Tire Grant Closeouts must be submitted by July 15.
- If you have a Rescue Capital Improvements Grant, please submit your closeout documentation as soon as your project is complete.

9S Administrative Rule Update: The revised 9S Fire Department Administrative Rules are now finalized and moving forward to the Rules Review Commission for approval. We anticipate completion of this process before the end of 2025. Thank you for your patience and continued commitment to fire department excellence.

Fire & Rescue Commission and Training Update

Chief 101-2025 is available online for those eligible to complete the upgrade from Chief 101-2020. The Chief 101-2025 program will be available for delivery beginning August 1, 2025.

The Fire and Rescue Commission has several upcoming important dates for the third quarter of 2025.

Board Meetings:

- Fire Rescue Commission: July 15 (Virtual)
- Certification Board: September 4 - Kernersville, NC

Qualification Schools:

- Firefighter Q School - September 8-9: Catawba Valley Community College (Registration closes Aug. 1)
- Written Exam Only Q School - October 27-28: Brunswick Community College (Registration closes Sept. 12)

Indoctrination Courses:

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| • July 11: Wilmington Fire Department | • August 14: Carteret Community College |
| • August 12: Rowan-Cabarrus Community College | • August 20: Davidson/Davie Community College |
| • August 12: Martin Community College | • August 28: Catawba Valley Community College |

Other Courses:

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| • Instructor III - July 16-18: Nash Community College | • Chief 101 Re-qualification - August 6: Raleigh Convention Center |
| • Fire Officer III - August 15: South Piedmont CC | • Instructor III - September 10-12: Harrisburg Fire Department |
| • Chief 101 - August 6: Raleigh Convention Center | |



AFFF Division



Q School Information