

ANNUAL REPORT - 2002

WALLINGFORD FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

The following information was compiled by the staff of the Wallingford Fire Prevention Bureau to present an overview of the responsibilities and accomplishments during calendar year 2002.

Presented by:

***Fire Marshal Joseph P. Micalizzi Jr.**

***Fire Inspector Richard B. Forman**

***Fire Inspector Michael R. Gudelski**

***Senior Clerk Laura Watson**

***Clerical Assistant Joyce Fretts**

WALLINGFORD FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

MISSION
STATEMENT

TO ACTIVELY PURSUE THE HIGHEST
STANDARDS OF LIFE SAFETY
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY
THROUGH EDUCATION, INVESTIGATION,
AND ENFORCEMENT

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In 2002, this office performed well in excess of **811** various types of inspections and activities. With the use of our Firehouse software, we will try to give an overview of these activities. Although we have tracked **811 inspections** through the “Firehouse ©” inspection program, this figure does not reflect all the meetings, preliminary plan reviews, preconstruction conferences, zoning approvals, training activities, walkthroughs, open burning permits, blasting permits, and many more various activities and duties performed by this office that can’t be tracked or recorded in “Firehouse”.

Personnel: In February of 2002, a new fire inspector was hired to fill the vacancy created in July of 2001 by the retirement of the Deputy Fire Marshal. Inspector Michael R. Gudelski started his training in the State Fire Marshal Certification Program in February of 2002 and successfully completed his training in late October, enabling him to become a certified fire inspector for the Town. The process of testing, screening, hiring and training a fully certified fire inspector took a total of 15 months, during which time this office functioned with two certified personnel.

Vehicles: The Fire Prevention Bureau has three vehicles assigned to its’ inventory. A 1994 Plymouth Voyager with 56,000 + miles, a 1995 Chevrolet Lumina with 45,000 + miles (both of which are front wheel drive mini-vans) and a 1997 Ford Crown Victoria with 50,000 + miles (a rear wheel drive retired police cruiser). I will be recommending a planned phase-in replacement program through the Capitol Expense Budget this year to begin replacing these vehicles. I estimate the first replacement vehicle should be ordered in fiscal year 2004-2005 starting with the Ford and replacing it with a more appropriate vehicle, most probably a four-wheel or all-wheel drive Sport Utility Vehicle. This type of vehicle is recommended for all three vehicle replacements due to its increased traction and safety in adverse weather conditions and especially due to the fact that it is a much more practical vehicle to carry the vast array of equipment needed for investigation and inspection activities and can be used as a working platform during investigations. The Ford Crown Victoria is not a practical vehicle when working out of a trunk.

Inspections and activities: The following pages will illustrate the amount of activities performed by this office throughout calendar year 2002.

PLAN REVIEW AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

The Plan review process is the foundation for all new construction projects and insures that both new construction and existing building renovations meet all applicable fire and life safety codes. This is also a necessary process in approving fire code violation corrections to insure they meet the code when corrections require alteration or construction to buildings. In the year 2002, the Fire Marshal performed **101 inspections for certificates of occupancy** and **141 plan reviews** for new and existing buildings comprising of thousands of pages of blueprints examined, hundreds of site plans, and many meetings and consultations with contractors, developers, architects and engineers.

INSPECTION AND ABATEMENT

In 2002, the Fire Prevention Bureau conducted a **Target Hazard Inspection Program** to help identify the most likely properties that sustain the highest rate of civilian deaths and injuries due to fire. During 2000-2001 this office targeted multiple unit housing. Once completed, the next target hazard with the next highest death and injury rates as reported by the National Fire Protection Association and the National Fire Incident Reporting System was industrial and manufacturing occupancies. In 2002 this office identified these properties and conducted fire code inspections. During 2002 this office performed **302 building inspections**

This office continues to do permitting and licensing inspections for various other types of occupancies as required and requested during the target hazard inspection program. Complaints from the public and referrals from other agencies are continuously handled on a daily basis.

FIRE INVESTIGATIONS

The Fire Prevention Bureau conducted **16 fire investigations** during calendar year 2002, 7 of which were accidental, 5 incendiary, and 4 undetermined.

State statutes require that the Fire Marshal or his designee conduct investigations to determine the origin, cause, and circumstances of all fires within his jurisdiction. Although some fires are determined by the Fire Department Officer on scene when the cause is apparent, it becomes necessary to call in state certified investigators when the origin and cause is not easily determined or when the fire appears to be suspicious in nature. All members of the Fire Prevention Bureau are state certified as experts in the field of fire origin and cause determination. We also have the resources and training to coordinate with other investigative agencies such as the Wallingford Police Department, Office of State Fire Marshal Investigations Division, State Canine Accelerant Detection Unit, and Connecticut State Forensic Laboratory.

PUBLIC FIRE EDUCATION

Efforts to educate the public and make the citizens and visitors of Wallingford more aware of the dangers of fire in an effort to reduce injuries and property loss are paramount. This office alone can not provide the manpower and hours needed to educate the public without the cooperation of the Wallingford Fire Department. This office coordinates training and public presentations hand in hand with the Fire Department. Our inspectors provide training materials and audio and visual aids as well as giving *presentations* when our office hours permit. Some of the services this office has provided to the general public in 2002 include:

- ✓ In service training for local health care agencies, municipal departments, civic organizations, and local businesses.
- ✓ Production of public safety announcements on local government television.
- ✓ Safety displays and fire prevention materials at town events.
- ✓ Fair Plan and CFMA statewide poster contest for all 4th & 5th graders.
- ✓ “Smoke Detectors Save Lives” banners displayed on firehouses and public buildings.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Perhaps this office’s biggest shortfall lies in the fact that we are electronically isolated from the rest of our profession. Due to a lack of internet capabilities we are unable to network with various other State Agencies, investigative bureaus and report providers such as the Office of the State Fire Marshal, United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, Underwriter’s Laboratories, National Fire Prevention Association, International Association of Arson Investigators, etc.

We have successfully completed a transfer of the property tax records onto our computer network. We have also updated that listing with the new property evaluation. Our staff routinely references this database for owner information.

PERMITS

Permits are issued to various agencies and commercial farms on basis of individual need. *Open Burning Permits* for vegetation management are issued to monitor fire safety conditions and air quality compliance. *Blasting permits* are issued to certified contractors where applicable for development of construction sites and the installation of utilities. *Pyrotechnic permits* are also issued for all special events and fire works displays in the public and private sectors. The Fire Marshal monitors and issues these permits. At times, it is necessary to schedule overtime assignments to monitor compliance with the Connecticut Fire Safety Code as required by state regulations.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The enforcement of hazardous materials “Right to know” regulations fall under the auspices of the Fire Prevention Bureau. Inspections and safety meetings are conducted with our local industries to help ensure that adequate levels of safety are met. The Fire Prevention Bureau correlates, verifies and distributes this information to the Fire Department for the protection of emergency response personnel and the general public. The Fire Prevention Bureau conducted **97 Hazardous Material** inspections in 2002.

The Fire Prevention Bureau conducts on site inspections of all **underground storage tank** installations, certifications, abandonment and removals. The purpose of the inspections is to help ensure that applicable installation and maintenance standards are met.

OUTDOOR AMUSEMENTS

Inspections of outdoor assembly events including carnivals, outdoor amusements, open air tents and special events such as the Taste of Wallingford, are conducted with the State Fire Marshal and local building officials. The moderate summer season highlights these activities and approximately **20 events** were inspected.

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

State Certified Fire Marshal Personnel assigned to the Fire Prevention Bureau are required to maintain a high skill proficiency level. Each employee is required to achieve a state mandated 90 hours of continuing education within a three-year cycle. The required training helps us stay abreast of a dynamic and constantly changing public safety environment. This year, as with years in the past, all members of the Fire Prevention Bureau have met their training obligations in a professional manner and are current on the latest information available. Also, outside training and seminars, as well as professional organizational meetings are an integral part of networking and staying abreast of ongoing changes in codes and legislation.

The Wallingford Fire Prevention Bureau will continue to monitor and assess the needs of our community to deliver services and public safety to our towns residents, visitors and business community.

Respectfully submitted,

Wallingford Fire Prevention Bureau

End of report

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