

ANNUAL REPORT - 2006

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 2006.

Presented by:

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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 2006, this office performed **1,878** 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 **1,878 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: The Fire Prevention Bureau is fully staffed with 3 state certified members; two Fire Inspectors and one Fire Marshal, 1 full time Senior Clerk, and 1 part time clerical assistant. The Deputy Fire Marshal position has remained vacant since 2002. In the coming months we are expecting one Fire Inspector retirement. This office has worked in conjunction with other town departments and has completed the testing and selection process for a replacement fire inspector. That individual is now attending the State of Connecticut Fire Marshal pre-certification class in anticipation of being hired on or after July 1, 2007. In May of 2007, the other fire inspector is anticipating activation and deployment in the Persian Gulf with United States Naval Reserve Units. His deployment is expected to be from 12 to 14 months and poses a serious manpower shortage to this office. I am presently examining the possibility of hiring a part time temporary replacement fire inspector at that time, perhaps in July or August of 2007.

Vehicles: The Fire Prevention Bureau has three vehicles assigned to its’ inventory. A 1994 Plymouth Voyager with 76,000 + miles, a 1995 Chevrolet Lumina with 60,000 + miles (both of which are front wheel drive mini-vans) and a 2005 Dodge Grand Caravan which was purchased in October, 2004. A new mini van is presently on order from Ford and is expected to be delivered in late January or February of 2007. This will replace the 1994 Plymouth Voyager. This office expected to request the third vehicle replacement this year, however, with the anticipated temporary loss of one inspector, I will delay the request for a new vehicle until fiscal year 2008-2009.

Inspections and activities: The following pages will illustrate the amount of activities performed by this office throughout calendar year 2006.

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 2006, the Fire Marshal performed **136 inspections for certificates of occupancy** and **227 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 2006, 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. In 2006 this office performed **1,199 building inspections**. Unfortunately, from time to time it becomes necessary for this office to write **Administrative Search Warrants** and **Arrest Warrants** for owners of properties that are uncooperative or non-compliant. These warrants are required by state statutes and policy guidelines as outlined by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and State Prosecutors Office. This is a very time consuming and demanding process for our staff and resources.

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. This year we performed **185 permit inspections**. Complaints from the public and referrals from other agencies and departments are continuously handled on a daily basis.

FIRE INVESTIGATIONS

The Fire Prevention Bureau conducted **27 fire investigations** during calendar year 2006, **15** of which were accidental, **6** incendiary, and **6** undetermined. This year marked a **decrease** in investigations from last years high of 40 fire investigations.

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 ***Fire Prevention presentations*** when our office hours permit. Some of the services this office has provided to the general public in 2006 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.
- ✓ Fire Prevention poster contest for all 4th & 5th grade students.
- ✓ “Smoke Detectors Save Lives” banners displayed on firehouses and public buildings.

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 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 **104 Hazardous Material** inspections in 2006.

The Fire Prevention Bureau conducts on site inspections of all ***underground and aboveground flammable and combustible liquid 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 AND TENTS

Inspections of outdoor assembly events including carnivals, outdoor amusements, open air tents and special events such as the Celebrate Wallingford are conducted with the State Fire Marshal and local building officials. The moderate summer season highlights these activities and approximately **40 tents and 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 certified member 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,

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End of report

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