

# ANNUAL REPORT - 2014

## WALLINGFORD FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU



The 2014 Fire Prevention Poster Contest winners

The following information was compiled by the staff of the Wallingford Fire Prevention Bureau in order to present an overview of our activities during the 2014 calendar year.

*Presented by:*

\*Fire Marshal Carmen A. Rao

\*Deputy Fire Marshal Brian R. Schock

\*Deputy Fire Marshal John J. Andrews

\*Senior Clerk Laura Watson

**WALLINGFORD FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU**

**MISSION**  
**STATEMENT**

**The Town of Wallingford, Office of the Fire Marshal, is committed to providing our citizens with a fundamental fire and life safety program in order to reduce the loss of life and property of the citizens of Wallingford. We accomplish this through comprehensive fire protection plan reviews, informative public fire education, effective fire and life safety code enforcement and thorough fire origin and cause investigations. We will continually strive to maintain an unmatched level of courtesy, professionalism, and support to our community.**

## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

In 2014, this office performed **1,613** 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 **1,613 inspections/activities** through the “Firehouse ©” inspection program, this figure does not reflect all the meetings, preliminary plan reviews, pre-construction conferences, zoning approvals, training activities, walkthroughs, open burning permits, blasting permits, and many more various activities and duties performed by this office that are not tracked or recorded in “Firehouse”.

**Personnel:** The Fire Prevention Bureau is staffed with 3 state certified members; two Deputy Fire Marshals, one Fire Marshal and 1 full time Senior Clerk.

**Vehicles:** The office has four vehicles: 2010 Ford Escape SUV, 2007 Chevy Uplander Van, 2005 Dodge Caravan that is used for Fire Investigations and a 2009 Crown Victoria which is a former Police Cruiser transferred from Public Works. Newer vehicles are more reliable and cut down on maintenance costs throughout the year.

The life expectancy of a vehicle in the Fire Marshals Office is approximately 10 years, we are continuing with the vehicle replacement program implemented in 2011. This office will be looking to purchase a new vehicle in the 2015-2016 budget year through the Capital Budget at a cost of \$30,000 dollars.

**Inspections and activities:** The following pages will illustrate the types of activities performed by this office throughout calendar year 2014.

## **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 safety codes. This is also a necessary process in approving fire code violation corrections to ensure they meet the code when corrections require alteration or construction to buildings. In the year 2014, the Fire Marshal’s Office performed **114 inspections for certificates of occupancy** and **211 plan reviews** for new and existing buildings comprising of hundreds of pages of plans examined, site plans, and many meetings and consultations with contractors, developers, architects and engineers. We have completed our work with Choate Rosemary Hall with the installation of fire sprinkler systems in the student housing. As of this school year all dorms have been provided with an automatic fire sprinkler system.

## **INSPECTION AND ABATEMENT**

In 2014, the Fire Prevention Bureau conducted **1,166 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 office continues to conduct permit and licensing inspections for various types of occupancies as required and requested in addition to handling complaints from the public and referrals from other agencies and departments on a daily basis.

## **FIRE INVESTIGATIONS**

The Fire Prevention Bureau conducted **17 fire investigations** during calendar year 2014.

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. All members of the Fire Prevention Bureau are state certified 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 staff provides training materials and audio/visual aids as well as giving **Fire Prevention presentations** when our office hours permit. The Fire Prevention Bureau also provides access to Fire Safety tips through our town web site along with presentations on government television and our display at Town Hall. Some of the services this office has provided to the general public in 2014 in addition to **5 Fire Prevention activities** include:

- ✓ Juvenile Firesetter program.
- ✓ Production of public safety announcements on local government television.
- ✓ Safety displays and fire prevention materials at town events.
- ✓ Fire Prevention poster contest for all 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- ✓ “Fire Safety” banners displayed on firehouses.
- ✓ “Fire Prevention Everyone/Everyday” banners displayed on North Main Street and at Town Hall.
- ✓ Distributed smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors to local residences in conjunction with the Fire Department and donations from the Kidde Corporation.

### **PERMITS**

Permits are issued to various agencies and commercial farms on the 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’s Office 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 Marshal’s Office. 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 ***2 High Hazard*** inspections in 2014.

## **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.

## **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 minimum **90 hours** of continuing education within a three-year cycle. The required training keeps us 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,

Carmen A. Rao  
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**End of report**

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