



2023

Annual Report

Committed to Enhancing Public Safety
Throughout the Commonwealth

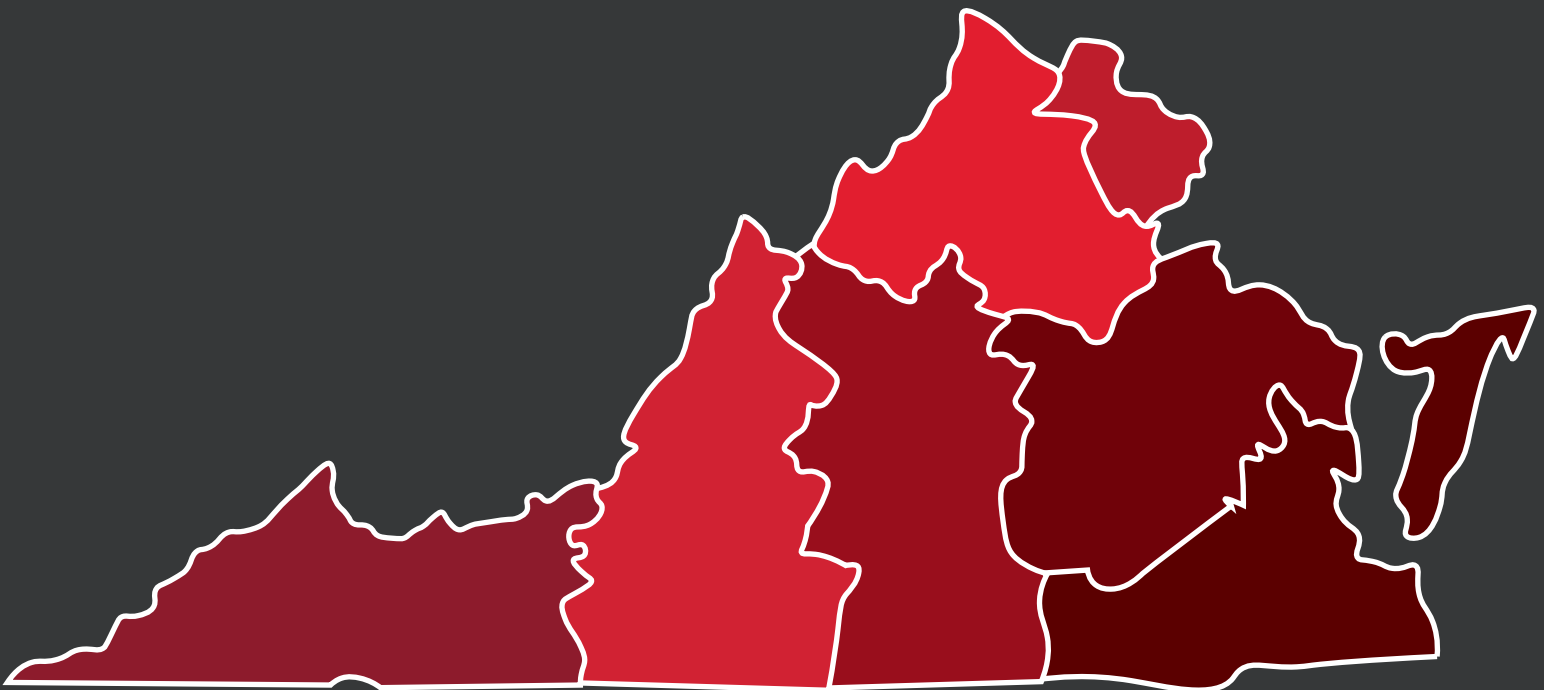


TABLE OF CONTENTS



2	LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
3	AGENCY OVERVIEW
4	TRAINING & OPERATIONS
5	FIRE & EMS MEMORIAL SERVICE
6	LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW
7	GRANTS SUMMARY
9	STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
10	COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION
11	VIRGINIA FIRE MARSHAL ACADEMY
13	SAFETY

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear stakeholders,

As we close out 2023, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our collective achievements.

Together, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs has worked to strengthen our team by focusing on individual-growth, mental and physical health, and an overall good atmosphere to work. We have focused on expanding the capacity of the State Fire Marshal's Office and exploring an online testing solution that will work in all areas of the commonwealth while respecting our technology regulations.



In 2024, I am optimistic that we will achieve several of our goals and complete projects that we have been working on for many months. We will:

- Serve as the national leader in fire services education and training – with a focus on health, safety and wellness
- Complete the re-accreditation process for our training programs
- Perfect and release a training program regarding electric vehicles by July 1 to comply with HB2451
- Make significant progress with the website redesign project
- Continue development and rollout of new features in Cornerstone OnDemand
- Execute objectives of the Virginia Fire Prevention and Control Plan and the Virginia Five-Year Strategic Training Plan
- Strengthen our Community Risk Reduction Program and educate our stakeholders on the transition from NFIRS to the new NERIS

I would like to thank all our staff and stakeholders for their continued support of VDFFP. I look forward to the achievements we will accomplish this year.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. B. [unclear]". The signature is fluid and cursive.

AGENCY OVERVIEW



Brad Creasy
Executive Director

VDFP is one of ten agencies within the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security.

The agency is organized into three branches with seven division offices throughout the Commonwealth.

Mission Statement

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) is committed to enhancing public safety throughout the Commonwealth.

Vision Statement

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) will be a nationally recognized leader in providing the highest level of fire services professional development and statewide risk reduction efforts.



Nicholas Nanna
Deputy Director



Jamey Brads
Chief of Training
and Operations



Theresa Hunter
Chief of Administration



Billy Hux
State Fire Marshal



Kenneth Brown
Community Risk
Reduction Coordinator



Matt Dewhirst
Chief Safety Officer

8
appointed
officials

82
full-time
employees

400+
instructors

\$36M
Aid-to-Localities funding to
Virginia jurisdictions

TRAINING & OPERATIONS



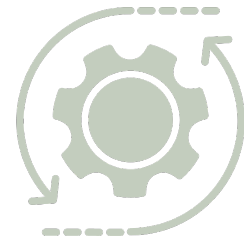
Overview

VD FP is accredited to award certification by both the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the Pro Board. With a cadre of more than 400 adjunct instructors, training and Operations delivers a portfolio of 130 different courses ranging from single-day to several months in length.

Virginia is one of a few states without a dedicated, state-run Fire Academy.

Current Initiatives

- Testing and rolling out online testing solutions
- Piloting modular training curriculum and processes
- Re-aligning Accreditation and Certification and Learning Development Divisions to streamline processes



Accreditation and Certification

VD FP has streamlined the processing of certificates for accredited programs to include the Pro-Board seal. Any certificate issued for an accredited course completed after January 1, 2022, is now sealed and registered with Pro-Board saving our students and the localities an estimated \$72,000 annually. This means that upon successful completion of a course, students automatically receive certification with both IFSAC and Pro-Board for the levels to which the agency is accredited.

Training Statistics



25,088
students in seats



179,314
instructional hours



1,789
sessions completed

FIRE & EMS MEMORIAL SERVICE



The 2023 Virginia Fallen Firefighters & EMS Memorial Service was held on Saturday, June 3, 2023 in Richmond.

Ten firefighters were recognized for their bravery and dedicated public service under the Virginia Line of Duty Act.

The 2024 service is scheduled for June 1, 2024.

HONOR - DUTY - RESPECT

VDFP coordinates the Fire & EMS Memorial Service annually with a committee of approximately 10 dedicated personnel from Virginia's fire service and emergency community. Committee members volunteer their time and resources, and give selflessly to demonstrate how meaningful each honoree's sacrifice was to the fire service.



LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW

The 2023 session of the Virginia General Assembly contained multiple pieces of legislation that had a direct or indirect impact on the fire service. The Virginia Department of Fire Programs stood ready to assist stakeholders in addressing legislation, while also speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia regarding fire service issues.

Legislation with direct impact to VDFP:

HB1993

This bill removes duplicate training for law enforcement fire marshals that hold prior certifications recognized by the Department of Criminal Justice Services. This change offers the locality an option to meet the basic law enforcement training requirement without attending BLE.

HB2133

The State Fire Marshal or his designee will be the authority having jurisdiction over state-owned buildings, property, or structures related to fire safety and prevention. This bill clarifies that even if another state entity has a safety or security division, that ultimately the State Fire Marshal is the authority for fire safety and prevention.

HB1813

This legislation would alter the definition of fireworks in the Commonwealth and curtail the ability of local fire marshals and the State Fire Marshal from enforcing the Statewide Fire Prevention Code on a new category of fireworks labeled "consumer" fireworks. This bill was defeated in committee.

HB2175

This bill directed the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to convene a workgroup composed of various groups, state entities, and others to study Virginia's fire service. This group would examine fire service needs, funding, and the practices of other states to produce a report for the General Assembly. The report, drafted by VDFP, represented the first holistic review of funding for both fire and EMS in many years with 87% of localities reporting.

HB2451

The legislation requires the Department of Fire Programs to develop a training program regarding electric vehicle fires. This would include both career and volunteer firefighters and must be implemented by July 1st, 2024. The legislation also requires all firefighters in the Commonwealth of Virginia to complete this training by December 1, 2025.

GRANTS SUMMARY

Aid to Localities (ATL)

In the Aid to Localities (ATL) program, financial assistance is provided to cities, counties and incorporated towns throughout the state by offering a variety of grant opportunities to pay for training, construction of training centers, firefighting equipment and protective clothing. Allocations are population based.

ATL minimums are currently \$30,000 for counties and cities and \$15,000 for towns as approved by the Virginia Fire Services Board.

The FY2024 allocation is \$40,530,830 – an increase of 11.4% from FY23.

FY2023 ATL Allocated	\$36,379,201
# of Localities Served	320
FY 24 Allocation	\$40,530,830

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

The primary goal of the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire-related hazards by providing direct financial assistance to eligible fire departments, nonaffiliated Emergency Medical Services organizations, and State Fire Training Academies. This funding is for critically needed resources to equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, foster interoperability, and support community resilience.

VDFP received \$325,000 to purchase a mobile fire alarm and sprinkler system training laboratory. This project has been delayed due to supply chain issues but the shell of the training lab is under construction and will be ready in 2024. Once the shell is complete, the agency will bid the second part of the project for the procurement and installation of the internal components of the trailer.

Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System Hardware Grant (VFIRS)

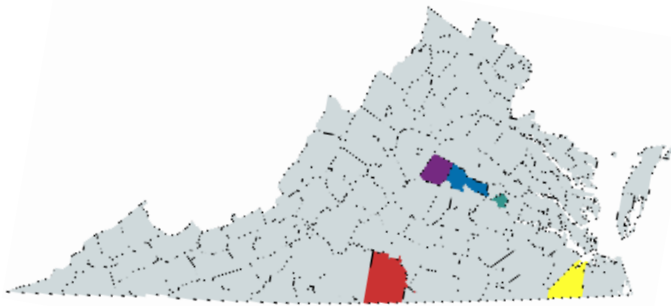
VDFP awarded ten grants to localities totaling \$16,100 in FY23.

FY23 Awardees:

- Bland County
- Culpeper County
- Middlesex County
- Warren County
- Town of Accomack
- Town of Bloxom
- Town of Boydton
- Botetourt County
- Poquoson County

Live Fire Training Structure Grant

As of Dec. 2023, five burn buildings remain open:



- _ Halifax County
- _ Fluvanna County
- _ Goochland County
- _ City of Richmond
- _ City of Suffolk

In FY23, VDFP awarded one renovation grant to Roanoke County.

\$78,909

Renovation Grant

Awarded to Roanoke County

In FY23, VDFP awarded one repair grant to Buckingham County.

\$8,820

Repair Grant

Awarded to Buckingham County



Pictured is Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Terrance Cole and VDFP Executive Director, Brad Creasy, experiencing live fire training evolutions at Hanover County Fire-EMS' burn building which was partially funded by a VDFP grant.

Regional Fire Services Grants

The Regional Fire Services Grant funding is utilized for the acquisition, renovation, repair, service, and management of fire services training props to provide training opportunities to multiple jurisdictions in support of training throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia per the NFPA 1001 and 1403 training standards. A locality may submit one application containing multiple training props but it is only allowed to receive a maximum award of \$50,000 unless a hardship is awarded. The Virginia Fire Services Board awarded a \$54,695 grant to: King and Queen County.

\$54,695

Virginia Fire Services Board Grant

Awardee:
-King and Queen County

STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

Current Initiatives

- Requesting funding to increase staffing and fully fund the agency
- Moving two positions under Special Operations to assist with pyrotechnic, high hazard and other inspections
- Pursuing assisting Virginia State Police and Local Fire Investigators on origin and cause investigations



2023 Milestones



In 2023, there were 28 Fire Fatalities in the Commonwealth

Based on available data, the median age of the victims was 69 years old. **The leading cause was electrical overload/malfunction.** Many of the victims had mobility issues that hindered timely evacuation.

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

Current Initiatives

- Replacing VDFP CRR Initiative Workgroup with CRR Forum
- Developing State Fair Display
- Developing a Smoke Alarm Request Program
- Working with Other State Agencies on:
 - Bed Shaker Smoke Alarm Installation Program
 - CO Alarms for Unserved ESL Population
 - Assisting with Curriculum Support for Home Schoolers
- Developing a CRR Forum Training Event
- Developing a CRR Online Data Program
- Working to have all FLSE courses available online



Achievements

Promotional Shoots – in coordination with the VDFP Public Information Office, the CRR section produced safety videos with the following localities:

NEW KENT FIRE RESCUE	GOOCHLAND FIRE -RESCUE	CHESTERFIELD COUNTY FIRE AND EMS
 <p data-bbox="251 1543 381 1585">4 Videos</p>	 <p data-bbox="738 1543 868 1585">4 Videos</p>	 <p data-bbox="1193 1543 1404 1585">1 Video, 4 Reels</p>

- Participated in Smoke Alarm Blitz in Atkins
- Distributed 300 Additional Smoke Alarms to Sound Off Localities
- Provided Supplies for “Rock the Rescue” Event in Louisa
- Participated in Community Relations event “On The Green” Richmond
- FLSE I Pilot in Alexandria, August 8–10
- FLSE II in Final Review
- Established and scheduled a Community Risk Reduction update section to the Weekly Newsletter
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- Established and scheduled a Community Risk Reduction update section to the Weekly Newsletter
- **Fire Board Studies: Community Risk Assessments**
 - Pulaski County
 - Amherst County
 - Sussex County
 - Alleghany County
 - Town of Lebanon

VIRGINIA FIRE MARSHAL ACADEMY

The VFMA provides training related to Fire Inspection, Fire Investigation, Environmental Investigations and Basic Law Enforcement for Fire Marshals throughout the Virginia.

In late summer of 2023, the Virginia Fire Marshal was moved back under the State Fire Marshal's Office. Since the restructure, the VFMA has continued to provide courses such as Fire Inspector (NFPA 1031), Fire Investigator (NFPA 1033), Basic Law Enforcement for Fire Marshals, and Environmental Investigations. The VFMA also supported the Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference and the First Responder Virginia Conference.

As we move forward into 2024 and beyond, the VFMA will be working with both our internal and external partners to prepare for the agency's reaccreditation. All of VFMA courses will be under review this year.

Current Initiatives

- Continuing to provide courses throughout the Commonwealth
- Focusing on cost reduction for stakeholders when sending them to courses
- Selecting locations for courses based on the needs of the stakeholder
- Continuing to assist with continuing education for our stakeholders

2023 Course Deliveries

Program	# of Students Graduated
NFPA 1031 Fire Inspection 1 & 2	143 (6 Classes)
NFPA 1033 Fire Investigator	131 (5 Classes)
NFPA 1031 Re-entry Program	16 (1 Class)
Basic Law Enforcement	22 (1 Class)
Environmental Crimes	57 (4 Classes)
Civilian Entry	20 (3 Classes)



Instructor teaching students of 1033 Fire Investigator in Abingdon, Virginia.



Basic Law Enforcement (BLE) Students training on detaining a subject at the Virginia Public Safety Training Center.



Students training on traffic stops at the Virginia Public Safety Training Center.



Graduates of the 44th Session of Basic Law Enforcement Training.

Scheduled for 2024



1 Basic Law Enforcement Academy Course



7 Environmental Investigations Courses



4 NFA 1033 Fire Investigator Courses



4 NFA 1031 Fire Inspector Courses

Overview

The Chief Safety Officer(CSO) develops and oversees the effective development and implementation of policies, procedures, and systems that promote a safe and orderly environment for employees and students who participate in our training programs, including live fire structures. The CSO provides guidance on overall employee, and student, health and safety to include cancer prevention and mental health awareness. This position is also responsible for processing position specific 1582 physicals, manages the agency personal protective equipment, 1403 Live Burn training, ISO and HSO programs and related safety programs. This position will investigate all agency student and employee injuries. Additionally, the position serves in the ESF-4 position at the EOC and serves on the VEST for VDEM.

Cancer Prevention Course distributed via CSOD

This previously held in-person program was reconfigured as an on-demand course for our stakeholders to access at any time. Pre-incident, incident and post-incident preventative measures and best practices are presented during this course.

Updated the Live Fire Training (1403) Program and Offering It On Demand via CSOD

This baseline course is intended for all personnel who are assisting with live burns, in any capacity. It covers basic NFPA 1403 safety information, best practices and rules to follow while functioning as part of a live burn cadre. Additional courses on this subject will be built out in the future in the same format.

Developed Incident Safety Officer Course

This course, which meets job performance requirements set forth in NFPA 1521, is a 2 1/2 day class that prepares the student to become an Incident Safety Officer (ISO) for their organization. This course covers firefighter health, reading smoke, technical events, alternative energy sources and more.



Turnout Gear Cleaning Program

Annual turnout gear cleaning was conducted again this year with a change in the process using direct mailing of the adjunct's turnout gear to the cleaning facility, and back to their residence. This process worked well with a 70% response rate.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for new SCBA's

VDFP will use this grant to purchase new SCBAs that meet current NFPA standards. The new SCBAs will be used by ARFF, Division Chiefs and instructional staff.

Training Officer Quarterly

Began a virtual round table to discuss burn building, training and safety related issues around the Commonwealth. Please reach out to Chief Dewhirst if you'd like to be included on the email list for this meeting.

Training for VDFP Staff

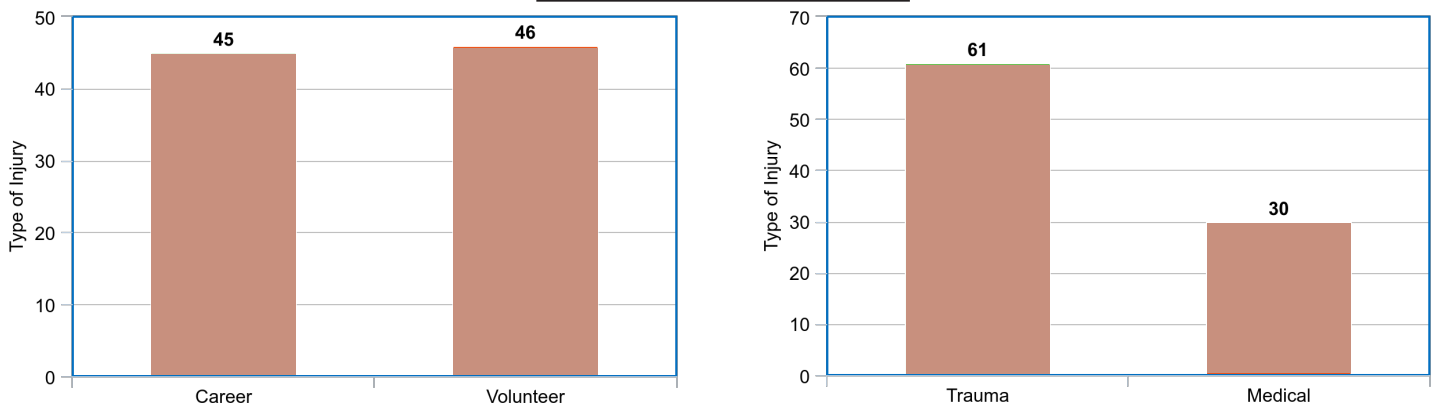
Worked with stake holders to deliver "Active Shooter" training and "Mental Health First Aid" for our staff members.

GOALS FOR 2024

- Successfully implement NFPA 1582 physicals, and mask fit testing, for adjunct instructors and VDFP Operational staff.
- Intake new SCBAs and train VDFP staff on their use.
- Begin developing new Health and Safety Officer curriculum via subject matter workgroup experts.
- Deliver the new ISO course eight times around the Commonwealth.
- Have 90% compliance on adjunct turnout gear cleaning.
- Reduce the number of student injuries during training by 10%.

2023 Injuries

91 Total Injuries
by category





Virginia Department *of* Fire Programs

Leaders in enhancing public safety

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