

BUCKS COUNTY



FIRE MARSHAL DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

2012

Robert Loughery, Chairman
Charles H. Martin, Vice-Chairman
Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW

Brian Hessenthaler, COO

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY

The Bucks County Fire Marshal Department (BCFMD) renders its expertise to the Bucks County Commissioners, District Attorney's Office, Law Enforcement and Fire Professionals in matters of fire safety, protection and investigation.

We provide 24 / 7 On-Call Fire Marshal Investigators rendering assistance to local fire companies, fire marshals, municipal, state and federal law enforcement authorities in the investigation of fires determining their origin and cause for the protection of the public and the prosecution of arson cases. The BCFMD Fire Marshals are all Certified Fire Investigators.

In 2012 the Bucks County Fire Investigation Task Force (BCFITF) of which the BCFMD is part of was not deployed for any investigations. The ten person team remains ready to work together toward the development of origin and cause fires when requested.

In 2012 the Bucks County Fire Marshal Department completed another year in successfully managing the municipal inspection program, which remains a pilot program. This program is designed to work with municipalities that have no fire marshal to provide fire safety inspections of commercial occupancies making the community safer. We effectively conducted over 317 fire safety inspections in Plumstead Township that served to make the public arena a safe haven for community residents to work, shop and play.

The BCFMD continues to maintain highly trained educated professionals specially equipped to accomplish technical fire investigations as well as fire safety and prevention, serving fire and law enforcement agencies, as well as the public.

The BCFMD works to implement fire prevention, which is done through two primary mechanisms; our juvenile fire-setter intervention program "Fire Professionals Aiding Children" (Fire PAC) operated and maintained in an effort to address the problem of juvenile fire-setting in Bucks County. This initiative reduces the threat of fire from our young population.

The BCFMD also operates and maintains an inspection program inspecting for all county government owned and leased properties to insure fire safety. Additionally, we inspect provider homes for the Bucks County Area Agency on Aging and Foster Care Homes for Bucks County Children and Youth Social Services Agency.

The BCFMD maintains a county owned and operated Central Station, providing protection for numerous County owned and operated facilities. It protects 136 property sites against fire, burglaries / intrusions and panic using various alarm systems. Our department also inspects and maintains well over 1,600 County owned portable fire extinguishers.

Bucks County Fire Marshal Department Staff

Chief Fire Marshal
Nicholas E. Rafferty, IAAI CFI

Assistant Fire Marshal
Mark Kramer, CFEI – IAAI CFI

Assistant Fire Marshal (30-hr Per Diem)
David Cell, CFEI

Assistant Fire Marshal (20-hr P/T)
John Gundy, CFEI

Administrative Assist / Alarm Coordinator
Beth Ann Sodano-Jones

Contact Information: Bucks County Fire Marshal's Office
911 Freedom Way, Ivyland, PA 18974
Telephone 215-340-8730
Email: buckscountyfiremarshal@co.bucks.pa.us

FIRE INVESTIGATIONS

(35% increase over 2011 Investigations)

a) Fire Investigations # 115

- # Accidental # 53
 - # Incendiary # 11
 - # Undetermined # 24
 - # Juv. Fire PAC Cases # 27
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- Assisted Municipality w/FM # 38
 - Assisted Municipality w/o FM ... # 50

b) Fire Investigation Man-Hours # 681

- # On-Scene # 395
- # report writing and follow-up. ... # 286

(140% increase over 2011 fatal fires)

c) Fatal Fire Investigations # 8

- Suicide 1
- Accidental 6
- Criminal. 0
- Undetermined. 1

Municipality where Fatal Fires occurred:

▪ Tincum Township	Date of Fire 01/2012	Adult Female (1)
▪ Warminster Township	Date of Fire 01/2012	Adult Male (1)
▪ Middletown Township	Date of Fire 03/2012	Adult Female (1)
▪ Upper Makefield Township	Date of Fire 03/2012	Adult Female (1)
▪ Falls Township	Date of Fire 04/2012	Adult (2)
▪ Bensalem Township	Date of Fire 10/2012	Adult (2)

d) Fire Investigation Task Force Activation / Response # -0-

1. **Consult w/Attorney regarding Fire Investigation Cases**

Attorney Consultations # (18)

2. **Consult w/Private Fire Investigator's regarding Fire Investigation Cases**

PI Consultations # (41)

3. **Property Inspections**

Completed Property Inspections	# 647
Plumstead Twp. Municipal	# 317
County Buildings	# 171
Rental Properties	# 41
Foster Homes ...	# 102
Aging Homes ..	# 15
Other Properties <i>Dock Meadows</i>	# 1

4. **Extinguishers**

Extinguishers Inspected / Maintained	# 1,427
New Extinguishers Entered into System	# 263

5. Departmental Meetings Attended by all Three FM's

➤	Criminal Investigation Meetings	6
➤	County Fire Marshal meeting	20
➤	Bucks County Chief's and Firefighter's Association meeting	18
➤	Insp. & Bldg Const. / Design	4
➤	Juv. Fire-setter Intervention Program Fire PAC Multi Disciplinary Team	6
➤	Fire Death Review	3
➤	Bucks County Commissioners meeting	3
➤	Fire Prevention	10
➤	Fire Investigation Task Force Meeting	1
➤	Public Safety Committee	5
➤	Department Head	3
➤	Department Staff meetings	26
➤	Bldg. Plans Review	3
➤	Hoarding Response Committee	4
➤	Municipal Inspection Program Meeting	1
➤	Departmental Administrative Meetings	4

6. Training

Investigator	Course Title	Hours
FM200 Rafferty		
10/03/2012	NFPA 25 Standard for Inspection, Testing, & Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems update Seminar	4
FM201 Kramer		
10/03/2012	NFPA 25 Standard for Inspection, Testing, & Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems update Seminar	4
FM202 Cell		
10/03/2012	NFPA 25 Standard for Inspection, Testing, & Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems update Seminar	4
TOTAL	TRAINING HOURS	12

JUVENILE FIRE-SETTER INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Bucks County Fire Professionals Aiding Children – Fire PAC

Fire PAC Cases

Total cases referred to program	#30
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Fire PAC Man-Hours

Total hours On-Scene	#92
Total hours report writing / follow-up	#62

(Includes report writing, arranging / conducting Education, MDT meetings, Case Follow-ups, etc.)

Sex of Children

Male	#29
Female	# 1

Assessment Interviews

Conducted	#19
Refused by parents or inaccessible	#04
Not completed by year-end due to extenuating circumstances	#07

Assessment Interventions

Cases requiring Fire Safety / Science / Prevention Education	#23
Cases successfully completed Fire Safety / Science / Prevention Education	#16
Cases refused fire safety Education	#02
Cases failed to attend Fire safety Education / intervention	#01
Cases who voluntarily received education	#00
Cases required by Courts to take fire safety Education	#09
Cases requiring Mental Health Services	#06
Cases requiring in-home fire safety intervention	#09

Fire-setting Information

Children having a Fire-setting history	#03
Children having multiple fire sets prior to referral	#02
Fire-setting Intended to harm/destroy resulting in significant damage/harm	#01
Fire-setting not Intended to harm/destroy resulting in significant damage/harm	#00
Fires resulting in criminal charges of varying degrees	#07
Fire-setting behavior not resulting in property loss or harm to another	#02
Fires resulting in burn injuries	#00
Juvenile Volunteer Firefighters who engaged in Fire-setting activity	#00

Significant Concerns

Cases having Mental Health Issues	#06
Cases having Family Problems or Issues	#13
Biological father absent from child's life	#05
Biological mother absent from child's life	#03
Juvenile with suicidal tendency	#00
Juvenile with homicidal tendency	#00

Recidivism Rate

Number of children recurring fire-setting behavior	#00
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Age of Children

Age	Number of cases per age
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	1
8	2
9	0
10	2

Age	Number of cases per age
11	5
12	3
13	3
14	8
15	4
16	1
17	0
18+	1

Referring Agencies

Agency	Cases Referred
Children & Youth Agency	4
Private Mental Health	8
Public Mental Health	0
Fire	4
Youth Aid	1

Agency	Cases Referred
Police	3
Juvenile Justice	6
School District	1
Other	3
Total	30

Geographical Location of Juveniles

Location	Cases Referred
Upper Bucks County	4
Central Bucks County	1
Lower Bucks County	25



7. **Fire / Burglar / Panic Alarm Activity**

- Central Station Alarm Interventions # **13**
 - Assisted County Departments w /Alarm Systems. # **89**
 - Assisted AFA Alarm Company w /Alarm Systems. # **12**
 - Other Alarm Activities . .Sprinkler Inspections # **20**
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8. **Fire / Burglar / Panic Alarm Activity**

(Beth Jones Alarm Coordinator)

- Assisted County Departments w /Alarm Systems **on a daily basis**
 - Telephone issues, Trouble conditions,
 - Coordinate replacement/repair of panels and/or components
 - Updating phone numbers
 - Updating contacts
 - Adding/Deleting zones/contacts/locations
 - Assisted AFA Alarm Company w /Alarm Systems **on a daily basis**
 - Put systems on test and back online
 - Provide information as to zones, trouble conditions, panel type, component type
 - Call to schedule maintenance at County location
 - Central Station Failure - At least three to four times a month the system needs some type of restart or troubleshooting between the 911 Center, IT and this office.
 - Called upon after hours to work on Central Station computer from home.
 - Insure all 136+ Bucks County owned emergency alarm locations are tested annually and maintenance kept up-to-date
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9. Special Assignments

Assignments in addition to regular duties

- Per Diem employee FM202 Dave Cell acquired certification as a CFEI Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator.
- Conducted Smoke alarm distribution Tinicum Township in neighborhood of fatal fire incident
- Provided County employees fire and emergency evacuation & procedure classes' w/Security.
- Conducted training for four fire company's on the First Responders Role in Fire Investigation
- FM200 Provided Fire Investigation Technique Instruction to Delaware Valley College Criminal Justice students

- Managed and oversaw Fireworks display at Tinicum County Park.
- Served with Bucks EMA for Hurricane Storm incidents
- Participated in Emergency Operations Center Limerick Drill
- Knowledge Center Training
- Participated in Management Training
- Continued pursuit of the State Farm Arson Dog program

- Participated in the Bucks County Fallen Firefighters Memorial
- Attended awareness training on new expected emergency radios
- Improved spreadsheets on Plumstead Township business to better manage and track inspections
- Managed Plumstead Township Billing
- Developed Spreadsheet to determine net profit of Plumstead Inspections after expenses

- Further developed Codepal program to track extinguishers and their inspections
- Assisted local municipality with Bio-Diesel fuel manufacturing issues.
- Addressed County property fire suppression system problems
- Intervened in alarm and Central Station issues / problems / concerns
- Continued work on development of RFP to improve the County's Alarm Central Station System.

- Reviewed existing fire extinguishers removing noncompliant extinguishers and purchasing new extinguishers to maintain our fire prevention efforts.
- Conducted fire drill
- Improved on established relations with Pennsylvania State Police Fire Marshal Division with consorted efforts in fire investigation and interventions.

END REPORT