

**ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1999 - JUNE 2000**

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

JEFFREY J. MORRISSETTE, State Fire Administrator
Established - 1975 Statutory authority - Chap. 7-323
Central office - Connecticut Fire Academy, 34 Perimeter Road
Windsor Locks, CT 06096
Average number of full-time employees - 22
Recurring operating expenses - 1999-2000 - \$2,063,417
Capital outlay - \$18,847

***Organization structure - Office of State Fire Administration, Training,
Certification, and Fiscal Services***

The Commission proudly presents the following summary of services, programs and activities as evidence that the responsibilities entrusted to it have been faithfully administered.

Agency Mission

To prevent or mitigate the effects of fire and disasters, either natural or man-made, on the citizens of the State of Connecticut. This objective shall be accomplished through the development and delivery of state-of-the-art educational programs designed to meet nationally recognized standards, certification of individuals to such standards and maintenance of up-to-date resources for use by fire service personnel, public educators and other first responders.

Statutory Responsibility

The Commission is charged with and has primary responsibility for training, public fire and life safety education and professional certification for members of the fire service. Conn. Gen. Statutes Title 7; Secs. 7-323(j) through 7-323(q), 13(a) - 248; and others.

Public Service

The commissioners and staff are committed to Public Service Excellence. Feedback on services is continually solicited through the use of student comment sheets, surveys and regular interaction with fire service organizations.

In an effort to promote and market agency services, a display booth was staffed at three state and regional conferences during the year. Staff members continued to serve as a resource on fire service and public fire education issues to the television, radio and newsprint media. Once again the Academy and its programs were the basis for numerous feature stories positively impacting local public safety efforts.

The staff conducted 15 tours of the Connecticut Fire Academy facility in response to requests from legislators, local civic organizations and other interested citizens.

Improvements/Achievements 1999-2000

A conscious effort is continually made to schedule programs and services within every region of the state. The needs of both the volunteer and career fire departments are gauged in consideration of program development and delivery.

Reducing Waste

The Commission remains a small, efficient, organizationally streamlined agency. Through the use of full-time staff serving as facilitators and coordinators, adjunct instructors deliver a majority of agency services.

Strategic Planning

Our initiative to update the agency strategic plan began in the last quarter of fiscal year 1999/2000 but has not yet been completed. This initiative will be a priority during fiscal year 2001.

Administrative Projects

The State Fire Administrator and staff remain active in state and national committees, boards and organizations to maintain a positive proactive impact upon services. By Connecticut General Statute, the Administrator serves on both the State Emergency Response and Enhanced 911 Commissions thus maintaining a communications link. The Director of Training serves as the Commission's representative to the Department of Public Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board. Administrative projects completed or ongoing include:

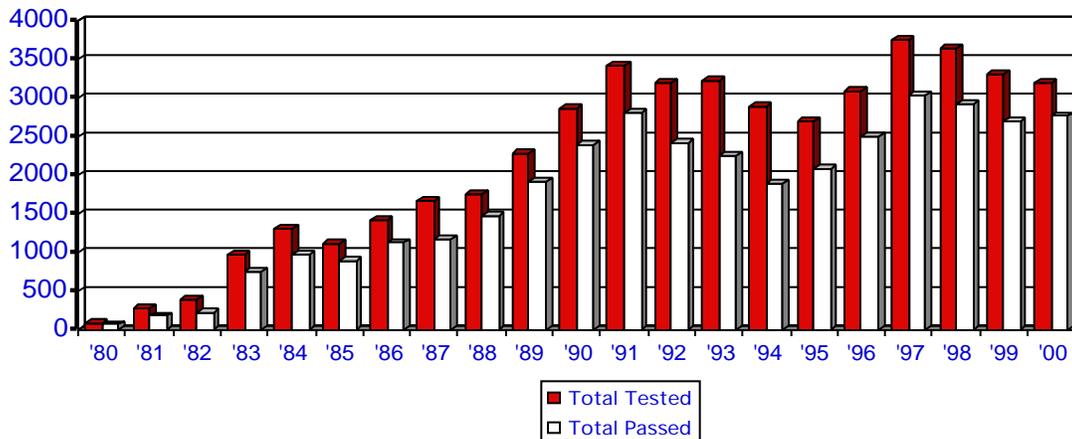
- Completed an agency reorganization consolidating the Public Education Division into the Training Division.
- Continued administration of the 800 FIRE LINE Program, a national volunteer fire and emergency services recruitment tool. During the fiscal year, 93 calls were received with 31 referred to local fire and EMS organizations. The Connecticut Fire Chiefs' Association Radio Technical Advisory Committee continues to reimburse the agency for phone charges related to this program.
- Continued to host regional forums on volunteer recruitment and retention. A total of four forums were held with 79 attendees.
- Planned and coordinated the State Emergency Response Commission's Annual Conference. This year's program was held in conjunction with the National Association of Super Fund Amendments Reauthorization Act Title III Program Officials. A total of 140 participants, many from throughout the United States took part in this three-day conference held in Hartford.
- Completed Y2K assessment of the agency's information technology systems. Remediation was unnecessary as our Macintosh Operating System was found to be fully compliant.
- Continued to upgrade agency computer hardware to state-of-the-art technology.
- Participated in the state's Business Contingency Planning Process.
- Initiated a pilot test outsourcing of facility management services for dormitory room administration.
- A total of 3,399 dormitory room reservations were handled during the year.
- Developed an Entry Level Firefighter Training Guidance Document.
- Provided ongoing assistance to the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations including coordination of the 2nd Annual Fire Service Day at the Capitol.
- Maintained the agency's homepage presence on the Internet. During the fiscal year our web site was accessed 20,785 times.
- Established an electronic mail list service providing immediate dissemination of information to subscribers. A total of 152 messages were transmitted since its inception in September, 1999.
- Continued in an advocacy role on fire service issues to members of the General Assembly and Congress.

Certification Division

The Certification Division is headed by Director Frederick W. Piechota, Jr. The division is responsible for the development and administration of a voluntary fire service testing and certification program. All examinations are based upon the Standards for Fire Service Professional Qualifications developed by the National Fire Protection Association. The certification system continues to be held in high regard nationally as is evidenced by the national accreditation granted to us by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress. Both of these entities have certified that agency certification procedures meet the high standards established for national accreditation. The security and integrity of the system remains a high priority as a majority of Connecticut's

fire departments have mandated certification through contractual or organizational requirements making it crucial that the system be able to withstand legal challenge.

Fiscal Year 2000 saw a total of 3,201 personnel tested within the 13 levels of professional competency offered with an 86 percent passing rate realized. This passing rate represents a 5 percent increase over the previous year. Individuals certified by the Commission are eligible to voluntarily apply for national certification offered by our accrediting boards.



Three major initiatives are in progress to revise and refine the certification system. Two projects, the development of a peer driven Fire Officer III Certification Examination System and a Testing in Context Examination process for the levels of Firefighter I and II, are planned to more realistically examine the capabilities and knowledge of our students. The third project, the revision of the state regulations governing the certification process, is being made based upon the input of the fire service, as well, to ensure a more efficient, streamlined testing process. The division has also participated in the Connecticut High Efficiency Licensing Project by providing information for all levels of state certification.

The division continues to work closely with the Department of Administrative Services to develop and modify examination procedures to ensure compliance with the American’s with Disabilities Act.

The 14th Annual Certified Instructor’s Seminar was conducted for 120 state-certified instructors. This year’s program was entitled “Recharging Your Fire Instructor” and was intended to provide students with new and innovative theories and techniques to best motivate and teach.

The division continues to assist a number of fire departments with the administration of local promotional and entry examinations through the use of the Commission’s test item database.

Fiscal Services Division

The Fiscal Services Division is headed by Director Peter F. O'Neil. The division is responsible for all of the Commission's accounting, budgeting, personnel, purchasing, payroll, contracting and physical plant functions at the Connecticut Fire Academy. The Commission also uses a contracted food service operation and facilities management company for its customers and staff.

The agency's recycling program has been progressing. Recycled totals for the past year are as follows: newspaper – 1.2 tons; bottles and cans – 1,200 pounds; cardboard – 2.24 tons and white office paper – 2.6 tons.

The division administers payments to volunteer fire departments for emergency responses to limited access highways. Eligible volunteer fire departments submitted 2,420 claims for responses to emergencies on our state's highways represents a 9 percent increase over the previous fiscal year.

A substantial amount of publishing continues to be accomplished by this agency. Materials range from student workbooks and manuals to class flyers and the annual Training Catalog. The audio-visual library remains productive, loaning to local fire departments in excess of 1,000 training/education films, slides, audio and videotapes annually.

The Commission's database has allowed this division to increase its effort in collecting past due accounts. Total accounts receivable over 120 days continues to be less than one-percent outstanding. The division completed its first full year utilizing the state's online accounting system for daily deposits with the State Treasurer. An increase in timeliness of invoice payments is helping the agency take advantage of vendor discounts.

Training Division

The Training Division is headed by Director of Training Adam D. Piskura. The division is responsible for the development and delivery of Fire, Hazardous Materials/OSHA Compliance, Emergency Medical Services and related public safety training programs.

The division is comprised of 12 full-time staff and 160 part-time adjunct instructors all dedicated to keeping Connecticut's firefighters well-trained and safe through quality training and education. Working primarily under the banner of the Connecticut Fire Academy, instruction is available in both cognitive and psychomotor development. During the year, the division realigned instructor curriculum and inserted a new component for individual platform skill development. Fire Officer levels I and II have entered the pilot-testing mode scheduled for September, 2000. Fire Officer III is a new course under development, designed for fire service managers. This program has a planned spring 2001 rollout. Curriculum management was consolidated to ensure accountability and completeness.

To increase retention and develop practical skills, several facility/simulator improvements were made. The car-fire prop was modified to halt continuing maintenance issues and increase student/instructor safety. The propane training vehicle was altered to increase available container space at no cost to the state (donated materials/labor). The flashover simulator was modified to reduce labor and injury exposure to instructors. For the first full year of operation, 263 firefighters participated in the firefighter personal safety class safely exposing them to the life threatening effects of a flashover. An apartment mock-up was constructed on the second floor of the training tower to add expanded utility and realism to Firefighter Safety and Survival, Rapid Intervention, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, Search and Rescue and Recruit classes. Acquired an elevator car as a donation from Otis Elevator, to be used in a new two-day elevator/escalator rescue course. Finalizing the acquisition of a surplus Department of Corrections pumper realizing a capital expenditure saving of \$200,000.

Provided advice and counsel to Connecticut fire departments statewide. Assisted Norwalk and Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Departments and Middlesex Regional Fire School in justification research for training facilities. Coordinated the delivery of a non-traditional Incident Command System Program to manage large-scale non-emergency events. An instructor from the University of Missouri delivered this program to both academy staff and OPSail 2000 principals. The Annual June Fire School had 429 participants attending 23 different courses.

In the process of increasing Connecticut Fire Academy transferable course work into Charter Oak College to increase opportunities for higher education degrees.

The consolidation of the Life Safety Education and Juvenile Firesetting Program into the Training Division has expanded our role and function. Program quality and management were increased with the appointment of a dedicated program coordinator. Continued Academy visibility is ensured through participation in state, regional and national events and by presence in publications.

Established a specification committee to develop a Request for Proposal for replacing the Connecticut Fire Academy's rescue vehicle. Developed a relationship with a Department of Defense contract broker to represent the Academy as a vendor for eastern region military fire training opportunities. These revenues, along with other private clients such as the Massachusetts Maritime Academy leverage additional Connecticut municipal training courses.

Two significant initiatives commenced this year:

- Increased firefighter access to educational materials through the creation of a retail bookstore with dedicated personnel. Inventory control and Point-of-Sale software have been researched and recommended to DOIT for acquisition.
- The division was awarded a contract by the Capitol Region Council of Governments to administer Candidate Physical Ability examinations for firefighter candidates. It is anticipated many of the state's fire departments will adopt the test.

The staff successfully pursued and received federal grant assistance for:

Hazardous Materials Training	\$ 130,000.00
Emergency Response to Terrorism Training	\$ 80,000.00

This funding is used to subsidize or offer tuition free learning opportunities for Connecticut's firefighters and emergency responders.

Membership

Members of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control are appointed by the Governor and represent statewide fire service organizations. The following commissioners served during the year: Chairman Peter Carozza, Jr., Waterbury; Vice Chairman Kevin J. Kowalski, Simsbury; Secretary Edward F. Haber, Berlin; Clifford C. Brammer, Jr., Thomaston; Robert J. Chatfield, Prospect; Edward B. Gomeau, Old Saybrook; William Johnson, West Haven; Wayne Maheu, Middletown; Daniel Milewski, Stratford; Peter Mullen, Branford; George J. Munkenbeck, Jr., Waterbury; Richard H. Nicol, Middlebury; Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Derby; James P. Wilkinson, Milford and John Vendetta, Hartford.