From the State Fire Marshal Matt Perez

Our thoughts and prayers are with the students, teachers, families and first responders at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida. The devastation left in the aftermath of these incidents demands that all public safety agencies review their involvement to see what more can be done to protect our children.

In the fire service, change has traditionally been spurred by catastrophic events. Fire safety codes are a compilation of lessons learned at incidents such as the 1958 Our Lady of Angel’s fire in Chicago where 92 children and 3 nuns died. These incidents created the demand to adopt national fire prevention standards in order to eliminate risks of school fires and ensure the safe egress of all occupants. Thanks to these efforts, school fire deaths are now nearly non-existent.

In light of the most recent incidents, the need to improve security at our schools must also be a top priority. Establishing new school security procedures based on lessons learned, without compromising existing standards for fire safety, can be complicated. The OSFM has initiated meetings with the Illinois School Board of Education to revisit how schools are secured and how fire alarm procedures could be adjusted to create safe egress in all circumstances.

A problem of this magnitude cannot be eliminated by fixing one issue, but with involvement from school officials, law enforcement and the fire service, I believe we can deliver the highest level of fire protection and school security for the children of Illinois.
Employee Spotlight- Arson Investigator II Linda Hacker

Arson Investigator II Linda Hacker was born and raised in Seneca, Illinois. She attended Western Illinois University where she completed a 16-week internship with the OSFM Arson Division. Investigator Hacker says, “that opportunity convinced me that there could be no better job for me than the combination of Law Enforcement and Fire.” After graduating from WIU in 1992 with a B.A. in Law Enforcement, she became a patrol officer in Coal City and a volunteer firefighter in Seneca. In 1993, Linda started at the OSFM and has now reached her 25-year anniversary with the agency. She is still the only female Arson Investigator the agency has ever had. Linda has worked under eight State Fire Marshals, seven Arson Directors, and five Governors. Arson Division Manager Terry Ooms says, “It’s a pleasure working with Linda, she is very knowledgeable and continually demonstrates her leadership and dedication to this office and the Arson Division.”

Question: What do you like most about the OSFM?
That every day brings something new to the job. Sometimes I am behind a desk, sometimes I’m at a fire scene or attending an autopsy or conducting interviews. Day or night, rain, fog, snow or sun, weekdays or weekends (including holidays), this job offers a wide range of experiences. I enjoy working with all levels of law enforcement, fire departments and the OSFM staff.

Question: What advice would you give a person who was considering a career with the OSFM?
Be prepared to dedicate yourself. People are depending on you in their time of need. There is always a department out there in need of our services, and it is our job to be there for them. There is a science involved in this field, which is constantly changing. Be prepared for constant change and constant education. There are also encounters that will leave a lasting impression, sometimes good, sometimes bad. Have a sense of humor, as some encounters will not easily be dismissed from your memory. Lastly, enjoy your job! I couldn’t imagine having spent the last 25 years of my life doing anything else but this.

Investigator Hacker still resides in Seneca and has been married to Joe for 22 years. They have three children: Grant-21-years old, Paige-18-years-old and Faith-16-years-old. Linda’s future goals are to retire one day and possibly move to a sun-filled beach.

SFM Matt Perez says, “Linda is a well-respected fixture in the OSFM Arson Division. She works tirelessly on her own investigations and does a great job of overseeing the northern region. OSFM is lucky to have had 25 years of her services.”
OSFM News

Photo: (left to right) Personnel Standards & Education (PS&E) Office Specialist Mary Torricelli and Fire Certification Specialist Peter Stehman are seen here proctoring the Regional Examinations at the OSFM in Springfield on February 5, 2018. The OSFM provides regional exams on the first Monday and third Thursday of every month (except for January and August). For more information, please check out the PS&E Public Event Calendar Section on our website:

https://webapps.sfm.illinois.gov/PSEPortal/Account/Login

Welcome to the OSFM

Amanda Yingling, Personnel Standards & Education-Office Assistant
Robert (Bobby) Novak-Boiler & Pressure Vessel Safety Inspector
Carl Holland-Boiler & Pressure Vessel Safety Inspector

OSFM Anniversaries

Terry Ooms, Arson Division Manager, 5 years
Joyce Armstead, Fire Prevention Administrative Assistant, 10 years
Linda Hacker, Arson Investigator II, 25 years
University of Illinois Fire Service Institute-Library & Information Services

In person, Online and at your local library

The Library is available to serve all Illinois fire and emergency response personnel by providing information materials and services free of charge. To see the immense collection of books, articles, reference materials, DVDs, e-readers and other electronic services please go the their website at: https://www.fsi.illinois.edu/content/library/

Two notable databases compiled and presented by IFSI’s library:
- Illinois Firefighter Line of Duty Death (IFLOOD).
- Illinois Firefighter Medal of Honor and Medal of Valor Database.

Springfield Fire Department
ISO Class 1 Classification

Congratulations to the Springfield Fire Department on their ISO Class 1 Fire Departments (Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification Class 1). This is the highest ranking a department can receive from ISO and indicates an exceptional level of protection for the covered area. Illinois has 15 ISO Class 1 departments, the highest in the region. News story is here: http://www.sj-r.com/news/20180109/springfield-fire-department-regains-class-1-rating

2017 OSFM Annual Report is now available online
Other News

Kayne Hayes, son of OSFM Boiler Safety Specialist Wayne Hayes is a 10-year-old skating enthusiast who started skateboarding at the age of 8. Wayne and Ashley Hayes says their son loves to skateboard and especially enjoys street obstacles such as curbs, stairs and ledges. Recently they were contacted by Mike Vallely, who is a pioneer of street skateboarding and the owner of Street Plant Skateboards in California. Mike was interested in Kayne’s idea of a new skateboard. From that meeting evolved a concept to incorporate Kayne’s drawings into a one-of-a-kind signature board. His artwork was inspired by being bullied at school, and Wayne couldn’t be happier that his son is spreading the power of being a “peacemaker.” To see more about Wayne’s son, check out the full article: https://www.streetplantbrand.com/product/kayne-hayes-peacemaker-8-125/

Class Announcements

OSFM Public School Inspection Class—FREE

Become a Qualified Public School Inspector

April 7th ➔ 9:00am-1:00pm
Litchfield Public Library
1205 S State Street, Litchfield, IL  62056

May 2nd ➔ 8:30am-12:30pm
Rockford Fire Department
204 S. 1st St. 2nd Floor Training Room, Rockford, IL  61103

Please see our website for required qualifications and how to register: https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/About/Divisions/Fire-Prevention-and-Building-Safety/Pages/School-Inspection-Program.aspx

For further information or questions, please call Debbie Wickenhauser at (217) 785-4714, or email Debbie.Wickenhauser@illinois.gov
NFPA Clothes Dryer Safety Tips

Clothes Dryer Safety

Doing laundry is most likely part of your daily routine. But did you know how important taking care of your clothes dryer is to the safety of your home? With a few simple safety tips you can help prevent a clothes dryer fire.

1. Have your dryer installed and serviced by a professional.
2. Do not use the dryer without a lint filter.
3. Make sure you clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry. Remove lint that has collected around the drum.
4. Rigid or flexible metal venting material should be used to sustain proper air flow and drying time.
5. Make sure the air exhaust vent pipe is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating. Once a year, or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry, clean lint out of the vent pipe or have a dryer lint removal service do it for you.
6. Keep dryers in good working order. Gas dryers should be inspected by a qualified professional to make sure that the gas line and connection are intact and free of leaks.
7. Make sure the right plug and outlet are used and that the machine is connected properly.
8. Follow the manufacturer’s operating instructions and don’t overload your dryer.
9. Turn the dryer off if you leave home or when you go to bed.

AND DON'T FORGET...

Dryers should be properly grounded.

Check the outdoor vent flap to make sure it is not covered by snow.

Keep the area around your dryer clear of things that can burn, like boxes, cleaning supplies and clothing, etc.

Clothes that have come in contact with flammable substances, like gasoline, paint thinner, or similar solvents should be laid outside to dry, then can be washed and dried as usual.

FACT

The leading cause of home clothes dryer fires is failure to clean them.

State of Illinois

Office of the State Fire Marshal
"Be Alarmed!" is a fire safety education and smoke alarm installation program administered cooperatively between the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance (IFSA) and the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM). The program distributes fire safety education materials and 10-year concealed battery smoke alarms to fire departments in the state of Illinois. The fire departments then deliver the education and install smoke alarms in at-risk homes within their communities while recording data for reporting purposes. Both the educational materials and smoke alarms are provided to fire departments at no cost as a result of funding from both the IFSA and OSFM.

The program was developed to educate Illinois residents on the dangers of fire in the home and how to prevent fires from occurring in the home, as well as to ensure there are working smoke alarms properly installed in homes. By providing 10-year concealed battery smoke alarms, it ensures that the power source cannot be removed from the unit and, if properly maintained, will last the life of the device.

The program seeks to:
1) Educate Illinois residents, young and old, on home fire safety and prevention methods,
2) Reduce the number of fire-related injuries in Illinois,
3) Reduce the number of fire-related deaths in Illinois, and
4) Identify the reason for non-working smoke alarms in Illinois homes.

Click here to see the Be Alarmed! Smoke Alarm Installation Program Fire Department Guide
Inferences-definition: a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning.

As a reader, you can make a guess about what will happen next based on what you have read and already know about fire safety. It’s like finding clues for the answer. Make a prediction for each of the situations below. Write your answers on the blank lines and discuss with your teacher, parent or firefighter.

1. Marty’s dad is cooking fried chicken on the stove. He leaves a paper towel next to the pan and goes to answer the doorbell without turning off the stove. I predict:

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

2. Lizzie wakes up and hears the loud beeping of a smoke alarm. She smells smoke. I predict:

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

3. Billy is in the cafeteria at school when the fire alarm sounds. I predict:

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

4. Sue and her brother are throwing a nerf ball in the living room where a candle is lit. I predict:

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

5. Cindy is excited about the 4th of July. She is in her bedroom playing with sparklers. I predict:

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________