

DRAFT

**VIRGINIA
FIRE PREVENTION
& CONTROL PLAN**

**2019
Prepared Summer 2019**

Prepared by:

**Virginia Department of Fire Programs
Virginia Fire Services Board**



This plan is a living document subject to change on a regular basis. It should be reviewed on an annual basis. As such, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs should keep the most current plan posted on their website to be accessible.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction	Page 2
Chapter 2	History	Page 2
Chapter 3	Virginia Partners	Page 3
Chapter 4	Virginia Fire Data	Page 7
Chapter 5	Recommendations	Page 26
Chapter 6	Glossary	Page 30
Chapter 7	Acronyms	Page 31

1.0: INTRODUCTION

The Fire Prevention and Control Plan (Plan) provides a mechanism to address fire and life safety issues facing the Commonwealth and its fire services. The Plan addresses fire and life safety concerns and provides information regarding resources of all federal, state and local agencies. Through the versions of the Plan, many recommendations have been achieved, others have been addressed by the creation of additional committees, and new challenges have been identified.

Today, through the growth and development of the Virginia Fire Services Board (Board) in their committee processes along with the positive working relationship with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VD FP) and the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security (SPSHS), there are new means to address most problems facing Virginia's fire services.

The focus of the Plan has narrowed since its inception in an effort to reflect the needs of the Commonwealth's fire services that can be addressed by the Virginia Fire Services Board and the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

2.0: HISTORY

In 1977, the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council examined issues surrounding the coordination of Virginia's fire prevention and protection activities. The Senate Joint Resolution (SJR 97) (SD 14, 1978) requesting the study noted that the state had a serious, but un-quantified fire loss problem. It also noted the absence of "orderly Plans for the development of priorities towards reducing fire losses within the Commonwealth."

To answer this concern, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) published the Fire Prevention and Control Plan in 1987. DHCD staff wrote the Plan from the Office of the State Fire Marshal (SFMO) and Office of Policy Analysis and Research along with staff from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VD FP). In addition, there were considerable input from members of the fire service.

The 329-page document covered many aspects of the fire services and the problems associated with various issues in the mid 1980's. Subjects included, the collection of fire

related data, training and certification, fire safety education, fire codes, fire insurance, arson and telecommunications (Emergency Dispatch Centers).

In 1998, at the request of the Board, a process was initiated to update the Plan but to concentrate on the issues dealing with fire and life safety. Through multiple meetings across the Commonwealth, fire and life safety individuals discussed and proposed changes for the future.

This iteration of the Plan replaces the previous version that was published on August 16, 2013.

3.0: VIRGINIA PARTNERS

This section addresses the organization of the fire services at the state level and the partnerships with fellow agencies and fire organizations found in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The cooperative effort between all the entities listed has enabled great strides to take place in providing better service to Virginia's fire service and the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

3.1: Virginia Fire Services Board

The Virginia Fire Services Board (the Board) as established is a policy board within the meaning of § [2.2-2100](#) in the executive branch of state government. It is created pursuant to § [9.1-202](#) of the Code of Virginia. The Board is comprised of 15 members appointed by the Governor to represent various fire service organizations throughout Virginia, as well as the general public. The VFSB is comprised of the following:

- An appointed representative of the insurance industry
- Two appointed members of the general public with no connection to the fire services, one of which shall be a representative of those industries affected by SARA Title III and OSHA training requirements

There must also be at least one representative from each of the following organizations:

- Virginia Fire Chiefs Association
- Virginia State Firefighters Association
- Virginia Professional Firefighters Association
- Virginia Fire Service Council
- Virginia Fire Prevention Association
- Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators
- Virginia Municipal League
- Virginia Association of Counties
- Local fire marshal, as defined by § [27-30](#)
- Certified Virginia fire services instructor

Of these appointees, at least one must be a volunteer firefighter.

In addition, the following are members of the VFBS;

- The State Forester
- A member of the Board of Housing and Community Development, to be appointed by the chair of that Board.

Each of the organizations represented submits names for the Governor's consideration in making these appointments.

3.2: Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP)

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (Agency) is one of eleven agencies within the [Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security](#). The Agency is organized into three branches with seven division offices throughout the Commonwealth. Moreover, the Agency's two primary functions are to distribute the Fire Programs Fund and to provide training to Virginia's firefighters. There are several other duties that the Agency undertakes as part of their role in state government and in carrying out the policies established by the Virginia Fire Services Board.

3.2.1: The Agency

The Agency has branches that directly report to an appointed Executive Director including State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO), Agency Administration, and Training & Operations.

State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO): SFMO provides many services to provide safety to life and property from fire for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Training and Development: Training and Development coordinates and delivers fire emergency services education and training programs for the fire and emergency response community, public, law enforcement and industry for the purpose of protecting and defending the commonwealth against the loss of life and property. In addition to the various types of fire, related training, including Firefighter, Officer, Hazardous Materials, and specialty training - a position within VDFP is also assigned to the Virginia Fusion Center (VFC). Lastly, Training and Development is organized into General Fire Service Training and Specialized Training.

General Fire Service Training: VDFP coordinates and delivers fire emergency services education and training programs for the fire and emergency response community, public, law enforcement and industry for the purpose of protecting and defending the commonwealth against the loss of life and property. VDFP offers training programs across Virginia through our Division Offices.

Specialized Training: The Specialized Training Branch oversees, Aircraft Rescue Firefighting (ARFF), National Incident Management System (NIMS), and Technical Rescue (TR) Programs.

Agency Administration: Agency Administration is responsible for the administrative management activities of the Agency, to include all recruitment, personnel, and employee relations as they pertain to human resource management in conjunction with the Department of Human Resource Management. Agency Administration includes Finance, Information Technology, Statistics, Grants and Local Aid, and Government Affairs.

3.2.2: Cooperation with other State Agencies

Cooperating agencies include;

- **Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM):** The Agency shares common training venues in hazardous materials and incident management with VDEM. Additionally, VDFP provides staffing to the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (managed by VDEM) during times of regional or statewide disasters.
- **Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS):** VDFP in cooperation with DCJS has the authority to design, establish and maintain the required courses of instruction for fire marshals through such agencies and institutions as the Departments jointly may deem appropriate and to approve such other courses as such Departments determine appropriate.
- **Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD):** VDFP collaborates with DHCD to assure consistent training of Virginia's fire inspectors who enforce the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. VDFP provides certification training for Fire Inspectors with DHCD providing the certification for the same.
- **Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF):** VDOF is responsible for the protection, promotion and stewardship of the forest resources of the Commonwealth. Along with prevention and suppression of wildfire, VDOF also responds to and provides incident command for other emergencies. VDOF participates with VDFP on the creation of this report and other publications on fire and life safety. The agencies also partner for the training of firefighters across the Commonwealth in the area of wildland fire fighting. Through VDFP's partnership with VDOF each year, \$100,000 of the Fire Programs Fund is transferred to VDOF for the installation and maintenance of dry hydrants across the Commonwealth. There are more than 1,600 of these hydrants in service today. More important, after negotiations with the Insurance Services Office (ISO), these dry hydrants have been recognized and approved as a viable water source. In turn, this allows for the possible reduction in insurance rates for homes and businesses in proximity to these hydrants.
- **Other Agencies:** VDFP collaborates with other agencies including, Virginia State Police, Department of General Services, and Department of Juvenile Justices Services to complete the Agency's mission.

3.2.3: Cooperation with Fire Associations

There are various organizations that play a role in fire prevention and safety concerns by supporting fire related legislation, and providing venues for delivering training.

- [Virginia Fire Chiefs Association](#)
- [Virginia State Firefighters Association](#)
- [Virginia Professional Firefighters Association](#)
- Virginia Fire Services Council
- [Virginia Fire Prevention Association](#)
- [VA Chapter International Association of Arson Investigators](#)
- [Virginia Fire and Life Safety Coalition](#)

Chapter 4: Recommendations

Virginia's fire service responds to all types of events, including fires, rescue and emergency medical services, hazardous conditions, severe weather incidents, service calls, special incidents, and good intent calls, as well as false calls. Recommendations must be based on the analysis of the most relevant available data.

Complete, accurate and relevant statistical data is used for various initiatives including legislation, staffing, funding, etc. Statistical data also provides necessary facts to support fire prevention measures and code changes that are crucial to the prevention of fires and associated injuries and deaths.

4.1. Reporting

VDFP should compile an annual report summarizing national and state data to identify trends or significant fire related issues to be submitted to Virginia Fire Services Board.

4.2 Grants

VDFP should seek additional grant funding from other local, state, national and private sources that can be used for Public Fire and Life Safety Education. Such funding sources could be provided to Public Fire and Life Safety Educators in Virginia who need a dependable source of "seed" money to develop or implement local programs and to promulgate state and national programs in their jurisdictions or regions

4.3 Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS)

Participation in VFIRS should be required of all fire and rescue departments in the Commonwealth. A related and vital part of this process is the necessity of updating this information as new information becomes available on each incident. This includes fire

investigators, upon completing their would go back to VFIRS and input any new data on the fire origin and cause along with all supporting information such as first material ignited, etc.

Reporting of Fire deaths and Injuries

There is a need for a better system of reporting fire and fire related burn injury/death statistics from hospitals and healthcare. It is recommended that VDFP develop and implement the necessary policy and/or procedure regarding the reporting of such statistics by fire and rescue departments as well as hospitals and health care facilities. If a legislation need is identified, the Virginia Fire Services Board encourages it is recommended that the Virginia Department of Fire Programs VDFP to create such and to seek the Governors approval to support such legislation.

4.4 Uniform Statewide Building Code

Support the promulgation of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) that to contain requirements for the installation of residential sprinkler systems in all new residential occupancies. If necessary, the VFSB will support the fire prevention associations in their endeavors to seek legislation that would mandate residential sprinkler systems in new residential occupancies.

4.5 Accreditation

The VFSB support VDFP's efforts to have all VDFP programs meet national level of accreditation through the National Professional Qualifications System (ProBoard) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).

4.6 Fire Code Committee

VFSB must maintain an active Fire Code Committee to advocate the development of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code and areas of the Statewide Building Code that address' fire safety issues. VDFP must provide staff to support including, a representative from the State Fire Marshal Office.

4.7 the Statewide Fire Prevention Code

The method in which the Statewide Fire Prevention Code amendments are adopted, in conjunction with DCHD, must be reviewed and amended to allow the Commonwealth's Fire/Rescue Service to have more control in what amendments are made to the model code being reviewed.

There is a need to have a more cooperative effort between the two VFSB and BHCD Boards.

4.8: SFPC Adoption

Localities should be encouraged to adopt the Statewide Fire Prevention Code and employ staff (fire inspectors) in the same way they have in hiring inspectors for the Building Officials Offices.

4.9: Insurance

It is recommended that the VFS's representative from the insurance industry continue its participation in all aspects of VFSB activities.

5.0 Uniform Crime Report (UCR)

Every fire investigator must provide the relevant data to the Uniform Crime Reporting System once the fire is determined to be incendiary in nature. If there is no local fire marshal with investigative authority then the responsibility should be for the local law enforcement to complete the necessary reports.

DRAFT

6.0: GLOSSARY

Board: Unless mentioned otherwise the Board shall refer to the Virginia Fire Services Board

Board of Housing and Community Development: A state Agency reporting to the Secretary of Commerce for the Commonwealth of Virginia. They have the responsibility to promulgate, in conjunction with the Virginia Fire Services Board, the Statewide Fire Prevention Code.

Coalition: Unless mentioned otherwise, Coalition shall refer to the Virginia Fire and Life Safety Coalition

Fire Prevention and Control Committee: A committee of the Virginia Fire Services Board members assigned to review prevention items including the oversight of the Fire Prevention and Control Plan.

K through 12: Refers to educational levels of kindergarten through a senior in High School.

NWCG: National Wildfire Coordinating Group

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): A private, international, entity dedicated to fire prevention through the development of fire related codes and standards.

National Professional Qualifications System: A series of professional standards that outline expectations for a specific discipline in the fire service from firefighter through fire officers. These standards are written by Committee's established through NFPA, with specific guidance and oversight. Each committee on a specific discipline is comprised of experts from that specific field. Final documents are through a consensus vote, which is then offered up for vote by the NFPA membership at their annual meeting. All such documents are offered for peer review by the public.

National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board): The mission of Pro Board is to establish an internationally recognized means of acknowledging professional achievement in fire service and related fields. Their primary goal is to accredit organizations that certify "uniform" members of public fire departments, both career and volunteer.

Pro Board: The National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications

Virginia Department of Emergency Management: State Agency reporting to the Secretary of Public Safety for the Commonwealth of Virginia. They are responsible for coordinating the state's emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery efforts.

Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP): State Agency reporting to the Secretariat of Public Safety for the Commonwealth of Virginia. They are charge with many duties from distribution of the Fire Programs Fund to the delivery of training to Virginia's Fire Service.

Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS): The reporting system used by the fire service to document all calls and responses. These are detailed reports that allow for the collection of data to be used in prevention efforts and budget preparation. Data collected includes apparatus and equipment use, personnel and others involved in the fire as well as all aspects of the fire cause and actions of existing installed detection & suppression equipment. VFIRS is critical to the success of the modern fire service today.

Virginia Fire Services Board (Board): The Virginia Fire Services Board is created within the Virginia Department of Fire Programs pursuant to § 9-153.1 of the Code of Virginia as seen below. The Board is comprised of 15 members appointed by the Governor. Board members serve four-year terms.

7.0 ACRONYMS

BCI: Bureau of Criminal Investigations

CFFI: Certified Forensic Fire Investigator

DHCD: Department of Housing and Community Development

ED: Executive Director

IAFF: International Association of Fire Fighters

IASIU: International Association of Special Investigation Units

OSHA: Occupational Safety and Health Administration or Occupational Safety and Health Act

IAAI: International Association of Arson Investigators

ISFSI: International Society of Fire Service Instructors

NWCG: National Wildfire Coordinating Group

SFMO: State Fire Marshal's Office

SARA: Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act

SBC: Statewide Building Code

2019 Fire Prevention & Control Plan
Virginia Fire Services Board and the Virginia Department of Fire Programs

SFPC: Statewide Fire Prevention Code

TTS: Training and Technical Services

UCR: Uniform Crime Report

USBC: Uniform Statewide Building Code

USFA: United States Fire Administration

VAHMRS: Virginia Association of Hazardous Materials Response Specialists

VDEM: Virginia Department of Emergency Management

VDFP: Virginia Department of Fire Programs

VFCA: Virginia Fire Chief's Association

VFIRS: Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System

VFPA: Virginia Fire Prevention Association

VFSC: Virginia Fire Services Council

VPBSR: Virginia Public Building Safety Regulations

VPFF: Virginia Professional Fire Fighters

VSFA: Virginia State Firefighter's Association

WUI: Wildland Urban Interface