

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Committed to
Enhancing Public
Safety Throughout
the Commonwealth



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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Stakeholders,

As we close out 2024, I want to take a moment to reflect on the progress we have made together. The Virginia Department of Fire Programs remains committed to strengthening our team, enhancing training and education, and advancing fire safety initiatives across the Commonwealth.

Over the past year, we have successfully piloted online testing, launched our new EV training, and realigned our training and operations branches to serve our students more efficiently. We have also made significant strides in modernizing our systems to better serve Virginia's fire service community.



Looking ahead to 2025, I am confident that we will continue to build on these achievements. Our key initiatives include:

- Advancing fire services education and training with an ongoing emphasis on health, safety, and wellness.
- Completing the website redesign to enhance accessibility and user experience.
- Continuing the development and implementation of new features in Cornerstone OnDemand.
- Executing the objectives outlined in the Virginia Fire Prevention and Control Plan and the Virginia Five-Year Strategic Training Plan.
- Supporting the transition from NFIRS to NERIS and strengthening our Community Risk Reduction Program.
- Successfully implementing our online testing initiatives.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our staff, partners, and stakeholders for their dedication and support. I look forward to another year of progress and collaboration as we continue our mission to serve Virginia's fire service.

Sincerely,
Executive Director Brad Creasy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. B. Creasy".

AGENCY OVERVIEW

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.



Nick Nanna
Deputy Director



Kenneth Brown
Community Risk
Reduction Coordinator



Billy Hux
State Fire Marshal



Matt Dewhirst
Chief Safety Officer



Theresa Hunter
Chief Administrative
Officer



Jamey Brads
Chief of Training
and Operations





MISSION 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.

VISION STATEMENT

We, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP), will strive to expand our services to meet the growing needs of Virginia's fire service, ensuring that Virginia's communities remain safe from fire and reducing community risk.

3

**appointed
officials**

83

full time employees

400+

instructors

45.7m

allocation FY 24

TRAINING & OPERATIONS

Current Initiatives

- Implementation of online testing solution
- Increasing our accreditation levels from the current 26 courses to more than 50
- Developing attendance-based courses that provide skills which can be applied immediately





Branch realignment

Training and Operations underwent a full realignment of its divisions. Division Chiefs are out in the field operating as liaisons for the agency and interacting with stakeholders face-to-face.

All division administrative assistants were reassigned to either the Accreditation and Certification or Learning Development Divisions.

This was done to streamline business processes and ensure continuity statewide. The Accreditation and Certification Division is responsible for all testing and accreditation while all training curriculum is handled by the Learning Development Division.

2024 Statistics



FIRE & EMS MEMORIAL SERVICE

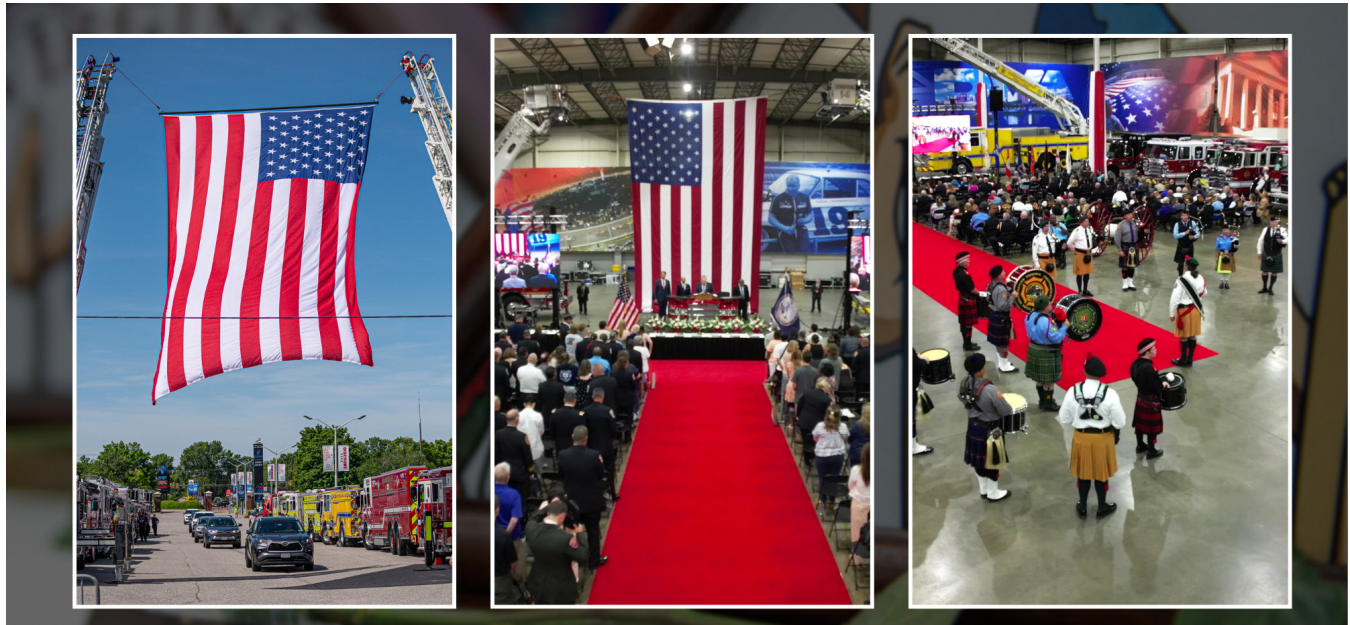
The 2024 Virginia Fallen Firefighters & EMS Memorial service was held on Saturday June 1, 2024.

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

The 2025 service will be held June 7, 2025.

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

HB 489

(Garrett) Fire Programs Fund; increases annual assessment used to fund: This bill provides that the portion of the Fire Programs Fund allocated to localities may be used for the additional purposes of (i) constructing, improving, or expanding fire station facilities, (ii) providing mental health resources, or (iii) hiring additional fire personnel and funding recruitment and retention programs. The bill also prohibits such funds from being used, except as provided, for the purposes of investments, operating expenses, debt repayment, taxes, or fees. *The bill was continued to 2025.*

HB 1043

(Sickles) Virginia Firefighting Personnel and Equipment Grant Program; established: This bill establishes the Virginia Firefighting Personnel and Equipment Grant Program for the purpose of providing grants to localities to hire additional firefighters and to improve their firefighting and emergency medical services. The Department of Fire Programs shall administer the Program and two types of grants shall be made from the Program. The first shall provide grants to localities to increase the number of firefighters. The other type of grant shall be provided to localities for improving firefighting and emergency medical services. *This bill did not pass.*

HB 66

(Campbell) Public schools; fire drills, timing and frequency: This bill requires every public school to hold fire drills during the school session in accordance with the requirements of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code.



HB 484

(Garrett) Consumer fireworks; authorizes use, penalties: This bill authorizes the use of consumer fireworks in the Commonwealth and distinguishes by definition consumer fireworks from display fireworks and permissible fireworks. The bill also allowed certain funds to be provided to the local fire department from tax revenue from the sale of the fireworks. *This bill did not pass.*

HB 133

(Convirs Fowler) Local gov't; ongoing health care for employees exposed to toxic materials. This bill directs the Department of Fire Programs to convene a work group to identify options to assist local government employee responders who were exposed to toxic materials when responding to emergencies. *VD FP produced a report posted on the VD FP website.*

HB 933

(Bolling) Alzheimer's disease and dementia; training for dispatchers, firefighters, etc. Requires certain agencies in the Commonwealth to develop curricula and provide training related to Alzheimer's disease and dementia to dispatchers employed by or in any local or state government agency, firefighters, and emergency medical services personnel. Fire departments shall provide this training.

Budget Item 377

#1c: Required the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to hire an outside contractor to review the sufficiency of fire and EMS funding in Virginia. Virginia Commonwealth University produced and provided a report publicly posted online.

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 FY 2025 allocation is \$45,793,418. This represents an increase of 12.98% over FY24:

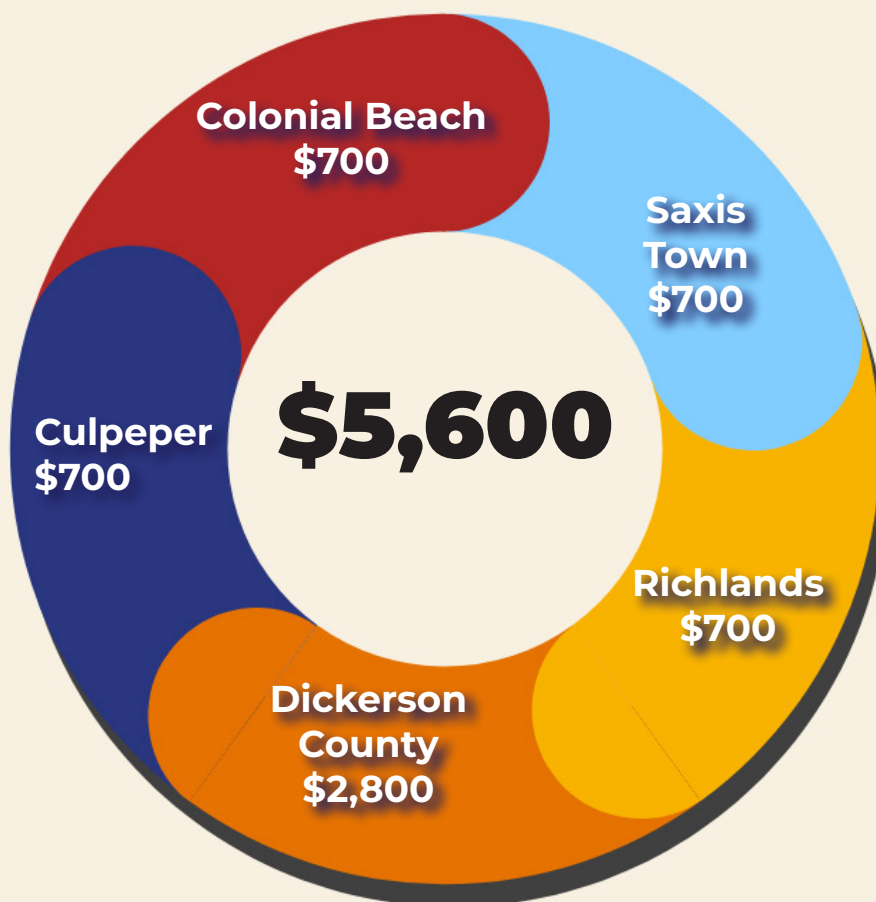
SUMMARY	LOCALITIES	POPULATION	FY 2025 ALLOCATION 06/30/24
Counties	95	5,513,482	\$28,289,874
Towns	189	527,766	4,217,092
Cities	38	2,590,145	13,286,452
Virginia	322	8,631,393	45,793,418

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

The primary goal of the FEMA Assistance to Firefighter 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, non-affiliated 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 2025.

Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System Hardware Grant (VFIRS)

**VDFP awarded 5 grants to localities
totaling \$5,600 in FY 24:**



Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program FY2024

As of December 2024, five Burn Building projects remained open:



In FY24, the Virginia Fire Services Board awarded two renovation grants for a total of \$588,986: Training and Operations division at VDFP for \$438,986.00 and the City of Winchester for \$150,000. In FY24, VDFP awarded four repair grants for a total of \$84,188 to Wise Town (\$12,800), Town of Chilhowie (\$17,800), Town of Pulaski (\$28,588) and Town of Farmville (\$25,000).

Burn Building Repair Projects

LOCALITIES (100% complete)	AMOUNT
City of Roanoke	\$78,909
Town of Wise	\$12,800
City of Lynchburg	\$38,849
City of Virginia Beach	\$34,549
City of Winchester	\$148,632
Buckingham County	\$8,820
TOTAL	\$322,559

Regional Fire Services Grants (Props)

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.



STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



2024 Milestones

137

Blaster &
Pyrotechnician
Certifications

177

Permits to use, store,
sell or manufacture
explosives

59

Permitted
blasting
Events

3,704

Fire prevention
Inspections

367

RCIP Inspections of
Cigarette Retail
Sales Locations

482

Food Truck
Inspections

403

Fire Prevention
Complaint/Inspections

666

State Construction
Inspections



In 2024, there were **51 Fire Fatalities** in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Based on available data, the median age of the victims was 61 years old. **The leading cause was electrical overload/malfunction & improperly discarded smoking materials.**



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

Current Initiatives

- Communicating With Your Community included in basic academies
- Fire & Life Safety Educator II in the works
- 2025 Smoke Alarm Distribution project
- Incorporating the NERIS data into ESRI map
- Continuing the promotional FLS video shoots in partnership with VA Localities
- Developing Junior Fire Setters 1 class schedule for delivery
- Enhance the ESRI map with NERIS data

Achievements

- Community Risk assessment
- Fire Safety Message being available on the CRR web page
- Smoke Alarm Distribution Project over 300 smoke alarms have been installed and plotted on the new ESRI map
- Fire & Life Safety Educator I
- Communicating With Your Community Train the Trainer was developed
- Community Outreach





VIRGINIA FIRE MARSHAL ACADEMY

The VFMA provides training related to Fire Inspections, Fire Investigations, Environmental Investigations, and Basic Law Enforcement for Fire Marshals. In addition, it delivers in-service training at regional events as well as tracks locally delivered in-service training.

As we move forward in 2025, we will ensure both the NFPA 1031 Fire Inspector and NFPA 1033 Fire Investigator programs are re-accredited through both the ProBoard and IFSAC. After accreditation for current programs is concluded, we will begin transitioning from the current Inspector program based on NFPA 1031 to the new NFPA 1030 standard as it relates to First Responder Inspections and Fire Inspector. During this same time work will continue on updating the Environmental Investigations program with a rollout in the second half of the year.

2025 will be a year of inclusion, with engaging legacy instructors that may have been less active over the last year in the development and delivery of classes. This initiative will also include bringing new instructors into the fold of all programs as well as bringing allied industries into the process of development and delivery to ensure all aspects of the fire marshal field, both public and private are represented.

Current Initiatives

- Transitioning from the NFPA 1031 standard to the NFPA 1030 standard
- Updating the Environmental Investigations training program
- Working through Pro-Board and IFSAC re-accreditation of 1031 and 1033 training
- Developing a more appropriate method for managing and tracking in-service training

2024 Course Deliveries

PROGRAM	# OF STUDENTS GRADUATED
Fire Investigator, NFPA 1033	56
Fire Inspector, NFPA 1031	105
Environmental Investigations	16
Inspection Re-Entry	6
Civilian Entry	7

Supported VSFA and VFCA conferences — 13 classes with 620 students

Supported the delivery and tracking of Continuing Education — 97 classes

Classes Scheduled for 2025

4 Fire Investigator NFPA 1033

4 Fire Inspector NFPA 1031

2 Basic Law Enforcement

4 Environmental Crimes





SAFETY

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.

Developed Incident Safety Officer Course

This course was delivered four times around the state.

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.

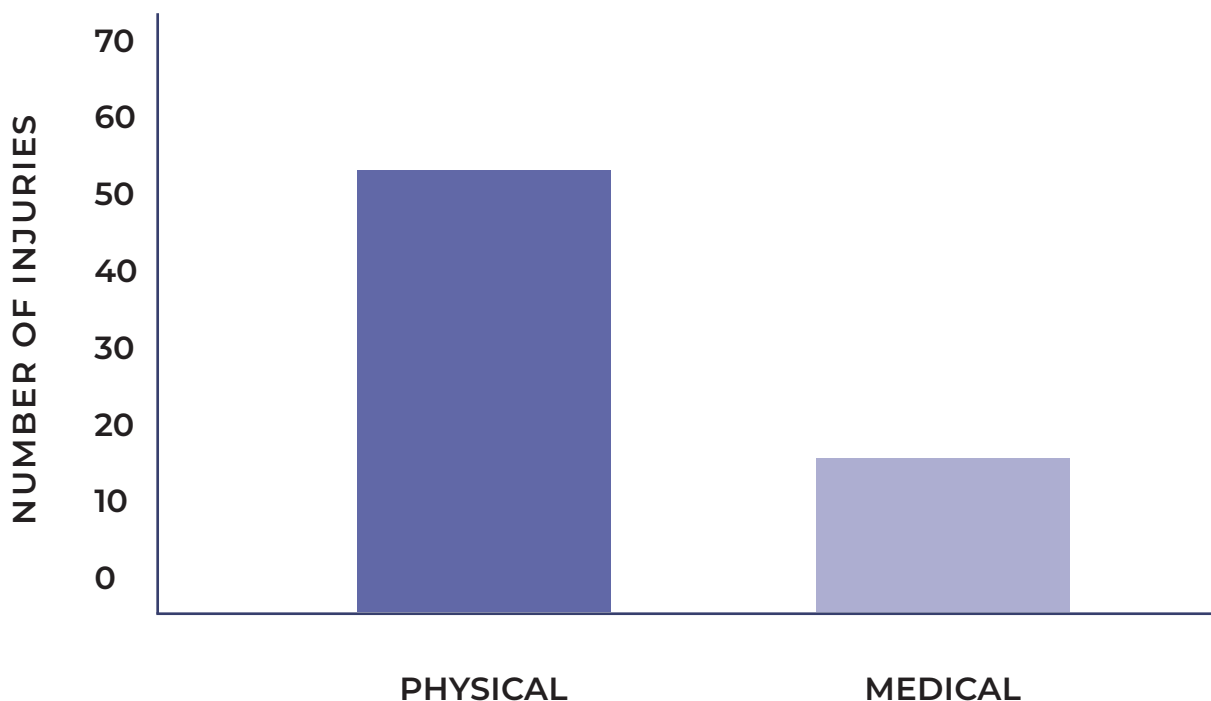
FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for new SCBA's

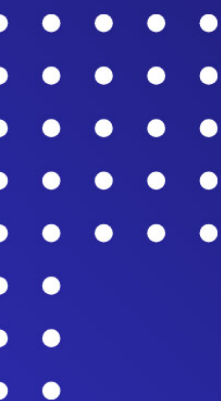
VDFP used this grant to purchase new SCBAs that meet current NFPA standards. The new SCBAs was used by ARFF, Division Chiefs and instructional staff.

Goals for 2025

- Successfully implement NFPA 1582 physicals for adjunct instructors
- Intake new SCBA's and train staff on them
- Complete development of new Health and Safety Officer curriculum via subject matter workgroup experts
- Reduce the number of student injuries during training by 10%

2024 Injuries





Virginia Department *of* Fire Programs

Leaders in enhancing public safety
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