

# **A PROFILE OF A STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**

## **ADVOCATE FOR FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL**

**Prepared by the National Association of State Fire Marshals supported in part by  
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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>America’s Fire Problem .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Approaching a Solution to America’s Fire Problem .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Prevention .....	7
Early Detection and Suppression .....	8
Fire Investigation and Analysis .....	9
System Feedback .....	10
<b>The State’s Role and the State Fire Marshal .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Current Organizational Functions of the State Fire Marshal's Office .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Existing State Fire Marshal Organizational Structures .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>The Current Role of the State Fire Marshal.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Profile of a State Fire Marshal’s Office .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Responsibilities of Model Bureaus .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>What Kind of Resources are needed .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendices:.....</b>	<b>22</b>

## Introduction

Fire is among the great natural destructive forces. The detection and suppression of fire, and the management of the many other threats to life and property, are possible only on an episodic basis, when and where they occur. Whether or not fires and other hazards are managed with technologies (*e.g.*, smoke detectors, central alarm systems, automatic fire sprinklers), local fire departments must respond to all reported fires and other emergencies. In most states, local fire departments are independent entities, owned and operated by municipalities or by private, voluntary associations. As dictated by local need, their emphasis is and must be on emergency response. Although mutual aid agreements are common, centralized authority over multiple departments above the county level is rare. Given these realities, several common needs arise.

- The first need is for structured statewide support and coordination of certain local fire departments activities, *e.g.*, data collection, training, grants distribution, public education, regional or statewide mobilization of fire services, etc. Statewide coordination of these activities results in improved quality of service and greater efficiencies.
- The second need is a true focus on prevention. Few local fire departments have the resources and many lack the inclination to address prevention as thoroughly as they do suppression.
- The third need is for well-informed guidance to those who establish public policy and determine the allocation of state resources. The interests and opinions of local fire departments may vary by community. State policymakers benefit when the range of those positions is objectively and fairly evaluated and summarized by an entity within state government.
- Fourth, in an era marked by homeland security concerns and outright acts of terrorism, the need and ability to coordinate and direct fire service resources on a regional and statewide basis becomes most critical in response to large scale events.
- Finally, even though fire protection has been considered, traditionally, a local responsibility, few communities have the resources to fully protect against their full potential for disaster. This is clear as departments plan protection for wild-land interface areas where forest firefighting resources are needed and must be supplemented with structural firefighting personnel and resources. The solution of a large scale mutual aid operation needs the support and coordination of a state agency to facilitate an effective suppression effort.

This document is designed to help state administrators and elected officials understand the need for a focused statewide approach to control and mitigate the destructive impact of fire in their respective states. It also describes the role the State Fire Marshal's office will play in fulfilling this need.

The loss of life, the personal, social and economic impact of fire injuries, and the drain on scarce building and housing resources in each state has gone far beyond reasonable and acceptable limits. The on-going destruction will only be contained when the state's fire policies and

programs – coordinated, focused, and supported with adequate resources – are directed at the clearly defined causes of the problem.

## **America's Fire Problem**

With more than 4,000 fire deaths per year and tens of thousands of fire-related injuries, the United States has one of the worst fire records in the industrialized world. More than 750,000 structures are destroyed by fire each year, costing billions of dollars to replace what was lost and unfairly competing with any attempt to build additional housing for our growing population. This is an enormous waste of national resources, including the irreplaceable loss of human life.

Unfortunately, the members of society who are least able to defend themselves against fire – the very young and the elderly – are often the unwitting perpetrators of our nation's fire problem and also are the ones most severely impacted. Young children, curious about fire and fascinated by its attractiveness, cause some of the more destructive bedroom fires, sometimes resulting in the injury or death of their siblings or parents. The elderly, with limited agility and forgetful moments, are often responsible for kitchen or cooking fires. There are also intentional firesetters, who are acting out frustrations, issuing cries for help or insidiously using fire as a tool for revenge or injury, resulting in thousands of casualties annually. Ultimately, fire impact is more devastating to the poor and other politically marginalized groups, who typically cannot afford to pay for insurance against property damage.

The most effective solution to the fire problem is to adopt well designed building and fire codes, and product safety regulations. But codes and regulations are only effective if they are enforced by an office with a full range of inspection responsibilities and a fully staffed cadre of enforcement personnel who can ensure compliance on a regular basis. When appropriate, regulatory enforcement should be supplemented with suitable engineering solutions to provide immediate response and extinguishment to incipient fires. It is in the adoption and enforcement of sensible building and fire codes, as well as targeted product safety regulations that the state's role becomes clearly defined and effective. The state can determine the overall policy regarding suitable fire protection and prevention measures that will contribute to reducing the state's fire problem. These services can be provided most efficiently at the state level, making fire prevention and protection a shared responsibility of both state and local governments.

Fire prevention and control has historically been viewed as the responsibility of local government. In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the federal government began to support local efforts, thereby increasing the efficiency of fire mitigation in our nation's communities. Those states that had a state-coordinated and integrated system to facilitate local fire prevention and control efforts experienced the greatest efficiencies and improvements. It was, primarily, the State Fire Marshal's office that made possible the improved impact of the federal efforts.

Public education, long considered an effective way to help reduce fires, has, in reality, had a history of uneven and questionable effectiveness. Education efforts have been most successful when focused on the awareness and utilization of new or improved life saving technologies such as the smoke detector or fire sprinkler protection. The willingness to install such devices improves with the education efforts. Education that is focused on fire safe behaviors alone has

mixed results. It appears that people are more willing to employ new technologies than to adopt new behaviors when it comes to fire safety. Clearly, regulations that require new technologies and improved product safety are more effective in reducing fires and life loss than education alone. Even then, public education about fire safety is most effective when it is coordinated statewide and it must be supported by a clear definition and public recognition of the problem with a clear understanding of the benefit to be derived from the behavior change.

The state has a clear role to play in reducing the fire problem in our nation. It is only through the office of a well organized fire agency that the strength of the state can be brought to bear on the fire problem. This is the clear role of a State Fire Marshal's Office.

State Fire Marshals present their greatest value to the state and local government prior to and following fires and other emergencies. But they do not do it alone. At each step in the process, State Fire Marshals work with local emergency responders in the following manner:

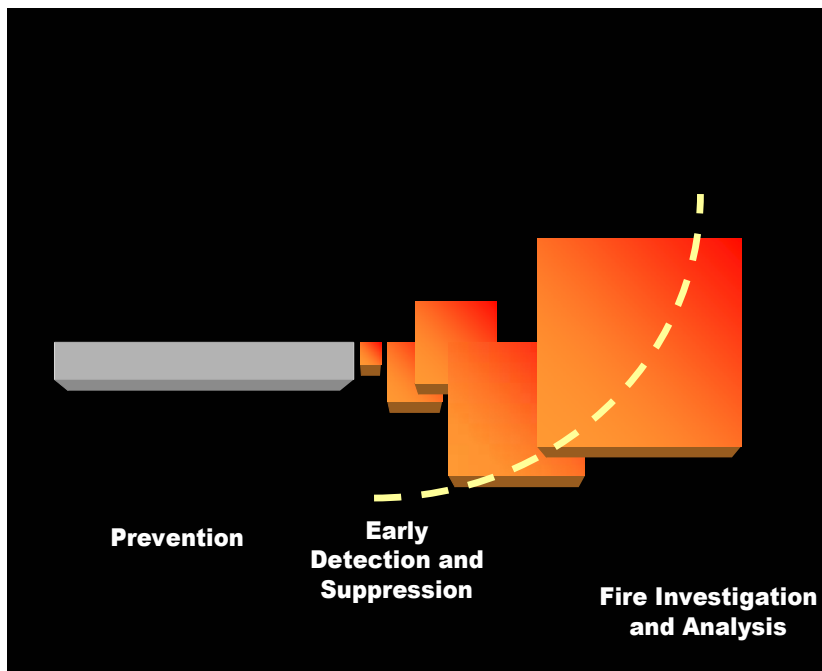
- They provide an understanding of the nature and scope of fires and other hazards and of the firefighters who must deal with them.
- This understanding then is translated into preventive measures.
- Fires and other hazards continue to occur, and the most severe of these incidents are investigated carefully, adding to a general understanding that leads to more effective prevention.

As a state official, the State Fire Marshal is well-positioned to consider the range of state interests, e.g., public safety and health, environmental quality, education, civil rights, economic prosperity and cultural diversity.

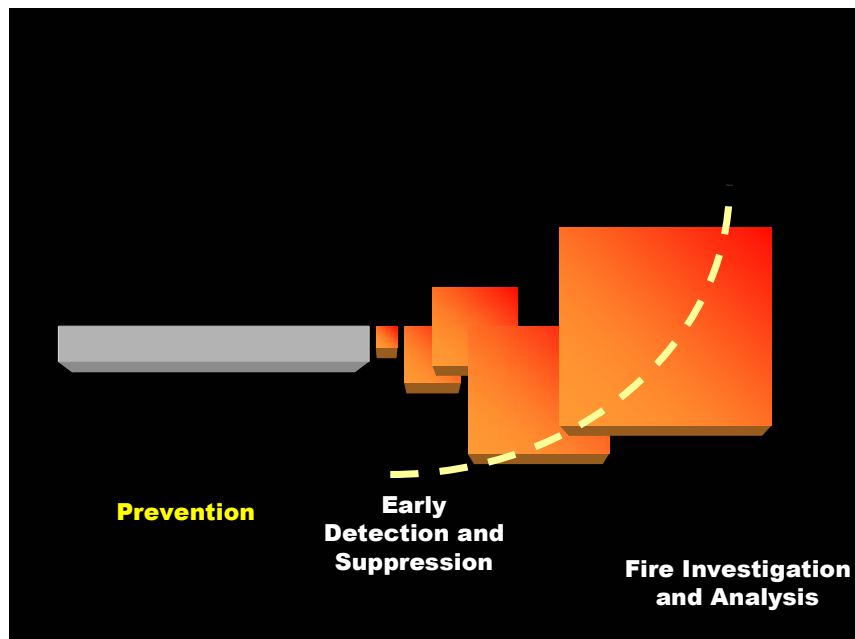
## Approaching a Solution to America's Fire Problem

From one perspective, a solution to America's fire problem can be seen as a continuum with three major parts:

- Prevention
- Early Detection and Suppression
- Fire Investigation and Analysis



## Prevention

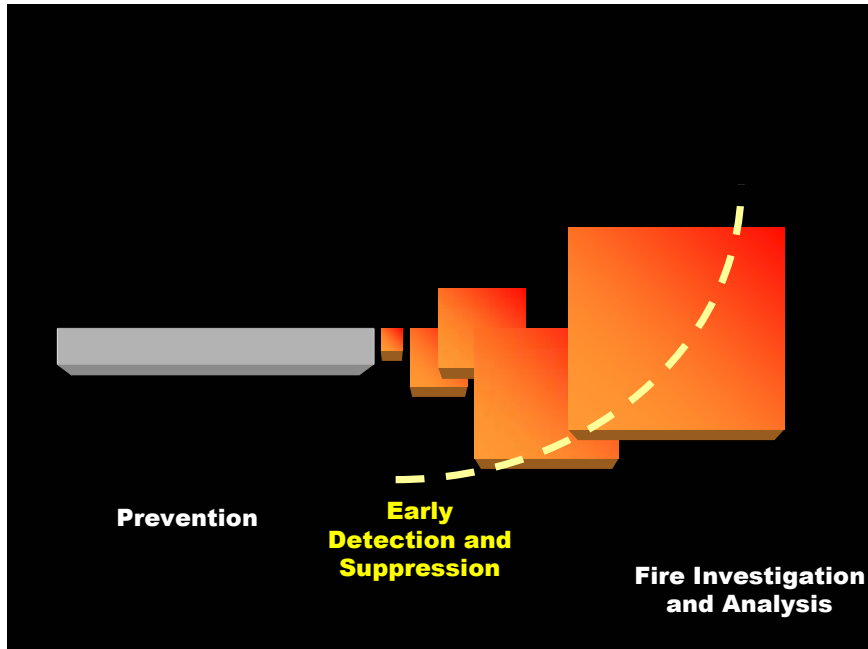


Prevention includes three distinct elements: public education; the use of passive fire protection; and the safety engineering of buildings and other environments in which fires can injure people or damage property.

The first step in fire prevention is proper education. Educating building occupants and equipment users about living and operating in a fire safe manner will assist in preventing some fires. In addition to education, passive protection reduces the opportunity for equipment to initiate fires, inhibits the spread of fire and protects escape routes from the building or environment in which the fire occurs. Finally, building contents and equipment can be engineered to provide additional safety, or can be reduced in order to limit a fire's growth.

Educating the public to fire safe behaviors, working with children who are curiously fascinated with fire and advising citizens about fire behavior and the safe use of certain consumer products are all examples of traditional prevention efforts.

## Early Detection and Suppression

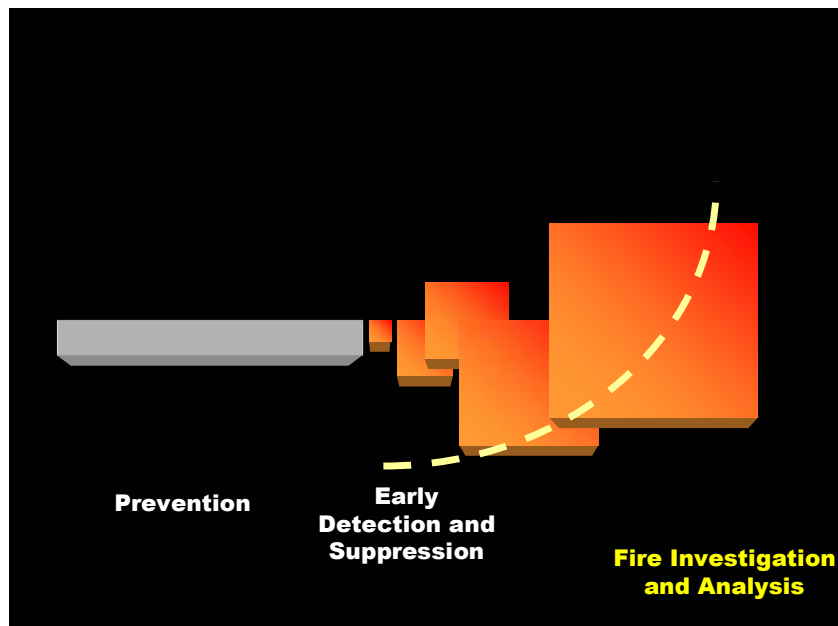


There are times when fire prevention efforts fail and a fire occurs. There is, then, an imminent need for early detection and suppression of the fire in order to avoid death, injury or property loss. Early detection can take the form of smoke or heat detectors strategically installed in structures and living or workspaces. Adequately administered and enforced building and fire codes are typically the vehicles that call for such early warning devices. Early warning devices, however, will not extinguish fires. They merely provide more time to escape the path of rapidly growing fire. Occasionally, well-trained building occupants equipped with fire extinguishers can assist in suppression efforts but they cannot be relied on for complete suppression. Full suppression, needed to stop the fire's geometric growth, requires more than 2.5 gallons of water or 5-10 lbs. of dry chemical.

Traditionally, fire suppression is the duty of the career and volunteer fire departments in our communities. In fact, America's 33,000 community fire departments respond to more than two million fires each year and as many as two million additional non-fire emergencies – an incredible chore that leaves little time or resources for addressing the overall fire problem in America.

More and more, building owners and occupiers are relying on installed automatic fire suppression systems to add a suppression component to early detection efforts. This type of protection avoids the inherent delay in alerting fire suppression personnel who must respond from several miles away to arrive at a fire. Many times, high life risk, high value properties or special hazard occupancies are most often targeted for supplementing early detection with early suppression equipment, but adequate installation of these technologies is critical to the ability of firefighters to reduce America's fire loss.

## Fire Investigation and Analysis

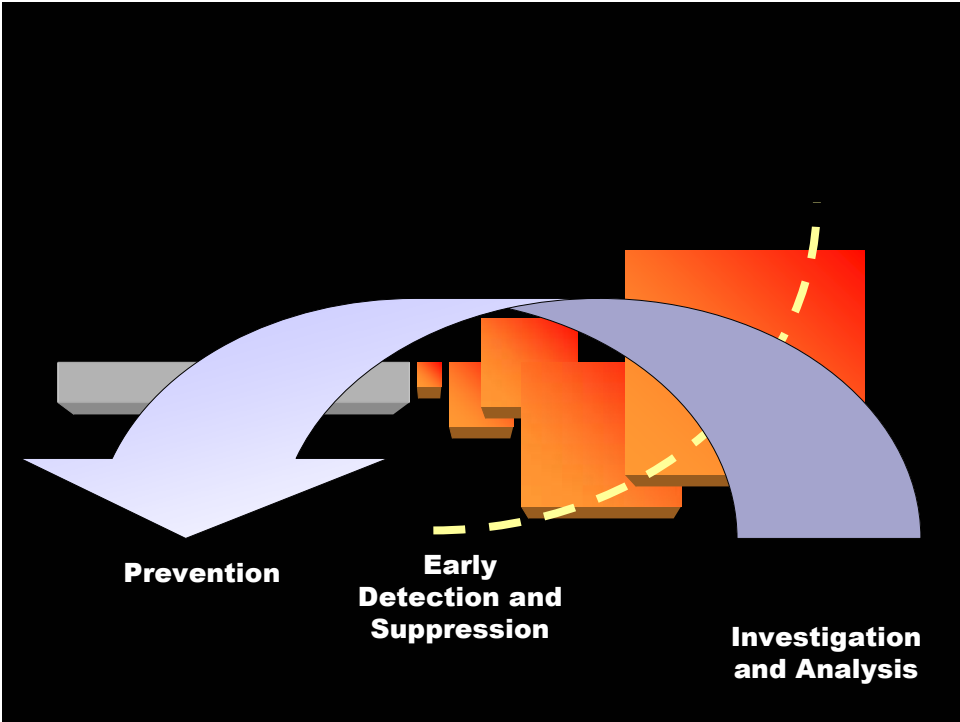


Fire investigation and analysis is arguably the most critical aspect of the continuum. It is the investigation that allows discovery of the precise scenario of the fire: its cause, its point of origin and its spread, in addition to the factors that may have accelerated its growth.

In the analysis of these factors, we find those elements that need to be altered in order to prevent future occurrences. Fire investigation is not simply a case of finding the perpetrator of a fire, whether accidental or intentional. It is also significant analysis to determine how the investigated fire could be prevented from happening again. The analysis becomes the list of “lessons learned” that can be applied to future circumstances or events to prevent another fire from occurring.

Fire investigations cannot be haphazard. They require a high degree of training, up-to-date investigative techniques and protocols based in sound science. Investigations require special studies and experimentation to understand the factors influencing fire behavior and progression. They also require perceptive analytical skills to assess the appropriate changes needed to prevent the subsequent occurrence of a similar fire. The results of a properly conducted investigation and analysis become the basis for improved prevention of fires in the future.

**System Feedback**



## **The State's Role and the State Fire Marshal**

A sensibly organized and reasonably empowered State Fire Marshal's office can best achieve the integration and coordination of fire policies and programs that effectively address the individual state's and, as a result, the nation's fire problem.

In most states, the office of the State Fire Marshal evolved in response to historical events. Often, it began with a major disaster. In response to the existence of hazardous conditions, the state empowered an existing agency or, when politically necessary, created a new agency to mitigate the fire risk evidenced by the disaster. In many cases, the historical growth of the state agencies has been haphazard and uneven; not planned, but evolutionary. Typically, the agency's growth tracks a series of historical events, major fires or disasters, for which the public outcry for corrective action has been intense. This type of growth does little to facilitate the development of coherent state fire mitigation policy and legislation. Currently, State Fire Marshals and their offices have the duties and areas of responsibility as listed in the chart below:

### Current Organizational Functions of the State Fire Marshal's Office (See Note on page 13)

STATE	Code Enforcement	Fire Investigation	Plans Review	Fire Prevention	Fire Data & Analysis	Fire Service Training	Public Fire Education	Fire Legislation Developmt.	Manufactured Housing Reg.	Mechanical Inspects	Electrical Inspects	Boiler Inspects	FPE on sta	Distribution of Funds to FD's
Alabama	X	X		X	X	X	X				X			
Alaska	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
Arizona	X	X	X	X		X								
Arkansas	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X			
California	X	X		X	X	X	X	X					X	
Colorado									X					
Connecticut	X	X	X	X	X			X		X		X		
Delaware	X	X	X	X	X		X	X						
DC	X	X		X			X	X						
Florida	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X
Georgia	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X	
Hawaii	(NONE)													
Idaho	X	X	X	X	X									
Illinois	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	
Indiana	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X
Iowa	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X					X
Kansas	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
Kentucky	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Louisiana	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		
Maine	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X				
Maryland	X	X	X	X	X		X	X					X	X
Massachusetts	X	X			X		X							
Michigan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Minnesota	X	X	X	X	X		X							
Mississippi	X	X		X	X			X	X					X
Missouri		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X		
Montana	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Nebraska	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Nevada	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X			
N. Hampshire	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X			
New Jersey	X	X		X	X	X	X	X						X
New Mexico	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
New York	X	X		X	X	X	X		X					X
N. Carolina	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
N. Dakota	X	X		X	X		X							

STATE	Code Enforcement	Fire Investigation	Plans Review	Fire Prevention Inspections	Fire Data & Analysis	Fire Service Training	Public Fire Education	Fire Legislation	Manufactured Housing Reg.	Mechanical Inspects	Electrical Inspects.	Boiler Inspects	FPE on staff	Distribution of Funds to FD's
Ohio	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X
Oklahoma	X	X	X	X	X		X						X	
Oregon	X	X		X	X		X	X						
Pennsylvania		X												
Rhode Island	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			
S. Carolina	X		X	X	X		X	X			X		X	X
S. Dakota	X	X	X		X	X		X	X			X		
Tennessee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Texas	X	X	X	X	X		X							
Utah	X	X	X	X	X		X						X	
Vermont	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X		
Virginia	X		X	X		X							X	
Washington	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
West Virginia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
Wisconsin	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wyoming	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X			

**NOTE:**

Many states have given State Fire Marshal Offices additional statutory responsibilities such as licensing of fire extinguisher, fire detection or fire suppression system installers; building access and CCTV system installers, elevator inspections, pyrotechnic/ fireworks handlers and amusement rides. While the variation in the nature of these duties from state to state makes it difficult to represent them in a table of limited size, these duties are very appropriate functions and well suited for a State Fire Marshal's Office to carry out.

## **Existing State Fire Marshal Organizational Structures**

### **Under Department of Insurance**

Alabama  
Florida  
Georgia  
Idaho  
Mississippi  
New Mexico  
North Carolina  
Tennessee  
Texas

### **Under Department of Public Safety**

Alaska  
Colorado  
Connecticut  
District of Columbia  
Iowa  
Kentucky  
Louisiana  
Maine  
Maryland  
Massachusetts  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Nevada  
New Hampshire  
Utah  
West Virginia

### **Under a Separate Government Department**

Indiana – Dept. of Fire & Building Services  
Michigan – Dept. of Consumer & Industry  
Services & (DSP (Investigation only))  
Montana (Justice—Attorney General)  
Kansas  
South Dakota – Dept. of Community Affairs  
Virginia – Dept. of Housing and Comm. Develop.  
Wisconsin—Fire Investigation, Public Ed;  
Legislation; (Justice—Attorney General)  
all others: Department of Commerce  
Wyoming

### **Under a Regulatory Agency**

Arizona – Department of Building Fire Safety  
Vermont – Dept of Labor & Industry

### **Under State Police**

Arkansas (DSP)  
Michigan – Fire Invest. (Only) & (Separate Dept.)  
Oregon (DSP)  
Pennsylvania (DSP)  
Washington (State Patrol)

### **Under Cabinet-Level Official**

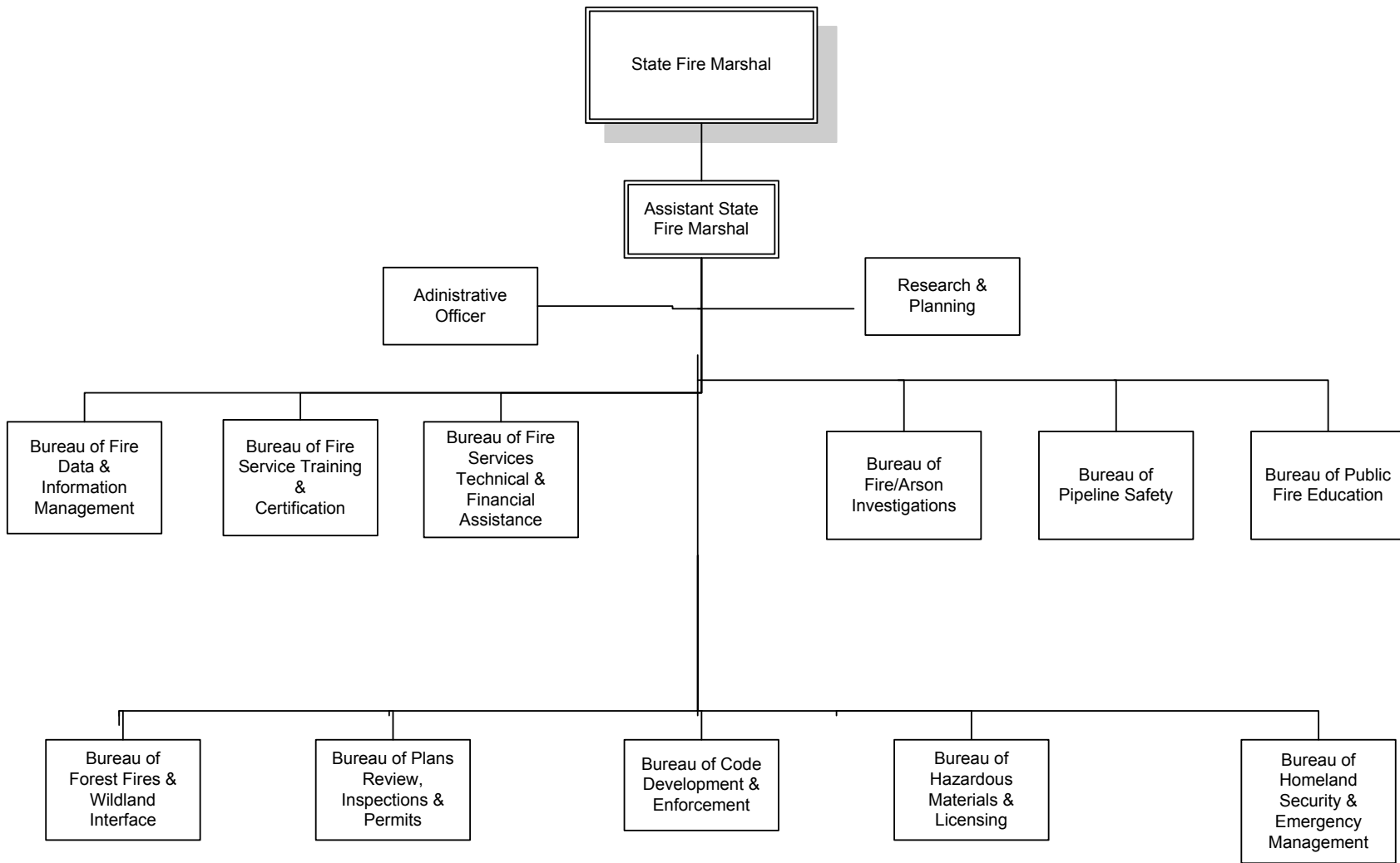
California (Dept. of Forestry)  
Illinois  
Nebraska  
New Jersey (Department of Community Affairs)  
New York (Secretary of State)  
North Dakota (Attorney General)  
Ohio (Department of Commerce)  
Rhode Island (Governor's Office)  
South Carolina (Department of Labor, Licensing  
& Regulation)

### **Under State Fire Commission**

Delaware  
Oklahoma

## **Profile of a State Fire Marshal's Office**

*The organization of, and the functions performed by, any state fire marshal office is largely determined by the state statutes and resources made available through the legislative process. Designation of this sample organizational structure as a guide does not mean or imply that any deviation or variation from it is a deficiency. An effective State Fire Marshals Office should consider having a statutory advisory board to assist the State Fire Marshal in carrying out his/her duties. The recommended model for advisory board/boards is embodied in the State of New Jersey statutes (see Appendix A). The New Jersey statute establishes a State Fire Commission to advise the Commissioner of Community Affairs, and it establishes four statutory Advisory Councils to address, specific fire protection questions and problems. Finally, the Fire Safety Commission is also empowered to establish additional Councils as needed. Specific recommendations of the Commission or Advisory Councils can be adopted by the agency as regulations and enforced under the general powers and duties of the agency.*



## **The Current Role of the State Fire Marshal**

A full service Office of the State Fire Marshal is normally responsible for a myriad of duties related to fire and life safety, and the security of the state's citizens. This section will identify and describe the core responsibilities of a full service office, all of which are necessary for coordinated and integrated statewide fire safety policies and programs. The programs offered by a full service State Fire Marshal Office enjoy the benefits of providing equitable and standardized services statewide.

- **Data Collection and Analysis**

Sound management requires sound information and data. To be effective, fire policies and programs must be based on sound data. A statewide data collection system is most critical for appropriating scarce state resources to those fire protection issues that will bring maximum benefit to citizens. Anecdotal information regarding causes, current trends and impacts of fire will not ensure effective mitigation results and can lead to inappropriate allocations of resources. The statewide fire data and analysis system becomes the cornerstone of effective fire control policy and the foundation for adequate budgeting. Details on the types of incidents, causes and other contributing factors are key factors in identifying trends for injuries & deaths; potential product malfunctions & failures and assisting in focusing limited resources on key fire protection & prevention priorities

- **Fire Service Training**

Many states have included fire service training as a key element of the State Fire Marshals Office. Traditionally, state fire training programs were based in a state's land grant college or organized independently under a fire training commission of the state. The integration of the fire training program into the State Fire Marshal Office permits a higher degree of program coordination, providing swift application of lessons learned from fire investigations to fire service training programs. In addition, data on fire service deaths and injuries can be swiftly applied to revisions of firefighter health and safety protocols in the training materials.

- **Code Adoption and Enforcement**

Code adoption and enforcement has been a traditional role for the State Fire Marshal's Office. It provides the path of integration of the lessons learned from a fire investigation experience to the application of prevention measures for the future. Fire investigators uncover fire causes and factors that contribute to fire spread. Armed with this data, the specifics of necessary code revisions that will prevent continual occurrence of similar fire disasters become readily apparent. With code enforcement responsibilities at hand, the pertinent code revisions can be easily applied, providing swift counter measures to head off future occurrences. For example, emergency lighting in stairwell was required when several building power failures initiated an evacuation that resulted in injuries to several elderly occupants. Several severe fires at gasoline service stations resulted in requirements for installation of automatic fire extinguishing systems in service stations. Finally, severe fires as a result of installing Class A rated carpeting in a vertical position

on walls, forced the development of and the requirement for a new rating test for wall coverings.

- **Licensing and Regulation of Explosives and Hazardous Materials**

Given the overall purpose of a State Fire Marshal Office in assisting in the development of state fire policy, the licensing of explosives and hazardous materials is most appropriately located in this agency. Because of their inherent ability to cause death, injury and damage to property, hazardous materials require reasonable controls for their handling and use. The State Fire Marshal's Office conducts training and has access to experts with the experience and ability to evaluate proper handling, storage and use of such inherently dangerous materials, thereby facilitating their licensing and regulation. The State Fire Marshal of Massachusetts provides hazardous material incident response assistance to localities statewide. This service, while somewhat unique, is a very appropriate role for state fire marshal offices and again provides an economy of scale for such a high tech service.

- **Investigation & Fire Cause Determination**

Fire cause determination is historically the responsibility of the State Fire Marshal's Office. While opportunities to develop wide-ranging expertise are somewhat limited at the local level because of the limited number of incidents in most communities, state fire investigators, providing assistance to local departments, have greater opportunities to develop the wide-ranging skill and expertise necessary to produce accurate assessments, thus benefiting local governments as well as the state. The ability to analyze burn patterns and causal factors, the ability to evaluate factors contributing to fire spread and knowledge of the science of fire investigation are some of the strengths a state team of specialists can bring to the assistance of local investigators.

- **The State Fire Marshal's role in Homeland Security and the Emergency Management System**

The resources of the local fire service are most critical in a state's response to large-scale emergencies, whether they are incidents of terrorism or a natural disaster. The State Fire Marshal plays a critical role in the state's organizational efforts to handle statewide emergencies. In keeping with the organizational principle of "Unity of Command," it is the State Fire Marshal's Office that best serves as the state's liaison with the local fire service. A state official who is both familiar with and works daily with fire service organizations will provide a significant organizational benefit and strengthen communications with local emergency workers in times of emergency and crisis. No other state official can carry out this function as well as the State Fire Marshal.

- **The State Fire Marshal's role in the Insurance Industry**

A State Fire Marshal's Office serves, in many ways, the loss prevention function of the state's insurance industry. An effective State Fire Marshal's Office will positively impact fire loss statistics through sound building and fire codes as well as effective enforcement. In addition, thorough fire investigations will reduce the occurrence of intentionally set

fires and contribute to the enactment of more effective building and fire codes. In many states, the appropriateness of this interconnection between the State Fire Marshal and the insurance industry has led to the long term funding of the State Fire Marshal's mission by the insurance industry as well as the location/relocation of the State Fire Marshal's Office within the organizational structure of the state's insurance regulatory agency.

- **Natural and Man-made Disaster**

For the same reasons that were cited above regarding emergency management, the State Fire Marshal's Office is the government agency best suited to mobilize the resources of the local fire service in the event of any natural or man-made statewide disaster.

- **Homeland Security**

The security of our homeland is a key element of the fire and emergency service's daily activities. The fire service also plays a vital role in coordinating multiple agency emergency incidents, and the appropriate role of the State Fire Marshal is the national contact point for the mobilization of fire service resources in their respective states. The State Fire Marshal can readily serve as a key evaluator and technical expert to identify critical weaknesses in a state's infrastructure and high risk occupancies, such as health care facilities, schools and high occupancy structures. Given the sophisticated network of communication with fire service agencies, the State Fire Marshal will effectively serve as the single point of contact to share critical intelligence and information to the fire service of his/her state

- **Public Fire Education**

Public fire education is most effective when clearly defined objectives are the targets and the public can identify with the problems being addressed or the objectives being taught. The State Fire Marshal's Office has access to data as well as investigative and analytical capacity, making it the ideal agency for defining the desired fire prevention educational objectives.

- **Research and Planning**

Research and planning are vital functions of a State Fire Marshal's Office. The office is equipped to ask the proper questions for research and is the repository for the state's fire safety assets and resources for the proper planning and allocation in time of need. Given the overall perspective of the state's fire problem, an effective State Fire Marshal's Office can accurately assess the state's fire safety needs and develop the policies to address those needs in a productive manner.

## **Responsibilities of Model Bureaus**

### **Bureau of Administration**

- Staffing
- Facilities
- Transportation

### **Bureau of Research & Planning**

- Provides support to the various operational bureaus of the organization
- Conducts research on new suppression technology & prevention strategies
- Oversees master fire protection planning and assist communities in evaluating fire protection

### **Bureau of Fire Data and Information Management**

- Collection and Analysis of Fire Data
- Management of State Fire Incident Reporting System
- Production & Reporting of the State Fire Statistics
- Office Computer Network Support

### **Bureau of Plans Review, Inspections and Permits**

- Conducts building Plans Review for certain Occupancies
- Inspection of State-Owned and/or Regulated and certain Hazardous Occupancies
- Provide On-site Inspections and Issues Permits for Certain Occupancies
- Provide Fire Protection Engineering Assistance to State and Local Agencies

### **Bureau of Public Fire Education**

- Established Statewide Fire Education Objectives based on Data
- Develops Public Fire Educational Programs
- Trains Local Fire Educators
- Develops Public Fire Education Materials

### **Bureau of Fire Service Training & Certification**

- Established Fire Service Training Standards and Certification Requirements
- Establishes Certification Standards for Code Enforcement Officers
- Establishes Certification Requirements and Training Programs for Licensing of Electricians, Fire Alarm & Fire Sprinkler Installers

### **Bureau of Code Development and Enforcement**

- Building & Fire Code Standards Development
- Publishes State Modifications to Model Building & Fire Codes
- Revise and update Code Provisions as Required

**Bureau of Hazardous Materials & Licensing**

Licenses the use of explosives

Provides Hazardous Material technical assistance to local fire service agencies

Issues Licenses for Electricians, Fire Alarm & Fire Sprinkler Installers

**Bureau of Fire Service Technical and Financial Assistance**

Provides Technical Assistance with fire Hazard Assessments to Local Fire Departments;

Administers State Financial Aid and Loan Programs to Local Fire Departments;

Provides engineering assistance to local Departments; Bureau also serves as the State Fire Marshal's liaison to local fire service agencies for Homeland Security and

Emergency Management

**Bureau of Fire Investigation**

Investigates fire statewide fires based on thresholds such as requests from local fire departments, intentionally set fires, fires with losses over \$200,000 and fire involving fatalities or serious injuries

**Bureau of Pipeline Safety**

Regulates Pipeline Safety within the State

Enforces Federal Standards for Pipeline Safety

Assists Local Fire Departments to develop Local Response Plans to Pipeline Incidents

Serves as Fire Service Liaison to Common Ground Alliance

Provides Hazardous Material Incident Response Assistance

**Bureau of Forest Fire & Wildland Interface**

Coordinates the use of structural firefighting resources in cooperation with forest fire control

Develops community assistance and awareness programs to combat wildland interface disasters

Develops training and safety materials for structural firefighters working in interface areas

## **What Kind of Resources are needed**

The level of resources necessary to efficiently administer a state fire marshal's office is dependent on a multitude of factors. These include: the size of the state, number of personnel needed to carry out the range of statutory duties and responsibilities and the prevailing wages in the geographic area that can attract the appropriately credentialed personnel. The size of the office and the range of responsibilities will, of necessity, be determined by state statute. This model, based on experience and practice, suggests the range of responsibilities that a full service state program should include.

- **Sources of Funding**

The sources of funding, historically, can and have varied greatly in each state. A direct State appropriation, sufficient to fulfill the purposes and responsibilities assigned, is quite common. In addition, many states have placed the Office of State Fire Marshal in the Insurance Industry regulatory agency of the state, which traditionally, has been funded through a direct assessment on both the domestic, as well as, the foreign insurance companies doing business in the respective states. Some states have utilized the special 2 percent tax revenue that is normally assessed against foreign insurance companies to fund the state's fire marshal office, and other states have set fees for services to fund portions of their State Fire Marshal activities. Finally, some states have assessed a direct premium dollar assessment equally to both foreign and domestic insurance companies doing business in the state. Each of these funding mechanisms has its respective benefits and drawbacks. Most states, however, have and continue to utilize some combination of each of these funding sources to underwrite the State Fire Marshal function of the state

### **Appendices:**

- A. New Jersey State Statute establishing a Division of Fire Safety and a Fire Safety Commission in the Department of Community Affairs enacted into Law as Chapter 382 of the Laws of 1983
- B. New York State Executive Law Article 6C, establishing the Office of Fire Prevention and Control in the Department of State enacted into Law June 12, 1979