

Monthly Activity Report: November & December 2008
Program/Division/Unit: Fire & Life Safety Division

Accomplishments & Highlights:

- Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) staff attended the S.C. Fire Marshals Association (SCFMA) Fall Conference in Greenville. Resolutions were received from the SCFMA supporting recent action of the International Code Council in support of residential fire sprinklers, and supporting a ban on Toy-like Novelty Lighters. Both issues save lives and property and enhance protection of our state firefighters.
- The S.C. Division of Fire & Life Safety hosted a Statewide Fire Service Strategic Planning Summit. Firefighters from across the state participated in this effort, which was facilitated by the University of South Carolina Office of Policy & Research Development. The purpose of the summit was to identify the needs of the state's fire service and to establish and support a course of direction to significantly improve the quality of fire services across the state.
- The Office of State Fire Marshal attended the November meeting of the S.C. Building Code Council (SCBCC) and the Code Study Committee to support adoption of the National Electric Code (NFPA 70) without modification. Randy Safer, the NFPA Southern Regional Manager, also attended and gave testimony on the necessity of arc-fault circuit interrupters and tamper-proof receptacles. The necessity of both of these items critical to life safety was favorably endorsed by the Study Committee to the SCBCC for consideration at the February 25, 2009 meeting.
- The Fire Marshal delivered a presentation at the Michelin Training Center to the S.C. Association of Safety Engineers. The myriad of services offered by the S.C. Division of Fire & Life Safety was discussed, including training, plan review and inspection services. This opportunity to meet with the industrial community safety engineers will open doors to future collaborative efforts.
- Staff of the S.C. Division of Fire and Life Safety attended numerous professional development training modules, including business writing. The remedial defensive driving course proved extremely valuable to one employee who applied lessons learned to avoid a significant accident.
- A licensed LP Gas contractor replaced relief valves and test valves and provided upgrades to the 18,000- and 30,000-gallon LP gas storage tanks and piping to comply with the appropriate NFPA standards. The upgrades and repairs were essential to maintain a high-level of protection and to teach others by example.
- The Fire Academy Superintendent attended the swearing in ceremony for Charleston's new Fire Chief Tom Carr and delivered the key note address for the Charleston Fire Department Recruit School graduation for 22 firefighters.
- The Fire Academy Superintendent represented LLR and the Division of Fire & Life Safety at a Line-of-Duty Death ceremony for a Sumter firefighter.

- South Carolina civilian fire fatalities have increased from 60 in 2007 to 75 in 2008. Records are being reviewed to determine the reason for the increase in fire deaths. Results will be released when available.
- The S.C. Fire Academy maintenance team and the Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) coordinator designed and constructed an ARFF fuselage prop to use with the new ARFF truck's piercing "Snuzzle". This saved a significant amount of money and proves to be a better prop than commercial units on the market. This is another example of innovative approaches to completing our objectives in a cost efficient manner.
- The Office of State Fire Marshal welcomes John Dunlap and Cory Bainter to the staff. These individuals will serve as Deputy Fire Marshals in their corresponding territories. These territories are posted with all contact information on the Web site.
- The Office of State Fire Marshal Web site has been modified and a question-and-answer section has been added for customer service. Last month's Q&A provided information on when and where fire sprinklers are required on residential balconies. Next month, the site will feature fire station minimum code requirements and where fire sprinklers are required.
- The assistant fire marshal for the Office of State Fire Marshal Code Enforcement responded to Lamar, S.C., to assist Darlington County Fire Services, Lamar Police Department, and SLED in conducting a fire investigation at a mobile home. The request for code consultation was made due to the nature of the fire. A child died in the fire. Two other structures were inspected during the process by the investigation team.
- The State Fire Marshal attended and was recognized at the December Columbia City Council Meeting. At the meeting, Columbia Council members gave final approval to the adoption of the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act 357. Columbia leads the way as the first municipality in the state to adopt the law providing a tax refund mechanism for 50 percent of the installation cost for non-required fire sprinkler installation in new or existing, residential or commercial properties.
- On December 1, 2009, the Office of State Fire Marshal staff participated in the unveiling of the 2009 Safety Calendar at the S.C. Hospital Association's headquarters in Columbia. First Lady Jenny Sanford presented awards to 13 children whose artwork was selected to be featured in the calendar. The calendar identifies monthly safety themes and addresses specific safety messages to coordinate with each theme. Safety calendars will be distributed to all elementary school classrooms, pediatrician offices, health department offices, and interested fire service members.
- The Office of State Fire Marshal staff completed the development of a PowerPoint program on the Fire Sprinkler Initiative (Act 357). The program was presented for the Midlands Fire Marshals Association and Charleston Fire Department's command staff. For those interested in seeing the program, contact the OSFM to schedule a presentation.