

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL



2026

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2025 - JUNE 30, 2026

73 YEARS OF SERVICE



Letter to the Governor



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

JOHN W. RUDD
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

DOVER OFFICE
HEADQUARTERS

September 8, 2026

The Honorable Matthew S. Meyer, Governor
State of Delaware
Office of the Governor
Tatnall Building
Dover, Delaware 19901

Dear Governor Meyer,

I am pleased to forward to you the 73rd Annual Report from the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

The 73rd Annual Report reflects the accomplishments of the agency by our dedicated staff in providing a fire safe environment to the residents, visitors, and our business community throughout the State of Delaware during FY 2026.

By conducting thorough and efficient fire investigations, performing occupancy inspections, various code enforcement activities, comprehensive plan reviews, fire protection system reviews and inspections, youth fire-setter intervention, and performing various community outreach programs, our agency provides the citizens of the State of Delaware and all who visit a fire safe environment.

The staff of the Office of the State Fire Marshal worked with other state agencies, our partners in law enforcement, our first responders, the Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's Association, Delaware State Fire School, and Delaware State Fire Prevention Commission to deliver timely and quality services to the residents and visitors of Delaware.

We appreciate the support you and your staff provide to our agency, as well as the support of the General Assembly in providing the funding and the resources needed to accomplish our mission.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Rudd
State Fire Marshal

DELAWARE FIRE SERVICE CENTER, 1537 CHESTNUT GROVE ROAD, DOVER, DELAWARE 19904-1544
TECHNICAL SERVICES / LICENSING (302) 739-4394, ADMINISTRATION (302) 739-5665, INVESTIGATIONS (302) 739-4447
FAX (302) 739-3696



Mission & FY2026 at a Glance

OUR MISSION

To protect Delaware's people, property, and communities from the devastating effects of fire and explosion through prevention, code enforcement, plan review and inspection, investigation, youth firesetting intervention, education, licensing, data, and partnership.

STATEWIDE SERVICE

New Castle | Kent | Sussex

6

New Employees
FY2026

6

Promotions
FY2026

1

Retirement
FY2026

\$4.83M

ASF Revenue Received
Reported by Fiscal

\$4.41M

Plan Review Revenue
Reported by Fiscal

\$28.58M

Cumulative Revenue
FY2010-FY2026

Technical Services & Life-Safety Measures

3,381

Plan Reviews
FY2026

3,623

Technical Services Inspections
FY2026

480

Day Care Inspections
FY2026

113

Health Care Inspections
FY2026

449

Licensed Fire Protection Companies
As Reported

625

Certificate Holders
As Reported

Investigations & Enforcement Measures

452

Fire & Explosion Investigations
FY2026

1,849

Code Enforcement inspections
FY2026

14

Fire Deaths
FY2026



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OUR AGENCY & PEOPLE

Leadership & Organization

Statewide Administration

Name	Title	Primary Location
John W. Rudd	Delaware State Fire Marshal	Statewide
B. Scott Bullock	Assistant State Fire Marshal / Chief of Investigations	Statewide
Michael G. Chionchio	Assistant State Fire Marshal / Chief of Administration	Statewide
Duane T. Fox, Jr.	Chief of Technical Services	Statewide
Rebekah L. LePore, MS	Youth Firesetting Program Manager	Statewide
Lisa Badders	Fiscal Advisor III	Kent / Headquarters
Stephanie Goodyear	Executive Assistant	Kent / Headquarters

NEW CASTLE DIVISION INVESTIGATIONS & ADMINISTRATION		KENT / HEADQUARTERS DIVISION INVESTIGATIONS & ADMINISTRATION		SUSSEX DIVISION INVESTIGATIONS & ADMINISTRATION	
Name	Rank / Title	Name	Rank / Title	Name	Rank / Title
Thomas P. Looney	Deputy Fire Marshal IV	Brian A. Schad	Deputy Fire Marshal IV	John M. Galaska	Deputy Fire Marshal IV
Brent E. Billings	Deputy Fire Marshal III	Robert G. Brode	Deputy Fire Marshal III	William P. Goins, Jr.	Deputy Fire Marshal III
Kathryn Haddaway	Deputy Fire Marshal III	Tyler A. Sipple	Deputy Fire Marshal III	Eric Ketterer	Deputy Fire Marshal III
Michael Horgan, Jr.	Deputy Fire Marshal III	L. Chatham Marsch	Deputy Fire Marshal II	Dale W. Magee	Deputy Fire Marshal III
Eric Comley	Deputy Fire Marshal II	Mariah Austin	Office Manager	Mike Pfaffenhauser	Deputy Fire Marshal III
Lewis Jefferies	Deputy Fire Marshal I	Candy Morris	Administrative Specialist	Paul S. Shulli	Deputy Fire Marshal III
VACANT	Deputy Fire Marshal I	Heather McClements	Administrative Specialist	Stacey Beckner	Office Manager
Diane R. Edwards	Office Manager	Kristin Honeycutt	Administrative Specialist	Li Ann Burroughs	Administrative Specialist
Barbara Kraft	Administrative Specialist			Christine Bangert	Administrative Specialist
Sierra Empson	Administrative Specialist			VACANT	Administrative Specialist
Amy Broyles	Administrative Specialist				



OUR AGENCY & PEOPLE

Leadership & Organization

Technical Services Division-Fire Protection & Life Safety

Division	Name	Rank / Title
New Castle	James G. Facciolo	Fire Protection Specialist III
New Castle	Michael R. Moran	Fire Protection Specialist II
New Castle	Richard Trincia	Fire Protection Specialist II
New Castle	Mary Pizzadili	Fire Protection Specialist II
New Castle	Tony Eoppolo	Fire Protection Specialist II
New Castle	Dennis Hitchens	Fire Protection Specialist I
New Castle	Kristian Bailey	Fire Protection Specialist I
New Castle	VACANT	Fire Protection Specialist I
Kent	William Kelly, II	Fire Protection Specialist III
Kent	Jefferson L. Cerri	Fire Protection Specialist II
Kent	Edward Morris, Jr.	Fire Protection Specialist II
Sussex	Desiree Truitt	Fire Protection Specialist III
Sussex	John A. Colpo	Fire Protection Specialist II
Sussex	Daniel E. Louder	Fire Protection Specialist II
Sussex	Walter Johnson	Fire Protection Specialist II
Sussex	Mark DiRusso	Fire Protection Specialist I
Sussex	Zarek Anderson	Fire Protection Specialist I

Specialized Programs & Inspectors

Name	Program / Title	Primary Work Location
David R. Wilson	FPS II - False Fire Alarm, Hardwired Smoke Detector, DFIRS & Health Care Programs	New Castle
Thomas G. Kapa	Day Care Program / Fire Inspector	Kent & Sussex
Donna Burnette	Fire Inspector	New Castle



OUR AGENCY & PEOPLE

Workforce Highlights & New Staff Hires

Fiscal Year 2026 brought continued growth, professional advancement, and six new employees across New Castle and Sussex counties.

6 New Hires 4 New Castle / 2 Sussex	6 Promotions 2 in each county	1 Retirement New Castle Division
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County activity: New Castle - 4 hires, 2 promotions, 1 retirement | Kent - 2 promotions | Sussex - 2 hires, 2 promotions



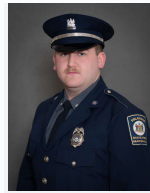
Amy Broyles
Administrative Specialist
Start Date: December 1, 2025
New Castle County Division



Dennis Hitchens
Fire Protection Specialist I
Start Date: December 15, 2025
New Castle County Division



Mark DiRusso
Fire Protection Specialist I
Start Date: January 26, 2026
Sussex County Division



Kristian Bailey
Fire Protection Specialist I
Start Date: January 26, 2026
New Castle County Division



Zarek Anderson
Fire Protection Specialist I
Start Date: February 23, 2026
Sussex County Division



Lewis Jefferies
Deputy Fire Marshal I
Start Date: May 18, 2026
New Castle County Division



OUR AGENCY & PEOPLE

Promotions & Retirement

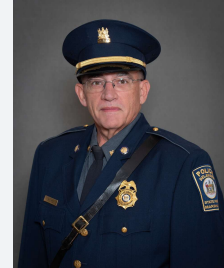
PROMOTIONS

Employee	Promotion	Effective	Division
Walter Johnson	FPS I -> FPS II	July 14, 2025	Sussex
L. Chatham Marsch	DFM I -> DFM II	July 28, 2025	Kent
Edward Morris, Jr.	FPS I -> FPS II	October 6, 2025	Kent
Michael Horgan, Jr.	DFM I -> DFM III	October 20, 2025	New Castle
Desiree Truitt	FPS II-> FPS III	December 1, 2025	Sussex
Thomas Looney	DFM III -> DFM IV	January 11, 2026	New Castle

CAREER MILESTONES

- Walter Johnson and L. Chatham Marsch were hired in FY2025 and advanced in FY2026.
- Desiree Truitt advanced to a Fire Protection Specialist III supervisory role.
- Thomas Looney advanced to Deputy Fire Marshal IV and is shown as New Castle Division Chief Deputy Fire Marshal on the August 2026 roster.

RETIREMENT



ROBERT FOX

Deputy Fire Marshal IV

Began agency service on September 18, 2000 as a Fire Protection Specialist I. He changed career paths on June 3, 2002 and became a Deputy Fire Marshal I in the New Castle County Division.

Retired January 1, 2026 as a Deputy Fire Marshal IV after more than 25 years of service.

FY2026 Promotion Timeline

JULY 14, 2025 Walter Johnson FPS I to FPS II Sussex	JULY 28, 2025 L. Chatham Marsch DFM I to DFM II Kent	OCTOBER 6, 2025 Edward Morris, Jr. FPS I to FPS II Kent
OCTOBER 20, 2025 Michael Horgan, Jr. DFM I to DFM III New Castle	DECEMBER 1, 2025 Desiree Truitt FPS II to FPS III Sussex	JANUARY 11, 2026 Thomas Looney DFM III to DFM IV New Castle



OUR AGENCY & PEOPLE

Employee Recognition & FY2026 Award Recipients

The Employee Recognition Plan celebrates exemplary service, professional achievement, and sustained contributions across the Office of the State Fire Marshal.



Four annual award categories

FOUR AWARDS FOR EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

- Administrative Employee of the Year
- Investigations Employee of the Year
- Technical Services Employee of the Year
- Distinguished Service Award

Annual process: division elections in April; final selection by the State Fire Marshal; recipients notified by May 1 and presented at the May Delaware State Fire Prevention Commission meeting.



INVESTIGATIONS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Brent Billings
New Castle Division



FIRE PROTECTION EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Daniel Louder
Sussex Division



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Barbara Kraft
New Castle Division



ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Heather McClements
Kent Division

EMPLOYEE FAMILY PICNIC & ALUMNI EVENT

Held at Killen's Pond in Kent County on the first Saturday of June for current employees, former employees, and their families.

STATEWIDE CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Held during the first week of December each year for all current employees.



02

FISCAL STEWARDSHIP & AGENCY OPERATIONS

A plain-language explanation of agency funding, FY2026 financial results, and the operational systems that support statewide service.

FISCAL STEWARDSHIP & AGENCY OPERATIONS

Funding & FY2026 Financial Highlights

How the agency is funded and the key financial results for FY2026.

GENERAL FUNDS

General Funds are the agency's primary operating funds. They support designated personnel and core operating expenses. Unused funds are generally returned at fiscal year-end.

- Designated salaries and related personnel costs
- Building utilities, security, and ordinary office operations
- Deputy Fire Marshal vehicles, technology, training, and professional memberships
- Department of Technology and Information services
- Routine K9 program costs, including food, veterinary care, and recertification

SPECIAL FUNDS

Special Funds are supported by revenue generated through agency activities. They fund designated programs and expenses that are not fully supported by General Funds.

- Technical Services, youth intervention, and designated administrative salaries
 - Employee travel for training and conferences
 - Copiers, telephones, cellphones, vehicles, and related operating costs
 - Expenses not covered by General Funds or incurred after General Funds are depleted
 - Firearms, ammunition, safety gear, and other law-enforcement equipment
- Appropriated Special Funds support authorized agency spending; Restricted Non-Appropriated Special Funds are tracked separately for dedicated purposes.*

\$3.81M

Original General Fund Appropriations
Reported Total

\$4.83M

ASF Revenue Received
FY2026

\$4.41M

Plan Review Revenue
91.3% of ASF Revenue

\$2.60M

ASF Spending Grand Total
Expenditures + Encumbrances

\$23.46M

Reported ASF Carryover
End of FY2026

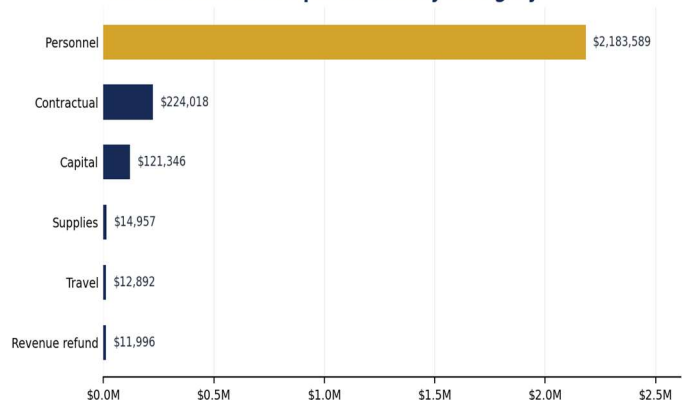
\$28.58M

Cumulative Revenue
FY2010-FY2026

Appropriated Special Fund Revenue Mix



ASF Current-Year Expenditures by Category





FISCAL STEWARDSHIP & AGENCY OPERATIONS

Financial Detail

General Funds and FY2026 Appropriated Special Fund revenue

General Funds - As Reported

GF Appropriations	Available Funds	Encumbrances	Current-Year Expenditures
Personnel (Salaries)	\$3,240,600.00	\$0.00	\$3,377,492.29
Contractual	\$482,300.00	\$0.00	\$482,300.00
Energy	\$62,600.00	\$0.00	\$55,390.44
Supplies	\$23,400.00	\$314.26	\$23,085.74
General Fund Totals	\$3,808,900.00	\$314.26	\$560,776.18

FUNDING NOTE

Available personnel funds equal the original \$3,240,600.00 plus \$136,892.29 added by the Office of Management and Budget to cover salaries.

Appropriated Special Fund Revenue

Category	Appropriation	Account	Revenue Received FY2026
Amusement	70002	43601	\$3,740.00
Assembly Licensing	70003	43601	\$59,975.00
Inspections	70004	46152	\$257,000.00
Day Care	70007	8614	\$10,122.00
Explosives	70010	44006	\$325.00
Fireworks	70014	43603	\$9,775.00
In-House License	70015	43603	\$0.00
Licensing	70017	43603	\$20,000.00
Occupancy / Permits / License	70019	44006	\$6,675.00
Systems License	70026	43603	\$51,700.00
Misc. Revenue	70028	4000	\$0.00
Plan Review	70108	43604	\$4,409,318.28
ASF Subtotal			\$4,828,630.28



FISCAL STEWARDSHIP & AGENCY OPERATIONS

Financial Detail

ASF spending, restricted funds, and agency operations

Appropriated Special Fund Spending - As Reported

ASF Appropriations	Available Funds	Encumbrances	Current-Year Expenditures / Total
Personnel (Salaries)	\$2,437,900.00	\$0.00	\$2,183,589.14
Travel	\$34,000.00	\$0.00	\$12,891.82
Contractual	\$366,800.00	\$0.00	\$224,018.35
Supplies	\$81,000.00	\$0.00	\$14,956.77
Capital	\$196,200.00	\$28,609.93	\$121,346.23
Revenue Refund	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$11,995.56
ASF Spending Totals	\$3,117,400.00	\$28,609.93	\$2,568,797.87
ASF Spending Grand Total			\$2,597,407.80
FY2025 Holding Account Carryover			\$23,457,785.62

Restricted Non-Appropriated Special Funds - As Reported

Appropriation	Available Funds	Revenue Received	Remaining Funds
Cigarette Certification (21002)	\$439,061.82	\$47,000.00	\$286,773.90
Detector Fund (20345)	\$5,234.91	\$0.00	\$5,234.91
NSF Totals	\$444,296.73	\$47,000.00	\$292,008.81



03

PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

The agency's public-facing work: plan review, inspections, licensing, investigations, specialized operations, outreach, and incident data.

PREVENT

Plan review, inspections, licensing, and quality assurance.

INVESTIGATE

Fire and explosion investigations, code enforcement, K9, UAV, and command support.

INFORM

Community risk reduction, public outreach, NERIS, and statewide incident data.

PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Technical Services Activity

3,381

Plan Reviews
Statewide

3,623

Technical Services Inspections
Statewide

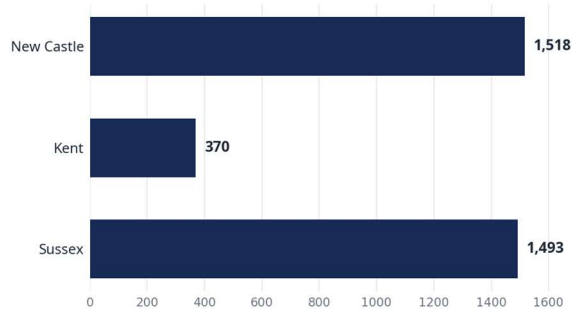
1,252

Progress Inspections
FY2026

2,371

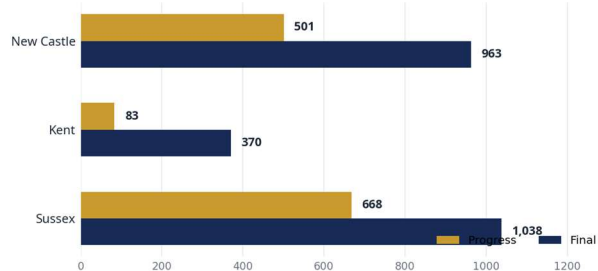
Final Inspections
FY2026

Plan Reviews by Division



New Castle: 1,518 | Kent: 370 | Sussex: 1,493

Progress and Final Inspections



New Castle: 1,464 | Kent: 453 | Sussex: 1,706 | Other jurisdictions: 0

Plan Review

Technical Services staff review site, building, fire protection system, tank, hazardous-material, and related submissions for compliance with the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations.

Inspection & Acceptance Testing

Staff verify construction, site access, fire lanes, hydrants, tanks, and fire protection systems through progress inspections, final inspections, and acceptance testing.

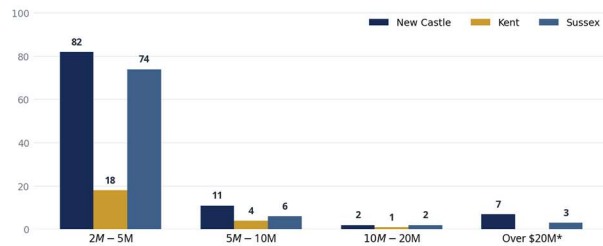


PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Construction Activity & Exempt Plan Reviews

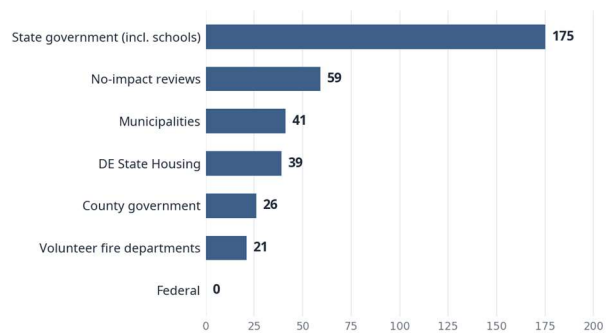
361 Exempt Plan Reviews <i>As Reported</i>	\$1.19M Review Revenue Not Collected <i>Due to Exemptions</i>	\$276.9M Exempt Construction Value <i>As Reported</i>
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Projects by Construction-Cost Band



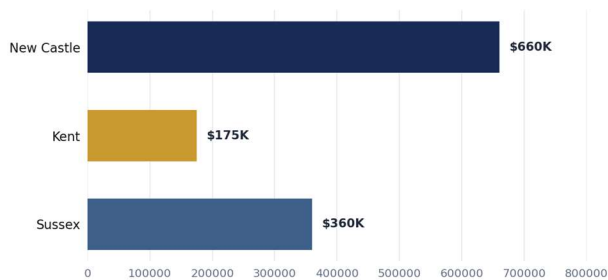
Three New Castle projects were reported at construction costs over \$50 million.

Exempt Reviews by Client Type



Client-type counts total 361: State government is the largest category.

Reported Exempt-Review Revenue by County



New Castle: \$660,204.67 | Kent: \$174,686.00 | Sussex: \$359,946.65

PROJECTS REPORTED OVER \$50 MILLION

- William Penn Field House
- Christiana Care - Middletown
- 301 Business Park North - Middletown



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Inspections, Licensing & Quality Assurance

FY2026 day care and health care inspection activity, fire-protection company licensing, certificate holders, and quality-assurance responsibilities.

480 Day Care Inspections FY2026	113 Health Care Inspections FY2026	449 Licensed Companies As Reported	625 Certificate Holders As Reported
Day Care Inspections New Castle 250 Kent 92 Sussex 135 Newark 3.	Health Care Inspections New Castle 59 Kent 9 Sussex 29 Wilmington 9 Newark 2 Dover 5.		
Licensed Companies by Category FAS 145 FSS 132 FEL 119 CSRSL 53	Certificate Holders by Category FAS 206 FSS 300 FEL 119		
DAY CARE & HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS Day care occupancy inspections are performed at the request of the Office of Child Care Licensing. Health care inspections support fire and life-safety compliance for hospitals, nursing homes, limited-care facilities, ambulatory surgery centers, and other regulated occupancies.		LICENSING & QUALITY ASSURANCE Companies that design, install, and maintain fire protection systems are licensed annually. Administrative staff process applications, fees, certificates, inspection certificates, and contractor inquiries. Major Deficiency Reports are routed for review and field follow-up.	
PROGRAM UPDATE Family child care homes were added to the day care inspection list beginning in February 2026.		PROGRAM CONTINUITY Richard Trincia and Daniel Louder were completing the education portion of CMS training to serve as backups when David Wilson is unavailable.	



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Projects of Interest - New Castle County

Selected FY2026 construction, renovation, public-safety, health care, education, and commercial projects reviewed or inspected by Technical Services.



Wuxi App Tech Building

OPENED IN FY2026 | MIDDLETOWN

Opened during FY2026



Christiana Care Medical Office

UNDER CONSTRUCTION | MIDDLETOWN

Construction was underway during FY2026.



Residence Inn & Suites

OPENED IN FY2026

Built in the Chestnut Run Innovation & Science Park.



Barley Mill Plaza Apartments

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Apartment project active FY2026



Churchman's Road Warehouse

OPENED IN FY2026

Warehouse project on Churchman's Road, just off airport property in New Castle County.



Additional Churchman's Road Work

WORK UNDERWAY

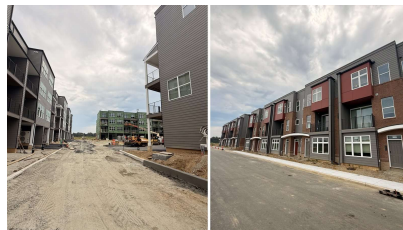
Additional work began on Churchman's Road during FY2026.



Hodgson Vo-Tech

EXTERIOR & EARLY CHILDHOOD WING

Vocational School project active FY2026



Lincoln Center Apartments

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Apartment project active & ongoing project



Sprouts Farmers Market

OPENED IN FY2026

Supermarket project active FY2026



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Projects of Interest - Kent County

Selected FY2026 construction, renovation, public-safety, health care, education, and commercial projects reviewed or inspected by Technical Services.



John Dickinson Plantation Visitor Center
14,504 sq. ft. project with site, building, fire alarm, fire suppression system, and a 15,000-gallon tank. Construction: approximately \$5,376,315. Calculated fee: \$21,227.75; exempt.



Delaware Public Health Laboratory
Three-story addition totaling 70,816 sq. ft., with site, building, fire alarm, and fire suppression system permits.



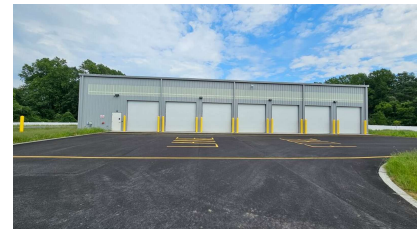
Hospital for the Chronically III
UNDER CONSTRUCTION
New 120,000 sq. ft. facility with site, building, fire alarm, fire suppression, access control, and commercial hood permits. Construction: approximately \$57,038,855. Calculated fee: \$179,271.99; exempt.



Garrison's Lake Clubhouse
4,465 sq. ft. project with site, building, fire alarm, fire suppression, commercial hood, and hood suppression permits. Construction: approximately \$1,939,357. Calculated fee: \$10,396.17; exempt.



DNREC Environmental Laboratory
31,972 sq. ft. project with site, building, access control, fire alarm, and fire suppression permits. Construction cost listed as \$303,127.76. Calculated fee: \$87,726.57; exempt.



Delaware State Police Troop 3 Special Operations Hangar
9,996 sq. ft. project with site, building, fire alarm, fire suppression, and access-control permits. Construction: approximately \$3,459,315. Calculated fee: \$13,716; exempt.



Delaware State Fire Commission Addition
10,932 sq. ft. addition with site, building, fire alarm, fire suppression system, and access-control permits. Construction: approximately \$8,880,265. Calculated fee: \$32,342; exempt.

KENT COUNTY PROJECT PORTFOLIO

The projects shown represent the range of Technical Services plan-review and inspection activity documented for FY2026.



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Projects of Interest - Sussex County

Selected FY2026 construction, renovation, public-safety, health care, education, and commercial projects reviewed or inspected by Technical Services.



Delaware State Police Troop 4

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

New Troop 4 facility under construction between Georgetown and Millsboro.



Sussex Technical High School

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The new Sussex Technical High School was under construction during FY2026.



Tidal Health - Millsboro

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The new Tidal Health facility in Millsboro was under construction.



Freeman Arts Pavilion

OPENED IN FY2026

The Freeman Arts Pavilion in Americana Bayside, Roxana, opened during the fiscal year.



Laurel Mixed Use Redevelopment

Redevelopment of a site where a three-story apartment building had burned and was demolished in prior years.



Milford Middle School Addition

An 85,332 sq. ft. addition involving site, addition, fire alarm, fire suppression, commercial hood, and hood-suppression permits.



Sussex Evidence & Storage Facilities

New evidence building and the storage building remodel at the Sussex Division.

SUSSEX COUNTY PROJECT PORTFOLIO

The projects shown represent the range of Technical Services plan-review and inspection activity documented for FY2026.

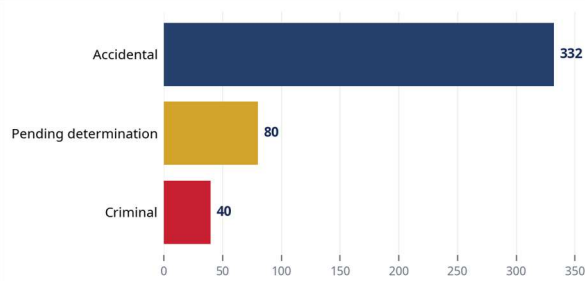


PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Investigations Statewide Activity

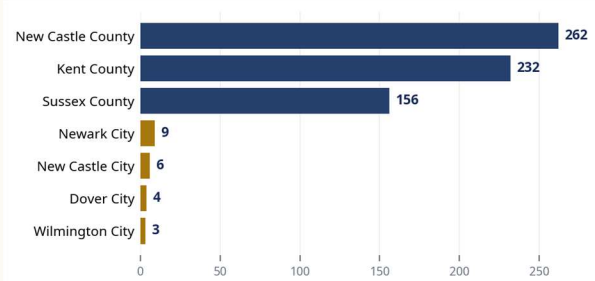
452 Fire & Explosion Investigations <i>FY2026 Subtotal</i>	672 Total Reported Activities <i>FY2026 Grand Total</i>	11 Adult Arrests <i>As Reported</i>	12 Charges Placed <i>As Reported</i>
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Investigation Classification



The three classification categories total 452 fire and explosion investigations.

Activity by Jurisdiction



Grand-total activity includes investigation classifications plus specialized and support responses.

Specialized & Support Activity

- K-9 responses: 3
- Juvenile referrals: 4
- Injuries: 53
- Deaths recorded in the activity report: 2
- MIRT responses: 5
- Assistance to other agencies: 89
- Exposure fire / miscellaneous: 40

Reported Outcomes

- Cleared / investigation: 599
- Cleared / arrest: 10
- Adult arrests: 11
- Juvenile arrests: 0
- Charges placed: 12

Clearance totals reflect the figures reported in the statewide activity report.



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Accelerant Detection K9 Team

A statewide fire-investigation resource for locating accelerants and ignitable liquids.

SINCE 1990

Statewide K9 Service

MAY 2022

K9 PJ and Handler Paired

50

Fire Scene Responses

25

Operational Deployments



Statewide Resource

The Office of the State Fire Marshal's Accelerant Detection K9 Team has served Delaware since 1990. The unit assists fire investigators by examining scenes for accelerants or ignitable liquids, including gasoline and lighter fluid, that may have been used to start or spread a fire.

K9 PJ & Michael Pfaffenhauser

The unit has been staffed since May 2022 by K9 PJ, a Yellow Labrador Retriever, and handler Deputy Fire Marshal III Michael Pfaffenhauser. The team remains available to investigations throughout Delaware.

FY2026 Activity

- Approximately 50 fire-scene responses statewide.
- 25 operational deployments.
- Deployments included significant-loss and other complex incidents.
- Regional assistance included the City of Dover and City of Wilmington.



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

K9 Training, Certification & Partnerships

Daily proficiency work, annual recertification, program support, and regional assistance.



DAILY TRAINING

K9 PJ uses a food-reward system and is rewarded for correctly identifying an accelerant. The team completed more than 1,000 training repetitions during FY2026 using fire scenes, training scenarios, and training aids.

CERTIFICATION & SUPPORT

The team is required to complete annual recertification. In July 2026, K9 PJ and Deputy Pfaffenhauser successfully recertified in Freeport, Maine. FY2026 also marked the first year of support from International Fire Dogs.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The K9 Team continued to support partner agencies, including the City of Dover and the City of Wilmington, while remaining a statewide resource for significant-loss and other complex fire investigations.



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

FY2026 Fire Investigation Highlight



ATTACHED-GARAGE FIRE LANCASTER PIKE IN THE CRANSTON HEIGHTS AREA

Photographs of active fire conditions involving the garage area and the adjoining residence.



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

FY2026 Fire Investigation Highlight



FIVE POINTS/CLAYTON ROAD

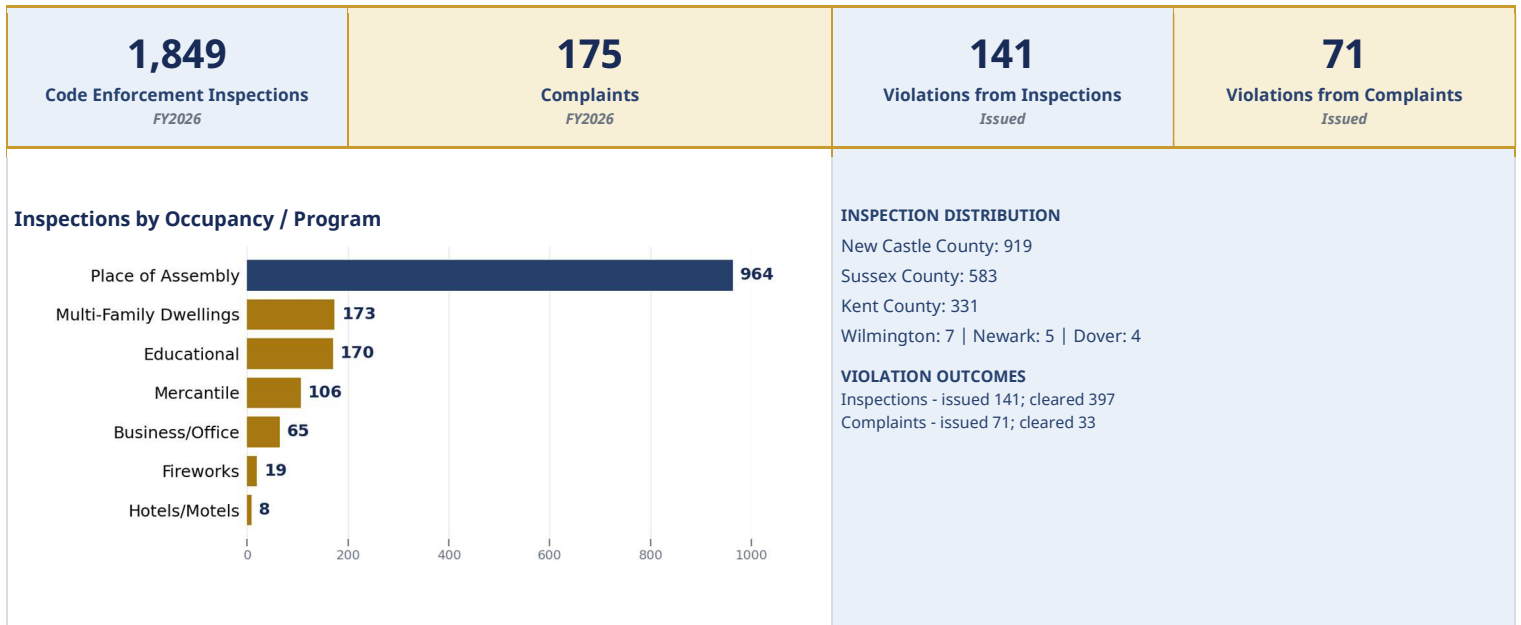
Photograph of a fire involving three row houses on Clayton Road in the Five Points area.



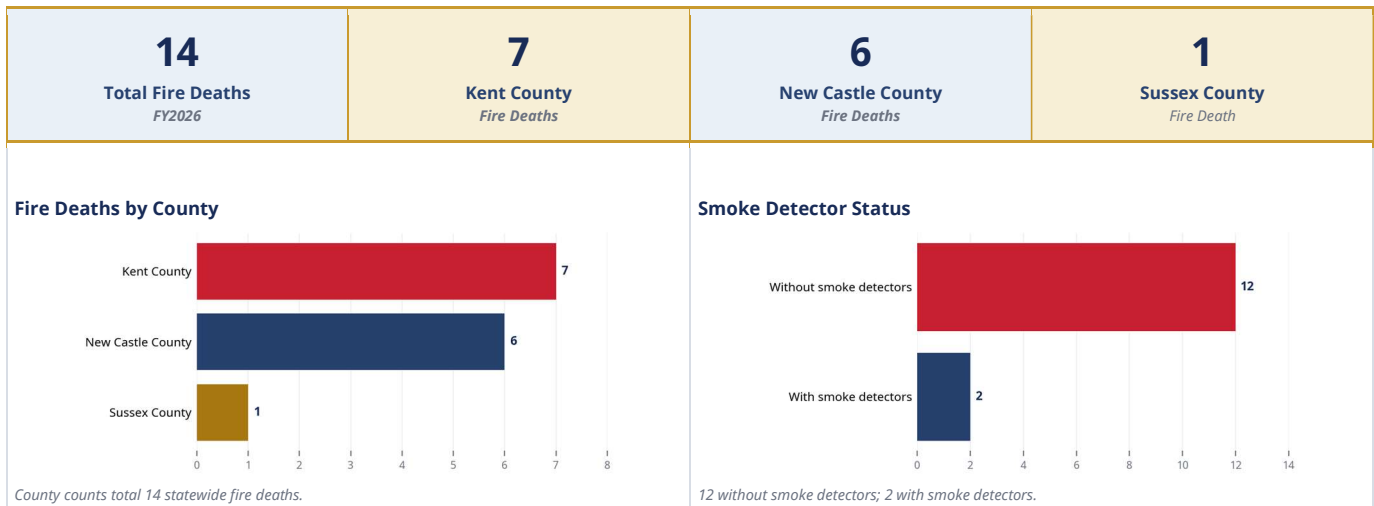
PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Code Enforcement & FY2026 Fire Deaths

Statewide code-enforcement activity and the FY2026 fire-death summary.



FY2026 Fire Deaths





PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Youth Firesetting Prevention & Intervention Program

Since 1981, the program has connected Delaware youth and families with education and support following fire-related behavior.

44 YEARS Helping Children Since 1981 Program History	6,193 Youth Interviewed & Supported Cumulative	<1% Reported Recidivism Rate Program Measure	
HOW YOUTH CONNECT WITH THE PROGRAM PROGRAM LEAD: REBEKAH L. LEPORE, MS REFERRAL NETWORK - Schools and fire departments - Child mental health professionals - Social and rehabilitative services - Parents, guardians, and Deputy Fire Marshals WHO MAY BE REFERRED The program is open to youth ages 3-18. Referrals may be made by calling 1-800-432-8500 or using the online referral form. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT The program participated in 21 public relations and outreach events.		EDUCATION & RISK-REDUCTION FOCUS PROGRAM LEAD: REBEKAH L. LEPORE, MS WHAT THE PROGRAM TEACHES - Real consequences: injuries, property loss, and burns - The financial, legal, and career costs of firesetting - Media portrayals of fire compared with real-world outcomes - Safe decision-making in response to peer pressure TREND CONTEXT Youth firesetting has declined. Product-safety improvements, changes in youth activity, and improved supervision were identified as possible contributing factors.	
REFERRALS Youth ages 3-18	CONTACT 1-800-432-8500	OUTREACH 21 public relations and outreach events	
01 REFERRAL Schools, fire departments, families, and professionals	02 ELIGIBILITY Youth ages 3-18	03 EDUCATION Consequences, risk reduction, and safer decisions	04 OUTREACH 21 public-relations and outreach events



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Leadership Development & Education Partnerships

Fiscal Year 2026 included important professional-development milestones and the agency's participation in statewide health and safety education standards.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program

Rebekah L. LePore, MS is the fifth Delaware student accepted and the first woman from Delaware admitted to the program.

From July 27-August 8, 2025, she completed her first 10-day residential course, Exercise of Executive Leadership, at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

The EFO Program is a National Fire Academy flagship initiative operating since 1985. It focuses on leadership, public policy, and community risk reduction, with annual nationwide cohorts of 80-250 selected through peer review.



STATEWIDE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Educational Standards Collaboration

The Office of the State Fire Marshal was invited by the Delaware Department of Education to provide stakeholder feedback as Delaware updates its Health and Physical Education standards. The standards are being modernized for the first time in more than 20 years and align with new national frameworks.

Once the standards are implemented, the office is expected to be included in a specialized resource guide supporting school administrators in meeting the new health and safety criteria.

AGENCY ROLE

This work extends the office's prevention, education, and community risk-reduction mission.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Training

Deputy State Fire Marshals continue to attend the Federal Bureau of Investigation Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (FBI-LEEDA) Trilogy Training through LEEDA's Supervisor, Command, and Executive Leadership Institutes.

This highlights their commitment to professional growth, continuous pursuit of leadership excellence, and continues the agency's long tradition of serving all who live, work, and visit the State of Delaware.

PROGRAM INFORMATION fbileeda.org



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

Fire & Carbon Monoxide Alert Device Program

A partnership between the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Delaware Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing expands access to specialized smoke and carbon monoxide warning systems for residents who cannot rely on standard audible alarms.



DODHH PARTNERSHIP

Accessible Home Alerting at No Cost

The Fire & Carbon Monoxide Alert Device Program provides specialized equipment at no cost to eligible Delaware residents who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, or Deaf & Blind.

The initiative operates under Delaware House Bill 53 and currently focuses on single-family homes.

SHARED LIFE-SAFETY MISSION

The program is intended to close a long-standing protection gap for residents who may not hear standard audible smoke or carbon monoxide alarms.

NO-COST

Specialized Alerting Equipment
For Eligible Residents

OFFLINE

Low-Frequency Radio Network
No Wi-Fi or Cell Service

SINGLE-FAMILY

Current Program Scope
For Eligible Residents

From Protection Gap to Partnership

BACKGROUND & SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

EARLIER PROTECTION MODEL

For many years, the Office partnered with Delmarva Power to distribute free strobe smoke alarms. Funding generally limited a resident to one bedroom alarm, and that device was not interconnected with the home's other smoke alarms.

WHY THE MODEL CHANGED

More than a decade ago, safety-code changes required strobe alarms to be hardwired into the home's electrical circuit. The earlier program ended, and equipment and electrician-installation costs created a financial barrier, especially for seniors on fixed incomes.

ODHH RESPONSIBILITIES

- Manages the program and determines eligibility
- Maintains program records
- Provides sign language interpreters

OSFM RESPONSIBILITIES

- Checks homes for fire hazards
- Determines device quantity and placement
- Installs equipment and teaches residents how to use the system

Equipment & Technology

BELLMAN & SYMFON SYSTEM

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The system uses low-frequency radio waves rather than the internet. It does not require Wi-Fi or cell service and can continue operating during major storms or power outages.

SMOKE ALARMS

Placed on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area.

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Placed near attached garages, utility rooms, or gas appliances. Carbon monoxide protection is also included when a home has an attached garage but no gas appliances.

FLASH RECEIVERS

Bright strobe receivers are placed in bedrooms and living rooms. Common-room units can be carried during the day and recharged at night.

BED SHAKERS & SPECIAL CLOCKS

Bedroom flash receivers can connect to mattress shakers. Clients may also select an alarm clock equipped with a bed shaker.



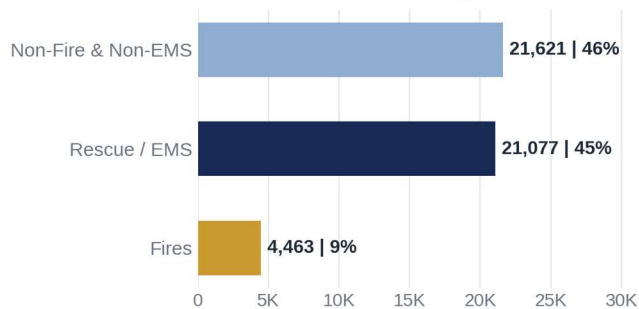
PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

NERIS Incident Data

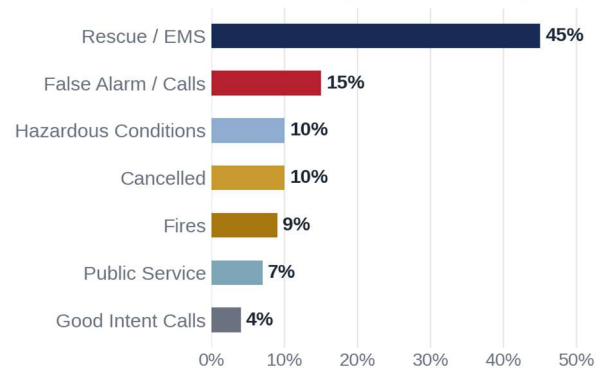
Fire and emergency response activity reported through NERIS | January 2026–June 2026

FY2026 NERIS REPORTING This is the first annual report compiled entirely from NERIS data following retirement of the legacy NFIRS platform. The charts summarize incident categories, geographic distribution, and detector effectiveness. This report reflects that transition. Historical NFIRS data remains accessible through the U.S. Fire Administration's public archive, ensuring continuity for year-over-year comparisons even as the fire service moves fully onto the NERIS platform.

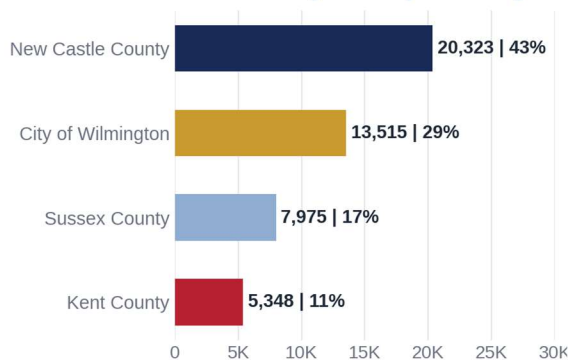
Broad Incident Categories



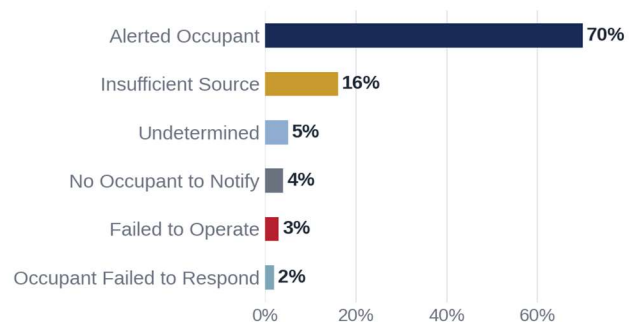
Incident Type Summary



Incidents by County and City



Detector Effectiveness



Detectors present in or near the area of origin



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

NERIS Department Activity

55,840 Department Activity Total <i>Jan.-Aug. 2026</i>	61 Departments Listed <i>Statewide Report</i>	18,221 Wilmington Activity <i>Largest Department Total</i>	8 Outstanding Submissions <i>Departments Identified</i>
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OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

NERIS Department Activity - Report Period: 1/1/2026 to 8/31/2026

Department Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Aetna Hose, Hook And Ladder Company	337	329	289	291	309	288	356	323	2,522
Belvedere Volunteer Fire Company	8	2	3	11	5	0	0	0	29
Bethany Beach Volunteer Fire Company	48	45	41	33	57	63	80	40	407
Blades Volunteer Fire Company	42	50	35	27	49	46	51	36	336
Bowers Fire Company	20	13	8	13	10	17	24	10	115
Brandywine Hundred Fire Company No 1	97	106	103	95	96	90	95	85	767
Bridgeville Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	51	53	30	32	51	41	34	40	332
Camden-Wyoming Fire Company, Inc.	94	116	99	78	74	83	79	25	648
Carlisle Fire Company, Inc.	75	100	73	67	63	67	78	45	568
Cheswold Volunteer Fire Company	48	63	38	41	39	38	49	37	353
Christiana Fire Company	412	355	357	351	416	390	370	373	3,024
Citizens' Hose Company No. 1, Inc.	85	91	73	33	0	2	0	0	284
Claymont Fire Company	139	130	164	125	159	134	130	134	1,115
Clayton Fire Company No 1, Inc.	50	61	45	32	38	34	52	16	328
Cranston Heights Fire Company	132	145	122	117	124	108	112	118	978
Dagsboro Volunteer Fire Department	22	40	24	22	34	35	37	14	228
Delaware City Fire Company Station #15	80	60	60	66	61	76	86	68	557
Delmar Volunteer Fire Department	18	13	16	20	33	25	26	18	169
Dover Fire Department	163	207	163	147	164	173	158	186	1,361
Ellendale Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	54	44	30	33	31	45	28	1	266
Elsmere Fire Company No 1	1	81	102	88	113	116	103	117	721
Farmington Volunteer Fire Company	23	34	37	31	35	45	50	24	279
Felton Community Fire Company, Inc.	41	45	26	31	33	28	42	31	277
Five Points Fire Company, Inc.	149	119	103	80	85	94	79	0	709
Frankford Volunteer Fire Company	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Frederica Volunteer Fire Company	31	41	18	20	25	29	33	26	223
Georgetown Fire Company, Inc.	72	113	67	65	70	73	75	76	611
Good-Will Fire Company No 1	126	112	98	100	113	123	120	91	883
Greenwood Volunteer Fire Company	11	30	22	28	36	20	22	21	190
Gumboro Volunteer Fire Company	12	19	8	14	14	7	18	2	94
Harrington Fire Company	28	37	31	18	28	38	67	32	279



PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY

NERIS Department Activity - Continued

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

NERIS Department Activity - Report Period: 1/1/2026 to 8/31/2026

Department Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Hartly Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	44	59	27	36	32	25	27	22	272
Hockessin Fire Company	111	103	94	78	111	104	100	65	766
Holloway Terrace Volunteer Fire Company	91	102	99	92	87	95	91	100	757
Houston Volunteer Fire Department	29	31	16	12	11	18	10	7	134
Indian River Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	38	88	59	51	62	53	65	67	483
Laurel Fire Department, Inc.	66	60	61	52	67	52	73	52	483
Leipsic Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	15	12	10	0	4	13	13	20	87
Lewes Volunteer Fire Department	105	117	102	88	114	122	156	142	946
Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	49	25	25	18	0	0	1	0	118
Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	46	43	21	33	29	40	31	28	271
Marydel Fire Company	25	29	20	16	12	10	27	13	152
Memorial Volunteer Fire Company	11	6	3	7	5	0	0	0	32
Mill Creek Fire Company	146	170	129	155	165	136	174	143	1,218
Millsboro Fire Company	68	78	55	53	68	66	75	71	534
Millville Volunteer Fire Company	260	264	239	257	298	312	354	262	2,246
Milton Fire Department	54	53	47	53	53	47	61	43	411
Minquadales Fire Company	319	314	348	307	311	336	339	325	2,599
Minquas Fire Company No. 1	159	136	132	129	132	108	136	137	1,069
Odessa Fire Company, Inc. (Station 24)	96	65	63	72	70	74	17	19	476
Port Penn Volunteer Fire Company	35	49	48	44	53	62	68	49	408
Rehoboth Beach Volunteer Fire Company	84	144	73	56	83	81	127	94	742
Roxana Volunteer Fire Department	3	14	3	2	2	0	8	0	32
Seaford Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	119	146	103	104	114	103	144	118	951
Selbyville Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	19	25	20	23	17	22	19	10	155
South Bowers Fire Company	17	18	9	21	15	12	20	9	121
Talleyville Fire Company, Inc.	136	145	147	144	152	157	151	71	1,103
Townsend Fire Company	52	50	47	62	44	47	61	56	419
Volunteer Hose Company Of Middletown	146	123	93	121	122	137	151	128	1,021
Wilmington Fire Department	2258	2259	2258	2162	2331	2247	2390	2316	18,221
Wilmington Manor Volunteer Fire Company	154	115	106	127	139	108	120	88	957

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

NERIS Department Activity - Report Period: 1/1/2026 to 8/31/2026

Departments with Outstanding NERIS Submissions

Department Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Belvedere Volunteer Fire Company	8	2	3	11	5	0	0	0	29
Citizens' Hose Company No. 1, Inc.	85	91	73	33	0	2	0	0	284
Five Points Fire Company, Inc.	149	119	103	80	85	94	79	0	709
Frankford Volunteer Fire Company	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Leipsic Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	15	12	10	0	4	13	13	20	67
Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.	49	25	25	18	0	0	1	0	118
Memorial Volunteer Fire Company	11	6	3	7	5	0	0	0	32
Roxana Volunteer Fire Department	3	14	3	2	2	0	8	0	32



WILMINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

10TH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

HONORING THE BRAVE. REMEMBERING THE FALLEN.
NEVER FORGOTTEN.

Senior Firefighter
Jerry Fickes
C Platoon, Squad 4

Senior Firefighter
Ardythe "Ardy" Hope
C Platoon, Engine 5

Lieutenant
Christopher Leach
D Platoon, Engine 6

★ LAST ALARM ★

September 24, 2016

Ten years have passed since the tragic events of September 24, 2016.
We gather to honor the memory, courage,
and sacrifice of three extraordinary members
of our department who gave their lives in the line of duty.

 THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 2026	 2:00 PM	 CANBY PARK WILMINGTON, DELAWARE
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Please join the Wilmington Fire Department,
the families of our fallen firefighters,
and the Wilmington community as we remember
and pay tribute to their ultimate sacrifice.

**THEIR COURAGE LIVES ON.
WE WILL NEVER FORGET.**

HONORING THE BRAVE. REMEMBERING THE FALLEN. NEVER FORGOTTEN.



WE WILL NEVER FORGET



OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

HEADQUARTERS
1537 Chestnut Grove Rd
Dover, DE 19904

NEW CASTLE DIVISION
2307 MacArthur Rd
New Castle, DE 19720

SUSSEX DIVISION
22705 Park Avenue
Georgetown, DE 19947

statefiremarshal.delaware.gov

Proudly Serving Delaware Since 1953

Fiscal Year 2026 | July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026