

FY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



NEW MEXICO STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S MISSION



The mission of the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) is to protect the lives and property of New Mexico residents and guests from the devastating effects of fire. This goal is accomplished through promotion of public safety and fire prevention programs, as well as resources distributed to the New Mexico fire departments for fire protection services. The SFMO carries out its mission through four bureaus: Code Enforcement, Fire Investigations, Fire Service Support, and the Fire Training Academy.

The New Mexico State Fire Marshal's Office became a part of DHSEM in 2021.

FIRE MARSHAL RANDY VARELA

Randy Varela was appointed as the NM State Fire Marshal in June 2022. He is a generational native of New Mexico and has over 40 years of experience in fire service, including 17 with the Fire Marshal's Office. Randy has responded to and managed emergencies of all sizes, from small fires to large-scale disasters, and has been responsible for implementing safety protocols and training programs.

He enthusiastically shares the vision to come together as one to make positive, lasting change for New Mexicans and their futures. He is committed to leading, listening, and learning as this State Fire Marshal's Office turns another page.



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In Fiscal Year 2024, the New Mexico State Fire Marshals (SFMO) worked with departments across the state to ensure the safety of New Mexicans and increase compliance, resources, and knowledge for local fire departments.

As part of our mission, we will continue to provide support and resources to local departments in order to keep our communities safe.



NEW MEXICO STATE FIRE ACADEMY

The Academy is dedicated to meeting the needs of a complex and dynamic fire service by providing programs of the highest quality. The New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy's objectives and goals are:

1. Provide training programs designed to develop the basic and advanced skills necessary for students to be more effective members of the fire service and society;
2. Provide the best instruction and training possible in all areas of the fire service;
3. Serve the public at large by providing education services, training, and counseling; and
4. Provide a means to allow firefighters to demonstrate their ability to meet professional qualification standards.



NEW MEXICO STATE FIRE ACADEMY

In Fiscal Year 2024, the New Mexico Fire Academy continued its work to train our New Mexico's fire service members to provide the best protection to their communities, all while improving and innovating the programs provided and the resources available to training staff and all who spent time learning from them.

TRAINING CONTACT HOURS

132,286

CLASSES CONDUCTED

418

PASS RATE FOR CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS

79%

- Received dual accreditation through Pro Board and IFSAC.
- Completed thermal linings in new burn building.
- Updated furniture in Academy lobby and classrooms.
- Upgraded academy with a new roof on admin and student staging, new AC/heating units on admin, and all AV equipment in the classrooms.
- Developed a master plan for replacing administration building, upgrading and adding new training sites to the facility, including ARFF pad, Hazmat Pad, and EVD course.
- Implemented new testing software to streamline the process and allow online testing in the future.
- Received AFG grant funding for equipment including 2 new trucks, 3 trailers, and equipment for the hazmat and VEX trailer.
- Purchased new ladders, hose, extrication tools, and PPE for instructors.
- Added new courses to include Aerial Ops, Live Fire Instructor and Live Fire Instructor In-Charge, as well as the National Traffic Incident Management course.
- Successfully increased our departmental outreach for non-certification training by travelling around the state to conduct entry level training on topics for local departments.



CODE ENFORCEMENT



The Code Enforcement Bureau provides for the life safety of occupants in buildings, structures, and facilities, the prevention of fire and the reduction of property losses due to fires. The State Fire Marshal's Office has adopted the ICC International Fire Code 2021 edition to assure standardization of life safety concerns statewide.



CODE ENFORCEMENT

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Code Enforcement Bureau worked across the state to ensure the safety of buildings, new and old. Inspectors worked across the state to inspect record numbers of building, review projects and plan, and educate those they serve on the standards that exist to keep New Mexicans safe.

BY THE NUMBERS: FY24 INSPECTIONS

CONDUCTED NEARLY
4,000 INSPECTIONS TOTAL



**3651 NEW PLANS
REVIEWS**



**8.9M SQ. FEET
NEW PROJECTS**



**138 SCOPE OF
WORK PROJECTS**



**430 ACCEPTANCE
TESTS**



**420 STATE AND
622 PED SCHOOL
BUILDINGS**



**318 INSPECTIONS FOR
SAFER CIGARETTE
COMPLIANCE**



**254 FIREWORKS
INSPECTIONS**

In FY 2025, the Code Enforcement Bureau will focus on:

- Inspect PED School Statewide, in collaboration with local fire departments to ensure inspections are being conducted in accordance with the statute and Safe Schools Drills.
- Fireworks permitting, online payment set up.



FIRE SUPPORT BUREAU



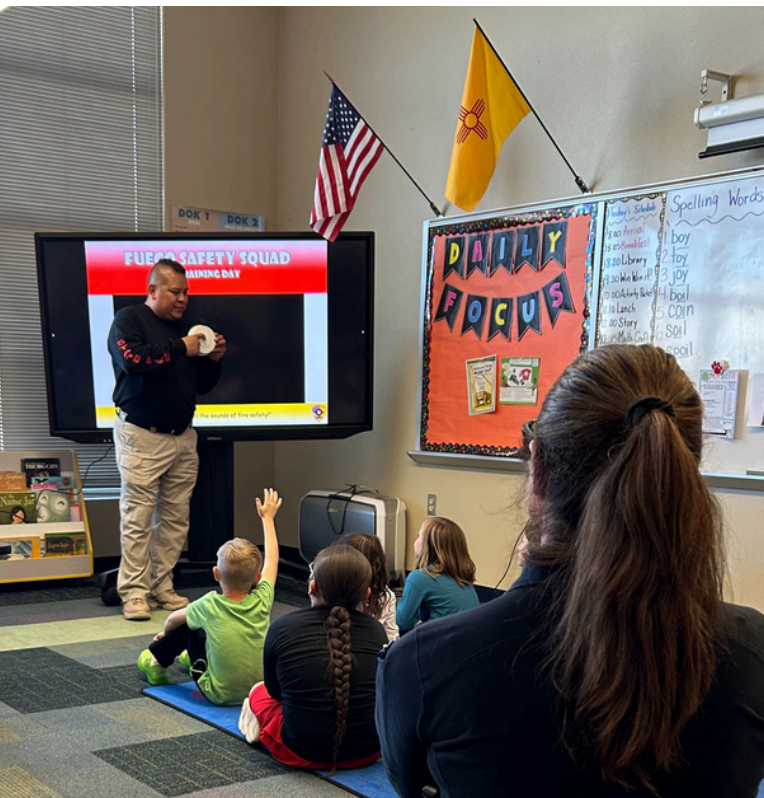
The Fire Support Bureau is responsible for the distribution of funds from the State Fire Fund and provides assistance to local fire departments in preparation of Insurance Service Office (ISO) surveys. The bureau also reviews fire apparatus specifications in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, performs site feasibility inspections for new fire stations and districts, and conducts certification inspections of new stations and fire districts for funding purposes. The services provided by the bureau promote increased fire protection in all communities which result in reduced loss of life and property from fire incidents and lower insurance rates (where applicable) for the citizens of New Mexico.



FIRE SUPPORT BUREAU

- Had 27 fire departments improve their ISO rating Statewide.
- Fire Support increase the number of inspectors to provide more coverage to the fire service.
- One inspector is assigned to the 8, 9, and 10 departments to identify the needs and guide them to improve their ISO ratings.
- Increased our fire prevention outreach program to the schools teaching the kids the importance of fire safety.
- Increased our fire prevention to state employees with fire extinguisher training.
- Added a new fire prevention trailer to move fire prevention materials.

- Increased Fire Fund distribution to departments by \$1.5M, totaling \$77,316,129 in FY 24.
- Brought fire departments in the state to 95% compliance with reporting to NFIRS monthly.
- Completed 540 fire department inspections.
- Audited 100% of the fire departments in New Mexico.
- Distributed 100% of the Fire Fund grants to departments on time.



FIRE INVESTIGATION BUREAU

The Fire Investigations Bureau is responsible for determining the origin, cause, and circumstances related to a fire incident. State fire investigators respond to requests for assistance from local fire departments and law enforcement agencies and assist the Office of the Medical Examiner (OMI) in fatal fire incidents.



Photo Source: KRQE

September 2023, Fire Investigations staff responded to a fire located at the Wal-Mart in Clovis, NM. The five-day origin and cause investigation was a team effort involving SFMO, ATF, Clovis PD, Curry County Sheriff's Office, and Curry Co District Attorney Office. The investigation determined the fire was intentionally set by a homeless individual who entered the store after hours and caused approximately \$42M in damage. There were no fatalities or injuries as a result of the incident. The suspect was later apprehended in Texas and has been indicted on federal arson charges.



SFMO investigators along with ATF certified fire investigators secured indictments and a conviction in US Federal Court in California in March 2024 regarding a serial arsonist who traveled the southwestern US setting fires to Swift Transportation long-haul trucks from 2020-2022. The fires occurred at various truck stops located on I-10 and I-40 stretching from Alabama to California. A total of 24 truck fires occurred with 9 occurring in New Mexico. There were no fatalities or injuries as a result of the fires. The federal case originated from investigative work done by NMSFMO staff.



FIRE INVESTIGATION BUREAU



Photo Source: Alamogordo FD

In February 2024, SFMO investigators and Alamogordo FD/law enforcement secured a conviction for arson and murder regarding a March 2021 homicide incident in Alamogordo, NM. The defendant killed his roommate and set fire to their RV to conceal the crime.

164
fire investigations

22
fatality fire investigations
with 29 victims

5
referred for prosecution





STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OVERALL FISCAL YEAR 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Supported the addition of State Fire Plan Retirement for uniformed state fire Personnel. This includes both the Fire Marshals office and State Forestry.
- Secured \$25M for firefighter recruitment within the state, A big thank you to all that attended these meetings and supported this.
- Secured \$2M for the Firefighter Training Academy for upgrades to the facility.
- Secured \$3.1M for planning and development of a satellite training facility in Santa Fe, to include a firefighter memorial.
- Adjusted the inspector pay band to pay range 70 with salary.
- Added new positions to make the department more efficient, including an executive admin and a human resource position.

