West Virginia State Fire Marshal

State Fire Commission

FY 2026 Annual Report



Kenneth E Tyree Jr – State Fire Marshal

firemarshal.wv.gov



1600 Pennsylvania Ave

Charleston, WV 25302

Phone (304) 558 – 2191

Fax (304) 558 – 2537

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From the State Fire Commission Chairman

WV STATE FIRE COMMISSION
Grant Gunnoe-Chairman
Doug Mongold-Vice Chairman
Ted Shriver- Secretary

Phone: (304) 558-2191 Fax: (304) 558-2537

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Charleston, WV 25302
firemarshal.wv.gov

October 31, 2026

The Honorable Patrick Morrisey
Governor of West Virginia
State Capitol Building
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Governor Morrisey,

On behalf of the members of the West Virginia State Fire Commission and in accordance with the West Virginia Code, I am pleased to submit to you the Annual Report of the WV State Fire Commission for FY 2026.

The support you have shown for the entire Fire Service of West Virginia, the State Fire Commission and the Office of the Fire Marshal is greatly appreciated.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Fire Commission if you have any inquires in the future.

Sincerely,

Grant Gunnoe
Chairman



From the WV State Fire Marshal

Department of Homeland Security
Cabinet Secretary Michael T. Baylous
State Fire Marshal Kenneth E. Tyree, Jr.

Phone: (304) 558-2191 Fax: (304) 558-2537

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October 31, 2026

The Honorable Patrick Morrisey
Governor of West Virginia
State Capitol Building
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Governor Morrisey,

In compliance with the West Virginia Code, Chapter 5, Article 1, Section 20, the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2026 of the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's office is hereby submitted for your review.

This report is a representative, but by no means complete, look at the myriad services provided to the citizens of West Virginia by the dedicated personnel of the West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office.

Since 1909 the State Fire Marshal's Office has consistently increased its level of public service to the State of West Virginia through code inspections and enforcement, licensing and regulatory services, public fire education, fire investigations and many other duties.

This report in part reflects the efforts of West Virginia's fire departments and fire service organizations that represent full-time career, volunteer, and part-paid combination departments. It should not be forgotten that daily, these brave men and women are ready to give their lives protecting their communities from fire and other emergency incidents.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth E. Tyree, Jr.
West Virginia State Fire Marshal



Mission Statement

To provide, through leadership, the best possible fire prevention and life safety for our citizens by legislation, education, training, standards, and resource allocation.

Commission Representation

3 Members ..... Full-Time Paid Firefighters

1 Member ..... Full-Time Paid Fire Chief

3 Members ..... Volunteer Firefighters

2 Members ..... Volunteer Fire Chiefs

2 Members ..... Business & Industry

1 Member ..... Fire Insurance Industry

1 Member ..... Registered Architects

Standing Committees

Fire Department Services Committee

Disciplinary Committee

Legislative and Codes Committee

Training Committee

VFD Equipment and Training Grant Fund Committee

Recruitment and Retention

OSHA Emergency and Response Standard Committee

Fire Commission Officers

Chairman: Grant Gunnoe
Represents: Paid Firefighters

Vice-Chairman: Doug Mongold
Represents: Volunteer Firefighters

Secretary: Ted Shriver
Represents: Architects

Fire Commission Members



Steven Byers

Steven was re-appointed to the State Fire Commission by Governor Justice in 2023. He began his career in the fire service in June of 1988 when he joined Jackson's Mill VFD as a junior member. Since 2006 he has held the position of Chief in that same department. Chief Byers represents the volunteer fire chiefs. Steve is a Certified Fire Officer and Fire Instructor For WVU-FSE. Currently he is involved with and serves with Local and State Fire Associations.

Fire Insurance Industry

Currently there is not any appointee representing the Fire Insurance Industry.



Carl Eastham

Carl was re-appointed to the State Fire Commission by Governor Justice in 2022 to represent the Paid Fire Chiefs. Carl started his service with the City of Huntington, in July 1985 where he rose through the ranks until retiring February 2017 as Fire Chief. He has served as President of the Huntington Professional Fire Fighters, Secretary & Treasurer of the Professional Fire Fighters of West Virginia, and President of Tri-State District Labor Council. He also served as the Emergency Services Director for the City of Huntington, a fire service instructor and was a founding member, and team leader of WV Region 3 Haz/Mat Response Unit. He currently holds an Associate Degree in Occupational Development from MCTC with an emphasis on Firefighting and Fire Safety.



Doug Estep

Doug was re-appointed to the State Fire Commission by Governor Jim Justice in 2023. Doug was sworn in as Fire Chief of the Morrisvale Volunteer Fire Department in August of 1982. Chief Estep has served as Chief of the department while also maintaining a career as a Heavy Equipment Mechanic at Hobet Mining. He retired from mining in 2013 with 38 years of service. Chief Estep is a certified Fire Officer along with being a certified Fire Instructor 2 for WVU Fire Service Extension. He specializes in teaching rural firefighting tactics.



Edward J. George

Edward was appointed to the State Fire Commission by Governor Jim Justice in June of 2018 and reappointed in June of 2022. He was appointed to represent Business and Industry interests. Edward is a partner in the law firm of Dinsmore & Shohl LLP where his practice is extensive and involves matters affecting manufacturing, waste transportation and disposal, energy generation, and beverage alcohol regulation. Edward's career also includes past service as a metro-Philadelphia firefighter. Edward also serves as a reserve police officer.



Grant Gunnoe

Grant represents the Paid Firefighters in West Virginia and was re-appointed to the Fire Commission by Governor Jim Justice in 2020. After graduation from High School Grant worked in the Communications Center for the Charleston Police Department and then as a Paramedic for the Charleston Emergency Ambulance Service until beginning a 28-year career with the Charleston Fire Department. In 2002 he was promoted to Chief of the Department. Grant retired in May of 2006 to assume the position of Director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security for the City of Charleston until he retired in April of 2019.



Phil Hart

Phil was re-appointed to the Fire Commission by Governor Jim Justice in 2021, representing volunteer Fire Chiefs. Since 1989 Phil has been employed with the City of Bridgeport Fire Department as a Firefighter/Paramedic and he has held many offices throughout his career. In June of 2016 he was appointed Fire Chief of the combination department and after 36 years of service he retired on October 31st, 2025. Since 1978 Phil has been a member of the Belington Volunteer Fire Department and remains active today, holding the role of Fire Chief since 2010.



Brian Jones

Brian represents the Paid Firefighters and was re-appointed to the Fire Commission by Governor Justice in 2024. He retired as a Lieutenant from the North Side Fire Station in Morgantown after 24 years of service. He served as Vice President of IAFF Local 313 and as President of the Professional Fire Fighters of West Virginia from 2006 to 2021.



Thomas Keefer

Tom was re-appointed to the State Fire Commission by Governor Jim Justice in 2023. He represents the Business and Industry interests for the Commission. Tom began his career at the DuPont, Belle, WV facility in the Project Engineering Group in May 1974. Tom was a DuPont / Chemours HAZMAT responder since 1976 with extensive experience in process safety, safety, security, hazardous material distribution, emergency response, and incident command. In addition, Commissioner Keefer is the Administrator for the Kanawha-Putnam Emergency Planning Committee.



Doug Mongold

Doug was re-appointed to the State Fire Commission by Governor Jim Justice in 2023. Chief Mongold represents the volunteer firefighters. He currently serves as Fire Chief of the Moorefield Volunteer Fire Company. Chief Mongold is past President of the WV State Firemen's Association and is currently serving on the executive committee. Chief Mongold is also currently Chairman of the local LEPC board.



Jim Oldaker

Jim was reappointed to the State Fire Commission by Governor Justice in 2020. Jim is a 44-year member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 466, Charleston, WV, AFL/CIO. Jim is a 47-year member of the Alum Creek Volunteer Fire Department and has served 39 years in the position of Fire Chief. Jim is a Certified Fire Officer and Fire Instructor. Currently he is involved with and serves on many associations. Jim represents the Volunteer Firefighters.



Ted Shriver

Ted was originally appointed in June of 2009 and most recently re-appointed to the State Fire Commission by Governor Jim Justice in 2022, representing the West Virginia Society of Architects. As Chairman of the Commission's Code and Regulatory Committee, he has been a part of updating the rules for the State Fire Code, the State Building Code, Code Officials and Home Inspectors. He earned an Engineering Technology Degree from Fairmont State College in 1979 and obtained licensure in 1995 to practice architecture. He retired in 2023 after 43 years in the field.



Virgil ‘P-nut’ White

Virgil “P-nut” White is a 40-year veteran of the Fire Service and was re-appointed by Governor Jim Justice to the State Fire Commission in 2022. Virgil began his career in 1986 with the Lewisburg Fire Department and in 1993 became employed by the South Charleston Fire Department. In his years of service, he has risen through the ranks up to his current rank of Fire Chief. Virgil has always had a strong passion for the fire service and other public safety. He has decades of experience as a paramedic, fire service instructor, and as a 911 telecommunicator. He currently holds an Associate and a bachelor’s degree in Fire Science from West Virginia State University and a Master’s Degree in Emergency Management from Anna Maria College.



Personnel Listed by Division

Administration Division

State Fire Marshal	Kenneth E. Tyree
Administrative Secretary	Kathryn Burns
Administrative Services Assistant I	Courtney Aston
Office Operation Associate	Janice Patton
Public Information Specialist I	Timothy Rock

Regulatory and Licensing Division

Divisional Director	Kayla Burns
Administrative Services Assistant II	Dawn Owens
Administrative Services Assistant I	Danielle Burkes
Regulatory and Licensing Support Specialist II	Kristi Brown
Regulatory and Licensing Support Specialist II	Elizabeth Frame

Fire Dept. Services, Fire Inspection & Plans Review Division

Deputy State Fire Marshal	Mark Stewart
Assistant State Fire Marshal III	Jeff Armentrout
	Nevin Kilmer
	Bobby Palmer
Assistant State Fire Marshal II	Everett Chapman
	John Holben
	Timothy Mouse
	Bradley Scott
	Ronald Williams
Assistant State Fire Marshal I	Lonnie Cogar
	Cody Foutty
	Richard Hacker
	Thomas Varney
	Jason Beafore
Assistant Fire Marshal In-Training	Bradley Benson
	Micheal Hatfield
	Joshua Stacy
Data Analyst	Alice Morrison
Regulatory and Licensing Support Specialist II	Malena Boggess
Fire Safety Plans Examiner Supervisor	Jennifer Price
Fire Safety Plans Examiner II	Ernest Parsons
Fire Safety Plans Examiner I	Megan Kay
Fie Safety Plans Examiner 1	Michael Hans
Secretary II	Rebecca Brick
Office Operations Associate	Lillian Burdett

Fire Investigation Division

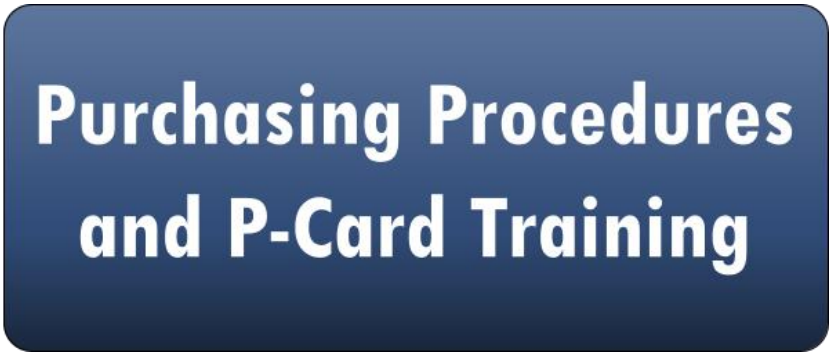
Deputy State Fire Marshal	Jason D. Baltic
Assistant State Fire Marshal III	Ronald Ayersman
	Robert S. Rodes, II
	Shawn Alderman
Assistant State Fire Marshal II	Tim Chastain
	Larry Hamrick
	James Lewis
	Rick Sovastion
	James Owens
Assistant State Fire Marshal I	Anthony Iafolla
	Keith Corley
	Jonathan Estep
Executive Coordinator	Jill O'Brien

Administration Division

Working with DAS, the Administration Division manages procurement, accounting, personnel, payroll, cash management, fringe benefits, personnel records, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, Fire Commission meetings, the annual report, the agency website, and fixed assets.

Procurement

Administrative staff work with DAS to procure the goods and services the West Virginia State Fire Commission needs for its daily operations, with the goal of obtaining equipment, supplies, and services of the highest quality available. Purchases are made through statewide contracts, internal resources, or competitive bids solicited from reputable vendors registered to do business with the State of West Virginia.



Accounting

Administration handles all revenue and expenditure transactions, including payroll, travel, vendor payments, cash deposits and refunds, and fringe benefit plan maintenance. The division also prepares and monitors the annual operating budget.

Training

Administrative staff complete many hours of training each year to stay current on agency, state, and federal policies.

Personnel

Administration works with DAS each day to complete all personnel transactions, including new hires, transfers, separations, reallocations, leaves of absence, and promotions. The division also posts job openings, manages employee leave, oversees workers' compensation claims, and coordinates West Virginia State Fire Commission meetings. Throughout this work, the division ensures the agency complies with all state and federal employment regulations.

Office Relocation

Fiscal Year 2026 ended with the agency's move to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Charleston, WV. Administration coordinated both the administrative and physical sides of the move. Working with the other divisions, it completed the moving contracts, sent items to surplus, furnished and equipped the new office, arranged IT and construction work, and kept two office locations running during the transition.



Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

Administration receives, tracks, and monitors all agency FOIA requests and received 464 requests last fiscal year. Common requests include investigation reports, inspection reports, and incident reports from fire departments. Each request is routed to the appropriate internal and external staff for processing, and administrative personnel handle invoices and the release of responsive documents.

Fire Safety Inspection & Plans Review Division

Fiscal Year 2026

Deputy State Fire Marshal, Mark Stewart



INTRODUCTION

The Fire Safety Inspection/Plans Review Division is mandated by Chapter 15A, Article 10 "Fire Prevention and Control Act" to conduct fire and life safety inspections in all types of occupancies except one and two family dwellings. The division's duties and responsibilities also include, but are not limited to:

- Issuance of citations for fire code violations, including but not limited to, locking, or blocking of exits, tampering with fire protection equipment, and blocking fire lanes
- Conducting fire investigations in buildings that are normally inspected by the Fire Inspection division
- Enforcement of blasting regulations and inspection of explosives magazines, investigation of blasting complaints
- Enforcement of mobile food unit regulations and inspections of fairs and festivals throughout the state.
- Enforcement of forest fire burning laws
- Assistance to the Fire Investigation Division on large loss fires or fatalities
- Assistance to law enforcement agencies when requested
- Assistance to local fire departments when requested
- Assistance to federal government in the implementation of the Federal Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act
- Providing aid and assistance in disasters
- Regulation of aboveground storage tanks containing flammable liquids
- Assistance to the Licensing & Regulatory Division in the enforcement of the licensing programs, electrician, fire protection worker, fireworks, blasters, etc.
- Administering licensing tests
- Assistance with conducting fire department evaluations/follow-ups
- Conducting fire safety training educational seminars and public fire education

The Division consists of one (1) Field Deputy Fire Marshal, three (3) Assistant Fire Marshal III (Field Supervisors), eleven (11) Assistant Fire Marshals, one (1) Fire Safety Plans Examiner Supervisor, and one (1) Fire Safety Plans Examiner 2 and three (3) Fire Safety Examiners I. The

Division also consists of one (1) Divisional Secretary, one (1) Office Operations Associate and one (1) Office Operations Assistant. The Assistant Fire Marshals are assigned to a designated geographical territory, ranging from one (1) to nine (9) counties. Five (5) Divisional personnel are trained and certified to assist with the review of plans, when necessary, in addition to their inspection duties. All Assistant Fire Marshals serve as liaisons for all Fire Marshal services with local fire departments, municipal governments, and the general public.

FIRE SAFETY INSPECTIONS

This fiscal year, eight thousand two hundred and fifty-six (8,255) fire safety inspections, consultations, license checks and complaints were conducted by the Division. Spreadsheets are provided within this report to show which types of inspections were conducted by occupancy type. Business and Educational occupancies, which include all inspections for businesses within our jurisdiction, day cares, colleges, and universities, as well as public and private schools, dominate the largest number of inspections completed within the Division. Also included in this report are charts which demonstrate the number of complaints and system inspections that were conducted, by occupancy.

In addition to fire safety inspections, a significant number of hours were invested in fire safety training and educational programs, administering licensing tests, assisting the Fire Investigation Division, as well as other agencies, and department-specific training. Additional educational programs include in-service training given to county school system maintenance personnel and educational staff(s), presentations given to various organizations and associations, upon request, to provide detailed information pertaining to fire and life safety, office meetings with Building Code Officials, construction teams, etc.

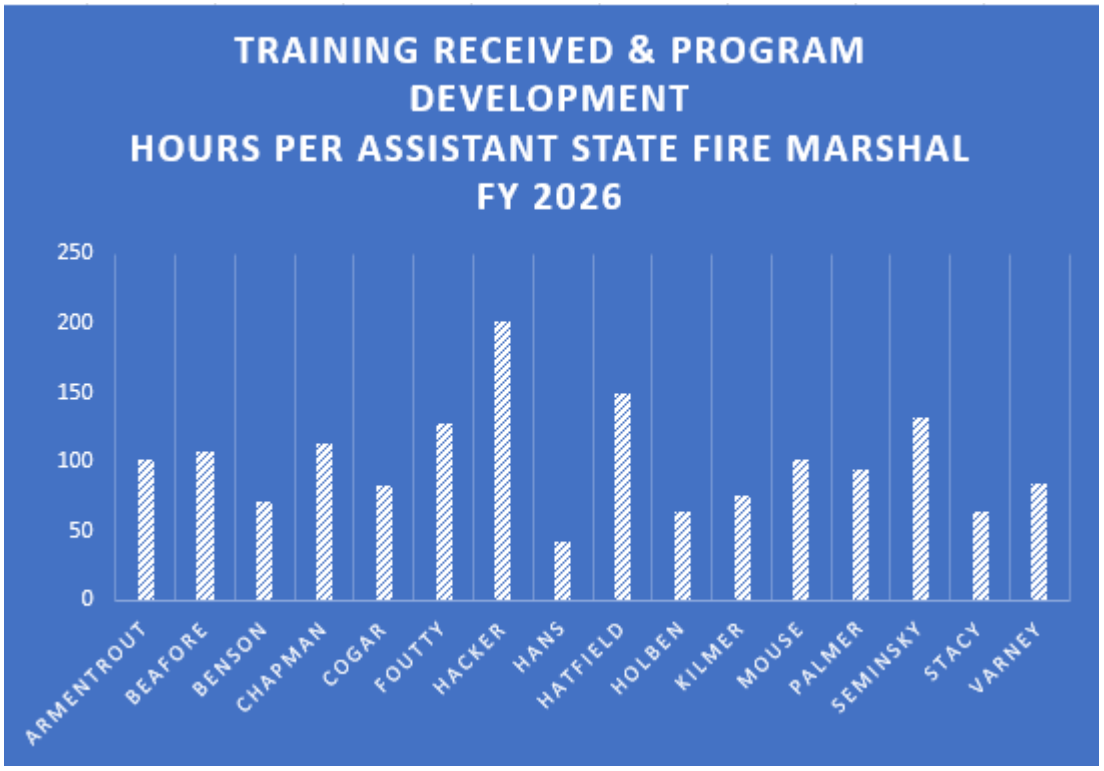
The Fire and Life Safety Inspections Division became totally digital on April 1, 2026. This streamlined the process for customers requesting inspections and then receiving their inspection reports and invoices. Additionally, it provides a more efficient method for tracking the status of inspections from inception through completion. Invoice payments were also improved with this feature by allowing customers the ability to make online payments through a link emailed directly to them.

FIRE SAFETY INSPECTIONS - FISCAL YEAR 2026

	Annual	License Checks	Construction	Consults	Final	Final w/CO	Follow Up	Initial	System Inspections	DIVISION TOTALS
ASSEMBLY	55	122	146	37	9	29	27	62	90	577
BUSINESS	181	675	500	60	135	62	79	162	145	1999
DETENTION	62	31	12	2	1	4	0	1	0	113
EDUCATIONAL										
College	13	43	15	4	5				5	85
Day Cares	381	65	9	5	3	4	26	51	6	550
Schools	611	241	173	17	32	3	23	12	53	1165
FIREWORKS; Consumer, Storage, Tent, Stand and Display	67	175	5	3	3	19	155	105	4	536
HEALTH CARE - hospitals/nursing homes/ambulatory care	178	135	110	17	51	1	14	5	15	526
INDUSTRIAL	6	82	58	16	24	12	4	4	22	228
MERCANTILE										
Class A		14	29		8	2	2	1	11	67
Class B		44	30		6	5	5	4	7	101
Class C	1	69	97	8	16	20	13	19	49	292
MOBILE FOOD UNIT	265	51	0	4	4	0	49	206	0	579
RESIDENTIAL										
Hotel/Motel	24	12	16	3	1	1	1	5	11	74
Apartments	8	136	358	19	183	34	21	15	146	920
Dormitory	22	14	8	2	1		2	1	6	56
Rooming/Lodging	228	61	35	6	9	2	13	19	13	386
Dwellings										
Board & Care										
Dilapidated Property				1						1
STORAGE	21	50	51	2	5	19	5	2	23	178
TOTALS	2123	2020	1652	206	496	217	439	674	606	8255

Additional Services	Total
Assist FD, Bldg Insp	50
Assist Investigator	26
Assist Other Law Agency	17
Fire Investigation	17
Citations	3
Warnings Issued	31
Court Appearances	3
Explosive Magazine Insp	10

COMPLAINT INSPECTIONS FY 2026						
	TYPE OF COMPLAINT					
OCCUPANCY	BLASTING	ELECTRICAL	FIRE CODE	LICENSING	FIREWORKS	TOTALS
ASSEMBLY	0	2	25	0	0	**27**
BUSINESS	4	4	31	1	0	**40**
DETENTION	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
EDUCATIONAL	0	2	12	0	0	**14**
NURSING HOMES	0	0	3	0	0	**3**
HEALTH CARE	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
HOTEL/MOTEL	0	0	11	0	0	**11**
INDUSTRIAL	0	1	4	1	0	**6**
MERCANTILE	0	1	41	0	10	**52**
MISCELLANEOUS	0	1	9	0	0	**10**
RESIDENTIAL	14	9	49	0	0	**72**
DAYCARE	0	0	3	0	0	**3**
TOTAL	**18**	**20**	**188**	**2**	**10**	**238**



PLANS AND REVIEW SECTION

This fiscal year, the Plans and Review section reviewed, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-one (1,821) sets of plans, as shown in the spreadsheet which displays the amount of plans reviewed by type. In the past five years, revenue received for plans reviewed has increased significantly as shown in an attached chart.

The Plans and Review Division accomplishes a formal review of the plans when construction documents are submitted. This is an in-depth review of all architectural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing plans for code compliance. Specialized systems such as fire alarms, automatic sprinkler systems, hood suppression, and smoke management systems are other types of plans that may be submitted to our office for review.

The Fire Safety Plans Examiners dedicate a significant amount of time and research to telephone calls, email correspondence, and walk-in consultations with architects, engineers, contractors, and owners to assist with code interpretations, as well as assisting the public in answering general fire code-related questions. Through these opportunities of consultations and correspondence, the Plans Examiners can assist designers and owners with proper code requirements during the early developmental stages of the project. Although these consultations and points of contact are not a formal review of plans, this process has proven to eliminate costly and time-consuming changes during the design and construction phase of the project and bridges the gap to prevent lack of knowledge due to poor communication between our office and the public.

The Fire Safety Plans and Review Division became totally digital at the beginning of 2025. This streamlined the process of submitting, reviewing, and issuing permits for projects submitted to the WV State Fire Marshals Office.

PLANS REVIEWED BY TYPE FY 2021 - FY 2026

TYPE OF PLAN	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
ARCHITECTURAL	758	703	572	989	426	771
FIRE ALARM SYSTEM	412	412	311	451	312	451
SPRINKLER SYSTEM	310	249	197	339	209	331
HOOD SUPPRESSION SYS	155	135	123	216	227	192
AGST	22	18	8	21	12	22
FM 200	16	5	6	4	0	9
CARPET	20	31	3	5	0	0
UNCLASSIFIED	1	0	0	0	1	0
SOLAR				6	36	45
TOTAL BY TYPE	**1694**	**1553**	**1220**	**2025**	**1223**	**1821**



MONEY RECEIVED FY 2022 - FY 2026					
DIVISION	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
INSPECTIONS	101,336.00	97,022.00	101,629.00	101,195.00	104,554.00
PLAN REVIEW	849,648.00	1,260,885.00	1,503,718.90	1,682,562.89	1,113,631.32
TOTALS	**950,984.00**	**1,357,907.00**	**1,605,347.90**	**1,783,757.89**	**1,218,185.32**

Investigation Division



2026 Annual Report



Fire Investigation Division

Division Director: DSFM Jason D. Baltic, CFI, CFEI, CVFI, CFII

Executive Coordinator: Jill O'Brien

Field Personnel

Regional Supervisor: Shawn Alderman, CFI, CFEI, CVFI

Regional Supervisor: Vacant

ASFM Timothy Chastain, CFEI, CVFI, CFII, CFI

ASFM Keith Corley, CFEI, CVFI

ASFM Jonathan Estep, CFEI, FIT

AFSM Larry T. Hamrick, FIT, CFEI, CVFI

ASFM Anthony Iafolla, CFEI, CVFI

ASFM James Lewis, CFEI, CVFI, FIT, CFI-11, CFPE

ASFM James Owens, FIT, CFEI, CVFI

ASFM Rick Sovastion, CFEI, CVFI, CFI

ASFM - Vacant

INTRODUCTION

The Investigation Division current authorized staffing levels is one (1) Field Deputy State Fire Marshal, two (2) Field Supervisors, nine (9) Assistant State Fire Marshals, and one (1) Secretary, when fully Staffed.

Each Fire Marshal has a designated geographical territory ranging in size from two (2) to seven (7) counties, depending on their size and population. The Fire Marshal's primary duties encompass all aspects of fire/arson identification and enforcement including determining fire origin and cause, fire death investigations, executing state or federal search/arrest warrants and subsequently providing expert testimony in criminal and civil trials. In addition, each Fire Marshal is responsible for explosives related investigation/enforcement in their respective areas.

Many non-arson related violations are identified during an arson investigation, and are generally referred to other federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies for investigation/prosecution.



INVESTIGATIONS CASES WORKED

There is a total of five hundred and nineteen (519) incidents called in to the Arson Hotline requesting an investigation in the fiscal year 2026.

Out of the five hundred and nineteen (519) cases worked by State Fire Marshal investigators, fifty-seven (57) of those were determined to be Incendiary, fifty- seven (57) were classified as Accidental, two (2) were classified Explosion, and Three hundred and ninety-six (396) were of Undetermined cause. In addition, there were seven (7) Non-Fire Incidents

Incidents are called into the West Virginia Fire Marshal Hotline (1-800-233-3473, FIRE) and are, from there, sent to the Deputy State Fire Marshal for the Investigation Division as well as the Supervisors. Cases Are assigned based on geographical area and by the investigator's case load. Each Investigator has a primary area assigned to them for emergency response.

NAME	ASSIGNED COUNTIES	# OF FIRES
INVESTIGATOR 1	KANAWHA PUTNAM	48
INVESTIGATOR 2	DODDRIDGE HARRISON MARION RITCHIE TAYLOR TYLER	13
INVESTIGATOR 3	CALHOUN JACKSON PLEASANTS ROANE WIRT WOOD	41
INVESTIGATOR 4	CABELL LINCOLN MASON WAYNE	43
INVESTIGATOR 5	GRANT HARDY MINERAL PENDLETON RANDOLPH TUCKER	52
INVESTIGATOR 6	BERKELEY HAMPSHIRE JEFFERSON MORGAN	32
INVESTIGATOR 7	BOONE LOGAN MINGO	57
INVESTIGATOR 8	MCDOWELL RALEIGH WYOMING	55
INVESTIGATOR 9	BRAXTON CLAY FAYETTE KANAWHA NICHOLAS WEBSTER	62
INVESTIGATOR 10	BARBOUR GILMER LEWIS RANDOLPH UPSHUR	40
INVESTIGATOR 11	GREENBRIER MERCER MONROE POCAHONTAS SUMMERS	11
INVESTIGATOR 12	BROOKE HANCOCK MARSHALL MONONGALIA OHIO PRESTON WETZEL	50
DIVISION OF FORESTRY	WILDLAND FIRE INVESTIGATIONS CALLED INTO HOTLINE	5
CHARLESTON FD	CITY OF CHARLESTON	3
NON-FIRE INCIDENT		7
TOTAL		519

INVESTIGATION DIVISION RETIREMENTS

Recognizing Ronald “Mackey” Ayersman (31 years of service) and Robert Scott Rodes (17 years of service) for their long-standing dedication, exemplary performance, and foundational contributions to the agency.



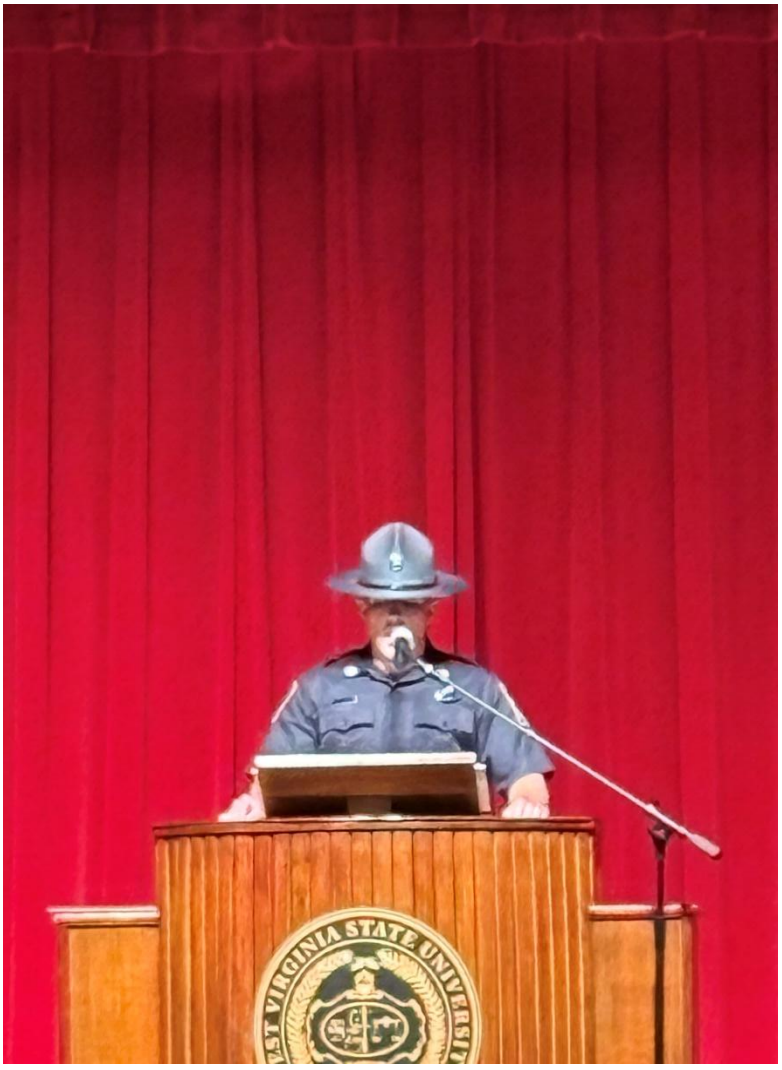
L-R DSFM Baltic, ASFM Ayersman, and ASFM Sovastion



DSFM Baltic and ASFM Rodes

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In August 2025, ASFM Investigator Jonathan Estep, completed all required coursework and training to officially graduate from the West Virginia State Police Academy.



2026 FY FATAL FIRE STATISTICS

COUNTY	SMOKE DETECTORS	CAUSE	AGE	M/F
Cabell	Unknown	Incendiary	32	M
Brooke	Unknown	Undetermined	55	F
Mason	Unknown	Undetermined	53	F
Harrison	Unknown	Undetermined	40	M
Wayne	Yes-Working	Accidental	65	M
Marion	Yes-Working	Incendiary	42	M
Jefferson	Unknown	Incendiary	56/21	M/F
Kanawha	Yes-Working	Undetermined	74	F
Mason	N/A	Undetermined	?	
Cabell	N/A	Undetermined	57	M
Summers	N/A	Undetermined	48	M
Wyoming	No	Undetermined	46/6	F/M
Mineral	Unknown	Undetermined	92/55	F/F
Hardy	Yes-Working	Accidental	72	F
Logan	Unknown	Undetermined	67	M
Kanawha	No	Undetermined	78	M
Cabell	No	Undetermined	76	M
McDowell	No	Undetermined	48	M
Hampshire	Yes-Not Working	Incendiary	91	M
Wyoming	Yes-Working	Accidental	54	F
Hampshire	No	Accidental	73	F
Cabell	No	Undetermined	49/36/31	M/M/F
Morgan	Yes-Working	Undetermined	88	M
Ritchie	Unknown	Undetermined	79	M
Mason	Unknown	Undetermined	51	M
Marion	Yes-Not Working	Accidental	73	F
Greenbrier	Unknown	Undetermined	77	F
Ohio	Unknown	Undetermined	29	M
Wood	No	Undetermined	62	M
Berkeley	N/A	Undetermined	?	F
Mercer	Yes-Working	Undetermined	67	M
Brooke	Unknown	Undetermined	65	M
Monroe	Unknown	Undetermined	76	F
Kanawha	Yes-Not Working	Undetermined	65	F
Harrison	Yes-Working	Accidental	78	M
Mercer	No	Undetermined	30	F
Boone	Unknown	Undetermined	84,79	F/M
Logan	Yes-Working	Undetermined	59	F
Pocahontas	N/A	Undetermined	85	F
Ohio	No	Undetermined	35	M

Kanawha	Unknown	Undetermined	71	F
Marion	Not Working	Undetermined	58	F
Pleasants	No	MPA	80	M
Mingo	Unknown	Undetermined	84	M
Fayette	Unknown	Undetermined	69	M
Barbour	Unknown	Undetermined	86	M
Calhoun	Unknown	Undetermined	60	M
Raleigh	Unknown	Accidental	72	F
Kanawha	Unknown	Accidental	59	F
Boone	Yes-Working	Undetermined	61	M
Raleigh	No	Undetermined	31	M
Wayne	N/A	Accidental	54	M
Marion	Yes-Working	Undetermined	92	F
Kanawha	N/A	Incendiary	28	M

FIRE FATALITIES

There were sixty (60) fatalities during the 2026 Fiscal year, the result of fifty-four (54) fires. Five (5) of these fires resulted in multiple fatalities. Out of the fifty-four (54) fires, forty (40) were classified as Undetermined, nine (9) as Accidental, and five (5) as Incendiary.

The State of West Virginia is still above the national average by population for fire fatalities. However, through public education and assistance programs, the WVSFMO is working toward lowering these numbers.



ARRESTS

During the 2026 Fiscal Year, the Investigation Division handled fifty-seven (57) incidents classified as Incendiary. As a result, twenty-eight (28) individuals were arrested on several different criminal charges or warrants for their arrests.

Each year, investigators hone their skills through continuing education and training in law enforcement, arson investigation and criminal procedure and law in order to perform their jobs as West Virginia State Fire Marshals.



CONVICTIONS

During the 2026 Fiscal Year, there were several notable convictions of cases that were obtained. Some of these Convictions were from cases in previous years.

COUNTY	CHARGES	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
MASON	1ST DEGREE ARSON, ATTEMPTED MURDER X 3	PLEA TO 1ST DEGREE ARSON	10 YRS
CABELL		PLEA DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY	2 YRS PROBATION
CABELL	2ND DEGREE ARSON X 2	PLEA TO 2ND DEGREE ARSON	9 YRS
WAYNE	1ST DEGREE ARSON	PLEA TO 1ST DEGREE ARSON, OBSTRUCTING, INTIMIDATION OF OFFICER	AWAITING SENTENCE
CABELL	1ST DEGREE ARSON	PLEA TO 1ST DEGREE ARSON	JUVENILE CENTER
CABELL	1ST DEGREE ARSON, GRAND LARCENY, BREAKING AND ENTERING	PLEA TO 1ST DEGREE ARSON, BREAKING AND ENTERING	ANTHONY CENTER
KANAWHA	1ST DEGREE ARSON	PLEAD GUILTY TO 4TH DEGREE ARSON	PROBATION FOR TIME SERVED
JACKSON	1ST DEGREE ARSON	SUBJECT FOUND INCOMPETENT TO STAND TRIAL	CONFINED TO MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY
JACKSON	1ST DEGREE ARSON	SUBJECT FOUND INCOMPETENT TO STAND TRIAL	CONFINED TO MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY
WOOD	2 COUNTS 1ST DEGREE MURDER, 1ST DEGREE ARSON	PLEA TO 2 COUNTS 2ND DEGREE MURDER	PENDING
KANAWHA	3RD DEGREE ARSON	PLEA	360 DAYS JAIL TIME, 5 YEARS PROBATION
KANAWHA	3RD DEGREE ARSON	REDUCED TO DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY	3 YRS PROBATION
KANAWHA	3RD DEGREE ARSON	PLEAD TO FELONY DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY	PENDING
KANAWHA	2ND DEGREE ARSON	NO CONTEST	180 DAYS JAIL TIME WITH NON-SPECIFIED PROBATON
RALEIGH	2ND DEGREE ARSON	PLEA	PENDING
WAYNE	2 COUNTS 1ST DEGREE MURDER, 1 COUNT 1ST DEGREE ARSON, 1 COUNT FELON IN POSSESSION OF FIREARMS	2 COUNTS 1ST DEGREE MURDER, 1 COUNT 1ST DEGREE ARSON, 1 COUNT FELON IN POSSESSION OF FIREARMS	LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

FIRE INVESTIGATION TRAINING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Every year Fire Marshals from the Investigation Division are requested to teach fire investigation classes throughout the state. Fire department and local law enforcement are at the scene of a fire prior to our investigators, and they need to know what to look for in a possible case of Arson. Classes are taught at County fire schools, E.S.C.A.P.E. week at Pipestem Resort, and at requesting fire departments or law enforcement agencies.

Multiple classes during the year were offered in conjunction with the State Fire Commission, West Virginia University – Fire Service Extension, and the West Virginia Department of Education. Only Certified Fire Investigators from our agency may teach fire investigation classes, with the exception of Fire Investigation 1 and 3. Fire Investigation 1 may be taught by a Certified Fire Investigator from outside the agency with our approval. Attorneys within the State assist with Fire Investigation 3 which is mainly concerning laws and courtroom testimony.

Classes Provided

- **Fire Investigation 1**
- **Fire Investigation 2**
- **Fire Investigation 3**
- **Evidence Collection for Fire Investigators**
- **Evidence Preservation**



STATE FIRE MARSHAL FIREARMS TRAINING

All sworn employees of the State Fire Marshal's Office carry Firearms on duty and train with them frequently. There are two qualification training courses that occur each year for daytime and low-light weapons training. Fire Marshals must pass each qualification session in order to carry their firearms. Each Fire Marshal is issued a Glock 45, .9mm Caliber handgun. Marshals of the Investigation Division also carry Remington 870, 12 Guage shotguns which are securely stored in their vehicles.

All firearms instructors are State Certified Instructors that train several hours to acquire and retain their certification.

Below are the Firearm Instructors in the agency:

DSFM Jason D. Baltic

ASFM Timothy Chastain

ASFM Timothy Mouse

ASFM Larry T. Hamrick

ASFM Cody Foutty

ASFM Anthony J. Beafore



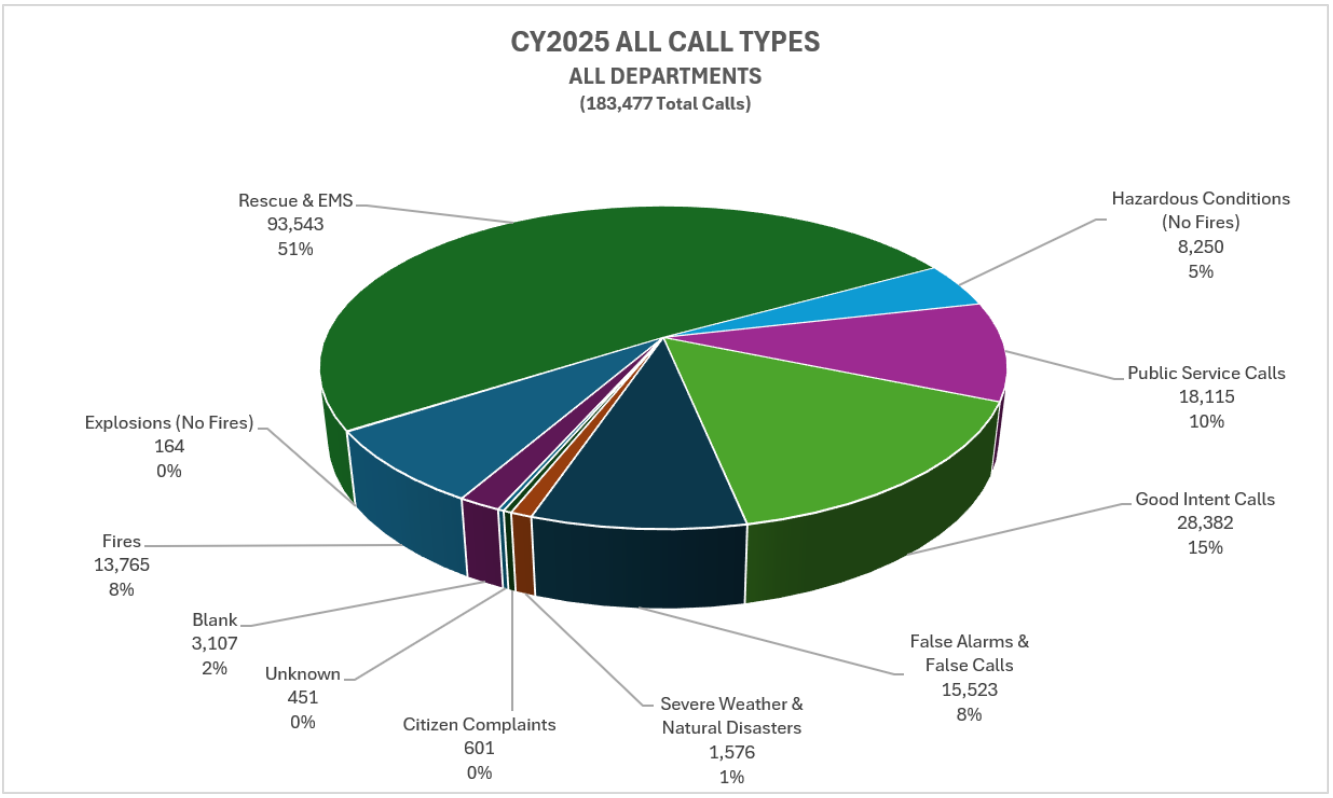
Fire Department Services

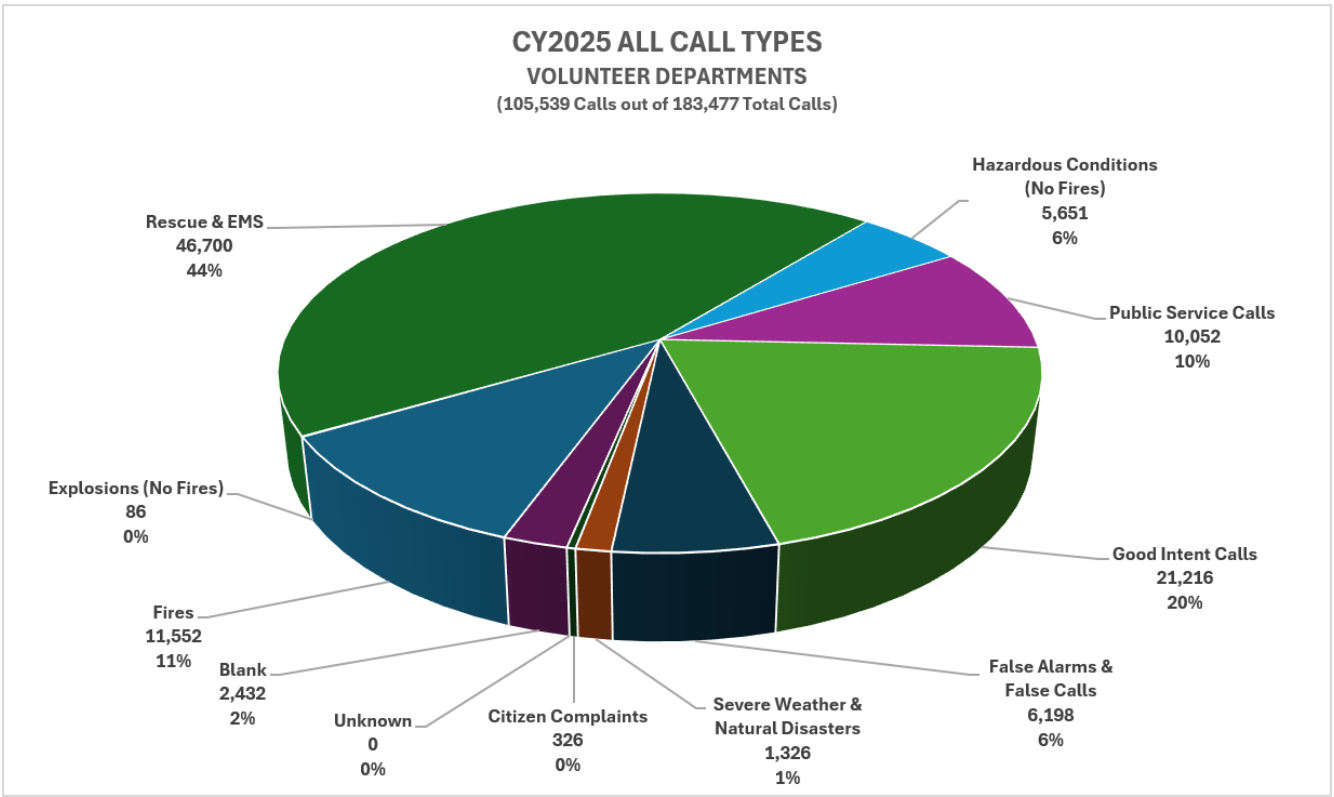
The Fire Department Services Division also oversees, consults, and assists all 436 certified fire departments in the State of West Virginia and provides information and guidance to new fire departments and fire chiefs seeking certification.

During the fiscal year 2025-2026 the division has:

- Certified compliance and approved funding for 407 volunteer and 15 combination departments totaling $36,539,038.83.
- Successfully onboarded all 435 departments onto the new National Emergency Response Incident System (NERIS), which replaces the previous NFIRS system. This achievement makes West Virginia the first state in the country to reach 100% onboarding compliance. Additionally, West Virginia currently leads the nation in incident reporting, with 99.1% of our 435 departments actively reporting.
- Completed 64 evaluations of Fire Departments (down 44 from last year). 76 Fire Departments were Re-Certified (down 36 from last year).
- Certified 54 new fire chiefs (up 1 from last year).
- Received 32 complaints on fire departments (down 8 from last year).
- Fielded approximately 3,000 calls by office personnel, with the majority of those asking for assistance with the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), the changeover to the National Emergency Response Incident System (NERIS), and Assistance to Firefighter Grants (AFG) grant assistance.
- Fielded approximately 4,500 calls by field personnel, with the majority of those relating to evaluations, training, worker's comp issues, boundary disputes, and complaints.
- Assisted 35 Fire Departments with grant research using data from NFIRS and NERIS (up 12 from last year).
- Assisted several outside agencies with research, varying in nature, using data from NFIRS, NERIS, or funding applications.
- Offered remote tech support for NFIRS related issues using the Bomgar Support Portal. A total of 32 remote tech support sessions were held (up 8 from last year).
- 153 messages were posted on the training channel by co-admins on the WVFIRS – WV Fire Incident Reporting System workspace on Slack.com, to better assist our departments with their training needs (down 115 from last year).
- Processed and evaluated 6 Temporary Fire Officer applications (up 1 from last year) and a total of 6 were approved.
- Processed 22 FOIA requests for incident reports which were compiled (up 10 from last year).

Due to Legislation allowing for a grace period for submission of fire loss data, Fiscal year 2025-2026 will not be available until after January 1, 2027. The following data is from Calendar year 2025 (January 01-December 31). A total of 183,477 responses (up 17,759 from last year) were reported by all West Virginia Fire Departments. Attached are charts and graphs depicting a limited breakdown of those responses based on data available on 07/01/26.

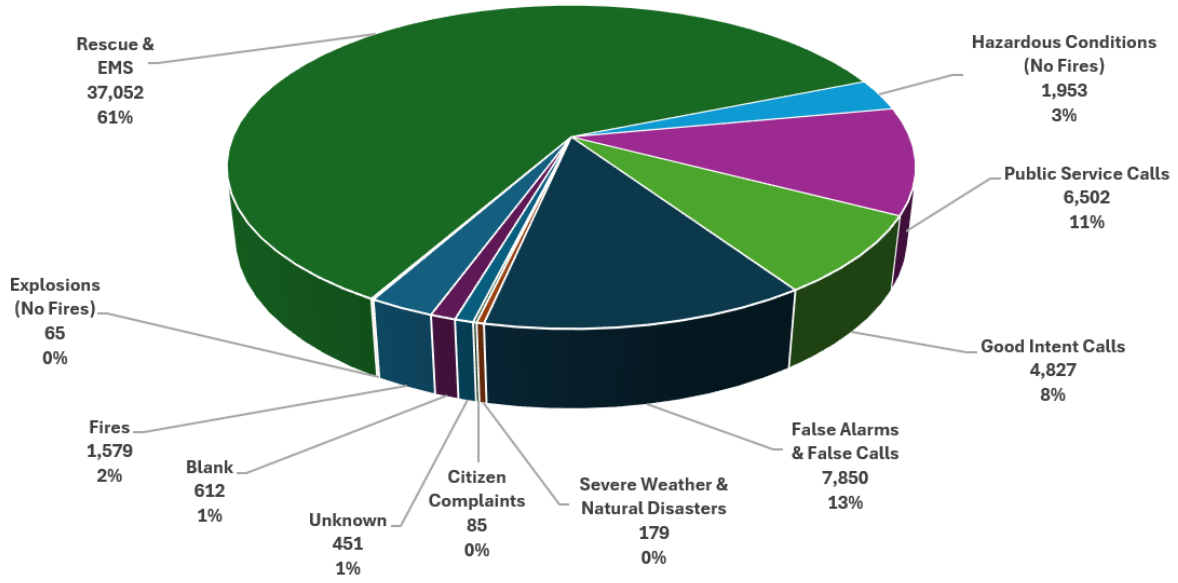

CY2025 ALL CALL TYPES
ALL DEPARTMENTS
(183,477 Total Calls)
Rescue & EMS
93,543
51%
Hazardous Conditions
(No Fires)
8,250
5%
Public Service Calls
18,115
10%
Good Intent Calls
28,382
15%
False Alarms &
False Calls
15,523
8%
Severe Weather &
Natural Disasters
1,576
1%
Citizen Complaints
601
0%
Unknown
451
0%
Blank
3,107
2%
Fires
13,765
8%
Explosions (No Fires)
164
0%


CY2025 ALL CALL TYPES
VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENTS
(105,539 Calls out of 183,477 Total Calls)
Rescue & EMS
46,700
44%
Hazardous Conditions
(No Fires)
5,651
6%
Public Service Calls
10,052
10%
Good Intent Calls
21,216
20%
False Alarms &
False Calls
6,198
6%
Severe Weather &
Natural Disasters
1,326
1%
Citizen Complaints
326
0%
Unknown
0
0%
Blank
2,432
2%
Fires
11,552
11%
Explosions (No Fires)
86
0%

CY2025 ALL CALL TYPES

PAID DEPARTMENTS

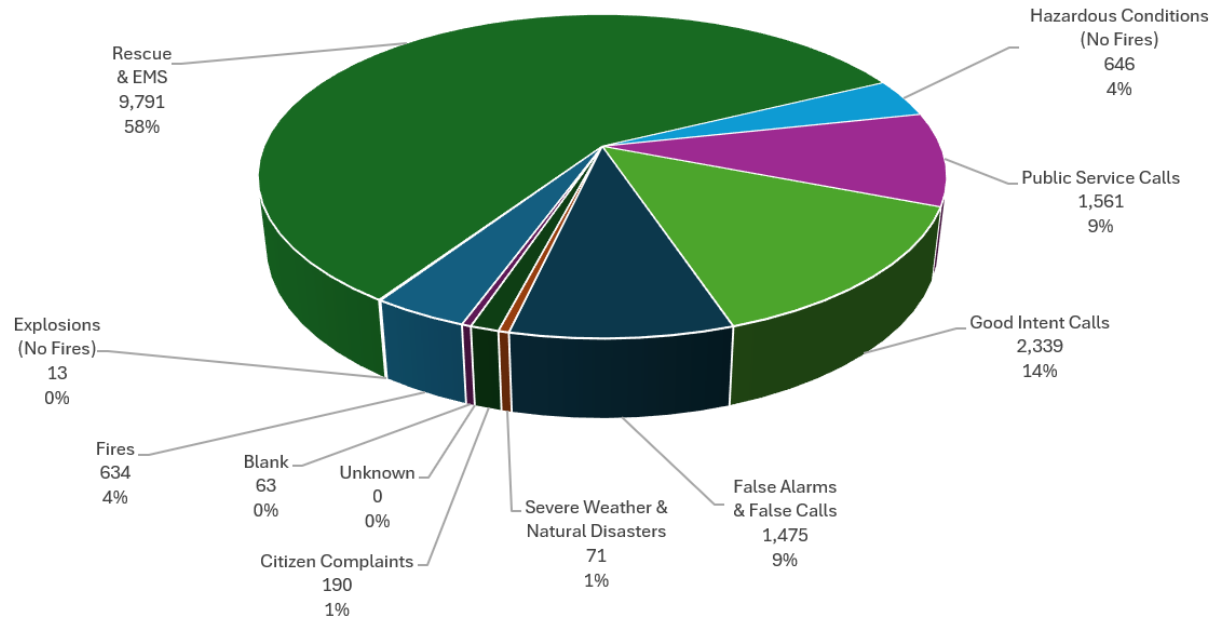
(61,155 Calls out of 183,477 Total Calls)



CY2025 ALL CALL TYPES

PART-PAID DEPARTMENTS

(16,783 Calls out of 183,477 Total Calls)



The Landscape of Fire Incidents in West Virginia: A Data Narrative

Every year, first responders across West Virginia answer thousands of calls, confronting everything from minor backyard mishaps to major structural blazes. A breakdown of statewide fire department records reveals that out of **13,765 total fires** reported across the Mountain State, the top 10 most common fire types account for **12,187 incidents**—representing a staggering **88.5%** of all fire emergencies.

The remaining **11.5%** (1,578 incidents) are comprised of highly niche, rare, or unclassified fire types. By grouping the top 10 categories, which represent the overwhelming majority of the state's fire activity, a clear narrative emerges regarding the primary threats to property, nature, and transit in West Virginia.

1. The Dominant Threat: The Built Environment

Fires involving buildings and physical infrastructure represent the single largest challenge for local fire departments, making up over 40% of all statewide fires.

- **Structure Fires (5,525 incidents):** Standing far above any other category, traditional structure fires are the most frequent emergency. This single category accounts for **40.1% of all fires in the state** (and 45.3% of the top 10), emphasizing the critical, ongoing need for residential and commercial fire prevention.
- **Fires in Structures Other Than a Building (335 incidents):** These involve non-traditional or detached structures—such as detached carports, sheds, or freestanding industrial frameworks—representing a smaller but distinct hazard (2.4% of all fires).

2. Nature and the Elements: Wildland & Vegetation Fires

West Virginia's rolling hills and dense forests are beautiful, but they also present unique environmental fire hazards. Combined, outdoor vegetation fires account for over 2,500 incidents.

- **Brush, or Brush and Grass Mixture Fires (1,316 incidents):** Often sparked by dry seasonal weather or controlled agricultural burns getting out of hand, brush fires are the leading outdoor hazard, representing **9.6% of all statewide fires**.
- **Forest, Woods, or Wildland Fires (767 incidents):** Deep-woods fires pose severe operational challenges due to rugged terrain and limited access for standard emergency vehicles (5.6% of all fires).
- **Grass Fires (494 incidents):** Smaller, confined grass fires frequently occur near roadsides or open fields, requiring quick containment before spreading to nearby structures (3.6% of all fires).

3. Wheels on Fire: Transit and Transport Hazards

Vehicular fires represent a dangerous intersection of mechanical failure, high-speed travel, and flammable fuels.

- **Passenger Vehicle Fires (1,483 incidents):** Ranking as the second most common individual type of fire overall, car fires are a frequent highway emergency, accounting for **10.8% of all fires in West Virginia**. They are often caused by electrical faults, overheating, or accidents.
- **Road Freight or Transport Vehicle Fires (281 incidents):** While fewer in number (2.0% of all fires), fires involving semi-trucks and cargo transports carry a much higher risk of closing major interstates and complicating logistics.

4. Trash, Cooking, and Minor Containments

Not every emergency call involves a raging inferno. A significant portion of incident reports stems from localized mishaps or trash disposal issues that require professional intervention before escaping control.

- **Outside Rubbish, Trash, or Waste Fires (1,143 incidents):** Backyard burning or poorly managed waste heaps frequently trigger emergency dispatches when they grow too large or produce excessive smoke (8.3% of all fires).
- **Cooking Fires Confined to Containers (438 incidents):** The classic kitchen mishap—a pan catching fire on the stove or a grill flaring up—frequently requires intervention but stays safely contained to the cooking vessel (3.2% of all fires).
- **Trash or Rubbish Fires in a Structure (405 incidents):** These are indoor trash can fires or waste bin flare-ups that, fortunately, are extinguished before causing structural or flame damage to the surrounding building (2.9% of all fires).

Top 10 Fire Breakdown Summary

The following table contextualizes the top 10 fire types against the state's grand total of **13,765 reported fires** shown in the heat map above:

Rank	Type of Fire	Total Incidents	% of Top 10	% of Statewide Total (13,765)
1	Structure Fire	5,525	45.3%	40.1%
2	Passenger Vehicle Fire	1,483	12.2%	10.8%
3	Brush, or brush and grass mixture fire	1,316	10.8%	9.6%
4	Outside rubbish, trash, or waste fire	1,143	9.4%	8.3%
5	Forest, woods, or wildland fire	767	6.3%	5.6%
6	Grass fire, including fire confined to area	494	4.1%	3.6%
7	Cooking fire, confined to container	438	3.6%	3.2%
8	Trash or rubbish fire in a structure, no flame damage	405	3.3%	2.9%
9	Fires in structures other than in a building	335	2.7%	2.4%
10	Road freight or transport vehicle fire	281	2.3%	2.0%
-	**Top 10 Combined**	**12,187**	**100%**	**88.5%**
-	**All Other Fires (Outside Top 10)**	**1,578**	-	**11.5%**
-	**Statewide Total**	**13,765**	-	**100%**

Key Takeaway: The top 10 fire types dominate West Virginia's fire landscape, capturing nearly 9 out of every 10 incidents (**88.5%**). While a wide variety of unusual or minor fire scenarios make up the remaining **11.5%**, the bulk of emergency response resources in the state is consistently dedicated to managing home structure fires, vehicle accidents, and wildland brush control.

CY2025 NFIRS-NERIS Incident Types by County

County	100 Fires	200 Explosions (No Fire)	300 Rescue & EMS	400 Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	500 Public Service Calls	600 Good Intent Calls	700 False Alarm & False Calls	800 Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	900 Citizen Complaint	UUU Unknown	(blank) Blank	Grand Total
Barbour	114	0	317	17	77	164	27	14	0	0	11	741
Berkeley	801	21	2,814	723	1,936	2,381	1,441	114	19	0	0	10,250
Boone	390	4	811	154	253	471	62	31	7	0	21	2,204
Braxton	161	0	732	41	90	161	21	17	2	0	50	1,275
Brooke	115	0	1,797	116	172	342	207	37	1	0	61	2,848
Cabell	567	9	1,836	344	581	1,069	1,682	66	39	0	5	6,198
Calhoun	55	0	112	35	28	14	8	7	1	0	12	272
Clay	60	0	99	41	18	41	6	2	1	0	25	293
Doddridge	65	2	80	44	27	23	8	1	0	0	18	268
Fayette	379	4	625	223	221	474	128	64	3	0	100	2,221
Gilmer	24	0	110	21	90	2	4	2	0	0	19	272
Grant	115	0	345	32	63	100	22	3	0	0	27	707
Greenbrier	317	3	1,761	144	463	502	330	24	32	0	107	3,683
Hampshire	331	0	555	69	147	336	45	5	0	0	30	1,518
Hancock	212	2	1,940	124	128	423	280	2	2	0	23	3,136
Hardy	126	0	184	50	27	114	33	0	4	0	2	540
Harrison	535	3	9,046	416	1,165	2,638	508	154	10	0	93	14,568
Jackson	142	0	599	55	64	199	46	3	1	0	168	1,277
Jefferson	549	9	7,318	337	506	1,805	564	45	22	0	0	11,155
Kanawha	1,650	13	19,874	793	2,943	4,052	3,445	34	203	451	122	33,580
Lewis	135	1	1,669	81	168	628	162	34	0	0	60	2,938
Lincoln	204	2	376	83	119	152	36	56	4	0	14	1,046
Logan	312	5	872	181	989	386	122	32	3	0	18	2,920
Marion	441	2	2,524	345	1,089	942	333	86	4	0	135	5,901
Marshall	276	2	2,015	143	224	328	134	12	9	0	177	3,320
Mason	164	2	422	69	112	256	88	48	10	0	77	1,248
McDowell	231	0	487	77	146	283	37	19	33	0	92	1,405
Mercer	376	1	1,804	224	351	710	406	79	37	0	129	4,117
Mingo	180	0	756	53	133	100	104	26	23	0	34	1,409
Mineral	376	2	2,720	129	323	1,187	176	32	0	0	121	5,066
Monongalia	581	7	2,443	487	880	1,767	1,420	71	3	0	91	7,750
Monroe	68	0	190	23	53	64	15	1	1	0	17	432
Morgan	193	1	437	70	57	345	42	1	1	0	0	1,147
Nicholas	156	1	558	84	201	216	71	41	3	0	93	1,424
Ohio	225	25	6,779	281	1,216	818	1,121	60	10	0	267	10,802
Pendleton	91	0	133	45	60	66	12	3	0	0	13	423
Pleasants	39	0	214	10	48	30	29	4	1	0	1	376
Pocahontas	59	0	674	140	26	206	87	4	3	0	24	1,223
Preston	250	2	863	122	182	305	68	30	2	0	71	1,895
Putnam	391	2	2,225	102	174	700	353	3	11	0	5	3,966
Raleigh	509	12	4,913	275	543	1,086	587	91	33	0	19	8,068
Randolph	175	1	705	135	267	280	99	46	10	0	36	1,754
Ritchie	98	1	1,117	84	66	175	25	9	0	0	11	1,586
Roane	97	0	251	47	44	98	15	18	7	0	0	577
Summers	91	1	361	69	113	117	45	4	2	0	9	812
Taylor	48	1	286	92	164	155	58	2	0	0	0	806
Tucker	44	0	265	57	113	109	17	5	2	0	62	674
Tyler	70	0	258	69	119	60	21	2	0	0	39	638
Upshur	154	5	1,108	138	60	298	97	7	4	0	13	1,884
Wayne	214	3	372	52	63	188	102	11	9	0	20	1,034
Webster	99	0	127	18	10	41	10	1	2	0	12	320
Wetzel	110	1	821	110	150	83	71	48	3	0	17	1,414
Wirt	18	0	64	17	20	11	10	0	0	0	46	186
Wood	444	13	3,127	529	788	745	657	56	12	0	481	6,852
Wyoming	138	1	652	30	45	136	26	9	12	0	9	1,058
Totals	13,765	164	93,543	8,250	18,115	28,382	15,523	1,576	601	451	3,107	183,477

2025-2026 FY Annual Report

Public Information/Education Division

Timothy Rock. Public Information Specialist

Mission and Responsibilities

The West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office, Public Education Division is responsible for duties that include, but are not limited to, the development and implementation of public fire and life safety programs and activities statewide and the administration of the Fire-Safe Cigarette certification program for tobacco manufacturers.

Executive Summary of Fatal Fire Incident Data

This executive summary analyzes **54 distinct fire incident events** spanning July 2025 through June 2026, which resulted in a total of **60 fatalities**.

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1. Geographic Breakdown

Incidents occurred across **31 separate counties** in West Virginia. The bulk of the occurrences concentrated within densely populated and heavily industrialized hubs:

- **Primary High-Volume Hotspots: Kanawha County** logged the state's highest incident rate with **6 fatalities**. **Marion County** followed closely with **4**, including a highly devastating multi-fatal fire that claimed 3 lives.
- **Elevated Regional Activity: Cabell County** and **Logan County** each sustained **3 fatalities**.
- **Widespread Baseline Trends:** The remaining 27 affected counties reported isolated incidents, maintaining a baseline of 1 to 2 fatalities over the course of the fiscal year.

2. Demographic Vulnerability Profile (Age & Sex)

The demographic data underscores a disproportionate risk facing older citizens and a marginal skew toward male fatalities.

- **Severe Age Disparity**: Older adults face the highest statistical threat. Individuals aged 60 and older represented roughly 53% of all total deaths (32 out of 60). More than 28% of all victims were over the age of 75.
- **Gender Breakdown**: Of the 60 recorded fatalities, 32 victims were male and 26 were female *(2 victims remained unspecified in initial records)*.
- **Youth Outliers**: The dataset records two youth anomalies: a 21-year-old female casualty in Jefferson County and a 6-year-old male casualty in Wyoming County.

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3. Temporal Tracking (Day of the Week)

- **Day of the Week:** Mapping the 54 incident dates to their matching calendar days reveals that **Thursdays were the most active day for fatal fires (11 events)**, followed closely by Tuesdays (9 events). Saturday registered as the quietest day with 5 recorded events.

Day of the Week	Event Frequency
Thursday	11
Tuesday	9
Friday	8
Sunday	8
Monday	7
Wednesday	6
Saturday	5

The map below highlights the geographic distribution of all **54 fatal fire incidents** across West Virginia, categorized by their incident volume to visually separate high-frequency regional clusters from zero-incident zones.

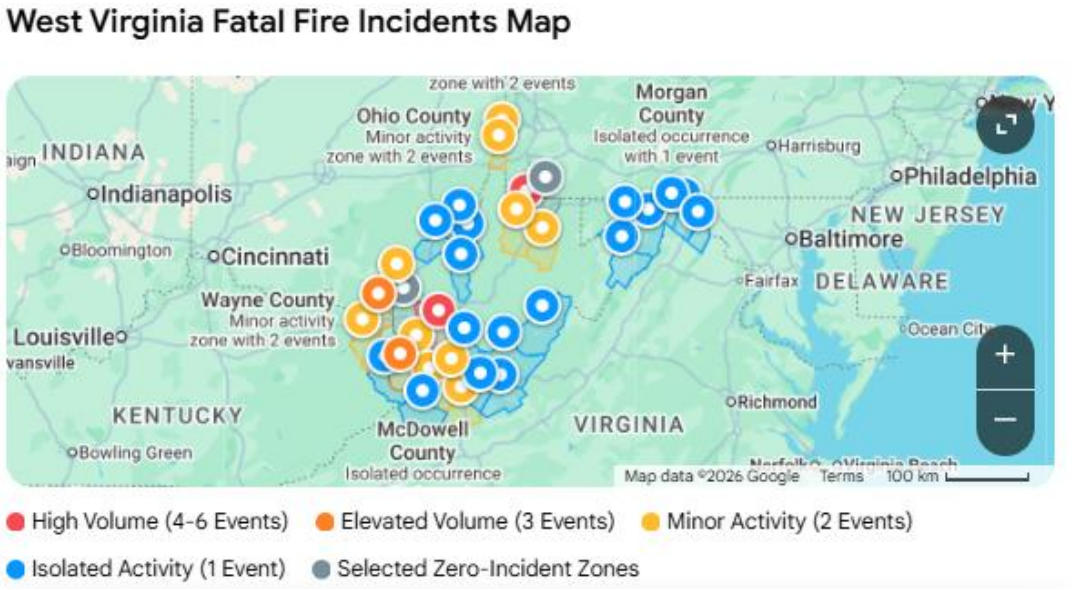
High Volume (4-6 Events)

Elevated Volume (3 Events)

Minor Activity (2 Events)

Isolated Activity (1 Event)

Selected Zero-Incident Zones



- 🔴 **High-Risk Hotspots (4–6 Incidents):** Kanawha, Marion
- 🟠 **Elevated Activity Clusters (3 Incidents):** Cabell, Logan
- 🟡 **Minor Activity Zones (2 Incidents):** Barbour, Boone, Brooke, Harrison, Mason, Mercer, Ohio, Raleigh, Wayne, Wyoming
- 🔵 **Isolated Activity Areas (1 Incident):** Berkeley, Calhoun, Fayette, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, McDowell, Mineral, Mingo, Monroe, Morgan, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Ritchie, Summers, Wood
- ⚫ **Zero-Incident Counties (0 Incidents):** 24 remaining counties (including Monongalia, Putnam, Hancock, Marshall, etc.)

This map below visualizes the leading accidental and undetermined sources driving the **54 fatal fire incidents**, helping to identify regional trends (such as concentrated electrical failures versus heating or cooking accidents).



- ⚡ **Electrical Failures (Wiring, Outlets, Appliances):** Major driver of fatal incidents in **Cabell**, **Logan**, and **Raleigh** counties.
- 🔥 **Alternative Heating (Space Heaters, Wood Stoves):** Primary lethal fire source concentrated heavily in **Marion** and **Mason** counties.
- 🚬 **Smoking Materials (Cigarettes, Pipes):** Logged as the primary ignition factor across incidents in **Harrison** and **Wayne** counties. Smoking while on medical oxygen also remains a safety issue in West Virginia.
- 🍳 **Cooking & Kitchen Elements:** Stood out as the primary cause factor within **Barbour County**.
- 🕯️ **Open Flames & Candles:** Formed isolated fatal incidents in the eastern panhandle region, notably **Jefferson County**.

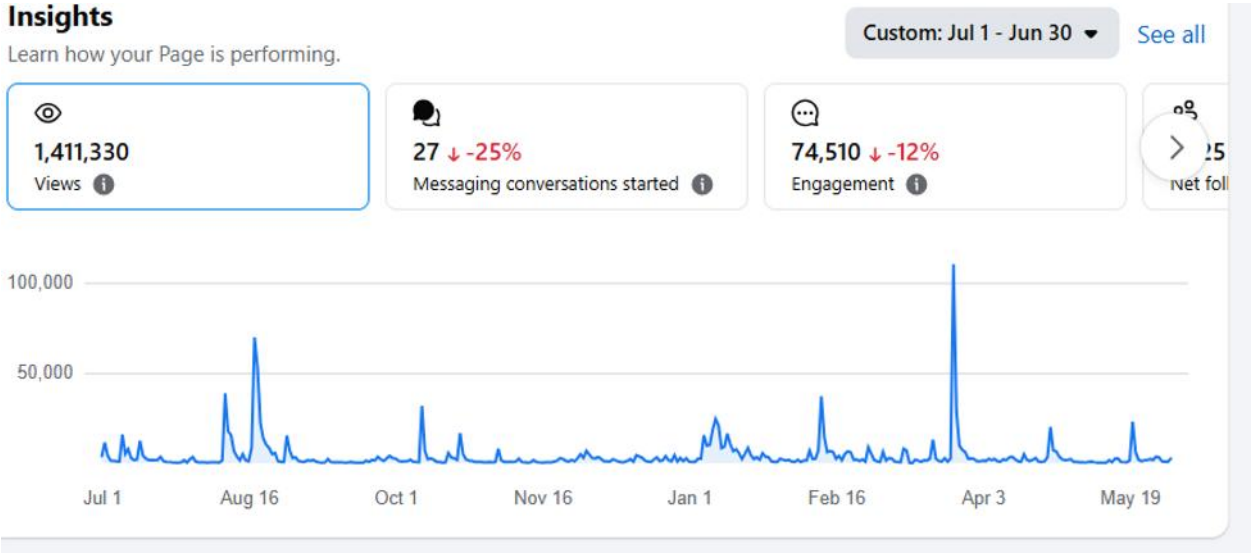
West Virginia Smoke Alarm Usage in Fatal Fires

Out of 60 total recorded fatalities, a definitive absence or malfunction of smoke alarms was confirmed in at least 18 instances. Specifically, **14 victims were lost in structures where no smoke alarms were found** at the scene, while an additional 4 fatalities occurred in properties where a smoke alarm was present but determined to be non-operational. Working smoke alarms were documented in properties corresponding to 11 of the fatalities. 31 fatality investigations did not find any smoke alarms in the dwellings.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS FOR FY 2025-2026

The numbers for the WVSFMO Facebook page were slightly down this year, possibly because of the trend of Facebook to prioritize videos and Facebook Reels over traditional posts with texts: https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/facebooks-2026-rules-for-reach-relevance/

In the next year there will be a bigger emphasis on video by the Public Information Officer.



Advertisements on the statewide Metronews Radio Network was a success, with number of listeners listed here:

- The Morning News Weekly Listenership: 72,700
- Statewide Sportsline Weekly Listenership: 144,200
- HS GameNight/Football Championships Weekly Listenership: 302,800
- Display ads on wvmetronews.com (over twelve months); **1,715,566 Impressions Delivered — 1,282 Clicks**

STATEWIDE FIRE SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

For the eighth year the WVSFMO held our Fire Safety Poster Contest for WV students, grades K-5. 30 schools, representing 15 counties, took part in the contest. 12 winners were picked by a select group of judges and the winners were once again featured on a calendar.

This 2026 calendar was sent to all the winning schools, the student winners, the WV Legislature and the 400+ fire departments across the state.

Here are the winners of the 2025 Fire Safety Poster Contest:

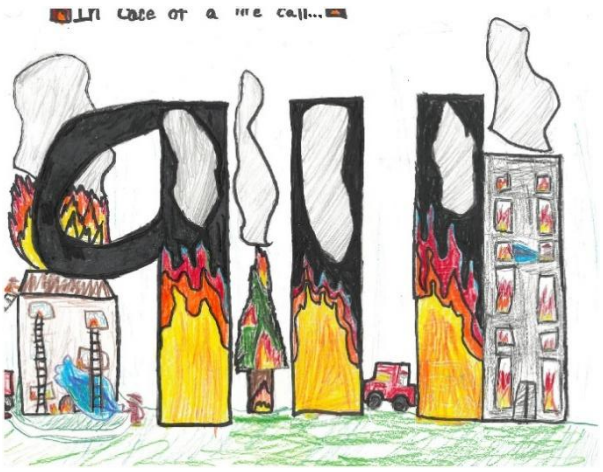
Allie Javorsky, 3rd Grade, Culloden Elem.



Athena Newberry, 2nd Grade, Mount Valley Elem.



Ava Springston, 5th Grade, Point Harmony Elem. (Overall Winner)



Jessalynn Stewart, Kindergarten, Berlin McKinney Elem.



Carly Martin, 4th Grade, Duval PK-8



Creed Denbow, 2nd Grade, Paden City Elem.



Everett Myers, 1st Grade, Meadows Elem.



Gunnar Alderman, Kindergarten, Ice Mountain Elem.



Isaiah Edwards, 5th Grade, Montrose Elem.



Justin Skinner, 3rd Grade, Point Harmony Elem.



Kara Hur, 1st Grade, Marlowe Elem.



Kynlee Clay, 4th Grade, Wayne Elem.



Regulatory and Licensing Division

The mission of the Regulatory and Licensing Division is to ensure that all West Virginians have a safer standard of living through the administration of the Licensing programs supervised by the Office of the State Marshal, which include Electricians, Electrical Inspectors, Home Inspectors, Building Code Officials, Pyrotechnicians, Blasters, and Fire Protection Workers.

Fiscal Year End Summary

During the Fiscal year 2026 the Regulatory and Licensing division issued licenses to over 6721 Electricians, processed approximately 4332 Fireworks/Fireworks related permits and Explosive/Explosive related permits, certified 920 Fire Protection Workers, Home Inspectors, Electrical Inspectors, and Building Code Officials. The Regulatory and Licensing Division was also responsible for proctoring over 1700 tests for Electricians and Pyrotechnicians at 5 different locations throughout the state.

Electrician's Exam

Permit/Certification/Applications and Licensure Numbers and Fees Collected Charts

ELECTRICIANS		
License Type	Number Issued	Total Fees Collected
Journeyman	4,207	$336,135.00
Master	2,066	$171,450.00
Specialty	444	$36,350.00
Temporary	4	$250.00
TOTAL	6,721	$544,185.00

ADDITIONAL FEES		
Duplicate Licenses	7	$50.00
Letters of Good Standing	289	$7,220.00
Test Applications	2,100	$46,395.00
Total	2396	$53,665.00
Duplicate Licenses	7	$50.00

CODE OFFICIALS, FIRE PROTECTION WORKERS, & INSPECTORS		
License Type	Number Issued	Total Fees Collected
Building Code Officials	88	$7,100.00
Fire Protection Workers	460	$63,450.00
Electrical Inspectors	66	$6,825.00
Home Inspectors	247	$28,000.00
Total	861	$105,375.00

EXPLOSIVE PERMITS & REVENUE		
Type of Permit	Number Issued	Total Fees Collected
Manufacturer	7	$7,000.00
Dealer	13	$6,500.00
Storage Magazines	543	$54,140.00
Limited Manufacturer	2	$500.00
Black Powder	6	$300.00
Individual Blasters	586	$39,745.00
Temporary Blasters	10	$940.00
Total	1167	$109,125.00

FIREWORKS RELATED PERMITS & REVENUE		
Type of Permit	Number Issued	Total Fees Collected
Display Fireworks	305	$23,475.00
Pyrotechnician Licenses	240	$5,560.00
Pyrotechnician In Training	338	$7,040.00
Registered MWDI	27	$14,580.00
Permanent	57	$59,280.00
Temporary	227	$122,580.00
Magazine Storage	246	$24,600.00
Sparklers and Novelties	742	$11,131.00
Total	2182	$268,246.00

DISPLAY FIREWORKS PERMITS REVENUE		
Type of Permit	Number Issued	Total Fees Collected
Display Fireworks	305	$23475.00
Indoor Pyrotechnician	27	$560.00
Outdoor Pyrotechnician	213	$5000.00
Pyro In Training	338	$7040.00
Total	883	$36075.00

CONSUMER FIREWORKS REGISTERED MWDI REVENUE	
Type of Fee	Total Fees Collected
Certification Fee	$14,580.00
Storage Fee	$800.00
Total	$153580.00

REGISTERED MWDI APPLICATIONS BY DATE	
October 11-17	1
February 7-13	3
February 14-20	1
February 28-March 6	2
February 7-13	1
March 21-27	2
March 28-April 3	1
April 4-10	2
April 11-17	2
April 18-24	1
April 25-May 1	5
May 2-8	2
May 9-15	1
May 16-22	1
May 23-29	1
June 20-26	1
Total	27

PERMANENT CONSUMER FIREWORKS FACILITY REVENUE	
Type of Fee	Total Fees Collected
Certification Fee	$58,280.00
Storage Fee	$4,500.00
Total	$63780.00

PERMANENT CFRS APPLICATIONS BY DATE	
November 29-December 5	2
February 7-13	4
February 28-March 6	2
March 7-13	2
March 14-20	1
March 21-27	1
March 28-April 3	1
April 4-10	2
April 11-17	1
April 18-24	37
May 2-8	1
May 9-15	1
June 6-12	1
June 13-19	1
Total	57

TEMPORARY CONSUMER FIREWORKS FACILITY REVENUE	
Type of Fee	Total Fees Collected
Certification Fee	$122,580.00
Storage Fee	$193,000.00
Total	$315,580.00

TEMPORARY CFRS APPLICATIONS BY DATE	
September 13-19	4
March 14-20	1
March 21-27	1
March 28-April 3	1
April 4-10	12
April 11-17	13
April 18-24	2
April 25-May 1	26
May 2-8	26
May 9-15	30
May 16-22	13
May 23-29	2
May 30-June 5	17
June 6-12	36
June 13-19	29
June 20-26	13
June 27-July 3	1
Total	227

SPARKLER AND NOVELTY REVENUE	
Certification Fee	$11,131.00

SPARKLER AND NOVELTY APPLICATIONS BY DATE	
November 15-21	149
November 22-28	507
December 6-12	1
December 20-26	1
January 17-23	15
February 7-13	48
May 9-15	1
May 16-22	18
June 6-12	1
June 20-26	1
Total	742

Additional Breakdown of Licenses, Permits Issued & Fees FY 2026

Electrician Licenses

	Total #	Total Fees
Electrician License Issued:	6721	$544,135.00
Journeyman	4105	$329,235.00
Master	1648	$135,500.00
Electric Sign	8	$1,050.00
HVAC	41	$2,950.00
Low Voltage	286	$23,350.00
Single Family Dwelling	63	$4,900.00
Equivalency Master	3	$150.00
Reciprocal Journeyman	102	$6,900.00
Reciprocal Master	415	$35,750.00
Reciprocal Electric Sign	0	$0.00
Reciprocal HVAC	0	$0.00
Reciprocal Low Voltage	35	$4,100.00
Reciprocal Single Family	11	$0.00
Temporary Journeyman	2	$150.00
Temporary Master	2	$100.00

Temporary Electrician Licenses

	Total #	Total Fees
Temporary Electrician Licenses Issued:	4	$250.00

Fire Protection Worker Licenses

	Total #	Total Fees
Fire Protection Worker Licenses Issued:	460	$69,500.00
Design Layout Technician	23	$3,975.00
Engineered Fire Suppression System Installer	18	$2,000.00
Engineered Fire Suppression System Technician	6	$425.00
Pre-Engineered Fire Suppression System Installer	63	$7100.00
Pre-Engineered Fire Suppression System Technician	29	$2000.00
Fire Extinguisher Technician	153	$16700.00
Sprinkler Fitter Journeyman	168	$31250.00

Individual Blaster Licenses

	Total #	Total Fees
Individual Blaster Licenses Issued:	586	$40,680.00
Class A Unlimited	159	$15,760.00
Class B Aboveground	78	$6,670.00
Class C Underground	4	$1,265.00
Class D Demolition	22	$1,585.00
Class E Seismic	7	$780.00
Class F Agriculture	0	$15.00
Class G Coal	49	$3,160.00
Class G Helper	106	$4,765.00
Class G Helper - Limited	5	$280.00
Class G Law Enforcement (Active)	14	0.00
Class G Special	142	$8960.00

Temporary Individual Blaster Licenses

	Total #	Total Fees
Individual Blaster Licenses Issued:	10	$940.00
Class A Unlimited	3	$345.00
Class B Aboveground	0	$0.00
Class C Underground	0	$0.00
Class D Demolition	1	$115.00
Class E Seismic	0	$0.00
Class F Agriculture	0	$0.00
Class G Coal	2	$160.00
Class G Helper	3	$240.00
Class G Special	1	$80.00

Pyrotechnician Licenses

	Total #	Total Fees
Pyrotecnician Licenses Issued:	578	$12600.00
Indoor Pyrotechnician	27	$560.00
Outdoor Pyrotechnician	213	$5,000.00
Pyrotechnician In Training	338	$7040.00

Building Code Official Certifications

	Total #	Total Fees
Building Code Certifications Issued:	88	$7,100.00
Code Official	23	$1,825.00
Code Inspector	31	$2,625.00
Code Plans Examiner	5	$475.00
Provisional Code Official/Inspector/Plans Examiner	29	$2,175.00

Electrical Inspector Certifications

	Total #	Total Fees
Electrical Inspector Certifications Issued:	66	$6,825.00
Class A - One and Two Family Dwellings	18	$1,850.00
Class B - All Structures	40	$4175.00
Class C - All Structures and Plans Review	8	$800.00

Home Inspector Certifications

	Total #	Total Fees
Home Inspector Certifications Issued:	247	$28,000.00

Company Explosive Permits

	Total #	Total Fees
Total Company Explosive Permits Issued:	571	$68,440.00
Dealer	13	$6,500.00
Manufacturer	7	$7,000.00
Storage	543	$54.140.00
Limited Manufacturer	2	$500.00
Black Powder	6	$300.00

Public Display Fireworks Permits

	Total #	Total Fees
Total Public Display Fireworks Permits Issued:	305	$23,475.00

Exam Applications

	Total #	Total Fees
Exam Applications Processed:	2100	$46,395.00
Journeyman	1384	$31,105.00
Master	588	$11,970.00
Electric Sign	0	$0.00
HVAC	4	$100.00
Low Voltage	93	$2,115.00
Single Family Dwelling	9	$225.00
Indoor Pyrotechnician	12	$240.00
Outdoor Pyrotechnician	10	$640.00

	Total #
Graded Exams:	1762

Miscellaneous

	Total #	Total Fees
Letters of Good Standing Issued:	289	$7,220.00
Duplicate Licenses Issued and Misc:	7	$50.00

Summary:

Licenses Issued & Total License Fees:	8355	$660,870.00
Certifications Issued & Total Certification Fees:	401	$41,925.00
Permits Issued & Total Permit Fees:	876	$91,915.00
Exam Applications Processed & Total Exam Fees:	2100	$46,395.00
Misc Issued & Total Misc Fees:	296	$7,270.00

Consumer Fireworks

	Total #	Total Fees
Permanent	57	$59,280.00
Temporary	227	$122,580.00
Wholesaler	27	$14,580.00
Outdoor Storage	246	$24,600.00
Sparklers and Novelties	742	$11,131.00

Summary:

Total Certificates Issued:	1299	$232,171.00

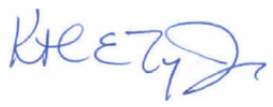
In Closing:

*The **State Fire Marshal** has statutory responsibility for enforcement of laws covering fire prevention; hazardous substance and explosives; installation and maintenance of fire control equipment; adequacy of fire exits from buildings and all other places where people live, work, and congregate; determine fire causes; arrest arsonists; certification of fire departments for state revenues; manage fire incident reporting system. Authorized to establish demonstration units within public and private educational institutions for the purposes of public fire safety education, prevention, and protection.*

*The **State Fire Commission** is the policy making body organized to coordinate the fire service objectives of the state. Responsibilities include promulgation of the state fire code and state building code, development of fire prevention and control which covers manpower needs, training centers, communications, firefighter training standards and certification, and public education.*

As the State Fire Commission and the State Fire Marshal's Office work together, their ultimate goal is the safety of all who work, live and visit the Great State of WV. We hope this annual report provides you with a better understanding of how we strive to achieve this goal.

Kenneth E. Tyree Jr.



State Fire Marshal



WV State Fire Marshal



@WVfiremarshal

West Virginia
State Fire Marshal's Office
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Charleston, WV 25302
(304) 558-2191

firemarshal.wv.gov