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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **New Bedford Fire Department recruits graduate from Massachusetts Firefighting Academy**

#### **Five firefighters added to the force**

**New Bedford, Massachusetts-** The New Bedford Fire Department announced that three recruits recently graduated from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) in Stow, and added two firefighters from other departments. Firefighters Steven Francis, Kevin Moniz and Manuel Valenzuela completed the ten-week academy. In addition, two lateral transfers have recently been added to the force: Firefighters Nicholas Davila and Keenan Martin.

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey announced the graduation of the 255<sup>th</sup> class of the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's fifty-day Career Recruit Firefighter Training Program on July 14, 2017. "This rigorous professional training provides our newest firefighters with the basic skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely," said Ostroskey. The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA), a division of the Department of Fire Services, offers this program tuition-free.

The ceremony took place at the Department of Fire Services in Stow. Retired Leominster Fire Chief Alfred LeBlanc was the guest speaker. He is an instructor at both the MFA and the National Fire Academy. The 36 graduates, 34 men and two women, represent the 19 fire departments of: Burlington, Cambridge, Falmouth, Framingham, Franklin, Leominster, Mansfield, North Attleboro, Natick, Needham, New Bedford, Newton, Norfolk, Sandwich, Somerville, Sudbury, Tewksbury, Whitman, and Yarmouth.

"The New Bedford Fire Department commends our newest firefighters on their determination over the course of the academy, and completing the necessary training to join the ranks of our department. We welcome them to our force," said New Bedford Fire Chief Michael Gomes.

A press release from the academy said, "Today's firefighters do far more than fight fires. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies, ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to a gas leak. They may be called to rescue a child who

has fallen through the ice or who has locked himself in a bathroom. They rescue people from stalled elevators and those who are trapped in vehicle crashes. They test and maintain their equipment including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), hydrants, hoses, power tools, and apparatus.”

At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, recruits learn these skills and more from certified fire instructors who are also experienced firefighters. Students learn the basic skills they need to respond to fires and to contain and control them. They also receive training in public fire education, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, stress management, confined space rescue techniques, and rappelling. The intensive, ten-week program for municipal firefighters involves classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training, and live firefighting practice.

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