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Department of Fire Services*



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34 Local Firefighters Graduate State Firefighting Academy

STOW – State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey announced the graduation of the 255th 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 State Fire Marshal Peter J. 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, MA.

36 Graduates from 19 Fire Departments

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.

Guest Speaker: Retired Leominster Fire Chief Alfred LeBlanc

The guest speaker was retired Leominster Fire Chief Alfred LeBlanc who served the department for 27 years before retiring in 2006. LeBlanc is currently an instructor for the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and has also been an instructor for the National Fire Academy. He is the Fire Science Coordinator and an adjunct faculty member at Mount Wachusett Community College. He spoke to the class about the importance of training and advancing their education throughout their careers.

Today’s Firefighters Do Far More than Fight Fires

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

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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 they learn all these skills and more from certified fire instructors who are also experienced firefighters. Students learn all the basic skills they need to respond to fires and to contain and control them. They are also given 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.

Starting with Class #247, the Mass. Firefighting Academy's Career Recruit Firefighter Training Class shifted from a 9-week to a 10-week program. Instead of three recruit classes of 24 students every three weeks, the academy now has two classes of 36 recruits every five weeks. There is still a total of 72 recruits on the Stow campus all the time. The longer program adds more practical time for recruits, including training in water rescue, power saws, additional live fire training, and more focus on Firefighter I/II practical skills.

Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple-room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the Recruit Program all students have met national standards of National Fire Protection Association 1001 and are certified to the level of Firefighter I and II, and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operational Level by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.