

## **Office of the State Fire Commissioner State Documents**

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Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of the State Library

Forum Building  
607 South Drive  
Harrisburg, PA, 17120

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## Summary Information

**Repository:** Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of the State Library

**Creator:** Pennsylvania. Office of the State Fire Commissioner

**Title:** Office of the State Fire Commissioner State Documents

**Identifier:** FIRE

**Date:** 1976 - Present

**Date:** Majority of material found within 2009 - Present

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**Language of** English

**Materials:**

## Scope and Contents

The Office of the State Fire Commissioner is charged with meeting the diverse training, operational, and informational needs of the Commonwealth's fire and emergency service community. The Commissioner, who is appointed by and reports directly to the Governor, oversees the development and operation of Pennsylvania's emergency service training program, the Volunteer Loan Assistance Program (VLAP), which provides low-interest loans to volunteer fire and emergency medical services organizations, and the Fire Company and Emergency Medical Service Grant Program (FCEMSGP), that provides grants to volunteer fire and emergency medical services organizations and the state's fire safety education program. In addition, the Commissioner is responsible for the development of a comprehensive fire incident reporting system. The Commissioner and his staff function as support and resource personnel for Pennsylvania fire department in dealing with issues such as volunteer recruitment and retention, firefighter safety, intervention programs dealing with juvenile fire-setters, and community safety education. The Office of the State Fire Commissioner oversees the operation of the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, Lewistown. This facility provides comprehensive resident and weekend programs for firefighters, rescue personnel, arson investigators, hazardous materials teams, and other emergency responders. With the passage of Act 13 of 2012, the SFA has also addressed the need for additional training programs specific to alternative energy. In addition, the SFA manages Voluntary Fire Service Certification and is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFPSPQ) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). The Office is also the principal point of contact in coordinating cooperative training programs at the local and regional levels using a unique partnership involving the Commonwealth's community colleges and some county governments.

The publications of the Office of the State Fire Commissioner contain newsletters, educational guides, and instructional handbooks. Selected topics from these publications include standards and procedures for various positions in the fire squad, firefighting terminology, and rescue service instructions. The bulk of the current material is dated from 2009 to present.

## Biographical / Historical

The Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner's Office had its beginning in 1976 with Governor Milton Shapp's appointment of the state's first fire commissioner. In 1981, Governor Richard Thornburgh reorganized the then-separate Fire Commissioner's Office, State Fire School, and Volunteer Loan Assistance Program as the Office of Fire Safety Services under the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. The current Office

of the State Fire Commissioner was created, by legislation, as a separate office in 1995 when Governor Tom Ridge signed Act 61 of 1995, The Fire Commissioner Act.

## **Legacy Agency Names and Related Agencies**

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (parent agency), Fire Commissioner's Office (former agency name), Office of Fire Safety Services (former agency name), State Fire School (incorporated agency), Volunteer Loan Assistance Program (incorporated agency)

## **Administrative Information**

### **Publication Statement**

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### **Controlled Access Headings**

- Fire prevention--Government policy
- Pennsylvania Politics and government
- Politics and government
- State government publications