

# Minnesota Department of Public Safety



## **Fire Safety Account** *Financial Report* *Fiscal Year 2021*

January 2021



## Fire Safety Account — Fiscal Year 2021

### Overview

Minnesota State Legislature passed a bill in 2006 establishing a fire safety surcharge on homeowner and certain commercial insurance policies. The Fire Safety Account (FSA) was created to hold revenue generated by that surcharge. State statute requires insurance companies submit surcharge collections quarterly to the Minnesota Department of Revenue on or before May 15, Aug. 15, Nov. 15, and Feb. 15.

The legislation also created a Fire Service Advisory Committee (FSAC) to make recommendations to the commissioner of public safety on how to spend FSA money. These revenues can only be allotted to:

1. The Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE).
2. Programs and staffing for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Fire Marshal Division (DPS-SFMD).
3. Fire-related, regional response-team programs and other fire service programs that have potential statewide impact.

The FSAC is made up of representatives from state fire service associations, local units of government and the insurance industry. The FSAC meets quarterly to review the account's status and funding allotments. It creates biennial budget recommendations for the commissioner.

### Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget

Transfers from the FSA as established in the base FY21 budget:

- DPS-SFMD — \$8,574,000.
- MBFTE — \$5,792,000
- Minnesota Air Rescue Team (MART) — \$317,000.
- Minnesota Task Force 1 (MN TF-1) — \$975,000.

### FY21 Activity Summary

Balance forward from FY21	\$6,436,879	
Collections from FSA premiums	\$16,499,100	
Resources available		\$22,935,979
Transfer to general fund	\$0	
Transfer to SFMD	\$8,574,000	
Transfer to MBFTE	\$5,792,000	
Transfer to SFMD (State Hazardous Material Response Teams)	\$1,800,000	
Transfer to MBFTE for MART base budget	\$ 317,000	
Transfer to MBFTE for MN TF-1 base budget	\$ 975,000	
Returned to the FSA	(\$580,874)	
One-time appropriations	\$2,630,000	
Total transfers		\$15,211,126
Account balance end of FY21		\$7,724,853

## One-Time Appropriation for Fiscal Year 2019

The \$4,428,002 one-time appropriation was allocated by to Commissioner of Public Safety John Harrington for approval. The committee recommended funding the following:

MBFTE	\$1,796,730
MN TF-1: Equipment, training reimbursements	\$819,122
DPS-SFMD: Health Care Team Supplemental	\$75,000
DPS-SFMD: Gear Washer/Dryer Program	\$600,000
DPS-SFMD: Fire Protection Team software	\$211,500
Haz Mat Teams: Chem. Testing equipment	\$293,500
MART	\$100,000
Mn FIRE Mental Health/Cancer/Cardiovascular Training	\$400,000
Minnesota DNR for Virtual Reality Training Programs	\$132,150
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,428,002</b>

### MBFTE

A base budget appropriation of \$4.265 million and a \$1.8 million one-time appropriation from the Fire Safety Account was made available for Minnesota fire departments in FY21. Awards to all Minnesota fire departments were based on a per-firefighter rate of \$200. The MBFTE chose to award departments based on the number of firefighters on their current roster. No formal applications were required by the MBFTE for a fire department to receive a training reimbursement award.

More than \$5.5 million in training reimbursements was requested by 630 of the 773 Minnesota fire departments in FY21. The average training reimbursement per fire department in FY21 was \$8,845 based on the number of fire departments that submitted their requests.

### Other FY21 highlights:

- The MBFTE provided reimbursement for NFPA 1001, Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2 and Hazardous Materials Operations training. There was \$2.8 million available to Minnesota fire departments to pay for this training — enough to fund more than 1,500 firefighters.
- The MBFTE provided more than \$59,000 in reimbursement grants to local, regional and statewide fire service organizations for unique training events. These awards helped nearly 20,000 firefighters attend a total of 14 different training opportunities at a significantly reduced rate.
- Approximately \$187,500 funded 125 live-burn training events across Minnesota. Live-burn training is conducted in accordance with NFPA 1403 standards which ensures all burns are conducted in a safe manner meeting a nationally recognized standard and meeting the statutory requirements of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- The MBFTE provided more than \$40,000 to fund the Fire Service Leadership Development course. This 44-hour course helps a cross-section of fire service leaders, from throughout the state, develop skills and address key leadership issues specific to the Minnesota fire service. The training is offered at no cost to firefighters or to their fire departments. Nearly 200 firefighters completed this course over the last five years and the demand for this training remains strong.

The MBFTE continues to educate fire departments, fire training providers and fire service organizations across Minnesota on resources made available through the Fire Safety Account. The MBFTE maintains a simplified website and reimbursement process allowing user friendly online management of training reimbursements for all fire departments and fire training providers.

## **DPS-SFMD**

Approximately 70 percent of DPS-SFMD budget comes from the FSA. The remaining 30 percent comes from fees and contracts for health care, daycare, school and motel inspections.

FY21 funds provided operational funding to the DPS-SFMD for the following:

- Health care and Department of Corrections facilities inspection team.
- Public and charter school inspection team.
- Residential care and lodging inspection team.
- Fire protection systems plan review and inspection team.
- Fire investigation team.
- Administrative, management and other support services (such as fire service specialists).
- Fire and life safety education.
- Youth firesetter intervention.
- Fire incident data collection and analysis.

FSA funding helps DPS-SFMD significantly improve training opportunities for local fire marshals, inspectors and firefighters. One example is upgrading the fire protections systems demonstration trailer, a mobile training system containing seven complete, working fire protection (sprinkler) systems in a variety of configurations. This demonstration trailer provides students a hands-on demonstration of the internal operations of sprinkler systems and helps them gain a better understanding of how individual components function during a fire. Approximately 5,600 fire service personnel have attended 342 classes statewide since the trailer was first deployed in 2012. Unfortunately, in-person training dropped off significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another training aid is the fire code training trailer. This unit contains a variety of training props including a working fire alarm system, kitchen hood fire protection system, several fire doors and egress devices, escape window, and other fire safety and protection features commonly found in buildings. This unit gives fire marshals and inspectors — particularly those new to the job — hands-on experience with the props and a functional understanding of their operation and purpose.

### **Fire Marshal Conference in Partnership with the Fire Marshals Association of Minnesota (FMAM)**

DPS-SFMD has sponsored a State Fire Marshal Conference in April since 2012 and now has partnered with FMAM to deliver the conference. Attendance has grown from 160 the first year to more than 225 in recent years. The conference brings national fire service experts to Minnesota to share the most up-to-date information about fire prevention, fire safety education and fire investigation.

### **Training Efforts**

The FSA allows DPS-SFMD to provide fire investigation, fire code, fire protection system and fire safety education training for the Minnesota fire service at no cost. This augments local government budgets, especially training dollars that are often in short supply on a local level. DPS-SFMD continued to provide a fire code academy – albeit in the virtual realm due to Covid-19 – focusing on fire code training for code officials from across the state in FY21.

### **State Response Teams**

Coordination and administration of all the state response teams was transferred to the State Fire marshal Division on May 1, 2019. DPS-SFMD continued its focus on upgrading and sustaining equipment for Chemical Assessment Teams (CAT) along with St. Paul, Duluth, St. Cloud and Moorhead Fire Department's Emergency Response Teams (ERT) and Minnesota Task Force 1 in FY21.

Additional funds were used to update standard operating procedures based on shortcomings identified in exercises. Monthly exercises with local police, fire, state response teams, other state agencies and federal partners allowed DPS-SFMD to evaluate, improve and streamline response procedures across the state. One-time funding was secured from the FSA for \$1 million to purchase four new hazardous materials incident response vehicles. The new response have been delivered and have gone to Moorhead, Duluth, Rochester and St. Paul's hazardous materials response teams.

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