

Minnesota Department of Public Safety



Fire Safety Account

Financial Report

Fiscal Year 2023

December 2023

Fire Safety Account — Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23)

Overview

The 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 to 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 (DPS) State Fire Marshal (SFM) division.
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 FSA's status and funding allotments. The FSAC also creates biennial budget recommendations for the DPS commissioner.

FY23 Budget

Transfers from the FSA as established in the base FY23 budget:

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

FY23 Activity Summary

Estimated Resources (\$ in thousands)

- Balance forward from prior year: 8,887
- Receipts and Transfers in: 21,466
- **Total Resources Available: 30,353**

Estimated Uses (\$ in thousands)

- State Fire Marshal (SFM): 9,914
- MBFTE: 7,604
- FY23 Allocation: 4,919
- **Total Uses: 22,437**

- **Balance Before Reserves: 7,916**
- 60-day operating reserve for FY24 budget: (3,288)
- **Budgetary Balance: 4,628**

One-Time Allocations for FY23

The FSAC recommended a one-time funding allocation of \$4,518,925 which was approved by Department of Public Safety Commissioner John Harrington

One-Time Allocations for FY23

- MBFTE, training reimbursement programs: \$2,835,000
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and MBFTE, statewide fire leadership training courses: \$287,425
- MN TF-1, replacement personal protective equipment (PPE) for compliance: \$40,000
- Arrowhead Regional Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), training and readiness exercises: \$169,000
- SFM, turnout gear washer/extractor/dryer grant program: \$600,000
- SFM, fleet radio upgrade: \$95,000
- Hazmat teams, radios, and purchase/updates to analytical equipment: \$492,500

MBFTE

A base budget appropriation of \$4.5 million and a \$3.1 million one-time allocation from the FSA was made available for Minnesota fire departments in FY23. More than \$8 million in training reimbursements was requested by 639 of the 772 Minnesota fire departments in FY23. The average training reimbursement per fire department in FY23 was \$10,498 based on the number of fire departments that submitted their requests.

Other FY23 highlights:

- The MBFTE provided reimbursement for NFPA 1001, Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2 and Hazardous Materials Operations training. There was \$1.9 million available to Minnesota fire departments to pay for this training — enough to fund more than 1,200 firefighters.
- Approximately \$174,000 funded 97 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 \$75,000 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 300 firefighters have completed this course over the last nine years and the demand for this training remains strong.
- The MBFTE provided more than \$48,000 in reimbursements to local, regional and statewide fire service organizations for unique training events/conferences/seminars. These awards helped nearly 20,000 firefighters attend a total of 11 different training opportunities at a significantly reduced rate.
- The MBFTE renewed more than 3,600 firefighter licenses in FY23. Per Minnesota Statute, Chapter 299N.05, full time firefighters are required to be licensed by the board, while volunteer firefighters have the option to be licensed. There are currently 2,352 full-time firefighters in Minnesota.

The MBFTE continues to educate fire departments, fire training providers and fire service organizations across Minnesota on resources made available through the FSA. 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.

SFM

Approximately 70 percent of SFM's budget comes from FSA and general fund appropriations. The remaining 30 percent comes from fees and contracts for health care, daycare, school and motel inspections.

FY23 FSA dollars provided operational funding to the SFM for the following:

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

FSA funding supports statutory required fire inspection, fire investigation and fire sprinkler plan reviews. Inspections performed by the teams listed above help improve fire safety in many public buildings (e.g., schools, hotels/motels, hospitals). Fire investigations are performed to determine origin and cause following a fire. The findings from our fire investigations team support law enforcement arson cases and provide data to aid in fire prevention messaging.

Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2022, Inspections, Investigations and Fire Sprinkler Plan Review

- Health care: 1,046
- Correctional: 151
- RC&L: 1,871
- Investigations: 898
- Schools: 1,014
- Fire sprinkler plan reviews; 291

Training for Local Fire Code Officials, Inspectors and Investigators

The FSA allows SFM 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. The SFM pivoted to virtual training options during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to offer many virtual options today. Virtual trainings have helped SFM expand access to high quality fire marshal related training in greater Minnesota. In FY23, SFM hosted 22 courses with a total attendance of 377.

Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor/Dryer Grant Program

This program, administered by SFM, provides grant funding opportunities to local fire departments to assist with the purchase of turnout gear washer/extractors and dryers. Thorough and effective washing of turnout gear is a cancer prevention initiative. Since its inception, over 265 fire departments have benefited from this program.

State Response Teams

SFM continued its focus on upgrading and sustaining equipment for State Emergency Response Teams (SERT) and MN TF-1 in FY23. New support was provided in FY23 for the operational training and readiness of the Arrowhead Regional USAR Team.

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