

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY  
NEW JERSEY FIRE SAFETY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Meeting of March 19, 2026**

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at the New Jersey State Firemen's Association in Wall Twp., New Jersey.

**Commission Members Present:** Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Chairman  
Mr. John Wisniewski, Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood  
Mr. George Aleu  
Mr. Steve O'Gorman  
Mr. Raymond Heck  
Mr. Richard Blohm  
Mr. Frederick Collender  
Mr. Charles Siedenburger

**Commission Members Excused:** Mr. Peter Goldring  
Mr. Kevin Bellew  
Mr. Nelson Wiest  
Mr. Gerard Naylis  
Mr. Armando Roman  
Ms. Kathleen O'Leary

**DCA Staff Members Present:** Wayne Wolk, State Fire Marshal  
Louis Kilmer, NJDFS  
Bruce Tynan, NJDFS  
Charles Lavin, NJDFS  
Greg Kirkham, NJDFS  
Jason Spiecker, NJDFS  
Vincent Campagna, NJDFS  
Lenny Inzerillo, NJDFS

**Guests:**

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| David Kurasz   | Peggy Brookes     |
| William Quinn  | John Drucker      |
| Michael Welsh  | David Boehning    |
| Brian Pericone | Sara Huisking     |
| Sima Clapman   | Elizabeth Sweeney |
| Chris Gerace   |                   |

## **A. Call to Order**

Chairman Kevin Krushinski called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. He led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those lost in the line of duty this past year and the men and women serving our nation overseas.

## **B. Approval of Minutes**

The Fire Safety Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the regular meeting of January 15, 2026. Chairman Krushinski noted that the minutes were in today's meeting packets for all to review.

## **C. Correspondence**

Chairman Krushinski noted that any and all correspondence for today's meeting was contained in the Commission packets.

## **D. Public Comment I**

Chairman Krushinski opened up the meeting to any members of the public present wishing to comment. With no members of the public wishing to address the Commission at this time, the meeting was moved to Division of Fire Safety Activities.

## **E. Division of Fire Safety Activities**

Chairman Krushinski called attention to the NJ Division of Fire Safety Activities Report that was distributed to all Commissioners yesterday via email, and was also available in printed form in today's meeting packets. He asked if any Commissioners had any questions for the NJDFS based on the contents of this report at this time.

Commissioner Richard Blohm asked about the Train-the-Trainer for HazMat and whether the academies would be able to do additional offerings on their own. Greg Kirkham from the NJDFS answered yes, the senior instructors who take the Train-the-Trainer would be able to go back to their academies and deliver the training themselves. Commissioner Blohm also asked about the changes to the Job Performance Requirements from ProBoard and whether there were noticeable differences. Greg Kirkham answered that any changes were extremely minor, a matter of spelling out abbreviated terms, etc.

Commissioner Blohm asked if we are using the 2018 Fire Code as it pertains to the BEST (Battery Energy Storage) System. Deputy Director Louis Kilmer answered that, currently, we are using the 2018 Code as there are a handful more steps until the adoption of the 2024 edition. As of right now, it is in the New Jersey Register and in the 60-day comment period.

Chairman Krushinski introduced Wayne Wolk, the newly appointed Director of the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety. Director Wolk thanked Chairman Krushinski for the

introduction and said he looked forward to working with everyone on the Fire Safety Commission to better the fire service and fire safety for New Jersey's citizens and first responders. Director Wolk thanked his predecessor, Richard Mikutsky, for all his great work in moving New Jersey's fire service in the right direction for the past eight years as State Fire Marshal and throughout a 40-year fire service career. Director Wolk gave some background on himself personally, highlighting his roots in the City of Trenton and with the Trenton Fire Department.

Director Wolk reported on new business from the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety that was not in the previously distributed report. He began by discussing pieces of legislation that the NJDFS is monitoring. The first was Assembly Bill 3946, which requires emergency medical technicians and firefighters to receive training regarding electric vehicle fires. The NJDFS supports the intent of the bill, but does have some concerns about the delivery of the potential training which they are looking into. Director Wolk also spoke about Assembly Bill 2401, which establishes measures to improve safety in scrap metal businesses, which Deputy Director Kilmer has been working with moving forward.

Director Wolk spoke about Senate Bill 1343, which permits high school students be eligible for credits from classes at fire academy courses. This would help get students, ages 16-18, a leg up when looking to volunteer in the fire service during their high school years. Director Wolk also spoke about Assembly Bill 4972, which prevents single-exit stairwells in certain residential buildings under the State Uniform Construction Code. The NJDFS continues to be opposed to this bill, which was carried over from the previous session.

From the Bureau of Fire Department Services, Director Wolk reported that foam tender disposal and tank cleaning is taking place at Middlesex County Fire Academy and continuing until end of March. Bulk foam collection from municipal fire departments at the north site will run until March 20, and at the south site until April 17. The north site is Mountainview Correctional facility Hunterdon County. The south site is Southern State Correctional Facility in Cumberland County. There are also currently 19 ongoing fire department complaint investigations-dual investigations or referrals with NJDOL/PEOSH/NJ DOH/Attorney General's Office.

From the Office of Training and Certifications, Director Wolk reported that the 2026 Spring Semester brochure has been posted on the Kean Fire Safety website and class registration started on March 4, 2026. There were over 3,100 registrations as of 11:30am. Also, the Hazardous Materials Train-the-Trainer will start being scheduled in April.

There are several proposed regulations in the NJ Register for the 60-day public comment:  
\*N.J.A.C. 5:70 – Uniform Fire Code – changes include the adoption of the 2024 International Fire Code – NJ Edition, changes to LHU and non-LHU categories and a new rule for mobile fuel dispensing operations. Placed into the NJ Register on March 2, 2026.

\*N.J.A.C. 5:73 – Standards for Fire Service Training & Certification – changes include the Junior Firefighter Auxiliary rules, all chief officers must have Incident Management Level 2 state certifications, requiring the Incident Management Level 1 state certification for all Hazardous Materials: Incident Commander applications, experience requirements for the Fire Inspector and Fire Official licenses, and mandatory Firefighter 1 certifications for all new recruits graduating the academy. Placed into the NJ Register on March 2, 2026.

\*N.J.A.C. 5:75 – Fire Service Incident Management System – changes include the requirement that all chief officers must have Incident Safety Officer training, and language limiting modifications to established RIC training requirements. Placed into the NJ Register on February 16, 2026.

Deputy Director Kilmer added that it is crucial to make positive comments on these regulations and support their approval. Upon approval, it will be the first time the Fire Code will be up to date with the current Uniform Construction Code.

NJ Weekend at the National Fire Academy scheduled for May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026. Seven (7) courses have been chosen. The NJ NFA Weekend brochure has been posted on the Kean website. Unfortunately, at this time, due to the budget crisis, the NFA is shut down again. NFA Admissions System, NFA Online Classes, and FEMA SID Numbers are unavailable at this time. Classes are postponed through March 16, 2026, at this time.

- \*Incident Management and Leadership Fundamental for the Company Officer
- \*Incident Command System and Resource Management for the Fire Service
- \*Wildland Urban Interface Firefighting for the Structural Company Officer
- \*Building Organizational Support for Community Risk Reduction
- \*Strategy & Tactics for the Initial Company Operations
- \*Executive Skills Series: Exercising Leadership to Facilitate Adaptive Change
- \*Fire Investigation: Fire as a Weapon

Commissioner Blohm asked about the shutdown of the National Fire Academy and the lack of offering of the online version of trainings, and whether the NJDFS would be waiving requirements due to the shutdown. Greg Kirkham answered that the NJDFS does not have the authority to waive requirements, but these courses can be taught in person at the academies.

From the Community Risk Reduction Unit, Director Wolk reported that the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual New Jersey FIRE Bowl program kicked off on March 10<sup>th</sup>. A couple key dates for the program this spring are as follows:

- \*May 1<sup>st</sup> – “Academy Day” Field Trip to Middlesex County Fire Academy for all students.
- \*May 15<sup>th</sup> – State Championship Event at Kean University (STEM Building)

All commission members are invited to attend these events.

From the Fire Investigations / K9 Unit, Director Wolk reported that, In February, Scott Royle was promoted into the unit due to an unexpected vacancy that left our north region without a Fire Investigator / K9 Handler. He is also currently going through Basic K9 Training with his new partner, K9 Cash. This training is progressing nicely, and K9 Cash

has already been imprinted on many raw-stage ignitable liquids and will be moving to burned-stage ignitable liquids soon. This Basic K9 Training consists of 400 hours of classroom lessons and practical evolutions as per the NJ Attorney General Guidelines, and DFS Fire Investigator / K9 Coordinator Stephen Letts leading this training for us. We anticipate that K9 Cash and Handler Royle will complete this training and be certified as an Ignitable Liquid K9 Team before summer starts, and this will fully restore our K9 capabilities in the north regions. We still have K9 Remi in the central region and K9 Mila in the south region, so all regions will then have a primary K9 Team again.

The Fire Investigations / K9 Unit responded to the Camden Firefighter line of duty death incident on February 5<sup>th</sup> and continue to assist with the follow-up investigation along with NJ Dept. of Labor PEOSH and local law enforcement. Here, veteran Firefighter Howard Bennet died after falling into the icy Delaware River while he was working alone at the city's Fireboat dock area. Other crew members eventually realized he was missing and he was later recovered from under the ice after an extensive search. Currently, the investigation and related materials are being handled by the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, and we anticipate the state investigation moving forward soon.

The Fire Investigations / K9 Unit are pursuing an issue with multiple HVAC unit fires that have occurred in a few schools over the past month. Schools in Galloway and Wildwood have been affected by significant fires so far, with Galloway having suffered multiple fires on different dates. Additionally, a school in Pennsylvania may be related, as there were some common findings with these fires, including the brand / model, and the installer. Regional news networks have started coverage on this issue, but further details are being withheld while this investigation continues in the coming weeks. The unit was not initially involved with any of these investigations, and at this point it is unknown exactly why these units failed, but we anticipate more specialized examinations of these units in the coming weeks. Additional details will be forthcoming as the case progresses.

Deputy Director Louis Kilmer began his report by talking about the new computer system, which NJDFS staff continues to work on enhancements with IBM on. They are working on having Dynamics and the new training system speak to each other to help streamline operations relative to certificates, licenses, etc. The NJDFS is also continuing to work on the food truck portal.

The NJDFS recently added one new, full-time inspector but there are still several open positions available and there is no viable civil service list for inspectors. The NJDFS is looking forward to the new regulations being adopted so that inspectors can be added and get on the job more quickly than in the past. Deputy Director Kilmer also noted that the Compliance Unit has gotten the list of invoices on suspended status down to 664. This is down significantly from around 2,900 last June. He commended the staff on all their hard work on this. The Compliance Unit has also issued 228 warning notices so far this year, as we was issued 69 docketed judgements. They have collected \$1,693,644.51 so far in FY26.

Deputy Director Kilmer reported that the Peer Review Meetings are scheduled for April 15, 2026 regarding several Fire Officials who worked with expired or otherwise invalid Licenses/Certifications, or who allowed Fire Inspectors under them to work without valid Licenses/Certifications. They are also working with several LEAs for possible changes in jurisdiction effective April 1, 2026.

Deputy Director Kilmer reported that the NJDFS has assumed jurisdiction in Pennington Boro in Mercer County, and has just recently been asked to assume jurisdiction in Weehawken (Hudson County) as well. The Local Assistance Unit will be working on this going forward. Deputy Director Kilmer has also been meeting with Local Government Services regarding dealing with non-compliant towns.

Deputy Director Kilmer reported that the NJDFS continues to meet with the Food Truck Association. They are ready to roll out the new portal for food truck operators and allow them to see all their documents, test reports, etc. in one place. Automatic renewal notices will also be built in to the system. Lastly, Deputy Director Kilmer noted that the NJDFS meeting notes documents are for Commission meeting purposes only, and should not be considered an official document for distribution.

With no further business to discuss regarding Division of Fire Safety Activities, the meeting was moved to Advisory Council Reports.

#### **F. Advisory Council Reports:**

##### **1. Codes Advisory Council**

Commissioner George Aleu reported that the Codes Advisory Council report was largely covered under the NJDFS Activities report and otherwise reported progress. The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council is scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

##### **2. Training and Education Advisory Council**

Commissioner Charles Siedenburb reported that the Training and Education Advisory Council met on February 17<sup>th</sup>. The minutes of that meeting were distributed to the Commissioners in today's meeting packets for their review. The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled for April 21<sup>st</sup>.

##### **3. Statistics and Information Advisory Council**

In the absence of Commissioner Gerard Naylis, no formal report was given.

##### **4. Master Planning and Research Advisory Council**

Commissioner Lawrence Wood noted that there was no meeting held since the prior Fire Safety Commission meeting and reported progress.

**5. Public Education Advisory Council**

In the absence of Commissioner Armando Roman, no formal report was given.

**6. Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council**

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported progress on behalf of the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council. The next meeting of the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council will be held on May 14<sup>th</sup> at Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

**7. Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council**

Chairman Kevin Krushinski reported that the Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council met on March 8<sup>th</sup> at the Monmouth County Fire Academy in Freehold. The minutes of that meeting were included in today's meeting packet for all to review.

Chairman Krushinski highlighted the upcoming Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist courses – June 8-9 (Ocean County) and June 10-11 (Union County) – as well as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Anthony R. Braig Conference on Youth Firesetting in December.

The next meeting of the Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup> at Monmouth County Fire Academy in Freehold.

**G. Committee Reports**

**1. Residential Sprinkler Committee**

In the absence of Commissioner Gerard Naylis, no formal report was given.

**2. Ad-Hoc Committee on Legislation**

Vice-Chairman John Wisniewsky reported progress. There is no further update available at this time.

**3. NJ Statewide Utility Safety Team**

Commissioner Steve O'Gorman reported that the NJ Statewide Utility Safety Team continues its work towards training firefighters and promoting utility safety at the fire department level. The next meeting is scheduled for May in Somerset County.

**4. Electric Vehicles Working Group**

Vice-Chairman John Wisniewski reported progress, but also commented that the name of the Committee should reflect that the issue is not just concerning vehicles. The issue

concerns the use of lithium-ion batteries in all devices. Chairman Krushinski agreed and so the Committee will be referred to the Lithium-Ion Battery Working Group going forward. Vice-Chairman Wisniewski also spoke about the need to address this issue at a legislative level.

## **5. Recruit Firefighter Physical Agility Program**

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported that the Recruit Firefighter Physical Agility Program Committee had not met since the last Fire Safety Commission meeting. They had been waiting on a previously-submitted document from the NJDFS to be amended/corrected and resubmitted for the review of the Committee. Commissioner Blohm also gave newly-appointed NJDFS Director Wolk a comprehensive background on this issue. Director Wolk answered that, while he did have some background on the subject, he was somewhat new to the debate on this issue that has been taking place at the Fire Safety Commission level. Director Wolk committed to meeting with the Committee in person to hear all sides and perspectives on the matter. Since there was currently no meeting of the Committee scheduled, it was agreed that they would hold a meeting at Middlesex County Fire Academy on May 12<sup>th</sup> with Director Wolk in attendance. Deputy Director Kilmer added that he does not believe the NJDFS and the Committee is too far off on this matter and believes something can certainly be crafted to meet the needs of the fire services as a whole.

## **H. Old Business**

Chairman Krushinski opened up the meeting to discuss any Old Business. There being none, the meeting was moved to New Business.

## **I. New Business**

Chairman Krushinski thanked Commissioner Nelson Wiest and the NJ Career Fire Chiefs Association for sponsoring the coffee/refreshments at today's meeting. He also thanked the NJ State Firemen's Association for hosting the meeting.

Chairman Krushinski opened up the meeting to discuss any New Business. There being no further New Business to conduct at this time, the meeting was moved to Public Comment II.

## **J. Public Comment II**

Chairman Krushinski opened up the meeting once again for any member of the public wishing to comment at this time.

John Drucker thanked Deputy Director Louis Kilmer and Code Specialist Dan Timmerman on all their hard work on a 2024 Fire Code. Deputy Director Kilmer thanked Mr. Drucker for his support.

Sara Huisking from the American Red Cross spoke briefly to introduce herself and offer assistance. She recently took over for Eddy Blanchard at the Tinton Falls office and looks forward to continuing their partnership with the NJDFS and the state's fire service.

#### **K. Adjournment**

With no further discussion requested, Chairman Kevin Krushinski called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wood made the motion, which was seconded by Vice-Chairman Wisniewski and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:03 AM.

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