

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

Meeting of May 21, 2026

The New Jersey Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at the Bergen County Fire Academy in Mahwah, New Jersey.

Commission Members Present: Mr. Kevin Krushinski, Chairman
Mr. John Wisniewski, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood
Mr. George Aleu
Mr. Gerard Naylis
Mr. Armando Roman
Mr. Peter Goldring
Mr. Richard Blohm
Mr. Frederick Collender
Mr. Charles Siedenbourg

Commission Members Excused: Mr. Steve O’Gorman
Mr. Arthur Londensky
Mr. Nelson Wiest

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

Guests:

Brian McDade	Geoffrey Gibbons
Evan Kufzin	Samuel Ahtoshak
Neal Carroll	Tim Ferguson
Michael Thomasey	Joseph Berchtold
Scott Russo	Ken Schulz
Glenn Corbett	Francis Walsh
James O’Connell	James Dougherty
Dan Perez	James Woods

A. Call to Order

Chairman Kevin Krushinski called the meeting to order at 10:07 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.

Bergen County Executive James Tedesco spoke briefly to welcome the New Jersey Fire Safety Commission to Bergen County and thanked them for all their hard work on behalf of New Jersey's citizens and fire service. Chairman Krushinski thanked Mr. Tedesco for his remarks and thanked Commissioner Richard Blohm for hosting today's meeting.

B. Approval of Minutes

The Fire Safety Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the regular meeting of March 19, 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. Glenn Corbett from Waldwick (Bergen County) and longtime member of the Codes Advisory Council commented on the previously made proposal that would establish a team on the State level that would examine large fire incidents from a code perspective. This team would be volunteers that would look specifically focus on codes, response, firefighting, etc. – not cause and origin. Mr. Corbett asked if this could be established with the administrative support of the Division of Fire Safety. He specifically referred to the recent fire in Belleville as one that needed a closer look.

Mr. Corbett also spoke about a bill (S-2968) that would allow for the elimination of a stairwell in multiple dwellings. He asked that the Fire Safety Commission come out and oppose this bill. Mr. Corbett also asked that the Commission take the lead in ramping up volunteer firefighter recruitment/retention, and get legislator involved in the efforts.

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 earlier this week via email and was also available in printed form in today's meeting packets.

Director Wayne Wolk began his report by talking about the recent fire incident in Belleville. NJDFS coordinators and county fire coordinators deployed the following resources. Response to scene included:

Essex County: 16 Engines; 8 ladders; 5 Chief s; 5 Mutual Aid Coordinators
Hudson County: 8 Engines; 4 Ladders; 3 Chief's; 2 Mutual Aid Coordinators
Bergen County: 15 Engines; 5 Ladders; 8 Chief's; 8 Mutual Aid Coordinators
Passaic County: 8 Engines; 2 Ladders; 4 Chief's; 5 Mutual Aid Coordinators

Union County: 3 Engines; 1 Ladder; 4 Mutual Aid Coordinators
Water Tender Task Force: 18 Water Tenders; 6 Engines.

The Task Force supplied approximately 750,000 gallons of water and maintained a flow of approximately 2000 gallons per minute over an 11-hour time frame.
Counties involved: Morris (Lead); Passaic; Middlesex, Monmouth; Somerset

TOTAL SCENE: 55 Engines; 20 Ladders; 20 Mutual Aid Chiefs; 18 Water Tenders; 24 Mutual Aid Coordinators, 1 Division Fire Safety Regional Fire Coordinator

Station covers in Belleville:

During the fire we maintained 4 engines and 2 ladders until 0800 Monday. Monday to Thursday we maintained 2 engines and 1 ladder

Hudson: 17 engines; 8 ladders; 8 chiefs'

Bergen: 2 Engines; 1 Ladders; Chief's; 1 Mutual Aid Coordinators

Passaic: 11 Engines; 3 Ladders; 5 mutual Aid Coordinators

Union: 5 Engines; 2 Ladders 1 Mutual aid coordinators

Morris: 2 Engines; 1 Ladder; 1 Mutual Aid Coordinator

Total to maintain cover: 35 Engines; 14 Ladders; 8 Chief's, 3 MAC

Commissioner Gerard Naylis asked if the NJDFS was going to put out their findings stemming from the Belleville fire. Director Wolk answered that he certainly wouldn't have a problem with that once it is thoroughly looked at but, of course, this would have to be approved through the Department of Community Affairs administration. Given their support, Director Wolk would support sharing the NJDFS's findings with the state's fire service.

Director Wolk reported that the NJDFS Homeland Security Conference is set for Thursday June 4, 2026, at the STEM building, Kean University. Agenda as follows:

FIFA World Cup Overview NJSP Deputy Superintendent Dave Sierotowicz
NJSP LTC Doug Lemanowicz

SAIL 250 Overview USCG LTC. Melissa Martinelli
USCG Jon Andrechik

Intelligence -Current Threat Environment Local
NJOHSP Paul Kwiecinski

World and Abroad Threat Assessments/Threats
NJOHSP Joe Sansone, NJOHSP Devin Andre

From the Office of Training & Certification, Director Wolk reported that staff have begun scheduling and conducting training for chief officer access to the new DCA Certification & Licensing System. Registration is through the Kean Fire Safety portal.

We are working on scheduling a couple of nights and/or weekends to allow the volunteer chiefs to attend.

- May 22nd at the Bergen County L&PSI – 10am and 1pm
- May 29th at the Camden County ESTC – 10am and 1pm
- June 1st at the Morris County PSTA – 10am and 1pm
- June 5th at the Monmouth County FA – 10am and 1pm
- June 12th at the Union County FA – 10am and 1pm
- June 15th at the Middlesex County FA – after the EO meeting ends at 1pm

Anyone experiencing issues connecting to the new Division portal should contact the Office of Training & Certification and ask for Supervisor Kirkham or Training & Certification Specialist 1 Taylor. Also, the Firefighter Recruit Agility Program Committee met on May 12, 2026, at the Middlesex County Fire Academy and went over the proposed draft document. There are changes that need to be made before the next meeting of the Committee.

The DFS/Kean will be running an ARFF credentialing program starting October 5 through 10, 2026. This will be a five-day class, all sessions must be attended, with training at the Middlesex County Fire Academy, the Newark International Airport, and the Atlantic City International Airport. There will be a fee of \$350.00 per person to help cover costs. Registrations will be through the Kean webpage.

Director Wolk reported that due to very low enrollment, the New Jersey Weekend at the National Fire Academy has been cancelled for 2026. DFS and Kean will be meeting soon to pick courses for New Jersey Weekend 2027. More information to follow. The National Fire Academy has re-opened and is conducting business as usual now.

On May 15th, the 19th Annual New Jersey FIRE Bowl concluded with a live, four-team single-elimination tournament at Kean University to determine this year's champion. After an extremely close competition, the team from Washington Community School in Bayonne was crowned New Jersey State Champion for the second straight year. We now look towards 2027 when the FIRE Bowl program will celebrate its 20th Anniversary. Director Wolk thanked Charles Lavin for his work on this program and encouraged everyone to get their own school districts to participate if at all possible.

Director Wolk reported that K9 Cash, along with Fire Investigator / K9 Handler Royle will be completing their Basic Ignitable Liquid K9 Certification this month. This is after completing nearly three months of training in accordance with the NJ Attorney General K9 Standard. We performed most of this training in-house, with Unit K9 Coordinator Letts leading the curriculum that was overseen by our contracted K9 Trainer. We have done it this way for our last few K9 Teams, and it proved to be a major cost-savings and schedule benefit over having to join an external K9 course. We also extend our appreciation to Aberdeen Fire District, Perth Amboy FD, and NJ Forest Fire Service for assisting us with specialized K9 environmental training.

The NJDFS K9 Teams have been busy conducting multiple K9 lectures / demo programs for various groups. This has included the NJ Chapter of IAAI, NJ Human Services Police, Union Co. College, NJ Institute of Technology, Middletown Schools, and various other groups and events. We have already received multiple K9 program requests for upcoming police and fire summer camps / junior academies, so agencies are reminded to schedule with us asap to ensure availability.

Deputy Director Louis Kilmer began his report by talking about the Bureau of Code Enforcement's year-to-date statistics. They have completed 6,130 inspections, 4,650 reinspections, cited over 17,000 violations, issued 831 permits, done 790 smoke alarm certifications/changes of occupancy, and handled 161 complaints. Also, the Compliance Unit has been ramped up with additional staffing and continues to increase collection of outstanding fees (over \$2.3 million year-to-date). The Bureau of Code Enforcement is also working with Camden City via the Local Assistance Unit, and has taken over jurisdiction in Brigantine City and Weehawken for life hazard use inspections. This stemmed from their fire officials working with expired licenses.

Deputy Director Kilmer reported that NJDFS Code Specialist Dan Timmerman has been doing a lot of work on the upcoming FIFA World Cup, coordinating with New Jersey Transit on code issues, etc.

Deputy Director Kilmer reported that the comment period on the Fire Code and Training regulations has expired. The comments were mostly position and in the process of being addressed. Deputy Director Kilmer also commented on the previous statements by Glenn Corbett about the examining of significant/high impact fires from a code perspective. There have been personnel identified to work on these kinds of investigations/reviews and they were in Belleville working on looking at that incident. Deputy Director added that they need to be cognizant of liability when putting out these types of reports, so at this time they are using in-house staff to work on this. Commissioner George Aleu asked if Belleville was considered a "significant fire" under this classification, even though there were no fatalities. Deputy Director Kilmer answered that it was absolutely significant, which is why they went there to participate in the investigation/information gathering. Commissioner Aleu added some first-hand account from the fire that highlighted some of the planning deficiencies in terms of water supply, etc.

Commissioner Richard Blohm asked about the upcoming adoption of the Fire Code and if there was a retrofit for battery/energy storage systems included in it. Deputy Director Kilmer answered that there is no retrofit provision specifically, and Commissioner Blohm gave examples of problems that could arise with the suppression systems for them, etc. Commissioner Blohm asked when this Fire Code would actually go into effect. Deputy Director Kilmer answered that the timeline is an inexact science, but his best guess would be sometime early 2027.

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 met on April 15th at Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville. The minutes of that meeting were distributed in the Commission meeting packets for all to review. Commissioner Aleu reported that a big topic of conversation at the meeting was the single-exit in new r-2 occupancies bill. The Council was concerned about the potential ramifications to firefighter and public safety should the bill wind up passing. A robust discussion on this bill took place amongst the Fire Safety Commission members, who are vehemently opposed to its passing. Commissioner Naylis urged everyone to be vocal within their organizations and legislators on the opposition of this bill.

The next meeting of the Codes Advisory Council is scheduled for June 17th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville.

2. Training and Education Advisory Council

Commissioner Charles Siedenburgh reported that the last meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council had been canceled and rescheduled for June. When exact details of the meeting were available, he would make sure it is distributed to the Fire Safety Commission.

3. Statistics and Information Advisory Council

Commissioner Gerard Naylis reported that NERIS is alive and well and moving forward at the federal level. Commissioner Naylis has heard mixed reports on the new data collecting system, but at the end of the day it is law and the system we have. Commissioner Naylis shared a recent article on the fire service – who we are and what we do. He spoke about the article and referenced it as a possible springboard towards training on what the fire service actual delivers to the public and keeping them aware of the hows and whys. The article was shared with the members of the Fire Safety Commission via the Secretary for their review.

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

Commissioner Armando Roman reported progress. There had been no meeting of the Public Education Advisory Council since the previous Fire Safety Commission meeting.

6. Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported that the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council met on May 14th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy. The minutes of that meeting are contained in the meeting packets for all to review.

Commissioner Blohm reported that the Department of Health is now down to four inspectors throughout the state. They have a willful violation against a coastal city that was tearing down buildings with asbestos in them but, generally, they have not been dealing with many fire departments.

Commissioner Blohm reported that there was a discussion about the medical evaluation that departments are required to comply with. It is conducted only once unless there has been a change in an individual's health status. The result of that evaluation to the employer is simply whether the employee is fit, unfit, or pending further evaluation.

Commissioner Blohm reported that the Department of Labor now has six inspectors throughout the state. Commissioner Blohm provided the Council with an update on the Physical Agility Test Initiative and reported that the next meeting of that subcommittee is scheduled for June 18th. Commissioner Blohm also reported that FEMA has announced that AFG, SAFER, and Fire Prevention grants are being funded once again – the deadline for grant applications is June 22nd.

The next meeting of the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council is scheduled for June 7th at Middlesex County Fire Academy at 10am.

7. Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council

Chairman Kevin Krushinski reported that the Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council met on May 14th at Monmouth County Fire Academy. The minutes of that meeting are contained in the meeting packets for all to review.

Chairman Krushinski reported that a main topic of discussion was the 23rd Annual Anthony R. Braig Conference on Youth Firesetting – scheduled for December 3-4, 2026. A meeting of the planning committee was scheduled for the end of May. The Council also discussed the upcoming National Fire Academy classes that were being offered in New Jersey – both Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist courses on June 8-9 (Ocean) and June 10-11 (Union)

The next meeting of the Youth Firesetting Prevention Advisory Council was scheduled for September 16th at the Wildwood Crest Fire Department at 10am.

G. Committee Reports

1. Residential Sprinkler Committee

Commissioner Gerard Naylis reported progress. There is no further update available at this time.

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

In the absence of Commissioner Steve O’Gorman, no formal report was given.

4. Electric Vehicles Working Group

Vice-Chairman John Wisniewski reported progress and said there would be a comprehensive report available at the next Fire Safety Commission meeting.

5. Recruit Firefighter Physical Agility Program

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported that the Committee will be meeting on June 18th, where they expect to have a final draft of the document that is being worked on. Once that is completed it will be presented to the Fire Safety Commission members – hopefully at the July meeting – for their review. From there, the committee is looking to host a special meeting on a Saturday morning so the whole fire service will have an opportunity to come and speak on this issue. Commissioner Blohm reviewed the history and background of this issue that has been discussed at the Commission, Advisory Council, and Committee levels for the past couple of years for those present who were unfamiliar.

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 opened up the meeting to discuss any New Business.

Commissioner Naylis made a motion that the New Jersey Fire Safety Commission formally oppose Assembly Bill 1536/Senate Bill 2968 (the single-stairway bill). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peter Goldring and passed unanimously.

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. Ken Schulz from the Bergen County Fire Academy asked why RIT Training was becoming mandatory. He wanted to know if this stemmed from a specific incident where it was not implemented and wanted to know how this would be monitored at fires, etc. Deputy Director Kilmer answered that with the new code being adopted, Firefighter 1 will be mandatory for all new firefighter recruits. This is the building block and foundation for the skill sets that will be acquired for a career in the fire service. The Division tries to balance the requirements of training to ensure a safe and effective fire service while still allowing it to operate and thrive staffing-wise. Deputy Director Kilmer also pointed out that most of their certifications are voluntary, RIT Training included. Director Wolk suggested that the NJDFS put out new guidance from the Office of Training and Certification outlining what exactly is mandated and what is voluntary and said he would work with Supervisor Greg Kirkham on this.

Glenn Corbett spoke about the investigation/examination of significant fires that was discussed earlier in the meeting. He added that there are comprehensive reports from the past (80s, 90s, etc.) that were extremely thorough and detailed and helped the fire service move forward. What is being discussed about having a body look at and report on significant fires going forward could be modeled after these and serve the same purpose.

K. Adjournment

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

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