

MARYLAND
STATE FIRE
PREVENTION
COMMISSION

ANNUAL
REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2024

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

MSAR #2029

Commission No. SP-0156

The State Fire Prevention Commission was established in 1964 and consists of nine (9) members appointed to a maximum of two five-year terms by the Secretary of the State Police, with the approval of the Governor in accordance with Public Safety Article Title 6-201. The Commission currently has three vacancies. Appointments and reappointments are critical to ensure a quorum is met for each meeting in order to conduct official business. The following members served on the Commission in Fiscal Year 2024:

Edward S. Tochtermann, Jr. Chairman 2 nd Term Expires June 30, 2026 Not eligible for reappointment	At-Large Industry Representative
Caroll H. Spriggs, II Vice Chairman 1 st Term Expires June 30, 2027 Eligible for reappointment	At-Large Career Fire Company
Daniel J. Stevens Vice Chairman Pro-Tem December 21, 2023-February 15, 2024 1 st Term Expires June 30, 2025 Eligible for reappointment	Southern Maryland Volunteer Fire Company
Mark Hopkins, PE 1 st Term Expires June 30, 2027 Eligible for reappointment	Central Maryland Architect/Engineer
Jerred A. Johnson 1 st Term Expires June 30, 2028 Eligible for reappointment	Eastern Shore Volunteer Fire Company
Randy E. Sanger, II 2 nd Term Expired June 30, 2028 Not eligible for reappointment	At-Large Building Contractor
Also Served in Fiscal Year 2024:	
Mark A. Bilger 2 nd Term Expired June 30, 2024 Resigned at end of second term	Western Maryland VACANT Volunteer Fire Company
Emily K. Devan 2 nd Term Expired June 30, 2024 Resigned at end of second term	At-Large VACANT Member of Public
Michael R. Faust 1 st Term Expired June 30, 2022 Did not seek a second term. Served until replaced 10/18/23	Eastern Shore Industry Representative
Kevin J. Simmons Former Vice Chairman 1 st Term Expired June 30, 2022 Did not seek a second term. Served until replaced 10/18/23	Central Maryland Career Fire Company
Stacy N. Welch 2 nd Term Expired June 30, 2022 Second term expired but served until replaced 10/18/23	Washington-Metro VACANT Architect/Engineer

The Fire Prevention Commission may be contacted as follows:

Maryland State Police/Western Operations Center
18345 Colonel H.K. Douglas Drive, Suite 240
Hagerstown MD 21740
Telephone: 301-766-3899 Toll-Free: 877-890-0199
Fax: 301-766-3889
E-Mail: msh.sfpcc@maryland.gov
Website: <https://mdsp.maryland.gov/organization/pages/statefirepreventioncommission.aspx>
Secretary: Heidi Ritchie

PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE TITLE 6-204:

The Commission is mandated to hold a minimum of six regular meetings every year. Seven meetings were held but a quorum was not achieved at the December 21, 2023, meeting. The July 20, 2023, meeting made up for the FY 2023 April 22, 2023, meeting which did not have a quorum. Public meeting agendas and approved minutes are posted at the Commission's website.

FISCAL YEAR ATTENDANCE ROSTER							
MEETING DATES LOCATION & MEMBERS	7/20/2023 Pikesville	8/17/2023 Laurel	10/19/23 Chester	12/21/23 (No Quorum) Pikesville	2/15/24 Annapolis	4/18/24 Laurel	6/18/24 Ocean City
BILGER	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
DEVAN	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
FAUST	P	A	A	NA	NA	NA	NA
HOPKINS	NA	NA	NA	P	P	P	A
JOHNSON	NA	NA	NA	P	P	P	P
SANGER	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
SIMMONS	A	A	P	NA	NA	NA	NA
SPRIGGS	NA	NA	NA	P	P	P	P
STEVENS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
TOCHTERMAN	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
WELCH	P	P	A	NA	NA	NA	NA

P=Present A=Absent NA=Not Appointed

PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE TITLE 6-501:

The Commission is empowered to hear appeals filed by a person who is aggrieved by an order or decision of the State Fire Marshal or his designee in the course of enforcing the State Fire Prevention Code. One appeal was received in FY 2024 but was withdrawn prior to being heard.

PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE TITLE 6-206:

The Commission is empowered to promulgate, amend, and repeal regulations for the safeguarding of life and property from the hazards of fire and explosion and to hold public hearings pertaining to such regulations. Code of Maryland Regulations as promulgated by the Commission may be viewed at the Commission's website.

COMAR 29.06.01 State Fire Prevention Code

In November 2023, the Commission began its review to adopt the 2024 editions of *NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) 1 Fire Code* and *NFPA 101 Life Safety Code* and amend the State Fire Prevention Code regulations accordingly. Chairman Edward Tochtermann and Commissioner Hopkins served on the Code Update Review Committee along with 33 other state and local building and fire code officials. Chaired by the Office of the State Fire Marshal Chief Fire Protection Engineer Kenneth Bush, six day-long meetings were held to review and discuss the codes and regulations. On behalf of the review committee, Chief Fire Protection Engineer Bush presented proposed recommendations to the Fire Prevention Commission members at its February 15, 2024, meeting. The Commission voted to table any motion to vote on the recommendations until such time a task group could meet with Maryland State Police

Colonel Butler and his staff to discuss the code adoption process to avoid any delay or withdrawal as was encountered during the 2021 code adoption process.

At the Commission's June 18, 2024, meeting, Chief Fire Protection Engineer Bush presented three additional review committee recommendations for proposed amendments. The Commission voted unanimously to accept these additional recommendations and the recommendations presented at its February 15, 2024, meeting. The proposed amendments were submitted to the Maryland State Police legislation coordinator on June 25, 2024, for processing.

PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE TITLE 6-205:

The Commission is mandated to promote and conduct seminars, conferences, workshops and meetings at least once each year to inform the public and firefighting personnel of the latest techniques in fire prevention programs and procedures, life safety measures, changes in the State Fire Prevention Code, and developments in improved fire and life safety goals. The Commission co-sponsors the annual Mid-Atlantic Life Safety Conference along with several other organizations. This conference offers a variety of fire and life safety oriented workshops presented by some of the nation's leading fire and emergency services professionals. The 2023 conference had over 200 attendees, including several Commission members. Commissioner Mark Bilger served as the Chairman of the Conference Steering Committee.

PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE TITLE 6-302:

The Secretary of State Police appoints a State Fire Marshal from a list of three names submitted by the Commission. The former State Fire Marshal, Brian S. Geraci, was appointed in 2013 and retired December 31, 2023. The Commission is thankful for his dedicated service to not only the citizens of Maryland but also with his involvement in numerous national and international organizations. His hard work has earned him many awards and has helped make Maryland the nation's leader in fire prevention. The Commission diligently fulfilled its responsibility and interviewed perspective State Fire Marshal applicants in April 2024, submitting a list of three names to Secretary Butler for his consideration. As of June 30, 2024, the position remains unfilled.

MEMBER AFFILIATIONS:

Throughout the year, Commission members attend and participate in a variety of activities and serve on committees involving fire prevention education, fire and emergency services, fire and explosive investigation, and code enforcement. Networking with members of these organizations and associations provides Commission members a greater understanding of the needs of Maryland's code enforcement authorities and the emergency services community. Some of these organizations include the following:

Maryland Rehabilitation Code Advisory Council

Public Safety Article 12-1003 established this council that consists of 27 members, one of whom is a representative of the Fire Prevention Commission. The council encourages private investment in existing buildings by streamlining the code requirements for rehabilitation work in buildings older than one year. Commissioner Tochtermann represents the Commission on this council.

Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices

During the Maryland 2024 legislative session, HB823/SB689 were passed and signed into law to establish a “Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices for Pre–1974 High–Rise Apartment Buildings”. The Workgroup took effect June 1, 2024 and must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on or before December 31, 2024. The Workgroup consists of fourteen members, one of whom is the Chairman of the Fire Prevention Commission or designee. Chairman Tochtermann represents the Commission on this Workgroup. As of the end of FY 2024, all members of the Workgroup have not been appointed and the Workgroup has not held any meetings.

Maryland State Firemen's Association

The association membership is comprised of volunteer departments from throughout the State whose mission is to serve, promote, advocate and represent the interests of the volunteer fire, rescue, and emergency medical services of Maryland.

Maryland Fire and Explosives Investigators Association

The association is a non-profit corporation that serves the fire and explosives investigation community across the Mid-Atlantic Region by providing training and educational opportunities and sharing information. Since the State Fire Prevention Code adopts regulations that deal with fireworks and explosive, networking with members of this association provides information on industry standards and practices.

Maryland Emergency Management Association

The association promotes and supports an all-hazards approach to emergency management in the State of Maryland to save lives and property during natural and manmade disasters. The legislative committee monitors legislation at the state and national levels to determine any potential impact on emergency management.

National Fire Protection Association

National Fire Protection Association codes are adopted by incorporation or by reference under the Maryland State Fire Prevention Code. This association is a U.S.-based international nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire and related hazards. Over 250 technical committees play a crucial role in developing the nationally and internationally recognized codes and standards. The association typically reviews and updates its codes on a three-year cycle or at other intervals as needed.

National Fire Sprinkler Association

The National Fire Sprinkler Association advocates for a stronger industry and a safer world by promoting fire sprinklers in model codes and legislation. The regional chapter of the association provides its input and opinions during the Maryland State Fire Prevention Code adoption process and is active in attending the meetings of the State Fire Prevention Commission and offering various cost-free training seminars to building and fire authorities throughout Maryland.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Line-Item Budget Expenses

The Commission's expenses are reported to the Department of State Police on a quarterly basis. Expenses for Fiscal Year 2024 totaled \$5,726.72. This includes travel/meal expenses, court stenographer services/transcripts, postage, or other miscellaneous purchases.