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Milford Fire Marshal's Office

Mission Statement

"The mission of the Milford Fire Marshal's Office is to reduce the economic and human losses associated with fire through public education, fire code enforcement, and fire cause investigation."



Organizational Structure & Functions of the Fire Marshal's Office

The Fire Marshal's Office currently consists of four uniformed members of the Milford Fire Department and one civilian clerk position. The division is led by Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal Gary Baker. There is one Senior Fire Inspector, Inspector Anthony Fino, and two Fire Inspectors, Inspector Michael Geanacopoulos and Inspector Stephen Mantie. There is also an Administrative Clerk, Rose-Marie Colon. Inspector Mantie retired from the Department in November 2015, and Inspector Geanacopoulos resigned from the Department in January 2016. As of the completion of this fiscal year, the vacancies have not been filled.



The members of the Fire Marshal's Office are responsible for public safety education, fire code enforcement, and fire cause investigation. Public safety education consists of fire safety related programs for school children as young as pre-kindergarten as well as programs for adults up to including senior citizens. Fire code enforcement begins with plan review for all new building projects and continues with annual compliance inspections. Fire cause investigation is also conducted by the members of the Fire Marshal's Office for the purpose of reducing future losses associated with fire-related incidents.

Public Safety Education

Youth Fire-Setters Intervention Program

One of the longest running public safety programs the Fire Marshal's Office provides is the Milford Youth Fire-Setters Intervention Program. This program has been administered by the Fire Marshal's Office since 1996. We provide services for children and their families who have had exposure to fire-setting behavior. We primarily provide this service for residents of Milford; however, when requested, we also will provide services for those in need in our surrounding communities. We have a small team of registered nurses, therapists, and clinicians who also assist us with this program.

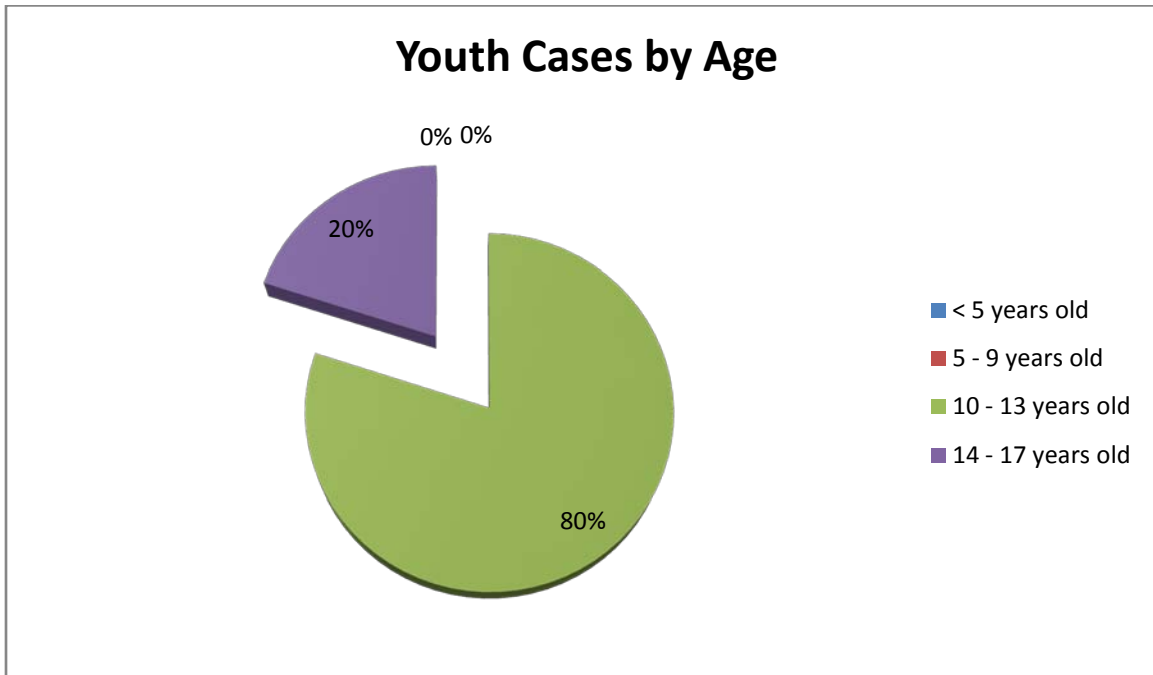


The Program Mission Statement is as follows:

“To identify the fire-setting behavior of children involved in the unsanctioned/unsupervised use of fire, determine the motivation for the fire-setting behavior, and provide prevention education/intervention and referrals if warranted for these children and their families.”

This program provides support and education in fire prevention and safety for the child and his or her family. The program consists of educational sessions with fire safety professionals. Through a comprehensive assessment process, an individualized program will be designed for the child's specific needs. If the child is found to need additional support services, recommendations and referrals to other supporting agencies can be made.

The program provided services for five (5) children in the fiscal year 2015-16. Four of the children were involved in a fire incident in Milford. The fifth case was for a Stratford child involved in a Stratford structure fire. The age breakdown of children involved in our program this year was as follows:



The Program is funded through the department's Fire Intervention account and currently operates on \$2,500.00 annually. These funds are used to purchase educational materials and electronic equipment needed for the program. The funds are also utilized for educational seminars and meetings required for the interventionists working in our program. The non-department team members are required to attend continuing education seminars and workshops related to youth fire-setting.

The Milford Youth Fire-Setters Program was also awarded State Pilot Program status by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. With this recognition, we will work with the OSFM and the State Department of Children and Families to develop a standardized curriculum and program development guideline to be used as the model for future programs throughout the state. We are hopeful that additional funding and resources will also become available through the pilot program process.

Portable Fire Extinguisher Training

The Fire Marshal's Office also provides portable fire extinguisher training for various employees in their workplaces. This training is OSHA and Fire Code compliant training for those businesses that are required to provide it. The training utilizes the BullEx® ITS Intelligent Training System and provides for a "hands-on" fire extinguishing experience.



The BullEx® ITS Intelligent Training System is a sophisticated piece of training equipment, and as such, requires routine maintenance and service. This service requires approximately \$800 annually. This cost is for the routine maintenance and can increase if additional service is found to be needed. We also need to purchase liquid propane for the fuel of the BullEx® ITS Intelligent Training System. The system is supplied by typical 20lb propane cylinders. In the fiscal year 2015-16, we spent a total of \$500.00 on maintenance and supplies required for fire extinguisher training.

Fire extinguisher training is required to be conducted outside; therefore, the training is only conducted during the months of May through October. The office provided fire extinguisher training for 8 businesses in the city in the fiscal year 2015-16. The training was conducted over 25 total hours. The businesses included Schick, Donghia, Milford Fabricating, and Residence Inn. A total of 835 employees were trained this year. **Unfortunately, due to the vacancies in the Office, the fire extinguisher training has been suspended until additional Inspectors are hired.**

Propane Collection Services

The Fire Marshal's Office conducts two propane collection days each year. These collection days are conducted in the Spring and the Fall and are held at the North End Fire Station. The department collects old liquid propane cylinders from Milford residents for free disposal. Old, abandoned propane cylinders are a serious fire and explosion hazard. There are very few places that will accept these cylinders so we offer the service. We partner with Paraco Gas Company who will then collect all the cylinders and provide for their safe recycle/disposal.



In the fiscal year 2015-16, we collected a total of **456** propane cylinders during our two collection days. 181 cylinders were collected on September 26, 2015 and 275 cylinders were collected on May 21, 2016. This continues to be a popular program in town and continues to collect a large number of otherwise hazardous cylinders.

Safe Ash Disposal Campaign

Over the past several winters the office has seen a considerable number of fires in the Winter season. As this is common in cold weather regions with supplemental heating appliances, there have been an alarming number of these fires that were found to be directly related to careless ash/coal disposal. Most notably, the Stamford fire tragedy in December of 2011, which claimed the lives of three children and two adults, was determined to be caused by the careless disposal of fireplace ashes. To avoid such losses in Milford, our office began a public safety campaign this year to inform and educate our citizens in the practice of safe ash disposal. We used public safety announcements on both our city webpage and our department Facebook® page. We also employed a metal ash bucket raffle in which we purchased ten metal ash buckets from Lowe's and donated them to Milford Residents by raffle.



We began the public safety campaign on November 18, 2015 and provided the metal ash buckets to the Milford raffle winners on December 4, 2015. The distribution of the ash buckets was recorded by name and address in our Firehouse® records. This year, we were able to provide ten free ash buckets to Milford residents. We are happy to announce that this was the first Winter season that we did not have any fires resulting from careless ash disposal! We would like to think that our public awareness campaign played some role in that realization. We will continue with the campaign and the ash bucket give-away program again this coming Winter.

Public Education Presentations

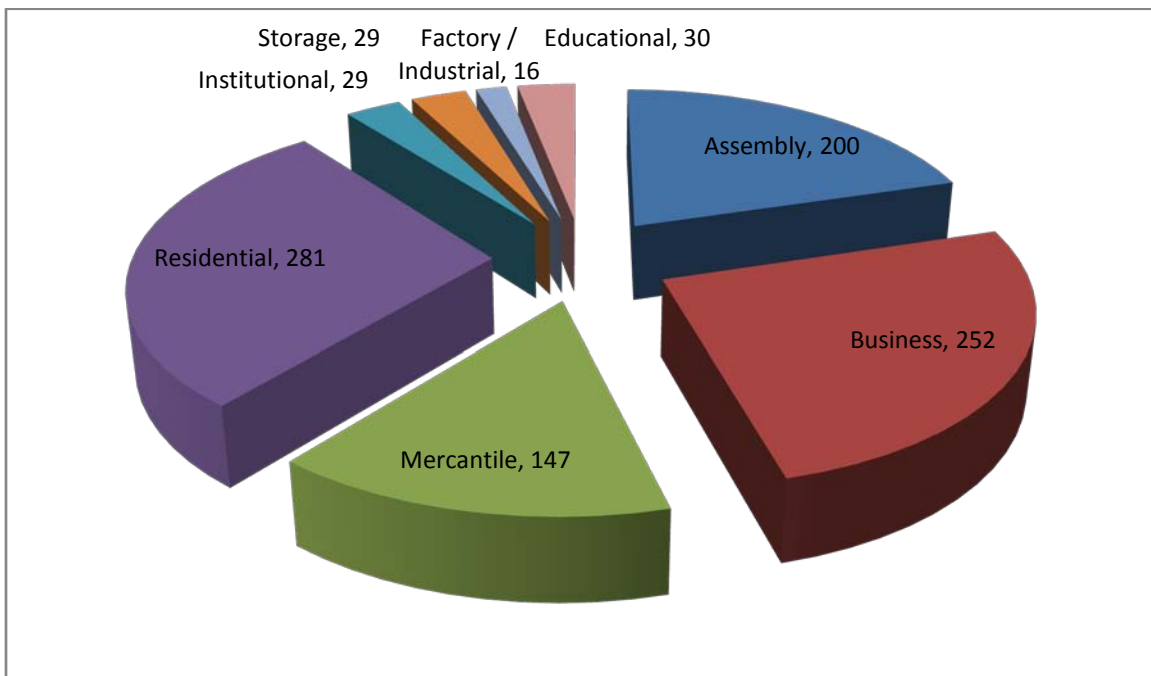
The members of Fire Marshal's Office perform several safety education presentations to the public each year. These presentations range in topics from fire safety to slip and fall prevention for senior citizens. Our target audiences also range from pre-kindergarten children to the elderly. In recent years, we have also expanded our training to the Milford Board of Education staff. We now perform annual training for all school staff from principals to school greeters.



The Fire Marshal's Office performed **37.58** total hours of safety presentations this year. These presentations also include fire evacuation drill observations in many school and business buildings. This total is typically higher; however, public education was significantly limited after the resignation of the two Fire Inspectors in January 2016.

Fire Code Enforcement

This section is a report based on the compiled data of all Fire Code inspections conducted by the Milford Fire Marshal's Office in the fiscal year 2015-16. The inspection record data is based on the inspection requirements of Connecticut General Statute 29-305. The Statute includes inspections required for both "new" construction and "existing" buildings. The chart below illustrates the **984** "existing" building inspections that are required to be completed once per year, based on occupancy type.



Total Existing Building Inspections by Occupancy Type

CGS 29-305 requires annual inspections for all Assembly, Institutional, and Residential occupancies. Mercantile, Business, and Storage occupancies are required to be inspected on a three (3) year cycle. Factory/Industrial occupancies are required to be inspected on a four (4) year cycle. The records in this report have been adjusted to reflect the inspection cycle prescribed in the Statute. There are 1,887 existing buildings requiring inspection. 984 of these buildings are required to be inspected each year to meet the cycled schedule. As a result of newly constructed buildings and an increased number of previously unrecorded businesses being entered into the system, the total

number of existing buildings requiring inspection increased from 1,114 to 1,887. Many of these buildings were discovered by engine company field survey data. Approximately 773 existing buildings were entered into the system and have never been inspected by this office. The increase in occupancies requiring inspection continues to cause a further strain on the office. The already understaffed office will continue to show a decline in inspection productivity if an increase in staffing is not realized.

The Connecticut General Statutes also require the local fire marshal (or his/her designees) to conduct inspections for all “new” construction in all buildings, other than single- or two-family homes. This puts an additional strain on the local marshal’s office. The number of new construction inspections is dynamic and can fluctuate annually as a result of a variety of factors. In the fiscal year 2015-16, the Milford Fire Marshal’s Office was required to conduct **195** new construction inspections. This is an increase of 58 inspections over the 137 conducted in 2014-15.

New construction inspections are given priority over all other inspections; however, there is a much greater liability associated with the existing building inspections. The existing buildings are inherently less safe due to their outdated building construction and the common lack of fire protection systems. The majority of fires we encounter in Milford occur in buildings built prior to 1990. Building and fire codes were relatively weak prior to 1990, and in many communities, the codes were not enforced very effectively. Since 1990, the building and fire codes have been based on a strict set of national codes, and as a result, much safer buildings have been constructed. This statement was supported in 2015-16, where all ten structure fires reported occurred in single-family homes built prior to 1990.

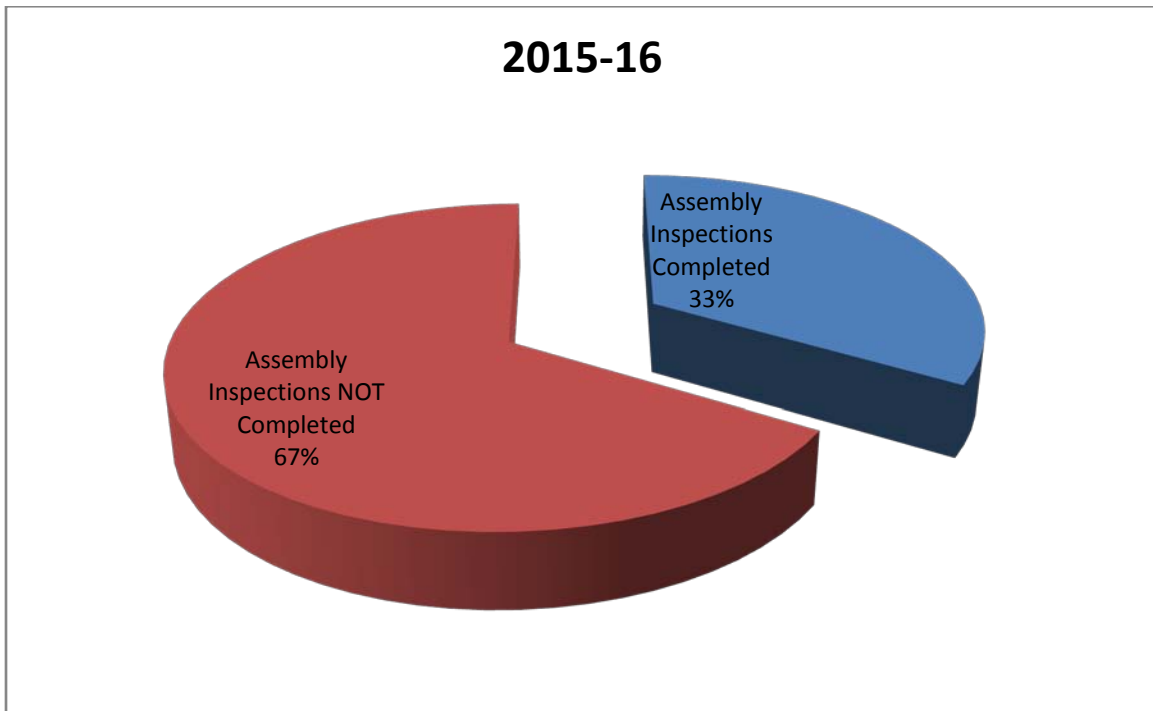
In addition to fires in older buildings, most significant fire damage and civilian casualty occurs in residential building fires. As a result, most fire marshals in Connecticut have turned a priority to the inspection of the multi-family residential properties in their communities. In Milford, there are **281** residential properties that fall under the statutory requirements for annual fire code inspection. Each year, our office makes effort to gain entry to these buildings to conduct the required inspections. Each year, a significant percentage of these properties go uninspected due to a lack of available human resources. In 2015-16, our office was able to inspect only **25** of these (or **9%**). This was a decline in inspection productivity of 5% in the last year.

The need for full statutory compliance has become evident in recent years. There have been several cases across Connecticut that involved fire-related injuries, deaths, and/or property loss in multi-family residences. In each of these cases, the municipalities have been ordered to make financial restitutions based on the lack of required fire safety code inspections. The courts have ruled, in most cases, that a “lack of manpower” does not provide any governmental immunity from compliance with the statute. Courts have

interpreted this to be a ministerial duty rather than discretionary. Some cases have even involved charges of “recklessness” against local fire marshals for not conducting the required inspections. Several links to pertinent court cases have been provided at the end of this report. It is my opinion that every effort must be made to conduct these inspections, as required by law. The need for compliance is evident; to protect both the fire department and the city from financial liability. More importantly, we have an ethical obligation to the citizens of Milford to ensure their safety.

The following pages provide the fiscal year 2015-16 inspection records based on the various occupancy types and their inspection frequencies required by statute.

Assembly Occupancy Inspections

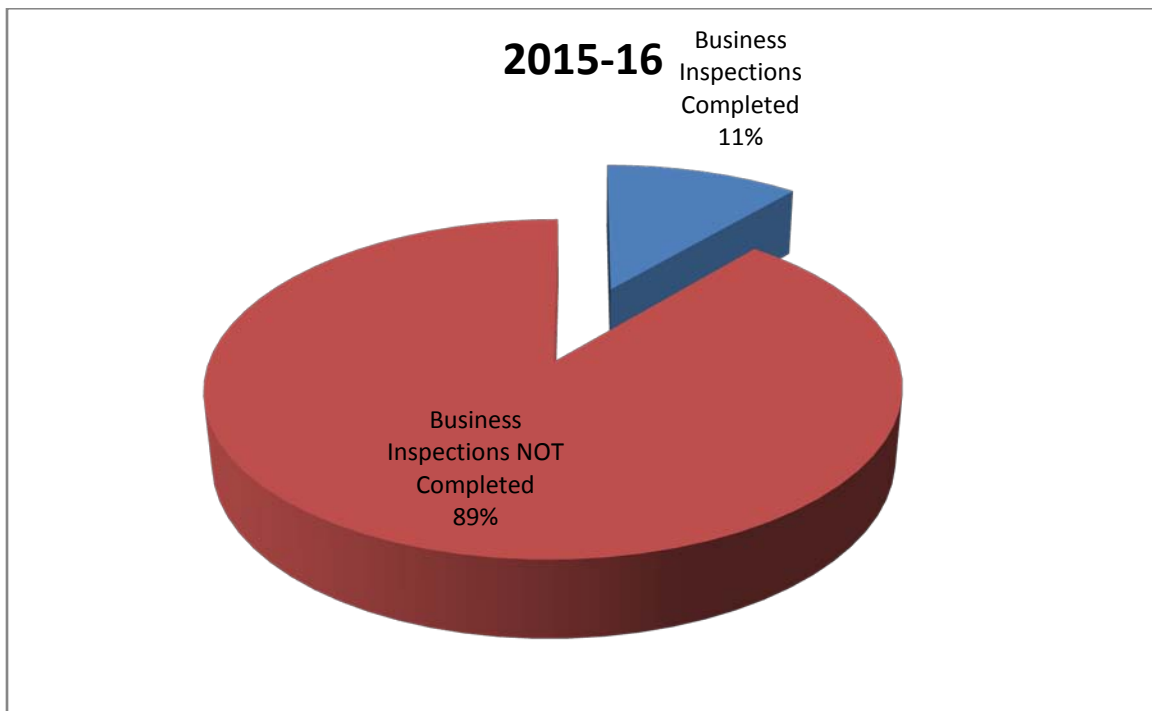


Assembly occupancies include restaurants, bars, clubs, churches, and halls, etc. If alcohol is served at these occupancies, they will require a Liquor License from the State Liquor Commission. There are **200** Assembly occupancies in Milford. Assembly occupancies are required to be inspected annually by Connecticut General Statute 29-305.

In fiscal year 2015-16, our office completed 67 of the 200 required Assembly inspections. This equates to **33%** of the statutory requirement.

The percentage of completed inspections **declined 17%** in the last year.

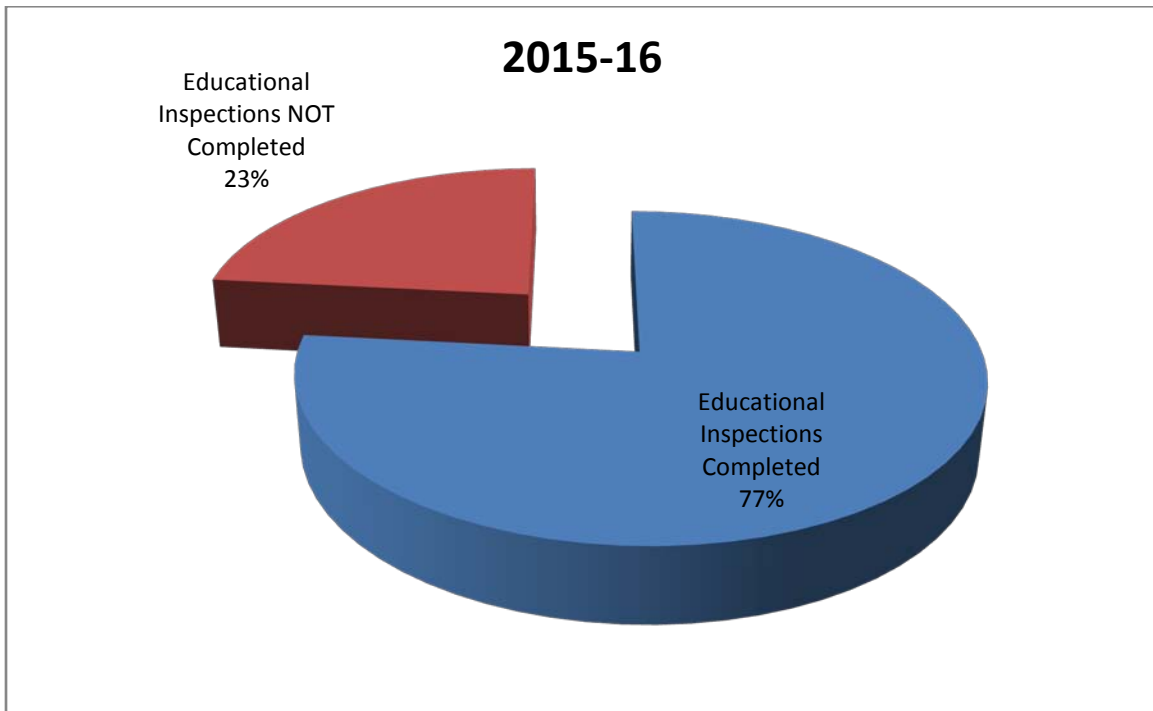
Business Occupancy Inspections



Business occupancies include offices, professional services, banks, clinics, beauty shops, etc. Educational facilities for students above twelfth grade are also Business occupancies, as are restaurants with less than 50 occupants. There are **756** Business occupancies in Milford. Business occupancies are required to be inspected once every three years by Connecticut General Statute 29-305. This equates to **252** Business occupancies requiring inspection each year.

In fiscal year 2015-16, our office completed 28 of the 252 required Business Occupancy inspections. This equates to **11%** of the statutory requirement.

Educational Occupancy Inspections

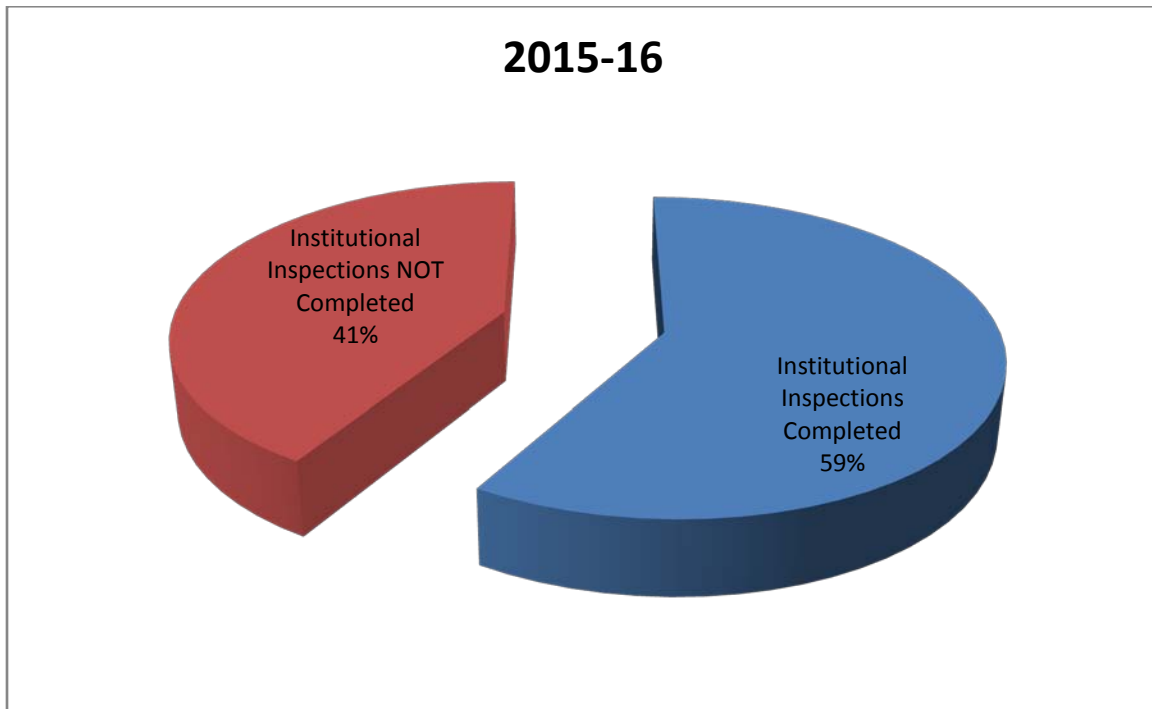


Educational occupancies include schools and buildings providing educational activities for children in kindergarten through the twelfth grade. There are **30** Educational occupancies in Milford. Educational occupancies are required to be inspected annually by Connecticut General Statute 29-305.

In fiscal year 2015-16, our office completed 23 of the 30 required Educational inspections. This equates to **77%** of the statutory requirement.

The percentage of completed inspections **declined** 4% in the last year.

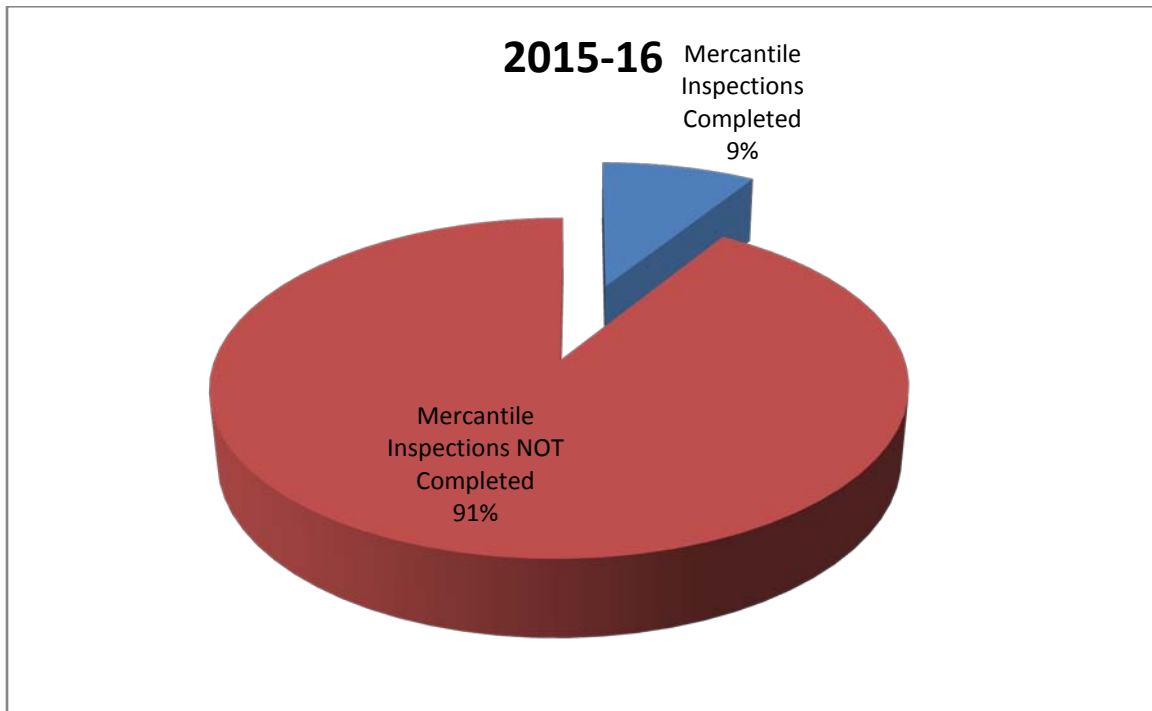
Institutional Occupancy Inspections



Institutional occupancies include hospitals, nursing homes, detention centers, and day care facilities. There are **29** Institutional occupancies in Milford. Institutional occupancies are required to be inspected annually by Connecticut General Statute 29-305.

In fiscal year 2015-16, our office completed 17 of the 29 required Institutional Occupancy inspections. This equates to **59%** of the statutory requirement.

Mercantile Occupancy Inspections

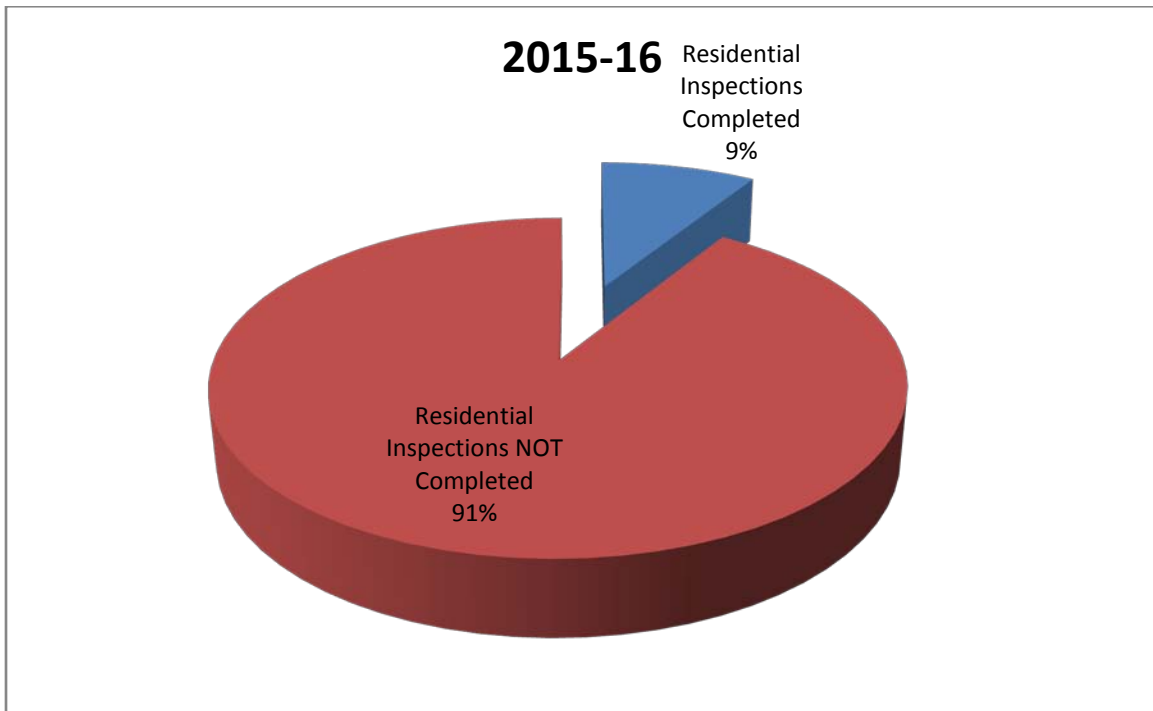


Mercantile occupancies include occupancies whose primary function is the display and sale of goods. There are **441** Mercantile occupancies in Milford. Mercantile occupancies are required to be inspected once every three years by Connecticut General Statute 29-305. This equates to **147** Mercantile occupancies requiring inspection each year.

In fiscal year 2015-16, our office completed 13 of the 147 required Mercantile inspections. This equates to **9%** of the statutory requirement.

The percentage of completed inspections **declined 8%** in the last year.

Residential Occupancy Inspections

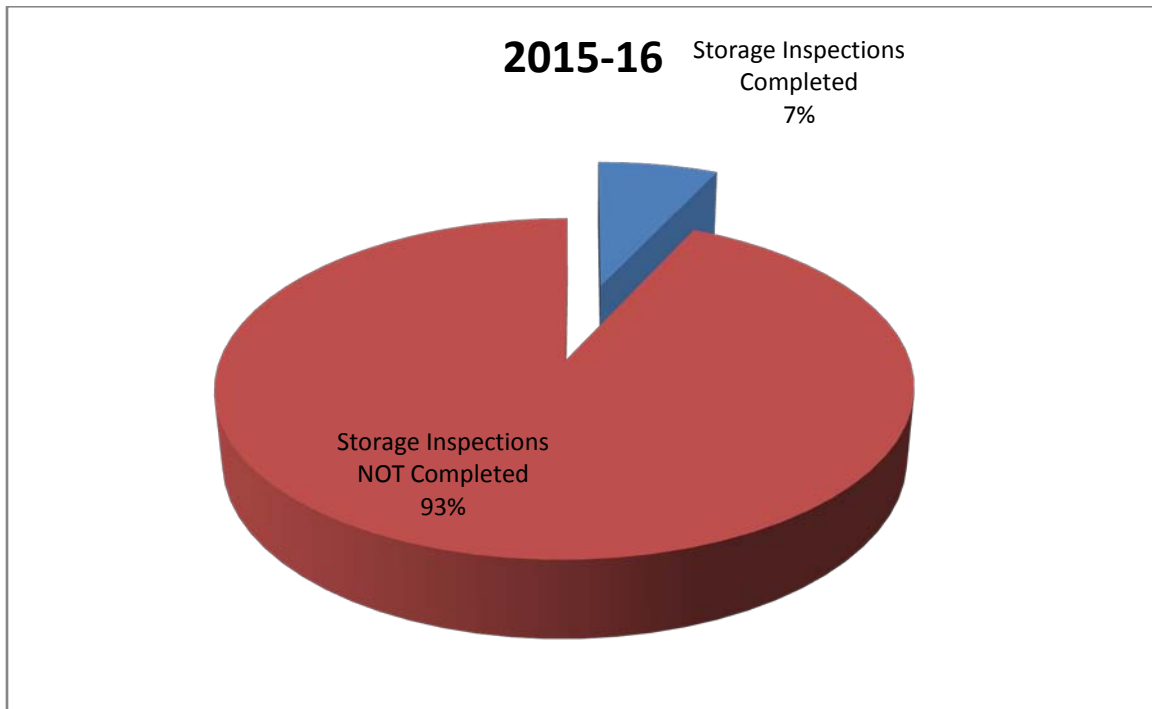


Residential occupancies include apartments, condominiums, hotels & motels, and residential board and care facilities. There are **281** Residential occupancies in Milford. Residential occupancies are required to be inspected annually by Connecticut General Statute 29-305.

In fiscal year 2015-16, our office completed 25 of the 281 required Residential inspections. This equates to **9%** of the statutory requirement.

The percentage of completed inspections **declined** 5% in the last year.

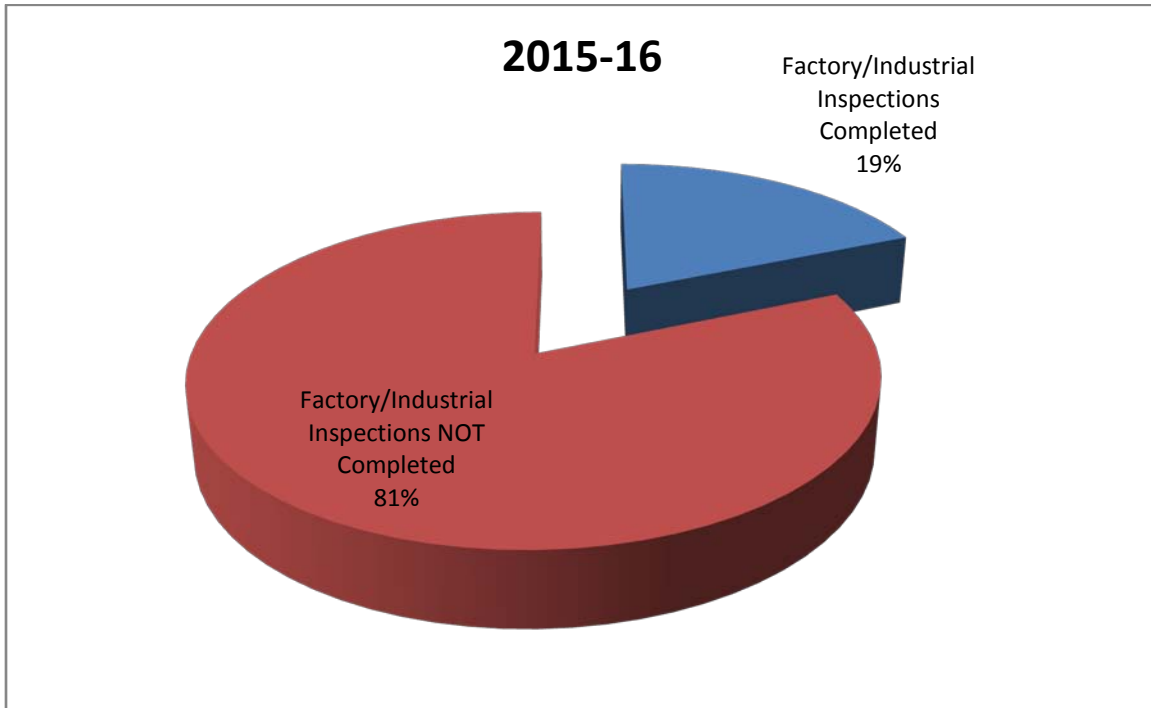
Storage Occupancy Inspections



Storage occupancies include occupancies whose primary function is the storage of goods. Also included in Storage occupancies are motor vehicle repair facilities and facilities employing paint spray booths. There are **86** Storage occupancies in Milford. Storage occupancies are required to be inspected once every three years by Connecticut General Statute 29-305. This equates to **29** Storage occupancies requiring inspection each year.

In fiscal year 2015-16, our office completed 2 of the 29 required Storage inspections. This equates to **7%** of the statutory requirement.

Factory/Industrial Occupancy Inspections

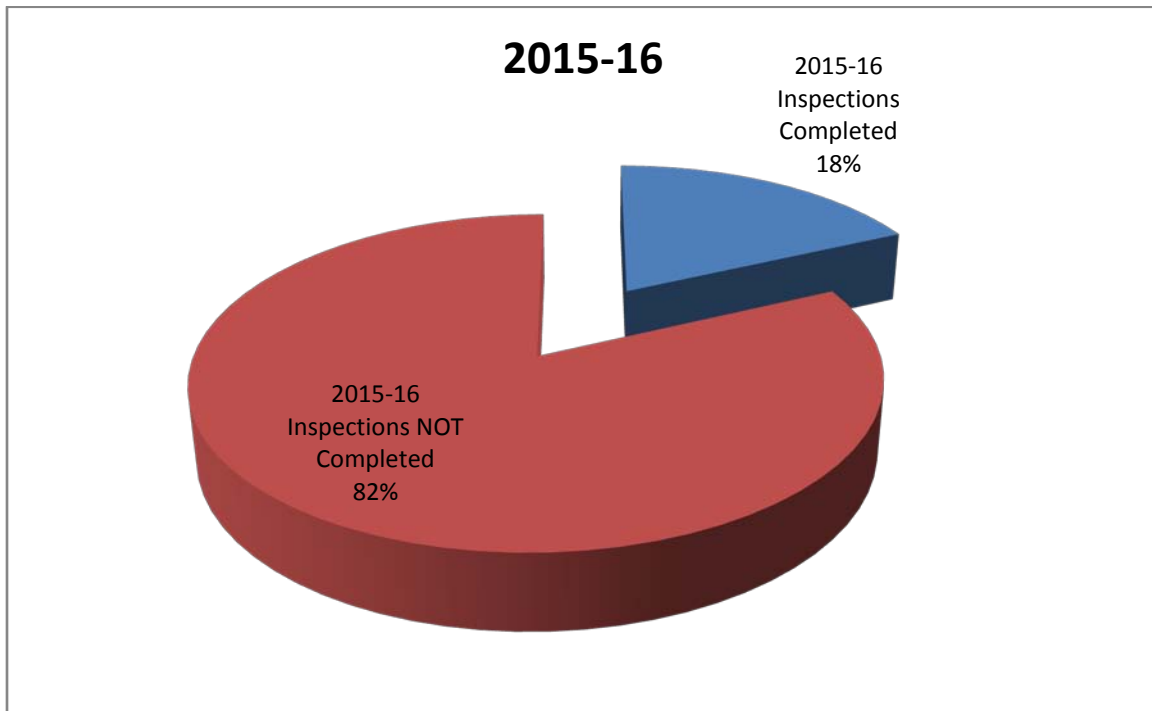


Factory/Industrial occupancies include occupancies whose primary function is assembling, fabricating, and/or manufacturing operations. There are **64** Factory/Industrial occupancies in Milford. Factory/Industrial occupancies are required to be inspected once every four years by Connecticut General Statute 29-305. This equates to **16** Storage occupancies requiring inspection each year.

In fiscal year 2015-16, our office completed 3 of the 16 required Factory/Industrial inspections. This equates to **19%** of the statutory requirement.

The percentage of completed inspections **declined 45%** in the last year.

2015-16 Inspections Completed



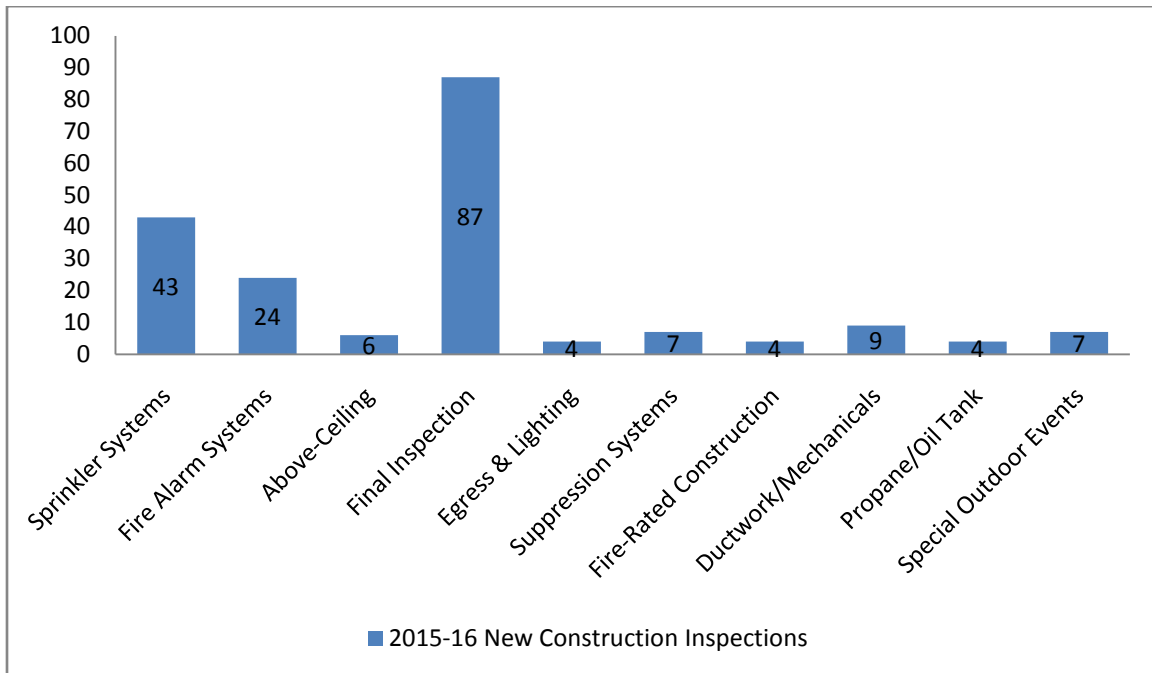
In the fiscal year 2015-16, there were **984** inspections required to be conducted in accordance with Connecticut General Statute 29-305. Our office, consisting of three (3) full-time Inspectors until January 2016, then reduced to one (1) Inspector, was able to complete **178** of these inspections. This equates to **18%** of the statutory requirement.

As stated, the Fire Marshal's Office previously consisted of three (3) full-time certified Fire Inspectors. Two (2) of the Inspectors resigned in November 2015 and January 2016, respectively. Since January, the office has been run with one (1) Inspector and the Fire Marshal. In addition to fire code inspection, each Inspector is required to perform several other public safety functions on a daily basis. These functions include, but are not limited to, fire prevention and safety education and fire origin and cause investigation. Also included in the Inspector's work are new construction inspections in all commercial and multi-family residential properties. The new construction inspection numbers vary annually; however, they continually add a significant demand to each Inspector's workload. Not included in this report, are records of all re-inspections conducted by the Inspectors when initial inspections fail. Commonly, there are violations found upon inspection that require one or more re-inspections before compliance is met.

Based on the data compiled and a thorough review of all the demands each Inspector is required to meet, the need for additional Inspectors is evident. Having accurately tabulated the number of inspections required annually, based on occupancy type, and reviewing the current extraneous demands on each Inspector, it is my request for additional manpower in this Office to complete more of the required inspections. Last year, I had requested two (2) more full-time Fire Inspectors. With the resignation of the two (2) Fire Inspectors we had previously employed, we now would need to fill those two (2) vacancies and additionally hire two (2) more Fire Inspectors. An office of at least six (6) certified Fire Inspectors (of any designation) would be needed to address the statutory demands of the community. With this number of Inspectors, I believe this Office would be able to significantly increase the amount of inspections completed each year while also reducing the liability that the city is currently exposed to. The liability for non-compliance with CGS 29-305 cannot be overstated.

New Construction Inspections

By Inspection Type



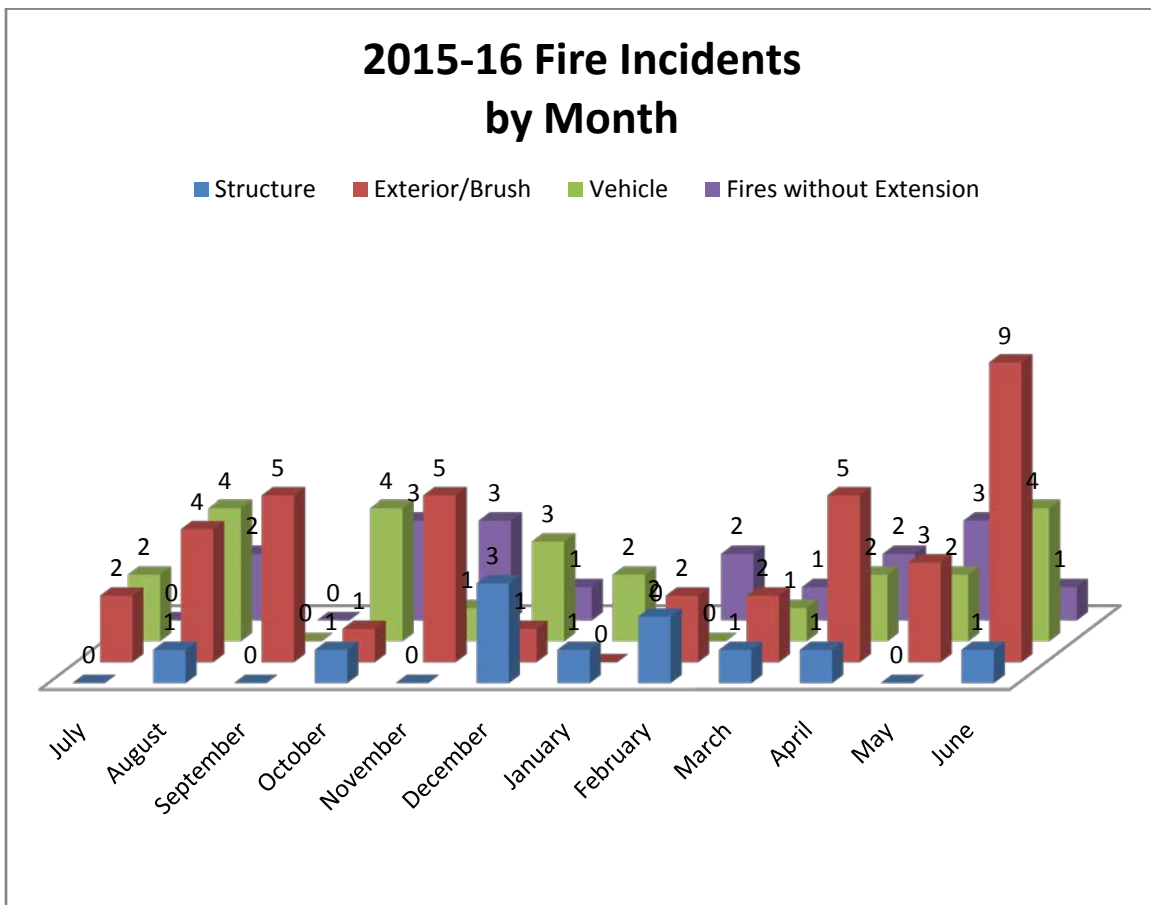
A total of **195** New Construction inspections were conducted by the Fire Marshal's Office in 2015-16, further categorized by inspection type.

❖ A full, detailed compilation of the inspection records involves several hundred pages. The detailed inspection records were omitted from this report but can easily be provided upon request.

Fire Cause Investigation

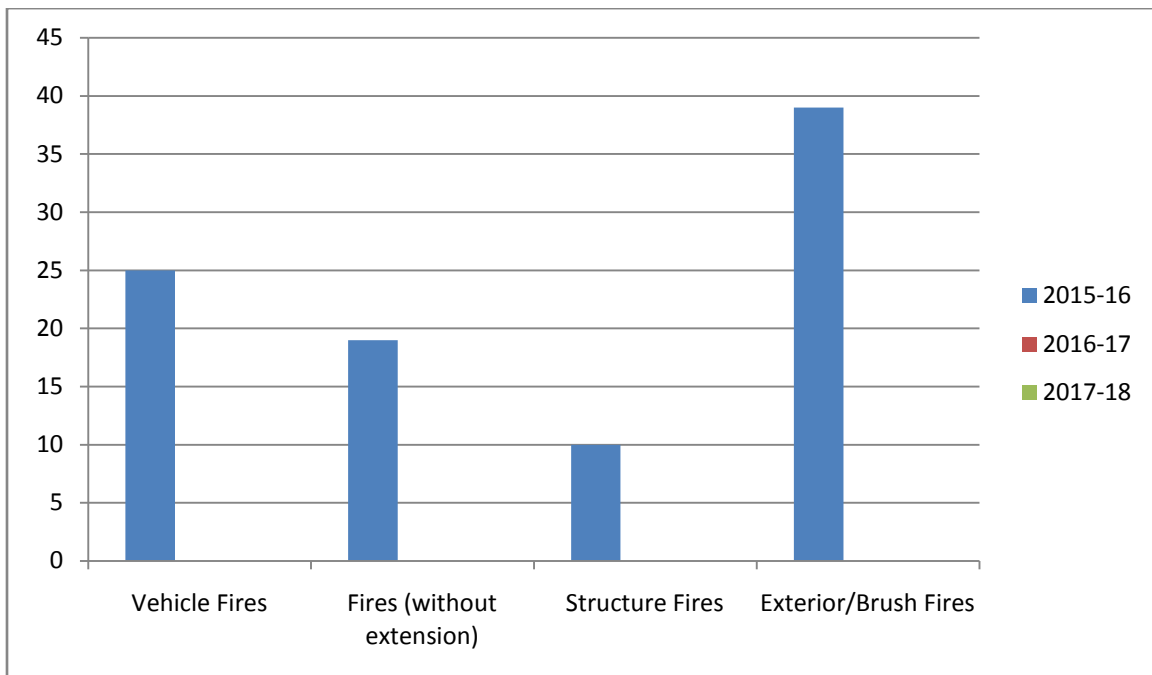
The members of the Fire Marshal's Office conduct fire investigations to determine the origin and cause of fires and explosions within the jurisdiction of Milford. The main objective of the fire cause investigation is to determine how a fire started in order to prevent fires and fire-related losses in the future. The fire cause data that is developed is used to create codes and regulations as well as public education programs.

In fiscal year 2015-16, the Milford Fire Department responded to **93** fire-related calls. The chart below illustrates the fire incidents based on fire type. The Fire Marshal's Office investigated **24** of these fires.



Annual Trending of Fire Incidents

The chart below is a year to year breakdown of fire incidents by type. This is the first year of analysis; therefore, the data is limited to the 2015/16 year. As the data is collected and analyzed in the future, we will be able to chart trends in fire incidents by type. This information will be used to develop focused fire prevention programs aimed at target risks.



Annual Trending of Fire Incidents

2015/16 Fire Incidents

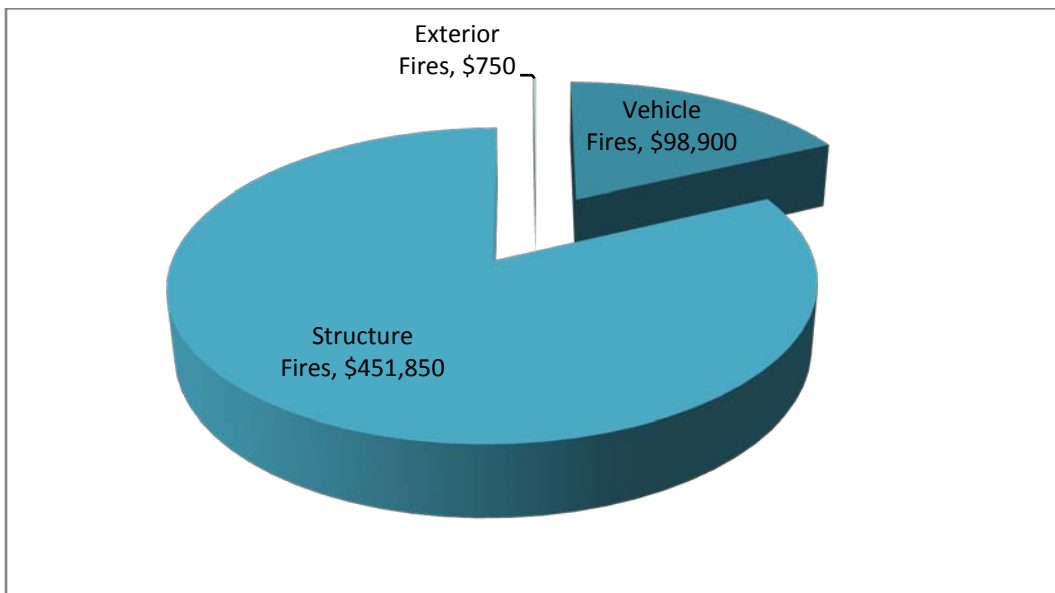
The ten (10) structure fires in the fiscal year 2015-2016 are identified below in **bold** by date and address. Estimated property loss is also provided for each.

Date	Address	Fire Description	Estimated Loss
7/19/15	I-95	Vehicle Fire	-
7/21/15	9 S Kerema Avenue	Exterior – Grill fire	\$0
7/25/15	1201 Boston Post Rd	Exterior - Mulch fire	\$0
7/28/15	73 Wilbar Avenue	Vehicle Fire	\$5,100
8/2/15	1636 Boston Post Rd	Exterior - Mulch fire	\$0
8/3/15	100 Viscount Drive	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
8/18/15	998 East Broadway	Vehicle Fire	-
8/21/15	80 Cornflower Drive	Incendiary fire – no extension	\$500
8/25/15	10 Rowe Avenue	Vehicle Fire	\$12,300
8/28/15	14 Benham Ave	Exterior - Mulch fire	\$0
8/29/15	1201 Boston Post Rd	Exterior - Mulch fire	\$0
8/30/15	High St / Darina Place	Exterior - Mulch fire	\$0
8/31/15	65 Gunn Street	Structure - Garage fire	\$5,500
8/31/15	215 Cherry Street	Vehicle Fire	-
8/31/15	I-95 – Entrance 34 N	Vehicle Fire	\$60,000
9/1/15	1389 Boston Post Rd	Exterior - Brush fire	\$0
9/8/15	123 Milford Point Rd	Exterior – Illegal burning	\$0
9/8/15	52 Grant Street	Exterior – Rubbish fire	\$0
9/21/15	18 Roselle St	Exterior – Illegal burning	\$0
9/22/15	470 Bridgeport Ave	Exterior - Brush fire	\$0
10/1/15	884 Milford Point Rd	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
10/8/15	116 Hill Street	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
10/11/15	203 Broad Street	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
10/12/15	Route 15 South	Vehicle Fire	-
10/20/15	160 Chapel Street	Trash fire - confined to container	\$1,000
10/22/15	I-95 / Entrance 39B	Vehicle Fire	-
10/24/15	I-95 / Exit 36	Vehicle Fire	-
10/30/15	36 Peak Ave	Exterior – Illegal burning	\$0
10/31/15	256 Boston Post Rd	Vehicle Fire	\$1,000
11/3/15	Seaflower Road	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
11/5/15	589 Bridgeport Ave	Exterior – Illegal burning	\$0
11/15/15	15 Grant Street	Dryer fire – no extension	\$1,000
11/18/15	21 Lyda Drive	Exterior – Illegal burning	\$0
11/20/15	265 Bridgeport Ave	Exterior – Illegal burning	\$0
11/21/15	433 Old Gate Lane	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
11/26/15	269 Lookout Hill Rd	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
11/26/15	26 Park Circle	Cooking fire confined to container	\$1,100
11/29/15	433 Old Gate Lane	Vehicle Fire	-
12/4/15	50 Daniel Street	Exterior – Dumpster fire	\$0
12/8/15	31 South Wind Lane	Structure - Bedroom fire	-

12/15/16	267 Melba St	Vehicle Fire	\$15,000
12/16/15	26 Alden Place	Structure - Bedroom fire	\$10,000
12/17/15	321 Bridgeport Ave	Structure - Fatal fire	-
12/23/15	East Town Rd	Vehicle Fire	-
12/24/15	18 Grassy Lane	Vehicle Fire	-
12/31/15	168 Yale Ave	Dryer fire – no extension	\$2,500
1/19/16	22 Camden St	Structure - Basement Fire	-
1/20/16	93 Boston Post Rd	Vehicle Fire	-
1/27/16	Route 15 North	Vehicle Fire	-
2/7/16	162 Fourth Avenue	Structure - Kitchen Fire	-
2/9/16	81 Orange Avenue	Exterior – Illegal burning of rubbish	\$0
2/12/16	101 Gulf St	Hotworks - Welding	\$0
2/18/16	334 Milford Point Rd	Structure – Extension Cord	\$210,000
2/20/16	181 Grinnell St	Exterior – Illegal burning of rubbish	\$0
2/23/16	81 Briarwood Lane	Chimney fire confined to chimney	\$0
3/14/16	Route 15 North	Vehicle Fire	-
3/18/16	121 Lenox Avenue	Exterior	\$250
3/19/16	13 Fern Street	Structure – Car Port	\$195,000
3/26/16	269 Mary Ellen Drive	Dryer Fire – no extension	-
3/28/16	589 Bic Drive	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
4/6/16	160 Wampus Lane	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
4/8/16	485 Bridgeport Avenue	Fan Motor – no extension	\$250
4/9/16	10 Utica Street	Structure Fire – Dryer in garage	-
4/11/16	Route 15 South	Vehicle Fire	-
4/12/16	221 Old Gate Lane	Vehicle Fire	-
4/15/16	122 Carriage Path South	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
4/17/16	1025 Naugatuck Ave	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
4/21/16	1337 Naugatuck Ave	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
4/22/16	57 East Broadway	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
4/29/16	I-95 – Entrance 35 S	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
5/1/16	601 Gulf Street	Exterior – Camp fire on Beach	\$0
5/5/16	204 Alberta Jagoe Ct	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
5/6/16	I-95 S – McDonald's	Vehicle Fire	-
5/9/16	64 Country Lane	Bathroom fire – no extension	\$0
5/16/16	245 Orange Avenue	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
5/16/16	I-95 North	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
5/19/16	81 Hilltop Circle	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
5/20/16	82 Deerwood Avenue	Vessel Fire	\$5,500
6/2/16	147 Naugatuck Avenue	Exterior – Juvenile Set Fire	\$0
6/2/16	I-95 – Exit 34S	Vehicle Fire	-
6/2/16	732 Naugatuck Avenue	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
6/10/16	Wheeler's Farm Road	Vehicle Fire	-
6/13/16	28 Shell Avenue	Cooking fire confined to container	\$0
6/14/16	I-95 North	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
6/18/16	96 Seabreeze Ave	Vehicle Fire	-
6/19/16	1201 Boston Post Road	Exterior – Trash can fire	\$0
6/20/16	50 Eastern Parkway	Structure Fire – Kitchen Fire	\$25,000

6/23/16	291 Old Gate Lane	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
6/24/16	29 Overlook	Exterior - Dumpster fire	\$0
6/25/16	571 Anderson Avenue	Exterior – Brush fire	\$0
6/25/16	Schoolhouse Road	Vehicle Fire	-
6/26/16	330 Merwin Avenue	Exterior - Mulch fire	\$500
6/27/16	14 Benham Avenue	Portable Toilet	-
6/28/16	70 Research Drive	Exterior - Dumpster fire	\$0

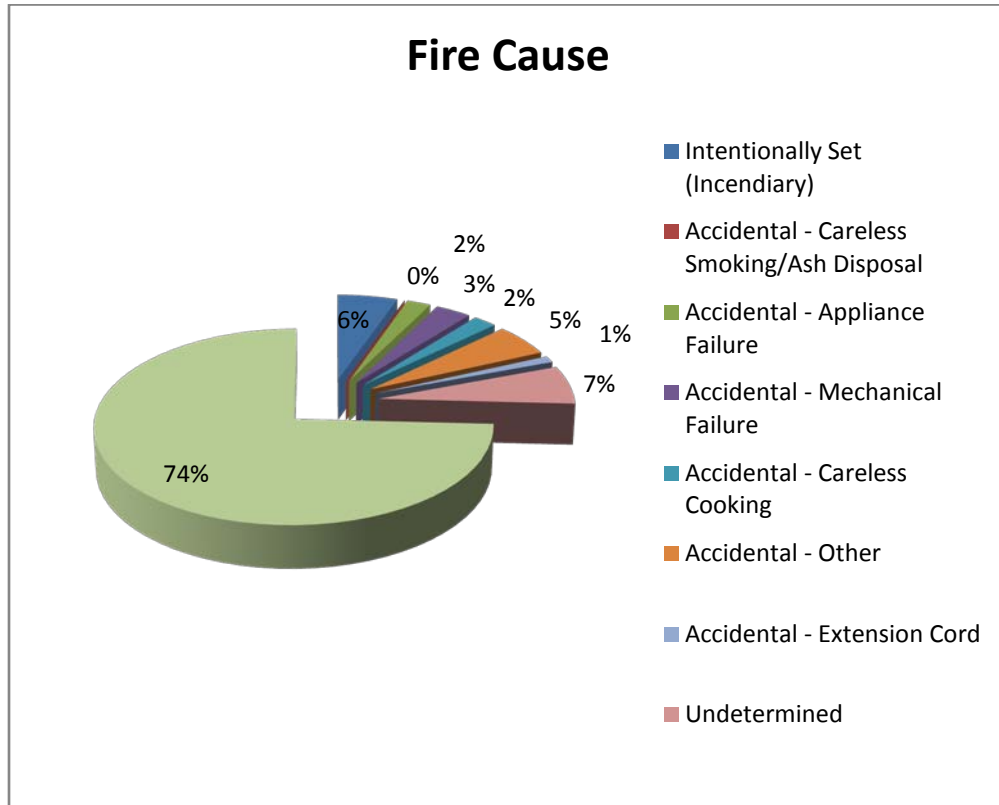
The estimated dollar loss associated with the fire incidents in 2015/16 is valued at **\$551,500**. This value is lower than the actual dollar loss, as many of the incidents were not analyzed for dollar loss, or no value was provided in the reporting. For example, there were 24 vehicle fires in 2015/16; however, an estimated dollar loss was only provided for 5 of these vehicles. Through better reporting, we could hope to more accurately calculate the estimated dollar loss associated with fire each year.



Dollar Loss by Fire Type

Fire Cause Determinations

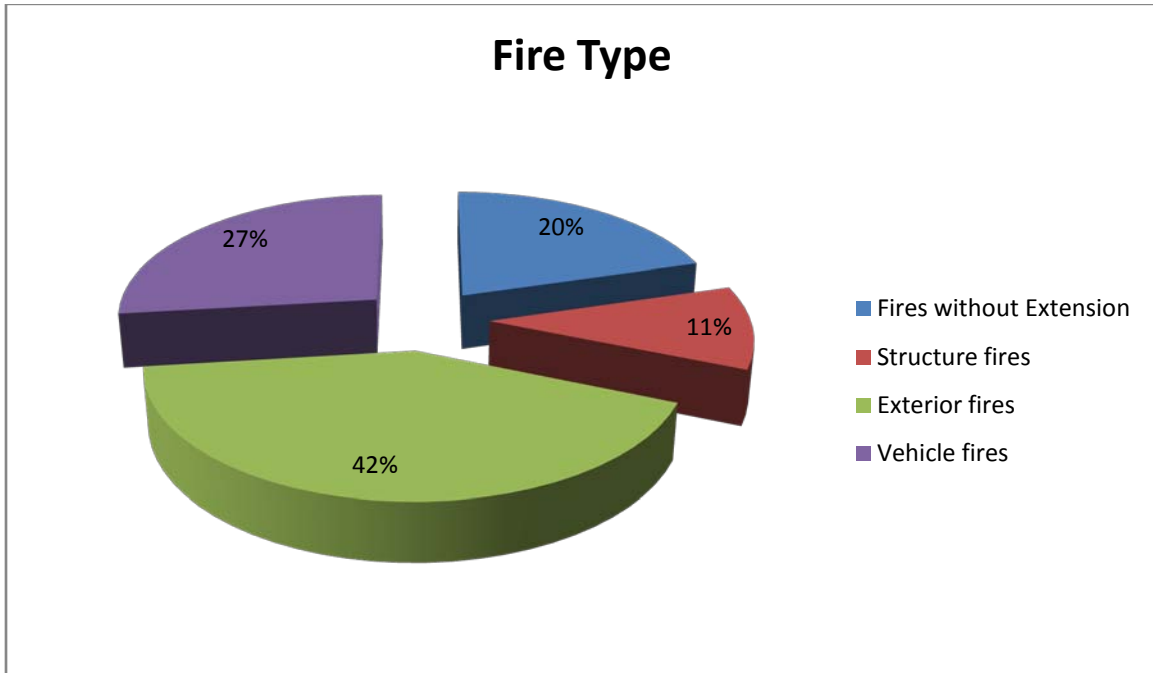
The fire cause breakdown in 2015-16 is indicated on the pie chart below. Only fires investigated by a Certified Fire Investigator are given an official fire cause. Fires that were not investigated are categorized as such, and totaled 69 incidents.



Incendiary fires accounted for four (4) of the fires this year. One of these incidents was determined to have been caused by juveniles. One (1) fire was determined to have been caused by extension cord misuse, and five (5) fires were caused by appliance/mechanical malfunction. In addition, two (2) structure fires were caused by careless cooking operations. Including cooking fires confined to containers, there were 12 total fires resulting from careless cooking operations. Careless cooking operations continued to be a leading cause of fire in residential buildings. All structure fires in 2015/16 occurred in single-family residential structures. This was the first year that there were no reported fires caused by improperly discarded fireplace ashes or smoking materials.

Fire Incidents by Type

The fire incidents in 2015-16 are indicated by fire type on the pie chart below:



The analysis shows that **69%** of all fires in the city of Milford were either vehicle fires or exterior brush-type fires. Many of the exterior fires (8) were actually “illegal” burnings on private property requiring extinguishment by the property owner. With better promotion of the Open Burning Ordinance, we should be able to greatly reduce this number of fires each year.

In the Fiscal Year 2015-2016, the Department responded to **10 Structure Fires**. For the purposes of this report, a Structure Fire is defined as a fire event in which a structure and/or its contents are damaged by fire. A fire originating on the exterior of a building and spreading to involve the structure would be included in this definition. Fires occurring within a structure, but resulting in no damage to the structure or its contents would not be included. Chimney fires with no extension or damage outside of the flue assembly and stovetop fires that are confined to the cooking vessel are examples of fires that are not defined as Structure Fires.

Of the aforementioned 10 Structure Fires, 9 were found to be Accidental or Undetermined in origin. One (1) was determined to be Incendiary. The structure fire occurring at 31 South Wind Lane was determined to be intentionally set and an arrest was made based on the investigation. Two (2) fires were the result of careless cooking operations in single-family homes. Two (2) fires were determined to be caused by electrical malfunction. There was one (1) civilian fatality as a result of a fire incident this year, occurring in a non-sprinklered residential mobile home.

Based on the data analyzed, we can make several distinct conclusions. The first is the probability of fire by type. Almost half of all reported fires in Milford are "exterior" fires. These are fires that include outside refuse containers, such as dumpsters and trash cans, and natural vegetation fires, including grass, leaves, and mulch. Motor vehicle fires make up the second largest category of fires, at 27%. Fires that occur in or around buildings and which spread outside of the first fuel ignited, make up the smallest percentage at 11%. Most interesting is that 100% of these building fires occurred in single-family homes constructed of Type V Wood Frame construction. In the year 2015/16, we did not respond to any fires (with structure involvement) in commercial buildings. This would appear to be a trend directly related to the improvement in building and fire codes in newer construction. We should continue to see commercial building fires declining in the future. With the increase in the number of fully-sprinklered buildings, we should also continue to see a dramatic decline in dollar loss related to fire in these buildings.

Through a continued diligence to building and fire code enforcement in both new construction (design phase) and in existing building inspections, we should recognize substantiated reductions in overall fire loss each year. In addition, our fire origin and cause determinations should be used to develop public education programs directed at the most common fire causes.

Summary & Analysis

The members of the Fire Marshal's Office are responsible for the following duties: fire code enforcement, fire prevention education, and fire origin and cause investigation. In accordance with our mission, we strive to develop the best possible strategies to accomplish our primary goal of reducing fire-related losses. Unfortunately, in recent years, we have continually fallen short of our established goals.

Through a detailed analysis of the office and its activities, a list of organizational weaknesses were identified. The weaknesses are as follows:

- ❖ Lack of adequate manpower
- ❖ Lack of consistency in personnel
- ❖ Job description limitations
- ❖ No generation of revenue
- ❖ No career path for employees

The current staffing of the office would consist of one (1) Fire Marshal, one (1) Senior Fire Inspector, and two (2) Fire Inspectors. As previously stated, we currently have two vacancies in the position of Fire Inspector. Even with a full staff of four certified employees, we would (and have in the past) only be able to complete a small percentage of the required duties each year. Additional human resources are desperately needed.

The personnel in the office do not stay long enough to become skilled and proficient in the requirements of the job. Most experienced fire marshals in the state acknowledge that several years are required to become proficient at this job. In the last five years, the longest length of employment in the office was two years. We simply cannot keep skilled personnel in the office long enough to make significant progress. Instead of sending skilled personnel into the field to perform their duties, we are in a constant state of "training". A method of long-term employee retention is required.

The current job descriptions limit the duties and activities that the Inspectors can perform. The current job description limits the Fire Inspectors to code enforcement activities only. The current job description for Senior Fire Inspector does not allow for plan review, issuance of abatement orders, or direct supervision of the Fire Inspectors. All members of the Fire Marshal's Office are state-certified to the same level; Fire Marshal. Limiting the duties that each member can perform severely limits the

potential productivity of the office as a whole. If through negotiation, the job descriptions could be amended to empower each member to be able to perform a wider range of duties, we could accomplish more of our organizational goals.

Currently, the Fire Marshal's Office does not charge fees for any of our services. We have proposed a fee schedule implementation plan each year, since 2012. We have documented the potential for an annual fee generation of approximately \$60,000 to \$80,000. These fees would be collected for services that we are already currently providing. The amount of revenue would increase as a result of any additional services that we could provide through the addition of Fire Inspectors. The revenue may also be used to cover any expenses required to implement any of the other strategic goals. The fire marshal fee schedule plan has been implemented in all surrounding cities and towns to fund their respective needs for additional manpower and pay grade increases; we need to do the same.

Finally, the Milford Fire Marshal's Office only consists of three (3) union positions. The Fire Marshal is a non-union position, and by contract, is not open to application to any member of the Fire Marshal's Office. Simply put, no member of the Fire Marshal's Office can ever become Fire Marshal! Because of this fact, most department members see the job of Fire Inspector as a "dead-end" career path. This process has directly caused the inconsistency in the office that we have seen for years. Members only stay in the office long enough to find another job outside of the department. Additionally, based on the short tenure of both Fire Marshals and Fire Inspectors, we do not develop nor implement any long-term strategic plans. We desperately need to create a potential career path to elicit the best and brightest candidates from within our department to make the career choice to become a Fire Marshal!

If we can implement a resolve to the five major areas of organizational weakness in the Fire Marshal's Office, I believe we can build the office into one of the best in the state. If we do not address the issues aforementioned, I believe the office will continue to decline until some other agency is forced to take over operations. The office has simply floundered for too many years to continue on this path much longer.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony W. Fino

Senior Fire Inspector

Court Case Links

Juan Pinos v. Mystic Fire District (2009)

<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/ct-superior-court/1565174.html>

Smart v. Corbitt (2011)

<http://judicialview.com/state-cases/connecticut/torts/smart-v-corbitt/44/24830>

Rinh Thach v. City of Bridgeport et al., Docket No. CV07-5009210
(2012)

<http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Bridgeport-to-settle-fatal-fire-lawsuit-4240060.php>