

# Minnesota Fire Association Coalition – MnFAC



## 2019 Legislative Agenda

### MnFAC Priority Issues:

#### Fire Safety Account

The fire service relies on the appropriation of the dedicated revenue funds from insurance surcharge proceeds in order to fund vital functions of the Minnesota Fire Service. This funding has been approved by the Minnesota Legislature in the past. Our goal is to ensure that this funding is permanently built into the Minnesota state budget. We

are requesting approximately \$13 million dollars to be appropriated from the dedicated revenue account to fund the State Fire Marshal's office, the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE) and the Statewide Response Teams (HAZMAT, Task Force 1 Structural Collapse Team and Air Rescue Team).

#### Creation of Fire Protection Districts

We are working to pass enabling legislation to allow for the creation of fire protection districts. This would allow local units of governments across the state to collaborate to provide sustainable models of fire service. The legislation is permissive and allows for appointed elected officials to serve on the board of directors for the fire

protection district. The proposed Fire Protection District legislation would include guidelines for setting up the district and would consist of local elected officials making local decisions on whether to participate in a local Fire Protection District.

#### Local Control of Emergency Medical Services

The current laws regulating Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Minnesota allow ambulance providers the ability to provide EMS services in exclusive operating areas. This is referred to as Primary Service Areas (PSAs). These areas have an indefinite period of time an agency covers them and very little oversight or transparency. Ambulance services currently have no response time requirement from the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB), which is the state's EMS regulatory agency that oversees and issues ambulance licenses. The EMSRB also has no oversight on ambulance billing rates.

Currently no other Health Licensing Board in Minnesota grants a provider an exclusive operating areas as does the EMSRB. Historically, Health Licensing Boards have played a critical role in setting professional standards and establishing credentialing processes.

There is also little transparency required of the ambulance industry. The current system does not require ambulance services to disclose the number of ambulances staffed, where the ambulance is responding from or any other important data points that would be important to ensuring a community is receiving quality ambulance services.

MNFAC believes it is the local units of government, who are closest to the service delivery and directly impacted by it, are best positioned to determine who the licensed ambulance provider is, what level of service is provided, and the authority to ensure there is transparency. MNFAC proposes uncoupling the professional standards overview by the EMSRB from the service area determination thus allowing the local unit of government to determine who provides service within their political boundary. This allows the professional standards to continue to be set by the EMS Regulatory Board which is made up of industry professionals and stakeholders.

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## 2019 Legislative Agenda, Continued

### MnFAC Issues to Support & Monitor:

- MNFIRE initiatives that support physical health can emotional wellness of responders. Cancer, cardiac conditions and mental illness are adverse outcomes that MNFIRE is working to address.
- Ban on flame retardants that are hazardous when exposed to firefighters.
- Increases in funding for the public safety benefit (PSOB) fund.
- Legislation that requires railroads to continue to provide training to responders as well as requiring railroads to share planning, response, and rail line activity information with first responders and emergency managers.

### MnFAC Opposes:

#### Statutory Prohibition of Residential Fire Sprinklers

**Background:** MnFAC opposes efforts to statutorily limit the use of residential fire sprinklers. MnFAC supports the inclusion of stakeholders including state agency professionals and industry experts in creating and writing rule/code parameters that make Minnesotans safer in their homes. We want professionals involved in the writing the residential building code, particularly as it relates to the installation of fire suppression systems.

Past legislative bans have been struck down through the designated appeals process. We want to work collaboratively with all to ensure homes are safe and we know residential fire sprinklers save lives in a cost-effective way.

Recent Minnesota studies show the cost of installing residential fire sprinkler systems averages \$1.15 per sprinklered square foot, or approximately 1% of new home construction.

#### Expansion of Fireworks

**Background:** MnFAC continues to strongly oppose the expansion of legal fireworks in Minnesota. Fireworks cause injury and pose a serious fire risk.

Fireworks injuries in 2015 were the highest they have been in the last 10 years. 43% of the fireworks injuries in the past ten years happen to people 0-19 years of age (children, teens, and young adults). Fire damage due to fireworks in 2014 was \$1.75 Million.

### Additional MnFAC Issues:

In addition to those issues that MnFAC actively initiates, supports and opposes there are several issues that are likely to come up during the session that we will monitor.

Once the legislation is introduced, we will evaluate the bill and determine if we should take a more active approach and support or oppose the legislation. Some of those issues we will be monitoring include:

- Pension changes
- MBFTE statute changes
- Military leave reimbursement
- Fire code transfer
- Wildland firefighter exemption from licensing requirements
- EMS legislation (regulation, reimbursement, funding and operations)
- Sales tax exemption for purchasing equipment
- Pension buy back for military leave
- Public places of accommodation requirements
- School evacuation requirements
- Penalties for interfering with emergency personnel/operations
- State EOC replacement