

MISSISSIPPI STATE FIRE ACADEMY SECOND QUARTER 2016 NEWSLETTER

Making A Difference When It Matters The Most



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK:

This quarter has brought quite a few changes to the Mississippi State Fire Academy, perhaps most notably to our staff. First of all, we must congratulate Instructor Chief Curtiss Marbury on his recent retirement. Curtiss joined the Fire Academy staff 24 years ago. His dedication and abilities helped him earn the position of Instructor Chief of the Special/Industrial Bureau in 2007. Curtiss will be greatly missed, but his contributions to the Fire Academy will long remain with us.

We are very proud to announce that Nick Ragan, long-time staff member of the Special/Industrial Bureau, will advance to Curtiss' former position of Instructor Chief. Nick joined the Fire Academy instructional staff in 2002, coming to us from Flowood Fire Department. Throughout his career at the Fire Academy, Nick has displayed remarkable initiative and creativity in all his work, from the teaching of classes to the development of new programs. We look forward to seeing the Special/Industrial Bureau continue to evolve and grow under Nick's leadership.

Finally, we are very pleased to welcome Barry Burnside. Barry now joins us as a full-time instructor, having served as an adjunct instructor for the Fire Academy since 2013. In addition to his experience as an instructor, Barry brings eleven years of experience as Clinton's fire chief, and an additional eleven years of prior fire service experience with Clinton Fire Department. We feel very fortunate to have Barry on our instructional team.

Although we have encountered changes in our staff, you can be assured that one thing will not change: the instructors and support staff of the Mississippi State Fire Academy will always make it their primary goal to offer the best possible training in fire and emergency response.

Quality Improvement

Curriculum/Testing & Public Relations

The Curriculum/Testing Bureau is committed to quality improvement. We believe that systems in place can always be enhanced, and with that in mind, we have implemented processes such as electronic grading and student re-testing. We strive to put students first in our quality improvement efforts. Whether we are re-evaluating individual distractors on a test question, developing new test banks, designing new course, selecting text books, or administering the CPAT, the students' best interests are at the heart of what we do.



As the bureau responsible for testing, we may not get as much face time with students as other instructors. However, our doors are always open to students who need an issue addressed, need clarification on a test question or testing process, or just want to chat. We are always happy to serve our customers and do our part to make this the #1 Fire Academy USA-the Mississippi Fire Academy!

Matt Ellis, Senior Instructor
mellis@msfa.state.ms.us

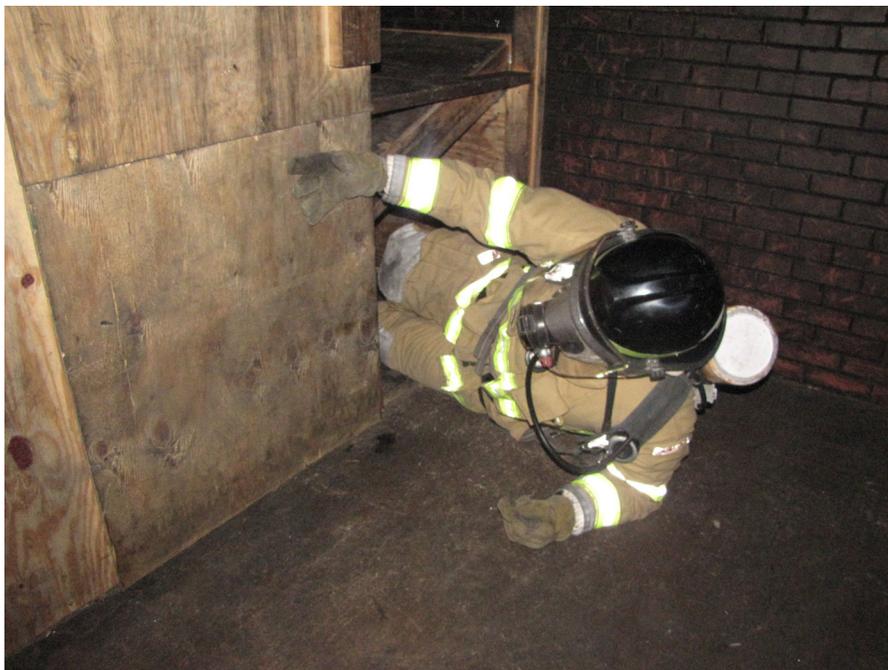


Calling A MAYDAY

The term MAYDAY can frequently generate a lot of conversation in the fire service today. The word MAYDAY is an actual emergency word used across the globe to signal in voice a sign of distress. The word is derived from the French “Venez m’ aider”, meaning “come help me.” Good communication is the first step in calling for help. I challenge you to evaluate your communication system. Here are three quick questions to ask yourself related to your team calling a MAYDAY.

1. Does every member of our firefighting team have a portable radio?
2. Has each team member been shown how to properly call a MAYDAY?
3. Can all team members properly navigate through all fire attack channels with a gloved hand in zero visibility and can they push the emergency button with a gloved hand?
4. Has each team member been told when to call a MAYDAY?

The proper way to call a MAYDAY should be a priority in teaching our recruits today. Without actually having a portable radio or being shown how to properly operate it, our fire fighter cannot be expected to call a MAYDAY correctly or hear another brother’s MAYDAY call. For answers to questions on your department’s communications, take a few minutes and read the new NFPA 1802: Standard on Personal Portable (Hand-Held) Two-Way Radio Communications Devices for Use by Emergency Services Personnel in the Hazard Zone.



Rob Fisher, Instructor Advanced
rfisher@msfa.state.ms.us



Surface & Swiftwater Rescue Training

Special/Industrial Bureau

This August the Special / Industrial Services Bureau will host the first NFPA 1006 2013 Ed. Surface and Swiftwater Levels 1 & 2. This course is a long time coming, and will serve as a huge enhancement to the training and capabilities of Mississippi first responders. Surface water rescues, recoveries, and other operations may occur on any number of the State's Army Corps of Engineer lakes, in-land waterways and coastal estuaries, and smaller lakes. Though Mississippi is not known for its whitewater, swiftwater conditions take place when water is moving as little as 3 miles per hour. Such speeds can take place very quickly in the event of a flashflood-or as Texas friends have come to call them "rain bombs." They can also occur more gradually with large river flooding, such as the Mississippi River during 2011. Water in flood events is either "coming" or "going," and this creates a potential hazard for civilians and first responders. Our staff have operated in extreme currents on city streets during flood events.

Our class will address both types of environments and the training will take place on campus for three days. Then participants will travel to Pearl River County for the swiftwater portion. The training area is where the Pearl River joins the Bogue Chitto in a man-made connection called a "weir," named the Wilson's Slough Diversion. The result of the diversion is a change in elevation of many feet and a Class 3-4 Rapid that extends over 200 yards. The rapid has many features including waves, two prominent eddys, whirlpools, and strainers. There is no simulation of the hazards. They are real and require the utmost training, preparation, and equipment. Technical rescue is dangerous and this type of environment is not for the timid. In addition to providing training, boats, and equipment, the staff at the MSFA are asking the students to invest in themselves. In addition to the PPE the students are required to bring to the class, they will be asked to perform a swim test, and perform fundamental rope skills from past training. The swim criteria can be found online by searching: IADRS Watermanship Test. The necessary PPE and additional rope skills can be found in our course catalog.

Each year the Special / Industrial Bureau at the Fire Academy seeks to raise the bar in special operations. We try to add new courses, update tools, and update techniques. In addition, we have recently increased the demands on students for exit testing in rescue programs. In the future students will be required to perform "entry check-offs" to demonstrate retention of key skills acquired in previous courses. This will require a student to come more prepared, but students gain valuable instructional time when time spent reviewing can be minimized.

Remember one thing about us: "minimum standard" is not in our vocabulary. Special operations response requires: specialized training, specialized equipment, and special people. Our programs aim to be unequalled on a national level. Mississippi rescuers have the potential to be the best in the United States. Our job is to provide the tools and resources and set the "gold" standard. You can look to your colleagues in Special / Industrial at the MSFA to continue to do just that!



Russell McCullar, Senior Instructor
rmccullar@msfa.state.ms.us



Your Mississippi State Fire Academy has secured a federal grant to purchase a state of the art, computer-generated Fire Apparatus Driving Simulator. We are very excited to take delivery of the totally self-contained, trailer mounted, two place driving simulator. This new virtual technology will allow the students to select the appropriate style of apparatus from a passenger car, SUV, ambulance, pumpers, ladder trucks and even a tiller truck if applicable. The simulator will have the capability to respond to calls in urban, rural, or metropolitan areas. Weather, traffic, obstacles, and other responding fire apparatus can be generated by the simple click of a mouse to give students a realistic driving experience.

This simulator will also have an approved driving course installed for aiding in the initial training of driver operators. This is just another way your Mississippi State Fire Academy is staying on the cutting edge of technology to augment our existing Driver Operator Programs.

Steven Ashby, Instructor Chief
sashby@msfa.state.ms.us

