



**State Fire Marshal  
Monthly Report to the California  
Fire Prevention Officers**



**Kate Dargan  
State Fire Marshal**

**Taking Care of Each Other**

Fire Friends,

Closing a year and welcoming the next is always a reflective time for me; this year especially so. This December marks my 50th birthday and quite predictably prompts reflection on progress made and plans for the future. Serving as your State Fire Marshal is one of the most rewarding personal and professional opportunities I have received and the past few years have been fast and furiously paced. Let's take stock:

**Adoption of the Wildland-Urban Interface Building Standards** - a leadership moment for California as a group of diverse individuals came together and

worked through a tough set of building and fire code decisions and successfully recommended them forward to the California Building Standards Commission.

**Blueprint 2020: State Fire Training** – A collaborative effort with both Cal Chiefs and the OSFM, along with countless participants, advisors, reviewers, and the approval of the State Board of Fire Services.

**Publication of the updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps** – a team of scientists, academics, firefighters, and fire planners worked long months to develop a rigorous hazard model, a rollout program and local outreach to 56 counties and over 200 cities.

**Adoption of the I-Codes based California Building and Fire Codes** – how many thousands of hours did we spend working collaboratively across California with fire and building officials, industry and manufacturers to develop safe, effective, and reasonable codes.

**Photovoltaics: Fire Service Fundamentals** – this program, initiated from controversy, brought together a green policy goal, an industry with little fire service familiarity, and a task force of interested parties that developed a trend-setting class on the key solar issues for firefighters.

And I could keep this list going for a few more pages if I wanted to describe in more detail the **Disabled Access Task Force, STEAC, the Fireworks Committee, the Group L Committee, the Water Purveyor Task Force** to name a few more (and still not all) but I think you can start to see the point. We are focused at the Office of the State Fire Marshal on creating friendships, listening to the concerns brought to us, resolving conflicts, and being grateful that we have each and all of you as partners.

And this is the lesson most valued as we close this difficult year in both our state and country: **people are what count**. It is this recognition that comes again to me as I celebrate 50 years of life....it's the people, it's ALWAYS the people that matter the most. So take care of one another out there, make a phone call to a colleague you lost touch with, invite a laid-off friend out to lunch and give them a few contacts, listen closely to the individuals and industries so damaged by these hard financial times and help them find their way back. It may be that taking care of each other is taking care of all of us.

Peace, Hope, Safety

Kate

## Deputy SFM Wins the Medal of Valor

The Medal of Valor is the highest honor the State can bestow on its employees. It is awarded to individuals who have performed an extraordinary act of heroism above and beyond the call of duty to save the life of another person, or have risked their own life to save someone.



This year CAL FIRE has seven recipients, each with their own story of heroism in the face of danger. In the State Fire Marshal's office we are especially proud of **Deputy State Fire Marshal, John Guhl.**

On Sunday May 18, 2008 while visiting the Grand Marina in Alameda, DSFM John Guhl risked his personal safety in order to stop a disoriented driver from injuring other individuals and prevented the man from driving his car off a cliff into the waterway. The driver repeatedly shifted his car from forward to reverse, striking several objects as he went. At one point, the right front tire of his vehicle was suspended in the air over the embankment. DSFM Guhl entered the car through the passenger door, turned off the ignition, removed the keys and placed the car in park. He then kept the driver safely in the car until police arrived.

Congratulations to John Guhl as well as Eric R. Ayers, James F. Allen, Franklin T. Johnson, Corey Call, Wesley D. Grim, and Carl Schwettman, the CAL FIRE 2008 Medal of Valor winners.

Photos of all of the CAL FIRE Medal of Valor winners will be posted on the SFM website.

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## Pipeline Safety

### Pipeline Division Seeks Local Agency Volunteers

The State Fire Marshal is currently looking to fill three local agency vacancies on the **Pipeline Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC)**. The committee is comprised of eight members of whom two represent pipeline operators, three represent local agencies, one as a fire chief, plus two public members. The purpose of the



PSAC is to inform local agencies and every pipeline operator of changes in applicable laws and regulations affecting the operations of pipelines, and reviewing proposed hazardous liquid pipeline safety regulations adopted pursuant to Section 51011. The committee shall meet when requested by the State Fire Marshal, but not less than once a year. The members shall be paid expenses and one hundred dollars (\$100) per diem for each meeting.

If you represent a local agency and are interested in participating in issues relating to the transportation of hazardous liquid by pipeline in California, please contact Pipeline Safety Division Chief Bob Gorham at (562) 497-9102 or by email: [bob.gorham@fire.ca.gov](mailto:bob.gorham@fire.ca.gov) .

Appointment terms are two years and typically the committee meets once or twice a year, usually in conjunction with an industry training seminar.

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## Wildland Urban Interface Fire Prevention

Since **California Building Code Chapter 7A** *“Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure”* became fully effective in January and July of this year, the OSFM has become aware of a number of issues which pose challenges to implementing the code as intended. In November the OSFM took two steps toward addressing these issues, beginning with the issuance of policy documents to facilitate compliance with CBC Ch7A. The application of these new *“CBC Ch7A Compliance Policy”* documents will be limited to building standards regulations pertaining to exterior wildfire exposure protection and only to OSFM plan review and construction inspection on projects under OSFM jurisdiction. The scope of the CBC Ch7A Compliance Policies will be construction methods and materials which meet the OSFM intent for the chapter including: OSFM “acceptance” of specific products, examples of prescriptive compliance, and alternate methods of construction. *“CBC Ch7A Compliance Policy”* documents will provide direction to OSFM plan review and construction inspection staff and will serve as a resource for design professionals to promote more uniform statewide application of the code for projects within OSFM jurisdiction.

The second step towards facilitating implementation of CBC Ch7A *“Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure”* will be the formation of an ad hoc **Task Force to recommend CBC Ch7A code change proposals** to the OSFM for the 2010 California Building Code. For up to date information on these initiatives please see the OSFM website Homepage at <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/> and click on the “Hot Topic” [CBC Ch7A Wildfire Protection](#).

This policy is only applicable to OSFM plan and construction review for projects under OSFM jurisdiction, which encompass state-owned buildings. Local jurisdictions and other enforcing agencies may or may not adopt similar methods of administering current code requirements; determining equivalent alternates for materials, design, tests, and methods of construction; or of approving specific product use as necessary in enforcing the existing California Building Code Ch7A “Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure” and related sections.

**OSFM Ch7A Compliance Policies** address those aspects of OSFM plan and construction review that are not clearly addressed by existing regulation and typically indicate acceptable methods of achieving compliance with applicable codes and regulations. OSFM Ch7A Compliance Policies are intended for use by OSFM staff and as a resource for design professionals to promote more uniform statewide guidelines for plan review and construction inspection of projects within the jurisdiction of OSFM, although other methods proposed by design professionals may be considered. References to CBC are to the California Building Code in effect at the time of policy issuance or revision date, Ch7A refers to CBC Ch7A “Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure,” “code” refers to the California Building Code and all related provisions of CCR Title 24.

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## Fire and Resource Assessment Program

### Local Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) Maps Released

FHSZ recommendations have been released by the Director for the following counties and/or cities within the counties that have Very High FHSZ:



Shasta, Butte, Napa, Sacramento, Marin, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Bernardino, Monterey, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, and Tuolumne.

Others are imminent.

# Fire and Life Safety

## Working for Safety...Running for Fitness

In addition to all of that energy they devote to codes and public safety, both of our Fire and Life Safety Chiefs are accomplished runners. Northern California Chief Vickie Sakamoto, who has run in the Boston Marathon among others, recently finished first in her age group in the “Run the River” race in Sacramento with a time of [3:49:33](#).



And here is Southern California Chief **Ernie Paez** (front left) competing in the San Antonio Rock and Roll Marathon in November with a time of 4 hrs 2 minutes. This is Ernie’s second marathon, although he has run many other shorter distance races. He logged 40-45 miles per week in the weeks leading up to the marathon. And he says he is officially hooked on the sport.

So that is how they stay so fit!

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## Code Development and Analysis

OSFM Code Development and Analysis Division (CDandA) has issued an **Information Bulletin** relating to “Decorative Vegetation in New and Existing Buildings”. This IB addresses a conflict between CCR, Title 19 and the 2007 California Fire Code and states as follows:

*During the rulemaking promulgation and adoption of Title 24, Part 9, 2007 California Fire Code (CFC), provisions contained in Section 806 for “Decorative Vegetation in New and Existing Buildings” were adopted in conflict with Title 19,*

*Division 1, Section 3.08. The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has identified this conflict and in the next rulemaking cycle will be addressing the conflict. At this time, OSFM considers the provisions contained in CFC Section 806 to be “non-building standards” in accordance with CFC Section 101.6. The provisions contained in Title 19, Division 1, Section 3.08 are to be utilized since the CFC is in conflict. This does not preclude the local enforcing agency or jurisdiction from adopting the CFC provisions by ordinance in accordance with CFC Section 101.8 For additional information please see the November 20, 2008 I.B. <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/informationbulletin/informationbulletin.php>*

## **Group L Task Group**

The SFM-proposed amendments for **Group L occupancy requirements** located in the California Building Code at Section 443, were approved by the California Building Standards Commission at their meeting on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008. This amendment package included a complete rewrite of the Group L occupancy requirements contained in the 2007 CBC. This rewrite was accomplished by the SFM Group L Task Group which consisted of members from the Biotech industry, hazmat experts, consultants, university fire marshals, fire service, a building official, an architect and SFM staff.

During the BSC meeting the commission assigned the SFM, with assistance from the fire service and the Biotech industry, the task of providing specific requirements to address the maximum number of laboratory suites allowed per floor.

SFM has since reformed the original Group L task group with additional fire service members. The task group has had meetings in October and November and is drafting revisions to Table 443.7.3.1. If you have any questions regarding the revisions, please contact John Guhl at (916) 445-8314 or [john.guhl@fire.ca.gov](mailto:john.guhl@fire.ca.gov)

## **Supplement to the 2007 California Codes**

The 2007 annual rulemaking cycle to create the supplement to the 2007 California Codes has been completed. Publication of the supplement is tentatively scheduled for February 1, 2009 with an effective date of August 1, 2009.

OSFM made several revisions to the Building, Mechanical and Fire Codes:

- Rewrite of the L occupancy provisions in CBC Section 443.
- Revisions to standby and emergency power systems for high-rises.
- Adoption of the 2007 edition of NFPA 72 and corresponding amendments.
- Several amendments in chapter 30 have been repealed as these provisions are now contained in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) A17.1 standard.
- Clean up of provisions related to Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly

## Emergency Code Change

Permanent adoption of OSFM emergency regulations to the 2007 California Building and Fire Code concerning I-2 occupancies above 75 feet was approved at the Building Standards Commissions October 27, 2008 meeting. An emergency supplement was been published October 23, 2008 and is effective immediately.

## 2010 California Building Standards Code Pre-rulemaking Activity

CDandA has started the pre-rulemaking activities to adopt and amend the 2009 editions of the base model codes for inclusion in the 2010 California Building Standards Codes. Over the next six months, CDandA will be holding focus group and stakeholder meetings requesting input and vetting SFM proposals. If you would like to be included in the CDandA stakeholder email distribution list please email [Kevin.Reinertson@fire.ca.gov](mailto:Kevin.Reinertson@fire.ca.gov)

The California Building Standards Commission has been compiling an online erratum for the 2007 Edition of Title 24 which can be downloaded at: [http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/bsc/Title\\_24/documents/Errata/Errata080108.pdf](http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/bsc/Title_24/documents/Errata/Errata080108.pdf)



And last but not least, **Renee Powers** retired in November after 28 years with the OSFM. Chief Dargan presented her with a proclamation as ASFM Tonya Hoover and Roseville Fire Chief Dennis Matheson look on.

We wish you all the best Renee in your new life!

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**CAL FIRE Office of the State Fire Marshal**

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov>

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