Jacquelyn A. Suárez, Commissioner
Richard Mikutsky, Director and State Fire Marshal

Statewide Stage 3 Fire Restrictions Currently in Effect Due to Ongoing Drought Conditions

Fall 2024

New Jersey Division of Fire Safety

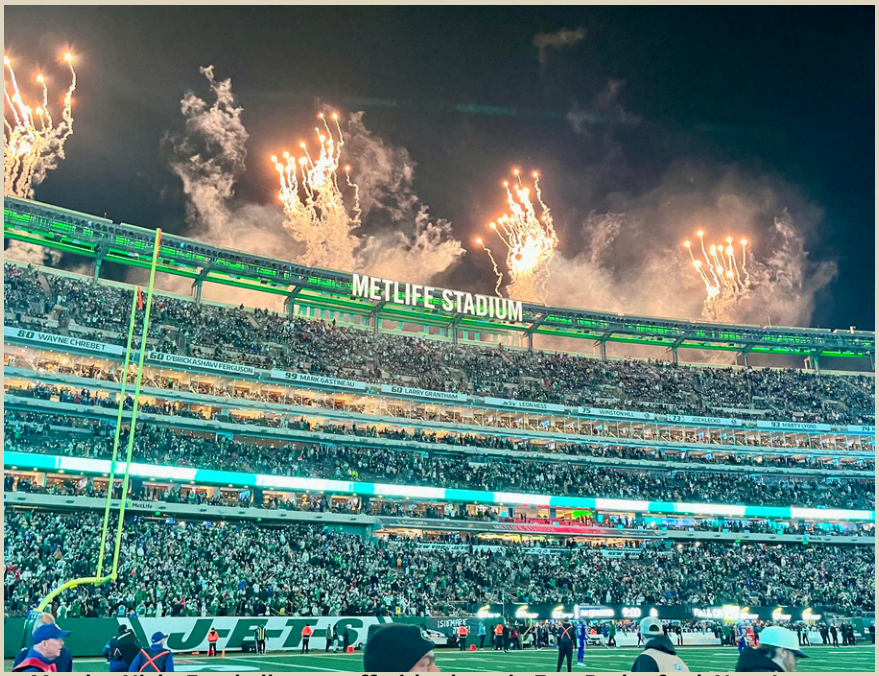
FIRE FOCUS

Excellence in Public Safety

Monday Night Lights: Courtesy of NJDFS Code Enforcement

On October 14, 2024, over 80,000 fans looked to the sky above MetLife Stadium - and nearly 18 million tuned in on their televisions – as Monday Night Football kicked off with a barrage of fireworks. The enhanced pyrotechnic display set the stage for a primetime matchup between the New York Jets and Buffalo Bills.

However, these shows can't go on without a thumb's up from the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety's Code Enforcement Unit.



Monday Night Football starts off with a bang in East Rutherford, New Jersey.



NJDFS Inspector David Bori examines the fireworks from the MetLife Stadium rooftop 45 minutes before kickoff.

Whether it's the Jets, Giants, Kenny Chesney, or Taylor Swift, any event that features pyrotechnics in New Jersey must get a permit from the NJDFS. The team, or artist, submits a packet with detailed information on what the fireworks at their event will entail. The packet is reviewed by the Code Enforcement Unit and a permit is issued if the plan is determined to be safe.

Monday Night Lights: Courtesy of NJDFS Code Enforcement (cont.)

"Our inspectors are on-site at every event to ensure that the plan submitted by the pyrotechnic company is what is actually being set up," said Supervisor Chad Stanley. "We look for things like the positioning and spacing of the fireworks, as well as ensure that none are left unexploded at the conclusion of the event."





Several types of fireworks stand ready to blow prior to kickoff.

There are also the elements of the event – like the weather - that you *can't* control. And on the night of the October 14th, the quarterbacks and kickers were not the only ones concerned about the wind.

"We keep a close eye on the conditions," added Inspector Joe Hayes. "Because if the wind gets above 25 mph, we cannot let them shoot."

Luckily the winds settled before kickoff and the fans were treated to the full fireworks display.

Next time you hear bombs bursting in air during the National Anthem, or see the sky light up in green (or blue) after the home team scores, rest assured that event organizers must work with the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety to make it happen.



NJDFS Inspectors David Bori and Joe Hayes discuss the night's plans with New York Jets Pyrotecnics Coordinator Ed Rubio.

STATE FIRE MARSHAL MESSAGE



November is here and that means that it's Carbon Monoxide (CO) Awareness Month! Every year, carbon monoxide is responsible for over 100,000 documented emergency room visits and hundreds of fatalities. CO poisoning is on the rise in the United States and often has long-lasting health effects. It is the mission of the National Carbon Monoxide Awareness Association (NCOAA) to mitigate the risk of CO poisoning in the United States. The Division of Fire Safety, in partnership with the NCOAA, is focused on eradicating carbon monoxide poisoning and helping carbon monoxide poisoning survivors recover.

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is a public health crisis affecting as many as 1 in 6 homes and is a leading cause of poisoning in the United States

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless non-irritating gas that is imperceptible to human senses. Health effects of carbon monoxide poisoning range from mild symptoms such as fatigue, dizziness, headache, confusion, and nausea to more severe symptoms such as disorientation, unconsciousness, long-term neurological disabilities, coma, cardiorespiratory failure, and death.

We are excited to have you, our fire service partners, raise awareness and help us educate our communities about CO safety and support CO poisoning survivors as we work toward greatly reducing injuries and deaths due to carbon monoxide poisoning.



Stay safe and have a healthy and happy holiday season!

Rich Mikutsky
Director / State Fire Marshal

Training Never Stops for Fire Investigation/K-9 Unit

Every month, the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety's K-9 Teams perform their monthly in-service training at the Atlantic County Fire Academy. At these trainings, they conduct various search evolutions of interior and exterior building areas, vehicles, brush, etc., to model situations that could potentially be encountered on fire scenes.

The NJDFS K-9's are certified for Ignitable Liquid Detection, and are "play reward/aggressive indication," which means they scratch when they detect one of the nearly 30 odors with which they have been imprinted. The NJDFS team also works with other agency K-9 Teams, some of which are "food reward / passive indication," in which they will sit down when they find an ignitable liquid odor. It is the objective of all the K-9 Teams to locate ignitable liquids, whether or not they played a part in the initiation or spread of the fire, and to assist with determining the best areas to take evidence samples for laboratory analysis.

The K-9 Teams have all completed a 400-hour Basic Training and hold monthly in-service training sessions, which actually exceeds the New Jersey Attorney General's K-9 Proficiency Standards. They are re-evaluated every six months by K-9 Trainer Dennis McSweeny. He is a world-renowned K-9 trainer and consultant who brought the country's first formal "Accelerant Detection" K-9 training program to New Jersey in the late 1980's when he was a Sergeant with the Atlantic City Police Department. For over 20 years the NJDFS Team has learned from the best in the business.



The NJDFS Investigation K-9 Unit, Left-to-Right: Investigator Woody Villegas, K-9 Mila, Investigator Joe Jackson, Trainer Dennis McSweeny, Supervisor Jason Spiecker, Investigator Stephen Letts, K-9 Remy, Investigator Rod Meyer, K-9 Hank, Investigator Walt Zieser, K-9 Murry.

Training Never Stops for Fire Investigation / K-9 Unit (cont.)



Investigator Joe Jackson works with K-9 Mila under the direction of world-renowned K-9 Trainer Dennis McSweeny.



K-9 Coordinator Stephen Letts rewards K-9 Remi.



Investigator Rod Meyer and K-9 Hank search the grounds at Atlantic County Fire Academy.



Investigator Walt Zieser and K-9 Murry work together to “find the cause.”



ANNUAL FIRE DEPARTMENT SURVEYS NEEDED!!

Each calendar year, all fire departments are required to submit their Annual Fire Department Survey to the NJ Division of Fire Safety. If your department is not compliant for 2024 - or if you are unsure if your department has submitted a survey - contact Lenny Inzerillo: *Leonard.Inzerillo@dca.nj.gov*

NERIS - Coming Soon...

As 2025 approaches, we would like to remind everyone that the State Fire Marshal's Office is no longer accepting emailed National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data. Agency personnel must upload the NFIRS reports directly into the FEMA website. Job aids are available at the following website:

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfirs/training/

In addition to the available job aids, agencies can request Incident Report Writing training classes by contacting the Fire Incident Reporting Unit. We would like to commend those agencies who have made the transition smooth and would invite our remaining departments to reach out so we can assist you with the program.

Currently, the biggest talk around the fire data collection world currently is NERIS (National Emergency Response Information System). NERIS is being launched by the USFA (U.S. Fire Administration) as a National collaborative effort in providing an interoperable fire information and analytics platform. Please head over to https://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfirs/neris/ and watch the recorded webinars to learn more about how the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T), and USFA are working hard to "modernize" the fire and emergency service data collection system. Two common questions the Fire Incident Reporting Unit have received are:

Is there a release date for the NERIS data dictionary?
Answer: The consolidated NERIS data dictionary launched on November 4, 2024. Current data schema and options are available on the NERIS website (fsri.org). (Note: The engagement period for comments has closed and the schemas are being modified as needed based on user feedback. So, the published draft schema may not be the most current version.)

How can we pull past data sets from NFIRS when NERIS is 100% live?
Answer: Once NERIS goes online, users will continue to have access to the Data Warehouse to retrieve NFIRS data. If users want to compare or use NFIRS and NERIS data combined, they will need to work locally (offline).

As we continue to move forward and do our part in the national data collection process, we would also like to remind you of some New Jersey required forms that assist us in that process. These forms are available online at https://www.nj.gov/dca/dfs/forms/index.shtml

Information obtained from school fire reports, lithium-ion battery fires, burn victims, or fatality reports will assist us in increasing public awareness of fire safety by developing educational fire safety materials such as brochures, flyers, posters, and booklets for distribution to schools, fire departments and the public.

HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY

As the most festive time of year approaches here in New Jersey, so do the hazards that could potentially cause fires. Here are some tips that your fire department, or fire prevention bureau, can promote this holiday season:

Holiday Decorating



- **Be careful when decorating for the holidays. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.**
- **Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Always follow manufacturer's instructions.**
- **Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so cords do not get damaged.**

Holiday Entertaining



- **Test your smoke alarms and make guests aware of your home fire escape plan.**
- **Stay in the kitchen whenever cooking on a stovetop.**
- **Keep children and pets away from lit candles. Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.**

Christmas Trees



- **Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, or heat vents.**
- **NEVER use lit candles to decorate a tree.**
- **Use lights that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory and always turn them off before leaving the house or going to bed.**

As with all seasons, focus on having and practicing fire escape plans and stress the importance of having working smoke alarms in the home.

The NJ Division of Fire Safety wishes you a happy and safe holiday season!

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