

4B
FOURTH BIENNIAL REPORT

Department of
Public Safety



STATE OF VERMONT

1955 -- 1956

In the aforementioned cases listed as Incendiary, the following results were obtained:

	Fiscal Year 1955	Fiscal Year 1956
Adults:		
Arrests.....	9	22
In Hands of State's Attorney.....	1	
Juveniles:		
Returned to Brandon State School.....		1
Committed to the Vermont State Hospital.....		1
No action Taken.....		2

In the aforementioned 25 cases listed as Children and Matches there were 44 children involved.

Of the 207 fires of undetermined origin, the following tabulation shows the opinion of the investigators as to the cause of some of the fires. However, as origin cannot be proven, the cases have been listed as undetermined.

	Fiscal Year 1955	Fiscal Year 1956
Accidental and Carelessness.....	11	15
Children and Matches.....	8	8
Oil Burners and Chimneys, overheated or defective.....	5	2
Electric Wiring—defective.....	5	7
Incendiary.....	19	8
Lightning.....	2	1
Sparks.....	2	2
Motor Vehicles—faulty fuel pump.....	1	
Spontaneous Combustion.....	5	4
Exposure from Grass Fire.....		1

The following twelve persons lost their lives by fires during the fiscal year 1955:

Name	Date	Age	Place
Ora Stevens	July 6, 1954	75 years	Island Pond
Hattie Andrews	September 12, 1954	60 "	Rutland
William W. Adams	October 1, 1954	24 "	Fair Haven
Percy Weinle	October 14, 1954	59 "	Brandon
Kuzma Wasiluk	November 26, 1954	65 "	Bridgewater
Gordon R. Cantell	December 29, 1954	48 "	Montgomery
Benjamin D. Spooner	February 5, 1955	7 "	Topsham
Rollo Rowe	February 10, 1955	79 "	Sherburne
Linda Lee Colbeth	March 19, 1955	20 months	Marshfield
Steven Allen Colbeth	March 19, 1955	7 years	"
Huldah Salter	March 27, 1955	74 "	Pittsford
Frances Hunter	June 12, 1955	62 "	Guildhall

The following nine persons lost their lives by fire during the fiscal year 1956:

Name	Date	Age	Place
Clare Ames	January 21, 1956	26 years	North Pownal
Phillip Brooks	December 20, 1955	21 "	Topsham

Paul J. Flickenger	June 17, 1956	31 "	Sunderland
Mrs. Jennie K. Hall	March 3, 1956	81 "	Orleans
Donald Ingram	December 12, 1955	23 "	West Topsham
Charles W. Keitchline	February 6, 1956	19 "	Groton
Mrs. Lela E. Lackey	May 2, 1956	58 "	Marlboro
Lawrence Sirrell	January 22, 1956	31 "	Quechee
William H. Stoddard	April 15, 1956	3 "	Wells

Approximately 1,562 inspections were made during this period, including state-owned buildings, schools, theatres, hospitals, convalescent homes, and other public buildings.

Fire losses reported for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1955, as received by this office by July 10, 1955, totalled \$1,991,112.00, and as reported for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1956, as received by this office by August 10, 1956, totalled \$2,125,064.00.

The statistics in this report will reflect a dropping off in the number of claims reported because as of July 1, 1954 fire insurance companies were required to report only fires in which the damage amounts to \$100 or more, instead of the \$50 minimum, which previously applied.

Civil Defense Activities

Having taken advantage of the five years of its current existence, civil defense in Vermont is now a mature organization, the need for which is clearly and universally recognized. The public is generally aware that we are faced by a potential enemy with the capability of both producing and delivering an attack with Hydrogen weapons. It is also apparent that civil defense is no longer a temporary affair, but that it will continue indefinitely. In the past, civil defense efforts were restricted to the duration of actual hostilities. Today, civil defense, like military defense, has become an integral part of our daily lives and will continue as long as the danger of atomic attack exists.

The field of civil defense preparations is vast. It covers a myriad of governmental and individual responsibilities, and encompasses a wide variety of tasks calling for constant effort. Civil defense is faced with the dual task of informing the public as to the need for civil defense and how it operates, and at the same time through this informative process, it seeks to recruit volunteers. This is a formidable challenge. The preparations being made by civil defense to provide for the care and protection of our people in case of an attack disaster comprise many activities. To pick out which aspects are most important or which contribute the most to the overall program is nearly impossible. Each and every contribution is important because it is a link in the whole chain of preparations. A cross-section of the activities engaging the attention of the State Civil Defense Agency is, therefore, included herein.

Civil Defense Operational Tests

The highlight of the fiscal year 1956 Activities was "Operation

Bellwind," the first test evacuation in Vermont and the first of its kind in the country. Held on May 24, approximately 600 people were evacuated from Bellows Falls, and were received and fed in Chester and Windsor. This was based upon the theory that radioactive fallout was so concentrated in Bellows Falls, that the people could not remain in their shelters beyond their three day food supply limit, and, therefore, it was necessary to evacuate the people to safe areas. Over 500 civil defense volunteers participated in the exercise. The results were favorable.

In addition, the civil defense organization was tested in "Operation Alert 1955." Local civil defense units as well as the State Agency participated in the exercise.

Ground Observer Corps

Since the inauguration of "Operation Skywatch" on July 14, 1952, the Ground Observer Corps has been on 24-hour duty in 36 states along the northern, eastern, and western borders of our country. On the third anniversary of "Skywatch," 1955, this system was extended, and the Ground Observer Corps is now on "Skywatch" in all the 48 states.

This has made necessary the addition of 24 more filter centers to handle the Aircraft Flash Calls from new posts in the added area. It also means that the overall estimate of required volunteers has been increased to over a million. Our goal is obvious. We must have a detection system to screen out the enemy regardless of his direction of approach, and this system must be able to complement radar, or even supplement it, in the event of radar evasion or sabotage.

In Vermont, "Operation Skywatch" continues its forward surge. Of the 140 observation posts designated, all are organized and only 6 are not being manned some portion of the day or night. However, the ultimate goal of 140 24-hour posts is not yet in sight. It will require the addition of approximately 5,000 volunteers ready to sacrifice some of their free time so that they may remain free. A 24-hour post is something of which to be proud in the community. It shows that the townspeople realize their responsibilities and are ready to do something to protect that freedom.

During the fiscal year 1955, "Skyscan" and "Skytrain" exercises were held to test the effectiveness of the Ground Observer Corps system. Facts and figures compiled by the statisticians show that it is becoming increasingly more difficult for an enemy or unknown plane to sneak through our detection network. Of course, this has been under alert conditions, but it does show that the Ground Observer Corps is operationally sound and has excellent capabilities for detection. The U. S. Air Force, through the sector sergeants, officers, and State Coordinator, has assisted and advised civil defense chairmen and post supervisors. Over 350 meetings were attended by Air Force representatives with an estimated audience of 10,500.

Under the realignment plan, Vermont is now divided into three filter center areas of responsibility. Observation posts in the state now report to the Syracuse, Bangor and Albany filter Centers, with sector sergeants from each filter center assisting in the development of operational GOC posts within their area.

Women's Activities in Civil Defense

Of primary importance in women's activities is the organization of an advisory council made up of the presidents and the civil defense chairmen of all major State women's civic groups. This council developed at a workshop meeting October 27, 1955, a program for home and community participation in civil defense plus a civil defense public information service. An executive committee of 6 persons was elected to direct program activities throughout the year. The home preparedness phase of the program emphasizes training in home nursing and first aid for one member of each household. To help meet this objective, two home nursing instructor courses cooperatively sponsored by Red Cross and Civil Defense have been conducted. Five graduates received civil defense certificates of proficiency at Rutland, and 11 at Barton, bringing the total number cooperatively trained and currently certified to 33. Each instructor is available to teach two 14-hour classes in local communities in the ensuing year.

Home demonstration clubs and the Vermont Extension Service have stressed the importance of home preparation through the publication of a leaflet entitled, "Is Your Home Ready for an Emergency," and a series of club meetings highlighting the need for maintaining a 3-day supply of food, civil defense first aid kit and other miscellaneous necessities in cellar shelters.

The community preparedness program has received a good start with the drafting of a Vermont Civil Defense mass feeding manual currently being prepared for publication by the Vermont Dietetics Association.

A speaker's bureau available to organizations and district civil defense groups is being trained and sponsored by the women's program to assist in public information.

A major activity was the Governor's luncheon and civil defense conference attended by over 100 organization leaders in September of 1955. Mrs. Jean Wood Fuller, Director of Women's Activities for Federal Civil Defense Administration was a guest speaker. This conference provided organizations increased incentive to implement civil defense in their existing programs.

Contributions Program

Matching funds totalling \$62,389.40 were allocated by the Federal Civil Defense Administration to the State of Vermont during the biennium. Federal funds can only be used when matched equally by state or local governments. 130 requests were processed covering communications, siren, training and rescue items.

Local Civil Defense Organizations

As required by law, all cities and towns are authorized and directed to develop a civil defense organization based upon the State Civil Defense Plan. During the past two years, 71 new civil defense chairmen have been appointed, some new and some replacing others who resigned. This brings the total to 234 out of 246. Considerable progress has been made in the development of workable civil defense organizations in these various towns and cities, however, much more has yet to be done before an effective organization is achieved in every community.

Public Information

A comprehensive public information program in civil defense embraces a variety of responsibilities. Utilizing every available medium—literature, exhibits, lectures, newspapers, radio, television and motion pictures, the civil defense public information service helps the community prepare for its role in the event of attack. During the period of this report the state staff attended 300 meetings speaking to 13,000 people. For the first time a series of television shows were presented by the state staff and other civil defense people for the purpose of acquainting the public with civil defense. The quarterly publication and distribution of the newsletter, "The Vermont Lookout," to 2,500 people were continued. Publications of all types are distributed freely to civil defense personnel as well as the general public. The ultimate goal of this program is to make every citizen in the state aware of the part he or she must take in the preparation for a major disaster.

Legislation

On May 12, 1955, Governor Joseph Johnson signed the Civil Defense Bill, No. 186 of the Public Acts of 1955, which extended the life of the State Civil Defense Agency to June 30, 1957. From February 15, 1955, the expiration date of the Civil Defense Act, until May 12, 1955, the personnel of the Civil Defense Division continued to work without pay in order that continuity in the civil defense program would not be lost. A clause, which would have given the Civil Defense Agency the necessary authority to operate in natural disaster, was defeated by the Senate along with House Bill 99 which would have permitted interchange of aid with other states in the event of a natural disaster. Vermont, therefore, remains one of the few states in the country in which Civil Defense does not have the authority to assist in the event of a natural disaster.

Radiological Defense

In view of the extended fallout patterns produced by thermo nuclear weapons, radiological defense for Vermont assumes new importance. However, the basic philosophy which guided us in the establishment of the original radiological service resulted in a

program which will require no reorganization or disruption in view of these newer realities.

In the event of disaster involving the presence of radioactive fallout, or radioactive contamination from other sources, the health, welfare, and lives of possibly thousands of individuals may depend upon careful, accurate measurements and assessments of radioactivity. Our philosophy has been that of maintaining what one might call an "elite corps" of radiological safety officers. In this way, we avoid the necessity of frequent training sessions to try to maintain the enthusiasm and interest of numerous individuals, who because of background require frequent exercises and refresher courses to maintain their value as monitors. We are equipping these teams with up-to-date instruments in order to cope with any radiological problem. In addition, liaison has been established with the Weather Service for plotting of wind currents as pertain to radioactive fallout.

Communications

Progress was made during the past two years in the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) in both the planning and operational aspects of its program. This advancement is reflected in the growing awareness of many local communities in the State as to the vital role that amateur radio plays in civil defense planning and operations.

The State Control Center's radio station at Headquarters functioned throughout the year as part of the RACES network. This station and the other district stations participated in the nationwide "Operation Alert" on June 14 and 15, 1955, and were in operation for all regularly scheduled, weekly state-wide radio drills.

Crime Prevention and Detection

Crime, as with traffic violations, and motor vehicle accidents, is on the upsurge in occurrence frequency throughout the nation.

Its causes are also similar to those which create traffic hazards and accidents.

Driver training education and a safety conscious public made so by a sound and progressive safety education program, are among the means of destroying ignorance, the basic cause of many traffic violations and accidents, likewise a well informed public is the medium for reducing and destroying the source or cause of crime. This department, realizing the importance of public cooperation as a factor in combatting crime, has attempted to present a public information program which is both informative and educational. The methods and means of presenting the department's public information program are as described in the Traffic Control section of this report under the heading "Public Information Program."

The public's cooperation and wholehearted support are essential if the crime frequency is to be reduced and offenders