

# 2020 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

## TRAINING CENTER GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE SAFETY REPORT

Submitted January 2021

### ROBERT H. WOOD JR. CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND FIRE SERVICE TRAINING CENTER



# **2020 TRAINING CENTER GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE SAFETY REPORT**

Pursuant to Number 118, Section 12. 29 V.S.A. § 842 (a), there is a safety subcommittee created under the Training Center Governance Committee. The safety subcommittee shall meet annually on or before February 1, review the safety records of the Training Facility and, on or before July 1, submit to the Training Center Governance Committee its recommendations on how safety at the Training Facility can be improved upon.

The Training Center Governance Committee shall review the report and shall consider the recommendations of the safety committee. The Training Center Governance Committee shall report annually, on or before January 15. The report shall address any safety issues discovered at the Training Facility and what steps, if any, have been taken to remedy those issues, and whether the Governance Committee has instituted any of the changes.

This Document was prepared by the members of the Training Center Governance Committee and the Training Safety Sub-Committee. The document has been reviewed and approved at a committee meeting held on December 17, 2020.

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Michael Desrochers, Executive Director  
Division of Fire Safety  
Chair, Training Center Governance Committee

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Date

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William Sheets, Interim Executive Director  
Vermont Criminal Justice Council  
Training Center Governance Committee

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Date

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Training Center Governance Committee convened with members of the Safety Subcommittee with respect to the content in this legislative report. Law enforcement and firefighter training occur on campus in Pittsford and off campus throughout the state. The Fire Academy relies on two national safety standards and Standard Operating Guidelines to guide instructors through a consistent application of course delivery. The Vermont Police Academy follows rules, statutes, best practices, and court rendered decisions. Both are specified below:

### **Vermont Fire Academy:**

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards. NFPA 1403 – *Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions* is applied to ensure the safety of instructors and students.
- The Fire Academy has created a rehabilitation program based on NFPA 1583 - *Standard on Health-Related Fitness Programs for Fire Department Members* to ensure all personnel are physically capable of starting and continuing strenuous activity.
- The Fire Academy follows Vermont Fire Service Training Council approved Standard Operating Guidelines, Procedures and a Fire Instructor Handbook to ensure training is delivered as a safe as possible in a consistent manner.

### **Vermont Police Academy**

- Training is delivered through rules outlined in the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council Administrative Procedures.
- Vermont Statute include 20 V.S.A. § 2351, 20 V.S.A. § 2352, and 20 V.S.A., Chapter 151
- State and Federal court decisions which evolve and change regularly.
- Nationally recommended best practices from a host of different law enforcement entities such as the International Association of Police Chiefs (IACP), The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST), and expert committee recommendations.

In calendar year 2020 despite significant shifts in training procedures due to COVID-19, the Police and Fire Academy's developed ways to safely train emergency responders. Great focus was placed on creating an environment where cognitive learning involved full student participation, and psychomotor skills were practiced and tested in a manner that continued to maintain a high standard. Because of this the student numbers were a bit lower. Vermont Fire Academy trained approximately 714 students in various curriculums, while the Vermont Police Academy trained 70 law enforcement officers in Level – III basic training and 25 law enforcement officers in Level – II basic training programs. Over 2,505 individuals attended in-service training programs. In 2020, there were 5 firefighter injuries and 17 law enforcement injuries. It should be noted that the reporting policies between the two agencies mirror each other.

The movement by both agencies to work together and share policies has become more noticeable as a result of the inception of the Training Center Governance Committee and the Safety Sub-Committee. In addition to the Safety-Sub Committee meetings, staff from the Police and Fire Academies meet regularly to share information. Examples of this are evident throughout this document. It is also clear both agencies examine past injury reports to understand how to prevent future injuries. The committee looks at proactive ways to reduce the overall number of injuries through programs like Exertional Heat Stroke recognition training for our instructional staff.

The Fire Academy and Police Academy have well-established protocols on reporting injuries and when considering how many students are trained in a year in the respective professions, the training center continues to have an excellent safety record.

## INTRODUCTION

The Training Center Governance Committee was created in 2015 under the authority of Act 26. The purpose of the committee is to govern access, use and future capital investments at the training facility for efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, economy and continuity of operations. The Governance Committee provides a single voice to the legislature on key areas of responsibility ensuring all users are represented resulting in continued fair access and use of the facility. The Governance Committee also provides an avenue for users to resolve conflicts on the site and brings a consistent management system to the facility. A primary goal of the Governance Committee is to pave a path forward working with the Vermont Legislature to enhance the infrastructure of the aging 1907 training center facility so we can better prepare our first responders and emergency service personnel. Since 2015, the Governance Committee has been able to constructively use its authority to enhance the facility's use by working collaboratively together as a single entity with the same visions and goals for long term sustainability.

Delivering training to those who respond to and manage dangerous situations can present challenges to the instructors. Firefighters and law enforcement officers have an inherent risk of injury on the job and at training. The risk of injury is clearly associated with physical attributes.

***Vermont Fire Academy*** delivers training using national safety standards/models published by the National Fire Protection Association, coupled with Standard Operating Guidelines to address specific safety concerns. Title 20, Chapter 179 of Vermont Statutes requires that a Fire Training Council govern Fire Academy training.

***Vermont Police Academy*** delivers training through rules outlined in the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council Administrative Procedures, Vermont Statute, State and Federal court decisions (which evolve and change regularly), nationally recommended best practices from a host of

different law enforcement entities such as the International Association of Police Chiefs (IACP), The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST), and expert committee recommendations.

## **JOINT INITIATIVE ON INJURY REPORTING POLICY**

An Injury Report Form was created jointly by the Vermont Police Academy and Vermont Fire Academy. Instructor(s) administering training in which an injury or illness is reported are required to submit an Injury Report Form documenting the event. This reporting tool allows for the collection of information from multiple people. All reports are reviewed by the Safety Sub-Committee as needed and presented to the Training Center Governance Committee with recommendations on how to reduce or mitigate the injury/illness. Any injury that is defined by OSHA 300, as a recordable work-related injury and illness are those that result in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, one or more days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, diagnosis of a significant injury or illness, loss of consciousness, or death will be reported appropriately documented within this report.

Students must make a first report of injury to their local agency, while the Vermont Fire Academy Site Coordinator files any staff reports with the Vermont Department of Human Resources. Additionally, the employing agency of the injured student is notified of the injury and the circumstances surrounding the incident. If the student works for a municipality, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) is notified. All First Reports of Injury and Instructor Injury Report Forms are stored confidentially.

The Safety Sub-Committee and members of the Governance Committee have created this single injury reporting form to bring a consistent approach to evaluating injuries. The Governance Committee is committed to reducing injuries on and off campus.

## **POLICE AND FIRE ACADEMY'S INJURY REPORTS**

The following are the individual reports for the Police and Fire Academy as submitted by both agencies. The report reflects training related injuries from January 1, 2020 through December 17, 2020. The individual report includes current injury reporting data, explanation of injuries, and the mitigation and prevention of future injuries. The Safety Committee met on January 28, and August 24, 2020 to review past and future program deliveries to ensure best safety practices are in place.

## Vermont Police Academy



**Recruits at the Firing Range**



**Recruit Driving on the Driving Pad**

The Vermont Police Academy administers training in accordance with rules outlined by Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council Administrative Procedures, Vermont Statutes, Federal Law, State and Federal court decisions (*evolving regularly*) and nationally recommended best practices from entities such as the IACP, IADLEST, CALEA, ASCIA, FOP, etc. The Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council authorizes several specialized committees and appoints individuals with recognized expertise to serve on them. These committees further recommend best practices and policies to aid in governing Academy operations. The Academy utilizes a comprehensive manual of internal standard operation procedures to further guide operations and processes.

The mission of the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council is to improve public safety by promoting excellence in law enforcement through the implementation of the highest standards for training, certification, and recognized best practices. The Academy's vision is to consistently advance standards of excellence within the law enforcement community. This is accomplished through the enlistment of the highest standards in training and professionalism, fostering partnerships, promoting teamwork, and providing a modern, efficient, and welcoming training environment where everyone is encouraged and empowered to succeed.

### **Injury Prevention Measures:**

Injury forecasting and prevention continue to be a priority for the Vermont Police Academy; the safety of trainees at the basic and in-service levels is always of paramount importance. All injury mitigation strides the Academy has made have become a routine part of institutional culture. In addition to the steps taken in recent years, additional injury mitigation processes have been instituted. Academy staff are open to further methodologies and are constantly seeking ways to not only improve training, but also to ensure training is administered in as safe a manor as possible. The Academy continues to take a holistic approach to the physical and psychological safety of training participants. The injury mitigation and prevention methods outlined in this document are new for Calendar Year 2020. Please refer to prior publications of this report for a more thorough description of the Academy's ongoing and evolving injury prevention and mitigation measures.

## **COVID-19 Mitigation:**

As is the case for everyone, COVID-19 has forced substantial change to business practices. This year's report focuses on COVID specific changes the Academy has enacted to continue to train Vermont's law enforcement officers at all levels spanning from basic Level-II and Level-III, to advanced in-service training.

When Governor Scott first ordered business practice changes relative to COVID-19, the police Academy was already weeks into the 109<sup>th</sup> basic training class. Recruits were sent home and everything at that time was unknown. Academy staff worked tirelessly to implement a plan to continue to train a full class of recruits amidst a campus shut down. The Academy was (*and remains*) closed to all outside entities using the facility, e.g. – Pittsford Recreation Department, Senior Citizen Luncheons, Pickleball League, Little League, Vermont Special Olympics and local residents using the campus for dog walks, bike rides, walks, etc.

Academy staff quickly went into high-gear and commenced the administration of training to recruits via the online electronic platform ZOOM, which was still in its infancy for Academy use as a training delivery mechanism. Simultaneously, Academy management, without an Executive Director (*who retired - the position still remains vacant*), created a plan to complete training for the 109<sup>th</sup> basic class. Recruits, Academy staff and adjunct staff all signed special agreements and quarantined alone either at home or in a hotel for fourteen days and delivered training remotely via the Internet. This plan was approved by the Governor's office in conjunction with Department of Health and the VSEA. A federal grant was applied for and awarded, and an intense training schedule was authored, approved and enacted. Meals were prepared on campus and delivered to students and staff staying off-site in hotels each day utilizing enhanced sanitation and food preparation practices. Following the fourteen-day post-quarantine period, everyone returned to campus and were locked down for four additional weeks of 24/7 training away from family and friends. The class mantra became, "*all day, every day, seven days a week.*" A battery of washing machines and dryers needed to be added to accommodate the increase in laundry. This included plumbing and electrical work. Because recruits and staff could not leave campus, it was necessary for a schedule for laundering be enacted. This brought with it specific challenges, due to sheer volume. After completion of several weeks of 24/7 training, a small graduation ceremony was held, via ZOOM, outside by the law enforcement memorial. This entire process was unprecedented and was a tremendous sacrifice for the greater good of public safety.

Following the graduation of the 109<sup>th</sup> basic class, it was decided the police Academy was a critical component of public safety and must remain open. Unlike other state government entities, the Academy was to remain open for business, but it would be anything other than business as usual. Staff remain on-site for the most part and do not work remotely from home most days, unlike other state workers. The building and campus remain on lock-down and many in-service trainings (*other than basic training*) are held off-site at selected locations. For basic training, recruits are limited in number; a normal size class capping at thirty-eight. Because of limitations required for social distancing, the 110<sup>th</sup> basic class is limited to twenty-six recruits. The Academy is limited in the number of rooms it has for sleeping quarters and normally, recruits would share rooms and work together with their respective roommates to keep them up to requisite standards. With COVID-19, recruits are assigned individual rooms, taking up the entire building. Normally, recruits would

be limited to the second floor, keeping dorm rooms on the third floor open for in-service and Level-II basic training students. This of course limits others from using the facility for in-service training. Recruits are assigned specific bathrooms and floors are literally marked with carefully measured tape to indicate where recruits should stand so they are properly distanced. Recruits are continually masked and have daily health screenings in accordance with recommendations from the Department of Health and CDC. Recruits and staff also received specific COVID-19 mitigation training.

The classroom for the recruits is now the gymnasium; this is due to social distancing requirements. Recruits are forced to learn in this environment, which brought with it specific challenges due to its size. A new sound system needed to be added, so instructors can use cordless microphones so they can be heard. The large size of the gymnasium brings with it an echo, that makes it difficult to hear, as sounds reverberate. Each recruit is issued bottles of hand sanitizer, spray cleaner, paper towels and nitrile gloves, so they can keep individual workspaces clean and disinfected. The gymnasium has also become the cafeteria. The cafeteria at the police Academy is not large enough to accommodate the number of recruits, so in conjunction with kitchen staff, meals are pre-plated and recruits pick up their food one by one and return to the gym to eat at their desks. They then return to the cafeteria to drop off empty plates and trays. This logistically has been an example of just one of many changes enacted to keep trainees and staff as safe as possible.



**Recruits in their COVID-19 Classroom – VPA Gymnasium**

Recruits were required to sign waivers specific to COVID-19, which require them to be as safe as possible when they leave basic training for their weekends off. Recruits are required to steer clear of groups and crowded places and avoid contact with other people outside their respective family circles. They must report any abnormalities or deviations from their agreements upon return to basic training Sunday nights. During training, recruits frequently wash hands according to Department of Health and CDC recommendations. An additional hands-free water bottle filling station was installed to help minimize hand contact to surfaces. Buildings and General Services (*BGS*) has increased and enhanced sanitation processes, cleaning high traffic areas more frequently, such as bathrooms, door handles, etc.





**Recruit Being Served a Meal During COVID-19**

Use-of-force training for recruits and in-service personnel offers a unique set of problems, which needed to be overcome. Social distancing is not possible for this training, as the psychomotor skills portion of training, which includes hours of practice with training partners require human contact and repetition. This includes training in the gym and scenario-based training at other campus locations. Recruits and instructors wear masks and heavy-duty nitrile gloves, similar to gloves used by automotive technicians, which are durable and less prone to ripping. Even more frequent sanitation is required between repetitions and individuals are limited in the amount of training partners they can work with. Training mats, padded protective gear and impact bags are also sanitized far more frequently than would have been necessary in a pre-COVID world. Training like this offers one unique challenge – it is HOT. Breathing through masks is more arduous and nitrile gloves do not allow sweaty hands to cool normally. Considering this, even more frequent hydration is required.



**Recruits Practicing Use-of-Force During COVID-19**

Physical training has also become more laborious. Recruits continue to sanitize frequently and any equipment they use, such as weights, jump ropes, bands, medicine balls, etc. must be sanitized constantly. This takes additional time and time in an Academy environment directly affects scheduling. This too has caused numerous adjustments to be made and training has become anything but status-quo.

In addition to what has been done to keep recruits safe during basic training, other practices have been enacted to keep in-service training staff and participants as safe as possible. Anyone authorized to be on the campus is health screened upon arrival. This includes temperature checks

and a health screening question checklist. Level-II basic training has also continued with limited numbers. Because all the Academy's room quarters are being utilized by Level-III basic training recruits, recruits for Level-II training who live at a distance and are unable to commute are housed in a local hotel. Because the Academy is required to pay for basic training by statute, a grant had to be utilized to finance the cost, as the budget was unable to absorb this. Level-II recruits are limited to one classroom, specific bathrooms and a specified building entrance and exit to keep them isolated from the Level-III class.

Another challenge has been relative to law enforcement entrance testing. Because entrance testing must continue, several new procedures had to be enacted. Candidates from out-of-state have been banned unless they can make the trip to the Academy in a single drive without stopping. Out-of-state applicants, able to make the drive, must have either quarantined for seven days and had a negative COVID-19 test result, or fourteen days without signs of illness prior to coming to the Academy. Because the Level-III basic training class utilizes the gym as their classroom, entrance testing needed to be moved to multiple smaller classrooms, and several additional testing dates were instituted as a result. Offsite testing is not permissible, as logistically finding an unused space with everything required for testing is extremely difficult, not to mention being able to staff it. When entrance testing occurs during the workweek, three separate (*and smaller*) classrooms are used to accommodate testers. This requires three staff members to proctor the written exam and psychological assessment instead of one. The physical fitness portion of the test is held in the largest of the three classrooms, with limited numbers of testers being permitted to test at a time. Large dumb bells are used to hold an applicant's feet during the sit-up test and yoga blocks are used as a marker to impact the sternum during the push-up test in lieu of a partner's closed fist. Additionally, a second universal bench-press machine needed to be set up in the largest classroom, as the one housed in the gym cannot be used due to the Level-III class occupying that space. All testers are temperature checked and health screened upon arrival for testing. Desks for the written portion of the test are moved into the largest classroom and then moved out for the physical fitness portion of the test, as added space is required. The 1.5-mile run is still held outside and EMS personnel from Rutland Regional Ambulance are always present. BGS cleaning staff are also more vigilant on entrance testing days and frequently clean and sanitize areas where testers are present.

Because limited numbers of testers are allowed in the building, even occupying three classrooms, additional test days have been added each month; these occur on multiple Saturdays. Dedicated Academy staff adjust and flex their normal work schedules to accommodate this. Testing on Saturdays is held in the gymnasium; this is to accommodate larger numbers than what are permissible during the workweek. Desks are again set-up and broken down, as the desks and space used by Level-III basic training recruits is kept separate and off limits. BGS staff also come to the Academy on Saturday to clean and sanitize at the conclusion of testing. Even on Saturday test dates, applicants are extremely limited in their access to the building, and bathroom use is limited to one bathroom, one person at a time.

Additional grant funding has been sought to purchase COVID-19 related equipment. This includes items such as helmets for simunition training, as the current supply of helmets is limited, and they are difficult to sanitize due to the cloth material they are lined with. Additional lap-top computers are needed by staff, along with projectors and sound equipment, so they can deliver in-service

training off-site and remotely. Academy staff continue to evolve, and work to maintain standards in this new world environment. They should be applauded and recognized for these efforts. While other State employees have simply experienced inconvenience by having to work from home and attend meetings electronically, Academy staff and students continue to put themselves at risk, always in the best interest of public safety.

Despite the best efforts of Police Academy personnel to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the academy still ended up with eighteen individuals infected. Those infected included students and staff. At the onset of the first positive test, academy staff were quick to close the campus, initiate quarantine protocols and work with the Vermont Department of Health for contact tracing and guidance. Training shifted from on campus to online, until everyone was able to complete quarantining periods with accompanying negative COVID-19 test results. It was only then, that students and staff were able to return to campus to complete basic training. Academy staff were quick to respond to this health crisis and should be recognized for the tremendous alacrity they demonstrated while fulfilling their mission objectives.

### **CY/2020 Injury Report:**

The following represents injuries reported and documented for Calendar Year 2020:

- On 01-09-2020, a Level-II officer sustained a knee injury during in-service use-of-force training. The recruit executed a baton block on a training bag, pivoted, and twisted their right knee. The recruit left training and was evaluated at Rutland Regional Medical Center. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. This individual was subsequently able to complete Level-II phase training following this incident.
- On 02-06-2020, a Level-III recruit sustained a strain to their right leg and knee during physical training. The recruit indicated the injury was an aggravation of a previous injury that occurred prior to them attending basic training. The recruit was seen by Occupational Health, had a regimen of physical therapy and was cleared. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.
- On 02-20-2020, a Level-III recruit fell during a run during physical training, spraining their left ankle. The recruit was seen by Occupational Health and underwent a regimen of physical therapy and was cleared. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. This recruit did not graduate from basic training. His departure from basic training was unrelated to this injury.
- On 02-26-2020, a Level-III recruit bruised their hand striking a bag during use-of-force training. The recruit declined medical treatment and the bruise healed normally. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.

- On 02-27-2020, a Level-III recruit experienced pain in their right shoulder during use-of-force training. The recruit declined medical treatment and did not complain of further pain or discomfort after the passage of some time. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.
- On 03-11-2020, an in-service use-of-force instructor was assisting with the administration of use-of-force training to the Level-III class. While role-playing and struggling with a recruit, the instructor experienced pain in their left shoulder. The instructor left training for the day and subsequently was evaluated at the emergency room. X-rays revealed no injury, and the instructor was eventually cleared for full duty after some physical therapy. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring.
- On 05-09-2020, a recruit sustained a bruise to their heel during use-of-force training and stomping their foot on the mat. The recruit declined medical attention and the bruise healed normally. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.
- On 05-24-2020, a post-basic training recruit was playing frisbee outside on their own down time and fell, injuring their right shoulder. The recruit refused medical treatment. The shoulder injury healed normally, and the recruit was able to complete post-basic training without incident. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring.
- On 08-04-2020, an in-service Level-II officer sustained a small chip to one of their teeth during use-of-force in-service training. During a handcuffing maneuver, their training partner was stepping around their head and hit the trainee in the mouth with their heel, chipping a tooth. The student refused medical attention and was able to complete the mandatory use-of-force training without further incident. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring.
- On 09-02-2020, a Level-III recruit cut their elbow after slipping in the shower. The recruit received basic first aid and declined additional medical attention. The cut resolved itself without further incident. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 09-09-2020, a Level-III recruit injured their ankle during use-of-force training. This occurred when the recruit accidentally caught their foot between the seam of two mats and twisted. Medical attention was declined, and the injury subsided without incident. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.

- On 09-13-2020, a Level-III recruit injured their right shoulder removing their duffle bag out of their personal vehicle in the parking lot. Medical attention was declined, and the injury subsided without further incident. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 09-16-2020, a Level-III recruit reported experiencing pain in their left knee during use-of-force training. The injury occurred when the recruit knelt down onto a training mat. The recruit requested medical attention and was seen by Occupational Health and evaluated. The injury cleared itself and there was no further complication. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 09-30-2020, a Level-III recruit reported their right wrist and hand was sore and experiencing pain after practicing baton retention during use-of-force training. The recruit used ice on their hand and wrist, along with taking ibuprofen. Medical attention was declined following the injury report and the injury cleared itself without further complication. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 09-30-2020, a Level-III recruit reported their right eye was still irritated longer than normal, following exposure to oleoresin capsicum (*pepper spray*). The recruit was seen at the emergency room and diagnosed with a corneal abrasion. Within a few days, the injury cleared itself without further complication. Evaluation following this injury revealed the recruit may have inadvertently scratched their own eye during decontamination. There may have also been a small undetectable particle that could have been introduced to one of several freshwater stations. The recruit may have inadvertently picked up the particle and scratched their own eye. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 10-07-2020, a Level-III recruit complained they injured their right shoulder during a use-of-force scenario. The recruit declined medical attention and the injury resolved itself with a few days without further complaint. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 10-18-2020, a Level-III recruit complained of knee soreness from running during physical training. The recruit requested medical attention and was seen by Occupational Health and no abnormality was detected. The injury resolved itself with a few days without further complaint. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.

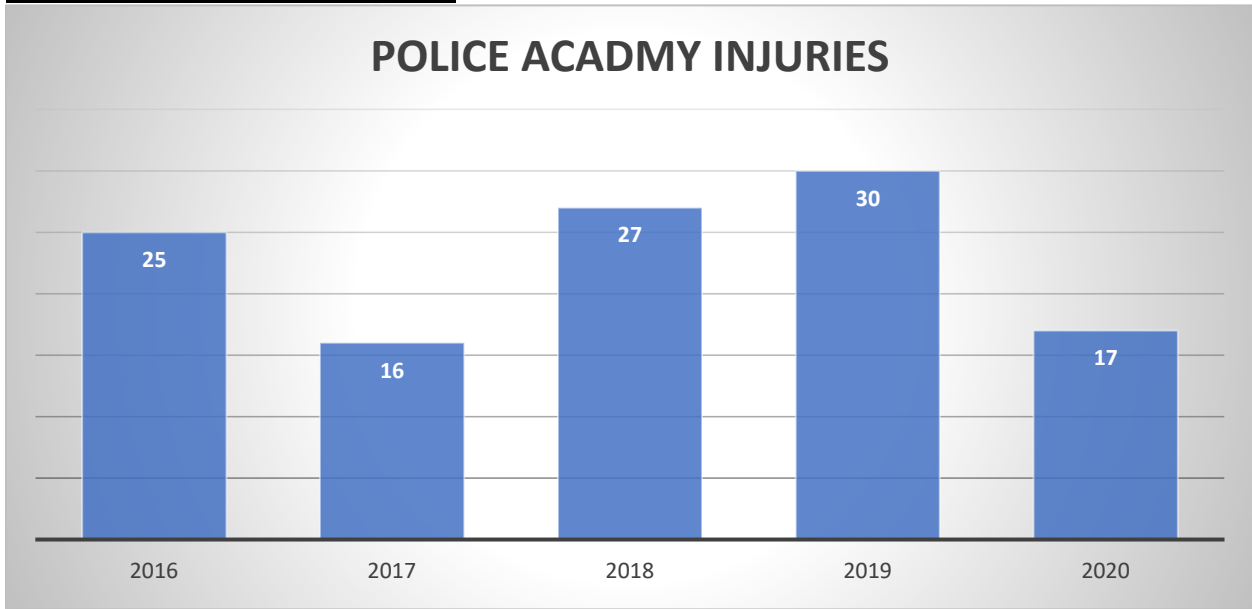
**Conclusion:**

There was a total of **17** injuries reported in 2020. This report illustrates **every** known report. Many of the reported injuries required only basic first aid, if that, and were not considered reportable by OSHA standards, as no medical treatment was sought. Every known reported injury was included in this publication to illustrate the detailed level of tracking and continued commitment the police Academy takes to mitigate, investigate and prevent injury, despite the often rigorous and arduous demands required for training law enforcement officers both at basic and in-service levels. The Academy’s level of documentation allows staff to continually make targeted changes to training practices where appropriate.

**Police**

INJURY TYPE	SKILL PERFORMED	LOCATION	COURSE NAME	ER / DR	Met OSHA 300 Reporting Requirements	COMPLETED TRAINING
Knee	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leg/Knee	Police Officer	Gym	Physical Training	Yes	Yes	YES
Ankle	Police Officer	Grounds	Physical Training	Yes	Yes	No
Hand	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	No		Yes
Shoulder	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	No		Yes
Shoulder	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	Yes	Yes	
Heel	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	No		Yes
Shoulder	Police Officer	On site on off time	Playing frisbee	No		Yes
Tooth	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	No		Yes
Elbow	Police Officer	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor bathroom	Showering	No		Yes
Ankle	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	No		Yes
Shoulder	Police Officer	Parking lot	Getting out of car	No		Yes
Knee	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wrist/Hand	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	No		Yes
Eye	Police Officer	Grounds	Use of Force OC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shoulder	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	No		Yes
Knee	Police Officer	Grounds	Physical Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Academy Annual Injuries Reported:**



**NOTE:** This table reflects all injuries identified by the Vermont Police Academy, even those considered non-reportable by OSHA.

**2019 Police Academy Individual Injury Chart:**

OSHA 300 Recordable work-related injuries and illnesses are those that result in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, one or more days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, diagnosis of a significant injury or illness, loss of consciousness, or death.

## Vermont Fire Academy



### Description of injury reporting:

Injuries to Vermont Fire Academy staff and students requiring more than basic first aid are reported and documented by the Instructor In-Charge utilizing the Injury Report Form used by both the Vermont Fire Academy and Police Academy. This form is completed at the time of incident. The Instructor In-Charge follows all instructions that are included with the Injury Report Form and will notify the Site Coordinator of the incident as soon as possible. The Site Coordinator will make any other notifications that are required and will follow up with the student's agency point of contact to inform them of what happened and remind them to file a First Report of Injury. An investigation is then done by the Site Coordinator to determine what happened and how to prevent further incidents if possible. The Vermont Fire Academy Site Coordinator will file any staff reports of injury with the Vermont Department of Human Resources.

### General summary of how injuries are handled on and off campus:

When someone becomes injured and needs more than basic first aid or experiences a medical event while participating at any Vermont Fire Academy function medical assistance shall be called for immediately. The majority of Vermont Fire Academy staff and students are also medically trained, and we have essential first response equipment to begin assessment and treatment while waiting for local emergency services to respond. No Vermont Fire Academy Instructor or Student may return to any form of Fire Academy activity without a formal physician's letter stating the persons allowable level of activity.



## **2020 Injuries and Mitigation:**

In 2020 the Vermont Fire Academy had a total of five reportable injuries. Outlined below are the injuries that occurred with summaries of the investigative findings and any recommended changes to prevent re-occurrences.

- **Eye Injury – 01/25/2020** While participating in vehicle extrication practical training as part of a Firefighter I/II program, a student reported something being in their eye after practicing cutting glass. The student was treated on site and brought to the local emergency room. The eye was cleared of any debris and the student returned to active status that day. Findings determined that all proper personal protective equipment was being utilized including eye protection. There are no recommendations for changes to the program currently and safety measures are adequate and in compliance with the applicable standards for the skills being performed.
- **Finger Injury – 01/25/2020** While participating in vehicle extrication practical training as part of a Firefighter I/II program a student reported pain in their right thumb. It was found that the student had been pulling on interior plastic molding when the pain began. The student was treated onsite and brought to the local emergency room. The student missed no time from training and continued with the program. There are no recommendations for changes to the program currently and safety measures are adequate and in compliance with the applicable standards for the skills being performed.
- **Chest Injury – 06-27-2020** While participating in live fire practical training at the Fire Academy in Pittsford as part of a Firefighter I program a student was descending the aerial device of the platform truck when they lost their balance and awkwardly caught themselves. The student completed the day and then reported to the emergency room where it was determined the student tore their right pectoral muscle. The student finished the program but was out of work and the fire service for several months during healing. It was determined to be a rare individual accident. There are no recommendations for changes to the program currently and safety measures are adequate and in compliance with the applicable standards for the skills being performed.
- **Panic Attack – 06-27-2020** While participating in live fire practical training at the Fire Academy in Pittsford a student had a panic attack inside the burn building during the first evolution. The student was escorted out of the building and later reported having chest pain. The student was treated on site by the Rehabilitation Officer while emergency services were called. On the arrival of emergency services, the student no longer had pain or symptoms but chose to be transported. The student did not return phone calls, emails, nor did he return to class. Through communications with their Fire Chief it was determined the student was fine, not missing work, and actively participating at their fire department. There are no recommendations for changes to the program currently and

safety measures are adequate and in compliance with the applicable standards for the skills being performed.

- **Dehydration – 07-02-2020** On the way home from live fire practical training at the Fire Academy in Pittsford a student became ill and stopped on the side of the road. The Rehabilitation Officer and other instructors who were also on their way home stopped and checked on the student. After seeing no change in the student's condition, they called for emergency services and the student was transported to the local emergency room. It was determined that the student had not been wearing their glasses and had not been eating or drinking for most of the day and was dehydrated. The student was given IV fluids and sent home with no restrictions. The Vermont Fire Academy actively informs students on how to physically prepare themselves for live fire starting the first day of Firefighter I and II programs. This student did not follow the Academy's guidance and became ill. There are no recommendations for changes to the program currently and safety measures are adequate and in compliance with the applicable standards for the skills being performed.

### **Prevention:**

The Vermont Fire Academy continues to make safety a priority at our courses and programs and reinforces best safety practices for our students and instructors inside and out of Academy training. Although the Vermont Fire Academy had an increase in injuries in comparison to the previous three years, we continue to move forward with safety in mind. The five reportable injuries sustained this year were determined to be unavoidable and all practical safety processes were in place. As we stated in last year's report when we had zero reportable injuries it was a difficult number to maintain with the nature of training that we perform.

We continue to monitor our processes and implement new ideas that can improve what we do. This past year, the Fire Academy has continued to improve our Rehabilitation Policy which is now being fully utilized. Through this policy, and by conducting early blood pressure screening of our students, we have been able to make recommendations that have led students to meeting with their primary care providers to get underlying issues of high pulse and blood pressure under control and being able to complete their program.

Due to COVID-19, the Vermont Fire Academy was put in a situation where we needed to complete our fiscal year 2020 programs during the summer. This meant that we were conducting high intensity practical training in weather that was much warmer than typical. To help combat this, the Fire Academy engaged in direct communication with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration to predict the weather as accurately as possible so that trainings could be postponed prior to conditions becoming dangerous due to temperatures and other weather events. The Vermont Fire Academy also purchased several tents to provide shade for our students and instructors, which are a great resource that has been shared with all agencies on campus. All of

these factors in combination with recent past purchases of weather monitoring equipment, ice machines, and misting fans allowed us to complete these programs when we might not have previously.

Every year the Vermont Fire Academy inventories and checks our medical emergency kits to ensure all equipment is up to date and that we have everything needed. This year we purchased new blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, and pulse oximeters for screening our students and instructors, as the old stock was becoming aged. We also added trauma kits with tourniquets and wound control supplies that will be deployed to training events where the skills being performed could result in serious traumatic injuries such as ventilation, where chainsaws are used. This change in safety practice is an example of the Fire Academy being proactive instead of reactive and making sure we are prepared for an emergency should one occur.

Cancer prevention will always remain a talking point and something that the Vermont Fire Academy works to prevent through education and decontamination. We talk at length about the carcinogens that are transferred into and onto personal protective equipment and firefighter bodies as they engage in real world firefighting and training. We discuss the importance of decontaminating equipment and bodies after being exposed to dangerous environments. We provide students and instructors cleaning wipes, designed specifically for firefighters to wash their face, hands, and neck during our training events. We also provide bags for taking personal protective equipment home so it won't cross contaminate vehicles and those who get in them. We offer access to showers at the Fire Academy to students and instructor to reinforce taking care of yourself after calls and training.

COVID-19 is certainly part of our everyday lives and something we need to continue to address as we move forward until there is a widely utilized vaccine. We have followed all state guidance and created a Standard Operating Guideline based on the Vermont Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control, and Agency of Commerce and Community Development guidance. Per the Vermont Department of Health, we are following Collegiate guidelines. All our students and instructors are being screened before entering training areas, following strict social distancing rules, wearing approved face coverings, cleaning high touch areas, and making sure our classrooms are safe for everyone.

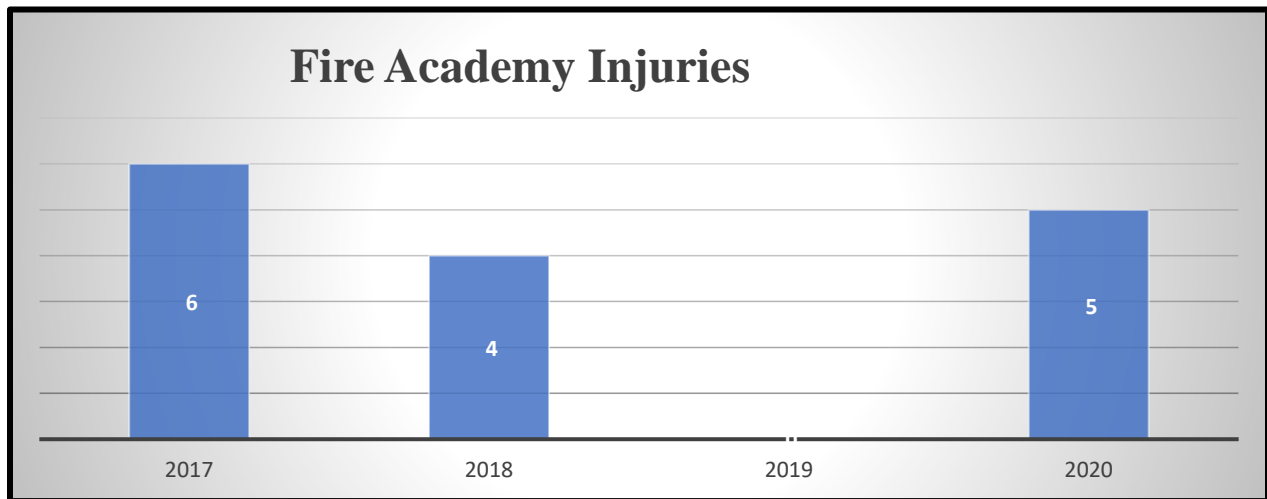
With all that is going on in the world and everything that we have adapted to, we have had another great year of training. We will continue to look for ways of improving our policies, procedures, and equipment before incidents occur; and will remain vigilant in investigating all incidents that occur to determine if there is a need for change. We will also continue to work closely with our partners at the Vermont Police Academy in sharing ideas and resources.

**2020 Fire Academy Individual Injury Chart:**

INJURY TYPE	SKILL PERFORMED	LOCATION	COURSE NAME	ER / DR	Met OSHA 300 Reporting Requirements	COMPLETED TRAINING
Eye Injury	Vehicle Extrication	Thetford	Firefighter I/II	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finger injury	Vehicle Extrication	Thetford	Firefighter I/II	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chest Injury	Live Fire	Pittsford	Firefighter I	Yes	Yes	Yes
Panic Attack	Live Fire	Pittsford	Firefighter I	Yes	Yes	No
Dehydration	Live Fire	Pittsford	Firefighter I/II	Yes	Yes	Yes

\* OSHA 300 Recordable work-related injuries and illnesses are those that result in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, one or more days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, diagnosis of a significant injury or illness, loss of consciousness, or death.

**Fire Academy Annual Injuries Reported:**



**FIRE AND POLICE INJURY OVERVIEW/SUMMARY**

The goal of both Academies is to not have any injuries, and to minimize those situations where injuries may occur. Certainly, the demand for realistic physical activity including running, raising and climbing ladders, lifting equipment, engaging in one on one restraint drills, using heavy

equipment, training with animals or doing routine drills exposes the students and instructors to many hazardous conditions. Well-planned activities with strict monitoring by trained professionals allow for a reduction in all injury areas.

The Safety Sub-Committee conducts after action reviews of injuries and identify any potential cause. Depending on frequency or severity, we initiate modifications to mitigate future injuries whenever possible. It has also become a practice to be proactive and identify those situations that might cause injuries and determine how to lessen the risk.

Considering the volume and intensity of training for fire fighters and law enforcement officers in a myriad of disciplines, demanding psychomotor skills from students (use-of-force, patrol procedures, firearms, K-9 training, etc.), injuries are minimal. Students are frequently briefed on injury mitigation and reporting, provided adequate warm-ups (when appropriate) and given protective gear when injuries are foreseeable. Furthermore, instructors are trained in injury prevention and first aid / CPR. First aid kits are readily available to students and instructors and personnel with higher levels of medical training are identified beforehand in case an injury occurs.