

**FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE FIRE
MARSHAL FROM THE DATE OF ITS
ORGANIZATION SEPT. 1, 1911, TO DEC.
31, 1911; STATE OF NEW YORK, NO. 37**

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First Annual Report of the Department of State Fire Marshal from the date of its Organization
Sept. 1, 1911, to Dec. 31, 1911; State of New York, No. 37 by Various

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VARIOUS

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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

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OF THE

Department of State Fire Marshal

From the Date of Its Organization
Sept. 1, 1911, to Dec. 31, 1911

THOMAS J. AHEARN
State Fire Marshal

TRANSMITTED TO THE LEGISLATURE FEBRUARY 15, 1912

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STATE OF NEW YORK

No. 37.

IN ASSEMBLY

FEBRUARY 15, 1912.

REPORT OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

To the Honorable, the Legislature of the State of New York:

Your honorable body at its session of 1911 passed an act to amend the Insurance Law, in relation to establishing the office of the State Fire Marshal, defining his powers and duties and providing for his compensation and the maintenance of his office. This act became a law on the 26th day of June, 1911, with the approval of the Governor, and now constitutes chapter 451 of the Laws of New York for the year 1911.

On the 26th day of July, 1911, his Excellency, the Governor, saw fit to confer upon me the honor of being the head of this new Department. On the same day the Senate of the State of New York duly confirmed my appointment and I immediately entered upon the discharge of my duties, but was unable to organize my office staff until September 1, 1911, owing to the length of time required to repair and furnish the office assigned to this Department on the first floor of the Capitol building.

In accordance with the provisions of section 358 of the State Fire Marshal Law, I now respectfully transmit to your honorable body a full report of the proceedings of this Department and such statistics as have been gathered for the four months beginning the 1st day of September, 1911, to December 31, 1911, during which time this Department has been organized and in working order and, also, in accordance with the provisions of said section 358, I respectfully present for your consideration such recommendations for amendments to the said law which to me appear to be desirable in order to make the enforcement thereof more effective.

THOMAS J. AHEARN,
State Fire Marshal.

PART I.

**Comparative Review of the State Fire Marshal Law of the State of
New York Showing the Points Where it is at Variance or in
Conflict With Other State Laws and Pointing Out
the Provisions Where Amendments
Seem to be Desirable.**

PART I.

Comparative Review of the State Fire Marshal Law of the State of New York Showing the Points Where it is at Variance or in Conflict With Other State Laws and Pointing Out the Provisions Where Amendments Seem to be Desirable.

Your honorable body, of course, is aware that certain minor defects are found to exist in all new laws when put into practice for enforcement, and the State Fire Marshal Law is no exception to this rule. I will, therefore, take the liberty of recommending certain changes and amendments thereto which will render the enforcement of the law more feasible.

Section 351 provides as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the State Fire Marshal to enforce all laws and ordinances of the State, and the several counties, cities and political subdivisions thereof, except in cities having over one million inhabitants, as follows:

1. The prevention of fires;
2. The storage, sale or use of combustibles and explosives;
3. The installation and maintenance of automatic or other fire-alarm systems and fire extinguishing equipment;
4. The inspection of steam boilers;
5. The construction, maintenance and regulation of fire escapes;
6. The means and adequacy of exit, in case of fire, from factories, asylums, hospitals, churches, schools, halls, theaters, amphitheaters and all other places in which numbers of persons work, live, or congregate from time to time for any purpose;
7. The suppression of arson and investigation of the cause, origin and circumstances of fires."

In order to ascertain what my exact duties are under this section, I have endeavored to gather a full collection of the laws and ordinances of the State, and of the several counties, cities, towns and villages therein upon the various subjects treated in the subdivisions of said section, and to my surprise I have found that there is no system of State laws on those subjects whatever and that such municipal ordinances and regulations as exist in the various localities have never been systematically or scientifically framed, and in some instances are conflicting with each other or with the laws of the State. There are comparatively few localities that have any ordinance at all on such important subjects as are enumerated in this section, and the need of some kind of uniform legislation by the State is imperative.

Subdivision 1. "The prevention of fires." Outside of the city of New York (and there only by recently enacted legislation) neither the State, nor any county, city, township or village has any laws or ordinances on this subject.

Subdivision 2. "The storage, sale or use of combustibles and explosives." This is a subject which deserves the earnest consideration of the Legislature as there is now no system of laws or ordinances either by the State or by any municipality outside of the city of New York. This subdivision should be amended in such a manner as to provide for the issuance of licenses or permits by the State Fire Marshal, allowing the manufacture, transportation, storage, sale or use generally of explosives, highly combustible substances, explosive chemicals, gases in liquid form or under great pressure and other similar dangerous articles or substances. The city of New York has just enacted a code of rules and regulations formulated by its municipal explosive commission which, by the act of the Legislature contained in the fire prevention law applicable to the said city, has become a chapter of the ordinances of the city of New York. Said chapter goes into minute details as to the manufacture, transportation, storage, sale or use of the following articles or substances:

- Blasting explosives.
- Blasting supplies.
- Ammunition.

Plate No. 1



Dilapidated building in the rear of Post-Office and Bank in Southampton, Long Island, originally built by Thomas Sayer in the year 1648, said to be the oldest frame building in the state of New York. This department very reluctantly ordered the demolition of this old building and did so only when it was fully ascertained that it was impossible to move or preserve the same.