

IMSA is the oldest known association of its kind in the world. It dates back to October 1896, when a group of municipal signal men from several east coast cities met in Brooklyn, New York and organized an association called the "International Association of Fire and Police Telegraph Superintendents." Records indicate that the group met once a year thereafter and that committees were appointed which developed and submitted technical papers on pertinent subjects at these annual meetings.

The basic purpose of the organization was to keep its members and others in the profession, up-to-date on proper procedures of construction and maintenance of signal systems and informed on new products and equipment developments.

In 1900 the organization changed its name to the "International Association of Municipal Electricians" (I.A.M.E.). This name remained for the next 35 years.

Records show that Thomas A. Edison and the Edison Electric Company were associate members in 1901. During that year the association members began developing standards and specifications for wire, cable, fire alarm boxes, and even the size of manhole covers. Association members were also instrumental in the founding of the Underwriters Laboratory and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (N.E.M.A.) during this era.

On August 31, 1913, at 2:00 PM, in Watertown, New York, the very famous Charles Proteus Steinmetz was nominated and elected First Vice-President of the I.A.M.E. He held office until his death on the 26th of October 1923. While I.A.M.E. was developing, other groups of men, in the same or similar fields, were organizing at local or area levels. In 1921, a group of six signal superintendents from the State of Connecticut, who had been meeting socially, decided to organize and meet frequently for the purpose of discussing mutual problems. They called themselves the "Eastern Association of Superintendents of Fire and Police Telegraph.

As this association became better known, attendance at meetings increased and so did membership as signal men from other New England States and from New York and New Jersey joined the organization. In the 1920's the name was changed to the "New England Municipal Signal Association."

At about this time, some of the more distant members of the New England Association and other signal men formed groups of their own such as the New Jersey Signal Association, the New York State Municipal Signal Association, the Northwest Municipal Signal Association, and the Southern New York Municipal Signal Association. In the early 1930's these groups formed the "Associated Municipal Signal Services" (A.M.S.S.), but each group retained its individual identity and continued to conduct its own meetings.

In 1934, this association started publishing the "A.M.S.S. Journal," which was sent free to all members. The Journal contained reprints of the papers presented at the various association meetings plus other items of technical interest to the members. The A.M.S.S. Journal was augmented in about 1936 with a monthly publication called "CEMENT" (Communication Engineers Mutual Educational National Tabloid). This magazine was used to inform members about the activities of the individual groups within the association, and also had other technical and non-technical news not contained in the journal.

During the mid 1930's, both I.A.M.E. and A.M.S.S. continued to grow. Many signal superintendents and engineers belonged to both organizations and many were also members of the still active and independent state or local associations. Membership was individual for each and there were no chapters or sections, as such until 1935.

At its October 1935 Annual Conference in Richmond, Virginia, I.A.M.E. approved a new constitution and by-laws and changed the organization name to "National Municipal Signal Association" ("N.M.S.A."). The chief officer of each of the independent member associations was named to the Board of Directors. These

Directors were instructed to return to their individual associations for a membership vote on becoming a chartered Chapter of the N.M.S.A. A Headquarters Chapter was also formed for those members who resided outside of the boundaries of all of the other chapters.

In September 1937, the organization name was officially changed to the "International Municipal Signal Association" (I.M.S.A.).

Since its origin in 1896, IMSA has grown in size, stature and prestige. Today, the Association has members in all areas of the United States, in many areas of Canada, and in many of the free countries of the world. Through its many years of continuous dedication of effort in improving and advancing all aspects of public-safety, IMSA has gained recognition and influence with local, professional organizations.

Membership is comprised of persons employed by governmental organizations (city, county, state, federal, province, etc.) and private corporations who are interested in promoting Public Safety in the most economical manner. The IMSA objectives are to improve the efficiency, installation, construction, and maintenance of Public Safety equipment and systems by increasing the knowledge of its members on traffic controls, fire alarms, radio communications, roadway lighting, work zone traffic control, emergency medical services and other related systems.

Membership areas are divided into geographic sections covering North America and other group locations. Each section holds one or more meetings during the year, attended by IMSA members and other interested persons in the area. At the meetings, mutual problems are discussed, solutions presented, and personal contact with exchange of ideas is assured. Technical papers are presented by members, engineers and other experts covering a variety of helpful topics.

Since 1896, when IMSA was founded, an International meeting has been held every year. Expert speakers are selected to present Public Safety subjects that are educational in scope and motivational to everyone in attendance.

Manufacturers exhibit the latest product innovations at the Annual Conference. Experienced engineers and technicians are on hand to demonstrate equipment and to give personalized attention to the individual needs of the IMSA members.

The first IMSA National School was conducted in conjunction with the Annual Conference in 1978. Because this first school was such a success, the Association has decided that each year a school will be conducted in conjunction with the Annual Conference. This school is open to both members and non-members.

Through its International Committees, the IMSA successfully represents its members by undertaking and completing many important Public Safety projects. For example: working in an advisory capacity granted by the Federal Communications Commission IMSA provides coordination of public safety radio frequencies for the fire, emergency medical service and public safety pool including 800 MHz.

IMSA maintains and appoints chairmen to the following International Committees:

- * Traffic Signal
- * Signs and Markings
- * Roadway Lighting
- * Work Zone
- * Radio Communications
- * Public Safety
- * Fire Alarm
- * EMS
- * Educational

- * Certification
- * Awards
- * Membership
- * Publicity
- * Conference
- * Cable Specifications

The IMSA Journal is published by the International Municipal Signal Association. It is written and edited to inform members of new products, new tools, technological advances, new applications and new ideas in the Public Safety field. It also furnishes current Section News, activities, and information on the local, regional, national, and international levels. The magazine is published bi-monthly.

IMSA offers educational and certification programs in Traffic Signals, Signs and Markings, Work Zone Traffic Control, Municipal and Interior Fire Alarm systems, Public Safety Dispatcher and Flagging. To assist the governmental agencies in lowering the likelihood of unnecessary legal actions and to increase the quality of public safety personnel, it is the deep conviction of IMSA that a certification program is warranted in each area of public safety operations.

The IMSA Certification Programs are primarily concerned with the evaluation of expertise. However, IMSA realizes that not all agencies have access to standardized training materials and therefore make available Certification Review Programs for its level examinations. These Review Programs are not intended to teach an individual all that he/she needs to know in order to pass a particular examination. They are intended to present the fundamentals of particular areas and overview of subjects that participants should already be familiar with based on national standards and regulations.