

N. C. Fire and Rescue Commission  
Certification Board  
Policy and Procedures Manual



NC Fire and Rescue Commission  
NC Department of Insurance  
Revised July, 2019

**NC Fire and Rescue Commission Certification Board**  
**Policy and Procedures Manual**  
**Revised: July, 2019**

North Carolina General Statute § 58-78-5(a)(14b) authorizes the State Fire and Rescue Commission to establish voluntary minimum professional qualifications for fire and rescue service personnel. The North Carolina Fire and Rescue Certification Board was established by the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission to oversee the delivery of those standards.

This manual is written to define the responsibilities of the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Certification Board. This manual defines the authority granted to the Certification Board by the State Fire and Rescue Commission and the means by which the Certification Board may carry out its responsibilities. In no way does this manual limit the State Fire and Rescue Commission's ability to add to, or to take responsibilities from the Certification Board, nor should it limit or inhibit the Certification Board's flexibility to make rulings and judgments granted by the original intent of each of the qualification standards.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The formulation of these certification programs have been the work of numerous individuals. The final authority for these and future professional qualification programs for the fire and rescue services remain with the members of the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission.

### FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION MEMBERS

Harley Cook, NC Society of Fire and Rescue Instructors - Chair

Gary Whitman, NC Association of Rescue and EMS, Inc.

Robert Poe, NC Association of Rescue and EMS, Inc.

Freddy Johnson, NC Firefighters' Association

Phil Welch, NC Firefighters' Association

Ryan Cole, NC Association of Fire Chiefs

Paul Padgett, NC Fire Marshal's Association

Walter Gardner, NC League of Municipalities

Cloyce Anders, Public-at-Large

Kevin Gordon, Speaker of the House Appointee

Scott Mullins, Governor's Appointee

Josh Smith, Professional Firefighters and Paramedics of NC

Ken Andrews, NC International Association of Arson Investigators

Randy Thompson, NC Association of County Commissioners

Vernon Massengill, President of the Senate Appointee

### **Ex-Officio Members**

Commissioner of Insurance

Commissioner of Labor

Department of Public Safety

Attorney General

Environment, Health and Natural Resources

Community Colleges System

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BOARD MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

In a continued effort to reduce the fire loss in the State of North Carolina, the State Legislature established GS 58-78-5(a)(14b), which requires the State Fire and Rescue Commission to establish voluntary minimum professional qualifications for all levels of fire and rescue service personnel. It is the intent of this manual to set forth policies and procedures pertaining to Certification Board. The following policy identifies the structure for the Certification Board.

### A. Membership

1. The Certification Board consists of two (2) permanent members who serve by virtue of their position and eleven (11) members serving three-year terms representing various associations or appointments. Upon resignation of a three-year term member, he/she shall be replaced in the same manner as originally appointed, and may not be temporarily replaced or represented by another individual. A member has a right to complete his/her term and may not be replaced unless they agree to resign. Any member shall continue to serve until his/her successor is appointed.
2. Permanent members, who serve by virtue of their position, shall forfeit membership immediately upon their loss of position. They may be represented by an individual who is temporarily filling their position, until a permanent replacement has been found. This temporary individual must be recognized by their governing body as acting in that position. Upon permanent replacement of an individual in the position, he/she shall immediately begin serving as a permanent member of the Board.
3. If any of the organizations represented on the Board by either a three-year term member or a permanent member should dissolve, then the position is removed from the Board subject to replacement by the Commission at a later date by another organization.
4. Permanent Members are:
  - a. Director, Public Safety Training Programs (NC Community College System), or designee
  - b. Executive Director, NC Fire and Rescue Commission, or designee
5. Three-Year Term Members are:
  - a. One (1) Member of the Commission
  - b. One (1) Member appointed by the Chair of the Commission
  - c. One (1) Member appointed by the Vice- Chair of the Commission
  - d. One (1) Member representing the NC State Firemen's Association
  - e. One (1) Member representing the NC Association of Fire Chiefs
  - f. One (1) Member representing the NC Society of Fire and Rescue Service Instructors

- g. One (1) Member representing the NC Fire Marshal's Association
- h. Four (4) Members representing the NC Association of Rescue and EMS.

#### **B. Appointment Procedure**

1. The three-year term members shall be appointed in the following manner:
  - a. The Commission Chair's appointee shall be appointed to a three-year term by the current Chair of the Commission in office when the appointment comes up for replacement.
  - b. The Commission Vice-Chair's appointee shall be appointed to a three-year term by the current Vice-Chair of the Commission in office when the appointment comes up for replacement.
  - c. The Commission member serving shall be nominated and elected at a regularly scheduled and announced Fire and Rescue Commission meeting, by a majority of the full voting membership present. This individual must be a Commission member at the time of appointment.
  - d. Representatives of the NC Firemen's Association, the NC Association of Fire Chiefs, the NC Society of Fire Service Instructors, and the NC Fire Marshal's Association shall be elected by the Commission at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting, by a majority of the full voting membership present, after receiving resumes and nominations on two (2) individuals from the represented association. Representatives of the NC Association of Rescue and EMS, Inc. shall be elected by the Commission at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting, by a majority of the full voting membership present, after receiving resumes and nominations on four (4) individuals and two (2) alternates from the association.

#### **C. Vacancies and Resignations**

1. Vacancies shall be filled in the original manner, and shall begin a new three-year cycle. Terms not completed by a member will dissolve, and the new appointee will begin a new three-year term. Vacancies caused by resignations shall remain vacant until filled in the original manner. Delays in the appointment procedure will allow the current member whose term has expired to continue to fill the position until a successor is appointed

#### **D. Quorum**

1. At all regularly scheduled and called meetings of the Board, no vote shall be cast and no policy decision made without a quorum of members present. Issues may be discussed for information only, but must be carried over until the next meeting where a quorum is present.
2. A quorum of voting members shall exist by the presence of seven (7) out of 13 members being present.

#### **E. Member Attendance**

1. Members whenever possible should be present at all meetings. Members must be present to vote, and shall not be allowed to send a delegate or designee in his/her place.

2. Whenever a member is unable to attend, he/she should make either the Chair of the Board or staff know so that there can be assurances of a quorum.
3. Any member who misses two (2) consecutive meetings of the Board shall be considered to have resigned from the Board. In addition, any member who misses four (4) meetings in a two-year period shall be considered to have resigned from the Board. Legitimate absences may be excused by the Chair.
4. Vacancies which occur shall be submitted to the represented association within 14 days for submission of two names to be placed before the Commission at the next scheduled meeting.

**F. Representation By Alternate**

1. Permanent Members of the Board, by virtue of their position may appoint an alternate to represent them at meetings they are unable to attend. The Chair must be notified in writing by the Permanent Member of the beginning and ending dates of the representation. It must be renewed at least annually.



MEETINGS	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

In a continued effort to reduce the fire loss in the State of North Carolina, the State Legislature established GS 58-78-5(a)(14b), which requires the State Fire and Rescue Commission to establish voluntary minimum professional qualifications for all levels of fire and rescue service personnel. It is the intent of this manual to set forth policies and procedures pertaining to Certification Board. The following policy establishes criteria for scheduling and outlines expectations of Certification Board meetings.

### A. Frequency of Meetings

1. Meetings shall be held at least quarterly, or within 60 days of an appeal. Scheduled meetings should be planned at the previous meeting as to date, time and location.

### B. Location, Time, and Meeting Length

1. The location, date, and time of regular meetings shall be set at the previous meeting. Members should select dates which the majority will be able to attend. Meeting length must be flexible. In some cases, the Chair and staff may decide to break the agenda up into two (2) meetings instead of trying to address all material in one day.

### C. Called Meetings

1. The Chair of the Board may at any time he/she deems necessary, or at the request of another Board member, call a special unscheduled meeting of the Board.

### D. Meeting Announcements and Notification Procedures

1. Each member must be notified in writing no less than two weeks prior to each meeting of the date, time, and location of a regular meeting. Special called meetings which give less than a two-week notification shall require notification by telephone or personal interface, in addition to a follow-up in writing. It shall be the responsibility of staff to issue these announcements upon direction of the Chair.

### E. Rules of Order

1. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Board in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these policies and any special rules of order the Board may adopt.
2. All requests, appeals, exemptions, etc., that are to be presented to the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting must be received a minimum of 15 working days prior to the meeting in order to give staff the time to make preparations for the meeting. All materials received after

the cut-off date may be held by staff until the following meeting. Board members requesting items to be placed on the meeting agenda should submit them to the Chair or staff prior to the cut-off date as well.

3. All meetings of the Board must have recorded minutes, which shall be voted on and approved at the following meeting. These minutes will be sent to Board members prior to the Board meeting for review.



CHAIR	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
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### A. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

1. There shall be a Chair of the Board, hereafter called "Chair", who shall be elected by the Board. Elections shall be held during the first regular meeting after July 01 each year. Any member may serve as Chair for as many terms as elected. The terms shall be for a period of one year. Upon the replacement or resignation of any member serving as Chair, a new Chair shall be elected at the following Board meeting.
2. There shall be a Vice-Chair, hereafter called "Vice-Chair", who shall be elected by the Board. Elections shall be held during the first regular meeting after July 01 each year. Any member may serve as Vice-Chair for as many terms as elected. The terms shall be for a period of one year. Upon the replacement or resignation of any member serving as Chair, a replacement shall be elected at the following Board meeting.

### B. Responsibilities of the Chair

1. The Chair shall have the following duties:
  - a. Communicate to staff agenda items for meeting;
  - b. Conduct and "chair" all Board meetings, maintaining order, and following Robert's Rules of Order;
  - c. Call special meetings independently, or upon request of staff or members;
  - d. Represent Board at Commission meetings, making annual reports, and testifying on Board actions at all appeals;
  - e. Represent Board at various conferences, "chairs" hearings, meetings, etc., established for Board input;
  - f. Select or appoint such committees as may be necessary to bring in specialists to properly evaluate programs; and
  - g. Handle other duties as may be delegated by the Board and/or the Commission.
2. The Vice-Chair shall serve in the absence of the Chair.

**C. Representation**

1. If the Chair is elected from one of the fire-related organizations, the Vice-Chair must be elected from a rescue-related organization. If the Chair is elected from a rescue-related organization, the Vice-Chair must be elected from a fire-related organization.



STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
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### A. Board Staff and Staff Responsibilities

1. The Director of the NC Fire and Rescue Commission shall serve as staff of the Board. He/she may request or obtain such additional help as may be needed to complete his/her responsibilities.
2. Staff responsibilities are:
  - a. Given written and/or verbal notice to all members of regular and special meetings
  - b. Record and prepare written minutes of all meetings;
  - c. Record and prepare written documentation of all Board rulings, keeping documentation for future reference;
  - d. Working with the Chair, prepare meeting agendas;
  - e. Review all correspondence for the Board, giving members a brief description of the request, and staff recommendation based on past rulings and standards;
  - f. Provide Board members at meetings with copies of necessary correspondence;
  - g. Correspond, in writing, to all individuals presenting requests to the Board concerning the Board's ruling involving their request, copying Board members for documentation. These copies are to be included in Board packets at following meetings;
  - h. Keep Board Chair and members informed of all related rulings and issues discussed and ruled on by the Commission;
  - i. Prepare such operations procedure drafts, ruling drafts, etc., that the Board may request for approval, subject to staff time and availability;
  - j. Maintain and update policies and procedures after adoption by the NC Fire and Rescue Commission's, Certification Board;
  - k. Arrange for meeting space subsequent to request from individuals to host meetings;
  - l. Keep Chair informed of any issues impacting the Board;
  - m. Provide individuals with applications, and procedures for applications, to the Board;
  - n. Answer questions concerning Board rulings and procedures to interested parties;

- o. Make interpretations, and rulings based on Board precedents, at the level requested by the current Board to individuals applying. This serves to keep repetitive requests from taking valuable Board time;
- p. Relay Board requests to other organizations for developmental support as requested by the Board; and
- q. Handle such other requests for assistance by the Board or Chair, based on ability and time constraints.



BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
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### A. General Responsibilities

1. It shall be the general responsibility of the Certification Board to establish rules, routines, reporting requirements, administrative guidelines, options, etc., for carrying out the various certification programs assigned to it. These rules, etc., should be based on the intent of each standard as passed by the Commission, and should not vary the context or original intent of the standard. Such rules, procedures, etc., promulgated by the Board, should further define the requirements of the standard, and make application, administration, documentation, and management of the standard more explicit. These responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - a. All qualification classes qualifying instructors to delivery standards work must come before the Board;
  - b. Develop and evaluate tests when needed;
  - c. Enforce certification requirements set forth by the NC Fire and Rescue Commission;
  - d. Evaluate and develop forms, physicals, applications, etc., necessary for administration of the standard;
  - e. Evaluate departments who make application for delivery agency status;
  - f. Evaluate independent training programs;
  - g. Evaluate Instructor teaching outlines;
  - h. Evaluate other agency programs for compliance;
  - i. Review individual records for certification; and
  - j. Review out-of-state certification programs for compliance.
2. It shall also be the general responsibility of the Board to make rulings, set penalties, issue approval and conduct evaluations. Such evaluations, rulings, etc., shall be consistent with the original intent of each standard as passed by the Commission.
  - a. Handle such rulings as may come up on individual problems or situations
  - b. Make such rules, evaluations, etc., necessary to carry out the intent of the standard
  - c. Monitor the quality of instructor work, and establish such rules as necessary to enforce the suspension requirements in the instructor standard. The Board may request such

assistance as necessary, such as from the OSFM field staff, Community College Area Coordinators, etc., to evaluate or investigate complaints and/or instructor ability

- d. Rule on suspension of instructors, appeals, etc.,
  - e. Rule on violations of standard rules by individuals, organizations, schools, etc.
3. It shall also be the general responsibility of the Board to make recommendations to the Commission regarding updating or amending standards based on improvements and further clarification needed as viewed by the Board. This should be done a minimum of every five (5) years.
  4. The Board shall handle such additional certification standards as may be assigned to it by the Fire and Rescue Commission.
  5. Any rulings, procedures, documentation, etc., produced by the Board shall be forwarded to the appropriate individuals.



<b>PUBLICATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF RULINGS</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
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### A. Board Rulings

1. Whenever the Board establishes a procedure, or makes a ruling on any issue, the Board shall, working with staff, make such ruling or procedure available to appropriate individuals or organizations.
2. Board member should take it upon themselves to keep the organizations they represent appraised of routine Board meetings and actions.
3. Specific actions shall be addressed, in writing, to appropriate agencies by staff when so directed by the Board.



<b>REPORTING TO THE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
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### A. Quarterly Reports to the Fire and Rescue Commission

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Chair (or OSFM Staff) to prepare a quarterly report of Board activity for the preceding quarter.
2. This quarterly report shall be presented to the Commission at their quarterly meeting by the Chair (or OSFM Staff).
3. The report shall consist of:
  - a. Significant Board rulings
  - b. Number of meetings
  - c. Change in representation of any agency
  - d. Any surveys, procedures, reports, etc., requested by the Commission
  - e. Board member names and attendance records
  - f. Schedules for the upcoming year on standard revision suggestions



<b>SUSPENSION, DENIAL, OR REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
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### A. Suspension, Denial, or Revocation of Certification

1. Instances that may result in the issuance of consequences include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Has been convicted of a felony against this State or the United States, or convicted of a felony in another state that would also be a felony if it had been committed in this State;
  - b. Has obtained certification through fraud, deceit or perjury;
  - c. Has knowingly aided or abetted any person who has obtained certification through fraud, deceit or perjury; or
  - d. Has been guilty of willful misconduct or gross incompetence.
2. The Board may investigate the actions of any certified individual or applicant upon the verified complaint, in writing, of any person alleging a violation of subsection A. 1. a.-d. above.
3. The Board may deny an application for certification, suspend or revoke a certification or refuse to grant a certification to any individual for any of the grounds that are described in subsection A. 1. a.-d. above. Within 30 days after receipt of a notification that an application for a certificate has been denied or a certification has been revoked, the applicant may make a written request for a hearing before the Fire and Rescue Commission.



<b>INSTRUCTOR CONSEQUENCE POLICY</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 14, 2014	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

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### A. Definitions

1. Certified fire/rescue instructors (Level II) are those who have met the following requirements:
  - a. Certified as a Fire Instructor I
  - b. Successfully completed the Fire/Rescue Instructor II course requirement.
  - c. Must be at least 21 years of age.
  - d. Must have a high school education or equivalent recognized by the State.
  - e. Certified a minimum of five (5) years as either: Firefighter II, Technical Rescuer, or Fire and Life Safety Educator.
2. Qualified fire/rescue instructors are those who have met the following requirements:
  - a. A certified fire/rescue instructor (Level II) will be recognized as subject matter experts by the Certification Board to teach, promote, and develop course work in designated areas. In order to teach and evaluate students towards a Commission Standard, the fire/rescue instructor must receive recognition as a qualified fire/rescue instructor in these designated areas by successful completion of the specified qualification process.
  - b. Certified fire/rescue instructors may become recognized as a qualified fire/rescue instructor in any number of subjects within six (6) different qualification areas. These areas are: Firefighter, Technical Rescuer, Driver/Operator, Hazardous Materials, Firefighter Specialty, and Technical Rescuer Specialty.

### B. Accountability for Fire/Rescue Instructors

1. Instances that may result in the issuance of consequences include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Failure to adhere to the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission (Commission) Policies;
  - b. Failure to accurately and timely report injuries or deaths associated with a certification class;
  - c. Evidence of improper or unsafe training practices during certification classes;
  - d. Dishonesty on examinations; and

- e. Breach of test bank security
2. **Any level of discipline may be the initial level depending on the circumstances and conduct of the fire/rescue instructor.**

### C. Letter of Warning

1. Commission staff may issue a letter of warning for failure to comply with any of the requirements placed on the fire/rescue instructor during the period of time that the consequences of a Letter of Caution issued to the fire/rescue instructor are in effect. A letter of warning may also be issued as a first consequence if the severity and the maliciousness of any actions by the fire/rescue instructor are found to warrant such action. Staff shall handle this level and notify the Discipline Committee who will then report to the Certification Board in the Discipline Committee's quarterly report. The consequences of this warning will be in effect for a minimum of 1 year.

### D. Suspension

1. The fire/rescue instructor's certification may be suspended for a period of not less than three years for failure, or repeated failure, to comply with any of the requirements placed on the fire/rescue instructor.
2. If suspended, the fire/rescue instructor will lose any and all recognized qualifications held at the time of the suspension.
  - a. After the suspension has been served, the fire/rescue instructor may elect to reacquire their previously held qualification(s).
  - b. The fire/rescue instructor must meet all requirements in-place at the time of reacquisition of previously held qualification(s) and successfully complete the applicable qualification process for each.
3. Staff shall bring this level before the Discipline Committee who will review and make a recommendation to the Certification Board prior to issuing the notification.
  - a. If an instructor has any action taken, a copy shall be placed on permanent file with the NCFRC Office and notification to the Delivery Agency and/or Chief of the fire/rescue instructor's Department shall be made.

### E. Revocation

1. The fire/rescue instructor's certification may be permanently revoked for willful or wanton negligence that leads to death or serious injury while engaged as a fire/rescue instructor.
2. A fire/rescue instructor's certification may also be permanently revoked for violation of any part of the Certification Board Policies and Procedures that has received a previous suspension.
3. Any revocation of a fire/rescue instructor certification will also result with the revocation of any and all recognized qualifications held at the time of the revocation.

**F. Investigative Process –**

1. Any allegation found to be substantiated by the Discipline Committee shall be forwarded to the Certification Board for a hearing. During this period of time, the fire/rescue instructor's certification shall be suspended until the final ruling of the Certification Board.

**G. Due Process –**

1. Once any of the above consequences have been issued, the fire/rescue instructor will have due process to aggrieve their penalty. Infractions that receive a Letter of Caution or Warning shall have the right to appear before the Certification Board to receive an interpretation of their findings.
2. Fire/rescue instructor's given a suspension or revocation will have the right to appeal to the Commission.



<b>APPEAL PROCESS</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

In a continued effort to reduce the fire loss in the State of North Carolina, the State Legislature established GS 58-78-5(a)(14b), which requires the State Fire and Rescue Commission to establish voluntary minimum professional qualifications for all levels of fire and rescue service personnel. The following policy was established to handle the appeals process of OSFM Staff or Certification Board decision/rulings.

## II. OSFM STAFF DECISION/RULINGS

Any decision or ruling of the OSFM Staff may be appealed by the affected individual, department, school, etc.

### A. Appeal

1. The appeal shall be heard by the Certification Board (Board) at its quarterly meeting.
2. The appeal must be in writing and state that the affected party would like to appeal a decision to the Board. The written request for appeal must be received by the Fire and Rescue Commission (Commission) office 60 days prior to the scheduled meeting so that ample notification of the hearing can be provided.

### B. Hearing Procedures

1. The hearing will be conducted by the Board, or its members present at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. A special meeting can be scheduled at the request of the Chair or any two members of the Board if the appeal is time sensitive.
2. Members of the Board must be unbiased and must not have had direct involvement in the case prior to the hearing. Direct involvement would be demonstrated in such ways as participating in the investigation, providing information for the original ruling, filing the complaint, etc. Knowledge of the ruling would not be considered direct involvement.
3. Parties to the hearing are notified in writing of the hearing date, time, location and procedures at least thirty (30) days before the hearing.
4. Hearing procedures include the following:
  - a. A written and/or electronic record of the proceedings is maintained.
  - b. The Chair of the Board, or in his absence the Vice-Chair, shall serve as the Hearing Chair during the Hearing.
  - c. The proceeding is not governed by formal rules of evidence or by trial-like procedures. The procedures are those used by reasonable persons conducting a serious proceeding. The Chair rules on all procedural questions.

- d. The Chair reads the charges or complaint to the Board.
  - e. It is the responsibility of the appealing party to submit a clear and coherent statement providing the basis for the appeal, including any supporting documentation.
  - f. Each side presents its case in an informal format, and may use exhibits, witnesses, written submittals, or other supporting documentation.
  - g. Members of the Board have the right to question any of the parties or witnesses.
  - h. The Chair may terminate a party's or witness's right to address the committee if the party becomes abusive or persists in presenting irrelevant evidence or information not considered pertinent by the Chair.
  - i. If either party fails to appear, the hearing will continue as if the absent party were present.
  - j. The failure of any party to appear without justifiable cause will terminate that party's right to appeal.
  - k. After the hearing, the Board deliberates and renders a decision by simple majority based on a preponderance of the evidence. If the Board decides to impose a penalty, it specifies the disciplinary action to be imposed. These will be provided in writing to the individual within 30 days of the decision by the Board.
5. Any appeal of the Board's decision must be made to the Commission within 60 days of the receipt of this decision and state that the affected party would like to appeal a decision by the Board. The written request for appeal must be received by the Commission office 60 days prior to the scheduled meeting so that ample notification of the hearing can be provided.
  6. All documentation for all hearings will be kept on file.

### C. Hearing Rights

1. In appeal hearings, parties have the following rights:
  - a. To be present during the hearing
  - b. To be informed of all the evidence received by the Board and OSFM Staff
  - c. To present witnesses
  - d. To challenge or rebut evidence or testimony presented by the OSFM Staff
  - e. To submit evidence on behalf of their own position

## III. CERTIFICATION BOARD DECISION/RULINGS

Any decision or ruling of the Certification Board may be appealed by the affected individual, department, school, etc.

### A. Appeal

1. The appeal shall be heard by the Commission at its quarterly meeting.  
The appeal must be in writing and state that the affected party would like to appeal a decision by the Board. The written request for appeal must be received by the Commission office 60 days prior to the scheduled meeting so that ample notification of the hearing can be provided.

### B. Hearing Procedures

1. The hearing will be conducted by the Commission, or its members present at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission. A quorum of members must be present to conduct the hearing. A special meeting can be scheduled at the request of the Chair or any two members of the Commission if the appeal is time sensitive.
2. Members of the Commission must be unbiased and must not have had direct involvement in the case prior to the hearing. Direct involvement would be demonstrated in such ways as participating in the investigation, providing information for the original ruling, filing the complaint, etc. Knowledge of the ruling would not be considered direct involvement.
3. Parties to the hearing are notified in writing of the hearing date, time, location and procedures at least thirty (30) days before the hearing.
4. Hearing procedures include the following:
  - a. A written and/or electronic record of the proceedings is maintained.
  - b. The Chair of the Commission, or in his absence the Vice-Chair, shall serve as the Hearing Chair during the Hearing.
  - c. The proceeding is not governed by formal rules of evidence or by trial-like procedures. The procedures are those used by reasonable persons conducting a serious proceeding. The Chair rules on all procedural questions.
  - d. The Chair reads the charges or complaint to the Commission.
  - e. It is the responsibility of the appealing party to submit a clear and coherent statement providing the basis for the appeal, including any supporting documentation.
  - f. Each side presents its case in an informal format, and may use exhibits, witnesses, written submittals, or other supporting documentation.
  - g. Members of the Commission have the right to question any of the parties or witnesses.
  - h. The Chair may terminate a party's or witness's right to address the committee if the party becomes abusive or persists in presenting irrelevant evidence or information not considered pertinent by the Chair.
  - i. If either party fails to appear, the hearing will continue as if the absent party were present.
  - j. The failure of any party to appear without justifiable cause will terminate that party's right to appeal.
  - k. After the hearing, the Commission deliberates and renders a decision by simple majority based on a preponderance of the evidence. If the Commission decides to impose a penalty, it specifies the disciplinary action to be imposed. The decision will be provided in writing to the individual within 30 days of the decision by the Commission.
  - l. Any appeal (petition for contested case) of the decision must be made within 60 days of the receipt of this decision pursuant to 11 NCAC 1.0401, 11 NCAC 1.0403, Article 3A of N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 150B, and N.C. Gen. Stat. 150B-23(f), by requesting a hearing before the Commissioner of Insurance of the State of North Carolina or a hearing officer designated by him. Such hearing request must be in writing directed to General Counsel, North Carolina Department of Insurance, 1201 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1201.
5. All documentation for all hearings by the Commission will be kept on file.

**C. Hearing Rights**

1. In appeal hearings, parties have the following rights:
  - a. To be present during the hearing
  - b. To be informed of all the evidence received by the Commission and Board staff
  - c. To present witnesses
  - d. To challenge or rebut evidence or testimony presented by the Board
  - e. To submit evidence on behalf of their own position



NEW CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2015	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

In a continued effort to reduce the fire loss in the State of North Carolina, the State Legislature established GS 58-78-5(a)(14b), which requires the State Fire and Rescue Commission to establish voluntary minimum professional qualifications for all levels of fire and rescue service personnel. It is the intent of this manual to set forth policies and procedures pertaining to Certification Board. The following policy establishes criteria for handling additional certification standards as may be assigned to it by the Fire and Rescue Commission.

### A. Approval process for new programs

1. OSFM Staff, or Emergency Service Agency, will present the idea/concept to the Certification Board.
2. The Certification Board will determine if the idea/concept is to be a certification program (meeting a NFPA professional qualification or alternative standard) or a hand-off training course. The Certification Board will also set expectations for the certification program. Finally, the Certification Board Chair will appoint a Committee of subject matter experts to serve as a Development Committee.
  - a. See attached flow chart on page 3.
3. The Certification Board will present the program to the Fire and Rescue Commission (Commission) as part of the Certification Board's quarterly report for approval.
4. Once approved by the Commission, Staff and the assigned Development Committee will develop and, if necessary, pilot the program.
5. The Certification Board must approve the final product after development and/or the pilot offerings. This approval must include contact hours, instructor qualification process, and effective release date.
6. If approved, the OSFM Staff will release the program to the recognized Delivery Agencies or Emergency Service Agencies for delivery.
7. The Commission will receive final notice of the approved program as part of the Certification Board's quarterly report.

### B. NC Certifications

1. If a non NFPA Professional Qualification course subject is approved as an alternative standard (NC certification), the Certification Board shall require Job Performance Requirements (JPR) be written in a format consistent with NFPA standards identifying requisite knowledge and

requisite skills. The JPR's (Job Performance Standards), requisite knowledge, and requisite skills shall all be used as information from which instructional objectives can be written.

2. From a training and certification or licensing perspective, it is very difficult to develop individual personal certification testing requirements against an operational standard like the 1400 series. They are written for fire department operations, and do not identify the job performance of an individual. Since they are not written with JPR's like the professional qualification series (1000 series), the individual job requirements are not developed. In the late 1980's NFPA recognized this and their legal staff developed the JPR process to clearly identify the actual job duties of an individual within each of their professional qualification standards.





REVISION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> OCTOBER 08, 2015	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

In a continued effort to reduce the fire loss in the State of North Carolina, the State Legislature established GS 58-78-5(a)(14b), which requires the State Fire and Rescue Commission to establish voluntary minimum professional qualifications for all levels of fire and rescue service personnel. It is the intent of this manual to set forth policies and procedures pertaining to Certification Board. The following policy identifies the criteria for handling revision of established certification programs. The Certification Board shall make recommendations to the Commission a minimum of every five (5) years on changes to standards programs. They shall also request upgrade and qualification course agencies to re-evaluate or update courses when standards are changed, or upon need.

### A. Process for revision of certification programs

1. OSFM Staff will present the NFPA Standard Comparison Matrix to the Certification Board to begin the process of revision for a current certification program area.
2. The Certification Board will assign the Matrix to the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will assess any needed changes to the administration of this particular certification program. The Committee will make any necessary recommendations to meet the applicable NFPA Professional Qualification Standard and/or direction of the NC Fire and Rescue Commission.
3. After receiving direction from the Certification Board, OSFM Staff will prepare lesson plans, practical skills, test questions, and recommend supporting manuals for the certification program undergoing revision.
4. OSFM Staff will request the Certification Board Chair to appoint a Committee of subject matter experts to serve as a Validation Committee.
5. The appointed Validation Committee is to validate course content, test questions, and practical skill sheets. The Committee will recommend to the Certification Board approval of the revised course when the Committee is satisfied and the course revision is complete.
6. When approved, the Certification Board will release the revised program to the recognized Delivery Agencies or Emergency Service Agencies for delivery.
7. The Fire and Rescue Commission will receive final notice of the revised course as part of the Certification Board's quarterly report.



RECIPROCITY	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> APRIL 11, 2017	<i>VERSION:</i> v1r0
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

This policy shall establish guidelines for applicants seeking to receive reciprocity for certifications earned in other states, provinces, and countries through the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission (Commission). This policy will address reciprocity administration, requesting reciprocity, and equivalent credit.

### A. Reciprocity Administration

1. Reciprocity will only be granted to members of NC Departments for certifications that are accredited by either the International Fire Service Accreditation (IFSAC) or the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro-Board).
2. The (Commission) will not grant reciprocity for certifications to members of NC Departments for certifications taken through an out-of-state delivery agency if those certification programs are offered in NC.
3. There is no reciprocity for non-IFSAC/Pro-Board certifications. Those certifications are:
  - a. Chief 101
  - b. Emergency Vehicle Driver
  - c. Rescue Officer
  - d. Agriculture Rescue
4. Reciprocity will not be allowed for the following management level certifications:
  - a. Fire Officer (NFPA 1021; levels III and IV)
  - b. Fire/Rescue Instructor (NFPA 1041; level III)
  - c. Fire Marshal (NFPA 1037)
  - d. Fire Investigator (NFPA 1033)
5. Equivalent credit will not be allowed to satisfy requirements for the Fire/Rescue Instructor qualification process of the various accredited subjects.

### B. Requesting Reciprocity

1. The Commission will recognize and accept certification certificates from any entity accredited by IFSAC or the Pro-Board.
2. The candidate must meet all pre-requisite(s) of the certification(s) for which reciprocity is being sought.
3. A candidate shall complete a Reciprocity Packet. The packet will contain the following:
  - a. Application for Certification

- b. Copy of original certificates with accreditation statement/seal
  - i. Must include the level certified and the date of issue as annotated on the original certificate.
  - ii. The IFSAC or Pro-Board accredited entity issuing the certificate and the original seal number assigned by the issuing entity.
4. Incomplete reciprocity requests will not be processed
5. Once a candidate's application is received and deemed complete, the candidate will be allowed to attend a regional test site for the certification exam for each requested certification.
  - a. Candidate must pass the exam with a score of 80%.
  - b. If a candidate fails on the first attempt, the candidate is allowed a retest at another regional testing site.
  - c. Any candidate that fails the retest will not be granted reciprocity and must take the NC certification class and pass the certification exam in order to become certified.
6. Upon successful completion of the certification exam, the candidate will receive a North Carolina certification(s).

**C. Pre-requisite(s) credit (equivalent credit)**

1. The Commission recognizes and accepts certifications accredited by any IFSAC or Pro-Board entity as being equivalent to the Commission certification for comparable titled levels.
2. Under this reciprocity provision, eligible candidates, may progress within the Commission certification programs using external IFSAC or Pro-Board accredited certifications to meet the prerequisites as identified by each specific program. This provision is applicable without retesting or recertifying the lower level certifications.
3. The candidate must meet all pre-requisite(s) of the certification(s) for which equivalent credit is being sought.
4. A candidate shall complete an Equivalent Credit Packet. The packet will contain the following:
  - a. Application for Equivalent Credit
  - b. Copy of original certificates with accreditation statement/seal
    - i. Must include the level certified and the date of issue as annotated on the original certificate.
    - ii. The IFSAC or Pro-Board accredited entity issuing the certificate and the original seal number assigned by the issuing entity.
  - c. Once processed, a student record will be established and equivalent credit will appear for the approved certifications.
5. The matrix below details the accepted Commission program areas.

NC Program		Entrance Requirements		Prerequisite Requirements		
	Education	Age	Yrs of Service	NC Certs	IFSAC	IFSAC
Airport FF	HS or GED	18	None		FF 2	HM Ops
D/O Pumps	HS or GED	18	None	D/O EVD	FF 1	
D/O Aerial	HS or GED	18	None	D/O EVD	FF 1	
FLSE 2	HS or GED	18	None		FLSE 1	
FLSE 3	HS or GED	18	None		FLSE 2	
Instructor 2	HS or GED	23	5 yrs as FF2, TR, or FLSE		Instructor 1	
Instructor 3	HS or GED	25	7 yrs as FF2, TR, or FLSE		Instructor 2	
Officer 2	HS or GED	23	5 yrs as FF2		Instructor 1	Officer 1
Officer 3	HS or GED	25	7 yrs as FF2		Instructor 1	Officer 2
Officer 4	HS or GED	27	9 yrs as FF2		Instructor 1	Officer 3
HM - PPE	HS or GED	18	None		HM Operations	
HM - Decon	HS or GED	18	None		HM Operations	
HM - Air	HS or GED	18	None		HM Operations	
HM - Technician	HS or GED	18	None		HM Operations	
Marine FF	HS or GED	18	None		FF 2	
TR - CSR	HS or GED	18	None		TR - General	HM Operations
TR - Rope	HS or GED	18	None		TR - General	HM Operations
TR - Structural	HS or GED	18	None		TR - General	HM Operations
TR - Water Rescue	HS or GED	18	None		TR - General and TR - Ropes	HM Operations
TR - Trench	HS or GED	18	None		TR - General	HM Operations
TR - VMR	HS or GED	18	None		TR - General	HM Operations
TR - Wilderness	HS or GED	18	None		TR - General	HM Operations



LIVE FIRE TRAINING EVOLUTIONS	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION BOARD GOVERNANCE	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> APRIL 21, 2015	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> JULY 01, 2019
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>NC FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i> NFPA 1403 NFPA 1142	<i>FORMS:</i> FORM 200.14A LIVE FIRE AUDIT FORM

## I. SCOPE

This policy shall establish guidelines for the Live Fire Burn programs of the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission (Commission). This policy will address the various aspects of the program and exceptions that are taken by the Commission, applies to any live fire training evolutions conducted in acquired structure, and ONLY applies to live fire training structures when used for Commission sanctioned courses/programs.

### A. General Definitions

1. Live Fire – Any unconfined open flame or device that can propagate fire to the building, structure, or other combustible materials (includes LP Gas).
2. Training Structure –
  - a. Acquired Structure – A building or structure acquired by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) from a property owner for the purpose of conducting live fire training evolutions.
  - b. Live Fire Training Structure – A structure specifically designed for conducting live fire training evolutions on a repetitive basis.

### B. Student Prerequisites and Age

1. The 2018 edition of NFPA Standard 1403 requires that: “Students participating in live fire training evolution who have received the required minimum training and prerequisites from other than the authority having jurisdiction shall not be permitted to participate in any live fire training evolution without presenting prior written evidence of having successfully completed the prescribed minimum training to the levels specified in 4.3.1 (required minimum training) and 4.3.2.1 through 4.3.2.5 (prerequisites).”
2. Student, or participant, shall be at least 18 years of age to participate in live fire delivered by any Commission approved Delivery Agency and/or led by any qualified live fire (or LP Gas instructor). ID’s will be checked by qualified instructors before allowing students to participate in the live fire training. Signatures on Form 200.14A validates that the student is at least 18 years old and have successfully completed the above required minimum training and prerequisites.

### C. Instructor Qualification

1. Those desiring to be a Qualified Live Fire Instructor shall successfully complete the Live Fire Qualification Courses approved by the Certification Board and delivered by the NC Department of Insurance/Office of State Fire Marshal Staff.
2. There shall be a Live Fire and LP Gas Qualification courses.

3. Instructors must meet the following requirements in order to be qualified as a Live Fire Instructor:
  - a. Certified as Instructor Level II
  - b. Qualified five years as a Firefighter Instructor
  - c. Participated in five burns with a Live Fire Qualified Instructor and be able to document these burns.
  - d. Student must have an agency sponsor and a signed sponsorship letter on letterhead.
  - e. Meet all course requirements, successfully complete 100% of the practical evolution, and pass final written test with an 80%.
4. All Qualified Live Fire Instructors shall comply with the procedures established by the Commission.

#### D. Live Fire Reporting

1. Live Fire Reporting requirements for training evolutions conducted in **acquired structures**:
  - a. The Delivery Agency shall notify Office of State Fire Marshal Staff (OSFM Staff) 10 days prior to a live fire training evolution(s), conducted in **any acquired structure**; providing the AHJ, location, time, and the name of the Instructor in Charge of the class for the purpose of random audits.
  - b. The notification in **D-1-a** above shall be done utilizing the Live Fire Reporting system on the Office of State Fire Marshal website.
  - c. The Delivery Agency shall notify OSFM Staff within 72 hours, of an accident and/or injury associated with live fire training or certification training.
2. Live Fire Reporting requirements for training evolutions conducted in **live fire training structures**:
  - a. The Delivery Agency shall notify Office of State Fire Marshal Staff (OSFM Staff) prior to a live fire training evolution(s), conducted in **any live fire training structure**; if the course being delivered requires reporting through the Delivery Agency Portal.
  - b. The notification in **D-2-a** above shall be done utilizing the Delivery Agency Course Scheduler Portal on the Office of State Fire Marshal website. Reporting requirements of the Delivery Agency Portal shall be applicable to this reporting requirement.
  - c. The Delivery Agency shall notify OSFM Staff within 72 hours, of an accident and/or injury associated with live fire training or certification training.
3. All Delivery Agencies shall comply with the procedures established by the Commission.

#### E. Live Fire Audit

1. The Commission authorizes OSFM Staff to conduct random audits of all live fire evolutions conducted in **any acquired structure** which are led by any Qualified Live Fire Instructor and/or sponsored by any approved Delivery Agencies.
  - a. Any OSFM Staff, who conducts Live Fire Audits, shall be a Live Fire and LP Gas qualified instructor.
2. The Commission authorizes OSFM Staff to conduct random audits of all live fire evolutions conducted in **any live fire training structure** when used for Commission sanctioned courses/programs.

- a. Any OSFM Staff, who conducts Live Fire Audits, shall be a Live Fire and LP Gas qualified instructor.
3. When OSFM Staff conducts an audit, they shall identify themselves on official business for the purpose of a Live Fire Training Audit. This identification should be made upon their arrival on the training site to the Incident Commander and/or Qualified Instructor in Charge.
4. OSFM Staff should make every effort not to impede the training process. However, OSFM Staff shall be able to conduct a Live Fire Training Audit while on scene in a reasonable amount of time. (A reasonable amount of time is defined as during the next rotation or break in the training process).
5. Qualified Live Fire Instructors, who willfully refuse to be audited by OSFM Staff, shall immediately forfeit their Live Fire Qualification. OSFM Staff shall file a written report with the Deputy Director of the Fire and Rescue Commission, which will forward the report to the Certification Board Chair who will take appropriate action(s) as directed by Instructor Consequence Policy (PPM 200.09).

#### F. Exceptions to NFPA 1403 and 1142

1. The Live Fire Qualified Instructor shall abide by all policies, procedures, competencies, and processes of the qualification class. This includes the proper use of:
  - a. Pre-burn application of Class "B" fuels to the fire set, or
  - b. Proper use of Class "A" fuels to the fuel set.
2. **Suitable amounts of class "A" or class "B" fuels may be pre-applied to the fire set before it is ignited, however throwing additional fuel after the set has been ignited, whether class "A" or class "B", has been eliminated.**
3. The NC Fire & Rescue Commission takes exception to Annex A.1.3.3 and adopts the wording specific to 1.3.3\*:
  - a. Procedures for suppression of fires set for the sole purpose of training individuals for fire cause and origin investigation shall not be covered in this standard.
4. Adequate ventilation was included in the 1997 edition: 2-2.10\*(g):
  - a. An adequate ventilation opening(s) shall be made in the roof. It was not included in 2002, 2007, 2012, or 2018 editions. NCFRC takes exception and requires adequate ventilation opening(s) be made in the roof.
5. Commission exception taken to NFPA 1142 on determining water supply needed for exposures.
  - a. A multiplier of .5 shall be added for each exposure.
  - b. Exposure is defined by NFPA 1142.

**Student name****Department****Name of Training Officer or Chief completing this form**

The 2018 edition of NFPA Standard 1403 requires that: "Students participating in live fire training evolution who have received the required minimum training and prerequisites from other than the authority having jurisdiction shall not be permitted to participate in any live fire training evolution without presenting prior written evidence of having successfully completed the prescribed minimum training to the levels specified in 4.3.1 (required minimum training) and 4.3.2.1 through 4.3.2.5 (prerequisites)." These required minimum training subjects (4.3.1) and prerequisites (4.3.2) are:

- |  |       |  |       |
|--|-------|--|-------|
| 1. 4.3.1 - Safety                            | _____ | 9. 4.3.1 - Ventilation                           | _____ |
| 2. 4.3.1 - Fire Behavior                     | _____ | 10. 4.3.1 - Forcible Entry                       | _____ |
| 3. 4.3.1 - Portable Extinguishers            | _____ | 11. 4.3.1 - Building Construction                | _____ |
| 4. 4.3.1 - Personal Protective Equipment     | _____ | 12. 4.3.2.1 - Fire Dynamics                      | _____ |
| 5. 4.3.1 - Ladders                           | _____ | 13. 4.3.2.2 - Health and Safety                  | _____ |
| 6. 4.3.1 - Fire Hose, Appliance, and Streams | _____ | 14. 4.3.2.3 - Fundamentals of Fire Behavior      | _____ |
| 7. 4.3.1 - Overhaul                          | _____ | 15. 4.3.2.4 - Fire Development in a Compartment  | _____ |
| 8. 4.3.1 - Water Supply                      | _____ | 16. 4.3.2.5 - Nozzle Techniques and Door Control | _____ |

The Fire Chief or Training Officer of \_\_\_\_\_ Department authorizes that \_\_\_\_\_ has completed the required minimum training and prerequisites and may participate in the live fire training evolutions delivered by any NCFRC approved Delivery Agency and/or led by any NCFRC qualified live fire instructor.

Student, or participant, shall be at least 18 years of age to participate in live fire delivered by any NCFRC approved Delivery Agency and/or led by any qualified live fire instructor. ID's will be checked by qualified instructors before allowing students to participate in the live fire training. Signatures below validates that the student is at least 18 years old and have successfully completed the above required minimum training and prerequisites.

Chief or Training Officer Signature

Date

Instructor Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date



POLICY FOR TESTING	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION TESTING	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> DECEMBER 10, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 11, 2017
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>CERTIFICATION BOARD</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i> FORM 300.01A

## I. SCOPE

The purpose of this chapter is to establish uniformity for the overall North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission (NCFRC) Certification Program. It is intended to ensure that the integrity and quality of the Certification Program is maintained. It is the policy and practice of the NCFRC to develop and disseminate training programs to Delivery Agency (DA's), and administer a certification system following the criteria outlined by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the Pro Board Fire Service Professional Qualifications System (Pro Board).

### A. General Testing Requirements

1. NCFRC shall have on file a signed statement from all instructors, proctors, and delivery agencies acknowledging their intention to comply with the testing procedures of the NCFRC. Proctors, who have been through the NCFRC Proctor Course, are the only persons permitted to deliver written certification examinations. Proctors may be qualified at Regional Qualifications locations held across the state.
2. Written test packages shall be made available to the DA by the NCFRC, to be disseminated by the DA, in sealed, separate packages, to the proctor prior to the completion of each course, block, or series of instruction. The examination date is to be determined upon registering the course, block, or series of instruction.
3. Practical skills books shall be made available to the DA by the NCFRC, to be disseminated by the DA, to the instructor prior to the beginning of each course, block, or series of instruction. The skills book check-off sheet (located at the back of each skills book) shall be made available to the Proctor before a written examination can begin. This sheet must show that 100% of the skills were covered during the delivery of the course, block, or series of instruction.
4. It is the proctor's responsibility to make certain that all paperwork for the class is in order before the written test begins. The proctor must not open the written test package until the appointed test time.
5. It is the instructor's responsibility to assure that all necessary equipment and props are in place and working so that all skills within the skills book can be completed.
6. Candidates must pass the practical skills book, when applicable to that subject, before sitting for the written examination.
7. Candidates shall not be allowed admittance to the test site once the test has begun.
8. Proctors will assure that testing candidates are the same as those noted on the roster by checking a valid photo ID.
9. Upon test completion, the proctor shall seal all tests in an envelope and return the envelope to the DA.

10. The time the written test will be administered must be pre-determined by the instructor, the proctor, and the DA.

#### **B. Practical (Manipulative) Skills Testing Procedures – Skill Books**

1. Practical skills shall be examined according to the practical skill books provided by the NCFRC.
2. Practical skills tests shall be graded on a pass/fail basis, as determined by a preponderance of the steps need for skill completion.
  - a. A “Critical” rating (Indicated by a red “C”) is assigned to items which, if omitted or performed incorrectly, would not meet the intent of the standard. Should a student fail to perform any one item rated critical, the student would be unsuccessful in attaining the required proficiency level for that skill.
3. Each practical skill sheet has an instructor statement to read aloud to each student to ensure directions are consistent to all candidates.
4. When conducting practical skills evaluations, "evaluated" students must be separated from "unevaluated" students.
  - a. The use of cell phones or other electronic media devices is prohibited while the candidate is conducting practical skills scenarios. This means texting, voice or camera use will not be tolerated unless it's deemed an emergency or permission is given by the instructor.
5. If a candidate fails the practical skills exam, he/she shall be given one chance to retest. This shall be done before the candidate can take the written exam.

#### **C. Written (Cognitive) Testing Procedures**

1. Knowledge objectives shall be measured by a written test created at random from a test bank of questions provided by the NCFRC. Passing grades shall equal a score of 70% or greater on each unit examination.
2. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices as noted below are not permitted during test administration. The proctor shall have a location where these items can be placed during the examination period. Stored electronics are required to be turned off or set to silent mode so as not to disturb the testing process. Prohibited devices include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Cell phones, audio players/recorders, tablets, laptops, notebooks, smart watches, or any other personal computing devices.
3. Prior to the written test starting, the proctor shall hand out answer sheets to each candidate and explain:
  - a. The number of questions on the test.
  - b. If any candidate should need clarification for any question on the test, the proctor may read the question aloud, but not offer any interpretation or further explanation which may indicate the answer.
  - c. Candidates shall fill out the applicable information on the answer sheet provided.
  - d. The maximum time allowed for the written test shall be indicated by the proctor (60 seconds per test item).
  - e. The proctor shall maintain a quiet and secure environment during the entire time the test is being administered.

- f. The proctor shall tell the candidates that all written tests for certification courses require a minimum of 70% score for passing.
- g. Any candidate receiving less than a 70% grade shall be allowed to apply for re-testing at the local Delivery Agency. School Directors or their appointed representatives, shall be allowed to administer these retests.
- h. Candidates shall be allowed to leave the test area to use bathroom facilities and /or to take a break within the building only after turning his/her test booklet and answer sheet face down, raising his/her hand and waiting for the proctor's permission.
- i. If more than one room is used for the test, then at least one proctor for each room shall be made available.

#### **D. Oral Testing Procedures for Written (Cognitive) Tests**

1. Request for Oral Testing
  - a. Candidate shall make request in advance to the proctor specifying the level of testing and reason(s) for requesting an oral test.
  - b. Oral tests should be discouraged except for a temporary physical handicap which may impede his/her writing ability.
  - c. Any other requests should follow the steps outline in 300.02 ADA Policy.
2. Oral Testing Procedures
  - a. An official identification must be provided by the candidate to participate in testing.
  - b. Proctor shall read the questions and the answer choices twice, waiting 15 - 20 seconds between first and second reading. The proctor must read the question as written, neither emphasizing any portion, nor eliminating any portion, so as not to suggest the correct answer. The proctor shall then wait for 90 seconds before reading the next question.
  - c. No other conversation and/or comments shall take place between the proctor and the candidate.

#### **E. Retesting of Candidates**

1. Any candidate that fails the written test will be allowed to retest one time before having to retake the entire class again.
2. Any candidate that is retesting must do so within 30 days of the date posted on the failure notification letter.
3. The written retest maybe given by the SD or the school designee (i.e. Administrative Assistant). Testing Centers shall not be used to administer certification exam.
4. Refer to the Community College DA Policy for testing of candidates who took the original test at a different school.

#### **F. Auditing of Testing Procedures**

The instructor that teaches the class shall not proctor the written test. The following procedures are in place for quality control.

1. Auditing of testing procedures shall be conducted by the staff of the NCFRC or its appointed representatives.
2. Auditing of testing procedures shall include direct observation of practical skills tests and written tests.

3. Auditing of testing procedures shall be randomly conducted.
4. Audits shall be conducted without prior notification to the proctor.
5. An audit form shall be provided by the NCFRC office. (See Form 300.01A)
6. The audit shall take place according to the following procedures;
  - a. The auditor should arrive at the test site in enough time so as not to interrupt testing.
  - b. The auditor shall identify themselves to the proctor immediately upon arrival and shall inform the proctor as to purpose of their visit.
  - c. The Auditor shall determine whether the written test packet is adequately sealed.
  - d. If practical skills are being evaluated the auditor shall determine that all necessary equipment is available.
  - e. The auditor shall remain at test site as long as necessary to determine that all NCFRC testing procedures are being followed.
  - f. The auditor shall discuss all audit findings with the proctor.
  - g. Non-compliance with testing procedures may subject the proctor to disciplinary action as outlined the N. C. Fire & Rescue Commission Certification Board Policy and Procedures Manual.

## II. RECORD KEEPING AND TEST BANK MANAGEMENT

- A. Certification records shall be maintained for a minimum of 5 years by the DAs.
- B. The test bank management system is designated by the NCFRC. Software programs are secure. Each question set has been validated as being job specific and fair. Tests are periodically created by NCFRC Staff and the tests are put online for the DAs to use.
- C. The tests shall be available in several versions and shall be revised as needed. The tests shall not be weighted, the Standard Error of Measurement shall not be used, cut-scores distribution shall not be used, average scores shall not be used, standard Deviation shall not be utilized, and reliability estimates shall not be used.
- D. The test questions are developed based on the appropriate NFPA objective and referenced to related training materials.
- E. When test questions and practical skills sheets are purchased, or obtained externally, the NCFRC shall ensure that each question and each skill sheet is validated. The NCFRC Staff shall ensure that purchased test banks shall be repaired and/or questions replaced when they don't apply to North Carolina's standards.
- F. During the validation review of test banks, reviewers shall view test banks in a secure environment. No hard or electronic copies shall be made of the question banks by the validation reviewers.

## III. TESTING PERSONNEL POLICY

- A. An NCFR certification is valid and in good standing through the end of the current NFPA standard edition expiration date.
- B. Following the accreditation of a certification level, individuals certified at that level have until the time that the current standard expires to submit their NCFR certificate as proof that they tested under the current edition of the standard.
- C. If the individual desires NCFR certification after the current edition of the standard expires, the individual must start the testing process from the beginning.

- D. Anyone previously certified by the NCFRC to a certified standard, shall upon accreditation by IFSAC, receive reciprocity for that standard.
- E. The NCFRC will offer examinations for any level for which certification is offered.
- F. All testing and certifying services shall be made available to all the NCFRC constituents without regard to race, sex, disabilities or ethnic origin.



<b>ADA POLICY</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> CERTIFICATION TESTING	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> MARCH 04, 2014	<i>LATEST REVISIONS:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>CERTIFICATION BOARD</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

**I. SCOPE**

This policy shall establish guidelines for making reasonable accommodations for a written and practical skills test for candidates with documented disabilities directly through the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission (Commission). This document does not apply to certification tests given through a delivery agency, as those requests for reasonable accommodations are processed and administered through the delivery agency’s ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Administrator. This document will address requesting an accommodation and establishing eligibility, record keeping process for accommodation requests, and acceptable accommodations for an eligible candidate.

**A. Requesting an Accommodation and Establishing Eligibility**

1. The Commission recognizes that each candidate’s circumstances are unique and will establish eligibility for a test accommodation on a case by case approach.
2. The Commission will offer reasonable accommodations for the written and practical skills tests of state certification programs for those persons with documented disabilities.
3. A candidate requesting accommodations shall make the request 30 days prior to the test. This should be done at the same time as test registration.
  - a. If a candidate fails to register prior to the 30 day window, the candidate will be notified that they are unable to test on the requested date and will be allowed to register for a future test that meets the 30 day criteria.
4. A candidate shall send a letter addressed to the Commission Staff asking for specific accommodations for a test and attach the following documentation:
  - a. A candidate shall submit documentation from a professional qualified to assess and diagnose the specific presenting disability.
    - i. The documentation must include a comprehensive evaluation with objective evidence demonstrating the existence of a disability which substantially limits one or more major life activities.
    - ii. The name, title, and professional credential of the qualified professional must be clearly stated in the documentation.
    - iii. Documentation must be submitted on official letterhead, typed, dated, and signed.
    - iv. The professional diagnosis must include:
      1. A current, valid, professionally recognized diagnosis of the candidates disability (ex: pursuant to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV: revised)) by an appropriately qualified expert with copies of and reported scores from professionally recognized diagnostic tests, where applicable.

2. Documentation that clearly identifies the nature and extent of the functional limitations that exist as a result of the diagnosed disability.
  3. Sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the functional limitation substantially limits the individual in performing one or more major life activity.
  4. Specific information about the significance of the impact the disability has on the candidate in the testing environment.
  5. Specific recommendations for accommodations (ex: extended testing time).
  6. An explanation of why each accommodation is recommended and why it is necessary to alleviate the impact of the disability in taking a Commission certification test.
5. The Commission Staff reserves the right to request additional information related to the claimed disability at any time from the candidate requesting accommodations for a Commission certification examination.
  6. Once a candidate has requested and been approved for special accommodations, the candidate will not be required to provide a letter documenting his/her disability. The candidate will still be required to request the special accommodation in accordance with section 3.
  7. The candidate will be notified in writing by the Commission Staff if any accommodations may be allowed for the test.

**B. Record Keeping Process for Accommodation Requests**

1. The requesting letter, supporting documentation, and decision letter shall be filed with the candidate's certification file through OSFM. These records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable state and federal laws.

**C. Acceptable Accommodations**

1. Request for reasonable accommodations will be considered on a case by case basis. These accommodations may include:
  - a. Verbal tests.
  - b. Extended test time up to 1.5 times the normal allotted time.
  - c. Providing a distraction free environment with an extra proctor.
  - d. Provide a test up to 36 font print for a visually impaired candidate.



POLICIES FOR FIRE AND RESCUE DELIVERY AGENCY	
<i>SECTION:</i> FIRE AND RESCUE DELIVERY AGENCY	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> DECEMBER 10, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISIONS:</i> JUNE 14, 2019
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>CERTIFICATION BOARD</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i> FORM 400.01A FORM 400.01B FORM 400.01C FORM 400.01D

## I. SCOPE

The purpose of a site visit to a Fire/Rescue Department Delivery Agency (DA) seeking initial Delivery Status should be to gather objective data and well-grounded impressions regarding the agency. The members of the site visit team should capitalize upon all feasible opportunities to observe characteristic operations of the DA seeking Delivery Agency Status. The report developed by the site visit team should provide a clear and coherent account of the facts and impressions relating to the DA actual operations.

### A. Delivery Agency Request

1. Fire/Rescue departments requesting delivery status recognition shall make the request in writing to the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission (NCFRC) with a completed application provided by NCFRC.
2. The Manager of the NCFRC shall notify the Director of Continuing Education, North Carolina Community College System Office NCCCS.
3. The Manager of the NCFRC shall schedule a site-team visit to include one (1) staff member of NCFRC.
4. The Manager of the NCFRC shall present the request to the Fire and Rescue Certification Board (CB) for approval. If, after the site visit, the fire/rescue department meets the identified requirements to be recognized as a DA, it may be recognized as a Fire/Rescue Department Delivery Agency.

### B. Administration of Fire/Rescue Training Delivery Agency

1. All agencies or institutions approved for delivery status shall provide an agreement signed by the Fire Chief/ Department Head.
2. The Fire Chief/ Department Head of the institution or agency sponsoring any fire or rescue standards class shall have the responsibility for implementation of all applicable rules and standards and for administration of certification classes. The institution or agency shall abide by the approved rules and procedures of the certifying agency.
3. The Fire Chief/ Department Head of the institution or agency shall designate one individual to coordinate each of the NCFRC programs. This individual shall be formally recognized by the NCFRC as the Fire and Rescue School Director. The School Director (SD) shall have the responsibility for planning, scheduling, presenting, coordinating the testing process, reporting, and generally managing the fire/rescue training program as it relates to NCFRC programs.

4. The Fire Chief/ Department Head of the institution or agency shall notify NCFRC staff within 2 weeks of the replacement of a Fire Rescue SD and a change of SD form shall be filled out and sent to NCFRC staff.
5. The Fire Chief/ Department Head shall ensure the institution or agency to maintains records for a period of 5 years of all fire/rescue training courses sponsored or delivered by the DA, reflecting:
  - a. Course Title.
  - b. Delivery hours of course.
  - c. Course delivery dates.
  - d. Testing dates.
  - e. Names, date of birth and the last four digits of the social security numbers of certified instructors and proctors.
  - f. A roster of enrolled students, showing their name, the last four digits of the social security number, attendance, and whether students participation was successful or unsuccessful (Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory).
  - g. Completed skill books for each course.
  - h. Any documentation which may be needed to explain any abnormal occurrences during class.
  - i. Any failures of the practical or written test that cause the student to fail the class.
  - j. All Delivery Agencies shall submit all certification records monthly.
  - k. When submitting the monthly certification records, they should be provided electronically in a format approved by the NCFRC.
  - l. Record retention shall be subject to an audit for compliance.
6. The Fire Chief/ Department Head of the DA sponsoring any NCFRC fire/rescue course of instruction shall:
  - a. Allocate sufficient financial resources to provide NCFRC certified/qualified instructors and to meet other necessary program expenses.
  - b. Provide adequate administrative and support staff assistance as required by the SD to submit required course documentation.
7. The DA may use another agency's equipment, facilities and/or supplies available at the appropriate time during the course delivery as long as a memorandum of understanding is on file.

### **C. Responsibilities of the School Director**

1. In planning, developing, coordinating, and delivering each NCFRC fire/rescue training course, the SD shall:
  - a. Follow all rules and procedures described in the appropriate standard for each NCFRC certification course.
  - b. Follow the procedures for testing of individuals participating in NCFRC certification courses as outlined in PFT 300.01 (Certification Testing).
  - c. Select instructors who are properly qualified by the NCFRC for the course(s) which they are to teach.

- d. Select proctors who are properly qualified by the NCFRC and ensure the testing policy and procedures are followed.
- e. Provide each instructor with a NCFRC approved course outline and all other necessary information concerning the delivery of the course if needed
- f. Arrange for the timely availability of required audiovisual aids and materials as specified in the NFPA standard.
- g. Arrange for the timely availability of required equipment and facilities as specified in the NCFRC standard.
- h. Reproduce and distribute NCFRC approved testing instruments as prescribed in the policy on Certification Testing.
- i. File an online pre-course delivery of any and all NCFRC certification courses sent to the appropriate regional certification specialist prior to the delivery of these courses containing:
  - i. Title of course
  - ii. Location of the class.
  - iii. Beginning date of course.
  - iv. Course instructor.
  - v. Ending date of course.
  - vi. Date and time of scheduled test
- j. Collect, store electronically and grade the approved tests for each NCFRC certification course. Each SD shall report test grades electronically to the NCFRC or its representative.
- k. Electric devices shall not be used to administer certification tests; this includes computer-based testing. All tests shall be administered in paper format and marked with pencils or pens.
- l. Work cooperatively with the NCFRC staff in the evaluation of certified/qualified NCFRC instructors. Instructor evaluations shall be recorded on approved forms or approved DA forms.
- m. Allow only those persons who have completed approved courses of instruction in NCFRC certification programs to participate in the testing process.
- n. Report to NCFRC by OSFM online training report form any injuries that occurred to emergency service personnel while training in fire and rescue classes sponsored by your agency within 72 hours of the injury.
- o. Ensure candidates have access to tests and test sites.
- p. Notify NCFRC staff of any live fire training in acquired structures 14 days prior to the training by using the online registration form on the NCFRC website.

#### **D. General Overview of Fire/Rescue Training Delivery Support**

1. Instructors may use appropriate materials to enhance their presentations, but the use of NCFRC approved curriculum materials shall be required in all certification courses.
2. SD should evaluate, or have evaluated, presentations by certified instructors on NCFRC approved evaluation forms and maintain these forms for a minimum of five years. They shall be made available for inspection by a representative of the NCFRC upon request.

**E. Reporting of Test Grades to the NCFRC**

1. The instructor/proctor shall allow only those individuals who have scored at least 70% on the practical skills test to sit for the written test. The proctor shall hand grade each skill sheet, assign points and double check it for accuracy.
2. The instructor/proctor shall place a "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" grade for the student in the designed space on the role sheet for the practical test (if one is provided).
3. Upon recording a passing grade for the practical skills test, the instructor/proctor shall allow the student to sit for the written test.
4. Upon the completion of the written tests, the proctor shall place the test booklets and answer sheets into an envelope, seal the envelope and return the envelope to the SD of the DA within 3 days of administering the written test.
5. The SD shall grade or cause to be graded the written test. It may be hand graded or electronically scanned as approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). Double grading is preferred in order to ensure accuracy.

**F. Delivery Agency Site Audits**

1. Agencies having delivery status shall be reviewed every five (5) years for compliance with policies.
2. Audits shall be done by NCFRC staff to assure compliance.
3. Audits shall include record retention, required equipment inventory, and personnel.

**G. Agreements to Comply with NCFRC Delivery Status**

1. All approved DAs shall have signed agreements to comply with the North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission Delivery Procedures.
2. Failure to comply with these procedures can result in the loss of delivery status.

**H. Appeals**

1. All appeals shall be made in accordance with PPM 200.10 (Appeal Process).



<b>CONSEQUENCE POLICY</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> FIRE AND RESCUE DELIVERY AGENCY	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> DECEMBER 10, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>CERTIFICATION BOARD</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

The policy shall provide a level of accountability for recognized Delivery Agencies (DA) of either Fire or Rescue Departments. This is an effort to ensure accuracy and fairness for the handling of all violations by a DA.

### A. Accountability for Delivery Agencies (DA)

1. Instances that may result in the issuance of consequences include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Failure to adhere to the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission Policies
  - b. Failure to accurately and timely report injuries or deaths associated with a certification class
  - c. Evidence of improper or unsafe training practices during certification classes
  - d. Dishonesty on examinations
  - e. Breach of test bank security
2. Any level of discipline may be the initial level depending on the circumstances and conduct of the DA.

### B. Letter of Caution

1. North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission (NCFRC) staff shall issue a letter of caution for the first failure to comply with any of the requirements placed on the DA. Staff shall handle this level and notify the Discipline Committee (DC) who will then report to the Certification Board (CB) in the DC quarterly report. The consequences of this letter will be in effect for a minimum of one year.

### C. Letter of Warning

1. North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission (NCFRC) staff shall issue a letter of warning for the second failure to comply with any of the requirements placed on the DA during the period of time that the consequences of a Letter of Caution issued to the DA are in effect. A letter of warning may also be issued as a first consequence if the severity and maliciousness of any actions by the DA are found to warrant such action. Staff shall handle this level and notify the Discipline Committee (DC) who will then report to the Certification Board (CB) in the DC quarterly report. The consequences of this warning will be in effect for a minimum of 2 years.

### D. Suspension

1. The DA status shall be suspended for a period of not less than six months, and up to one year for repeated failure to comply with the above requirements. The SD shall have to successfully complete a review of the DA's policies and procedures with the appropriate NCFRC staff in order

to regain full delivery agency status. The severity and the maliciousness of any actions by the DA shall be taken into consideration when this consequence is enacted. Staff shall bring this level before the DC prior to issuing the notification of suspension. The DC will review and make a recommendation along with its findings to the CB. When the infractions reach this level, the DA shall be given an opportunity to appear before the CB before its DA status is suspended.

#### **E. Revocation**

1. The DA's status shall be revoked for a period to be specified by the Certification Board of up to five years for repeated failure to comply with the above requirements. The DA will then be required to complete a thorough DA audit (all of the initial DA certification process requirements) and have a formal review of the DA's policies and procedures with the appropriate NCFRC staff in order to regain full delivery agency status. The severity and the maliciousness of any actions by the DA shall be taken into consideration when this consequence is enacted. Staff shall bring this level before the DC prior to issuing the notification of suspension. The DC will review and make a recommendation along with its findings to the CB. When the infractions reach this level, the DA shall be given an opportunity to appear before the CB before its DA status is suspended.

#### **F. Investigative Process –**

1. Any allegation found to be substantiated by the DC shall be forwarded to the CB for a hearing. During this period of time, the DA shall be suspended until the final ruling of the Certification Board.

#### **G. Due Process**

1. Once any of the above consequences have been issued, the DA will have due process to aggrieve their penalty. Infractions that receive a Letter of Caution or Warning shall have the right to appear before the CB to receive an interpretation of their findings. DA's given a Suspension or Revocation will have the right to appeal to the Fire/Rescue Commission.



ONLINE/HYBRID COURSE DELIVERY	
<i>SECTION:</i> FIRE AND RESCUE DELIVERY AGENCY	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> SEPTEMBER 15, 2017	<i>VERSION:</i> v1R0
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>CERTIFICATION BOARD</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i> 400.03 FORM A 400.03 FORM B

## I. SCOPE

It is the policy of the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission (NCFRC) to develop and disseminate training programs to Delivery Agency (DA's), and administer a certification system following the criteria outlined by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the ProBoard Fire Service Professional Qualifications System (Pro Board). This policy will outline the delivery of any Online or Hybrid NCFRC class.

### A. Definitions

1. Online courses - are those courses that are held solely in a distance learning format. Or courses in which less than one third of the class is held in a conventional classroom setting utilizing any of the approved methods.
2. Hybrid courses – are those courses that utilize both distance learning environments and conventional class formats to achieve the courses desired goals. In the hybrid format a class must meet more than one third of the courses total hours in a conventional classroom setting. Hybrid format requires a minimum of 50% of class work be delivered online.

### B. Approval Process

1. The DA shall apply to be recognized as an online/hybrid DA. (Appendix A) Once the regional NCFRC staff member has received the application a one-time trial program may be set up. Once the trial program has been completed a Program Evaluation (Appendix B) shall be conducted. The findings shall be submitted to the Certification Board by staff and a recommendation made to include the following:
  - a. Approve the DA to offer the certification class online.
  - b. Approve the DA to make recommended revisions and offer a subsequent course.
  - c. Deny the DA the ability to offer online programs.

### C. Agency Requirements

1. Each Online/Hybrid DA shall maintain and insure the following requirements are met for all distance learning courses.
  - a. The lead instructor over a course shall be qualified in the designated area by the NCFRC before being allowed to instruct the online portion of the course.

- b. Instructors will be required to receive training and qualify to teach an online/hybrid course. A hybrid training course that outlines the specifics of how to use and access hybrid programs can be found on the OSFM website. However, individual delivery agencies may require additional training according to their policies and procedures.
- c. A syllabus shall be developed for each online/hybrid training course by OSFM staff. The course syllabus shall contain, as a minimum, the following information:
  - i. Level of accepted student participation
  - ii. Course description
  - iii. Instructor expectations
  - iv. Procedures for making contact with the instructor
  - v. Format a paper or assignment should be in and how it is to be submitted
  - vi. How and when communication should take place with other students.
  - vii. Ethics statement that outlines the student's responsibility to maintain a code of conduct including mutual trust, personal respect, and individual integrity.
  - viii. Clear guidelines and procedures for grading of assignments and participation requirements.
- d. The DA shall provide each student with an information package which contains directions on how to access the class, login steps, and class navigation prior to the course start date. This information can be delivered by the lead instructor or IT support personnel.
- e. The DA shall maintain a class roster and student progression information for each online/hybrid course delivery.
- f. The DA shall provide students with an address, place, and contact person for issues or questions.
- g. Instructors shall have all course work completed and online prior to the start date of class. Instructors may allow students to work ahead with prior approval.
- h. Instructors shall be required to check the progress of the students by logging in to and surveying the course at least every 24 to 36 hours to facilitate student learning.
- i. Certification courses shall have an established schedule in which a minimum of 50% of the required hours for each course shall be in the conventional education format to allow for hands on learning, practical evaluation and testing.
- j. The DA will meet all security requirements of the NC Community College System.

#### **D. Student Requirements**

1. Valid email address.
2. Internet connection (Required DSL or higher connection), Microsoft Word (or equivalent), PowerPoint (or equivalent), Adobe Reader, Video player (example Window's Media Player). Students will need BASIC computer knowledge in Internet navigation.

3. Appropriate reference manuals as required. (Example: IFSTA or Jones and Bartlett)
4. Students must pre-register through the approved delivery agency, and attend a mandatory orientation class prior to participating in the course. This orientation can be completed in person or online.
  - During orientation, students will be given a schedule and syllabus containing the following:
    - Dates and times of assignments due
    - Online and phone availability of instructors
    - Test dates and times
    - Any handout material the course instructors have provided.
5. Student shall provide a Department Chief's approval form (signed by the Chief or designee).
6. A registration deadline designated prior to the start date and time of the course shall be enforced to allow time for the delivery agency to confirm student eligibility.
7. All students enrolled shall be members in good standing with a state agency meeting the fee exemption status afforded to all Public Safety personal. Standard tuition fees shall otherwise apply.
8. Students must show a valid photo ID at both the practical and written test sites.
9. Students may sign up for any or all certification courses as long as there are no conflicts with other college course schedules.

#### E. Assignment Grading Criteria

1. Instructors shall be able to explain to the students how their work is going to be assessed. It may be as simple as stating that the students must achieve a passing score (70%+) to successfully complete the online portion of the course and be able to continue to the classroom portion. However, any standard grading scale can be used. If the instructor grades discussion forum participation the following example may be utilized.
2. DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS GRADING CRITERIA: (Example)

	0-10 POINTS	11-15 POINTS	16-20 POINTS
Quality of posting	Postings are not relevant to the questions posed.	Postings reflect the reading and some outside source material but outside source material not cited	Postings reflect the readings and outside information with proper outside source material citation
Quality of reply	Response not relevant to original posting	Response relevant to posting but fails to support position	Response relevant to posting and supports position with factual information
Understanding of reading and outside source material	Responds to the question posted but does not	Responds to the question posted and makes	Responds to question posted and demonstrates understanding of material and outside source

	mention materials from the reading	reference to readings.	material and properly cited information
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3. If written assignments are submitted and scored as part of the overall course scoring system, the instructor shall provide criteria on how to successfully pass the written assignment.

#### **F. Classroom/Hands on Learning**

1. The DA shall provide sufficient time for the student to learn the hands-on portion of the class. It shall not be assumed that the students have learned the skills needed when they come to the classroom session. It is recommended that the DA have sufficient instructors present depending on the skills required to be covered and the number of students. It is recommended that the DA conduct a course evaluation (Appendix B).

#### **G. Testing**

1. All NCFRC Policy of Testing requirements shall be followed. All certification testing will be conducted by the approved DA, during the designated date and time, in the DA's designated coverage area.

#### **H. Auditing**

1. The NCFRC regional certification specialist will be given access to the online/ hybrid portion of the class. They will be set up as an instructor in the system so they can view the program. Also, the class shall be reported the same as any other class being ran by the DA as stated in the NCFRC NC Certification Policy Manual.

#### **I. Hybrid Course Offerings Approved by NCFRC:**

1. Fire Officer I
2. Fire Officer II
3. Rescue Officer
4. Fire and Life Safety Educator I
5. Fire and Life Safety Educator II
6. Fire and Life Safety Educator III



<b>POLICIES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE DELIVERY AGENCY</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> COMMUNITY COLLEGE DELIVERY AGENCY	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> DECEMBER 10, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISIONS:</i> JUNE 14, 2019
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>CERTIFICATION BOARD</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i> FORM 500.01A FORM 500.01B FORM 500.01C FORM 500.01D

**I. SCOPE**

The purpose of a site visit to a Community College Delivery Agency (DA) seeking initial Delivery Status should be to gather objective data and well-grounded impressions regarding the agency. The members of the site visit team should capitalize upon all feasible opportunities to observe characteristic operations of the DA seeking Delivery Agency Status. The report developed by the site visit team should provide a clear and coherent account of the facts and impressions relating to the DA actual operations.

**A. Delivery Agency Request**

1. Community Colleges requesting delivery status recognition shall make the request in writing to the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission (NCFRC) with a completed application provided by NCFRC.
2. The Manager of the NCFRC shall notify the Director of Continuing Education, North Carolina Community College System Office NCCCS.
3. The Manager of the NCFRC shall schedule a site-team visit to include one (1) staff member of NCFRC and one (1) staff member from the NCCCS.
4. The Manager of the NCFRC shall present the request to the Fire and Rescue Certification Board (CB) for approval. If, after the site visit, the Community College meets the identified requirements to be recognized as a DA, it may be recognized as a Fire/Rescue Department Delivery Agency.

**B. Administration of Fire/Rescue Training Delivery Agency**

1. All agencies or institutions approved for delivery status shall provide an agreement signed by the Chief Executive Officer/ Department Head.
2. The Chief Executive Officer/ Department Head of the institution or agency sponsoring any fire or rescue standards class shall have the responsibility for implementation of all applicable rules and standards and for administration of certification classes. The institution or agency shall abide by the approved rules and procedures of the certifying agency.
3. The Executive Officer/ Department Head of the institution or agency shall designate one individual to coordinate each of the certification programs. This individual shall be formally recognized by the NCFRC as the Fire and Rescue School Director. The School Director (SD) shall have the responsibility for planning, scheduling, presenting, coordinating the testing process, reporting, and generally managing the fire/rescue training program as it relates to NCFRC programs.
4. The Executive Officer/ Department Head of the institution or agency shall notify NCFRC staff within 2 weeks of the replacement of a Fire Rescue SD and a change of SD form shall be filled out and sent to NCFRC staff.

5. The Executive Officer/ Department Head shall ensure the institution or agency to maintains records for a period of 5 years of all fire/rescue training courses sponsored or delivered by the DA, reflecting:
  - a. Course Title.
  - b. Delivery hours of course.
  - c. Course delivery dates.
  - d. Testing dates.
  - e. Names, date of birth and the last four digits of the social security numbers of certified instructors and proctors.
  - f. A roster of enrolled students, showing their name, the last four digits of the social security number, attendance, and whether students' participation was successful or unsuccessful (Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory).
  - g. Completed skill books for each course.
  - h. Any documentation which may be needed to explain any abnormal occurrences during class.
  - i. Any failures of the practical or written test that cause the student to fail the class.
  - j. All Delivery Agencies shall submit all certification records monthly.
  - k. When submitting the monthly certification records, they should be provided electronically in a format approved by the NCFRC.
  - l. Record retention shall be subject to an audit for compliance.
6. The Executive Officer/ Department Head of the DA sponsoring any NCFRC fire/rescue course of instruction shall:
  - a. Allocate sufficient financial resources to provide NCFRC certified/qualified instructors and to meet other necessary program expenses.
  - b. Provide adequate administrative and support staff assistance as required by the SD to submit required course documentation.
7. The DA may use another agency's equipment, facilities and/or supplies available at the appropriate time during the course delivery as long as a memorandum of understanding is on file.

### **C. Responsibilities of the School Director**

1. In planning, developing, coordinating, and delivering each NCFRC fire/rescue training course, the SD shall:
  - a. Follow all rules and procedures described in the appropriate standard for each NCFRC certification course.
  - b. Follow the procedures for testing of individuals participating in NCFRC certification courses as outlined in PFT 300.01 (Certification Testing).
  - c. Select instructors who are properly qualified by the NCFRC for the course they are to teach.
  - d. Select proctors who are properly qualified by the NCFRC and ensure the testing policy and procedures are followed.
  - e. Provide each instructor with a NCFRC approved course outline and all other necessary information concerning the delivery of the course if needed

- f. Arrange for the timely availability of required audiovisual aids and materials as specified in the NFPA standard.
- g. Arrange for the timely availability of required equipment and facilities as specified in the NCFRC standard.
- h. Reproduce and distribute NCFRC approved tests as prescribed in the policy on Certification Testing.
- i. File an online pre-course delivery of any and all NCFRC certification courses sent to the appropriate regional certification specialist prior to the delivery of these courses containing:
  - i. Title of course
  - ii. Location of the class.
  - iii. Beginning date of course.
  - iv. Course instructor.
  - v. Ending date of course.
  - vi. Date and time of scheduled test
- j. Collect, store electronically and grade the approved tests for each NCFRC certification course. Each SD shall report test grades electronically to the NCFRC or its representative.
- k. Electric devices shall not be used to administer certification tests; this includes computer based testing. All tests shall be administered in paper format and marked with pencils or pens.
- l. Testing Centers shall not be used to administer tests.
- m. The DA shall implement the following policy for retests:
  - i. The original testing SD shall make a request to the SD at the DA where the student wishes to retest. The SD who will retest the student shall arrange a time with the student and administer the test. After that has been completed the SD shall provide the score sheet to the original DA. The original DA shall be responsible for grading the test and making sure credit for the student is sent to OSFM, if the student passes. If the student fails a second time, the original SD will notify the student. This only applies to a retest for a written test.
- n. Work cooperatively with the NCFRC staff in the evaluation of certified/qualified NCFRC instructors. Instructor evaluations shall be recorded on approved forms or approved DA forms.
- o. Allow only those persons who have completed approved courses of instruction in NCFRC certification programs to participate in the testing process.
- p. Report to NCFRC by OSFM online training report form any injuries that occurred to emergency service personnel while training in fire and rescue classes sponsored by your agency within 72 hours of the injury.
- q. Ensure candidates have access to tests and test sites.
- r. Notify NCFRC staff of any live fire training in acquired structures 14 days prior to the training by using the online registration form on the NCFRC website.

**D. General Overview of Fire/Rescue Training Delivery Support**

1. Instructors may use appropriate materials to enhance their presentations, but the use of NCFRC approved curriculum materials shall be required in all certification courses.
2. SD should evaluate, or have evaluated, presentations by certified instructors on NCFRC approved evaluation forms and maintain these forms for a minimum of five years. They shall be made available for inspection by a representative of the NCFRC upon request.

**E. Reporting of Test Grades to the NCFRC**

1. The instructor/proctor shall allow only those individuals who have scored at least 70% on the practical skills test to sit for the written test. The proctor shall hand grade each skill sheet, assign points and double check it for accuracy.
2. The instructor/proctor shall place a "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" grade for the student in the designed space on the role sheet for the practical test (if one is provided).
3. Upon recording a passing grade for the practical skills test, the instructor/proctor shall allow the student to sit for the written test.
4. Upon the completion of the written tests, the proctor shall place the test booklets and answer sheets into an envelope, seal the envelope and return the envelope to the SD of the DA within 3 days of administering the written test.
5. The SD shall grade or cause to be graded the written test. It may be hand graded or electronically scanned as approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). Double grading is preferred in order to ensure accuracy.

**F. Delivery Agency Site Audits**

1. Agencies having delivery status shall be reviewed every five (5) years for compliance with policies.
2. Audits shall be done by NCFRC staff to assure compliance.
3. Audits shall include record retention, required equipment inventory, and personnel.

**G. Agreements to Comply with NCFRC Delivery Status**

1. All approved DAs shall have signed agreements to comply with the North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission Delivery Procedures.
2. Failure to comply with these procedures can result in the loss of delivery status.

**H. Appeals**

1. All appeals shall be made in accordance with PPM 200.10 (Appeal Process).



<b>CONSEQUENCE POLICY</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> COMMUNITY COLLEGE DELIVERY AGENCY	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> DECEMBER 10, 2013	<i>LATEST REVISIONS:</i> DECEMBER 08, 2015
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<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i>

## I. SCOPE

The policy shall provide a level of accountability for recognized Delivery Agencies (DA) of Community Colleges. This is an effort to ensure accuracy and fairness for the handling of all violations of a DA. The Certification Board shall have the power to suspend, revoke or refuse to grant certification issued by the Commission under its voluntary professional qualification program.

### A. Accountability for Delivery Agencies (DA)

1. Instances that may result in the issuance of consequences include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Failure to adhere to the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission Policies
  - b. Failure to accurately and timely report injuries or deaths associated with a certification class
  - c. Evidence of improper or unsafe training practices during certification classes
  - d. Dishonesty on examinations
  - e. Breach of test bank security
2. Any level of discipline may be the initial level depending on the circumstances and conduct of the DA.

### B. Letter of Caution

1. North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission (NCFRC) staff shall issue a letter of caution for the first failure to comply with any of the requirements placed on the DA. Staff shall handle this level and notify the Discipline Committee (DC) who will then report to the Certification Board (CB) in the DC quarterly report. The consequences of this letter will be in effect for a minimum of one year.

### C. Letter of Warning

1. North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission (NCFRC) staff shall issue a letter of warning for the second failure to comply with any of the requirements placed on the DA. A letter of warning may also be issued as a first consequence if the severity and maliciousness of any actions by the DA are found to warrant such action. Staff shall handle this level and notify the Discipline Committee (DC) who will then report to the Certification Board (CB) in the DC quarterly report. The consequences of this warning will be in effect for a minimum of 2 years.

### D. Suspension

1. The DA status shall be suspended for a period of not less than six months, and up to one year for repeated failure to comply with the above requirements. The DA responsible party shall

have to successfully complete a review of the DA's policies and procedures with the appropriate NCFRC staff in order to regain full delivery agency status. The severity and the maliciousness of any actions by the DA shall be taken into consideration when this consequence is enacted. Staff shall bring this level before the DC prior to issuing the notification of suspension. The DC will review and make a recommendation along with its findings to the CB. When the infractions reach this level, the DA shall be given an opportunity to appear before the CB to have due process in the matter.

#### **E. Revocation**

1. The DA's status shall be revoked for a period to be specified by the Certification Board of up to five years for repeated failure to comply with the above requirements. The DA will then be required to complete a thorough DA audit (all of the initial DA certification process requirements) and have a formal review of the DA's policies and procedures with the appropriate NCFRC staff in order to regain full delivery agency status. The severity and the maliciousness of any actions by the DA shall be taken into consideration when this consequence is enacted. Staff shall bring this level before the DC prior to issuing the notification of suspension. The DC will review and make a recommendation along with its findings to the CB. When the infractions reach this level, the DA shall be given an opportunity to appear before the CB to have due process in the matter.

#### **F. Investigative Process –**

1. Any allegation found to be substantiated by the DC shall be forwarded to the CB for a hearing. During this period of time, the DA shall be suspended until the final ruling of the Certification Board.

#### **G. Due Process**

1. Once any of the above consequences have been issued, the DA will have due process to aggrieve their penalty. Infractions that receive a Letter of Caution or Warning shall have the right to appear before the CB to receive an interpretation of their findings. DA's given a Suspension or Revocation will have the right to appeal to the Fire/Rescue Commission.



ONLINE/HYBRID COURSE DELIVERY	
SECTION: COMMUNITY COLLEGE DELIVERY AGENCY	
EFFECTIVE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2017	VERSION: v1R0
APPROVED: <b>CERTIFICATION BOARD</b>	
REFERENCES:	FORMS: 500.03 FORM A 500.03 FORM B

## I. SCOPE

It is the policy of the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission (NCFRC) to develop and disseminate training programs to Delivery Agency (DA's), and administer a certification system following the criteria outlined by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the ProBoard Fire Service Professional Qualifications System (Pro Board). This policy will outline the delivery of any Online or Hybrid NCFRC class.

### A. Definitions

1. Online courses - are those courses that are held solely in a distance learning format. Or courses in which less than one third of the class is held in a conventional classroom setting utilizing any of the approved methods.
2. Hybrid courses – are those courses that utilize both distance learning environments and conventional class formats to achieve the courses desired goals. In the hybrid format a class must meet more than one third of the courses total hours in a conventional classroom setting. Hybrid format requires a minimum of 50% of class work be delivered online.

### B. Approval Process

1. The DA shall apply to be recognized as an online/hybrid DA. (Appendix A) Once the regional NCFRC staff member has received the application a one-time trial program may be set up. Once the trial program has been completed a Program Evaluation (Appendix B) shall be conducted. The findings shall be submitted to the Certification Board by staff and a recommendation made to include the following:
  - a. Approve the DA to offer the certification class online.
  - b. Approve the DA to make recommended revisions and offer a subsequent course.
  - c. Deny the DA the ability to offer online programs.

### C. Agency Requirements

1. Each Online/Hybrid DA shall maintain and insure the following requirements are met for all distance learning courses.
  - a. The lead instructor over a course shall be qualified in the designated area by the NCFRC before being allowed to instruct the online portion of the course.

- b. Instructors will be required to receive training and qualify to teach an online/hybrid course. A hybrid training course that outlines the specifics of how to use and access hybrid programs can be found on the OSFM website. However, individual delivery agencies may require additional training according to their policies and procedures.
- c. A syllabus shall be developed for each online/hybrid training course by OSFM staff. The course syllabus shall contain, as a minimum, the following information:
  - i. Level of accepted student participation
  - ii. Course description
  - iii. Instructor expectations
  - iv. Procedures for making contact with the instructor
  - v. Format a paper or assignment should be in and how it is to be submitted
  - vi. How and when communication should take place with other students.
  - vii. Ethics statement that outlines the student's responsibility to maintain a code of conduct including mutual trust, personal respect, and individual integrity.
  - viii. Clear guidelines and procedures for grading of assignments and participation requirements.
- d. The DA shall provide each student with an information package which contains directions on how to access the class, login steps, and class navigation prior to the course start date. This information can be delivered by the lead instructor or IT support personnel.
- e. The DA shall maintain a class roster and student progression information for each online/hybrid course delivery.
- f. The DA shall provide students with an address, place, and contact person for issues or questions.
- g. Instructors shall have all course work completed and online prior to the start date of class. Instructors may allow students to work ahead with prior approval.
- h. Instructors shall be required to check the progress of the students by logging in to and surveying the course at least every 24 to 36 hours to facilitate student learning.
- i. Certification courses shall have an established schedule in which a minimum of 50% of the required hours for each course shall be in the conventional education format to allow for hands on learning, practical evaluation and testing.
- j. The DA will meet all security requirements of the NC Community College System.

#### **D. Student Requirements**

1. Valid email address.
2. Internet connection (Required DSL or higher connection), Microsoft Word (or equivalent), PowerPoint (or equivalent), Adobe Reader, Video player (example Window's Media Player). Students will need BASIC computer knowledge in Internet navigation.

3. Appropriate reference manuals as required. (Example: IFSTA or Jones and Bartlett)
4. Students must pre-register through the approved delivery agency, and attend a mandatory orientation class prior to participating in the course. This orientation can be completed in person or online.
  - During orientation, students will be given a schedule and syllabus containing the following:
    - Dates and times of assignments due
    - Online and phone availability of instructors
    - Test dates and times
    - Any handout material the course instructors have provided.
5. Student shall provide a Department Chief's approval form (signed by the Chief or designee).
6. A registration deadline designated prior to the start date and time of the course shall be enforced to allow time for the delivery agency to confirm student eligibility.
7. All students enrolled shall be members in good standing with a state agency meeting the fee exemption status afforded to all Public Safety personal. Standard tuition fees shall otherwise apply.
8. Students must show a valid photo ID at both the practical and written test sites.
9. Students may sign up for any or all certification courses as long as there are no conflicts with other college course schedules.

#### E. Assignment Grading Criteria

1. Instructors shall be able to explain to the students how their work is going to be assessed. It may be as simple as stating that the students must achieve a passing score (70%+) to successfully complete the online portion of the course and be able to continue to the classroom portion. However, any standard grading scale can be used. If the instructor grades discussion forum participation the following example may be utilized.
2. DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS GRADING CRITERIA: (Example)

	0-10 POINTS	11-15 POINTS	16-20 POINTS
Quality of posting	Postings are not relevant to the questions posed.	Postings reflect the reading and some outside source material but outside source material not cited	Postings reflect the readings and outside information with proper outside source material citation
Quality of reply	Response not relevant to original posting	Response relevant to posting but fails to support position	Response relevant to posting and supports position with factual information
Understanding of reading and outside source material	Responds to the question posted but does not	Responds to the question posted and makes	Responds to question posted and demonstrates understanding of material and outside source

	mention materials from the reading	reference to readings.	material and properly cited information
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3. If written assignments are submitted and scored as part of the overall course scoring system, the instructor shall provide criteria on how to successfully pass the written assignment.

#### **F. Classroom/Hands on Learning**

1. The DA shall provide sufficient time for the student to learn the hands-on portion of the class. It shall not be assumed that the students have learned the skills needed when they come to the classroom session. It is recommended that the DA have sufficient instructors present depending on the skills required to be covered and the number of students. It is recommended that the DA conduct a course evaluation (Appendix B).

#### **G. Testing**

1. All NCFRC Policy of Testing requirements shall be followed. All certification testing will be conducted by the approved DA, during the designated date and time, in the DA's designated coverage area.

#### **H. Auditing**

1. The NCFRC regional certification specialist will be given access to the online/ hybrid portion of the class. They will be set up as an instructor in the system so they can view the program. Also, the class shall be reported the same as any other class being ran by the DA as stated in the NCFRC NC Certification Policy Manual.

#### **I. Hybrid Course Offerings Approved by NCFRC:**

1. Fire Officer I
2. Fire Officer II
3. Rescue Officer
4. Fire and Life Safety Educator I
5. Fire and Life Safety Educator II
6. Fire and Life Safety Educator III



<b>HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM</b>	
<i>SECTION:</i> HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM	
<i>EFFECTIVE:</i> MARCH 04, 2014	<i>LATEST REVISION:</i> MARCH 19, 2019
<i>APPROVED:</i> <b>CERTIFICATION BOARD</b>	
<i>REFERENCES:</i>	<i>FORMS:</i> FORM 600.01A FORM

## I. SCOPE

This policy shall provide a guideline for initial requests, approval, and accountability for high school certification programs offered through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Career and Technical Education Division in partnership with the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission (NCFRC). It is the intent of this policy to ensure a secure, accurate, and effective method to provide Certification classes in North Carolina High Schools that meet the NCFRC objectives.

### A. Explanation of Terms

1. Delivery Agency – Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) unless the high school is partnering with a NCFRC Approved Fire Department Delivery Agency.
2. LEA – Local Educational Agency. The school system that wishes to offer the Firefighter Certification Program.
3. Teacher – A NCFRC Certified Instructor II that is qualified to teach the Firefighter Certification Program.
4. CTE Director – Career and Technical Education Director. Responsible for initial request and making sure Policy and Procedures are followed for the LEA.
5. IMC – Information Management Coordinator. Responsible for test administration and grade reporting for the LEA.
6. Junior Standard – The High School Firefighter Certification Programs are exempt from the 2009 Voluntary Junior Standard by NC Governor's Orders.
7. Certification Class – Any class that is offered from the Firefighter Certification Program.
8. Module – A block of five to seven certification classes that is offered per semester. These modules are set by the Certification Board.
9. Certification Completion – A student shall complete all requirements for NC Firefighter Certification. This includes completing all Firefighter Certification Program classes, Hazmat Responder, must be 18 years of age, and must receive a high school diploma or equivalent.
10. Student – Only high school students enrolled within the LEA may participate in the High School Firefighter Certification Program at that LEA
11. Proctor/Testing Coordinator – A person who has completed an additional qualification to become a recognized NCFRC Proctor and has had no participation in the class being proctored

## II. PROCEDURES

### A. High School Firefighter Certification Program Request

1. A School System (Local Educational Agency – LEA) requesting a High School Firefighter Program shall make the request known to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), who will then set up an initial meeting with the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM), the High

School Principal, the Career and Technical Education Director (CTE Director), Testing Coordinator (IMC), and supporting Fire Chief(s).

2. Other members who may be present but not required at the initial meeting would be the School System's Administration Staff and/or representatives from the local community college.
3. All required parties must be committed to the success of the program and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) shall be required between the high school and the supporting fire department. It is up to the NCDPI Representative and the OSFM Certification Specialist to gauge the proper level of commitment and both parties will have the ability to approve or disapprove the School System for a Certification Program.
4. NC OSFM shall function as the Delivery Agency unless the partnering fire department is a NCFRC Approved Delivery Agency. If the partnering fire department is a NCFRC Approved Delivery Agency, it must seek special approval from OSFM to conduct the Firefighter certification classes in the high school.

#### **B. Administration of High School Certification Program**

1. The CTE Director and the High School Principal shall request approval of the teacher from the NCFRC. To teach the Certification Program, the Teacher must be NCFRC Instructor II Certified and qualified to teach the Firefighter Certification Program. The NCFRC lesson plans shall be used as the minimum to teach the classes.
2. A second meeting shall be held before the first semester of the initial class offering starts. This meeting should include the OSFM Certification Specialist, NCFRC approved Teacher, CTE Director, and Testing Coordinator. During this meeting, the process for conducting the program will be reviewed. This shall include the delivery of the lesson plans and practical skills as well as administrative requirements including application requirements, testing requirements, and grade transfer. Form 600.01A should be given to the CTE Coordinator, Teacher, and Testing Coordinator.
3. Names and Contact Information for the CTE Coordinator, Teacher, and the Testing Coordinator will be collected by the OSFM Certification Specialist to be sent to the Certification Administrator.
4. If the Teacher, CTE Director, or Testing Coordinator leaves the program, OSFM shall be notified of the departure within 2 business days.
5. Firefighter Certification Classes shall not be conducted without an NCFRC Qualified Instructor present. If the Teacher is unavailable, another NCFRC Qualified Instructor may be used as a substitute. Otherwise, no teaching may occur.
6. NCFRC and OSFM may suspend or revoke the ability to offer Certification classes if policies and procedures are found to not be followed.

#### **C. Testing of the High School Certification Program**

1. It is the responsibility of the CTE Director and the Testing Coordinator to follow all NCFRC Testing Policies and Procedures. If a Fire Department Delivery Agency is partnered with a High School Certification Program, then the Fire Department Delivery Agency Director will serve as the Testing Coordinator and deliver the appropriate tests according to NCFRC Fire Department Delivery Agency Policies and Procedures.

2. The Teacher creates a tentative monthly calendar listing test dates for the semester and gives to the Testing Coordinator
3. The IMC or Testing Coordinator is responsible for reporting the classes through the online portal and updating the portal if a class or test date needs to be altered.
4. The OSFM Certification Manager emails the written test back to the Testing Coordinator (in a password protected format.)
  - a. After six months with no change of the Testing Coordinator and approval the NCFRC Certification Specialist, the Testing Coordinator will be given a website and a log in to be able to download the test that is needed.
5. The Testing Coordinator duplicates the written test and response sheets and places them in an envelope. The envelope is sealed and signed for security purposes.
6. The Testing Coordinator will provide the course skill books and the skill checkoff sheets to the instructor. The skill checkoff sheet must be completed prior to a student being allowed to test for certification.
7. The Testing Coordinator shall administer the test on the appointed date and time.
8. Prior to administering the written test, the Testing Coordinator shall verify the skills checkoff sheet has been completed for each student testing for certification. Any students not checked off on 100% of the skills shall not be allowed to test for certification but will be allowed to test for high school credit only. Students testing for high school credit only are not eligible for a retest of the written test.
9. The Teacher shall not be present at the time of written testing.
10. The Teacher is responsible for administering and grading 100% of the practical skills. Students must pass all the practical skills test before taking the written test for certification.
  - a. If a student fails the practical skills test, he/she is allowed one retest per practical skill test. The student can elect to immediately retest or may go to a designated area away from untested students to review practice materials before retesting.
  - b. If a student fails the practical skills retest, he/she may take the written test for high school credit only. The student will not be given certification credit for the class.
11. The Testing Coordinator shall create a spreadsheet (see Form 600.01A) for the purpose of reporting grades back to the NCFRC. The spreadsheet will contain the school name, student name, student ID's (last four digits of SSN), birth date, grade, course title, FIP code number and course date to be uploaded into the portal.
12. The Testing Coordinator shall collect and grade the written tests and places those grades on the spreadsheet.
13. Any time a retest is requested (within 3 work days); the same exact procedures are followed. If the student passes the retest the spreadsheet is updated with the new grade and re-sent to the Teacher with the new grade highlighted.
14. The Testing Coordinator keeps all testing and retesting materials on file at the school office. All materials are to be kept in a locked office or locked filing cabinet.
15. Upon completion of the certification class, the Testing Coordinator will upload the spreadsheet to the OSFM Certification portal. This should be done within two weeks from the completion of the class. See Form 600.01A for a sample of the reporting format.
16. The Testing Coordinator will ensure that only students attending their high school fire fighter program will be tested. No testing of other fire & rescue personnel is allowed.