

PENNSYLVANIA FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



FACILITY FIRE BRIGADE – INCIPIENT CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

**OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER
PENNSYLVANIA STATE FIRE ACADEMY**

Dear Certification Candidate,

Welcome to the Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program. This manual provides information to assist you in successfully participating in the certification test. This manual outlines the prerequisites, testing, and application process and provides a study guide reference list. Tests are conducted under the sanction and approval of the Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner, with accreditation granted by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (National Pro-Board) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC)

In accordance with section 7384 of the Emergency Management Services Code (35 Pa. C.S. §§ 7101 *et seq.*), OSFC is entrusted with the duty to implement a statewide firefighter training and certification program. The voluntary certification program in Pennsylvania is available to any Commonwealth resident, regardless of religion, gender, or national origin; any resident may apply for consideration as a test candidate.

Effective March 1, 2026:

- All certification candidates are required to maintain an active Acadis user portal account. (Acadis portal location = OSFC website/ Training and Certification Portal, or click here: [ENVISAGE Acadis®](#))
- All certification candidates are to be registered with the designated test site and rostered for the certification test.
- All certification candidates are to be registered within Acadis for the certification test. (You will need to register twice for the certification test, with the test site *and* Acadis)

Good luck and thank you for participating in the Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program.

Application Process

Upon obtaining an application from either the Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) [website](#) or an approved test site, the candidate must fill out the form, in full, and provide all required supporting documentation. The completed application and accompanying documents must be submitted to an approved test site or PA State Fire Academy (PSFA). The test site or PSFA will review the application and supporting documentation and render either an accept or reject decision based on the completeness and if any deficiencies (e.g., lacks pre-requisites, no signatures, etc.) exist.

The general testing process is as follows:

1. Submit a complete application including all supporting documents;
2. Upon approval, take the written and subsequently the skills tests (NOTE: the skills test cannot be taken before the written test);
3. Upon successfully completing the written and skills tests and after a review of all documentation by the test site and PSFA or Delegated Authority, the candidate can be certified for the level tested. If a candidate should not pass any part of the test process, a retest can be administered and must be completed within one (1) year of the original test date.

Application Pointers

1. Make sure the application is legible and check for completeness (must be typed);
2. Application **MUST** have your FEMA Student Identification Number (FEMA-SID).
3. Social Security Number: please provide the last four (4) digits;
4. Complete name is listed including suffix (Jr, Sr, III, etc.) - **NO** nicknames;
5. Address includes street, apartment number, city, state, and zip code;
6. All appropriate signatures are obtained and are in **blue or black ink**.
 - a. **Please Note:** Chief Officers may **NOT** sign for themselves where a Chief Officer's signature is required; another Chief Officer must sign.
 - b. Along with wet signatures (blue or black ink), We are now accepting digital signatures - but they **MUST** be Adobe Signatures - **NOT** Freedom Signatures
7. Copies of required certificates and/or certifications are attached along with a current copy of a medical training and CPR cards (both front and back side) with a signature.
8. Make sure your Pre-Requisite Verification Form is appropriately marked off and signed in **blue or black ink**.
 - a. Along with wet signatures (blue or black ink), We are now accepting digital signatures - but they **MUST** be Adobe Signatures - **NOT** Freedom Signatures

Prerequisites

1. **Successful completion of Incident Command System Course.**
NFPA 1081 (2018 edition) Chapter 4, JPR 4.1.1, Chapter 1, JPRs 1.3.8, 1.4.3, 1.4.3.1.1
The following are recognized courses:
 - a. NFA Incident Command System Course
 - b. NFA NIMS ICS for the Fire Service
 - c. NFA NIMS ICS for EMS
 - d. NFA IS-100 and IS-200

2. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Emergency Medical Care Training: NFPA 1081 (2018 Edition) Chapter 4, JPR 4.1.1, Chapter 1, JPRs 1.3.9, 1.3.8

Each candidate **MUST** complete an approved CPR and medical care training course or hold a current EMS certification. A cognitive and skills assessment for both the CPR and First Aid training courses **MUST** be completed as part of your course, including ALL written exams or optional written exams if applicable.

A list of approved courses that meet the requirements of this section can be found on the OSFC website (Access here: [CPR & First Aid Requirements | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#))

Please assure the following:

- Attach copies of your course certificate or card for CPR and Medical Training. Your certificate or card **MUST** be signed where applicable in order to be valid. Copies **MUST** include front and back where applicable.
- If submitting an eCard or eCertificate, the copy provided **MUST** have an interpretable QR code or number, certificate ID, or authorization number.

3. Hazardous Materials Awareness Training and/or Certification NFPA 1081 (2018 Ed), Chapter 4, JPR 4.1.1

Candidates **MUST** be trained or certified at the Hazardous Materials Operations Level in accordance with NFPA 1072 (2017), Chapter 5 (Core Competencies) and Chapter 6 (Mission-Specifics) Section 6.2 (PPE) and Section 6.6 (Product Control), **OR** NFPA 470 (2022) *Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Standard for Responders*. Training standards as outlined in Chapters 6 and Chapter 8, Section 8.2 (PPE) and Section 8.6 (Product Control) or in Certification standards as outlined in Chapter 7 and Chapter 9, Section 9.2 (PPE) and Section 9.6 (Product Control)

Attach a copy of one of the following recognized certificates. Training certificates **MUST** be from the PSFA-approved Jones & Bartlett curriculum **OR** the PSFA-approved IFSTA curriculum.

- _____ Hazardous Materials Operations Level training **OR**
- _____ Hazardous Materials Operations Level Annual Refresher training (candidate must have completed an approved operations initial course) **OR**
- _____ Hazardous Materials Operations Level Responder National Certification (ProBoard or IFSAC)

NOTE: The certificate (training, refresher training, or certification) **MUST** be current and dated within one (1) year of the certification application and **MUST** meet the requirements of NFPA 1072 (2017) **OR** NFPA 470 (2022).

REQUIREMENT: NFPA 1081 (2018 Edition) Chapter 4, JPR 4.1.2.5 Incident Report

The candidate **MUST** attach a copy of a properly completed fire department's incident ("run") report for an actual incident. The report may be one used by their respective department incident report; however, the report **MUST** be equivalent to the information contained in Guide 1 of the candidate handbook. National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and/or Pennsylvania Fire Incident Reporting System (PENN-FIRS) reports are acceptable.

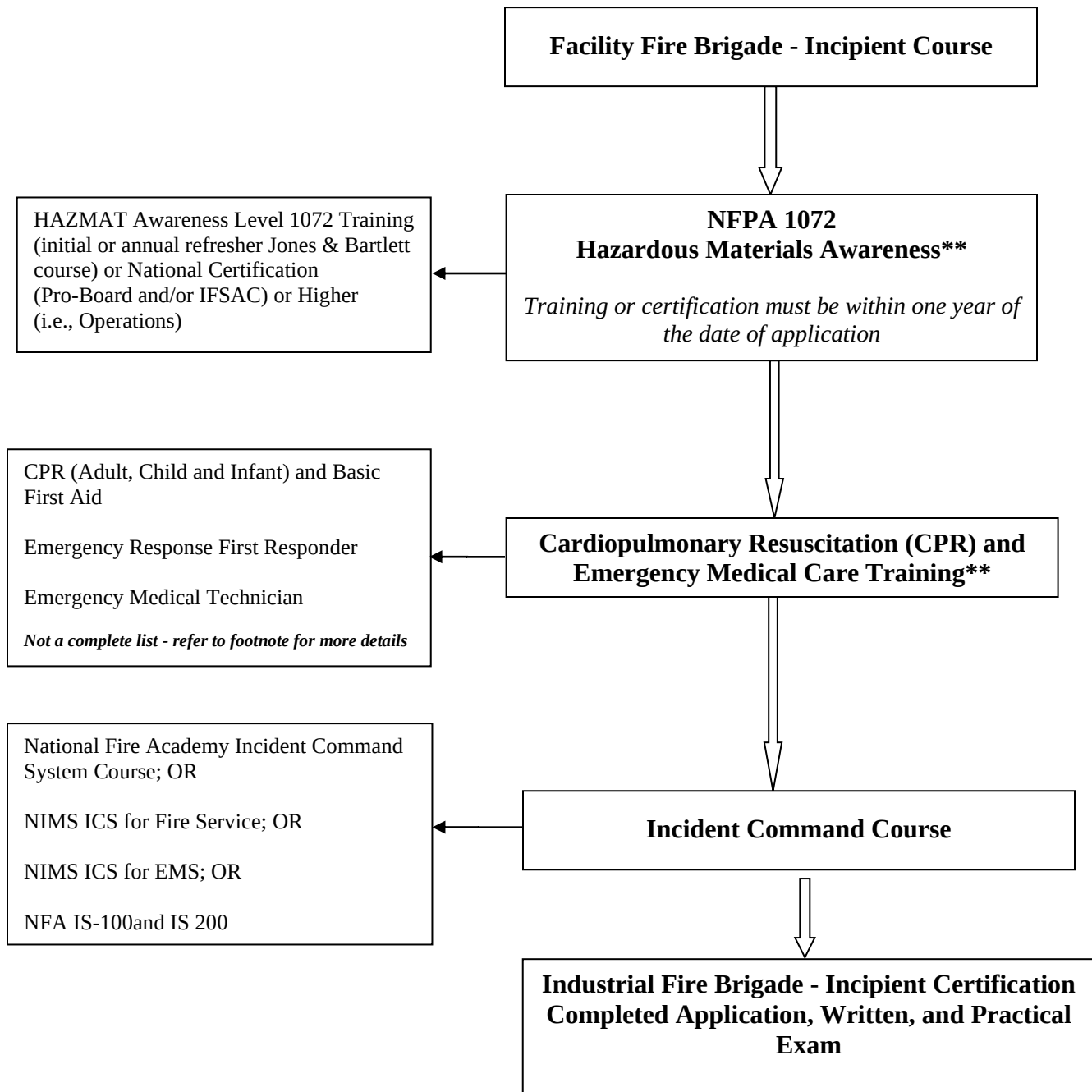
REQUIREMENT: NFPA 1081 (2018 Edition) Chapter 4, JPR 4.3.5 Fire Safety Survey

Facility Fire and Life Safety Survey – Refer to Guide 2 of the candidate handbook for more information and required forms.

- a. Complete a pre-incident and fire safety survey form on a facility building.
- b. Conduct a life safety survey on a facility building.

NOTE: This JPR requires the candidate to complete a fire and life safety survey. The facility selected **MUST** be a structure on the facility in use with some form of fire protection infrastructure (i.e., detectors, suppression system, fire walls, fire-rated doors, etc.). Furthermore, the facility selected **CANNOT** be a fire, EMS, or other first responder station/facility; and the facility cannot be designated as a secured facility by a governing authority (i.e., Federally or Commonwealth) or by the employer.

Incipient – Facility Fire Brigade Certification Pathway



**** Please refer to the Industrial Fire Brigade Incipient application OR the previous section titled **Prerequisites** for a complete list of approved courses to meet the requirement.**

Test Policy

Written Test

Passing scores for any written test is seventy percent (70%).

Skills Test

Must pass the required number of tasks indicated in the performance outcomes for all skill stations to complete the skills test; nonetheless all skills tested must be passed to receive certification.

Re-test Policy

Written Test

If you are unsuccessful, you may retest a total of two (2) times and have one (1) year to complete the retest. You will need to contact the fire academy or a test site of your choice to schedule retest.

Skills Test

Must pass all skills retested to receive certification.

- If you are unsuccessful on three (3) or less skill stations, you may retest the same day. (Only one retest per skill station);
- If you are unsuccessful on four (4) or more skill stations, you may NOT retest the same day. Skill retests must be scheduled at a later time.
- A total of eight (8) retest attempts are permitted and must complete in one (1) year to successfully complete the testing process.

Appeals

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of a failure notice, a candidate may request a review of his/her performance records by the State Fire Academy. Appeals must be in writing and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Certification Program

Send to: Pennsylvania State Fire Academy
Attn: Certification Program Manager
1150 Riverside Drive
Lewistown, PA 17044

Accommodations

The Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program offers reasonable accommodations for the written certification exams for individuals with documented disabilities. Only written requests for accommodations for certification examinations are reviewed and each request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Requests must be submitted on the Accommodation Request Form. The Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program provides written notification of its decision to the candidate upon completion of its review and the review by legal counsel of the request for accommodation.

The ***Accommodation Request Form*** is located on page 9 of this manual or is available from the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and test site coordinators. Please contact the Certification Program Manager for further information. The candidate who is requesting an accommodation must complete the request form at the time of application submission or as soon as the need for an accommodation is recognized. All requests must be made prior to the scheduled date of the examination. Any request for accommodation not submitted at least twenty (20) working days prior to the scheduled examination will result in a delay in the candidate's date of examination.

Documentation of a specific disability which would impact a candidate's performance on the written examination must be current (within five (5) years of the date of application). Such documentation should include a signed explanation on letterhead stationery from a professional who is familiar with the applicant's disability or a copy of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) from an educational institution. See below comment.

The statement must confirm and describe the disability for which the accommodation is requested. The professional must have expertise in the specific disability for which the accommodation is being requested.

Request for Accommodation Form

Candidate Name: _____

Last Name	First Name	Middle
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Candidate Address: _____

Telephone Number (Area Code): _____
(List a daytime number you can be reached at between 8 AM – 4 PM)

County of Residence: _____ Email Address: _____

Certification Level Requesting Accommodation for: _____ Date of Test: _____

Test Site to which you submitted your application: _____

I have reviewed the NFPA job performance requirements for the level of certification I am seeking and request the following accommodation(s) due to my disability related needs:

____ I have attached a statement on letterhead stationery from a professional who is familiar with my disability. I understand the professional must have expertise in the specific disability for which I am seeking an accommodation and the statement must confirm and describe the disability for which the accommodation is requested. The statement is signed by the professional.

____ I am submitting a copy of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which I obtained from my educational institution.

Signature of individual completing this form
Date

Printed or type name of the individual completing this form

Return this form to: Pennsylvania State Fire Academy
Attn: Certification Program Manager
1150 Riverside Drive
Lewistown, PA 17044
(717) 248-1115

Safety Policy

A candidate should meet the requirements of *NFPA 1580 (2025) Standard for Emergency Responder Occupational Health and Wellness* prior to physical testing to ensure his/her ability to safely perform the required tasks.

For the safety and protection of all participants, equipment, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) being used for testing must meet the NFPA standard at the time of manufacturing. PPE will be inspected prior to being used for testing.

The facial hair policy directs that a candidate with facial hair that interferes with the operation or use of a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) will not be permitted to participate in a testing process that requires the use of a SCBA.

Test Results/Release of Results

The Office of the State Fire Commissioner/PA State Fire Academy notifies candidates of their results in writing via US Mail. Only pass/fail grades are given.

In accordance with the Federal Education Records and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 which is a federal law that established a minimum standard for the protection of records requires prior consent of a person before any records or other personally identifiable information can be released. In the event a third-party request test results of a candidate a Consent to Release Information form will need to be completed and signed by the candidate that the third party is requesting results for.

No show policy

If a candidate is accepted for testing and fails to show up without an acceptable reason, the test site has the right to enforce their no-show policy that could include but is not limited to suspension from testing for an identified period of time and/or financial penalties.

Study Reference List

The following is a list of text that may be reference in preparation for testing.

1. National Fire Protection Association NFPA 1081 (20182 Ed) Standard for Industrial Fire Brigade Member Professional Qualifications;
2. IFSTA Industrial Emergency Services Training, Incipient Level, 2nd Edition, 1st Printing;
3. Jones and Bartlett, Industrial Fire Brigade: Principles and Practices, 1st Edition;
4. Advanced Exterior Skill Sheets can be found under [“Skills we’re looking for”](#)

Additional Information:

1. Applications shall be submitted to the test site by their established deadline or no later than 3 weeks prior to the test date.
2. Please contact the test site of your choice to receive information about fees for testing.
3. Photo ID is required at the time of the written and skills tests.
4. Bring all appropriate PPE and SCBA needed to complete all possible skill stations.
5. Dress appropriately; bring extra dry clothes.
6. ng food and water or a similar beverage to stay hydrated.

Certification applications and skill sheets, in addition to the test schedule and test site contact information, can be found at [Firefighter Certifications | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#). A page will open with information about the certification program and process. Scroll through the page to find the links for certification applications, skill sheets, test schedule, and test site contact information.

If you have additional questions or concerns about the test process, please contact the test site coordinator at the site in which you applied to be tested at or contact the PA State Fire Academy Certification Program Staff.

Firefighter Code of Ethics

I understand that I have the responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of the fire service. Therefore, I pledge the following...

- Always conduct myself, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively on myself, my department and the fire service in general.
- Accept responsibility for my actions and for the consequences of my actions.
- Support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.
- Avoid situations that would adversely affect the credibility or public perception of the fire service profession.
- Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or others' dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.
- Conduct my personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the performance of my duties or bring discredit to my organization.
- Be respectful and conscious of each member's safety and welfare.
- Recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles, and equipment and that these are protected from misuse and theft.
- Exercise professionalism, competence, respect, and loyalty in the performance of my duties and use information, confidential or otherwise, gained by virtue of my position, only to benefit those I am entrusted to serve.
- Avoid financial investments, outside employment, outside business interests or activities that conflict with or are enhanced by my official position or have the potential to create the perception of impropriety.
- Never propose or accept personal rewards, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honors, or gifts that may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.
- Never engage in activities involving alcohol or other substance use or abuse that can impair my mental state or the performance of my duties and compromise safety.
- Never discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition, or handicap.
- Never harass, intimidate, or threaten fellow members of the service or the public and stop or report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors.
- Responsibly use social networking, electronic communications, or other media technology opportunities in a manner that does not discredit, dishonor, or embarrass my organization, the fire service, and the public. I also understand that failure to resolve or report inappropriate use of this media equates to condoning this behavior.

Developed by the National Society of Executive Fire Officers