

PENNSYLVANIA FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES INSTRUCTOR I

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 helpful in your effort to be successful in the certification test. It outlines prerequisites, testing and application processes, 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 *Act 61 of 1995, The State Fire Commissioner Act*, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner is the certifying agency within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy is the administering agency. Any United States citizen eighteen (18) years of age or older who resides in Pennsylvania 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.

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

Application Process

Obtain an application from either the Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) [website](#) or an approved test site. You must fill out the form in full and provide any required supporting documentation. The completed application and accompanying document(s) are to be submitted to an approved test site or the PA State Fire Academy (PSFA). The approved test site or PSFA will review the application and decide to either accept or reject based on any identified deficiencies (e.g., no signatures, missing information, lacks pre-requisites, etc.).

The general test process follows:

1. The candidate must submit a complete application including all supporting documents;
2. After the application is approved, the candidate takes the written and subsequently the skills tests (NOTE: the skills test cannot be taken before the written test);
3. Upon successful completion of the written and skills tests and a review of the application for completeness 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.

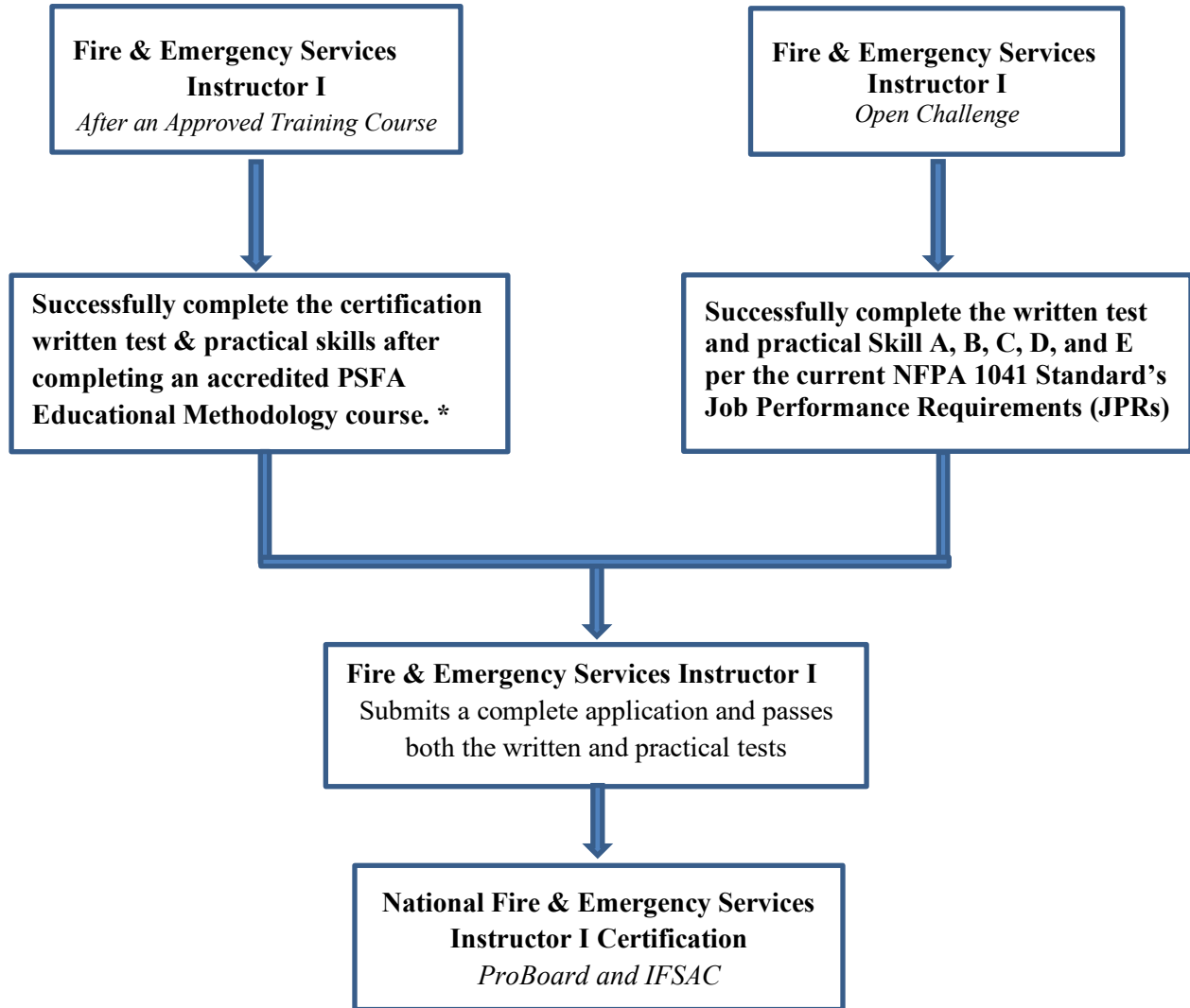
Application Pointers

1. Make sure application is legible and check for completeness.
2. Application **MUST** have your FEMA Student Identification Number (FEMA-SID).
3. Social Security Number: please provide the last four (4) digits.
4. Make sure your complete name is listed including a suffix (Jr, Sr, III, etc.) **NO** nicknames
5. Make sure your mailing address includes street, apartment number, city, state, and zip code.
6. Make sure all appropriate signatures are obtained and are signed in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink or via digital, electronic signatures (**MUST be Adobe signature, NOT a Freeform signature**).
 - a. *Please note that Chief Officers **CANNOT** sign for themselves where a Chief Officer's signature is required.*
 - b. *For this requirement, another Chief Officer **MUST** sign this section of the application.*
7. Legible copies of all pre-requisites must be attached and signed were applicable. **NOTE:** Copies must include both the front and back of the document where applicable. (i.e. CPR & Medical cards). Make sure your Prerequisite Verification Form is appropriately marked off and signed in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink or via digital, electronic signatures (**MUST be Adobe signature, NOT a Freeform signature**).

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this level of certification

Fire & Emergency Services Instructor I Certification Pathways



* Course instruction with tests and certification test are **two separate processes and CANNOT** be intermixed.

NOTE: Candidates seeking to become instructors within the PSFA Local Level system are required to have an educational methodology course or an equivalent program of instruction as a prerequisite. Please refer to the instructions in the Local Level Instructor Application for clarification. The Local Level Instructor Application is available at www.osfc.pa.gov under the link *State Fire Academy*, click *Local Level Training Program*, then *Local Level Training Instructor Information*.

Test Policy

Written Test: The written test is randomly generated and consists of one hundred (100) questions. Candidates have a maximum of two (2) hours to complete the test. A passing score for a written test is seventy percent (70%).

Skills Test: Must pass 100% of the skill stations offered at the time of test.

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 need to contact the fire academy or test site of your choice to schedule a retest.

Skills Test: You must pass 100% of the skill stations used in this certification level.

- 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 be completed in one (1) year from the date of the initial test.

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 accommodation for the written certification exam for individuals with documented disabilities. Only written requests for accommodation are reviewed, and each request is reviewed independent of any other request (i.e., done on a case-by-case basis). A request **MUST** be submitted on the Accommodation Request Form. The Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program provides written notification to the candidate regarding its decision upon completion of the review by PSFA and legal counsel.

The *Accommodation Request Form* can be found on Page 7 of this manual; it is also available from the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and test-site coordinators. Please contact the Certification Program Manager for further information. The candidate requesting accommodation **MUST** complete the request form and submit it with the application, or soon thereafter as the need for 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 a written examination **MUST** be current (i.e., within five years of the date of application). Such documentation should include a signed explanation on letterhead stationery from a professional familiar with the applicant's disability or a copy of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) from an educational institution. See comment below.

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

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, all equipment, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used for testing **MUST** meet the NFPA standard at the time of manufacturing. PPE will be inspected prior to being used for the test.

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

Test Results / Release of Results

The Office of the State Fire Commissioner / PA State Fire Academy / Delegated Authority notifies candidates of their results in writing via the US Postal Service (i.e., mail). Only PASS / FAIL grades are provided.

In accordance with the Federal Education Records and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, a federal law which established minimum standards for the protection of education/training records, the PSFA requires prior consent from a candidate before any candidate record or other personally identifiable information can be released. In the event a third party requests a candidate's test results, a Consent to Release Information form **MUST** be completed and signed by the candidate allowing the record(s) disclosure to the third party requesting the results / information.

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.

Test Integrity and Dishonesty

Test dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, facilitating acts of test dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of test / examination documents, or submitting work of another person. Any instance of test dishonesty will constitute disciplinary and/or legal actions. All certification candidates shall act with personal integrity, respect the rights and property of others, and help maintain a professional environment in which all can be successful.

Test-site coordinators, assistant coordinators, test proctors, evaluators, and instructors should take reasonable steps to anticipate and deter acts of dishonesty, reinforce integrity, and support appropriate behavior to protect the rights and trust of honest candidates. At the beginning of each test, it is the responsibility of those mentioned above to provide test candidates with the "Testing Integrity and Dishonesty" policy and clarify any questions that arise.

Falsification of Documents

Any individual found to have forged, altered, or falsified documentation for a certification test will be indefinitely suspended from participating in any certification exam within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Further action may be taken in accordance with the Pennsylvania Crimes Code 18 Pa C.S. 4904 relating to unsworn falsifications.

Cheating on Test

All candidates are expected to work entirely on their own while taking any test. Test integrity violations consist of any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids unless provided by the test proctor for a specific test, or any persons, papers, or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance.

Document Integrity

Certification candidates are expected to complete any and all work individually. Any materials obtained from other sources such as plot plans, web maps, etc. a source reference must be given. All essay answers must be the candidate's own work.

Study Reference List

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

1. National Fire Protection Association, NFPA 1041 (2019 Ed) Standard for Fire & Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications;
2. IFSTA, Fire and Emergency Services Instructor, 9th Edition, 1st printing;
3. Jones and Bartlett, Fire Service Instructor: Principles and Practice, 3rd Edition, 1st Printing;
4. Fire & Emergency Services Instructor I 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 three weeks prior to the test date.
2. Please contact the test site of your choice to receive information about test fees.
3. Government issued photo ID (i.e., driver's license) 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. Bring 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 or the PA State Fire Academy Certification Program Staff.

Fire & Emergency Services Instructor I Skill Station Information

Skill Station A: Instructional Technology (IT)

The candidate shall demonstrate the use of Instructional Technology (IT). One IT item **MUST** be a computer with visual projection. Other technology items can include digital displays, interactive SMARTBoards, digital audio players, overhead projectors, instructional or presentation software delivered through an IT device, training simulators, etc. or other like items. The candidate will be required to start, operate, and shut down each device assigned/used. NOTE: If the device cannot be manipulated in a start/stop mode (i.e., Tasks 3 & 10), the candidate **MUST** accurately describe the start-up/shut-down processes. This exception **DOES NOT** apply to computers/projection devices or similar devices that can be easily manipulated.

Skill Station B: Classroom Lecture

In this station, the candidate conducts a training session (i.e., lecture) utilizing a lesson plan, IT, demonstration device (if applicable), and any requisite equipment for the given topic. For candidates who are taking an approved PA State Fire Academy Educational Methodology for Local Level Instructor (EMLL) course, the certification test is coordinated with the test-site **AFTER** the EMLL course concludes. **Please Note:** The lesson plan developed in the course and that used for certification **CANNOT** be the same. Per certification policy, and as stipulated in our accreditation by ProBoard and IFSAC, the ability to assess competence and knowledge of a candidate **MUST** be done independent of any educational or training process. Also note, the candidate will need to provide the evaluator a copy of their lesson plan; the lesson plan is **NOT** simply a copy of the PowerPoint presentation or other displayed visual delivery document.

If a candidate is challenging the certification process and is **NOT** taking the test after an EMLL course, contact the PSFA for direction on using a lesson plan and necessary resources (see the note below).

For Skill B, the candidate has fifteen (15) minutes to complete the lecture component of the lesson.

Note: You may use a lesson plan you have access to (i.e., local training), however it **MUST** be relevant to fire/rescue, have a skill component, and **MUST** be approved by PSFA or test-site coordinator prior to use.

Supplemental Information: To assist candidates taking the Fire & Emergency Services Instructor 1 certification test, the list below denotes commonly found items within a lesson plan:

- Lesson Name
- Lesson Overview
- Learning Objective(s)
- Time (estimated)
- Instructional Materials and Resources / Audiovisuals / Props / Equipment
- Instructional aids (i.e., informational sheets, activity sheets, etc.).
- Delivery Format (e.g., lecture, demonstration, etc.)
- Setting (classroom, apparatus floor, training tower, etc.)
- References (all materials used in creating the lesson)
- Lesson Outline and Content
 - Introduction
 - Instructional Content
 - Summary
- Activities
- Evaluation Tools (e.g., quiz/test and an answer sheet, skill evaluation sheet, etc.)

Skill Station C: Hands-On Instruction

Utilizing a lesson plan and necessary equipment, demonstrate a skill within the lesson. Assume the evaluator is part of the audience. The practical work may be performed in an area(s) designated by the evaluator. You have fifteen (15) minutes to complete the lesson. This is, as noted in the title, hands-on (psychomotor) instruction. You **MUST** utilize a resource(s) (e.g., tools, equipment, appliances, etc.) and have other “students” **DEMONSTRATE** what you taught (e.g., trying knots, inspecting equipment, donning SCBA, etc.).

NOTE: Psychomotor means motion-action. Activities that are cognitive in nature **CANNOT** be used to demonstrate psychomotor skills. For example, lecturing on incident size-up, then having a “student” look at a visual image and give a size-up is a cognitive activity, **NOT** a psychomotor skill. This concept applies to any scenario of a similar nature.

In this station, the candidate conducts a training session (i.e., demonstration) utilizing a lesson plan and requisite equipment or other devices for the given topic. For candidates who are taking an approved PA State Fire Academy Educational Methodology for Local Level Instructor (EMLL) course, the certification test is coordinated with the test-site **AFTER** the EMLL course concludes. **NOTE:** The lesson plan developed in the course and that used for certification **CANNOT** be the same lesson plan. Per certification policy, and as a condition of our accreditation by ProBoard and IFSAC, the ability to assess competence and knowledge of a candidate **MUST** be done independent of any educational or training process. Thus, the two events **MUST** be separate activities.

If the candidate seeks this level of certification through a challenge process and is not taking the EMLL course, contact PSFA or the test site to coordinate lesson plan and equipment resources. The candidate has fifteen (15) minutes to complete the lesson.

Please Note: You may use a lesson plan that you have access to, however it **MUST** be relevant to fire/rescue, have a lecture component, and **MUST** be approved by PSFA or the test-site coordinator prior to use.

Evaluation / Evaluator Note: Given a candidate MUST conduct both skills B and C, the approved practice is to complete both skills in a single lesson delivery. Therefore 30 minutes is the averaged time. Nonetheless for the evaluator, both skill sheets B and C MUST be completed.

Skill Station D: Training Schedule

Given a list of training assignments, Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) scheduling procedures, instructional resources, facilities, and a timeline for delivery, the candidate shall select and appropriately schedule three single-unit instructional sessions. The topics and scheduling form shall be provided to the candidate. The scheduling of the three selected topics **MUST** be done in a chronological order.

Please note all data fields in the pre-formatted form **MUST** be filled in with appropriate information. Failure to provide the correct information and do so in a chronological manner is an automatic failure. Please read the supplemental form and each training topic contained within to determine the timeframes/deadlines for each topic and of the three you select, place them in the correct order.

Skill Station E: Training Records / Reports

Using the topics selected in Station D, the candidate completes the training records / report forms and activity reports (one-page minimum per session), which describes in summary the training conducted, the time allocated, the attendees, and any pre-activity requirements fulfilled. Please note: The report is a summary of activities **after a training session occurred**. Therefore, comments must be in past tense (e.g., *The TIC training was held at Station 5 with 10 personnel completing all activities required. Instructor McBride conducted the training on Monday, February 1 starting at 6:30 PM and concluded at 8:30 PM. He spent one hour reviewing the content and one hour having the participants practice using the TIC.*

Training reports are official accounts of a training event completed. Reports narrate the actions/instruction/skills reviewed and completed, and any issues or concerns that arise from the training session. Each report **MUST** be written in the past tense. Any report not written in past tense shall be marked FAIL.

A complete report **MUST** include all formatted data fields indicated in the form (e.g., topic, start/stop times, delivery method, etc.) and a detailed account of the training activity and equipment used. A detailed narrative should include the who what, when, where, and why, in addition to a list of all equipment, props, or instructional aids used. The reports shall describe the actions taken or activities completed during training, challenges experienced in the instructional delivery, underperformance issues, course management issues/concerns (if any), and the process to correct underperformance issues experienced.

NOTE: Any narrative that is generalized without detail is an automatic failure. For example, a report that simply states that “*participants sat through a lecture on how to perform CPR and then practiced the techniques on a mannequin*” is incomplete. The narrative should include the key topics introduced in a CPR program (e.g., adult, child, and infant CPR techniques, airway obstruction recognition and relief techniques, etc.), how the demonstration was done (e.g., one or more instructors, demonstration only, guided demonstration, etc.) and how the practical session was facilitated (e.g., participants were placed into two-person teams and rotated to the skills stations where they demonstrated CPR only or CPR with rescue breathing and airway obstruction relief techniques for adult, child, and infant that met 100% of the course requirements, etc.). this concept applies for any of the topics covered in the reports (i.e., radio communications, apparatus inspections, accountability, TIC operations, fire prevention, CPR, and medical training, lock-out/tag-out, building inspections, and equipment inspections).

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, vehicle, 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