

PENNSYLVANIA FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



FIREFIGHTER 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 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. Refer to the **Age Rule Exception** section (Page 3) for additional information.

All certification candidates are required to have an established and up to date user portal account in the PA State Fire Academy's Acadis Learning Management System prior to participating in **ANY** certification testing opportunity. Please log in to your Acadis portal account and update all personal information before submitting your certification application. (Access can be gained through the OSFC website – [Training and Certification Portal](#)).

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 all required documentation. The completed application and accompanying documents are to be submitted to an approved test site or PA State Fire Academy (PSFA). Your application is then reviewed and either accepted or rejected based on compliance and deficiencies (i.e., lacks pre-requisites, no signatures, etc.).

The general test process is as follows:

1. A 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 testing 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 complete. Applications **MUST** be typed.
2. You **MUST** provide your FEMA Student Identification Number. (FEMA-SID)
3. Social Security Number: please provide the last four (4) digits.
4. Provide your complete name including suffix (Jr, Sr, III, etc.) **NO** nicknames please.
5. Make sure your mailing address includes street, apartment number, city, state and zip.
6. Make sure all appropriate signatures are obtained and are signed in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink.
 - a. *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 prerequisites 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).*
8. Make sure your Prerequisite Verification Form (found at the back of the application) is appropriately marked off and signed in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink.

Prerequisites

Hazardous Materials Training and/or Certification: 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 (Jones & Bartlett curriculum or IFSTA curriculum):

- Hazardous Materials Operations Level, **OR**
- Hazardous Materials Operations Level Annual Refresher (must have the full operations level course as well)
- Hazardous Materials Operations Level (CORE, PPE, Product Control) national certification (ProBoard or IFSAC). The certification **MUST** be within one year of this application.

NOTE: The training or certification certificate must be dated within one year of the date on the application. Any training or certification certificate greater than one year from the date on the application will NOT be accepted concerning fulfilling this prerequisite. To meet this prerequisite, you must show proof of completion of a current course, refresher training course, or certification certificate.

1. **Interior Structural Fire Attack**: To be certified as a Firefighter I, a candidate **MUST** have demonstrated his/her ability to attack and extinguish an interior structural fire operating as a member of a team. The following courses of instruction meet this requirement. A formal course not listed below **MUST** be submitted to and approved by PSFA Certification Staff prior to fulfilling this requirement.

- Interior Firefighting (ELIF) certificate from the Entry Level curriculum that must include LIVE fire training. Certificates with NO Live Fire are NOT acceptable;
- PA State Fire Academy Local Level *Structural Burn Session (SBS)*;
- PA State Fire Academy Resident Course *Engine Company Operations at Residential Fires (ZSFB)*;
- Pennsylvania Department of Corrections *Fire Emergency Response Team Training*.

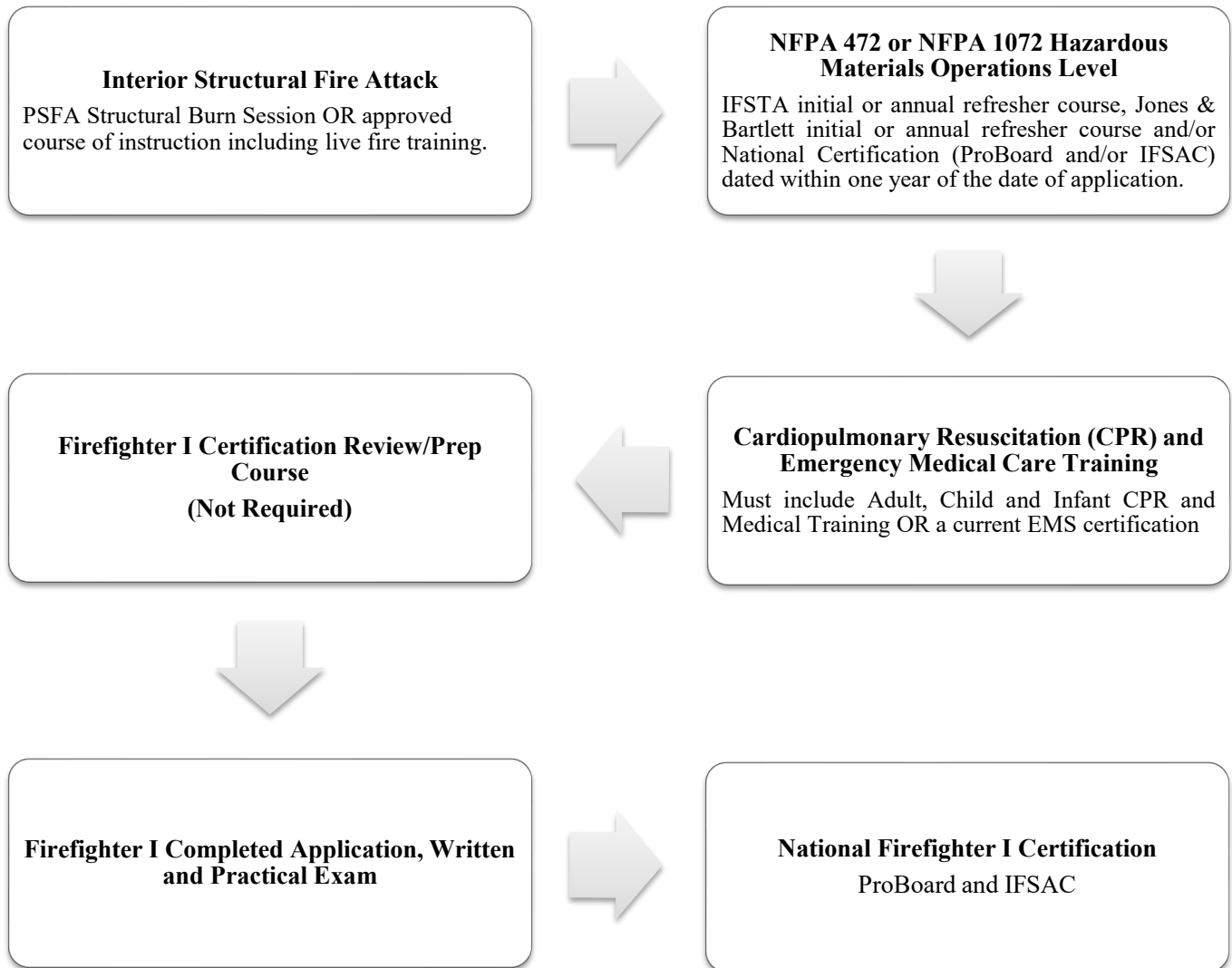
2. **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Emergency Medical Services Training**: Candidates shall provide, at minimum, evidence of their capabilities regarding emergency medical care, infection control, bleeding control, shock management, and CPR/AED (*adult/child/infant*). Each candidate **MUST** complete an approved CPR course and a 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](#))

*Copies of course certificates and cards for the CPR and medical training **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.*

Firefighter I Certification Pathway



Please refer to the Firefighter I application OR the previous section of this document titled “Prerequisites” for a complete listing of approved courses.

Test Policy

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

Skills Test: Candidates must pass one hundred percent (100%) of the skill stations offered.

Re-test Policy

Written Test: If you are unsuccessful, you have a total of two (2) retest attempts 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 a retest.

Skills Test: You must pass 100% of the skill stations offered.

- 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 for a later date and time.
- A total of eight (8) retest attempts are permitted and must complete in one (1) year to successfully complete the testing process.

Appeals

A candidate may request a review of his/her performance records by the State Fire Academy within thirty (30) days of receipt of a failure notice. 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 8 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 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 for 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 use in testing.

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 the 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 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.

Professional Testing Integrity and Dishonesty

Dishonesty in the professional test environment includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarizing, facilitating acts of testing dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, or submitting work of another person. Any instance(s) of testing dishonesty constitutes the need for disciplinary and/or legal actions. All certification candidates shall act with personal integrity, respect others' rights and property, 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 process, it is the responsibility of those to provide candidates with the "Testing Integrity and Dishonesty" policy and clarify questions that may arise.

Falsification of Documents

Any individual found to have forged, altered, or falsified documentation for the purpose of certification testing 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 his/her own while taking any exam. Violations of test integrity consist of any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids unless provided by the test proctor for the purpose of a specific test, or any person, papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance.

Document Integrity

Certification candidates are expected to complete all work individually. For any material obtained from other sources such as plot plans, web maps, etc., a source reference must be given.

Study Reference List

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

1. IFSTA, Essentials of Fire Fighting, 7th Edition;
2. NFPA 1001 Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications (2019 Edition);
3. Fire Fighter I Skill Sheets on the OSFC [website](#)

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. 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 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 other 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