

PENNSYLVANIA FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OPERATIONS 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 supporting 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.

Age Rule Exception – Hazardous Materials Application:

Hazardous Materials Operations (HMO): Anyone age 16 or older may certify at the HMO level.

The Child Labor Law Division of the Department of Labor & Industry issued the following decision: juniors 14 to 17 years of age are permitted in training and certification at the Hazardous Materials Awareness level; juniors 16 to 17 years of age are permitted to participate in training and certification at the Hazardous Materials Operations level provided **no** Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) atmosphere exist as part of the course or certification testing. *Likewise, this does not permit Junior Firefighters the ability to participate in emergency response to hazardous materials incidents or where the potential for an IDLH atmosphere might exist.*

Application Pointers

1. Make sure the application is legible and check for completeness. Applications must be typed in.
2. You **MUST** provide your FEMA Student Identification Number (FEMA-SID)
3. Social Security Number: please provide the last four (4) digits.
4. Make sure you 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. *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).
8. Make sure your Pre-Requisite Verification Form (found in the back of the application) is appropriately marked off and signed in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink.

Prerequisites

1. 16 years of age or older

2. **Core Competencies**

Candidate must meet requirements of NFPA 1072 (2017) *Standards for Hazardous Material /Weapons of Mass Destruction Emergency Response Personnel Professional Qualifications, JPR 5.1.2 and 5.1.3* **OR** NFPA 470 (2022) *Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction/WMD Standard for Responders* Chapter 7 and core competencies of Chapter 9. Attach a copy of the following recognized certificates (IFSTA or Jones & Bartlett curriculum) certificates. Certification and training must be within one (1) year of the date of application. If the certification certificate is greater than one (1) year you must show proof of completing refresher training course.

- Hazardous Materials Awareness Level 470 or 1072 (Pro-Board, IFSAC or DOD) certification **AND**
- Hazardous Materials Operations Level 470 or 1072 initial or annual refresher training course **AND**
- Hazardous Materials Awareness Level 470 or 1072 annual refresher training course

3. **Mission Specific Certifications**

NFPA 1072 (2017)) Standard for Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents Chapter 4, and core competencies of Chapter 5 and mission specifics competencies of Chapter 6, JPR 6.1.1 Mass Decontamination, Victim Rescue and Recovery, Technical Decontamination, Detection, Monitoring and Public Safety Sampling, **OR** NFPA 470 (2022) Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Standard for Responders, Chapter 5 Awareness, Chapter 7 Operations core competencies, and Chapter 9 Operations mission specific competencies JPR 9.1.1 Mass Decontamination and Victim Rescue and Recovery, or Detection, Monitoring, and Sampling, or Technical Decontamination Attach a copy of the following recognized (IFSTA or Jones & Bartlett curriculums) certificates. Certification or training must be within one (1) year of the date of application. If certification is greater than one (1) year you must show proof of completion of a current refresher training course.

- Hazardous Materials Awareness Level 470 or 1072 (Pro-Board, IFSAC or DOD) certification **AND**
- Hazardous Materials Operations Level 470 or 1072 initial or annual refresher training course **AND**
- Hazardous Materials Operations Level 470 or 1072 Core Competencies Certification (Pro-Board, IFSAC or DOD) (if testing Mission Specific competencies only)

Testing Policy

Written Test: The written test is randomly generated and consists of seventy-five (75) questions. Candidates will have a maximum of 90 minutes to complete the test. Passing scores for any written test is seventy percent (70%).

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

Re-test Policy

Written Test: If you are unsuccessful, you may retest an additional 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 100% of the skill stations offered at the time of testing.

- If you are unsuccessful on three (3) or less skill stations, you may retest the same day, however, you are permitted only one retest on each failed 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 date and time.
- A total of eight (8) retest attempts are permitted which must be completed within one (1) year of the original test date in order 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 7 of this manual, or it is also available from the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy or 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

Name of Candidate: _____
Last Name First Name Middle

Address of Candidate: _____

Telephone Number (area code): _____
(please list a number you can be reached during daylight hours 8am – 4pm)

County of Residence: _____ Email Address: _____

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

Test Site to which you have submitted your application: _____

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

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

_____ I am submitting a copy of an IEP (Individual Education Plan) which I have 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) 247-3743

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 and will be inspected prior to use in certification tests.

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 which requires SCBA use.

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, 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

Professional testing dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, facilitating acts of testing dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person. Any instances of testing dishonesty will constitute 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 testing process, 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 his/her own while taking any exam. Violations of testing integrity shall 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 all work individually. Any material obtained from other sources such as plot plans, web maps, etc. must appropriately cite the source. All essays 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 470 (2022) Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Standard for Responders
2. DOT, Emergency Response Guidebook (2020)
3. IFSTA Press, Hazardous Materials for First Responders 6th Edition

Additional Information:

1. Application should be submitted to the test site no later than the 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 testing fees.
3. A Photo ID is required at the time of the written and skills tests.
4. Bring all appropriate PPE and SCBA for completion of all possible skill stations.
5. Dress appropriately and bring extra dry clothes.
6. Bring food and beverage with you, 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](#) at the top of the webpage. A page will open with information about the certification program and process. Scroll on the page to find the links to the 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