



EXCERPTS CERTIFICATION ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

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Application Overview ([Back to Top](#))

Any United States citizen eighteen (18) years of age or older who resides in Pennsylvania may apply for consideration as a test candidate; an exception to the aforementioned would be for certification in hazardous materials awareness and operations (see below). Age Rule Exception - Hazardous Materials Applications:

1. Hazardous Materials Awareness (Hazmat Awareness) – Anyone age 14 and older may certify at the Hazmat Awareness Level.
2. Hazardous Materials Operations (Hazmat Operations) – Anyone age 16 and older may certify at the Hazmat Operations Level
3. 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.*

Applications and information about tests are obtained by contacting a test site conducting certification testing or from the Office of The State Fire Commissioner website at www.osfc.state.pa.us. Applications are also available by writing the PA State Fire Academy, 1150 Riverside Drive, Lewistown, PA 17044-1979, or by calling (717) 248-1115 and requesting a candidate application.

The candidate must meet all the requirements/pre-requisites as required by the NFPA standard for the level of certification sought. Standard pre-requisites are established for each level of certification to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly. Pre-requisites are noted on all applications and in the candidate handbooks for each level of certification offered. These documents are posted on the OSFC website.

Upon obtaining an application, the candidate must fill out the form, in full, and provide all required supporting documentation. The completed application and attached documents are submitted to the PA State Fire Academy or approved test site. The Academy and test sites will either accept or reject, based on deficiencies (i.e., lacks pre-requisites, no signatures, etc.), any application and will notify the candidate in writing. **All candidates for voluntary certification testing must receive approval prior to participating in the test. Approval consists of the acceptance of their applications and documents, and notification that they have been approved to participate in the voluntary certification testing process.**



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If the candidate is rejected, the candidate must be notified in writing by the State Fire Academy or test site as to the reason(s). If accepted, the State Fire Academy or test site will notify the candidate and provide additional information concerning the test date and location. The Academy or test site also provides the candidate with information and references that may be used in preparing for the test. Pertinent test policies can be accessed on the State Fire Commissioner website under the Certification link.

Testing [\(Back to Top\)](#)

The OSFC/PSFA utilizes the professional qualifications standards as written by the NFPA and approved by the Pro-Board and IFSAC. The latest edition of the standards are utilized and implementation of new/revised editions will be in accordance with Pro-Board and IFSAC requirements. One alternative standard for fire police is utilized through the IFSAC process only.

All certification tests are a combination of both cognitive and psychomotor component to ensure that an individual is tested in a wide variety of the JPR's and they meet the minimum competencies required by a specific NFPA standard.

The Fire Service Certification Advisory Committee (FSCAC) has established that 70% is passing because it is nationally recognized and accepted test score. This scoring process is used for both cognitive and psychomotor testing. Mandatory skills are those considered "life safety" skill, random skills are not considered "life safety" but necessary for daily activities. Mandatory skills must pass 100% and random must pass with 70%.

The number of test items both cognitive and psychomotor is determined by the specific level of certification, the number of JPR's in the standard, those items identified as life safety and past testing practices. A cognitive test is commonly 100 questions but some may be 50 questions.

Project Methodology is an option that can be used to complete specific levels of certification such as Fire Officer I and II, Fire Investigator, Fire Service Instructor II, Public Fire and Life Safety Educator I, Juvenile Firesetter I and II. This method allows for projects to be used to address a single JPR or multiple JPR's within a standard and can be completed as part of a course "by training" or independently outside of class "by challenge". All materials MUST be prepared by and are the work of the individual. To minimize the potential for fraud/copyright a Professional Testing Integrity and Dishonesty policy is in place.

By Training:

To certify by this method, you must have successfully completed the course or courses of instruction accredited by the State Fire Academy within one (1) year of the date of application.



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By Challenge:

To certify by this method, you must have successfully completed work for each Job Performance Requirements (JPR's) noted by the specific level of certification. All completed documents, copies of certificates and any other supporting materials MUST be attached to the certification application.

Evaluations of projects are based upon the skill sheets/competency check list established for each JPR within the specific level of certification and are reviewed by the certification staff and/or approved evaluators. The process for developing these documents is to use individuals who have knowledge in the specific subject matter area, reference text books and NFPA standards to establish the criteria. Annual training of evaluators is conducted to ensure consistency through the evaluation process.

The written exam can be administered by another approved test site other than the PSFA by an approved test proctor. The written exam will be sent certified via US Mail to the test proctor in a sealed envelope with instructions on test procedures and a verification form. Proctor administers the exam in accordance with OSFC/PSFA testing policies and returns all test materials to the State Fire Academy in the envelope supplied.

Process:

1. Candidate submits completed application and practical skills packet to State Fire Academy;
2. Candidate takes written exam;
3. Candidate completes a written practical skills packet;
4. Certification Program staff reviews practical skills submission against skill sheets/competency check list;
5. If practical skills submission does not meet competency, it is returned to candidate for changes and resubmission;
6. Successful candidate passes written exam with 70% and written practical skills exam;

All the same testing policies established for cognitive and psychomotor testing apply for the project methodology. Those include but are not limited to the one year requirement to complete the testing process successfully, retest of written exam and resubmission of written skill practical, appeals, accommodations, etc.

Portfolio Methodology follows a similar process as the project methodology with some additional requirements for verification of life experience.

The process for selection of evaluators/reviewers for the portfolio process is the same for all other assessment methodologies, training program, certification to level reviewing and apprenticeship.

All information submitted will be verified through a written correspondence with the issuing agency. In the case of life experience a written correspondence will be sent to verify the information is valid.



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In the case that a formal course of instruction (such as a college-level course) is submitted to address a specific JPR(s), a course completion certificate or a transcript and course syllabus must be attached which confirms this fact. The Act 46 equivalency process will be utilized to validate that the course content does meet the requirements of the JPR(s).

A candidate **MUST** follow the testing process and successfully pass in order to be considered for and receive certification. The general testing process is as follows: first, a candidate must submit a completed application including all supporting documents; and second, upon approval of the application, a candidate takes the written and subsequently the skills tests third, upon successfully completing the written and skills test and a review of the application for completeness, 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. Refer to written and skills test policies of this document.

All test materials, applications, skill sheets, candidate handbooks and exam schedules are posted on the OSFC website under the Certification link. Candidate handbooks for each level provide standard testing information as well as NFPA standard specific information for testing including an exam study guide list.

Emergency Medical Certifications [*\(Back to Top\)*](#)

A candidate applying for certification at a level that requires a medical certification must have the current valid medical card(s) required for that level on the day the application is submitted.

Non-Discrimination Policy [*\(Back to Top\)*](#)

The Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC), Pennsylvania State Fire Academy (PSFA) ensures that the certification exam procedures are not discriminatory and are in full compliance with the EEO Act under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of the Governor, Administrative Policies and Procedures manual section four (4), subsection 401 through 405 which states “this agency will act affirmatively in attracting and utilizing the talents of the citizens of the Commonwealth without regard to race, color, religious creed, union membership, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or non-job related handicap or disability”.

No Show Policy - Candidate [*\(Back to Top\)*](#)

Each Certification test site will be responsible for developing, implementing and enforcing a “No Show” policy that addresses the logistical and financial impact for a candidate who has been accepted and fails to show for testing without an acceptable reason.



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Safety Policies [\(Back to Top\)](#)

For the safety and protection of all participants all 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.

Candidate should meet the requirements of NFPA 1582, Standard on Medical Requirements for Firefighters and information for Fire Department Physicians prior to physical testing to ensure his/her ability to safely perform the required tasks.

Facial Hair Policy - For the safety and protection of all participants, the facial hair policy (see below) directs that a candidate with facial hair that interferes with the operation or use of a SCBA will not be permitted to participate in a testing process that requires the use of a SCBA. Prior to the test date, the test site must inform the candidate of this policy

| | | | |
|----------|--|-------|-------------|
| Subject: | Facial Hair/SCBA Use | Date: | May 6, 2013 |
| To: | All Local Level Instructors; County/Regional School Committees; Certification Field Test Sites | | |
| From: | George M. Stapleton, Administrator; Pennsylvania State Fire Academy (PSFA) | | |

The issue of facial hair on firefighters has long been debated in the fire service and, specifically, fire training programs. Concern has centered on the impact that facial hair has on the ability to seal a tight fitting face piece against the face when utilizing Supplied Air Respirators (SAR), Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), etc. Tight-fitting face piece means a respiratory inlet covering that forms a complete seal with the face.

After reviewing all evidence pro and con, pertinent legal decisions, Federal regulations and other relevant data, the PSFA have determined that the wearing of beards or other facial hair (other than a well-trimmed mustache) that interferes with the face piece seal is incompatible with the duties of persons directly involved, or who may become directly involved, in operations at emergency scenes or in training where SAR/SCBA is or may be required.

In keeping with this determination, and in order to protect the interests of both students and the Commonwealth, it shall be the policy of the PSFA that persons taking part in any class whose subject matter involves the use or potential use of SAR/SCBA in any **hazardous** or **Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH)**, atmosphere as defined by NIOSH and OSHA shall be clean shaven, except for the option of a well-trimmed mustache. Facial hair shall not interfere with the face piece assembly seal and other hair will be substantially covered by protective clothing.

The final determination as to whether an individual meets this criterion shall rest with the instructor(s) of the class. Instructors and sponsoring officials of county or regional training activities shall be held fully accountable for adherence to this policy. Students **not** in compliance will be deemed to have **not** satisfied class completion criteria, and will **not** be issued certificates.

This policy is in effect as to the conduct of courses for the PSFA Resident, Academy on the Road, Local-Level and the Voluntary Fire Fighter Certification programs. This policy will also serve the best interests of the students, instructors and will reflect a positive example for day-to-day fire and rescue service operations.

Supersedes Facial Hair/SCBA Use Memo dated August 8, 2002



Written Test [\(Back to Top\)](#)

For any certification sought that requires a written test, the test must be administered by an approved test proctor as determined by the Fire Academy Certification Staff.

Passing scores for any written test is seventy percent (70%). If a candidate fails a written test, two retests may be attempted. Any retest must be completed within one (1) year of the original test date. Test results are valid for one year from the date of the original test.

A candidate has three (3) attempts to take and pass a written exam for each submitted application. However, a candidate cannot submit two concurrent applications for the same certification test (i.e., two FF1 applications in the same timeframe) or an application that does not have a fulfilled pre-requisite.

If a candidate fails to pass the written exam on the third attempt or fails to pass the skills test based on skills test/retest policy then the candidate needs to do remediation and reapply as a new candidate. Reapplying for testing means the candidate will complete and submit a new application and start the testing process again.

Candidates must present photo ID to sit for written and skills test.

Skills Test [\(Back to Top\)](#)

If a skills test is included as part of the certification process, the skill must be evaluated by a qualified evaluator as determined by the State Fire Academy. To pass the skill test portion of a certification test, the candidate must achieve the following:

1. Successfully pass one-hundred percent (100%) of each skill that is considered a "life safety skill" Mandatory Skill;
2. Successfully pass seventy percent (70%) of each skill tested that is NOT considered a "life safety skill" Random Skill;
3. Successfully pass all skills stations that are being tested;
4. Successfully pass all "Safety Items".

A candidate may retest one (1) time the same day of initial test if they failed no more than three (3) skill stations

If a candidate fails four (4) or more skills on the initial attempt within the same test date, the candidate must then retest at a later time. In this testing session, the candidate can retest two (2) times provided they fail three (3) or less skills. If the candidate fails 4 or more skills on the first retest 2R1 then the candidate must retest at a later time.

A candidate has three separate attempts to pass the skill stations. If a candidate fails the initial skills test and the second retesting session, a third attempt can be done. If a candidate is



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unsuccessful at retest and has exhausted all of the attempts the candidate will need to do remediation and reapply as a new candidate. Any failed skill stations must be retested within one (1) year from the original test date.

Test Results [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Upon completing an application and test results review for certification, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner/PA State Fire Academy notifies candidates of their results in writing via US Mail. Unsuccessful candidates will have the right to retest based on the testing policies. All certification testing (both written and skills) must be completed in the one year time frame. It is not permitted to test skills one year and written the next. To obtain certification all testing (skills and written) must be completed within the same one year time frame.

Successful candidates are notified via US mail. A certification number is issued for all successful candidates and is awarded a certificate and one (1) shoulder patch and one level bar by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner. The State Fire Academy will submit candidate certification information electronically to Pro-Board and IFSAC for registration on the national databases. Transition from the application process to electronic submission occurred between Fall 2010 through 2011 before being fully implemented in 2012. If certification was prior to January 1, 2012 candidates may have to request Pro-Board application from the State Fire Academy to submit to Pro-Board.

Release of Test Results - In accordance with the Federal Privacy Act of 1974 test results will only be released with written permission by the test candidate. In the event that 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. Original certificates shall be provided to the candidate only per the Act. Third party request as approved by the candidate will be provided copies of test results (pass/fail), certification certificates and/or letter of success or failure. Refer to Appendix F for form.

Appeal Process [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Test Results - Within fifteen (15) days of receipt of a failure notice, a candidate may request, in writing a review of his/her performance records for their written and/or skills testing by the State Fire Academy Certification Program staff. If an unsuccessful candidate fails to appeal within the specific fifteen (15) days, he/she will have no other recourse other than to participate in future scheduled certification testing as-retest are scheduled.



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Testing Accommodations [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Request for Accommodations - The Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program reviews, on a case-by-case basis, only written requests for accommodations for certification examinations. Requests must be submitted on the “Accommodation Request” form (APPENDIX A).

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. It is the responsibility of the program coordinator to explain accommodation request procedures to candidates.

The “Accommodation Request” form is available from the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and test site coordinators. 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.

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.

Reasonable Accommodations - The Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program offers reasonable accommodations for the written certification exams for those persons with written documented disabilities.

Based upon an analysis of the NFPA job performance requirements (JPR’s) and the written examinations, the Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program has determined that persons with learning disabilities manifested in the academic areas of reading, decoding or comprehension may be eligible for additional time to take a written certification examination as a reasonable accommodation.

Documentation of a specific disability, which would negatively affect one's performance on the written examination, must be included with a completed "Accommodation Request" form with the signature of the applicant. This statement must confirm and describe the disability for which an accommodation is being requested and clearly state the accommodation being sought.



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Requests for accommodations are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the appropriateness of the requested accommodation is in doubt, the certification program manager will discuss options with the candidate and will consult with legal counsel and professionals knowledgeable about the disability and functions of the profession.

Diagnostic information related to an individual's disability is highly confidential and is not disclosed to third parties. The accommodation file is maintained separately until completion of the exam process at which time the accommodation information will be placed in the same file as the level tested in which the accommodation was granted. All certification information is maintained in a secure area, in locked cabinets with limited access.

Accommodation Requests - A candidate with a documented disability that could negatively impact performance on a certification test shall complete and submit the Request for Accommodation Form (APPENDIX A) along with supporting documents. This form must be submitted to the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy. The Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program offers reasonable and appropriate accommodations for written certification examinations for individuals with documented disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

1. You must provide your own written request for accommodations, preferably in the form of a letter. Include a detailed description of your diagnosed condition and indicate specifically the accommodations you believe are necessary for you to take the written certification examination based on your disability. Include a telephone number where you can be reached during the day.

You are encouraged to also provide a fax number and/or e-mail address. If additional testing time is requested, your letter must specify a precise amount of additional time (e.g., time-and-a-half). A request for an untimed examination, or simply for extra time, is not sufficient.

2. Include current (within the last five years) documentation by your clinician, physician, or other qualified specialist with training and experience appropriate to diagnose and treat your disability. Documentation for visual, hearing, psychological, emotional, or physical disorders must be current within one (1) year and provide detailed results from a complete, appropriate diagnostic examination and an assessment of the functionality limiting manifestations of the condition(s) for which accommodations are needed.

This documentation must set forth in detail the diagnosis, treatment provided, and the last date of treatment and/or consultation with the qualified professional. It must also provide an explanation of the need for the requested accommodation(s) and how the functional limitation of the qualified condition relates to this test-taking activity. A description of the accommodations deemed appropriate should also be included. Your professional must also include a brief statement of his or her qualifications and areas of specialty.



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If additional testing time is requested, the documentation prepared by the diagnostician must state the precise amount of additional time that is deemed necessary, as well as the rationale for the additional testing time requested.

3. Enclose documentation regarding accommodations that have been made in the past, including those in elementary or secondary school, or in college,. If you lack documentation of accommodations or special assistance you received in elementary or secondary school, describe the accommodations in your request. Note, however, that the fact that an accommodation has been granted on a previous occasion does not guarantee similar accommodations for the written certification examination.

Scenarios Not Accommodated - Below are five examples of accommodations that are **NOT** likely to be allowed during the certification exams:

- Additional time to perform skills, which are to be performed within specific timeframes based on conditions likely found in an emergency situations;
- Accommodation not reasonably available at an emergency incident. Students are permitted to use performance aids that could be readily available and easily accessible to them at an actual emergency incident. It is the responsibility of the student to provide any personal aid the student deems necessary and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approves as appropriate.
- Unlimited time to complete a written examination. Such a request is not reasonable since completing a written exam within a finite time is a measure of a candidate's ability to read and react to written information relevant to the emergency incident and respond quickly and perform tasks/duties needed to bring the incident under control.
- An oral reader to assist the candidate to take the written examination. The ability to read and understand small English print (12 point) is an essential function of the profession, and the written examinations are designed, at least in part, to measure that ability.
- A written examination with a reading level, which is lower than the reading level required by the profession to function safely and efficiently.

Documented Learning Disability - The Office of the State Fire Commissioner and Pennsylvania State Fire Academy permits a standard time extension to a candidate taking the written certification examination who has presented documentation of a learning disability relating to reading, decoding, or comprehension. The standard time extension the Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program allows for completing a written examination is time-and-a-half. Thus, if the examination were normally administered in two hours, the Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program would permit the candidate an extra hour to complete the examination. This accommodation is allowed since the Pennsylvania Fire



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Service Voluntary Certification Program believes that if the candidate is able to pass the written examination with the standard time extension, the individual would be able to perform the essential functions of the position effectively and efficiently within acceptable time parameters.

The critical nature of reading in emergency situations requires reading finite amounts of material in measured amounts of time.

In addition, the reading level examined by an examination, which the Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program does not believe may reasonably be lowered to accommodate a disability, is not impacted by the time permitted for completion of the examination.

Reciprocity [\(Back to Top\)](#)

This policy complies with Act 46, an amendment to section 7316 of Title 35 (Health and Safety) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes which states that the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy shall grant reciprocity for the levels that the OSFC/PSFA are accredited for to emergency service personnel for certification levels attained outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Certification Program. All national IFSAC and/or Pro-Board certifications obtained from other accredited entities are recognized by OSFC/PSFA.

Emergency Service Personnel certified by states or organizations accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ), the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) or Department of Defense (DoD) Fire & Emergency Services Certification Program shall use the following procedure:

1. Submit a completed reciprocity application and fee to the State Fire Academy Certification Program Manager;
2. Completed application needs to include a copy of State or National Certificate, so that the certification number is legible.

Emergency service personnel certified by an entity not accredited by Pro-Board, IFSAC, or DoD must use the following procedure:

1. Submit a reciprocity application to the State Fire Academy Certification Program Manager;
2. Submit the following documentation attached to the application:
 - A. A legible copy of certification certificate;
 - B. A copy of the certification program information which includes the following:
 - i. Objectives
 - ii. Testing Mechanism
 - iii. Cross reference of JPR's of the NFPA Standard for the level of certification in which reciprocity is being sought. Individuals can request a copy of the NFPA matrices or skill sheet from fire academy or reference a copy of the standard to assist with this process



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Pennsylvania will only grant reciprocity to the level the provider is certified and may only be granted for certification levels accredited by the NBSFPQ/IFSAC. A special certificate is issued for reciprocity; a Pennsylvania certification number issued through reciprocity is preceded by an “R” (i.e.: R-01234). No patch will be issued.

Effective January 1, 2010, both in and out of state emergency responders requesting reciprocity will be charged fees which consist of a flat fee of fifteen (15) dollars plus five (5) dollars per level for processing the reciprocity application.

Emancipated Minors [\(Back to Top\)](#)

(Emancipated or Attained Academic Potential) - Minors will be permitted to participate in certification testing based on the PA Child Labor Law, Act of 1915, P.L. 286, No. 177 Section 7.2 (added April 25, 1968, P.L. 99, No. 49) which states “**Any minor of the age of seventeen years who is a high school graduate or who is declared to have attained his academic potential by the chief administrator of the school district wherein he resides shall, for the purposes of this act be deemed to be a minor of the age of eighteen years**”. Candidates MUST submit, with their completed application, a copy of supporting documentation from the school district, chief administrator of a school or the legal courts.

EVALUATOR CREDENTIALS [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Evaluator Training & Credentialing

All individuals that are a current evaluator or are seeking to become an evaluator MUST be certified to the level they are evaluating.

All approved evaluators, including those certified and approved prior to 2007, MUST complete the Criminal History Background check/affidavit form. This form must be on file, at a minimum of two weeks prior to participating in any certification test. The Act 168 form will need to be completed on an annual base at annual workshops, new evaluator training program, prior to evaluating any certifications test or when there is a change in law or academy operations.

Evaluator training and credentialing process:

1. New candidate to become an evaluator must have a minimum of five (5) years’ experience in an applicable emergency services field or in the specialty area to be evaluated (i.e. rescue, hazmat, etc.);
2. New evaluator candidates **must** attend the newly approved four (4) hour standardized new evaluator training program;



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3. New evaluator candidates **must** apprentice with an approved seasoned evaluator (individual who is current and has more than five (5) years' experience in evaluating certification test under the OSFC/PSFA system) for two (2) test at each level prior to being approved to evaluate independently;
4. New evaluator candidates **must** have on file the approved evaluator paperwork, completed and approved, prior to evaluating a certification test;
5. Existing evaluators **must** attend an annual evaluator workshop conducted by the test site. An Annual Workshop form must be completed by the evaluator and signed by test site to remain on the approved active evaluator list. If an individual is evaluates for a specific specialty level that are not conducted on a routine basis the evaluator must still attend an annual workshop to remain current.
6. If an existing evaluator wishes to evaluate a new level, they must complete an "Upgrade" form and must apprentice at least one (1) test at the new level.
7. If a current evaluator for Bucks County Community College Public Safety Training Center decides to evaluate for the Commonwealth of PA Office of the State Fire Commissioner Certification Program, the evaluator is required to complete a new evaluator application and must apprentice at least one (1) time for each level they wish to evaluate at an approved OSFC test site.

No Show – Evaluators - Each Certification test site will be responsible for developing, implementing and enforcing a "No Show" policy that addresses the logistical, financial impact and disciplinary action for an evaluator who has been contracted to do so but fails to show for testing without an acceptable reason.

Revocation of Evaluator Credential - The Office of the State Fire Commissioner/PA State Fire Academy shall revoke any evaluator credential and remove the evaluator from the evaluator list, at any time, for the following reasons:

1. Inactive for greater than 1 year
2. Any disciplinary action taken against them while acting in the capacity of an evaluator
3. Evaluators that are also local level instructor and who have been suspended, or had their instructor credentials removed as such or has had disciplinary (including letters of reprimand) and/or legal action(s) taken against them.
4. Evaluator who cannot show "just cause" for their failure to appear at a test site when contracted to do so.

An evaluator may appeal the revocation and/or removal of credentials to the Fire Service Certification Program Manager. All appeals shall be made in writing and received within fifteen (15) days of receipt of a revocation/removal notice, an evaluator may request a review of his/her performance records by the State Fire Academy Certification Program. This review is



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conducted by the Certification Program Manager (or his/her designee) and if necessary the Administrator of the Fire Academy or a member of FSCAC Compliance Committee.

Evaluator Reinstatement - If an individual has been inactive for greater than one (1) year (calendar year Jan to Dec) they must go through the process for a new evaluator to be reinstated. If the individual missed the previous year but attends an evaluator workshop prior to the start of the next year testing then the reinstatement process is to complete an annual workshop form.



FUNCTIONAL POSITION DESCRIPTION CERTIFICATION EVALUATOR

INTRODUCTION

The following position description is for a certification evaluator. This document identifies the minimum qualifications, competencies, and tasks expected of a certification evaluator.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION EVALUATOR

To qualify as an evaluator, at a minimum the applicant shall:

1. Meet minimum entry requirements to include:
 - a. being certified at or above the level intending to evaluate;
 - b. having at a minimum of five years' experience in applicable emergency services work or in the specialty area to be evaluated(i.e. rescue, hazmat, etc.);
 - c. successful completion of the PSFA evaluator training program;
 - d. serving as an apprentice evaluator at an approved test site;
 - e. successful completion of the apprentice evaluator program;
 - f. Application to and being accepted for employment at an approved test site.
2. Meet annual requirements (i.e., attend an annual workshop/update program);
3. Have a working knowledge of the currently used NFPA Job Performance Requirements (JPR's) for the level of certification evaluating;
4. Maintain a level of proficiency with the language of applicable NFPA Standards for the level of certification evaluating.

COMPETENCIES

The certification evaluator must demonstrate proficiency and competency in the performance of the job duties and evaluate test candidates objectively in accordance with the objectives of the PA Fire Service Certification Program to include:

1. Effectively communicates verbally with personnel via face-to-face, radio, and/or telecommunications mediums, and in written form using the English language;
2. Adequately hear and comprehend information provided by candidates, evaluators, and test administration team members, and for sounds common to the emergency scene;
3. Lift, carry and balance any and all equipment required for all levels tested at the site.
4. Read, write and comprehend the English language;
5. Document all relevant information in a prescribed format;
6. Demonstrate manual dexterity and fine motor skills, with the ability to perform all tasks related to the functions of the station being evaluated;
7. Bend, stoop, crawl and walk on uneven surfaces;
8. Meet minimum vision requirements to operate a motor vehicle within the Commonwealth;
9. Function in varied environmental conditions such as lighted or darkened work areas, extreme heat, cold and moisture.



Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program



DESCRIPTION OF TASKS

1. Function alone or as a member of a multi-person evaluation team;
2. Function in varied environmental conditions such as lighted or darkened work areas, extreme heat, cold and moisture;
3. Evaluate candidates on performing tasks competently and safely;
4. Evaluate candidates performance objectively;
5. Observes each candidate's performance individually;
6. Completes all paperwork accurately to reflect a candidate's performance;
7. Performs in situations that create stress and tension on a regular basis;
8. Communicates verbally for additional help as needed;
9. Assists in lifting, carrying and transporting equipment;
10. Attends continuing education, refresher training programs and annual evaluator workshops as required by employer and/or certifying agency;
11. Abides by and enforces all policy, procedures and administrative directives as established by the OSFC/PSFA;
12. Meets qualifications within the functional position description of a certification evaluator.

Act 168 Criminal History/Background Check [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Act 168 of 2006 amended Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania consolidated Statutes, Section 2, subsection (h) (1) Arson and related offenses reads:

“A person convicted of violating this section or any similar offense under Federal or State law shall be prohibited from serving as a firefighter in this Commonwealth and shall be prohibited from being certified as a firefighter under Section 4 of the Act of November 13, 1995 (P.L. 604, No.61), known as the State Fire commissioner Act” All individuals making application for certification testing **MUST** provide documentation of a background check. Proof of a non-conviction **MUST** consist of either an official criminal history record check obtained pursuant to Chapter 91 (relating to criminal history record information) indicating no arson convictions or by signing and dating affidavit provided on certification application.



Professional Testing Integrity and Dishonesty [*\(Back to Top\)*](#)

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 that is 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 testing integrity shall 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 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 candidates own work.



APPENDIX A

Request for Accommodation

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

___ I have attached a statement on letterhead stationary 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) 248-1115

APPENDIX A

Accomodation Consent to Release Information

I _____ do hereby allow the Office of the State Fire
Candidate Name (Please Print)

Commissioner and/or the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy to obtain information (i.e professional
documentation or IEP) necessary from _____ for the
Entity or Individual Name and Address

purpose of certification testing accommodation request.

Name Printed _____

Signature _____

Date _____



APPENDIX F

Consent to Release Information

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Consent to Release Information

Pennsylvania State Fire Academy
Attn: Certification Program Manger
1150 Riverside Drive
Lewistown, PA 17044-1979

I _____ do herby allow the Office of the State Fire
Candidate Name (Please Print)

Commissioner and/or the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy to release to

Entity or Individual Name and Address

the results of my certification testing information (i.e.: test results [pass/fail],
copies of certification certificate(s) and/or letter of success or failure for certification testing of

Level(s) of Certification

which was conducted by _____
Test Site that Conducted Testing

on _____.
Date of test(s)

Name Printed _____

Signature _____

Date _____



APPENDIX F

Nov 2010