PENNSYLVANIA FIRE SERVICE

VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

FIRE INSPECTOR I

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER

PENNSYLVANIA STATE FIRE ACADEMY

Revised Jan 2014

Dear Certification Candidate,

Welcome to the Pennsylvania Voluntary Fire Service Certification Program. The purpose of this manual is to provide you with information to successfully participate in certification testing. This manual outlines the pre-requisites, testing and application process, and provides you with 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.

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

Application Process

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

The general testing process is as follows:

1. A candidate must submit a completed application including all supporting documents;
2. Upon approval of the application, a candidate takes the written and subsequently the skills tests (NOTE: the skills test cannot be taken before the written test);
3. Upon successfully completing the written and skills test 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 application is legible and check for completeness
2. Social Security Number: you have the option to provide the full nine (9) digits or just the last four (4) digits.
3. Complete Name is listed including suffix (Jr, Sr, III, etc) **NO** nicknames please
4. Address includes street, apartment number, city, state and zip
5. All appropriate signatures are obtained and are in blue or black **ink.** Please note that Chief Officers may NOT sign for themselves where a Chief Officer signature is required, another Chief Officer must sign.
6. Copies of required certificates and/or certifications are attached and current copy of both front and back of medical training and CPR cards with signature
7. Make sure your Pre-Requisite Verification Form is appropriately marked off and signed in blue or black **ink**.

Pre-requisites

1. Hazardous Materials Training and/or Certification: Candidates must be currently trained or certified at the First Responder Awareness Level or higher in accordance with NFPA 472 "Standard for Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents". The following courses of instruction have been determined to meet this requirement. ***Training or Certification 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.***

a. Hazardous Materials Awareness Level 472 Training or Certification **OR** Annual Refresher

OR

b. Hazardous Materials Operations Level 472 Training or Certification **OR** Annual Refresher

OR

c. Hazardous Materials Technician Level 472 Training or Certification **OR** Annual Refresher

Fire Inspector I Certification Pathway

Hazardous Materials Awareness Level 472 Training or Certification
OR
Hazardous Materials Operations Level 472 Training or Certification
OR
Hazardous Materials Operations Level 472 Annual Refresher
OR
Hazardous Materials Technician Level 472 Training or Certification

NFPA 472 Hazardous Materials Awareness**

Training or certification must be within one year of the date of application

NFPA 1031 Fire Inspector I Course

Fire Inspector I Certification
Completed Application, Written and Practical Exam

** Please refer to the Fire Inspector I application OR the previous section of this document titled "Pre-requisites" for a complete listing of approved courses that will be accepted to meet the pre-requisites.

Testing Policy

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

Skills Test
Must pass 100% of the skill stations offered

Re-test Policy

Written Test

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

Skills Test

1. Must pass 100% of the twelve (12) 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 at a later time.
    - A total of eight (8) retest attempts are permitted and must complete in one (1) year to successfully complete the testing process.

Appeals

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

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.

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 stationary 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 have reviewed the NFPA 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

Safety Policy

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.

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

No show policy

If a candidate is accepted for testing and fails to show up for testing without an acceptable reason the candidate will be suspended from further certification activities for a period of one (1) year from the date of the original test.

Study Reference List

Reference list 0209

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

1. National Fire Protection Association, NFPA 1031, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, 2009 Edition
2. IFSTA, Fire Inspection and Code Enforcement, 6th Edition, 1st Printing
3. IFSTA, Essentials of Fire Fighting, 4th edition, 1st Printing
4. Delmar, Fire Prevention, Inspection & Code Enforcement, 3rd edition, 1st printing
5. Jones and Bartlett, Exam Prep Book Fire Inspector I & II http://www.jbpub.com/fire/ExamPrep/
6. Skill Sheets are available on the OSFC website www.osfc.state.pa.us

Additional Information:

1. Application should be to the test site at least 2 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 testing
4. Bring all appropriate materials needed for completion of all possible skill stations
5. Dress appropriately
6. Bring food and beverage with you, stay hydrated.

Certification applications and skill sheets as well as a testing schedule and test sites contact information can be found at www.osfc.state.pa.us . Click on the Certification link on the left hand side of the screen. A page will open with information about the certification program and process. At the end of that page you will find several other links for the certification applications, skill sheets, test schedules and test site contact information.

If you have any additional questions or concerns about the testing process please contact the test site coordinator at the site in which you applied to be tested at or 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, 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