

# **PENNSYLVANIA FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**



## **AIRPORT FIRE FIGHTER CANDIDATE HANDBOOK**

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER  
PENNSYLVANIA STATE FIRE ACADEMY

Dear Certification Candidate,

Welcome to the Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program. The purpose of this manual is to provide you information that will assist you in successfully participating in the certification test. 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 Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program.

## **Application Process**

Upon obtaining an application from either the Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) website [www.osfc.pa.gov](http://www.osfc.pa.gov) 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). 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.
2. Social Security Number: you have the option of providing all nine (9) digits or just the last four (4) digits.
3. Provide a complete name including suffix (Jr., Sr., III, etc.) - **NO** nicknames are permitted.
4. Provide a complete address to include the number and street name, apartment number (if applicable), city, state and zip code.
5. Make sure all appropriate signatures are obtained and are in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink.  
Please note a Chief Officer **CANNOT** sign for themselves where a Chief Officer's signature is required; another Chief Officer **MUST** sign.
6. Make sure the documentation requested is applicable and current (i.e., HAZMAT).
7. Make sure all signatures are signed in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink.

## **Prerequisites**

1. **Fire Fighter II Certification:** You must be certified at the Fire Fighter II level, (Pro-Board or IFSAC) per Chapter 4, General 4.1, JPR 4.1.1 Qualifications.
  
2. **Hazardous Materials Response:** As a First Responder, candidates **MUST** be trained or certified at the Hazardous Materials Operations Level (at minimum) in accordance with NFPA 472 (2013) *Standard for Professional Competency of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents*, Chapter 5 (Core Competencies) and Chapter 6 (Mission-Specific), Section 6.2 (PPE) and Section 6.6 (Product Control) **OR** NFPA 1072 (2017) *Standards for Hazardous Material /Weapons of Mass Destruction Emergency Response Personal Professional Qualifications*, Chapter 5 (Operations Level Responders) and Chapter 6 (Mission-Specific), Section 6.2 (PPE) and Section 6.6 (Product Control).

***Training or certification must be within one (1) year of the date of this application. If certification is greater than one (1) year you must show proof of completion of a current refresher training course.***

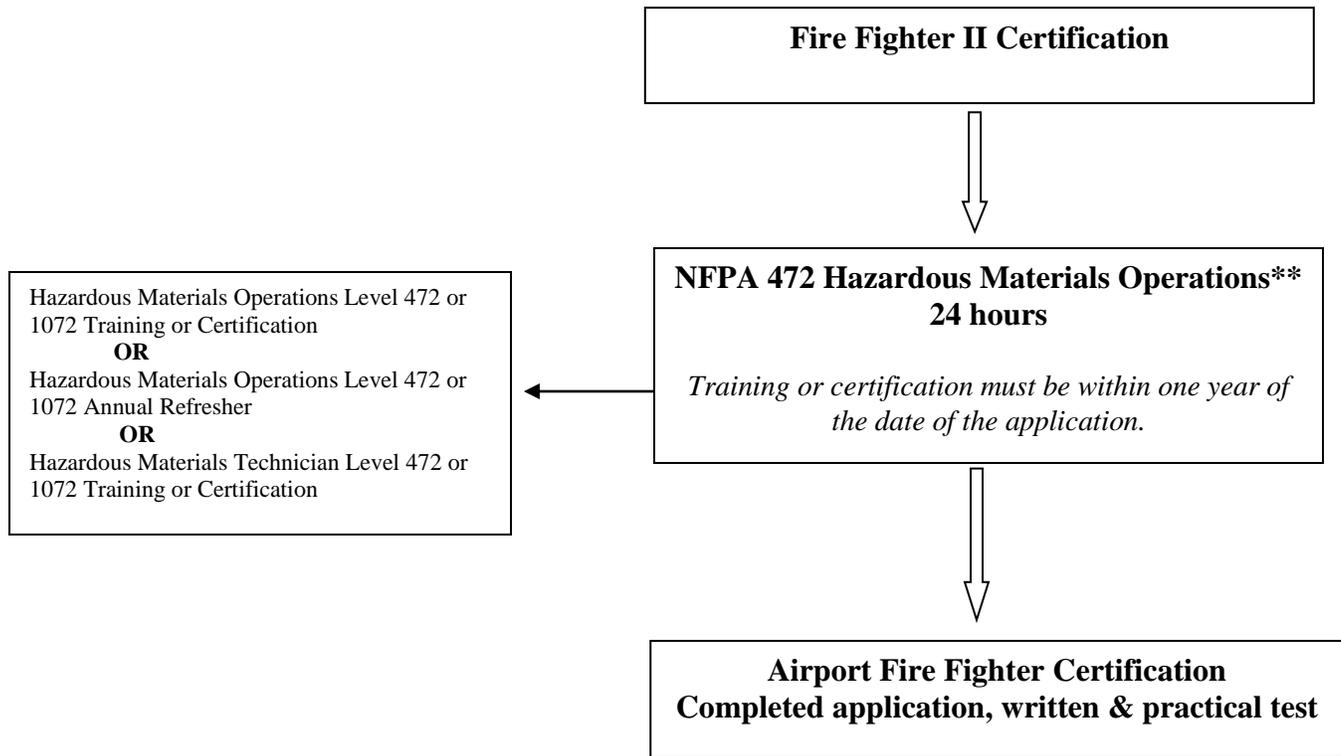
- a. Hazardous Materials Operations Level initial training course,  
**OR**
- b. Hazardous Materials Operations Level Certification,  
**OR**
- c. Hazardous Materials Operations Level Annual Refresher,  
**OR**
- d. Hazardous Materials Technician Level Training or Certification.

**NOTE:** Acceptable HAZMAT courses are to be the current state approved courses.

3. **SECTION IV** of the Airport Fire Fighter Application - Chief Officer's signature:

A Chief Officer signature is required in this section of the application. However, please note a Chief Officer **MAY NOT** self-endorse. Another Chief Officer within the same department / company **MUST** sign in this section.

## Airport Fire Fighter Certification Pathway



\*\* Please refer to the Airport Fire Fighter application OR to the previous section of this document titled “Prerequisites” for the approved courses that meet the prerequisites.

## **Test Policy**

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

Skills Test: Must pass 100% of skill stations offered

## **Retest Policy**

### **Written Test**

If you are unsuccessful you may retest a total of two (2) times and have one (1) year to complete the retest. You will need to contact the fire academy or a test site of your choice to schedule the 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 at a later time.
- A total of eight (8) retest attempts are permitted and must be completed in one (1) year to successfully complete the testing process.

## **Test Results/Release of Results**

The OSFC PA State Fire Academy notifies candidates of their results in writing via U.S. Mail. Only pass or fail grades are provided per policy.

In accordance with the Federal Education Records and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, a Federal law that establishes minimum standards for the protection of educational records, requires that prior to releasing any scores or other protected information, consent must be made by the participant before release. Therefore, if a third-party request is made regarding a candidate's test result(s), a Consent to Release Information form must be completed and signed by the candidate in question before releasing results to the third party.

## **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 for accommodations 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 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.



## **Safety Policy**

For the safety and protection of all participants and all equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used for testing **MUST** meet the NFPA standard at the time of manufacturing. PPE shall be inspected prior to use in testing.

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

## **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.

## **Study Reference List**

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

1. NFPA 1003 (2015 Ed) Airport Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications;
2. NFPA 402 (2013 Ed) Guide for Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Operations;
3. NFPA 403 (2014 Ed) Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Services at Airports;
4. NFPA 1001 (2013 Ed) Standards for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications;
5. NFPA 1500 (2013 Ed) Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Programs;
6. Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 139;
7. Title 49 Code of Federal Regulation;
8. Title 14 Code of Federal Regulation;
9. IFSTA Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> printing;
10. International Air Transport Association: Dangerous Goods Manual & Regulations (2013) 54<sup>th</sup> edition;
11. ARFF Skill Sheets available on the OSFC website [www.osfc.pa.gov](http://www.osfc.pa.gov)

## **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 [www.osfc.pa.gov](http://www.osfc.pa.gov) under < [State Fire Academy](#) > link, then the < [Certification](#) > sub-link at the top of the webpage. 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 any questions or concerns about the certification test process, please contact the test site coordinator where you applied to test or the PSFA 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**