

# **PENNSYLVANIA FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**



## **FIRE & LIFE SAFETY EDUCATOR I CANDIDATE HANDBOOK**

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER

PENNSYLVANIA STATE FIRE ACADEMY

Dear Certification Candidate,

Welcome to the Pennsylvania Fire Service Voluntary Certification Program. 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

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

The general test process is as follows:

1. A candidate must submit a complete application including all supporting documents;
2. After the application is approved, the candidate takes the written and subsequently the skills tests (NOTE: the skills test cannot be taken before the written test);
3. Upon successful completion of the written and skills tests and a review of the application for completeness by the test site and PSFA or Delegated Authority, the candidate can be certified for the level tested. If a candidate should not pass any part of the testing process, a retest can be administered and must be completed within one (1) year of the original test date.

## Application Pointers

1. Make sure the application is legible and complete. Applications **MUST** be typed.
2. Social Security Number: you have the option to provide the full nine (9) or just the last four (4) digits.
3. Provide your complete name including suffix (Jr, Sr, III, etc.) **NO** nicknames please.
4. Make sure your mailing address includes street, apartment number, city, state and zip code.
5. Make sure all appropriate signatures are obtained and are signed in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink.
  - a. *Chief Officer/Official CANNOT sign for themselves where this signature is required;*
  - b. *For this requirement, another Chief Officer/Official MUST sign this section.*
6. Legible copies of all prerequisites must be attached and signed were applicable. **NOTE:** *Copies must include both the front and back of the document where applicable. (i.e. CPR & Medical cards).*
7. Make sure your Prerequisite Verification Form (found in the back of the application) is appropriately marked off and signed in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink.

## Prerequisite

The candidate **MUST** provide their practicum packet signed by an authority (i.e., Fire Chief / Organizational Official) who has **personal knowledge** of the candidate's **demonstrated** ability to perform the *Job Performance Requirements (JPR's)* listed below.

- **JPR 4.1.2:** Communicates orally and in writing, and manages time well and can multitask;
- **JPR 4.2.3:** Maintains a work schedule for a list of events, activity requests, pre-activity requirements, and time allotments, so all activities are scheduled and completed without conflict;

*The candidate **MUST** attach a one-page (1 page) summary or completed department form which addresses the items noted for this JPR.*

- **JPR 4.4.2:** Demonstrates and practices safety during fire and life safety education activities, so that such activities are conducted without injury to the educator or participants;
- **JPR 4.4.3:** Present lessons using multiple presentation methods, evaluation instruments, time allotments, settings and audience types so the lesson plan is followed, and the objectives are met.

*The candidate **MUST** attach a copy of the lesson plan to be presented during the skills test and a description of the target audience. Use the topical outline provided in the Lesson Plan Guidelines (Appendix A) of this handbook to guide the development of your lesson plan.*

- **JPR 4.4.5:** Notifies the public, given a scheduled event, so the location, date, time, topic, and sponsoring agency are provided. A copy of a public announcement (e.g., brochure, news release, etc.) **MUST** be attached.
- **JPR 4.4.6:** Disseminates educational information to a specific audience and time frame so the information reaches the audience within an acceptable timeframe.

### **Test Policy**

**Written Test:** The written test consists of fifty (50) questions and is randomly generated. Candidates have a maximum of one (1) hour to complete the test. Passing score for the written test is seventy percent (70%).

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

### **Re-test Policy**

**Written Test:** If you are unsuccessful, you have a total of two (2) retest attempts and have one (1) year to complete the retest. You will need to contact the fire academy or the test site where the test was originally taken to schedule a retest.

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

- If you are unsuccessful on three (3) or less skill stations, you may retest the same day (only one retest per skill station);
- If you are unsuccessful on four (4) or more skill stations, you may NOT retest the same day. Skill retests must be scheduled for a later date and time.
- A total of eight (8) retest attempts are permitted and must be completed 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.

Send to: Pennsylvania State Fire Academy  
Attn: Certification Program Manager  
1150 Riverside Drive  
Lewistown, PA 17044

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

The Office of the State Fire Commissioner / PA State Fire Academy notifies candidates of test results in writing via US Postal Service mail. Only pass/fail grades are given.

In accordance with the Federal Education Records and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, a standard (i.e., law) for the protection of individual education and test records was established; therefore, prior consent from a student / candidate / person must be made before any records or other personally identifiable information can be released to any other person / organization / third-party entity. In the event a third-party request for test result(s) of a candidate is made, a “Consent to Release Information” form will need to be completed and signed by the candidate to permit release of results to another person / organization / third-party entity.

## **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 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.



## **Recertification**

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, certification is a voluntary process; currently there is no requirement for recertification. Issuance of a certificate indicates the candidate successfully passed the certification test. The certificate issued indicates the candidate is certified based on the edition and year of the standard under which the candidate certified. Furthermore, issuance of a certification certificate does not imply nor guarantee any indication of future performance because of the testing process.

## **Safety Policy**

A candidate should meet the requirements of NFPA 1582 *Standard on Medical Requirements for Firefighters and information for Fire Department Physicians* prior to participating in any physical test 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 in a test must meet the NFPA standard at the time of manufacturing. PPE will be inspected prior to use in a test.

The facial hair policy states candidates 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 test that requires 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.

## **Professional Testing Integrity and Dishonesty**

Dishonesty in the professional test environment includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarizing, facilitating acts of testing dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, or submitting work of another person. Any instance(s) of testing dishonesty constitutes the need for disciplinary and/or legal actions. All certification candidates shall act with personal and professional integrity, respect the rights and property of others, and help maintain a professional environment in which all can be successful.

Test Site Coordinators, Assistant Coordinators, Test Proctors, Evaluators and Instructors should take reasonable steps to anticipate and deter acts of dishonesty, reinforce integrity, and support appropriate behavior to protect the rights and trust of honest candidates. At the beginning of each test process, it is the responsibility of those to provide candidates with the "Testing Integrity and Dishonesty" policy and clarify questions that may arise.

### ***Falsification of Documents***

Any individual found to have forged, altered, or falsified documentation for the purpose of certification testing will be indefinitely suspended from participating in any certification exam within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Further action may be taken in accordance with the Pennsylvania Crimes Code 18 Pa C.S. 4904, relating to unsworn falsifications.

### ***Cheating on Test***

All candidates are expected to work entirely on his/her own while taking any exam. Violations of test integrity consist of any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids unless provided by the test proctor for the purpose of a specific test, or any persons, papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance

### ***Document Integrity***

Certification candidates are expected to complete all work individually. For any material obtained from other sources such as plot plans, web maps, etc., a source reference must be given. All essay answers must be the candidate's own work.

### **Reference List**

1. National Fire Protection Association NFPA 1035 (2010 Ed) Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Fire and Life Safety Educator;
2. IFSTA, Fire and Life Safety Educator, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> Printing;
3. IFSTA, Fire and Emergency Services Instructor, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> Printing;
4. 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 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 the PA State Fire Academy Certification Program Staff.

## Guide 1: Skill A

Utilizing your organization's form(s) or other prepared form, prepare an activity report which describes the activity request(s), pre-planned activity(s) or requirements, topics facilitated, or programs managed, POC's, and dates, times, duration of activity(s) and/or a schedule of the organization's activities and individuals responsible.

## Appendix A

### Lesson Plan Guidelines

1. Candidate conduct a 10 to 15-minute fire prevention / safety lesson on a topic of their choice.
2. The lesson plan should contain, at a minimum, the following components:
  - a. Title or topic;
  - b. Identified level of instruction;
  - c. Objectives that:
    1. identify the expected behavior;
    2. identify the conditions under which the performance is accomplished;
    3. identify the standard to which the behavior is accomplished;
  - d. Materials / equipment needed;
  - e. References (used in developing the lesson);
  - f. An identifiable preparation step;
  - g. An identifiable presentation step;
  - h. An identifiable application step;
  - i. Lesson content (i.e., topical outline or key knowledge components)
  - j. An identifiable lesson summary;
  - k. An assignment (if appropriate to the content taught);
  - l. An evaluation instrument (e.g., quiz, skill demonstration, etc.).
3. Candidate must submit the materials from AT LEAST two (2) of the following approved areas: these are based on audience needs and appropriate age level:
  - a. Overhead transparencies.
  - b. Videotape /digital videos or graphics.
  - c. Charts /graphs.
  - d. Diagrams.
  - e. Information sheets.
  - f. Student worksheets.
  - g. Job aids.
  - h. PowerPoint presentation/handout.
4. All materials **MUST be PREPARED BY THE CANDIDATE**; commercially prepared audiovisual productions may only be submitted to supplement program content.

# 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 failure to resolve or report inappropriate use of this media equates to condoning this behavior.

**Developed by the National Society of Executive Fire Officers**