

Guidance for Conducting Live-Fire Training in the Commonwealth



Training can be as dangerous as a real emergency event. Training should be conducted by educated personnel who are trained, evaluated, and certified for the delivery of live-fire training.

Appropriate planning and preparation must be done to ensure the safety of all participants. All students must have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to safely participate.

The Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) would like to address the training environment that firefighters throughout the commonwealth currently face.

OSFC is aware of fire departments/companies that wish to train their members but regrettably are not following best practices associated with doing so. Training regulations are in place for the protection of all parties involved and **MUST** be strictly adhered to. Additionally, leadership must be aware of the permitting required for training and other professional development opportunities.

OSFC's accredited instructors go through many hours of training and professional development to obtain their accreditation so that they may safely conduct dangerous training evolutions.

Setting a building or vehicle on fire for training purposes requires preparation and permitting, in addition to have the appropriate staffing to provide safe training.

Improperly managed live-fire training may result in:

- Unintentional injuries and/or deaths
- Serious liability issues for both the organizations and individuals involved
- Significant fines levied against the fire organizations.

To assist individuals that might not know how to obtain this type of education, OSFC would like to provide some additional direction.



The following information outlines the steps to set up live-fire training and provides additional resources.

Process for Live-Fire Training

All live-fire training conducted within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must follow guidelines to ensure the safety of personnel and the environment.

Fire Extinguisher Training

Fire extinguisher training requires a 10-day notification to the appropriate Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Regional Office for approval.

Vehicle Fire Training

Vehicle fire training requires a 10-day notification to the DEP Regional Office for approval and a clearance through the Pennsylvania State Police showing there are no liens on the vehicle. In addition, the vehicle must be stripped of ALL plastic, rubber, fluids (gas, oil, transmission oil, etc.), and pressurized cylinders (lift cylinders, bumper shock suppressors, airbag inflators, etc.). DEP may request to inspect the vehicle prior to approval.

Acquired Structure Exercises

Acquired structures exercises must be an approved Pennsylvania State Fire Academy (PSFA) Structural Burn Session Course and **CANNOT** be accomplished as a company level burn.

Acquired structures must be sponsored by an Educational Training Agency or the PSFA.

Exercises involving acquired structures additionally require the completion of the DEP "Application for Open Burning Exception for Fire Fighting Instruction, 2700-PM-BAQ0002 Rev. 9/2019."

In addition to the DEP application, OSFC requires the following supporting documentation:

- Permission from the property owner including a letter stating that insurance on the structure is cancelled.
- Asbestos sampling/testing and, if required, completed remediation of Asbestos Containing Materials. Prior to approval, an inspection of the property will be conducted by the DEP Bureau of Air Quality to ensure that all unauthorized materials (furniture, trash, chemicals, fuel oil, etc.) and pressure vessels (hot water heaters, well pressure tanks, fuel oil tanks, etc.) have been removed. DEP may require that shingle roofing and siding be removed.

Learn More

If you have questions, more detailed guidance may be obtained by contacting the [PSFA](#) or your local [Educational Training Agency](#).

Additional information can be found at the [OSFC website](#) and the [DEP e-Library](#).

