

NEBRASKA

State Fire Marshal

Training Division



TRAINING DIVISION

CERTIFICATION

POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

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Nebraska SFMTD Certification Policy and Procedures Manual

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FOREWORD

In order to increase individuals' knowledge and skills on a professional level and to document by a nationally recognized process the qualifications of firefighters and other emergency responders, the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division has established a certification system. This system is accredited by the Committee on Accreditation with the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications and by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress, thereby giving the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division the authority to grant certification to those candidates for specific levels of response, training, and management.

Because the certification process can be complex and demanding, as well as rewarding, the following policy and procedures manual has been developed to set forth the guidelines for those who wish to meet the challenge, as well as those policies to be adhered to by the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division. All candidates must adhere to the qualifications set forth in this Certification Policy and Procedures Manual to attain certification status based on either the current NFPA standard as published by National Fire Protection Association, or on the current NFPA standard recognized by the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division for the requested level of certification.

The Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division, by way of state statute number 81-5,151, offers certification to firefighters and other emergency response personnel. No component of the statute states or insinuates in any way that certification is required or that it must be attained before advancement in a particular field or status can be accomplished. Certification in Nebraska is voluntary, unless the Authority Having Jurisdiction sets forth a local policy requiring such.

The Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division Certification System is not intended to supersede any federal, state, or local laws, or any departmental policies that dictate other means or measures that must be met for professional operations as an emergency responder, trainer, or manager.

Certification is not intended to be used as a determination of an individual's qualifications for participation in the practice or profession of firefighting or the other related fields of emergency response, training, or management. Absence of a certification status may just indicate that the individual has not yet applied to be a candidate for certification, or has not yet met all of the requirements for certification. Likewise, the lack of a certification status does not necessarily mean that the individual is unqualified to participate in firefighting procedures, or the other facets of being affiliated with an emergency response organization.

Because the Certification System is offered on a voluntary basis, the Authority Having Jurisdiction has the final say as to whether those individuals who serve the jurisdiction shall meet, to any degree, a certification status.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A certification system was established in the State of Nebraska in the mid-1980's. At that time, the process successfully accomplished its goal and was beneficial and rewarding to those that applied for certification. However, certification systems used throughout the United States progress each year providing improvements to the nation's emergency responders. Nebraska's system must meet those needs by updating and modifying its current system regularly.

Many hours are dedicated to the update and modification of the new Certification System, and numerous people need to be recognized for their desire to produce the best possible system that would enhance the achievements of firefighters and other emergency response personnel.

Thanks should go out, not only to the full and part-time instructors and staff of the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division, but also to the numerous fire departments and individual firefighters and response personnel who gave of their time to assist with systems modification. Appreciation should also go to the directors and employees of the other state training programs throughout the United States for their direct or indirect assistance in helping us formulate the modifications to the Certification System.

Without the dedication and assistance from all of those mentioned, the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division Certification System would not be in existence today.

Let it be known to all that their assistance, guidance, and dedication to the cause is greatly appreciated and acknowledged by the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division. The certification system and the certification policy and procedures would have been a long time coming into development if it had not been for you.

Some still think that small talk and simple ideas lead you nowhere. This new system should be a prime example of what the mind can accomplish when ideas such as yours are not cast to the wind.

**CERTIFICATION
PROGRAM
ADMINISTRATION**

AUTHORITY

§81-5,151. Training Division; established; purpose; State Fire Marshal; powers and duties.

The State Fire Marshal shall establish a training division for purposes of operating a statewide training program for fire department personnel, others involved in fire safety training, and other emergency responders that may require specialized training available from the training program for the purposes of developing, maintaining, and updating fire department skills and other skills of those emergency responders requiring specialized training available from the training program. The State Fire Marshal in establishing a training division shall (1) conduct training, (2) certify fire department personnel, (3) give technical assistance to fire departments and other emergency responders requiring specialized training available from the training program, and (4) conduct live fire training. The State Fire Marshal in establishing such training may also give technical assistance to rescue squads and respond to emergencies upon request for technical assistance. Fees for manuals and training shall be collected pursuant to section 81-5,152. Nothing in this section shall require mandatory participation by fire departments, individuals, or others interested in fire safety training or other specialized training available from the training program.

The Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division, hereafter known as SFMTD, is currently recognized as the sole certifying agency for the certification of fire and emergency response personnel for those that serve the State's communities. No delegation of authority, in whole or in part, for certification to any level of any NFPA Standard has been established in Nebraska. These levels of certification, as addressed and administered by the SFMTD, are recognized by IFSAC and NBFSPQ.

The authorized signature for certification certificates and other paperwork for the IFSAC and NBFSPQ shall be that of the Training Manager of the SFMTD, or that of the Administrative Assistant when applicable; such as letters, correspondence, and record keeping lists.

MISSION STATEMENT

Provide knowledge and skills training and education with a professionally trained staff, which delivers basic to highly specialized programs to emergency responders providing community protection for life, property, and the environment.

TRAINING DIVISION GOALS

(NOTE: Goals are based on the budget proposal, submitted every biennium)

- *Develop a comprehensive database with multiple tables/forms for analyzing training strengths and weaknesses across the state.
- *Expand the use of computers for course deliveries to part-time instructors.
- *Provide an extensive selection of training curriculum that is professionally developed and comprehensive.
- *Meet training requests in a moderate time frame and utilize more instructors to address safety issues.
- *Facilitate a program for in-house training via videos and computer-based self-instruction.
- *Introduce more options and new levels per standards for certification.

Objective 1 Increase testing sites based on modified application process.

Objective 2 Offer additional levels per standards for certification.

Objective 3 Redefine the options for accepted training to meet the requirements for application for certification.

Objective 4 Utilize database records to verify applicant qualifications for testing and to coordinate sites for testing.

Strategies and Actions to be Taken:

1. Coordinate the process whereas a candidate applies for certification by introducing necessary requirements into existing training curriculum.
2. Offer certification testing based on the records in the database for each region on no less than a quarterly basis.
3. Coordinate with other state training programs to acquire training materials that will allow us to offer more certification courses designed to meet the minimum competencies of NFPA standards.
4. Use the database with direct link capability for all full-time staff to verify applicant qualifications and requirements for testing and reduce the number of sites because of regional boundaries.

CERTIFICATION GOAL

The SFMTD strives to develop courses, modify existing or purchased courses, and make available courses that will provide training and education to firefighters and other emergency responders. The SFMTD certification goal is to save lives and protect property and the environment by providing the skills and knowledge that will enable emergency responders to perform their duties without putting their lives at great personal risk.

The service that can be offered to the citizens and communities of this state will be enhanced by the professional competency attained through the certification process. However, it should be noted that the provision of knowledge and skills for certification is not our ultimate goal. We consider continuous training and education to be as important as the certification process.

The Certification System for emergency responders has been based on the following elements and shall be competency/performance driven for excellence.

- A. A set of uniform standards that addresses a minimum level of standards recognized nationwide as a standard of care.
- B. Quality and uniformity of all certification procedures, which reinforces equality and excellence for all candidates.
- C. Determination of competency status of all candidates based on either current published standards or those standards currently recognized by the certification system.
- D. Provision of a certification process for all candidates that qualifies them in a system within the State of Nebraska, as well as giving them the option of being recognized by an accreditation system(s) nationwide.
- E. Recognition of an individual's accomplishment(s) by issuance of a certificate indicating that their performance has met the current minimum standards.
- F. Modification of the certification process within a three-year period, whereas all certification processes will address the most current edition of any NFPA Standard.

APPLICANT ACCESS-CERTIFICATION LEVELS

Any individual requesting information on any certification level shall be provided with any or all options and waivers, applicable NFPA Standards and Editions (currently used by SFMTD) including each level certification is available for, all methods of acquiring the necessary training and education, and any applicable certification prerequisites. All pertinent information will be provided in a Candidacy Packet (see Appendix for document examples).

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

The SFMTD operates from a budget consisting of general funds and cash funds (with some federal funds for federal grant programs) established every biennium and approved by the Nebraska Legislature, Appropriations Committee, and signed into law by the State Governor. Within the budget are approved line item amounts for operating expenses, travel expense, capital outlay, personal services support, and personal services. All processes that support the certification option for emergency response personnel is calculated into the budget, as part of the overall training goal, and no exclusive line item exists for certification.

The issue of certification for emergency responders is an integral part of the budget, and appropriately addressed within the budget request. Likewise, this option is also addressed by statistics within the budget proposal and is supported by the State Fire Marshal.

CERTIFICATION STAFF

The SFMTD operates with one Training Manager, one Administrative Assistant, six full-time Training Specialists (Instructors) hereafter known as FT's, and 130 part-time Instructors hereafter known as PT's. All SFMTD staff are provided training in both the examination process and examination instruments. However, only Training Specialists, the Administrative Assistant, or the Training Manager are qualified to administer written test examinations.

Each FT is responsible for coordination within a region and all PT's within that region. Testing is conducted with FT's and PT's, with the PT's normally responsible to conduct practical skills examinations by station and FT's responsible for administering the examinations. All documentation and scoring of written examinations is handled in the SFMTD Office by the Administrative Assistant, with most components of the validation process now computerized.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All training conducted by the SFMTD requires students to participate with protective clothing, SCBA, and any given equipment/supplies that meets NFPA standards. This does not mean that all items listed above, or applicable to any training evolution, must meet the current applicable standard published. Since standards can be implemented by NFPA presumably at any time, no organization can or will be expected to immediately replace all PPE and equipment just to meet newly published standards. However, all PPE and equipment must be inspected to see that it did meet a NFPA standard when it was purchased and placed into service. The SFMTD does reserve the right to question the safety of any item during training, and if deemed unsafe, substitute PPE or equipment shall be brought in for any additional training to occur.

The SFMTD implements these same procedures when conducting any testing for certification. All applicable PPE and other equipment needed for testing stations shall meet the minimum standard for that particular item, or in such cases where new standards have been published; then any item shall be evaluated for compliance with an older NFPA Standard.

Compliance-Federal, State, & Local

The SFMTD does not have a training academy nor does it have any designated testing facilities, therefore all testing is conducted at local training sites or fire department stations. Because the SFMTD does not have the authority to dictate what type of equipment, apparatus, supplies, etc. that any organization must use; the SFMTD will require the host organization that is providing any equipment for the test and all other candidates from other organizations to verify that all equipment either meets or exceeds currently recognized Standards or State Statute. In conjunction with this compliance, the Department of Labor by way of State Statute also recognizes federally issued regulations that address health and safety.

The State of Nebraska, enforcing a State Statute on fire equipment sales/purchasing, requires vendors located within the boundaries of the State of Nebraska to sell certain equipment and apparatus that meets currently published and applicable NFPA Standards. The impact of the statute also applies to fire departments who update equipment and attempt to relocate any older equipment. Because of this statute and NFPA Standards that provide for the health and safety of emergency responders, the SFMTD does require all certification testing apparatus, equipment, or supplies to meet or to have met recognized federal, state, and local policies. This requirement shall apply to any apparatus, equipment, supplies, and etc. that may be used during any testing procedure.

Therefore, any organization, or individual if not sponsored by the organization, shall provide substantiation of adhering to the above mentioned health and safety issues addressed by Standards, Regulations, or Local Policies. The SFMTD will provide to each organization or each individual a Health and Safety form that addresses compliance with applicable standards, regulations, and local policies (See Appendix for Document).

Each candidate shall be considered as participating in the certification process under the auspices of their organization or as an individual of any organization but applying for candidacy on their own accord, and the signing of the document shall attest to organization/candidate verification that they are meeting and/or exceeding the requirements of the SFMTD health and safety compliance policy.

The SFMTD, who conducts all testing at test sites selected by the Training Specialists, shall validate that the organizational facility designated as the host for the certification testing does indeed meet all requirements and that all apparatus, equipment, or supplies used from the host organization also meets compliance. This verification shall be considered as a secondary approval to the compliance document received from the organization for the candidates about to be tested, and the Chief Examiner shall also sign this document at the time of the test. No testing shall be conducted with any apparatus, equipment or supplies that was not manufactured under specifications that met a NFPA Standard or other regulation or local policy.

TEST SITES

The SFMTD Training Specialists shall determine the schedule and geographic location of certification examinations, based in part upon completion of training courses within each of the six regions of the state.

Each geographical location selected for any certification examination, including practical and performance skills testing as well as written examinations, must have a testing location that meets minimum criteria for a test site. This test site criterion shall meet the following minimum guidelines, but is not limited to these guidelines. Any other factors or environmental concerns that may impact on the candidate's abilities to perform all functions of the selected tests may be reasons to disqualify the test site and another site must be chosen. Should any other factors affect the professionalism of the examiners, a different test site must be chosen.

Practical Skills, Performance Skills, or Written Examinations

- *Secure area that is quiet, provides ample lighting, comfortable chairs, sufficient tables, workable surface area for candidates to participate on, and workspace for the chief examiner and all other assisting examiners.
- *Area must be secured from motor vehicle traffic, spectators, and other emergency responders.
- * Area must have a staging location for candidates, capable of negating any visual contact with all test stations.
- *Area must have reasonable accessibility to restrooms.
- *Area must have controls for audible devices, such as page speakers, radio speakers, and intercom systems.
- *Area must have sufficient ceiling height to accommodate any practical or performance skills testing.
- *Testing area must be sufficient in size to handle all candidates applying for the examination. Should a site be suitable for testing but lacks sufficient size to accommodate all candidates, a second test date shall be established and candidates will be assigned to a respective test date.

Upon arrangement with the SFMTD, certain certification examinations may be taken at the Training Division office in Grand Island or the State Fire Marshal Office in Lincoln.

NFPA STANDARDS

The SFMTD shall use only NFPA Standards within the Certification System, and the SFMTD is not a standards writing division within the State Fire Marshal's Office. All NFPA Standards used within the SFMTD are recognized as minimum competencies for any particular skill or function; although no NFPA Standard is adopted by the SFMTD.

Since any certification level offered on NFPA Standards may also reference other NFPA Standards, those referenced standards shall hold the same merit as those recognized for certification purposes.

REACCREDITATION PROCESS

No individual, tested and certified by the SFMTD, shall have their certification revoked because of any updates to the Certification Policy and Procedures Manual or because of any system modifications reflected by changes required to be met for reaccreditation. Should any NFPA Standard contain a 'rank' system (i.e. Fire Fighter I and II, Instructor I, II, III), and this rank system is modified in future editions; any certified individual shall maintain the certification level they hold, only having this level evaluated for equivalency should any other NFPA Standard ask for prerequisites before application for candidacy can be attained.

EQUIVALENCY TESTING

Since firefighters take continuous training during station hours or during monthly scheduled meetings, these individuals acquire certain skills and knowledge that would place them at response capability position comparable to those that take prescribed training. Those fire fighters with the skills and knowledge acquired by departmental or regional training should not be kept from progressing in a standard with multiple levels. These individuals will be given the opportunity to take an equivalency examination for a particular level of a standard, which would allow them, upon successful completion of the examination, to proceed with their education to certify to the next level of the standard.

It shall be noted, however, that an individual who successfully completes an equivalency examination will not be issued a certificate for that level of the standard. The individual will only be allowed to progress with the standard to the next level for certification purposes. A certificate shall be issued indicating the equivalency testing and for the particular Standard, Level, and applicable edition.

Any organization that holds descriptive job duties for any position, may use those job duties to form a correlation to a specific level of a NFPA Standard, establish that all job duties have been successfully accomplished by departmental task identification, validate these task accomplishments by organizational management staff and/or political subdivision management staff, and submit all documentation to apply for an equivalency test or apply for the Option to Waive on course instruction and enter into the certification process.

The SFMTD does not grandfather any level of certification regardless of service time, involvement and participation, or past experience.

STANDARDS

The most current National Fire Protection Association Standards shall be recognized as the guidelines to establish the minimum competencies for those levels of specified standards used to develop the testing processes for certification to any particular standard and subsequent level within that standard. The SFMTD reserves the right to implement any given NFPA Standard when appropriate to the operations of the Certification System, however this time frame shall not exceed a 3-year period.

The SFMTD shall apply for reaccreditation for all certification levels required by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress.

The SFMTD shall implement new curriculum on all recognized standards in Nebraska for the Certification Program no later than three years after the introduction of the new edition of a particular standard by the NFPA.

The following National Fire Protection Association standards shall be used as the standards for the SFMTD Certification System for the following levels:

FIRE FIGHTER I

NFPA Standard 1001, Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications, 1997 Edition
NFPA Standard 472, Professional Competencies of Resp. to HM Incidents, 1997 Edition

FIRE INSTRUCTOR I

NFPA Standard 1041, Standard For Fire Instructor Professional Qualifications, 1996 Edition

All practical skills addressed within the NFPA standard become part of a selection bank of skills checklists for the purpose of grading a specific skill demonstrated by the certification candidate. These skills are specifically listed by each important component of the skill with a respective score (point system) attached to each of the particular skill steps.

PARTICIPATION

Eligibility

Certification examination shall be offered to anyone, regardless of the number of year's experience. The only exception to this rule is the Option to Waive Policy, which requires that a candidate that does in-house departmental training provide complete, undisputable documentation of training and education. This individual, if a new member of the organization, must have sufficient experience and training along with all documentation for classes attended and practical skills sessions attended, before they can apply for candidacy. This candidacy must be supported and approved by an officer in charge of the organization or some other AHJ.

Age Requirements

The minimum age for certification in the State of Nebraska shall be 18 years. There shall be no maximum age limit.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The SFMTD shall not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, or status as a disabled veteran. The SFMTD operates under the auspices of the State Fire Marshal's Office, and thus adheres to all policies and procedures established for compliance with AA/EEO. Should any candidate have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the candidate's needs. Any candidate with special needs may contact the SFMTD at the time of application to arrange alternative testing procedures.

However, it shall be understood that no skills will be modified for the purposes of making successful completion easier because of the disability. The SFMTD does not permit any issue of discrimination or ADA to circumvent any safety issues or any local organizational policies, thus permitting individuals to place themselves in harms way or become eligible candidates.

SCHEDULING OF EXAMINATIONS

Because the SFMTD does not have a fixed training facility, the SFMTD Training Specialists determine the scheduling of all certification examinations for their supervised region. Examinations are scheduled based in part upon completion of training courses within the region and by requests received from local fire departments.

The geographical location of the majority of those wishing to apply for candidacy dictates the location of the test site, and the location dictates the selection of examiners to administer the examination.

Frequency

Certification examinations at all levels shall be conducted per region when requested by the organizations within these regions and shall be contingent upon the number of candidates in the area at a given time.

Notification of Examinations

The minimum lead-time for notification prior to any examination shall be 30 days. Notification of examination shall be sent to the appropriate Fire Department contact for distribution to all eligible candidates for testing (each Fire Department contact person shall receive documentation 30 days prior to testing). Candidates may waive the 30-day notification condition by signing a waiver form. The 30-day notification period may be affected by direct correspondence within the candidate's organization, modified for Instructor I whereas performance skills examinations are conducted during the training session, or impacted by circumstances beyond the SFMTD control.

APPLICATION

Application Period

The deadline for receipt of all certification applications for candidacy by the SFMTD shall be the close of the business day for the deadline date listed on the application. This deadline date shall be a minimum of **15 days** prior to the scheduled examination. This policy shall apply to applications for initial or retake examinations and for written and/or practical skills examinations. This policy shall not apply to individual written examinations scheduled by appointment to be administered at the Training Division office.

Reapplication

Candidates who have failed a certification examination or portion of an examination shall be afforded the opportunity to reapply for certification, as many times as they desire, as a new applicant at the set fee for any particular examination. Candidates for certification are allowed one (1) free retake per paid examination.

2nd Fail Examination Option

Should any candidate fail the examination on the 2nd attempt for any portion of the certification process, the Training Manager will review the examination and an evaluation of the missed subject material will be conducted.

If it is determined by the Training Manager that a majority of the subject material missed can be categorized, the candidate will be granted one additional test once additional classes have been attended on the subject material in question. Upon completion of further education, the candidate shall notify the SFMTD in writing (Class Attendance Rosters) and a third examination will be scheduled.

No examination will be scheduled less than 30 days after the date of the 2nd failed examination. This third examination will be considered part of the initial examination fee for certification.

*Candidates who fail the certification examination shall be required to reapply for subsequent examinations.

*Candidates who miss an assigned examination shall be required to reapply for subsequent examinations.

*Written examination retakes shall be allowed by appointment only at times other than scheduled examination dates.

Firefighter I Certification Application Process

- * The Fire Fighter I candidate completes the required coursework or option to waive.
- * The Training Specialists schedule the Practical Skills Examination (PSE) and the written examination within their region.
- * The Administrative Assistant generates a list of students eligible for the PSE in that area (radius of approximately 75 miles).
- * A Candidacy Packet (see Appendix for document examples) is sent to the appropriate Fire Department contact for distribution to all students for testing (each Fire Department contact person shall receive documentation 30 days prior to testing). A deadline for return is listed on the application, as well as test dates, times, and locations.
- * Those students that return the Candidacy Packet for that test site to the SFMTD by the deadline are sent the Letter of Acceptance, a sample practical skills examination form, and a sample written exam of questions.
- * Once the PSE is completed and the score sheets are returned to the SFMTD, the Administrative Assistant enters PSE scores into the Training Records Database.
- * The Administrative Assistant generates a list of candidates that are eligible for written testing within the area (radius of approximately 75 miles) and sends information regarding eligible candidates to the Full-Time Instructor for reference. To be eligible, candidates must have completed all required coursework, passed the Practical Skills Examinations, and returned their Candidacy Packet to the Training Division prior to the written exam. No candidate will be allowed to take the written exam if these forms have not been received prior to the test date.
- * When written exams are returned to the Training Division office, they will be graded within five working days of receipt. Fail notifications will go out immediately to those candidates that did not pass, with a list of questions missed, correct answers, and references.
- * Pass notification and certification materials will be mailed to the candidates that did pass no later than 15 working days after the exam. All candidates will get a copy of all questions missed, noted correct answer, and reference material location.

Instructor I Certification Application Process

*The Instructor I student shall complete all required training from a course delivered by the SFMTD or meet requirements according to the Option to Waive for the educational section.

* Any individual who has the educational section of the certification process completed and may wish to apply for candidacy to be Instructor I certified, the Administrative Assistant would generate a list of those individuals who are qualified to apply for candidacy. Those on the list shall receive an application form 30 days prior to the course being presented. This reflects the attendance at each training session, whereas performance skills examinations are conducted.

* Upon enrollment for the training or upon being advised by the SFMTD that those records submitted listing the levels of education taken to meet all requirements have been accepted for Section 1 of the certification process, the student will be given an Application for Candidacy form to be completed; which is presented to the student in class or mailed to them.

* Since some candidates can apply for certification testing as part of the period of educational training, the 30-day waiver policy is still applicable for any student attending the Instructor I course, and must be completed at the beginning of the training course. These students are advised of the requirements for certification at the beginning of the training program. All PSE's are conducted during the training session, with each session scheduled no less than 2 weeks apart.

* Those students, who successfully complete the educational program and the performance skill examinations and elect to take the written examination immediately, must complete a 30-day waiver policy form before they will be allowed to proceed with the written examination.

* The Training Specialist, who scheduled and who may have instructed the course, shall make the necessary arrangements for Section 3 of the certification program to be administered at the site of the educational presentation. This Training Specialist shall not be involved with the actual testing processes.

* Students attending the training program or those approved by way of section 1 waiver, and have applied to be a candidate for the certification program for Instructor I, will be given a number of test example instruments and a letter of acceptance for the Written Examination during the 2nd session of the course.

* The Instructor I course that is presented by the SFMTD is 28 hours in length with an additional 12 hours of preparation work, independent of the class. The testing process is incorporated into the course presentation and all students receive descriptive information for examination preparation.

Prerequisite Information/Skills Testing

Candidates receive a Candidacy Packet (see Appendix for Sample Documents), which contains all prerequisite information and forms, after completion of coursework and scheduling of a test site by the SFMTD staff. The candidates then receive an Acceptance Packet (see Appendix for Sample Documents), which contains additional information, after they have returned all necessary documentation to the SFMTD office.

Each performance skills examination (5 & 12 minute presentations) for the Instructor I certification are contained within the supplemental handout provided by the SFMTD to all students. Should any student use the option to waive for 'Section 1' and have the necessary documentation to validate their educational experience, all documentation will be supplied to the individual along with the Letter of Acceptance for Instructor I certification.

Each candidate will receive an example sheet of a skills examination and a sheet with examples of written test questions. Students are advised that skills are evaluated on a point system and all written examination questions are either multiple choice or true/false.

REFERENCE LISTING

A list of reference materials from which examinations have been compiled shall be made available as study guides to prospective candidates for certification, upon request.

References for Firefighter I written examinations shall be "Essentials of Firefighting, 4th edition" and selected portions of additional appropriate IFSTA manuals. The reference manual for the Instructor I written examination shall be "Fire and Emergency Services Instructor, 6th edition".

ACCREDITATION ORGANIZATION ACCESS

All accrediting agencies shall be granted full access to all testing information, including locations, times, dates, types of tests, and testing materials.

Any accrediting agency representative shall be permitted to observe any test site, provided an official form of documentation is provided by the representative to the chief examiner at the site to validate their position, responsibility, and reason for requesting access to the test site.

SUBMISSION OF DATA

All data required by the accrediting organizations shall be submitted on a quarterly basis, beginning with January of each year. This data shall include, but is not limited to, candidate name, social security account number or personal identification account number (assigned by the SFMTD and accepted by the SSA), certification level of the NFPA Standard by definition, and all assigned seal numbers per accrediting organizations.

AVAILABILITY OF TESTING MATERIALS

All testing instruments, prepared written examinations, and master hard copies of test bank questions shall be made available to any accrediting organization upon request. No materials shall be permitted to be copied, but should any review member find any practical or performance skills examinations to be beneficial to their organization; the SFMTD welcomes a request on letterhead from the respective organization for copies of any instrument for their review.

DENIAL AND REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

Purpose

Any candidate that has applied for certification at any level available from the SFMTD shall have the right to seek an appeal of his/her denial or revocation of certification.

Denial or Revocation Criteria

Any candidate who knowingly violates the procedures for certification shall be denied certification, and a certified individual shall have his/her certification revoked if violations are discovered. Individuals who are denied certification or whose certification is revoked shall not be qualified to apply again for certification testing for a period of 6 months from the date that the infraction or violation was filed with the Training Division. The following shall be considered cause for denial or revocation of certification:

- ◆ Submission of false information on an application. This shall include all information regarding prerequisites.
- ◆ Submission of falsified department records regarding a candidate's participation in department organized training.
- ◆ Submission of records from other organizations that have presented curriculum that meets or exceeds the current NFPA standards for certification, which contain falsifications or misrepresentations.
- ◆ Failure to adhere to the rules and requirements for the administration and completion of either the practical or written tests for certification.
- ◆ Cheating during the proctoring of either the practical or written tests.
- ◆ Making available to future candidates for certification any information on the test or testing procedures, thereby giving future candidates either an advantage or disadvantage during the certification process.
- ◆ Failure to pay any or all appropriate fees for the certification process. All applicable organizations shall be notified of the revocation, along with the organization that the individual is considered a member of.

APPEALS PROCESS

Notice

Written notice will be given to any individual whose certification is denied or revoked by the SFMTD. The written notice shall state all reasons for the denial or revocation and the notice shall include the appeal process.

Review Committee

The review committee shall consist of three employees of the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office. The committee shall be formed from the following: the Assistant State Fire Marshal, the Business Manager, the Legal Counsel, a Training Specialist, or a Chief Deputy or Manager of another State Fire Marshal division. The ranking employee of the Agency shall serve as chair of the committee and shall assist in the final selection of other committee members. If such Agency employees are not available, then the remaining committee shall be selected from the Firefighter's Training Advisory Committee.

The Training Specialist who initially filed the infraction or violation shall not serve on the review committee.

Appeal of Denial or Revocation of Certification

An individual who is denied certification or is having his/her certification revoked shall be given the opportunity to appeal the action to a review committee.

The appeal shall state in writing any and all reasons for the appeal and why the infraction/violation stated is not warranted. The review committee shall consider an appeal within 45 days of receipt of the appeal. The appellant shall be advised in writing by the chair of the committee of the date and time of the review committee's meeting.

The appellant and other witnesses may appear before the review committee or the appellant. The decision of the review committee shall be transmitted to the appellant by certified mail.

Either the appellant or the SFMTD may appeal the decision of the review committee within 30 days to the State Fire Marshal. The subsequent decision of the State Fire Marshal may be appealed to the State Fire Marshal Appeals Board.

Individuals whose certification is denied or revoked shall not be eligible to apply for certification for a period of 6 months from the date of the individual's notice from the SFMTD.

If certification is revoked, the SFMTD shall notify all accrediting bodies with which the SFMTD is accredited of the revocation.

Appeal of Examination Process

An individual who wishes to appeal any matter related to the testing or scoring process may file a written appeal to the review committee. The appeal shall be filed within 30 days of the receipt of scores and shall state all reasons for the appeal.

Appeals shall be heard or considered within 45 days of receipt of the written appeal. The appellant shall be notified in writing of the date and time of the review committee's meeting. The appellant and witnesses may appear before the review committee at the request of the committee or the appellant.

The review committee's decision shall be transmitted to the appellant by certified mail. The SFMTD or the appellant may appeal the committee's decision within 30 days to the State Fire Marshal. The subsequent decision of the State Fire Marshal may be appealed to the State Fire Marshal's Appeals Board.

Individuals appealing a testing or scoring issue with the SFMTD may retake certification tests at any time while an appeal is pending.

RECIPROCITY

Reciprocity from the SFMTD with other entities bearing certification status to the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress or to the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications is established as follows.

Candidates applying for certification to any available level in Nebraska shall be granted certification after following the procedures for Nebraska Reciprocity Certification or for a Nebraska Certificate of Reciprocity. The candidate, if requesting that his/her certificate of certification from another certifying entity be recognized within the State of Nebraska, shall submit a paper copy of certificate to the SFMTD (if seal number is not readable, then the seal number shall be typed on an additional sheet of paper and stapled to the certificate). Upon verification of the certificate and the respective edition of the standard and level applying for, the SFMTD will issue a *Nebraska Certificate of Reciprocity* to the individual for purposes of stating the following: The State of Nebraska and the SFMTD recognize "stated individual" as having been certified by another entity by a program recognized by either the NBFSPQ or by IFSAC. The Training Division will issue a Certificate of Reciprocity for the level of the standard and corresponding edition for the original certificate of certification from the other entity.

The Training Division will not issue a Certificate of Reciprocity for certification for a certificate of equivalency or any other grand fathering process acceptable to any other entity. The Training Division will not issue a Certificate of Reciprocity for a certificate and upgrade the candidate to the current edition of a standard recognized by the State of Nebraska, but will only issue to the level and edition of the original certificate.

A candidate requesting a State of Nebraska *Reciprocity Certification* (a process similar to waiving all educational requirements) for the current level of a specified standard shall follow these procedures: The candidate shall submit a copy of the original certificate to the SFMTD. The SFMTD will verify the level of stated standard and the edition that was applicable at the time of issuance by the other certifying entity.

The Training Division will only issue a current certificate based on reciprocity to an individual if the individual's certificate is only two editions or less behind the current edition recognized by the State of Nebraska. Certificates any older than this will be recognized only for educational value and the candidate will be instructed as to what additional training he/she will need to be considered qualified to apply for state certification by way of reciprocity.

Once the candidate has been accepted as a candidate for certification for the requested standard and level, the candidate will be required to complete all applicable applications and shall participate in all appropriate testing processes. No candidate requesting a certificate based on reciprocity will be granted a waiver from any prerequisites or testing processes. The only section of the certification process for the State of Nebraska that will be waived is the educational section.

RECERTIFICATION

Recertification of any NFPA Standard, that certification is offered for, shall not be required by the SFMTD.

A process for updating a certification to a current edition of a recognized standard may be developed. This process will recognize past certification in conjunction with continued education as the basis for application for recertification to a current edition of the standard.

The SFMTD will not accept any certificate for this purpose that was issued for a standard that is more than three editions older than the current standard. Supplementing this process will be a program of training whereas all pertinent information, knowledge and skills, shall be presented to support any recertification process.

REVISIONS

Because of the difference in cliental and others interested in the process of certification to a NFPA Standard, the SFMTD shall send all revisions to the current policy and procedures manual to the following for review and comment prior to implementation into the manual.

Those that will receive these corrections, revisions, or additions are: State Fire Marshal Management Staff and Legal Counsel, Firefighter's Training Advisory Committee, and the Training Division Training Specialists (Full-Time Instructors).

At the beginning of the calendar year, the Certification Policy and Procedures Manual shall be reviewed for its content and those revisions that were implemented during the year.

If no major corrections have been noted, and the Training Division Manager has received no comments of significance; the review process can be directed by correspondence thus negating the need for a formal meeting. Regardless of any revisions or not, a review process must be documented to that effect.

The Certification Policy and Procedures Manual shall be available to all potential candidates and other interested parties to review said document and make comments at any time. These comments shall be compiled with no modifications made to any suggestion or question. During any quarterly meeting of the SFMTD staff, such comments, suggestions, or questions shall be discussed with an answer submitted to the interested party. Should any comment have direct consequences on upcoming test sites or individuals at upcoming test sites, then a special meeting shall be called to address any concern prior to the implication on those in question at the next certification test site.

All staff of the SFMTD, including full-time and part-time instructors, shall be issued a revised copy of the Certification Policy and Procedures Manual upon new printing or shall receive insert pages for any changes or modifications made to the Certification Policy and Procedures Manual. This update shall include a cover letter describing all changes and the implication of those changes on the certification process.

The Administrative Assistant shall maintain any questions or comments in the SFMTD office, permitting all constituents the opportunity to voice an opinion on all suggested changes or modifications. Notification of any changes or modifications to the Certification System shall be published in the Nebraska SmokeEater magazine and if any changes require immediate implementation, the publication shall include the date when such proposed issues will be implemented.

FEES

A fee shall be charged to candidates for all certification examinations. The amount of the fee shall be determined for each level of certification upon analysis of associated costs. If a candidate fails a certification examination, they may retake the exam again without paying the certification fee. Each candidate will be allowed one free retake per paid examination, and an option shall exist for a third examination if warranted by the Training Manager after evaluation of individual testing materials and categorizing those areas for additional study.

Excluding certification exam retakes, examination fees will not be waived under any circumstances. The fee for all examinations is \$35.00. NOTE: A portion of this fee is to be used for national certification submitted by the SFMTD on behalf of the candidate. Candidates will either receive a registration form at the certification test site listing the payment options, or it will be sent along with the testing packet.

The fee for a Nebraska Certificate of Reciprocity shall be \$10.00 and the fee for a Reciprocity Certification shall be \$35.00.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR CERTIFICATION

The procedures that must be followed for an individual to meet the requirements for certification through the Nebraska SFMTD, and to qualify for national recognition through an Accreditation Organization(s) are listed below. Any individual, who plans on applying for candidacy, must request in writing for an exception to those listed procedures. Exceptions to any procedure must be approved by two-thirds majority vote of the full-time staff of the SFMTD.

There shall be three (3) components to the certification process for the Nebraska SFMTD. Those components must be completed in succession as listed.

Section 1. Completion of a course (see the Accepted, Approved, or Qualified Courses Section) that meets/addresses all competencies listed in the current NFPA Standard for which the candidate is applying for certification. For purposes of this section, "current" NFPA standard shall be a current standard being addressed by the SFMTD and not necessarily the most current edition published by NFPA.

Section 2. Upon the completion of ALL course material for a specified course, the individual shall apply to be a candidate for certification and take a Practical Skills Evaluation or a Performance Skills Evaluation.

Section 3. Upon successful completion of Sections 1 and 2, the candidate shall take a written examination administered by the SFMTD.

Please see Equivalency Testing, Reciprocity, Option to Waive Policy, Prerequisite Process for Testing, and Prerequisite Waiver Policy sections for options/waivers of the above procedures.

PREREQUISITES

The Nebraska SFMTD recognizes the fact that not all curriculums developed and accepted as courses that meet the requirements for certification, cover all topics covered in a standard. Such is the case with certain courses presented by the SFMTD.

Therefore, if the course used to meet the requirements for certification excludes some components from the course curriculum, as is the case with the Firefighter I course; prerequisites for such competencies shall be completed by the candidate and verified by either the Chief, Training Officer, or the candidate's Supervising Officer before written tests will be administered.

As with all rules and guidelines, exceptions to the rule shall be established. These exceptions will be stated in the Prerequisite Waiver Policy Section.

Prerequisites for Candidacy

Candidates must meet the minimum age requirement as set by the local authority having jurisdiction, but in no case shall be less than 18 years of age.

If an individual is not a member of a recognized emergency response organization, but submits a letter stating his/her intent to apply to join an emergency response organization, that individual shall be permitted to test for certification once the individual has signed a release of liability and the individual has verified (driver's license, etc.) he/she is at least 18 years of age.

Students participating in any Associate Degree of Fire Science program, and who may be required to attend Fire Fighter Training classes, shall be accepted into the certification system. All requirements to become a candidate shall apply to these students.

Prerequisites-Recognized Standard for Certification

The SFMTD shall not accept any requests to modify or reduce the prerequisites for candidacy that may be listed in any particular NFPA Standard.

Prerequisites-State of Nebraska Established

The SFMTD reserves the right to establish any prerequisites that it deems necessary for the safety and overall educational value of a candidate for any standard that is recognized for certification within the SFMTD Certification System.

The fire chief or another departmental officer responsible for the education of any emergency responder will validate all prerequisites, which are required by the Training Division. Since an individual's verification is based on his/her merit for the system, and also based on the validation of the departmental officer to verify by certificate or departmental records; the Training Division reserves the right to inspect any records or to verify any stated training at any time for the purpose of validating the prerequisite paperwork submitted to the Training Division Office.

Any candidate who cannot provide sufficient support of the training required to meet the competencies or cannot verify his/her competency of the topic, shall be required to leave the test site. Should these records be checked after the completion of any or all testing processes and be found to be invalid, the certification certificate can be revoked and not reissued until such time that the prerequisite topic and its subsequent education to verify competency has been completed.

PREREQUISITE WAIVER POLICY

If there are policies and procedures within any organization or facility that do not allow a candidate to take a course to meet certain topics for a particular certification course, the candidate can receive a special waiver of a prerequisite. A candidate must submit in writing (on organization letterhead or stated to be from the organization) a request for a prerequisite waiver and must also send a copy of the policy and procedures section from their organization that states the policy of that organization.

As has been mentioned above, no exceptions to a written test will be made. If the candidate wishes to apply for a prerequisite waiver, he or she will accept the written test as developed by the SFMTD, and this test will include the topic that the candidate has requested be approved as a prerequisite waiver (example: Hazardous Materials training).

The candidate, upon successfully passing the written test, will receive his or her certification only after the SFMTD has received from the candidate the prerequisite form which states that the topic that was waived has been completed and the candidate has been verified as being competent.

OPTION TO WAIVE

Since numbers of firefighters and other emergency responders receive their training from sources other than the Training Division of the State Fire Marshal's Office, alternative methods shall be established and other courses and curriculums recognized for the purposes of certifying these potential candidates. Criteria for these options to waive portions of the certification courses established by the SFMTD shall be provided in writing to any candidate that wishes to use the option process for certification. Regardless of the alternative method elected by the candidate, the candidate shall provide substantiation of the required training to enter into the certification system.

Substantiated training shall mean that all training is documented by date, topic, length, knowledge or skills associated, and instructors and assistants. This documentation format is available from the SFMTD Office.

The SFMTD has established different systems for certification for the courses that are recognized by the accreditation agencies. Even though different courses do have modified arrangements for attaining certification by the candidate's participation in the course, the SFMTD will only recognize an option to waive the classroom instruction of those established courses. This means that any candidate electing the option to waive procedures must perform all cognitive and psychomotor skills that are established as part of the certification system recognized by the SFMTD. For example, in the Firefighter Training Course, a candidate may waive the required classroom education (Section 1), but shall be required to perform the practical skills evaluations and shall be required to take the written examination.

Any candidate deciding to use the option to waive policy shall apply for an Option Candidate Certification packet that will explain the accredited entity's policy and procedures for certification and the certification process. Each packet will be assigned an Option Certification Number assigned to the candidate and the packet shall only be used by that candidate. Application for the packet will require full name, social security account number or personal identification account number (assigned by the SFMTD), department affiliation, and letter(s) of substantiation of previous training to allow the candidate to enter the certification process.

Those alternative methods and/or courses that will be recognized as methods acceptable for the option to waive policy will be listed in the "Accepted, Approved, or Qualified Courses/Methods" section.

ACCEPTED, APPROVED, OR QUALIFIED COURSES/METHODS

- ◆ IFSTA established curriculum for the purpose of Firefighter I certification.
- ◆ Department of Labor's Journeyman's Program, which is accepted by the career fire departments as the minimum level of competency training.
- ◆ Firefighter Training established and used by the Chanute Air Force Base.
- ◆ ISFSI established training courses for certification through the EMACS system, as long as they meet and or exceed NFPA standards established for the certification course.
- ◆ Courses developed in other states for certification purposes, as long as they meet and or exceed NFPA standards established for the certification course.
- ◆ Fire Department or Emergency Response Organization developed courses for certification purposes, as long as they meet and or exceed NFPA standards established for the certification course.
- ◆ Approved Fire Department or Emergency Response Organization developed training, which involves both cognitive and psychomotor skills, training records are available to substantiate that the training was completed, training records are signed by both student and instructor for each training session, training is done using recognized training material, and that the candidate applying for the option to waive policy shall provide substantiation of the required training to enter into the certification system. If an individual is a new member of the organization, they must have sufficient experience and training along with all documentation for classes attended and practical skills sessions attended, before they can apply for candidacy. This candidacy must be supported and approved by an officer in charge of the organization or some other AHJ.
- ◆ National Fire Academy courses that address the cognitive learning of competencies of a particular NFPA Standard. All other competencies addressing the psychomotor skills shall be addressed as a separate and independent course of education.

**GENERAL
ADMINISTRATION
OF
WRITTEN
AND
SKILLS TESTING**

EXAMINATIONS

Certification Examinations Offered

All NFPA Standards and subsequent levels of those Standards shall be tested, addressing all content of the Standard. This shall involve the examination of candidates by testing both cognitive and psychomotor learning. Current NFPA Professional Qualifications Standards utilize the Job Performance Requirement (JPR) format, thus the SFMTD shall test all JPR's in all Standards noted for certification. The SFMTD does reserve the right to 'combination test' any or all prerequisite skills and knowledge for any specific JPR listed, with the exception that prerequisite knowledge components will also be tested by individual written examination questions.

All written examination questions shall be constructed either as a true/false question or as a multiple-choice question. All multiple-choice questions shall be reviewed for question structure and shall contain appropriate distracters with only one unquestionable correct answer. All examinations used by the SFMTD shall be based on and scored by an objective approach. No examination instrument or question shall contain any statements, in whole or in part, that lends itself to permitting the examiner to use subjectivity during the examination.

Correlation Forms

Correlation forms, indicating the relationship between each component of the JPR, including prerequisite knowledge and prerequisite skills, shall be provided for each level of each NFPA Standard that certification is offered for. These correlation forms shall show each component of the JPR and prerequisites, list whether the component shall be tested as a skill, knowledge, or option to test as both.

Each component shall be correlated to the respective PSE by number and to each respective written examination question by number within the test bank. Any or all components may have numerous PSE or Exam numbers correlated to the evaluation processes available for the Standard.

Correlation Forms for each certified NFPA Standard are located in the Appendix to this Certification Policy and Procedures Manual.

SELECTION PROCESS – PSE’s

Fire Fighter I Practical Skills

The SFMTD elects to randomly select those skills and written examination questions that will be administered at test sites.

The following process shall be used to determine the practical skills examinations that will be used for testing purposes at the designated test sites.

Before any site is established as a test site, the Training Specialist shall determine the availability of all needed equipment for demonstrating practical skills and/or any additional testing props that need to be secured for the test site.

The SFMTD shall administer all practical skills examinations (PSE) for Fire Fighter I by testing all candidates on two cluster skills examinations and two stand-alone skills examinations. At all test sites, one cluster examination must contain a component whereas the candidate must use SCBA. This requirement does not limit the SFMTD from having additional skills that may also require the use of SCBA and shall be graded accordingly.

The cluster skills examinations shall consist of a sequence of skills, organized from one JPR or a combination of JPR’s and subsequent prerequisite knowledge and skills. The candidate as a component of an actual (simulated for testing purposes) response assignment shall perform these cluster skill examinations, with some/all parts of each JPR being evaluated.

Stand-alone skills may be any individual skill, which may be a part of the JPR or prerequisite skill, and shall be performed by the candidate and evaluated for successful completion of each part of the skills examination.

The stand-alone skills shall also include all PSE’s for Hazardous Materials First Responder Awareness Level, and become part of the selection process when the stand-alone skills are drawn.

All PSE’s are evaluated by a point system, with each part weighted by a value and the total of all values must meet or exceed 75% for a Passing score. All practical skills examinations must be completed successfully and the candidate must receive a Pass score on all skills listed on the Master Candidate Scoring Sheet or the test site is recorded as a FAIL. This means a candidate must retake the Practical Skills Examination at another time. No credit is given for successful completion of part of the skills at the test site.

Candidates are permitted to retest at a station if they fail the first attempt, but this retest must be conducted as soon as the candidate is ready and a different examiner has been placed at the station.

All PSE’s shall be selected randomly by the Administrative Assistant for the Training Specialist once he/she sets the dates for a test site.

Instructor I Performance Skills

The SFMTD elects to randomly select those skills and written examination questions that will be administered at test sites.

The following process shall be used to determine the performance skills examinations that will be used for testing purposes at the designated test sites.

The SFMTD shall administer all performance skills examinations (PSE) for Instructor I by testing all candidates on one cluster skill examination (candidate make two presentations [one stand-alone and one cluster] with combined scores) and three stand-alone skills examinations. Both presentation PSE's are required at all Instructor I test sites.

The cluster skill examination shall consist of a sequence of skills, organized from one JPR or a combination of JPR's and subsequent prerequisite knowledge and skills. The candidate shall make a presentation to peer candidates, adhering to all criteria and guidelines for the presentation.

Stand-alone skills may be any individual skill, which may be a part of the JPR or prerequisite skill, and shall be performed by the candidate and evaluated for successful completion of each part of the skills examination. These stand-alone PSE's shall be graded by the Chief Examiner with either a Pass or Fail score recorded for each PSE. Some stand-alone PSE's will use the comparison of candidate scores to the Examiner's scores, using the 75% as the Pass/Fail criteria for scoring.

The cluster PSE is evaluated by a point system, with each part weighted by a value and the total of all values must meet or exceed 75% for a Passing score, after the stand-alone and cluster have had the scores combined. All performance skills examinations must be completed successfully and the candidate must receive a Pass score on all skills listed on the Master Candidate Scoring Sheet or the test site is recorded as a FAIL. Because of the nature of testing for Instructor I, whereas all PSE testing is conducted during the training presentation, any candidate who fails any stand-alone skill shall be permitted to test out on another stand-alone skill before the course is completed. If a candidate fails the combination of the presentations, the candidate shall be required to test again at a later date, and all 'Pass' stand-alone scores shall be accepted as final. This means a candidate must make additional presentation(s) to complete the Performance Skills Examination at another time.

All PSE's shall be selected randomly by the Administrative Assistant for the Training Specialist once he/she sets the dates for a test site.

WRITTEN

TEST

BANKS

TEST BANKS

The SFMTD maintains purchased test banks for all accredited certification programs, controlled and secured by the Administrative Assistant. These test banks are used to randomly generate written examinations for all certification programs. The written test specification determines the number of questions on each topic that will be included on the written exam. The SFMTD Training Manager, Training Specialists, and the Administrative Assistant determine this.

FIRE FIGHTER PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

NFPA 1001-1997 Edition

Firefighter I Level—100 questions per examination

	<u>Examination</u>	<u>Test Bank</u>
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	5	135
GENERAL	3	7
IMS	3	9
ROPE	5	26
EMERGENCY RESPONSE	2	8
FD COMMUNICATIONS	1	5
SCBA	8	34
FIRE BEHAVIOR	7	40
HORIZON VENTILATION	5	14
VERTICAL VENTILATION	5	29
OVERHAUL	4	15
SALVAGE	3	13
SPRINKLERS	3	18
WATER SUPPLY	2	13
EXTINGUISHERS	4	38
LIGHT SCENE	1	3
SCENE SAFETY	2	6
FIRE CONTROL	2	11
RESPONSE SAFETY	2	10
FORCIBLE ENTRY	4	44
EXIT HAZARD	2	13
GROUND LADDERS	5	37
VEHICLE FIRE	2	9
EXTERIOR FIRE	2	12
CONDUCT SEARCH	2	12
INTERIOR ATTACK	7	75
SAFETY SURVEY	1	7
FIRE PREVENTION	1	4
CLEAN/CHECK EQUIPMENT	5	36
CLEAN HOSE	2	16
TOTAL	100	699

FIRE SERVICE INSTRUCTOR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

NFPA 1041-1996 Edition

Instructor I Level—50 questions per examination

	<u>Examination</u>	<u>Test Bank</u>
GENERAL	2	4
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	6	15
INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	10	29
INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY	22	111
EVALUATION AND TESTING	10	36
TOTALS:	50	195

Test Bank Questions/Items

Each test bank contains a number of questions per competency/JPR as are listed in each of the NFPA Standards recognized for certification. The Fire Fighter I test bank contains 699 questions and the Instructor I test bank contains 195 questions. The numbers of items listed are based on the needs of the students and subsequent position to be performed by the candidate upon successful completion of the test instrument for certification. Each test bank shall contain sufficient questions whereas all applicable JPR, Prerequisite Knowledge, and Prerequisite Skills are addressed.

Test Bank Revision/Updates

The SFMTD abides by all updates and revisions offered from Performance Training Systems, Inc. for modifications to existing test banks. Each test bank is purchased and implemented to test a specific standard and edition of that standard, and each test bank is implemented by the SFMTD to test those NFPA Standards as are accredited by the accrediting organizations.

Each question contained within the respective test banks are validated for content, construction, and reference to both the NFPA Standard and learning reference source. This objective is tasked to the Training Specialists and the Training Manager. Modifications to any question are tasked to the Administrative Assistant.

Test Items Reviewed by Subject Matter Experts

The Training Specialists and the Training Manager of the SFMTD review the test items. The Training Manager first reviews questions introduced by candidates regarding the validity of any test examination question, and if questions still exist about the validity of any test question; the Training Specialists will address the issue. This consensus of validity shall determine usage of the question in future tests, modification of the question within the test bank, and modification of the final test score for all students at the test site in question.

Test Items and Test Review by Test Construction Experts

Test bank questions are purchased from Performance Training Systems, Inc. and all items have been listed by this company as being both reliable and valid. However, because the computer generates the tests used by Nebraska, the Training Specialists and the Training Manager will review all questions of an established test for construction and integrity prior to being used. This review shall also address the applicability of the question to issues addressed in the training courses for Nebraska response organizations.

Test Items/Scores Reviewed and Analyzed; Validity and Reliability

The Training Specialists and the Training Manager shall be the committee responsible for the verification of test bank questions for all certifiable standards for the SFMTD. A review process of examining questions shall be established for purposes of declaring all test questions reliable. A validation process for examination questions shall be established to maintain a competent and competitive program for the purposes of certification.

Each test site, which produces a sufficient quantity of tests taken by candidates (any number greater than 5), is evaluated by the test bank software to produce the number of candidates taking the examination, score results, median and mean of the scores, test reliability, and standard error of measurement. In cases where students have missed sufficient questions, an item statistics report is produced to evaluate the percentages of each question missed and how many times, which distracters were chosen and the percentages for each.

Each test site, excluding those candidates who may come to the SFMTD office to take the examination, shall be calculated and the statistics evaluation printed and filed. Each score for a candidate is combined with the standard error of measurement and this is the final score each candidate receives on the letter sent addressing the examination. A copy of this letter is filed per each candidate file, but no copies of this letter are permitted without expressed written permission from the candidate.

Test question validity is also evaluated by the item statistics report, and compared to question content and construction. All information is then compared to the NFPA Standards and the SFMTD Lesson Plan objectives.

Developing Written Test Examination Questions

Because of the limitation of the purchased test bank on some areas of competency questions for the NFPA standard, the SFMTD shall adhere to the following guidelines for the implementation of developed questions.

- ◆ Questions shall be developed by the SFMTD Training Specialists, initiated either from test site comments or instructor notation of potential errors in other questions.
- ◆ Questions developed shall address a specific JPR of the NFPA Standard and Objective of the prescribed course of study for which the test is for.
- ◆ Questions developed shall have a reference to the applicable student manual used for educational purposes.
- ◆ Questions developed shall follow a format design conducive with the purchased test bank.
- ◆ Questions shall be submitted to the SFMTD Manager and Administrative Assistant for further review before being implemented into a review/evaluation process.
- ◆ All questions developed will be reviewed and tested by no less than a combination of 10 members of the SFMTD office (to include as least two of the following: Fire Marshal, Assistant Fire Marshal, Legal Counsel, and Business Manager) and the members of the Firefighters Training Advisory Committee.
- ◆ All questions, after initial review, content, and testing of material, by the above mentioned; shall be reviewed for validity, reliability, and content. After the Training Manager, Administrative Assistant, and Training Specialists have accepted all questions; these questions shall be dated and implemented into the test bank system.

Time Limit for Testing

The candidates are allowed three hours to complete the written examination for Fire Fighter I Certification. On a 100-question test, this allows the candidate approximately 1.75 minutes to answer each question. Candidates are allowed 1.5 hours to complete the written test for Instructor I Certification, which is a 50-question exam.

**WRITTEN
&
SKILLS

TEST

GRADING**

EXAMINATION GRADES/SCORING PROCESS

Grading

Examinations shall be graded within five working days after receipt in the SFMTD office. The Administrative Assistant or his/her designee shall conduct all grading of written examinations. All documentation of candidates is considered strictly confidential and office visitors, candidates, Part-Time Instructors, or others with no authority to view any confidential documents shall be requested to leave the grading area.

All examinations, PSE and Written, are graded by a point system. The Written Examination for FFI shall have 100 questions, each worth 1 point; and the Instructor I shall have 50 questions, each question worth 2 points. The scoring for these tests shall be explained to candidates prior to beginning the examination. The skills examinations are graded on a point system, however different steps for the skills are weighted with different point values. All values do total 100 points, but those steps considered vital or crucial may have a higher point value than supporting steps. All PSE's for Fire Fighter I are rated when the candidate has completed the examination as a Pass/Fail score. When Instructor I candidates do the Performance Skills Examination, the point values still exist, but two separate examinations constitute the total score of 100 points, and 75% becomes the Passing score. The two stand-alone PSE's for Instructor I are graded on a Pass/Fail score by the chief examiner.

All examinations shall be graded from an objective point of view. Written examinations, containing multiple choice and true/false questions, reduce the potential for subjectivity becoming a factor; however, the grading of all PSE's does hold the possibility of subjectivity becoming an issue if examiners are not trained on proper conduct and evaluation processes. This issue is addressed in the in-service training sessions when instructors meet the requirements to be an examiner, and a statement is contained on the test site information for examiners.

Paraphrased contents of those statements and from the training session are:

It is the responsibility of the Examiner to properly complete the PSE Check List, including all information at the top to indicate the candidate's proper identification; and this will be done legibly. The Check List gives you the evaluation steps, each correlating to a point system for scoring the skill accomplishment, that facilitate a complete evaluation along with an objective approach to the accomplishment of each skill.

The Examiner is to evaluate the candidate's performance while demonstrating the steps necessary to perform a skill safely, quickly, and efficiently. At no time will the Examiner coach the candidate or give assistance in performing the skill. The Examiner is held responsible for making sure no one frequents the test station, making comments on steps not performed properly.

As a Certification Examiner, you are required to make decisions about the skill performance of the candidates you evaluate. You will make these decisions on an “either-or” basis: “Either” the candidate performs the skill acceptably, “Or” the candidate does not perform the skill acceptably. This must be an OBJECTIVE evaluation, with no other factors influencing your decision. You must understand that skill performance involves the translation of knowledge into action. As an examiner, you are expected to make a judgment about whether a person can do a skill well enough to meet the objectives of the skill station.

Therefore, you will observe each and every step performed by the candidate as they demonstrate the practical skill. From what you observe, you will grade the candidate by using the PSE Check List and the points per step. As was stated earlier, you are to be unbiased, accurate, and use your professional training to fairly grade the candidate and be able to comment in writing about anything that leads you to believe that the candidate is not performing sufficiently to complete the objective safely and efficiently.

Remember-your position no longer identifies you as an instructor; you now have the responsibilities of an examiner.

Skill Examination Grade

The Examiner will note on each Master Candidate Scoring Sheet a PASS or FAIL sign with the Examiners signature to accompany the score. It is the responsibility of the Examiner to properly complete the PSE Check List, including all information at the top to indicate the candidate’s proper identification; and this will be done legibly.

The Chief Examiner, including signature and date, shall validate the Master Candidate Scoring Sheet. This scoring sheet shall accompany all individual PSE sheets and shall be returned to the SFMTD for proper documentation in the database.

Notification of Grades

Candidates shall be notified of grades within fifteen working days of an examination. All pass/fail notification will be done in writing. All candidates will get a copy of all questions missed, noted correct answer, and reference material location. No pass/fail notification will be given by telephone. All participants in certification examinations who pass an examination shall be notified that they have passed the exam, along with their numerical score. Candidates who do not pass will receive a numerical score for the written portion and a summary of the areas needing further study. This summary shall include a printout of all questions missed along with the NFPA Standard JPR, the reference material page(s), and the correct answer (candidate’s selected answer will also appear on the printout).

Since candidates are normally members of emergency response organizations, and since those organizations may require or wish to know of the position of a candidate who has completed testing for certification status; the Fire Chief or Officer in Charge of any emergency response organization shall request the sign of PASS of any candidate who is a member of their organization by requesting the indication of pass in writing to the Training Division.

Time Period-Certification Records

Certificates

All participants who successfully complete all required portions of a certification examination will be issued a certificate and patches signifying the certification level. Certified individuals are authorized to note their level of certification after their name. Additional patches are also available for \$5. Any certified individual requesting additional patches must provide proof of identity, to include full name and social security or personal identification account number. Organization representation shall not be required nor shall it be considered as proof of identity.

The date of certification shall be the date that a person has completed all portions of the examination process. This shall be the date noted on the certification certificate issued to the candidate. Completion of all portions of the examination process shall also include any examination waiver accepted by the SFMTD. Therefore, successful completion of all segments of the certification process does not dictate the certificate date, but that the date on the letter and prerequisite form indicating successful completion of any prerequisite noted as waived shall be recognized as the official certification date.

A letter will be sent to the candidate stating that they have become certified to a particular level, along with their certificate and patches. All correspondence related to each individual's testing and certification process will be kept at the Training Division office. The SFMTD policy for active records is 5 years, but all certification documentation per individual shall be maintained for a period of 30 years.

All individuals who become certified by the Nebraska SFMTD with a certification level authorized by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications, Inc. (NBFSPQ) will have their records submitted for national certification. Certification records will be sent to IFSAC and NBFSPQ approximately quarterly.

There will be a \$5 fee for duplicate certificates, which will be a copy of the copy of the original contained within the file for the certified individual. There will be a \$25.00 fee for replacement certificates. Replacement certificates will be filed with new IFSAC and NBFSPQ certification numbers for the national registry, but will duplicate all other information contained on the copy of the original certificate.

Confidentiality

All records regarding certification shall remain confidential with the exception that the SFMTD may verify that a candidate is certified at a particular level.

Retest-Practical/Performance Skills Examinations

Candidates must pass all skills examination test stations in order to receive a Passing score for Fire Fighter I and must have a 75% or better score to pass the Instructor I skills examinations. At least 30 days must pass before the candidate will be allowed to retake a PSE. Application can be made prior to the 30 days.

TEST

SECURITY

SECURITY OF TESTING INSTRUMENTS

Access

Access to the Examination Test Banks shall be restricted to the Training Manager and Administrative Assistant to the Training Manager, both being responsible for the Certification Program for the SFMTD. All computerized test bank files shall be password protected, and this password shall be limited to the Training Manager, Administrative Assistant to the Training Manager, and the Business Manager of the State Fire Marshal's Office. Access, for purposes of review only, to the Examination Test Banks shall be granted to the State Fire Marshal and to all Training Specialists of the SFMTD.

Storage

All testing materials shall remain under lock and key, filed within the office of the Administrative Assistant to the Training Manager. This filing cabinet shall hold all written examinations for any NFPA Standard that certification is offered for, and shall hold the masters of all Practical Skills Examinations. The PSE selection file for the random selection of PSE's for any given test shall be secured under lock and key.

Candidate Files

All files of candidates or successful candidates shall be secured under lock and key, and all filing cabinets shall be located on the premises of the SFMTD. These files are only accessible to the Administrative Assistant and the Training Manager of the SFMTD, but may be reviewed by Training Specialists, the Business Manager, and the State Fire Marshal under the supervision of the Administrative Assistant.

Disposal

All draft materials, old examinations, testing materials containing any personal information, etc. shall be disposed of by paper shredder and all CD's, Zip Disks, or Floppy Disks shall have all files erased and if possible, all disks shall be reformatted.

Test Site Security

When materials are prepared for a specific test in the field, the Administrative Assistant shall contact the SFMTD Training Specialist and a decision shall be made on the means of transferring the materials to the Training Specialist. If possible, materials should be picked up at the TD office. However, if this isn't practical, materials shall be sent by first class U.S. Postal Service mail or by UPS directly to the Training Specialist's home office.

Once any testing materials are in the possession of the Training Specialist, the materials shall remain in the state vehicle and vehicle shall remain locked at all times. After all arrangements have been made at the test site and testing materials are moved to the testing site, no materials shall be left unattended at any time. All testing materials shall remain in a brief case or carrying case, and either the Chief Examiner or the Assistant Chief Examiner shall be with the testing materials at all times.

During the testing process, should any Examiner need to take a break, it shall be the responsibility of the Chief Examiner or the Assistant Chief Examiner to secure all testing materials as well as the test station until the Examiner returns.

All candidates shall be advised that no speaking, visiting, or coaching will be allowed. Should this behavior occur, all candidates involved will be dismissed from the test site and will have to reapply for testing.

During Practical Skills Examinations, any candidate that may need to use the restroom shall request permission from the Chief Examiner or the Assistant Chief Examiner. As soon as it is verified that no other candidate is in the restroom, the candidate will be allowed to enter. One of the Examiners, Chief or Asst. Chief Examiners, shall stand by the door until the candidate returns. During Written Examinations, the Chief Examiner shall allow only one candidate to use the restroom at a time, this including male and female candidates.

Candidates shall be advised that the staging area is an area where all candidates, who are not testing at a station, should be located. Within the staging area, no study materials shall be allowed, no practice equipment will be allowed, and no visiting shall be allowed. Candidates will also be advised during the "Statement to Candidates" that candidates will not be allowed to stop and visit between testing stations.

**TEST
PROCTORS
AND
EVALUATORS
(SFMTD-
EXAMINERS)**

LEVELS OF EXAMINATION EXAMINERS

Examination Administration

Adequate supervision for each other as examiners and for all candidates shall be provided at all certification examination sites. This shall be done to ensure control, adherence to established procedures, and safety. Such supervision shall be provided by the SFMTD, and shall be provided by the examiners, the assistant chief examiner, and the chief examiner.

For purposes of testing, 3 levels of examiners shall be established. These different levels will have multiple responsibilities for both the test site and the candidate. These levels shall be known as: Chief Examiner, Assistant Chief Examiner, and Examiner. When cluster practical skills examinations test stations are designated, there shall also be a Lead Examiner for those Examiners administering the test.

The SFMTD shall maintain and review those policies that dictate all actions and procedures to be used on any certification test examination. This shall include all skills test sites and written test sites. In conjunction with procedures for properly and professionally administering the examination, all procedures that direct and maintain control of test stations, documentation, candidate overview and explanations shall be made available to all examiners for all test sites. These procedures and rules shall be reviewed and understanding verified prior to any certification examination being conducted.

Test Site Audits

The SFMTD shall have an audit process designed to validate and assure the credibility of all functions on any type of test site. This audit process shall be conducted on site by the chain of command as is described for examination test sites, whereas all SFMTD personnel shall be accountable to peer review as well as that of the Assistant Chief Examiner and the Chief Examiner.

Because policies dictating proper conduct, procedures for testing, and methods of controlling a test site may be misunderstood or hampering for reasons beyond anyone's control; the SFMTD shall conduct at least 4 visits to scheduled test sites each calendar year to verify complete and thorough use of all policies and procedures for conducting certification testing. The SFMTD Training Manager shall conduct this audit, and reserves the right to appear on site without prior notice of the audit process.

Written Criteria for Selection of Test Proctors (Examiners)

For Practical Skills Exams, those SFMTD Part-Time instructors that are Fire Fighter I Certified may be examiners. Part-time instructors that are both Fire Fighter I Certified and Instructor I Certified may act as assistance chief examiners. Only the SFMTD Training Specialist and the Training Manager may act as chief examiners at the Practical Skills Examinations and as proctors of the written examination.

Exception to Proctors for Written Examinations: Since retake examinations cannot be scheduled to accommodate all candidates who may have failed an examination, examinations can be administered at the SFMTD Office. Dependent upon the candidate and any past problems with the candidate, the Training Manager may appoint the Administrative Assistant to proctor the examination.

All examiners must attend the SFMTD in-service training session on certification examination administering. This training shall address issues of objectivity, rules on security, usage of testing instruments, use of skills checklists and point values, conflicts, and other rules that dictate the procedures for conducting an examination at a test site. This training shall explain the policies that govern the testing score information and the importance of record keeping and data entry for each candidate.

The Training Specialist who selects any Part-Time Instructor to serve in the capacity of an examiner must evaluate all examiners yearly. This evaluation shall be submitted to the SFMTD and filed in the PT Instructor's file. Every three years, or more frequently if policies and procedures for certification testing change, any PT Instructor who wishes to be qualified as an examiner must attend an in-service training session.

Candidate/Examiner Conflict

Since examination sites are scheduled on a "needed in the region only" basis, and since those examiners are scheduled based on location and their participation in the instruction of potential candidates, it is possible that an examiner may personally know a candidate commuting a lengthy distance to participate in the testing. Should any examiner discover that a candidate for a specific skill examination or for a written examination is a relative, is related to an examiner by marriage, or has a close personal relationship that would create a conflict of interest for the examiner; the examiner shall notify the chief examiner or the assistant chief examiner and shall be released from the skill examination station for the candidate in question.

This same rule shall exist for any instructor who has presented a course, or parts of a course, that testing is being offered for; and this examiner (Instructor as noted above) discovers that someone who has applied for candidacy is scheduled to test and they are the assigned examiner for a test station. The examiner shall follow all applicable rules and notify the chief examiner and be replaced for the testing of the noted candidate.

The SFMTD Training Specialist selects all examiners for a scheduled test site, and submits all documentation for the test site to the SFMTD. Between the Training Specialist and the Administrative Assistant, every effort must be made to verify that no examiner has served in the capacity as a PT Instructor for any portion of the course that is to be tested.

This requirement shall also be understood by the PT Instructor, that they be requested to assist and they feel there may be a conflict of any nature; that they either decline the duty or when such conflict with a particular candidate arises, the Chief Examiner is notified and the Examiner with the conflict issues steps aside and permits another examiner to complete the testing at the assigned test station.

All PT Instructors contacted to be an Examiner for a test station shall agree to all policies and procedures and this shall be noted on the Letter of Agreement that must be signed and returned to the SFMTD Office.

The Training Specialist at the site shall reprimand any examiner who willfully disregards policies and procedures, and this reprimand shall be documented with said document forwarded to the SFMTD Training Manager. Content of the document will dictate whether the examiner will be put on a probationary period of 3-6 months, or if they will be considered inactive until the next in-service training session. Acts that will warrant an inactive status will be assistance to a candidate, assistance to candidates waiting to test, disregarding procedures for an objective evaluation by using their own methods of performing a skill and scoring accordingly, or bias.

The issue of OBJECTIVITY is addressed in the Instructor I course, and how it may impact on a decision if an open mind is not maintained while evaluating a skill sequence being performed.

EXAMINERS AND CANDIDATE INSTRUCTIONS

Practical Skills Examination Test Site From Chief Examiner

-Statement to Candidates

Introduction of all staff and what skill's station they will be supervising.

Explain the roles of all Examiners (Chief, Assistant Chief, Examiners, Leads) and their responsibilities, and explain all paperwork and the proper procedures for completing the paperwork properly.

- * Identify all lines and blocks on the Master Candidate Scoring Sheet.
- * Explain the PSE Check List that the Examiners will be using at the test stations.
- * Explain the "point system and the scoring procedure" used by the Examiners.
- * Explain the failure and retest process and to whom the Examiner will forward the Check List with explanation of why the candidate failed the skill station.
- * Explain that a retest is conducted immediately with a different examiner.
- * Explain what will be needed for the skills evaluations like SCBA, PPE, and paperwork forms.
- * Introduce the skills that will be performed for testing purposes.
- * Explain the need for all paperwork to be returned to the Chief Examiner upon completion of all test stations, and that the Master Candidate Scoring Sheet must be signed to validate the score sheet.

Explain the facility and all safety concerns. This will be based on what the host organization has for equipment, response personnel, and normal SOG's. Note all exits, restrooms, and locations for rehab.

Explain if any candidate is paged for an emergency response and leaves the test site, all materials must be turned into the Chief Examiner and will be marked as an incomplete test and the candidate will not be permitted to return and complete the test. If a candidate wishes to request permission to see if the organization has sufficient personnel to handle the call, and then returns to the test site; the candidate will be permitted to continue with the test. Otherwise, the examination will have to be rescheduled.

Explain the purpose for security at the test location, the purpose for the staging; and also explain that all candidates, while not performing a skill, will be at this location and must not visit about skills stations already tested at.

Explain that while in the staging area, candidates are not allowed to discuss the PSE's already completed with candidates that have not completed those PSE's. Should any examiner discover that coaching or cheating is evident, both candidates will be asked to leave the test location, all previous completed skills will be destroyed at the Training Division Office, and candidates will have to reapply for certification.

Explain that question, comments, or concerns about the PSE's will be directed to the Chief Examiner or the Assistant Chief Examiner. No questions will be asked of the Examiners at any test stations, except those pertaining to the directions given about the skill to be demonstrated for evaluation.

ASK: Any Questions?

Practical Skill Examination Test Site

-Examiner at Test Station

The Examiner will state to the candidate at his/her testing station the following information and description of what is expected of the candidate. The Examiner is to evaluate the candidate's performance while demonstrating the steps necessary to perform a skill safely, quickly, and efficiently. The Examiner will check all equipment repeatedly for safety and quality. If any deficiencies are discovered, notify the Assistant Chief Examiner.

The Examiner will note on each Master Candidate Scoring Sheet a PASS or FAIL score with the Examiners signature to accompany the score. It is the responsibility of the Examiner to properly complete the PSE Check List, including all information at the top to indicate the candidate's proper identification; and this will be done legibly.

The Check List gives you the evaluation steps, each correlating to a point system for scoring the skill accomplishment, that facilitate a complete evaluation along with an objective approach to the accomplishment of each skill. Any skill that has a time limit associated with the performance must be noted to the candidate and an accurate time must be recorded.

The Examiner is to evaluate the candidate's performance while demonstrating the steps necessary to perform a skill safely, quickly, and efficiently. At no time will the Examiner coach the candidate or give assistance in performing the skill. The Examiner is held responsible for making sure no one frequents the test station, making comments on steps not performed properly.

As a Certification Examiner, you are required to make decisions about the skill performance of the candidates you evaluate. You will make these decisions on an "either-or" basis: "Either" the candidate performs the skill acceptably, "Or" the candidate does not perform the skill acceptably. This must be an OBJECTIVE evaluation, with no other factors influencing your decision. You must understand that skill performance involves the translation of knowledge into action. As an examiner, you are expected to make a judgment about whether a person can do a skill well enough to meet the objectives of the skill station.

Therefore, you will observe each and every step performed by the candidate as they demonstrate the practical skill. From what you observe, you will grade the candidate by using the PSE Check List and the points per step. You are to be unbiased, accurate, and use your professional training to fairly grade the candidate and be able to comment in writing about anything that leads you to believe that the candidate is not performing sufficiently to complete the objective safely and efficiently.

Remember-your position no longer identifies you as an instructor; you now have the responsibilities of an examiner.

Practical Skill Examination Test Site

-From Examiner to Candidate

INSTRUCTIONS: The Examiner will follow the listed steps to welcome and introduce the candidate to the test station and the specific skill evaluation. After each statement, the examiner will ask the candidate if they have any questions. If the examiner discovers that there is a conflict between the candidate and the examiner (past class presentation, family, close friend, etc.), the examiner will notify the Assistant Chief Examiner and have him/her take the examiner's place.

The Examiner will do the following:

- *Greet the candidate and introduce yourself.
- *Give Candidate a chance to "catch their breath".
- *Ask for the Candidates Master Score Sheet so that personal information can be recorded on the PSE Check List.
- *State the specific skill by name and NFPA 1001 JPR number to the candidate.
- *Inform the candidate that you will be writing while they are demonstrating and that this is normal and should not be taken as an indication of improper demonstration of the respective steps.
- *Read the objective for the skill to the candidate and ask them if they understand what you just read (this will include any time restrictions).
- *Explain what is expected from the Candidate as is stated in the "Skills Test Objective" section on the Check List.
- *Explain that you will indicate a PASS/FAIL score on their Master Candidate Scoring Sheet and that you will initial the grade you have assigned. Should they fail the skill test station, the PSE Check List sheet and any comments will be forwarded to the Assistant Chief Examiner or Chief Examiner.
- *A FAIL score warrants a retest and the candidate shall be advised that they will be allowed to retest now. The candidate has the option to refuse to attempt the retest but must be reminded that any failure at any station is an automatic failure of the Test Site and the candidate will be asked to leave.
- *Candidates are permitted to retest at a station if they fail the first attempt, but this retest must be conducted as soon as the candidate is ready and a different examiner has been placed at the station.

After completion of the PSE, the Examiner should inform the Candidate to return to the Staging area and remind them not to talk to anyone or stop and observe any other skills test stations.

Thank the Candidate and make any other comments that you wish to make regarding their performance. Remember, you have other candidates that need to be tested and this is not a training session.

EXAMINER LEVELS – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Examiner:

The chief examiner performs as a specific examination administrator of certification examinations for the SFMTD. He/she shall answer directly to the SFMTD Training Manager.

The individual appointed as chief examiner shall be a member of the full-time instructional staff of the SFMTD. An individual shall hold this position that is both Fire Fighter I certified and Instructor I certified.

The chief examiner is accountable for all operations in the field, and must initially handle all problems until the defined problem can be forwarded to the SFMTD Training Manager.

The chief examiner shall supervise the assistant chief examiner and all examiners during skills evaluations.

Practical Skill Examinations:

The Chief Examiner shall:

- *Be responsible for Test Site Security.
- *Select test station placement for safety, security, and feasibility of operations.
- *Be responsible for the security of testing materials.
- *Secure test stations for isolation of candidates.
- *Be the receiver of all completed testing materials.
- *Correlate all completed testing materials, sign and seal per packaging envelopes.
- *Verify all candidates for certification testing.
- *Oversee all testing stations.
- *Brief Assistant Chief Examiner and all Examiners on proper procedures for test site and testing stations.
- *Be the direct contact person with the sponsoring agency for arranging the test site.
- *Control access to the test site-those qualified to be at the site, or to special dignitaries.
- *Introduces assisting staff and outlines their responsibilities.
- *Introduces candidates to the PSE site, explains what the Master Candidate Score Sheet is and explains the proper completion of the candidate's personal information, what paperwork must be completed, and how the point system and scoring is established for each skill evaluation.
- *Identify the location of all test stations and the materials needed at each station (i.e. Protective Clothing, SCBA).
- *Explains what procedures will be explained to candidates at each test station and the purpose for the objective and skill explanation.
- *Explains that cheating or failure to adhere to stated rules shall lead to a candidate being disqualified at the test site.
- *Explains failure and retest procedures.
- *Explains how disputes will be handled with reference to sequence questions directed by the Essentials Manual; and that all questions/complaints are to be directed to the Assistant Chief Examiner or the Chief Examiner.

Assistant Chief Examiner:

The assistant chief examiner performs as an assistant to the examination administrator of certification examinations for the SFMTD. He/she shall answer directly to the chief examiner.

The assistant chief examiner, to be appointed per test site, shall be either a Training Specialist or a Part-Time Instructor for the SFMTD. An individual shall hold this position that is both Fire Fighter I certified and Instructor I certified.

The assistant chief examiner is accountable for all field operations that may have been assigned per the test site by the chief examiner, and shall receive questions/complaints from students should the chief examiner be otherwise engaged.

The assistant chief examiner shall supervise all examiners per an established test site, and shall be held accountable for their actions under his/her supervision.

Practical Skill Examinations:

The Assistant Chief Examiner shall:

- *Assume responsibility for those duties assigned by the chief examiner.
- *Assist with security of the test site.
- *Evaluation of equipment supplied by test site host, and responsible for the replacement of damaged or broken equipment for the purpose of safety and efficiency for the candidate. This should be done with the following procedure in mind: all candidates at a stated test site shall be tested on the same equipment or as close to the same equipment as reasonably possible.
- *Control test station security so candidates are not allowed to oversee or observe skills being performed by others.
- *Assist candidates with proper completion of examination paperwork.
- *Coordinates the routing of candidates from the staging area to the specific test stations.
- *Substitutes for the test site examiner for breaks, conflicts, or retests.
- *Oversee the proper use of the equipment at each test station for safety and quality of equipment.
- *Answer questions from candidates regarding the point system and scoring process for the skills.
- *Provides information and acts as a liaison to students – explaining expectations, skills, retests, equipment, and reference material.

Cluster Skill Examiners:

All cluster skill examinations will provide the candidate with an assistant, an instructor or certified fire fighter from a surrounding organization, to be the second person on any task or assignment. This assistant shall not provide any guidance to the candidate, but only fulfill the roll of 2nd member of the team. The assistant shall perform all functions as directed to do so by the candidate being tested, without compromising anyone's safety. No activity of the assistant, who is not being graded, shall have any impact or implication on the skill test examination rating for the candidate.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION INSTRUCTIONS

Chief Examiner

Before examination packets are distributed to the candidates, the following information shall be verified and explained to candidates.

- All Candidates have been verified as being qualified to participate in the written examination. (This should be accomplished as candidates enter the test site area)
- Supply each candidate with 2-#2 pencils, scratch paper-if needed, and have sufficient number of test packets for each candidate. (Place on the tables for seating positions)
- Candidates placed at tables that are evenly spaced in the classroom. (Suggested that two candidates per table is the best arrangement-if sufficient table space available)
- Candidates have been advised that no materials may be present on the table, on the floor, or near the testing area that belong to a candidate.
- Candidates have been advised of exits, restrooms, and emergency procedures as are dictated by the host organization.
- All cellphones are to be turned off or placed on vibrate and no calls may be taken during the test unless the candidate is expecting an emergency call (doctors, family situations, etc).
- If any candidate is paged for an emergency response and leaves the test site, all materials must be turned into the Chief Examiner and will be marked as an incomplete test, test packet will be sealed, and the Chief Examiner will write his name across the envelop and the candidate will not be permitted to return and complete the test. If a candidate wishes to request permission to see if the organization has sufficient personnel to handle the call, and then returns to the test site; the candidate will be permitted to continue with the test. Otherwise, the examination will have to be rescheduled.
- Time for completion of the examination: (read the correct time for the applicable test)
Fire Fighter I—Total time-3.0 hours, Instructor I—Total time-1.5 hours
- Written examinations will not be graded at the site. The Administrative Assistant will grade the examinations within 5 working days once received in the SFMTD Office and you will receive a letter regarding your test status within 15 working days. All candidates, pass or fail, will receive a printout of all missed test questions along with you're their chosen answer, the correct answer, and a reference indicator.

When all candidates are seated, all above rules have been explained, and no one has any questions; handout the test packets and ask candidates to remove all materials, leave them in a pile, and lay the envelop at the top of the table. Remind them to be careful opening the envelope because they will be using it again. The instructions will be included in each test packet.

Read the following to the candidate and tell them to read along with you.

- On top of the materials for the test is an instruction sheet, please take it and read along with me as we cover all the instructions for taking this examination.
- There will be no talking between candidates before, during, or after you have completed your examination.
- If you need to make arrangements for some activity after the test is completed, make them now before the test begins.
- If you have a question, raise your hand and I'll come to your location. I am not permitted to assist you with answering the question, but if any terminology is not understood, or you need any interpretation of the wording of a question; I will clarify the question to all candidates.
- If you need to use the restroom, raise your hand, I'll come to your location, you'll be informed to place answer sheet inside of test booklet, close test booklet, and leave it on the table.
- The scannable test answer form requires you to complete all necessary information about yourself and this test site. Please note the following and we will cover all necessary sections for you to complete.
 - **TOP LEFT CORNER:** this is a box to enter your social security account number or personal identification account number (assigned by the SFMTD for those who will not provide their SSAN). Write your SSAN in the spaces at the top and fill in all corresponding ovals with the #2 lead pencil.
 - **DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING OVALS:** These are located in the lower left hand corner of the answer sheet. Please read and make sure you understand how to fill in the circles.
 - **NAME BOX (next box to the right of SSAN):** These spaces are for your LAST name. Write in the spaces your last name and then fill in the corresponding ovals.
 - **NAME BOX (next box to the right):** This space is for your FIRST name initial. Write in the space your first name initial and then fill in the corresponding oval.
 - **NAME BOX (next box to the right):** This space is for your MIDDLE initial. Write in the space your middle initial and then fill in the corresponding oval.
 - **GRADE BOX:** This box is below and to the left of your SSAN. DO NOT fill this box in.
 - **DATE BOX:** This box is to the right of the Grade Box and this is for today's date, not your birth date. The Date is: (Chief Examiner will give you the date) example: 02-05-2000. Write the date and fill in the respective ovals.
 - **ADDITIONAL DATA BOX:** This box is below the Date Box and requires the following information:
 - Course: Fire Fighter I or Instructor I
 - Test: Number from the test booklet
 - Date: Today's date
 - Instructor: Person administering the examination (Chief Examiner will give you the name)
 - Your Name: Enter your name-PLEASE write legibly
 - **SPECIAL CODES BOX:** Do not write in this box

- When you have completed all registration information (we'll wait until everyone is completed), open the test booklet to the first page. Examples of test questions are shown-and please note how to answer a true/false question. Note where the 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'D' answers are for each selection. They may not follow the same format for all questions in the test booklet.
- When you are told to begin the examination, read the entire question and all answers before making any selection.
- DO NOT write in test booklets, only on answer sheet (scratch paper is provided).
- NOTE: Test question numbers on the answer sheet are divided into 4 sections, each section contains 50 answer numbers with circles. Answers #1-#50 are in the first section, #51-#100 are in the second section, etc. Do not go straight down the first column. Make sure your question number in the test booklet matches up to the Answer sheet number.
- As you are answering questions on the test, periodically verify that you are on the correct number line on the answer sheet.
- If you change any answers, make sure you thoroughly erase the incorrect choice so the computer does not judge your answer as incomplete or wrong.
- When you have completed the examination and are sure you have answered all questions, place any scratch paper on top of the test booklet and place the answer sheet on top of the scratch paper.
- Place the documents inside the envelope at the top of your table (include the pencils unless the Chief Examiner tells you to do otherwise) and seal the envelope as best possible.
- Across the flap on the envelope, write your name, the date, and the current time (Chief Examiner can give you this if you do not have a watch).
- Take your test packet to the Chief Examiner and leave the test site room (you may remain on the premises or in the building, just not in the test site room).
- Do not visit or make any comments to other candidates.
- If you have questions for the Chief Examiner, you must wait until all candidates have completed the examination.

NOTE TO CHIEF EXAMINER:

- After each candidate turns in the test packet, verify the signature, date, and time and then write your name across the envelope flap.
- Secure all test packets and return to the SFMTD Office as soon as possible.

INTERPRETATIONS, LIMITATIONS, SAFETY

Students shall be advised that any assistance needed during any certification test requires them to make contact with the Chief Examiner or the Assistant Chief Examiner.

Additional supplies needed shall be directed to the Examiner in charge, such as paper, pencils, etc. Candidates taking any written examination will be provided all supplies needed for the examination and shall not be permitted to bring any support materials into the test site area.

Candidates needing a restroom break shall request permission to proceed to the restroom, under the condition that no other candidate is in the restroom. No situation should occur whereas two candidates should find themselves in the restroom at the same time, but should they; they shall refrain from any conversation regarding the test stations or test site.

All Examiners, regardless of rank, shall work under the policy that questions regarding the wording or meaning of a skills objective may be reworded in such a way that the meaning and intent of the objective is not changed, but the candidate does indicate to the Chief Examiner that they understand after rephrasing the statement. Questions in written examinations may be explained by rephrasing or rewording, but any question that is explained shall be explained to the entire candidate class so no bias claims can be made or statements of discrimination.

All health and safety issues must be explained in detail and may be expounded on for future understanding of the statement and safety objectives. All candidates shall be informed of risks to self and others when horseplay is conducted, and that any actions interpreted as such may lead to dismissal from the test site.

WRITTEN

TESTS

WRITTEN TEST SPECIFICATIONS

The SFMTD shall administer a written examination for any NFPA Standard and respective level that certification is offered for. Each written examination shall address the most current edition of the standard published by NFPA or the most current edition of the NFPA Standard recognized by the SFMTD for certification. The three-year limitation for update shall apply to this ruling.

The SFMTD shall administer written examinations for the following NFPA Standards:

1001—Fire Fighter I level—100 questions

Questions will be a combination of multiple-choice and true/false.

1041—Instructor I level—50 questions

Questions will be a combination of multiple-choice and true/false.

Written examinations will be generated randomly from the test bank of the SFMTD, purchased from PTS, Inc. and updated as notices are received from PTS, Inc.

Should any written examination be manually generated, it shall not contain any more than a 65% redundancy of questions.

No less than three versions of any certification written examinations shall be kept on file at all times in the SFMTD office. Frequency of use of any version shall dictate the disuse of the test and all tests shall be destroyed per policy and procedures. Maximum period that any one version shall be used is 1 year. This period will have a variance of 3 months, contingent upon the release of new versions of the test bank.

Passing Score/How Determined

The predetermined passing score, including the standard error of measurement-if applicable, shall be 75%. This passing score was determined based on analysis of scores received by candidates on previous written examinations. Also, 75% is a frequently used passing score for courses taken “Pass/Fail” at the post-secondary level in education. The scores from each test site are entered and a computer analysis is done on the test scores to determine the standard error of measurement for that test at that particular test site. The standard error of measurement points are added to the candidates raw score to determine their final score. Example: if the standard error of measurement for a particular site is 2.34, this is rounded off to 2. If a candidate received a raw score of 69% on the exam, their final score would be 71% once the standard error of measurement points are added.

SKILL

TESTS

PRACTICAL/PERFORMANCE SKILLS EXAMINATIONS

The SFMTD shall have developed a compilation of Practical Skills Examinations to be used for testing all Fire Fighter I candidates, and shall have designed Performance Skills Examinations utilized for Instructor I testing and education.

The SFMTD shall do a random selection of PSE's for Fire Fighter I and Instructor I testing, which shall include two cluster tests and two stand-alone tests for Fire Fighter I and one cluster and three stand-alone tests for Instructor I. These tests shall be randomly drawn from a file card system with each PSE number on it, with the exception that cluster tests shall be chosen so that at least one test contains the skill test of using an SCBA for Fire Fighter I. The cluster test for Instructor I shall involve a presentation (and conducted with one or two stand-alone PSE's), which score is combined with a stand-alone presentation to give a point score for a Pass/Fail rating on the presentations. These two tests (stand-alone and cluster presentation PSE's) will be required at all Instructor I test sites.

All PSE's will test the candidate by evaluating a step process of accomplishing an assignment for task. This approach to skills tests, along with the random selection that greatly reduces the chances of candidates knowing in advance which skills they will be tested on, verifies an ample achievement of testing the candidates understanding of all known skills needed for the Fire Fighter I classification.

Because of the design of the PSE's, which contain an evaluation process of scoring each step demonstrated to accomplish an assignment or task, the SFMTD is assured that all examiners will be consistent in their evaluation process and all candidates will be evaluated fairly. This method of evaluation will produce the same reliable and consistent scores, based on candidate efficiency observed.

All candidates will be evaluated with individually assigned check list score sheets, specifically assigned with the candidates name and social security account number or personal identification account number. All PSE checklists consist of a point value applied to each step to be demonstrated. This point value for each step needs only to be added up for a final score, which must meet or exceed 75% for a PASS score. Either the Chief Examiner or the Assistant Chief Examiner shall re-add all PSE scores for each candidate to validate the Pass/Fail rating.

All PSE examiners will receive instructions from the Chief Examiner prior to any test site examination being conducted. They shall receive direction on: the type of test stations, completing all candidate documentation, contact with both the Chief Examiner and Assistant Chief Examiner for questions and problems involving the candidate or equipment (handheld radios shall be used to maintain constant contact with all examiners-availability and arrangement for radios is the Chief Examiners responsibility), and locations for students that have and have not participated in the test stations. The Chief Examiner or the Assistant Chief Examiner shall secure the staging area.

In-service training for all examiners shall be conducted every three years or more frequently if policies and procedures are modified, and shall be evaluated annually by the Training Specialists.

