

**Washington State Patrol  
State Fire Marshal's Office  
Firefighter Certification Program  
CERTIFICATION POLICIES**



Approved by: Chad L. Cross, State Fire Marshal

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Effective January 10, 2024

The Washington State Patrol, Fire Protection Bureau (State Fire Marshal's Office) adopts nationally recognized standards to promote professionalism and competency in the fire service. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards will be used; standard development shall occur when no nationally recognized professional qualification standard exists. *(NFPA 5.1.3, IFSAC II A 2 Pro Board TD1)*

The State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) is currently accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), and will seek Pro Board accreditation in 2024, on the following levels of certification:

<b><u>Certification Level</u></b>	<b><u>Standard</u></b>
Hazardous Materials Awareness	NFPA 470
Hazardous Materials Operations	NFPA 470
Hazardous Materials Technician	NFPA 470
Firefighter I	NFPA 1001
Firefighter II	NFPA 1001
Driver Operator	NFPA 1002
Driver Operator – Pumper	NFPA 1002
Driver Operator – Aerial	NFPA 1002
Driver Operator – Tiller	NFPA 1002
Driver Operator – Mobile Water Supply	NFPA 1002
Driver Operator – ARFF	NFPA 1002
Airport Firefighter	NFPA 1003
Fire Officer I	NFPA 1021
Fire Officer II	NFPA 1021
Fire Officer III	NFPA 1021
Fire Officer IV	NFPA 1021
Fire Inspector I	NFPA 1031
Fire Investigator	NFPA 1033
Public Fire & Life Safety Educator I	NFPA 1035
Fire Service Instructor I	NFPA 1041
Fire Service Instructor II	NFPA 1041

<b>Table of Prerequisites/Co-requisites (NFPA 5.1.3, ISFAC II A 2)</b>		
Level	Prerequisite	Corequisite
Hazardous Materials Awareness (NFPA 470/1072)	NONE	NONE
Hazardous Materials Operations (NFPA 470/1072)	Awareness	NONE
Hazardous Materials Technician (NFPA 470/1072)	Operations	NONE
Firefighter I (NFPA 1010/1001)	NONE	Operations
Firefighter II (NFPA 1010/1001)	Firefighter I	NONE
Driver/Operator - Core (NFPA 1010/1002)	NONE	NONE
Driver/Operator - Pumper (NFPA 1010/1002)	Core	NONE
Driver/Operator - Aerial (NFPA 1010/1002)	FF1, Core	NONE
Driver/Operator - Tiller (NFPA 1010/1002)	FF1, Core	NONE
Driver/Operator - Mobile Water (NFPA 1010/1002)	Core	NONE
Driver/Operator - ARFF	Core, ARFF	NONE
Airport Firefighter (NFPA 1010/1003)	FF2	NONE
Fire Officer I (NFPA 1020/1021)	FF2	Instructor 1
Fire Officer II (NFPA 1020/1021)	Officer I	NONE
Fire Officer III (NFPA 1020/1021)	Officer II	NONE
Fire Officer IV (NFPA 1020/1021)	Officer III	NONE
Fire Investigator (NFPA 1033)	Awareness	NONE
Fire Inspector I (NFPA 1030/1031)	Awareness	NONE
Public Fire & Life Safety Educator I (NFPA 1030/1035)	NONE	NONE
Fire Service Instructor I	NONE	NONE
Fire Service Instructor II	Instructor 1	NONE
<p><b>NOTE</b> - Prerequisites for any level of certification require certification in <b><u>ALL</u></b> subordinate levels. Example: Firefighter II requires Firefighter I, Awareness, and Operations. ARFF requires FFII, FFI, Awareness, and Operations.</p>		

**Mission Statement:** *(NFPA 5.1.2, IFSAC II A 1)*

The mission of the Accreditation and Certification Program is to administer a quality certification program through competency testing in accordance with nationally recognized standards.

**Goals:**

- Implement testing processes that certify candidates to nationally-recognized standards
- Seek third party approval (Accreditation) of the State of Washington's certification program, to ensure that it is fair and equitable to fire service personnel, and meets the standard it is designed to attain
- Work collaboratively with the fire service, colleges, consortiums and professional organizations
- Continually strive for improvements in the delivery of the program to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources devoted to carrying out the mission

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## **1.0 ACCREDITATION CRITERIA**

### **1.1 Washington State Accreditation & Certification** *(NFPA 5.1.4, IFSAC II A 3)*

All levels of accredited certification in Washington State shall be conducted in accordance with NFPA 1000 and accrediting body guidelines. Utilizing the same criteria will ensure consistency throughout all levels of accreditation relating to written and practical examinations.

### **1.2 Delegated Authority** *(NFPA 5.1.9, IFSAC II B 4)*

Entities with delegated authority shall maintain compliance with Washington State accreditation criteria, and are subject to site visits and audits to verify compliance. Previously accredited entities must apply for delegation at the time the SFMO is accredited. The SFMO does not currently delegate its certification authority.

### **1.3 Two Year Update Requirement** *(IFSAC II A 10)*

The competencies for certification testing in Washington State are based on either NFPA or Washington State Performance Qualification Standards. The SFMO will update its testing materials within two years of edition changes to applicable standards. The SFMO will notify the appropriate accrediting body if unable to meet the two year requirement.

### **1.4 Notice of Standard Edition Changes**

Notice of standard changes shall be provided from the SFMO through multiple communication methods, including, but not limited to, website updates, email distribution lists, and newsletter publications.

### **1.5 Testing During Standard Edition Changes**

In instances where the standard is changed while a candidate is involved in the testing process, the candidate will be allowed to complete testing or retesting on the standard edition they were trained on, provided it is completed within a specified timeframe.

### **1.6 Program Guidance** *(NFPA 5.1.10, IFSAC II A 8, Pro Board PA4 TA2)*

The SFMO shall seek program guidance and feedback from a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) as needed, but no less than annually. The TAG will review specific aspects of the Firefighter Certification Program and make written recommendations for consideration and approval by the State Fire Marshal.

#### **1.6.1 Technical Advisory Group Composition**

To prevent undue influence on the program and ensure that a preponderance of the state's fire service is represented, SFMO staff shall ensure that every TAG has a diverse and robust membership. Certain TAGs may be smaller and less diverse, depending on the certification level and issue(s) to be considered (i.e., Airport Firefighter, Hazardous Materials – Technician Level). TAG membership will be approved by the Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal of the program.

#### **1.6.2 Program/Policy Appeals**

Any member of the Washington fire service may challenge a policy, process, or methodology of the Firefighter Certification Program. Those appeals must be made in writing to the program's Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal. Programmatic appeals will be considered at the next TAG meeting. TAG recommendations will be forwarded to the State Fire Marshal for consideration.

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**1.7 Impact of Accreditation** *(NFPA 5.2.5, IFSAC II A 9, Pro Board PA2)*

The SFMO recognizes that providing an accredited certification program benefits the citizens of the state of Washington by providing a reliable and valid means for firefighters to demonstrate competency in firefighting professional qualifications. This accreditation also supports Washington State Patrol Goal #2, to reduce our citizens' vulnerability to fire, crime, terrorism, and natural hazards.

The SFMO has addressed the impact of accreditation on the fire service and its members by providing a means for certain members to demonstrate professional competency through equivalency, historical recognition, or reciprocity.

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## **2.0 TESTING PROCESS**

### **2.1 Certification Testing** *(NFPA 5.2.4, IFSAC III 1, Pro Board PA3)*

Written competency exams and practical evaluation sheets are developed and disseminated by the SFMO. Certification exams are administered by individuals approved by the SFMO.

Written and practical exams shall have the capability of testing all components of the NFPA Job Performance Requirements (JPR's). There are no separate pretests for the requisite knowledge or skills.

Requisite knowledge is tested for all levels of certification through written exams. Requisite skills are tested for all levels of certification through practical skills exams except Fire Officer III and Fire Officer IV, which are tested via Product/Portfolio assessment.

#### **2.1.1 Test Security**

Individuals approved by the SFMO shall comply with test security protocol to ensure integrity of the testing process.

#### **2.1.2 Practical Skills Test**

The practical skills portion of the test shall be conducted in accordance with the Test Construction Guide for each level.

#### **2.1.3 Host Entity Responsibilities**

The host entity is responsible for appointing a test site manager to ensure required equipment, a safety officer, and necessary support personnel are provided. The host entity will ensure the test site complies with all state and federal safety regulations.

#### **2.1.4 Fees**

The SFMO does not charge a fee for providing written exams or practical skill sheets to the host. Host entities, including the Fire Training Academy, may charge fees to candidates to recoup expenses for conducting testing.

### **2.2 Test Registration**

All written and practical certification tests shall be registered with the SFMO. The SFMO shall make the testing schedule available upon request. Testing that is not registered with the SFMO will be invalid.

### **2.3 Candidate Eligibility**

All members of the Washington fire service are eligible to participate in the certification testing program. The SFMO shall publish candidate eligibility requirements to ensure individuals in the testing process meet the minimum age requirement and have adequate knowledge and skills requisite to take the exam(s). The SFMO will maintain a matrix identifying pre- and co-requisites for each accredited level.



### **2.3.1 Minimum Age Requirement**

Candidates must be 18 years or older to enter the testing process, regardless of affiliation with a department through a Cadet or Explorer program.

### **2.3.2 Training**

Candidates will be trained to the standard for which they are testing.

### **2.3.3 Test Progression**

Candidates shall test in progression as prescribed by the nationally recognized standard.

### **2.3.4 Prerequisites** *(IFSAC II A 13, Pro Board PA3)*

Candidates must meet all prerequisites prior to competency testing. Retroactively seeking to meet the prerequisites after entering the testing process will result in an invalidation of test scores. Candidates must be certified in all subordinate levels of a qualification to be certified at that level. Prerequisites are identified in each applicable chapter of the NFPA standard under General requirements.

Candidates must meet the prerequisites through testing in progression/sequence unless they meet one of the below exceptions:

#### **2.3.4.1 Equivalency**

Candidates may qualify for equivalency if they entered the fire service and completed training to NFPA 1001, prior to April 1995 when Washington State initially became accredited. Successful candidates will receive an SFMO certificate of equivalency.

#### **2.3.4.2 Historical Recognition**

Candidates seeking historical recognition must provide documented evidence of education, training and/or experience that validates performance to the adopted standard. Successful candidates will receive a certificate of competency with appropriate recognition from the accrediting bodies on new levels adopted after June 1, 2013.

##### **2.3.4.2.1 Five-year Limit**

Candidates will have a five-year window to apply for historical recognition for any new level accredited after June 1, 2013.

#### **2.3.4.3 Recognition of Certifications Issued by Other Accredited Entities**

#### **2.3.4.3.1 Recognition of IFSAC Certifications**

Recognition of IFSAC certifications issued by other accredited entities will only be granted on levels of certification for which the SFMO holds IFSAC accreditation. Candidates must be affiliated with a Washington State fire agency. Candidates must have been tested by an entity with the ability to test all the same NFPA Job Performance Requirements as the SFMO IFSAC accredited levels. Certifications must be verifiable. Candidates will receive an SFMO letter of reciprocity.

On levels where currency is required in Washington State, candidates will be expected to comply. If the out of state certification is expired, reciprocity will not be granted.

#### **2.3.4.3.2 Recognition of National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications Certificates (Pro Board)**

Recognition of Pro Board certifications issued by other accredited entities will only be granted on those levels of certification for which the SFMO holds accreditation. Candidates must be affiliated with a Washington State fire agency. Candidates must have been tested by an entity with the ability to test all of the same NFPA Job Performance Requirements as the SFMO 's accredited levels. Certifications must be verifiable. Candidates will receive an SFMO letter of recognition.

#### **2.3.5 Co-requisites**

Candidates must meet all co-requisites within one-year of beginning the testing process.

#### **2.3.6 Candidate Application**

Candidates must complete and sign the Candidate Application prior to entering any aspect of the testing process.

### **2.4 Retest [PA6](#)**

#### **2.4.1 Written Exam**

There is no limit to the number of retest attempts a candidate may take. Candidates must retest on a different day from the day of their original written exam(s). Candidates shall be administered a different test version for each retest attempt.

#### **2.4.2 Practical Test**

Candidates who fail up to three skill sheets are entitled to retest on the same day. Candidates who fail a fourth skill sheet, or who fail the same skill sheet twice must retest on a different day from the day of their original practical test(s).

### **2.4.3 Product/Portfolio Submissions**

Individual products may be resubmitted up to two times for reconsideration by the evaluators. Portfolio submissions must be resubmitted in their entirety.

## **2.5 Appeals** (*IFSAC II A 18, Pro Board PA5*)

Candidates may make a written appeal to the SFMO regarding certification testing scores or questions.

### **2.5.1 Written Exam**

#### **2.5.1.1 Written Score**

Candidates must submit an appeal in writing within 30-days of their score notification. The appeal must address the specific issue with the exam(s).

#### **2.5.1.2 Test Questions**

Candidates must complete the Certification Test Critique and Inquiry form provided with the Candidate Application. The Inquiry must contain the question number and the specific issue associated with the question. The form must be submitted at the time of the exam.

### **2.5.2 Practical Exam Score**

#### **2.5.2.1 On-Site Arbitration**

The Test Control Officer (TCO) on-site shall arbitrate any disputes candidates may have with an evaluator's grading decision. The TCO shall document all appeals and forward all appeals documentation to the SFMO.

#### **2.5.2.2 Unresolved Disputes**

If unable to resolve the dispute on-site, candidates may appeal further to the SFMO. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 30-days of their score notification.

### **2.5.3 Appeal Process**

Appeals not submitted in writing within 30-days of score notification will not be considered. For the purposes of appeals, "submitted" shall mean postmarked date, if sent by US Mail, or received date, if sent electronically to the SFMO.

#### **2.5.3.1 Appeal Step 1**

Appeals will be reviewed by the Chief Deputy of the program. Notification of that decision will be made within 15 business days of receipt of the appeal.

#### **2.5.3.2 Appeal Step 2**

Requests for review of the Step 1 decision must be made in writing to the Prevention Division Assistant State Fire Marshal (ASFM) within 15-days of

the appeal notification date. Notification of the ASFM's decision will be made within 15 business days of the receipt of the appeal. The decision of the ASFM is final.

## **2.6 Complaints**

The SFMO will consider all complaints regarding the testing process or against individuals involved with the testing process. The SFMO will investigate all complaints as appropriate.

## **2.7 Audit**

### **2.7.1 Audits by Accrediting Body**

Upon request, the SFMO shall provide the accrediting body a current test schedule. A representative designated by the accrediting body shall be permitted to observe any testing process as long as the SFMO receives a notice of intent to observe the test at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the test.

### **2.7.2 Audits of Delegated Authorities and Tests**

All exam sessions are required to permit a representative designated by the accrediting body or the SFMO to observe any testing process. Test managers/Test Control Officers must notify the SFMO of any change of the date, time, or location, 24 hours in advance.

## **2.8 Testing Outside of Washington State**

The SFMO shall test only within its jurisdictional boundaries, unless one of the below conditions are met.

### **2.8.1 Department of Defense (DOD) Facilities**

The SFMO will not conduct tests at DOD facilities without specific permission from the installation. The SFMO will conduct tests of DOD personnel, on or off DOD installations, only at DOD request.

### **2.8.2 Live Fire Facility**

If access to an out-of-state live-fire training facility is necessary to conduct a certification exam, the host entity must request approval from the SFMO prior to conducting the exam. The SFMO shall then request permission from the accrediting body and all related parties.

### **Currently Approved Out-of-State Facilities:**

- Marine Environmental Research and Training Station (MERTS), Astoria, OR
- Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport Fire Training Facility, Dallas, TX
- Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) Training Center, Maple Ridge, BC

### **3.0 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION** *(NFPA 5.2.1, IFSAC II A 7, PRO BOARD PA1)*

The SFMO will allow reasonable accommodation for known physical, mental, or sensory limitations of an otherwise qualified candidate with a disability in all aspects of the testing process, unless doing so would cause undue hardship to the SFMO.

Reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to, providing readers, qualified sign language interpreters, adaptive equipment, and other aids, as well as making documents and publications available in an alternate format when reasonably required to accommodate persons with disabilities.

It is the obligation of a candidate with a disability to request a reasonable accommodation in advance of all testing and exams. The SFMO may request verification from a health care professional.

The candidate's sponsoring agency is responsible for arranging for and any cost associated with testing accommodation.

Candidates shall be able to perform the essential functions of the certification for which they seek. A qualified candidate with a disability has the right to refuse accommodations.

## **4.0 TEST SITE REQUIREMENTS** *(PRO BOARD TA3)*

### **4.1 Safety Requirements**

Individuals approved by the SFMO to administer tests are responsible to provide a safety briefing to all participants in the testing process, ensuring they are aware of, and comply with WISHA, NFPA and WAC 296-305 safety requirements.

#### **4.1.1 Test Site Requirements**

Test sites must provide adequate space for written and manipulative skills testing.

Written test candidates must be seated at least two feet apart (per table). Candidates may not be seated directly across from each other at a table.

Computer-based candidates must all be seated facing the same direction.

Manipulative skills testing sites must be able to test all of the JPR's for a given level. Live Fire components may be tested at a different facility, but must be registered as a separate test.

Test sites must meet or exceed the NFPA safety and health standards or their equivalents, WISHA requirements, WAC 296-305 standards, and EPA requirements for live fire testing.

All Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), apparatus and equipment must meet or exceed applicable NFPA standards or their equivalents.

#### **4.1.2 Safety Officer**

Safety Officers are to be designated at all certification exams involving firefighting skills. They are responsible for monitoring site safety and shall have the authority to immediately stop and/or prevent unsafe acts at any time during the testing process.

#### **4.1.3 Test Control Officer (TCO)**

The TCO has the utmost responsibility of safety at the testing site and is required to terminate any unsafe activity immediately.

#### **4.1.4 Reporting**

All participants in the testing process are responsible for identifying and reporting safety issues.

#### **4.1.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)**

Candidates are required to verify their PPE is in good working condition and their SCBA has been properly fit tested. All SCBA cylinders must have visible

hydrostatic testing/inspection dates. Candidates with non-compliant PPE, SCBA, or SCBA cylinders are to be dismissed from the testing process.

#### **4.2 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Requirements**

Host entities and individuals administering exams shall be aware of and comply with all requirements of the federal EPA and the Air Pollution Authority, as they pertain to live-fire testing/training. All required permits are the responsibility of the host entity, and shall be maintained on file.

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#### **4.3 Non-compliance**

The SFMO or host entity will provide documentation when non-compliance with statute and/or other state, federal, or local regulations has occurred.

#### **4.4 Violations**

Violations of any of the above policies may result in disciplinary action.

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## **5.0 CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **5.1 Non-Discrimination** *(NFPA 5.2.1, IFSAC II A 7, Pro Board PA1)*

The SFMO prohibits all types of harassment, including sexual harassment and discrimination of any person because of ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability.

### **5.2 Cheating on Examinations**

Candidates and all test personnel with access to exam materials shall not cheat or tamper in any manner with an official examination by obtaining, furnishing, accepting or attempting to obtain, furnish, or accept answers or questions to such examinations. Furthermore, individuals shall not copy, photograph, or otherwise remove examination contents; nor shall they use any misrepresentation or dishonest method while preparing for, administering, or participating in such examinations.

### **5.3 Test Administration Personnel Conduct**

Participation in the SFMO Test Administration Personnel Program (TAP) is strictly voluntary; no employment relationship between the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and individuals participating in the TAP Program shall be construed or implied.

The WSP reserves the right to remove individuals from the program for any reason. Termination from the TAP Program shall be effective as of the date specified in the written notice of termination.

### **5.4 Candidate Conduct**

Alleged violations of policy will be investigated by the SFMO as appropriate. Individuals found to be in violation of the policies outlined in this document may be subject to discipline, which will be progressive in nature and may include permanent removal from participation in the state certification program. Though discipline is progressive in nature, the SFMO may initiate action at any level, based on the nature of the policy violation.

#### **5.4.1 Discipline Steps**

1. Verbal warning with follow-up documentation.
2. Written warning letter with corrective action plan implemented within 60days.
3. Suspension from the certification program for a period of one year.
4. Permanent removal from the certification program.

#### **5.4.2 Investigation**

The SFMO will maintain absolute confidentiality during investigations, though this may not be entirely possible with individuals external to the SFMO.

During an investigation, the SFMO's staff may contact any test personnel, test candidates, helpers, and personnel employed by, or associated with the agency/entity hosting the exam, who may have knowledge or are considered potential witnesses regarding our investigation.

#### **5.4.3 Findings & Recommended Actions**

The Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal of the program will determine appropriate corrective action for Steps 1 through 3. Any recommendation of permanent removal (Step 4) will be approved by the Assistant State Fire Marshal.

#### **5.4.4 Appeal of Discipline**

Appeals must be made in writing and submitted within 30 calendar days of notification of the determination of discipline. It is the responsibility of the appellant to ensure delivery of the request within the 30-day requirement.

Appeal of Steps 1 through 3 shall first be made to the Assistant State Fire Marshal. Appeal of Step 4 shall be made to the State Fire Marshal.

The decision of the State Fire Marshal is final.

#### **5.4.5 On-Site Conduct**

The TCO or Proctor has the authority to remove candidates from the test site if they determine the candidate has committed an egregious offense or policy violation (i.e., cheating) during the testing process. The offense or violation shall be documented and immediately reported to the SFMO and the above candidate corrective action policy shall be instituted.

## **6.0 INVALIDATION OF EXAM RESULTS**

### **6.1 Prerequisites Not Met**

Candidates will have their scores voided if prerequisite certification levels are not accomplished simultaneously in the same test administration sequence or prior to testing for the next highest level.

### **6.2 Cheating**

Certification or test results will be voided if cheating has been determined. See Code of Conduct Policy 5.2 Cheating on Examinations.

### **6.3 Test Version Duplication**

If candidates retest on the same test version, results shall be voided.

### **6.4 Test Security Compromise**

If test security is compromised, appropriate steps will be taken by the SFMO to determine scope of compromise and candidate scores may be voided as appropriate.

### **6.5 Under Minimum Age Requirement**

Candidates found to be under the age of 18 at the time of testing will have test results voided.

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## **7.0 ISSUING CERTIFICATIONS**

### **7.1 Notification of Test Scores (IFSAC V 2, Pro Board)**

#### **7.1.1 Written Exam**

Candidates will receive a Score Notice letter with the results of their written exam within 30 days of receipt of all test documents by the SFMO.

Test scores may be released to the TCO, proctor, or candidate's Fire Chief.

Training Officers and Training Program Directors may also be provided written scores by the SFMO.

#### **7.1.2 Practical Exam**

Candidates will receive notification of their practical score on the day of the practical exam from the TCO. Practical exam results are also included in the Score Notice letter.

#### **7.1.3 Score Expiration**

Scores expire one year from the date of notice.

### **7.2 Passing Score**

#### **7.2.1 Written Exam**

Candidates must have a raw score of 70 percent or higher to receive a passing score.

#### **7.2.2 Practical Exam**

Practical exams are scored on a pass/fail basis. Candidates are allowed two attempts on a specific task, but no more than four failed attempts during the testing process. When the maximum attempts are reached, the candidate is required to retest on a different calendar day.

### **7.3 Extensions**

Candidates may apply for an extension to complete their testing requirements. The SFMO will determine the length of the extension as appropriate. Extension requests must be in writing and made prior to the expiration of any practical or written test score.

### **7.4 Issuing Seals**

Certificates of Competency with seals from the accredited bodies will be issued to candidates that have successfully passed the written and practical exams as well as met the prerequisites for the level in which they tested.

#### **7.4.1 Replacement Seals**

Candidates may request a replacement certificate with new seals if the original is lost, stolen, or destroyed.

#### **7.4.2 Seal Report**

The SFMO shall submit a full report of all seals issued on a quarterly basis. The report will include any seals voided during the reporting period.

#### **7.5 Currency**

The following levels have a currency requirement to remain active in the state database:

Fire Investigator – 5 years

Candidates wishing to maintain currency in these levels must submit a Currency Application to the SFMO prior to the certification expiration date.

#### **7.6 Invalidating Certifications**

The SFMO may invalidate certification of any candidate when it is found that:

- The candidate has knowingly made a material misrepresentation of any information required for certification.
- The candidate has knowingly by any means of false pretense, deception, fraud, misrepresentation, or cheating, obtained training or certification.
- The certification was issued in error.

## **8.0 TEST BANK MANAGEMENT**

Tests Banks may be purchased from a test bank company or developed by the SFMO. There are no parts of an exam that are weighted.

### **8.1 Test Question Analysis**

#### **8.1.1 Correlations**

All test banks and practical skills must be correlated to the referenced NFPA standards utilizing approved correlation sheets/matrices for the level of certification being validated. Questions shall be reviewed and analyzed by the SFMO and a committee of subject matter experts. Each question shall include a reference to the standard being measured and to the reference source.

#### **8.1.2 Test Version**

Multiple test versions of each level will be created. The number of versions will be based on the frequency of use. Computer-based test versions will be scrambled.

#### **8.1.3 Test Results Review**

Tests/test items shall be reviewed when there is a high failure rate on a test version, which is defined as 50% or more candidates failing the exam.

#### **8.1.4 Written Exam Consistency**

Test questions are picked at random from the test bank whenever a new test is generated. Test banks are large enough to generate several different versions of the same test instrument.

### **8.2 Access**

#### **8.2.1 Access to Test Banks**

Access to test banks shall be limited to the following:

- Authorized SFMO personnel
- Accrediting bodies for the purpose of a site visit or administrative review
- Subject-matter experts for the purpose of test bank validation

### **8.3 Security**

#### **8.3.1 Test Bank Protection**

Test banks are maintained on a secure drive with access limited to authorized SFMO personnel only.

#### **8.3.2 Test Bank Compromise**

Any suspected compromise of a test bank shall be documented and reported to the SFMO, who shall investigate and take appropriate action. If it is determined

a test bank has been compromised, the SFMO shall report it to the accrediting bodies and immediately flag it and remove it from use.

### **8.3.3 Test Materials**

All test materials are kept in a secure location at the SFMO. Test questions shall not be duplicated or provided to unauthorized individuals.

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#### **8.3.1.1 Exam Booklets**

Exam booklets shall be considered a controlled item with use and distribution documented. Periodic inventories will be conducted.

#### **8.3.1.2 Proctors and Test Control Officers (TCO)**

Proctors and TCOs are responsible for the security of written exam materials while in their possession until properly submitted in a secure manner to the SFMO. Materials are not to be retained for any reason after the exam has been administered.

#### **8.3.1.3 Master Copies of Exams**

One master copy of each test version with associated answer key shall be kept on file at the SFMO.

#### **8.3.1.4 Destruction**

Destruction of test materials shall be documented.

#### **8.3.1.5 Minimum Exam Inventory**

A minimum of two (2) forms of each exam level will be on hand at all times. A larger number may be kept in inventory for levels with higher rates of use.

### **8.4 Test Development** (*Pro Board TD2*)

#### **8.4.1 Selection of Assessment Methods**

Assessment methods (cognitive, psychomotor, product, project, portfolio) will be selected based specific job performance requirements of the certification level, and ensure that the selected assessment method(s) is/are capable of measuring all job performance requirements of a standard/level.

#### **8.4.2 Complete Coverage**

The SFMO shall ensure its capability to cover all elements of each JPR being tested by maintaining documentation listing which test items meet each JPR. All JPR's for each standard shall be covered.

#### **8.4.2 Selection of Reference Materials**

Text books and other reference materials that meet the edition of the current NFPA standard shall be used. Only texts/reference materials recommended to the SFMO by the Technical Advisory Group will be used. The SFMO may seek input from specific interest groups and provide that input to the Technical Advisory Group to use in making their recommendation.

### **8.5 Test Instrument Creation**



### **8.5.1 Written Test Instruments**

Written test instruments shall be created using software designated by the SFMO. Test instruments shall be created using the random selection feature.

### **8.5.2 Computer/On-Line Based Test Instruments**

Electronic test instruments shall be created using software designated by the SFMO. Test items will be selected at random.

## **8.6 Test Item Creation**

### **8.6.1 Cognitive Test Items**

Cognitive/written test items created by the SFMO will be developed following the test item creation procedure listed in the program's test item creation procedures documentation. Cognitive test items will only be created when third party test banks do not provide sufficient questions to completely cover all JPR's in a standard. All SFMO-created test items will be reviewed by the SME group for that level.

#### **8.6.1.1 Qualifications**

Test items created by the SFMO will be done by an individual certified/qualified in the level of certification who holds, at a minimum, Fire Instructor I certification. Test items created by SFMO staff not certified in the level will be reviewed by an individual holding that certification.

#### **8.6.2 Other Test Items**

All other test items (skills sheets, assessment rubrics, etc) will be created using the test item creation procedure listed in the program's test item creation procedure.

## **8.7 Local Validation**

All test items will be validated by Subject Matter Experts in accordance with the SFMO Test Item Validation procedure.

## **9.0 RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

### **9.1 Confidentiality of Candidate Information**

Candidates entering the testing process shall be informed of the guidelines pertaining to confidentiality of candidate information.

#### **9.1.1 Candidate Personal Information**

Candidate FEMA SID, date of birth, and last four digits of social security number are required for identification and tracking purposes by the SFMO.

#### **9.1.2 Test Scores**

By signing the Candidate Application, the candidate authorizes the release of test scores to the home unit, instructor and TCO.

### **9.1.3 Public Disclosure**

Personal information attached to test records will be maintained in accordance with the Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW and other applicable law.

- Administrative or instructional staff may access student/candidate records when the information is required for advisement, recordkeeping, reporting, or other legitimate interests consistent with their specific duties and responsibilities.
- Officials of local jurisdictions may request the records of their own assigned personnel, pursuant to the authorization on the Candidate Application. Records released to the candidate's home unit will reflect the person's name, type and date of training, and the person's pass or fail status (including written scores).
- Authorized federal, state or local officials may request student/candidate records as authorized by law.
- Records may be released to comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena.

## **9.2 Test Records**

The SFMO shall maintain records of all certification exams to include location, date and level of exam, candidate names, scores and certifications issued. The records shall be maintained in accordance with Washington State retention and/or accrediting body guidelines.

### **9.2.1 Retention Schedule**

Records retention follows the Washington State Patrol's state agency Unique Retention Schedule.

In-Office: 24 months

Records Center: 48 years

Total Minimum Retention: 50 years

## **10.0 TEST ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL PROGRAM** *(PRO BOARD TA5)*

The SFMO shall establish and maintain a program for the selection and training of test proctors and evaluators. A list of current test administration personnel shall be maintained and published by the SFMO.

### **10.1 Agreement with the SFMO**

Test administration personnel must sign an agreement to abide by all SFMO policies and procedures pertaining to the testing process.

### **10.2 Test Administration Personnel Classifications**

Instructor I certification is a prerequisite for all test administration personnel, except those trained solely as a Proctor.

#### **10.2.1 Proctor**

This is a stand-alone designation for the administration of written exams only.

##### **10.2.1.1 Initial Certification**

SFMO approved classroom training

##### **10.2.1.2 Recertification**

Certification shall expire three years from date of issue. Individuals are responsible to complete SFMO approved refresher training, which may include a written exam, prior to the expiration date:

#### **10.2.2 Evaluator**

An impartial professional knowledgeable about and experienced with the components of an evaluation. Evaluators shall be certified at the level(s) which they are evaluating.

##### **10.2.2.1 Initial Certification**

- SFMO approved classroom training
- Task book completed and approved by SFMO

##### **10.2.2.2 Recertification**

Certification shall expire three years from date of issue. Individuals are responsible to complete the following prior to the expiration date:

- SFMO approved refresher training (which may include a written exam)
- A minimum of six evaluations

### **10.2.2.3 Adding Levels**

Requests to evaluate at additional levels may be submitted after certification on new levels is received. The request must be approved by the SFMO before performing evaluations on the new level.

### **10.2.3 Senior Evaluator (SE)**

A qualified evaluator with supervisory and site management responsibilities. Senior evaluators shall be certified at the level(s) which they are acting as senior evaluator.

#### **10.2.3.1 Initial Certification**

- SFMO approved classroom training
- Pass senior evaluator certification exam
- Serve 3 years as an Evaluator
- Task book completed and approved by SFMO

#### **10.2.3.2 Recertification**

Certification shall expire three years from date of issue. Individuals are responsible to complete the following prior to the expiration date:

- SFMO approved refresher training (which may include a written exam)
- A minimum of three evaluations

*Recertification at a higher level will maintain currency for lower level.*

#### **10.2.3.3 Adding Levels**

Requests to evaluate at additional levels may be submitted after certification on new levels is received. The request must be approved by the SFMO before performing evaluations on the new level(s).

### **10.2.4 Test Control Officer (TCO)**

A qualified senior evaluator with overall responsibility for test and site management. Test control officers shall be certified at the level(s) which they are acting as TCO.

#### **10.2.4.1 Initial Certification**

- SFMO approved classroom training
- Pass TCO certification exam
- Serve 3 years as a Senior Evaluator
- Task book completed and approved by SFMO at recommendation of TAG

#### **10.2.4.2 Recertification**

Certification shall expire three years from date of issue. Individuals are responsible to complete the following prior to the expiration date:

- SFMO approved refresher training
- A minimum of two performance evaluations by another TCO
- A minimum of two performance evaluations of another TCO

*Recertification at a higher level will maintain currency for lower levels.*

#### **10.2.4.3 Adding Levels**

Requests to evaluate at additional levels may be submitted after certification on new levels is received. The request must be approved by the SFMO before performing evaluations on the new level(s).

#### **10.2.5 Temporary Appointments**

The SFMO reserves the right to appoint test administration personnel at any level on a temporary basis as needed.

### **10.3 Previously Approved Test Administration Personnel**

The following policies shall apply to current test administration personnel with a signed agreement on file with the SFMO prior to December 31, 2013:

#### **10.3.1 Instructor I Prerequisite**

Fire Instructor I (NFPA 1041) is a prerequisite for the TAP Program.

#### **10.3.2 Certification Requirement**

Test administration personnel are required to be certified or hold equivalency for any level for which they serve as a Evaluator, Senior Evaluator, or Test Control Officer. The SFMO may temporarily appoint test administration personnel to evaluate on levels with a significant lack of certified evaluators, or for new levels of accreditation. Written test proctors do not need to be certified in a level to proctor a written exam.

#### **10.3.3 Recertification**

As of April 1, 2014, all individuals will be required to follow the 3-year recertification cycle as outlined above.

#### **10.3.3 Adding Levels**

Requests to evaluate at additional levels may be submitted after certification on new levels is received. The request must be approved by the SFMO before performing evaluations on the new level(s).

### **10.4 Ongoing Evaluation**

Test administration personnel are subject to ongoing evaluation. A rating sheet shall be completed on each evaluator and senior evaluator for every practical skills test.

### **10.5 Ethics in Testing**

Test administration personnel shall not serve as evaluators for the skill(s) they have taught to the candidate(s) without prior approval from the SFMO. Written certification exams shall not be proctored by the instructor(s) involved in training the candidate(s).

### **10.6 Discipline**

Test administration personnel are subject to the discipline policy, as outlined in 5.3 Test Personnel Conduct.

### **11.0 Delegation of Authority** *(NFPA 5.1.9, IFSAC II B, Pro Board PA6, PA7)*

As the accredited entity in Washington State, the SFMO has the authority to delegate any and all certification testing responsibilities to other entities within its jurisdictional boundaries. No delegation is currently granted by the SFMO.

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