Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control
Fire Service Certification Frequently Asked Questions
September 2010 (Revised June 2012)

1. What is the basis for fire service certification in the State of Connecticut?
Statutory authority with respect to the provision of fire service certification within the State of Connecticut incorporates Section 7-323ℓ-1 through 7-323ℓ-20 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The Certification Division of the Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (The Commission or CFPC) is accountable to the Fire Service Administrator who directs the agency's operations under the jurisdiction of a Board of Commissioners.

2. Why does the State of Connecticut offer a fire service certification process?
Within the State of Connecticut, the certification of fire and emergency personnel to various levels of competencies reflects the performance objectives established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The testing and evaluation certification process is a means by which a candidate demonstrates cognitive knowledge and psychomotor skills to meet professional qualifications standards for a particular level.

3. Is there national or international recognition to the certification process?
The Commission has been granted international accreditation by the ProBoard Fire Service Professional Qualifications System (ProBoard) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). These entities oversee the administrative and operational integrity of the certification process to ensure a high standard of fairness, validity, reliability, consistency, and equitability.

4. What standards are used to certify fire service personnel in this state?
The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control bases fire service certification on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for all of the levels offered. The Commission reserves the right to adopt other standards in the absence of an appropriate NFPA standard.

5. Who says I have to become certified?
Your local fire department, as the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), may have regulations requiring specific levels of certification. There is no state law or regulation requiring fire service personnel to become certified in Connecticut. The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control offers fire service certification on a voluntary basis.

The extent to which your community can influence your participation in the certification process depends on membership or employment requirements, collective bargaining agreements and local protocols.

6. Is there a distinction between the Connecticut Fire Academy and the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control Certification?
Yes. The Connecticut Fire Academy's role in the fire service is to present training opportunities to fire personnel. The CFA delivers training in areas relative to nationally recognized professional qualification standards, e.g. Fire Fighter I and II, Fire Service Instructor I, II and II, Fire Officer I, II, III and IV. Once the training is completed, candidates can pursue the national professional qualifications certification process granted to the Commission. The Commission's role is to offer a third party independent evaluation of the candidate's cognitive and practical skills which have been acquired from the resulting CFA course. If, the candidate tests successfully to the professional qualification standards required under the level of certification desired, the candidate will be recognized and certified both by the state and nationally.

7. What are the eligibility requirements for certification?
A candidate must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. The candidate must be sponsored by, or an active member of, a Connecticut fire department (or an out-of-state fire department that provides mutual aid to a Connecticut fire department on a regular basis). The candidate must meet the specific pre-requisite requirements and attain the knowledge and skills for the level of certification.

8. What levels of certification are recognized by the Commission?
The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control offers certification examinations for the following forty (40) levels of certification:

- Fire Fighter I
- Fire Fighter II
- Fire Service Instructor I
- Fire Service Instructor II
- Fire Service Instructor III
- Fire Officer I
- Fire Officer II
- Fire Officer III
- Fire Officer IV
- Public Fire and Life Safety Educator I
- Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Specialist I
- Fire Inspector I
- Fire Investigator
- Rescue Technician Ropes and Rigging I
- Rescue Technician Ropes and Rigging II
- Rescue Technician Confined Space I
- Rescue Technician Confined Space II
- Rescue Technician Trench I
- Rescue Technician Trench II
- Rescue Technician Vehicle and Machinery I
- Rescue Technician Vehicle and Machinery II
- Rescue Technician Structural Collapse I
- Rescue Technician Structural Collapse II
- Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Awareness
- Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Operations
    - Mission-Specific Competencies: Personal Protective Equipment
    - Mission Specific Competencies: Mass Decontamination
    - Mission Specific Competencies: Technical Decontamination
    - Mission Specific Competencies: Evidence Preservation and Sampling
    - Mission Specific Competencies: Product Control
    - Mission Specific Competencies: Air Monitoring and Sampling
    - Mission Specific Competencies: Victim Rescue and Recovery
    - Mission Specific Competencies: Response to Illicit Laboratory Incidents
    - Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Technician
- Driver Operator Pump
- Driver Operator Aerial
- Driver Operator Mobile Water Supply (Tanker)
- Health and Safety Officer
- Incident Safety Officer - Fire Suppression
- Airport Fire Fighter

9. What happens if I do not meet the prerequisite qualifications for a particular examination level?
You are not eligible for the certification testing process. Some levels of certification require that prerequisite conditions be met before a Certification Candidate can apply for testing. This may include driver training, Q endorsement or CDL license, sponsorship from a fire department or municipality, or subsequent certifications at another level. Refer to the application form or the Certification website for current prerequisite stipulations.

10. How do I apply to take a certification examination?
Upon completion of the appropriate training for the given level of certification, you may complete and submit the proper certification application form. Applications are generally handed out during the course and submitted to Certification by the instructor. Applications can be found at the ct.gov/cfpc website by clicking "Certification" and clicking "Certification Applications". All certification applications are available at the Certification Office. Applications must be received by the Certification Division at least ten (10) days prior to the examination date. Once reviewed and approved, you will be notified as to the location, date and time of the examination.

11. What type of assessment will I be required to complete?
In all levels, the certification process tests the candidate's cognitive abilities by offering a written examination covering the objectives for the respective standard. This is typically a minimum of one-hundred (100) multiple-choice questions. There are a number of levels of certification that require successful completion of a psychomotor assessment component. The psychomotor assessment covers areas of the level of certification where demonstrable skills are tested. In both circumstances, the candidate will be required to successfully complete the examinations process with a minimum test score of seventy percent (70%) or greater.

12. What is the certification testing process for those candidates trained in a combined course (i.e. Fire Fighter I/Fire Fighter II/HMWMD or Rescue Technician Confined Space I/II)?
The Certification Division will offer pre-determined certification examinations for specific training and certification combinations. Psychomotor skills examinations will offer a variety of demonstrable skills at each level. The certification candidate will have to successfully accomplish all skill sets, JPRs and/or scenarios with a seventy percent (70%) or greater score. If unsuccessful, a candidate will have to reschedule and successfully complete an entire practical skills examination process for the combination of levels.

The written combination examination process will consist of a number of randomly selected questions from the appropriate test bank designed by a third-party independent firm. The number of test questions for each level is pre-determined. While a candidate's overall test score may be seventy percent (70%) or greater, the score for each separate level being tested must reflect a minimum of seventy percent (70%) for successful completion of the written component of the certification process. Should a candidate pass one level and fail another, the candidate is only required to retake the failed level.

13. What do I have to study for the examinations?
Refer to the "Certification Reference Materials" located at the ct.gov/cfpc website for the specific references for the levels of certification. The candidate is responsible for all information from the list of reference materials. However, some materials may carry more information or be considered the primary source of information based on specific objectives for each standard.

14. Are the physical requirements adjusted to recognize limitations that age/gender/stature may place on an individual?
No. The standards are written to minimum performance levels. For certification, all fire service personnel must meet these minimum levels regardless of age/gender/stature or other physical characteristics.

15. Is the Connecticut Fire Academy the only location where testing and evaluation take place?
No. Written examinations are offered on a monthly basis at the CFA and at various locations convenient to courses presented throughout the state. Psychomotor (practical) examinations are scheduled at various predetermined locations based on the course being offered, the type of skills being assessed and the professional qualifications standard level of certification.

16. What do I need to know about participating in the practical and/or written examination events?
The following situations and responses are among those most commonly addressed by the Certification Division staff and our cadre of onsite examiners:

> **A candidate's name does not appear on the roster for a practical or written exam**
> The candidate is not allowed to participate in the examination process. No "walk-ins" are allowed. The official certification roster is prepared in advance and cannot be amended at the examination site in order to add a candidate. The candidate is required to reschedule.

There are reasons why a candidate's name does not appear on the roster – unmet prerequisites, an incomplete application, late submission of an application (fewer than ten (10) days prior to the examination) unsigned or incomplete instructor endorsements on the reverse side of the application form and other similar issues. Adjunct Examiners, by policy, have been instructed to dismiss any unlisted candidate from the process. The inclusion of unauthorized individuals has been shown to overburden the system, fail to provide the promised fair, objective, consistent assessment environment and compromise the integrity of the certification process.

A candidate forgets to bring a photo ID to the practical and/or written certification examination.
The candidate is not allowed to participate in the examination process. Rescheduling is necessary.

A candidate arrives late to a practical or written examination.
The candidate is not allowed to participate in the examination process. Rescheduling is necessary.

A candidate foregoes bringing food and/or beverage, anticipating an offsite lunch break.
It is the practice of the Certification Division to conduct the practical examination without suspending activities for a lunch break or allowing candidates to leave the examination site before all testing and re-testing is completed. Candidates are encouraged to plan for their personal/medical food and beverage needs during the examination day and to check with the host site contact or lead instructor to confirm arrangements and guidelines for the onsite provision and consumption of food and/or beverages.

A candidate informs examiners of the need to leave the examination site (work, family or social commitment, fire department event) before the full day examination is completed.
Candidates are required to remain at the certification testing site until dismissed following the conclusion of all testing and retesting. Those who elect to leave before the official end of the examination day will be required to complete a Voluntary Withdrawal Form. Rescheduling for a future examination is necessary. No credit will be given for any of the skill stations, evolutions or JPR scenarios completed prior to leaving the site.
Should notification of a family emergency be received once the examination has begun, a candidate, with proper notification to the Chief Examiner and documentation of the situation, may be dismissed from the examination and advised to reschedule.

A candidate arrives at the examination site with jewelry/piercings in the face/neck area and/or facial hair that could interfere with SCBA or other respiratory protection.
All certification candidates are required to comply with NFPA standards and OSHA regulations as outlined for facial hair when donning an SCBA or other respiratory device. Jewelry and/or body adornment which may pose a safety hazard shall be removed. Non-compliance shall result in dismissal from a practical examination.

A candidate's PPE does not fit, is torn, and/or not suitable for use.
Poor fitting, torn, unsuitable PPE is a **safety** issue. Candidates are allowed to borrow needed items without disrupting the examination process. Any borrowed items must be worn in compliance with manufacturer's recommendations and in accordance with applicable NFPA Standards. If it is not possible to borrow items, the candidate will be dismissed and advised to reschedule.

A candidate behaves with disrespect, displays temper, uses profane or abusive language towards an adjunct examiner or station evaluator.
The candidate is dismissed from the examination and must leave the site. It is possible that law enforcement will be notified.

A candidate asks to be afforded reasonable accommodations for a disability.
All requests for reasonable accommodation must be made in writing to the Director of Certification at least ten (10) days in advance of any written examination. Requests outside of this policy cannot be accommodated at the examination site. The Candidate may elect to continue with the written examination process as administered for other candidates at that time.

A candidate's friend(s)/family member(s,) fire department members, officers, instructors, host site representative(s) or civilians visit the examination site during a practical or written examination.
No friends, family members, fire department members or civilians are allowed to visit the examination site during the testing process or converse with any candidate. A chief officer wishing to monitor a certification candidate's performance on the examination day must secure written permission from the Director of Certification, show it to the Chief Examiner and observe from a distance deemed appropriate by the Chief Examiner. No contact with the certification candidate is allowed.

A candidate brings recordable electronic technology to the examination site
Electronic devices (iPods/iPhones/PDAs/cell phones/pagers) are prohibited at examination sites. No photography, audio or video recording is allowed by any electronic means. Additionally, no one is allowed to record any certification processes without permission from the Director of Certification. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the examination site.

A Lead Instructor for the candidate's training class arrives at the examination site.
No conversation should occur between the Lead Instructor and the certification candidates once the testing process is begun.

A candidate brings a calculator, pencils, and reference material to a written examination
This is not necessary. All required materials will be supplied by the Proctor at the time of the examination.

17. Under what conditions could a practical or written certification examination be cancelled?
While extremely uncommon, there may be environmental, site-specific or equipment/ resources-related circumstances which prevent the delivery of a safe, fair, objective and consistent examination process. If, in the estimation of the Chief Examiner or Proctor, an examination needs to be postponed or canceled, every effort will be made to notify all concerned parties at the earliest possible time.

Below are a few characteristic instances where the cancellation of an examination may be warranted:

Use of the site by another event concurrent with the practical or written examination
The examination site cannot to be shared with another function, in fairness to all involved. If the Chief Examiner determines that the facility is not conducive to appropriate fair and consistent testing, the examination process is to be canceled.

Insufficient qualified Station Evaluators for a practical examination
The host department/training school for the examination must fill the vacancy within one hour. Extenuating circumstances can occur, however, where the Chief Examiner, may exercise discretion and elect to continue the practical examination.

Under no circumstances is an instructor allowed to serve as a Station Evaluator for a topic/skill previously taught to a candidate or class of candidates. The inability to field a team of qualified Station Evaluators is cause for cancellation.

Insufficient equipment on site to conduct the practical examination
Prior to the scheduled examination date, a list of required equipment is sent to the host department/agency/training school which is responsible for safety and operational compliance of the items. Should extenuating circumstances occur, the host entity the training school has one hour to locate and position the appropriate needed apparatus/equipment on site.

Equipment/apparatus malfunction
It is the responsibility of the host entity to provide substitute apparatus/equipment on site within one hour. Continuation of the practical examination will be at the discretion of the Chief Examiner.

Severe weather conditions (predicted or developing during an examination)
When severe weather is forecast during regular business hours for an upcoming examination, the Certification Division office staff will make contact with the host or training school and assigned Adjunct

Examiners. The entities will exchange direct contact information, allowing the parties to make the joint decision to cancel, postpone or conduct the examination. Should an examination be canceled or postponed the State Fire Administrator and the Director of Certification will be notified. Every effort will be made to notify all concerned parties at the earliest possible time.

For severe weather conditions which develop during an examination, the decision to cancel, postpone, suspend or delay the process will be at the discretion of the Chief Examiner/Proctor.

18. What happens if I am unable to attend my scheduled practical or written examination?
It is the responsibility of the candidate to notify the Certification Office. Rescheduling will be at the discretion of the Certification Office.

19. What if I fail to report to my assigned examination?
Failure to report to an examination at the assigned time and location constitutes an absence, which translates to a "No Show" status. When a candidate is considered "No Show", the following procedure shall be enforced:

- The candidate shall forfeit any certification application fee
- The candidate shall receive information on the rescheduling process to coincide with the mailing of results from the missed exam
- The candidate shall be required to reapply for the examination

20. If I fail the practical examination how soon can I be scheduled for another examination?
The Certification Office will notify you of the rescheduled date and location. Do not attempt to contact the Certification Office before you receive this notification.

21. How will I be notified on my written examination results?
Unofficial results of the written examination will be posted in the Certification section of the CFPC website approximately two (2) weeks following an examination. Officially, a candidate will be notified of the written examination test results through the USPS. **Do not call the Certification Office inquiring about results or to retake an examination until you have received notification through the USPS.**

22. If I fail can I retake a certification examination without taking the training course over again?
Certification candidates are allowed one year from the date of the Lead Instructor's signature on the original applications for certification to complete the certification process for that level of training. This includes both single level and multi-level certification examination processes. During that time you will be provided unlimited opportunities to retest following the policies for examination retake.

Once the twelve (12) month period has lapsed, you shall be required to retake the applicable training course before the application process can be activated.

23. I'm a certified firefighter in another state. What do I have to do to get recognized as a certified firefighter in Connecticut?
To be certified to any level in the State of Connecticut an individual must complete the "Certification Reciprocity Application" and submit copies of the IFSAC and/or ProBoard Certifications for review. Reciprocity does not replace the certification process. Individuals certified from other states are entered into the Certification System and are not granted Connecticut certificates or patches. They are allowed to advance to the next level in the certification process.

24. I've been on the job since before the fire service standards were developed. Can I receive retroactive status or an exemption into the certification process?
The Commission does offer retroactive status to a select few certification levels. FFI is waived for members of a fire department who are active members before July 1, 1977, if they are applying for Pump, Aerial, and Mobile Water Supply Operator. FFII is waived for active members before July 1, 1977 seeking Fire Service Instructor I certification. Fire Officer I is waived for those seeking Health Safety Officer or Incident Safety Officer--Fire Suppression, who have served as an officer with the same department since July 1, 1986. In all circumstances, documentation is required. All other prerequisites apply.

25. I have a fire science degree. Can I have any portion of the certification examination waived?
The Commission makes certification independent of training and education. Therefore, no portion of the certification process is waived for possession of educational degrees. A candidate must solicit the Director of Certification before taking a course, to review course materials for content against a particular current professional qualification standard to challenge the certification process. If it is determined that a course meets all aspects of the standard, the Director can elect to limit a portion of the certification examination process.

26. I have many certificates for training I have completed. Does this make me certified?
No. The Commission maintains that there is a distinct difference between training and certification. In earning your training certificates you may have acquired the knowledge and experience that could assist you in the certification process for a particular level. However, all persons who wish to become nationally certified to a particular level must successfully complete the certification examination process.

27. I have a State of Connecticut teaching certification, POST instructor or EMS-I. Can I become a certified fire service instructor?
Yes, provided you are an active member of a CT fire department and meet all stated eligibility requirements, the Commission will waive the training course for the Fire Service Instructor I prerequisite. A candidate applying for Fire Service Instructor I will need to successfully complete the practical and written examination process before receiving certification. The teaching license is not valid for Fire Service Instructor II or III certification prerequisite requests. Be advised, that if you are considering employment as an instructor at the Connecticut Fire Academy you may need to complete the Fire Service Instructor I training program.

28. What constitutes a qualified course or instructor for purposes of applying to enter the certification process?
There are certain fire and emergency services certification-intended training courses offered in Connecticut that do not require instruction by a Certified Fire Service Instructor or where the student may benefit from instruction by an individual with specialized expertise in a given field. Similarly, there may be students who do not have a fire service background and who may participate in training and certification as an obligation to their profession. Four essential elements are necessary to qualify for participation in the certification process: qualified entity, qualified instructor, qualified course and qualified student. Refer to the Administrative Manual for the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM** which is listed in the Certification section of the CFPC website.

29. Who is responsible for paying the certification fees?
The individual applying for certification is responsible for arranging payment of the certification fees. Some communities pay the fee while others make the fee the responsibility of the individual. Check your local procedure for this aspect of certification.

30. If I become certified to a specific level this year, when will I have to recertify?
At the present time there is no requirement for recertification in the State of Connecticut at any level offered by the Commission.

31. I lost or misplaced my certificates. How do I apply for a replacement?
While duplicate certificates can be made, at a charge of **$5.00** per certificate, the time it takes to process such requests could keep you from meeting an important deadline for certification or promotional testing. Requests for duplicate certificates are processed when time permits.
You can download a Certification Order Form from our website under the tab "Forms".

32. I lost or misplaced my re-examination paperwork. How do I get a replacement?
If you are sent paperwork for a retest, it is your responsibility to keep this paperwork in a safe place so that it is readily available to you when you are ready to retest. Requests for replacement paperwork can be sent to the Certification Registrar via a formal request in letter form. Replacement paperwork will be sent out when time permits (not ASAP), and you may miss out on a deadline in the meantime, so it is up to you to keep this paperwork in a safe place.

32. Does the Certification Division offer EMS certifications?
All EMS related certifications are processed by the Office of Emergency Medical Services, Department of Public Health. Refer to the website: www.ct.gov/dph

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