

CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

Administrative Manual

Revised March 2009

CONTENTS

CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM - Administrative Manual

FORWARD FROM THE DIRECTOR

SECTION ONE: CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM.....Page 1

SECTION TWO: DIVISION ORGANIZATION Pages 2-9

Governance	2
Mission: Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control	2
Mission: Certification Division	2
Certification Division Goals and Objectives	2-4
Staffing: Roles and Responsibilities	4
Director of Certification	4
Certification Coordinator	4
Certification Registrar	4
Adjunct Examiners	4
Chief Examiner	5
Examination Proctor - Written Examinations	5
Live Burn Auditor	5
National Registry ALS Examiner	5
General Responsibilities for Adjunct Examiners	5-7
Professional Conduct of Adjunct Examiners	7-9
Examiner Attire for Examinations	9
General Attire	9
PPE	9

SECTION THREE: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND PRACTICES..... Pages 10-20

Compliance	10
Eligibility	11-13
Certification of Non-Fire Service Personnel	13-14
Certification Challenge	14-15
Certification Prerequisite Waiver	15
Certification Reciprocity	15-16
Examinations	16
Staffing	16-17
Health and Safety	17-18
Testing Environment	18-20
Cheating	20
Discipline for Cheating	20

SECTION FOUR: HOW KNOWLEDGE IS ASSESSEDPages 21-43

Requirement Compliance Options	21-22
Method # 1	22
Method # 2	22
Method # 3	22
Process for Candidate Evaluation	22-23
Initiating the Review and Interview Process	23-24
Assessment of the Certification Candidate	24-25
Notification of Examination Results	25
Method #4	25-26
Competency Verification	26
Process Approval	26-27
Process Initiation	27-28
Demonstration of Competency	28
Option I: Professional Experience	28-29
Option II: Documented Work Product(s)	29
Option III: College Course Completion	29-30

Option IV: Completion of a Professional Development Program	30-31
Appointment of the Portfolio Review Team (PRT)	31
PRT Selection Criteria	31-32
PRT Orientation	32
Portfolio Review	32-33
Applicability	33
JPR Mastery	33
Originality of Work	33-34
Completion of Review and Candidate Notification	34-35
Portfolio Appeals	36
Fraud or Deception After Issuance of Certification	36
Assessment of Psychomotor Skills	37-38
Skill-Related Evaluation Materials	38
Assessment of Cognitive Competency	38-39
Written Test Design	39
Multi-level Examinations	39
Question Bank Management	39-40
Examination Practices and Assessment-Related Guidelines	40
Examination Absences	40
Reasonable Accommodations and the Assessment Process	41
Documentation of Challenged Status	41
Generally Accepted Accommodation Options	41-42
Accommodation for Language	42
Testing Locations for Accommodated Candidates	42
Field Reporting System	42-43

SECTION FIVE: RECORDS MANAGEMENTPage 43-50

Document Obsolescence	43
Test Security	44-45
Privacy and Security Policies	45-46
Public Information Disclosure	46
Disclosure of Student/Certification Candidate Records	46-47
Third Party Disclosure of Examination Information	47
Disclosure of Examination Results	47-48
Disclosure of Examination Results to Certification Candidates	48
Practical Examinations	49
Written Examinations	49
Challenge Process: Records/Files Review	49-50

SECTION SIX: CERTIFICATION REFUSAL, REVOCATION AND APPEALPage 51-53

Appeals Board	52
Procedural Timeline	52-53

SECTION SEVEN: POLICY REVIEW AND REVISIONPage 53

FORWARD

The focus of the State of Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, Certification Division, is on people -- in the Connecticut Fire Service community and within the agency and the division. This assures customer-orientation, quality and competence. Our mission is committed to the development and maintenance of an organization and procedures which allow for fair and consistent evaluation of the members of the Connecticut Fire Service to various National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Professional Qualification Standards and the maintenance of certification records.

Respect for the individuals we serve and those who make up our team is one of the qualities that set the Certification Division standard. The members of the Certification Division are proud to be able to maintain an environment and core values that are drawn on each time we collaborate with our customers. Our key to success is founded on professional know-how and practiced to a high level of competence. For these reasons, the Certification Division is qualified to serve as the State of Connecticut's Fire Service confidential colleague in all certification matters.

The **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM** Administrative Manual and Operating Guide are two tools designed to guide the members of the Certification Division team and direct Certification Candidates to a successful certification examination experience. With this system's manual prominently displayed and employed, any member of the Connecticut Fire Service will be able to reference and understand the policies and procedures involved and the measures that are taken to ensure the most comprehensive, fair and consistent Fire Service certification process.

Tom McGowan
Director of Certification
January 2008

SECTION ONE: CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

The operation of the Certification Division of the State of Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control can be documented through six (6) interrelated components:

Administrative Manual - policy document

Operating Guide - procedures manual

Document Review Schedules - tracking documents

Examination Procedures - detailed information per certification level

Communications Packages - audience-specific detailed procedures

Website Communications - documents included in CFPC website

The intent of the systems approach is to provide a comprehensive framework which answers the questions, "What do we do?" and "How do we do it?".

Through modular design and the use of templates, the system is structured to offer multi-level response, with detail appropriate for the requesting entity. The result is an efficient process for review and modification reflective of the dynamic character of the Fire Service.

How to Use This Manual

Viewed as the "driving document" for the Certification Division's operational policies, this manual includes general policy information supplemented in more depth with charts and reference material located in the Appendix. Where appropriate, margin notes will direct the reader to specific locations for related system components.

Copies of this document are retained in hard copy at the Certification Division office and are available in electronic format on the Commission's website.

Style Guide and Glossary

The glossary and style guide located in the Appendix is intended to provide a common understanding of terms used within the Fire Service and the certification process. Every attempt shall be made to assure continuity among communications documents issued from the Certification Division.

Appendix

SECTION TWO: DIVISION ORGANIZATION

Within the State of Connecticut, the certification of Fire Service personnel to various levels of competency reflects performance standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in compliance with federal, state and local regulations and guidelines for the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). Nationally accredited, the process is overseen by the Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and managed by its Certification Division.

Governance

The Certification Division of the Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC) is accountable to the Fire Service Administrator who directs the agency's operations under the jurisdiction of a Board of Commissioners. A current listing of Commissioners is located in the Appendix to this document.

Appendix

Mission: Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control

The Mission of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC) is to prevent or mitigate the effects of fire and disasters, either natural or manmade, on the citizens of the State of Connecticut. This objective shall be accomplished through the development and delivery of state-of-the-art educational programs designed to meet nationally recognized standards, certification of individuals to such standards and maintenance of up-to-date resources for use by Fire Service personnel, public educators and other first responders.

Mission: Certification Division

The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control Certification Division is committed to the development and maintenance of an organization and procedures which allow for fair and consistent evaluation of the Connecticut Fire Service to various National Fire Protection Association Professional Qualification Standards and the maintenance of certification records.

Certification Division Goals and Objectives

Working closely with the CFPC Training Division, independent Regional Fire Training Schools located throughout the State, and through authorized certified instructors within local fire departments, the Certification Division is committed to the following goals and objectives:

- Establish a mechanism whereby municipal, tribal and industrial fire brigade personnel can be measured against established

qualifications and demonstrate skills in alignment with applicable NFPA Standards

- Maintain standard operating and administrative procedures to preserve accreditation of the CFPC certification system in accordance with the requirements of the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the National Board on Professional Firefighter Qualifications (ProBoard)
- Preserve the CFPC certification system within the requirements issued under the Connecticut General Statutes and State Administrative Regulations related to the CFPC
- Uphold a certification system whereby Certification Candidates are tested in a fair and consistent manner on information and skills relevant to the particular NFPA Standard
- Offer an individualized assessment of prior learning, knowledge, skills, abilities and experience for applicants who wish to pursue certification at certain levels
- Design the organization, procedures and staffing activities to achieve the highest standard for security of examination documents and results
- Provide all certification programs on a voluntary basis
- Strive to adopt new NFPA Standards and update all practical and cognitive instruments and procedures skills testing within 18 months of issue for each new or updated NFPA Standard
- Maintain permanent records documenting the certification testing results of all individuals who properly apply for certification through the CFPC Certification Division
- Assure that all testing is conducted in a manner which provides for the appropriate safety of all applicants, examiners and the general public at all times
- Sustain a cadre of Adjunct Examiners who are trained and qualified to fairly and consistently assess the skills of Certification Candidates
- Market Fire Service certification testing and certifying services to all the Fire Service organizations and personnel of the State

Appendix

Appendix

Operating
Guide

of Connecticut without regard to race, gender, creed, national origin or disabilities

- Develop policies and procedures in a way to reasonably preclude the inappropriate influence of individuals, entities or interest groups over the certification process

Staffing: Roles and Responsibilities

The Certification Division is staffed by a team of full-time employees supported by a cadre of Adjunct Examiners who serve as Chief Examiners, Written Examination Proctors and Live Burn Auditors:

The **Director of Certification** is responsible for the development and administration of the entire certification system. In addition to serving as the agency's representative to national accreditation boards and organizations, the Director is accountable for the development of written test documents and the oversight and management of daily operations.

The **Certification Coordinator** is primarily responsible for the administration of practical skills testing. Tasks include but are not limited to the development of skills examination stations, Job Performance Requirement (JPR) scenarios and NFPA 472 scenarios for examination of Certification Candidates, management of the practical skills examination component of candidate evaluation and associated recordkeeping tasks.

The **Certification Registrar** is responsible for records relating to the certification system and maintenance of individual certification records. Tasks include but are not limited to verification of Certification Candidate eligibility for practical and written examinations, scheduling of written and practical examinations, and communication of examination results to Certification Candidates with distribution of earned certificates.

Adjunct Examiners

The Certification Division employs a number of experienced Fire Service professionals who are minimally certified to the Fire Service Instructor I level and have been trained and oriented to the policies and procedures for conducting certification examinations.

These individuals may be called on to serve in any or all of the following roles:

The **Chief Examiner** for a practical examination is accountable for conducting Certification Candidate evaluations in a fair, objective and safe manner, and is granted authority for on-site decision making, with oversight for Station Evaluators and accountability for accurate recordkeeping and documentation of Certification Candidate performance.

The **Examination Proctor** for a written certification examination is responsible for assuring a safe and appropriate environment for the administration of written test instruments, for maintaining test security and for performing associated recordkeeping duties.

The **Live Burn Auditor** is responsible for the confirmation of Certification Candidate participation in live fire training that reflects specific skills within NFPA 1500 - Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, NFPA 1001 - Standard for Professional Qualifications of Firefighters at the Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II levels of certification and is conducted in a safe manner following the guidelines of NFPA 1403 - Standard for Live Fire Training Evolutions.

The **National Registry ALS Examiner** is responsible for assessing the psychomotor practical skills performance of Certification Candidates for the National Registry examination at the Advanced Life Support level, in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT). Station Evaluators shall be selected from among those Adjunct Examiners who have attained the requisite EMS qualifications specified by the NREMT. The exact skills to be evaluated on a given examination day shall be determined by the NREMT and communicated to the National Registry ALS coordinator.

General Responsibilities for Adjunct Examiners

The assurance of an effective, fair, consistent and secure testing environment is the priority for all adjunct personnel

who conduct examinations on behalf of the Certification Division. The safety of all participants in the examination process is of highest priority and the security of all testing materials is expected.

While a full delineation of responsibilities appears in the Operating Guide of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**, the following general tasks are assigned to a Chief Examiner and/or Written Examination Proctor:

- 1) Verify the identification of all Certification Candidates participating in an examination process through a photo identification source bearing a date of birth (e.g. driver's license, military or Fire Department identification card, passport)
- 2) Distribute and collect all examination materials required for a written certification examination; secure for transport
- 3) Deliver scripted instructions at practical and written examinations to explain the examination process and requirements for maintaining an appropriate testing environment
- 4) Assure that written examinations are conducted within the prescribed timeframe by announcing the start point, mid point and end point for a given examination
- 5) Confirm that Station Evaluators assigned to practical skills examination stations have not instructed Certification Candidates in the topic(s) to be assessed
- 6) Verify that practical skills stations are equipped with the tools and resources necessary to conduct a safe and accurate examination
- 7) Observe the administration of practical skills stations through periodic checks to confirm that Station Evaluators and Certification Candidates comply with prescribed guidelines for the examination process

Operating
Guide

- 8) Review skill sheet summaries and individual skill sheet deficiency documentation for accuracy and completeness
- 9) Conduct a skill sheet review with the Certification Candidate for any practical skill stations requiring retesting, and oversee the second performance assessment of said Certification Candidate
- 10) Record grade summaries on appropriate forms and document any discrepancies from the prescribed process
- 11) Dismiss from the examination site any individual who fails to comply with Certification Division policies and procedures for a safe, fair, consistent, equitable and objective examination
- 12) Discharge other duties as may be requested by the Director of Certification or his/her designee

Professional Conduct of Adjunct Examiners

As representatives of the Certification Division, all Adjunct Examiners are held to a high standard of professional conduct in the performance of their assigned duties. All are subject to the rules, regulations and guidance governing employees of the State of Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

Deviation from accepted policies shall result in disciplinary action as warranted, with potential dismissal resulting from repeated infractions.

Criminal or felonious behavior shall be referred to DAS SMART Human Resources for investigation which may result in immediate dismissal from employment as an Adjunct Examiner for the State of Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

It is expected that all Adjunct Examiners will discharge their duties with respect, impartiality and consistency in the use of reasonable judgment to sustain a safe, fair and objective testing environment. Situations which exceed the Adjunct Examiner's scope and authority shall be referred to the Director of Certification or designee.

Illustrations of situations requiring examiner judgment are included in the Operating Guide of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**.

Expectations for professional conduct include the following general characteristics of a Certification Division representative:

- Models a professional and positive demeanor
- Exhibits grooming and behavior appropriate for the high level of influence and responsibility that accompanies the role of a Certification Division representative
- Shows respect for the customer through punctuality and attentive response to questions and requests
- Shows respect for colleagues, Station Evaluators, host representatives and Certification Candidates in language, actions and through the exercise of fundamental human courtesy and regard for the diversity of all people
- Refrains from words, actions, innuendo or advances of a sexual nature which could be perceived as inappropriate or constituting harassment
- Demonstrates honesty in the handling of certification tasks, assessment of a Certification Candidate's abilities and avoids the appearance of impropriety in circumstances that might exhibit potential for a conflict of interest
- Uses materials issued locally and by the Certification Division in a proper and authorized manner
- Recognizes and handles the confidential nature of information accordingly
- Strives to deliver optimal customer service
- Follows the State of Connecticut Employee Code of Conduct
- Acknowledges the following Certification Division policy: The use of tobacco in any form, the consumption of alcohol and/or use of illicit drugs by

Appendix

Appendix

Certification Division representatives is strictly prohibited at examination sites during the examination. Individuals who engage in this behavior shall be dismissed from the examination site and subject to disciplinary action.

Examiner Attire for Examinations

Reasonable judgment is to be exercised by Certification Division representatives in the selection and use of attire. Where situations indicate the need for departure from a specific dress code, it is expected that Adjunct Examiners respond in a reasonable manner while maintaining the intent of the dress code.

Personal safety shall continue to be an overriding priority in the selection of specific attire for an examination.

General Attire:

When representing the Certification Division at examinations (practical and written), Live Burn Audits and ALS evaluations, Adjunct Examiners shall wear a Connecticut Fire Academy station uniform (navy blue trousers, navy blue shirt with Certification Division badge, dark socks, black shoes, matching belt).

Business attire is an acceptable substitute when proctoring a written examination.

When needed, sweaters, sweat shirts and outerwear (including caps) shall not display agency or organization affiliation or signage other than the CFPC logo.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Safety shall continue to be an overriding priority in the selection of specific attire for an examination.

Protective gloves, eyewear and headgear shall be worn as warranted for practical examinations.

It is expected that any PPE worn by a Certification Division representative be worn in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

SECTION THREE: General Requirements and Practices

While detailed examination procedures and specific knowledge and skill examination requirements are included in complementary components of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**, the Certification Division observes the following general practices:

Compliance

- The Certification Division shall comply with all applicable federal and Connecticut regulations, including CONN-OSHA, in the performance of certification testing in a safe and appropriate environment.
- All certification testing shall be based on the appropriate NFPA Standard for knowledge and skill at the requisite level of certification.
- The Certification Division, its policies, procedures and operations shall reflect criteria specified by its two accrediting agencies -- the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).
- All participating eligible Fire Service agencies, private fire protection providers, emergency response organizations and their employees/students/participants shall follow the policies and procedures established for and by the Certification Division and the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC).
- Participating agencies shall be responsible for furnishing copies of the applicable NFPA Standards to their students seeking certification at a given level.
- All individuals serving in the role of Chief Examiner, Examination Proctor, Station Evaluator or Live Burn Auditor shall follow all guidelines and instructions provided by the Certification Division for the administration of a safe, fair, consistent, equitable and objective practical and/or written examination or audit.
- Communication of all examination results shall comply with disclosure provisions outlined in Section Five (5) of this document.

Eligibility

- Certification Candidates must be eighteen (18) years of age to qualify for practical and written examinations conducted by the Certification Division.
- Certification Candidates shall furnish approval from their affiliated agency in the form of a Chief Officer signature attesting to their active status and confirming that they meet the medical and physical requirements for firefighting tasks at the level of certification sought.
- An authorized Chief Officer of the agency requesting a certification examination shall properly complete and submit a Request for Certification Examination application form not less than four (4) weeks prior to the date of the requested examination.
- Certification Candidates must meet or exceed the cognitive and psychomotor performance objectives outlined for each level of certification sought, as evidenced by the signature of a Connecticut-certified Fire Service Instructor on the appropriate Certification Examination Application form.
- The Certification Division disapproves of the practice known as "stacking", an overlapping of training courses and certification examinations which has proven counterproductive and disruptive to the candidate's certification process. The receipt of certification examination results for a given level and the delivery of associated certification materials are to precede the completion of any subsequent level of certification. Individuals seeking certification are advised to observe the recommended sequence for completing prerequisite training courses and certification for a given level, before initiating training and certification at a subsequent level. That sequence is established by the national professional qualifications boards and the consensus standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- Experience, prior training, outside education or a combination of these elements may be used to determine eligibility for challenging a certification examination in specific situations and at certain levels of certification. When these conditions apply, the individual shall be examined in both psychomotor

Communication
Packages

skills and cognitive knowledge for the level of certification sought.

- Certification Candidates are allowed one year from the date of the Lead Instructor's signature on the original application 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, the individual shall be provided unlimited opportunities to retest, provided that the following retraining/counseling requirements are met for each retest:
 - Within 180 days of the original examination, individuals who score between 60 percent (60%) and less than 70 percent (70%) may be re-examined in the specified deficient examination level(s) without retraining or counseling;
 - This no retraining option may be exercised one time for each examination; subsequent re-examinations shall require retraining or counseling;
 - Individuals scoring less than 60 percent (60%) on an examination or level(s) of a multi-level examination shall be retrained or counseled prior to any re-examination;
 - Proof of retraining or counseling shall be in the form of a signature of a Connecticut-certified Fire Service Instructor on a re-examination application form,
 - Upon successful completion of an examination, the final grade of record shall be the percentage received on the successfully completed re-examination.
- To be reexamined in any State of Connecticut certification written examination at any level within twelve (12) months of the date of the Lead Instructor's signature on the original application for certification does not require re-examination of the practical skills portion.

Communication
Packages

- Once the 12-month period has lapsed, the individual shall be required to retake the applicable training course before the application process can be activated.
- Extension of the 12-month deadline for testing for any level of written or practical skills examination may be granted for up to three months upon written request from the Certification Candidate, stating the reasons for the request and submitted before the original deadline.
- Conflict with work schedules and/or other educational programs shall not be sufficient reasons for the granting of an extension
- Certification Candidates must document proof of certification by an accredited entity for all prerequisite levels before the level of certification will be granted. Course completion certificates will not be accepted. Candidates for certification are not allowed to begin the certification process before prerequisite training is completed.
- Certification Candidates who fail any component of the Awareness and Operations level Hazardous Materials/ Weapons of Mass Destruction (HM/WMD) written examination as it applies to Fire Fighter I certification are not eligible for Fire Fighter I certification until all components of the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD are attained.
- Certification Candidates who fail any component of the Fire Fighter I or Fire Fighter I and II levels are not eligible for Fire Fighter II certification until all components of the Fire Fighter I level, including the Awareness and Operations Level Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction, are attained.

Certification of Non-Fire Service Personnel

- The Certification Division may administer certification examinations at any level to non-Fire Service personnel affiliated with or operating within a Fire Service organization when the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC) deems it to be appropriate and essential to the operation of that organization or to the safety of the citizens of the state (e.g., Public Fire and Life Safety Educator, Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist I, and Awareness/Operations and

Technician level for Response to Hazardous Materials and Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents).

- Applicants for certification under this provision shall be required to obtain, and may be tested on, any and all prerequisite certification levels.

Certification Challenge

- An individual may petition to challenge one or more components of an examination level without completing the training requirement. Applicants are limited to those who have:
 - received certifications from an IFSAC or ProBoard accredited entity
 - received alternative certification based on equivalent training and education
 - attained education equivalent to that received through a CFPC-sponsored course at the requisite level
- Documentation attesting to the attainment of each requirement of the applicable NFPA Standard is a prerequisite for challenge of the State of Connecticut practical and/or written examinations; submission of all pertinent materials is the responsibility of the petitioner.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to provide specific documentation of competency and the attained prerequisites.
- Evidence of demonstrated competency must reflect the specific objectives of a given National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Professional Qualification Standard, with documentation verified by an authorized Fire Service Instructor who is certified to the same level as the requested certification, and has completed Station Evaluator Training from the Certification Division. Verification is to be submitted on a form titled Matrix of Education, Training and Skills.
- If the certification level to be challenged includes a practical skills examination, it must be successfully completed before the written examination is offered.

- The Director of Certification is the sole arbiter for decisions relating to the challenge process and the granting of certification status.

Certification Prerequisite Waiver

Sections 7-323ℓ-80 through 7-323ℓ-94 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies permit the waiver of certain prerequisites for various levels of Fire Service certification.

A candidate for a given certification level shall be certified to the specified prerequisite level or shall document active Fire Department membership tenure in writing, as detailed in the Prerequisites and Applications Procedures document located in the Appendix to this manual and posted on the CFPC website.

A Certification Candidate electing such a waiver shall not be considered certified to the prerequisite level until all examination requirements for that prerequisite level have been satisfactorily fulfilled.

Certification Reciprocity

The State of Connecticut General Statutes (Sec. 7-323ℓ-99) authorize certification reciprocity as follows:

- a) Any firefighter who possesses Fire Service certification from another accredited agency which is at least equivalent to a level of certification offered by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control may receive credit for said level of certification.
 - b) The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, Certification Division shall determine the level of credit to be awarded in accordance with the minimum standards of the State of Connecticut.
- Receiving reciprocity only allows a person to enter the Connecticut certification system with advanced standing that acknowledges the equivalency required to continue training and certification in Connecticut; no certificates or uniform patches will be issued.
 - The granting of certification reciprocity applies to:

Appendix

CFPC
Website

active members of Connecticut Fire Departments
and
active members of Fire Departments that respond
into Connecticut on automatic or mutual aid response
agreements.

- Requests for reciprocity must include a completed Certification Reciprocity Application and a letter on department letterhead attesting to active firefighter status signed by the applicant's Fire Chief.

Examinations

- Practical skills examinations shall be conducted for every level of certification, as required by the respective NFPA Standard. These may take the form of designated practical examination days (e.g., Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II, HazMat Technician) testing and evaluation within a course of study leading to certification (e.g., Fire Service Instructor I), or assessment of project work following the conclusion of a given training course (e.g., Fire Officer IV).
- Written examinations shall be conducted for most levels of certification, as required by the respective NFPA Standard. These shall be administered on a pre-determined schedule established by the Certification Division.
- Certification Candidates shall not be restricted to the written examination schedule assigned to their respective training class. Periodic written examinations for all certification levels are offered at the Connecticut Fire Academy and through the State of Connecticut.
- Live Burn Audits, while not conducted as examinations, constitute a component of the qualifying process for awarding certification at the Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II levels.
- Rescue Technician CORE training, while not a level of certification itself, is a prerequisite for all levels of the Rescue Technician certification.

**CFPC
Website**

Staffing

- Through Adjunct Examiners and approved Station Evaluators, the Certification Division shall administer practical skills

examinations and/or perform practical skills oversight during the evaluation of Certification Candidates.

- The Certification Division shall assign qualified Examination Proctors to administer written certification examinations for levels of certification as defined in Methods 1 and 2 for cognitive assessment (page 21 of this document).
- Under no circumstances should an instructor who has taught a specific topic (cognitive knowledge or practical skills) to a Certification Candidate be allowed to serve as a practical skills Station Evaluator or Chief Examiner for that Certification Candidate in that topic at the respective certification level.
- Adjunct Examiners are strongly discouraged from proctoring a written examination at a given level for a class of Certification Candidates they have instructed.

Health and Safety

- All Chief Examiners, Station Evaluators and Certification Candidates shall wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the tasks to be performed during a practical examination day.
- Certification Candidates shall comply with applicable NFPA Standards, and other regulations, including guidelines for facial hair; non-compliance shall result in dismissal from the practical examination.
- Jewelry and/or body adornment posing a safety hazard shall be removed; non-compliance shall result in dismissal from the practical examination.
- Adjunct Examiners shall exercise reasonable judgment during severe weather conditions, utilizing heat and cold index guidelines and staying alert to extreme weather conditions (lightning storm, tornado, hurricane, blizzard) which may impact the safety of Station Evaluators and Certification Candidates.
- Every Certification Candidate added to the original roster for a given practical skills examination day shall complete an Injury Notification Report listing a contact person to be notified in the event of severe injury.

Operating
Guide

- EMS considerations shall be addressed for all practical and written examinations, with local protocols for access communicated to the Chief Examiner.
- Certification Candidates who become ill during the examination process and can no longer continue shall be dismissed, asked to complete a Voluntary Withdrawal Form and be allowed to reschedule for a future examination.
- Injuries sustained during an examination must be documented on an Injury Report Form. Should the injury prevent continuation in the examination process, the Certification Candidate shall be dismissed without prejudice, asked to complete a Voluntary Withdrawal Form and allowed to test at a future time. Medical monitoring of the situation shall be initiated, as appropriate. EMS providers shall be notified to respond for documentation, and/or treatment/transport to a designated medical facility. The Chief Examiner shall notify the Certification Coordinator and/or the Director of Certification as appropriate.
- For illness and/or injury deemed critical or fatal, the Chief Examiner shall notify both the State Fire Administrator and the Director of Certification at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The Director of Certification, through the State Fire Administrator, shall see that CONN-OSHA is notified within 24 hours of a death or an injury where more than three Certification Candidates are injured when performing the same skill.
- The use of tobacco products in any form, the consumption of alcohol and/or use of illicit drugs by Certification Candidates is strictly prohibited at examination sites during the examination process. Individuals who engage in this behavior shall be dismissed from the examination site.

Operating
Guide

Operating
Guide

Testing Environment

While specific listings and requirements for hosting practical examinations are included in the host communications component of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**, the following general requirements are to be observed:

Communications
Packages

- The Certification Division shall ensure an optimal testing environment at any site for which a written and/or practical examination is to be conducted. Conditions include, but are not limited to:
 - safe, well-lighted and ventilated areas with sanitary facilities
 - adequately spaced seating to preclude views of other candidates' answer sheets
 - appropriate climate control
 - testing areas reasonably free from distractions

Detailed criteria for acceptable examination sites are located in the Operating Guide and communications packages of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**.

- Examination site hosts shall verify that all apparatus and equipment selected for use at a practical examination complies with applicable NFPA Standards for care, use and maintenance (e.g., NFPA 1901 *Automotive Fire Apparatus*, Chapter 4, Sec. 4.2.1 and Chapter 5).
- Any apparatus or equipment that does not meet the requisite NFPA Standards shall not be used during the certification examination.
- Any equipment that requires regular or annual inspection or certification (e.g., SCBA, ladders, hose, ropes, etc.) shall be compliant to the appropriate NFPA Standard or alternative standard.
- The facility shall accommodate ground ladder deployment, including raise and full extension actions.
- The facility shall accommodate a continuous, non-interrupted water supply or wet hydrant system that does not cause concern for firefighter safety or public water consumption.
- In the case of major equipment failure, the host will have one hour to secure a replacement. Evaluation of the station is suspended until the replacement equipment is in place and operable. If equipment cannot be replaced within the allotted time, the practical examination day continues with the exception of the affected skills station and an appropriate

Communications
Packages

Operating
Guide

substitute skills evaluation station, as determined by the Chief Examiner, shall be set up.

- Certification Candidates who completed but did not pass a practical skills station prior to equipment malfunction requiring cancellation of the specific station shall be examined at the replacement station; those who passed the cancelled station need not be examined at the replacement station.
- The State of Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control shall be held harmless from all aspects of the care, use and maintenance of any apparatus and/or equipment utilized or any practical skills examination. Any extenuating circumstances shall be addressed on an individual basis.
- Site visits to prospective examination sites may be conducted by the Certification Division to accord long-term approval to a given location or to reject a site for non-compliance.

Cheating

The Certification Division shall not tolerate cheating in any form. Cheating implies the breaking of rules, an act of lying, deception, fraud, trickery, imposture or imposition characteristically employed to create an unfair advantage, usually in one's own interest, and often at the expense of others.

With respect to the certification process, cheating shall be defined as "the dishonest act of any kind with respect to unauthorized assistance by resources and material, or the giving of unauthorized assistance or material during cognitive and/or psychomotor skills assessment conducted for purposes of certification by the Certification Division of the State of Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. This practice includes, but is not limited to projects, portfolios and the alteration of records.

Discipline for Cheating

Should any Adjunct Examiners when discharging the duties of Chief Examiner, Proctor or Live Burn Auditor witness what is believed to be an act of cheating, it is within their purview to confiscate any material and dismiss the Certification Candidate from the examination. The alleged incident is to be fully documented by written narrative, with the account submitted to the Director of Certification, and notification made to the State Fire Administrator as soon as feasible. When possible, the narrative is to be signed by the Certification Candidate(s) as acknowledgement of the process, not an admission of guilt.

Adjunct Examiners shall exercise discretion to avoid disruption of the examination process. If a threat to life or personal property is perceived, law enforcement is to be summoned for assistance.

Appeals for Disciplinary Action

A Certification Candidate is automatically granted a hearing to appeal any allegation of cheating. The right to an appeal shall follow the guidelines under Section Six of this Administrative Manual of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**.

SECTION FOUR : How Knowledge is Assessed

The State of Connecticut Fire Service Certification Examination System utilizes a random range examination process. An individual is examined on a diverse sample of the required performance objectives for any given NFPA Standard. Whether a measure of cognitive knowledge, through selected written test questions, or psychomotor skill behavior through assignment of representative skills for examination, the purpose of this approach is to effectively measure an individual's competency and optimize the use of examination resources.

The exact identity of the specific skills to be examined is not known by the Certification Candidate until the time of the examination. Advanced information is not disclosed to Station Evaluators or Chief Examiners assigned to oversee the practical examination day.

To attain certification at a given performance level, a Certification Candidate's training and evaluation must reflect satisfactory completion of all objectives of a given standard. Typically, this is accomplished through testing and evaluation during a formal training program, with appropriate documentation furnished at the time of application for the State of Connecticut certification examinations. While the Certification Division does not endorse any one training venue over another, it does require uniformity in the application process.

Requirement Compliance Options

Certification examination application forms must specify one of the following four compliance methods used by a candidate to meet training requirements and to qualify for the examination process:

Method #1

Completion of an accepted and approved training program delivered through the Connecticut Fire Academy

Method #2

Completion of an accepted, approved local or national training program delivered by a training organization other than the Connecticut Fire Academy (e.g., National Fire Academy) or through one of the Regional Fire Training Schools located throughout the State of Connecticut

Note: Any such training program requires prior approval by the Director of Certification or authorized designee to assure that the training curriculum meets the current NFPA Standard for the respective level of certification.

Method #3

Documentation of successful completion of an individualized training program which requires the individual to provide:

- a comprehensive matrix to demonstrate how each performance objective of the respective NFPA Standard has been achieved or addressed
- the evaluation method used for the training program to confirm prerequisite knowledge and skill
- verification of successful course completion

An independent panel review and evaluation of the Certification Candidate's project comprised of elements designed to demonstrate and confirm competence in specific Job Performance Requirements for the level of certification to be attained

Process for Candidate Evaluation

Given appropriate training, as stated above, and prior to an interview and performance assessment, the Certification Candidate shall be required to design, develop and implement a project in order to show competency in the prerequisite

knowledge and skills for professional qualifications at the level to be certified.

During a one-hour interview, the Certification Candidate shall be required to deliver a 20-minute presentation on the completed project to a Project Process Team (PPT) panel comprised of three leaders in the field with equal or greater recognized qualifications for the specific certification level.

PPT panelists shall then pose questions on the project and its development, referencing relevant readings and/or course material defined through the specific requirements of the project process and applicable to the NFPA Standard for Professional Qualifications at the level of certification sought.

At the conclusion of the interview, the certification candidate shall be dismissed from the room to allow the PPT panelists to deliberate and offer recommendations for approval or denial of certification based on the predetermined evaluation criteria.

All assessment and evaluation materials and forms shall be collected. Data shall be compiled by the Director of Certification, with notification sent to the Certification Candidate.

Initiating the Review and Interview Process

The Certification Candidate will receive notification of acceptance to the review and interview process, including information on the date, time and location of the interview and instructions for courtesy communication in the event of tardiness or cancellation due to extenuating circumstances.

Included with the notification shall be a description of the assessment package, evaluation procedures and forms used by the review panel. The Certification Candidate also shall be advised of any current exceptions pertaining to the NFPA standard referenced for the certification level sought.

Formal acceptance as a PPT panelist shall be communicated in writing or by telephone upon confirmation of a review-interview date.

PPT panelists shall be advised of the date, time and location of the interview-review session and shall receive the following information which is to be brought to the interview:

- 1) a listing of assignments and responsibilities
- 2) a copy of the Certification Candidate's project
- 3) a Project Evaluation Form
- 4) a Prerequisite Skills Written Evaluation Worksheet

Assessment of the Certification Candidate

Each PPT panelist assigned to the review is responsible for assessing the knowledge and skills of the Certification Candidate, using a Project Evaluation Form which highlights objectives based on the criteria for the Job Performance Requirements. The competency JPRs for the Standard will involve specific criteria relevant to the Standard.

Following an assessment of the Certification Candidate's project, presentation and response to the panel's questions, each panelist shall offer a score based on the following assessment scale:

- 4 - Advanced:** demonstrates a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of rigorous subject matter, and provides sophisticated solutions to complex problems; demonstrates mastery of challenging subject matter and constructs solutions to challenging problems
- 3 - Proficient:** demonstrates a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solves a wide variety of problems
- 2 - Satisfactory:** demonstrates a partial understanding of subject matter and solves simple problems
- 1 - Deficient:** demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject matter and does not solve simple problems

The total score is combined and averaged with the other panelists.

Example: The total advanced average score that can be attained is 28; a total score of not less

than 12 must be achieved for a certification candidate to successfully accomplish the minimum standard for the Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) for the Fire Officer IV Project Review.

Additionally, each PPT panelist shall enter narrative detail for any pertinent information related to the Certification Candidate's project, presentation and/or response to PPT panel questions that justifies the result of the assessment.

Notification of Examination Results

Certification Candidates shall be notified in writing of the interview-review process. Typically, this process takes approximately six to eight weeks from the date of the examination interview.

An opportunity for project re-submission and participation in another review-interview session is afforded Certification Candidates who have shown deficiency in one or more evaluation criteria for the Job Performance Requirement of the certification level to be attained. The Director of Certification shall analyze the findings of the PPT panelists. A mentor or coach shall be assigned to assist the Certification Candidate in understanding areas for improvement, and to set up a timetable for completion of revised project materials.

Certification Candidates intending to challenge a deficient evaluation shall notify the Director of Certification within fourteen (14) calendar days (excluding holidays) of the receipt of the notification of deficiency.

Detailed procedures, including sample evaluation forms used for the evaluation process are found in the Examination Procedures component of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**.

Method #4

Independent panel review of a candidate portfolio comprised of elements designed to demonstrate and confirm competence in specific Job Performance Requirements for the level of certification to be attained

Note: The Certification Division may choose to use this process for certification to those levels which consist of advanced or broad job performance requirements (JPRs) or objectives and require an assessment of less tangible knowledge and skill criteria, such as the use of analysis and judgment in given circumstances.

Competency Verification

Any portfolio process must objectively verify that the Certification Candidate meets or exceeds the Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) and/or objectives of the specific standard and level. The Certification Candidate must demonstrate competency in all criteria listed for each JPR for the respective level of certification.

The candidate's portfolio shall verify competency through any combination of the following:

- documented professional experience work-related projects
- successful completion of applicable professional development courses from recognized organizations (e.g., Connecticut Fire Academy, National Fire Academy, Emergency Management Institute, etc.)
- successful completion of applicable college courses

Note: Only college and professional development courses which incorporate an assessment and grading process shall be considered.

Process Approval

Each process must assure that the Certification Candidate clearly demonstrates competency in each JPR or objective for the respective level in a manner that can be assessed objectively.

Requests for approval shall include the following components:

- 1) Criteria for each Job Performance Requirement (JPR) and objective listed in the NFPA Standard for the level

being evaluated and corresponding with the criteria section of the given JPR

- 2) Forms to be used to evaluate each Job Performance Requirement (JPR) and objectives that include the Certification Candidate's signature attesting to the accuracy of submissions
- 3) References for any agency form, record, or report required for completion of the portfolio
- 4) Lists of all courses and associated JPRs and objectives approved by the Certification Division which meet one or more of the criteria for certification

Process Initiation

If all prerequisites have been met, the Certification Candidate may proceed with the portfolio process.

The Director of Certification or his/her designee will issue the Certification Candidate the appropriate portfolio program manual and will review the instructions with the candidate to ensure an understanding of all the requirements of the portfolio, and the portfolio review and submission process.

Each manual contains information on the requisite criteria for the certification level and examples of the desired style and format for portfolio submission.

In addition, each applicant for the portfolio process of certification shall designate an advisor for the duration of the portfolio development and evaluation. The advisor must receive advanced approval by the Director of Certification or authorized designee, and must meet the following minimum criteria:

- 1) Certification to at least the level of certification sought by the portfolio applicant
- 2) At least five (5) years of documented experience operating in a municipal or private fire department at a level above that in which the applicant is seeking certification

The Director of Certification and the Certification Candidate shall mutually agree to the time limit for completion of a portfolio and panel review assessment.

The Certification Division shall verify all signatures associated with the portfolio and assure that each JPR and objective has been addressed before certification is awarded to the Certification Candidate.

Demonstration of Competency

Documented experience and education comprise four major options for demonstrating competency within the portfolio process:

Option I: Professional Experience

A Certification Candidate shall demonstrate competency of a JPR or objective through documented professional experience by submitting the following:

- 1) A job description for the position, formally adopted by the agency and in place during the Certification Candidate's tenure in the position, which identifies essential job duties and minimum requirements. All areas pertaining to the Job Performance Requirement (JPR) and objectives are to be identified
- 2) A letter from the Fire Chief or Human Resources Manager verifying the Certification Candidate's dates of service in that position and attesting to the validity of the job description for the position
- 3) A copy of any job performance evaluations during the Certification Candidate's tenure in the position that verify the Certification Candidate's satisfactory performance of the respective job duties. A letter from the Certification Candidate's designated supervisor, or Fire Chief, attesting to satisfactory performance may be substituted for job performance evaluation documents.

- 4) Written justification of how the Certification Candidate's professional experience relates to the specific Job Performance Requirement (JPR) and objective. The justification must address each criterion of the JPR or objective in a detailed, organized and well-written format.

Note: All letters submitted must be originals, written on agency letterhead, and signed in ink.

Option II: Documented Work Product(s)

A Certification Candidate shall verify competency through a work product by submitting a minimum of one documentation package for each Job Performance Requirement (JPR) or objective listed for the respective certification level, to include the following:

- 1) A copy of the work product (reports, memos, letters, projects, etc.)
- 2) Written verification that the Certification Candidate was the author of the work product, responsible for work represented in the majority of the product and capable of replicating the work product without supervision. Typically, this document is a letter from the Certification Candidate's supervisor, employer or authorized manager.
- 3) Written justification of how the work product relates to the specific Job Performance Requirement (JPR) or objective. The justification must address each criterion for the JPR or objective in a detailed, organized and well-written document.

Option III: College Course Completion

For college courses approved for Method #4 by the Certification Division, a Certification Candidate must provide an original transcript from an accredited college or university affixed with the official seal/stamp of the institution, specifying course title, identification

number, and verification of a final grade of "C", "Pass" or "Satisfactory".

For all other courses, the Certification Candidate must submit a copy of the course description as it appeared in the official printed or electronic college catalog at the time the course was completed, and a detailed, organized, well-written justification of how the college course relates to the specific JPR or objective.

If the course description is unavailable, the certification candidate may substitute a letter from the college registrar listing the outcome objectives for the course and verifying that an assessment / testing process was used during the course.

In addition, the following items are requested, if available:

- 1) course syllabus
- 2) learning objectives
- 3) testing methods used
- 4) copies of assignments, projects, tests and other pertinent course work

Option IV: Completion of a Professional Development Program

To demonstrate competency of a Job Performance Requirement (JPR) or objective through documented successful completion of at least one relevant professional development course per JPR or objective, Certification Candidates shall submit a copy of the course certificate specifying course title, dates, the Certification Candidate's name, and the phrase "...for successful completion of ..." or equivalent language. Certificates that only verify attendance will not be accepted.

For courses not approved by the Certification Division, the following additional information must be provided:

- 1) A description of the organization/agency sponsoring the course (e.g., flyer, brochure)
- 2) A course description that includes learning objectives and testing methods. (Only courses with a verified testing process will be accepted).
- 3) A transcript verifying course attendance and completion
- 4) A copy of the American Council on Education (ACE) recommendation for the course
- 5) A detailed, organized and well-written document that addresses each JPR or objective criterion to justify how the professional development course relates to the specific JPR or objective

Appointment of the Portfolio Review Team (PRT)

Within ten (10) days of acceptance of a portfolio for review, the Director of Certification shall appoint a three (3) - person Portfolio Review Team (PRT). All PRT members must be minimally certified to the Fire Service Instructor I level or its equivalent. One member shall be assigned to coordinate the review of the portfolio. This individual must have attained certification (or demonstrated equivalency) in the competencies listed in the NFPA 1041 Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Service Instructor II.

PRT Selection Criteria:

- 1) One (1) member shall be a fire science program coordinator from a community college/university or a senior instructor in the CT Fire Academy Fire Officer certification program. The member may not be the candidate's advisor or instructor of any courses submitted in the portfolio.
- 2) One (1) member shall be a Department Training Officer from other than the Certification Candidate's agency.

- 3) One (1) member shall be from the professional area and level in which the certification is being sought. For example, if a Fire Service Instructor II level is being sought, the member must be a training officer with responsibility for the development of curriculum and supervision of other instructors.
- 4) All members, in the judgment of the Certification Director, shall meet or exceed the requirements of the certification level being sought.
- 5) No member of a PRT may be from the certification candidate's agency.
- 6) No member should previously or currently have any private or professional relationship with the Certification Candidate that could result in bias during the review process. It shall be the responsibility of both the Certification Candidate and the PRT member to announce any such conflict of interest prior to beginning the review process, or when such conflict is determined. The Director of Certification shall immediately excuse any member with such conflict and seek replacement with another qualified member.

PRT Orientation:

The Certification Division shall conduct an orientation for individuals selected to serve as PRT members. Topics to be addressed include, but are not limited to, a review of the process guidelines, expectations for reviewers, assessment criteria and other information deemed appropriate for the specific review.

Portfolio Review

The PRT shall meet to review the portfolio within thirty (30) days following submission and shall use evaluation forms to guide the review of each Job Performance Requirement (JPR) and objective. A Certification Candidate must demonstrate competency in all of the criteria to pass each JPR or objective; all JPRs and objectives must be passed to qualify for certification.

The PRT shall objectively review each JPR and objective presented in the portfolio for the desired level, considering the following three general elements:

1) Applicability

The Certification Candidate must clearly demonstrate that the experience, work product or course listed is directly applicable to the Job Performance Requirement (JPR) or objective. The PRT may refer to the criteria in the JPR and/or the requisite skills and knowledge to measure the applicability.

For college and professional development courses, the PRT shall refer to the learning objectives and other course materials to determine if the specific job or skill was presented, applied and evaluated during the course. This may include objectives, learning activities, homework assignments, guide projects, etc.

2) JPR Mastery

The Certification Candidate must clearly demonstrate that he/she has mastered the Job Performance Requirement (JPR) or objective by addressing all inclusive criteria and is capable of performing that job without direct supervision or coaching. The PRT may consider the length and nature of the professional experience, the number of times the candidate replicated the work product, or the number of courses successfully completed with a minimum grade of "C", "Pass" or "Satisfactory" that addressed the JPR or objective.

3) Originality of Work

The Certification Candidate must clearly prove that all work products, course work, etc., are his/her original creation. While the candidate may have been part of a team, the candidate must prove he/she did the majority of the work and can perform the job without supervision or coaching.

For professional experience, originality means the Certification Candidate had the primary responsibility

for performing the duties referenced in the job description.

Original work in a college or professional development course requires proof that the candidate received individual credit, not credit as a member of a team or group.

If the PRT determines that a candidate meets these criteria, credit is awarded for the specific JPR or objective.

Reminder: It is the Certification Candidate's responsibility to provide adequate information in the portfolio for a credible review on the part of the PRT. Insufficient information may result in disqualification.

Completion of Review and Candidate Notification

The PRT shall submit a written evaluation summary to the Director of Certification within ten (10) days following the review of the portfolio. In addition to a listing of the JPRs and objectives passed, the PRT shall reference any JPRs or objectives for which the Certification Candidate was deficient and supply detailed written justification for the determination.

No materials used in the review shall be returned to the Certification Candidate including the submitted revised portfolio, reviewer notes, and other related materials. In addition, no information may be provided by any member of the PRT that could be used by the Certification Candidate to fraudulently revise his/her portfolio for future reconsideration.

The Certification Candidate shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the portfolio review within fifteen (15) days of the portfolio review. If all JPRs and objectives were met, a certificate for the respective level shall be issued to the candidate. The date of certification shall be the date the review by the PRT was conducted.

In addition, the Certification Candidate shall be informed of any unmet JPRs or objectives and/or deficiencies in the portfolio. This communication shall be accompanied by a detailed, objective critique of the submitted portfolio.

A Certification Candidate may submit a revised portfolio which addresses the deficient Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) or objectives. The revised portfolio must be submitted within six (6) months of the initial portfolio review.

Upon receiving a revised portfolio, the Director of Certification shall reconvene the initial PRT and direct them to review the revised portfolio. If the candidate fails to submit a revised portfolio within six (6) months of the initial portfolio review, he/she must submit a complete portfolio addressing all the Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) for that level and begin the process again.

The PRT shall meet to review the revised portfolio within thirty (30) days after submission by the Certification Candidate. As with the initial review, the PRT shall use the evaluation forms to guide the review of each JPR, and the Certification Candidate must demonstrate competency in all of the criteria to pass each JPR and objective.

The PRT shall submit a written evaluation summary to the Director of Certification within ten (10) days following the review of the revised portfolio. As in the initial review, the PRT shall furnish a listing of the JPRs and objectives passed, reference any JPRs and objectives for which the certification did not demonstrate competency, and include written justification detailing the reasons for said deficiency.

If the initially unmet JPRs and/or objectives were attained through the revised portfolio, a certificate for the level sought shall be issued to the Certification Candidate. The date of certification shall be the date the review by the PRT was conducted on the revised portfolio.

The Certification Candidate shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the revised portfolio review within fifteen (15) days of the review. This communication shall include any unmet JPRs and objectives for the resubmitted portfolio, and the reason for the judgment of deficiency.

Any Certification Candidate who does not meet the required Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) or objectives with the revised portfolio must wait twelve (12) months to resubmit a portfolio for the originally sought certification level. The new portfolio must address all the JPRs and objectives for the specified certification level.

Portfolio Appeals

The Certification Candidate may request that an advisor be allowed to attend appeal proceedings. The advisor may accompany the Certification Candidate to the appeal hearing but may only provide information on the JPR or objective in question. The purpose of the advisor is to serve as an advocate in the provision of objective, verifiable, and first-hand information that may demonstrate the appellant's competency in the deficient JPR or objective.

The Certification Candidate must advise the Director of Certification, in writing, of his/her desire to use an advisor during the appeal process. This notification must be received a minimum of ten (10) days before the scheduled hearing date. The advisor must have first-hand knowledge of the certification candidate's competency relating to the Job Performance Requirement in question.

Fraud or Deception After Issuance of Certification

Should the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control become aware that a certification was obtained through the use of fraudulent information, the Director of Certification shall appoint a Portfolio Review Team to review the suspected portfolio.

No member of the original PRT may be included in the PRT assigned to investigate potential fraud or deception.

The investigating PRT shall, within thirty (30) days, submit a written report to the Director of Certification. The report shall list the findings of the PRT, specifying whether fraud or deception actually occurred and whether the certification was inappropriately issued.

If sufficient evidence is found to prove that the certification was awarded based on fraudulent or deceptive information, the Director of Certification may revoke the certification. The decision of the Director of Certification is final.

Assessment of Psychomotor Skills

Practical skill performance evaluations are used for objectives that are best evaluated by demonstration of a particular skill. Each performance-based skill is assessed through the accomplishment of tasks that are further detailed in steps required for successful task completion. Examination concludes with a "pass"/"fail" evaluation which indicates attainment of minimal accepted performance of the requisite skill.

All performance objectives are evaluated using a practical skill sheet which outlines the tasks that must be successfully performed by the Certification Candidate in order to pass the specific skill area as defined in and referenced to the applicable NFPA Standard.

Operating
Guide

Skill sheets may be assessed singularly, grouped into a skill station or included with other skill sheets to form a Job Performance Requirement (JPR) scenario evolution in which a team of Certification Candidates is examined in a series of skills appropriate to the response tasks represented in the respective level of certification. A similar grouping of skill sets and skill sheets characterizes assessment for the NFPA 472 Awareness and Operations level Hazardous Materials/WMD scenario.

Certification Candidates are responsible for acquiring all the requisite knowledge and skills specified in the appropriate NFPA Standard (or alternative standard) for the level of certification sought. While responsible for all associated material, they will be assessed on a random selection of skills on the day of the practical examination.

To receive a "pass" grade on any skill sheet, a candidate must achieve 70% success for the items contained in the skill sheet, in addition to successful completion of all critical tasks which are denoted on the skill sheet with an asterisk (*).

Criticality is assigned to those comprehensive skills or tasks which, if performed incorrectly, could result in severe injury or death, either as part of the skills being examined, or at an actual incident. The inability to correctly perform a critical skill results in a deficiency on the skill sheet for that task.

Candidates are afforded two (2) opportunities to successfully complete each practical skills evolution before receiving a failing grade on the examination for the given testing date. This applies to both single-level examinations (e.g., Fire Fighter II) and multi-level examinations (e.g., Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter I and II).

Should a Certification Candidate fail an individual skill set, a JPR evolution or HM/WMD scenario assessment a second time during a psychomotor skill

practical examination day, the Certification Candidate will need to reapply for assessment on a future practical examination date. At that time the Certification Candidate will participate in the full psychomotor skill practical examination day and be assessed on all required skill stations for that day, not necessarily the deficient skill(s) from the initial examination.

Details of the grading process, including the responsibilities of skill Station Evaluators, appear in the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM** Operating Guide.

Skill-Related Evaluation Materials

Specific skill-related information and forms for each level of certification can be found in the series of skills assessment notebooks located in the Certification Division office. Each notebook is dedicated to a given certification level, designed to be reviewed and updated on a pre-determined schedule as noted in the document revision schedule tracking component of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**.

Examination
Procedures

Similar in content, each notebook includes the following components:

- Certification Examination Criteria for each certification level (e.g., Airport Firefighter)
- Guidelines for the respective certification level
- Testing methodology
- Test description report
- Examination prerequisites
- Examination application procedures
- Applications for practical and written examinations
- Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) for the respective level
- Individual skill sheets for the respective level
- Practical skills examination day content material for the respective level

Assessment of Cognitive Competency

Knowledge, or cognitive objectives, are assessed through written tests. While instructors may use local, curriculum-issued or non-CFPC supplied tests to measure learning within their respective programs, only those examinations generated and administered by the Certification Division of the CFPC will be used to determine whether sufficient learning has occurred to achieve certification to the applicable NFPA Standard.

Certification Candidates must demonstrate a mastery of theoretical material in order to earn a passing grade on written certification examinations. They must achieve a minimum score of 70% in order to earn a passing grade on an examination intended for certification at a given level of competence.

Written Test Design

To assure that the relative number of test questions in a written examination reflects the applicable NFPA Standard, the Certification Division determines the relative weighting of written test questions by correlation to the weight of the corresponding segment of the specific NFPA Standard. This process is achieved objectively through the use of commercial software designed to randomly generate examinations from any NFPA Standard and programmed for such weighting in the selection of available test bank questions.

While questions for the written certification examinations are selected from commercially-developed test banks, they are subject to regularly scheduled accuracy and applicability review sessions sponsored by the Certification Division.

Multiple written examinations are produced for each certification level tested by the Certification Division, with access restricted to those personnel essential to the examination process. Likewise, the software used to generate, scan and store examinations is accessible only to full-time staff of the Certification Division.

Multi-level Examinations

Cognitive skills assessment for certain levels of certification (e.g., Fire Fighter I with Awareness and Operations Level Hazardous Materials/ Weapons of Mass Destruction) requires administration of a multi-level written certification examination. A Certification Candidate who fails any level of a multi-level written certification examination must be retested using a written examination comprised of the deficient level(s).

Question Bank Management

Written certification examination test question banks shall be reviewed and analyzed for validity, reliability and ambiguity on a pre-determined basis as indicated in the test bank question management tracking component of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**.

Document
Review
Schedules

Written test questions found to be invalid, unreliable or ambiguous shall be corrected or removed from the test question bank, with the action documented.

Whenever possible, written test questions removed from the test question bank shall be replaced with the same number of questions referenced to the same objective within the applicable NFPA Standard.

Details on the security aspects of test question bank management are found in the Records Management section of this document (page 42).

Document
Review
Schedules

Examination Practices and Assessment-Related Guidelines

Examination Absences

Prior notification of an inability to attend a certification examination results in an excused absence. A Certification Candidate may reschedule the examination date by telephone or in person without resubmitting an application or forfeiting any application fee paid.

Failure to notify the Certification Division of an inability to attend a scheduled examination within five (5) days before the scheduled examination or within two (2) days following the exam (in the case of an emergency) shall be considered an unexcused absence. Any notification beyond this period shall be in the form of a written letter to the Director of Certification.

When a Certification Candidate is absent from an examination without being excused, the following procedure is enacted:

- 1) The Certification Candidate shall forfeit any examination application fee paid;
- 2) The Certification Candidate shall receive instructions on the rescheduling process coincident with the mailing of results for the missed exam;
- 3) The Certification Candidate shall be required to reapply for an examination. The original application expires one calendar year to the date of the Lead Instructor's signoff on the certification application form.

Reasonable Accommodations and the Assessment Process

One or more accommodations may be necessary for individual Certification Candidates according to their needs and the requirements of the test materials presented.

In accordance with Section 7-323ℓ-95(d) of the Regulations of the State of Connecticut, all examinations and/or components of examinations shall be structured and administered in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC Section 12101. To the extent feasible, the Certification Division shall make reasonable accommodations to the known literacy and learning style challenges of Certification Candidates. In all cases, maintenance of the integrity of the certification examination process shall be of primary concern.

Documentation of Challenged Status

Each Certification Candidate requesting accommodations that impact actual test administration will be required to furnish documentation of the specific condition requiring accommodation, and the intended specific accommodation to be granted. This documentation is to be sent directly to the Director of Certification, accompanied by the appropriate certification examination application form and associated testing fees. All documentation submitted shall remain confidential.

Generally Accepted Accommodation Options

The selection of accommodation for a challenged Certification Candidate shall be based on the written opinion of a qualified medical professional and/or educational professional who is acquainted with the specific needs and condition of the Certification Candidate. The Certification Division shall not be fiscally responsible for the provision of any accommodation.

Accommodations for the certification include, but are not limited to:

- additional time for completion of the written examination
- individual monitoring to confirm that the candidate understands any instructions given for the administration of an examination

- administration of an oral examination for Fire Fighter I
- physical location modification to address visual and auditory concerns
- any questions regarding the clarification of test question wording on a written examination
- recording test answers in the examination booklet in lieu of a "bubble sheet" scanning document

Accommodation for Language

While it is the intent of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control to offer reasonable accommodation to all Certification Candidates regardless of challenged status, it is also acknowledged that American English is the recognized language for communicating information or details regarding hazardous materials incidents. The Commission is obligated to require no additional assistance other than written and/or spoken American English when testing and assessing the hazardous materials-related components for any national professional qualifications examination.

Testing Locations for Accommodated Candidates

The Certification Division office at the Connecticut Fire Academy in Windsor Locks, CT shall be the primary location assigned for administration of cognitive knowledge examinations requiring accommodation.

Field Reporting System: Delegation of Authority to Certify

Members of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control voted to delegate authority to the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal, to certify personnel under the CFPC's accreditation with the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard).

This delegation of authority has been extended for individuals seeking to become nationally certified as a Fire Inspector I under the most current edition of the NFPA Standard 1031, Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector.

National certification to this level shall be conducted in accordance with the operational procedures of the ProBoard. Copies were issued to the Deputy State Fire Marshal at that time.

This delegation was made with the understanding that the CFPC will retain responsibility to ensure that the requirements of the accrediting agency are met for this level of certification. To facilitate the process, the Director of Certification, or his/her designee, shall perform an annual site visit to review examination and recordkeeping procedures.

SECTION FIVE: Records Management

The Certification Division bases its policies concerning records retention and disclosure upon the State of Connecticut Records Retention Policies and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

Records routinely maintained by the Certification Division in print and/or electronic format at the Connecticut Fire Academy site include, but are not limited to:

- Certification Candidate name and address
- Sponsoring training agency
- Fire Service affiliation(s)
- Training program(s) attended
- Certification level(s) attempted and examination scores
- Certification(s) awarded

Document Obsolescence

All routine documents and correspondence shall be managed in accordance with CFPC operational policies and guidelines for disposal of such materials.

When written test materials are deemed outdated, they shall be inventoried, accounted for in their entirety and destroyed through the use of a document shredder or other permanent destruction process.

Test Security

To ensure the integrity of the examination process, the Certification Division has instituted the following practices:

- Examination test question banks stored in hard copy format shall be secured at all times
- Examination test question banks stored electronically on an independent computer that is not continuously connected to an internet/intranet server with appropriate password safeguards
- Access to test booklets and completed answer sheets shall be restricted to the Director of Certification, the Certification Coordinator, the Certification Registrar and designated Examination Proctors
- Test booklets in transit to examination sites shall be transported under secure conditions including, but not limited to, a locked storage case
- Test question banks that have been printed and/or copied for development purposes shall be securely destroyed (shredded) as soon as possible; an inventory of copies made, currently in circulation and destroyed shall be maintained, with status documented in the tracking component of this system
- Test booklets shall be copied/duplicated in a secure manner
- Test booklets shall be revised on a regular basis to ensure security
- Cheating shall not be tolerated. Proof of cheating in any form will result in disciplinary action and/or penalties by the CFPC. Such actions will result in disqualification from the examination process
- A Certification Candidate dismissed for dishonesty shall be able to reapply for certification after one (1) year

To ensure a fair, consistent, equitable and objective testing environment for all practical examinations, all examination-related communications with Lead Instructors and scripts read to Station Evaluators stress the importance of maintaining a fair and impartial environment for all candidates.

While specific details and sample communications are found in the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM** Operating Guide, the following general practices are to be observed:

Operating
Guide

- To preserve the integrity of the examination process, visitors, family members, friends, Chief Officers, Fire Officers and Fire Service members not directly assigned to examination duties are prohibited from the examination area
- Conversation/video phones, personal digital assistants, hand-held scanner technologies and other electronic means for capturing audio, visual images and/or text shall be prohibited from all testing locations
- Any noise-emitting electronic devices allowed into the examination site shall be turned off during the entire examination process
- Emergency communications intended for Certification Candidates shall be processed by the Staging Officer at practical examination sites and by the Examination Proctor at written examinations
- Contents of examination boxes for each level of certification shall not be disclosed prior to the scheduled examination
- Practical skills examination test boxes shall be secured for transportation to and from examination sites
- All learning media and print materials including, but not limited to, texts, reference materials, notebooks and study guides shall not be allowed into the examination area on the day of testing
- Project-related materials and portfolios submitted for evaluation shall be reviewed for plagiarism, possible copyright violations and other inappropriate actions, in accordance with accepted practices established by the University of Connecticut, other State of Connecticut-regulated educational institutions, agencies or other regulatory bodies

Privacy and Security Policies

The Certification Division places a high priority on the preservation of individual privacy, confidentiality in the disclosure of examination-related communications, and the security of all materials relating to the

examination process for certification at all levels. The Certification Division shall acknowledge and comply with all State of Connecticut policies and regulations pertaining to electronic components and technology.

Public Information Disclosure

Information from records, files or electronic data directly relating to a Certification Candidate's examination score shall be disclosed to individuals or agencies outside the Certification Division only with the written consent of the Certification Candidate.

Public information comprised of data considered part of a Certification Candidate's record (Name, Certification level(s) attained) shall be disclosed unless an individual directs the Director of Certification by written instruction to refrain from said disclosure.

Exception: The above policy for disclosure of public information shall be superseded by court order through the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and/or the Office of the State Fire Administrator.

Disclosure of Student/Certification Candidate Records

All student/Certification Candidates are afforded the right to inspect records, files and electronic data primarily and directly related to their performance. This inspection is to be conducted in the presence of a Certification Division staff member, according to the following guidelines:

- Written request for record review must be submitted in writing to the Director of Certification;
- A date for records inspection shall be granted within forty-five (45) days of the receipt of the written request;
- Requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) provisions shall be honored accordingly;
- Certification examinations taken by the requestor do not constitute records or files for purposes of this review;
- On-line release of records, files and information directly pertaining to Certification Candidate performance shall comply

with accepted practices instituted within the State of Connecticut for its agencies.

Third Party Disclosure of Examination Information

With the exception of Public Information, and conditions stated herein, the Certification Division shall refuse access to or disclosure of information from educational records to third parties without the written consent of the Certification Candidate.

A record of the requesting party and the reason for the request shall be retained by the Certification Division.

Individuals wishing to release their certification record information must submit a written, signed and dated request to the Director of Certification, specifying the information to be released and including, if desired, a request for copies of the item(s).

Certification Candidate records are available without student-written authorization, to the following:

- Instructional or administrative personnel employed by the CFPC whose responsibilities reasonably require access to files/records
- Certain representatives of the State of Connecticut, federal departments, agencies or authorities, as provided by law, who administer and/or regulate activities directly related to fire and rescue services and who in the scope of their employment, should reasonably be expected to require access to individual files/reports
- In response to a lawful subpoena or court order

Disclosure of Examination Results

The Certification Division complies with CFPC regulations, federal and state privacy laws in prohibiting the disclosure of certification examination scores to any person other than the respective Certification Candidate, without the written consent of this candidate.

The CFPC Release of Test Scores Authorization Form (Form C-15) is the only mechanism available for use by a Certification Candidate to authorize the reporting of a certification examination score result to the Lead Instructor for a given course of study.

The following guidelines are to be communicated to the Certification Candidate at the time the form is presented and prior to the opportunity for authorizing score release:

- Scores shall be forwarded to the designated Lead Instructor as soon as possible;
- Under no circumstances will examination scores be released over the telephone, by E-mail or facsimile communication;
- The scores to be reported are confidential information and will only be reported to the Lead Instructor of the training program;
- The Lead Instructor is not authorized to release the scores to any other individual or organization, including other CFPC and/or Connecticut Fire Academy staff members and instructors;
- Upon receipt of scores, the Lead Instructor shall privately inform the individual Certification Candidate of the score received;
- The Lead Instructor is not authorized to release scores to other members of the training class, either verbally or by posting scores in a public place;
- Certification Candidates who fail an examination and require retesting **must** await receipt of written examination scores mailed from the Certification Division prior to applying for re-examination;
- Any application for re-examination based solely on examination results communicated by the Lead Instructor cannot be accepted and will be returned to the applicant.

Disclosure of Examination Results to Certification Candidates

It is the intent of the Certification Division to provide timely reporting of examination results for both practical and written testing of candidates for certification.

Practical Examinations

As detailed in the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM** Operating Guide, candidates for certification shall be advised of "pass/fail" status by station evaluators at the conclusion of each examination station or evolution at a practical examination. Chief Examiners shall confirm the Certification Candidate's status at the end of the examination day when all candidates have completed testing and all necessary retesting of candidates has been completed.

Reporting of a candidate's results shall be done in an appropriate and professional manner, with disclosure intended for the individual Certification Candidate and/or the evolution team.

Courses requiring in-class evaluation of practical skills (e.g., Fire Service Instructor I) and project evaluations (e.g., Fire Officer I) shall involve direct instructor-student communication.

Written Examinations

Test scores shall be sent to each candidate by First Class Mail within six (6) to eight (8) weeks of the examination date.

Challenge Process: Records/Files Review

The Certification Division shall respond to any reasonable written request, addressed to the Director of Certification, for an explanation or interpretation of any item in a Certification Candidate's records or files.

If, after inspecting a record or the contents of a file which the requestor believes is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of privacy, the individual may request an amendment to the document by submitting a written request to the Director of Certification, with appropriate compelling documentation attached. All such requests shall be answered within fifteen (15) days of receipt, indicating whether the requested amendment has been made.

Should a request for amendment be denied, the requestor may appeal to a panel of three (3) individuals designated by the Director of Certification using the following process:

- A written request for an appeal hearing shall be addressed to the Director of Certification, referencing the item(s) and stating the grounds for challenge (e.g., inaccuracy, misleading nature, inappropriateness, etc.)
- A hearing shall be scheduled within thirty (30) days of receipt of the request
- The requestor may choose to be assisted or represented by individuals of choice, including an attorney
- The Director of Certification is to be advised thirty (30) days prior to the hearing as to any anticipated representatives and their relationship to the requestor
- Representation and/or assistance shall be the requestor's expense
- The Director of Certification, in examining the contested item(s), shall:
 - 1) hear the person responsible for placing the contested item(s) in the file or record (if appropriate);
 - 2) examine any documentation or testimony the requestor wishes to present;
 - 3) decide whether the contested item(s) should be retained, deleted, altered or amended;
 - 4) issue a written decision, based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, within fifteen (15) days of the conclusion of the hearing.

For conclusions deemed adverse to the requestor, the notice of decision shall include a statement indicating the requestor's right to place a statement in the file or record to register disagreement and/or setting forth reasons for disagreement with the decision.

SECTION SIX: Certification Refusal, Revocation and Appeal

The Certification Division reserves the right to refuse certification of any applicant or Certification Candidate for cause. Certification shall be revoked in any instance where evidence of cheating, fraud or deceit is discovered.

The Certification Division shall provide applicants and Certification Candidates an orderly and systematic means to appeal qualifications, certification examinations and/or Certification Division policies and procedures without fear of restraint, coercion, or reprisal. When an appeal has been placed, a review may occur.

Conditions under which an applicant or Certification Candidate may exercise the right to an appeal:

- Noncompliance to written testing procedures and policies as outlined elsewhere in this document
- Validity of test questions or application of skills evaluations
- Perceived discrimination with regard to race, religion, creed, color, gender, age, disability or national origin

On-site examination appeals shall be limited to typographical and/or mechanical errors within a written examination booklet. Examination Proctors shall address the issue immediately and, if appropriate, issue a replacement examination booklet.

Unless specifically addressed in the methods for testing, the appeals process will only be utilized for the areas of concern stated above and is subject to include the procedural timeline and appeals board as necessary.

Appeals are limited to the applicant or Certification Candidate directly affected by the situation to be appealed.

Certification Candidates may only appeal the grading of their respective examination.

The content, wording, and/or reference materials of a specific question or questions are ineligible for appeal.

Only those persons who have failed an examination or specific portion of a multi-part examination shall be eligible to appeal the score of that examination.

Any Certification Candidate may inspect his/her written examination answer sheet or practical skills grading summary sheet to verify the mathematical accuracy of the grade and may be apprised as to which section needs further preparation.

The request for an appeal of an examination grade must be received by the Certification Division no later than fourteen (14) calendar days (excluding holidays) after the date of the notification letter indicating failure for that examination.

Appeals Board

The Certification Director shall establish an Appeals Board in accordance with the following guidelines:

- The Appeals Board shall consist of a non-voting chairperson and three voting members
- At least one (1) voting member shall not be an employee of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control
- If the concern involves a CFPC Adjunct Examiner/proctor, a representative from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) shall be a member of the Board
- The Certification Director shall not be a member of the Board
- Two (2) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum
- Affirmative votes of the majority present shall be required for any decision. The Board will meet as needed to review appeals
- A Board member shall not act in any case in which the member has a personal interest or direct knowledge of the Certification Candidate

Procedural Timeline

Candidates may submit an appeal to the Certification Coordinator or Certification Registrar after the examination is complete, but in no case shall this appeal be made more than fourteen (14) calendar days (excluding holidays) after the Certification Division has mailed examination results to the Certification Candidate.

Certification Candidates shall provide specific and detailed information in writing with regard to the alleged occurrence/violation.

If the appeal cannot be resolved by the Certification Coordinator or Certification Registrar within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt, excluding holidays, the Certification Director shall be advised.

The Certification Director will convene the Appeals Board within thirty (30) days after the Notice of Appeal is received.

The Appeals Board will review the appeal and record all proceedings, make a decision on the suggested action to be taken, set forth the reason for the decision and submit their findings to the Director of Certification.

The Appeals Board shall, in every case, make a recommendation to the Director of Certification within five (5) days of their last convened session.

The Director of Certification will review the Board's recommendation and provide written notification of the final decision to the Certification Candidate.

If the decision is in favor of the Certification Candidate, provisions for correction shall be made as quickly as possible.

SECTION SEVEN: Policy Review and Revision

This policy manual shall be reviewed and revised on a pre-determined basis to assure that its content remains correct, current and relevant. The document tracking component of the **CFPC CERTIFICATION SYSTEM** includes revision schedules and documentation. Interim amendments shall be considered as appropriate.

<p>Document Review Schedules</p>
