

Frequently Asked Questions: Current Editions NFPA 1001/NFPA 472

The adoption of updated editions for two NFPA standards presents new aspects for the future certification of Connecticut firefighters, including the opportunity for certification of Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction (HM/WMD) competencies.

As part of the *NFPA 1001 Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, 2008 Edition*, a firefighter/candidate must qualify under the *NFPA 472 - Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents 2008 Edition*. Firefighter/candidates are now required to show competency at the Awareness *and* Operations Level as part of Fire Fighter I certification.

Effective immediately, the Commission of Fire Prevention and Control, Certification Division will administer certification testing to the Awareness and Operations Levels within NFPA 472 as part of the Fire Fighter I Level of certification within NFPA 1001.

While changes have occurred in the **content** of the current standards, the overall **process** for certification remains the same: verification of fire control competencies through a live burn audit, practical examinations, and written examinations. In addition, the general **format** within practical examinations remains the same with selected combinations of skill stations, Job Performance Requirement (JPR) scenarios, and a Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction (HM/WMD) scenario.

The following questions and answers are offered to help ease the transition to the current standards:

1) What is NFPA 472?

The formal name for NFPA 472 is the “*Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents, 2008 Edition*.”

2) What is different about NFPA 472?

Under the 2008 Edition of NFPA 472 key Operations Level HM/WMD tasks have been more clearly defined and labeled as "Mission-Specific Competencies": The use of PPE; Air Monitoring and Sampling; Victim Rescue/Recovery; Product Control; Evidence Preservation/Sampling; Performing Mass Decontamination; Performing Technical Decontamination, and Response to Illicit Laboratory Incidents.

3) What are "Mission Specific Competencies"?

This term refers to competencies where the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) can match the expected tasks and duties of its personnel with the competencies required to perform those tasks. These competencies are to be performed under the guidance of a Hazardous Materials Technician (HMT), allied professional, or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). A more detailed description of specific tasks can be found in NFPA 472, Chapter 6.

4) What training requirements will qualify me to be eligible for a NFPA 472 examination?

Training course content for NFPA 472 should include the CORE competencies; PPE; Mass Decontamination; Technical Decontamination; Evidence Preservation and Sampling; Product Control; Air Monitoring and Sampling; Victim Rescue and Recovery, and Response to Illicit Laboratory Incidents. Estimates indicate that fulfillment of this obligation may require a firefighter/candidate to complete approximately 48 hours of classroom and practical experience in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD objectives. However, while all the NFPA 472 Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD competencies must be addressed, the methods for presentation, instruction and practice are determined by the training agency and instructor.

5) I am an instructor who plans to teach Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD as part of a Fire Fighter I class. What textbook is the basis for questions on the Certification Division's written HM/WMD examination?

Refer to the ct.gov/cfpc website under the certification and testing link to view the list of references. All test questions on the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD written examination are referenced and validated to many of the publishing companies' firefighting skills and hazardous materials manuals.

6) What should I expect in the practical skills portion of the NFPA 472 Operations level examination?

Scenarios have been developed to assess competency based on approximately 65 skill sets for which the firefighter/candidate is responsible at the Operations Level HM/WMD. These skill sheets will be available at the website ct.gov/cfpc. The exact scenario(s) and associated skill sheets selected for a given examination day are **not** communicated in advance.

7) How will CT firefighters be certified to the Awareness Level HM/WMD?

The Commission is **only** offering a certification in Awareness **and** Operations Level Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction with Mission-Specific Competencies. CT firefighters who follow the process will be certified to a combined Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD, including all Mission-Specific Competencies.

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9) Can the written examination be conducted concurrent (on the same day) with the practical examination?

No.

10) Can the Fire Fighter I certification examination be conducted concurrent with the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD examination?

As of February 2009, the Fire Fighter I examination process will incorporate the HM/WMD with Mission-Specific Competencies as part of the Fire Fighter I practical and written testing components.

11) What is the certification testing process for those candidates trained to the Fire Fighter I Level (inclusive of the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD)?

There will be three phases to the Fire Fighter I testing process. The first is the Burn Audit. The second will be the Practical Skills Test for Fire Fighter I and HM/WMD which will include Fire Fighter I skills, a Fire Fighter JPR evolution and a Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction scenario. The third will be a combined written examination inclusive of firefighting and Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD questions (140 questions). A 70% passing score in each of the three areas is required to qualify for certification.

12) What is the certification testing process for those candidates trained in a combined class for the Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II Levels (inclusive of the HM/WMD Awareness and Operations)?

The Certification Division will also offer a combination certification process for Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II which will also include the Awareness and Operations Level for HM/WMD. There will be three phases to the combined Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II testing process: Burn Audits (one for Fire Fighter I and one for Fire Fighter II); Practical Skills Testing, and a Written Examination. Both Burn Audits can be accomplished on the same day. During the Practical Skills Testing candidates will be assessed on Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II skills including but not limited to a JPR evolution, vehicle extrication skills and a skill set scenario for HM/WMD. A comprehensive 160-question written examination will assess Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II and Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD knowledge. A 70% passing score in each of the four areas is required to qualify for certification.

13) What is the certification testing process for those candidates trained to the Awareness and Operations Level for Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction?

Similar to the test design from above, there are two phases to the HM/WMD testing process. The first is the practical skills set scenario. The second phase is the written examination. This is a combined Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD examination consisting of 100 questions. A 70% passing score in each of the two written areas is required to qualify for certification.

14) What equipment or materials will the host community or requesting agency need to have available for Operations Level HM/WMD Practical Skills Testing?

The Certification Division will supply equipment and materials for the Operations Level HM/WMD practical skills test. The requesting agency or host community is required to have the following items:

- Large open, flat area, preferably a closed and empty parking lot capable of holding a Tractor Trailer scenario including hazard area and full technical decontamination deployment.

- A building or structure that could be used as a Fixed Facility site with a standard sized door to access the outside at ground level. A burn building, tower, or non-public access to the fire station could be acceptable.
- A building with a working, unobstructed garage door to simulate a residential home with attached garage. This area would be off-limits to members of the fire department and public during testing the process.
- One (1) fire service engine or pumper that meets NFPA 1901 standards with water supply capability including hydrant make-up and supply hoses.
- All firefighter/candidates are responsible for attending Operations Level HM/WMD practical examinations with Structural Firefighting Equipment (hood, helmet, boots, gloves, bunker pants and coat) including SCBA and a second air bottle. Additionally, they are required to bring and be prepared to don and doff a Level 'B' non-encapsulated suit (Low 'B'), helmet, boots, inner and outer gloves and tape (chem tape preferred, duct tape is acceptable).

15) Will the firefighter/candidate be allowed to have any reference material (ERG) at the written examination?

No. Test questions are written in a manner to allow the recall of information learned without the need to use any reference material. The Certification Division is not looking to require that firefighter/candidates memorize the reference material, but rather to have working knowledge of the intent of the reference material. Any resource material needed for the psychomotor (practical) skills will be supplied by the Adjunct Examiners at the time of the particular skills set.

16) What is the fee for certification?

As with any certification application there is a \$15.00 fee for each level of certification. To be clear, when a firefighter/candidate applies for a Fire Fighter I examination there are two assessments: a \$15.00 assessment for the Fire Fighter I and a \$15.00 assessment for the HM/WMD. There is one (1) application with a \$30.00 fee. Should a firefighter/candidate apply for certification levels in Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II there are three assessment fees for a total of \$45.00 with one (1) application. The firefighter/candidate will receive certification in Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II, and Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD with the Mission-Specific Competencies. Should a firefighter/candidate wish to be certified in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD only, the fee is \$15.00.

17) What happens if I fail the Fire Fighter I examination?

The Certification Division will not award the Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction certification until you successfully complete your Fire Fighter I certification.

18) How will retakes be handled for those who do not pass the HM/WMD practical examination and the written examinations?

A firefighter/candidate will be notified by the Certification Division in writing of pass/fail status. A firefighter/candidate with an initial failure will be granted another opportunity to retake an examination following the guidelines established by the Commission.

A firefighter/candidate must successfully pass all practical skills for both Fire Fighter I **and** HM/WMD to be eligible to take the written examination. A firefighter/candidate must successfully pass **all levels** covered in the written examination with a minimum of 70% in each area to satisfy the requirements for certification. As an example: a firefighter/candidate who tests for Fire Fighter I will also be tested to Awareness and Operations HM/WMD. The firefighter/candidate will be expected to achieve a minimum of 70% proficiency in the Fire Fighter I examination questions, a minimum of 70% on the Awareness Level questions, **and** a minimum of 70% on the Operations Level questions.

19) What is the policy for retaking a combined written examination for Fire Fighter I and Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD? For Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II and Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD?

The Certification Division offers multi-level written examinations for both the initial assessment and for retesting. A multi-level certification written examination assesses the firefighter/candidate at different levels in a similar professional qualification standard. The questions for each level are randomly selected and randomly sequenced within the examination. The firefighter/candidate is aware at the time of application and informed as part of the instructions for the examination that it is a multi-level assessment.

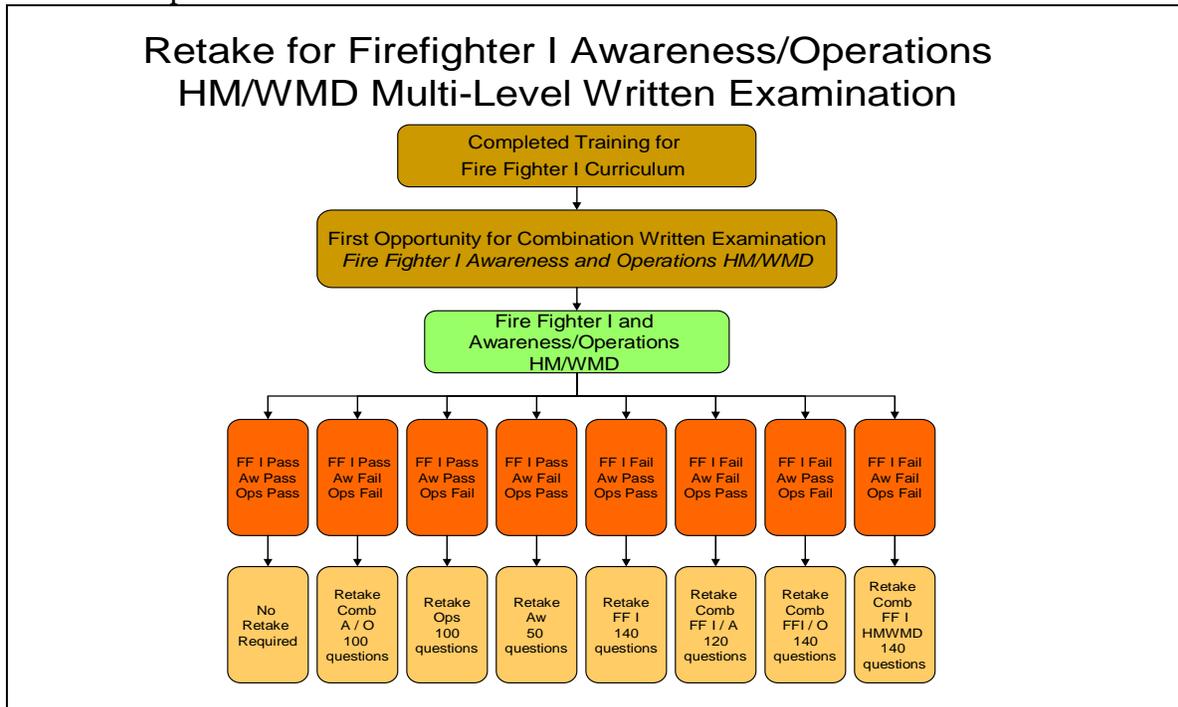
Successful cognitive assessment is based on 70% of the correct answers from each of the tested levels. Each level is scored separately. As an example, a firefighter/candidate taking the Fire Fighter I written examination will be given a test booklet with 140 questions--20 Awareness Level HM/WMD , 40 Operations Level HM/WMD, and 80 Fire Fighter I questions. A firefighter/candidate must score a 70% or greater to be considered competent cognitively at each level--Awareness Level and Operations Level HM/WMD and Fire Fighter I.

A firefighter/candidate who applies for a Fire Fighter I and Firefighter II examination will be responsible for four levels of certification--Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD, Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II. The examination will consist of 160 questions randomly selected from the four levels and distributed in a random sequence (Awareness Level HM/WMD - 20 questions, Operations Level HM/WMD - 40 questions, Fire Fighter I - 75 questions, and Fire Fighter II - 25 questions). At each level the firefighter/candidate must achieve a minimum 70% passing score.

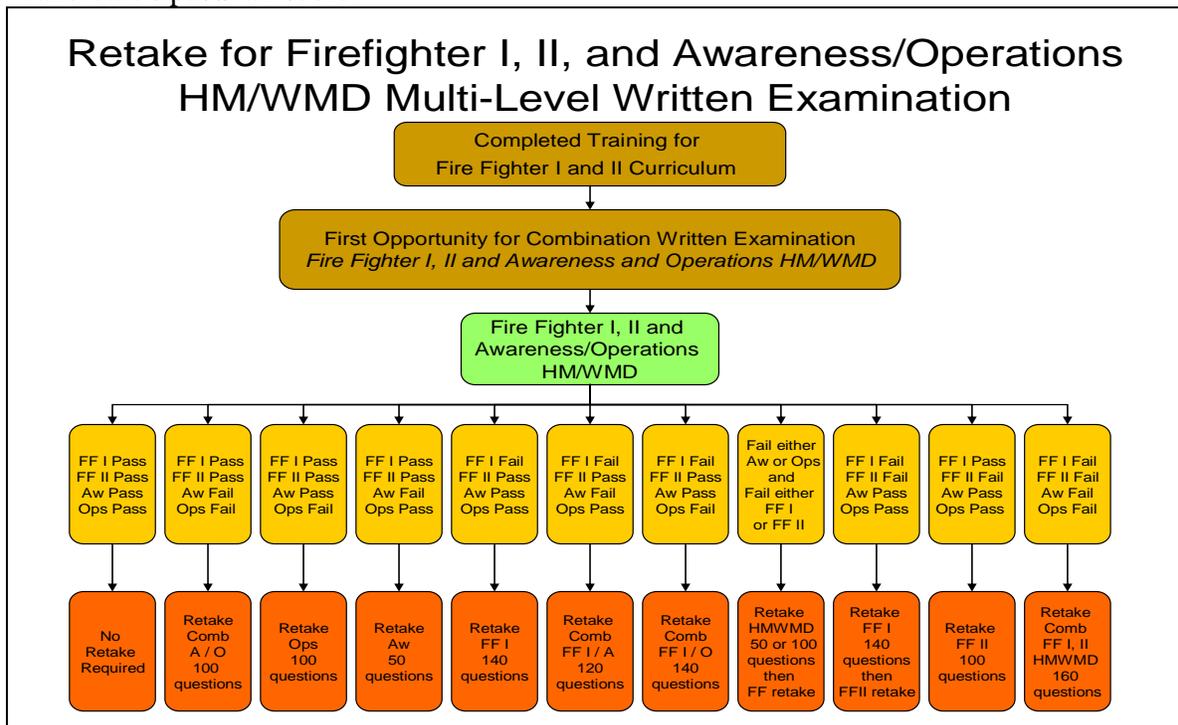
If a firefighter/candidate scores less than 70% at all levels of the examination, he/she is eligible to retest using the same type of multi-level written examination. If a firefighter/candidate scores less than 70% in any of the levels he/she only needs to retest at the level he/she was not competent. The number of questions in the examination is increased to offer a greater probability of assessing overall knowledge and to indicate if a firefighter/candidate achieved competency at the level.

Multi-level examination retakes carry all the other policy and procedure stipulations for retakes.

Retake for Fire Firefighter I Awareness/Operations HM/WMD Multi-Level Written Examination represents the retake written examination combinations based on a candidate's pass/fail score.



Retake for Firefighter I, II and Awareness/Operations HM/WMD Multi-Level Written Examination represents the retake written examination combinations based on a candidate's pass/fail score.



20) Can a firefighter become certified to the FFI level without being certified in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD?

No. Under the 2008 edition for NFPA 1001, a firefighter/candidate cannot receive a Fire Fighter I certification without also being certified to the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD.

21) Will those who are currently certified to the FFI level be required to become certified in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD?

No. Firefighters may elect to pursue this certification. Plans are underway to offer the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD including the Mission-Specific Competencies certification examination later in 2009.

22) I just earned FFI certification and plan to take a FFII course. Do I have to become certified in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD before being allowed to take the FFII course?

No, you do not need to be certified in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD before applying for the Fire Fighter II course.

23) I took Awareness and Operations Level Hazardous Materials training through my fire department several years ago. We update every year. Do we have to be certified now?

No. The NFPA has a different philosophy from CONN-OSHA which requires annual refresher training whether you are certified or just trained in hazardous materials.

24) Will I be meeting CONN-OSHA regulations with the NFPA 472 certification?

CONN-OSHA and NFPA are two separate, distinct entities. The NFPA consensus standards serve as a reference for the accrediting agencies that authorize the fire service certification process in Connecticut. The State of Connecticut Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health regulations (CONN-OSHA) mandate safety practices to be followed by business, industry and agencies, including fire departments.

The local fire department, which is the AHJ, will operate through policy and procedure, or local protocol to specify the scope of the firefighter's duties. This is your best source for defining how the CONN-OSHA regulations apply to your situation. Consult the NFPA 472 standard for specific details on the competency expectations for responders at the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD.

25) What HM/WMD Levels and Mission-Specific Competencies will my certification represent?

The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control will offer one certificate titled "HAZMAT Awareness and Operations" with the Mission-Specific Competencies: "CORE; PPE; Mass Decontamination; Technical Decontamination; Evidence Preservation and Sampling; Product Control; Air Monitoring and Sampling; Victim Rescue and Recovery; and Response to Illicit Laboratory Incidents".

26) When does certification for CT firefighters become effective?

The new standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications and the Competencies for Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents became effective for the Fall 2008 testing session.

27) How long is HM certification effective? Is re-accreditation required on an annual basis?

At present, all certifications by CFPC have life-time recognition. The accrediting entities, ProBoard and IFSAC which oversee the Certification Division of the Commission, do not require recertification.

28) I am an instructor who has taught HM for my FD ever since the program was handed off from the Connecticut Fire Academy. Am I authorized to teach the course leading to certification? Do I have to become a Hazardous Materials Technician in order to teach Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD courses?

At present you are still eligible to teach the hand-off course from the CFA. However, with the additional material and competencies found in the 2008 edition of NFPA 472 the original hand-off course does not adequately cover the new Mission-Specific Competencies. Refer to the resources list on the *ct.gov.cfp* website for assistance in designing an instructional plan to deliver training in these competencies.

29) I serve as a Station Evaluator for FFI and II practical examinations. Will I be authorized or required to examine firefighters for HM practical examinations for our upcoming classes?

The Certification Division has trained qualified Adjunct Examiners to evaluate the Operations Level HM/WMD firefighter/candidate. They will be hired by the Certification Division to assess the HM/WMD scenario.

30) What about reciprocity?

The State of Connecticut will offer reciprocity for the **complete** Awareness and Operations HM/WMD with the Mission-Specific Competencies.

31) What if I want to challenge the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD Certification based on my previous experience?

Challenges to the NFPA 472 Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction standard competencies will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Director of Certification for specific details and forms.

For answers to additional questions, please contact the Certification Division (860) 627-6363 extension 225 or send e-mail correspondence to Tom McGowan, Director of Certification at *thom.mcgowan@po.state.ct.us*

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