



TEXAS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' AND FIRE MARSHALS'
CERTIFICATION BOARD

SFFMA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Effective February 2015

PO Box 1709, Manchaca TX 78652 -1709
www.sffma.org

Phone: 512.454.3473
Fax: 512.453.1876



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TO: Texas Fire Chiefs and Certification Coordinators

FROM: Texas Volunteer Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Certification Board

RE: SFFMA Firefighter Certification Program

The Texas Volunteer Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Certification Board recommends that your department initiate this program and join the volunteer firefighters of Texas in upgrading our training standards. In order to maintain the integrity of this program, it is strongly recommended that the Chief attend a Certification Workshop once every three years. These workshops are generally free to the public for anyone interested in learning more about the Certification Program.

Each of the Association's member departments has access to the SFFMA Online program which enables the department to: maintain current contact information and membership rosters; track and report training; generate dues invoices and certification applications. Access information can be obtained by contacting the Austin office.

If you have any questions regarding any of these programs, contact your Area Board Member or the Austin office at the address below.

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RECOMMENDATION

Available Certifications

That Certification Programs for volunteer firefighters be established in the state of Texas on a voluntary basis and said programs be administered through the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association (SFFMA) office:

1. Introductory Fire Fighting program updated effective January 1, 2015;
2. NFPA Firefighter I & II programs updated effective January 1, 2015;
3. Master Firefighter program effective July 1, 1990;
4. Volunteer Investigation Personnel programs updated effective January 29, 2005;
5. Driver/Operator program effective August 1, 2000;
6. Fire Officer, Public Fire Educator and Public Information Officer programs implemented January 28, 2006;
7. Instructor programs updated effective June 1, 2008;
8. Wildland and Search & Rescue programs implemented January 31, 2009;
9. Vehicle Extrication Technician program updated effective January 25, 2010;
10. Fire Inspector program effective July 1, 2012;
11. Trench Rescue Apprentice program implemented February 1, 2014;

Additional programs will be implemented as deemed necessary by the Certification Board.

Physical Fitness

The very nature of a firefighter's actions is hazardous and extremely physically exhausting while on the fire scene. In order to render proper service to his/her department, and in keeping with this concept, a firefighter must be physically sound and free from any defect which may adversely affect his/her performance of duty. His/her personal safety and the lives of others will be endangered if the firefighter lacks the necessary physical abilities.

Emergency Medical Care

Minimum emergency medical care performance capabilities for entry-level personnel shall be developed and validated by the AHJ to include infection control, CPR, bleeding control, and shock management.

Composition

That a Board of no more than twenty-five (25) members, appointed by the President of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas (SFFMA) and known as the Texas Volunteer Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Certification Board, administer the program.

Appointments

- a. Board Members will be appointed to serve four-year terms on the board.
- b. Vacancies of the Board will be filled by the President of the SFFMA to fill unexpired terms caused by any reason.
- c. No two Board Members are to be from the same Zone area.
- d. Prospective new Board Member's name and resume must be submitted in writing by the SFFMA District to the President and Executive Director of the SFFMA.
- e. One Board Member shall represent Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) as a voting liaison.
- f. One Board Member shall represent Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) as a voting liaison.

Individual Requirements

- a. Board Member must:
 - i. reside in the Zone to be represented, and be active in that District;
 - ii. be an active, retired or honorary life member of a regularly organized volunteer or combination fire department that holds current membership in the SFFMA;
 - iii. maintain a current individual membership in the SFFMA;
 - iv. have at least eight (8) years of experience with a recognized fire department or combination of recognized fire departments;
 - v. hold at least an SFFMA Firefighter I certification;
 - vi. meet the instructional criteria for Certification Coordinator; and
 - vii. attend a majority of meetings each year.

Assistants

- a. There may be up to two (2) assistants per Zone, designated by the Board Member from that Zone.
- b. One assistant may cast a proxy vote, only in the absence of the Board member.
- c. Assistants should be named from departments outside the Board member's county.

Procedures

Meetings

- a. The Board shall meet at such times and places in the state of Texas as it deems necessary.
- b. Meetings shall be called by the Chairman upon his/her own motion, or upon the written request of five members.
- c. Quorum – A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.
- d. Orders of Business – Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail for all meetings.

Officers

- a. Officers of the Board shall consist of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary.
- b. The Board shall elect its officers from the appointed members at its first meeting succeeding the June State Convention.

Objectives

1. The Board is to raise the level of competence of volunteer firefighting and prevention personnel by establishing and maintaining minimum standards in line with NFPA requirements.
2. The Board has the authority to certify volunteer fire protection training and educational programs as having attained the minimum required standards suggested by the Board.

Duties

1. The Board has the power to revoke any certificate issued in the certification program, if the Board determines that:
 - a. the program is not being conducted properly;
 - b. the program is being abused in the department;
 - c. a certificate was wrongly issued or fraudulently obtained; or
 - d. a person's criminal conviction of a felony or misdemeanor directly relates to the duties and responsibilities of the holder of a certificate issued by the Board.
2. The Board may:
 - a. deny to a person the opportunity to be examined for a certificate;
 - b. deny the application for a certificate;
 - c. suspend or revoke an existing certificate; or
 - d. limit the terms or practice of a certificate to areas prescribed by the Board.
3. The methods and procedures for any revocation herein shall be established at the discretion of the Board. (Grievance procedure guidelines are available through the Austin Office.)

General Statement

1. It shall be understood that the suggested minimum standards herein described are designated as minimum programs. Participating Fire Departments are encouraged to exceed the minimum programs wherever possible. Continuous training beyond the minimum standards and testing on a regular basis for volunteer firefighters is strongly recommended. Nothing in these regulations shall limit or be construed as limiting the powers of the fire department or other agency or department of any city, town, county, parish, or municipal corporation to enact rules and regulations which establish a higher standard of training above the minimum.

Although the Board strongly endorses and supports adequate physical ability and good moral character as entrance requirements into a fire department, the matter of establishing entrance requirements is left to the respective local department.

2. Each participating fire department must have access to a current set of training materials from the library of any of the approved publishers, and must maintain current editions as they become available. Contact the SFFMA office for a current list of manuals required, or refer to our website at www.sffma.org.

Lesson plans, binders, and all approved training materials and current prices are available from the SFFMA office in Austin at discounted prices. Purchase programs may be arranged on an individual need basis.

3. Training provided under this program should include facilities, apparatus, equipment, reference materials, and records to support a quality volunteer firefighter education and training program. The resources should provide for classroom instruction, demonstrations and practical exercises for trainee to develop the knowledge and skills required for volunteer firefighter certification.
4. Applicants for all certifications other than Certification Coordinator must complete “Courage to be Safe” coursework and provide documentation at the time of application. A permanent record of the coursework completion will be maintained at the Austin Office.
5. Forms to apply for certification or to maintain progress of each member are furnished upon request and are available online (www.sffma.org/certification). Forms shall be returned to the Austin Office for processing.

Definitions

Certain definitions are used in describing the minimum standards and related requirements as suggested by the Board, including but not limited to:

1. Volunteer – a non-career professional
2. Board – The Texas Volunteer Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Certification Board
3. Chairman – the presiding officer of the Board
4. Department – a fire department that utilizes fire suppression and/or prevention personnel and/or search and rescue personnel
5. Fire Chief – the head of the fire department
6. Certification Coordinator – the official person in charge of setting up, maintaining and validating all of the certification records
7. Austin Office – certification department of SFFMA
8. Active Firefighter – an individual 18 years of age or older who participates in a minimum of 20 clock hours of training (including Continuing Education) per year, response participation required by the AHJ, and the Certification Program approved by the SFFMA by the submission of an annual progress report of training earned
9. Trainee – a member of the fire department who has not satisfied the requirements of the certification in question
10. School – any school, college, university, academy, or local training program which offers fire service training and includes within its meaning the combination of course curriculum, instructors and facilities
11. Requirement – a description of a provision, which relates to suggested minimum standards
12. Specification – a description of a requirement supplementing a section of the regulations
13. Examination – a Board-approved test administered by the Board and/or a Board-approved examiner, which an individual must pass as one of the requirements for accredited certification
14. Curriculum – the objectives established by the Board as a minimum requirement for certification
15. Objective – the numbered criteria required for mastery of each numbered statement
16. Eligibility – a determination of whether or not an individual has met the requirements set by the Board and would therefore be allowed to take a Board examination(s)
17. Eligibility Endorsement – a signed statement testifying to the fact that an individual has met the required training objectives of a Board-approved curriculum and is qualified to take a Board-approved examination of such level
18. Examinee – an individual who has met the Board requirements and therefore qualifies to take a Board-approved examination
19. Examiner – an individual appointed and/or approved by the Board or Board member to administer a Board-approved examination(s)
20. Certificate of Successful Completion – a document supplied by the SFFMA which identifies and shall be used as proof that an individual has completed the required training and has successfully passed the Board-approved examination(s) for certification.
21. AHJ – authority having jurisdiction

22. FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
23. ICS – Incident Command System
24. IFSTA – International Fire Service Training Association
25. NFIRS – National Fire Incident Reporting System
26. NIMS – National Incident Management System
27. NFA – National Fire Academy
28. NFPA – National Fire Protection Association
29. NWCG – National Wildfire Coordinating Group
30. TCFP – Texas Commission on Fire Protection
31. IFSAC – International Fire Service Accreditation Congress
32. Pro Board – Pro Board Fire Service Professional Qualifications System