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## **Introduction**

This guide provides Saskatchewan fire departments with information on gaining fire fighter certification offered by the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC). Your questions, comments and concerns are always welcome. Contact the office in Regina or Saskatoon, or get in touch with your regional Fire Prevention Officer.

The OFC is responsible for establishing training standards and professional qualifications for fire fighters. The OFC recognizes the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) professional qualification standards. All certification programs offered by the OFC meet NFPA Standards. The International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and the National Professional Qualifications Board have accredited the Office of the Fire Commissioner to certify fire service personnel to NFPA professional qualification standards.

## **Fire Service Instructor Program**

Fire service training in Saskatchewan is delivered through a province-wide Fire Service Instructor system. The OFC supports fire service training by providing training resource materials and consulting services to instructors and fire departments on matters of training, certification and program delivery.

The Fire Service Instructor program establishes a province wide network of certified instructors to meet the demand for training and ensures students will achieve a proficient level of fire fighting skill and knowledge. The Instructor program also provides a complimentary network of evaluators in order to satisfy requests for fire fighter certification.

Fire Service Instructors (FSI) qualified to NFPA Standard 1041 – Level 1 may recommend students to receive international certification, or provincial recognition of training to NFPA Standard 1001 (Fire Fighter). To gain provincial recognition or to attempt certification for other NFPA Standards, students must receive recommendation from a Fire Service Instructor qualified to NFPA Standard 1041 - Level 2.

## **Certification**

The certification of fire fighters to NFPA standards allows for the recognition of the individual achievement of fire fighters, both within their home department and throughout the fire service.

The adoption of a standardized certification program across Saskatchewan brings a much improved degree of recognition to fire department training carried out at all levels. NFPA, and the OFC, expect a person certified under NFPA standards will continue to develop the skills and knowledge gained during training and certification. As we all know, fire fighters must keep training throughout their careers to maintain a safe and effective level of performance.

It must be understood that once certification is gained, the fire fighter cannot remain static. Training must be ongoing, allowing the fire fighter to advance and to develop sufficient skills to perform competently in a broad range of assignments and duties. None of the objectives of NFPA 1001, for example, require a fire fighter to know how to operate a fire department pumper. But pumping skills are often essential for every member of a Department, particularly at smaller combination and volunteer halls.

Gaining certification identifies a properly trained and skilled fire fighter to anyone in the fire service community in Saskatchewan, across Canada and internationally. Certification can be the passport to employment with a full-time department. For paid-on-call and volunteer members certification is a persuasive demonstration to community leaders of their department's commitment to providing the best possible fire protection. And, most importantly, individual fire fighters develop a new confidence and pride in their abilities as a result of the certification process.

Unlike some emergency training, first aid courses for example, once a fire fighter has completed certification under any current NFPA standard, there is no further formal qualification needed. However, the individual must maintain their qualification by working within the field they are certified (see the appropriate appendix for information on maintaining qualification). Of course, fire fighting science, tools and techniques are constantly being improved. As progress is made, NFPA standards are updated as well. The Standards are much like building blocks. To take an advanced course, such as Pumper Driver/Operator (NFPA 1002) fire fighters should have the primary course, NFPA 1001, as a prerequisite.

A long-time fire fighter may be asked to gain certification in those sections of the 1001 standard which have changed, since he or she was first certified, before moving on to the more advanced Standard. On-going training programs at the department level will keep fire fighters up to date with additions and improvements made to NFPA standards. Fire fighters will not be required by the OFC to redo the entire content of a Standard once they have completed certification at that level.

The OFC certification program does not allow for *grandfathering*, where certification is gained through past experience or training. With the support of their department, experienced fire fighters may choose to challenge the written and practical tests for any given Standard, based on their level of experience, knowledge and training. Again, since the NFPA standards are widely respected as the benchmark for professional qualifications in the fire service, members who move to new departments will carry recognized certification with them.

*Remember, certification is not an ending, it is a beginning.*

The fire fighter that has gained certification at any NFPA standard is then prepared for additional, advanced and more specific training to continue as an effective and efficient member of their fire fighting team.

## **International Certification**

After participants have successfully completed an evaluation process, certification is awarded. The student's name is entered in the OFC's data bank and is registered with the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) at Oklahoma State University. Certified fire fighters may apply for registration with the National Professional Qualification Board in Quincy, Massachusetts and should contact the training coordinator for further information.

## **Gaining Recognition for Training and Certification.**

The OFC offers Certification to all serving fire department members within the province of Saskatchewan. Certification may come as part of a comprehensive training program offered by individual departments, through training co-operatives, from established training institutions, or individuals may choose to challenge written and practical tests independently. The requirements for certification remain the same, regardless of the learning methods students have chosen to use in their preparations to attempt certification.

Fire departments in the Province face a wide variety of fire risks and suppression challenges. Not all fire departments, or fire departments, will have the desire or resources to train to the full NFPA standards. But correct, comprehensive and continuing training is essential for the safety of all fire fighters. For this reason, the OFC offers a *provincial recognition of training* certificate for those fire fighters trained to conduct job duties within the scope of their local fire department's guidelines and procedures, but not necessarily to the full extent of the NFPA Standard. All qualified Fire Service Instructors may gain a provincial recognition of training certificate for students instructed. The Instructor must complete training record forms for the specialized programs they have instructed and submit these to the OFC. Certificates will be issued to the requesting Instructor, who is then responsible for the distribution of certificates to students.

Certification by IFSAC or NPQS identifies students who have attained a professional qualification. Certification programs are conducted following procedures established by the accreditation agency and the OFC. Instructions on gaining certification or to arrange a certification program may be found in the appendix. In addition to the information contained within the appendices, the following is applicable to certification programs.

1. The OFC will provide all evaluation instruments and supervision of Certification Programs. Written evaluations may be proctored following the system described under **Proctored Evaluations**.
2. Once a Certification Program is completed all students will be advised in writing of their standing (PASS/FAIL).
3. The Officer of the Fire Commissioner does not routinely release test scores. The student is informed if they are successful (PASSED) or unsuccessful (FAILED) in their certification attempt. The student, through written request to the OFC, may obtain percentage scores within two years of the certification program.
4. Certificates are issued only upon request. Qualified instructors and/or fire chiefs must provide a written request and appropriate confirmation and other documents (identified in each appendix with certification descriptions) to the OFC to obtain certificates for students. Successful students, upon written confirmation from their employer indicating that they are active members of a Fire Service Organization, will be issued a certificate.
5. Unless otherwise noted in an appendix, students must complete certification programs within 180 days.
6. Students not completing a certification program within the identified time frames will be required to reattempt evaluations (regardless of pass/fail status from previous attempts), resubmit assignments and all documentation required by the certification program.

## Facial Hair Policy

Fire fighters may not participate in any practical evaluation exercise where SCBA is, or may be required, if facial hair extends into the area covered by the seal of a SCBA face piece. It should be noted that a one to two day beard growth (stubble) is considered facial hair. This is to ensure compliance with the Department of Labour, Occupational Health and Safety regulations, Part *XXXII Additional Protection for Fire Fighters*, section 479(e)(ii) and 488.

## Evaluation Security

Security measures have been created to insure that every student is allowed an equal chance for success. These measures are further intended to prevent any individual or group from gaining an unfair advantage. Only those persons taking an evaluation will be granted access to evaluation materials. No one will be provided advanced knowledge of the contents of an evaluation (written or practical) prior to the evaluation. No one (instructors, chief officers, former students, etc.) will be granted access to the evaluations for the purpose of viewing or reviewing the evaluation. Any challenges to the validity of an evaluation or any item on the evaluation should be directed to the Fire Commissioner (see **Appeals** below). These security measures are designed solely to protect the integrity of the certification process.

***All evaluation materials are the property of the OFC and shall be returned to the Fire Prevention Officer conducting the certification program.***

## Written Evaluations

Written evaluations will be generated from the evaluation bank held by the OFC. Written evaluations consist of a question booklet, answer booklet and instruction pages. Any student needing help because of language or literacy issues must be identified in advance. Oral evaluations are available. Students shall not be permitted to have any study or reference material in the classroom or at their desk during written evaluations except as permitted by the Fire Prevention Officer supervising the evaluation. Written evaluations consist of multiple choice, matching and true/false questions covering a specific program, with a maximum time limit for completion. Passing scores and time frames for written evaluations are 70% and 30 minutes per 25 questions on the evaluation. Specific information on questions, pass marks and times are identified in each appendix for each certification program.

### Question Examples:

#### A. Multiple Choice

The capital of Saskatchewan is:

- A. Regina
- B. Saskatoon
- C. Winnipeg
- D. Melfort

#### B. Matching

Match the following tools with their common use;

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A. Axe                   | 1. to force a car door                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B. Pike pole             | 2. to ventilate a roof or force a door |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. Hydraulic rescue tool | 3. to pull down a ceiling              |

### **C. True/False**

NFPA 1001 is the standard for the Professional Qualifications of a Fire Fighter.

True     False

### **Performance Objective Evaluations**

Performance objective evaluation check sheets will be generated from the evaluation bank held by the OFC. Practical skill evaluations shall be based on the NFPA Standard for the certification program being conducted. Students are responsible for all of the skills and will be required to demonstrate practical skills under supervised conditions. Additional information on practical skills may be found in the appendices or within the NFPA Standard identified with the certification program.

The exact number of skills tested during any certification program may vary. Due to the number of skills required by some NFPA Standards, all skills may not be tested at each certification program. However, students should be prepared to demonstrate any and all skills outlined in the NFPA Standard for the certification program.

Grading for performance objective evaluations and pass/fail criteria are identified in the appendices.

### **Evaluation Discipline**

There is no room on the fire ground for a substandard performance or short cuts. The same holds true of the evaluation procedure. All participants are expected to partake fully and honestly in the process.

Should questions of honesty, unauthorized assistance or interference come up during an evaluation the student in question will meet informally with OFC evaluators and senior staff from the department or institution sponsoring the Certification Program. Students who have deliberately behaved in an unprofessional or dishonest manner during evaluation will be failed.

### **Certification Attempts**

A student who is unsuccessful in their attempt to gain certification in a program can try again. There is no limit to the number of attempts a student may make. However, a student may not reattempt the same certification program until at least three months after an unsuccessful attempt.

### **Recognition of Certification**

Recognition of qualifications held by fire fighters coming to Saskatchewan from other jurisdictions is subject to review by the OFC. Credentials provided by the student will be evaluated to determine which level of certification, if any is applicable.

## **Appeals**

Any student who feels the evaluation process is flawed may appeal, in writing, to the OFC. The appeal must provide detailed information. The Office will investigate and provide a decision within 30 days. The decision of the Fire Commissioner is final on all appeals.

## **Evaluation by Proctor**

Students may arrange for written evaluations to be proctored in situations where the student and OFC staff are unable to arrange a mutually convenient time and location. Proctored evaluations may be arranged through the Training Coordinator with the OFC.

Acceptable proctors are persons in the community who hold a position of trust. Proctors are required to follow the system established by the OFC, described in this section.

## **Eligible Proctors**

Municipal Administrators, Teachers, Fire Prevention Officers, Pastors, Provincial Government officers, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and any person approved by the OFC.

## **Information/Instructions to Proctors**

1. Duplication of test papers is strictly forbidden without the written consent of the OFC Training Coordinator. Test papers are to be found in a separate and sealed envelope. If envelopes show any sign of being opened or tampered with prior to the Proctor administering the evaluation, the evaluation is to be canceled. Arrangements for a new evaluation must be made with the OFC Training Coordinator.
2. Only those students listed on the Student's List are to be given an opportunity to write the evaluation.
3. The Proctor is to offer the option of reading the evaluation to the students. If a student accepts this option, the oral evaluation should be conducted separately from other students. The proctor is instructed to read only the question and offer explanation of words or phrases which serve to clarify the question. Students should have their own copy of the test paper, which they will follow, as the proctor reads each question.
4. Unless otherwise indicated, students are limited to a maximum of 30 minutes per 25 questions for a written evaluation or oral evaluation.
5. Students are to be reasonably separated and cautioned against talking. Any student leaving their seats during an evaluation is deemed to be completed and is to turn in their test paper to the Proctor.
6. During evaluation only the Proctor and the students are permitted in the room.
7. The Proctor is to explain and ensure students understand the instructions.
8. At the conclusion of the evaluation, all evaluation materials (used and unused), the Proctor's signed declaration, answer sheets and Student List are to be sealed the return envelope provided.
9. The proctor is to send the return envelope by priority post. Postage is the responsibility of the Department, Institution or community.

**Declaration of Proctor**

The undersigned affirms that the enclosed evaluation(s) have been conducted in accordance to the instructions provided.

Proctor Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Materials**

Enclosed with this Guide are appendices, detailing how to gain certification under NFPA Standards, and a Training Resources Catalogue, identifying training materials and resources available from the OFC.

## REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE

**Certificate Requested:** NPQS      IFSAC      Provincial  
CIRCLE ONE

**PRINT STUDENT'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** FIRE FIGHTER'S NAME MUST BE PRINTED NEATLY AND LEGIBLY, AS IT IS TO APPEAR ON THE CERTIFICATE.

**NAME OF THE COURSE THAT CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED FOR:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail certificates to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**ENSURE ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION IS ENCLOSED, ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION IS COMPLETE AND CORRECT, (see reverse of this form) AND SIGNED BY A QUALIFIED FSI OR FIRE CHIEF. THIS WILL ENSURE CERTIFICATES ARE ISSUED PROMPTLY.**

Fire Chief or Instructor Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Chief or Instructor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to: **Office of the Fire Commissioner  
Suite 310 - 1855 Victoria Avenue  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
S4P 3V7**

## Documentation required for IFSAC/NPQS Certificates

Documentation must be filed with REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE

NFPA STANDARD	PREREQUISITES	REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	√
<b>Instructor</b>		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief	
<b>1041 (Level 1)</b>		JPR (pages A-6 & A-7)	
<b>1041 (Level 2)</b>	Certification NFPA 1041 Level 1	Certificate NFPA 1041 Level 1	
		JPR (pages A-8 & A-9)	
<b>Fire Fighter <sup>1</sup></b>		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief	
<b>1001 (Level 1)</b>	Certification NFPA 472 Awareness	Certificate NFPA 472 Awareness Level	
	First aid and CPR	First Aid Certificate/CPR	
		JPR (pages B-2 through B-5)	
<b>1001 (Level 2)</b>	Certification NFPA 1001 Level 1	Certificate NFPA 1001 Level 1	
	Certification NFPA 472 Operational	Certificate NFPA 472 Operations Level	
		JPR (pages B-5 through B-6)	
<b>Haz Mat</b>		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief	
<b>472 Awareness</b>		JPR (pages C-2 through C-6)	
<b>472 Operational</b>	Certification NFPA 472 Awareness	Certificate NFPA 472 Awareness	
		JPR (pages C-7 through C-15)	
<b>Educator</b>		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief	
<b>1035 (Level 1)</b>	Fire Fighter skills (basic)	Certificate NFPA 1001 Level 2*	
	Instructional skills (basic)	Certificate NFPA 1041 Level 1*	
		JPR (page D-2)	
<b>1035 (Level 2)</b>	Certification NFPA 1035 Level 1	Certificate NFPA 1035 Level 1	
	Instructional skills (advanced)	Certificate for NFPA 1041 Level 2*	
		JPR (page D-3)	
	Media relation skills	Public Information Officer Qualification*	
<b>Investigator</b>		Letter of application	
<b>1033</b>		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief	
		2 Letters of reference	
	Certification NFPA 472 Awareness	Certificate NFPA 472 Awareness	
	Extensive fire prevention knowledge	Certificate NFPA 1001 Level 2*	
		Fire Reports Log (25) (page E-18)	
		Testimony Log (page E-11)	
	Instructional skills (advanced)	Certificate NFPA 1041 Level 2*	
	Fire safety skills (advanced)	Certificate NFPA 1035 Level 2*	
		JPR (page E-4 through E-10)	

\* Identifies that an alternative means of documentation or qualification may be accepted for certification requirements. Refer to the appendix.

<sup>1</sup> NFPA 1001 Fire Fighter certification programs are not conducted separately for Level 1 and Level 2. Students are required to complete Level 1 and Level 2 simultaneously during NFPA 1001 certification programs.