



DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
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Attachment 2

Date: October 8, 2012

To: Ronny J. Coleman, Chairman
Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee
c/o State Fire Training

From: Ken Wagner, Fire Service Training Specialist
Jon Woody, Fire Captain, CALFIRE, Fire Fighter Survival Cadre
Derek Alkonis, IAFF Cadre

Subject/Agenda Action Item: Evaluating the IAFF Fire Ground Survival Program for Equivalency with the State Fire Training Fire Fighter Survival FSTEP Course

Recommended Actions:

This report is for information only.

Background Information:

In 2010 the course Fire Fighter Survival was approved for delivery. This is a 16 hour FSTEP course. Subsequent to approval of this course, SFT was advised of a similar course being developed by the IAFF.

Derek Alkonis Comment: The IAFF FGS Course development process began December 2007. November 2008, a beta-test of the curriculum was held at Los Angeles County Fire Department East County Training Center. To ensure California State Fire Marshal concerns were addressed within the curriculum, members of the SFM Survival Program development team were invited to attend. SFM representatives, along with other attendees of the beta test, received draft FGS instructional materials, attended lectures on FGS topic, and participated in drills being considered for inclusion within the final program. At the conclusion of the multi-day beta-test, participants were asked to complete an evaluation to find where improvements could be made. The responses to the evaluations were used to make improvements to the program. After 6 beta-tests of the curriculum were completed in different parts of the United States (LACoFD beta-test was the second), the curriculum was finalized and published.

As a follow-up to the beta-test, I spoke with Chief Rick Bennett to find where the development of the IAFF FGS program could benefit from SFM personnel's participation. With approval from the IAFF, I also extended an invitation for the SFM Survival team to attend IAFF FGS development

meetings. The idea was to have SFM Survival team members assist with the development of the IAFF program so all SFM issues could be addressed. The invitation was declined by Chief Bennett during a phone conversation.

This course is entitled IAFF Fire Ground Survival Awareness.

Derek Alkonis Comment: The Awareness program only refers to the 8-hour on-line course. The full train the trainer course is a 4-day course.

Previous discussions on this topic at the SBFS resulted in a request that State Fire Training evaluate the IAFF course for reciprocity with the FSTEP course.

At the July 20, 2012 STEAC meeting, the Marin County Fire Chiefs Association advised STEAC that they had recently hosted a train-the-trainer course to establish a cadre of instructors for the IAFF course. Additionally, they asked that State Fire Training grant the IAFF course reciprocity with the FSTEP course.

In light of the previous discussion at the SBFS and the request made by the Marin County Fire Chiefs Association at their July 20, 2012 meeting, STEAC moved to ask State Fire Training to convene a meeting of development cadre members from the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival Course and the IAFF Fire Ground Survival Awareness course to evaluate the potential of reciprocity.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

On September 12, 2012 the aforementioned meeting was conducted. Attendance included:

Name	Representing
Derek Alkonis	IAFF
Jim Brinkley	IAFF
Lou Paulson	CFP
Jim Hudson	SFT Cadre
Jim Mathias	SFT Cadre
Jon Woody	SFT Cadre
Mike Richwine	Assistant State Fire Marshal
Ken Wagner	Fire Service Training Specialist

Curriculum

The IAFF curriculum is very detailed and includes a comprehensive on-line component along with a 24 hour instructor driven course delivery with emphasis on skills exercises. All materials are very professionally prepared and demonstrate a strong commitment to quality fire fighter training.

Meeting participants conducted a review and comparison of the two curriculum packages. The SFT Cadre identified three specific areas of instruction that are significantly different in the IAFF curriculum from what is contained in the FSTEP course material and Course Information and Required Materials Manual.

Derek Alkonis Comment: The review was not as detailed as it could have been. Prior to the meeting, IAFF FGS representatives recommended the SFT cadre members complete the IAFF FGS 8-hour on-line Awareness course to become familiar with the didactic portion. On the day of the review, when asked if the SFT Cadre members reviewed the program, they said they had not completed it. Furthermore, one member of the cadre said he had reviewed the information from the November 2008 beta-test, but had not looked at the new information posted on-line by the IAFF. Failure to review the new information resulted in the SFT Cadre members missing all the content updates from the beta-test sessions, as well as from recent IAFF FGS Instructor

Development Conferences. A detailed review of the program requires all SFT cadre members coming prepared to discuss the “details” of the program to find why specific content was selected.

The other area of concern in the above sentence is the statement: “three specific areas of instruction that are significantly different...”

I disagree. There are actually many more areas where the two curriculums significantly differ. One area is the thoroughness of the programs. This was further explained by the SFT Cadre members as; “everything the instructor teaches must be in writing.” The IAFF FGS Program includes comprehensive written content, PPT slides, instructor presentation notes, and video to support all sections of the course. Although the SFT includes written content and PPT slides, it does not include instructor notes or video. The absence of these instructional materials seems to go against the statement made by the SFT Cadre members.

Item	Cadre Concern
Rapid (Head First) Ladder Escape	A directed decision was made that this technique would not be taught in California curriculum due to demonstrated safety concerns.
Emergency Hose Slide	The technique taught in the IAFF curriculum significantly differs from SFT curriculum in that hand placement is different at the point of exit and the IAFF teaches a head first exit where SFT does not.
SCBA Emergencies	The SFT curriculum contains instruction on this topic that is more in-depth than what is presented in the IAFF curriculum.

The IAFF representatives agreed to take these three areas of concern back to their development cadre this fall and discuss their interest in modifying their curriculum to more closely align with SFT curriculum. If these modifications can be made, the SFT cadre is confident that the IAFF Fire Ground Survival course delivered after these modifications are made will be equivalent to the SFT Fire Fighter Survival FSTEP curriculum. As a result, participants presenting a certificate of completion for the IAFF Fire Ground Survival course could be granted equivalency for the Fire Fighter Survival FSTEP curriculum and could use the course to meet prerequisite requirements for the FSTEP Command and Control of the RIC Deployment course.