



**OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
STATEWIDE TRAINING AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

PO Box 944246
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Date: October 17, 2014

Attachment 1

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

From: Michael Richwine, Assistant State Fire Marshal

Subject/Agenda Action Item: Evaluating and Understanding Department of Defense (DoD) Training Records

Recommended Actions: Information/Discussion

Background Information:

California fire agencies have struggled on an on-going basis with the desire to hire employees that received their fire service training in the military, but have certifications issued by DoD and not State Fire Training (SFT). In 2011, The California Legislature recognized that an increasing number of personnel with fire fighter training were leaving military service and seeking employment in California. In support of this trend, Chapter 215 added California Health and Safety Code, Section 13159.2. This new provision states, in part "The State Fire Marshal may accept certification by the United States Department of Defense as an alternative for the basic SFM training and certification standards for the position of Firefighter I of the California Fire Service Training and Education Program, if the United States Department of Defense certification is accompanied by a national certification or accreditation that has been approved by the SFM and that is based on the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress, Pro Board, or other accepted third-party certification standard."

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

In an effort to assist both fire agencies and past members of the military, SFT has researched the way the DoD records the training records of military members. Aiding in this research was Kevin Bouillon, Battalion Chief with the Travis Air Force Base Fire Department. The attached information bulletin is intended to provide useful information to the California fire service on how to obtain and interpret fire service training records maintained by the DoD. Since the DoD is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board), once SFT is successful in achieving like accreditation, reciprocity for DoD certificate holders with the California certification system can be readily achieved. This will allow SFT to meet the intent of Chapter 215.

SFT plans to distribute the attached information bulletin to all stakeholder groups and would like to obtain feedback from STEAC before doing so.



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To: CFCA, CFFJAC, CDF, FDAC, STEAC, League of California Cities

Recruiting highly qualified entry level fire fighters is an on-going initiative for the California Fire Service. In addition to the entry level applicant base provided by our Accredited Regional Training Programs, we are experiencing a significant increase in the number of entry level applicants who have recently separated from military service. This trend may be at its highest level since the post-Vietnam era of the late 1970s through mid-1980s. During this period, fire fighter training in the military has improved and has become more structured with increased standardization. In fact, a majority of Department of Defense (DoD) fire fighter training is developed to meet the current professional qualification standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Furthermore, capstone certification examinations are being utilized and the DoD is accredited by and issues certifications recognized by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). These highly trained professional fire fighters are seeking employment opportunities with the California Fire Service and they are hoping to utilize their military training, certifications and experience to meet the employment standards established by state and local fire agencies.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal has researched the way the DoD retains and reports the training and certification records for their fire fighters. The purpose of the attached document is to provide some background on DoD fire fighter certification and explain how fire agencies can gather and interpret training records. We hope that you will find this information useful in your recruitment efforts.

If you have any questions, please contact Ken Wagner, Fire Service Training Specialist at (916) 425-2995.

Respectfully,

MICHAEL J. RICHWINE
Assistant State Fire Marshal
Chief, State Fire Training

Enclosure



California State Fire Training

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TRAINING BULLETIN

Evaluating and Understanding Department of Defense (DoD) Training Records

In 2011, The California Legislature recognized the increasing number of personnel with fire fighter training were leaving military service and seeking employment in California. In support of this trend, Chapter 215 added California Health and Safety Code, Section 13159.2. This new provision states, in part "The SFM may accept certification by the United States Department of Defense as an alternative for the basic SFM training and certification standards for the position of Firefighter I of the California Fire Service Training and Education Program, if the United States Department of Defense certification is accompanied by a national certification or accreditation that has been approved by the SFM and that is based on the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress, Pro Board, or other accepted third-party certification standard."

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is pursuing accreditation by both the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board). Achieving accreditation is a complex and lengthy process that will require comprehensive changes in the current certification program administered by the OSFM. Furthermore, the Fire Fighter I & II curriculum and certification examinations delivered by the Department of Defense (DoD) and the new 2013 California Fire Fighter I & II meet the same NFPA professional Qualification standards. With this in mind, the OSFM has been studying the way the DoD retains and reports the training and certification records for fire fighters with the hope of clarifying their interpretation for local fire agencies.

Every member of the military that leaves active duty status receives a document known as the DD 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty) and should be able to provide a copy to a hiring agency. Although the DD 214 does not normally contain information on fire fighter professional qualification certifications, it will contain several blocks or areas that will be of interest to a hiring agency.

1. **Block 11** will list the candidate's Primary Specialty in the military. This may include fire related terms such as Fire Protection Craftsman and/or Fire Protection Superintendent.
2. **Block 14** will list Military Education courses completed. However, it may contain reference to fire fighter certifications but should not be considered all inclusive.



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- 3. **Block 18** will list Remarks of a broad nature concerning the candidate's education, experience and commendations. Once again, this block may reference fire fighter training and experience but should not be considered all inclusive.
- 4. **Block 24** is entitled Character of Service and lists the nature of the candidate's discharge from the military. The term "Honorable" will be utilized to indicate that the candidate was discharged from the military after appropriately fulfilling their commitment. This is the only desirable notation in this block.

As previously stated, the DD 214 does not normally contain information on fire fighter professional qualification certifications. However, the DoD maintains a comprehensive website from which a candidate can access and print copies of all of their certifications. The titles on the certificates reference directly to the NFPA professional qualification standards. The website is <http://www.dodffcert.com/index1.cfm>. The initial screen will appear as shown in the following screen shot:

Since 12 July 2006, this site has processed 1,932,738 query requests. This database is updated daily, Mon - Fri between 8:30 and 8:45 pm EST.



Department of Defense
Fire & Emergency Services Certification Program
Lookup System

This database was last updated: **02 July 2014**

[Performance Test Notifications](#) [Mail Tracking System](#) [Program News/Updates](#)

This system allows customers to view and locally print DoD certification certificates.

Please enter your Last Name and the Last 4 digits of your social security number or employee number, then press Enter or click on the Submit button

Enter Last Name:

Last 4 of SSAN or ID:



[Detailed Explanation Page](#)

Certificates Printed		
Actual: 1,071,741	Implied: 66,624	Special: 147,691

[Privacy and Security Notice](#)

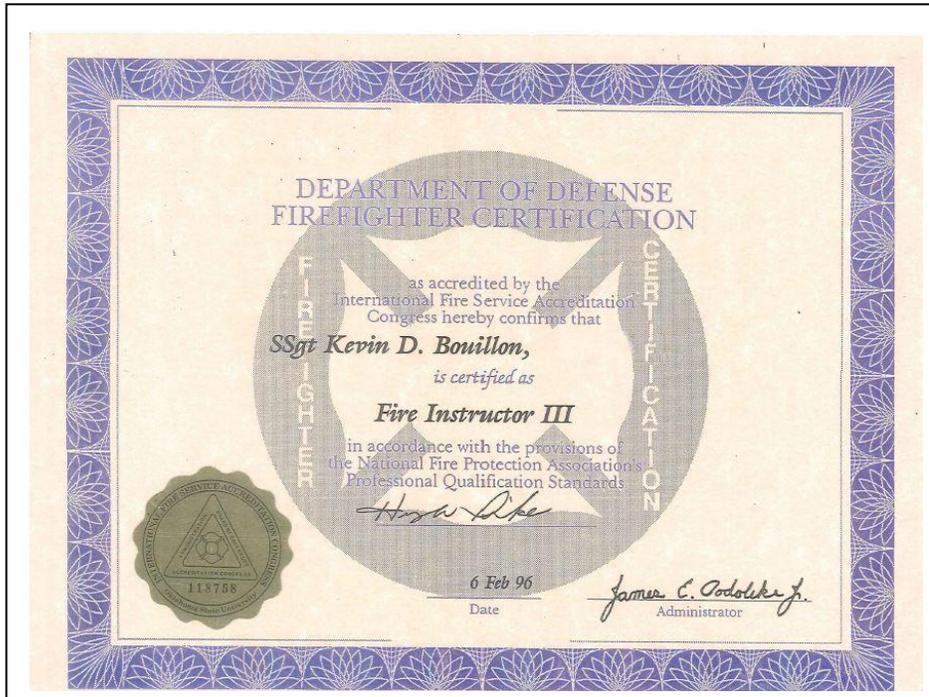
By logging in with their last name and last 4 digits of their Social Security number or military ID candidates can access their records and print color certificates for all of the certifications they received while in the military. The graphic below is a view of what a certificate printed from the web site will look like.



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Once the OSFM achieves accreditation from IFSAC and Pro Board, a mechanism will be adopted to offer equivalency for those individuals holding professional qualification certifications issued by the DoD. Until that time, local fire agencies are encouraged to evaluate the qualifications of discharged military personnel and make a local determination as to their suitability to fill positions within the California fire service.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Ken Wagner, Fire Service Training Specialist III at (916) 425-2995 or ken-wagner@comcast.net.