



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

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Attachment 3

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

From: Bill Vandevort, Fire Service Training Specialist

Subject/Agenda Action Item: Training and Education System Doctrine

Recommended Actions: Information Only

Background Information:

State Fire Training (SFT) has recently been in the process of reinventing itself and doing so on many fronts. This effort is in response to Blueprint 2020 and the simple fact that the "system" has become unwieldy to maintain in its current form. One area of focus is the Certification System. In 1974 the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) unveiled the first of several forthcoming professional qualification standards when it published Fire Fighter I. Soon after, SFT began an analysis of the standard and by 1976 Fire Fighter I certification became available, quickly followed by Fire Fighter II. Other NFPA professional qualification standards promptly followed and SFT began to add more certification tracks and levels within those tracks to the system. At this point SFT created the California Fire Service Training and Education System (CFSTES) to administer the certification program. By the mid 1980's the system grew to include Volunteer Fire Fighter, Fire Fighter I and II, Fire Apparatus Operator, Fire Officer, Fire Prevention, Fire Investigation and Fire Instructor, Hazardous Materials, and Public Fire Educator tracks.

Since the onset of the certification program a number of practices and beliefs, some correct and some not so correct, have crept into the system. For example, as the system grew and new and/or additional information became available related to the various fire service ranks and corresponding certification tracks, it became common practice to place this information in courses used to satisfy the knowledge requirements for certification. This led to a lot of information being included in the courses that exceeded the knowledge requirements stated in the NFPA standard. The certification courses were being viewed as the training requirements for promotion to various positions within the fire service. For example, the courses used to meet the knowledge requirements for Fire Officer Certification were also considered to be the training necessary to become a company officer.

What happened over time was that the functions of certification, training, education and professional development all got lumped together, when, in fact, these are separate elements each with a meaning and purpose of their own. This has led to confusion when discussing these elements and how they apply to the California Fire Service Training and Education System (CFSTES). Separating and defining each of these will allow for a clearer understanding of the purpose for each element. It also allows for the review of these

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functions or elements to determine which are the responsibilities of SFT and/or which parts of these elements can SFT effectively manage.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

California Fire Service Training and Education System Doctrine

By definition doctrine means a set of ideas or beliefs that are taught or advocated to establish a fundamental position, or policy. Doctrine seeks to provide a common conceptual framework for the organization for the purpose of determining:

- How it perceives itself to be ("Who are we?")
- What the mission is ("What do we do?")
- How the mission is to be carried out ("How do we do that?")

Doctrine provides a common frame of reference for all parties involved in fire service training and is a guide to action, rather than hard and fast rules. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application. A training doctrine for CFSTES is an initiative to provide clear, concise, and current policy that defines what SFT can and will do given the resources available to it.

What follows is an attempt to identify the training and education system components and to define the role SFT has in managing them.

For the purpose of this paper the following functions have been identified as certification, accreditation, training, education, and professional development.

Certification

Certification is the process through which an organization grants recognition to an individual that meets certain established criteria. These individuals usually have to meet eligibility requirements (such as education or years of experience), pass an examination, and pay a fee. There are also usually ongoing requirements that need to be met, such as retesting or participating in a minimum number of continuing education activities. Today, certification is widely recognized as basis of one's ability to do something.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the process by which an entity becomes officially approved as providing services of a reasonably good quality, so that the public can trust in the quality of its services. The accreditation process ensures that an entities practices are acceptable, typically meaning that they are competent to test and certify individuals, behave ethically and employ suitable quality assurance.

Training

Training is defined as learning that is provided in order to improve performance on the present job (Nadler, 1984). Performance is improved by helping the learners to master a new or established technology. The technology may be a piece of heavy machinery, a computer, a procedure for creating a product, or a method of providing a service. Notice that the last part of the definition states that training is provided for the present job. This includes training new personnel to perform their job, introducing a new technology, or helping an employee to achieve standards.

Education

The act or process of acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself for the future through formal schooling.

Education is helping people to do a different job. Unlike training, which can be fully evaluated immediately upon the learners returning to work, education can only be fully evaluated when the learners move on to their future jobs or tasks. We can test them on what they learned, but we cannot be fully satisfied with the evaluation until we see how well they perform their new jobs.

Professional Development

Professional development is helping people to acquire new horizons, technologies, or viewpoints and it enables workers to create better products, faster services, and more competitive organizations. It is learning for growth of the individual, but not related to a specific present or future job. Unlike training and education, which can be fully evaluated, development cannot always be evaluated. Development is more long term and often needs other driving forces. These driving forces may come in the form of leaders who talk-the-walk AND walk-the-talk. For instance, taking diversity classes may provide the big picture and concepts but it takes role models to provide living examples.

Summary

Certification is a designation earned by a person to assure qualification to perform a job or task. Training is learning for the present job. There should be immediate results when the performers return to their jobs while Education is learning for a future job. Results are obtained when the performers start their new jobs. Professional development is learning for the growth of the performer, rather than being related to a specific job. Results of information received during development may not be seen for some time.

So what does all of this mean? It means that there are separate and distinct components to our training and education system that impact the individuals participating in the system in their professional growth and development. It allows us to analyze each component to determine what the roles are of the various stakeholders in the system, such as SFT, fire department management, labor groups, and the education community. From this analysis we can also determine the extent to which each of these stakeholders may be able to contribute.