



FIRE OFFICER CURRICULUM REVIEW PROJECT

Memo

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TO: Mike Richwine, Chief, State Fire Training

FROM: Bill Vandevort, Cadre Chair,
Fire Officer Curriculum Review Project

SUBJECT: Project Progress Report

INTRODUCTION

With the approval by the State Board of Fire Services of the Fire Officer and Chief Officer Certification Training Standards, reviewing and updating the courses and course outlines within these two certification levels became a priority within State Fire Training. During the early part of 2008 a grant proposal was submitted for the purpose of reviewing and updating the Fire Officer and Chief Officer courses and course outlines. Because of the importance and the identified need to review the courses and course outlines, a decision was made by State Fire Training to go ahead and begin the project prior to the awarding of the grant. On January 20, 2009 a cadre of ten California fire officers met at the State Fire Marshal's Office in Sacramento at one of five meetings that were to occur over the next six months to begin the review process.

BACKGROUND AND DIRECTION

Prior to the creation of the certification system within California, command and management courses were held at Staff and Command Academies held in various hotels around the State. In the mid 1970's these courses and others were permanently located and presented at the State Fire Academy at Asilomar. Since then many of these "state fire academy courses" are now being delivered regionally throughout the state. These courses did not necessarily meet the NFPA standards and

were often touted as “addressing” the standards. For the most part the courses in those days were typically someone’s good idea. They were good courses but not standards based.

The California Certification System was established during the early to mid 1980’s, and even then the courses were loosely based on the NFPA standards. For example, the Fire Officer Career Development Guide was written after the courses were in place and reflected more of what was in the courses than what was in the standards and there never were any standards written for Chief Officer. The courses used in the curriculum for both of these levels of certification was a result of using existing State courses, creating or modifying others and grouping them into the appropriate certification level. This arrangement, with some minor modification, has stood in place for the past 25 plus years.

In 2008 the State Board of Fire Services approved for adoption the Fire Officer and Chief Officer Certification Training Standards. These documents, at the very least, meet every NFPA task statement, and where appropriate, additional tasks were added to meet the needs of the California Fire Service. These CTS documents are an embellishment of the NFPA standards and utilize a Student Performance Goal format. The knowledge and skill requirements for each task are found in the “Performance” section of the Student Performance Goal and are designed to assist in the development of course outlines and curriculum content.

As a result of these developments the Fire Officer Curriculum Review Project was initiated. **The direction from State Fire Training was for the cadre to review the Fire Officer and Chief Officer Certification Training Standards and make recommendations for any needed changes to the current courses and course outlines in order to meet the CTS requirements.**

In addition further direction was also provided from the State Fire Marshal that said that we would no longer utilize Fire Prevention 1A and 1B in the Fire Officer curriculum since those courses are designed for fire prevention personnel. The Cadre was also advised that a Leadership component should be seriously considered for inclusion in the both certification levels.

CADRE SELECTION

A number of conversations took place regarding who should be on the cadre, how many, and how to reach them. Part off that decision was driven by the impending grant application and the requirements associated with the grant. A number of options were discussed on how

to spread the word but ultimately the decision was made to put an announcement on the State Fire Training web page requesting resumes from those interested in participating on the project.

At the close of the announcement period, thirty-four resumes were received from two fire chiefs, 18 chief officers, 12 fire officers, and two engineers. 19/34 of the respondents have Bachelors or Masters Degrees, 22/34 had more than 20 years experience, and all had taught at some level within the State Fire Training system. The selection process was very difficult because we were limiting the number of participants to ten people when easily any one of the top twenty individuals was adequately qualified. The selection criteria was established as follows:

- Maximum of ten members – cost/manageable number
- North/South representation
- Representatives from the Training Officers Board of Directors
- Rank – company officers and various levels of chief officers
- Varying sizes of fire departments
- Experience on the job
- Educational background
- Teaching experience within the State system
- Participation in past State Fire Training projects/activities

Consideration was also given to providing a mix of individuals with both experience and new to working on projects within the State system. We felt this was important to infuse new and upcoming individuals into our system. We realized that by limiting the number of members on the cadre that we would eliminate some very well qualified individuals from participating. Having said this, there is still plenty of work to be done in the future, for probably as many people as want to, for participating in the development of curriculum and syllabi of the courses identified within these levels of certification.

The Cadre members selected are as follows:

- Steve Brassfield – Captain, Napa Fire Department
- Mike Bryant – Deputy Chief, Los Angeles County Fire Department
- Kevin Conant – Battalion Chief, San Jose Fire Department
- Bret Davidson – Battalion Chief, Ranch Santa Fe Fire Department
- Steve Horner- Captain, Santa Ana Fire Department
- Wolfgang Knabe – Fire Chief, Fullerton Fire Department
- Gary Lane – Division Chief, North County FPD (San Diego County)
- Ron Martin – Division Chief, Contra Costa County FPD
- Mark Romer – Division Chief, Roseville Fire Department
- Kevin Spellman – Captain, San Rafael Fire Department

CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS

The task of reviewing the CTS documents and determining needed changes to the courses and the course outlines appeared rather simple at first. However, there were a number of challenges that complicated the project. First of all the Fire Officer and Chief Officer certification tracks has not been looked at in their entirety since they were created over 25 years ago. Also, never had the Fire Officer and Chief Officer courses and course outlines been looked vertically (how one level builds upon the other).

Another complication to the project was that since the Fire Officer and Chief Officer CDG's were created a new edition of NFPA 1021 had been published which required updates to both CDG's. Then, half way through the review process it was determined by the Cadre that the Chief Officer CDG would better serve the certification system if it were split into two levels. This again took away from the review process.

Other considerations that impacted the review process was that a number of things have changed over the past 25 years. While Hazardous Materials and Master Planning were hot buttons in the late 1970's and early 1980's, they are commonplace today. Also, other programs that affect these levels of certification have been developed and are being delivered by other entities that were not available when the Officer courses were developed, such as CSTI, National Fire Academy, and now Homeland Security. In addition, the number of FSTEP courses has grown over the years that now provide hands-on training to individuals progressing through these levels of certification that was not available when the system was developed. And finally, there have been a number of general changes to the fire service over the years since the original courses and course outlines were developed.

The curriculum review process utilized the following steps to identify the courses and to create the revised course outlines.

1. Each "Performance" was separated from the CTS Task Statements.
2. Tentative teaching times were identified for each "performance" since each "performance" is considered a "teaching segment".
3. Segment teaching times were totaled to determine the teaching time for each Task Statement.
4. Similar CST Task Statements were grouped together to identify tentative course content along with the total teaching time for a course.

5. Tentative courses were reviewed and adjustments made to content and teaching times as needed.
6. Tentative course titles were identified that best reflected the content of the course.

Note: Any new course titles must be different than current titles in order to differentiate among the courses for internal record keeping purposes.

During this process the Cadre made sure that each Task Statement in the appropriate CTS was covered and also cross checked that all the Task Statements in the NFPA Standard were covered as well. If the Cadre felt there was a need to add Task Statements or Performances to meet California needs they were added to both the appropriate CTS and then to the courses and course outlines.

CARDRE RECOMMENDATIONS

During the past six months and over the course of 14 days of meetings the Fire Officer Curriculum Review Project Cadre has engaged in many discussions and debates, some associated with flashes of brilliance (and some not so brilliant). They took their task seriously, with responsibility and good conscience, to review the CTS documents, and based on their experience and ability, performed as per the direction they receive at the beginning of the project.

After careful review the Cadre wishes to offer the following actions and recommendations regarding the number and title of courses and course content for the Fire Officer and Chief Officer certification levels.

Fire Officer Certification Level:

1. Updated the Fire Officer CDG to reflect the changes found in the 2008 edition of NFPA 1021
2. Re-titled the Fire Officer CDG and Level of Certification from “Fire Officer” to “Company Officer”
3. Completely reworked the content of Fire Command 1A and re-titled it to “Command Operations for the Company Officer”
4. Completely reworked the content of Fire Command 1B and re-titled it “All-risk Command Operations for the Company Officer”
5. Reorganized the course outline for Fire Command 1C (to follow the order model established in Command 1A and 1B) but left the content virtually untouched. Re-titled the course to “WUI Command Operations for the Company Officer”
6. Completely reworked the content of Fire Management 1 and re-titled it to “Management Skills for the Company Officer”

7. Added a new course entitled “Leadership 1: Leadership Development for the Company Officer”
8. Eliminated both the Fire Prevention 1A and 1B courses from the curriculum.
9. Added a new fire prevention course entitled “Fire Prevention 1: Fire and Life Safety Inspections for the Company Officer”
10. Maintained the Training Instructor 1A/1B and Fire Investigation 1A courses from their respective certification tracks (necessary to meet the NFPA requirements)
11. Identified “I-200: Basic ICS” for Company Officer certification (assuming the “I-100: Introduction to ICS” would be included in Fire Fighter certification level)
12. Revised the requirements for “Company Officer” level of certification

Chief Officer Certification Level

1. Updated the Chief Officer CDG to reflect the changes found in the 2008 edition of NFPA 1021
2. Split the Chief Officer CDG into two levels and titled them “Chief Fire Officer” and “Executive Fire Officer”
3. Completely reworked the content of Fire Command 2A and re-titled it “Commanding Multi-alarm/Multi-agency Structure Fires”
4. Eliminated Fire Command 2B, 2C, and 2D course from the curriculum
5. Added a new command course entitled “Fire Command 2B: All-risk Command Operations for the Chief Fire Officer”
6. Completely reworked the content of Command 2E and re-titled it to “Command 2C: Command Operations For An Expanding Wildland Fire Incident”
7. Eliminated Management 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 2E from the Chief Fire Officer certification level (content from these course was either reworked back into other courses or identified to be placed into the Executive Fire Officer courses)
8. Added a new management course entitled “Management 2A: Fire Service Administration for the Chief Fire Officer”
9. Added a new management course entitled “Management 2B: Fire Service Program Management for the Chief Fire Officer”
10. Added a new course entitled: Leadership 2: “Leadership For The Chief Fire Officer”
11. Identified “I-300: Intermediate ICS” for Chief Fire Officer certification
12. Revised the requirements for Chief Fire Officer level of certification
13. Established the certification requirements for Executive Fire Officer.

14. Identified “I-400: Advanced ICS” for Executive Fire Officer certification

Note: Course outlines for Executive Fire Officer have not yet been developed (courses not used in Chief Fire Officer will be evaluated for inclusion in this level).

CONCLUSION

The Cadre seeks to receive approval for the following:

- **Changing the Fire Officer Certification level to “Company Officer”.**
- **Accepting the number of courses and tentative course titles identified in the Company Officer level of certification.**
- **Splitting the Chief Officer CTS into two levels: Chief Fire Officer and Executive Fire Officer.**
- **Accepting the number of courses and tentative course titles identified in the Chief Fire Officer level of certification.**

With this approval the Cadre can then proceed to finalize the course outlines for the Company Officer and Chief Fire Officer levels of certification and make them available for public review and comment. It will also allow the Cadre to proceed in identifying the courses and course outlines for the Chief Executive Fire Officer level of certification.