



**OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
STATE BOARD OF FIRE SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

PO Box 944246  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460  
Phone: (916) 445-8200  
Website: [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)



**Date: July 23, 2011**

To: State Board of Fire Services

From: Chief Mike Richwine, State Fire Training

Agenda Action Item: Eliminating Written Capstone Test and Adding Job Performance Requirements to the Certification Capstone Task Book

**Background Information:**

In 2009, the first Certification Capstone Task Book process was implemented for Training Instructor certification. Candidates were required to meet all components of the task book and then pass a written capstone test administered by State Fire Training. In the two years since the written capstone test process was implemented, SFT has delivered only one capstone test session with two candidates. One candidate was successful; one was not.

During 2010, while working on other curriculum projects, cadre leaders (Alicia Hamilton, Mark Romer, and Bill Vandevort) determined that the written capstone test might not be the best measurement for certification and the process would be benefitted by adding a performance section to the task book that is linked directly to the Certification Training Standards. Some of the reasoning included:

- Greater number of courses within a certification level greatly extends the time a candidate can complete the task book and be eligible to take the written capstone test.
- Using a performance-based task book provides the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills, and job performance requirements identified in the corresponding Certification Training Standards.
- The NFPA standards associated with the certification levels are becoming more performance-based, which is difficult to meet in a classroom environment, and a performance-based task book is a more relevant method of assessment within a particular discipline than by taking a comprehensive written test.

Another benefit of removing the written capstone test from the certification process would be to State Fire Training because the workload to develop and administer written capstone tests would be eliminated. Developing a comprehensive test for a certification level is considerable, even for one with only two to three courses. However, many certification levels have anywhere from five to ten courses. Although the workload to date is not significant, as more and more certification tracks are updated and moved to the task book process. This

workload would become extreme. By using the performance-based task book concept, SFT staff would need only to review the document to verify its completeness.

**Analysis/Summary of Issue:**

As with any new process, changes and improvements are inherent. While a written capstone test covering all courses within a certification level seemed to be the correct path at the onset, the alternative of using a performance section to the task book to assess a candidate's qualification will benefit both the candidate and State Fire Training.

Written tests would still be a critical component for each certification course by requiring a 50-item instructor-developed summative test that a student must pass with a minimum 80%.

Attached are proposed Certification Task Books for Training Instructor and Fire Inspector I.

**Recommended Action:**

Approve the new Certification Capstone Task Book process that replaces the written certification exam with job performance requirements.