



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

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ATTACHMENT 5

Date: April 22, 2013

To: State Board of Fire Services

From: Ken Wagner, Fire Service Training Specialist III

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: Information/Discussion

Background Information:

State Fire Training (SFT) has been working with the International Association of Fire Fighters to establish equivalency for their Fire Ground Survival course with the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival course. The SBFS discussed this item at their January 17, 2013 meeting. At that time, State Fire Training (SFT) staff provided a copy of a December 18, 2012 letter from Mr. Jim Brinkley, Director of Occupational Health and Safety, International Association of Fire Fighters. Furthermore, staff reported that a meeting with the SFT curriculum cadre was scheduled for January 21, 2013. The SBFS contemplated taking action but agreed to allow staff additional time to work on outstanding differences between the two curriculum packages.

Staff also provided a similar report to STEAC at their January 18, 2013 meeting. STEAC also contemplated taking action but instead deferred action until after the January 21, 2013 meeting between staff and the curriculum cadre. STEAC did, however, ask staff to schedule a conference call meeting for further discussion and possible action.

On January 21, 2013 Staff met with SFT Cadre members to discuss the IAFF response to the three curriculum differences that were previously identified. The Cadre appreciated the opportunity to continue the dialogue on this important subject and each response in Mr. Brinkley's letter was discussed in detail.

Staff and the Cadre revisited the focus of this discussion and the intent of equivalency for the IAFF course. Specifically, the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival course is currently the only listed academic prerequisite required for attendance in the FSTEP RIC Operations course. If equivalency is granted for the IAFF Fire Ground Survival course, it could also be used to meet the prerequisite. Keep in mind that when a course is an academic prerequisite it contains knowledge and/or skills that a

student must have to be successful in the next successive course. With that said, each of the three items of concern identified by the SFT Cadre during their review of the IAFF curriculum are items a student must prove competency in before the student can be successful in the RIC Operations course.

After reviewing the IAFF response dated December 18, 2012 and leading a discussion with the SFT Cadre, State Fire Training recommended the following:

Rapid (Head First) Ladder Escape

SFT is supportive of the decision by the IAFF to include the "Hook 2, Grab 4" technique and not the Rapid (Head First) Ladder Escape when teaching in California. Unfortunately, there is no nationally published criterion for the "Hook 2, Grab 4" technique. The SFT Cadre developed the technique included in the FSTEP curriculum after significant research and testing. It is in the interests of both SFT and the IAFF that students in either program be proficient in the "Hook 2, Grab 4" technique so that they are prepared to successfully participate in the FSTEP RIC Operations course. SFT understands that the IAFF places significant emphasis on developing lesson plans and requests that the IAFF provide copies of their new lesson plan and supporting materials on their implementation of the "Hook 2, Grab 4" technique so that SFT can share the materials with the FSTEP RIC Operations Instructors. In order to enhance the level of compatibility between curricula the SFT Cadre is willing to assist with lesson development.

Emergency Hose Slide

As stated previously, granting the IAFF course equivalency for the FSTEP course will allow students who completed the IAFF course to meet the "fire fighter survival" prerequisite to attend the FSTEP RIC Operations course. It is in the interests of both SFT and the IAFF that students in either program be proficient in an emergency hose slide skill. Furthermore, it is equally important for students to demonstrate proficiency in the FSTEP Emergency Hose Slide technique so that they are prepared to successfully participate in the FSTEP RIC Operations course. For reference, copies of the instructional materials for both the IAFF Emergency Hose Slide and FSTEP Emergency Hose Slide are attached to this report. The emergency hose slide as taught in the FSTEP course is a skill that is utilized and built upon in the FSTEP RIC Operations course. SFT respects the IAFF position on this technique and suggests that our joint interests could be met by the IAFF including the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival, Fire Fighter Survival Skill #5: Hose Slide as an additional skill when they teach their course in California. This would preclude the need for FSTEP RIC Operations Instructors to remediate students who have completed the IAFF course, thus eliminating a burden on students, instructors and the course flow. SFT understands that the IAFF places significant emphasis on developing lesson plans and, should this recommendation be accepted, requests that the IAFF provide copies of their new lesson plan and supporting information on their implementation of the FSTEP Hose Slide technique so that SFT can share the materials with the FSTEP RIC Operations Instructors. In order to enhance the level of compatibility between curricula and better prepare students for participation in the FSTEP RIC Operations course, the SFT Cadre is willing to assist with lesson development.

SCBA Emergencies

SFT is supportive of the decision by the IAFF to include the FSTEP SCBA Emergencies information as a part of their curriculum when teaching in California. Once again, students will be prepared to fully participate in the FSTEP RIC Operations course. SFT understands that the IAFF places significant emphasis on developing lesson plans and requests that the IAFF provide copies of their new lesson plan and supporting materials on their implementation of the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival, Topic 5: SCBA Emergencies information so that SFT can share the materials with the FSTEP RIC Operations Instructors. In order to enhance the level of compatibility between curricula the SFT Cadre is willing to assist with lesson development.

Implementation Items

In addition to the topic specific discussion and conclusions listed above, SFT has identified the following questions that must be answered before equivalency can be implemented:

1. How will the IAFF instructors be updated on each of the new or modified skills or topics that will be included in their curriculum to meet equivalency requirements?
2. After the IAFF curriculum is approved for equivalency, how will students who received IAFF certificates prior to equivalency be remediated so that they have the skills necessary to be successful in a future FSTEP RIC Operations class?

On March 7 2013, a STEAC conference call meeting was conducted. Staff provided a detailed report on the meeting with the curriculum cadre and explained that a letter was being drafted in response to Mr. Brinkley's letter of December 18, 2012. An unsuccessful motion was made to approve the IAFF curriculum for equivalency. Staff explained that they would continue to seek resolution on this matter.

Staff continued to work with the SFT cadre and IAFF representatives and on March 21, 2013 a letter signed by Assistant State Fire Marshal Mike Richwine was sent to Mr. Jim Brinkley at the IAFF. The letter outlined the three curriculum differences under discussion, implementation challenges and suggested actions to successfully achieve equivalency. A copy of Chief Richwine's letter is included with this attachment.

On April 11, 2013 Mr. Brinkley transmitted a letter in response to Chief Richwine's letter of March 21, 2013. Mr. Brinkley's letter addressed the IAFF's proposal to address each of the curriculum differences and implementation challenges. A copy of Mr. Brinkley's letter is included with this attachment.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

Mr. Brinkley's letter of April 11, 2013 addressed very completely the previously identified curriculum differences and implementation challenges. As a result, staff has been working with the IAFF designee, Training Chief Derek Alkonis of the Los Angeles County Fire Department to develop an equivalency implementation plan. A draft copy of this plan is included with this report.

SFT staff is working closely with the IAFF on the aforementioned implementation plan. Upon completion, equivalency will be in place.



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March 21, 2013

Jim Brinkley
Director of Occupational Health and Safety
International Association of Fire Fighters
1750 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006-5395

Dear Mr. Brinkley:

On September 12, 2012, Los Angeles County Fire Department Training Chief Derek Alkonis and you met with members of my staff, representatives of our State Fire Training (SFT) FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival Cadre and me to discuss establishing equivalency between the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival course and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Fire Ground Survival (FGS) course. In brief, three differences were identified between the two curricula and you agreed to discuss potential modifications to your program with your development cadre. Subsequently, on December 18, 2012, we received your letter outlining your position on how best to address the identified differences. The purpose of this communication is to bring you up-to-date on the staff work since we received your letter. Further, I want to assure you that it is the goal of the Office of the State Fire Marshal to continue working cooperatively with the IAFF to bring this matter to a successful conclusion.

As I am sure you are aware, at the October 19, 2012 meeting of the Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) a motion was approved allowing us to move forward with course equivalency if SFT and the IAFF were to reach an agreement on how to address the three differences identified at the aforementioned meeting. Further, in your December 18, 2012 letter you outlined IAFF's proposal to address each difference as follows:

- **Rapid (Head First) Ladder Escape** – The IAFF FGS instructors will only train California fire fighters in the "Hook-two, Slide-to-four" technique and not the "Rapid (Head First) Ladder Escape
- **Emergency Hose Slide** – The IAFF FGS Hose Slide technique does not require a head first exit. The IAFF FGS technique requires the fire fighter to exit the structure using the "Window Hang" technique first, and then to transition to the hose for descent to ground level. Having the fire fighter's head out of the window protects the fire fighter's head and the SCBA face piece from the potential high heat (polycarbonate fails at 400 deg F) coming from inside the room. Teaching a fire fighter to return his/her head into a superheated room like the SFT skill prescribes is contradictory to what the skill is designed to do. The IAFF FGS skill will not be changed.
- **SCBA Emergencies** – The IAFF FGS instructors will share the same SCBA Emergencies content found within the SFT curriculum when teaching in California.

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On January 21, 2013 staff met with SFT cadre members to discuss your December 18, 2012 response to the three curriculum differences. The Cadre appreciated the opportunity to continue the dialogue on this important subject and each response was discussed in detail.

Staff and the Cadre revisited the focus of this discussion and the intent of equivalency for the IAFF course. Specifically, the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival course is currently the only listed academic prerequisite required for attendance in the FSTEP RIC Operations course. If equivalency is granted for the IAFF Fire Ground Survival course, it could also be used to meet the prerequisite. Each of the three differences identified by the SFT cadre during their review of the IAFF curriculum are items in which a student must prove competency before the student can be successful in the FSTEP RIC Operations course.

Therefore, after evaluating your December 18, 2012 response, and in an effort to move forward with the implementation of equivalency, we have developed the following proposals:

Rapid (Head First) Ladder Escape

SFT supports the decision of the IAFF to include the "Hook-two, Slide-to-four" technique in place of the Rapid (Head First) Ladder Escape when teaching in California. Unfortunately, there is no nationally published criterion for the "Hook-two, Slide-to-four" technique. The SFT Cadre developed the technique included in the FSTEP curriculum after significant research and testing. It is in the interests of both SFT and the IAFF that students demonstrate proficiency in the "Hook-two, Slide-to-four" technique to ensure they are prepared to successfully participate in the FSTEP RIC Operations course. SFT requests that the IAFF provide copies of their new instructional materials on their implementation of the "Hook-two, Slide-to-four" technique so that SFT can share the materials with the FSTEP RIC Operations Instructors. In order to enhance the level of compatibility between curricula the SFT Cadre is willing to assist with development of instructional materials.

Emergency Hose Slide

SFT respects the IAFF position on the Emergency Hose Slide technique and after further discussion with the SFT cadre, will accept the emergency hose slide curriculum as taught by the IAFF. SFT accepts that at future FSTEP RIC Operations course deliveries some remediation may be required of students who have utilized the IAFF Fire Ground Survival course to meet the prerequisite.

SCBA Emergencies

SFT is supportive of the decision by the IAFF to include the FSTEP SCBA Emergencies information as a part of their curriculum when teaching in California. SFT requests that the IAFF provide copies of their new instructional materials on their implementation of the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival, Topic 5: SCBA Emergencies information so that SFT can share the materials with the FSTEP RIC Operations Instructors. In order to enhance the level of compatibility between curricula the SFT Cadre is willing to assist with development of instructional materials.

In addition to the topic specific discussion and conclusions listed above, SFT has identified the following questions that we must work cooperatively to answer so that equivalency can be implemented in a seamless manner for students, instructors and staff:

1. How will IAFF instructors be updated on each of the new or modified skills or topics that will be included in the curriculum to meet equivalency requirements?
2. After the IAFF curriculum is approved for equivalency, how will students who received IAFF certificates prior to equivalency be remediated so that they have the skills necessary to be successful in a future FSTEP RIC Operations class?

Jim Brinkley
March 21, 2013
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We would like to report to STEAC, at their April 19, 2013 meeting, that we have resolved these differences and are moving forward with the implementation of equivalency, allowing us to list the IAFF Fire Ground Survival course as meeting the prerequisite requirements for the FSTEP RIC Operations course.

We look forward to your prompt response and a long cooperative working relationship with the IAFF. If you have questions or need clarification please contact Ken Wagner, Fire Service Training Specialist at ken-wagner@comcast.net, or (916) 425-2995.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL J. RICHWINE
Assistant State Fire Marshal

cc: Tonya L. Hoover, CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal
Ken Wagner, CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal
Ronny J. Coleman, STEAC
Derek Alkonis, Los Angeles County Fire Department



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS®

HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER
General President

THOMAS H. MILLER
General Secretary-Treasurer

April 11, 2013

Michael J. Richwine
Assistant State Fire Marshal
Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Office of the State Fire Marshal

Dear Mr. Richwine,

In response to your letter dated March 21, 2013, the IAFF agrees to the following modifications to the Fire Ground Survival program when taught in California so it is recognized as equivalent to the state's survival program:

SCBA Emergencies- The IAFF FGS curriculum will include the same information covered in the state's curriculum. Pages 31-39, FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival Instructor & Student Guide, January 2010 Edition will be covered in lecture via a handout given to students on the first day of class. This handout will be inserted within the appendix of the IAFF FGS manuals. The handout will be created through a collaborative effort between the SFT RIC cadre and IAFF FGS Master Instructors from California. The classroom instruction will be reinforced during hands on training during the IAFF FGS SCBA Familiarization and Confidence Course drills.

Hook 2, Slide to 4 - The IAFF curriculum includes the same technique as the state's program. Furthermore, and as stated in previous communications, the IAFF will not teach the head first ladder slide in California.

Hose Slide - In addition to the IAFF FGS technique, IAFF FGS instruction will include the same instruction found within the state's program included on pages 53-54, FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival Instructor & Student Guide, January 2010 Edition.

IAFF FGS Master Instructor Training

IAFF FGS Train the Trainer is delivered using a cadre of forty Master Instructors from the United States and Canada. All IAFF FGS Master Instructors will be trained in the California content during the annual IAFF Instructor Development Conference in November 2013. To ensure California has FGS Master Instructors trained in these changes before November, the ten Master Instructors employed by fire departments within Los Angeles County will be trained within 60 days after equivalency is granted and course materials approved.

Remediation of California Firefighters Trained Prior to Equivalency

Currently there are approximately two hundred California fire fighters that have completed the IAFF FGS Train-the-Trainer program. These trainers are responsible for training over 3,700 California fire fighters using IAFF FGS instructional materials.

Approximately 3,500 of these fire fighters are employed by fire departments within Los Angeles County. These fire fighters will be taught the California content as part of the upcoming Los Angeles County Regional Training Group's IAFF FGS training scheduled for late 2013 or early 2014.

The remaining fire fighters who do not work in Los Angeles County will receive a training bulletin addressing the content areas discussed above. This training bulletin will be created through a collaborative effort between the SFT RIC cadre and IAFF FGS Master Instructors from California.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with State Fire Training to ensure the IAFF FGS Program is recognized as equivalent in California. This will allow IAFF FGS trained fire fighters to enroll and complete SFT's RIC Operations course without having to go through the state's survival program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Brinkley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Brinkley
Director of Occupational Health and Safety

cc: Lou Paulson, President, California Professional Firefighters

IAFF Fire Ground Survival Equivalency Implementation Plan¹

Number	Item	Responsible
1	Develop a supplement to the IAFF Awareness & Operations course that includes the following instructional materials from the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival Instructor & Student Guide, 2010 Edition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCBA Emergencies curriculum, Pages 31-39 • Hose Slide curriculum, Pages 53-54 The supplement will also reflect that the head first ladder will not be taught in California	IAFF/Alkonis
2	Develop a training bulletin which contains background information on this equivalency and the supplement described in Item 1 above for current IAFF instructors within California	IAFF/Alkonis
3	Provide IAFF a Word or other editable version of the FSTEP Fire Fighter Survival Instructor & Student Guide, 2010 Edition	SFT/Wagner
4	Brief SFT instructors on equivalency agreement and implementation	SFT/Wagner
5	Brief SFT staff on equivalency agreement and implementation	SFT/Wagner
6	Update RIC Operations CIRM & Course Plan to reflect equivalency under prerequisites	SFT/Wagner
7	After implementation of equivalency, IAFF to include a designation on future IAFF Operations course completion certificates noting that course was instructed in accordance with the agreement, I.E. Course Instructed in California	IAFF/Alkonis
8	After SFT review, IAFF supplement and training bulletin will be distributed by IAFF to all of their instructors in California and students who previously completed their Operations course.	IAFF/Alkonis SFT/Wagner
9	IAFF will develop a task book for students noted in Item 8 above to utilize to clearly document that they have been remediated in the skills associated with this agreement. This task book can be presented along with their IAFF Operations course certificate to verify the meet the prerequisite for SFT RIC Operations. This impacts personnel from Pasadena, Burbank and Marin	IAFF/Alkonis
10	All IAFF Master Instructors will be trained on supplement during annual conference in November 2013. Instructors in LA County will be trained with 60 days after the supplement and training bulletin are complete.	IAFF/Alkonis

¹ This content reflects a discussion between ken Wagner and Derek Alkonis on April 18, 2013.