



## DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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**To:** State Board of Fire Services

**From:** Bill Vandevort, Fire Service Training Specialist

**Subject/Agenda Action Item:** An action of the Mission Alignment Committee Curriculum Task Force is to review and revise the California certification model so that it coincides with the NFPA standards for professional qualifications.

**Recommended Actions:** Information

### Background Information: INTRODUCTION

Before we could make any decisions on what a changed system should look like, we first needed to look to the past to determine how our certification system was created. We chose a starting point for the review to be 1967 since that was when A Study Of A Fireman's Occupation was published as a result of a comprehensive study of a fireman's occupation in the State of California. The study was designed to make an occupational task inventory of all ranks within the fire service.

#### LOOKING INTO THE PAST

##### Origin of Courses

Most all courses developed and delivered in the late 1960's and early 1970's were based on the Fire Service Occupational Analysis that had been created some forty years earlier, and modified over time, along with the Study Of A Fireman's Occupation. The one exception was for Instructor Training, which as a result of an agreement between SFT and UCLA (which at that time was the keeper of Teacher Training within the State) to create an instructor training course that was modeled after the UCLA 60 clock hour vocational education course. This unique agreement allowed SFT to teach instructor training to firefighters.

In the early 1970's The California Chiefs Association arranged to have a permanent site for the delivery of these courses and entered into a contract with the Asilomar Conference Grounds located in Pacific Grove, California and with Monterey Peninsula College. This became known as the California Fire Academy.

### Creating the Certification Program

In 1974 the initial professional qualification training standard was published by NFPA for the position of firefighter. This standard was quickly followed by three more standards for the positions of fire officer, fire instructor, and fire inspector/investigator. With the advent of these standards came the pressure for California to create its own statewide certification system. Roughly ten years later SFT took over the administration of the State Fire Academy.

From the onset, this new certification program was designed to be self-funded. It was also decided by SFT staff that the existing Fire Academy courses would be rolled into the certification program. They were placed in certification tracks based on the NFPA standards and arranged in levels (1, 2, 3, etc.). It was also decided that written certification exams would be created for each course and delivered by instructors at the end of the course.

At the time, no effort was made to design certification courses to meet each statement within the NFPA standards. For the most part our curriculum met the NFPA standards, but in a number of cases it did not and often we included material not in the NFPA standards. As a result, the standard line, "we addressed the standards" was often used.

### Some Issues Over The Years

The system was put together with the right idea in mind. Unfortunately, once the system had been created, it would be over 30 years before an in depth review would take place to determine if the system was current, met the needs of the California fire service, and maintained a consistency among all levels of certification.

Upon review by the Mission Alignment Committee it was found that the training and education system was not keeping up with changes in the fire service, course materials had become outdated, and procedures for development and maintenance of the system evolved into a cumbersome and convoluted process. Over the years since the inception of the certification system some things were started and never finished.

- Career Development Guides were developed for some tracks and not others.
- Instructor Guides (lesson plans, etc.) were not completed for all courses. Compromise was lagging.
- Often changes were made in one level without comparing them to what was in another level or even from course to course for the same certification level.
- Additional material over and above the NFPA standards found its way into the training standards and eventually into courses because someone thought it was a good idea. California began to further deviate from the national standards.
- Without national direction, standards and courses were added just because a subject matter item was deemed "important," we never said NO.

When the certification system was created, SFT felt that it was important to create a number of documents to support the system. The apparent reason for doing this was an effort to create consistency, standardized testing, and predictable outcomes.

At the time this decision was made, national publishers were not as plentiful as they are today, nor were they publishing the same support documents as SFT. It has become clear over time that SFT has not had the resource capability to maintain these support documents. We have also come to realize that these documents have not been used as they were intended. In other words, instructors were ignoring some or all of these products because they thought they could either do without them or do a better job of creating self-developed materials to support their teaching style and methods. All the while it has taken an extraordinary amount of time and effort to create and maintain these documents and this effort is one that SFT resources could not keep up with resulting in outdated materials.

### **Analysis/Summary of Issue:**

#### LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

##### General Direction for SFT

In July of 2011 at the request of the Chief of the California State Fire Training Program and the Chair of the Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC), a special committee, named the Mission Alignment Committee, was convened to review the California State Fire Training Education Strategic Plan of 2008, Blueprint 2020. The goal was to compare how SFT was doing compared to the goals and objectives of the plan and to identify immediate, midterm, and long range actions necessary to sustain SFT into the future. Observations by the Mission Alignment Committee included, among other things:

- The way we are doing things doesn't work
- Need to make significant changes
- Need to change the way we do things
- Need to increase pace of production
- Need a new certification model

The Mission Alignment Committee made it clear that the current California training and education system is too complex and cannot, as it exists today, be sustainable in the future. Among other things, the committee recommended that SFT identify career paths for incoming fire service personnel that are in line with the NFPA standards for professional qualifications and that the program be in close alignment with national models of other states and to minimize training duplication within our own system.

Other recommendations from the Mission Alignment Committee included adapting certification testing to be in congruence with the requirements for national accreditation, to incorporate a "continuing education" component in the certification system, and to enhance relationships with national publishers who are in a better position to create and maintain support documents for certification courses.

A number of the changes needed to bring the certification system in line with the current needs of the fire service are in process and many have already been made. One of the first changes was to reduce and streamline the documents needed to support the certification system. Progress has been rapid in this area and to date the various documents needed to support the certification system have been restructured and simplified to become much more manageable. The work to produce instructor guides, audio-visual support, activities, and tests has been shifted from SFT to national publishers (something they are already doing).

As we move forward the one point that must always remain in focus is that whatever we come up with in revising the system, it must be manageable by the resources at State Fire Training.

#### What the Future Could Look Like

- When we consider what the future of the certification system could look like we find that there are a number of factors that need to be considered such as:
- Adhering to the NFPA standards in order to create a career path based on national standards.
- Determining the staff workload needed to maintain a level of certification that includes the creation and maintenance of a Certification Training Standard (CTS),
- One or more Course Plans and a Task Book.
- Implementation of a "continuing education" component.
- Ability to place each level of certification (and the corresponding documents) on a five-year revision cycle consistent with NFPA and national publishers.
- Determining how we incorporate course and certification equivalencies from other entities.
- Determining how to handle material currently included in our system, but that is outside the NFPA standards.

To begin the process of what to include in a new certification system the Task Force reviewed 19 NFPA professional qualification training standards that pertained to positions within the fire service. Within each standard there is one or more levels and each level, which usually but not always, equates to a certification designation. When adding up the number of levels within each standard we found that there were potentially 56 possible certifications each requiring a CTS, Task Book, and one or more Course Plans. It quickly became apparent to the Task Force that SFT may not have the capability to support that number of certifications. As a result each of the standards was analyzed to determine which would be most suitable for the certification system.

In reporting the results of this analysis, the NFPA standard is listed along with the number of levels within the standard, the decision the Task Force made, and the rationale for making that decision.

#### 1. NFPA 1001 – Standards for Professional Qualifications for Firefighter

- Firefighter I
  - Wildland Firefighter I (*NFPA 1051*)
- Firefighter II
  - Wildland Firefighter II (*NFPA 1051*)

Decision: **Recommend two levels: Firefighter I and Firefighter II.** Rationale:

- To meet the NFPA 1001 standard.
- To provide a career path based on a national standard.
- Firefighter I is a prerequisite to Firefighter II.
- Firefighter II is a prerequisite for Fire Officer.
- State Fire Marshal's new Firefighter I to be structured to meet NFPA 1001, level 1, and NFPA 1051 Wildland Firefighter I.
- State Fire Marshal's new Firefighter II to be structured to meet NFPA 1001, level II, and sections of NFPA 1051 Wildland Firefighter II. The remaining portions of NFPA 1051 may be either included in Company Officer or deferred to a later date.

2. NFPA 1002 – Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications

- Apparatus equipped with a fire pump
- Apparatus equipped with an aerial device
- Apparatus equipped with a tiller
- Wildland fire apparatus
- Aircraft rescue and firefighting apparatus
- Mobile water supply apparatus

Decision: **Recommend to Certify Only Driver/Operator for Apparatus Equipped with Fire Pump, and to defer the other certification levels.**

Rationale:

- To meet sections of the NFPA 1002 standard that reaches the largest audience.
- Deferring certification for the other levels because they reach too narrow of an audience
- To provide a career path based on a national standard.
- The remaining certification levels may be addressed as FSTEP per agency needs:
  - o Apparatus equipped with an aerial device
  - o Apparatus equipped with a tiller
  - o Wild land fire apparatus
  - o Aircraft rescue and firefighting apparatus
  - o Mobile water supply apparatus
- Reaching widest audience.
- State Fire Training workload capacity limitations (funding, personnel, project management).

3. NFPA 1003 – Standard for Airport Firefighter Professional Qualifications

- Airport Firefighter

Decision: **Recommend to defer providing certification for Airport Firefighters**

Rationale:

- Airport Firefighters are regulated by other agencies, such as FAA, military, etc.
- Reaches too narrow of a target audience.
- State Fire Training workload capacity limitations (funding, personnel, project management).

4. NFPA 1005 – Standard for Marine Firefighting for Land Based Firefighters Professional Qualifications

- Level I
- Level II

Decision: **Recommend to defer providing certification for Marine Firefighting for Land Based Firefighters**

Rationale:

- Reaches too narrow of a target audience.
- State Fire Training workload capacity limitations (funding, personnel, project management).
- May be addressed as FSTEP courses.

5. NFPA 1006 – Standard for Technical Rescuer Professional Qualifications (13)

- Rope Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue
- Trench Rescue
- Structural Collapse
- Swift Water Rescue
- Surface Water Rescue
- Dive Rescue
- Vehicle and Machinery Rescue
- Ice Rescue
- Surf Rescue
- Wilderness Rescue
- Mine and Tunnel Rescue Cave Rescue

Note: Each one of these certifications has two levels.

Decision:

- **Recommend providing certification for technical rescue as is defined in chapter 5 in NFPA 1006, which shall include:**
  - **Rope Rescue**
  - **Confined Space Rescue**
  - **Trench Rescue**
  - **Structural Collapse**
  - **Swift Water Rescue**
  - **Surface Water Rescue**
  
- **Recommend deferring the other certification levels, which include:**
  - **Dive Rescue**
  - **Vehicle and Machinery Rescue**
  - **Ice Rescue**
  - **Surf Rescue**
  - **Wilderness Rescue**
  - **Mine and Tunnel Rescue**
  - **Cave Rescue**

Rationale:

- To meet sections of the NFPA 1006 standards, sections that reach the largest audience.
- Deferring certification for the other levels because they reach too narrow of an audience.
- Assists agencies in meeting the CAL EMA typing standard.
- State Fire Training workload capacity limitations (funding, personnel, project management).

6. NFPA 1021 – Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications

- Fire Officer I
- Fire Officer II
- Fire Officer III
- Fire Officer IV

Decisions:

- **Recommend combining NFPA Fire Officer levels I & II into a single level certification, including Wildland Fire Officer I; recognized as Company Officer.**
- **Recommend to certify at NFPA Fire Officer Level III, and Wildland Fire Officer II, recognized as Chief Fire Officer.**
- **Recommend certifying at NFPA Fire Officer Level IV, recognized as Executive Chief Officer.**

Rationale:

- To meet the NFPA 1021 standard.
- To provide a career path based on the national standard. The reason for combining NFPA levels I & II is that California Fire Service has very few NFPA Level I Fire Officers; a combined certification would meet the needs of a larger audience.
- The reason we are creating two levels of Chief Officer certification is to address that Managerial/Administrative levels require different skill and knowledge sets.

7. Fire Chief

- CPSE designation

Decision: **Recommend to continue to offer Fire Chief certification.**

Rationale: To meet demand and provide a career path.

8. NFPA 1026 – Standard for Incident Management Personnel Professional Qualifications  
\* See CICCIS position titles.

Decision: **Recommend that this standard not be addressed in our certification system**

Rationale: Covered under CICCIS

9. NFPA 1031 – Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner

- Fire Inspector I
- Fire Inspector II
- Fire Inspector III
- Plans Examiner I
- Plans Examiner II

Decision:

- **Recommend certifying at the Fire Inspector I level.**
- **Recommend certifying at the Fire Inspector II level.**
- **Recommend to not certify at the Fire Inspector III level.**
- **Recommend certifying at the Plans Examiner Level (NFPA level I & II combined).**

Rationale:

- To meet the NFPA 1031 standard.
- To provide a career path based on the national standard.
- Fire Inspector III material has been placed in Fire Inspector II and Fire Marshal certifications.

10. NFPA 1033 – Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator

- Fire Investigator

Decision: **Recommend certifying at the NFPA 1033 standard; recognized as Fire Investigator certification**

Rationale:

- To meet the NFPA 1033 standard.

11. NFPA 1035 – Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, and Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Specialist

- Fire and Life Safety Educator I
- Fire and Life Safety Educator II
- Fire and Life Safety Educator III
- Public Information Officer
- Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist I
- Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist II

Decision: **Recommend to provide certification for NFPA 1035, which shall include:**

- **Fire and Life Safety Educator I**
- **Fire and Life Safety Educator II**
- **Fire and Life Safety Educator III**
- **Public Information Officer**
- **Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist I**
- **Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist II**

Rationale:

- To meet the NFPA 1035 standard.
- To provide a career path based on the national standard.

12. NFPA 1037 – Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Marshal

- Fire Marshal

Decision: **Recommend to provide Fire Marshal certification.**

Rationale:

- To meet the NFPA 1037 standard
- To provide a career path based on the national standard.

13. NFPA 1041 – Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications

- Fire Service Instructor I
- Fire Service Instructor II
- Fire Service Instructor III

Decision:

- **Recommend certifying Fire Service Instructor I.**
- **Recommend certifying Fire Service Instructor II.**
- **Recommend certifying Fire Service Instructor III.**

Rationale:

- To meet the NFPA 1041 standard.
- To provide a career path based on the national standard.
- Fire Service Instructor I is a prerequisite for NFPA Fire Officer I & II.
- Fire Service Instructor II is a prerequisite for NFPA Fire Officer III.
- Fire Service Instructor III is a critical foundation for effective administration and/or management of fire training programs and professional development



14. NFPA 1051 – Standards for Wildland Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications

- Wildland Firefighter I
- Wildland Firefighter II
- Wildland Fire Officer I
- Wildland Fire Officer II
- Wildland/Urban Interface Protection Specialist
- Wildland/Urban Interface Coordinator

## Decision:

- **Recommend not provide certification for NFPA 1051.**
- **Wildland Firefighter I material will be embedded in our Firefighter I certification.**
- **Recommend Wildland Firefighter II material be split between Firefighter I and Company Officer certifications.**
- **Recommend Wildland Fire Officer I material be embedded in our Company Officer certification.**
- **Recommend Wildland Fire Officer II material be embedded in our Chief Fire Officer certification.**
- **Recommend deferring providing certification for Wildland/Urban Interface Protection Specialist and Coordinator.**

## Rationale:

- To meet the NFPA 1051 standard for Wildland Firefighter I & II and Wildland Fire Officer I & II.
- The Wildland/Urban Interface Protection Specialist and the Wildland /Urban Interface Coordinator standards reach too narrow of an audience.
- State Fire Training workload capacity limitations (funding, personnel, project management).

15. NFPA 1061 – Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Safety TelecommunicatorDecision: **Recommend to defer providing certification.**

## Rationale:

- State Fire Certifications offered by other professional certifying entities such as APCO (Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials), EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatch), etc.
- Reaches too narrow of a target audience.
- State Fire training workload capacity limitations (funding, personnel, project management).

16. NFPA 1071 – Standard for Emergency Vehicle Technician Professional Qualifications

- Emergency Vehicle Technician I
- Emergency Vehicle Technician II
- Emergency Vehicle Technician III

Decision: **Recommend to certify at all three of the Emergency Vehicle Technician levels.**

Rationale:

- Meet the NFPA 1071 standard.
- To provide a career path based on the national standard.
- Meets the needs of the California Fire Mechanics Academy (CFMA)

17. NFPA 1081 – Standard for Professional Qualifications for Industrial Fire Brigade Member

Decision: **Recommend to defer providing certification for Industrial Fire Brigade Members**

Rationale:

- Reaches too narrow of a target audience.
- State Fire Training workload capacity limitations (funding, personnel, project management).

18. NFPA 1091 – Standard for Professional Qualifications for Traffic Control Management

Decision: **Recommend to defer providing certification for Traffic Control Management**

Rationale:

- Reaches too narrow of a target audience.
- State Fire Training capacity limitations workload (funding, personnel, project management).

19. NFPA 472 - Standard for Competency of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents

Decision: **Recommend this standard will not be addressed in our certification system**

Rationale:

- Certifications are available through other entities

### **Analysis/Summary of Issue:**

To reaffirm, the extent of a new certification system needs to be based primarily on the workload that SFT is capable of managing in order to keep the system components current followed by demand for a particular certification. Consideration should also be given to the need to revise the various certifications on a five-year revision cycle in keeping with NFPA. The other significant consideration impacting workload will be establishing the "continuing education" component and determining how that will be tracked.

A further determination will need to be made as to how many levels within each of these standards will be considered for inclusion into the certification system. Again, the main factors in making this determination will be demand and the document development and maintenance workload. If a workload saturation point is reached then some levels of certification may have to be deferred to a later date.

After reviewing the standards the Task Force recommends the following certifications be included in the new system.

- Firefighter - two levels
- Fire Officer - three levels
- Fire Service Instructor - three levels
- Fire Inspector and Plans Examiner - three levels
- Driver Operator - one level

- Technical Rescuer - six levels
- Emergency Vehicle Technician - three levels
- Community Risk Officer - six levels
- Fire Investigator - one level
- Fire Marshal - one level

The Task Force further recommends that the certifications based on the following NFPA standards be deferred to a later date.

- Airport Firefighter
- Marine Firefighter
- Public Safety Telecommunicator
- Industrial Fire Brigade Members
- Traffic Control Management

Table 1 below provides a graphic depicting the Task Force recommendation.

Table 1

