



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

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ATTACHMENT 5

Date: May 21, 2015

To: State Board of Fire Services

From: Ken Wagner, Fire Service Training Specialist III

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:

Approval of Fire Fighter I Certification Examination Process

Recommended Actions:

Discussion/Action

Seeking SBFS approval for implementation of the proposed Fire Fighter I certification examination process.

Background Information:

At the August 21, 2014 SBFS meeting staff presented a detailed staff report proposing required capstone certification examinations for all Fire Fighter I candidates. Staff has discussed this proposal at numerous STEAC meetings over the past two years, discussing implementation plans, projected program costs and stakeholder outreach efforts. At their meeting of January 16, 2014, STEAC unanimously approved implementation of this proposed Fire Fighter I certification examination process.

Staff continues to solicit and react to comments received from stakeholders. The California Professional Firefighters (CPF) has expressed concerns about implementation of this proposal and has discussed these concerns with Chief Hoover and Chief Richwine. CPF requested that State Fire Training (SFT) contact all stakeholders and understand their concerns and level of support for the proposal. Furthermore, during the January 17, 2014 STEAC meeting, several members discussed their concern about availability of certification examinations in areas of the state that are not adequately served by an Accredited Regional Training Program (ARTP). On-going discussions with the California Fire Technology Directors Association (CFTDA) and Accredited Local Academies (ALA) have resulted in suggestions for program modifications to aid in implementation at both ARTPs and ALAs.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

SFT has been working to address the concern raised by STEAC about the availability of certification examinations to those areas of the state that are not adequately served by an ARTP. Staff has discussed this concern with CFTDA. Both Sierra College and the South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium (both ARTPs) have expressed their availability to take the certification examination process “on-the-road” to underserved areas. Furthermore, the accreditation of Fresno City College closes a gap in the central valley. Allan Hancock College and Monterey Peninsula College adequately serve the area in southern Monterey County and northern San Luis Obispo County. The counties on the eastern side of the state are less populated and can be adequately served by adjacent ARTPs or those willing to take the process “on-the-road.” Staff has entered into discussions with the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association to assist them in developing a model that will suit their unique needs in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. Staff will continue to work with CFTDA, Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association and others on this concern; the belief is that adequate resources are available to address the need statewide.

In response to CPF’s request that SFT contact all stakeholders and understand their concerns and level of support for the proposal, staff has been engaged in a vigorous outreach effort. Since our last report to SBFS, the outreach effort has been focusing in on local and regional organizations. To date, presentations on the proposed certification examination process have been delivered to the following stakeholder groups:

- California Fire Chiefs Association (CFCA) Board of Directors (February 19, 2014)
- California Fire Chiefs Association Annual Conference (October 1, 2014)
- CFCA NorCal Training Officers Board of Directors (April 15, 2014)
- CFCA SoCal Training Officers Board of Directors (April 1, 2014)
- California Fire Training Directors Association (CFTDA) (on-going)
- Accredited Local Academies (ALAs) (April 29, 2014)
- California State Fire Fighters Association (CSFA) Board of Directors (May 1, 2014)
- California Metro Fire Chiefs Association (July 10, 2014)
- Los Angeles Area Fire Chief’s Association, Regional Training Group (April 2, 2014)
- FIRESCOPE Board of Directors (July 9, 2014)
- State Board of Fire Services (September 21, 2014)
- San Bernardino County Fire Chiefs Assoc. (August 28, 2014)
- Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association (October 22, 2014)
- Cosumnes FD (September 10, 2014)
- Stanislaus County Fire Chiefs Assoc. (December 4, 2014)
- Tuolumne County Fire Chiefs Assoc. (December 11, 2014)
- South Bay Regional Training Consortium (November 24 & 25, 2014)
- East Bay Fire Chiefs & Training Officers (December 5, 2014)
- Fresno Area Training Officers (January 8, 2015)
- California Fire Mechanics Academy (January 22, 2015)
- Santa Barbara County, Ventura County and San Luis Obispo County Fire Chiefs & Training Officers (February 11, 2015)
- San Diego County Fire Training Officers (February 18, 2015)

The reaction has been positive from the stakeholder groups so far. Staff has been able to answer numerous questions and address concerns about how the proposed process will be implemented. A proposal has been submitted to the California Public Employers Labor Relations Association (CalPELRA) seeking a place on the agenda at their annual conference in October 2015. If the proposal is accepted, this forum will provide an opportunity to brief a large group of human resources professionals on the wide range of changes occurring in SFT programs. Staff will continue to engage stakeholder groups in discussion on this important initiative.

Staff recommends that SBFS approve implementation of the proposed Fire Fighter I Certification Examination process.

Once this proposal is approved, staff will begin the formal application and self-study process with IFSAC and Pro Board. The goal of SFT is to achieve accreditation from both organizations prior to the end of calendar year 2015. Additionally, staff will continue to meet with stakeholder groups at both the statewide and local levels to insure that they understand how this program will be implemented. During calendar year 2016 SFT will begin program implementation to coincide with the certification examination process.