National Recognition Update – March 2014

2013 was a very busy year as State Fire Training (SFT) moved toward implementation of National Recognition. First and foremost, our Fire Fighter I Curriculum development Cadre completed the complete re-write of our Fire Fighter I curriculum to meet NFPA 1001, Professional Qualification Standard for Fire Fighter, 2013 Edition. This was a very important step as both IFSAC and Pro Board require that our certification examinations be based upon the most current NFPA professional qualification standards. Further, the State Board of Fire Services approved the curriculum for beta testing at the Sierra Community College Fire Academy during the Spring 2014 Semester. The Curriculum Cadre also developed all the required skill sheets for Fire Fighter I testing.

Beta testing the curriculum at Sierra College will allow SFT staff to evaluate the curriculum before final statewide rollout and, more specifically evaluate both the written and skills examination procedures that will ultimately be submitted to IFSAC and Pro Board for accreditation approval.

Development of the various policies and procedures necessary to efficiently and effectively implement National Recognition is well underway. These policies and procedures are in their third draft form and are being reviewed by staff. They will be utilized during the Fire Fighter I beta test to determine if the program can be implemented as planned. Ultimately, these policies and procedures will be submitted to IFSAC and Pro Board for review and approval. After approval they will be rolled out statewide.

SFT is anticipating peer review site visits by both IFSAC and Pro Board after July 1, 2014. After the site visits the respective governing boards will make a determination on SFT’s request for accreditation. Anticipating the requests to be successful, SFT will then implement certification examinations statewide and IFSAC and Pro Board Fire Fighter I Certification as a complement to California Certification.

SFT plans on expanding the sound relationship with Accredited Regional Training Programs (ARTPs) and Accredited Local Academies (ALAs) to deliver certification examinations. To that end, SFT has been meeting with ARTP representatives through the regular meetings of the California Fire Technology Directors Association (CFTDA). Additionally, SFT conducted a briefing for representatives of the fire departments that comprise the ALAs. It is through these partnerships that certification examinations for Fire Fighter I will be delivered and, ultimately successful.

Certification examinations are a key component of National Recognition. Implementation of certification examinations was strongly emphasized by stakeholders in the Blueprint 2020. SFT is meeting with stakeholder groups to explain what implementation of this important initiative really means to the certification system in terms of process, requirements and cost. Only after stakeholders fully understand these implications will SFT seek approval for final implementation of certification examinations and National Recognition. Once the program is implemented for current California fire service personnel, steps will be taken to implement reciprocity for firefighters who have received IFSAC and/or Pro Board certification from other states and the US military.

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