



CERTIFICATION POLICY MANUAL

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Purpose of this Manual

This manual was prepared by the Alaska Fire Standards Council (AFSC) to define the policy and procedure for fire service certification in Alaska. This document is intended to assist the Certifying Officer (CO) in his or her role in the fire certification testing process. Although this manual is designed for the Certifying Officers it is also a valuable tool to assist Accreditation Managers, Training Officers (TO), and other individuals in managing their accredited fire training programs. This manual is intended to be a guide for all AFSC certification directives.

The AFSC extend our grateful acknowledgment to the Alaska Fire Marshal Office and the Alaska Emergency Medical Services Section of the Department of Health and Human Services for their assistance in preparing this guide. Much of the content in this guidebook was originally created by the Division of Fire and Life Safety Training and Education Bureau (formerly known as *Fire Service Training*) and was based on the certification manual developed by the EMS section for assisting their certifying officers. Through the accreditation process the AFSC has received ongoing support for directive updates from many agencies, including critical support from Colorado Division of Fire Safety, North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission, and Washington State Patrol Fire Protection Bureau.

This manual contains the AFSC policies and procedures related fire standards testing and certification. Some of the test site responsibilities outlined in this manual may be delegated by the AFSC staff or an assigned Certifying Officer. However, the AFSC ultimately holds the CO responsible for the consistency of the examination. The following guiding principles were developed to assist Certifying Officers in achieving the goals established by the AFSC:

1. Support fire department accreditation through leadership
2. Conduct assignments ethically, with integrity and honesty
3. Uphold fair and consistent test site practices
4. Maintain minimum standards requirements at all times

This manual is available for downloading at the AFSC web site: www.firestandards.alaska.gov

Suggestions for improving the manual can be sent via mail, fax, or by e-mail to:

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This manual will be revised as needed to address the requirements of the AFSC Administration. For eligibility to perform Certifying Officer assignments, an individual must read this manual and complete all associated requirements specified in this document prior to serving as an authorized certification test representative. Upon acceptance of an assignment to conduct a test site examination, it is strongly recommended that the Certifying Officer review this manual prior to arrival at a test site.

Mission and Authority of the Alaska Fire Standards Council

It is the policy of the state to protect its residents and their property from the ravages of fire. The state recognizes the need for the state to participate in providing an educational and training system that meets the needs of all communities and all fire services personnel. The Alaska legislature finds that fire is a constant threat and homes, places of employment, modes of transportation, and our natural resources need a system of fire protection that is based on the most current, practical standards and educational principles.

Under Alaska Statute [18.70.350](#) the council may:

- 1) adopt regulations for the administration of AS 18.70.320 - 18.70.369, including regulations
 - a. establishing minimum training and performance standards for certification of fire services personnel that are consistent with the standards of the National Fire Protection Association or other applicable standards;
 - b. establishing minimum fire training curriculum requirements for certification of training programs that are designed to enable trainees to meet the standards established under (A) of this paragraph;
 - c. governing the procedure for certification of fire services training programs that meet the minimum curriculum requirements adopted under this section;
 - d. governing the procedure for certification of individuals who satisfy the minimum training and performance standards established under this section; and
 - e. governing the procedure for revocation of the certificate of a person or program that, having been issued a certificate under this section, fails at a later date to meet the standards adopted by the council under this section; the procedures must be consistent with AS [44.62](#) (Administrative Procedure Act);
- 2) consult and cooperate with municipalities, agencies of the state, other governmental agencies, universities, colleges, and other institutions concerning the development of fire services training schools and programs offered in the state;
- 3) employ an administrator and other persons necessary to carry out its duties; and
- 4) charge and collect fees determined by the council to be necessary.

Certification Levels

The AFSC offers the following levels of certification:

Certification Levels with IFSAC Accreditation and Adopted Standards

Firefighter I/II – IFSAC	NFPA 1001	2008 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2012</i>
Hazardous Materials Aware/Ops- IFSAC	NFPA 472	2008 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2012</i>
Fire Service Instructor I/II– IFSAC	NFPA 1041	2007 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision-- 2012</i>

Certification Levels and Adopted Standards

Airport Rescue Firefighter	NFPA 1003	2010 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2015</i>
Apprentice Firefighter	Alaska specific		
Basic Firefighter	Alaska specific		
Basic/Advanced Marine Firefighter	Alaska specific		
Driver Operator; Pumper; Aerial; Mobile Water Supply	NFPA 1002	2009	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2014</i>
Emergency Vehicle Driver	Nat. Safety Council		
Emergency Vehicle Driver Instructor	Nat. Safety Council		
Fire Investigator I – Technician	NFPA 1033	1998 ed.	<i>Renewal Only –Sunset 2013</i>
Alaska Fire Investigator Technician	NFPA 1033- <i>partial</i>	2009 ed.	<i>CFITrainer.net</i>
Certified Fire Investigator	NFPA 1033	2009 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2014</i>
Fire Department Safety Officer	NFPA 1521	2008 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision-- 2013</i>
Fire Officer I	NFPA 1021	2009 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2014</i>
Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist I	NFPA 1035	2005 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2010</i>
Live Fire Training Standard	1403/Alaska specific		
Public Fire and Life Safety Educator I/II/III	NFPA 1035	2005 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2010</i>
Public Safety Telecommunicator	NFPA 1061	2007 ed.	<i>Next NFPA Revision- 2012</i>
Rapid Intervention Technician	Alaska specific		<i>Under review for fall 2011</i>
Rapid Intervention Technician Instructor	Alaska specific		<i>Under review for fall 2011</i>
Rural Fire Protection Specialist	Alaska specific		

Definitions

General

The definitions contained in this section shall apply to the terms used in this manual. Where terms are not defined here or under another heading, they shall be defined using their ordinarily accepted meanings within the context in which they are used. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition, shall be the source for the ordinarily accepted meaning.

General Definitions

Accredit: To give official authorization to or approval of; to provide with credentials; to recognize an educational institution as maintaining standards that qualify its graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions or for professional practice.

Accreditation Manager: A fire department or emergency response organization representative that is responsible for maintaining accreditation program requirements as defined within the Training and Education Bureau accreditation manual.

Accredited Organization: A fire department or emergency response organization that has met the Training and Education Bureau requirements defined in the accreditation manual and audit checklist. These entities have received approval to conduct a fire training course(s) that has an intended outcome of AFSC certification testing.

AFSC Administration: The staff that manage the administrative functions of the AFSC and day-to-day tasks of the fire certification process.

Approved: Acceptable to the Alaska Fire Standards Council

Assistant: The individual who supports the Certifying Officer at a test site and is responsible for assisting evaluators within a practical examination station.

Candidate: The individual who is taking a certification examination for a level that they are not yet certified at.

Certify: To attest authoritatively, such as to attest as being true or as represented or as meeting a standard.

Certification: The issuance of a document that states that an individual has demonstrated the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a particular fire service professional field.

Certifying Officer (CO): The individual who is authorized by the AFSC to manage a certification examination test site.

Evaluator: The individual who supports the Certifying Officer at a test site and is responsible for observing practical examination candidates and for completing skills evaluation using established criteria.

Job Performance Requirement (JPR): A written statement that describes a specific job task, lists the items necessary to complete the task, and defines measurable or observable outcomes and evaluation areas for the specific task.

Lead Instructor/Instructor: The individual that has the primary responsibility for the delivery training material to candidates during an accredited course.

Simulation: The repeatable act of carrying out a job performance requirement in a safe environment that reproduces actual job performance conditions to the fullest possible extent.

Standard: Something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value, or quality.

Training and Education Bureau (TEB): Division of Fire and Life Safety Training and Education Bureau

Test Site Coordinator (TSC): The designated representative of the entity requesting a certification examination who has the responsibility to support the Certifying Officer by preparing and supporting practical exam stations at a test site. Often this is the department Training Officer.

Accreditation Program Policies

Accreditation Program Requirements

The Fire Standards Council has multiple certification directives that are accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and/or the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board). Program accreditation approval is based on the established Fire Standards Council administrative policies and procedures for directives, and the testing and evaluation requirements evaluated by the accrediting entities. Strict adherence to all Fire Standards Council directives must be followed to maintain accreditation.

This Certification Policy Manual describes these directives. Whenever applicable, the existing policy and procedures for accreditation programs will be used as the model for future training programs and certification directives.

The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Fire Service Professional Qualifications Standards, or other standards approved by IFSAC and/or ProBoard, are the basis upon which accredited certification testing is conducted.

Undue influence Policy

The Alaska Fire Standards Council shall not allow any entity, organization or individual to exercise undue or inappropriate influence over the State of Alaska Firefighter Certification Program.

Delegation of Certifying Authority

In compliance with IFSAC and ProBoard policies and procedures the AFSC does not delegate certifying authority to any entity at this time, but it reserves the right to do so in the future. The AFSC, acting as the accreditation entity for the state of Alaska, will not delegate its certifying authority to another entity possessing a broader service area in terms of constituency.

Testing to the Current Standard

The Alaska Fire Standards Council shall certify personnel to the most recent edition of the NFPA standard(s) that have been adopted by the AFSC.

Each certification directive shall list certification examination references to include:

- a. the current standard
- b. the referenced text(s) for written test material
- c. the practical skills packet

All certification directive and related skills packets are available through the [AFSC certification webpage](#).

Updated Standards for Certification

The Alaska Fire Standards Council may continue to certify to the previous edition of a recognized standard for a period of up to three (3) calendar years from the official date of adoption of the newest version.

Certification Data

The AFSC will collect and maintain the following data on certification:

1. Names of candidates tested
2. Individual identification number or equivalent
3. Certification level records
4. IFSAC seal number (as applicable)
5. PROBOARD identification number (as applicable)

The AFSC policy related to the maintenance of data is to maintain all data items listed above indefinitely. The AFSC will provide IFSAC and ProBoard with this data at least twice annually.

Non-Discrimination and Equitably

The Alaska Fire Standards Council shall make all testing and certifying services available to all of its constituents without regard to race, sex, or ethnic origin. All candidates for certification shall be tested in accordance with the policy and procedure within this document and the directive manual associated with the level of examination.

Accommodations will be made for candidates with disabilities to the extent that the minimum standard criteria are maintained for the level being tested.

An equitable certification fee structure shall be established and maintained by the AFSC. A fee schedule shall be listed on the AFSC [Application for Certification](#).

Accreditation Representative Examination Observation

The Alaska Fire Standards Council shall permit a representative of IFSAC or ProBoard to observe any testing process upon receiving notice of intent to observe the test at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the test. The certifying entity shall provide the dates, time, and location of any testing process upon request for such information from IFSAC Administration.

Review of Test Materials by Accreditation Site Team

All test items and materials will be available to the site team and/or administrative reviewers. The tests shall be maintained in a secure area at all times. During the Site Team visit the review will be held within the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Anchorage building in a secure room. The DPS building is a secure building and permits only authorized access. The review area shall be secured at all times during a site team audit. All relevant materials are located on site and will be provided by AFSC staff during a site audit.

Test Materials Selection and Validation

Written (cognitive) examination materials shall be validated against the NFPA standard for the level of certification. Examinations for accredited certifications levels shall be acquired or purchased through credible vendor(s) and validated by the AFSC. The AFSC shall select local Subject Matter Experts (SME's) to review test materials to ensure the applicability of all materials for use within the jurisdiction. The SME review committee shall identify substandard questions and the AFSC administrative staff will edit the test bank as warranted.

Separate test banks shall be maintained for each level of certification issued by the AFSC. All test banks shall include sufficient questions to correlate 100% of the standards specified for each certification level. Test banks shall be at least twice as large as the number of questions used per test generated and questions shall be randomly selected from each group of questions that are correlated to each JPR or requisite knowledge. Each question within a test bank shall identify the appropriate NFPA Standard and edition being tested, and questions shall be

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the same standard and edition as the accredited level. Each question shall also be referenced to the standard being measured and to the appropriate reference source.

The number of questions for each category is monitored to ensure that an adequate number of questions are maintained in the test bank. If a required NFPA category lacks a sufficient number of questions, the AFSC will develop questions that target the deficient category. All final test bank questions shall be approved by a designated review committee.

Practical (psychomotor) examination skills shall be developed to include at least one skills assessment item correlated to either; each JPR, or each requisite skill area identified in the standard. Each certification directive shall identify the number of skills and the process for the selection of skill assessment items to ensure consistency between certification examinations. The review committee shall review and approve the examination skills for each level of certification.

Written Examination Review and Analysis

Test scores and test items shall be reviewed on a regular basis. The following procedures shall be used for analyzing and corrective action for special circumstances or when question validation is challenged:

1. The question/item shall be reviewed by the AFSC Director for validity and reliability in regards to the appropriate NFPA Standard and reference materials.
2. If the AFSC Director is unable to make a clear determination of the test question/item challenged it shall be immediately nullified from the overall score, or removed from any test, and not be used until the issue has been resolved.
3. The AFSC Director may then submit the question/item to members of the Test Validation Committee for further review.
4. Following review, the question/item may be:
 - a. Retained as written
 - b. Rewritten
 - c. Permanently removed from the test bank

The AFSC Executive Director shall review all test statistics and to identify problem questions/areas. The Executive Director, or designee, shall review each candidate test question comment and to compare with the test questions and reference information. If a question is found to be invalid the question score is nullified and is not counted in the final score for the test group. If the question is found to be valid the score shall remain as indicated by the candidate. In cases where multiple discrepancies are identified, the Training Officer/Course Coordinator is notified with a written explanation or clarification.

If group scores from a specific course are below average, the Training Officer/Course Coordinator for the course is contacted and the course content is discussed. An entity with multiple candidates that test below minimum scores from greater than 3 courses must provide a written report detailing the disparity. The report must include a mitigation plan to improve student test scores in future training programs. The Executive Director will assist in identifying an experience program manager to work with the Training Officer/Course Coordinator to identify areas for improvement.

The AFSC shall maintain and analyze test statistics including the following:

1. Number of persons taking the test
2. Distribution of test scores
3. Average test score

Certification Records Maintenance

For certified fire service personnel, a copy of the written answer sheet and practical skills pass/fail for each candidate is stored in individual files located in the AFSC office. If the individual moves out of state or discontinues participation with the fire service, his or her file is placed on inactive status and maintained in a secure location in accordance with the State of Alaska archive policy. All certification files are kept in perpetuity. The Fire Standards Council shall maintain a copy of the Course and Testing notification form, any relevant correspondence, all written exam scores, and practical skill pass/fail forms for each accredited course program.

Certification Appeals Procedure

An individual has the right to appeal the denial of an application for certification, or, any portion of the written or practical examination process. All appeals must be made in writing, and addressed to the Alaska Fire Standards Council Executive Director within 30 days of the examination or denial notification. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Executive Director will review the application, certification test information, and dispute detail provided by the applicant. The Alaska Fire Standards Council Executive Director will investigate all written appeals and will provide a written response to the applicant within 30 days of receipt. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the applicant, then he or she can appeal directly to the Alaska Fire Standards Council. The Council will review the appeal during their next scheduled meeting and, when reasonable, issue a ruling prior to the close of the meeting.

Recognition of Previous State of Alaska Certification

The Alaska Fire Standards Council will recognize previous State of Alaska certifications issued at all levels through the Division of Fire and Life Safety (formerly Division of Fire Prevention). In cases where an individual must meet prerequisite requirements for a level of certification that is currently accredited by IFSAC and/or ProBoard, the individual must have a certificate with an IFSAC or ProBoard seal.

Grandfather Certification

For individuals that received firefighter certification prior to initial State of Alaska IFSAC or ProBoard accreditation (NFPA 1001, 1997 Edition), the AFSC policy for issuance of "Grandfather" certification with an accreditation seal expired in June of 2010. Due to ongoing changes with all levels of certification the grandfather provisions for a given standard will expire upon the adoption of the third NFPA standard revision after the individual's initial certification was issued, unless otherwise specified.

This clause does not prohibit an individual that was certified in Alaska prior to 2001 from receiving an IFSAC or ProBoard seal. Individual seal requests for a certificate issued three or more revisions ago will be required to successfully complete a current written and practical test before issuance of a certificate with a seal.

Reciprocity

The AFSC offers reciprocity (honored in part) to applicants who have completed his or her certification through an entity accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) or the National Fire Service Professional Qualifications Board (ProBoard). Honored in part designates that requisite certification for a given level must be provided and approved before reciprocity is granted (i.e. a Firefighter I request for reciprocity must include a Hazardous Materials Awareness/Operations certificate).

An applicant who qualifies for reciprocity is not required to take a practical or written examination. For approved reciprocity requests, the AFSC will issue a State of Alaska certificate only, and it will not issue a new IFSAC seal. The AFSC cannot not issue reciprocity certifications for levels that the AFSC does not have a certification

directive. Additionally, reciprocity applicants must meet the residency requirement, or be members of a department registered with the [Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety](#).

Equivalency Challenge

To initiate the equivalency challenge process, an individual must have documentation of completion of a training program or course that meets the requirement of the associated NFPA standard. The AFSC will only accept equivalency challenge request for an applicant that is affiliated with an Alaska fire department or organization with an accredited training program for the level of the challenge request. All challenge requests must be coordinated through the fire department the individual is affiliated with. The fire department Training Officer/Accreditation Manager has the responsibility to verify the applicant meets the requirements for testing and must complete and sign-off a Training Record before the applicant is eligible to complete an AFSC certification exam.

Applicants that have been endorsed by a Training Officer/Accreditation Manager may complete an approved AFSC examination locally, but an examination will not be scheduled for a single individual. If no test opportunity is possible locally, applicants can contact the AFSC Administration for information on other certification test sites.

A candidate **is not** permitted to attend a final exam at an alternate test site without the explicit pre-approval of the AFSC Administration *and* the agency that is authorized for the exam. To test at a site other than his or her fire department, an equivalency challenge candidate must:

1. have a completed training record signed off by the candidate's **Training Officer/Accreditation Manager**
2. have permission from the agency that is scheduled to test
3. provide the CO with evidence of AFSC written approval to test
4. provide photo ID
5. have the appropriate level of PPE in accordance with NFPA requirements

Mission and Authority of Certifying Officers

Overview

The AFSC complies with the test processes as established by IFSAC and PROBOARD. The AFSC requires that Certifying Officers and personnel supporting a certification examination comply with all of the guidelines defined within this Certification Manual.

Certifying Officers are selected by the AFSC Administration to serve as an agent of the state in administering examinations. The Certifying Officer is:

1. Responsible for the consistency of AFSC practical and written examinations
2. Empowered to use sound judgment in ensuring that the examination is administered in accordance with applicable standards and regulations
3. The overall authority for testing and certification activities at a test site.

Approval and Authorization of a Certifying Officer

To be approved by the AFSC as a Certifying Officer, an individual must:

- a. Be an AFSC or TEB employee approved by the AFSC Executive Director; *or*
- b. Be a current Fire Service Instructor I, preferably a Fire Service Instructor II (or above), and meet the following criteria:
 1. have a minimum of five years' experience as an active firefighter or instructor; *and*
 2. have completed an AFSC approved Certifying Officer workshop or completed a AFSC approved Certifying Officer seminar; *and*
 3. have successfully completed a CO Exam worksheet with 100% accuracy; *and*
 4. have read this manual in its entirety; *and*
 5. have completed a [Certifying Officer Application](#); *and*
 6. have reviewed and signed the [CO Code of Ethics Compliance Agreement](#); *and*
 7. have successfully assisted an AFSC approved Certifying Officer in the administration of two complete examinations (*each pre-approved by the AFSC Executive Director*):
 - A. one assignment as a CO Trainee assistant observer ([STEP A](#)), *and*
 - B. one assignment as a CO Trainee lead proctored by a current CO ([STEP B](#)); *and*
 8. have been endorsed for Certifying Officer privileges by another CO, *and*
 9. have received final written approval by the AFSC Executive Director.

Certifying Officer Expiration, Revocation, Suspension, or Denial

Authorization as a Certifying Officer shall automatically cease on the date the individual's Alaska Fire Service Instructor certification expires, except as outlined as follows:

The AFSC may revoke, suspend, or decline to endorse an individual as a Certifying Officer if:

- a. The individual's certification as a Fire Service Instructor is revoked, suspended, or has expired.
- b. The test examination process changes substantially and requires retraining of the Certifying Officer prior to AFSC endorsement to certify examinations. This suspension and subsequent retraining may be resolved in an informal manner, at the discretion of AFSC Executive Director, provided the Certifying Officer has received and confirmed review of the updated material.
- c. The Certifying Officer fails to maintain the security of the written and practical examinations in accordance with applicable regulations, policies, and procedures.
- d. The Certifying Officer has a documented history of interpersonal conflicts with evaluators, candidates, or instructors at examination sites, as indicated within the test site evaluation survey or other written report. Disciplinary measure shall be addressed as follows:
 - 1st report shall result in verbal counsel
 - 2nd report shall result in written report and coaching/retraining if appropriate and applicable
 - 3rd report shall result in suspension of eligibility until documentation can be reviewed by an Certifying Officer advisory committee
- e. The Certifying Officer has a situation involving gross negligence associated with the performance of his or her duties (Examples of gross negligence can include failure to maintain a safe testing environment, falsifying candidate test records, theft (materials or equipment), copying final exam materials, or permitting candidates to cheat on examinations).

Course Test Notification Procedure and Schedule

An accredited fire department or emergency response organization is responsible for determining final exam dates following an approved course. The AFSC shall determine a final exam dates as follows:

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1. An accredited entity shall notify the AFSC Administration by submitting a [Certification Course Notification Form](#) at least **30 days PRIOR** to the **START** of the course.
2. The AFSC Administration will review the proposed test dates to confirm availability and schedule resources. If the AFSC is unable support the proposed date the Primary Course Coordinator will be consulted to determine alternate test dates.
3. Upon final approval the AFSC will assign a test number and ensure that the Test Site Coordinator (TCS) receives the necessary support including:
 - a. Authorization and verification of the approved test date
 - b. Testing site preparation instructions
 - c. Verification of mandatory equipment necessary for testing
 - d. Assignment, travel, and accommodation arrangements of Certifying Officer
4. The AFSC will assign a Certifying Officer following the guidelines in this manual.
5. The accredited entity shall provide a response to **the AFSC email sent a minimum of 4 weeks before the final examination** to confirm the test date and number of candidates.
6. The Certifying Officer shall not be from a department that is requesting a certification examination.
7. Once the AFSC approves the examination the Test Site Coordinator shall be responsible for notifying test candidates of the final examination date(s).

Assignment of Certifying Officers for Test Sites

The AFSC administrative staff is responsible for designating a Certifying Officer for each examination. A list with electronic email addresses of all approved and potential CO trainees shall be maintained for use in selecting CO assignments. The AFSC Administration shall use the following guidelines for assignments:

- a. Soliciting Certifying Officer requests for a regional assignment shall be done through the CO email notification list. The notice will include the certification level of the test, the location, the scheduled date, and the name of the organization that is testing.
- b. To ensure that all Certifying Officers are given an opportunity to preside over an exam, the selection process shall be on a rotation basis. All CO's that contact the AFSC Administration with an acknowledgement of interest shall have their names randomly selected for the assignment, unless a CO has administered an exam within 30 days prior to the notification, or has already accepted an assignment within 30 days of the posted request. Solicitation requests for CO assignments shall remain active for a 72-hour period, unless the exam date is less than 30-days from the notification date.
- c. When a CO has accepted an assignment, his or her name will go to the bottom of the regional list until thirty days after the completion of the assignment. An individual may still be eligible for another assignment within the 30 day period if she or he acknowledges interest and no other regional CO responses are received before the closing date of the requested assignment.
- d. If no regional CO is available then the notice will be sent out through a statewide CO email notification. *In general the first CO to contact the AFSC Administration with an acknowledgement of interest shall be given the assignment unless the CO has administered an exam within 30 days prior to the notification. An individual may still be eligible for another assignment within the 30 day period if she or he acknowledges interest and no other regional CO responses are received before the closing date of the requested assignment.
- e. A CO must be approved to conduct the test at the certification level specified in the notification.
- f. The CO shall not be directly affiliated with the organization requesting the test and shall not have served as a primary instructor for the course associated with a certification exam assignment.

**Due to the large geographic area related to statewide announcements, the AFSC staff reserves the right to select the CO that requires the least travel in cases where it is cost prohibitive to make travel arrangements for other interested CO's.*

Certifying Officer Test Materials

All testing and certification materials are provided to the CO in advance of the test assignment. Upon receipt of the test tote package the first priority of the CO must be to inventory the number of test binders received. The CO should then review the material to ensure that he or she arrives at the test location adequately prepared for the examination. Once on location at the test site, it is the responsibility of the CO to provide the necessary forms and documentation to the candidates. Prior to starting the final examination at the testing site, the Certifying Officer must ensure they have the following items:

- a. Correct number of Written Examination(s) Binders
- b. Blank Answer Sheets for all candidates
- c. Receipt Book
- d. Skill Station outline
- e. Equipment List (also emailed in advance to CO and Accreditation Manager/Lead Instructor)
- f. Pencils for candidates
- g. Blank Skill Sheets for the level of test (one copy per level minimum- check with test site organization for print availability)
- h. Blank Applications for Certification (one copy per candidate- check with test site organization for print availability)
- i. Certifying Officer's Manual
- j. Practical Examination Reporting Form (P/F Form)
- k. Remedial Training Form (for candidates who must retest the practical beyond a third attempt)
- l. Blank Evaluator Code of Ethics and Compliance Agreements
- m. Extra Applications for Certification
- n. Extra Scantron forms

Note that items "g-m" above are available for download online at www.firestandards.alaska.gov

A responsibility of the Certifying Officer is to ensure candidates have a comfortable test environment. In cases where the CO arrives at the test site before she or he is able to review the test materials, a CO must take time to examine the contents of the test material packet before beginning the examination instructions. Viewing the materials in advance allows the CO to organize materials and provides an opportunity to verify contents and prepare the materials before addressing a group of candidates. Regardless of the condition of the test packet materials, a CO must always convey a professional attitude in front of the test site candidates.

"Off Duty" Certifying Officers

Occasionally, an individual who has served as a Certifying Officer for other examinations for certification may attend a test site to act in another capacity (e.g. evaluator, skill assistant, etc.), or support others involved in the test process. In such cases, the individual has no authority to function as a Certifying Officer at that site. Any issue related to test security, disputes, etc., are the responsibility of the Certifying Officer that is assigned by the AFSC for that examination site. Although the "Off duty" individual may provide information, suggestions, and/or support to the authorized Certifying Officer, he or she has no authority over the assigned CO.

Evaluator and Assistant Training

Due to the difficulty in providing statewide evaluator training, the AFSC requires that all Evaluators and Assistants attend the evaluator training briefing before each test. This insures that the Evaluators and Assistants have the most current information to observe and assess the candidates. This briefing must be conducted by the CO at the beginning of each testing session and must include a review of written instructions (in this manual) or the related slideshow module.

The Role of the Certifying Officer

Certifying Officer Core Responsibilities

The core responsibilities of the Certifying Officer include:

1. Comprehending material within the Certifying Officer's Manual and being knowledgeable with the testing policies of the AFSC.
2. Coordinating with the Training Officer, Accreditation Manager, or Test Site Coordinator to ensure the candidates experience a fair and consistent test.
3. Managing the written and practical testing process throughout an examination assignment.
4. Providing evaluative feedback to the AFSC after each assignment to assist with improvements to the testing program.

Certifying Officer Examination Site Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Certifying Officer at the examination site include:

1. Meet with Evaluators, Assistants, and Test Site Coordinators and distribute materials for conducting tests.
2. Ensure that all Evaluators and Assistants are given the required training and instruction prior to participating in the exam, and advise the Evaluators on their roles and responsibilities as covered in this manual.
3. Ensure that all Evaluators and Assistants have completed and signed an [Evaluator Code of Ethics and Compliance Agreement](#).
4. Review all skill stations and equipment to ensure they are set up as required and comply with testing instructions. Confirm the equipment at each station is ready and that it will operate correctly and safely.
5. Review each candidate Training Record form and verify the candidate has successfully completed the required training program and that the Training Officer, or designee, has signed the Training Record.
6. Meet the Candidates and provide instructions for the certification directive and related the testing process (read the script provided in this manual or follow the related slideshow instruction module).
7. Distribute the AFSC [Application for Certification](#) to the candidates and explain the procedure for correctly completing the application.
8. Collect the Alaska Fire Standards Council testing and certification fees. Provide a receipt for payment as appropriate (*fees may be invoiced/billed or covered by a Purchase Order through the AFSC Administration as indicated on the Application for Certification*).
9. Ensure that the practical and written examinations are administered consistently, fairly, and safely. The examination site procedures must be consistent with the information in this manual and the skills sheets provided.
10. Administer and collect all examination booklets, scratch paper, grading sheets, and check them for marks and completeness.
11. Ensure that all candidates have completed all paperwork accurately. It is the CO responsibility to verify that the candidate has correctly and accurately filled out all paperwork. *The most common errors are the incorrect binder number or incorrect version of the written exam.*
12. Check all applications for completeness. Ensure that the Training Officer or Fire Chief, *and* the Certifying Officer have signed each application.
13. Ensure consistency between all practical stations.
14. Collect and review the practical examination skill sheets as soon as they are completed and check the candidate pass/fail status. Record the candidate's pass/fail/retest status on the [Practical Examination](#)

[Reporting Form](#) (P/F form) and notify the Test Site Coordinator of the status after the candidate has completed an initial attempt at all stations.

15. Ensure that candidates have a different evaluator for all re-tests.
16. Discuss any test site discrepancies with the Test Site Coordinator.
17. Collect all other Certifying Officer materials and use the checklist to return them to the tote. Secure the tote before leaving the test site.
18. Thank the candidates and test site support staff for their time.
19. Return the test materials to the AFSC Administration in accordance with the Security Plan in this manual.

Preparing For the Test Site Examination

Interacting With the Test Site Coordinator/Training Officer

The Test Site Coordinator (TCS) is responsible for obtaining Evaluators/Assistants, obtaining equipment, and preparing the site for the practical examination. The Test Site Coordinator must be at the test site throughout the entire test. By the date of the test the Training Officer/Lead Instructor will have invested countless hours toward the success of her or his students. Certifying Officers are certified fire instructors and can often empathize with the instructor's desire to see his or her students do well. However, the Certifying Officer is the Alaska Fire Standards Council's official representative at the test site, and he or she is responsible for the overall management of the examination process. Although the Training Officer /Lead Instructor have an important role at the test site, the Certifying Officer must remain in control of all aspects of the examination process.

Selection of Evaluators

The Evaluators for practical examination stations have a significant responsibility, and the selection of competent evaluators is essential to an examination site. The **Test Site Coordinator** for the scheduled examination site shall identify individuals to serve as Evaluators and Assistants prior to the arrival of the Certifying Officer. The Certifying Officer shall approve individuals to serve as Evaluators and Assistants for individual skill stations. To ensure consistency and fairness throughout testing, every attempt should be made to use personnel who can stay for the entire practical examination. It is important that all the people involved in assisting with the skill evaluation process understand their role in the process and possess sufficient maturity to be appropriate and consistent.

It is expected the Certifying Officer and the Test Site Coordinator for a scheduled examination will coordinate the selection and approval of each evaluator. A potential Evaluator must:

1. Have completed the mandatory Evaluator training directive module
2. Be certified at the level they are evaluating
3. Must be known to exhibit good judgment and fairness (*as determined by the Test Site Coordinator, Training Officer, or designee*).

In cases where testing is in a remote location and Evaluator selection is limited, an individual that is not certified at the level of the test may be utilized as an Evaluator. Non-certified individuals must have the appropriate training, experience, and judgment to serve in the capacity of an Evaluator. The Test Site Coordinator can contact the AFSC director prior to the test to discuss the suitability of using uncertified evaluators.

The Certifying Officer must confirm the selected Evaluators have completed the mandatory evaluator training and are certified at/or above the certification level of the exam. This may be done by checking a potential Evaluator's certification level with the AFSC or the local fire department training records. All Evaluators must review the Evaluator Code of Ethics form and sign an Evaluator Compliance form before assignment to a station is permitted.

Instructors who will also act as Evaluators are not permitted to evaluate skills for the topic they instructed during the course.

The Certifying Officer has the final approval as to the appropriateness and inclusion of any proposed Evaluator or Assistant.

Selection of Assistants and Helpers

Assistants and Helpers differ from Evaluators because they are generally actively involved in a test station. Assistants may provide direct support to a candidate during scenarios or may be needed to quickly prepare a station between scenarios. The Assistants for practical examination stations are essential to ensure that the candidate can adequately perform the task. The Assistants must review the Evaluator Code of Ethics form and sign an Evaluator Compliance form and be certified at the level being tested. In some cases, an individual that is not certified at the level of the test may be utilized as an assistant, but the individual must have the appropriate training, experience, and judgment to serve in the capacity of an Assistant. Helpers provide additional support to the test site and differ from Assistants in that they are not generally actively involved in supporting candidates within an evaluation scenario. As such, the Helpers do not need to be certified as they are only providing secondary support to the test site (i.e. resetting stations, cleaning up, staging equipment, etc.).

Briefing Evaluators

The Certifying Officer must ensure that evaluators understand the grading criteria, time limits, and expectations of the practical station that they will be evaluating. Evaluators must understand that their primary role is that of a "trained observer." **Personal bias, hidden agendas, and subjectivity must be left outside the test station. The test candidates are required to meet the practical skill sheet objectives, and evaluator's are not permitted to inject individual opinions or expectations into the station objective.** To prepare test site Evaluators, Certifying Officers must use the standardized evaluator briefing script found later in this manual.

Briefing Assistants and Helpers

Briefing individuals who may be assisting in the skills is also an important responsibility of the Certifying Officer. The correctness of the examination is ultimately the responsibility of the Certifying Officer. Assistants must be prepared to respond in a correct manner. If assistants are working in multiple stations they must be consistent between stations and between candidates. Identify and review potential problems or situations before testing begins. If needed, demonstrate acceptable techniques and provide examples of appropriate responses to common mistakes. The assistants should be thoroughly familiar with the items on the practical examination practical skills sheet so they can assist with the evaluation in circumstances where the candidate's actions are in question.

Basic Equipment and Staffing Requirements

Due to the differences in local equipment and staffing resources, the AFSC Administration has established a minimum list of resources necessary to complete each exam. It is imperative that the Certifying Officer and the Test Site Coordinator communicate in advance of the test to ensure that all the necessary testing requirements will be met. Certifying Officers must ensure that the following items are addressed before the test begins:

- a. The test site minimum staffing requirements for the AFSC designated practical skill stations are adequate.
- b. The Test Site Coordinator has gathered the appropriate equipment for each skill station and received approval from the Certifying Officer.
- c. Evaluators are briefed on how to set-up and maintain their assigned station and understand that they **may not** add additional equipment to the skill station site.

Remember the goal is to create a good evaluation environment and to ensure that all candidates are given the same opportunity to successfully complete the exam.

Equipment Review

The Certifying Officer will verify that all equipment needed for the practical skill stations are at the stations and the equipment is functioning correctly. The Certifying Officer must verify that all Personal Protective Equipment, firefighting equipment, and apparatus used during testing meet the applicable NFPA standards. The equipment should be situated so that the testing process can begin and finish without interruption.

Duplicating Practical Skill Stations

If a large number of candidates are being tested duplicate practical skill stations could be set up to shorten the amount of time needed for testing. In the interest of consistency, it is important to make the practical stations as identical as possible. The practical examination process requires that all candidates have the same initial testing scenario.

Rehearsing Practical Skill Stations

The best way to ensure that Evaluators understand the practical skill evaluation sheet and the skill station is to require the successful completion of an evaluator training directive. It is also important to set up the practical station correctly and to practice it at least once. If time does not permit this, it is essential that the Certifying Officer visits each station prior to the start of the examination to answer any questions from Evaluators or Assistants and verify the station equipment is adequate.

Verification of Candidate Eligibility for Testing

A candidate's eligibility to test must be clearly documented prior to the arrival of the Certifying Officer. The Training Officer or the Lead Instructor of the locally accredited department or organization will provide the Certifying Officer a list of candidates taking the final examination. The Certifying Officer must verify that a training record has been completed for each candidate and is on file at the accredited department or organization. This list can be copies of the application for certification, or a roster list of the candidates.

Candidates who are testing with an agency or candidate group outside of his or her jurisdiction must have written approval from the AFSC Administration prior to a test date. Certifying Officers cannot authorize testing for candidates who have not received written approval from the AFSC. Retest candidates who need to retake an exam must also have AFSC written approval prior to eligibility to test at another location. Candidates who lack the appropriate documentation or do not meet all requirements for final examination shall not be permitted to test.

In rare cases, the Certifying Officer may be presented with candidates who have been auditing the training course or who are otherwise **known** to be ineligible for certification (i.e underage or have only partially completed training requirements). When **ineligibility** has been clearly established, the CO **shall not** allow the individual to take the examination for certification.

Confidentiality of Examination Results

The Certifying Officer must make every effort to keep the candidates' practical examination results confidential. To maintain confidentiality of a candidate test status, no indication of station pass/fail status should be put on a public display by the CO (e.g. chalkboard, whiteboard, easel, etc.). Any discussion about practical station status and retests should be kept between the Certifying Officer, the Training Officer/designee, the Evaluator, and the candidate.

Written test materials are processed by the AFSC staff after the material has been returned to the AFSC Administration. Final certification score results shall only be released to the candidate and the Primary Course Coordinator (as indicated on the Course Notification Form).

Testing and certification final results and the associated test instruments shall be securely maintained and stored in accordance with the state of Alaska records retention policy.

Briefing the Candidates

Briefing the candidates can be the most challenging and important role for the Certifying Officer. Candidates have prepared for the test since the first day of the class and anxiety should be expected. Certifying Officers must clearly stress that their role is to ensure the test is a reasonable and unbiased assessment of their skills that is consistent with the certification standard. A firm but fair approach is appropriate. Candidates should be told what to expect in terms of scheduling, score notification, and re-testing. The Certifying Officer must make every effort to avoid embarrassing candidates. Certifying Officers should wait until a candidate has completed the first attempt at each station before informing him/her of the results. Candidates must be informed that once the test is underway discussing the practical examination or sharing information with other candidates is not permitted.

Administering Examinations

Firefighter I and Firefighter II Examinations

The Fire Standards Council has developed the skill sheets and a training record for Firefighter Level I and Level II. The [Firefighter Certification Directive](#) document provides the related guidelines for these certifications. The Fire Standards Council skill sheets and training records for all levels of Firefighter certification are posted online at the AFSC [certification webpage](#), and candidates must complete each training component to be eligible for certification testing. It is expected that the Training Officer, or designee, will complete the skill sheets and the training record for the candidates during a firefighter certification course. The Certifying Officer must verify that there is documented evidence that all the required skills have been completed by each candidate.

There are mandatory and random skills stations designated for Firefighter certification testing. Random practical skills are selected by AFSC staff using the LXR computer software prior to the examination date. Mandatory and random skill sheet selections determine the equipment list that will be sent via email to the Test Site Coordinator/ Training Officer. The list is sent to ensure that all materials needed for the exam will be available at the test site. The Test Site Coordinator shall not disclose the contents of the equipment list to any of the candidates testing prior to the day of the exam.

The CO must coordinate with the TSC to verify all equipment and materials will be available for the test site. In the event that the CO determines the skill sheet cannot be used for the test site (reasons are limited to a lack of equipment/material or inclement weather) the AFSC Administration must be contacted with an explanation of what equipment and material is not available, and why it is not available. An alternative skill from the same general NFPA 1001 category will be randomly selected using the LXR program. The AFSC Administration must be notified of the inability to supply the necessary equipment by the CO/TSC at least 1 business day in advance of the practical test.

Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations Examinations

This section provides an overview of the practical examinations required for Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations Level certification in Alaska. The required skills for hazardous materials certification supplement those for Firefighter I and II, and the procedures for administering the examinations are similar. In some cases a

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Certifying Officer will conduct the written and practical certification examinations for Hazardous Materials in conjunction with a Firefighter exam.

The AFSC has developed the skill sheets and a training record for Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations levels (NFPA 472). The [Hazardous Materials Certification Directive](#) document provides the related guidelines for these certifications. The Fire Standards Council skill sheets and training records for all levels of hazardous materials certification are posted online at the AFSC [certification webpage](#), and candidates must complete each training component to be eligible for certification testing. It is expected that the Training Officer, or designee, will complete the skill sheets and the training record for the candidates during a hazardous materials certification course. The Certifying Officer must verify that there is documented evidence that all the required skills have been completed by each candidate before testing begins.

Hazardous Materials certification is a mandatory requirement for Firefighter certification, and this material is often included in Firefighter certification courses. With advance notice to the AFSC Administration, the Hazardous Materials certification examination can be offered independent of a Firefighter course. Due to certain certification requirements, each request for an independent Hazardous Materials certification examination will be managed by the AFSC Administration on a case-by-case basis.

Hazardous materials certification examinations consist of the following elements:

- a. Hazardous Materials Awareness –
 1. Written test – 50 multiple choice questions
 2. Practical test – Skills from the Hazardous Materials – Awareness Skill Sheets
- b. Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations
 1. Written test – 100 multiple choice questions
 2. Practical test – Skills from the Hazardous Materials – Awareness and Operations Skill Sheets

Practical skills for Hazardous Materials certification testing consist of mandatory and random stations. Random skills are selected by FSC staff using the LXR computer software prior to the examination date.

For practical portions of the Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations testing, the use of the North American Emergency Response Guide is permissible. This policy is only applicable for the hazardous materials component, and does not apply to any other test topic.

Fire Service Instructor Examinations

This section provides an overview of the examination process required for Fire Service Instructor certification in Alaska. Although the required skills are different than those for Firefighter I and II, the same basic procedures for administering the examinations are used. A Certifying Officer will administer a Fire Service Instructor written exam that is scheduled to follow an approved Methods of Instruction (MOI) course.

The Fire Standards Council has developed the skill sheets and a training record for Fire Service Instructor Level I and Level II (NFPA 1041). The [Fire Service Instructor Directive](#) provides the related guidelines for these certifications. As with other training programs, it is expected that the Lead Instructor for the Methods of Instruction course will use the skill sheets and complete the training record for the candidates during a course. The Certifying Officer must verify that there is documented evidence that all the required skills have been completed by each candidate.

Fire Service Instructor I Practical Instruction

The Certifying Officer must review the FSI training Record with the MOI I Lead Instructor or Test Site Coordinator. To facilitate final testing the host agency (i.e. that has requested the certification exam) is responsible for providing Evaluators for the practical skills review. A Certifying Officer is scheduled to arrive on site at the conclusion of the course to administer the written exam and the final portion of the practical exam.

For the Fire Service Instructor I (FSI I) level the final portion of the practical exam is the 15-20 minute presentation conducted during the practical examination. The practical skills and written testing for FSI I will take place at the end of the MOI course. Depending on the course, the location, and/or the number of candidates the final skill evaluation and the final written examination may be completed at another time, as specified on the Course Notification Form. The MOI Lead Instructor or Test Site Coordinator has the responsibility to inform candidates of what the test arrangement is prior to the start of the course.

Each candidate must complete the practical skills evaluations throughout the MOI I course. The course material is such that the MOI I Instructor is responsible for ensuring that candidates complete each required skill sheet. It is expected that the MOI Instructor will adequately review each candidate's skills and technical abilities throughout the course. This includes ensuring every candidate has completed the skill and been evaluated for each skill requirement. The Certifying Officer must review documentation that a candidate for certification has completed the required skills before the candidate conducts the final presentation. In cases where evaluators are not available, the MOI I Instructor may be required to assist the Certifying Officer as an Evaluator for completion of the final practical.

All of the FSI I examination requirements can be conducted in a classroom setting. Specialized equipment is not critical for this evaluation, and the Fire Standards Council does not have an equipment requirement list for Fire Service Instructor Level I test. A basic classroom setting and related media equipment (i.e. projector, computer, screen) is the minimum requirement. In certain cases the AFSC can supply a laptop and projector upon request.

Fire Service Instructor II Practical Instruction

The practical examination for the Fire Service Instructor II level involves significant individual project-based course work, and cannot be reviewed immediately following the MOI course at this level. Practical examinations for the Fire Service Instructor level II will follow the practical skill sheet guidelines, and a final review will be generally be evaluated by an approved instructor as a component of an approved course. Due to the nature of the FSI II skill sheet assignments, each candidate must arrange the necessary materials to complete the skill requirements.

The FSI II examination requirement is dependent upon the MOI II candidate's presentation topic. Any equipment necessary to complete the final presentation is the responsibility of the candidate, and the AFSC does not have an equipment requirement list for Fire Service Instructor Level II test. It is expected that there will be a basic classroom setting and related media equipment (i.e. projector, computer, overhead screen) is the minimum requirement. In certain cases the AFSC can facilitate the use of a laptop and projector upon request.

Test Site Coordinator/Training Officer Test Responsibilities

Advanced Preparation

The *Test Site Coordinator/Training Officer is responsible for the following items **prior** to the testing process:

1. Submit a Certification Course and Testing Notification Form request to the Fire Standards Council Administration **30 days PRIOR to the proposed START date of the course**; *and*
2. Arrange a test site location for the initial written and practical examination for all candidates; *and*
3. Complete all training record documentation for each candidate and ensure each candidate is eligible to test; *and*
4. Ensure that potential Evaluators are available during the examination period; *and*
5. Communicate with the designated Certifying Officer in advance of the test date to plan the written and practical certification examination

Test Date Preparation

For all test sites, during the day of the examination the ** Test Site Coordinator/Training Officer has the responsibility to:

1. Provide an adequate site for the examination;
2. Provide assistance to the Certifying Officer;
3. Ensure that candidates have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment that meets or exceeds the applicable NFPA standard;
4. Obtain sufficiently trained and qualified Evaluators for the practical skills testing;
5. Obtain sufficiently trained and qualified Assistants for the practical skills testing;
6. Ensure that all necessary equipment, apparatus, and supplies are at the test site, and that all items meet or exceed all applicable NFPA and health and safety standards; and
7. Set-up practical examination skill stations.

*In certain cases, the Lead Instructor may assume the responsibilities of the Test Site Coordinator/Training Officer. At a minimum, the organization that submitted the Course Test Notification will designate an officer or responsible individual to coordinate the duties of the Training Officer as defined above.

**Unless the Test Site Coordinator/Training Officer has made prior arrangements with the AFSC Administration and the Certifying Officer, he or she must be present at the test site for the entire examination. Failure of the Training Officer to provide support during the examination process could result in restrictions or revocation of training accreditation.

Designated Safety Officer

The testing agency has the ultimate responsibility for the safety of all parties involved in the testing process. A Safety Officer shall be assigned from either the support staff or from the available members of the fire department who are not testing. This Safety Officer should be an individual with sufficient training and experience to determine potential safety problems and take corrective action. The Safety Officer shall operate in a roving fashion to ensure that all evolutions are being conducted in a safe manner. The Safety Officer has the authority, regardless of rank, to stop any activity immediately if a dangerous condition or act is observed.

Live Fire Skill Assessment

Some firefighter skills contain objectives that involve fire control JPR's. For completion of certification testing elements most fire control elements can be simulated. Each skill sheet will identify the requirement for completion of the skill station and specify if simulation is permitted. Any live fire skill that is conducted during the certification exam portion must be in compliance with the Alaska Standard for Live Fire Evolution (modeled after NFPA 1403).

Written Examination Basic Overview

Administering the Written Examination

A Certifying Officer is responsible for administering the written examination and is expected to:

1. Ensure that candidates are in a comfortable environment for completing the written examination.
2. Separate candidates to ensure test integrity and verify extraneous materials are removed from the tabletops (in certain cases the use of a dedicated calculator may be permitted).
3. **Follow** the written exam instructions specified in this manual (either the written script or the companion Powerpoint instructions).
4. Distribute the test binders and instruct candidates to complete the top of the application form (verify the name and test code information is completed as per the instructions)
5. Direct candidates to read the questions thoroughly and answer all questions.
6. Direct candidates to begin the examination.
7. Remain in the room, or designate another authorized individual to remain in the room, to ensure the security of the examination.
8. As candidates complete the examination, collect the materials. **Ensure** the candidate did not mark the examination booklet.
9. Confirm the number of the test binder and the version of the test are accurately marked on the Scantron answer sheet.
10. Secure the exam binders and collect all remaining testing materials when all candidates have completed the examination.
11. If a candidate writes on any document or paper during the exam it must be collected with the application and answer sheet and attached to the individual packet.

Oral Examinations

For a candidate that may have difficulty reading a written examination, the AFSC can make arrangements to have the written exam verbally given to the candidate. For a request for verbal delivery, the AFSC Executive Director must specifically approve the verbal delivery of the examination. A candidate that requires the oral administration of an exam must be provided with a discreet area that will allow the privacy to the candidate and will not disrupt other examination candidates. Oral administration should be conducted by an AFSC authorized individual that *is not* affiliated with the fire service.

Written Retest

Candidates that do not successfully complete the written exam must be scheduled for a retest. Generally, the AFSC Administration will contact the Training Officer or Lead Instructor to schedule a written retest. The candidate will receive written notification of his or her status and will be advised to coordinate with his or her

Training Officer to arrange a retest. This notification shall include documentation for authorization to retest at an approved test site. Approved retest sites include the AFSC main office or a Training and Education Bureau regional office. The candidate must receive a written authorization prior to arriving at a regional office for a retest. In cases where an individual requires a retest but is unable to physically get to a regional test site, the AFSC will attempt to locate a proctor in the candidate's region.

The candidate must complete a written retest within 90 days of receiving the notice of retest, or the local Fire Chief or Training Officer must approve a retest beyond this 90 day window. If the candidate fails the written examination a second time the 90-day rule again applies from the retest date. The request for the third and final examination must be in writing and must include a letter from the Training Officer or the Fire Chief describing additional remedial training completed to assist the candidate. If a candidate fails this third attempt, they must retake the training course.

Practical Examination Instruction

Administering the Practical Examination

A Certifying Officer is responsible for administering the practical examination and is expected to:

1. Ensure that the candidates are physically ready to take the exam (i.e. not injured, ill, or otherwise incapacitated).
2. Verify that all examination stations have the correct equipment and/or supplies.
3. Complete the Evaluator and Assistant training briefing and obtain Evaluator Code of Ethics Compliance Form signatures
4. **Follow** the practical exam instructions specified in this manual (either the written script or the companion slideshow instructions).
5. Ensure all appropriate safety measures will be followed within each skill station and candidates and evaluators maintain personal safety awareness (*the Certifying Officer may alter, suspend, or terminate any operation they determine as unsafe*).
6. Begin the practical examination process.
7. Ensure that Evaluators receive a practical station skill check sheets for each candidate.
8. Ensure all skill stations are consistent for each candidate.
9. Ensure alternate evaluators are assigned to evaluate any candidate that requires a retest.
10. Complete the required practical examination documentation and secure with application and written examination paperwork.

Candidate Competency at Practical Examination Sites

The practical examinations for certification are intended to determine whether a candidate is competent in the requisite skill requirement as identified within the certification standard. It is expected that candidates have been trained and are competent in the required skills prior to the test site. Once the test examination process begins, candidates are prohibited from practice training at the test site.

Candidates must be prepared to take the examinations for certification prior to the start of the examination and are not permitted to delay or opt out of a practical examination station for any reason other than injury or sudden on-set of illness. Once the examination has begun, candidates are prohibited from discussing the contents of the practical examination with other candidates.

Facial Hair in Contact with SCBA Prohibited

Individuals with facial hair that comes into contact with the SCBA facepiece seal will not be allowed to be tested for certification. The Certifying Officer will have the authority to deny testing to these individuals and is expected by the AFSC to do so. Any Certifying Officer, Evaluator, or Assistant wearing SCBA while participating in any practical skill that has the potential for a hazardous atmosphere shall also comply with this requirement. This policy is in accordance with NFPA 1500, Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Programs, 2007 Edition:

"7.13.3 Members who have a beard or facial hair at any point where the facepiece is designed to seal with the face or whose hair could interfere with the operation of the unit shall not be permitted to use respiratory protection at emergency incidents or in hazardous or potentially hazardous atmospheres."*

Practical Examination Re-testing

Candidates that are testing for practical skill examinations must demonstrate competency in accordance with the Fire Standards Council requirements. Practical examinations for candidates will be scored as Pass or Fail. Candidates that are unable to demonstrate competency in a specific skill will be informed of the general subject area deficiency. Candidates that are unsuccessful in a skill station will not generally receive specific detail of failure points. In most cases, the candidate will be required to complete the entire station again.

If a candidate is unable to competently perform a skill the candidate may attempt to retest the skill again. Candidates may attempt the skill or evolution retest two additional times after the initial attempt (three total attempts). If a candidate is unable to demonstrate the skill competency within three attempts, she or he must receive remedial training before attempting the skill again. In most cases, a candidate that requires more than three attempts to complete the same skill will be required to retry on another date at another test site.

It is expected that the Certifying Officer, the Training Officer, and/or the Lead Instructor will meet to determine the remedial action necessary to adequately prepare the candidate for another skill evaluation. The Certifying Officer has discretionary authority to determine an appropriate course of action for remediation and retest alternatives, or, the Certifying Officer can contact AFSC Executive Director for a directive regarding this issue.

A candidate who requires remedial training must receive this training from a certified Fire service Instructor. Remedial training is not permitted at a test site practical skills examination station. All required remedial training must be documented on a [Remedial Training Form](#).

Remedial Training Form

The Certifying Officer must complete the Remedial Training Form when a candidate cannot demonstrate skill competency in accordance with established job performance requirements for the level that he or she is testing. This form must be completed if the candidate is unable to successfully complete the same practical skill station within three attempts. Remedial training is required if a candidate cannot demonstrate skill competency in accordance with established job performance requirements during the final skill evaluation.

Remedial training must be conducted by a certified Fire Service Instructor that is not directly involved with the testing and evaluation process in which the candidate initially tested. Instructors could include the course instructor or another outside instructor if they are not providing direct support to the test site process. Remedial training **cannot** be conducted by the Certifying Officer or a test site Evaluator. The Fire Service Instructor who provides remedial training must verify that the candidate is capable of competently demonstrating skill competency in accordance with established job performance requirements for the level of certification at which

the candidate is testing. The burden is on the candidate to obtain the required remedial training, and there is no minimum or maximum number of hours for remedial training. The candidate has 12 months following successful course completion to obtain the remedial training and successfully complete the practical examinations.

Due to the nature of the station selection for each certification examination, a candidate that must retest at a different test site will be required to demonstrate skill competency for all of the stations at the alternate location. It is possible that a candidate will perform different skill stations at the alternate test site that do not include the station the candidate did not successfully complete during his or her initial test. However, the candidate must show proof of remedial training before beginning a new practical examination process.

Practical Examination Record Keeping

It is imperative that Certifying Officers maintain thorough records at a practical examination site. Incomplete or improper documentation creates the potential for administrative errors, and the AFSC Administration cannot issue certification in cases where documentation is inadequate.

Candidates are required to competently complete the skills stations selected for a given test site. The AFSC requires the Certifying Officer to document the results of final skill examinations on the [Practical Examination Reporting Form](#). Although each candidate must have a skill sheet for each examination station, the Certifying Officer is only required to *review* the completed skill sheets and mark the candidate accordingly on the Practical Skills Examination Form; *the CO is not required to submit individual skill sheets with the return test packet*. The completed skill sheets are left with the TSC/TO for local record keeping.

In cases where an individual is unable to successfully complete a required skill station, the Certifying Officer must follow the remedial training procedure and record the results on the [Remedial Training Form](#).

Practical Skills Examination Reporting Form (Used for Entire Test Group)

These forms are used to record the results of each candidate at the test site. It is helpful to list the candidates by last name, in alphabetical order. The outcome for each candidate should be clearly noted on the form. A completed Practical Examination Reporting Form must be included with the return test packet documentation.

Remedial Training Form (Used for Candidates that require Re-testing.)

This form is used **only** for candidates who are unable to successfully complete the initial practical examination at the test site after three attempts and who need re-testing on a different date. Candidates that are re-tested up to three times on the same date will be identified on the above original Practical Examination Reporting Form. The Certifying Officer shall complete this form anytime a candidate has three unsuccessfully attempts at a practical station. The Certifying Officer will indicate the specific skills the candidate must have remedial training on before the candidate will be permitted to retest.

After receiving remedial training; the Certified Fire Service Instructor that provided the candidate with remedial training must sign this form. The candidate is responsible for returning this form to the AFSC Administration. The AFSC will coordinate with the candidate in order to schedule an approved retest. Once the candidate successfully completes an approved retest, a Certifying Officer must sign the Remedial Training Form and return it to the AFSC Administration. See the section on remedial training for more information on how to complete remedial training. If the applicant declines retesting, or is unable to retest during his or her initial practical test, the Certifying Officer shall record this information on the Remedial Training Form and forward a copy to the AFSC Administration.

Returning Examination Booklets and Materials

All final examination materials are to be returned by the Certifying Officer after the testing session. Copying any portion of the exam is explicitly prohibited. All test items should be shipped in accordance with AFSC policies for test materials. Shipping should always be done through a means that allows materials to be traced (Goldstreak, Fed-Ex, USPS).

The following items must be returned to AFSC after each exam:

1. Test Binders containing all of the following items
 - a. Completed applications – Check for all signatures
 - b. Completed answer sheets
 - c. Written examinations
2. Completed Hazardous Materials skill sheet and template copies (*if applicable*)
3. Completed Practical Examination Reporting Form
4. Completed Evaluator Compliance Agreements

Examination Grading, Scoring and Re-testing

The AFSC will attempt to score exams within 5 business days from the day they were received. During peak test periods results may not be available for up to 30-days. In most cases, a list of the scores will be sent to the Training Officer/Lead Instructor and the Certifying Officer. The candidate should not attempt to contact the AFSC or TEB Administration about individual test scores. This information will be mailed directly to the candidate with a certificate upon receipt of payment and processing of certificate.

All written exams are processed and scored using the LXR Scantron unit. Each exam is double scored to ensure there are no scoring errors. For most exams, the student must pass the exam with a score of 70% or higher, unless otherwise specified.

Practical skill evaluations are graded on a pass/fail basis with all mandatory components identified. The applicant must pass all designated stations during the examination in order to successfully "Pass" the overall skill component of the examination.

Exam Result Notification Procedures

Upon completion of the grading process the Training Officer/Lead Instructor or Accreditation Manager is notified of the candidate's scores. The AFSC Administration will mail the appropriate certificate to candidates that successfully complete the written and practical components. The candidate is responsible for supplying a copy to their organization. The AFSC will maintain a copy of the certificate in the individuals certification file in the main office.

Summary

The CO must endeavor to provide timely and accurate documentation for a test site assignment. Rapid submission of examination test site paperwork is mandatory and ensures test security and prompt grading of candidate examinations.

Test Examination Security Plan

Each examination requires significant resources to be successful. The Fire Standards Council maintains a high level of security for examinations, and it will take immediate action against individuals or agencies that misuse the certification examination process. If members of an organization exhibit a gross violation of this policy, disciplinary action may be taken up to and including a loss of individual certification, loss of fire department accreditation and cost recovery associated with conducting the test. The security of the examination is the responsibility of every individual involved in the testing process.

General Security Points

1. All packages that contain examinations must be clearly labeled with legible shipping and return addresses. The term "Examinations" is meant to include all written and practical testing materials, and includes:
 - a. test binders
 - b. completed answer sheets
 - c. practical examination result forms
 - d. completed applications
 - e. evaluator compliance forms
 - f. other associated paperwork (i.e. payment, remedial training forms, CO pay documents, Haz mat skill sheets)
2. Examinations shall only be shipped by methods that provide shipment tracking (e.g., Gold Streak, Airfreight, Federal Express, *USPS Mail, etc)
*examinations sent through the USPS must be sent using the **Certified Mail** option
3. All examinations not in the direct view of a Certifying Officer/Review Committee member must be stored in a secure location, such as the locked case provided, a locked filing cabinet, locked car trunk, etc.
4. The AFSC reserves the right to determine what individual or agency can receive test examination materials.
5. All return packets must include a completed return Checklist (i.e. CO Exam Return Report or an AFSC Test Bank Report)

Distribution of Examinations

1. Copying any certification examination is explicitly prohibited.
2. For authorized test site examinations the AFSC Administration shall mail examinations to assigned Certifying Officer's, or a designated secure pickup location, as deemed appropriate by the AFSC staff.
3. In the event that a written examination must be administered to an individual in a community that does not have a Certifying Officer available, a designated individual (*such as a school principal or a law enforcement person*) shall be authorized to administer the examination. In these cases, the AFSC Executive Director must specifically authorize the individual to proctor the exam. For retest proctors, following guideline shall be used:
 - a. the examination shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope with the signature of the person sending the examination across the flap
 - b. the sealed envelope shall be given by the test proctor to the examinee
 - c. when the examinee has completed the examination, he or she shall place the test binder and completed examination answer sheet into a return envelope
 - d. The examinee shall seal the envelop and sign across the flap
 - e. the sealed envelope must be returned to the AFSC Administration immediately through an approved shipping method

During the Testing Process

1. The Certifying Officer, or authorized individual, must be physically present throughout the administration of the written examination.
2. The Certifying Officer, or authorized individual, is prohibited from reviewing the written examination with anyone.
3. The Certifying Officer must discuss examination security with the practical examination evaluators prior to administration of the practical examination.
 - a. Provide detailed instructions to evaluators and candidates to ensure that candidates are not allowed to see the practical skills stations prior to his or her test
 - b. Determine how you will segregate candidates that have completed a specific practical skill station from other candidates that have not completed that specific skill station. This may require several segregated candidate staging areas away from the test stations. In cases where multiple staging areas are not available, the CO or designee must remain in the staging area to ensure candidates do not discuss skill stations with each other.
4. If an approved Scantron answer form is unavailable for a written examination, a candidate may record the answers on a standard sheet of paper. The candidate answers will be transcribed onto the answer form by the Certifying Officer or designee, checked for accuracy, and returned to AFSC Administration accompanied by the original form on which the answers were recorded. This form will be retained with the Scantron answer sheet.

Missing Examinations

Upon receipt of the test tote material the CO must inventory examination binder totals. If a Certifying Officer determines that an assigned examination is missing from her or his assigned test site, the CO must contact the AFSC Executive Director immediately and provide the following information in writing:

1. a description of the missing material(s);
2. the last known location;
3. a description of the attempts made to locate the examination; and
4. a recommendation for additional action.

If an individual other than the Certifying Officer is responsible for the missing examination, the he or she must send a separate letter to the AFSC Executive Director detailing the circumstances under which the examination was lost. The AFSC Executive Director, or designee, will investigate the circumstances surrounding the loss of the exam. If disciplinary measures are required they will be addressed by the AFSC Executive Director at the conclusion of an investigative review. In such cases, the AFSC Executive Director may implement disciplinary action up to and including: a loss of individual certification, loss of fire department accreditation, and cost recovery associated with conducting the test.

Breaches of Security

Breaches of security or any compromise of the examination process is a serious situation. If an individual suspects an examination has been compromised, the AFSC Executive Director must be contacted by phone, by the Certifying Officer, or designee, that is responsible for the examination, as soon as practical after any breach of test security.

If a breach of test security occurs, the individual responsible for the examination should provide a written statement containing:

1. a description of the security breach;

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2. a list of individuals involved in the breach; and
3. other information the individual considers appropriate.

Written statements from persons with knowledge of the event should accompany the letter, if available.

The Alaska Fire Standards Council expects that the Certifying Officer or individual responsible for the examination will perform an initial assessment of the breach of security to obtain information which might not be available at a later time. The AFSC ultimately holds the responsibility for investigation, but the individual responsible for the examination must provide a detailed examination of the events in writing.

The AFSC Executive Director, or designee, will investigate the circumstances surrounding the loss of the exam. If disciplinary measures are required they will be addressed by the AFSC Executive Director at the conclusion of an investigative review. In such cases, the AFSC Executive Director may implement disciplinary action up to and including: a loss of individual certification, loss of fire department accreditation, and cost recovery associated with conducting the test.

Test Security Policy

Test Materials Access and Storage Policy

Access to the written exams, test banks and computer system containing any relevant information are restricted to the Alaska Fire Standards Council Executive Director and Certification Clerk. When the Certification Clerk issues the tests for a certification exam, the tests are sent to the Certifying Officer in a locked case. The Certification Clerk gives the lock combination directly to the Certifying Officer. The Certifying Officer signs a compliance agreement ensuring the maintenance of test security.

The written exam test banks software disks and hard copies of the exam are maintained in secure file cabinets in the Alaska Fire Standards Council main office. The Alaska Fire Standards Council Executive Director and the Certification Clerk shall have the only keys to these file cabinets. The written exam test banks are maintained on a secure computer network. The Alaska Fire Standards Council Executive Director and the Certification Clerk are the only persons with knowledge of the password to this system.

Review Committee Test Security Policy

During test item development, validation, and review all examination material shall be distributed in accordance with methods listed under “General Security Points.” Test material shall not be copied or reproduced in any manner without the express written permission of the AFSC Executive Director or designee. Infringing on any copyright material is against the law and is not permitted. Material must not be shared or viewed by people outside of the designated committee, and the committee members must not share any information with the public that can be construed as revealing or identifying confidential test information. All test bank material is confidential and must be under constant control while under committee review. All material will be returned to the Executive Director of the AFSC, or designated administrative staff, by the established deadline.

Test Materials Disposal Policy

All outdated written exam materials are shredded before disposal. All computer disks are destroyed by breaking or shredding the disks. All computer systems use for storage of test bank material are wiped by the Department of Public Safety IT department before disposal.

Application for Certification Instruction

Application Detail

To assist the AFSC staff in processing applications for certification it is extremely important that the applications be completed correctly and legibly. The following are items that are often overlooked by the applicant/candidate, and the Certifying Officers must ensure they are completed correctly.

1. Select the correct "Application Type." For candidates that are testing after completing a course, the "New" box is selected.
2. For "Application Level," check each box that applies to the test that is administered. For Firefighter exams, the Hazardous Materials component is often conducted simultaneously, and both the Firefighter and Haz Mat box is checked for the appropriate level
3. Under "Personal Information," the ID number is composed of the first three (3) letters of the candidate's **last name** and the **last four numbers** of the candidate's social security number.
4. The "Personal Information," and "Department or Employer Information" portion on the first page must be completed and legible.
5. Review the certification requirements as identified on the second page. Verify documentation as required.
6. Ensure the applicant/candidate meets the minimum age requirement (18 for FFI and 21 for FSI).
7. Ensure the applicant/candidate meets the three years of fire service experience requirement for Fire Service Instructor I.
8. All signatures must be on the application for final processing.
 - a. Applicant must sign
 - b. Training Officer or Fire Chief must sign (this indicates that the person has completed the required training program)
 - c. Certifying Officer must sign (this indicates that the final examination has been administered and completed).
9. The application must be placed in the return packet with the written examination answer sheet.
10. For all recertification, the required documentation must be completed and attached.
11. Training Officer verification of CPR credential and First Aid

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Requirements

A valid CPR credential includes any one of the following: a CPR card; completed course rosters; or a letter from a certified CPR Instructor attesting to the applicant's successful completion of a CPR program. The card or letter must clearly indicate that the course included adult, child, and infant CPR and airway obstruction relief maneuvers, including two-rescuer CPR and barrier devices. The following CPR credentials are acceptable for **Firefighter I** certification.

- a. BLS for Health Care Providers-**American Heart Association**
- b. CPR for the Professional Rescuer-**American Red Cross**
- c. The CPR component of Medic First Aid-Advanced
- d. Basic Life Support for Professionals (BLSPRO)-**EMP America**
- e. CPR for the Professional Rescuer-**American Safety & Health Institute**
- f. Respond Systems AED/CPR
- g. AAOS Emergency Care and Safety Institute-**Professional Rescuer CPR**
- h. Emergency First Response CPR & AED
- i. Military Training Network

Programs that do not include *all* of the necessary components or that offer a card valid for greater than two years do *not* meet the CPR requirements for Firefighter I certification. Requirements for CPR certification and training are specified in 7 AAC 26.985 (d) of the Alaska EMS Regulations.

As per the Fire Department Accreditation guidelines, the local Training Officer has the responsibility to ensure that the medical care training program (i.e. ETT, EMT, or other in-house training) meets the NFPA 1001 (4.3) minimum for infection control, bleeding control, and shock management.

Prerequisite Requirements

When a standard (or a level within a standard) states that prerequisite certification is required a candidate must complete prerequisite before testing for the higher level of certification. Prerequisite certification examination questions shall be differentiated in the exam process and scored independently. A separate AFSC certificate shall be issued for prerequisite certification levels. Each AFSC certification level shall identify prerequisite requirements specific to the related certification directive and training record.

Applicants from Out-of-State

The AFSC will not certify applicants/candidates that have not met the 30 day residency requirement. This residency requirement may be confirmed by an Alaska driver's license or a letter from an individual other than the applicant/candidate stating that the applicant has lived in Alaska for at least 30 days. The residency requirement is waived for those applicants that are members of a fire department that is registered with the State Fire Marshal's Office.

Underage Applicants

A candidate who is less than 18 years of age cannot complete a certification exam at any level. Individual departments may decide whether the underage applicant may attend the training sessions, but the AFSC prohibits the underage candidate from testing until after her or his 18th birthday.

Applicants with Criminal History

The AFSC has not adopted a specific set of policies for processing applicants at the FFI, FFII, or Instructor I and II Level with a record of criminal history. The AFSC recommends that the local AHJ adheres to department policy regarding criminal history background checks.

The AFSC is the AHJ for criminal history background checks for certified Fire Investigators. A criminal history report must be submitted with application for certification as a Fire Investigator.

If a Certifying Officer becomes aware of a significant criminal background issue regarding an applicant this information must be forwarded to the AFSC Supervisor. The AFSC Executive Director will follow guidelines established by the Alaska Fire Standards Council to determine if the criminal background issue is significant or relevant to the level of certification the applicant is testing at.

Written Examination Instructions

Certifying Officer Instructions

AS THE DESIGNATED ADMINISTRATOR OF THIS EXAMINATION YOU ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH THE ALASKA FIRE STANDARDS COUNCIL TESTING POLICIES. SECURITY OF THIS EXAM IS CRUCIAL TO THE STATEWIDE CERTIFICATION PROCESS. AS AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ALASKA FIRE STANDARDS COUNCIL, THE AFSC EXPECTS YOU TO MAINTAIN THE SECURITY OF THIS EXAM. PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTERING THIS EXAMINATION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Candidates taking the test should be assembled in a quiet location that is appropriate for conducting the examination. All reference books and materials must be removed from the candidate's desk. Candidates may use dedicated calculators (no electronic devices such as Smart Phones, PDA's, etc.), scratch paper and other tools as necessary. The Certifying Officer should ensure the candidates understand what items they may or may not use.
 2. Candidates are prohibited from removing any copies of the examination from the testing location.
 3. Each candidate should have a test binder that includes; an application for certification, testing instructions, an examination booklet, a bubble style answer sheet and two (2) No. 2 lead pencil. Writing in or on the examination booklet is prohibited. The answer sheet shall be prepared and completed in accordance with the test binder instruction sheet.
 4. It is mandatory that the test instructions are read to candidates before each test.
 5. At the completion of the examination all test binders, applications, answer sheets, and scratch paper must be collected and accounted for. All examination contents must be returned to the AFSC along with any practical examination documents that have been completed by the candidate. Do not fold answer sheets.
- (These instructions are included with each mailed written examination)

If the exam is administered while candidates are on call and an emergency arises that warrants a response by candidates:

- a. Test booklets and answer sheets must be turned face down.
- b. Test will continue when students return.
- c. If emergency is of long duration:
 - i. The test that students failed to complete will be considered invalid.
 - ii. Test will be rescheduled.
 - iii. A different version of the test will be issued at a later date.

At no time shall the CO leave the examination binders unattended

Verbal Instructions for Written Exam

The CO is required to read these instructions at the start of the written exam. As an alternative to this script, the AFSC has a slideshow presentation that can be used in place of this Verbal Instructions section.

1. Welcome to the practical examination. My name is _____. I'm the Certifying Officer for this examination.
2. The written examination will begin shortly.
 - Please remove all material from your desk.
 - You are not to open the test binder until I give you instructions to do so.
 - There is a two hour time limit for this examination.
 - Location of exits _____
 - Location of restrooms _____
 - In case of Emergency – exit building and place testing materials back in the binder and close the binder.
3. During the examination you may not leave the room except to use the restroom, you will only be permitted to leave one at a time. If you need to leave the room, please raise your hand and I will dismiss you. This privilege will be suspended if it is abused. If you leave place testing materials back in the binder and close the binder.
4. I am not permitted to answer any questions about individual examination items.
5. Any irregularities connected with this examination, such as giving or obtaining assistance to another applicant, may be sufficient cause to terminate your participation in taking the examination and/or gaining certification. In such cases, the State of Alaska reserves the right to delay processing of examination results until a thorough and complete investigation is conducted.
6. You must not copy any material from the examination or make any recordings of this examination at any time or in any way. Efforts to reconstruct the examination using your memory or that of others are prohibited. You must not duplicate any questions in writing and should report evidence of this activity to the AFSC Executive Director.
7. No computers or other electronic devices may be used during the examination. However, dedicated calculators (**NO** smart phones, PDA, or other handheld electronic devices) are permitted for use on the AFSC written examination for certification.
8. After finishing the examination, you may leave the room. Be sure you have completed the answer sheet and returned all examination materials which were given to you, including the examination booklet, scratch paper, answer sheet, and any borrowed pencils.
9. Before we begin the examination we must complete a few items on the bubble answer sheet.
 - ID Number – Use the candidate's last four numbers of the social security number, complete boxes and ovals
 - Version Number – The exam version number can be found in the upper, right hand corner of the exam. That version number must be entered directly after the ID number (please see example in exam binder).
 - Last Name -- Last name by letter, complete boxes and ovals
 - FI & MI -- First and Middle initial by letter, complete boxes and ovals

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- Date -- Month, Day and Year by number, complete boxes and ovals
- Grade Box – Enter the binder number of the test (found on the front cover of the exam binder). Please enter a zero first if the binder only has a single digit listed on it. Example, binder 1 would be recorded as 01.

Also complete the Additional Data box as follows:

- Course – enter the name of the course
- Test – (name of exam) Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Instructor I, etc.
- Date – the date of the test
- Instructor – course instructor's name
- Your Name – the student's name
- Blank – the certifying officer's name

10. While completing the answer sheet remember the following critical items:

- Mark each answer clearly by filling in the oval for that particular question. Make dark heavy marks that fill each oval completely.
- All changes on the answer sheet must be clearly erased. Smudges and extra dots are not acceptable and may cause a particular answer to be rejected.
- Do not make any stray marks on the answer sheet.
- If you choose to change an answer make sure that the first answer is erased completely.

11. **Remember!!** Select the best answer. All unanswered questions will be scored as incorrect.

12. If you feel there is a poor question, or question that are difficult to understand please mark the question number and a description of why you believe the question is poor on the backside of the Scantron sheet. This will allow the AFSC Administration to review the question and verify if there is any problem noted with the question. In some cases the AFSC may void questions for circumstances such as:

- a. the question/answer is not consistent with the standard the candidate is tested against
- b. the question/answer is poorly worded or structured

13. This test consists of 100 questions.

14. Do you have any final questions for me before we begin the examination?

15. You may now open the examination booklet and begin.

Verbal Instructions for Practical Examination

General Instructions to Candidates Regarding Practical Examination

The Certifying Officer must read the following to the candidates:

1. Welcome to the practical examination. My name is _____. I'm the Certifying Officer for this examination.
2. Let's review the following:
 - Location of exits _____
 - Location of restrooms _____
 - In case of Emergency – exit building and meet _____
 - Is everyone physically prepared to take the test?
3. It is my responsibility to ensure that all applicants are tested in a safe and equal manner. Safety is our number one priority. If you have any concerns about the safety at any of the skill stations please discuss them with the evaluator for that station.
4. By successfully completing this examination process and receiving subsequent certification you will have proved to yourself, the State of Alaska, and your local community that you have achieved a level of competency assuring that you can provide quality firefighting service.
5. The skill station evaluators used today were selected because of their expertise in each particular skill. Skill station Evaluators are observers and recorders of your expected appropriate actions. They record your performance in relationship to the criteria listed on the skill sheets developed by the AFSC.
6. The practical skill stations will be conducted as per AFSC guidelines. Please pay particular attention to the following items:
 - a. The skill station evaluator will call you into the station when it is prepared for testing.
 - b. Candidates are prohibited from staging in the testing area while waiting for his/her next station. A candidate must wait outside the testing area until the station is open and she or he is called.
 - c. Candidates who have completed a practical skill station must be separated from the other candidates who have not completed that station. This may require several segregated areas away from the testing locations for the staging of candidates.
 - d. You are not permitted to take any books, pamphlets, brochures or other study material into the station. You are not permitted to make any copies or recordings of any station.
 - e. Each skill station Evaluator will describe the scenario or series of skills a candidate is expected to perform. The Evaluator will not describe the individual elements of a skill sheet or station, but will describe the overall objective of that station.
 - f. A Candidate must pay particular attention to the Evaluator's description of what skill he or she is expected to perform. The skill station evaluator will offer to repeat the instructions and will ask you if the

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instructions were understood. Do not ask for additional information beyond the instructions because the skill station Evaluator is not permitted to give additional information.

- g. Candidates sometimes complain that skill station evaluators are abrupt, cold or appear unfriendly. It is important for candidates to understand that the Evaluators have been told they must avoid casual conversation with candidates. This is a requirement to assure fair and equal treatment of all candidates throughout the examination.
- h. Skill station Evaluators have been instructed not to indicate any judgment regarding a candidate's performance in the skill station.
- i. Candidates should not interpret any of the evaluators' remarks as an indication of her or his overall performance. Candidates should simply perform the skills to the best of his or her ability.
- j. Each skill station is supplied with several types of equipment for candidate selection. Each candidate will be given time at the beginning of the skill station to survey and select the equipment necessary for that particular task. A candidate should not feel obligated to use all the equipment. If personal protective equipment is needed for a particular station, it is expected that the candidate will supply her or his own bunker gear for this examination. Any specialty equipment for the examination will be supplied to each candidate.
- k. As a candidate progresses through the practical examination, each skill stations evaluator will be observing and recording his or her performance. The Evaluator documentation practices should not be interpreted as an indicator for candidate performance in the station. There is no correlation between the volume of his/her documentation and the quality of a candidate's performance. A candidate is encouraged to explain the things she or he is doing during performance in the station.
- l. If the station has a time limit, the evaluator will inform a candidate of this during the instructions. When a candidate reaches the time limit, the skill station evaluator will inform you to stop your performance. However, if a candidate completes the station before the allotted time, he or she should inform the evaluator that she or he is finished. A candidate may be asked to return equipment to its location at the end of his or her portion of the skill station.
- m. A candidate is not permitted to discuss any specific details of any station with another at any time. When traveling from station to station, candidates should keep all excess noise to a minimum and be prompt in reporting to each station to minimize the overall test time.
- n. The results of the practical examination are reported as a pass/fail of the skill station. If a candidate is unable to demonstrate satisfactory competency and unsuccessful in a skill station, he or she will be informed of the general subject area but not the specific element.
- o. If a candidate is unsuccessful in the completion of a skill she or he may return and attempt that skill again. A candidate may only attempt that station twice after the initial attempt (three total attempts). If a candidate is unable to satisfactorily pass that station in three attempts he or she must receive remedial training before attempting the station again. In this case, the Certifying Officer is authorized to decide whether you can return and complete this skill or station late today or in the future.
- p. During the skills testing session, a candidate will not receive a detailed critique of his or her performance on any station. The examination is a formal verification process and is not designed to assist with teaching or learning. The purpose of this examination is to verify achievement of the competencies after the education and training has been completed. Identifying errors is contrary to the principle of this type of

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examination, and could result in the candidate "learning" the examination while still not being competent in the necessary skill. It is recommended that a candidate contact her or his instructor or teaching institution for remedial training if she or he is unsuccessful in a skill station.

- q. The skill station evaluator does not play a role in the establishment of pass/fail criteria, but is merely an observer and recorder of your actions in the skill station.
- r. A Certifying Officer is here today to assure that fair, objective, and impartial evaluations occur in accordance with the guidelines contained in this guide. If a candidate has any concerns, notify the Certifying Officer immediately to discuss concerns. The Certifying Officer will be visiting all skill stations throughout the examination to verify adherence to these guidelines. Please remember that a candidate must voice concerns or complaints about the test today with the Certifying Officer before leaving the site, to ensure that it is addressed appropriately. .

Points to Remember

1. Safety is the Number One Priority
2. Follow instructions from the staff.
3. During the examination, move only to areas directed by the staff.
4. Give your name as you arrive at each station.
5. Listen carefully as the testing scenario is explained at each station.
6. Ask questions if the instructions are not clear.
7. During the examination, you are not permitted to talk about the examination with anyone other than the skill station evaluator, or the assistant assigned to help you at the skill station.
8. Be aware of any time limits, but do not sacrifice quality performance for speed.
9. Equipment will be provided. Select and use only that which is necessary to perform the task adequately.

Does anyone have any questions concerning the practical examination?

Instructions to Evaluators Regarding Practical Examination

The Certifying Officer must read the following to the evaluators.

1. My name is _____. I will be the Certifying Officer administering this examination. On behalf of the Alaska Fire Standards Council I thank you for your help today.
2. It is my responsibility to ensure that all applicants are tested in a safe and equal manner. Safety is our number one priority. If you have any concerns about the safety at any of the skill stations please discuss them with me prior to the beginning of the testing. It is your responsibility to monitor the safety of evolutions being conducted at your station. Please contact me directly if you have questions or concerns about safety during this examination.
3. Before we go any further, let me confirm that each of you are appropriately trained and certified to evaluate the station for which you have been selected. Each of you must be certified at the same level (or above) of that skill station you are testing.
4. You must sign an [Evaluator Code of Ethics Compliance Form](#). This agreement specifies that you have completed the required training program and will adhere to the AFSC policies and procedures regarding the evaluation of certification applicants.
5. If an evaluator fails to comply with the policies and/or procedures of this testing session they will be removed from the testing site and a report will be filed with the AFSC Executive Director.
6. All data concerning a candidate's performance is based upon your objective recordings and observations. You were chosen as evaluator today because of your expertise in the assigned station and ability to fairly and accurately observe and document various performances. All performances must be reported with the greatest degree of objectivity possible. The skill evaluation instruments you are using today have been designed to assist you in objectively evaluating the candidates.
7. In conducting the evaluations please remember the following points.
 - a. This examination is a formal verification procedure not designed for teaching, coaching or remedial training. Therefore you are not permitted to give any indication whatsoever of satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance to any candidate at any time.
 - b. You must not discuss any specific performance with anyone other than me. If you are unsure of scoring a particular performance, notify me as soon as possible. Do not sign or complete any evaluation form if you have any questions at all, until we have discussed the performance.
 - c. You should act in a professional manner at all times, paying particular attention to the manner in which you address candidates. You must be consistent, fair and respectful in carrying out your duties as a formal evaluator. The safest approach is to limit your dialogue to examination-related material only. Be careful of the manner in which you address candidates, as many will interpret your remarks as some indication of their performance.
 - d. You should develop a dialogue with candidates throughout their performance and should ask questions for clarification purposes. These questions should not be leading but should be asked when additional clarification is required. You may also have to stimulate a candidate to perform some action.

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- e. Do not ask for additional information beyond the scope of the skill, such as having the candidate explain advanced Firefighter II or Fire Officer information if they are taking the Firefighter I exam.
- f. To assist the CO in grading a candidate during the skill station, the AFSC has developed a Practical Skills Evaluator training directive. The information and skills taught in that directive provide guidance when grading a candidate. The AFSC has also included Practical Skills Evaluation guidelines as a reference. These guidelines are listed later in this manual. These evaluation guidelines have been established for all skill testing, not just in a final examination situation, so some of the elements of the guideline may or may not be relevant to this particular skill situation.
- g. We suggest that you introduce yourself to each candidate as you call him or her into the station. At no time is a candidate permitted to remain in the testing area while waiting for his or her next station. Take a few moments to clearly print the candidate's first and last name on the evaluation form as well as your name, the date and skill station number.
- h. You should describe to the candidate what this particular skill station involves and what is expected of her or him. Each candidate worked with the skill sheets throughout the course of her or his training and is familiar with them, so she or he should need nothing more than a simple introduction. The description of the station must be given to each candidate in the same manner to assure consistency and fairness.
- i. Give the candidate time to inspect any equipment, if necessary, and explain any specific design features of the equipment if you are asked.
- j. All skill sheets should be filled out in a manner that prohibits the candidate from directly observing the grading of a task or the comments noted. After the candidate finishes the performance, complete the skill sheet in accordance with the documented performance. Please remember that the most accurate method of fairly evaluating any candidate is one in which your attention is devoted entirely to the performance of the candidate.
- k. You must observe and enforce any time limits for the skill stations. When a time limit has been reached, stop the candidate's performance promptly and direct the candidate to move on to his or her next station. Ensure that the candidate does not take notes or recordings of the station. You should check the "Fail" column for any steps that were not completed within the allotted time.
- l. You are responsible for the security of all evaluation material throughout the day and must return all material to me before you leave this examination site.
- m. After you receive your materials for today's examination, you may proceed to your station and check any props and equipment to assure that the skill station is prepared for the first candidate. You should orient any additional evaluators and assistants with their roles in today's examination. Any assistants should act as a similar person would in a field situation. If possible, they should be trained to at least the same level as the applicant is applying for. Please emphasize the importance of their consistent and professional performance throughout today's examination. You must brief all candidates the same way, and review the skill sheet before evaluating each candidate.
- n. Please examine your assigned station and any associated equipment.
- o. Are there any questions?

Practical Skill Evaluation Guideline

Appointment

1. Candidate
 - a. Know the name of the candidate
 - b. Correct Personal Protective equipment
2. Performance Task
 - a. Requirements of the task (Skill Sheet)
 - b. Required tools and/or equipment
3. Practical Test Area
 - a. Safety Officer (if needed)
 - b. Clear area of operation
 - c. No distractions
4. Performance Standards
 - a. Trained in accordance with the current AFSC skill sheets.
 - b. Evaluator has current Skill Sheets for each candidate that is testing

Meeting the Candidate

1. Be on time
2. Ensure private test environment.
3. Eliminate interruptions
4. Leave your ego outside of the test room/area
5. Remove your prejudice from this environment
6. Keep personal/business problems to yourself
7. Be polite, courteous and receptive
8. Do not be arrogant, overbearing or condescending
9. Provide adequate description of the examination
10. Describe safety procedures

Oral Questions

1. This is primarily a performance examination. Oral questions should be kept to a minimum.
2. Questions must be:
 - a. Valid
 - b. Relevant
3. Applicable to the individual skills station or examination being tested

Practical Examination

1. Have the Skill Sheets with you at the test site
2. Conduct examination according to the Skill Sheets
3. Performance must be completed:
 - a. Safely and According to Skill Sheets
 - b. Within prescribed limits (if required)
4. No instructing/coaching during test
5. If unsatisfactory, allow the student to complete the examination and then immediately inform the Certifying Officer. For final certification examinations contact the Certifying Officer prior to retest.
6. Examples of unsatisfactory performance:
 - a. Exceeding limitations: time, safety, and equipment limitations
 - b. Inadequate/insufficient personal protective equipment
 - c. Lack of skill accuracy and task completion as defined on the skill evaluation sheet
 - d. Poor judgment in skill performance (i.e.- wrong application of tool or equipment or safety violation)
 - e. Failure to appropriately apply basic fire fighting knowledge
 - f. Not competent in the specified task or skill steps
 - g. Outcome of the specified task is in doubt (i.e.- incorrectly performed or did not accomplish skill evaluation criteria)
 - h. Need for Evaluator intervention (i.e.- imminent health or safety risk to candidate or others)
 - i. Failure to adhere to basic safety principles or guidelines
7. A task that is not performed to the required standard during the practical examination may be repeated twice during a test site visit. The Certifying Officer must be notified immediately after the initial attempt and failure. The Certifying Officer will schedule the additional two attempts. Unsuccessful attempts that are a result of equipment malfunction, safety problem, or any other reason outside the candidate's ability to control must be brought to the attention of the CO. The evaluator shall ensure that the candidate understands what task is to be demonstrated before that candidate starts the demonstration.

Certifying Officer Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Problem:** Half way through the examination a candidate who has failed a practical examination complains to you that equipment that was supposed to be available was either not present or not in working condition.

Possible Solution: If it can be confirmed that there is merit to the complaint, you may authorize an additional attempt at the examination. Since you checked each station before the examination to ensure adequate equipment, you should also find out where it went or how it became inoperable!

2. **Problem:** An evaluator tells you that the last candidate tested performed correctly, but exceeded a time limit by just a few seconds.

Possible Solution: The candidate must retest if the specified time limit was exceeded

3. **Problem:** You arrive at the testing location and find that three of the five evaluators scheduled to attend will not be present. No replacements have been obtained.

Possible Solution: The examination should be rescheduled if possible. If it is not possible, you may opt to test two stations, test two more, etc. This will add considerable time to the overall practical examination. It may also be possible to get the two longest or most complex stations under way and attempt to secure other evaluators.

In either event, the AFSC Administration should be advised of the problem so that remedial action with the instructor may be taken.

4. **Problem:** After completing the application for certification, a candidate pulls you aside and tells you that he had been convicted three years ago of a felony, and asks your advice about testing.

Possible Solution: Test the candidate along with the rest of the class and advise him or her to submit the documentation of the arrest and conviction with the application. Advise the candidate that the AFSC Executive Director will review that specific application separately. The application should be sent with those from the rest of the class.

5. **Problem:** The candidate's specific fire department procedures conflict slightly with the requirements of the skill sheets.

Possible Solution: If the minimum skill sheet task requirement is still achievable then instruct the evaluators to test the candidate based on the department procedure. Also notify the Lead Instructor that these items should be brought to the attention of the AFSC Administration prior to the final evaluation process so that corrections and adjustments can be made prior to the candidates arriving for testing.

6. **Problem:** A candidate has an obvious medical condition that presents a safety concern related to physical requirements for performing firefighter tasks within a test station.

Possible Solution: If it is evident the individual is not fit to perform physical work on the day of the practical examination DO NOT allow the candidate to participate; contact the AFSC Director if warranted. Request a doctor's release that clearly indicates the candidate has medical clearance to perform physical work specific to firefighter duties included in the examination. Express your concerns to the TSC; at a minimum have the TSC/TO provide a written statement that they are accepting full responsibility for the individual