

**STATE OF ALASKA  
DEPT. OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF FIRE and LIFE SAFETY  
TRAINING AND EDUCATION BUREAU**



**TRAINING PROGRAM ACCREDITATION  
&  
COURSE APPROVAL  
MANUAL**

January 2008

## **ACCREDITATION OVERVIEW**

The Training and Education Bureau has established a program to accredited local fire and emergency service training organizations to conduct certification training on behalf of the State of Alaska. The Training and Education Bureau has also established a program to approve training courses conducted by these accredited entities. This manual outlines the scope of both this accreditation process and the course approval process.

Although The Training and Education Bureau, under this accreditation program, authorizes a local training program to conduct training on behalf of the state, The State of Alaska maintains direct control over the testing, evaluation and certification process of all the approved "certification" programs. The objective of this accreditation and course approval program is to assist agencies in establishing training programs that are managed, delivered and documented in a proficient, professional and uniform manner across the State of Alaska.

In order to be accredited, two major components are evaluated. First, the training program itself must meet certain administrative requirements. Secondly, the curriculum must meet the appropriate NFPA (or other applicable) standards as the course and/or class objectives. The material in this manual describes each of these in detail, and all of the associated requirements and procedures.

Once a training program is accredited to conduct training using a basic curriculum, to advance to a higher level of training, the accredited entity must receive approval for that new proposed curriculum. This manual describes the requirements of this additional course approval process.

Accreditation will begin at the Firefighter I level. A department wishing to start the process at a lower level (course approval) must contact the Training and Education Bureau.

During the early years of the accreditation program model training guides were published to assist the local training officer. Since most courses now come with training guides and/or curriculum packages, the Training and Education Bureau no longer publishes these guides. When conducting training at the local level it is expected that a local training agency will purchase one of these published curriculum packages, but it is also acceptable for a local agency to develop their own training guides.

## **ACCREDITATION POLICIES**

The purpose of the Accreditation Program is to assist local organizations in conducting training programs that will result in the certification of their members by the State of Alaska. The training must adhere to State standards, which are in turn based on national certification standards. The management of the training program must also meet State criteria to insure the delivery and documentation of all training activities.

The benefits of the program are many and varied. Improved management and control will lead to more effective training. Strengths and weaknesses within the organization's operation will become evident. The required planning will afford better time allocation and resource management. A sense of belonging and direction will spread through the membership while participation and enthusiasm grow. The list of benefits goes on and, in the end participation in the accreditation program will contribute to a reduction in State fire losses.

It must be clearly understood that the Training and Education Bureau functions to support and enhance the fire responsibilities of local governments, organizations and fire departments. The decision to participate in the Accreditation Program lies completely at the local level. If such a commitment is not feasible, the Training and Education Bureau will provide any support regardless of local involvement in the accreditation program.

Accreditation is granted primarily so that members are trained in accordance with state requirements and that at the completion of this training there is a high probability that the individual student will successfully complete the state written and practical examination. Circumstances may arise where an accredited department may desire to train and pass on for examination individuals who are not members of the local department. This is a local prerogative. Unless the applicant does not meet the basic examination and certification criteria, the Training and Education Bureau takes no issue with these "non-member" applicants.

If an accredited program fails to meet or maintain program requirements, the Training and Education Bureau may elect to initiate revocation procedures. Or if an accredited training program becomes inactive the Training and Education Bureau may elect to inquire into the reasons. A letter of intent will be sent to the organization to which the department will have 30 days to respond and explain the circumstances. Based upon that response or the failure to do so, the Training and Education Bureau will take appropriate action. Prior to revoking the accreditation the Training and Education Bureau may place the organization on a six month probationary period to resolve the identified problem.

Once any accreditation is earned it will remain in effect as long as evidence indicates continued compliance with program requirements. The Training and Education Bureau reserves the right to verify compliance at any time either by correspondence or on-site visit.

The Training and Education Bureau reserves the right to periodically conduct audits of accredited organizations to insure continued compliance with program requirements. It is optimistically hoped to conduct audits on a five year cycle. The evaluation will focus on the management of the training program and may include a sample testing of student performance skills.

## **TRAINING PROGRAM**

## **ACCREDITATION & COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS**

Following is a brief description of the accreditation process. This process will give the applicant agency a “roadmap” to follow as they proceed toward receiving their initial accreditation and subsequent course approvals.

### **Accreditation and Approval of Initial Training Course**

1. An applicant for accreditation must be registered with the State Fire Marshal's Office as a fire department in the State of Alaska, or they must be a recognized school within the State of Alaska educational system.
2. A Training Program Accreditation & Course Approval Manual (this document) may be downloaded from the website at <http://www.dps.state.ak.us/fire/pdf/accrediationmanual.pdf>
3. After reviewing the Accreditation Manual the local agency should re-evaluate its commitment to the process.
4. After committing to the process, the local agency must submit to the Training and Education Bureau (TEB) the completed application and all required documents as outlined. At least one course approval must also be included with this initial accreditation application. This course approval form must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the beginning of the planned course.
5. The Training and Education Bureau will review the application for completeness and accuracy. If necessary, TEB will assist the applicant in meeting all requirements.
6. Once it appears that all requirements are in order, the Training and Education Bureau will schedule an on-site evaluation to further assist and verify that all requirements for both accreditation and course approval are in place. This on-site evaluation will generally take place at the beginning of the training course, but also may be scheduled at the end; or both. This will be determined by mutual agreement of the applicant and the Training and Education Bureau. This initial evaluation step is referred to as the “Phase 1 site visit”.
7. At the completion of this first training course, the Training and Education Bureau will provide an on-site evaluation team to visit the organization. This on-site evaluation will accomplish at least two major objectives.
  - a. The team will review the accreditation and course documentation and compare it with how the training program is actually administered and the course was conducted;
  - b. The team will conduct the final certification skills and written exam for the course. A minimum of six students are required for this exam and evaluation to take place.
8. The final certification written and skills test will include all of the requirements of that particular certification program.
9. All possible variables that may result from this on-site evaluation cannot be anticipated. However, as a general guide organizations can expect the evaluation team to be looking for evidence of consistent and uniform performance from all personnel tested. Proficiency is important but it is only one element of the evaluation.
10. When accreditation is awarded, the organization is then authorized to conduct training at that level on behalf of the state. Final exams for future classes will still be conducted by the State of Alaska, through at designated Certifying Officer. The Certifying Officer will not be from the organization being tested.

11. After accreditation has been awarded, the organization also has the authority to provide a challenge process for those members who may have completed training at another location or prior to the accreditation date. If the organization will offer a challenge process it must be included in the accreditation application. The challenge process will allow an individual to challenge the training program only. To become certified the individual will still be required to complete the state final examination process.
12. Instances sometimes arise where members of a neighboring department request training from an accredited organization. The Training and Education Bureau will honor these members as long as the accredited organization understands that they are responsible for providing the same level of training, record-keeping, and program administration as they do for their own members. The organization providing the training is completely responsible for the training of these other individuals and must treat them as their own. The training records of these other individuals may also become part of an audit review.
13. To maintain accreditation organizations must agree to comply with all the requirements of the accreditation program, and must submit any and all records of the training program to the Training and Education Bureau upon request for verification that the program is being maintained.

It is important to remember that the initial accreditation process includes two separate elements.

1. Accreditation of the training program
2. Approval of the course

For future training courses the Training and Education Bureau will only evaluate the new course, not re-evaluate the training program, provided the significant elements of the training program remain the same.

Additionally it is important to remember that the Training and Education Bureau will attempt to audit accredited programs at least once every 5 years. If a request for a new course is received on or about this 5 year date, the course approval may also include an audit.

**State of Alaska**  
**Department of Public Safety**  
**Division of Fire and Life Safety**  
**Training and Education Bureau**

**APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION & COURSE APPROVAL**

Organization Information

Fire Department or Organization	
Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip	
Telephone	
Fax	

Chief's Name	
Training Officer's Name	

APPLYING FOR

Initial Accreditation

When do you anticipate being ready for Phase #1 evaluation? \_\_\_\_\_

When do you anticipate being ready for Phase #2 evaluation and final exam testing? \_\_\_\_\_

Course Approval

Course Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Accreditation Fee – \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial \$500  
Renewal (every 5 years post audit) \$250

I attest that the above information is true and complete. Our fire department/organization is fully committed to becoming an accredited fire training program for the Training and Education Bureau. Our fire department/organization will adhere to all rules and regulations of the accreditation process.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**STATE OF ALASKA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF FIRE and LIFE SAFETY  
TRAINING and EDUCATION BUREAU**



## Certification Course & Testing Notification Form

This form **MUST** be received by TEB at least 30 days before the proposed course **START** date. TEB will assign a Certifying Officer based on the projected course testing dates below.

**Course:**

- Firefighter I     
  Firefighter II     
  Fire Officer I     
  Instructor I     
  Instructor II  
 Airport FF     
  Fire Investigator     
  RIT     
  Basic Marine FF     
  Advanced Marine FF  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Department/Agency:</b>	<b>Location of Course:</b>
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	<b>Course Start Date:</b>
	<b>Course End Date:</b>
<b>Contact Telephone:</b>	<b>Date of Written Exam:</b> (Estimated written exam time is 3 hours)
<b>Contact Email for Confirmation Receipt:</b>	<b>Date of Practical Exam:</b> (Estimated FFI practical exam time is 9 hours)
<b>Name of Course Coordinator:</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Students for Final Exam Testing:</b>
<b>Name of Lead Instructor:</b>	<b>Contact Number for Lead Instructor:</b>
<b>Contact Person for Written Test Results:</b> (TEB will notify this person of the testing scores) <b>Name:</b>	<b>Contact Person for Written Test Results Phone Number:</b>

Special notes \*Due to budgetary constraints TEB will not offer certification testing for classes with less than five (5) candidates.

\*TEB will not offer testing at the Firefighter I level for candidates under the age of 18 at the time of the test.

As a TEB accredited or approved fire training organization I affirm that I have the necessary training equipment and instructional resources and I agree to teach this course in compliance with applicable TEB policies and procedures.

		<b>Test Number</b>
Signature of Course Coordinator	Date	

**This block for TEB use only.**

Assigned Certifying Officer/Date Assigned	Contact Information for Certifying Officer
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## **ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS**

(The following items must be included with the application for accreditation.)

### **Official Powers and Responsibilities of Department or Organization**

- **Registered fire department with State Fire Marshal's Office**  
An exemption from this requirement will be given to those organizations that are not required to register. This generally means training institutions such as the college fire science programs. Registration includes current compliance with the ANFIRS reporting requirement. Departments must also maintain this registration to maintain their accreditation.
- **Defined mission/goal statement**

### **Department Organization and Management**

- **Organizational Chart/Chain of Command**  
The structure and relationships within the organization must be defined to indicate the flow of authority and responsibility. A simple chart or graph will suffice.
- **Membership or employment requirements**  
A policy statement of the organization defining the requirements for employment or membership in the organization. This is not to be considered as the "Personnel Policies" of the agency organization, but the policy that identifies the requirements for an individual to meet to be considered for membership or employment.

### **Accreditation Fee**

- **Initial accreditation**  
The Alaska Fire Standards Council collects a fee of \$500 for the initial accreditation application. This fee helps to cover the cost of the accreditation audit team to conduct the site visit.
- **Accreditation renewal**  
The Alaska Fire Standards Council collects a fee of \$250 for accreditation renewal every 5 years. This fee helps to cover the cost of the accreditation audit team to conduct the site visit for re-accreditation.

### **Training Program Organization and Management**

- **Safety**  
Most fire training programs conducted under the accreditation guidelines can be inherently dangerous. It is critical that strict safety policies and procedures be in place for all these courses. The application accreditation must include a clear description of the safety procedures used in each program. These policies must include how the agency is going to address a student's physical health, and how safety will be maintained and accomplished during live fire training scenarios.

These safety policies are perhaps the most important requirement of the application. Considerable thought must be given to these policies. The Training and Education Bureau will review them in depth.

Along with the policy, any documents used to enact the policy must also be included. For further information refer to NFPA Standard #1500, #1521, and #1403.

- **Defined authority and responsibility for program management**

A policy, statement or any documentation that describes how the overall training program is managed within the organization. This should include who is responsible for the program, how authority is delegated, and who is responsible for what portions or parts of the training program.

- **Training schedule development**

A policy or statement that describes how training schedules are developed is required. This policy should describe who is responsible for the schedule and how adjustments are made to the schedule. The policy should also include how sessions may be “made up” if the schedule is not completed as envisioned. A sample training schedule for a proposed course should also be included.

- **Instructor assignment**

A policy that describes the selection and management of instructors is required. An established method of assigning instructors to classes and/or course responsibilities must be documented. A description of how the instructors are evaluated is also required.

- **Curriculum**

Include a clearly stated policy that describes how the organization will select the curriculum for a particular course or program, and how that curriculum will be evaluated to make sure the program meets the relevant standards. Since some “off the shelf” curriculums do not meet, or far exceed the requirements, the policy should also state how the training program will review the curriculum for these issues and what steps will be taken to correct any problems identified. Some training program managers find it very simple to use these popular programs, but do not take the time to evaluate whether it meets the requirements of the standard, or the organization. This policy should address this important point.

It must be understood that the written exam questions generally come from a generic test bank based on the NFPA standard for that level and that practical exams will be based on the approved TEB skill sheets. It is the program manager’s responsibility to prepare the student for the final certification exams.

For the Course Approval portion of this document, a sample or description of the curriculum must be included.

- **Written and/or oral testing**

Include a clearly stated policy that describes how the training organization will conduct testing for all courses. It is important that the training program have a planned system for testing. This policy for this testing system should include such items as when quizzes will be given, how they will be graded, what weight they have for the overall course, how make up quizzes are handled, where the questions come from, who develops the questions, and whether a final exam is used for the course, prior to the State certification exam. The organization must also decide if they will offer written exams in a verbal form to accommodate individuals who have difficulty with written exams. A grading policy for both academic and manipulative materials must be incorporated into the program.

Within any training program the testing portion is the most important tool used to evaluate the instructor, the student and the training program. It is important that the program manager develop a policy that provides clear direction for this testing.

For the Course Approval portion of this document, a sample of a written exam must be included.

- **Performance Testing**

The Training and Education Bureau has developed a set of skill sheets for most certification programs. These skill sheets are the required skill elements that must be completed during a certification training program. A clearly stated policy must be included that describes how the training organization will conduct skills testing during the training portion of the course. This policy should address the use of the state skill sheets, or if others are to be used, how the student will be prepared for the final certification exam. The policy should also address such things as how the practical skills testing will be administered, what weight the skills test will have in the overall course, how re-tests are handled, if a final practical skills exam (prior to the certification exam) will be conducted, etc. A grading policy for both academic and manipulative materials must be incorporated into the program.

The Training and Education Bureau expects that within a certification program, every student will complete every skill sheet and be evaluated on each of those skills. Many of these skills will be included in the final certification exam, and the program manager must make sure that all students are aware of these skill requirements. If a program manager elects to use other skill packages during the training course they must be aware that the students will still be testing using the state skill sheets.

- **References and Resources**

It is expected that the applicant organization will have the necessary references and resources on hand to adequately manage the training program and to conduct each individual training course. These basic support materials should include NFPA standards, student manuals, instructor guides, and other support documentation. With changing techniques and new knowledge these support documents are critical to the success of any training program. These resources must be made available to individual students. A description of these resources must be included.

### **Training Program Manager (Training Officer) and Instructors**

- **Training Program Manager or Training Officer**

One position within the organization must be responsible for the training program. This person will be the primary contact for the Training and Education Bureau and for the management of the overall training program. This person must have the authority, responsibility, credentials, and certification to effectively accomplish this task. The application must identify this person. The accredited agency is also responsible for notifying TEB if this person changes.

- **Program Instructors**

For each training course the individual instructors must be identified. TEB does not require that these individuals be state certified, but the local training program manager should understand that having adequately trained instructors is critical to the success of the program. If the instructors are state certified the program manager is at least assured that the instructors have received training in presenting their particular topics.

## **Records and Reports**

- **Attendance Records**

A copy of the attendance record used for each program or course must be included. This attendance record should track a student's attendance at each session and should also identify how make up sessions will be recorded. Included within the program management policies should be a description of how the attendance record is used within the program.

- **Individual Training Records**

The Training and Education Bureau has developed a training record form that tracks a student's progress through a particular certification program. It is expected that the program manager will use either this form or one very similar. The training record must track the student's progress based on the NFPA standards for the program. This training record does not need to be sent to TEB at the end of the course, but must be available for review by the Certifying Officer prior to testing, and must also be available for review at any time by the Training and Education Bureau. These individual training records must be kept for at least 5 years.

- **Department Training Records**

Along with other documents required, the department or organization must include a training record that supports and tracks training. It must contain training date, topic, instructor and attendance records as a minimum. It is highly suggested that the student is required to sign or initial an attendance roster to confirm attendance at the training.

## **Program Quality Control**

- **Quality Control**

Documents and/or policies must be provided that describe how quality control will be maintained within the training program. This should include such things as the methods or procedures used to maintain quality within the entire training program; how the training program and an individual course will be reviewed for content and delivery; what methods will be used so that the student has input in the design and/or revision of a particular program or course.

## **COURSE APPROVAL OVERVIEW & POLICIES**

The Training and Education Bureau has established a program to allow accredited organizations to add additional programs to their accreditation list. Under this course approval process TEB may grant additional accreditation authority to a training program without requiring an entire accreditation application.

It is anticipated that most training agencies will start at the Firefighter I level. This course approval process lets them easily advance to the upper levels without going through a full accreditation survey. It must be understood that the initial accreditation process must also include the approval of at least one course. Additional course approvals will only be granted if the organization has continued to operate their training program in the same way as was initially approved.

Organizations requesting course approval that have been accredited at least five years may also have an accreditation audit included as part of their new course approval.

The following pages of this manual layout the course approval process.

## **COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS**

Following is a description of the course approval process.

The Training and Education Bureau requires that for initial accreditation a course approval also be included. Whether this course approval is part of the initial accreditation process, or a new course request the following elements must be included.

1. Courses are only approved for organizations that are already accredited under the Training and Education Bureau accreditation system.
2. Only courses that result in certification need to be submitted for addition to an organization's accreditation.
  - a. Due to the constantly growing number of certifications available the Training and Education Bureau will review and approve courses for which certification is not currently available. Students who have completed approved courses may apply for the certification when it becomes available.
3. Applicant organizations should review the latest version of this application manual.
4. For each course approval request the application form found on page 6 of this document must be included with the required documentation.
5. The Training and Education Bureau will review the course approval request. Organizations should expect that this review process will take approximately two months. As such, organizations considering conducting an approved course must submit the application for approval well in advance.
6. After receiving approval for the new training course, the organization may conduct this program. The organization continues to be responsible for communicating with the Training and Education Bureau to schedule the final certification exam.
7. If any substantial changes are made to the approved program, the Training and Education Bureau must be notified of these changes. If these changes are not approved the Training and Education Bureau may remove that course as an approved element of the organization's accreditation.
8. An accreditation fee is not charged to currently accredited departments who are adding new training programs.

## **COURSE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS**

(The following items must be included with the application for course approval.)

- **Title of the course**

What is the name of the training program? This will generally be Firefighter I, Fire Officer I, Fire Service Instructor I, etc. In some instances the course may not be named after one of the certification levels, for example the “Methods of Instruction” course.

- **Standard the course follows**

Generally this will be an Alaska Fire Standards Council approved standard or a NFPA standard. There are some instances that the certification program is based on another accepted training standard. If this is the case this standard must be identified and a copy of the standard included.

- **Safety**

Most fire training programs conducted under the accreditation guidelines can be inherently dangerous. It is critical that strict safety policies and procedures be in place for all these courses. The application for course approval must include a clear description of the safety procedures used in each program. These policies must include how the agency is going to address a student’s physical health, and how safety will be maintained and accomplished during live fire training scenarios.

These safety policies are perhaps the most important requirement of the application. Considerable thought must be given to these policies. The Training and Education Bureau will review them in depth.

- **Course Description**

This is a short description of the course. This should describe in basic terms what topics the course covers, the level of knowledge obtained, and some of the basic elements of the course. Generally this description may also be used as a public advertisement for the course.

- **Training Schedule**

A full training schedule for this particular course should be included. This requirement demonstrates the agencies ability to plan in advance for an upcoming course. A training schedule for the course does not need to be included in subsequent deliveries, but TEB does require that the accredited entity will notify TEB when a course is being held.

- **Instructor Selection and Assignment**

A list of assigned instructors must be included. This includes the lead instructor for the course and any assistant instructors. Although over time the list of instructors will surely change, this approval allows TEB to review whether the instructor selection policies in the accreditation portion are being followed. Training program managers are reminded to ensure that the instructors are well aware of the TEB requirements for certification training. It is the instructor’s responsibility to provide instruction that meets the standard, and as such program managers should select instructors who are familiar with the program.

- **Quizzes, written exams, and practical exams**

Samples of quizzes, written exams and practical exams must be included. A policy should also be included that describes how the exams are developed and how they fit into the content of the course. The policy should also state how much weight is given to each exam and what methods are used if a person fails an exam. Much of this may be the same as was included in

the original accreditation documentation, but it is important that the test criteria for each program be established and identified.

- **Special Program Elements**

(The Training and Education Bureau has identified some program elements under the NFPA standards that may be particularly difficult to meet. Even though they may be particularly difficult to accomplish they are still requirements of the program and as such must be accomplished. To insure that they are taught and to allow for technical assistance they have been singled out for discussion. The agency must provide documentation on how the following will be met.)

Firefighter I

- a. NFPA 5-3 Fire Ground Operations – Describe training methods used to insure compliance with this standard. How does the accredited entity meet the live fire burning requirements using:
  - Passenger vehicle fires (5-3.7)
  - Stacked or piled Class A fires (5-3.8)
  - Interior Structure Fire (5-3.10)
  - Small fires with portable extinguisher fires (5-3.16)
  - Ground Cover Fire (5-3.19)
- b. NFPA 4-3 Emergency Medical Care - Describe training methods used to insure compliance with NFPA 1001, 4-3.
- c. NFPA 5-1.1 Response to Hazardous Materials Incidents - Describe training methods used to insure compliance with NFPA 1001, 5-1.1
- d. NFPA 5-5 Prevention, Preparedness, and Maintenance - Describe the training methods used to meet the public education program requirement of 5-5.1 and 5-5.2. Also describe and demonstrate the record/reporting form for this presentation requirement.

Firefighter II

- a. NFPA 6-3 Fire Ground Operations – Describe training methods used to insure compliance with this standard. How does the accredited entity meet the live fire burning requirements using:
  - a. Ignitable Liquid Fire (6-3.1)
  - b. Flammable Gas Cylinder Fire (6-3.3)
- b. NFPA 6-1.1 Response to Hazardous Materials Incidents - Describe training methods used to insure compliance with NFPA 1001, 6-1.1
- c. NFPA 6-5 Prevention, Preparedness, and Maintenance - Describe the training methods used to conduct training and evaluation of students complying with the requirement to complete a pre-incident survey, 6-5.1.