

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



Fire Training Program Accreditation Manual

Authority AS 18.70.020, 13AAC 52-030 & 13AAC 52.050

October 2013

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ACCREDITATION GOAL

The goal of the Accreditation Manual is to establish a clear, consistent and efficient joint process between the Training and Education Bureau, Alaska Fire Standards Council and the organization that enables fire training to be conducted on behalf of the State of Alaska.

ACCREDITATION OVERVIEW

The Training and Education Bureau (TEB) in cooperation with the Alaska Fire Standards Council (AFSC) has established a program to accredit local fire and emergency service training organizations to conduct training on behalf of the State of Alaska. TEB and AFSC have established a program to approve training courses conducted by these accredited entities. This manual outlines the scope of this accreditation process and the fire training course approval process.

The objective of this accreditation program is to assist organizations in establishing training programs that are managed, delivered and documented in a proficient, professional and uniform manner across the State of Alaska. TEB authorizes a local training program to conduct training on behalf of the state; AFSC maintains direct control over the testing, evaluation and certification process of all the approved certification programs.

AFSC certification testing elements are based on approved standards. Written exam questions come from a test bank based upon the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard for that level. Practical exams will be based on the approved AFSC skill sheets which follow the adopted NFPA standard for the appropriate level.

Two major components are evaluated for accreditation. First, the training program must meet the administrative requirements established by TEB. Secondly, each course must meet the appropriate AFSC directives.

The organization must be accredited to conduct each training course offered

This document will be revised as needed to address the requirements of the accreditation program.

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.

Accredit: To give official authorization to or approval of; to provide with credentials.

Accreditation manager: The State of Alaska Fire Training Administrator is designated to accredit fire training programs to be offered on behalf of the State Division of Fire and Life Safety.

AFSC: The Alaska Fire Standards Council as a body, including members and administrative staff.

AFSC Administration: The State of Alaska Department of Public Safety employees that provide direct administrative support to the Council and its day-to-day functions.

Adopted: Approved and endorsed by the Alaska Fire Standards Council through majority vote.

Approved: Acceptable to the Training and Education Bureau and the Alaska Fire Standards Council.

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.

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

Certifying Officer: AFSC approved individual to manage and conduct certification testing for approved programs.

Council: The Alaska Fire Standards Council voting members appointed by the Governor, or designated in statute.

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.

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

Standards Review Committee (SRC): All members of a committee designated to review a standard; to include a designated Committee Lead and at least one Committee Member.

Subject Matter Expert (SME): An individual with a high level of specialty training or knowledge as it relates to a particular level/scope of a standard or job performance tasks.

TEB: The Division of Fire and Life Safety Training and Education Bureau.

Third party vendor: A supplier that provides goods and services that will in turn be supplied to the customer.

Training Officer: Coordinates activities relating to fire suppression training. Develops training programs, develops curricula, and coordinates activities at fire training schools, seminars and workshops.

Training Program Manager: The person responsible for the administration and management of the fire training program at the local level.

ACCREDITATION POLICIES

The purpose of the Accreditation Program is to assist local organizations in conducting training programs that adhere to State standards. Management of the training program must meet State criteria to insure the professional delivery and documentation of all training activities.

TEB functions to support and enhance the fire training responsibilities of local governments, organizations and fire departments. The decision to participate in the Accreditation Program lies completely at the local level. TEB will provide 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 as administered by the AFSC. Circumstances may arise where an accredited department may desire to train and approve for examination individuals who are not members of the local department. This is a local prerogative. All applicants must meet the basic examination and certification criteria established by the AFSC.

If an accredited program fails to meet or maintain program requirements, TEB will elect to initiate revocation procedures. If an accredited training program becomes inactive TEB will 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, TEB will take appropriate action. Prior to revoking the accreditation TEB will place the organization on a six month probationary period to resolve the identified problem.

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

TEB reserves the right to periodically conduct audits of accredited organizations to insure continued compliance with program requirements. A reaccreditation audit will be conducted on a periodic 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

TEB has oversight for program elements for management and administration of a fire training course. AFSC approves each course of study that results in certification. Following describes the Accreditation process:

Initial Accreditation

To apply for accreditation, an entity must qualify pursuant to 13 AAC 52.030 Standards of organization and services of a fire department which states:

- I. The division of fire and life safety will register the following fire departments that meet the requirements of:
 - A. Fire department that by municipal ordinance is authorized to perform its duties;
 - B. Fire department outside a municipality that is authorized to perform its duties;
 - C. Airport fire department;
 - D. Airport fire response service;
 - E. Industrial fire department;
 - F. Industrial fire brigade
 - G. University or college fire department

Registration shall be maintained.

1. The local agency must submit to TEB the completed application and all required documents as outlined. At least one fire training course must also be included with this initial accreditation application. For the initial accreditation application the fire training course form must be submitted no later than 60 days prior to the beginning of the planned course.
2. TEB will review the application for completeness and accuracy. If necessary, TEB will assist the applicant in meeting all requirements.
3. Once it appears that all requirements are in order, TEB will schedule an on-site evaluation to assist and verify that all requirements for both accreditation and fire training courses are in place. This initial evaluation step is referred to as the "Phase 1 site visit".
4. At the completion of this first training course, TEB will provide an on-site evaluation team to visit the organization. This team will consist of representatives from TEB and AFSC and will accomplish 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. Final certification skills and written exam for the course will be conducted in accordance with AFSC policy for that particular certification program-. The AFSC testing and certification policy can be found at: [AFSC testing and certification policy](#)

5. All 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.
6. When accreditation is awarded, the organization is then authorized to conduct training at that level on behalf of the State of Alaska. Final exams for future classes will be conducted by the AFSC in accordance with AFSC policy when applying for AFSC certification.
7. 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 be required to comply with AFSC challenge policy.
8. Instances arise where members of a neighboring department request training from an accredited organization. TEB 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.
9. 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 TEB upon request for verification that the program is being maintained.
10. Third party vendors that are used by an accredited department to provide training programs that result in certification shall comply with AFSC policy for certification and testing.

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

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

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

TEB will audit accredited programs periodically.

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

The following documents should be submitted with the Accreditation application.

Official Powers and Responsibilities of Department or Organization

- **Registered fire department with State Fire Marshal's Office**
Departments must maintain registration to maintain their accreditation. Training institutions that are authorized by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education to conduct postsecondary training are exempt from registration with the State Fire Marshal's Office. Documentation must be provided to TEB if requesting a waiver from this section.
- **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. An organization chart identifying the department's management structure will suffice.

- **Membership or employment requirements**

A policy statement from the organization defining the requirements for employment or membership in the organization is required. 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. This policy must include:

1. Physical fitness requirements for Firefighter I and Firefighter II
2. Background check requirements

Training Program Organization and Management

- **Safety**

Most fire training programs conducted under the accreditation guidelines are inherently dangerous. It is critical that strict safety policies and procedures be in place for these courses. The accreditation application must include a clear description of the safety procedures used in each program. These policies must include how the agency is going to address how the student's 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. TEB will review them in depth.

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

The organization must define how it will meet the Alaska Fire Standards Council standard for training courses which involve live fire.

- **Training Program Administration**

A policy is required 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 any program oversight.

- **Training schedule development**

A policy 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 completed 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, management and evaluation of instructors is required. An established method of assigning instructors to classes and/or course responsibilities must be documented. TEB recommends that State of Alaska certified Fire Service Instructors are used to teach the accredited courses. Training program managers must ensure their instructors are aware of the AFSC requirements for certification training.

- **Curriculum**

Include a policy that describes how the curriculum will be evaluated to ensure the course meets the relevant standards. Since some “off the shelf” curriculums do not meet the standards, the policy must state what steps will be taken to correct any problems identified.

- **Written and/or oral testing**

Include a clearly stated policy that describes how the training organization will conduct testing for all courses. The 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. The organization must also decide if they will offer written exams in a verbal form to accommodate individuals who have difficulty with written exams.

- **Performance testing**

AFSC has developed a set of skill sheets for 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 check-off or skill assessment during the training portion of the course. The policy must address the use of the state skill sheets; 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 if the organization will require in-house practical skills testing, what weight the skills test will have in the overall course and how re-tests are handled.

TEB expects that within a training program, every student will complete every skill sheet and be evaluated on each of those skills. A selection of these skills will be included in the final certification exam and the training program manager must make sure that all students are aware of these skill requirements. If a training program manager elects to use other skill sheets during the training course they must ensure the students are informed of the use of the AFSC skill sheets for the examination.

- **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. 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 TEB and for the management of the overall training program. 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. Instructors should be certified at or above the level of the course they are teaching. TEB recommends that these individuals be state certified Fire Service Instructors. 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 materials to students.

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**

A training record form has been developed that tracks a student's progress through a particular certification program. It is expected that the training program manager will use this form or one very similar. The training record must track the student's progress based on the adopted NFPA standards for the program. This training record must be available for review by the Certifying Officer prior to testing. These individual training records should be kept for the life of the members as part of their permanent training record. The training record form is located here: [Training record form](#)

- **Department training records**

The department or organization must include a training record that supports and tracks training. At a minimum, the department training records must contain training date, topic, instructor and attendance records. The student shall be 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; and how the training program and an individual course will be reviewed for content and delivery.

FIRE TRAINING COURSE APPROVAL OVERVIEW & POLICIES

TEB has established a program to allow accredited organizations to add additional fire training courses to their accreditation list. Under this course approval process TEB may grant additional accreditation authority to a training program without requiring a new accreditation application.

The initial accreditation application must include the approval of at least one course. Additional fire training course approvals will only be granted if the organization has continued to operate their training program in the same way as was initially approved.

It is anticipated that most training agencies will start at the Firefighter I level. Prior approval must be granted by the TEB Supervisor if the agency chooses to start with a different course.

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

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

It is the responsibility of the AFSC to establish professional standards for fire service personnel, and curriculum requirements for the certification of training programs

FIRE TRAINING COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS

Following is a description of the fire training course approval process.

TEB requires that for initial accreditation a fire training course approval also be included. Whether this fire training 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 TEB 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 TEB 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 initial course approval request, please complete and submit the following AFSC forms: [AFSC Test Request Self-Assessment](#) and [AKIMPACT](#).
5. TEB will review the course approval request. Organizations should expect 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 fire training course, the organization may conduct this program.
7. The organization is responsible for communicating with the AFSC to schedule the final certification exam.
8. If any substantial changes are made to the approved program, TEB must be notified of these changes. If these changes are not approved TEB may remove that course as an approved element of the organization's accreditation.

FIRE TRAINING COURSE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Title of the course**

Provide the title 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 AFSC approved standard. There are some instances that the certification program is based on another accepted training standard. In this case the standard must be included in the course approval application.

- **Safety**

Safety elements specific to the course must be detailed in the application. For example: the safety policy addressing live fire training for Firefighter I.

- **Course description**

Describe in basic terms what topics the course covers, the level of knowledge obtained and the basic elements of 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 is not required for subsequent deliveries unless major changes are made to the schedule, such as switching from an academy style course to a year long course.

- **Instructor selection and assignment**

A list of assigned instructors must be included. This includes the lead instructor for the course and any assistant instructors.

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

Samples of quizzes, written exams and practical exams must be included. This allows TEB to review whether the written and practical exam policies in the accreditation portion are being followed.

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

APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION & FIRE TRAINING 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: _____

I attest that the above information is true and complete. Our fire department/organization is fully committed to becoming an accredited fire training program through 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

APPLICATION FOR WAIVER OF REGISTRATION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT

Name of Department or Training Institution	
Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip	
Telephone	
Fax	

Chief's Name	
Training Officer's Name	

Training institutions that are authorized by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education to conduct postsecondary training are exempt from registration of fire department with the State Fire Marshal's Office. Documentation must be provided to TEB if requesting a waiver.

- Check if applying for waiver of registration of fire department.
- Attach Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education authorization in accordance with AS 14.48
- Attach Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education exemption from authorization in accordance with AS 14.48

ACCREDITED TRAINING PROGRAM AUDIT CHECKLIST

This checklist will be used by the Training & Education Bureau to audit accredited fire training programs within the State of Alaska. This checklist will be used by the review team conducting the audit. It may also be used by the accredited entity to prepare for the audit review, and as a *self-review* document to assist in routinely evaluating themselves to make sure their training program meets the intent of the accreditation program. The training program manager must review the current accreditation manual prior to the scheduled audit. This manual explains further the intent and scope of the accreditation program. This audit checklist includes elements for both the training program accreditation and approved fire training courses.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street/PO Box

City

State

Zip code

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Chief's Name: _____

Training Officer's Name: _____

Training Program Manager's Name: _____

Approval for courses at the following levels - [Check box]

Firefighter I Firefighter II Haz-Mat Awareness

Haz-Mat Operations Methods of Instruction I Methods of Instruction II

Fire Officer I Rapid Intervention Technician

Other, Title _____

Date of initial accreditation. _____

Date of last accreditation audit/review. _____

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Each of the following must be available for the audit/review team. The review team may require that copies of the following be included with the audit/review report.

Official Powers and Responsibilities of the Department

Registered with State Fire Marshal's Office	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Defined goal/mission statement	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

Department Organization & Management

Organization chart/chain of command	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Membership/employment requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

Training Program Manager (Training Officer) & Instructors

Designated Training Officer	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Defined authority and responsibility for management	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Training schedule development policy	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

Training Program Organization & Management

Safety policy	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Instructor assignment policy	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Written/oral testing policies	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Performance testing	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
References and resources	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
AFSC Test Request Self-Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
AFSC Test Notification Form	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

Records & Reports

NOTE: Training records must be available for audit review.

Course attendance records	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Individual training records	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Department training records	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

Program Quality Control

Quality control policies	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
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APPROVED COURSE AUDIT CHECK LIST

The following elements must be met by each approved course and will be included as part of the audit.

Course Title: _____

Certification Standard: _____

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Safety Elements for this Particular Course | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Course Description | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Training Schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Instructor Selection & Assignment | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Copies or Samples of Written and Practical Exams | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| AFSC Test Request Self-Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| AFSC Test Notification Form | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

Notes:

