



CERTIFICATION POLICY MANUAL

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1 GENERAL

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

The Alaska Fire Standards Council (AFSC) has prepared this manual to define the policy and procedure for fire service certification in Alaska in accordance with NFPA 1000, Chapter 5 – Certifying Entity Requirements. It provides guidance for the Certifying Officer (CO) in his or her role in the fire certification testing process and is designed to assist fire department Training Program Managers, Training Officers (TO) and other individuals in managing accredited fire training programs. It contains information pertaining to all AFSC certification directives.

The AFSC extends its grateful acknowledgment to the Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety and the Alaska Emergency Medical Services Section of the Department of Health for their assistance in preparing this manual. Through the international certification accreditation process, the AFSC has received ongoing support for directive updates from many agencies, including critical support from various members of the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress ([IFSCAC](#)).

This manual contains the AFSC policies and procedures related fire standards testing and certification. AFSC staff, or an assigned CO, may delegate some of the test site responsibilities outlined in this manual, however, the AFSC ultimately holds the CO responsible for the consistency of the examination. The following guiding principles will assist COs 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: <https://dps.alaska.gov/AFSC/Home>

Revision of this manual is conducted as needed to address the requirements of the AFSC administrative operation and/or third-party accreditation requirements under IFSCAC/ProBoard. Suggestions for manual revision are received via mail, fax, or e-mail at:

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For eligibility to perform CO 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. The AFSC recommends that the CO reviews this manual upon acceptance of an assignment prior to arrival at a test site.

1.2 MISSION & AUTHORITY [NFPA 1000, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.5(A)(B), 5.1.7]

The mission of the Alaska Fire Standards Council is to establish professional standards for fire service personnel, and curriculum requirements for the certification of training programs.

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.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

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

1.3.1 AFSC 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: The State of Alaska Fire Training Administrator designated to accredit fire training programs offered on behalf of the State Division of Fire and Life Safety.

Accredited Organization: A fire department, emergency response organization, or an institution recognized by the Office of the Alaska State Fire Marshal that has met the Bureau of Fire Accreditation, Standards and Training requirements defined in the accreditation manual and audit checklist. These entities have received approval to conduct a fire training course(s) with an intended outcome of AFSC certification testing.

AFSC: The Alaska Fire Standards Council operations as a whole, including appointed/designated members.

Adopted: Standards accepted by 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, which may include acting as a team member for a test candidate.

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ): An organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirement of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, and installation, or a procedure.

Authorized Department Designee: A fire department member that is authorized by the Fire Chief to function in the capacity of a Test Site Coordinator or Training Officer for the purpose of verifying department member candidates, eligibility to test for certification.

Bureau of Fire Accreditation, Standards and Training (BFAST): The Division of Fire and Life Safety Bureau that manages state level fire accreditation, training, prevention, and education to include staff that manage the administrative functions of the AFSC and day-to-day tasks of the fire certification process.

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

certified.

Certify: To attest authoritatively, such as to attest as being true, 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.

Council: AFSC voting members appointed by the governor or designated in statute.

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.

Executive Board: The AFSC Chair and Vice Chair.

Helper: Non-certified support personnel who provide secondary support to the test site such as resetting stations, cleaning up, staging equipment, etc. They are not actively involved in supporting test candidates within an evaluation scenario.

Fire Training Administrator (Administrator): The individual designated to accredit fire training programs offered on behalf of the State Division of Fire and Life Safety and provides oversight over BFAST.

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 of training material to candidates during an accredited course.

Proctor: An individual who is authorized to administer a written examination on behalf of the Alaska Fire Standards Council.

Simulation: The repeatable act of carrying out a job performance requirement in a safe environment that fully reproduces actual job performance conditions.

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

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.

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; generally, the organization's Training Officer or designee.

Training Officer (TO): The entity representative that coordinates activities relating to fire suppression training such as the development of training programs, curricula, and activities at fire training facilities.

Training Program Manager (TPM): The entity representative that is responsible for maintaining accreditation program requirements as defined within the Bureau of Fire Accreditation, Standards and Training accreditation manual and AFSC certification policies.

Written Test Contact: The entity representative who has the authorization for receipt of written certification examination scores and the responsibility to distribute them to individual candidates.

2 NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

2.1 NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS [NFPA 1000, 5]

The AFSC has multiple certification directives that are accredited under the [International Fire Service Accreditation Congress](#) (IFSAC) and/or the [National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications](#) (Pro Board). The basis for accreditation approval is the established AFSC administrative policies and procedures for directives, and the testing and evaluation requirements evaluated by the accrediting entities. Strict adherence to all AFSC directives is required for compliance with accreditation requirements. This Certification Policy Manual defines accreditation program directives and serves as the basis for Certifying Officer training workshops, certification directive revisions, and related policy and procedures used for fire service certification programs.

The [National Fire Protection Association's](#) (NFPA) Fire Service Professional Qualifications Standards, or other standards approved by the AFSC, IFSAC, and/or ProBoard, are the basis to conduct accredited certification testing.

2.2 UNDUE INFLUENCE POLICY [NFPA 1000, 5.1.10(A)]

The AFSC shall not allow any entity, organization, or individual to exercise undue or inappropriate influence over the State of Alaska firefighter certification policies and procedures.

2.3 DELEGATION OF CERTIFYING AUTHORITY [NFPA 1000, 5.1.9]

To comply with IFSAC and ProBoard policies and procedures, the AFSC does not delegate certifying authority to any entity, 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 geography or constituency.

2.4 TESTING TO THE CURRENT STANDARD [NFPA 1000, 5.1.3, 5.1.4(A)(B), 5.2.4(A)]

The AFSC shall certify personnel to the most recent edition of the NFPA standard(s), or other bona fide standards, that have been adopted by the Council.

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.

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

2.5 UPDATED STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION [NFPA 1000, 5.1.3, 5.1.4(A)*(B)]

The AFSC may continue to certify to the previous NFPA edition of an adopted standard for a period of up to two (2) calendar years from the official date of the newest edition.

2.6 CERTIFICATION DATA [NFPA 1000, 5.1.6]

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. date of certification

5. IFSAC seal number (as applicable)
6. ProBoard identification number (as applicable).

The AFSC maintains records in accordance with the State of Alaska records retention policies. The AFSC will provide IFSAC and ProBoard with this data at least twice annually.

2.7 NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUITABLY [NFPA 1000, 5.2.2]

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

The AFSC may permit accommodations for candidates with disabilities, to the extent that testing will maintain the minimum standard criteria for the level tested.

2.8 FEE SCHEDULE [NFPA 1000, 5.1.5(A)(B)]

The AFSC shall establish and maintain an equitable certification fee structure. Testing and certification service fees are determined by the Council on a routine basis and applied as appropriate. Individual candidate fees will apply to test request for groups with greater than the minimum number of candidates, as determined by the Council.

When an accredited department requests a group examination with less than the minimum number of candidates, the AFSC will support the request with a direct expense process. The AFSC will bill all test support costs (i.e. Certifying Officer hours, travel/per diem, and administrative service fees) to an entity requesting a test with less than the minimum number of candidates. This process enables the AFSC to support a department's request for essential certification testing and permits the AFSC to recuperate costs commensurate with test support expenditures.

A list of the [AFSC Certification Fee Schedule](#) is available for download on the AFSC [Certifications](#) webpage.

2.9 ADA POLICY [NFPA 1000, 5.1.1]

The following information is in reference to the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA Title III Technical Assistance Manual: Covering Public Accommodations. Additional information is available online at: <http://www.ada.gov/taman3.html>.

Where necessary, the AFSC may be required to provide auxiliary aids or services, unless it can demonstrate that offering a particular auxiliary aid or service would fundamentally alter the examination or result in an undue burden. Some individuals with learning disabilities may need auxiliary aids or services, such as readers, because of problems in perceiving and processing written information.

The AFSC has designed written certification examinations to test specific skills or areas of knowledge. An individual with a disability that limits the ability to read written material may be unable to pass an examination because of limited reading ability, regardless of his or her knowledge or ability in the area that the designed test measures. The AFSC will make every reasonable effort to administer the test in a manner that enables the applicant to demonstrate his or her skill or knowledge, rather than the ability to read. However, if the design of the test is to measure the ability to read written material, such as the use of the North American Emergency Response Guidebook used for Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations, the AFSC administers examination material in written form because the result will accurately reflect the individual's ability to complete the job performance requirement.

The AFSC requires that an applicant provide documentation of the existence and nature of a disability as

evidence that he or she is entitled to modifications or aids. Requests for documentation are limited to the need for the modification or aid requested. Appropriate documentation includes a letter from a physician or other professional, or evidence of a prior diagnosis or accommodation, such as eligibility for a special education program. The AFSC will permit individuals with certain disabilities with 50% more time to complete an examination. The testing agency's Training Officer/Test Site Coordinator must note any request for accommodation when submitting a Test Notification or not less than 30 days prior to test administration. The submission must include appropriate documentation to establish the need for additional time, or that other accommodations are necessary, because of a documented disability.

The AFSC must provide a candidate that requires the alternative administration of a written examination for ADA compliance with a discreet area that will allow the privacy to the candidate and will not disrupt other examination candidates. See [Oral Examination Requests](#) for more details.

2.10 ACCREDITATION REPRESENTATIVE EXAMINATION OBSERVATION

The AFSC 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.

2.11 REVIEW OF TEST MATERIALS BY ACCREDITATION SITE TEAM

All test items and materials will be available to the site team and/or administrative reviewers. AFSC shall always maintain tests in a secure area. During the Site Team visit, the review location will be within an AFSC facility in a secure room. AFSC staff shall secure the review area during a site team audit and shall ensure all relevant materials are located on site during an audit.

2.12 TEST MATERIALS SELECTION AND VALIDATION [NFPA 1000, 5.1.4, 5.2.4(E)(F)(G)(H)(I)]

Written (cognitive) examination materials shall be validated against the NFPA standard JPRs for the level of certification to ensure addressing all knowledge/facts needs based upon action verbs. Acquisition of examinations for accredited certifications levels shall be through a credible vendor(s) and validated through the AFSC process. 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 AFSC shall edit test banks as warranted.

AFSC shall maintain separate test banks for each level of certification. 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 randomly selected from each group of questions correlated to each JPR or requisite knowledge. Each question within a test bank shall identify the appropriate NFPA Standard (or other approved standard[s]) and edition used for testing, and questions shall be the same standard and edition as the accredited level. Each question shall reference the standard objective(s) and the appropriate reference source.

AFSC shall monitor the number of questions for each category to ensure that an adequate number of questions are in the test bank. If a required NFPA category lacks enough questions, AFSC shall develop questions that target the deficient category. An AFSC designated review committee shall approve all final test bank questions.

Practical (psychomotor) examination skills development shall include at least one skills assessment item correlated to either each JPR or each requisite skill area identified in the standard. JPRs identifying a manipulative skill in real time by its action verbs will be tested as psychomotor skills. 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 AFSC review committee shall review and approve the

examination skills for each level of certification.

Practical (process) examination skills development shall include at least one skills assessment item correlated to either each JPR or each requisite skill area identified in the standard. JPRs identifying a mental activity to perform a cognitive skill in real time by its action verbs will be tested as process skills. 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 AFSC review committee shall review and approve the examination skills for each level of certification.

Practical (product) examination skills development shall include at least one skills assessment item correlated to either each JPR or each requisite skill area identified in the standard. JPRs identifying a cognitive skill which cannot be directly observed or the application of knowledge to yield a product by its action verbs will be tested as product skills. 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 AFSC review committee shall review and approve the examination skills for each level of certification.

2.13 WRITTEN EXAMINATION REVIEW AND ANALYSIS [NFPA 1000, 5.2.4(C)(E)]

AFSC shall review test scores and tests on a regular basis and shall use the following procedures to analyze and take corrective action for special circumstances or when it receives a question validation challenge:

1. The Fire Training Administrator shall review the question/item for validity and reliability in regard to the appropriate NFPA Standard and reference materials.
2. If the Administrator 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 Administrator 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, or
 - c. permanently removed from the test bank.

AFSC shall review all test statistics to identify problem questions/areas to include review of each candidate test question comment for comparison with the test questions and reference information. If the determination is that the question is invalid, AFSC will nullify the question score and will not count it in the final score for the test group. If the determination is that the question is valid, the score shall remain as indicated by the candidate. In cases where it is determined there are multiple discrepancies, the Training Officer/Course Coordinator is notified with a written explanation or clarification.

If group scores from a specific course are below average, AFSC will contact the Training Officer/Course Coordinator for the course and discuss the course content. An entity with multiple candidates that test below minimum scores from greater than three (3) courses must provide a written report detailing the cause of disparities. The report must include a mitigation plan to improve student test scores in future training programs. The bureau Administrator will assist in identifying an experienced training program manager to mentor the Training Officer/Course Coordinator and identify areas for improvement.

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.

2.14 CERTIFICATION RECORDS MAINTENANCE [NFPA 1000, 5.1.6(A)(B)]

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 becomes inactive. AFSC keeps certification files in perpetuity and shall maintain a copy of the Course and Testing Notification, any relevant correspondence, all written exam scores, and practical skill pass/fail forms for each accredited course program. All individual practical skill sheets used for testing are left with the TSC/TO for local record keeping. The Alaska Fire Standards Council complies with the Alaska Public Records Act, (AS40.25.100 – 40.25.295)

2.15 CERTIFICATION APPEALS PROCEDURE [NFPA 1000, 5.2.9]

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 in writing and addressed to the Administrator within 30 days of the examination or denial notification. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Administrator will review the application, certification test information, and dispute detail provided by the applicant. The Administrator and AFSC Executive Board 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 AFSC. AFSC will review the appeal during its next scheduled meeting and, when reasonable, issue a ruling prior to the close of the meeting.

2.16 RECOGNITION OF HISTORICAL ALASKA CERTIFICATION [NFPA 1000, 5.2.5]

AFSC 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 under IFSAC and/or ProBoard, the individual must have a certificate with an IFSAC or ProBoard seal.

2.17 RECIPROCITY [NFPA 1000, 5.2.6]

AFSC offers reciprocity (honored in part) to applicants who have completed his or her certification through an entity accredited under [IFSAC](#) or [ProBoard](#). 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). Reciprocity applicants must meet AFSC requirements that are specified within the directive and training record for the requested level of certification. An applicant who qualifies for reciprocity is not required to take a practical or written examination. Upon approval of reciprocity requests, AFSC will issue a State of Alaska certificate only and will not issue a new IFSAC or ProBoard seal. AFSC cannot issue reciprocity certifications for levels that AFSC does not have a certification directive.

Applicants for reciprocity must:

- a. be at least 18 years of age; *and*
- b. be an Alaska resident or member of an organized fire department or an emergency response organization registered with the [Division of Fire and Life Safety](#); *and*
- c. complete an [Application for Certification](#); *and*
- d. provide a photocopy of a driver's license or official photo ID with application; *and*
- e. provide a copy of a valid certificate with an IFSAC or ProBoard seal; *and*
- f. meet the AFSC eligibility requirement for the requested level of certification.

Reciprocity certificates issued for Certified Fire Investigator or Fire Service Instructor will have an AFSC renewal date based on the original date of issuance as defined in the AFSC renewal requirements. For reciprocity applications that have an [IFSAC](#) or [ProBoard](#) certificate with a date of issuance greater than 3 years (CFI) or 5 years (FSI) prior to the application date, AFSC will issue an initial certificate that will expire on December 31 of the year a reciprocity certificate was granted. Exceptions to this requirement will only be

considered if the reciprocity application packet includes a completed renewal packet specific to the level of requested certification.

2.18 RENEWAL [NFPA 1000, 5.2.7]

The AFSC has implemented guidelines for the renewal process to ensure that individuals maintain their knowledge and skills in AFSC certifications, specifically the NFPA 1033 Fire Investigator (FI) and NFPA 1041 Fire and Emergency Services Instructor (FESI) certifications. In order to meet these requirements, the AFSC has developed renewal guidelines that necessitate individuals to undergo recurring training.

All AFSC FI certificates are valid for a maximum period of three (3) calendar years, while all levels of AFSC FESI certificates remain valid for a maximum period of five (5) calendar years. To renew their certification, individuals must submit a Renewal Packet and the necessary renewal documents before the expiration date stated on their certificate. Renewal must be completed within one year of expiration, or additional renewal requirements will need to be fulfilled. It is the responsibility of the certified individual to keep track of their certification expiration date. The AFSC determines the expiration date of an Alaska certificate based on the date of the applicant's initial certification application.

Currently, all other AFSC certifications do not have an expiration date. However, individuals are still responsible for maintaining the required knowledge and skill requirements after completing the certification examination.

2.19 EQUIVALENCY CHALLENGE

The AFSC equivalency challenge process provides departments a mechanism to conduct a local evaluation of personnel competency in cases where his or her training was completed through a non AFSC approved course. Under this process, an individual is eligible for AFSC testing after the Training Officer/Training Program Manager (TO/TPM) completes a local validation that training has met 100% of the certification directive and/or AFSC training record requirements. Any equivalency challenge requiring a completed written training record and/or practical skills testing must be conducted by an accredited department. The Equivalency Challenge **is not** intended to circumvent or bypass core AFSC eligibility requirements under its third-party accreditation requirements with IFSAC or ProBoard.

To initiate the challenge process, the TO/TPM must submit the documents listed below to AFSC prior to testing. All equivalency challenge requests must be coordinated through the authorized representative of the department that the individual is affiliated with. The TO/TPM is responsible for verifying that the applicant meets all the AFSC requirements for testing. A candidate **is not** permitted to attend a final exam without the explicit pre-approval of the AFSC office *and* the agency that is coordinating the exam site. The following steps apply to all equivalency challenge requests:

Step 1: For each level being challenged the TO/TPM shall:

- a. Review original training documentation to verify compliance with certification directive and/or the AFSC Training Record requirements (training documentation must be dated within the last two (2) years); *and*
- b. if required, complete the AFSC Training Record to include the specific dates of knowledge acquisition and local skill validation (*Note, an accredited department is authorized to conduct local training if the individual records are missing core JPR's, or the individual completed the initial training greater than two (2) years ago*); *and*
- c. submit the following to the AFSC, via post or email:
 - i. completed copy of AFSC [Application for Certification](#) that is signed by the TO/TPM; and
 - ii. certificate of course completion and/or completed AFSC Training Record for each level requested; and
 - iii. written permission to attend an AFSC authorized test site (if testing with another department).

Step 2: AFSC shall:

- a. Review the equivalency challenge packet for completion *and*
 - i. return an approved signed copy of the AFSC Application for Certification to the TO/TPM; *or*
 - ii. provide an explanation of rejection to the TO/TPM
- b. Provide written approval to the Test Site Coordinator and Certifying Officer assigned to the examination where the individual shall complete the test.

Step 3: The TO/TPM shall ensure the individual completing the equivalency challenge brings the following to the test site:

1. the completed Application for Certification with all required signatures of approval for testing
2. a completed AFSC Training Record for each level of equivalency challenge signed by the individual's TO/TPM or authorized designee
3. official photo ID
4. personal protective equipment/self-contained breathing apparatus, if required for testing
5. other tools, equipment, or materials necessary to complete the practical exam components.

2.20 TESTING WITHOUT REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS

The AFSC will permit an individual to test for a level of certification that he or she lacks requisite qualifications [certification(s)]. The individual must have attended and completed an approved course and all required training at that level for eligibility to complete a certification examination. The following conditions apply to individuals who opt to test without requisite certifications:

1. All AFSC fees apply and are due in accordance with its official payment policy.
2. AFSC will provide individual test scores to the designated Written Test Contact for the purpose of course evaluation and candidate proficiency only. An entity/individual shall not use the test scores as an indicator of certification completion for a candidate that does not meet requisite certification requirements.
3. Requisite qualification requirements must be completed (*i.e.* *AFSC certificate issued*) within two (2) years of the initial test date of the examination level that an individual opts to test without requisite certification(s).
 - a. **EXAMPLE 1:** A Firefighter I (FF I) candidate with no requisite Hazardous Materials Awareness/ Operations (HMAO) certifications takes his or her FF 1 on January 15, 2020. The candidate must obtain his or her AFSC HMAO certifications within the two-year period to receive an AFSC FF I certification.
*Under Example 1, the candidate **must** complete the HMAO qualifications **before** January 16, 2022.*
 - b. **EXAMPLE 2:** A Fire Officer I (FO I) candidate with no requisite Firefighter II (FF II) and no requisite Fire Service Instructor I (FSI I) certification takes his or her FO I on July 30, 2020. The candidate must obtain his or her AFSC FF II and FSI I certification within the two-year period to receive an AFSC FO I. *Under Example 2, the candidate **must** complete the FFII and FSI qualifications **before** July 31, 2022.*
4. If a candidate tests without requisite qualifications and is unable to complete them within two years of the original test date, then the candidate must complete the requisite qualifications **and** complete the entire course, training record, written examination, and practical examination once again.
 - a. **EXAMPLE 3:** A candidate **does not** get certified in HMAO before January 16, 2022 (*see Example 1 above*). The candidate must now complete AFSC HMAO certifications **and** retake the FFI training and all testing requirements. *Under Example 3 this is required because the original training and original test date have exceeded the two-year eligibility to test for AFSC certification.*

2.21 IN-STATE ACCREDITATION APPROVAL [NFPA 1000, 5.1.8]

The Bureau of Fire Accreditation, Standards, and Training (BFAST) has collaborated with the Alaska Fire

Standards Council (AFSC) to establish a program to accredit local fire and emergency service training organizations. These organizations will be able to conduct training and host testing on behalf of BFAST and the AFSC.

The objective of this accreditation program is to assist organizations in establishing training programs that are proficient, professional, and consistent throughout the State of Alaska. Moreover, criteria have been set for the approval of fire training courses conducted by accredited entities. These criteria ensure that facilities and equipment both safeguard the health and safety of the participants and meet the requirements of testing. Additionally, there must be adequate space for classroom and manipulative skills testing.

To seek certifications, an organization must be accredited, and each course must be approved. BFAST grants authorization to local organizations to conduct training, while AFSC maintains direct control over the testing, evaluation, and certification process for all approved certification programs.

To learn how to receive approval for conducting state-endorsed training and becoming eligible for AFSC certification testing, refer to the [BFAST Fire Training Program Accreditation Manual](#). The goal of this manual is to provide clear, consistent, and efficient information about the joint process involving BFAST, AFSC, and the organization facilitating local fire training on behalf of BFAST.

3 MISSION AND AUTHORITY OF CERTIFYING OFFICERS [NFPA 1000, 5.2.4(J)]

3.1 ROLE OF THE CERTIFYING OFFICER

AFSC utilizes a CO to serve as an agent in administering examinations. AFSC follows accreditation test processes established under IFSAC and ProBoard, and requires its COs, and other individuals that support the certification examination process, to comply with all the guidelines defined within this manual. The CO:

1. is responsible for the consistency of AFSC practical and written examinations
2. is empowered by the AFSC to use sound judgment in ensuring that the examination is administered in accordance with applicable standards and regulations
3. must understand the test policies of the AFSC
4. must coordinate test processes with the Training Officer, Training Program Manager, or Test Site Coordinator to ensure the candidates experience a fair and consistent test process
5. must manage the written and practical testing process throughout an assignment must provide feedback to the AFSC after each assignment.

3.2 APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT OF A CERTIFYING OFFICER

To receive AFSC CO Endorsement, an individual must be a BFAST employee approved by the Fire Training Administrator **or** be a current Alaska Fire Service Instructor I, and meet the following criteria:

1. be employable by the State of Alaska; *and*
2. have a minimum of five years of experience as an active firefighter or instructor; *and*
3. have completed an AFSC Certifying Officer training; *and*
4. have successfully completed an open book CO Quiz with 100% accuracy; *and*
5. have read this manual in its entirety; *and*
6. have completed a [Certifying Officer Application](#) within 30 days of # 3 & 4; *and*
7. have reviewed and signed the [Certifying Officer Code of Ethics Compliance Agreement](#); *and*
8. have successfully assisted an AFSC CO in the administration of two complete examinations, (*each pre- approved by the Administrator*):
 - A. one assignment as a CO Trainee assistant ([STEP A](#)), which must be completed within 6 months of #6
 - B. one assignment as a CO Trainee lead, ([STEP B](#)), which must be completed within 12 months of #6.
9. have final written approval of the Administrator

3.3 CERTIFYING OFFICER CURRENCY [NFPA 1000, 5.1.7(D)]

To maintain currency as a Certifying Officer, the CO's must complete a Triennial Agreement Packet (TAP). The objective of the Triennial Agreement is to allow the AFSC office to effectively monitor and confirm the participation and continued interest of Certifying Officers (CO) to the program. Additionally, it will include an endorsement in IMPACT and streamline the process of tracking refresher training requirements for each CO, when necessary.

The Alaska Fire Standards Council (AFSC) CO's official expiration date is 3-years from issuance and is listed on the individual's endorsement. Authorization as a CO shall automatically cease on the date the individual's Alaska Fire Service Instructor certification or CO Endorsement expiration date, except as outlined in section 3.4 below.

3.4 CERTIFYING OFFICER EXPIRATION, REVOCATION, SUSPENSION, OR DENIAL

Authorization as a CO shall automatically cease on the date the individual's Alaska Fire Service Instructor

certification or CO Endorsement expires, except as outlined below.

Previous revocations or suspensions of a CO Endorsement will be weighed when considering future applications.

AFSC may revoke, suspend, or decline to endorse an individual as a CO for the following:

- a. The individual's Fire Service Instructor certification is expired.
- b. The test examination process changes substantially and requires retraining of the CO prior to AFSC endorsement to certify examinations. This suspension and subsequent retraining may be resolved in an informal manner, at the discretion of the Administrator, provided the CO has received and confirmed review of the updated material.
- c. The CO fails to maintain the security of the written and practical examinations in accordance with applicable regulations, policies, and procedures.
- d. The CO has a documented history of interpersonal conflicts with evaluators, candidates, or instructors at examination sites, as indicated within the test evaluation surveys or other written report.
- e. The CO 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 of materials/equipment, copying exam materials, or permitting candidates to cheat on examinations).

At a minimum, disciplinary measures shall be addressed as follows:

- **Step 1**- verbal counsel
- **Step 2**- written report and coaching/retraining if appropriate and applicable
- **Step 3**- suspension of eligibility until documentation can be reviewed by the AFSC Executive Board.

All above actions will result in written documentation stored in AFSC records. For serious offenses, the AFSC reserves the right to invoke Step 3 immediately.

3.5 AFSC STANDARD OF CONDUCT

The AFSC has established expectations and responsibilities throughout this manual. This section identifies required behaviors for carrying out the functions and demands of a CO. Egregious misconduct is grounds for immediate suspension as an AFSC CO. Any violation of the standards of conduct shall be subject to discipline, up to and including permanent revocation as a CO. General provision for the standards of conduct are:

- a. **Conduct standards apply to all AFSC representatives.** All of the ethical standards and rules expressed herein are inclusive, and together constitute the standards of conduct by which all representatives of the AFSC are governed. It shall be the duty of each representative to study and become familiar with the rules, regulations, and operations of the Council, as well as the rules governing control and discipline.
- b. **Professional standards of behavior apply.** The standards of conduct set out in this chapter do not recognize every possible act that constitutes unacceptable behavior. Conduct that shocks the conscience or that violates generally recognized standards of professional behavior is forbidden.
- c. **Reputation and effectiveness of the AFSC is affected by the conduct of its representative.** The reputation of the AFSC is influenced to a large degree by public belief in the integrity of its representatives. Each representative is expected to make a dedicated effort to conduct her or his official duties so that they will inspire the confidence and trust of its constituents. The good conduct and reputation of representatives help assure the cooperation and support of the public, other agencies, and the cooperation of all constituents that serves to increase the effectiveness of AFSC's mission.

At a minimum, misconduct violations shall result in a written documentation record stored in AFSC records.

3.6 ASSIGNMENT OF CERTIFYING OFFICERS FOR TEST SITES

The AFSC is responsible for designating a CO for each examination. AFSC shall maintain an electronic list with email addresses of all approved COs and potential trainees for use in selecting assignments. The following guidelines shall be used for assignments:

- a. AFSC staff shall initiate CO requests for a regional assignment 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. AFSC staff will approve a CO who is certified at the level specified in the notification, exceptions at the discretion of the Fire Training Administrator.
- c. To ensure that all COs have an opportunity to preside over an exam, the selection process shall be on a rotation basis when reasonable. 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.
- d. Generally, the assignment will be given to the first qualified CO to respond with an acknowledgement of interest unless the CO has administered an exam within the 30-days prior to the notification. An individual may still be eligible for another assignment within the 30-day period if he or she acknowledges interest and no other regional CO responses have been received before the closing date of the requested assignment.
- e. When a CO has accepted an assignment, his or her name will go to the bottom of the regional list.
- f. AFSC staff will send a statewide CO email notification if no regional CO is available. Due to the large geographic area related to statewide announcements, 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.
- g. Consideration for more desirable assignments will be made for CO's historically taking less desirable assignments.
- h. AFSC staff will also consider the need for a CO to meet their Triennial Agreement, which entails completing at least one assignment per year.
- i. A CO shall not have served as a primary instructor for the course associated with a certification exam assignment.
- j. A CO affiliated with the organization requesting the test is only eligible for the assignment when circumstances warrant and must be approved by the Administrator.

Once selected the next action steps taken by the Certifying Officer are:

1. Advise the AFSC Office on how you would like to receive the tote.
2. Fill out the MOA form and return it to the AFSC office within 3 business days.
3. If air travel is required, complete and return the travel request form immediately.
4. Contact the Test Site Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the test date to discuss test details.

3.7 EVALUATOR AND ASSISTANT TRAINING

Due to the difficulty in providing statewide evaluator and assistant training, the AFSC requires that these individuals attend the briefing before each test. The CO must conduct a briefing at the beginning of each testing session using the companion slideshow.

3.8 "OFF DUTY" CERTIFYING OFFICERS

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

3.9 CERTIFYING OFFICER EXAMINATION SITE RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the CO at the examination site include:

1. Preparation:
 - a. Meet with Evaluators, Assistants, and Test Site Coordinators and distribute materials for conducting tests.
 - b. Provide all Evaluators and Assistants with the required training and instruction prior to participating in the exam, and ensure Evaluators know their roles and responsibilities as covered in this manual.
 - c. Ensure that all Evaluators and Assistants have completed and signed a [Code of Ethics Compliance Agreement](#)
 - d. Review all skill stations to ensure they are set up as required and comply with testing instructions. Confirm with evaluators that the equipment at each station is ready and will operate correctly and safely.
 - e. 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. Highlight and verify with the Training Officer, or designee, that the pre-requisite requirements are met on the Training Record. (See [Testing Without Requisite Qualifications](#) policy.)
2. Written Testing:
 - a. Meet and provide instructions to the Candidates related to the testing process (read the script provided in this manual or follow the related slideshow instruction module).
 - b. Complete the AFSC Test Site Candidate Roster using the candidate's legal name as it appears on their official government issued ID.
 - Candidates are not permitted to write their own personal information on the roster; they are solely allowed to sign it to indicate verification.
 - c. Distribute the test materials to include the AFSC [Application for Certification](#) and explain the procedure for correctly completing the application.
 - d. Verify a clear email address for fees that will be invoiced, billed, or covered by a Purchase Order.
 - e. Administer and collect all examination booklets, scratch paper, grading sheets, and check them for marks and completeness.
3. Practical Testing:
 - a. Ensure consistency between all practical stations.
 - b. Collect and review the practical examination skill sheets and check the candidate pass/fail status as they are completed. Record the candidate's pass/fail/retest status on the [Practical Examination Report Forms](#) (P/F form) and notify the Test Site Coordinator of the status after the candidate has completed an initial attempt at all stations.
 - c. Ensure that candidates have a different evaluator for all re-tests.
 - d. Discuss any test site discrepancies with the Test Site Coordinator.
4. Post Test:
 - a. Ensure that all candidates have completed all paperwork accurately and verify that the candidate information is accurate and correct.
 - b. Ensure that the Training Officer or Fire Chief, *and* the CO have signed each application.
 - c. Collect all other CO materials and use the checklist to return them to the tote. Secure the tote before leaving the test site.
 - d. Return the test materials to AFSC in accordance with the Security Plan in this manual.

4 TEST EXAMINATION SECURITY [NFPA 1000, 5.2.4(D)]

Each examination requires significant resources to be successful. AFSC follows third-party requirements for security of examinations and will take immediate action against individuals or agencies that misuse the certification examination process. If an organization exhibits 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.

4.1 TEST SECURITY POLICY

4.1.1 TEST MATERIALS ACCESS AND STORAGE POLICY

Access to the written exams, test banks and computer system containing any relevant information are restricted to the AFSC/BFAST designated staff. Designated staff issues the tests for a certification exam and sends them to the CO in a locked case. Administrative staff shall provide the lock combination directly to the CO. The CO shall sign a compliance agreement ensuring the maintenance of test security.

AFSC maintains the written exam test bank software in secure locations within its office. Designated AFSC/BFAST staff shall have the only access to these files. AFSC maintains written exam test banks on a secure software platform. AFSC/BFAST designated staff are the only persons with security access to this system.

4.1.2 REVIEW COMMITTEE TEST SECURITY POLICY

During test item development, validation, and review of all examination material, designated AFSC/BFAST staff shall distribute materials in accordance with the methods listed under "General Security Points." The AFSC prohibits copying or reproducing test material in any manner without the express written permission of the Administrator or designee. The AFSC does not permit copying or reproducing of copyright material or other illegal activities. The AFSC prohibits designated committee members from sharing or viewing material with individuals outside of the designated committee; committee members must not share any information construed as revealing or identifying confidential test information with the public. All test bank material is confidential and must be under constant control while under committee review. Committee members shall return all materials to the Fire Training Administrator, or designated staff, by the established deadline.

4.1.3 TEST MATERIALS DISPOSAL POLICY

AFSC shreds outdated written exam materials before disposal and destroys computer disks by breaking or shredding the disks. The Department of Public Safety IT staff shall wipe all computer systems used for storage of test bank material before disposal.

4.2 GENERAL SECURITY POINTS

1. The CO/Proctor must clearly label returned examination packages with legible shipping and return addresses. The term "Examinations" is meant to include all written and practical testing materials, including:
 - a. test packets
 - b. completed answer sheets
 - c. practical examination result forms
 - d. completed applications
 - e. evaluator compliance forms

- f. other associated paperwork (i.e. 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 Certified Mail, etc.)
3. All examinations not in the direct view of a CO/Proctor/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)

4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF EXAMINATIONS

1. The AFSC explicitly prohibits copying any certification examination.
2. AFSC staff shall mail authorized test site examinations to assigned COs, or a designated secure pickup location, as deemed appropriate by AFSC staff.
3. If a written examination must be administered to an individual in a community that does not have a CO available, a designated Proctor shall be authorized to administer the examination as described previously under the [Written Test Proctor](#) procedure.

4.4 DURING THE TESTING PROCESS

1. The CO or authorized test Proctor must be physically present throughout the administration of a written examination, cameras are not allowed to replace physical presence.
2. The AFSC policy strictly forbids the reviewing of the written examination by the CO or an authorized test proctor, either independently or in the presence of others.
 - a. The only exception would be if a issue arises that would prohibit the candidate from completing the exam. (e.g. Improper printing resulting in missing question details.)
3. The CO 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 separate candidates that have completed a specific practical skill station from other candidates that have yet to complete that specific station. This may require several candidates 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.
 - c. Skill stations that involve presenting to an audience may have a special provision. At the candidate's discretion, fellow test candidates may serve as audience members. However, it is crucial for audience members to uphold professionalism and appropriate behavior. Any inappropriate behavior or assistance provided to the testing subject may result in failure for the candidate being evaluated and is considered breach of security for the audience member.
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 for return to AFSC administration. AFSC staff will transcribe candidate answers onto a Scantron form and check for accuracy before scoring. The AFSC will retain this form with the Scantron answer sheet.

4.5 MISSING EXAMINATIONS

Upon receipt of test tote material, the CO must inventory examination packets totals. If there is an insufficient number of exams for the test candidates, as a result of an error or miscommunication between the AFSC Office and Test Site Coordinator, the Certifying Officer may choose to have candidates wait until others have finished their exams and then provide them with the necessary exam packet. It is strictly prohibited to copy any test materials under any circumstances.

If a CO determines that a confirmed exam packet is missing from the tote, the CO must contact the Administrator 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 recommended course of action.

If an individual other than the CO is responsible for the missing examination, they must send a separate letter to the Administrator detailing the circumstances under which the examination was lost. The Administrator, or designee, will investigate the circumstances surrounding the loss of the exam. If disciplinary measures are required, the Administrator and AFSC Executive Board will address these at the conclusion of an investigative review. In such cases, the Administrator 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.

4.6 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 CO or written test Proctor must contact the Administrator by phone as soon as practical.

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

1. a description of the security breach;
2. a list of individuals involved in the breach; and
3. other information the he or she considers appropriate.

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

The AFSC expects that the CO or individual responsible for the examination will perform an initial assessment of the breach of security to obtain information that may not be available later. AFSC ultimately holds the responsibility for the investigation, but the designated CO or Proctor for the examination must provide a detailed description of the events in writing.

The Administrator, or designee, will investigate the circumstances surrounding the security breach. If disciplinary measures are required, the Administrator and AFSC Executive Board will address these at the conclusion of an investigative review. In such cases, the Administrator 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.

5 ADMINISTERING EXAMINATIONS [NFPA 1000, 5.2.4(A)(D)(J)]

5.1 OVERVIEW OF WRITTEN AND PRACTICAL CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS

AFSC maintains skill sheets and a training record for each adopted level of certification; certification directives provide the related guidelines. These documents are posted on the [AFSC Certification](#) webpage. Candidates must complete each training component to be eligible for certification testing. The Training Officer is required to verify completion of the skill sheets and training record for the candidates during an approved course. The CO must verify the documented record of training that each candidate completed the required skills before testing begins.

There are mandatory and random skills stations designated for each level of certification testing. AFSC staff randomly selects practical skills using computer software prior to the examination date. Within the In-State Accreditation Approval, specific criteria have been established for fire training courses conducted by accredited entities. These criteria are designed to protect the health and safety of participants and ensure that all testing requirements are met. Therefore, all accredited entities have previously ensured that their facilities, equipment, and staffing resources meet the necessary standards for each skill packet to which they hold accreditation within the AFSC program. Details of the examination skill selections can be found within the last pages of the relevant skills packet.

The CO must coordinate with the TSC to verify all equipment and materials will be available for the test site. The TSC shall not disclose the selected skill sheets to any of the candidates testing prior to the day of the exam. If 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 TSC must contact the Administrator immediately with an explanation of what equipment and material is not available and why. An alternative skill from a similar NFPA job performance objective may be randomly selected using a computerized program.

The AFSC permits the use of a current Emergency Response Guide for written and practical portions of the Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations testing. This policy is only applicable for the hazardous materials component and does not apply to any other test topics taken within the same setting (i.e. Firefighter I).

The [AFSC Certification](#) webpage contains all documentation related to adopted levels of AFSC certification

6 PREPARING FOR THE TEST SITE EXAMINATION

6.1 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 final exam dates as follows:

1. An accredited entity shall notify AFSC staff by submitting a [Test Notification](#) through IMPACT at least **30 days prior** to the course **final examination date**.
2. The AFSC staff will review the proposed test dates to confirm availability and schedule resources. If the AFSC is unable to support the proposed date, staff will consult with the Test Site Coordinator to determine alternate test dates.
3. Upon final approval, AFSC staff will assign a test number and ensure that the Test Site Coordinator (TSC) receives the necessary support including:
 - a. authorization and verification of the approved test date
 - b. testing site preparation instructions
 - c. verification that equipment necessary for testing has been confirmed on the departments accreditation, see skill sheets for each level of testing.
 - d. assignment, travel, and accommodation arrangements of CO.
4. 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.
5. AFSC staff will assign a CO following the guidelines in this manual. If the AFSC is unable to contract a CO for the proposed date, AFSC staff will consult with the Test Site Coordinator to determine alternate test dates.
6. Once the AFSC approves the examination, the Test Site Coordinator shall be responsible for notifying test candidates of the final examination date(s).

6.2 CERTIFYING OFFICER TEST MATERIALS

The AFSC provides a CO with all testing and certification materials in advance of the test assignment. Upon receipt of the test tote/test package, the first priority of the CO is to inventory the number of test packets received. The CO should then review the material to ensure that he or she arrives at the test location adequately prepared for the examination. In cases where the CO arrives at the test site before he or she 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. 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 CO must use the "Test Tote Checklist" found in the front of the paperwork folder to verify the contents of the tote as follows:

- 1) Verify test packet count and contents:
 - a. Blank Application*
 - b. Scantron Sheet
 - c. Haz Mat Packet Components:
 - i. Laminated Sheets Laminated Sheets (NFPA placard & table-top scenario)
 - ii. SDS Sheet
 - iii. Practical Skill Sheets (Yellow)
- 2) Required Signed Forms:
 - a. AFSC Test Site Student Roster*
 - b. CO Code of Ethics Agreement*
 - c. Evaluator Code of Ethics Compliance, Page 1 & 2*
 - d. CO Exam Return Report*
 - e. Training Officer Survey Form* (*inside return envelope*)
 - f. CO Survey Form*
 - g. Contractor Pay Document*
- 3) Practical Paperwork:
 - a. Practical Correlation and Skill Sheets * for each test level

- b. HMO Tabletop Key(s)
- c. Practical Exam Report Form Instructions*
- d. Practical Exam Report Form(s) *
- e. Remedial Training Form*
- 4) Extra Forms and Shipping:
 - a. Return Shipping Page
 - b. FedEx Billable Stamp
 - c. FedEx Mailing Tag
 - d. Extra Scantron Sheets
 - e. Extra Applications
 - f. Extra HMO SDS Sheets {HM}
 - g. Extra HAZ MAT Scantron Sheets{HM}
 - h. Extra HMO Practical Sheets (Yellow) {HM}
 - i. Extra NFPA Placards{HM}
- 5) All Other Paperwork:
 - a. CO Manual*
 - b. AFSC Certification Fee Schedule*

**Downloads are available online at www.firestandards.alaska.gov.
Hazmat material as applicable.*

6.3 TEST SITE COORDINATOR/TRAINING OFFICER TEST RESPONSIBILITIES

The CO is AFSC'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 has an important role at the test site, the CO must remain in control of all aspects of the examination process.

Unless explicit exception is granted prior to testing, the Test Site Coordinator may not be a test candidate for a test session they are administering.

6.4 TEST SITE COORDINATOR ADVANCED PREPARATION

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

1. Submit a Test Notification at least **30 days prior** to the course **final examination date**.
2. Arrange a test site location for the initial written and practical examination for all candidates.
3. Complete all training record documentation for each candidate and ensure each candidate is eligible to test.
4. Verify that each candidate has an official ID to be brought with them to the test site.
5. Ensure that potential Evaluators are available during the examination period.
6. Communicate with the designated CO in advance of the test date to plan the written and practical certification examination.

The Test Site Coordinator* is responsible for:

1. Assisting the CO.
2. Ensuring that candidates have the appropriate personal protective equipment that meets or exceeds the applicable NFPA standards.
3. Obtaining sufficient trained and qualified evaluators for the practical skills testing, the CO may not act as an evaluator.
4. Obtaining skill station assistants who are adequately trained. All test candidates will be tested individually. If a skill station requires team members an assistant(s) may be provided to fill the role based on the skill sheet.
5. Ensuring that all necessary equipment, apparatus and supplies meet or exceed all applicable NFPA health and safety standards and are provided at the test site, see CPM Section 2.21 In-

State Accreditation Approval.

6. Setting up practical examination skill stations.
7. Securing an adequate site for the examination.

*Unless the Test Site Coordinator or Course Coordinator have made prior arrangements with AFSC staff and the CO, he or she will be present at the test site for the entire examination.

The Test Site Coordinator is responsible for completing the Test Site Coordinator Exam Site Survey after the test is administered. Test results will be released upon receipt of this survey by the Fire Standards Council Office.

6.5 SELECTION OF EVALUATORS AND ASSISTANTS [NFPA 1000, 5.1.7(B)(C)]

The Test Site Coordinator for the scheduled examination site shall identify individuals to serve as Evaluators and Assistants for practical examination stations prior to the arrival of the CO, the CO may not act as an evaluator. These individuals have a significant responsibility, and their competency is essential to an examination site. The CO shall approve individuals to serve in these capacities for individual skill stations. To ensure consistency and fairness throughout testing, the CO should make every attempt to use personnel who can stay for the entire practical examination.

AFSC requires the CO and the Test Site Coordinator coordinate the selection and approval of each Evaluator and Assistant. Evaluators are responsible for evaluating a candidate's performance in a given skill station and must record the performance as pass/fail on the associated skill sheet (any notations of failure must have written documentation to support the failure). Assistants differ from Evaluators in that they are generally actively involved in a skills test station; they may provide direct support to a candidate during scenarios or as needed to prepare a station between scenarios. All testing participants will be tested individually and allowed one or more assistant(s) as needed or required by the skill(s) to be performed.

Evaluators and Assistants should:

1. Have completed the mandatory Evaluator/Assistant training directive module.*
2. Be certified at the level they are evaluating, unless approved by the CO.*
3. Have a history of 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/or Evaluator and Assistant selection is limited; a CO *may* use an individual not certified at the level of the test. Non-fire service subject matter experts may be considered for use, subject to approval by the AFSC Administrative Office. Non-certified individuals must have the appropriate training, experience, and judgment to serve in their respective capacity. If non-certified personnel will be used as evaluators, the CO must initial the waiver on page 1 of the [Evaluator Code of Ethics Compliance Agreement](#). The Test Site Coordinator shall contact the Fire Training Administrator prior to the test date to discuss the suitability of using uncertified evaluators.

The CO must confirm the selected Evaluators have completed the mandatory evaluator training and are certified at/or above the certification level of the exam. Confirmation may include checking a potential Evaluator's certification level with the AFSC or the local fire department training records. All Evaluators and Assistants must review the Evaluator Code of Ethics form and sign an Evaluator Compliance form before the CO permits assignment to a station.

A CO may not permit instructors to act as practical skills Evaluators for the topic he or she instructed during the course. The CO has the final approval as to the appropriateness and inclusion of any proposed Evaluator or Assistant.

6.6 SELECTION OF HELPERS

Helpers provide additional support to the test site and differ from Evaluators and Assistants in that they are not actively involved in supporting candidates within an evaluation scenario. 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.).

6.7 BRIEFING EVALUATORS AND ASSISTANTS

The CO 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."

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. 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 AFSC prohibits test support personnel from behaving in a manner that reflects personal bias, hidden agendas, and subjectivity within the test stations scenarios. The test candidates are required to meet the practical skill sheet objectives, and evaluators are not permitted to inject individual opinions or expectations into the station objective. To prepare test site Evaluators, COs must use the standardized companion slideshow.

6.8 BASIC EQUIPMENT AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Within the In-State Accreditation Approval, specific criteria have been established for fire training courses conducted by accredited entities. These criteria are designed to protect the health and safety of participants and ensure that all testing requirements are met. Therefore, all accredited entities have previously ensured that their facilities, equipment, and staffing resources meet the necessary standards for each skill packet to which they hold accreditation within the AFSC program. It is imperative that the CO and the Test Site Coordinator communicate test requirements in advance of the test date. COs must address the following items before the test begins:

- a. The test site minimum staffing requirements for 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 CO.
- 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.

6.9 EQUIPMENT REVIEW [NFPA 1000, 5.2.3(B)]

The CO will verify that all equipment needed for the practical skill stations are at the stations that all personal protective equipment, firefighting equipment, and apparatus used during testing is situated so that the testing process can begin and finish without interruption.

6.10 DUPLICATING PRACTICAL SKILL STATIONS

If a large number of candidates are tested, duplicate practical skill stations may 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 - all candidates must have the same initial testing scenario.

6.11 REHEARSING PRACTICAL SKILL STATIONS

To ensure Evaluators understand the practical skill evaluation sheet and the skill station, successful completion of the [Evaluator Training Instructions](#) is required. The Evaluators and Assistants at each practical station should verify set up and verbally rehearse their station correctly at least once. It is essential that the CO visit each station prior to the start of the examination to answer any questions from Evaluators or Assistants and verify the station equipment is in accordance with the skill sheet.

6.12 BRIEFING THE CANDIDATES

The CO is responsible for informing candidates of what to expect with test grade timelines, score notification, and re-testing. COs may wait until a candidate has completed the first attempt at each station before informing him/her of the practical results. A CO must inform the candidates that they cannot discuss the practical examination or share information with other candidates once the test is underway. (See the companion slideshow instructions)

6.13 VERIFICATION OF CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY FOR TESTING

A candidate must have clear documentation for eligibility to test prior to the arrival of the CO. The Training Officer or the Lead Instructor of the locally accredited department or organization will provide the CO a list of candidates taking the final examination. The CO must verify that there is a completed candidate training record for each candidate and it 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 Fire Training Administrator prior to the test date; COs cannot authorize testing for candidates who have not received written approval. Retest candidates must also have written approval prior to eligibility to test at another location.

If the CO is presented with a candidate that is **known** to be ineligible for certification (i.e. underage or have only partially completed training requirements), and **ineligibility** has been clearly established, the CO **shall not** allow the individual to take the examination for certification. An exception to this policy is the [Testing Without Requisite Qualifications](#) policy listed previously in this manual.

6.14 CONFIDENTIALITY OF EXAMINATION RESULTS

The CO must make every effort to keep the candidates' practical examination results confidential. To maintain confidentiality of a candidate test status, the CO shall not publicly indicate station pass/fail status. The CO shall keep all discussion about practical station status and retests between the Training Officer/designee, the Evaluator, and the candidate.

AFSC staff will process written test materials after the CO returns material to the AFSC office. The AFSC shall only release the final score results to the candidate and the Training Officer (as indicated in the [Test Notification Process](#)).

7 APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS

7.1 APPLICATION DETAIL

To assist AFSC staff in processing an [Application for Certification](#), it is important that candidates complete the form **correctly and legibly**. COs must ensure correct completion of the following:

1. Verify "Application Type." Candidates that are testing after completing a course should select the "New" box.
2. Verify "Application Level," check each box that applies to the test that the candidate is taking. 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. Verify "Personal Information:"
 - a. email is legible
 - b. the ID number is the **last four numbers** of the candidate's social security number and matches the Scantron
 - c. if applicant had a name change he or she must provide the following with the AFSC with application
 - State/government identification with the changes **AND**
 - Proof of previous name, i.e. marriage license, divorce decree, or other legal documentation
 - d. Candidate requesting a collar pin has checked and initialed the boxes
4. Review the certification requirements as identified on the second page.
5. Verify documentation as required.
6. Ensure the applicant/candidate meets the certification requirements on the applicable directive.
7. The CO is required to use the candidate's government ID to accurately write their legal name on the Test Site Student Roster.
8. All signatures must be on the application for final processing:
 - a. Applicant
 - b. Training Officer or Fire Chief
 - c. CO

Place applications in the return packet with the written examination answer sheet.

7.2 PREREQUISITE REQUIREMENTS

When a standard (or a level within a standard) states that prerequisite certification is required a candidate must complete prerequisite before the AFSC permits certification for the higher level of certification (see page 12 under the "[Testing Without Requisite Qualifications](#)" section). The AFSC shall differentiate prerequisite certification examination questions in the exam process and score these independently. The AFSC shall issue or identify prerequisite certification levels. Each AFSC certification level shall identify prerequisite requirements specific to the related certification directive and training record.

7.3 APPLICANTS FROM OUT-OF-STATE

The AFSC will not certify candidates that do not meet the residency requirement. Confirmation of the residency requirement includes a copy of an Alaska driver's license or a letter from an individual, other than the candidate, stating that the candidate lives in Alaska. The AFSC will waive the residency requirement for an applicant that is a member of a fire department registered with the State Fire Marshal's Office.

7.4 UNDERAGE APPLICANTS

An individual who is less than 18 years of age may not complete a certification exam at any level, however, departments may decide whether the underage applicant may attend the training sessions.

7.5 APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL HISTORY

The AFSC is the AHJ for criminal history background checks for certified Fire Investigators. An individual must submit 2 (two) fingerprint cards processed by an approved service ([click for Approved Finger Printers](#)) with application for certification as a Fire Investigator.

A specific set of policies has not been adopted for processing applicants at other levels with a record of criminal history. The AFSC recommends that the local AHJ adhere to department policy regarding criminal history background checks, however, the CO must contact the Fire Training Administrator immediately if he or she becomes aware of a significant criminal background issue regarding an applicant. The Administrator and AFSC Executive Board will follow established AFSC guidelines to determine if the criminal background is significant or relevant to the level of certification the applicant is seeking.

8 TEST DATE PREPARATION [NFPA 1000, 5.1.8(A)(B), 5.2.3.(A)(B)]

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 CO
3. Ensure that candidates have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment that meets or exceeds the applicable NFPA standard
4. 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
5. Provide sufficiently trained and qualified Evaluators, Assistants, and Helpers for the practical skills testing
6. Set-up practical examination skill stations

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

8.1 DESIGNATED SAFETY OFFICER [NFPA 1000, 5.2.3]

The testing agency has the ultimate responsibility for the safety of all parties involved in the testing process. The testing agency shall assign a qualified Safety Officer (as determined by Test Site Coordinator, Training Officer, or designee); this individual cannot be a candidate. The Safety Officer shall ensure that candidates, Assistants, and Evaluators conduct evolutions in a safe manner. The Safety Officer has the authority, regardless of rank, to stop any activity immediately if he or she observes a dangerous condition or act.

8.2 ARTIFICIALITIES OF TRAINING AND TESTING [NFPA 1000, 5.2.4(k)]

Training and testing offer an estimation of specific Job Performance Requirements (JPRs). When it becomes difficult to reproduce the performance under authentic circumstances, it is acceptable to carry out the manipulative skills within a simulated environment, provided that the simulation enables successful evaluation of the skills needed for a real situation. Both the Lead Instructor and candidate should be able to adapt to simulations for the final examination. The course design should prepare candidates for potential scenarios. The Training Program Manager/Training Officer or their representative designs the course.

Some firefighter skills contain objectives that involve fire control JPR's. For completion of certification exam elements, candidates can simulate most fire control elements. Each skill sheet will identify the requirement for completion of the skill station and specify if simulation is permissible. Any live fire skill that is conducted during the certification exam portion must comply with NFPA 1403; *Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions*.

9 TESTING RESPONSIBILITY [NFPA 1000, 5.2.4(A)(D)(J)]

9.1 ADMINISTERING THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION

The AFSC requires that the CO/Proctor complies with all test policies. The security of AFSC examinations is paramount to maintaining the statewide professional qualifications process. As the designated AFSC representative the CO/Proctor has the responsibility to maintain the security of the examination throughout the test site assignment including locking them up when you are not actively administering the exam.

A CO/Proctor responsible for administering the written examination shall:

1. The written exam instructions provided and specified in this manual, correspondence, and/or the companion slideshow presentation.
2. Ensure that candidates are in a comfortable environment for completing the written examination.
3. Separate candidates to ensure test integrity and verify extraneous materials are removed from the tabletops.
4. Candidates must remove all reference books and materials from the candidate's desk
5. All electronic devices including traditional watches, etc. must be removed and placed facedown.
6. The CO should ensure the candidates understand what items they may or may not use.
7. Distribute the test packets and instruct candidates to complete the required paperwork.
8. Direct candidates to read each question and answer every question.
9. Tell candidates when to begin the examination.
10. Remain in the room to ensure the security of the examination, cameras may not be utilized for testing observation. Exception to this requirement may be found in the following section of this manual under Oral Examination Requests.
11. As candidates complete their exam, collect the sealed test envelope with all other materials outside the envelope, including the used white envelope.
12. Confirm the version of the test packet and the version of the test are accurately marked on the Scantron answer sheet.
13. If a candidate writes on any document or paper during the exam, the CO must collect it.
14. The CO/Proctor must collect and account for all test packets, applications/candidate authorizations, answer sheets, and used envelope/scratch paper to return to the AFSC Office.
15. Do not fold Scantron answer sheets.

If candidates are on-call during the administration of the exam 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, the incomplete test is invalid and will not count against the number of total attempts by the candidate. AFSC staff will reschedule the exam and issue a different version of the test.

9.1.1 ORAL EXAMINATION REQUESTS

For candidates who have difficulty reading a written examination, the AFSC *may* pre-approve arrangements to have the written exam orally read to the candidate. The Fire Training Administrator must approve the request in writing prior to the date of the examination. The Test Site Coordinator has the responsibility to ensure the CO/Proctor is aware of the request prior his or her arrival at the test site. See [ADA Policy](#) for more details. The entity requesting oral administration must provide the following in writing:

1. a request for oral administration at least 30 days prior to testing
2. documentation related to the individual disability associated with the request (see [ADA Policy](#))
3. the number of candidates under the request
4. confirmation that there is a discreet area that will allow the privacy to the candidate, will not disrupt other examination candidates, and will allow for the CO/Proctor to maintain observational abilities
5. the name and community role/position (i.e. librarian, pastor, teacher) of an individual that is available to Proctor a verbal examination (this individual may **not** be affiliated with the fire service or certified at

the level of the exam being administered).

Guidelines for reading the exam are as follows:

1. Questions must be read exactly as written, the reader may not add, detract or define what is written.
2. The reader may not prompt the candidate, clarify, paraphrase, translate or otherwise vary from the written examination.
3. The reader may repeat any portion of the examination as requested by the candidate.
4. Unless there is a request for an extension of time, the time limit for the examination does not change because it was read to the candidate.
5. The candidate must personally complete the answer sheet.
6. The name, credentials, and contact information of the reader must be submitted with the "ADA Reader Instructions and Verification Form" testing materials.

9.1.2 WRITTEN RETEST

The Written Test Contact will be informed about the test results. We strongly advise the test candidate to retake the test at the earliest opportunity in order to retain and review the study materials.

After three total attempts to pass the written exam, the request for additional examinations 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 a fourth written examination, the AFSC recommends that the candidate complete the entire training course. AFSC staff will review additional retest requests on a case-by-case basis. The candidate has two years following successful course completion to obtain the remedial training and successfully complete the written examination.

9.1.3 WRITTEN RETEST PAYMENT

Invoicing for written retests will occur upon request for the test. Payment must be received before the test notification will be approved. Retest fees are non-refundable.

9.1.4 WRITTEN TEST PROCTOR

In the event that an individual requires the administration of a written examination the AFSC Office must specifically authorize a proctor. Test proctors are authorized representatives of AFSC in the administration of a written certification exam. The proctor may not be the primary instructor that trained the individual at the level of the certification examination. It is the test proctor's responsibility to follow test confidentiality protocols in accordance with AFSC policy and procedures.

Written response to the Proctor Instruction Authorization email serves as confirmation that only the candidate shall open the sealed test envelope, and that the candidate shall return all test material in the secondary envelope provided and seal it without permitting the proctor or anyone else from viewing the certification exam. Proctored exams will not be sent out until written verification of receipt of the above instructions has been received.

The AFSC shall use the following guidelines for authorized examinations administered by written test Proctors:

1. AFSC shall review a completed application and supplemental documentation as appropriate to determine eligibility prior to authorizing a Proctored exam.
2. Upon approval the Proctor examination material shall be prepared and mailed by AFSC staff in a shipping package that includes:
 - a. Printed Proctor Confirmation Email
 - b. Student Roster with proctor signature for ID verification
 - c. Proctor return checklist
 - d. Exam instructions
 - e. Self-addressed return envelope
 - f. Return shipping instructions and pre-paid FedEx shipping label

g. Candidate Sealed Certification Examination Packet to include:

- i. Candidate Test Authorization Form
 - ii. Scantron (bubble) form
 - iii. Certification examination
 - iv. Copy of Original Application
 - v. Exam Instruction Page
 - vi. Supplements (SDS, Placard, or other references if applicable)
 - vii. Proctored Candidate Test Authorization Form
 - viii. Individual Test Packet Return Checklist
3. The sealed test envelope **shall not be opened by the written exam Proctor** before the test begins
 4. The **TEST CANDIDATE** shall open the sealed test envelope and fill out the Candidate Test Authorization Form and Scantron (bubble) form when instructed by the Proctor before commencing the exam.
 5. Upon completion, the **TEST CANDIDATE** shall return all test materials to the secondary envelope included with the packet (see items i-viii).
 6. The **TEST CANDIDATE** shall reseal the return test envelope and sign across the gum-line
 7. The test Proctor shall use the return envelope to return all items to the AFSC Administration immediately through an approved shipping method (see [Test Examination Security Plan](#)).

9.2 ADMINISTERING THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

A CO is responsible for administering the practical examination and must:

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 and the companion slideshow.
5. Ensure candidates and evaluators maintain personal safety awareness and follow appropriate safety measures within each skill station as per section 6.1 in this CPM; and
 - A. *the CO may alter, suspend, or terminate any operation they determine as unsafe.*
6. Begin the practical examination process.
7. Review any mandatory local skill sheets for completion. Ensure evaluator signature confirming prior evaluator training completion.
8. Ensure that Evaluators receive a practical station skill check sheets for each candidate.
9. Ensure all skill stations are consistent for each candidate.
10. Ensure assignment of alternate evaluators to evaluate any candidate that requires a retest.
11. Complete the required practical examination documentation and secure with application and written examination paperwork.

9.2.1 CANDIDATE COMPETENCY AT PRACTICAL EXAMINATION SITES

The intent of practical examinations for certification is to determine whether a candidate is competent in the requisite skill requirement as identified within the certification standard. The expectation is that candidates have training and are competent in the required skills prior to the test site. The AFSC prohibits candidates from practicing at the test site once the test examination process begins and candidates are not allowed to bring any test paperwork, electronics, or study materials including agency SOP/G's, checklists, etc. to a skill station.

Each candidate must be prepared to take all portions of the examinations for certification prior to the start of the examination. It is not permissible for a candidate to delay or opt out of a practical examination station for any reason other than injury or sudden on-set of illness. The AFSC prohibits a candidate from discussing the contents of the practical examination with other candidates once the examination process begins.

9.2.2 FACIAL HAIR IN CONTACT WITH SCBA PROHIBITED

It is not permissible for individuals with facial hair that contacts the SCBA facepiece seal to test for certification. The CO has the authority to deny testing to these individuals. Any Test Candidate, CO, 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, 2021 Edition:

"7.14.3 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."*

9.2.3 MANDATORY LOCAL SKILLS AND PRODUCTS

Practical skills being evaluated through mandatory local skill or product shall be evaluated by an AFSC trained evaluator. The evaluator will ensure successful completion of all components of the skill sheet with no failures.

Product items unable to be reviewed at the testing location (e.g. FOII Binders) shall be turned into the CO for processing by the AFSC office staff. AFSC office staff will coordinate evaluation of products by qualified evaluators and return results to the candidate.

9.2.4 PRACTICAL EXAMINATION RETESTING

Candidates that are testing for practical skill examinations must demonstrate competency in accordance with AFSC requirements. Scoring for practical examinations will result in Pass or Fail for that skill sheet. Failures may occur due to either failing a critical point or not achieving the minimum total points for a skill sheet. In the event of failure at a skill station, detailed feedback on specific areas of failure will be provided to the candidate. If a candidate fails a skill sheet, the candidate is required to undergo a complete retest of that skill. Evaluators must document in writing the reason for failure on skill sheets. Any questions must be directed to the CO.

Candidates completing psychomotor or process skills may attempt the skill or evolution retest two additional times after the initial attempt for a total of three attempts. If a candidate is unable to demonstrate the skill competency within three attempts, he or she must receive remedial training before attempting the skill again at a different test session on a different date.

Candidates completing product skills may attempt the product two additional times after the initial attempt for a total of three attempts. AFSC office staff will coordinate with the candidate and qualified evaluators to complete this process. If the candidate is unable to complete the product skill within three attempts, he or she must receive remedial training before attempting to complete the product again.

The CO, the Training Officer, and/or the Lead Instructor will meet after a candidate's third unsuccessful attempt to determine the remedial action necessary to prepare the candidate for another skill evaluation.

A candidate who requires remedial training must receive this training from an AFSC certified Fire Service Instructor. The AFSC does not permit remedial training at a test site practical skills examination station. An instructor must document all required remedial training on a [Remedial Training Form](#).

9.2.5 REMEDIAL TRAINING FORM

The CO must initiate the [Remedial Training Form](#) if the candidate is unable to successfully complete the same practical skill station within three attempts or if the applicant chooses not to retest or is unable to retest during their initial practical test. The CO will document the specific skills on the Remedial Training Form.

Additionally, the original failed skill sheet must be included with the form when it is submitted to the AFSC staff. Copies of these documents may be created for the Test Site Coordinator, Training Officer, or Instructor for their record-keeping purposes.

Remedial training **may not** be conducted at the test site or by the CO or a test site Evaluator. The Fire Service Instructor who provides remedial training must verify by signature that the candidate is capable of demonstrating skill competency in accordance with established job performance requirements for the level of certification at which the candidate is testing.

An AFSC certified Fire Service Instructor that is not directly involved with the testing and evaluation process in which the candidate initially tested must conduct remedial training. Instructors may include the course instructor or another outside instructor if they have not provided direct support to the test site process. The burden is on the candidate to obtain the required remedial training and is responsible for returning this form to AFSC staff. There is no minimum or maximum number of hours for remedial training. The candidate has two years following the initial test to obtain the remedial training and successfully complete the practical examinations.

Due to the nature of the station selection for each certification examination, the candidate is required to demonstrate skill competency for all the stations selected for the new test 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. Once the candidate successfully completes an approved retest, a CO must sign the Remedial Training Form and return it to the AFSC staff.

9.2.6 PRACTICAL EXAMINATION RECORD KEEPING

COs must maintain thorough records at a practical examination site. Complete and proper documentation ensures efficient administrative processing. AFSC requires clear documentation prior to issuing certifications.

Candidates are required to competently complete the skills stations selected for a given test site and all mandatory locally verified skills. The AFSC requires the CO to document the results of all mandatory skills and randomly selected final skill examinations on the [Practical Examination Report Forms](#). Although each candidate must have a skill sheet for each examination station, the CO 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. **However, if the candidate fails a skill upon his or her third attempt, the original skill sheet must accompany a copy of the remedial training form.**

In cases where an individual is unsuccessful completing a required skill station(s), the CO must follow the remedial training procedure, record the results on the [Remedial Training Form](#), and provide copies of relevant skill sheets from station(s).

9.2.7 PRACTICAL SKILLS EXAMINATION REPORTING FORM

The [Practical Examination Report Forms](#) are used to record the results of all mandatory and randomly selected skills for each candidate at the test site including locally verified skills. It is helpful to list the candidates by last name, in alphabetical order. The CO must clearly note the outcome for each candidate on the form. A CO must include a completed Practical Examination Report Form with the returned test packet documentation.

10 EXAMINATION PROCESSING AND NOTIFICATION

10.1 RETURNING EXAMINATION BOOKLETS AND MATERIALS

The CO shall be responsible for returning all final examination materials after the testing session. The AFSC explicitly prohibits all personnel from copying any portion of certification examination. All test items must ship in accordance with AFSC policies for test materials. Test items must ship through a means that allows materials to be traced (Goldstreak, Fed- Ex, USPS).

The CO must return all materials to AFSC after each exam by using the "Test Tote Checklist" found in the front of the paperwork folder. These include:

1. Test Packets, verify the numbers and packet count
2. Completed signed [Application for Certification](#)
3. Completed Scantron answer sheets
4. Completed Hazardous Materials skill sheet and template copies (if applicable)
5. Completed & signed [Test Site Candidate Roster](#)
6. Completed [Evaluator Code of Ethics Compliance Agreement](#)
7. Completed [Practical Examination Report Forms](#)
8. Completed [CO Exam Return Report](#)
9. Completed [CO Exam Site Survey](#)
10. Completed [Contractor Pay Documentation Form](#)
11. Completed [Test Site Coordinator Exam Site Survey](#)
12. All other material listed on the tote checklist sent by AFSC staff

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

10.2 SCORING

AFSC staff will attempt to score exams upon receipt. During peak periods, test results may not be available for up to 30- days. For group examinations, AFSC sends the candidate scores to the designated Written Test Contact specified by the requesting entity. The designated Written Test Contact has the responsibility to distribute individual test scores to candidates.

Evaluations of practical skill sheets are on a pass/fail basis with all mandatory components identified. Practical skill tasks may be indicated as critical with yellow highlighting and an asterix. If a candidate fails a critical task, it will result in failing the entire skill sheet. All other non-critical tasks are evaluated based on a pass/fail point system, where achieving a specific number of correct answers without missing any critical points is required for passing. A candidate must successfully complete all AFSC designated stations during the examination of the overall skill component of an examination level. The CO will provide each candidate with practical exam results (*Pass/Fail*) on the date of the practical examination.

AFSC processes all written exams scores using computer software. If computerized scoring is unavailable, AFSC staff use a stencil to ensure accurate scoring. Written exam scoring is duplicated for each test group to ensure score accuracy. The student must pass the written exam with a score of 70% or higher, unless otherwise specified.

Under the [Testing Without Requisite Qualifications](#) option, the release of candidate scores shall include a statement noting certification pre-requisites are incomplete. Final certification issuance is withheld until all pre-requisite requirements are achieved and AFSC test fees are paid.

10.3 PAYMENT PROCESSING

Applicants that are paying their own fees and will not have a registered Fire Department pay for their testing

fees, are required to pay **prior** to testing. For Registered Fire Departments, the AFSC/BFAST staff generate invoices upon receipt and send them to the email address provided by the applicant on the back of the application.

The AFSC does not issue certification until receipt of test fees. Once the AFSC receives payment for an application, final review and issuance is queued. The AFSC issues certification to individuals with complete applications within 30-days of payment.

For test group of less than 5 candidates direct expenses will be invoiced in lieu of individual test fees if the direct expenses are more that the cost of the test fees. In addition to the direct expenses such as CO fees, travel, parking, shipping and per diem, there will be an additional 20% for administrative costs.

10.4 CERTIFICATION NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Upon certification issuance, the AFSC shall email an electronic notification to each candidate with instructions on accessing an electronic certificate. The candidate is responsible for providing a copy of the certificate to his or her organization. The AFSC will maintain a copy of the certificate in the individuals' certification file in the main office. For group examinations, the entity's designated training record manager will receive an email notification when a department member is issued an AFSC certification.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – CERTIFYING OFFICER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. Issue:** A candidate who did not pass a practical examination has raised a concern regarding the unavailability or non-functioning of required equipment during the examination.
Potential Resolution: If the validity of the complaint can be verified, it may be appropriate to allow the candidate to retake the examination. Furthermore, considering that you conducted a thorough equipment check prior to the examination to ensure sufficient availability, it is necessary to investigate the whereabouts or cause of the malfunctioning equipment.
- 2. Issue:** Upon arrival at the testing location, it is discovered that three out of the five scheduled evaluators will be absent and no replacements are available.
Possible Solution: If feasible, reschedule the examination. If rescheduling is not an option, consider testing two stations at a time and gradually testing the remaining stations. This will significantly increase the duration of the practical examination. Alternatively, it may be possible to commence the two longest or most complex stations while attempting to secure additional evaluators. In either case, it is important to inform the AFSC Administration about the problem so that appropriate action can be taken with the instructor or Test Site Coordinator.
- 3. Issue:** After completing the certification application, a candidate discloses that they were convicted of a felony three years ago and seeks advice regarding testing.
Possible Solution: Include the candidate in the testing session along with the rest of the class and inform them that this matter falls under the purview of the Authority Having Jurisdiction. If the CO becomes aware of a significant criminal background issue concerning an applicant, immediate contact with the Administrator is necessary. The Administrator and Executive Board will follow established guidelines to determine the significance or relevance of the criminal background issue to the desired level of certification.
- 4. Issue:** The candidate's fire department procedures slightly deviate from the requirements specified in the skill sheets.
Possible Solution: If the candidate meets the minimum task requirement, instruct the evaluators to assess the candidate based on the department procedure. Additionally, it is vital to notify the Lead Instructor to bring up these concerns with the AFSC Administration prior to the final evaluation process. This will enable necessary corrections and adjustments to be made prior to the candidates' arrival for testing.
- 5. Issue:** A candidate displays an obvious medical condition that poses safety risks in relation to the physical demands of firefighter tasks during a test station.
Possible Solution: If it is evident that the individual is unfit to engage in physical work on the day of the practical examination, it is crucial to prohibit their participation. If necessary, inform the Administrator and request a doctor's clearance indicating that the candidate has been medically cleared to perform the physical work required for firefighter duties during the examination. Express concerns to the Test Site Coordinator (TSC) and, at the very least, obtain a written statement from the TSC or Training Officer (TO) assuming full responsibility for the individual.
- 6. Issue:** The skill sheet includes the use of foam, which is prohibited in the testing area.
Possible Solution: Utilize training foam for testing purposes.
- 7. Issue:** The use of training foam is not permitted.
Possible Solution: Simulate the application of foam without spraying any.
- 8. Question:** Can the CO permit any skill to be simulated?
Answer: No, simulations will only be allowed if specified in the skill sheet or with prior approval from the Administrator.

APPENDIX B – ALASKA FIRE SERVICE CERTIFICATION BACKGROUND

In the 1970's, fire service agencies in Alaska requested that Fire Service Training create a Firefighter I training and certification program for use throughout the state. The basis of the program was an NFPA referenced standard that would allow localized accreditation by Fire Service Training for departments to conduct in house training and testing that would result in individual state certification for Firefighter I. In the 1980's Fire Service Training expanded the program to include Firefighter II.

In the early 1990's Fire Service Training began to administer all firefighter written examinations, but fire service agencies continued to conduct the practical exam testing at the local level. By 2000, Fire Service Training conducted all practical and written examinations for firefighter certification with state endorsed Certifying Officers. In 1998, the Alaska legislature created the Alaska Fire Standards Council (AFSC) to provide oversight to fire service standards and certification process and assist the Fire Service Training office in achieving International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) accreditation for firefighter certification directives.

In 2005 Fire Service Training was renamed the Training and Education Bureau (TEB), and TEB staff oversaw all fire service certification testing until the AFSC administrative office took over the responsibility in 2008. In 2017 the AFSC and TEB units merged to form the Bureau of Fire Accreditation, Standards and Training (BFAST) Currently, fire service training is still conducted at the local level through training programs accredited by BFAST, but under the AFSC authority, staff manage all final practical and written certification examinations in accordance with the AFSC [Certification Policy Manual](#).