

AUGUST 2014 REVISED HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Frequently Asked Questions: Current Editions NFPA 1001/NFPA 472

As part of the NFPA 1001 Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, 2013 Edition, a firefighter/candidate must satisfy the NFPA 472- Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents 2013 Edition. Firefighter/candidates are required to show competency at the Awareness and Operations Level as requisite requirement for Fire Fighter I certification.

As of July 1, 2010, the Alaska Fire Standards Council administers certification testing to the Awareness and Operations Levels within NFPA 472 as part of the Fire Fighter I Level of certification specified in NFPA 1001. Although minor changes have occurred within the **content** of the current standards, the overall **process** for certification remains the same. Certification testing is conducted to verify requisite knowledge and skill requirements through practical and written examinations. The general **format** within practical examinations remains the similar to previous skills (practical job performance requirements [JPR's]).

The following information is provided to explain updates to current revisions of the standards:

1) What is NFPA 472?

The formal name for NFPA 472 is the *“Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents, 2013 Edition.”* It represents the national consensus standard for hazmat competency requirements and serves as the reference for minimum firefighter hazmat training.

2) What has changed with NFPA 472?

Under the 2013 Edition of NFPA 472, key Operations Level Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction (HM/WMD) tasks used for final certification examinations have remained unchanged.

3) What are "Mission Specific Competencies"?

This term refers to competencies where the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) can match the expected tasks and duties of its personnel with the competencies required to perform those tasks. These competencies should be performed under the guidance of a Hazardous Materials Technician (HMT), allied professional, or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). A more detailed description of specific tasks can be found in NFPA 472, Chapter 6.

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4) What training requirements will qualify an individual to be eligible for a NFPA 472 Operations examination?

Training course content for NFPA 472 should include the CORE COMPETENCIES listed in chapters 4, 5, and 6; MISSION SPECIFIC competencies of PPE (6.2) and Product Control (6.6). AFSC estimates indicate that fulfillment of this obligation requires a *minimum* of 3 full days of classroom *plus* practical skills training. **However**, while all the NFPA 472 Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD competencies must be addressed, the methods for presentation, instruction and practice are determined by the fire department Training Program Manager, Training Officer, and/or Lead Instructor. Note that the AFSC only requires that two "Mission Specific" competencies be tested. While the local AHJ has the discretion to include additional competencies requirements, the AFSC final examination will only address sections 6.2 and 6.6 of this chapter as required for IFSAC and ProBoard accreditation.

5) I am an instructor who plans to teach Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD as part of a Fire Fighter I class. What textbook/curriculum is the basis for questions on the Alaska Fire Standards Council's written HM/WMD examination?

All test questions on the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD written examination are referenced to the NFPA 472 2013 standard and validated to the following publishing companies' hazardous materials manuals:

- IFSTA, *Hazardous Materials for First Responders*, 4th Edition
- Jones and Bartlett Learning, *Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations*, 1st Edition

Reference lists are also in the AFSC [Firefighter Certification Directive](#) and [HMA/HMO](#) certification directive documents.

6) What should I expect in the practical skills portion of the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD examination?

Skill sheets have been developed to assess competency based on approximately 7 skill sets that the firefighter/candidate must complete to test at the Operations Level HM/WMD. There are no specific competencies at the awareness level (chapter 4). These skill sheets are available at the AFSC [certification program](#) webpage. The selected skill sheets and scenario(s) detail for a given examination are **not** available in advance of the examination date.

7) Will Alaska firefighters still be able to certify to the Awareness Level HM/WMD?

The AFSC will continue to offer a separate Awareness level test for departments that are unable to complete a combined Awareness and Operations course. However, a candidate is not eligible for Firefighter I certification until successful completion of both Awareness *and* Operations Level HM/WMD examination.

8) How will Alaska firefighters be tested to receive certification to the Operations Level HM/WMD?

To meet the current requirements for Firefighter I, as of July 1 2014, the AFSC **only** offers a combined written certification test for Awareness *and* Operations Level Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction with Mission-Specific Competencies. Alaska firefighters

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who successfully complete the process for Firefighter I will receive a combined Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD certificate, including referenced Mission-Specific Competencies.

9) Can the written examination be conducted concurrent (on the same day) with the practical examination?

Yes. However, HM/WMD examination that are taken on the same date(s) and at the same test site as a Firefighter I examination will likely be conducted over a two-day period (*written one day and the practical another*) due to the amount of time needed to complete the test material. The actual test date(s) and time needed are coordinated between a Test Site Coordinator/Training Officer and the AFSC office.

10) Can the Fire Fighter I certification examination be conducted concurrent with the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD examination?

Yes. Unless an accredited department specifically requests separate test dates, the Fire Fighter I examination process will incorporate the HM/WMD with Mission-Specific Competencies as part of the Fire Fighter I practical and written testing components.

11) What is the certification testing process for those candidates trained to the Fire Fighter I Level (inclusive of the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD)?

There are generally two phases to the Fire Fighter I testing process. The first is a combined written examination inclusive of firefighting and Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD questions (100 FFI and 100 HM questions). The second is the practical skills test for Fire Fighter I and HM/WMD which will include Fire Fighter I skills, a Fire Fighter JPR evolution and a Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction scenario(s). A 70% passing score for the written exams and a "Pass" on the practical skills station is required to qualify for certification.

12) What is the certification testing process for those candidates trained to the Awareness and Operations Level for HM/WMD?

Similar to the FFI level test above, there are two phases to the HM/WMD testing process. The first phase is the written examination and the second phase is the practical skills. This is a combined Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD examination consisting of 100 questions. A 70% passing score for the written exams and a "Pass" on the practical skills station is required to qualify for certification.

13) What equipment or materials will the host community or requesting agency need to have available for Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD Practical Skills Testing?

The AFSC will supply templates for the Operations Level HM/WMD practical skills test. The requesting agency or host community is required to have the following items:

- A copier for reproduction of skill sheets
- Copies of a current Emergency Response Guide (ERG) book.
- Large open, flat area, preferably away from public view or easy public access.

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- A building or structure that could be used as a Fixed Facility site with a standard sized door to access the outside at ground level. A burn building, fire training tower, or non-public access to the fire station could be acceptable.
- One (1) fire service engine or pumper that meets NFPA 1901 standards with water supply capability including hydrant make-up, supply hoses, and foam solution (can be training solution).
- All firefighter/candidates are responsible for attending Operations Level HM/WMD practical examinations with Structural Firefighting Equipment (hood, helmet, boots, gloves, bunker pants and coat) including SCBA and a spare air cylinder.

14) Will the firefighter/candidate be allowed to have any reference material (ERG) at the written examination?

Yes. Although test questions are written in a manner to allow the recall of information learned without the need to use any reference material, the Fire Standards Council Hazardous Materials Committee determined that the use of the reference material is a critical component to overall competency at this level. The use of the ERG and an SDS (*selected by the AFSC*) is permitted for both the written and practical portions of the hazardous materials exams. *Note that most questions on the written exam cannot be answered using the ERG, and candidates are cautioned not to spend too much time searching the ERG to answer written exam questions.*

15) What is the fee for Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD certification?

The certification fee is \$60: \$205.00 for the written exam, \$20 for the practical, and \$20 for the certification administration fee for each level certificate that is issued. When a firefighter candidate is testing for combined firefighter and hazardous materials examinations there is an additional \$20 fee for the other certificate that is issued, but there is no additional written and practical fee (\$80 total). Should a firefighter/candidate choose to certify Hazardous Materials separately from the Firefighter I, *each* examination sitting is \$60.00 per candidate.

16) What happens if an individual fails the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD portion during a combined Fire Fighter I examination?

The AFSC will not award the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD certification *or* the FFI certificate until the individual has successfully complete the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD exam. As an example: a firefighter/candidate who tests for Fire Fighter I will also be tested to Awareness and Operations HM/WMD. The firefighter/candidate will be expected to achieve a minimum of 70% proficiency in the Fire Fighter I examination questions and a minimum of 70% on the Awareness and Operations Level questions in addition to a "Pass" for all required skills.

17) How will retests be handled for those who do not pass the HM/WMD practical examination and the written examinations?

- Practical skills will be evaluated at the test site by an AFSC Certifying Officer. A candidate has three total attempts to successfully complete the practical. A candidate must receive remedial training if she or he is unable to successfully complete a station within three attempts. The AFSC office can be contacted on a case-by-case basis to reschedule an examination after remedial training has been conducted.

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- For written tests, a firefighter/candidate will be notified by the AFSC in writing of pass/fail status. A candidate with an initial failure will be granted another opportunity to retest as per guidelines established by the AFSC. The AFSC will reschedule examination retests on a case-by-case basis.

18) Can a firefighter become certified to the FFI level without being certified in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD?

No. Under the 2013 edition for NFPA 1001, a firefighter/candidate cannot receive Fire Fighter I certification without also being certified to the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD.

19) Are individuals that were certified to the FFI level under previous versions of NFPA 1001 required to become certified in latest Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD?

No. A certified Firefighter I may *elect* to pursue Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD certification, but there are no AFSC requirements for individuals already certified as FFI.

20) An individual earned FFI certification before the NFPA 1001 2013 edition changes and plans to take a FFII course in the near future. Does the individual have to become certified in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD before completing an accredited FFII course?

No, an individual does not need to be certified in Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD before completing the accredited Fire Fighter II course. However, he or she must complete Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD training and successfully complete the AFSC final examination before eligibility to receive FFII certification.

21) An individual took Awareness and Operations Level Hazardous Materials training through an accredited fire department several years ago and received certification. The department completes a refresher course every year. Does the individual have to be recertified to the 2013 edition?

No. The AFSC does not have a recertification requirement for hazardous materials issued to individuals certified before these updates.

22) Will an individual meet OSHA regulations by obtaining NFPA 472 certification?

OSHA and NFPA are two separate and distinct entities. The NFPA 472 Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD requirements are consistent with OSHA regulations, but the local AHJ is ultimately responsible for determining the policy and procedure for meeting OSHA regulation requirements.

23) Will an individual meet NFPA 472 certification requirements by completing an OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (HAZWOPER) course?

No. The NFPA 472 Awareness and Operations level is specific to first responders and fire department operations. HAZWOPER is intended for employers and their employees who are exposed or potentially exposed to hazardous substances -- including hazardous waste -- and who are engaged in operations as specified by [1910.120\(a\)\(1\)\(i-v\)](#) and [1926.65\(a\)\(1\)\(i-v\)](#).

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24) What HM/WMD Levels and Mission-Specific Competencies will the latest AFSC certification represent?

The AFSC will issue one certificate titled “Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations” with the Mission-Specific Competencies: Personal Protective Equipment and Product Control.

25) When are the 2013 certification update requirements for AK firefighters effective?

The latest standards used for testing Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications and the Competencies for Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents were effective on July 1, 2014.

26) How long is HM certification effective and is recertification required?

To date, Firefighter and Hazardous Materials certifications issued by AFSC do not expire within the state of Alaska.

27) Who can deliver Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD courses?

This course is delivered by the Division of Fire and Life Safety Training and Education Bureau (TEB), or, through a fire department or organization that is accredited by TEB to teach for this level of certification. Accreditation requirements and course content must be approved by TEB prior to [Course Notification Form](#) submittal, and the course notification must be sent to the AFSC office at least 30-days prior to the course start date.

28) What about reciprocity?

At present, the AFSC will offer reciprocity (honored in part) for Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD certificates ProBoard or IFSAC seals. Certificates issued under reciprocity will only be issued for recognition of **complete** Awareness and Operations HM/WMD with the AFSC required Mission-Specific Competencies.

29) Is there a challenge process to the Awareness and Operations Level HM/WMD Certification based on previous experience?

Equivalency challenges to the NFPA 472 Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction standard competencies will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Contact the AFSC Director for specific details and forms.

For answers to additional questions, please contact the [AFSC office](#) or send e-mail correspondence to:

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