



# **FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE**

*(NFPA 1033 2014 Edition)*

**Department of Public Safety**

**5700 E. Tudor Road**

**Anchorage, Alaska 99507**

**(907) 269-5052**

<https://dps.alaska.gov/AFSC/Home>

*Revised January 2020*

V14-7

# AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE

## FIRE INVESTIGATOR DIRECTIVE OVERVIEW

The Certified Fire Investigator (CFI) directive was originally designed to provide Alaska fire service agencies with a method to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to adequately perform fire investigations within their organizations and regions. It was based on the 1998 edition of NFPA 1033 and was developed cooperatively by the Fire Service Training office and the Alaska Association of Fire and Arson Investigators ([AAFAI](#)). In 2015, the AFSC updated the directive to meet the 2014 edition of the [NFPA 1033 Standard, Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator](#). The intent of the CFI material is to support fire service organizations and ensure that they are investigating post fire incidents in a proficient, professional, and uniform manner throughout the State of Alaska.

## LEVELS OF CERTIFICATION

The AFSC Fire Investigator certification directive follows the 2014 edition of NFPA 1033. Two levels of certification are available through this directive and include Alaska Fire Investigator Technician (AKFIT) and Certified Fire Investigator (CFI). Training for the AKFIT certification is available through the completion of 15 core modules accessible through [CFITrainer.net](#). Training for Certified Fire Investigator is typically available through the Bureau of Fire Accreditation, Standards and Training (BFAST) offered courses or other entity courses accredited by BFAST. The AFSC provides certificates for both levels of certification and administers certification examinations for Certified Fire Investigator upon completion of an approved course.

### **Alaska Fire Investigator Technician (AKFIT):**

This directive encompasses the requirement for individuals seeking basic fire cause and determination investigator certification. This level includes basic elements of the 2014 NFPA 1033 standard and the NFPA 921 guidelines. Applicants for this level of certification must successfully complete the AFSC designated online modules through [CFITrainer.net](#) and the [AKFIT Training Record](#).

### **Certified Fire Investigator:**

**Fire Investigator Definition:** (*NFPA 1033 2014 ed., 3.3.7*): An individual who has demonstrated the skills and knowledge necessary to conduct, coordinate, and complete a fire investigation.

This directive encompasses the requirement for individuals who are generally assigned the fire investigation responsibilities of their organization. This level includes all requisite elements of 2014 edition of NFPA 1033. Applicants for this certification must meet the AKFIT certification requirements and must complete training to meet knowledge and skill requirements as required within the NFPA 1033 standard.

## AKFIT INITIAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

For certification as an Alaska Fire Investigator Technician (AKFIT), an individual must:

- a. be at least 18 years of age; and,
- b. be an Alaska resident or member of an organized fire department/emergency response organization registered with the Division of Fire and Life Safety; and
- c. \*complete the following [CFITrainer.net](#) core modules:
  1. [Digital Photography and the Fire Investigator](#)
  2. [Documenting the Event](#)
  3. [Electrical Safety](#)
  4. [Ethics and the Fire Investigator](#)
  5. [Fire Investigator Scene Safety](#)
  6. [Fundamentals of Interviewing](#)
  7. [Fundamentals of Residential Building Construction](#)
  8. [Introduction to Evidence](#)

## AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE

9. [Investigating Fatal Fires](#)
10. [Investigating Motor Vehicle Fires](#)
11. [Physical Evidence at the Fire Scene](#)
12. [The HAZWOPER Standard](#)
13. [The Practical Application of the Relationship Between NFPA 1033 and NFPA 921](#)
14. [The Scientific Method for Fire and Explosion Investigation](#)
15. [Wildland Fires Investigation](#)

*\*A copy of the [CFITrainer.net](#) transcript must be included with the application packet.*

- d. complete the [AKFIT Training Record](#) with Chief/Supervisor signature; and
- e. complete an [Application for Certification](#)

## CERTIFIED FIRE INVESTIGATOR INITIAL REQUIREMENTS

For certification as a Certified Fire Investigator, applicants must:

- a. be at least 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or equivalent; and,
- b. be an Alaska resident or member of an organized fire department/emergency response organization registered with the Division of Fire and Life Safety; and
- c. have AFSC AKFIT certification or submit completed [AKFIT Training Record](#) with Chief/Supervisor signature which will result in an additional admin fee; and
- d. be currently active as an investigator in Alaska and have a minimum of 18 months experience as an investigator in Alaska and have investigation duties assigned (*official documentation/letter from Chief or supervisor required*); and
- e. \*successfully complete a BFAST accredited/AFSC approved Certified Fire Investigator course; and
- f. complete an [Application for Certification](#); and
- g. submit 2 (two) fingerprint cards processed by an approved service ([click for Approved Finger Printers](#)); and
- h. \*successfully complete the practical (JPR) requirements and [AFSC CFI Training Record](#); and
- i. successfully complete the AFSC CFI exam with a score of 70% and pass the required practical skills.

*\* The CFI course requirement and the final examination requirement must be completed within **three years** of application date and must meet NFPA 1033 core requirements.*

*\*\* The AFSC will perform the criminal background check before issuance of final certification. An individual convicted of a felony is not eligible for certification at this level (report is sent to applicant)*

## CERTIFIED FIRE INVESTIGATOR TRAINING COURSES

For AFSC Certified Fire Investigator eligibility an individual must complete an AFSC approved training course. A training course may be offered either through an accredited training program with an approved curriculum; or through other courses approved by the AFSC. If an organization is interested in conducting an approved Certified Fire Investigator course that will result in AFSC certification the entity must contact the Training and Education Bureau well in advance of the course start (*minimum of 60 days*). CFI courses that are conducted without prior accreditation approval from the BFAST and AFSC **will not** be eligible for AFSC certification examinations.

CFI courses are primarily designed to satisfy the knowledge and practical skill requirements of NFPA 1033. The [CFI Skill Sheets](#) and [CFI Training Record](#) are utilized for the final examination to ensure the candidate has met the requisite skill requirements before issuance of certification.

### Alternative to CFI Courses

The AFSC recognizes a number of other courses and/or certifications. For eligibility to test for CFI, completion of an approved course must be within the last 3 years, and the corresponding certificate must be valid at the time of AFSC [Application for Certification](#). Applicants requesting recognition of CFI training for any other course must

## AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE

provide the AFSC with course documentation and curriculum when submitting an [Application for Certification](#). AFSC approved courses and certifications are:

1. **National Fire Academy/Fire Investigation: essentials (RO 772)** (*copy of certificate of completion required*)
2. **International Association of Arson Investigators Certified Fire Investigator Program** (*copy of certification required*)
3. **National Association of Fire Investigators Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator Program** (*copy of certification required*)

*The above courses meet the training and practical exam requirements for the CFI level.*

Upon approval to test, an applicant must successfully pass the final examination to receive AFSC CFI certification. The final examination must be completed within 3 years of the completion an accredited/approved course.

## CERTIFIED FIRE INVESTIGATOR EXAMINATIONS

The Fire Standards Council has a validated written examination test bank for Certified Fire Investigator. The CFI examination has a total of 100 questions. Questions from the test banks are referenced to NFPA 1033 Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator, 2014 edition. Certified Fire Investigator certification examinations are typically administered immediately following an AFSC approved CFI course.

In cases where an individual is eligible to test, but is not testing with a group, an approved AFSC Certifying Officer (CO) may request an examination be mailed for local administration. If a CO is not available in the local community, the AFSC office may authorize mailing the exam to an approved individual to serve as a test Proctor in the applicant's community. Exam distribution procedures shall follow the Written Test Proctor policy specified in the [Certification Policy Manual](#). The examination must be completed and returned to the AFSC office within 30-days of receipt.

For individuals with reasonable access to the AFSC office local staff will proctor written examinations. The AFSC **will not** send examinations to the individual taking the exam.

The AFSC office will grade all certification examinations and notify the applicant of final scores.

Certified Fire Investigator Written & Practical Examination References

- a. NFPA 1033, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*, 2014 Edition
- b. NFPA 921, *Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations*, 2014 Edition
- c. Text (*each of the following text is only partially referenced and cannot be used as a stand-alone resource for written exam preparation*)
  - Jones and Bartlett, *Fire Investigator, Principles and Practice*, 5th Edition
- d. [CFI Skill Sheets](#)

For certificate issuance, written examinations must be completed with a score of 70% or higher. The AFSC office will grade all certification examinations and notify the applicant of final scores. Upon successful completion, the AFSC will issue the Certified Fire Investigator certificate.

## RECIPROCITY/EQUIVALENCY CHALLENGE

Refer to the AFSC [Certification Policy Manual](#) for the requirements under each of these processes.

## CERTIFICATION TIME LINES

Certificates issued under the AFSC Certified Fire Investigator directive have an expiration date. The AFSC uses NFPA 1033, 1.3.7 as a basis for maintaining currency through certification renewal. The AFSC has determined that Alaska fire service personnel should maintain requisite skills associated with fire investigation, and AFSC renewal guidelines were developed to ensure that individuals obtain recurring training related to fire investigation.

All AFSC AKFIT and CFI certificates are valid for a maximum period of 3 calendar years. To renew, an individual must submit a [AKFIT/CFI Renewal Packet](#) and renewal documents prior to the expiration date listed on the

## AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE

individual certificate. Renewal must be complete within one year of expiration or additional renewal requirements must be met. *The certified individual is ultimately responsible for monitoring his or her certification expiration date.*

The AFSC uses the date of an applicant's initial application for certification to determine the Alaska certificate expiration date.

### FIRE INVESTIGATOR RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

#### Alaska Fire Investigator Renewals (AKFIT & CFI)

The AFSC AKFIT & CFI certification levels have specific expiration dates for each certificate that is issued. For initial certification and renewals, the individual expiration date is 3-years from the issuance date. Official expiration/renewal dates are listed on all issued certificates or within the AFSC [IMPACT](#) database. The CFI level supersedes AKFIT and only one [AKFIT/CFI Renewal Packet](#) is needed for renewal as a CFI.

A previously certified investigator can renew certification by providing documentation under item 1 *and* 2 as follows:

1. Documentation of fire investigator learning *and/or* instructional delivery of fire investigator related training.
  - a. Documentation of attendance at one or more \*courses totaling 40 classroom/field hours during the previous period of certification (minimum of 40 hours) with primary objectives that meet the following criterion:
    - i. Directly relate to fire investigative topics outlines within NFPA 1033 1.3.7 (2014 edition), to include: fire science; fire chemistry; thermodynamics; thermometry; fire dynamics; explosion dynamics; computer fire modeling; fire investigation; fire analysis; fire investigation methodology; fire investigation technology; hazardous materials; failure analysis and analytical tools; fire protection systems; evidence documentation, collection, and preservation; and electricity and electrical systems.  
*\*Qualifying courses include hours accrued through [CFITrainer.net](#), AAFAI conference attendance hours, and other related CFI course hours. All CEU's must be specific to CFI training and education hours and are subject to AFSC review and final approval.*
  - b. Documentation that an individual \*\*instructed classroom/field hours during the 3-year certification period (minimum of 40 hours) on topics specifically related to NFPA 1033 1.3.7 (listed above).  
*\*Instructional delivery is specific to public safety personnel (not public education/presentations). Course preparation and closeout time **do not** apply.*
  - c. Any combination of **a** and **b** above equivalent a minimum of 40-hours over the \*\*3-year certification period.
2. Submit a [AKFIT/CFI Renewal Packet](#) within one-year of the expiration date.

*Note: For item "2", the AFSC [AKFIT/CFI Renewal Packet](#) is available online. The packet items must be reviewed and signed by applicant Chief/Designated Supervisor before return to the AFSC office.*

#### **Additional Renewal Requirements for CFI Level Applicants Only:**

3. \*\*\*must submit 2 (two) fingerprint cards processed by an approved service ([click for Approved Finger Printers](#)).
- \*\*\* The AFSC will perform the criminal background check before issuance of final certification. An individual convicted of a felony is not eligible for certification at this level (report is sent to applicant)*

#### Alaska Fire Investigator Renewals (AKFIT & CFI) For Expirations More Than 12-Months

Individual renewal for fire investigator certificates that are expired **more than 12-months** must:

- a. Complete the renewal steps listed above; and,
- b. provide clear documentation of 20 additional hours (**60 total hours when combined with above**) of fire investigator learning *and/or* instructional delivery of fire investigator related training \*specific to fire and arson investigation, that has been completed within 3-years of the application date.

## **AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE**

- c. complete a Certified Fire Investigator written exam with a minimum score of 70%

### **CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Applicants for Certified Fire Investigator must submit 2 (two) fingerprint cards processed by an approved service ([click for Approved Finger Printers](#)). The AFSC will perform the criminal background check and review applicant criminal history report before issuance of final certification. An individual convicted of a felony is not eligible for certification at this level (report is sent to applicant).

### **FIRE INVESTIGATOR CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS**

Periodically, the AAFAI provides Fire Investigator conferences. The AAFAI generally hosts a number of CFI related workshops and provides documentation to attendees upon completion. In addition, the National Fire Academy and the Alaska State Firefighters Conference host a number of arson investigator related courses/courses. To receive credit for investigator renewal, any CEU's claimed for credit must be clearly documented and certificates of completion or attendance must be included in renewal packets.

### **PREVIOUS ALASKA CERTIFIED FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION/GRANDFATHER CERTIFICATION**

The Alaska Fire Standards Council recognizes State of Alaska fire investigator certifications that have not expired.

Due to ongoing changes with NFPA fire investigator certification standards the grandfather request for IFSAC seals are not available.

This clause does not prohibit an individual that was previously certified in Alaska from receiving an IFSAC seal. Individual IFSAC seal requests for CFI are automatically granted through completion of the requirements listed within this directive.