



# **FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE**

*(NFPA 1033 2022 Edition)*

**Department of Public Safety**

**5700 E. Tudor Road**

**Anchorage, Alaska 99507**

**(907) 269-5052**

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

*Revised June 2023*

## 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 2022, the AFSC updated the directive to meet the 2022 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 2022 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 27 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 2022 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 2022 ed., 3.3.10*): 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 2022 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. [Charting Your Career Path In Fire Investigation](#)
  2. [Critical Evaluation and Testing of Commonly Reported Accidental Causes](#)
  3. [Digital Photography and the Fire Investigator](#)
  4. [Documenting the Event](#)
  5. [Effective Investigation and Testimony](#)
  6. [Electrical Safety](#)
  7. [Ethics and the Fire Investigator](#)
  8. [Explosion Dynamics](#)

## AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE

9. Fire Chemistry
10. Fire Flow Analysis
11. Fire Investigator Scene Safety
12. Fundamentals of Interviewing
13. Fundamentals of Residential Building Construction
14. Insurance and the Fire Investigation
15. Introduction to Evidence
16. Investigating Fatal Fires
17. Investigating Motor Vehicle Fires
18. NFPA 1033 and Your Career
19. Physical Evidence at the Fire Scene
20. Residential Electrical Systems
21. Residential Natural Gas Systems
22. The HAZWOPER Standard
23. The Practical Application of the Relationship Between NFPA 1033 and NFPA 921
24. The Scientific Method for Fire and Explosion Investigation
25. Understanding Undetermined
26. Wildland Fires Investigation
27. Writing the Initial Origin and Cause Report

\*A copy of the [CFITrainer.net](http://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 **two 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 BFAST office well in

## AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE

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 two 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 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 two years of the completion and 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, 2022 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 Administrator 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*, 2022 Edition
- b. NFPA 921, *Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations*, 2021 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.

## AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE

### RECIPROCITY/EQUIVALENCY CHALLENGE

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

### CERTIFICATION TIMELINES

Certificates issued under the AFSC Certified Fire Investigator directive have an expiration date. The AFSC uses NFPA 1033, 4.1.7 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 three (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 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 their 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

The Alaska Fire Standards Council FI certification official expiration date is 3-years from the issuance date and is listed on the individual's certification. Submit this renewal packet within one-year of the expiration date.

Packet items must be reviewed and signed by applicant Chief/Designated Supervisor before return to the AFSC office.

1. Fill out **Sheet A - FI Renewal Application**, all fields are required. Incomplete applications will not be processed.
2. Complete **Sheet B – Instructional Learning and Delivery Record**
  - A. Documentation of hours:
    - i. Learning - Forty classroom/field hours for the 3-year certification period (40 hours) with primary objectives directly related to the current edition of fire investigative topics outlines within NFPA 1033 4.1.7 (2022 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 FI course hours. All CEU's must be specific to FI training and education hours and are subject to AFSC review and final approval.  
*Submission of all relevant course completion documents/certificates required.*
    - ii. Delivery - Forty classroom/field student contact hours for the 3-year certification period (40 hours) on topics specifically related to NFPA 1033 4.1.7 (listed above).
      - Course preparation and closeout time do not apply.
    - iii. Combination - Any combination of Learning and Delivery equivalent to 40-hours over the 3-years preceding the renewal request.

### **Renewal Requirements for Expirations More Than 12-Months**

Certificates expired **more than 12-months** must complete these additional items:

- a. 20 additional hours to the required 40 hours above meeting the same requirements, and
- b. complete a 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

## AFSC FIRE INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION DIRECTIVE

([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). *Fingerprint cards are no longer required for renewal.*

### 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.