

Idaho Division of Professional-Technical Education
Emergency Services Training

*IFSAAC Accredited
Certification Programs*

Policies and Guidelines



December 2007

Boise, Idaho
www.pte.idaho.gov

Table of Contents

Chapter 1.	Introduction	3
Chapter 2.	Scope	3
Chapter 3.	Purpose	4
Chapter 4.	Mission and Goals	4
Chapter 5.	Certification	4
Chapter 6.	Examination Process	5
Chapter 7.	Written Exams	6
Chapter 8.	Manipulative Skills Exams	7
Chapter 9.	Proctors and Evaluators	7
Chapter 10.	Request for Accommodations for Certification Examinations	9
Chapter 11.	Certificates and Seals	9
Chapter 12.	Facilities and Equipment Certification	9
Chapter 13.	Recertification	10
Chapter 14.	Reciprocity	11
Chapter 15.	Testing Appeals Process	11
Chapter 16.	Record Keeping and Test Bank Management Policy	12
Chapter 17.	Notification of Testing to IFSAC	14

Idaho Division of Professional-Technical Education
Emergency Services Training
Certification Program
Policies and Guidelines

Chapter 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Idaho Fire Fighter Certification Program is a voluntary program. There is no statutory requirement that fire fighters become certified. The certification program establishes a way to judge the competency of fire fighters and first responders, irrespective of their department affiliation and regardless of whether they are career or volunteer.
- 1.2. Emergency Services Training (EST) uses the following standards:
 - 1.2.1. NFPA 1001, 2002 edition, *Standard for Firefighters Professional Qualifications*, as the training standard and the *IFSTA Essentials of Fire Fighting* as the training curriculum leading to meeting minimum qualifications for certification. Other training curriculum is available and can be used to meet the minimum qualifications.
 - 1.2.2. NFPA 1002, 2003 edition, *Standard on Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications*, as the training standard and the *IFSTA Pumping Apparatus Driver/Operator Handbook, Second Edition*, as the training curriculum leading to meeting minimum qualifications for certification. Other training curriculum is available and can be used to meet the minimum qualifications.
 - 1.2.2.1. NFPA 472, 2002 edition, *Standard for Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents* as the training standard and the *IFSTA Hazardous Materials for First Responders, Third Edition*, as the training curriculum leading to meeting minimum qualifications for certification. Other training curriculum is available and can be used to meet the minimum qualifications.
- 1.3. Emergency Services Training does not discriminate or deny services on the basis of age, race, religion, national origin, sex, or disability. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for applicants with disabilities. Requests for accommodations must accompany the testing request.

Chapter 2. Scope

- 2.1. The guidelines for the state certification program are designed to ensure the accountability, consistency, and credibility of testing, and certification of fire fighters in the State of Idaho.

Chapter 3. Purpose

- 3.1. The purpose of the Fire Fighter Certification Program is to measure the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by fire fighters and to attest that these individuals meet nationally recognized standards.

Chapter 4. Mission and Goals

- 4.1. The mission of Emergency Services Training is to provide Idaho's first responder community with the technical skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for ensuring the safety and protection of Idaho's citizens, responders, and property.
- 4.2. Goals of the Certification Program:
 - 4.2.1. Establish and promote the fire service in the State of Idaho as a professional service.
 - 4.2.2. Encourage establishment of minimum basic training standards for fire protection personnel.
 - 4.2.3. Develop more competent and reliable fire service personnel through the promotion of national professional qualification standards.
 - 4.2.4. Ensure that all IFSAC accredited programs are administered with strict adherence to the requirements and recommendations of the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).
 - 4.2.5. Maintain a certification program that will ensure complete impartiality and confidentiality and is designed to safeguard against misuse and abuse.
 - 4.2.6. Issuance of certificates to persons who complete requirements for certification and pass the required state examinations.
 - 4.2.7. Maintain records of persons who have attained state certification.

Chapter 5. Certification

- 5.1. It is the policy of Emergency Services Training that the accreditation process will not affect the current certification status of any individual.
- 5.2. Emergency Services Training is the certifying entity for the State of Idaho and does not delegate its certifying authority to any political subdivision, local government entity, or state government agency.
- 5.3. Certification tests for competency are conducted by Emergency Services Training and conducted by fire organizations who act as the host entity.
- 5.4. The Fire Chief has the responsibility for certifying to Emergency Services Training that the individual(s) applying for certification, at any level, is adequately trained and qualified for the requested level of certification.

- 5.5. Certification testing will be made available to any individual who meets the required prerequisites. Certification will be granted to any candidate who meets the required prerequisites and successfully passes the certification examination process.
- 5.6. The candidates must meet the following:
 - 5.6.1. Be at least 18 years of age prior to the issuing of certificate.
 - 5.6.2. Must be sponsored by a recognized fire department, emergency response organization, or training institution within the State of Idaho.
- 5.7. It is the policy and practice of Emergency Services Training to certify personnel to the current edition of the National Fire Protection Association Professional Qualifications Standards (NFPA) and other standards adopted by IFSAC. Certification standards will be updated by Emergency Services Training within three (3) years of the official date of adoption by the NFPA.

Chapter 6. Examination Process

- 6.1. Testing and certification are available throughout the State of Idaho.
- 6.2. Testing events will be scheduled as required, throughout the state. Exam dates and registration cut off dates will be posted on Emergency Services Training's web site.
- 6.3. Emergency Services Training will publish written material regarding written and skills test descriptions, preparation, types of questions used in written tests, study references, and skills test criteria. The material will be available on Emergency Services Training web site and will be available for mailing to individuals who do not have internet access.
- 6.4. Certification Exam Requests must be received at least **30 days** prior to the test date. Candidate applications must be received by the posted registration cut off date. **No walk-ins** will be accepted for certification exams. An official picture ID is required for admittance to a certification exam. The entire testing process must be completed within one (1) year from when the examination process was started.
- 6.5. A Certification Exam Request can include a request for a written exam and a manipulative skills exam.
- 6.6. Emergency Services Training will notify the requesting department/agency whether or not they are approved for testing at least 15 days prior to the test date.

- 6.7. Emergency Services Training will provide the written examination materials and manipulative skills task sheets. Where applicable, a sealed testing packet will be sent to the proctor or lead evaluator prior to the testing event. All testing materials will be sent by a shipping method capable of tracking the location of a package.
- 6.8. The security of the test questions and manipulative skills task sheets is the responsibility of Emergency Services Training. After the test packets are mailed or delivered, the proctor or lead evaluator becomes responsible for maintaining the security of the test materials until the materials are returned to Emergency Services Training. Returned testing material will be sent to Emergency Services Training by use of a shipping method capable of tracking the location of a package. Test materials are not to be reproduced in the field unless requested by EST.
- 6.9. An Emergency Services Training representative will periodically visit test sites to ensure compliance with testing guidelines and policies. Corrective action will be taken if a proctor or evaluator is not complying with Emergency Services Training's testing guidelines and policies.
- 6.10. The cost of equipment, apparatus, and facilities needed for a testing event is the responsibility of the requesting fire department/agency. Emergency Services Training may pay all or a portion of the cost of proctors and evaluators depending on the testing event size and location.

Chapter 7. Written Exams

- 7.1. Candidates are allowed a maximum of three (3) attempts on the written exam. The initial testing attempt is at no cost to the candidate. A Fifty dollar (\$50) retesting fee applies to each additional testing attempt. The candidate's department will be billed for the retesting fee. A retest candidate will be scheduled to retest at the next scheduled exam that has available space. If a candidate fails the third attempt, the candidate is required to reapply for certification after a one (1) year period following the last testing attempt. It is recommended that candidates attend additional training courses for the level of certification they are trying to obtain before they reapply for certification.
- 7.2. Scoring of the written exams is conducted at Emergency Services Training's office using electronic scoring equipment. Any test with a failing score will be pulled and hand scored to verify the test score. Results of the testing will be mailed to a candidate within 10 – 20 working days following the testing event. Scores will not be released by telephone. If a candidate provides a written

release, pass/fail results will be provided to the candidate's Fire Chief or Training Officer.

- 7.3. An official picture ID is required for admittance to a written exam.
- 7.4. Candidates who are scheduled to attend a testing event and do not show up for the testing, will be scored as failing the test. The only exceptions are: (a) the candidate calls EST and cancels or (b) documents illness, injury, or family/work emergency. Once the candidates begin the test, the test is closed and no late arriving candidates will be admitted. Candidates arriving late will be scored as failing the test.

Chapter 8. Manipulative Skills Exams

- 8.1. Candidates are allowed a maximum of three (3) attempts on the manipulative skills exam. The initial and second testing attempts are at no cost to the candidate. A Fifty dollar (\$50) retesting fee applies to the third testing attempt. The candidate's department will be billed for the retesting fee. A retest candidate will be scheduled to retest at the next scheduled exam that has available space. If the candidate fails the third attempt, the candidate is required to reapply for certification after a one (1) year period following the last testing attempt. It is recommended that candidates attend additional training courses for the level of certification they are trying to obtain before they reapply for certification.
- 8.2. Candidates retesting on manipulative skills are allowed one (1) attempt (third attempt) to pass the skill that failed from a previous testing event. If the candidate passes the failed skill(s), they will be given an additional randomly drawn skill for each failed skill. The candidate will be allowed two (2) attempts to pass the additional skills(s).
- 8.3. An official picture ID is required for admittance to a manipulative skills exam.
- 8.4. Candidates who are scheduled to attend a testing event and do not show up for the testing, will be scored as failing the test. The only exceptions are: (a) the candidate calls EST and cancels or (b) documents illness, injury, or family/work emergency.

Chapter 9. Proctors and Evaluators

- 9.1. Proctors for administering written exams are selected from either Emergency Services Training staff members, technical college or other approved representatives.

- 9.2. All written exam proctors are required to comply with all rules, guidelines, policies, and procedures for proctoring written exams as provided by Emergency Services Training.
- 9.3. Evaluators for conducting manipulative skills exams are selected from lists of qualified evaluators based on technical college service regions of the state. If there are not a sufficient number of evaluators available from a specific region, evaluators are provided from other regions. Evaluators are not eligible to evaluate when:
 - 9.3.1. candidates are from the evaluator's department, or
 - 9.3.2. candidates are from a course that the evaluator taught twenty (20) percent or more of the course
- 9.4. All manipulative skills exam evaluators are required to comply with all rules, guidelines, policies, and procedures for evaluating manipulative skills exams as provided by Emergency Services Training.
- 9.5. To qualify as an evaluator for manipulative skills exams, two of the following minimums must be met:
 - 9.5.1. Be qualified to teach the level being evaluated or
 - 9.5.2. Be IFSAC certified at the level evaluating, and
 - 9.5.3. Attend an IFSAC Evaluator training course.
- 9.6. The IFSAC evaluator training course covers evaluator responsibilities, paperwork requirements, evaluation criteria, addressing problems and issues, authority, and objective evaluation procedures. In addition, new evaluators are required to complete a mentoring process with a qualified evaluator.
- 9.7. Emergency Services Training will select evaluators and designate a lead evaluator for each manipulative skills exam. The lead evaluator will have oversight responsibility for the testing event and the other evaluators. When a skill sheet requires a choice of scenarios by the evaluator, the lead evaluator will make the selection.
- 9.8. It is the proctor or lead evaluator's responsibility to make certain that all paperwork for a testing event is in order before the event begins and that all the necessary equipment and props are in place and working properly.
- 9.9. All proctors and evaluators have the responsibility for insuring the objectivity and integrity of the evaluation process.
- 9.10. Any proctor or evaluator who fails to follow established policy and guidelines may have their name removed from the list of eligible proctors or evaluators.

- 9.11. All evaluators are required to attend annual evaluator in-service training or complete a mentoring session (testing event) with a qualified evaluator. This refresher training will review the initial evaluator training course plus any program changes and updates.

Chapter 10. Request for Accommodations for Certification Examinations

- 10.1. Candidates may make a request in writing to Emergency Services Training specifying the level of testing and the reason(s) for requesting testing accommodations for written and/or manipulative skills exams. The request must be accompanied by a statement from the candidate's doctor or fire chief attesting to the need for testing accommodations. A testing request and training documentation form must also be provided.
- 10.2. If the request is approved, the candidate will be notified in writing of the test location and date.
- 10.3. The candidate(s) must meet all other requirements and prerequisites for the level of testing being requested.
- 10.4. Emergency Services Training will make all reasonable accommodations to enable the candidate to take the written and/or manipulative skills exams.

Chapter 11. Certificates and Seals

- 11.1. Upon satisfactory completion of the certification testing process, a certificate is created, then sent to the candidate's Fire Chief for signature, and returned to Emergency Services Training for Division signatures. A numbered and registered IFSAC seal is then attached to the certificate. A copy of the certificate with the affixed seal is maintained in the candidate's file.
- 11.2. Certificates are mailed to a candidate's Fire Chief for distribution.
- 11.3. Certificates are valid for a period of three (3) years. A "**Valid Until**" date is printed on the certificate. To maintain certification, certificate holders must recertify every three (3) years.

Chapter 12. Facilities and Equipment Certification

- 12.1. Written Examination

- 12.1.1. The proctor is responsible for certifying that the facilities provide adequate space for testing.
 - 12.1.2. The Fire Chief of the department sponsoring the test is responsible for certifying that the facilities meet or exceed applicable NFPA safety and health standards or equivalent.
- 12.2. Manipulative Skills Examination
- 12.2.1. The lead evaluator is responsible for certifying that the facilities provide adequate space for testing and ensure privacy during testing.
 - 12.2.2. The Fire Chief of the department sponsoring the test is responsible for certifying that the facilities and equipment furnished for certification testing meet or exceed applicable NFPA safety and health standards or equivalent.
 - 12.2.3. Test candidates who are not members of the sponsoring department must have their equipment certified as NFPA compliant by their Fire Chief.
 - 12.2.4. The lead evaluator has the authority to suspend a testing event if it is determined there is safety issue with equipment (e.g. a non-functioning relief valve on a pump) or a safety hazard exists (e.g. weather related issues). Any untested candidates will be rescheduled for another testing event as soon as possible.

Chapter 13. Recertification

- 13.1. Recertification of the most recently issued certification must occur within three (3) years of certification. Failure to recertify will result in the voiding of the IFSAC registered seal. To become certified after the expiration of a certificate requires completion of the entire testing process.
- 13.2. To renew a certificate, the candidate must document completion of the required number of hours of appropriate class and manipulative skills training within a three (3) year certification period starting with the certificate date of issue. At least half of the hours must address the competencies of the highest level of certification.
- 13.3. Each certification may be renewed by submitting a Recertification Application, signed by the Fire Chief and the candidate, to Emergency Services Training. The application must be received by EST prior to or postmarked by the **Valid Until** date printed on the certificate.
- 13.4. The most recently earned certification will renew all previous certifications. **Valid Until** stickers will be issued for all certificates.
- 13.5. Achieving a new level of certification will renew all previously held certifications.

- 13.6. This provision will not apply to fire fighter certifications issued in Idaho prior to IFSAC accreditation beginning April 17, 1998.

Chapter 14. Reciprocity

- 14.1. Emergency Services Training may elect to give credit for accredited certifications received in other states, territories, countries, or the Department of Defense provided the certification is to the current or the immediate preceding edition of the appropriate Standard. Candidates holding certification to any other previous edition of the Standard must complete the certification testing process.
- 14.2. To apply for reciprocity, a candidate submits a letter of request and a copy of the competency certificate to Emergency Services Training. Reciprocity is available only on levels accredited by IFSAC in Idaho. Reciprocity only applies to individuals employed by Idaho emergency response agencies.
- 14.3. After reviewing the applicant's credentials, Emergency Services Training will issue a letter either granting or denying reciprocity.
- 14.4. Individuals needing reciprocity for pre-employment requirements, must submit a letter of request and a copy of the competency certificate to Emergency Services Training. After reviewing and approving the applicant's credentials, EST will issue a letter granting conditional reciprocity.
- 14.5. Adoption of updated NFPA standards or IFSAC programs will not render invalid any participant's prior certification.
- 14.6. Individuals granted reciprocity will be issued an Idaho certificate and will be subject to Idaho's recertification requirements.

Chapter 15. Testing Appeals Process

- 15.1. All appeals must be made in writing and sent to Emergency Services Training for review and response.
- 15.2. An appeal must include the following:
- 15.2.1. Name of person initiating request for appeal,
 - 15.2.2. Examination date,
 - 15.2.3. Type of examination,
 - 15.2.4. Reason/basis for appeal.

- 15.3. The Program Manager of Emergency Services Training will make a decision on the appeal based on a review of the test results and statements from the candidate and the evaluator/proctor.
- 15.4. If the candidate disagrees with the decision of Program Manager of Emergency Services Training, the candidate may appeal to a review board of three (3) evaluators selected from a pool of statewide qualified evaluators. The review board members are selected by a process of Emergency Services Training selecting one member, the appellant selecting one member and those two members will select a third member. Each evaluator will review the appeal and make a written recommendation to Emergency Services Training. Based on the recommendation, the Program Manager, will make the final decision for resolution of the appeal.
- 15.5. If there is a problem identified with a test question, the question will be removed from the test and all test scores will be adjusted for that testing event.
- 15.6. Actions to correct any problem identified through the appeals process may include editing or removal of the question or skill sheet and revalidation of the affected test item.

Chapter 16. Record Keeping and Test Bank Management Policy

- 16.1. It is the policy of Emergency Services Training to maintain electronic or hard copy candidate records for the following areas:
 - 16.1.1. Name
 - 16.1.2. Candidate identifier number
 - 16.1.3. Address
 - 16.1.4. Test dates
 - 16.1.5. Date of certification
 - 16.1.6. IFSAC seal number
 - 16.1.7. Records for each candidate's certification level with a copy of the candidate's certificate and attached IFSAC seal.
- 16.2. Emergency Services Training transmits to IFSAC, on an annual basis, the following information:
 - 16.2.1. Candidate's name
 - 16.2.2. International Registry Tracking Identifier
 - 16.2.3. Date of certification
 - 16.2.4. Certification level
 - 16.2.5. Seal number
- 16.3. The following statistical information is created and maintained:

16.3.1. Written exam

- 16.3.1.1. Level of testing
- 16.3.1.2. Date of test
- 16.3.1.3. Location of test
- 16.3.1.4. Number of candidates tested
- 16.3.1.5. Median average score
- 16.3.1.6. High – low score range
- 16.3.1.7. Test used

16.3.2. Manipulative skills exam

- 16.3.2.1. Level of testing
- 16.3.2.2. Date of test
- 16.3.2.3. Location of test
- 16.3.2.4. Number of evaluators
- 16.3.2.5. Number of candidates who pass and fail
- 16.3.2.6. Test used

16.4. Test event and candidate records are kept for three (3) years. Candidate summary records are kept indefinitely. (*see 16.1*) Upon recertification or decertification, candidate testing records are discarded.

16.5. Test Bank

- 16.5.1. Emergency Services Training maintains a test bank for each of the IFSAC accredited certification levels.
- 16.5.2. Test banks are revised as needed to comply with updates to NFPA standards.
- 16.5.3. Emergency Services Training uses commercially available test bank software for creating written exams. Several versions of the written exams are randomly created from the test bank using test generation software.
- 16.5.4. Emergency Services Training will create or edit questions and skills sheets to cover any areas of the NFPA standard that the test banks do not include.
- 16.5.5. Security of the test bank is password protected and access is limited to the program manager and the testing coordinator of Emergency Services Training. All generated tests are kept in a locked file cabinet unless the tests are in use or under review by authorized personnel. Master copies of old test materials are kept for a period of three (3) years and then

shredded. Older versions of computerized testing materials are kept password protected and CD's and disks are kept in locked cabinets or drawers.

16.5.6. Validity and Reliability

16.5.6.1. All test items are referenced to both the applicable NFPA Standard and the appropriate IFSTA training manuals or other appropriate training manuals. Test items are also reviewed by subject matter experts to insure their validity and applicability.

16.5.6.2. Reliability is automatically measured as each test is electronically scored.

Chapter 17. Notification of Testing to IFSAC

17.1. At the request of IFSAC Administration, Emergency Services Training will provide a listing of scheduled testing events, that includes the dates, location, level, and contact information for both written and manipulative skills tests. This information is also available on Emergency Services Training's web site. With a 48 hour notice, a representative designated by the Certification Assembly Board of Governors will be allowed to observe any scheduled testing process.