

## Officer Certification Program

In a continuing effort to make North Carolina the leader in fire and rescue expertise, OSFM is the process for certifying leaders in fire departments and rescue squads. Previously Fire Officer I, II, and III certifications have been available through an independent study program to those who meet the standards of experience and education. Starting on September 1, 2009, these programs will be available in a direct delivery format taught by NC Fire and Rescue Commission qualified instructors for those who learn better in that format. More information about the direct delivery program is available in the section on the Officer Certification Process. OSFM is developing Rescue Officer I and II certifications that will be analogous to the Fire Officer I and II certifications.

The Officer Development and Certification program that is recognized by the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission has broad based support. Currently, this Road Map and supporting documents is recognized by the North Carolina Association of Fire Chief's, North Carolina Fireman's Association, North Carolina Society of Fire/Rescue Instructor's, North Carolina City and County Fire Marshal's Association, and the North Carolina Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators.

NC OSFM is making a comprehensive effort to reduce the redundancy in courses that are taken by identifying those programs that share common objectives with each other and meet the current edition of NFPA 1021. This allows departments to focus efforts to get training for current and future leaders within the organization to develop them *before* promotion.

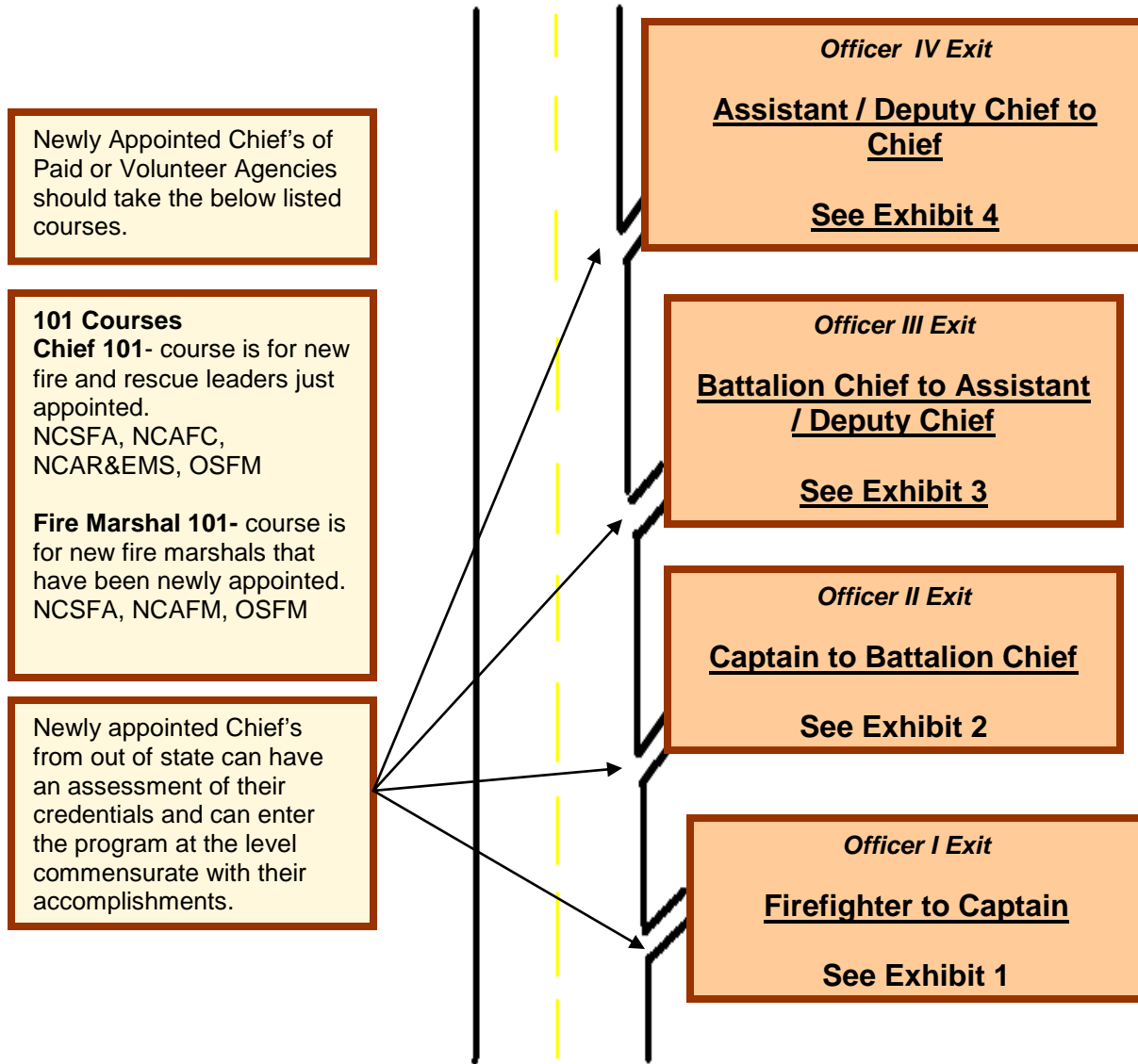
By reducing duplication in the training process, training budget dollars are maximized and this allows for participation in various other programs that will enhance the educational experience of our current and future leaders.

The training methods for receiving Officer Certification are discussed after the Roadmap below.



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**NC FIRE / RESCUE OFFICER TRAINING ROADMAP**



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This illustration is designed to help you determine your training needs to excel in your career or volunteer department. If the rank structures listed above does not exactly match your departments, simply figure out where you fit according to your needs and rank structure for your organization.

## **OFFICER CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

The current program has five basic components by which a person can become certified in Fire Officer I-IV. It is up to the individual department's leadership to determine which method or combination of methods best fit the department and the needs of its personnel. These are discussed below.

### **Workbook**

This method of completion is designed to be the distance learning model of Fire Officer I-III Certification in the state. This method has been in place for some time now and is convenient for working professionals. This method is especially helpful for those who have substantial course credit towards this certification and need an efficient way to fulfill the remaining requirements in the NFPA 1021 standard. A person requests the workbook, completes all areas of the book or submits supporting documentation of equivalency for credit to be given in a particular section or sections. The Fire Officer Ad Hoc Committee of the Certification Board then reviews this book. If the review is favorable, the candidate is able to register for the Regional Test and take the Fire Officer exam at the level they have completed.

### **Direct Delivery**

This method of completion is designed to be the classroom-learning model of Fire Officer I-IV Certification in the state. This method will be available starting on September 1, 2009 for Fire Officer I, II, and III. OSFM course development staff has specifically designed these courses to meet the requirements of NFPA 1021 for Officer Development and to equip officers with the skills they need to continue improvement in the NC fire and rescue service. A person desiring to obtain certification in Fire Officer I-IV seeks the courses that are required and delivered at the local Community College.. These courses are not structured like or conducted like Firefighter or Rescue programs. These demanding classes will require a significant level of dedication to complete. Once all individual courses are taken, the candidate for Officer Certification can register for the Regional Test and take the exam commensurate with the level they have completed.

### ***Direct Delivery Course Procedures***

It is imperative to note, that the workbook must still be completed successfully in the direct delivery program but will be done throughout the course and will be graded at the end of each module. All courses will be deliverable in an all day, evening or weekend format allowing the delivery agency the flexibility to meet the needs of participants.

## **College Credit**

For those that have graduated and have a degree, there is the potential to be awarded the Fire Officer certification commensurate with the degree credit that has been awarded. In other cases the coursework completed can be used to satisfy some of the objectives listed in the NFPA 1021 and the rest can be satisfied by some of the other methods even if the courses were not taken as part of a degree program.

The granting of credit for individual courses can happen in one of two ways. If the course has already been evaluated in terms of the NFPA 1021 JPR's met then the course can be found in the Course Credit Crossover Reference and then can be used to satisfy the JPR's indicated and the applicant can turn in the documentation of successful completion with the notebook. If the course has not been correlated by OSFM then the student must submit a syllabus for evaluation to the Officer Ad Hoc group of the NC Fire and Rescue Certification Board in order to receive credit.

All degrees and courses must be from a school accredited by an accreditation board recognized by the US Department of Education or the American Council on Education (ACE).

## **National Fire Academy**

The NFA has correlated many of their course offerings to the NFPA 1021 current edition and credit can be given for these courses. The eligible courses are listed in the Officer Course Credit Crossover Reference utilized by the Officer Ad Hoc group.

## **Chief Fire Officer Designation**

The Center for Public Safety Excellence requires many of the same competencies for the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) program as those identified by the Officer Ad Hoc group at OSFM. Credit will be given for those individuals that have earned the CFO designation by the Center for Public Safety Excellence. Credit will be given in those areas of the CFO program that meet the specific NFPA 1021 JPR's required.

## **Combination Method**

It is important to note that combinations of all the above areas can be used to meet certification requirements in the Fire Officer Programs. If a person can show credit in any of the above areas for each of the NFPA 1021 JPR's listed on the Officer Course Credit Cross-reference and provide documentation of completion, they will be eligible to sit for the Fire Officer exam for the level they want to test at through the Regional Testing system. By cross-referencing all methods of receiving credit with the individual JPR's of the NFPA 1021 standard, the Officer Ad Hoc committee has made it simple for the student to determine what training to pursue in order to be eligible for a given level of Officer Certification.

## FIRE OFFICER I

### Performance Standard

NFPA 1021, current edition as adopted by NC OSFM.

### Course Description

45 Hour program includes pre-course and course projects.

Major topics covered in the program are:

- The role of the fire officer, the fire officer's responsibility in facing compliance and accountability
- Recognizing and managing cultural diversity
- Safety and wellness
- Quality management within the organizational structure
- Community awareness
- Public relations
- Fire safety education
- Functional leadership
- Problem solving
- Performance appraisal
- Building construction
- Fire cause determination
- Effective communication skills
- Incident command system with strategy and tactics.

Fire officer training can be taken as a direct delivery course, a distant learning course, or some combination of these two options with credit granted for some previous college or NFA coursework. More information is available in the Officer Certification Process chapter. Some degrees have been correlated with the NFPA 1021 standard and can be lead to Fire Officer Certification.

### Entrance Requirements

**Age:** Must be **21** years of age before certification as Fire Officer. Training and course work may begin prior to this, but certification cannot be issued until the candidate's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. **Note:** The candidate must meet the requirements of the standard in place at the time of his/her birthday even though he/she may have been working toward a previous standard.

**FIRE OFFICER I (CONT.)****Education Requirements**

Must have a high school diploma or equivalent recognized by the State Department of Public Instruction (i.e. G.E.D.).

**Medical Requirements**

N/A

**Reciprocity**

Any fire officer certified by another State or agency whose program is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), or the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) will receive reciprocity.

Individuals must be a member of a North Carolina fire department and/or rescue squad and submit a letter from the chief stating such, along with copies of accredited certifications. Mail this information to the NC Fire and Rescue Commission, attention "Reciprocity".

**Recertification**

None required by the NC Fire and Rescue Commission as of January 01, 2003.

**Prerequisites**

Firefighter I, II certification, and General Level I Instructor certification are required. Three years experience in the fire service is required.

**Crossover Credits**

Many college and NFA courses can count towards Fire Officer Certification and some degree programs lead to Fire Officer Certification if the student is tested in accordance with OSFM policy. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter on Officer Certification Process.

## **FIRE OFFICER II**

### **Performance Standard**

NFPA 1021, current edition as adopted by NC OSFM.

### **Course Description**

45 hour program includes pre-course and course projects.

Major topics covered include:

- Human resource management
- Managing affirmative action
- Government agencies
- Supervisor and subordinate interaction
- Budgetary process
- Information management systems
- Health and safety
- Fire safety inspection
- Public fire education
- Specialized fire protection equipment
- Other contemporary topics as they relate to emergency services

Fire officer training can be taken as a direct delivery course, a distant learning course, or some combination of these two options with credit granted for some previous college or NFA coursework. More information is available in the Officer Certification Process chapter. Some degrees have been correlated with the NFPA 1021 standard and can be lead to Fire Officer Certification.

### **Entrance Requirements**

**Age:** Must be **21** years of age before certification as Fire Officer.

### **Education Requirements**

Must have a high school diploma or equivalent recognized by the State Department of Public Instruction (i.e. G.E.D.).

**FIRE OFFICER II (CONT.)****Medical Requirements**

N/A

**Reciprocity**

Any fire officer certified by another State or agency whose program is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), or the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) will receive reciprocity.

Individuals must be a member of a North Carolina fire department and/or rescue squad and submit a letter from the chief stating such, along with copies of accredited certifications. Mail this information to the NC Fire and Rescue Commission, attention "Reciprocity".

**Recertification**

None required by the NC Fire and Rescue Commission as of January 01, 2003.

**Prerequisites**

Fire Officer I certification with two years experience at that level is required.

**Crossover Credits**

Many college and NFA courses can count towards Fire Officer Certification and some degree programs lead to Fire Officer Certification if the student is tested in accordance with OSFM policy. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter on Officer Certification Process.

## **FIRE OFFICER III**

### **Performance Standard**

NFPA 1021, current edition as adopted by NC OSFM.

### **Course Description**

80 Hour course includes pre-course and course projects.

Major topics include:

- Program orientation
- Ethics
- Establishing a partnership with the community
- Budgetary process, budgeting and auditing practices
- Budget development and fiscal planning
- Managing human resources
- Inspections and pre-incident planning for specific occupancies
- Risk management and safety programs
- Managing personal evaluations, assessments centers and accountability
- Emergency services delivery
- Incident planning and multi-agency involvement

### **Entrance Requirements**

**Age:** Must be **21** years of age before certification as Fire Officer.

### **Education Requirements**

Must have a high school diploma or equivalent recognized by the State Department of Public Instruction (i.e. G.E.D.).

### **Medical Requirements**

N/A

### **Reciprocity**

Any fire officer certified by another State or agency whose program is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), or the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) will receive reciprocity.

Individuals must be a member of a North Carolina fire department and/or rescue squad and submit a letter from the chief stating such, along with copies of accredited certifications. Mail this information to the NC Fire and Rescue Commission, attention "Reciprocity".

**FIRE OFFICER III (CONT.)****Recertification**

None required by the NC Fire and Rescue Commission as of January 01, 2003.

**Prerequisites**

Fire Office II certification with a minimum of two years of service at that level is required .

**Crossover Credits**

Many college and NFA courses can count towards Fire Officer Certification and some Bachelor degree programs lead to Fire Officer III Certification if the student is tested in accordance with OSFM policy. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter on Officer Certification Process.

**PROPOSED FIRE OFFICER IV/NC EXECUTIVE EMERGENCY OFFICER PROGRAM**

Previously the Fire Officer Certification was only available in levels I-III in NC but as the Fire and Rescue service in the state has grown, there is a need for a higher level of leadership. Fire Officer IV is an IFSAC certification that can be achieved through reciprocity or through a combination of education and experience as described above. However, going through this new program specifically designed for NC by OSFM is the only way to receive the NC Executive Emergency Officer Certification as well as Fire Officer IV. OSFM created the NC Executive Emergency Officer Program (EEOP) program in order to assess, enhance and refine the leadership qualities of Chiefs who are currently leading their organizations and develop “bench strength” in high potential senior officers who can move into positions of greater responsibility.

The NC Executive Emergency Officer Program will qualify for college credit at the University's that have correlated the Fire Officer III and IV certifications into there degree plans. The Fire Officer III and IV certifications can be used for credit in Bachelor's programs. The number of credits received is dependant on the institution and you will need to consult your advisor on the transfer of credit and how much will be awarded.

## **PROPOSED FIRE OFFICER IV/NC EXECUTIVE EMERGENCY OFFICER PROGRAM (CONT.)**

### **Program Format**

The EEOP is delivered through four sessions each running 5 days in length with six-month intervals between sessions. The intervals provide time for reading assignments, completing assigned projects and immediately applying leadership concepts covered in class.

**Year 1** – Session 1 is a two week course (students attend one week, skip a month and come back for the second week the next month) held in Fall  
Session 2 held in Spring

**Year 2** – Session 3 held in Fall  
Session 4 held in Spring

**Year 3** – Session 5 and Graduation held at the Annual SAFE Conference.

### **Research Project**

This project will be ongoing after the Session 1 class in the fall. Using an online learning format the research process will be guided exercise but will be very demanding. This is a professional research project which is designed to help the participant use research to make sound decisions. This research project is due in the Session IV Spring class. The participant must present his/her research findings to the class. A group of peers will then assess the quality of work and require the participant to defend the findings to the panel. At that point the panel will decide if the research is of good quality and if the student should be awarded their Fire Officer IV and the NC Executive Emergency Officer Certificate.

### **Curriculum**

The EEOP curriculum includes eight learning modules. The central themes of Executive Leadership, Self Analysis and Leading Change are emphasized across the curriculum.

## ***Rescue Officer Certification Program***

### **RESCUE OFFICER I**

Coming soon.

### **RESCUE OFFICER II**

Coming soon

<b>Officer IV / NC EEOP Session I Fall</b>	
<b>Module I</b> <b>Developing Administrative and Communication Skills</b>	
Policy Formulation	
Conflict Management	
Customer Service	
Leadership Communication	
Research Design for Decision Makers	
<b>Module II</b> <b>Leadership and Decision Making</b>	
Developing Vision, Mission, and Values within Organizations	
Problem Solving	
Developing Organizational Ethics	
Executive Leadership	
<b>Session II Spring</b>	
<b>Module III</b> <b>Human Resources Management</b>	
Self Analysis	
Professional Development for Organizations	
<b>Module IV</b> <b>Developing Administrative and Communication Skills</b>	
Accreditation/NCRRS	
Policy Formulation	
Organizational Evaluation	
<b>Module V</b> <b>Managing Multi-Agency Operations</b>	
Planning for Emergency Operations	
Implementing Emergency Operations Plans for Special Incidents	
<b>Session III Fall</b>	
<b>Module VI</b> <b>Community and Government Relations</b>	
Developing Partnerships and Coalitions	
Local and State Political and Legal Systems	
Community: Leadership and Structure	
<b>Module VII</b> <b>Organizing Fire Prevention and Life Safety Programs</b>	
Injury and Loss Prevention Principles	
Reducing Community Risk	
<b>Module VIII</b> <b>Dev Organizational Safety and Health Program</b>	
Risk Management Principals	
Risk Reduction and Planning	
<b>Session IV Spring</b>	
<b>Research Presentation and Defense</b>	
Research Presentations to Class	
Defense of Research to Reviewers	

## **The Value of EEOP**

Completion of this program by the participant can benefit the community, organization and the individual. At the completion of the program, participants will be able to:

- Describe their personal strengths and weaknesses and areas where continued improvement is needed.
- Define executive leadership as a set of behaviors and characteristics – not the position or the person.
- Develop and implement an organizational vision that is ethically and morally responsible.
- Act more knowledgeable in the role of change agent and manage the problems associated with change in an effective manner.
- Develop stronger communications skills to motivate and inspire individuals and groups to work toward a common goal.
- Conduct and utilize research as an important decision-making tool.
- Develop an organizational strategic plan that focuses on customer service and how to achieve results.
- Conduct an evaluation of the organization using both internal and external criteria.
- Identify potential sources of conflict early and manage conflict constructively.
- Recognize how to represent the organization effectively, both internally and externally.

## **Faculty**

Instructors are nationally recognized experts from academia, the corporate sector, private consulting organizations and fire service leadership. Some faculty members have taught in the national Executive Fire Officers program.

## **Who Should Attend?**

The EEOP is designed for Chiefs that are newly appointed, or Chiefs with experience but who strive for personal and professional development and officers with high potential for greater responsibility as described by management.

## **Tuition and Location**

Tuition is \$X and will cover all instructional costs, course materials. Tuition will be payable at the beginning of the program.

## **Admission**

Admission is by application and requires a statement of nomination from the applicant's top administrator.