

******* North Carolina has changed the required passing percentage *****
from 80% to 75% effective immediately and retroactive to
all examinees.**

****Deadline for July 4th Operators and Assistant Operators Permitting**
The deadline to be assured an application will be reviewed and an
applicant has an adequate opportunity to schedule an exam date is
JUNE 1, 2010.**

*******NEW*****NEW*****NEW*****NEW*****NEW*****NEW*******

For municipal employees including volunteer firefighters and state employees: Municipal employees are exempt from ATF requirements related to permitting, licensure, or letters of clearance. The Office of State Fire Marshal has developed alternate requirements for municipal employees applying for a Pyrotechnic Operators Permit. The municipal employee will be required to meet the same training and testing requirements as all North Carolina permitted pyrotechnic operators. The municipal employee using the alternative method of application will be issued a limited operators permit, allowing operation of events only for the municipality for which they are employed.

FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING THE ALTERNATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES PLEASE CONTACT The Office of State Fire Marshal at (919) 661-5880 extension 249 or 259 or rob.roegner@ncdoi.gov or natalie.pollard@ncdoi.gov .

Please contact the Office of State Fire Marshal for any emergency request related to unpermitted operators and scheduled fireworks events. Please contact OSFM at (919) 661-5880 extension 249 or 259 or rob.roegner@ncdoi.gov or natalie.pollard@ncdoi.gov .

1. What is the difference between a county issued permit and a state issued permit?

A county or city issued permit is typically issued to the sponsor of a show with the intent of verifying the safety of the intended site, anticipated weather conditions and the qualification of the operators. The N.C. Pyrotechnics Permit is a certification issued by the N.C. Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to a single operator that lasts for three (3) years and verifies that the operator is qualified in the handling of pyrotechnic or proximate fireworks. It permits an operator or assistant to conduct pyrotechnic operations throughout N.C. Both the Pyrotechnics Permit and a local permit are required to conduct a pyrotechnic or proximate show in N.C.

2. Do certifications issued by firework associations meet N.C. permitting requirements?

The licensing system has three basic components: documentation, experience and training and education. The Pyrotechnic Guild International (PGI) and American Pyrotechnic Association (APA) certification programs have been audited by OSFM and meet the training and education portion of the N.C. licensing process. Additional programs developed using the applicable NFPA standards will have to be evaluated by staff. These programs must be submitted to OSFM for review before receiving "acceptable" status.

3. What if I have a pyrotechnics show in early February, and I will not have a chance to get permitted?

If you have a show in the month of February, and you will not have a chance to be permitted prior to your show please contact Rob Roegner at rob.roegner@ncdoi.gov or Natalie Pollard at nataliepollard@ncdoi.gov. The Office of State Fire Marshal is committed to making the transition from a non-regulated state to a regulated state as seamless to the pyrotechnics industry as the law will allow.

4. If one person in my tour group has an operator's permit, do I still have to take the class and get my own permit?

All workers associated with the operations will be required to understand a certain level of safety, depending on the responsibility. These levels of safety are broken down by specific permits as follows:

- 1) State Permitted Operator – there can be as many of these as desired; however, the Law requires at least one state permitted operator on each site before, during and after each show.
- 2) State Permitted Operator Assistant – All assistants onsite can follow a similar path as the Operators have. This process consists of documentation and an exam.
- 3) On-site Certified – The Office of State Fire Marshal has developed a process which involves the local code official and the operator in charge of the pyro show. This is a three step process:
 - a) A safety briefing from the operator.
 - b) The assistant filling out a form provided by the operator and downloaded from our Web site.
 - c) The Fire inspector from the local jurisdiction issuing an on-site certification card for each assistant during their inspection.

5. What if I'm with a traveling tour group, and I can't get to N.C. to take a class before we're scheduled to perform?

OSFM already recognizes the PGI and APA certification programs, which are national programs and do not necessarily have to be attained in North Carolina. Contact the N.C. Office of State Fire Marshal if the class is not available or your schedule does not allow attendance at a class prior to your N.C. event. OSFM may be able to offer some assistance in locating or providing a class for your group.

6. What is considered proof of training?

Currently the training considered adequate is either APA or PGI Certification. OSFM is auditing individual classes based on the APA or PGI guidelines to approve equivalent classes by certified and experienced instructors.

7. What are the requirements for a substantially equivalent training program?

The basic requirements for a substantially equivalent class are a minimum of 6 hours of classroom education on NFPA 1123 for Pyrotechnic and 1126 for Proximate and two hours of practical time.

8. What training does OSFM conduct?

OSFM does not conduct any training classes, but we do host classes at 322 Chapanoke Road, Raleigh.

9. Where and when is the training offered?

You can get updated information about classes at www.ncdoi.com/osfm.

10. How do I sign up for classes?

All the approved classes with the contact information for the class organizer are listed on the OSFM web page at www.ncdoi.com/osfm. As more classes are offered, additional postings will appear. Simply contact the class organizer to sign up for a class.

11. How much do the classes cost?

The class cost varies depending on the sponsor. Typically the sponsor is attempting to cover the expense of the instructors and the pyrotechnics used in the practical session of the class.

12. How much does the permit cost?

The cost of the permit application \$100.00 and extends for three (3) years. If an operator desires to be permitted to operate outdoor Pyrotechnics and Proximate Audience Pyrotechnics, then the cost would be \$200.00 (\$100 for each permit).

13. If I am licensed in another state, am I permitted to operate pyrotechnics in N.C.?

No. Although licensing in another state will assist in the application process, it is still necessary to fill out and provide the information requested in the N.C. application. Your out of state license may fulfill some N.C. requirements. However, which requirements are affected will depend on the requirements of the different state licenses you have obtained. We require documentation of your existing license.

14. How long should I allow for the licensing process (application, class, test etc.)?

The process will be highly dependant upon the individual applicant. The training must be completed prior to submitting the application, and is solely the responsibility of the applicant to schedule and complete. Upon approval of their application, each applicant will be able to sign up for a test date based on the schedule available. Review of the application should be completed by OSFM staff within 14 days of receipt.

15. How do I take the permitting test?

The first step to obtaining approval for testing status is to file an application with the Office of State Fire Marshal. Upon filing an application and obtaining "approved" status the applicant will receive a letter allowing them to schedule themselves for the state exam. The test is administered by the Office of State Fire Marshal. Beginning in February the test will be offered periodically throughout the state. Go to www.doi.com/osfm and click on the fireworks banner for information about upcoming classes.

16. Can I take the test online?

Unfortunately we can't offer the test online at this time. We will do everything we can to accomodate the schedule limitations of out of town operators.

17. What is considered a passing grade on the pyrotechnic operator test?

You must score at least 75% to pass either the pyrotechnic operator test or the proximate test. You may retake the test only twice.

18. What should I use to study for the test?

Currently the only study guides for the test administered by OSFM are NFPA 1123, the 2000 edition; NFPA 1126, the 2001 edition; the N. C. Fire Code Chapter 33; and N.C. General Statute 14-410 – 14-415 and 58-82A 1-3. You may purchase a copy of the NFPA materials from NFPA or ICC. General Statutes are available online. There are no sample tests available as study guides.

19. Are there two different versions of the test or one test that requires knowledge of both large outdoor displays (formerly Class B Displays) and proximate displays?

There are two different versions of the test; one for Pyrotechnic and one for Proximate Fireworks.

20. When and where do I take the test?

Right now, the test is only offered in Raleigh, but we are hoping to offer it in other parts of the state very soon. The testing schedule is only released upon approval of an applicants application. and locations will be updated at www.ncdoi.com/osfm.