

South Carolina  
Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation

Division of Fire and Life Safety

**SOUTH CAROLINA FIRE ACADEMY**

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY  
VOLUME 1

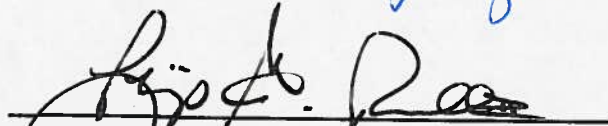
**Administrative Policy AP-010**

**Instructor Certification Policy**

REVISION 7

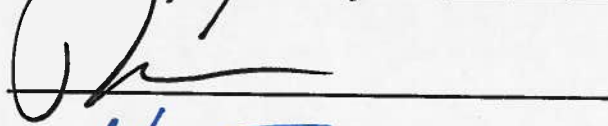
Effective Date: July 1, 2014

Recommended By:



5/28/14  
Date

Concurrence By:



5/28/14  
Date

Approved By:

  
Deputy Director, Fire and Life Safety

6-3-14  
Date

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The South Carolina Fire Academy (SCFA or “the Academy”) recognizes properly trained instructors are a key element in the instructional delivery system utilized to train South Carolina’s firefighters and industrial fire brigade members. The Academy understands that the success of an instructor is directly related to the capabilities developed through formal instructor training, occupational training, and experience.

The Academy recognizes the need for an instructor certification system similar to one used for certifying vocational educational teachers in South Carolina. In order to ensure a reasonable degree of accountability, consistency, and credibility within its training programs, the Division of Fire and Life Safety within the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation adopts the following guidelines as the standard for acceptable experience, training and performance for its instructors.

The Academy subscribes to the policy of nondiscrimination regarding ethnic origin, sex, age, or disability relating to the application of this and all other policies. Granting of instructor certification is for the benefit of the Academy. Certification may be revoked and/or denied for cause at the discretion of Fire Academy management and/or LLR Human Resources.

## 2.0 SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The requirements of this guideline apply to instructors as well as consultants, whether compensated in any manner or not, in courses for which students receive credit from the Academy, except in certain seminar courses. This guideline does not apply to covered, full-time Academy faculty members, whose qualifications and performance are determined and governed by the conditions of their employment.

The Regional and Resident Training Coordinators will directly administer the overall provisions of this guideline, and will coordinate its application and interpretation through course coordinators and administrative personnel.

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used throughout this guideline, and are defined here for clarity:

- **Continuing Education Unit (CEU):** The goal of offering CEU’s is to ensure instructors maintain an adequate level of current knowledge and proficiency.
- **Course Orientation:** Program that is course specific provides materials, an overview of the course, and evaluation instruments.
- **Equivalency:** The process which individuals may apply to have non-SCFA training recognized as being equal to specific SCFA courses.
- **Fire Instructor I:** A course of instruction used to teach instructor candidates how to train others. The course is designed to allow successful participants to meet the performance requirements of NFPA 1041, Level 1.
- **Lead Evaluator Training:** Program designed to certify instructors as lead evaluators for the Academy.
- **New Instructor Orientation Program:** Program designed to allow persons who have successfully demonstrated competencies for NFPA 1041 Level 1, to become eligible to become Academy Instructors.
- **Organized Fire Department:** Any organization consisting of personnel, apparatus, and equipment, which has as its primary purpose protecting property and maintaining the safety and welfare of the public from fire and other emergencies. The personnel of such an organization may be paid employees, unpaid volunteers, or any combination, and may represent a state, county, or municipal government, public service district or rural fire district. For the purposes of this guideline, industries operating a fire

department for the protection of an industrial plant site and the surrounding community are also included within the intent of this definition.

- **Recertification:** The required performance and documentation process that qualifies an instructor to teach. The recertification process takes place every two years.
- **Certified State Fire Instructor:** An individual who has met the minimum competencies for NFPA 1041 Level 1 (either through the Fire Instructor I course, or through equivalency). The individual is recognized as qualified to teach and/or evaluate certain occupational fire training programs within the fire department in which he/she is a member, or in other areas as may be designated by supervision.
- **Specialty Area:** A method of designating SCFA instructors according to demonstrated knowledge and skills. Program is course specific, provides materials, an overview of course, and evaluation instruments.

## **4.0 INSTRUCTOR PROGRESSION PATH**

### **4.01 Instructor Designation**

#### **Initial Instructor Training**

All persons must have NFPA 1041, Level I or equivalent training. Equivalent training may be Fire Instructor I, or completion of a program which meets the intent of NFPA 1041, Level I.

- A bachelor degree/master's degree in education will be accepted in lieu of NFPA 1041, Level 1 and/or methodology

#### **New Instructor Orientation Program**

All persons must attend the New Instructor Orientation Program. To enter this program, the minimum requirements include:

- Must be at least 21 years of age
- Recommended by agency head
- High school diploma or greater

#### **Teach Back Process**

This step will be at the discretion of the Regional and Resident Training Coordinators:

- Applicant will perform a 20-minute lecture demonstration using a topic of his/her choice.
- Applicant will be graded on administration, classroom management, and presentation skills.
- With prior approval from the Regional and Resident Training Coordinator, this step may be completed via video submission.

**4.01a** After completion of the previous steps, persons will be designated as a Certified State Fire Instructor, upon action and approval of the Regional/Resident Training Coordinator.

### **4.02 Specialty Area Designation**

#### **Specialty Area**

All instructors must complete one of the following in order to receive qualification in a given subject:

Method 1:

- a. The instructor has taken the class as a student
- b. The instructor attends a course orientation program

- c. The instructor teaches the class as an assisting instructor and mentored by a lead instructor, if applicable.

OR Method 2:

- a. Based on an evaluation process, the Regional/Resident Training Coordinator will determine if the instructor has had the experience, knowledge and ability to teach the subject.
- b. The instructor teaches the class as an assisting instructor and mentored by a lead instructor if applicable.

OR Method 3:

- a. Based on the individual status as an expert or SME, the instructor is granted specialty status by the Regional/Resident Training Coordinator.

#### **4.03 Continual Improvement**

##### **Recertification Workshops**

Certified State Fire Instructors are required to recertify every two years.

##### **Instructor Evaluations**

It shall be the goal of Regional and Resident Training Coordinators to provide regular performance evaluations for the instructors assigned and used to perform Academy programs. Additionally, the Academy may use independent evaluators when deemed necessary. Continuing education or professional development is required as part of the Instructor Evaluation. This may be course revisions, workshops/seminars, taking a class in specialty area, or attending college classes.

The purpose of the instructor evaluation is to provide feedback and comments on the tasks being performed by the instructor. The goal of the evaluation process is to ensure quality instruction and services to Academy students.

#### **5.0 CERTIFIED STATE FIRE INSTRUCTORS**

A Certified State Fire Instructor is an instructor who is qualified to teach South Carolina Fire Academy course(s), and represents the Academy while teaching program(s), and is working as an employee of the instructor's fire department. (The term employee means the Certified State Fire Instructor is a member of the department, and does not infer compensation.)

The Certified State Fire Instructor will be working under the employing fire department's Worker's Compensation or similar coverage, and the department assumes liability for the Instructor.

The Certified State Fire Instructor may teach outside of the jurisdiction of the employing fire department or countywide fire suppression system, provided the department Chief or other authorized agency official completes the Off-Site Authorization form. The form may be to a specific date, course, location, or open-ended.

#### **6.0 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Complaints are defined as a specific allegation in which an instructor has violated any conduct guideline, failed to meet specific performance requirements, created a harmful or dangerous situation for students or other instructors, or a situation that interferes with the mission of the Academy.

All complaints shall be made in writing to the Regional or Resident Training Coordinator, as well as the Superintendent, as promptly as possible. Regional and Resident Staff, or the Superintendent, will investigate any allegation(s) made through interviewing instructor(s), students, and other individuals as needed to make a determination. Academy staff will determine the disposition of any allegation, and shall communicate the disposition to those involved.

## **7.0 CERTIFICATION SUSPENSION/REVOCATION**

Certified State Fire Instructors are expected to maintain a high level of professionalism in all actions. The instructor shall be knowledgeable in the area of instruction, and shall conduct courses according to the approved lesson plan and abide by national, state, local, and departmental laws, standards, and guidelines. Certified State Fire Instructors shall be objective, impartial, without bias, or discrimination in their instruction.

The Academy grants Instructor Certifications as a privilege. As such, the Instructor Certification can be removed as so determined by South Carolina Fire Academy staff based on the needs of the organization.

**THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE ACADEMY AND CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS, TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES OR EMPLOYEES OF THE FIRE ACADEMY. THE DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENTS. THE ACADEMY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR IN CONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.**