

# ARFF Training Bulletin



Winter 2023

## ARFF TRAINING ADVANCES WITH VIRTUAL REALITY

I recently attended the 2022 ARFF Working Group's Annual International Educational & Training Symposium in Florida, which provided me a unique networking opportunity with leaders from training academies across the globe. I got to highlight the SC Fire Academy's ARFF training programs while I was there and to learn from industry members about new ARFF technology.

Of particular note is a rather new approach to ARFF training – Virtual Reality (VR). By simply wearing a headset, VR training gives students a unique “hands-on” experience. Additionally, it enables a degree of training that does not directly impact the environment and keeps the focus of safety.

In a recent article in *International Airport Review*, the writer interviewed Peter Moore, Manager of the Airport Fire Service and Chief Fire Officer in New Zealand. Chief Moore shared that “his firefighting teams have been trained on the VR system and are very positive about it.”

How useful is the new technology training tool that resembles a game?

“VR replicates fire scenarios on a scale not possible in our training area, so it’s a valuable tool,” he said. “Our firefighters can use this training to prepare for an actual aircraft emergency, so when the time comes they will be in an environment they are familiar with and confident in. This VR training is an extra tool for our teams to become more familiar with aircraft systems and layout and will further build muscle memory so a response becomes more instinctive and spontaneous.”

Having experienced the VR training myself, I understand how this technology can replicate the stress and uncertainty of real-world emergencies. As this type of training grows, so will the imagined emergency scenarios that can be used to safely prepare firefighters for the risks associated with the job.

Chief Joe Charleston  
SC State Fire ARFF  
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Chief Joe Charleston, ARFF coordinator, (left) spent time with a former colleague Trevor Williams during the 2022 ARFF Annual International Educational & Training Symposium. They both served in the US Air Force.



## SCFA ARFF UPDATE

With input from numerous ARFF instructors and departments, the Academy recently made improvements to the 3402 Municipal Approach to ARFF class. As a result, staff updated the content and added new videos emphasizing more recent events aligned with NFPA 1003 training requirements.

## ARFF CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Greenville Downtown Airport is the busiest general aviation airport in the state and is located in the heart of Greenville's business district. It is also home to seven flight schools.



With that shared, most recently, the Greenville City Fire Department completed its accreditation process. We understand, as those airport statistics will most likely increase, we need to continue to train in aircraft rescue and firefighting.

To accomplish this goal, we needed to train 36 firefighters within a three-week time period. With the assistance of Academy staff, we were able to set up three Municipal Fire Department Approach to Aircraft Rescue classes. In fact, the instructors created these classes specifically to fit our needs.

Our fire department was pleased with the training experience. Not only were the instructors and classes educational, but they also allowed us the opportunity to have an enjoyable training experience. The Academy's ability to think outside the box helped us provide the Airport and the people of Greenville with excellent service in addition to helping us meet our departmental goals.

Brian M. Austin  
Chief of Training | Greenville City Fire Department

### SC Fire Academy 2023 ARFF Training Dates

Course Code	2023 Dates
3400-23006	January 9-13
3400-23007	March 6-10
3400-23008	May 15-19
3400-23009	June 5-9
3400-24001	August 7-11
3400-24002	October 2-6
3400-24003	December 11-15



# RECOMMENDED READING

## RECENT NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

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A New Reality for Training Airport Firefighters



Nov. 2, 2022: Plane Crashes in Greenville County, Fire Chief Says

[Continue...](#)



Oct. 31, 2022: Carbon Dioxide 'deluge' at Los Angeles International Airport Sickens 4, Triggers Partial Evacuation

[Continue...](#)

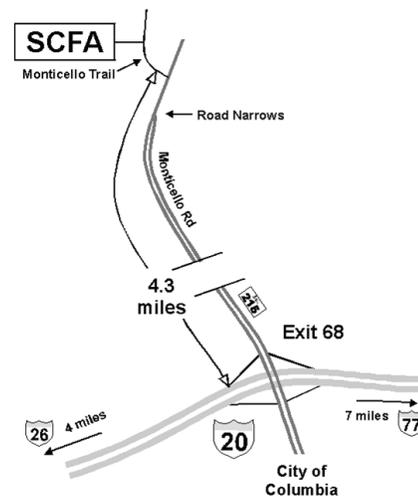


"It was likely a release used in a fire suppression system."

## COLUMBIA CAMPUS

From Interstate 20, take Exit 68 and turn north on Monticello Road (S.C. 215). Travel about 4.3 miles north to Monticello Trail and turn left. (The road will narrow from four to two lanes about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile before the turnoff.)

The Fire Academy complex is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile down Monticello Trail on the left.



# ACADEMY ACCOMMODATIONS

## SCFA Dormitory

We recently completed a multi-million dollar renovation on our dormitory. The top-to-bottom renovation includes new paved parking areas, a hotel-like reception area, new furnishings, and an expanded weight room/gym area.

**Please note:** Dorm rooms are first come, first served. Single occupancy is \$50/night, double occupancy is \$30/night. Please make your dorm room selection during the registration process.

In the event the State Fire Academy's dormitory is full or unavailable, the DoubleTree by Hilton is less than 10 miles away (15 minutes) from the Academy site.

### DoubleTree by Hilton Columbia

2100 Bush River Road  
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

Their 2023 rate for students attending classes and events at the Academy is \$104 per night, including breakfast, and falls below the GSA reimbursable allowed rate. For stays of five nights or more, the rate is \$94 per night, and includes breakfast each morning.

Two ways to make your reservation:

Call: 1-803-731-0300 and mention group: South Carolina State Fire #0002765133; or

Book online using the link [here](#) and enter corporate account #0002765133



### South Carolina Fire Academy

141 Monticello Trail  
Columbia, SC 29203

Tel: (803) 896-9800  
Hours: 08:30 am - 5:00 pm  
Monday - Friday except State Holidays

 803-896-9813

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