

## Lead Instructor Resolution

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In January, 2017 the Personnel Standards and Education Commission passed a resolution requiring that **lead instructors for certification courses have at least three years tenure as certified firefighters.** This resolution was introduced in order to ensure that lead instructors are seasoned and have the knowledge, skill, and ability to safely educate and train students. The premise of this resolution is that instructors who have a minimum of three years of tenure as a firefighter should have sufficient experience that they not only comprehend the material but should have the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the concepts and be capable of presenting practical examples of how concepts apply in the field.

The **70:20:10 Model for Learning and Development** (Eichinger, Lombardo, McCall, 1996) suggests that 70% of learning comes from experience, 20% from mentorship, and 10% from coursework and training. This research places greater emphasis on experience while also advocating for the need for mentorship.

The Fire and Emergency Service Higher Education (FESHE) professional development committees, in conjunction with the National Fire Academy, cite three elements as critical to the success of fire service members including education, training, and experience. Education is the acquisition of new knowledge, particularly through attainment of Associates, Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degrees. Training involves honing knowledge and developing skills which lead to task proficiency. Training can be accomplished by attending certification courses at the AFC to gain “craft knowledge”. Lastly, experience is gained over a period of time, whether through training or during emergency incidents. The foundation of this triad, education, training and experience, is that firefighters who have acquired all three components should be well-rounded and equipped to make the best decision possible when confronted with the complex circumstances that firefighters often face.

One of the core strategies of the AFC is to provide excellent education and training. It is necessary that this strategy be applied consistently whether for certification courses taught on campus at the AFC, at Regional and Extension Training Centers, or at field delivery courses taught by local fire instructors, both career and volunteer. Implementation of this strategy is accomplished by AFC Staff through approval of training facilities, approval of instructors, establishing minimum numbers of students so that safety thresholds are not compromised, development and distribution of curriculum which meets or exceeds NFPA standards, and through adherence to strict testing and evaluation procedures that comply with ProBoard and IFSAC requirements.

### **Procedure**

Vetting of lead instructors should be a shared responsibility between local departments and AFC staff. When completing course applications local departments shall ensure that the lead instructor has obtained a ProBoard or IFSAC certification in the course he/she is teaching, has obtained at least a Fire Instructor I certification (or Teaching Certificate), and has the requisite three years of tenure as a certified firefighter. Upon receipt of the *AFC Course Application* Regional Coordinators, Training Specialists, and Program Managers will also verify the instructors have the necessary credentials to teach the course.

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It should be noted that the three year tenure requirement does not apply to assistant instructors. Firefighters who hold a ProBoard of IFSAC Fire Instructor I certification but have less than three years of tenure as a certified firefighter may teach various portions of certification courses as well as oversee components of skills and drill activity so long as the lead instructor observes, regulates, and supervises the instruction. The intent of this provision is that the lead instructor will serve as a mentor in order to refine the skill level of less tenured instructors while still allowing the junior instructor to be engaged in the education and training of personnel.

If anyone has questions regarding this resolution or its implementation please contact your Regional Coordinator.