

CERTIFICATION INFORMATION AND POLICIES

(Refer to the Certification Manual for more information regarding specific policies. To obtain a copy, please contact us or visit us online at www.alabamafirecollege.org. Please direct inquiries to the Certification Unit at certification@alabamafirecollege.org.)

The Alabama Fire College and the Personnel Standards & Education Commission are charged with the responsibility of certification of fire fighters and fire education programs in the State of Alabama and are guided by the Code of Alabama, the Administrative Rules and Regulations, and our certification policies and procedures. While our internal policies may not contradict either state law or the administrative code of Alabama, they serve to guide the staff on implementation of rules and ensure fairness in application. As part of the accreditation process, we disclose our practices to third-party accrediting agencies, who audit the organization periodically to assure compliance.

Accreditation and Standards

The Alabama Fire College and Firefighters Personnel & Education Standards Commission is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). Accreditation serves as an affirmation that the certification courses of the Alabama Fire College meet the standards of excellence as defined by the national accrediting body. The Alabama Fire College has been ProBoard accredited since 1983. In November 2005, AFC was successful in obtaining accreditation by IFSAC. In 2013, the International Code Council approved recognition of the Fire Inspector I and II courses. The Alabama Fire College is not an academic degree-granting institution. The accreditation of Alabama Fire College's certification processes by ProBoard and IFSAC assures complete compliance with the procedures and criteria established by these accrediting entities. The Alabama Fire College is proud to act as a certifying agent under their sponsorship. Currently, the Alabama Fire College issues certification automatically and at no further charge to the individual upon successful completion of approved courses. Please visit the websites at www.TheProBoard.org (individual accessible certification look-up); and www.IFSAC.org for more information.

Academic Fraud and Dishonesty

Academic fraud or dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form during any type of evaluation. Students will be required to abide by the following Honor Statement: I, understand that during any phase (academic or practical) of an Alabama Fire College course (coursework, evaluation, project, practical/skills exam, cognitive/written exam) cheating, in any form, is prohibited. Cheating, in any form, is acting dishonestly to gain an unfair advantage. Cheating includes: giving or receiving unauthorized aid on any assignment, quiz, or exam; plagiarism, using the ideas of another and declaring it as one's own; and stealing, taking without permission. During a certification exam, any of the following acts, constitutes academic fraud and could be subject to penalties, including but not limited to, dismissal from and failure of the examination: (a) Looking at another candidate's exam; (b) Talking to another candidate; (c) Possession of any device capable of recording or transmitting data, including but not limited to, photography and audio recordings; (d) Attempting to remove an exam from the room; (e) Attempting to take an exam for someone else.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Anyone needing special accommodations for certification programs and/or testing shall request such provision no less than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled event. Requests must be submitted by the student along with the appropriate disability documentation on official letterhead and verified by an appropriate physician. Services and reasonable accommodations are provided pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Appeals/Rescore

Students may request an appeal in writing within 30 days of the testing event (written or skills). As a result of procedures in place to score and verify scores, students are not encouraged to request hand-scored answer sheets, as the equipment is checked for accuracy on a regular maintenance schedule.

Audit

A student may choose to audit (no certification testing) a course at the Alabama Fire College and receive a Certificate of Attendance. Once the declaration for audit has been filed and processed, the student will not be allowed to recant and test.

Certification

Requirements for each certification course are any specified pre-requisites, completion of course hours, and successful completion of the written and skills examinations. All certification paperwork must be completed and ALL required signatures, dates, hours, scores, topics, etc. received by the Certification Unit before certification can be awarded. Upon successful completion and receipt of the required paperwork, a certificate with the Alabama and applicable ProBoard seal and/or IFSAC seal will be emailed within a few weeks after testing. This certificate is automatically registered with these entities with no further application or fees needed for this recognition. Certifications cannot be issued to individuals with a felony conviction.

Course Delivery

Modifications may be made to the following listing as new standards are created or new courses gain certification:

Campus Delivery Courses are taught either at the Alabama Fire College, a Regional Training Center, or other area as approved by the Regional Coordinator and Training staff at the Fire College, including department delivery courses: Public Fire and Life Safety Educator I, Public Information Officer, Public Safety Telecommunicator I/II, Rescue Technician: Cave I/II, Rescue Technician: Confined Space I/II, Rescue Technician: Dive I, Rescue Technician: Rope II, Rescue Technician: Structural Collapse I/II, Rescue Technician: Surface Water I/II, Rescue Technician: Swift Water I/II, Rescue Technician: Trench I/II, Rescue Technician: Vehicle Extrication I and Machinery Extrication I, Rescue Technician: Vehicle Extrication II and Machinery Extrication II, Rescue Technician: Wilderness I/II.

Departmental Delivery Courses are taught at any fire department in the State of Alabama, provided that approval has occurred and all qualifiers have been met: Certified Volunteer Fire Fighter, Fire Apparatus Operator: Pumper, Fire Apparatus Operator: Aerial, Fire Apparatus Operator: Mobile Water Supply, Fire Department Safety Officer: Health & Safety Officer, Fire Department Safety Officer: Incident Safety Officer, Fire Fighter II, Fire Inspector I, Fire Instructor I, Fire Instructor II, Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, Hazardous Materials Awareness & Operations, Live Fire Instructor, Rapid Intervention Crews, Rescue Technician: Rope I (available only if Instructor is approved by Fire College NFPA 1006 Program Manager).

Course Prerequisites

Individuals may attend certification courses upon registration, accompanied by proof of prerequisites. A student must meet all prerequisites and forward the appropriate documentation to the Certification Unit prior to attendance. Prerequisites are listed on our website under the Training Program Course Description, Prerequisite Listing, and syllabi. When a course requires certification as a prerequisite, accepted proof is a certificate from an agency accredited by either ProBoard or IFSAC. When the prerequisite is proof of training, a completion document signed by the agency who conducted the training or other verifiable documentation of that training is required.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The Alabama Fire College has established policies and procedures to comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The examination scores are confidential. No actual scores will be given by telephone. Certificate information is deemed as a public record and can be conveyed to officials of a fire fighter's department unless the College is notified in writing on a yearly basis not to issue this information. A student desiring his/her grade to be released to another entity must indicate in writing which scores can be disclosed and the organization to which the scores can be revealed. Please use the Transcript Release form located under the Forms section of our website at www.alabamafirecollege.org. (Student Record Policies and Procedures can be obtained from our website or by contacting our offices.)

Re-Certification

Any individual who was previously issued Fire Fighter I certification by the Commission, and whose Fire Fighter I has expired, may be recertified by successfully completing a Fire Fighter Re-certification Course as prescribed by the Commission. (Please visit our web page – [How Do I/Reinstate My Fire Fighter I certification.](#))

Reciprocity

The State of Alabama requires a minimum number of training hours to serve as a fire fighter. Individuals seeking employment in Alabama as a fire fighter who have prior training to the Fire Fighter I level may apply for Reciprocity. Please see our web page–[How Do I/Transfer Fire Fighter I \(for employment\) Certification Training from Another Entity/State](#) for more information.

Re-Test Policy

Students have the opportunity for a retest to be taken after 30 days from the original test date and within one year of the course completion date. Any student who fails to complete the required examinations within 12 months of course completion must complete the course again to sit for another test. Students appearing to take a retest must show a driver's license or other acceptable photo identification. Open Testing (Initial and Retest) is conducted at the Alabama Fire College Campus, please see our web page- [How Do I/Schedule a Certification Exam](#) for test dates. Students should contact the Certification Unit to schedule a test at least one week prior to the desired test date. Department of Defense and Out-of-State students that need alternate testing arrangements should contact the Certification Unit. Retests may be given in conjunction with other regularly scheduled certification tests and the request should be routed through the appropriate regional personnel. Please refer to our Regional Map section on our website. EMS exams may be made up at the discretion of the instructor or the EMS Group Supervisor.

Skills Examination

The skill component of a course is completed through skills testing or project completion. Skills evaluations are required for certification per course and administered by an official Alabama Fire College Regional Personnel/Proctor and trained evaluators. Skill and Project packages are available on our web page under the Training Section Course Description page per course. Cell phones and electronic communication devices are not allowed in the skills testing area.

Standard of Training: NFPA

The Alabama Fire College uses the Fire Service Professional Qualifications Standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for the basis of all certification training. The complete current standards are on file in the Alabama Fire College's Curriculum Unit. Visit www.nfpa.org for current standards and updates.

Test Administration

Written and skills examinations are routinely administered at the end of each certification course at the training location by an official Alabama Fire College Proctor and evaluators. Written examinations are administered only to individuals that have met all course requirements, including all prerequisites, course hours and skills requirements. Proctor procedures are followed in a uniform manner regardless of testing site.

Test Development, Security, & Analysis

Every question on the written examination is cross-referenced to the appropriate teaching outline, reference text, and to the national standard to ensure it is covered in-depth in the course. Test questions are purchased from nationally accredited test bank providers or developed in-house by subject matter experts. Multiple versions of the written examination are developed for each certification level. Security checks are in place to ensure the accuracy of the scoring process. Analysis of exam questions is completed routinely after test administration.

Test Eligibility

A student must complete all portions of a certification course, both classroom and practical, to be eligible for testing and certification. It is the responsibility of the host fire chief/course coordinator/instructor to ensure that every student meets ALL attendance and skill requirements for certification courses. Certification candidates with incomplete certification files, where certification testing has occurred, but the certifying agency certificate is pending, will be allowed to sit for the certification exam but will not be processed for certification until all documentation has been received by the Certification Unit.

Test Preparation

In order to avoid the need for a retest, students are urged to purchase the required textbooks and begin reading prior to the start of the first class. Course syllabi containing pertinent course information help guide students on what to begin studying prior to the class. Additional study each night between classes further prepares students for the written exam. Students should also pay close attention to the instructor's teaching outline, slide presentation, and should take notes during class. Many courses have online components that provide further study materials.

Test Results

GRADES ARE NOT RELEASED OVER THE PHONE. Results are released after processing in order, as received by the Unit (approximately 7-10 days after receipt) if all course paperwork is also received. Please note that final scores

for project-based courses (Fire Instructor I, II, III, Hazardous Materials: Incident Commander, Public Fire & Life Safety Educator I, Fire Inspector III, Fire Department Safety Officer: HSO & ISO, Fire Officer I-IV) will take additional time to receive due to the evaluation of the projects by the Certification Unit. Students will receive an email containing the certification eligibility results. This email is the first step in the notification process. If applicable, a certificate will be processed within approximately 30 days if appropriate prerequisite, paperwork, and skills information have also been provided.

Written Examination

The written examination is administered at the end of each certification course by an official Alabama Fire College test proctor to individuals who have met all the course requirements, including prerequisites, all course hours, and successful skills examination. Written examinations allow one minute per question. Cell phones and electronic communication devices are not allowed in the testing room.