

ALABAMA FIRE COLLEGE

SKILLS
EVALUATOR
TRAINING

Revised: November 27, 2015

OUR TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- ▶ The objectives for this training:
 - ▶ Define certification, accreditation, and testing
 - ▶ Define skills evaluator qualifications, training requirements, and responsibilities
 - ▶ Clarify roles of the student, proctor, evaluator and Certification staff involved in the arrangement, administering, and processing of the proctored skills (practical) certification exam
 - ▶ Create awareness of and understanding for the certification and testing processes



WHAT IS CERTIFICATION?

- ▶ Certification is the verification that a candidate has successfully completed an evaluation of his/her knowledge, skills and abilities against a consensus standard by an accredited certification system/agency.
- ▶ The Individual Fire Fighter gets **CERTIFIED**. Qualified people gain **certification**.
- ▶ The consensus standards used by the AFC are the NFPA standards.



WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Testing procedures must uniformly and consistently measure the performance of candidates to those skills, abilities and knowledge in the job performance requirement, requisite knowledge and requisite skill of the applicable professional standard.



WHY IS ACCREDITATION IMPORTANT?

- ▶ Affirms that the firefighter has been through a program that has been validated by a third party accrediting body
- ▶ Opens mobility opportunities to candidate
- ▶ Increases job marketability
- ▶ Increases promotional opportunities
- ▶ Improves safety and health for firefighters and citizens they serve



ACCREDITATION CONCERNS

- ▶ Does the AFC have the capability to test every JPR (job performance requirement) for every NFPA standard or level that we submit for accreditation?
- ▶ Is this testing done fairly and safely for every individual?
- ▶ Are there written policies and procedures that guarantee the above?

Maintaining accreditation affirms that the AFC meets or exceeds the requirements.

(successful Site Visits in 2013 & 2014)



AFC MISSION STATEMENT

- ▶ Our continuing commitment is to facilitate excellence in education, training, certification, and support services for the emergency response community.



AFC DEFINITION OF TESTING

- ▶ The act of giving certification candidates an examination to determine what the candidate knows, what they have learned, or their level of competency as compared to a National Fire Protection Association standard using either a:
 - ▶ Written (cognitive) exam
 - ▶ Skills-based performance exam
 - ▶ Project work, or
 - ▶ A combination of these test methodologies



ALABAMA FIRE SERVICE TERMINOLOGY

- ▶ Regional Personnel, Proctors, Certification Unit Staff
 - ▶ Employees of Alabama Fire College who proctor/monitor all field, on-campus, and DOD/Industrial courses to include the written and skills examinations
- ▶ Skill Evaluators
 - ▶ Supports the Regional or Testing Personnel at a test site. Is responsible for observing practical skills examination candidates and for completing skills evaluations using established criteria following AFC policies and procedures.



SKILLS TEST ADMINISTRATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ The skills (practical) portion of all certification examinations is administered only by AFC approved Evaluators. (AFC Policy # 705.02)
 - ▶ Individuals must complete the training and application requirements.
- ▶ Evaluators are expected to understand, enforce, and monitor for security, fairness and safety.
- ▶ Evaluators must work to uphold the following:
 - ▶ Mission of the Alabama Fire College
 - ▶ Testing Policies/Procedures, Integrity
 - ▶ Student Advocacy
 - ▶ Safety



SKILLS TEST ADMINISTRATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ The Pro Board and IFSAC require that we have an appropriate method of testing every Job Performance Requirement (JPR) referenced on the standard to be tested.
- ▶ The Pro Board and IFSAC require that the evaluator of the skills be someone other than the instructor for that skill.
- ▶ The Pro Board and IFSAC require that the evaluator be qualified and trained.



SKILLS TESTING

- ▶ Skill performance involves the translation of knowledge into action.
- ▶ Learning is defined as a change in behavior and skills allow a person to demonstrate that changed behavior.
- ▶ Skills testing is the demonstration phase of the students training process and professional development.
- ▶ Skills testing can be completed through:
 - ▶ Performance skills testing at skills stations
 - ▶ Performance skills testing through scenario worksheets (Fire Inspector I & II)
 - ▶ Project-based assessment (Fire Officer I-IV, Fire Inspector III, Fire Instructor I-III, PFLSEI, FDSO-ISO & HSO)



THE ROLES OF THE EVALUATOR

- ▶ Observe the candidate
- ▶ Make a judgment on performance
- ▶ Document the results on the appropriate Skills Sheets
 - ▶ (see AFC website – Master Resource Listing for most current packages)
- ▶ Ensure fair and safe testing environment
 - ▶ Safety must be the first consideration
 - ▶ Fair testing procedures
 - ▶ Professionalism
 - ▶ Standard performance guidelines



SAFETY PROCEDURES

- ▶ Appropriate PPE will be worn by candidate and Evaluator.
- ▶ Stopping the skills testing when unsafe situation occurs.
 - ▶ Student will not be penalized for safety questions.
- ▶ Same safety concerns in testing as in training.



SKILLS TESTING PROCEDURES

- ▶ Candidates will be tested utilizing the current skills sheet packages.
- ▶ Candidates will be directed when training has ended and testing is beginning.
- ▶ Candidate may be tested individually on a skill, tested individually within a team, or both, depending on the skills that were randomly drawn for skills testing.
- ▶ Candidate will be oriented to the Testing area layout.



SKILLS TESTING PROCEDURES

- ▶ Before starting the exam, ask if there are any questions.
- ▶ Test the complete station.
- ▶ **DO NOT TEACH AT THE STATION.**
- ▶ When the test is over, advise the candidate to return to the waiting area or staging area.
- ▶ Candidates (to be tested) should not be able to view the candidates that are currently testing



SKILLS TESTING PROCEDURES

- ▶ The testing station is a chance for the candidate to demonstrate what they know.



CANDIDATE GROUP & NUMBER ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Candidates can be assigned a number and a group.
 - ▶ Example: For a class of 20 students there may be 5 groups of 4 candidates. Group 1 will have candidates 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4. Group 2 will have candidates 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4. ETC.
 - ▶ Group assignment is the first number (1 – 1)
 - ▶ Candidate assignment is the second number (1 – 1)

YOU AS AN EVALUATOR

- ▶ You will make judgments about a candidate based on:
 - ▶ Your knowledge of the skill
 - ▶ The actual performance of the skill by the candidate
 - ▶ The requirements (steps) as found on the skills sheet
 - ▶ Candidates should be rated or evaluated to the requirements on the skill sheet and not each other
 - ▶ Your evaluation should be of the candidate's performance and not on your opinion



YOU AS AN EVALUATOR

- ▶ Focus on the skill performance and not:
 - ▶ Sex of the candidate
 - ▶ Ethnic background
 - ▶ Appearance
 - ▶ Demeanor of the candidate
 - ▶ His or her “home” department



SKILLS SHEETS

- ▶ designed to limit influences
- ▶ compare performance to the standard
- ▶ document what the candidate did incorrectly (invaluable in an appeals process)
- ▶ Evaluate the candidate on what you observe not what you “feel” about the candidate



SKILLS TESTING

- ▶ Each candidate will be given an initial attempt at each skill.
- ▶ Evaluators will not indicate if the candidate has passed or failed.
- ▶ When all skills are completed, the candidates will be instructed to leave the testing area.



RETEST

- ▶ If a candidate fails the initial attempt at any skill, a retest will be administered after all candidates have completed initial testing.
- ▶ Retesting will be scored by a different evaluator than the initial attempt.
- ▶ Remediation can occur between attempts.
- ▶ Failure on the second attempt will require the candidate to retest at a different testing site after a 30 day waiting period.



DOCUMENTATION (EVALUATOR COMMENTS)

▶ Poor example:

- ▶ Did not properly don the SCBA.
- ▶ Did not properly don the SCBA while adjusting straps.

▶ Good example:

- ▶ The candidate placed the cylinder/harness on top of his/her back and tightened the side straps before attaching the two straps together at the regulator.



GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

- ▶ Prepare yourself before each exam.
 - ▶ Do you know all the forms?
 - ▶ Do you know who and how many to evaluate?
 - ▶ Do you know the location?
 - ▶ Do you know what skills you are evaluating?
 - ▶ You must be certified to the level that you are evaluating as well as to the Fire Instructor I level. Are you competent at the skill?



GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

- ▶ Position yourself so that you can observe the candidate you are assigned to evaluate.
- ▶ Be totally acquainted with what you are testing.
- ▶ Adhere to the skills directions.
- ▶ Respect the student's effort by focusing your full attention on the attempt (no use of cell phones during testing).
- ▶ Candidates are not to observe other candidates performing individual skills testing. This is considered cheating.



GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

- ▶ Do not allow candidates to observe others performing individual skills testing.
 - ▶ They can be confused when they watch another candidate perform the skill incorrectly.
- ▶ During team skills only grade the candidate you are testing. Don't be influenced by the other candidates on the team.



GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

- ▶ During team skills grade your candidate for what they are assigned or expected to do during the skill.
- ▶ Even if the candidate is part of a team, they are to be tested individually.
 - ▶ Example: If the skill requires a door to be checked for heat, only one of the team members has to check the door, not each of them.



GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

- ▶ Make accurate observations.
- ▶ Observe with an open mind.
- ▶ Record detailed comments on what the individual failed to do.
- ▶ Carefully record your observations.
- ▶ Do not allow early observations to bias later observations.



GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS

- ▶ Do not form final opinions until the exercise is completed.
- ▶ Never indicate to candidates during an exercise how well or how poorly they are doing.
 - ▶ Avoid positive or negative feedback regarding performance.
 - ▶ Candidates will be looking for clues.



TEST SECURITY

- ▶ Evaluators should be aware that accreditation of the Alabama Fire College requires a specific level of security for all aspects of the test administration (receipt, delivery, return).
- ▶ Evaluators are not to share any test information with anyone. Student should not be aware of skill to be tested until at the skills station.



TESTING/RETESTING/CERTIFICATION POLICIES

- ▶ Academic fraud will not be tolerated in any form.
(AFC Policy # 705.20)
- ▶ Students will conduct themselves in a respectful manner to avoid hampering the ability of fellow students. (AFC Policy # 705.20)
- ▶ Students auditing a course will not be issued a test. (AFC Policy # 705.35)
- ▶ All certification testing and retesting must be completed within 12 months of the course completion date.



ACADEMIC FRAUD

(AFC POLICY # 704.21)

Academic fraud will not be tolerated in any form during any type of evaluation. Candidates will be held to the highest degree of conduct. The AFC takes the issue of cheating and unethical conduct seriously and all incidents will be investigated. (AFC Policy # 704.21)

- ▶ It is the responsibility of all representatives of the AFC to actively deter academic dishonesty. Apathy or acceptance in the presence of academic dishonesty is not a neutral act. All members of the agency – students, staff, instructors, test proctors and practical skills evaluators, all share the responsibility of challenging and making known acts of apparent academic dishonesty.
- ▶ Academic fraud: Acts such as cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism, See policy for further definitions of these acts.



PROCTOR/EVALUATOR AUTHORITY WITH REGARD TO EMERGENCIES

- ▶ The test proctor/evaluator has the authority to cease and restart the examination depending upon the circumstance. (AFC Policy # 705.18)
 - ▶ inclement weather
 - ▶ general safety of students and proctor
 - ▶ medical emergencies



CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ The skills evaluation is a component of the certification process. Certification is issued once skills and written components are compiled, along with course prerequisites and requirements.



SUMMARY

- ▶ Accreditation requires that the students have a fair, safe and equal opportunity when testing in both the cognitive and psychomotor environment.
- ▶ Our goal is to eliminate any issue or obstruction to fair testing.



Complete the Evaluator Application Form and forward to the
Certification Unit of the Alabama Fire College

Certification@alabamafirecollege.org

Fillable Form:

http://www.alabamafirecollege.org/docs/docs/afc_evaluator_approval_form.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=2



QUESTIONS

- ▶ All questions regarding this training or testing issues should be directed to the Certification Unit of the AFC
 - ▶ CERTIFICATION@ALABAMAFIRECOLLEGE.ORG
 - ▶ (205) 391-3745

THANK YOU!

