

Office of the State Fire Commissioner



Pennsylvania State Fire Academy Instructor Classification System And Code of Professionalism

Policy No. 2001 – 01

Issued July 1, 2001

Revised 7/01/2010

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I. Purpose

To establish an instructor classification system for individuals presenting courses related to, in support of, and at the direction of the Office of the State Fire Commissioner. This Instructor Policy includes, but is not limited to, Instructors qualified by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner for the educational training agencies' (the community colleges, technical institutes and full-time training academies involved in the Local Level Training Program) delivery programs, State approved curriculum for numerous hazard specialty courses, National Fire Academy (NFA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal agency courses, including those co-sponsored with other State agencies.

II. Instructor Classifications

Agency Instructor

PEMA Instructor

Non-Suppression Instructor

Suppression Instructor

Instructor Emeritus

III. Instructor General Requirements

In order to be considered as an instructor under this Instructor Policy, instructor candidates shall:

1. Be a minimum 23 years of age.
 - a. Where required, years of experience shall accumulate after the age of 18.
 - b. Possess a high school diploma or G.E.D.
2. Be physically capable of performing the minimum duties related to the presentation of courses.
3. Be of such moral character as to exemplify professional decorum, which facilitates the transfer of knowledge and fosters a positive learning environment for students.
4. Have no pending charges or convictions of any crime at the Misdemeanor 2 level or greater.
5. Have successfully completed a thirty-five (35) hour (minimum) adult education methodology course recognized by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, or possess a valid Teacher's Certificate.
6. Submit a current Clearance from Child Abuse report.
7. Submit a current Criminal Record Check report.
8. Possess applicable valid federal, state, county or local licenses, permits and/or certificates where required, e.g. commercial driver's license or approved written waiver, etc.
9. Receive approval from the Instructor Review Committee. (See Section VII Application Process for specific submission instructions.)

IV. Specific Requirements

A. Agency Instructor

An individual accredited to instruct **within their State agency, only** specific courses designated in the PA State Fire Academy Local Level Curriculum as Non-Suppression

courses. In order to qualify as an Agency Instructor, the candidate shall meet all general instructor requirements as listed in Section III of this document and the following additional criteria;

1. Provide a letter of request from the senior State agency official or designee that they be accredited as an Agency Instructor. The letter shall include a listing of the specific course(s) being requested to be accredited to instruct.
2. Attend a specific instructor development course (Train-the-Trainer) prior to instructing the specific course(s).

B. PEMA Instructor

An individual accredited by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) to instruct **PEMA** specific courses designated in the PA State Fire Academy Local Level Curriculum as Non-Suppression courses.

In order to qualify as a Radiological Instructor, the candidate shall meet all general instructor requirements as listed in Section III of this document and the following additional criteria;

1. Requirements established by PEMA
2. Attend a specific instructor development course (Train-the-Trainer) prior to instructing the specific radiological course(s).

C. Non-Suppression Instructor

An individual qualified to instruct various Local Level Training curricula designated in the PA State Fire Academy Local Level Curriculum and catalogue as Non-Suppression courses.

In order to qualify as a Non-Suppression Instructor, the candidate shall meet all general instructor requirements as listed in Section III of this document and the following additional criteria;

1. Have verifiable hands-on experience in appropriate emergency service work after their 18th birthday at the time of application.
 - a. In the year 2010, a minimum of 5 years of experience is required.
 - b. In the year 2011, a minimum of 6 years of experience is required.
 - c. In the year 2012, a minimum of 8 years of experience is required.
 - d. In the year 2013, a minimum of 10 years experience is required.
2. Submit a detailed resume listing their experience, education and training, and other information they believe qualifies them to instruct each of the specific course/specialties they wish to teach.
3. Have a minimum of 100 hours of emergency services training of which a minimum of 50 hours shall be in the specialty track(s) (rescue, hazmat, command, etc) they wish to be accredited to instruct.
4. Possess a Fire Service Instructor I certification; NBFSPQ or IFSAC.
5. Submit three (3) letters of professional reference, one of which must be from an accredited State Fire Academy Local Level Non-Suppression or Suppression instructor by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner.
6. Successfully completed the National Fire Academy course, "Incident Safety Officer."
7. Possess the minimum NBFSPQ or IFSAC professional certification in the specialty track(s) and/or course(s) they wish to be accredited to instruct; if the certification level exists in Pennsylvania.

8. Attend a specific instructor development course (Train-the-Trainer) prior to instructing specific courses. Should no specific Train-the-Trainer be available, applicants will need to satisfy any or all of the following as determined necessary by Office of the State Fire Commissioner;
 - a. Submit a detailed resume for evaluation listing the applicant's experience and qualifications to instruct specific courses.
 - b. Attend approved course of the same or similar topic. In many cases such course must be taken at a specific location; State/National Fire Academy, Emergency Management Institute, etc.
 - c. As an instructor candidate, teach initial classes under the direction of a qualified instructor appointed by the Field Supervisor and receive a favorable evaluation from the designated instructor.
9. Meet any and all federal, state and educational training agency requirements appropriate for the position and the course of instruction to be presented.
10. Receive approval from the Instructor Review Committee and the PA State Fire Academy Administrator.

D. Suppression Instructor

An individual qualified to instruct fire suppression courses as listed in the PA State Fire Academy Local Level Curriculum and catalogue. In order to qualify as a Suppression Instructor, the candidate shall meet all of the requirements for a Non-Suppression Instructor and the following criteria:

1. Have verifiable hands-on experience in appropriate emergency service work after their 18th birthday at the time of application.
 - a. In the year 2010, a minimum of 8 years of experience is required.
 - b. In the year 2013, a minimum of 10 years of experience is required.
2. Have a minimum of 150 hours of documented structural fire suppression training of which 100 hours shall be PSFA programs.
3. Have successfully completed one of the following selection of courses:
 - a. Engine Company Operations at Residential Structures and Fire Operations at Large Structures which must be completed at the PA State Fire Academy *or*,
 - b. An equivalent municipal or military program as approved by the PA State Fire Academy Curriculum Specialist.
4. Be certified as a Fire Fighter II and in 2013 Fire Service Instructor II; National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ) *or* International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).
5. After completing requirements D.1 through D.4, attend and successfully complete the "Suppression Instructor Development" (ZFID) course conducted by the Pa State Fire Academy.
6. Receive approval from the Instructor Review Committee and the PA State Fire Academy Administrator.

E. Instructor Emeritus

An instructor of the Non-Suppression and/or Suppression classification with twenty-five or more years of continuous service as a PSFA instructor in the state emergency services training system that has "retired on his/her merits." This title is honorary and would be conferred by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner. Emeritus instructors are exempt from Section VI Classification Maintenance, but must fulfill all other requirements for upgrades, etc.

V. Instructor Review Committee

A. Composition

An Instructor Review Committee shall consist of the persons holding the following positions with the PA State Fire Academy. The PA State Fire Academy Administrator may establish other members of the Committee; when and if needed.

1. State Fire Academy Assistant Administrator – Committee Chair
2. Western Region Fire Education Specialist – Field Supervisor
3. Central Region Fire Education Specialist – Field Supervisor
4. Eastern Region Fire Education Specialist – Field Supervisor

B. Duties

The duties of the Committee shall be;

1. To review and make recommendations to the PA State Fire Academy Administrator upon all instructor applications submitted.
2. To consider and make recommendations upon any application request for consideration of alternative credentials (equivalencies).
3. To perform such other duties as may be assigned by the PA State Fire Academy Administrator.
4. To serve as the Disciplinary Review Committee (See XII.B)

C. Authority

The Instructor Review Committee will have the authority to review equivalent or alternative credentials and shall make recommendations to the PA State Fire Academy Administrator whose decision will be final.

D. Meeting

The Instructor Review Committee shall meet at the PA State Fire Academy Administrator's call or when there is business to discuss.

VI. Classification Maintenance

To maintain classification, an instructor shall meet all requirements established by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner. They shall instruct, or be involved in instructing, a minimum of 32 hours of PA State Fire Academy accredited courses annually.

A. Continuing Professional Education – All instructors must complete **8** hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) each year. Such CPE shall meet the following criteria.

1. CPE must be relevant to the maintenance of instructor skills and Adult Education Methodology.

– **OR** –

2. CPE must be relevant to technical changes and improvements in the instructor's specialties. This education must

a. Be accredited by a county state, national organization or authority.

– **OR** –

b. Result in a certification issued by an entity accredited by the NBFSPQ or IFSAC.

– **OR** –

c. Be granted a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) value by a state or national CEU accredited entity.

Examples of acceptable CPE includes training completed, certification, seminars, workshops, and conferences attended, publication of papers, and documented research work.

B. Alternative CPEs – The Instructor Review Committee shall have the power to review and make recommendations to the PA State Fire Academy Administrator in cases where there is question regarding whether or not submitted CPE meets the requirements for this section. The burden of proof that an alternative credential is fully equivalent to the requirements of this directive shall fall upon the applicant.

C. Inactive Status – Any instructor who fails to meet the minimum annual teaching and/or continuing professional education requirements for a given year shall be placed on **Inactive Status** for one calendar year.

1. During this year, the instructor may regain his/her active status by completing

a. The minimum continuing professional education requirements for the current year

b. Plus eight additional hours of continuing professional education.

2. Upon receipt of evidence of such completion, the instructor shall be reinstated.

3. If at the end of the calendar year, the instructor has not fulfilled this requirement or, if in any subsequent year the instructor fails a second time to meet the minimum annual teaching and continuing education requirements, the instructor shall be permanently dropped from the rolls.

An instructor may, at his/her own written request to his/her Field Supervisor, be moved to inactive status for a period of **no more than 2 years**; and may request one (1) extension for a period of no more than 2 years, for a maximum total of 4 years. The request(s) shall state the reason for requesting inactive status and the anticipated date of return to active status. Such an instructor shall be reinstated upon his/her request and the furnishing of evidence of 8 hours of continuing professional education for each year of inactive status served. If no such evidence is received at the end of 5 years, the instructor shall be permanently dropped from the rolls.

4. Instructors on inactive status may not teach in the Local Level program. Any instructor dropped from the rolls as stated in this section, once dropped, must reapply as a new applicant if he/she wishes to be reinstated.

VII. Application Process

1. All applications to become a **Local Level Instructor** will be made on proper PA State Fire Academy forms. Only the **most current** edition of the application may be used. (I.e. if submitting in 2010, then the 2010 edition of the application **must** be used.) All applications must be complete with all documentation attached or the application will be returned.
2. All prerequisites required by this directive **must** be fully completed and complied with before an application is submitted. Applications submitted that do not meet this requirement will be rejected and returned.
3. Applications will be accepted **ONLY** from October 1 to December 31 of each year. For an application to be accepted for review, it must be mailed to the PA State Fire Academy Instructor Review Committee and received at the PA State Fire Academy, 1150 Riverside Drive, Lewistown, PA 17044 by **close of business on December 31st**.
4. The application review process will be completed by April 15th each year. Applicants shall be notified of the results of the review process **during the month of May of that year.**
5. Applicants dissatisfied with their application determination may appeal to the PA State Fire Academy Administrator. Any such appeal shall be received in writing at the PA State Fire Academy within 30 days of the date of their notification. The appeal letter shall fully describe the reasons for their appeal.
6. Applicants dissatisfied with their application appeal determination by the PA State Fire Academy Administrator may appeal to the PA State Fire Commissioner. Any such appeal shall be received in writing at the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, 2605 Interstate Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17110 within 30 days of the date of their notification. The appeal letter shall fully describe the reasons for their appeal. The decision of the State Fire Commissioner shall be final.

VIII. Instructor Code of Professionalism

Instructors shall follow and promote the ideals of honesty, courtesy, personal accountability, capability, personal development, accuracy and the exchange of knowledge when dealing with students, other instructors, the public, employers and the educational training agency.

The instructor shall adhere to the following principles to:

1. Conduct a safe instructional experience that meets the course objectives as listed in the course minimum standard of accreditation (MSA), emergency responder safety, and embraces community safety.
2. Train emergency services personnel in accordance with the course MSA to perform to the best of their ability and competency.
3. Serve the profession with honor.
4. Conduct him- or her- self in a manner, which commands respect and confidence.

IX. General Requirements of Professionalism

Instructors shall;

1. Instruct courses in accordance with Office of the state Fire Commissioner and Educational Training Agency's policy, guidelines, Instructor Policies, circulars and regulations of these entities.
2. Present only those principles, practices and information, which represent accepted state and national standards in emergency service.
3. Promote health and safety standards that insure the protection of everyone participating in the training.
4. Attend recognized training courses, seminars and/or conferences at least once a year to increase knowledge and improve instructional skills.
5. Offer and promote attitudes that will improve municipal fire and emergency service policies, procedures, and performance.
6. Perform all work assigned by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and/or educational training agency in accordance with established rules and regulations.
7. Accept compensation from one employing agency only.
8. Recommend and/or evaluate a prospective instructor objectively and without prejudice when requested to do so.
9. Report any unethical, illegal, unfair or inappropriate actions of an instructor to the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and educational training agency.
10. Refrain from political partisanship when instructing.
11. Always appear well groomed and properly attired, and be attentive to the conduct of self and colleagues in a professional manner immediately before, during, and immediately after training sessions.
12. Evaluate student competency in a training session by maintaining personal attention to the student(s) skill ability.
13. Use of tobacco, drug or alcohol products while instructing in a classroom or during any training exercise is prohibited.
14. Carefully choose words and tone of voice, making every effort to avoid emotional discussions immediately before, during and immediately after training sessions. Profanity is not appropriate or condoned.
15. Submit paperwork and reports in a timely fashion as required by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and/or educational training agency.
16. Make notification and submit proper paperwork when accidents and or near-miss incidents occur during a training session.
17. Assist organizations in preparing and submitting the required paperwork for a structural burn session in an acquired structure in accordance with the Structural Burn/Live Fire (SBS) Policy No. 2006-02 dated May 14, 2008.
18. When necessary, administer discipline in a manner that promotes student growth and will not embarrass or humiliate the student before his or her peers. Disciplinary actions shall be made part of appropriate student/class records.
19. Participate in continued professional development education that meets the requirements set forth elsewhere in this policy, keeps the instructor current in PA State Fire Academy policies, procedures, and methods, and maintains/improves his/her knowledge and skill in adult instruction and the technical aspects of courses that he/she are accredited to teach.

X. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

It is the firm policy of the State Fire Academy that every person involved with one of its fire training classes in any way whatsoever shall have an experience completely free of any type of harassment or discrimination based on any reason, including, but not limited to, that person's race, national origin, religion, age, gender (sex), gender identity, or sexual orientation. The PA State Fire Academy policy in this regard is one of "**zero tolerance**" for any such harassment or discrimination.

In the case of a disability covered under the Americans With Disabilities Act, the knowledge and skill prerequisites and Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) of the appropriate National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Professional Qualifications Standards series are considered to be the Essential Job Functions that apply. Instructors will permit and encourage full participation of disabled students in all courses by making reasonable accommodations where such accommodations allow a student to perform these Essential Job Functions and fully meet course objectives.

As the individuals ultimately responsible for class demeanor and conduct, it is the responsibility of each instructor to firmly adhere to this policy and to insure that every person (students, assistants, support staff, observers, and bystanders) fully complies with this policy at all times under their supervision and control. Instructors are expected to take every opportunity to actively promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity, and are expected to include training in managing diversity in the fire service and the educational environment in their presentations and their own professional development.

Failure to adhere to this policy shall be considered a serious offense. If subsequent investigation substantiates an instructor's failure to do so, he/ she may expect firm disciplinary action up to and including permanent revocation of instructor accreditation.

XI. Instructor Dress Code

An instructor shall be mindful that appearance and dress reflects directly upon safety and correct procedural practices, and upon the reputation of the instructor, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and any educational training agency.

1. In accordance with NFPA 1500 and relevant OSHA regulations, instructors shall **NOT** conduct any class requiring the use, by students or instructors, of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) or other respiratory protection while displaying facial hair that would interfere with the effective use of the respiratory protection or provide a poor example of firefighter health and safety.
Exceptions, requested in writing, may be granted on a case-by-case basis, if approved in advance by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner.
2. Instructors shall dress in a professional manner and consistent with the activities to be undertaken and the needs of the audience. The wearing of uniforms or dress attire should not take precedence over personal safety.

3. Special Notes
 - a. Any attire worn by instructors during hands-on exercises or competency testing shall meet the minimum safety standards as set forth in the current NFPA 1500 and/or appropriate OSHA-EPA Standards.
 - b. Fabrics and materials of uniforms, work clothes, and turnout gear should meet current standards or their successors. However, since this may not always be economically feasible, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner will recognize other materials that do not compromise safety.
 - c. Under no conditions are shirts, hats, jackets or trousers to be worn that promote products, services and vulgar or slang phrases.

XII. Suspension or Revocation of Instructor Credentials

A. Discipline

Discipline for non-compliance with this policy shall be administered by the PA state Fire Academy staff and in cooperation with the affected educational training agency. Discipline may vary from a documented verbal reprimand up to and including permanent revocation of any part or all of an instructor's credentials.

B. Discipline Review

The Instructor Review Committee will act as the Disciplinary Review Committee. They will review all disciplinary action against a PSFA Local Level instructor prior to discipline being placed against the instructor(s) in question. The only exception will be the "Administrative Recall of Instructor credentials (See XII.C)

C. Administrative Recall of Instructor Credentials

Instructor Credentials shall be recalled and held by PSFA if an Instructor has been charged in a criminal proceeding of a Misdemeanor 2 or higher until the case has been adjudicated. During which time, the Instructor shall not be permitted to act as a PSFA Local level Instructor. If not convicted, the Instructor's credentials will be reinstated without prejudice.

D. Suspension

In accordance with this document, an instructor may have his/her instructor credentials temporarily suspended. An instructor who is suspended will **not** be routinely removed from the Instructor Roster; but the instructor shall not be permitted to;

- Instruct specific courses
- Issue certificates
- Attend specific training activities

Cause for Suspension may be, but is not limited to:

1. Failure to report to the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and educational training agency representative any injuries sustained by instructional staff, students or bystanders during the course of a training program.

2. Failure more than two (2) times to conform to established records submission guidelines or local level class management procedures.
3. Failure to provide the number of hours of instruction called for in a course Minimum Standards for Accreditation, plan of instruction, or as indicated on the Certificate of Training.
4. Issuance of a Certificate of Training to an individual who has not met the competency and attendance requirements for the identified course Minimum Standard of Accreditation.
5. Use of identification or assignment as an Instructor for the promotion of commercial product sales for personal gain or for a particular commercial interest.
6. Conduct, in the capacity as an instructor, which publicly reflects disrepute on the training program, other instructors, an educational training agency, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, or the Commonwealth of PA.
7. Failure to report arrest for a first or second degree misdemeanor or felony within 3 weeks of notification of charges from District Justice.
8. Presentation of any class in the PA State Fire Academy's curriculum, Resident, AOTR or Local Level indicated as fire suppression course while displaying facial hair that would interfere with the effective use of respiratory protection or provide a poor example of firefighter health and safety.
9. Submission of falsified reports of their instructional performance or course activity that has detrimental effects on the training program or its management.
10. Failure to promote the use of proper personal protective equipment by students and all course instructors.
11. Failure to require students and all course instructors to use proper personal protective equipment in the performance of training exercises that present a risk to the personal safety of the student and instructor(s).
12. Failure to ensure that all students are provided with proper personal protective equipment appropriate for the course and activities they are participating in.
13. Failure to attend required in-service Instructor Workshops conducted by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, or the educational training agency
14. Partisan political statements and/or activities during course related activities.
15. Continued use of profanity or unacceptable gestures immediately before, during, and immediately after course related activities.

E. Reinstatement

An instructor who has been suspended will be reinstated at the end of his/her suspension in accordance with conditions and directions in his/her suspension letter.

F. Revocation

An Instructor's credentials may be permanently revoked for any of the following reasons, but is not limited to:

1. Disregard for safety and health regulations.
2. Appearance before a class while under the influence of any mind-altering substance.
3. Theft of equipment or other property from a fire school, fire department, educational training agency, the PA State Fire Academy, or any individual or private entity.
4. Use of any combustible/flammable liquids as a fire accelerant during structural fire fighting training activities.

5. Any attempt to obtain payment for work in conducting a training course from a second employing agency after having already arranged for compensation for that service by a first employing agency.
6. Conviction of any criminal charge(s) of a Misdemeanor 2 or greater.
7. Failure to adhere to the PA State Fire Academy Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy as stated in this Policy.

F. Appeal Process

An instructor may formally appeal his/her suspension or revocation of their instructor credentials and/or specific course accreditation. The appeal process for suspension or revocation is as follows:

1. Appeal of decisions made by the Regional Field Education Specialists shall be made to the PA State Fire Academy Administrator. Any appeal shall be received in writing at the PA State Fire Academy within 30 days of the date of their letter of notification. The appeal letter shall fully describe the reasons for their appeal, evidence to support the appeal, and a requested outcome of the appeal.
2. Appeal of decisions made by the PA State Fire Academy Administrator shall be to the State Fire Commissioner. Any appeal shall be received in writing at the PA State Fire Academy within 30 days of the date of their letter of notification. The appeal letter shall fully describe the reasons for their appeal, evidence to support the appeal, and a requested outcome of the appeal.
3. Decisions rendered by the appeal agents identified in paragraphs XII.F.1 and XII.F.2 of this document may sustain, modify, or reverse totally previously made decisions as their research determines.

XIII. Delegation of Program Management

The Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner delegate's ongoing management and implementation of this directive to authorized PA State Fire Academy staff of the program involved unless or until withdrawn. Specific responsibilities are placed upon the PA State Fire Academy Administrator, the PA State Fire Academy Assistant Administrator, the Fire Education Specialists – Field Supervisors, and the staff of the PA State Fire Academy.

XIV. Authority

Title 35 Health and Safety as amended and Act 61 of 1995, the State Fire Commissioner Act.

XV. Supersedes

This Office of the State Fire Commissioner Instructor Policy titled “Instructor Classification System and Code of Professionalism, No. 2001-01” revised July 1, 2010 supersedes and rescinds the Office of the State Fire Commissioner Instructor Policy titled “Instructor Classification System and Code of Professionalism, No. 2001-01” dated February 20, 2008.

XVI. Duration of Instructor Policy

This Instructor Policy shall remain in effect until superseded or suspended.

XVII. Effective Date

July 1, 2001
Date Approved:

July 1, 2010
Date Revised

Edward A. Mann
Edward Mann, State Fire Commissioner
Office of the State Fire Commissioner