



Saskatchewan Fire Service



Evaluation and Certification Guide

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Introduction

Saskatchewan follows the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards for the professional qualification of fire fighters. The Office of the Fire Commissioner is accredited under the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) to certify fire fighters under the following NFPA standards

- 472 *Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents*
Awareness and Operations Levels
- 1001 *Fire Fighting Professional Qualifications*
Levels I and II
- 1002 *Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications*
Apparatus Equipped with an Attack or Fire Pump
- 1031 *Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner*
Level I
- 1033 *Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*
- 1035 *Professional Qualifications for Public Fire and Life Safety Educator*
Level I and II
- 1041 *Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications*
Level I and II

The Office of the Fire Commissioner offers a comprehensive evaluation and certification program to the Saskatchewan fire service that is designed to meet the need of full-time, paid-on-call and volunteer fire fighters and provide for uniform evaluation of their knowledge, skills and abilities.

Certification benefits everyone in the fire service and involvement with the program gives much needed recognition to those fire fighters working to improve their skills and abilities.

A key part of the program is to meet the varying levels of demand for certification from both volunteer and career fire departments. There is enough flexibility to ensure testing and certification is conducted on a fair and equal basis in any community in the Province. We encourage regular comment and suggestions from everyone who takes part in fire fighter evaluations.

If you have questions about Fire Service Certification Programs, contact the Office of the Fire Commissioner at:

310-1855 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7
(306) 787-3774 Phone
(306) 787-9273 Fax

or visit our web site at: <http://www.cps.gov.sk.ca/Safety/fire/certification.shtml>

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Using the Evaluation and Certification Guide

This guide provides detailed information about the system of certification in Saskatchewan. The Appendices provide information on certification under a specific NFPA Standard and detail all requirements to gain certification. The Guide also includes information on organizing a certification program.

Certification & Recognition

The Office of the Fire Commissioner offers two types of recognition to those fire fighters who complete training, **International Certification** and **Provincial Recognition of Training**.

A certificate of achievement or recognition identifies a skilled fire fighter to anyone in the fire service in Saskatchewan, Canada and internationally. A certificate can also be the passport to employment within the fire service. A certificate is a persuasive demonstration to peers as well as the community of their department's commitment to providing the best possible fire protection. In addition, and most importantly, individual fire fighters develop a new confidence and pride in their skills, knowledge and abilities.

International Certification

The Office of the Fire Commissioner issues certificates under the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) to fire fighters who have proven their competency in meeting the requirements of NFPA standards. International Certification identifies that an individual has attained a professional qualification.

Instructions on gaining international certification are included within this document, with detailed information on each Standard within the appendices.

Provincial Recognition

The Office of the Fire Commissioner also offers certificates in recognition of training to all serving fire department members in Saskatchewan. The Fire Commissioner issues provincial recognition certificates based on the recommendation of a registered Fire Service Instructor or Fire Chief. Detailed information may be found in Appendix A, *Provincial Recognition of Training*.

Certification

Certification is a beginning, not an ending. Certification identifies that the individual has demonstrated they are ready to advance to the next level of training or ready for additional or advanced training.

Normally, a fire fighter has to gain certification in a NFPA standard only once. Most NFPA standards are updated every three to five years and the Office of the Fire Commissioner provides certification according to the most current edition of NFPA Standards. However, because standards constantly change, an individual may be required to upgrade their certification in a standard as a prerequisite to achieve certification in an advanced standard. Upgrading may be complete or in just those parts which have changed within the standard. In most cases, on-going training programs at the department level will keep fire fighters up to date with changes made to NFPA standards and eliminates the need to upgrade or re-certify fire fighters under a standard they have already met.

The certification process does not allow for "grandfathering", a means where certification is gained through past experience or training alone. Experienced fire fighters may choose to

challenge any given Standard, based on their level of experience, knowledge and training. The only means to certification is through the successful completion of evaluation of the individual.

Recognition of Out-of-Province Certifications

Recognition of qualifications held by fire fighters coming to Saskatchewan from other jurisdictions are subject to review by the Office of the Fire Commissioner to determine applicability within the Saskatchewan certification system. Certain NFPA standards require prerequisite training or certification. Individuals trained or certified by other jurisdictions may challenge certification in Saskatchewan, subject to review of eligibility by the Office of the Fire Commissioner. Persons who have qualification from outside of Saskatchewan should contact the Office of the Fire Commissioner before participating in a certification program to ensure they have met all requirements of eligibility.

Certification Programs

The Office of the Fire Commissioner conducts certification programs in strict compliance with the procedures established by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and following accepted evaluation practices and procedures. Certification programs are conducted to ensure that all participants are evaluated fairly. All certification programs conducted in Saskatchewan are open to participation by all qualified fire fighters.

Safety First

Safety, before success, is essential. Each evaluation exercise is designed and executed with personnel safety as the highest priority. Each participant has not only the authority, but the duty and obligation to ensure a safe evaluation. Fire fighters will not be penalized for interrupting an exercise to deal with safety issues. When you have a safety concern or see a problem developing tell the evaluation staff immediately.

Personal Protective Equipment

Everyone taking an active role in practical skills evaluation must use the correct personal protective clothing and equipment. All personal protective equipment, including Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) devices, must meet the requirements set out in the Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety regulations and accepted standards. Evaluators will conduct an inspection of all personal protective clothing and equipment as well as all other equipment and tools required prior to an evaluation exercise.

SCBA

If any facial hair extends into the area covered by the seal of a SCBA facemask, the individual may not participate in any practical evaluation exercise where SCBA may be required. This limitation extends to any participant that cannot obtain a safe seal between the mask and their face. All persons participating in drills requiring the use of SCBA must be able to demonstrate they have been adequately fit tested with the mask they are using during the evaluation.

Who qualifies to take part in a Certification Program?

Any person participating in a certification program must be a serving member of a Saskatchewan fire department. All certification programs are open to any qualified fire fighter to participate. All persons participating must be available to complete the entire evaluation process within the time frames allocated (see the appropriate appendix for each standard). Each standard has prerequisites and requirements that must be completed by persons who wish to participate.

Prerequisites

There are three types of prerequisites.

1. Confirmation of membership in a fire department or eligibility must come in writing from the Fire Chief of the department (see appropriate appendices). For a Fire Chief, a letter from a municipal mayor/reeve or administrator is acceptable.
2. Copies of certificates or documentation showing completion of required prerequisite qualification or training.
3. Completed Job Performance Requirements forms from the appropriate appendix.

NFPA STANDARD	PREREQUISITE QUALIFICATION	REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION
HazMat Responder		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief
472 Awareness		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
472 Operational	Certification NFPA 472 Awareness	Certificate NFPA 472 Awareness
		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
Fire Fighter		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief
1001	Certification NFPA 472 Awareness	Certificate NFPA 472 Awareness Level
	Certification NFPA 472 Operational	Certificate NFPA 472 Operations Level
	First Aid and CPR	Current First Aid/CPR (C Level) Certificate
		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
Driver/Operator		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief
1002	Certification NFPA 1001	Certificate NFPA 1001 Level 1
		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
Fire Inspector		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief
1031	Certification NFPA 472 Awareness	Certificate NFPA 472 Awareness
	Fire Fighter skills (basic)	Certificate NFPA 1001 Level 1*
		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
Investigator		Letter of application
1033		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief
		2 letters of reference
	Certification NFPA 472 Awareness	Certificate NFPA 472 Awareness
	Fire fighting knowledge	Certificate NFPA 1001 Level 2*
	Extensive fire prevention knowledge	Certificate NFPA 1031 Level 1*
	Fire safety skills (advanced)	Certificate NFPA 1035 Level 2*
	Instructional skills (advanced)	Certificate NFPA 1041 Level 2*
		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
Life Safety Educator		
1035 Level 1		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief
	Fire Fighter skills (basic)	Certificate NFPA 1001 Level 1*
	Instructional skills (basic)	Certificate NFPA 1041 Level 1*
		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
1035 Level 2	Certification NFPA 1035 Level 1	Certificate NFPA 1035 Level 1
	Instructional skills (advanced)	Certificate for NFPA 1041 Level 2*
		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
	Media relation skills	Public Information Officer Qualification*
Instructor		Letter of recommendation from Fire Chief
1041 Level 1		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)
1041 Level 2	Certification NFPA 1041 Level 1	Certificate NFPA 1041 Level 1
		Completed JPR forms (from appendix)

* Identifies that an alternative means of documentation or qualification may be accepted for certification requirements. Refer to the appropriate appendix.

Preparing for a Certification Program

Preparation is left to the individual's choice. Some persons choose to participate based on their qualifications and experience. Others after self-study or formal training, either through their department or training institution. Each appendix identifies recommended training materials and the Job Performance Requirements that a person will be required to perform during a certification program.

Evaluation Process

Evaluations take three forms. Review of required documentation, written evaluations and practical evaluation exercises. Participants must complete written and practical evaluations within 30 days of each other. This allows a 60-day period to successfully complete certification where a practical evaluation is part of the process (ie: written evaluation attempts can be conducted any time 30 days before and 30 days after the practical evaluation). If the certification process does not include a practical component (NFPA 472 Awareness), the evaluation attempts must be completed within a 30-day period.

Review of Documentation

Participants must submit required documentation to the Program Sponsor prior to attempting certification. If the required documentation is not submitted, you will not be permitted to attempt certification. Documentation is used to identify three criteria participants must meet prior to attempting certification.

1. The participant must be eligible to be involved in the certification process. This is normally met by a letter confirming membership in the fire service and recommending the participant as prepared for the certification attempt.
2. Certain NFPA Standards require the individual to maintain records or documents as part of the JPRs (ie: activity reports – NFPA 1035, training records – NFPA 1041, investigation reports – NFPA 1033, etc.). These documents are part of the certification process and the participant is evaluated on meeting these JPRs as well. Individuals participating in a certification program in these standards must be prepared to produce the documents for review by an evaluator to determine if the JPR has been successfully completed.
3. Each appendix lists the JPRs a participant will be evaluated against. These forms are a training record that must be submitted to identify the participant has received training or instruction in the JPR. Fire fighting is a hazardous occupation and untrained or unprepared individuals are an unacceptable risk, even during controlled exercises.

Written evaluations may be held at a different time or location than practical evaluations or individuals may choose to have the written evaluation proctored. Please check the certification program schedule at the Office of the Fire Commissioner web site or Newsletter for certification program schedules.

Written Evaluations

Written evaluations consist of instruction pages, a question booklet, and an answer sheet. Individuals needing help because of language or literacy issues should identify themselves to the certification program sponsor well in advance. Verbal evaluations are available. The Appendix for each standard details which study guides and/or reference materials are allowed in the room during written evaluations.

Written evaluations may consist of multiple choice, matching and/or true/false questions. The time allowed for written evaluations are included in the appendix for each certification program.

Question Examples:

Multiple Choice

1. The capital of Saskatchewan is:
 - A. Regina
 - B. Saskatoon
 - C. Winnipeg
 - D. Melfort

Matching

2. Match the following tools with their common use:

A. Axe	1. To force a car door
B. Pike pole	2. To ventilate a roof or force a door
C. Hydraulic rescue tool	3. To pull down a ceiling

True/False

3. NFPA 1001 is the standard for the professional qualifications of a fire fighter.

True False

All written evaluations must be completed within the time provided. A maximum of 30 minutes to finish 25 questions is allocated (a 100-question exam is limited to 2 hours). Participants are permitted two attempts to successfully complete written evaluations. It is the participants responsibility to arrange for the second attempt, either through Proctor or by other arrangement with the Office of the Fire Commissioner within the time frame permitted to complete the certification program.

Persons who do not complete an evaluation within the permitted time frame or fail in their second attempt at a written evaluation must reapply and challenge the entire standard again.

Practical Evaluation Exercises

Practical evaluation exercises begin with a safety briefing and explanation of what tasks are to be completed during the exercise. All participants will be given opportunity to ask questions. Evaluators will announce clearly when the exercise is starting and when it finishes. At the conclusion of the exercise, each participant will have an opportunity for discussion with the evaluator.

During practical evaluation exercises participants will be permitted two attempts to complete an assigned task. Persons who do not complete a practical evaluation within the permitted time frame or fail in their second attempt must challenge the entire standard again.

Passing Grade

The evaluation process is designed strictly to measure performance against an established standard. You must satisfactorily complete all requirements of the certification process (eligibility documentation, written and practical evaluation) in order to PASS. A minimum score of 70% must be achieved in each written and practical evaluation.

Participants are informed they have either **Passed** or **Failed** after a certification program. Marks from evaluations are not provided to participants. An individual may obtain their mark through a written request sent to the Office of the Fire Commissioner and received within 30 days of the certification program.

Evaluation Conduct

All participants are expected to partake fully and honestly in the certification process. Should questions of honesty, interference or unauthorized assistance come up during an evaluation, the individual in question will meet with evaluator(s) and sponsoring entity for the certification program. Persons who have deliberately behaved in an unprofessional or dishonest manner during evaluation will be failed.

All participants are evaluated continuously during an evaluation exercise, including those who may not be actively engaged in performing a task.

Participants

Each individual is evaluated individually. However, fire fighting depends on safe and effective teamwork. Individuals will also be evaluated on their individual performance as part of a team. With the exception of safety issues, participants are strongly cautioned to avoid interfering in any way with the performance of another person during evaluations. Individuals who ignore this requirement will be FAILED.

Certification Program Duration

The duration of a certification program depends on the standard being tested and the facilities available to evaluators.

A schedule of certification programs is advertised well in advance. Make sure you are available for all scheduled evaluations. If you miss any part of the certification program, you will receive a failing mark.

Disputes and Appeals

If you feel any practical or written exercise have been conducted unfairly, speak to an evaluator at the end of the exercise. Do not interrupt an exercise in progress unless you have a concern about safety. The evaluation team will consider your concerns and determine an appropriate action.

Any candidate who feels a decision made by the evaluators is unfair may appeal, in writing, to the Office of the Fire Commissioner within 30 days of the certification program. The appeal must provide details outlining the circumstance surrounding the issue. The appeal will be investigated and a decision provided within 30 days. The decision of the Fire Commissioner is final.

Proctored Evaluations

Certification programs normally have written and practical evaluations conducted during a single program. However, in some circumstances, written and practical evaluations may be held at different times and/or locations. Persons wishing to gain certification may find it impractical or costly to travel to different locations at different times to complete a certification program. To address this problem, persons eligible to participate in a certification program may arrange for written evaluations to be proctored.

A proctored evaluation is a written evaluation that is sent to a third party identified by the certification participant. The participant may then write the evaluation at a time and place that is convenient to their schedule.

Proctored evaluations must be arranged through the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

Acceptable Proctors

Acceptable proctors are persons who hold a position of trust. Municipal Administrators, Teachers, Fire Prevention Officers, Pastors, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and any person approved by the Office of the Fire Commissioner may act as proctors.

Arranging a Proctored Evaluation

The certification participant, Proctor or Sponsor must identify to the Office of the Fire Commissioner:

- the name of the proctor,
- a telephone number to contact the proctor,
- the address of the proctor or address where the evaluation is to be sent,
- the NFPA Standard by Number, Title and Level (ie: NFPA 1041, Fire Service Instructor Level 1) that the evaluation is to cover,
- the date the written evaluation is required by*, and
- the names (first and last) of those persons who are writing the evaluation.

*Notification must be at least two weeks prior to the desired evaluation date.

The Office of the Fire Commissioner will contact the proctor to arrange to have all required documents and information on proctoring the evaluation sent to the proctor.

Instructions to Proctors

All papers and related documents for the evaluation are in the package. Upon receipt of the evaluation package, the proctor is asked to check the following.

1. In the package will be a list identifying those eligible to write the evaluation. Only those people whose names are listed are permitted to write the evaluation.
2. There will be enough copies of the evaluation for those persons identified on the list noted in 1. above.
Please do not make copies of either the evaluation booklet or answer page.
3. Evaluation question booklets and answer sheets have an identification number printed in the lower right-hand corner. Make sure these numbers are the same so persons writing the evaluation have a matching question booklet and answer sheet.

If any of the three items listed above are incorrect, contact the Office of the Fire Commissioner at (306) 787-3774.

Conducting an Evaluation

The evaluation should be conducted in an acceptable manner that allows for fair and honest evaluation of the person writing the evaluation. Should the evaluation be interrupted, the participant may complete the evaluation at the discretion of the proctor.

1. Participants should have a quiet location and an appropriate table and chair to write the evaluation. Where more than 1 participant is involved, seating should be arranged to reduce the potential for interaction between participants.
2. The proctor is asked to explain and ensure participants understand the instructions for the evaluation. Additional instructions may be required, such as washroom location and use during the evaluation and procedure in case of fire.
3. Ensure that the candidate's name is clearly marked on their answer page.
4. Persons writing an evaluation are not permitted to bring books, notes or reference material (resources) into the examination room except as noted below.
5. Unless otherwise indicated, candidates have a maximum of 30 minutes to finish 25 questions. For example, a 100-question exam is limited to 2 hours.
6. If a person has arranged for the evaluation to be given verbally by the proctor:
 - The evaluation should be conducted separately from those writing the evaluation (as applicable).
 - The proctor should read only the question and listed answers.
7. The proctor may explain words or phrases that clarify a question to a person taking an evaluation, but may not offer assistance that would directly aid the person in answering the question.
8. At the end of the test period all evaluation material (both used and unused) should be placed in the return envelope provided. The envelope should be mailed to the Office of the Fire Commissioner the next business day.

Permitted Resources

During certain evaluations, participants will require or are permitted to use certain resources or aids. Each standard is listed below with permitted resources. Where participants are permitted to bring books or manuals, it is requested the Proctor ensure the books do not contain other reference materials or notes.

472 *Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents*
The North American Emergency Response Guidebook is required.

1001 *Fire Fighting Professional Qualifications*
No resources permitted

1002 *Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications*
A calculator, slide rule or other method for solving mathematical problems is permitted.

1031 *Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner*
The National Fire Code and National Building Code are required.

1033 *Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*
No resources permitted

1035 *Professional Qualifications for Public Fire and Life Safety Educator*
No resources permitted

1041 *Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications*
No resources permitted

Evaluation Security

With accreditation requirements, there can be no question about the fairness and honesty of written evaluations. The proctor is asked to administer the evaluation so that any question of the validity of the evaluation can be defended. The proctor should ensure that evaluations are conducted in a manner that ensures that the integrity of the participant or the evaluation tool will not be compromised.

Declaration

The undersigned affirms that the enclosed evaluation(s) have been conducted in accordance to the instructions provided.

Proctor Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Title/Position: _____

Date: _____

Return to: Office of the Fire Commissioner
Suite 310-1855 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7