



# POSITION STATEMENT

## Professional Certification of Fire Marshals

Fire marshals are responsible for administering community risk reduction programs and enforcing the locally adopted fire code. Given the current relationship between municipalities and private stakeholders operating under these programs, having a competent fire prevention program in place is increasingly critical. Certification of the fire marshal by a nationally recognized evaluation and certification program is a major component of establishing competency.

Certification provides many advantages to the fire chief and the jurisdiction. Consider the following:

- Fire marshals occupy a key and highly visible leadership role in fire prevention and community risk reduction.
- Jurisdictions benefit when their fire marshals have the qualifications needed to do their job through improved customer service and compliance.
- Requiring fire marshals to be certified by an approved, nationally recognized professional qualifications program demonstrates competence to internal and external stakeholders.
- Nationally recognized competency programs for fire marshals establish consistent baseline qualifications across differing jurisdictions and geographies.
- Requiring fire marshals to obtain continuing education is necessary to ensure their qualifications remain current.
- There is an increasing need for fire marshals to obtain professional certification on par with that required by the professionals with whom they interact including contractors, designers, architects and building officials.
- Fire marshal certification provides another tool for evaluating candidate expertise in fire prevention and community risk reduction when this is a requirement in the jurisdiction for advancement to a chief officer position.
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1037 *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Marshal* identifies the professional level of performance required for fire marshal.

- Organizations currently exist that provide accreditation to entities that certify the competency of individuals who meet the job performance requirements necessary to perform as a fire marshal in accordance with the NFPA 1037 standard.

Given these considerations, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) envisions a future where fire marshal certification is a mandatory requirement for chief officers serving in the fire marshal position, but recognizes that mandatory fire marshal certification is not currently practical in many jurisdictions, and that a transition period will be needed to fully implement this vision.

The IAFC also supports efforts by IAFC members, sections and other stakeholders to help achieve this vision for fire marshal certification to the NFPA 1037 standard using an approved third-party accrediting agency.

**SUBMITTED BY:** IAFC Fire & Life Safety Section

**ADOPTED BY THE IAFC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** 07 NOV 2013