

IAFC Officer Development Handbook

Second Edition

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

*Providing leadership and value
for fire and emergency services since 1873.*

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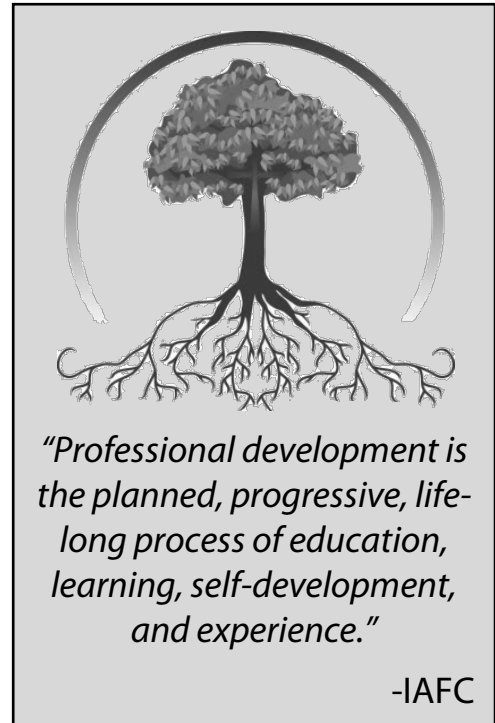


INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your interest in professional development and the path toward a leadership role in Fire and emergency services. The current leadership enjoys a common bond as members of this distinguished profession. We are, therefore, very interested in and committed to your development as a fire service leader.

We understand that professional development is a journey, not a destination. We encourage you to join with us on this never-ending journey of professional development.

The following pages offer information that will enable interested individuals to plan a systematic program of development for their professional service career. This handbook is designed to present the recommendations of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Please be sure to learn and incorporate the specific requirements set forth by your agency, which are your agency's requisites for career advancement.



“Professional development is the planned, progressive, life-long process of education, learning, self-development, and experience.”

-IAFC

No person is able to stop or stand still in this process. You are moving forward — developing, growing and improving — or you are slipping backward. Just as the muscles of the human body soon atrophy if not used, so will your leadership skills if you do not have a plan to “exercise” them.

We note that this edition of the handbook is a “work in progress.” This initial publication focuses upon the preparatory steps for moving into officer positions. In the context of a life-long process, a subsequent edition will address the ongoing development needs of those who have achieved officer status.

OVERVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



History

The need for professional development, especially for fire service officers, is not a new issue. At least as early as 1966, this issue drew international attention as a key component of the report from the first **Wingspread Conference — Statements of National Significance to the Fire Problem in the United States**. This conference convened top fire service leaders on four occasions at ten-year intervals. Each conference continued to emphasize the need for the development of effective leadership.

In the Foreword to the initial report, the committee noted that all too often *“success is largely dependent upon the caliber of leadership of the individual fire chiefs, and there is no assurance that this progress will continue...when there is a change of leadership...”*¹

Further, **Statement #9** of the report read, *“The career of the fire executive must be systematic and deliberate.”*² This statement goes on to point out the ineffective fire service practice of promoting personnel into higher ranks and then attempting to train or educate them. This practice of on-the-job training, rather than systematic skills building and preparation, is unlike the methodologies employed by virtually any other profession.

And what has happened in the interim?

Wingspread II – 1976, Statement 6

“A means of deliberate and systematic development of all fire service personnel through the executive level is still needed. There is an educational void near the top.”

Wingspread III – 1986, Statement 3

“Professional development in the fire service has made significant strides, but improvement is still needed.”

Wingspread IV – 1996, Statements 7 and 9

“Leadership: To move successfully into the future, the fire service needs leaders capable of developing and managing their organizations in dramatically changed environments.”

“Training and Education: Fire service managers must increase their professional standing in order to remain credible to community policy makers and the public. This professionalism should be grounded firmly in an integrated system of nationally recognized and/or certified education and training.”

Wingspread V – To be determined

¹ Wingspread Conference on Fire Service Administration, Education and Research; The Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wisconsin; 1966; page 5.

² Wingspread Conference on Fire Service Administration, Education and Research; The Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wisconsin; 1966; page 13.

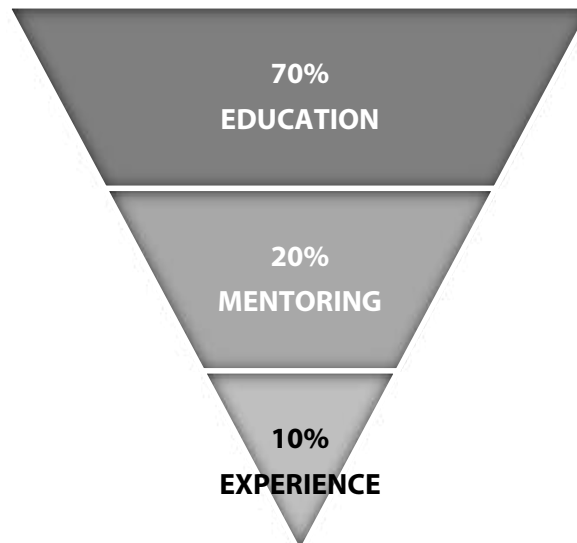
Progress continues to be made, but much remains to be accomplished. What will be written about this issue as a result of Wingspread V? This handbook provides guidance to help readers become effective leaders by implementing thoughtful professional development plans. Hopefully, use of this handbook will play a meaningful role in allowing the Wingspread V report to show significant advancement in this arena.

Professional Development Methods

Professional development takes place in three general ways: through experience, mentoring, and education. Historically, the fire service and other governmental agencies focus on education and training to emphasize learning objectives. After taking and passing a class, the students receive a certificate and the organization assumes that the learning has been adopted. In addition, many promotional processes are based on this “merit badge” approach. The résumé review process rewards completion of classes and achievement of certifications that may or may not accomplish the overall goal of developing the employee. Further, training programs and educational institutions have not fully established standardized credentials or learning objectives.

Figure 1 below shows the typical approach to developing employees by many government agencies (and in particular public safety agencies) as they seek to develop personnel for potential promotion.³

Figure 1: Most Common Approach to Employee Development

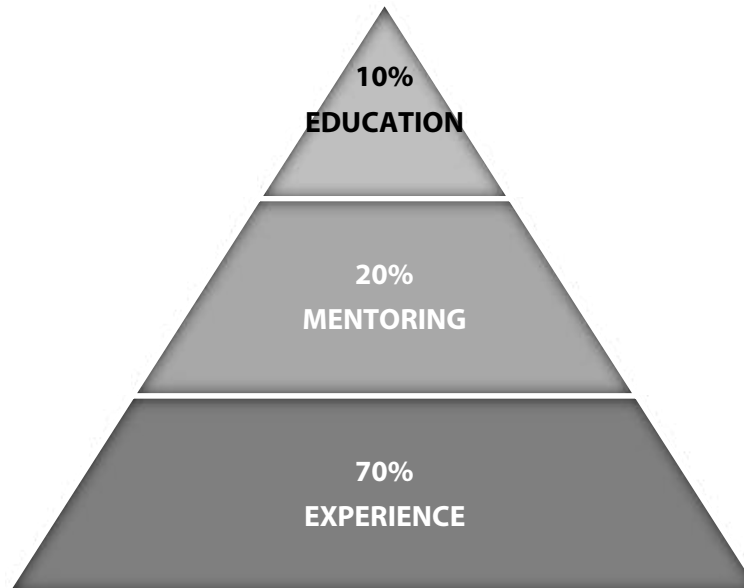


Most agencies focus on education and training and spend most of their resources on accomplishing the training mission. Additionally, most agencies have a relatively informal mentoring process to provide experienced leadership. Fire agencies, like other agencies, have a process to structure development that focuses on training and education as primary components to enhance the skills of personnel. In addition, most fire department budgetary expenditures are based on training—and most of that training focuses on the skills of line-level personnel. Far less effort is focused on the development of potential officers and as a result, officers rarely get the development they need.

A more effective model is to simply provide the right kinds of experience to high-potential personnel who have the ability to learn from that experience. Figure 2 below shows what works according to the best organizational development data available. Compared to the methods that are typically used (shown in Figure 1 above), it appears as if the methods used are radically different from those that actually work (Figure 2 below).

³ *The Leadership Machine-Architecture to Develop Leaders for Any Future*. Michael Lombardo, Robert Eichinger, 2002. Lominger Limited, Inc. A Korn Ferry Company.

Figure 2: What Works for Development⁴



Experience

People learn best from experience. Experience plays a key role in helping people learn to swim, to drive a car, or to be a doctor. It is important for fire agencies to provide experiential opportunities for employees so they can develop the competencies they will need later in their careers.

Studies from Lominger and others clearly indicate that not only is experience the best way to develop competencies, but the experience must be the right kind that is aligned not only to the current set of competencies demonstrated by the employee, but also to the strategic needs of the organization.⁵ Furthermore, certain features of the experience increase the likelihood of success. Most importantly, the experience must be:

1. A true experience, with more than just an exposure to different jobs.
2. Highly visible in the organization.
3. Structured to ensure that the risk of failure is present.
4. Provided so as to ensure a significant amount of pressure—that is, it should be meaningful and not just busy work.

⁴ *The Leadership Machine-Architecture to Develop Leaders for Any Future*. Michael Lombardo, Robert Eichinger, 2002. Lominger Limited, Inc. A Korn Ferry Company.

⁵ What is not clear from the data is the relationship between education, mentorship, and experience in developing employees. It is not clear whether a certain baseline of education, for example, is required to make sure that a higher likelihood of success is possible when experience is added later on.

Most fire agencies could use one or more of the following experiential opportunities to develop personnel. These opportunities are identified in the literature and designed to develop different sets of competencies.⁶

1. Cross moves—transfers between divisions, departments, or lateral job functions.
2. Membership in projects/task forces—participation in various opportunities to advance programs, projects, or processes within the agency.
3. Leader of projects or task forces—leading a group in the agency with an important and specific goal.
4. Participant in project with heavy strategic demands—one that requires heavy strategic thinking or planning.
5. Line to staff switches—a move from a line position to a demanding position in a staff role.
6. Scope assignments—assignments that have significant increases in complexity and that include managing a significant new or expanded project.
7. Scale assignments—assignments that have a sizeable shift in the number of people, budget, or volume of activity.
8. Change management assignments—assignments that require a significant effort to change a current process or implement something of significance.

Given the current structure of fire agencies in the United States, most agencies should be able to move forward with providing development opportunities for personnel—especially leadership opportunities. This process will require a structured system that is different from what is currently being provided; however, most fire agencies should be able to accommodate the leadership development opportunities that are needed within their organizations.

Mentorship

Another powerful way to develop members within a profession is to provide a structured mentorship program. Many successful individuals in the fire service attribute their achievements to a formal mentorship relationship.

Mentoring is not a new concept or practice. During the middle ages, boys served as apprentices to masters in a craft or trade while gaining skills to eventually qualify as journeymen, and finally as masters. During this time, the mentor relationship with the protégé ensured the continuity and quality of the craft being handed down to the next generation.

As baby boomers retire, the fire service will experience large numbers of retirements in short time periods, leading to significant loss of knowledge and experience at the top levels. This trend creates a discernible need for filling in the leadership gaps. Mentorships in the 21st Century can ensure the continuity and quality of the craft, similar to that sought by the craftsmen of the middle ages. Used

⁶ *The Leadership Machine-Architecture to Develop Leaders for Any Future*. Michael Lombardo, Robert Eichinger, 2002. Lominger Limited, Inc. A Korn Ferry Company.

alongside academic institutional learning, mentoring will play a key role in advancing professionalism in the fire service.

Mentoring can happen formally or informally. Formal mentoring is accomplished when departments establish a structured written policy or program. Such programs provide consistent and dependable paths for aspiring leaders, not only in their current positions but also as they strive to move to higher levels. Department leaders can direct attention to members who display positive leadership qualities, provide those individuals with mentors, and prepare them to become informed and effective leaders.

Informal mentoring happens in addition to or in the absence of a structured program, when individuals choose to offer guidance and advice to their co-workers and subordinates. Sometimes it occurs when young firefighters seek their own mentors. An example of informal mentoring could involve a veteran chief officer teaching an up-and-coming company officer some chief officer “tools of the trade.” While informal mentoring can be valuable, its inconsistency and lack of measures can prevent it from having a meaningful impact department-wide.

Successful mentorships typically involve a personal relationship in which the mentor and protégé are both actively engaged. A successful mentor guides and coaches a mentee through development, experience, and growth. Mentors get involved in coaching, instructing, teaching, and counseling. Good mentors do not tell others what to do but rather present options and challenge mentees to see the “big picture.” They provide encouragement, identify areas for improvement, and help refine skills. Protégés, likewise, must be ready to learn and to soak up the wisdom of the mentor.

Some of the goals and benefits of mentoring include:

- Promoting professional growth,
- Inspiring career development,
- Enhancing effectiveness with leadership and team building,
- Institutionalizing the mentor program.

Many mentees “repay” their debt to the mentor and the organization by becoming future mentors. When mentoring begins with new employees and newly promoted fire officers and chief officers, the first step toward institutionalizing mentoring in the fire agency has occurred.

Mentoring resources are plentiful. One example is the newly-created Chief Officer Mentor Program from the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). This program was originally co-developed by Fire Chief Chris Riley (Pueblo, Colorado) and Chief Marc Revere (Novato, California) while working on the IAFC Professional Development Committee. The CPSE Mentor Program offers “Train the Mentor” workshops and also is a link to the Chief Fire Officer Designation Program. Beginning in 2006, the program has been showcased at Fire-Rescue International (FRI) and the Colorado and California State Fire Chief Conferences. At FRI 2010 in Chicago, the Mentor Manual and other mentor best-practice documents will be presented and made available.

Chief officers are encouraged to invest their efforts when the opportunity to mentor a protégé arises. In terms of individual and organizational professional development, mentoring is truly a mission-critical function of the fire service.

Education and Training

The National Problem: One objective of the handbook is to streamline individual professional development, which has often been uneconomical and inefficient. In today's American fire service, the entire system of professional development is comprised primarily of three stovepipes, more commonly known as fire service training, education, and certification. This system has produced an entire generation of firefighters and officers with these credentials:

- More college credits than they need and no degrees to show for their efforts.
- Enough training, certification, and experience to qualify for college-level learning, yet lacking any master plan or career map that recognizes crosswalks between the three. Firefighters often end up with walls papered with certificates of training, college transcripts with more fire science and general education course credits than needed, and certifications that fail to satisfy necessary credentials.

Putting aside (unfairly, perhaps) the personal costs and stress created by this system, elected officials and the public they represent expect their tax dollars to be spent wisely. They have the right to ask this question:

How many times should a fire department pay a firefighter to accomplish the same job-related competency?

A National Solution: At the annual Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) conferences, efforts have been made to address this problem of a stove piped system of professional development by creating a model that integrates training, education, and certification. Since then, the National Fire Academy (NFA) has brought FESHE representatives together to create the National Professional Development Matrix (NPDM) that moves the model shown on page 13 from concept to reality.

The NPDM is designed for training and certification agencies and academic fire programs to assist the emergency services personnel they serve in their professional development planning. The NFA has produced a template that has streamlined Fire Officer I – IV competencies with “national” level courses that include NFA resident courses, FESHE model associate’s and bachelor’s courses, and general education courses recommended in this handbook. The NFA is encouraging states and fire departments to customize this template by adding their own standards and job performance requirements (JPRs), training, and college courses.

In addition, departments that want to raise the bar in their own professional practices are encouraged to finish reading this handbook and to adopt the Matrix as their own. The Matrix is based on the competencies in the handbook and its recommended general education courses. The Matrix and this guide can be used to help individuals more efficiently navigate their own professional development, to keep the process relevant to the credentials and competencies needed, and to minimize duplication of effort.

Adopting the Matrix: The major premise of the National Professional Development Matrix is that there are up to five ways to achieve the competencies:

1. This handbook lists one of the methods, education, which includes general education courses and fire science courses.

2. NFA or state training courses that have American Council of Education (ACE) recommendations of three or more credits at the under- and post-graduate levels.
3. Satisfaction of the appropriately referenced NFPA standard. Each standard contains a job performance requirement or JPR that addresses the appropriate competency.
4. State training courses. Example: communications competency is addressed in a public information officer (PIO) course at a state fire academy.
5. Fire department and/or local courses. Example, same competency as No. 4: Addressed in a non-credit communications course at a local community college.

Ideally, the state and fire department training academies and local fire science programs at nearby colleges would identify those courses and appropriate JPR references in clear and specific language. Once that information is acquired, degree efforts can be re-directed around the competencies by taking as many of the courses in the "education" column as possible. If the college allows use of the ACE credit system for an NFA course, students can apply for it and receive three credits for an elective or required course (and save the tuition reimbursement funds).

Passing It On: Once individuals have successfully charted a competency-based, professional development path that minimizes duplication of effort, they can help other staff members to chart theirs. Departments can use it to standardize their professional development systems and make training, education, and certification "interoperable."⁷

⁷ For more information, visit the National Fire Academy's FESHE page at: http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/higher_ed/index.shtm

Authority vs. Leadership: Implications for Professional Development

The reader of this handbook is typically confronted with serving two roles on a regular basis: developing self and developing others. These roles often intersect, and when profound developmental experiences occur, they can be meaningful to both self and others. If this observation is true, it should be presented as a question for the reader who contemplates this booklet: How can an officer develop others and self at the same time?

The handbook contains information on how one learns, the occasions and places in which the learning occurs, and recommendations for development, education, and experiential learning opportunities. However, there is a backdrop in which this developmental process occurs for individuals in organizational settings that the IAFC feels is particularly important: having and using authority or power is different from exercising leadership.

Having authority generally involves using power: one's ability to influence others to do things that the authority figure feels compelled to want done. As a result, and in the case of a fire department hierarchy, the chief of the department generally has more "power" than a battalion chief by virtue of associated authority.

Because of their positions, fire and EMS officers have authority. People with authority ("being authorized") are typically expected to provide protection and direction as well as to maintain order, and in return, they normally receive something such as performance (work), a vote, or simply respect.

Authority figures can be faced with two types of problems: technical and adaptive. Technical problems can generally be resolved using known procedures, operational guidelines, or previously established remedies to fix the problem. For example, when medical officers encounter a cardiac arrest, this serious problem can be resolved by following the appropriate procedures. By exercising the authority granted from the medical officer's position, the technical problem can be resolved.

However, authority figures are sometimes faced with situations that cannot be solved by simply using technical solutions. Adaptive problems are challenges for which the cure or solution to the problem is not readily known (to anyone) and for which there are no prescribed fixes. And, adaptive problems often require a change of heart and mind. When confronted with adaptive problems, leadership skills are needed. The authority figure who is faced with an adaptive problem is thrown into an ambiguous situation for which there is no clear solution. The willingness and the methods used to work through this unfamiliar territory will distinguish an authority figure from one who has power to someone who has the capacity to exercise leadership.

If an authoritarian is trained and willing to use only technical solutions to solve adaptive problems, the problem will remain unresolved. When adaptive problems occur that cannot be solved by traditional authoritative methods, the "person in charge" is at risk and may contribute further to the accompanying discord. These adaptive problems can be disabling to the entire organization, community, or even country because others expect the authority figure to know what to do, to solve the problem, and to make the pain go away. However, when authoritarians have no clue how to proceed, they will often attempt to solve the problem by treating it as a "technical one." The metaphor here is that their patching and inflation of the flat tire with air while not recognizing the tire is beyond repair is just a temporary fix. The adaptive problem will return, often in a more severe form.

Leaders are needed to address adaptive problems, which potentially require a change of behavior and of the underlying values for everyone who has ownership of the problem. In many cases *the solutions are unknown*, requiring experimentation and risk. Those who exercise leadership participate in a process with a distinct purpose in mind, attempting to hold conversations with many others about the problem. They are willing to experiment and improvise as new data and information is revealed and examined.

Issues such as global warming, alcoholism, fire safety, residential sprinklers, and use of seat belts in emergency services are huge adaptive problems because the solutions to these issues and many similar ones require broad, deep-seated changes to both values and behaviors among the many involved individuals. If the world were a static situation with recurring situations that come with known solutions, there would be no need for leadership.

So how do fire and rescue services prepare people to exercise leadership for adaptive situations? They incorporate experiential learning opportunities into their professional development processes. They introduce prospective officers to ambiguous situations and allow the officers to work through them. They encourage mentorships so that true leaders become the models for prospective officer candidates.

In summary, being a leader and being an authority figure are not synonymous. Authoritarians make decisions based on known solutions. Leaders willingly make uncomfortable decisions when the results are unknown. They engage subordinates, peers, and others in order to arrive at a sound solution. If officers think of these two acts as being one, they will ill prepare both others and themselves. Each role requires different proficiencies such as the required competencies to serve effectively in positions of authority vs. the competencies required to exercise leadership.

The intent of this revised handbook is to identify learning, educational, and experiential components that will support the development of competencies enabling fire officers to serve effectively in positions of authority *and* to exercise leadership.^{8, 9}

⁸ *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., Linsky, M. 2009. Harvard Press.

⁹ *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading*. Heifetz, R., Linsky, M. 2002. Harvard Press.

Professional Development Process

Measurements

Much of a journey's success is measured by progress along the way. These measurements are the means whereby one gauges success and appreciates what remains ahead. The journey of professional development is no different. Professional development can be measured by competencies. Competencies can be measured in two ways: academic achievement and experience.

Academic achievement can be measured in terms of course completion, program completion, and degrees conferred. While courses and programs can be measured, measuring academic achievement in the context of its relevance to leadership skills is more difficult.

Experience is generally more relevant to leadership competencies but less easily measured. Experience can contribute to competency if it is designed to meet the requirements of the position. It can also produce the opposite effect when individuals gain experience by repeating ineffective practices.

Assignments that focus on project management, team building, or change management can be readily measured by the success or failure of the project. Yet failure of a project does not mean failure of those involved to develop competencies.

Sometimes the greatest lessons learned come in the midst of a project's failure. One tends to examine failure much more critically than success, and critical examination provides a better opportunity for learning. That is why measurement of development is not based on a project's success or failure but rather on the lessons learned.

Motivation

Prospective officers are encouraged to carefully consider their motivations for seeking advancement. A few examples of motivations follow:

- A desire to have a greater influence on the work environment,
- An interest in the challenges of leadership,
- A desire for attaining status within the organization,
- An interest in higher levels of compensation,
- A personal commitment to public service.

All these possibilities and more are available through professional development and advancement. They do not, however, come without significant investment of time, energy, and money. Interested individuals should carefully consider their own interests in this pursuit and ensure that the returns will meet those interests.

Each step or progression in rank comes with added challenges and complexity. Discussing these with incumbent officers can be enlightening, but in reality, each person's experience is unique, and an

incumbent officer's response to experiences might be different from someone else's. Individual awareness of work and career wants and needs is vital. Remember the oft-quoted axiom from *Don Quixote*, "Make it thy business to know thyself, which is the most difficult lesson in the world."

Mapping

ISFSI's definition –

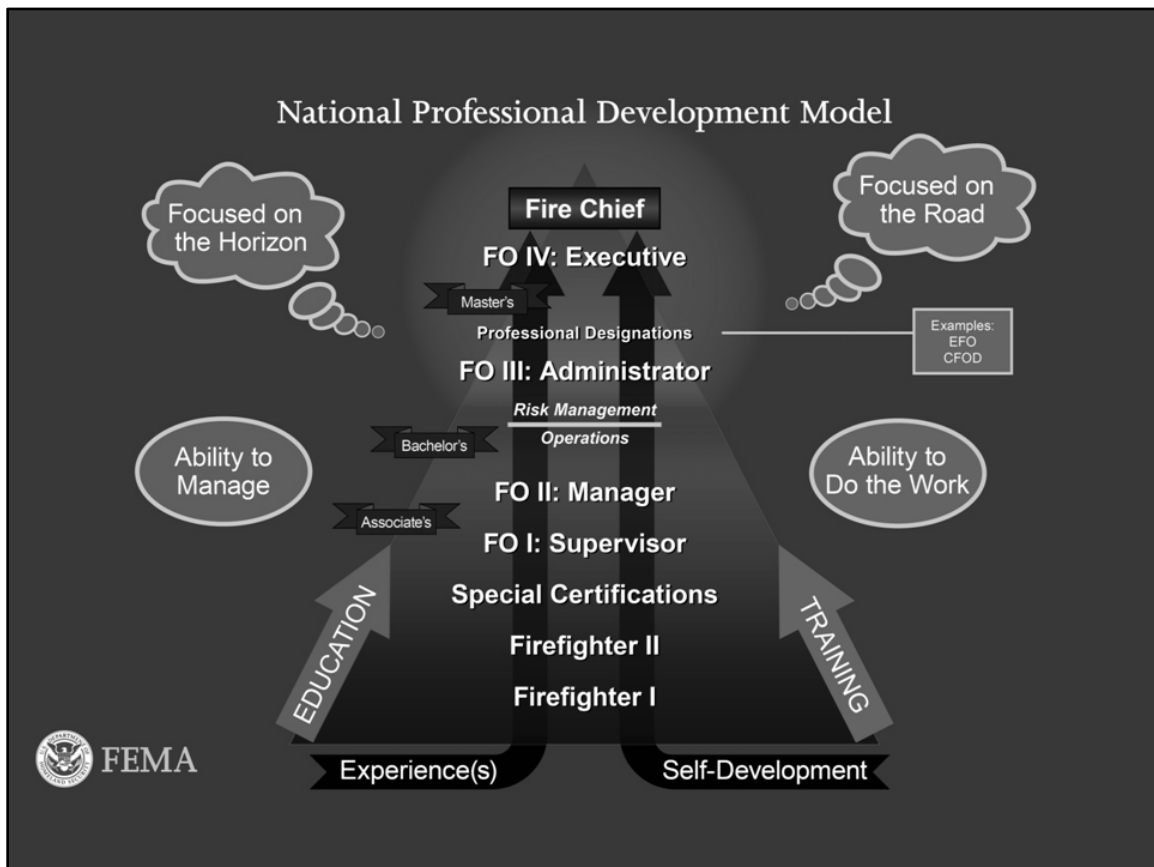
"Professional Development is the planned, progressive life-long process of education, training, self-development, and experience."

– contains four distinct elements. Based on this, the handbook is organized according to four (4) elements:

1. Education
2. Learning
3. Experience
4. Self-Development

The first two elements are especially critical and merit special attention. They form the basis of a nationally-recognized model for fire service professional development.

Figure 3: National Professional Development Model



This model, in *Figure 3* above, clearly illustrates the importance of both education and training. It also reflects the fact that emergency response training activities are more prevalent during the initial career years, while organizational skills grow from a shift to an education emphasis.

Is it enough simply to follow the four steps? Hardly! Just knowing one's basic direction does not preclude the need for a map. A "career map" can be an important tool in career development. As a part of the self-development, a destination must be identified. Destinations will be different for everyone and will be determined by individual interests.

The following steps can guide the career mapping process:

- Performing honest self-assessments to analyze strengths and weaknesses; to identify interests and abilities, followed by making specific plans for improvement.
- Establishing honest and realistic goals. For example being the fire chief is not a realistic goal for all chief officers, even though many are highly skilled and knowledgeable.
- Identifying skills that need to be developed or improved.
- Limiting objectives to a few, simple, attainable steps.
- Maintaining a supportive environment. Finding trusted individuals to offer honest feedback is important when preparing to move up within an organization.
- Constantly looking for ways to improve oneself and the organization. Offering solutions to everyday problems, even when the solutions are imperfect, provides important learning opportunities.
- Looking for new practice opportunities. This means experience – not training or education. While training and education can offer knowledge for "how to," experience is where those lessons learned can be practiced. People who choose to seek practice opportunities will likely gain experience, knowledge, and respect from those who are leading the organization.
- Looking for opportunities outside of the fire service. Working with non-profits (scouting, local churches, and others), community boards, etc. can provide meaningful leadership experiences. Aspiring leaders can find external leadership opportunities when they can't get the experience within their agencies.

Individuals must determine their own journeys and map their own courses. They may choose direct routes or take side roads to get to their destinations. As the saying goes, "You can't get to your goal if you don't know where you want to go."

Maintenance

The initial achievements of training, education, and experience are vital and occupy much of this handbook's attention. However, the professional development process is life-long. Therefore, the initial achievement is not sufficient to meet the challenges of the fire and rescue service leaders.

Fire officers need to maintain and enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. They must also push forward as a network of educated professionals dedicated to teaching each other, their teams, their

communities and their successors. As they seek to sharpen their skills, they need to look beyond themselves and achieve a level where they can develop performance-consulting capabilities to support managers, teams, and employees as those individuals seek to implement and take their own action on the changing strategies and innovations in the fire service. As these professionals evolve within the profession and merge the old with the new, perhaps they can join the change agents who are taking the fire service to new heights. These all serve as reminders that the fire service is not just a job, but indeed a career.

Currently, fire and emergency services professionals use professional associations, conferences, seminars, workshops, and similar offerings to meet their individual needs. The IAFC is working diligently to create more opportunities to further enhance professional development. This edition of the IAFC Officer Development Handbook is being published before that work effort is completed. For now, suffice it to say that there is much more to come on this subject.

Important Reminders

- ① Your professional development is a journey, not a destination.
- ① "Patience, persistence, and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success."
- Napoleon Hill
- ① "There are no secrets to success. Don't waste your time looking for them. Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty to those for whom you work, and persistence."
- Colin Powell
- ① "You've achieved success in your field when you don't know whether what you're doing is work or play."
- James Seatty

Summary

Fire officers at all levels of the organization have a responsibility to develop the right competencies and the right people. That is why the IAFC strongly encourages aspiring officers to incorporate systematic and deliberate professional development in their fire and emergency services careers. Fire personnel at all levels, whether paid or volunteer, young or old, newly hired or tenured, must be committed to learning, education, experience, and self-development. The success of this profession depends on its leaders to inspire the next generation through consistently professional leadership.

Responsibility for Learning

The Concept of Agile Learning

Different people learn differently. Some people have the ability to learn quickly from experience while others adopt learning far more slowly. While it is possible to calculate the amount of experience, education, and even intelligence that future leaders have, it is difficult to determine whether those people have learned from their education and their experiences.

Some researchers have described a concept known as “agile learning” or the ability of people to learn what they don’t know how to do.¹⁰ According to Lombardo and Eichinger, learning-agile people are critical thinkers who examine problems carefully, who know themselves well and are able to handle tough situations deftly, who like to experiment and can deal well with change, and who deliver results in first time situations.

Simply placing good people in difficult situations will not necessarily create learning. Some people will simply travel down the path of habit and continue the same behaviors that they have always practiced, while others will attempt to use technical expertise rather than management expertise when they move up in the organization. But fire agencies can build learners and build more competent managers by ensuring that development opportunities are designed to create competencies. To be successful, personnel must develop self-awareness. They should take on new and different roles with high levels of visibility and responsibility. They should demonstrate the ability to handle high-pressure responsibilities that include a chance of failure.

The Organization’s Responsibility

The people in any organization are the most important resource. If the fire service wants to efficiently meet the needs of its customers, it must prepare personnel for technical competency and administrative responsibility.

Even though fire service personnel are often the most technically trained and competent public service providers within communities, many fire agencies have not invested in their leadership. Organizations must recognize the need for officer development that extends beyond technical training and be willing to institute a professional development process for future leaders.

Organizations should provide multiple opportunities to develop leaders. They should be willing to send personnel to seminars and training at the National Fire Academy, to provide mentoring opportunities for employees, and to create experiential opportunities for potential leaders.

The organization should allow individuals who aspire to become future leaders to work in different divisions in the organization to gain experience. These individuals must be mentored for the responsibilities that lie ahead.

The Officer Development Handbook is, therefore, one resource to help organizations and future leaders design programs to develop relevant competencies.

¹⁰ Lombardo, M.M., and Eichinger, R.W., *The Leadership Machine*, Lominger Limited Inc., 2002,

The Individual's Responsibility

Individuals are responsible to prepare themselves to excel in current positions, to prepare for excellence within future positions, and to encourage peers and subordinates to excel. This ongoing pursuit of excellence improves the organization, improves the community, and most importantly, it improves the competencies of the individual.

From the time their careers start, firefighters learn the benefits of and strive for personal excellence. In the early years of firefighters' careers, people learn how to become technically good at their jobs. The need for excellence, however, does not end when fundamental skills are mastered. Aspiring leaders must also hold themselves individually responsible to achieve the highest level of competency in leadership skills. Just as firefighters hold themselves responsible for excellence in the early years, it also is their responsibility to prepare to become excellent leaders.

Few professions provide such clear opportunities to make a positive difference in the community. Firefighters must hold themselves personally accountable to maintain the highest level of training and skills they can throughout their careers.

Fire officers should also prepare themselves to perform well in future positions. They can do this by demonstrating a willingness to take risks and to engage in activities that exceed the bounds of their current position. In order to develop individual competencies, they must try new things and place themselves in unfamiliar positions that require making decisions.

Another obligation of strong leaders is to develop the skills of their peers and subordinates. Leaders in all organizations rate subordinate development as one of their most important responsibilities, but typically rate this as their own weak skill area. Because of demographic realities, a turnover of leadership in the fire service is inevitable. That means people with far less tenure in the organization will be leaders in a short time. That is why each fire officer and leader in the industry must direct special attention to assure that future leaders learn the needed competencies. As a reminder, some simple ways to develop future leaders include exposing them to new and relevant experiences, encouraging them to attend seminars and take NFA courses, and providing formalized mentorship.

Summary

The 21st Century fire service recognizes a need to move from traditional practices of promoting its members based on tenure to new norms that focus on effective, standardized professional development processes that foster true leadership qualities in prospective leaders. The sections that follow provide the roadmap for achieving that end.

OVERVIEW OF THE OFFICER DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK



This statement is given special emphasis so that handbook users will understand that professional development is not solely about “certifications” and “degrees.” These benchmarks are useful in documenting achievements in **Training** and **Education**. As such, they may be predictors of the likelihood that the recipient possesses the requisite knowledge and skills. The content of the learning experience, however, is of greater import.

For example, a given college degree may be from a fully accredited higher education institution, but the coursework may lack one or more subject areas essential to success as an officer/leader in a given agency. Therefore, this handbook focuses on key elements and targeted learning outcomes. The contents, however, are arranged and organized consistent with typical certification and degree programs.

Fire service technical certifications are based primarily upon **NFPA** Professional Qualification Standards (1000 series) with the balance based upon other key national standards. Chief Fire Officer Designation, by comparison, is based upon a blend of technical competencies, college education, leadership experiences, and job-related activities.

This handbook’s educational requirements are consistent with those published through the National Fire Academy by the **Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Conference** in its *Model Fire Science Curriculum*. The completion of all stipulated higher education course work should enable the student to qualify for the commensurate academic degree(s).

The category *Experience* is tied to those work experiences that are important to fostering the mastery of basic skills, including communication skills, and instilling self-confidence in the officer’s ability to assess situations and improve them.

The category *Self Development* is more subjective. It deals with awareness, personal attributes, and attitudes, which are individually developed and refined. It results from how one has grown, matured, and evolved over time. It depends upon an individual’s physical, mental and emotional health and is typically driven by his or her values. The expectations listed here are based on key indicators, activities, and experiences that assume officers’ self-development has prepared them to assume the challenges of supervision and leadership. Prospective officers are encouraged to foster development in this area through seminars, self-study, mentorships, and similar experiences.

The following four sections of this handbook are written with a consistent format for the presentation of recommendations for professional development planning.

Each section begins with an overview of the corresponding **NFPA 1021 – Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications** as promulgated by the **NFPA**. Each of this standard’s four levels (Level I through Level IV) corresponds to the four levels of officer development set forth in this handbook.



We want our officers to have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in supervisory, management, administrative, and executive positions.

NFPA 1021 constitutes the **minimum** standard for successful performance and is summarized in each handbook section as a reference.

Following the summarization of the standard, the following elements will appear for each officer level:

- Learning
- Education
- Experience
- Self-Development

This information constitutes IAFC's recommendations for those professional development experiences, based on the recommendations' potential to help develop the requisite knowledge and skills for success as a fire officer.

Individuals who are engaged in professional development planning are also encouraged to develop a working knowledge of the **Chief Fire Officer Designation** (CFOD) process, which is administered through the **Commission on Fire Accreditation International**. The CFOD process can help effectively credential the knowledge and skills of participants who progress into the levels of Administrative Fire Officer and Executive Fire Officer.



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS OFFICER DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

*In pursuit of the planned, progressive, life-long process of education,
learning, self-development, and experience.*

**IN PREPARATION FOR SERVICE AS A
SUPERVISING FIRE OFFICER**

SUPERVISING FIRE OFFICER



The **NFPA** promulgates minimum fire officer professional qualification standards for use in certification through an independent examination process. The applicable standards from NFPA 1021 for each of the four officer development levels are included here for reference. They should be included in the professional development planning process, while remembering that they comprise only a portion of the total development process.

For the **Supervising Fire Officer**, refer to:

NFPA Fire Officer I Standards

Component	Content
General	Firefighter II
General Knowledge	Organizational structure; procedures; operations; budget; records; codes and ordinances; IMS; social, political, and cultural factors; supervisory methods; labor agreements.
General Skills	Verbal and written communication; report writing; incident management system.
Human Resource Management	Use human resources to accomplish assignments safely during emergency, nonemergency, and training work periods; recommend action for member problems; apply policies and procedures; coordinate the completion of tasks and projects.
Community & Government Relations	Deal with public inquiries and concerns according to policy and procedure.
Administration	Implement departmental policy and procedure at the unit level; complete assigned reports, logs, and files.
Inspection & Investigation	Determine preliminary fire cause; secure a scene; preserve evidence.
Emergency Service Delivery	Conduct pre-incident planning; develop incident action plans; implement resource deployment; implement emergency incident scene supervision.
Health & Safety	Integrate health and safety plans, policies, and procedures into daily unit work activities; conduct initial accident investigations.

These standards are the basis. The next section presents the essential learning, education, experience, and self-development elements that are designed to prepare individuals for service as a Supervising Fire Officer.

Supervising Fire Officer: Learning

Element	Note
Firefighter I	NFPA 1001; Firefighter I
Firefighter II	NFPA 1001; Firefighter II
Fire Officer I	NFPA 1021; Fire Officer I
Incident Safety Officer	NFPA 1521
IMS	NIMS
Instructor I	NFPA 1041 or equivalent
Inspector I	NFPA 1031 or equivalent
Emergency Medical Services	Per state/local requirements
Valid Driver's License + Related Endorsements	Per state/local requirements
HazMat - Operations Level	NFPA 472

Supervising Fire Officer: Education

The following studies should be undertaken through an accredited institution of higher education.

SFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
SFO-01	Ability to write detailed prose.	100	English Composition
SFO-02	Understanding and using basic interpersonal, group and public communication skills.	100	Public Speaking
SFO-03	Ability to write accurate and clear letters, memos, technical reports and business communications.	100	Business Communications
SFO-04	Understanding ecosystem construction and destruction, energy production, and use and waste generation and disposal.	100	Biology
SFO-05	Understanding basic principles of general chemistry, including the metric system theory and structure.	100	Chemistry
SFO-06	Understanding basic principles of areas of psychology: physiology, cognition, motivation, learning, intelligence, personality, and mental health.	100	Psychology
SFO-07	Understanding basic principles of social groups, forces, structures, processes, institutions, and events.	100	Sociology
SFO-08	Understanding and using the basics of mathematical models; elementary concepts of probability and simulation; and emphasis on business applications.	100/200	Introduction to Finite Math; Algebra

SFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
SFO-09	Understanding basic principles of information technology and business computer systems for effective daily use.	100	Business Computer Systems
SFO-10	Understanding and implementing the basic principles of health, fitness and wellness.	100	Health / Wellness
SFO-11	Understanding basic concepts of government at the federal, state and local levels.	100	American Government
SFO-12	Understanding functional areas of human resource management and laws: job analysis, testing; performing interviewing, selection, training, and performance evaluation.	200	Human Resource Management
SFO-13	Understanding basic theories and fundamentals of how and why fires start, spread, and are controlled.	100	Fire Behavior & Combustion
SFO-14	Understanding the components of building construction related to fire and life safety, including inspections, pre-incident planning, and emergency operations.	100	Building Construction
SFO-15	Understanding and performing basic responsibilities of company officers including supervision, delegation, problem solving, decision-making, communications, and leadership.	200	Fire Administration I

Supervising Fire Officer: Experience

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experience
Agency Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked as qualified responder for three – five years. • Act as an aid to command/Participate in after action reviews.
Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice peer coaching, e.g., recruits and other organizational workgroups. • Select a subordinate who is experiencing difficulty in performing assigned tasks. Develop a performance improvement plan and provide coaching, including active feedback to the individual over an extended period of time. • Work with small group leadership: sports teams, youth clubs, etc. • Serve as either a coach or manager in a local sports organization, or club officer for a service club. • Work as a peer fitness trainer/youth sports coach/employee evaluator. • Develop a subordinate who needs performance improvement or is aspiring to promote and develop a performance improvement plan with benchmarks. • Acquire other leadership experience, such as coaching and leading others, outside the fire service.
Directing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function as acting officer for at least 200 hours. Include emergency response and non-emergency activities. • Serve as acting officer/aid to EOC; participate in disaster exercises. • Acquire through work experiences outside the fire service, such as supervisory or managerial roles, where directing resources is a primary job function.
Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function as the supervisor of a single resource unit. • When supervisor-level personnel, under the guidance of BCs, handle major incidents.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a planning process of critical importance to the organization. • Participate in NIMS planning section, strategic planning review, or Standard of Cover compliance. • Include other program planning – prevention, training, EMS, HazMat, ARFF, Tech Rescue. Include participating in organization and city strategic planning process.
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop curricula and deliver training classes to superiors, subordinates, and peers. • Collaborate with other members to identify training needs.

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experience
Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop teamwork skills. • Collaborate and organize peer group to actively resolve an important issue (e.g., apparatus operators not wearing their seat belts). • Participate in entry- level employee selection/prepare employee evaluations. • Participation in areas such as re-writes of job descriptions, evaluation process, and so on.
Financial Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in or contribute to a station, project, or small program budget. • Conduct an analysis of the total cost required to staff and operate a fire station where supervisory responsibility is held. • Complete a cost benefit and budgetary analysis of fire station annual operations and capital items. • Develop and assume authority over a five-year budget program.
Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in an organizational work project. • Develop and implement a home and residential fire safety program to decrease risk in the community. • Manage roll out of new procedure or equipment. • Implement a plan to complete an identified departmental project.
Interagency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in mass casualty training, exercises and incidents. • Identify an incident for which the community has a high incidence of risk (e.g., hazardous materials train derailment). Identify stakeholders who likely would respond to and mitigate the incident. Organize an exercise to simulate and then critique such an incident. • Identify a common target hazard in fire district and organize a disaster incident. Include outside agencies and stakeholders who likely would respond to the incident. Include a hot wash and post-incident analysis. • Participate in and or be a member of a local emergency planning committee and its associated functions. Work with the Office of Emergency Management in the administrative processes.
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with homeowners associations, service clubs, etc. • Join and actively participate in a local Rotary, Kiwanis or other service club. • Serve in a volunteer fire department.
Professional Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network with others in the service; get involved in local, state and/or regional professional association(s); e.g., instructors, EMS, inspectors, investigators, safety officers. • Join and actively participate in a State Fire Association.

Supervising Fire Officer: Self-Development

Element	Application
Health/Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in ongoing health and wellness program.
Physical Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain according to job requirements.
Career Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify personal traits, strengths and areas for development as part of a personal and professional inventory.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practice effective written and oral communication, listening skills, and giving/receiving constructive feedback.
Interpersonal Dynamics/Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen customer service skills, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills.
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the value/importance of organizational and community diversity.
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand, demonstrate and promote personal ethical behavior.
Legal Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the value/importance of law in its application to the organizational work unit.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware of the importance and value of technology in the work unit.• Develop/maintain skills to use technology in the work unit.
Local and/or Contemporary Hazards/Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a current awareness and understanding of unique local hazards and emerging issues.



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**IN PREPARATION FOR SERVICE AS A
MANAGING FIRE OFFICER**

MANAGING FIRE OFFICER



The **NFPA** promulgates minimum fire officer professional qualification standards for use in certification through an independent examination process. The applicable standards from NFPA 1021 for each of the four officer development levels are included here for reference. They should be included in the professional development planning process, while remembering that they comprise only a portion of the total development process.

For the **Managing Fire Officer**, refer to:

NFPA Fire Officer II Standards

Component	Content
General	Fire Officer I and Instructor I.
General Knowledge	Examine organization of local government; legislative processes; functions of related divisions, bureaus, agencies and organizations.
General Skills	Present intergovernmental and interagency cooperation concepts.
Human Resource Management	Evaluate member performance; maximize performance and/or correct unacceptable performance; complete formal performance appraisal process.
Community and Government Relations	Deliver public fire and life safety educational programs.
Administration	Prepare budget requests, news releases, recommended policy changes, and basic analytical reports.
Inspection and Investigation	Conduct hazard inspections, document violations, and investigate fires to determine origin and preliminary cause.
Emergency Service Delivery	Supervise multi-company emergency incident operations and hazardous materials responses.
Health and Safety	Review injury, accident, and exposure reports; identify unsafe work environments or behaviors; initiate action to correct the problem.

These standards are the basis. The next section presents the essential learning, education, experience, and self-development elements that are designed to prepare individuals for service as a Managing Fire Officer.

Managing Fire Officer: Learning

Element	Note
Fire Officer II	NFPA 1021
Multi-Company Incident Management	MCTO and MCI
Public Information Officer	Media relations
Fire Investigator I	NFPA 1033 or equivalent
Public Educator I	NFPA 1035 or equivalent
Leadership Development Series	National Fire Academy

Managing Fire Officer: Education

In addition to the elements for Supervising Fire Officer, the following additional studies are to be undertaken through an accredited institution of higher education.

MFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
MFO-01	Understanding and using statistical data for basic descriptive measures, statistical inference and forecasting.	Quantitative (Math) 100	Introduction to Statistics
MFO-02	Understanding and practicing basic interpersonal communication skills including perception, listening, and conflict resolution.	Communications 200	Interpersonal Communication
MFO-03	Understanding American political philosophy, social justice, and systems of American politics.	100	Philosophy
MFO-04	Understanding and using basic methods for critical analysis of arguments including inductive and statistical inference, scientific reasoning, and argument structure.	100	Critical Reasoning
MFO-05	Understanding ethical issues including whistle blowing, discrimination, social responsibility, honesty in the workplace, and setting appropriate workplace standards.	200	Professional Ethics
MFO-06	Understanding and demonstrating analysis, research, problem solving, organization, and expression of ideas in typical staff reports.	200	Professional Report Writing
MFO-07	Understanding accounting information as part of the control, planning, and decision-making processes.	200	Accounting Analysis
MFO-08	Understanding basic principles of organization and management as applied to fire service agencies; applying theories to management problems.	Management 200	Fire Service Management

MFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
MFO-09	Understanding the basic legal system structures and content as they affect local government and employers.	Law 100	Introduction to Law
MFO-10	Understanding and using the principles and techniques for effective project planning.	100	Introduction to Planning
MFO-11	Understanding the basic philosophy, organization, and operation of fire and injury prevention programs.	Fire Science 100	Prevention and Education
MFO-12	Understanding the basic design and operation of fire detection, alarm, and suppression systems.	Fire Science 100	Fire Protection Systems
MFO-13	Understanding the theory and principles for the use of water in fire suppression activities; includes hydraulic principles.	Fire Science 100	Fire Protection Hydraulics

Managing Fire Officer: Experience

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experience
Agency Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work as qualified SFO for two to four years. • Serve as Incident Commander for multi-company operations; review and update operating procedures.
Coaching/Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide coaching/counseling to new members. • Develop an orientation plan for newly hired personnel. Personally deliver and support this program/exercise, and remain available to provide guidance and support as they become familiar with and oriented to the organization. • Participate in Critical Incident Stress Management. • Develop and monitor individual improvement plans for marginal employees. • Take a lead role in working with command staff to develop an orientation program for newly hired personnel. Once delivered, personally mentor these individuals throughout their probationary year.
Directing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as officer for multi-company operations. Include emergency response and non-emergency activities. • Conduct an analysis of turnout and response times. Include both historical data as well as data gleaned from experiments and queuing. • Serve as Incident Commander for multi-company operations. • Oversee multiple small projects/ budgets.
Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function as the supervisor or an aide to the Incident Commander of a multi-company operation.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, implement or manage a planning process. • Monitor SOC compliance; lead efforts to close gaps in strategic plan targets.
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/implement company training plan. • Conduct a needs assessment to establish an outline for a Company Officer development program. • Develop and take a lead role with a Company Officer program. Use NFPA 1021 and the IAFC ODH as baseline documents. • Implement training plans for any specific department program.

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experience
Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in human resource functions involving individuals; e.g., performance appraisal, accountability and discipline, group dynamics, facilitation, conflict resolution, diversity and staffing. • Design a method to ensure high-quality feedback from supervisors (Company Officers) at the Company level. • Develop a promotional exam for Company Officer based on competencies needed by the organization.
Financial Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage a station, project, or small program budget/plan, and implement cost savings for station project or small program. • Develop a five-year budget for multiple, autonomous (but interlinked) department programs.
Program/Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be responsible for the planning, budgeting, implementation, management and/or reporting on a significant project or program. • Identify, implement and manage a department-wide program. • Be responsible for the planning, budgeting, implementation, management and/or reporting on a small project or program. • Direct and oversee a major component of your EMS, Fire Prevention, or Training functions.
Interagency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in an interagency committee, team or work effort. • Represent the fire department on a regional committee with a high profile related to public safety. • Work with a neighboring jurisdiction on a mutual aid response plan.
Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the development and/or updating of local emergency management plans/exercises. • Assist local Office of Emergency Management in their programs, i.e., grant funding – which is channeled through OEM from the state and feds.
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in non-fire service groups; e.g., charitable organizations, youth clubs, service clubs, sports teams, etc. • Provide leadership in local charitable organizations, youth clubs, service clubs, sports teams, etc. • Become involved in a volunteer fire service community effort.
Professional Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in local and state professional association(s).

Managing Fire Officer: Self-Development

Element	Application
Health/Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in an ongoing health & wellness program.
Physical Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain according to job requirements.
Career Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore career areas of special interest; seek a mentor.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak before small groups.
Interpersonal Dynamics/Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate groups; coach/counsel.
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embrace organizational and community diversity.
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand, demonstrate and promote ethical behavior for the team.
Legal Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the value/importance of law in its application to organizational programs.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/maintain skills to manage the use of technology in the work unit. Develop/maintain skills to use technology appropriate to work responsibilities.
Local and/or Contemporary Hazards/Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and communicate a current awareness and understanding of unique local hazards and emerging issues.



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ADMINISTRATIVE FIRE OFFICER**

ADMINISTRATIVE FIRE OFFICER



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For the **Administrative Fire Officer**, refer to:

NFPA Fire Officer III Standards

Component	Content
General	Fire Officer II and Instructor II.
General Knowledge	Be aware of national and international trends related to fire service organization, management, and administrative principles; know the public and private organizations that support the fire service.
General Skills	Practice evaluative methods, analytical methods, verbal and written communication, and ability to influence members.
Human Resource Management	Establish procedures for hiring, training, assigning, and promoting members; promote professional development of members.
Community & Government Relations	Develop programs to improve and expand services; build partnerships with the public to provide increased safety and quality of life.
Administration	Prepare and manage a budget; acquire resources through a proper competitive bidding process; direct the operation of an agency records management system; analyze and interpret records and data; develop a resource deployment plan.
Inspection & Investigation	Evaluate inspection programs and code requirements as to their effectiveness in ensuring the protection of life and property; evaluate pre-incident plans.
Emergency Service Delivery	Manage multi-agency planning, response, deployment, and operations.
Health & Safety	Develop, manage, and evaluate a departmental health and safety program; develop a measurable accident and injury prevention program.

These standards are the basis. The next section presents the essential learning, education, experience, and self-development elements that are designed to prepare individuals for service as an Administrative Fire Officer.

Administrative Fire Officer: Learning

Element	Note
Fire Officer III	NFPA 1021
Strategic Planning; Deployment Planning	
Research and Technical Reporting	
IT Applications; Database Management	
Negotiation; Mediation; Facilitation	"Getting to Yes"
Inter-jurisdictional Incident Management	
Leading Change	National Fire Academy

Administrative Fire Officer: Education

In addition to the elements for Managing Fire Officer, the following additional studies are to be undertaken through an accredited institution of higher education commensurate with a Baccalaureate degree.

AFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
AFO-01	Understand basic concepts of economic thinking and of the complex economic problems in modern society.	Business 100/200	Introduction to Economics
AFO-02	Understand the field of management including planning, motivation, group dynamics, decision-making, organizing, and group organizational change.	Management 300	Principles of Management
AFO-03	Understand basic concepts of management and decision-making in a political environment and how these concepts relate to practical problems faced by public administrators.	Management 300	Management in the Public Sector
AFO-04	Understand the historical examples of leadership throughout history from medieval times to present day.	Humanities 300	Leadership
AFO-05	Understand the theory and practice of personnel administration and human resource management, including recruiting, selection, compensation, performance appraisal, training, and labor-relations.	Management 300	Human Resource Management
AFO-06	Understand the factors that shape risk and the strategies for fire and injury prevention, including risk reduction, education, enforcement, investigation, research, and planning.	Management 300	Risk Management
AFO-07	Understand and implement organizational management in the fire service: organizational structures, resources; finance; planning.	Administration 300	Advanced Fire Administration

AFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
AFO-08	Understand the tools and techniques of rational decision-making in fire departments, including data, statistics, probability, decision analysis, modeling, cost-benefit analysis, and linear programming.	Administration 300	Analytical Approaches to Public Fire Protection
AFO-09	Understand and function effectively in the legal, political, and social aspects of government's role in public safety, including the legal system, department operations, personnel issues, and legislation.	Law 300	Political & Legal Foundations of Fire Protection
AFO-10	Understand the principles of budgeting, financial reporting, and management in governmental organizations with an emphasis on the use of financial data in planning, control, and decision-making.	Quantitative (Math) 400	Managerial Budgeting & Accounting
AFO-11	Understand the psychological and social factors affecting human work behavior and performance, including communication, motivation, leadership, social influence, and group dynamics.	Communications 400	Organizational Behavior
AFO-12	Develop skills for moral decision-making in professional life; explore styles of moral reasoning based on the differing premises of duty and ethics.	Humanities 400	Professional Ethics

Administrative Fire Officer: Experience

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experiences
Agency Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as a qualified MFO for three to five years. • Provide incident command of large multi-company/ multi-agency operations.
Coaching/Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide coaching/counseling to new members and subordinate officers. • Provide member development programs for subordinates. • Review employee progress on an agency-level plan for employee improvement. Make use of employee mentoring programs and develop strategies for reinforcement of desired behaviors and cultural norms.
Directing Resources/Influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in multiple function program management. • Participate in events, presentations, and other interactions with elected officials, business community, media and special interest groups. • Plan and deliver an influence plan for a department initiative; advocate for budget and programs at local executive and legislative levels. • Help the chief or other senior officers sell the organization vision and mission.
Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as an Incident Commander at a significant incident managed under ICS. • Plan for and implement a plan for the development of new and incumbent Incident Commanders.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in or lead an inter- or intra-agency project or committee. • Coordinate the development of a plan for the fire department to implement a change to service delivery, such as assuming the delivery of Advanced Life Support services within two years. • Complete a hazard analysis and mitigation strategy for community. • Lead a significant planning effort, such as the strategic plan or the development or update of the Standard of Cover document.

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experiences
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement organization-wide training effort. • Assist a neighboring jurisdiction to develop and administer a regionalized training effort. Represent your jurisdiction to examine, analyze, and potentially move forward with this effort. • Monitor and improve the department's training and officer development programs. • Lead the department's training program and take responsibility for training in one or more of the following: fire, EMS, HazMat, ARFF, technical rescue.
Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the department's human resource functions including staffing, diversity, performance appraisal, and accountability. • Investigate, document, and report on personnel issues including matters of discipline. • Within one's community, develop and move forward with a plan to increase the number of both women and minorities within the fire department. Develop a Diversity Recruitment and Hiring Action Plan. • Create a strategic HR plan that supports desired organizational culture. • Assist in development of hiring process – from interview questions to promotional exercises. • Chair or lead the hiring process for a new academy, managing all the associated issues that impact that process. • Assist or participate in contract negotiations with labor union.
Financial Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair a committee to examine the use of overtime, and report results with recommendations to the chief or city officials. • Plan, implement, manage and report budget functions at a program or divisional level. Set and advocate for strategic priorities within authority. • Develop a budget reduction plan, including service level impacts, and present it to elected officials. • Lead or participate in the RFP process for major equipment acquisition. • Assist in the development of vehicle replacement plan to include all financial impacts.

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experiences
Program/Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume responsibility for managing significant organizational project(s). • Monitor and lead project managers, mentor project managers, and set and monitor project metrics and budget. • Manage a department-wide program, such as an organizational vehicle replacement program, fire station remodel, new fire station location and construction, or personal protective equipment acquisition and replacement.
Interagency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the agency in multi-agency organizations, participate in multi-agency efforts, develop and negotiate agency priorities, and align with partner agencies. • Guide or direct an interagency committee or team effort. • Serve as organizational liaison with other agencies, such as the local ambulance review committee, 9-1-1 dispatch board, development review committee, Office of Emergency Management, county volunteer fire officers association, etc.
Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in or oversee emergency management planning and activities for mitigation and recovery. • Actively participate in the program and training developed through the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Assist OEM in soliciting grant funding which is channeled through that office from the state and federal governments.
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as the fire agency's representative to a large community effort that will sponsor and hold a major event. • Lead efforts to involve the fire agency in community efforts, monitor agency's community image and impact, and make plans for and lead improvement in community relations.
Professional Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join local, state, regional or national fire service association(s); serve on committees. • Participate in or take a lead role on a statewide committee that resolves an important statewide issue, such as residential sprinkler legislation. • Serve on or lead a county or state fire officers or volunteer association, fire marshal's association, fire chiefs association, or other professional associations.

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experiences
Professional Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare or assist with the preparation of instructional or informational material for publications or presentations. • Make presentations and participate in efforts to improve fire service knowledge base through lessons learned. • Mentor someone outside of one's own agency. • Print articles in national fire service publications.

Administrative Fire Officer: Self-Development

Element	Application
Health/Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing health & wellness program.
Physical Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain according to job requirements.
Career Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin CFOD process; learn mentorship.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver large group/public presentations.
Interpersonal Dynamics/Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use effective time management; build teams; become a mentor.
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and reinforce organizational and community diversity.
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand, demonstrate and promote ethical behavior for the organization.
Legal Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the value/importance of law in its application to the organization.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/maintain skills to integrate and coordinate the use of technology throughout the agency. Develop/maintain skills to use technology appropriate to work responsibilities.
Local and/or Contemporary Hazards/Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and analyze unique community risks and emerging issues.



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS OFFICER DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

*In pursuit of the planned, progressive, life-long process of education,
learning, self-development, and experience.*

**IN PREPARATION FOR SERVICE AS AN
EXECUTIVE FIRE OFFICER**

EXECUTIVE FIRE OFFICER



The **NFPA** promulgates minimum fire officer professional qualification standards for use in certification through an independent examination process. The applicable standards from NFPA 1021 for each of the four officer development levels are included here for reference. They should be included in the professional development planning process, while remembering that they comprise only a portion of the total development process.

For the **Executive Fire Officer**, refer to:

NFPA Fire Officer IV Standards

Component	Content
General	Fire Officer III.
General Knowledge	Understand advanced administrative, financial, communications, political, legal, managerial, analytical, and information management.
General Skills	Effectively apply prerequisite knowledge.
Human Resource Management	Administer, evaluate and improve department performance; appraise and direct a grievance program, a training and education program, a member assistance program, and incentive program(s).
Community & Government Relations	Project a positive image of the department; assume a leadership role in community events; effectively interact with community leaders.
Administration	Coordinate long-range planning, offer fiscal projections; evaluate training system requirements and establish goals.
Inspection & Investigation	No additional duties.
Emergency Service Delivery	Establish an ongoing program of comprehensive preparedness for natural or human-caused disaster incidents.
Health & Safety	Establish a comprehensive risk management program.

These standards are the basis. The next section presents the essential learning, education, experience, and self-development elements that are designed to prepare individuals for service as an Executive Fire Officer.

Executive Fire Officer: Learning

Element	Note
Influencing & Presentation Skills	
Meeting Facilitation	
Risk Assessment/Management	"Cause and Effect" Analysis
Disaster Incident Management	Emergency Management Institute
EOC Management	Emergency Management Institute

Executive Fire Officer: Education

In addition to the elements for Administrative Fire Officer, the following additional studies should be undertaken through an accredited institution of higher education at the graduate level and should be commensurate with a master's program. Individual programs may vary; however, the officer candidate should look for programs that meet the outcomes set forth below.

EFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
EFO-01	Understand organizational life and key challenges/ opportunities of managing public organizations: organizational mission, values, communication, culture, policy process, legislative-executive relations, and media relations.	Graduate	Public Management I
EFO-02	Understand organizational design, personnel, and management in mission-driven organizations; this includes organizational design, networks, service delivery, managing for performance, and ethical leadership.	Graduate	Public Management II
EFO-03	Understand decision-making from normative, prescriptive, and descriptive perspectives; individual decision-making and organizational decision practice; and decision analysis.	Graduate	Decision-Making for Public Managers
EFO-04	Understand managerial uses of accounting and financial management in the public sector; this includes fund accounting, cost accounting, asset accounting, internal controls, auditing, financial analysis and reporting.	Graduate	Financial Management in the Public Sector
EFO-05	Understand the issues involved in the implementation of public policy and programs, the institutional and political constraints on policy making, and the skills needed to address them.	Graduate	Management of Policy Process

EFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
EFO-06	Understand the nature of public sector executive life, the function of leadership in implementing and changing policy, the implications of leadership styles, and the relation of leadership to its constituencies.	Graduate	Executive Leadership
EFO-07	Understand the legal framework of administrative action, constitutional requirements, operation of the administrative process, and judicial review of administrative activity.	Graduate	Public Administrative Law
EFO-08	Understand moral issues in public life and the integration of moral concerns into public discussion resulting in good policy without polarization.	Graduate	Ethics and Public Policy
EFO-09	Understand value of mediation and negotiation techniques to resolve disputes and disagreements over public-policy issues.	Graduate	Mediation and Negotiation
EFO-10	Understand theories and models of behavioral science in organizational diagnosis and development (OD): review the OD approach: diagnosis, problem confrontation, and team building.	Graduate	Organizational Development in Public Agencies
EFO-11	Understand theory, practice, and politics of program evaluation, from simple feedback mechanisms to evaluation of large-scale programs.	Graduate	Program Evaluation
EFO-12	Understand theory, practice, and politics of developing an organizational strategic plan and incorporating multiple, diverse stakeholders.	Graduate	Strategic Planning

EFO Component	Outcome	Discipline Level	Suggested Course
EFO-13	Understand theory, practice, and politics of developing and carrying out an implementation plan for an organizational strategic plan.	Graduate	Strategic Plan Implementation
EFO-14	Understand how to formulate research questions, conduct research, and assess statistical tools or research methods to answer different types of policy or management questions.	Graduate	Quantitative Analysis

Executive Fire Officer: Experience

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experiences
Agency Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as qualified AFO for at least four years. • Lead high impact community-wide emergency event(s).
Coaching/Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in interagency coaching/counseling efforts. • Direct member development programs. • Develop and manage a comprehensive succession plan for the agency. • Develop and implement a mentor program and succession plan for one's own agency. Include benchmarks and goals.
Directing Resources/Influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage one or more functional areas of the organization. • Manage organizational change efforts. • Set agency's priorities, identify organizational changes needed and lead those change efforts. • Pursue the CPSE Accreditation process for one's own agency. • Lead the organization and provide the vision.
Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as Incident Commander at multiple significant incidents managed under ICS, and/or function as a section chief of an ICS overhead team. • Seek and acquire input from a variety of federal, state, and private sector resources when confronted with a catastrophic incident (flood, major hazardous material incident, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, etc.). • Develop, monitor and ensure agency's incident management competency. • Participate in or lead the activities at the emergency operations center at the local, state and national level (FEMA).
Planning/Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in or lead a strategic-level of planning for a program or division; participate in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of empirical data. • With limited resources, conduct an analysis, coordinate and administer a cross-department team to examine a critical organizational issue, and report the outcomes with recommendations to elected officials. • Lead a strategic planning effort and advocate for adoption at community level. Assess progress toward strategic objectives; move organization toward objectives. • Work with department's cross-functional executive team and develop a five-year comprehensive plan. Include use of focus groups and employee surveys in the process.

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experiences
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess/evaluate organizational professional development needs; establish and communicate strategic direction. • Provide overall leadership and direction to members who lead or manage programs and are specifically responsible for the training in their respective programs.
Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the development of human resource strategies for the agency. • Chair a task force with the goal of examining an area of critical importance (such as escalating health care costs) in areas of health and wellness for all employees. • Lead the development of human resource strategies for the agency. • Develop a wellness and fitness program with the Human Resource department and labor leaders. • Develop and implement hiring programs to improve department's compliance with issues dealing with diversity.
Financial Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the development of strategic financial planning; e.g., revenue projections, capital budgeting, fiscal controls, audits. • Develop long-term strategic financial plan; e.g., revenue projections, capital budgeting, fiscal controls, audits. Lead efforts to provide sufficient funding. • Work with a cross-functional team to develop alternate revenue sources for agency. • Manage an adopted budget, and recommend and implement mid-year budget adjustments.
Program/Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct/manage the development and implementation of a significant policy change or addition. • Create a system to assure alignment of agency's project management with strategic objectives. • Oversee, lead, and manage members who supervise or lead programs within the department.
Interagency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop interagency agreements, contracts, MOUs, etc. • Develop regional protocols/procedures. • Develop an agreement with surrounding jurisdictions and establish an MOU to create an automatic aid program. • Create strong relationships with other agencies. Lead interagency planning, projects.

Element	Examples of Appropriate Development Experiences
Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the planning, training and the exercise of emergency management preparation and response activities; work in an EOC; serve on multi-agency projects and teams. • Take a lead role as the fire department representative in the development of an Emergency Operation Center for the local county or region. • Lead community effort to prepare for and prevent disasters, and advocate for that effort through public outreach programs. • Develop and implement a region-wide EOC tabletop exercise. Include various stakeholders at all levels of local government.
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the agency with community groups or agencies. Participate in a lead role on a community committee.
Professional Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as an active and involved member in local, state, regional or national association(s). • Complete the CFOD or CMOD process through CPSE.
Professional Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve on state and/or national boards, committees, task forces, and related policy work groups.

Executive Fire Officer: Self-Development

Element	Application
Health/Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in ongoing health & wellness program.
Physical Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain according to job requirements.
Career Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete CFOD process; be a mentor.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate productive communication skills in interagency relations and interest-based negotiations.
Interpersonal Dynamics/Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include Professional Development Executive programs; e.g., Harvard Program
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate organizational and community diversity.
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand, demonstrate and promote ethical behavior for the profession.
Legal Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the value/importance of law in its application to the community. • Influence/participate in the development of law.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic direction on the use of technology within the organization. • Develop/maintain skills to use technology appropriate to work responsibilities.
Local and/or Contemporary Hazards/Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predict emerging local issues and trends.

APPENDICES



STAKEHOLDERS

- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
- United States Fire Administration (USFA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- National Fire Academy (NFA)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Higher Education Institutions/Coordinators
- State Fire Marshals/State Training Directors
- State Higher Education Associations
- State Fire Chiefs Associations
- Black Chief Officers Committee
- National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)
- National League of Cities (NLC)
- National Association of Counties (NACo)
- National Association of Hispanic Firefighters (NAHF)
- Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association Section of the IAFC (Metro Chiefs)
- National Society of Executive Fire Officers (NSEFO)
- International Association of Women in Fire & Emergency Services (iWomen)
- Center for Public Safety Excellence, Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CPSE-CFAI)
- International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC)
- National Board on Professional Fire Service Qualifications
- American Association for Adult Continuing Education
- International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- USFA Training Resources & Data Exchange (TRADE)

GLOSSARY

CFO	Chief Fire Officer designation; a program of the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).
Career Mapping	To plan in detail the pursuit of consecutive, progressive achievement especially in public, professional or business life.
Coach	One who instructs or trains an individual or a team; one who instructs in the fundamentals of an activity and directs group or team strategy.
Communication	A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior; exchange of information.
Community Involvement	Participate; take part; to commit; to have an effect on people living in a particular area or an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location.
Counseling	Give advice especially as a result of consultation with law, policy or expertise.
Customer Service	Work performed for one who is purchasing or receiving a service; a contribution to the welfare of others; a helpful act; useful labor that does not produce a tangible commodity.
Direct Resources	Regulate activities; carry out the organizing and supervising; train and lead performance; show or point out the way with authority.
Diversity	Differing from one another; composed of distinct or unlike elements or qualities.
Ethics	The discipline dealing with what is good and bad; moral duty and obligation; a set of moral principles or values; the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group.
Emergency Management	An organized system that incorporates planning for, mitigating against, responding to, and recovering from disasters.

FESHE	Fire & Emergency Services Higher Education
Financial Resource Management	Exercise executive, administrative, and supervisory direction of monetary resources or the functions necessary to carry out the financial policies of an organization.
Fitness	Sound physical and mental state; adapted to an end or design; adapted to the environment so as to be capable of surviving; being in such a state as to be or seem ready to do something.
Health	The general condition of the body; being sound in body, mind, or spirit; freedom from physical disease or pain.
Human Resource Management	Exercise executive, administrative, and supervisory direction of personnel or the functions necessary to carry out the personnel policies of an organization.
IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs; The IAFC has been providing leadership for fire and emergency services officers since 1873. The IAFC represents the leadership of over 1.2 million firefighters and emergency responders.
IFSAC	International Fire Service Accreditation Congress
Incident Command	A systematic means of providing the authoritative direction of resources in response to a situation with the potential for serious consequences.
Influence	The power or capacity of causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways.
Instruction	The action, practice, or profession of teaching; to cause to know or to know how to function.
Interagency	Occurring, shared by, involving or carried on between two or more administrative divisions of a government.

Interpersonal Dynamics	Forces and activity involving relations between persons.
Legal Issues	A matter of dispute between two or more parties or an unsettled matter relating to law.
Mentor <i>(noun)</i>	Trusted counselor or guide.
Physical Ability	The sufficient power, skill and resources of the human body to perform or function as needed.
Planning	Arranging the component resources so as to realize or achieve an objective.
Pro Board / NBFSPQ	National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications
Professional Association	An organization of persons having a common interest and associated with a principal vocation, employment or avocation.
Professional Contribution	To give toward or play a significant part in bringing about a result for a group of persons having a common interest and associated with a principal vocation, employment or avocation; to submit articles to a publication.
Professional Development	The planned, progressive, life-long process of education, learning, self-development, and experience.
Program Management	Directing or supervising a planned system designed to achieve goal(s).
Project Management	Directing or supervising a planned undertaking, task or problem according to a single plan.

Research	Studious inquiry, investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws; the collecting of information about a particular subject.
Teamwork	Work done by several personnel with each doing a part; each person subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency and effectiveness of the group or team.
Technology	The practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area; a manner of accomplishing a task especially using technical processes, methods, or knowledge.

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER DESIGNATION (CFOD)



Center for
Public Safety
Excellence

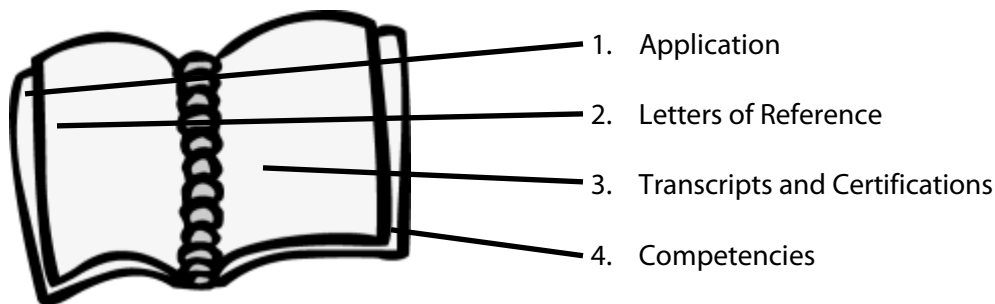
The Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFOD) Program is intended for officers at the Administrative level and higher. The program was designed with the assistance of a task force and the IAFC Professional Development Committee (PDC) to help incumbent and up-and-coming officers to have a tool for measuring their success as a Chief Fire Officer. The CFOD program is recognition for

individuals who are building a professional career in the fire industry. The IAFC believes that the CFOD program is well rounded and tells a story of how the applicant has achieved and performed in his or her career.

It should also be noted that the CFOD Program will continue to interface with the Professional Development Committee of the IAFC to ensure that career development processes are utilized.

To complete the CFOD application, an officer must have a minimum of 150 points in education and experience to complete the competency portion and submit a portfolio to the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, Inc. As long as an officer has followed the IAFC's professional development model, the officer should not have any difficulty meeting the minimum requirements. Figure 4 below is an example of how the CFOD portfolio should be set up.

Figure 4: Professional Development Portfolio Setup



We are constantly striving to improve the program. As new items come along and we continue to evolve as a profession, so will the Chief Fire Officer Designation program. If interested in the program, please contact:

Center for Public Safety Excellence
Commission on Fire Accreditation International
4501 Singer Court, Suite 180
Chantilly, VA 20151
Voice: 1-866-866-2324
Email: info@publicsafetyexcellence.org

**Additional information is available online at:
www.publicsafetyexcellence.org**

DEGREES AT A DISTANCE PROGRAM



Increasingly, most chief and mid-level officers in the nation's leading fire departments are being required to hold a bachelor's degree. The Degrees at a Distance Program (DDP) is an independent-study degree program sponsored by the **National Fire Academy** (NFA), which has agreements with seven accredited colleges and universities throughout the country to offer bachelor's degrees with concentrations in fire administration/management and fire prevention technology.

DDP provides an alternative means for fire service personnel to earn a bachelor's degree or to pursue college-level learning in a fire-related course concentration without the requirement of having to attend on-campus classes. While independent study and distance learning have increasingly appealed to working adults nationwide in the past few years, DDP is particularly attractive to fire service personnel whose fire department work shifts normally make classroom attendance difficult.

DDP institutions emphasize faculty-student interaction through written and telephone contact. Students receive detailed guidance and feedback on the required assignments and take proctored final exams at hometown locations.

DDP Curriculum Goal: *To develop a common body of knowledge in fire, life safety, and emergency services.*

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What exactly is the Degrees at a Distance Program?**

The Degrees at a Distance Program (DDP) is a way to take college courses that can be used toward a bachelor's degree with concentration in the areas of fire administration or fire prevention technology. The program is offered through a national network of four-year colleges and universities. Your regional college provides you with the opportunity to get a college education through independent study. The program is managed by the National Fire Academy (NFA).

- **Without being in a classroom environment, what kind of academy interactions can I expect?**

Each DDP college or university emphasizes faculty-student contact. You will maintain contact with your instructors by mail, telephone, and/or computer communication. You will receive detailed guidance and analytical comments on each of your required assignments. You may take proctored exams at convenient locations.

- **May I take a course even if I don't want to pursue a degree at this time?**
Yes. Those students who simply wish to upgrade their professional skills may take individual courses for credit. NFA certificates are awarded for the successful completion of six courses.
- **What if I have an associate degree?**
This program is perfect for you. DDP courses are junior-senior level. Your regional college will give you guidelines and will map your bachelor's degree route.
- **How is this program different from going on campus and taking a regular college course?**
In this program you get full upper-level college credit, but the emphasis is on independent study with no classroom attendance required. When you register for a DDP course, you obtain an instructional package, which includes the Course Guide and required texts. This complete learning package makes it possible for you to learn without classroom attendance as you maintain your work schedule.
- **What impact could this program have on my career?**
Education is often a key to advancement. By increasing your academic qualifications and your professional experience, your opportunities are likely to increase and your sense of personal accomplishment can be heightened.

Additional information is available online at:
<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/nfa/higher-ed/nfa-high.shtm>

EXECUTIVE FIRE OFFICER PROGRAM



The Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program is an initiative of the United States Fire Administration/National Fire Academy designed to provide senior officers and others in key leadership roles with enhanced executive-level knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to lead these transformations, conduct research, and engage in life-long learning. The program also provides an understanding of the following:

- The need to transform fire and emergency services organizations from being reactive to proactive, with an emphasis on leadership development, prevention, and risk-reduction.
- The need for fire and emergency services organizations to reflect the diversity of America's communities.
- The value of research and its application to the profession.
- The value of life-long learning.

The officers enhance their professional development through a unique series of four graduate and upper-division, baccalaureate-equivalent courses. The EFO Program spans a four-year period with four core courses. Each course is two weeks in length.

EFO Program participants must complete an Applied Research Project (ARP) that relates to their organization within six months after the completion of each of the four courses. A certificate of completion for the entire EFO Program is awarded only after the successful completion of the final research project.

Note: Completion of the ARP is a prerequisite for attending the next course in the sequence of the program.

Additional information is available online at:

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/nfa/courses/oncampus/nfa-on2.shtm>

INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS (IFSAC)



What is IFSAC? IFSAC is the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress. It is a peer-driven, self-governing system that accredits both fire service certification programs and higher education fire-related degree programs. IFSAC is a nonprofit project authorized by the Board of Regents of Oklahoma State University as a part of the fire service programs mission of the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology. The IFSAC administrative offices are located on the Oklahoma State University campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The administrative staff consists of the IFSAC manager, a unit assistant and student staff technicians.

- **What is the difference between certification and accredited?**

To accredit is to give official authorization to or approval of; to provide with credentials; to recognize or vouch for as conforming to a standard; to recognize (an educational institution) as maintaining standards that qualify its graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions or for professional practice. Accredited is often confused with certify. Accreditation involves the program or institution itself while certification is a function of the program or institution and applies to individuals.

- **Is my fire department accredited?**

IFSAC does not accredit fire departments. Actually, this has recently been offered through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). The Commission has developed criteria through the joint efforts of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

- **What kind of training does IFSAC offer?**

IFSAC does not provide training of any sort. It is the responsibility of IFSAC to accredit certificate programs.

- **How do I obtain my transcripts and verify any college credit that I have received through the courses I have taken?**

Unfortunately, IFSAC administration cannot provide transcripts and/or earned credits for these courses. The only thing IFSAC would be able to do is confirm that you have been certified for the courses you have taken and that you are located within our registry.

The entity from which you received your certificate is the one to contact regarding questions. They should be able to provide the transcripts or training records. Most entities will call them training records because some colleges get confused with the wording. Also bear in mind, that most certificate courses such as Fire Fighter I, II, etc., are not considered as college credit earning courses. They are usually classified as continuing education courses for adults. In this case, you will not have earned any college credit.

Either way, it is suggested that you contact the entity from which you earned the certificate(s). They will be able to tell you whether or not you have earned college credit and how to obtain a copy of your training records.

**Additional information is available online at:
<http://www.ifsac.org>**

NATIONAL BOARD ON FIRE SERVICE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (NBFSPQ)



The purpose of the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) is to establish an internationally-recognized means of acknowledging professional achievement in the fire service and related fields. The primary goal is the accreditation of organizations that certify uniform members of public fire departments, both career and volunteer. However, other organizations with fire protection interests may also be considered for participation. Accreditation is generally provided at the state or provincial level to the certifying authority of that jurisdiction.

Accreditation: The Pro Board accredits fire service training agencies that use the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) professional qualification standards. The accreditation process begins with the submission of an application, including a detailed self-study document, by the organization seeking accreditation. The application package is then reviewed by the members of the Committee on Accreditation (COA) for completeness and compliance with the bylaws of the Pro Board. The next step is a site visit by a team of COA members, usually two, who perform an extensive on-site review of the organization's testing and certification processes. The site visit team prepares a report and presents it to the COA. The COA decides if accreditation is granted.

Certification: An agency accredited by the Pro Board makes national certification available to its members. Members are then eligible to be placed on the Pro Board's national register and receive a Certificate of National Certification. In addition, the Pro Board encourages reciprocity among certifying agencies. This helps assure that Pro Board certification will be recognized by the department as the members seek advancement, and by other departments should they seek to transfer within the fire service. The cost of national registration, including a Pro Board Certificate, is \$15.

Benefits: Professionalism has long been a goal sought by the fire service. It has only been within the past 25 years that a system has evolved to produce national professional qualifications standards that an agency can use to establish performance measures for training programs. Agencies that achieve Pro Board accreditation are recognized as having met the rigors of review by an independent organization. This independent review is the best way to assure candidates and governance bodies that the training agency's program meets the national standards.

Certification from a nationally-accredited agency is a statement of success, an indisputable mark of performance belonging to individual fire service professionals. Each successful candidate for certification from an accredited agency knows that he or she has been measured against peers and meets rigorous national standards. National certification affords the individual a uniformity and portability of qualifications. In addition, the credibility of an organization is enhanced by having members certified to national consensus standards. A high percentage of certified members within a department should certainly help managers in their pursuit of adequate funding at budget time.

Organization: The Pro Board is sponsored by five prominent fire service organizations. Each organization seats one member on the Board of Directors whose task it is to set policy and oversee operations of the system. The Committee on Accreditation is comprised of representatives appointed by each of the sponsoring organizations and representatives elected by the accredited agencies. They are charged with the task of accreditation through review of applications, site visits and implementation of policy set by the Board of Directors. The Advisory Committee is comprised of delegates from all of the accredited agencies. It serves as a conduit for policy questions and suggestions to be addressed by the Board of Directors and/or the COA.

Additional information is available online at:
<http://www.theproboard.org>

IAFC OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Company Officer, Chief Officer, and Executive Chief Officer Leadership Symposia provide essential education, training, and professional development for aspiring leaders. With three (3) days of comprehensive classes taught by experienced leaders, no other program offers so much for so little. Company officers, chief officers, and chief executives will enhance their skills, knowledge, abilities, and talents and become better leaders in their departments and communities.

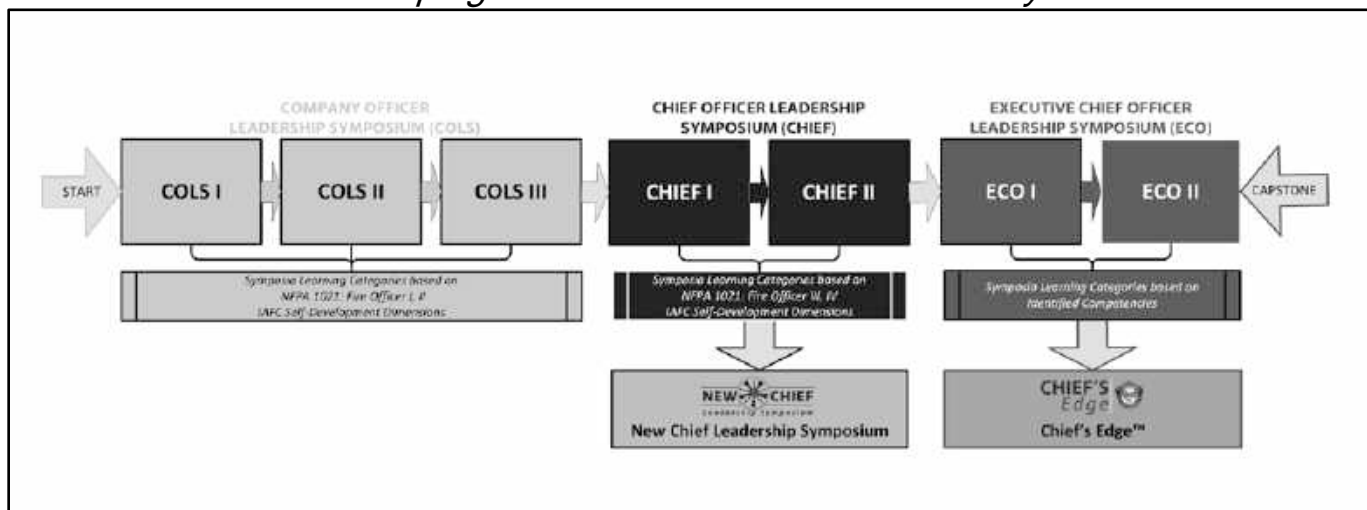
"The Company Officer Leadership Symposium is a comprehensive officer development program that every new crew leader should attend. The number and quality of takeaways that are afforded to participants is extremely valuable for career development. The knowledge gained in the training can be applied on your next shift. I would recommend the symposium to any progressive member of the fire service."

–**Lieutenant Jason Floyd**
Las Cruces Fire Department, NM

The leadership symposia programs are the place to:

- Enhance leadership skills chiefs want for chief and company officers;
- Sharpen proficiencies in areas such as decision-making and conflict resolution;
- Meet with other company and chief officers to share solutions and new ideas;
- Learn about the latest technology, apparatus, and gear available; and
- Meet with industry representatives to make purchasing recommendations.

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www.iafc.org/odp