

State of Iowa

Fire Service Training Bureau Certification Program



Policy and Procedure Manual

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Foreword

The Beginning: In 1923, a group of firefighters came to Iowa State College and asked for educational assistance to improve their firefighting and fire prevention skills. In 1925, the college's response was the First Annual Iowa State Fire School. That event marked the beginning of state-level fire service education and training in the United States. This first fire school, titled "First Short Course for Firemen" (1925), provided four days of training. Topics included fire prevention, firefighting, and first aid. The program was developed by the fire service, under the supervision of the Engineering Extension Department of Iowa State College. Over the years, Fire Service Extension changed to the Fire Service Institute, a component of Iowa State University Extension. The annual fire schools continued to grow. The Institute offered many basic and advanced fire service training programs.

The Transition: In 2000, at the request of several state fire service associations, legislation was drafted to remove the Institute from Iowa State University, and relocate it within the Iowa Department of Public Safety. The Governor signed House File 2492 during the legislative session, and the transfer of responsibilities occurred July 1, 2000. The Institute was dissolved, and the Fire Service Training Bureau was created within the Division of State Fire Marshal. While the responsibility and budget were transferred immediately to the Division of State Fire Marshal, the physical location of the Bureau continues in the Fire Service Education Building on the Iowa State University campus. The Bureau has arranged to remain in this building until newer and larger facilities are found. Proponents of the legislation believed transferring the responsibility of statewide fire service training to the Division of State Fire Marshal would give the new Bureau a higher priority for increased funding opportunities needed to ensure quality training and education. Iowa State University Extension also supported the move, stating they wanted what was best for the fire service and the citizens of Iowa and that this is what the fire service wanted.

The Move: In 2020, after several meetings and negotiations, an agreement was reached between the Iowa Department of Public Safety and Iowa Air National Guard to relocate the Fire Service Training Bureau to the Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center (CDJMTC) in Johnston, Iowa. The move was completed in July and also included the disestablishment of all affiliation with Iowa State University. The new location of the Fire Service Training Bureau is quite fitting, in that it is one of the original fire stations on the Camp Dodge installation.

The Fire Service Training Bureau is proud to offer National Certification for the Iowa Fire Service through accreditation with the [International Fire Service Accreditation Congress \(IFSAC\)](#). This accreditation assures firefighters that the testing is unbiased, current, and conforms to recognized national standards.

SECTION 1

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Section 1.1 Authority and Accreditation

(a) Legislative authority for fire service certification was granted to the Fire Service Institute, Iowa State University Extension, by the Iowa legislature in 1986. With the passing of HF2492 and the permission of the governing International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), authority for fire service certification was granted to the Fire Service Training Bureau, Division of the State Fire Marshal effective July 1, 2000.

(b) The Fire Service Training Bureau (FSTB) certification system has been accredited by the IFSAC to certify fire service personnel to national standards. Through this process, Iowa fire service personnel achieve national certification. Accreditation of the FSTB certification system assures the Iowa fire service that programs and standards used within this system adhere to the most current recognized and adopted national standards. The assurances gained through the accreditation process provide credibility and prestige for every firefighter participating in the certification process. Firefighters certified through the Iowa system are recognized throughout the United States (and the world) as qualified and meeting the standards set forth by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Section 1.2 Mission Statement

(a) The mission of the Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program is to establish credibility in providing quality education, training, certification, and professional consultation to Iowa's fire service and other emergency responders in a manner that reflects commitment, integrity, and contributes to the reduction of morbidity, mortality, and property loss from fire and other hazards.

Section 1.3 Purpose Statement

(a) The purpose of the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program is to develop and maintain a certification system that adheres to the NFPA's Professional Qualifications Standards, following the criteria as outlined by the IFSAC.

Section 1.4 Vision Statement

(a) The vision of the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program is to ensure all Iowa firefighters and emergency service personnel are certified to the most current standard of the NFPA, and that no individual, entity, nor interest group shall exercise undue influence over the certification system.

Section 1.5 Non-Discrimination Policy

(a) Registrations for certification will be accepted from any candidate meeting the criteria listed in the appropriate certification Procedures Guide. Registrations will be accepted without regard to race, color, creed, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or status as a military veteran. Registrations will be accepted without regard to age as long as the candidate is at least 18 years of age and disability as long as that disability does not hinder the candidate's ability to perform the necessary skills and practices required by the NFPA Professional Qualifications Standards. If you have any questions or comments regarding certification, training, or other services provided by the FSTB, please call (515) 727-3426.

(b) The Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program operates in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Equal Opportunity Act as well as other Federal and State laws, regulations and guidelines which prohibit discrimination.

Section 1.6 Sexual Harassment Policy

(a) The EEOC Guidelines define sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when

- submission to such conduct is made an implicit or explicit condition of an individual(s) employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct affects employment opportunities;
- such conduct interferes with an employee(s) work or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

(b) The key phrases in the EEOC definition of sexual harassment are "unwelcome" and "of a sexual nature." The behavior must be unsolicited and unwelcomed by the victim. The phrase "of a sexual nature" means that sex or gender must be the underlying nature of the behavior. Men and women may have disputes or disagreements on the job, but this would not be viewed as harassment unless there is a sexual element to the interaction.

Section 1.7 Operational Funding

(a) The Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau receives state allocations that provide salary and benefits for all full-time Bureau staff (which includes the Certification / Accreditation Manager). We cover all other costs through revolving accounts, administered by the Iowa Department of Public Safety. Our revolving account maintains a surplus annually. Our current funding is adequate to maintain the staffing levels necessary to implement and sustain our certification process. The Certification Program is funded through fees collected from candidates who register to take examinations, requests for reciprocity, additional sales of certification patches, and reprints of certificates.

Section 1.8 Iowa Fire Service and Emergency Response Council (IFSERC)

(a) In accordance with the Iowa Administrative Code 100B.1: The IFSERC is established under the division of the State Fire Marshal in the Department of Public Safety.

(b) The IFSERC is tasked with:

- Developing, in consultation with the State Fire Marshal, the policies of the Fire Service Training Bureau
- Develop and submit to the State Fire Marshal for adoption, rules establishing minimum training standards for fire service training that will be applicable statewide, and periodically review these standards
- Provide recommendations to the State Fire Marshal that will facilitate delivery of basic level fire fighter training at the local level
- Provide recommendations to the State Fire Marshal for a fee schedule for training and consultation services as necessary for the administration of fire protection services.

SECTION 2

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Section 2.1 Policy and Practice

(a) It is the policy and practice of the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program to certify personnel to the current edition of the NFPA, and any other standards adopted by the State of Iowa. Certification standards shall be updated by the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program in accordance with the requirements established by IFSAC.

(b) The FSTB has developed and published Procedure Guides for each level of certification the FSTB is accredited to. These guides are available on the Certification page of the FSTB website. Candidates seeking certification are provided detailed information regarding the requirements and process for certification within each level's guide. The guides also provide the specific NFPA Standard reference and texts each level is based from and correlated to.

(c) In fulfilling its responsibilities for qualifying Iowa firefighters and emergency services personnel, the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program shall provide appropriate written test and skills examinations as required by IFSAC.

Section 2.2 Requirements to Certify

(a) The Iowa Fire Service Certification Program is voluntary. Any eligible candidate wishing to become certified shall do so by successful completion of the specific certification level requirements. If a level of certification has pre-requisites, the candidate must present appropriate documentation that the pre-requisites have been met before pursuing the next level of certification.

- Appropriate documentation is limited to certifications issued from accredited entities. The certifications must possess either an IFSAC and/or a ProBoard® seal and seal number. The seal numbers will be verified with each accrediting body to confirm validity.

(b) Qualified personnel within the Iowa fire service may enter the certification system for the purpose of seeking certification by contacting the FSTB. Upon receipt of a request, the FSTB will provide appropriate information to members of the fire service about any of the levels or categories of certification available.

(c) It is the intent of the Fire Service Training Bureau to ensure all requisite knowledge and skills objectives are met by all candidates seeking certification, in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association standard edition for which the agency is accredited to and has adopted.

(d) All pre-requisites that are required by a specific Standard or locally mandated by the Fire Service Training Bureau shall be met by a candidate before they are permitted to pursue that level of certification. Pre-requisites for each level of certification are published in that levels respective Procedures Guide.

(e) Completion of stipulated courses of study and training are not a requirement for certification with the exceptions of Fire and Emergency Services Instructor I and II, and Fire Investigator.

Section 2.3 Incumbent Eligibility

(a) The Fire Service Training Bureau recognizes the length of service, experience, and past training that individuals attain throughout their career. However, to enter the certification process at a higher level, these incumbents must be certified by an accredited agency to all the required pre-requisites for lower levels before progressing with the higher level certification.

Section 2.4 Certification Processing

(a) After participants within the FSTB certification system have met the performance requirements and successfully completed an objective evaluation process, the FSTB awards National Certification. Upon awarding National Certification, the individual's name is entered in the Iowa certification database, as well as the national certification database maintained by IFSAC at Oklahoma State University. An official seal from IFSAC is displayed on every certificate and includes a national certification number.

- Candidates will also receive (at no additional cost), an "Iowa/Nationally Certified" patch and a certification level bar.
- Completed certificates will be issued by the FSTB within 30 working days. The FSTB should be contacted by the candidate if a certification has not been received by then.

(b) Candidates testing for ANY LEVEL offered by the FSTB will be given twelve (12) months to complete the certification process. The twelve (12) month time limit begins when the candidate takes their first examination towards certification at a given level. The FSTB will NOT accept any documentation requirements until the candidate has started their certification process. After the twelve (12) month time period has expired, candidates not completing the certification process will be REQUIRED to restart the certification process, including retaking the written and the practical skills examinations (regardless of the pass/fail status from the previous examination). Candidates must also re-submit all required documentation. All information and paperwork from expired certification processes will be removed from the FSTB database.

(c) The FSTB may deny or revoke a candidate's certification if the candidate submits false, copied, or plagiarized information to the FSTB or is found to be cheating during any phase of the certification process.

Section 2.5 Job Performance Requirements (JPRs)

(a) Written Examinations: Requisite knowledge objectives for each JPR consisting of demonstration of pertinent knowledge are examined through objectively graded written examination, referenced to the appropriate NFPA Standard. Written Examinations are graded according to a predetermined passing grade of 70% denoting the minimum percentage required to pass the exam, referenced to the appropriate NFPA Standard. Requisite knowledge for each JPR can be obtained through the completion of a formal educational course offering for a respective level of certification. This knowledge can also be obtained through a course of self-study, which would allow a candidate to "challenge" the certification process by taking the written examination.

(b) Practical Skills Examinations: Requisite skill objectives for each JPR consisting of manipulative skills are examined through a process of practical examination designed to meet the appropriate NFPA Standard. Practical Skills Examinations are graded on a pass/fail basis with a predetermined skills checklist for each skill to be evaluated, referenced to the appropriate NFPA Standard. Requisite skills for each JPR can be obtained through the completion of a formal educational course offering for a respective level of certification. These skills can also be obtained through a course of self-study, which would allow a candidate to "challenge" the certification process by taking the practical skill examination.

(c) Project-based Assessment Assignments: Requisite skill objectives for each JPR consisting of project-based skills are examined through a process of assigned projects designed to meet the appropriate NFPA Standard. Competency for these Project-based Assessment Assignments are evaluated and graded on a pass/fail basis based on predetermined skills checklists for each project component to be assessed, referenced to the appropriate NFPA Standard. The project associated with the Fire Investigator level has an 80% requirement to achieve a passing grade.

Section 2.6 Standard Edition Requirements

(a) The FSTB shall update correlation sheets, examination materials, and all other evaluative instruments for all levels of certification for IFSAC within three (3) years from the official release date of the newest edition. These updates will not affect the current certification status of any individual who has already received their certification.

(b) Procedure to update certification materials is as follows:

- Review NFPA standards for changes to professional qualifications.
- Upon determination that a standard has changed, obtain a copy of the updated standard.
- Process the purchase request for a new test bank.
- Obtain, review, and validate the new test bank.
- Update correlation sheets produced by IFSAC for levels of certification to be maintained.
- Update practical skill evaluation sheets.
- Retain one copy and destroy the remaining outdated examination materials.
- Publish new practical skill evaluation sheets and procedures guides.
- File a letter with IFSAC that the FSTB has updated to the new edition of the standard.

Section 2.7 Site Visits by Accrediting Agencies

(a) The FSTB will make all examination items and materials available, upon request, to IFSAC or a representative of IFSAC performing a site visit.

(b) The setting for review shall be secure so as to ensure the integrity and security of the examination materials. At no time will the copying of examination materials be permitted.

(c) Upon notification of an audit or site visit, the Certification and Accreditation Manager will review the request, and assure all examination items are available for inspection on the date and time requested and signed out by the representative.

(d) If a test bank is requested to be sent to IFSAC, a copy of the test bank will be shipped by traceable means (UPS, FedEx, or Certified Mail).

Section 2.8 Scheduled Examinations

- (a) The FSTB shall ensure the fire and emergency services personnel in the State of Iowa are provided with dates, times, and prerequisites for both the written and practical skills examinations for national certification. The FSTB has 19 regional examination sites have been designated throughout the state to provide multiple opportunities to the candidate to participate in the examination process.
- (b) Each of these exam sites was selected due to their capability to completely facilitate both the written and practical skills examinations allowing for adequate space for the candidates as well as having all the required equipment necessary to conduct examinations. Each is has been evaluated by a site visit and approved by the Certification and Accreditation Manager for the administration of both written and practical skills examinations. Each exam site is fully capable of facilitating all levels written examinations and all aspects of the practical skills examinations for each standard the FSTB is accredited to.
- (c) If an additional examination site is needed, due to specific reasons and the needs of the Iowa Fire Service; then that site will have a site visit conducted by the Certification and Accreditation Manager prior to the site hosting any examinations.
- (d) Examinations shall be administered throughout the calendar year, with dates, times, and locations, published on the Department of Public Safety (DPS) / FSTB web page at <https://dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal/fire-service-training>.
- (e) Periodic visits (both scheduled and unscheduled) are conducted by the Certification and Accreditation Manager throughout the year to re-evaluate the capability of each examination site and to ensure that each site has maintained their capability to host examinations.

SECTION 3

REGISTRATION FOR CERTIFICATION

Section 3.1 Registration for Certification

(a) Registrations for each level of certification may be obtained from the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program website at: <https://dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal/fire-service-training/certification-accreditation>

(b) Each candidate seeking certification within the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program must submit an examination registration form and the appropriate examination fee to secure entrance into the system. The registration form must be received by the FSTB office no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled exam date.

(c) Any registration submitted without appropriate payment will be returned to the candidate within three (3) business days. Payment is required at the time of registration unless paid by a fire department or college. For candidates paying by check or credit card, payment must be received by the FSTB in order to guarantee your reservation for the date and location you request for your certification examination.

(d) **NO "WALK-IN" OR LATE REGISTRATIONS WILL BE PERMITTED AT ANY EXAM SITE!**

Section 3.2 Fees for Certification

(a) In accordance with Iowa Administrative Code 661-251.203(100B): Certification registration fees are published for each level in the respective Procedures Guide for that level.

- The current certification registration fee is \$50.00. This initial fee allows the candidate one (1) attempt at the written examination and one (1) attempt at the practical skills examination (if required by that level).

(b) Payment for registration for certification exams can be made in the form of:

- Check or Money Order made out to the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau
- Bill to current Fire Department or College
- Credit Card (please call (515) 727-3425 with credit card information)

(c) Refunds of certification registration fees will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Request for refunds will be made to the Certification and Accreditation Manager.

(d) If a candidate fails either or both of the written and practical skills exams, the candidate must pay a \$50 fee for **each** additional exam retake.

Section 3.3 Confirmation of Registration

(a) Upon receipt of the registration and fee by the FSTB Certification and Accreditation Program staff, the registration will be processed (for each examination site) on a first-come / first serve basis.

(b) All candidates who submit a completed registration form will receive a confirmation email for the applicable examination site.

(c) In the event the candidate registered for an examination site that is full, an email or telephone call will be made to them, so that a new examination site can be chosen.

Section 3.4 Special Accommodations

(a) The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

(b) Special accommodations may be provided for examinations, based on individual review and proper documentation from a licensed professional. A request for accommodation is the responsibility of the candidate. It shall include a written letter from a licensed professional confirming the candidate has a need for a special accommodation and what type of accommodation is being requested (i.e., reader, extra time). If there are any questions, please contact the Certification and Accreditation Manager at the FSTB.

SECTION 4

RECIPROCITY

Section 4.1 Reciprocity Process

(a) Individuals who possess a certification from another state or nationally recognized certifying entity (IFSAC OR ProBoard®) may request reciprocity from the FSTB.

(b) The FSTB will only grant reciprocity for the levels of certification that the FSTB is accredited to by IFSAC.

- Individuals must complete the [Online-Request-For-Reciprocity-Form](#) for each certification level desired to be recognized in Iowa.
- Individuals must pay a Reciprocity Fee of \$50.00 per request up to \$200.00 maximum. Fees for additional requests above the \$200 cap will be waived.

(c) After verification of the validity of the IFSAC or ProBoard® seal that was issued, the certificate information will be entered into the Iowa certification database, and the FSTB will recognize the individual as having attained national certification at that level. The FSTB will not provide a new certification seal number or certificate as the individual has already attained national certification and recognition.

SECTION 5

GENERAL EXAMINATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Section 5.1 Examination Availability

(a) In accordance with Iowa Administrative Code 661-251.201(1): Any person seeking certification by the FSTB must meet the following requirements:

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Must be a current member of an Iowa fire, emergency, or rescue organization within the State of Iowa.

(b) Additionally, if a person is a student enrolled in a fire science degree program at an accredited Iowa college or a member of the Armed Forces on active duty.

(c) Out-of-State Firefighters are allowed to seek certification in Iowa, as long as they meet the required pre-requisites of the level for which they are pursuing and receive the approval of the Certification and Accreditation Manager.

(d) Certification examinations for both written and practical skills are offered in numerous locations in the State of Iowa, throughout the calendar year. They are conducted on a regional basis at many of the Iowa Community Colleges, Regional Fire Schools, select fire departments, and at the Annual State Fire School conducted by the FSTB.

Section 5.2 General Requirements

(a) The FSTB Certification and Accreditation Program shall ensure that all requisite knowledge and skill objectives are met by all candidates seeking certification, in accordance with the NFPA standard edition for which the agency is accredited.

Section 5.3 Re-Certification

(a) At such time re-certification is promulgated by the State of Iowa or any accrediting body; the FSTB shall enforce re-certification of levels for which certification has been issued. Certification is infinitely valid; therefore, no lapse of certification can occur. It shall be the responsibility of the candidate to ensure compliance with any re-certification requirements.

- The FSTB will notify candidate(s) in writing if re-certification is required.

(b) The FSTB currently requires re-certification for the Fire Investigator level. Requirements that must be met to secure re-certification at this level include:

- Completed request to re-certify form and payment of the \$25 re-certification fee.
- Provide documentation of 15 hours of untested or 30 hours of untested training. Training can be obtained through conference or seminar/course attendance or as an instructor of these events.
- Provide documentation showing at least ten fire investigations within the past three years.
- Submit a letter from the requestor's immediate supervisor attesting that the requestor's primary role is fire investigation.

Section 5.4 Cell Phone Policy

(a) At no time will cell phones or other electronic devices (smart watches, etc.) be allowed during a written or practical skills examination. Any candidate caught using a cell phone or other electronic device during the examination will be immediately dismissed from the examination site at the discretion of the proctor / evaluator.

Section 5.5 Facial Hair Policy

(a) Any candidate with a beard or facial hair in the area of the SCBA facepiece seal (including full-face beards, mutton-chops, goatees, etc.) will NOT be allowed to participate in the practical skills examination for any certification level. This policy will be enforced regardless of the skills being tested at any site. **No exceptions to this policy will be granted.** This is in compliance with 29 CFR 1910.134 Respiratory Protection Standard as mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA).

Section 5.6 Cheating / Academic Honesty

(a) The National Certification awarded by IFSAC is a verification of the candidate's competence and professional dedication. The FSTB values integrity and honesty during the examination process. Any candidate who is caught cheating on any element of the examination process will:

- Forfeit all fees.
- Be immediately removed from the current certification process, and any other certification levels in which they have active files.
- Not be allowed to apply for any certification for one year.

(b) It is impossible to list all of the actions that might be considered cheating or unethical conduct without missing some of them. Common actions are talking with other candidates during a written or practical skills examination for the purpose of soliciting or giving or comparing answers, copying or modifying another candidate's project work, then submitting it as your own. **No exceptions to this rule will be granted.**

(c) All examinations must be completed in the presence of an approved Proctor / Evaluator without the assistance of unauthorized books, notes, devices, or outside help unless specified otherwise in the examination directions. Candidates who give information to a dishonest candidate will be considered just as culpable as the candidate being assisted.

(d) Refer to Section 9.2(a) for specific information pertaining to Project assignments.

Section 5.7 Safety Standards

(a) The FSTB shall administer all certification examinations in accordance with the health and safety standards promulgated by the NFPA. Specifically, compliance with NFPA 1402, 1403, and NFPA 1500 standards shall be met or exceeded.

The facilities, grounds, and equipment shall be inspected prior to all examination sessions by the Certification and Accreditation Program Manager.

- All live-fire skills assessments shall be evaluated by FSTB Training Specialists, and conducted in accordance with NFPA 1402 and 1403.
- The ICS system of Chain of Command shall be utilized.
- A rehabilitation area shall be established and identified to all candidates prior to the commencement of a practical skills examination. The area shall be in a location that affords the security of the skill stations being evaluated and the safety of the candidates in rehab.
- Emergency Medical Services shall be provided by the 9-1-1 system.

SECTION 6

REMOTE EXAMINATION SITES

Section 6.1 Policy and Responsibility

(a) The variability and logistical capabilities required of host examination sites have increased. The FSTB attempts to maintain some specialized equipment that is needed during the examination process. However, the nature of the JPRs and NFPA standards prevent the FSTB from having all equipment necessary to conduct an examination remotely, therefore relying on the host department to supply some of the needed equipment to ensure candidate safety during the examination process, which includes:

- Meet all NFPA Safety Standards (no exceptions).
- Fire Department Pumper (equipped per NFPA 1901) with pumper operators as needed, to supply water at required GPMs for skill stations selected.
- Equipment and location space required to conduct any practical skill station of the standard being evaluated.
- Space to conduct live burns via a Burn Trailer or LPG Trailer if part of the examination.
- Space, power extrication tools, and the ability to acquire vehicles to be used in an auto extrication examination skill station.
- Appropriate buildings for ladder operations to be conducted (to a pitched roof, an upper floor window, or flat roof).
- Classroom with tables and chairs suitable to conduct a written examination or presentation, per FSTB requirements.

Section 6.2 Facilities and Equipment

(a) Facilities and equipment at the FSTB, as well as any remote examination site used for certification must be adequate for the full examination and evaluation of the performance objectives required, and to ensure examination security is maintained during the administration of the written examination.

- The building and classroom features will be maintained to ensure a comfortable testing environment.
- All practical skill scenario props and components shall be maintained to ensure fair and accurate testing and to provide for the safety and well-being of the candidates.

- Scheduling shall ensure proper and adequate spacing, equivalent to an open / empty chair space or one foot, for all certification examination programs. In the event the registered number of candidates exceeds a safe working level, candidates shall be reduced on a first come, first serve basis. All efforts will be made to ensure candidates are afforded the opportunity to take examinations without unreasonable delay.

(b) The FSTB shall provide adequate space for the written and manipulative skills examinations. The current main building with one classroom and lab and the facility grounds shall be maintained to ensure compliance.

(c) Fire Departments and/or Community Colleges that are designated as remote examination sites for the FSTB shall receive an equipment list of all the required materials needed to conduct any of the psychomotor practical skills that could be selected for a specific exam site. The FSTB shall ensure all equipment, apparatus, and personal protective equipment meets or exceeds compliance with the respective NFPA standard prior to the examination. Any non-conforming equipment shall be removed from service and replaced.

SECTION 7

WRITTEN EXAMINATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Section 7.1 Written Examination Development

(a) The examination test banks described in Section 13 are loaded into the NetExam platform and cognitive/written exam questions are randomly selected from the validated bank of questions to generate an examination which is reviewed and approved by the Central Staff.

(b) The lowest minimum passing score on an FSTB cognitive/written examination is 70%. This was determined to be our passing score to stay consistent with our state's educational recognized standard for passing of standardized examinations.

(c) FSTB Central Staff and SME's who are certified, at least to each of the respective levels of certification, review, develop, and implement the cognitive questions for each JPR or group of JPRs that will be utilized in examinations. These questions are validated and piloted by designated Training Specialists also certified, at least to the same level of certification being examined, for content and correlation to the applicable standard.

Section 7.2 Written Examination Instructions to the Proctor

(a) An examination kit will be mailed to the assigned proctor with the following: a signature roster of the registered candidates for each exam level, examination booklets, answer sheets, pencils and/or computer tablets.

(b) Plan to arrive at the examination site at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time for the examination.

- Greet exam site host point of contact:
 - Check room to be used for exam for adequate seating and spacing.
 - Coordinate adjustments as needed with exam site host.
 - Ask for the location of the restrooms.
 - If tablets are being utilized for the exam, verify that they are connected to the facilities Wi-Fi signal. (Refer to the Tablet Operation handout).

- Unpack exam kit:
 - Kit should include the following materials: Kit Checklist; Signature Roster(s); Site Record; Paper Examinations (if used); Answer (bubble) Sheets (if used); Pencils; Tablets (if used).
 - Set up the Proctor table from where the examination will be supervised.

- Check-in candidates:
 - Have each candidate come to the Proctor table and verify their identity with a photo ID (Driver's license, FD ID card).
 - Have candidate sign the exam roster(s) for each exam they're taking.
 - Give them their exam booklet(s), answer sheet(s), and pencils or a Tablet.
 - Instruct them NOT to open the exam booklet(s) or fill out the answer sheet(s) until told to do so.

Inform candidates to turn their cellphones to VIBRATE/SILENT or OFF and place them on the table FACE DOWN. If they have any other SMART devices (watches, etc.) they are to remove them and place them next to their phones. If a candidate is expecting an emergent call, they are to inform the proctor and when the call is received a proctor will escort them to an area where they can take the call.

(c) Each candidate shall complete an answer sheet and sign the examination roster for each certification examination level being taken at the site.

(d) Candidates are NOT to make any marks in the examination booklet; they are to indicate their choice on the answer sheet provided.

(e) ANY CANDIDATE OBSERVED TALKING TO ANOTHER CANDIDATE OR COPYING FROM ANOTHER CANDIDATE'S EXAM WILL BE IN VIOLATION OF THE CHEATING / HONESTY POLICY, THEREBY EXCUSED FROM THE EXAMINATION, AND GIVEN A SCORE OF ZERO (0).

Section 7.3 Written Examination Disciplines and Examination Questions

(a) The FSTB Certification and Accreditation Program shall maintain a minimum of two versions for every discipline that correlates to a cognitive examination. Each examination test bank of questions has been validated by a group of Subject Matter Experts (SME) in that respective field of instruction.

- The following chart lists the NFPA standard the examination is based on, level of the examination, the number of questions on the examination, and the maximum time limit allowed to complete the examination.

NFPA STD.	DISCIPLINE	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	TIME LIMIT
1072	HAZMAT AWARENESS	25	30 MINUTES
1072	HAZMAT OPERATIONS	50	60 MINUTES
1072	HAZMAT AW/OPS COMBINED	75	90 MINUTES
1001	FIREFIGHTER I	100	120 MINUTES
1001	FIREFIGHTER II	100	120 MINUTES
1002	DRIVER / OPERATOR - PUMPER	100	120 MINUTES
1002	DRIVER / OPERATOR - AERIAL	75	90 MINUTES
1041	FIRE INSTRUCTOR I	100	120 MINUTES
1041	FIRE INSTRUCTOR II	75	90 MINUTES
1021	FIRE OFFICER I	100	120 MINUTES
1021	FIRE OFFICER II	75	90 MINUTES
1031	FIRE INSPECTOR I	100	120 MINUTES
1033 / 921	FIRE INVESTIGATOR	100	120 MINUTES

Section 7.4 Proctor Instructions to Candidates for Manual Written Examinations (bubble-sheet)

(a) The Emergency Response Guide (ERG) is the only allowed additional reference source for the HazMat examinations ONLY. The ERG shall be free from any marks or notes and will be examined by the Proctor to verify this prior to the start of the examination. If an ERG is found to have extra markings or notes, the Proctor will confiscate the book during the examination and return it to the candidate upon their completion of the examination.

(b) The Proctor will instruct candidates as to what information must be clearly printed on the answer sheets provided. This information shall include:

- Candidate's full name
- Examination Production Date (Month / Year)
- Examination Version (A, B, or C)
- Candidate's last four digits of their social security number
- Examination Site Code

(c) The Proctor will then give the following instructions:

- The examination answer sheets will be computer scanned, and any question with more than one answer or left blank will be counted as incorrect.
- To change an answer, erase completely and carefully, as this may interfere with the computer-scanned answer sheet.
- The number of questions and the maximum time allowed on each examination.

- If the candidate has a question regarding a specific examination question, the candidate will raise their hand and wait for the Proctor to come to them. The Proctor will explain the question to the best of their knowledge without giving additional information leading to an answer.
- The candidates will receive their grade notifications within thirty (30) days if taking a manual examination.
- Passing grades are any score of 70% or higher.
- Once the instructions are given, the Proctor will then ask, “Are there are any questions?”
- The Proctor will then explain that no talking is allowed during the examination, and a candidate shall raise their hand if they need to use the restroom or if they have a question about the examination.
- The Proctor will then hand out the examination booklets.

Section 7.5 Proctor Instructions to Candidates for Computer-based Written Examinations (tablets)

(a) The Emergency Response Guide (ERG) is the only allowed additional reference source for the HazMat examinations ONLY. The ERG shall be free from any marks or notes and will be examined by the Proctor to verify this prior to the start of the examination. If an ERG is found to have extra markings or notes, the Proctor will confiscate the book during the examination and return it to the candidate upon their completion of the examination.

(b) The Proctor will instruct candidates on how to log onto the computer tablets by following the Tablet Operation handout included in the examination kit. This information shall include:

- The Proctor hands out the computer tablets.
- User Name and Password information to log in.
- The number of questions and the maximum time allowed on each examination.
- If the candidate has a question regarding a specific examination question, the candidate will raise their hand and wait for the Proctor to come to them. The Proctor will explain the question to the best of their knowledge without giving additional information leading to an answer.
- The candidates will receive their grade notifications immediately upon completion of the examination.
- Passing grades must have a minimum of 70%.
- Once the instructions are given, the Proctor will then ask, “Are there are any questions?”
- The Proctor goes around to each candidate and enters the Proctor Key to start the examination.

Section 7.6 Written Examination Process

(a) During the examination, the Proctor shall remain in the room with the candidates at all times, thus ensuring the candidates are not left unsupervised.

(b) Candidates may be excused by the Proctor to use the restroom only, as requested, but may not leave the building. Answer sheets, test booklets, and computer tablets must be turned face down at this time.

(c) At each thirty (30) minute interval, the Proctor will state how many minutes remain on the examination for candidates taking bubble sheet examinations.

(d) If time runs out for an examination and the Proctor states that the examination time has expired, candidates are to stop and put their pencils down. Proceed to step (e).

(e) As the candidates complete their examination, they will be allowed to bring their examination booklets, answer sheets, and pencils or computer tablets to the Proctor. At this point, the Proctor will check the booklet for any marks, and that all required information is clearly and correctly marked on the answer sheet. If incomplete, the Proctor will have the candidate correct the answer sheet accordingly. If the candidate used a computer tablet, the Proctor will ensure that the candidate is logged off and shut down the tablet.

(f) At this point, the candidates who have completed their examination must leave the examination area.

(g) At the conclusion of the examination, the proctor will ensure that all examination materials have been accounted for and collected. The proctor will prepare the exam kit for return mailing back to the FSTB and mail out the kit at their soonest availability.

Section 7.7 Lead Proctor Responsibilities

(a) When an examination site has a large number of candidates and / or multiple Proctors are needed; a Lead Proctor will be designated to oversee the examination site and advise other proctors. The Lead Proctor shall also be responsible for ensuring the following:

- A quiet environment for candidates to take the examination.
- All materials are turned in at the end of the examination.
- The examination booklet is free from marks.
- The candidate's answer sheet is marked completely, clearly, and correctly.

(b) At the completion of the written examination, the Lead Proctor shall:

- Verify all candidates have turned in all examination booklets, answer sheets, additional materials, and computer tablets.
- Organize the examination booklets in order (A, B, C) and organize the answer sheets in alphabetical order and separated by certification level.
- Seal the testing roster, testing booklets, answer sheets, additional materials, and computer tablets in the kit provided, in order to return it to the FSTB.
- Maintain security of the completed written examination kit.

Section 7.8 Written Examination Item Challenges

(a) A candidate, during the course of a written examination, can challenge an exam item by notifying the proctor. The proctor will document the following information:

- Candidate's name
- Examination site and date
- Examination level, version, and date of printing
- Question number

(b) This information will be sent back to the FSTB in the Examination Kit and the Certification and Accreditation Manager will review the information and render a decision, with the concurrence of the Bureau Chief, and notify the candidate of the decision.

Section 7.9 Re-Taking a Written Examination

(a) A candidate who is unsuccessful at passing the written examination with a minimum score of 70% will be required to register for another written examination site to re-take the examination. Candidates are allowed to take the written examination as many times as needed to achieve a passing score during their 1-year time period, however, they are limited to taking the examination only once per day.

(b) Candidates are permitted to review their examination by contacting the Certification and Accreditation Manager to make an appointment at the FSTB only, under direct supervision. At no time will copies or photos be allowed.

SECTION 8

PRACTICAL SKILLS EXAMINATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Section 8.1 Practical Skills Examination Instructions to the Evaluator

(a) An examination kit will be mailed to the assigned Lead Evaluator with the following: a signature roster of the registered candidates for each exam level, Evaluator Statement of Purpose form, Candidates PSE advisory notice and checklists, and the applicable skill sheets for each selected skill set.

(b) ALL evaluators should plan to arrive at the examination site at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled start time for the PSE. The Lead Evaluator and the exam site host point of contact will be sent an email identifying the tools and equipment required to conduct the skills evaluations for this exam site at least one week prior to the day of the exam.

- Greet exam site host point of contact:
 - Check room to be used for exam for adequate seating and spacing.
 - Coordinate adjustments as needed with exam site host.
 - Verify required tools and equipment per email sent to the Lead Evaluator and exam site host.
 - Ask for the location of the restrooms.
 - Confirm the location of the staging area for candidates during the PSE.

- Greet other evaluators as they arrive.
- Unpack exam kit:
 - Kit should include the following materials: Kit Checklist; Signature Roster(s); Site Record; Evaluator Statement of Purpose Form; Candidate PSE Documentation and Advisory Forms; PSE Skill Checklists (2 sets per each selected skill); Clipboards (1 for each evaluator); Pencils.
 - Set up the Lead Evaluator table from where candidates will check-in and exam site paperwork will be managed.
 - Have all evaluators read and sign the Evaluator Statement of Purpose form.
 - Look over and discuss the selected skills with all evaluators to ensure an understanding of the skills and evaluation expectations.
 - Distribute the skills amongst the evaluators and allow for the evaluators to set-up their respective skill station.

- Check-in candidates:
 - Verify each candidate's identity with a photo ID (Driver's license, FD ID card).
 - Have candidate sign the exam roster(s) for each PSE level they're taking.
 - Hand out the Candidate Statement of Purpose forms, pencils and PSE Checklist for each exam level to the candidates.
 - Have the candidates read and sign the Candidate Statement of Purpose form and collect the signed copies.

Inform candidates to either leave their cellphones in this room or in their vehicles. If they have any other SMART devices (watches, etc.) they are to remove them and leave them with their phones. Candidates will NOT have access to their phones during the PSE. If a candidate is expecting an emergent call, they are to inform the Lead Evaluator and when the call is received an evaluator will escort them to an area where they can take the call.

- Starting the exam(s):
 - Introduce yourself and have all other evaluators introduce themselves to the candidates.
 - Explain the PSE process to the candidates (staging area, location of skill stations, retakes of a failed skill station, failure of the entire PSE).
 - Before starting the PSE, ask if there are any questions.
 - If a candidate needs to use the restroom during the PSE, inform the Lead Evaluator or another evaluator.
- Packing the kit for return to the FSTB:
 - When all candidates have completed their skill stations and the PSE is over, ensure **ALL** paperwork has been collected.
 - Organize the Candidate Advisory and Candidate PSE Documentation forms alphabetically.
 - The Lead Evaluator will complete the Examination Site Record with each organization represented and the number of candidates from each organization. TOTAL the number of candidates after the last entry.
 - Place ALL exam materials in the pre-addressed return envelope and seal the envelope.
 - Mail the envelope as soon as available and notify the FSTB Certification Staff via email that the exam kit has been return mailed.

(c) Candidates **WILL NOT** be allowed admittance to the certification examination after it has begun.

(d) Candidates must adhere to the following protocols:

- No talking to another student at any time.
- No smoking or vaping is allowed during the examination.
- Only utilize approved materials during the examination (subject to verification).

(e) Evaluators will greet each candidate as they approach the skill station.

(f) The evaluator will read the “Evaluator’s Instructions to the Candidate,” as listed on the skill sheet. The evaluator will ask if the candidate has any questions regarding the instructions.

(g) Upon completion of the skill station, the candidate will be instructed to return to the staging area to await the next available skill station.

Section 8.2 Practical Skill Development

(a) The established objectives for each course of instruction are referenced to the corresponding national standard (NFPA JPRs). For JPR’s identified as psychomotor evaluative, practical skill evaluation checklists (skill sheets) are developed. These skill sheets are reviewed and validated by a panel of SME’s to ensure validity on content before utilization during a practical skills examination. This is done to ensure that all applicable JPRs are satisfied.

(b) FSTB Central Staff and SME’s who are certified, at least to each of the respective levels of certification, review, develop, and implement the psychomotor skills for each JPR or group of JPRs that will be utilized in practical skill evaluations. These psychomotor skills are validated and piloted by designated Training Specialists also certified, at least to the same level of certification being evaluated, for practicality and correlation to the applicable standard.

Section 8.3 Variable Number of Practical Skills Evaluated

(a) The exact number of skills evaluated for each NFPA Standard may vary by certification level. The number of skills to be evaluated are listed in the appropriate Certification Procedures Guide. Due to a large number of skills required by some NFPA Standards, all skills of a large standard may not be tested at each examination site. Candidate should be prepared to test on **any skill** outlined in the standard for which they seek certification. The intent of this process is to ensure that candidates are prepared to test on all skills required by an NFPA Standard.

(b) Skills are randomly selected by the FSTB Certification & Accreditation Manager for each level of certification being evaluated at each specific exam site.

Section 8.4 Prior Knowledge of Practical Skills to be Evaluated

(a) The practical skills to be administered at an examination site will not be revealed to the candidates or the exam evaluator prior to the examination. This policy is to prevent prior knowledge of the exam material, and to ensure examination security and integrity.

Section 8.5 Practical Skills Pass / Fail Criteria

(a) Practical skill examinations are graded on a 100% pass / fail basis. Candidates must successfully complete (pass) all components of each skill sheet to receive a passing grade. Furthermore, candidates must successfully complete (pass) all skill stations at an examination site to receive a passing grade for each level being evaluated.

(b) Each candidate is allowed two (2) attempts at each skill station. Candidates will be informed by the evaluator assigned to the skill station if they pass or fail an attempt at a skill station. Candidates failing their first attempt at a skill station will be allowed a second attempt when another evaluator is available.

(c) A different skills evaluator will be assigned to assess the candidate's second attempt at a skill station. At the completion of the second attempt, the candidate will be informed if they pass or fail.

Section 8.6 Practical Examination Skill Review and Analysis

(a) Following the completion of a practical skills examination, results are immediately reviewed by on-site evaluators to ensure consistency in the evaluation process. A secondary review is performed by the Certification and Accreditation Manager for any trends in failed skills or components of a skill. Such trends then identify a common concern in the application of the skill, which then results in review and amending instructional skill performance and/or practical skill evaluation checklist (skill sheets).

(b) Whenever there is an update to either the applicable NFPA Standard or the curriculum for a specific level, the PSE skill sheets are reviewed and revised, if needed, for content and correlation to the updated material. This is done to ensure the validity and reliability of each skill sheet.

(c) To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the evaluation of practical skills, the evaluator chosen for a specific skill set will remain the same throughout an examination. The evaluator will be certified to the level for which a specific skill is being asked to be demonstrated. Each evaluator will utilize the FSTB practical skills evaluation sheet (skill sheet) to objectively assess the candidate's performance of the skill.

If an additional skill station is required for one that is already established to process candidates more expeditiously, a second copy of the original skill evaluation sheet will be utilized by the evaluator assigned to the additional skill station. The skills evaluation sheet is the tool utilized to ensure accuracy and consistency between evaluators.

Section 8.7 Practical Examination Assessment Challenges

(a) A candidate, during the course of a practical skills examination, can challenge an assessment by notifying the Lead Evaluator. The Lead Evaluator will document the following information:

- Candidate's name
- Examination site and date
- Examination level
- Practical Skill and components being challenged and details of the challenge

(b) This information will be sent back to the FSTB in the Examination Kit and the Certification and Accreditation Manager will review the information, the skill sheet in question and render a decision, with the concurrence of the Bureau Chief, and notify the candidate of the decision.

Section 8.8 Re-Taking a Practical Skills Examination

(a) A candidate who is unsuccessful at passing the practical skills examination with an overall "Pass" will be required to register for another practical skills examination site to re-take the examination. Candidates are allowed to take the practical skills examination as many times as needed to achieve a passing score during their 1-year time period, however, they are limited to taking the examination only once per day.

SECTION 9

PROJECT POLICY & PROCEDURE

Section 9.1 Assignment of Projects and Project Development

(a) The assignment of a project methodology to evaluate the JPRs is based on the complexity of the standard. The established objectives for each course of instruction are referenced to the corresponding national standard (NFPA JPRs). Project assignments are then developed to satisfy these identified JPR's. These projects are reviewed and evaluated by a panel of SME's to ensure validity of content and correlation to the JPR objectives before being incorporated as a component of the certification process for a given level of certification. This is done to ensure that all applicable JPRs are satisfied.

(b) FSTB Central Staff and SME's who are certified, at least to each of the respective levels of certification, develop the Project components for each JPR or group of JPRs that will be evaluated. These projects are validated and piloted by designated Training Specialists also certified, at least to the level of certification being evaluated, for content and correlation to the applicable standard.

Section 9.2 Project Completion Time Frame

(a) Project assignments are designed to be completed individually, outside from the classroom environment and must be submitted within the one-year timeframe that starts when the candidate takes the written examination for the first time for a given level of certification. Candidates are permitted to seek assistance and guidance during the completion of their project, but the work must be their own. Project assignment submissions are kept on record, so that if a suspected case of plagiarism arises, the assignments in question can be compared to either confirm or rule out the accusation.

Section 9.3 Project Pass / Fail Criteria and Evaluation / Resubmission

(a) When a candidate submits their project assignment for evaluation, each component of the project is evaluated and graded by the FSTB Certification and Accreditation Manager and designated Training Specialists who are certified, at least to the same level of certification, against a skill sheet matrix developed directly from the individual JPRs to ensure the candidate has achieved the required objectives. Projects submitted for the Fire Investigator level are evaluated and graded by the Bureau Chief and three State Fire Marshal Special Agents, all of whom are certified at the State and/or by the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) or the National Association of Fire Investigators (NAFI).

(b) Projects are graded on a 100% pass / fail basis. Candidates receive a “Pass” grade on each component of the project that meets or achieves the objectives required of a specific JPR or group of JPRs. Components that do not meet or achieve the objectives required of a specific JPR or group of JPRs receive a “Fail” grade. The project for the Fire Investigator level has an 80% grade requirement to achieve a passing score.

(c) Candidates failing a component of or the entire project will be advised of the discrepancies and required to resubmit the project or failed components for re-evaluation. Candidates may resubmit project corrections and/or amendments as many times as needed to achieve an overall passing score during their 1-year time period.

(d) Whenever there is an update to either the applicable NFPA Standard or the curriculum for a specific level, all project components are reviewed and revised, if needed, for content and correlation to the updated material. This is done to ensure the validity and reliability of each project assignment and to ensure the relationship coincides with the latest edition of the training curriculum.

(e) If there are differences in the grading outcome of a project, the Bureau Chief is asked to review, evaluate, and grade the project to reach a consensus and to assess the accuracy and consistency between the evaluators of the project. The evaluators of such projects will then meet with the Bureau Chief to discuss differences in the outcomes and validate the criteria applied. In these instances, final decision on project acceptance and grading will be made by the Bureau Chief.

SECTION 10

NOTIFICATION OF EXAMINATION RESULTS

Section 10.1 Processing Examination Results

(a) After the candidate has completed the written and / or practical skills examination process, the FSTB will begin the process of scoring the exam results. As soon as grading and all documentation are complete, the results will be sent to the candidate utilizing the United States Postal Service.

Section 10.2 Confidentiality of Examination Results

(a) To ensure confidentiality, certification examination scores will not be released on the telephone, facsimile machine, email, or any other electronic means. Examination scores will only be released to the candidate. Examination results should be received by the candidate within 30 working days from the time of the examination.

(b) Any candidate who does not receive their results after the 30 working day period should contact the Certification and Accreditation Manager.

Section 10.3 Completion of the Certification Process

(a) After candidates have successfully completed all requirements of the certification process, the FSTB will issue the national certification.

(b) The candidate's name and corresponding certification information will be forwarded to the appropriate accrediting entity at required intervals.

SECTION 11

CERTIFICATION DENIAL, REVOCATION, AND APPEALS

PROCESS

Section 11.1 Policy

(a) All candidates shall have the ability to appeal (challenge) any certification decision, including examination scores, made by the FSTB. All appeals must be in written or email format and directed to the Certification and Accreditation Manager within 30 days. The letter or email shall include the date(s), time(s), certification level, examination site (if applicable) and reason for the appeal. A decision shall be based upon the facts of the case, and compliance with the JPRs of the respective certification level.

(b) All decisions shall be written and forwarded to the candidate within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal. A copy shall be maintained at the FSTB. All means, including peer review of the complaint, shall be enacted for a fair resolution.

Section 11.2 Procedure

(a) The following is the FSTB procedure once a written or email appeal has been received:

- Written or email appeal received
- Investigation of facts
- Referral to FSTB Bureau Chief
- Decision Rendered
- Written notification to candidate

Section 11.3 Denial of Certification

(a) Per Iowa Administrative Code r. 661-251.204, certification shall be denied to any applicant who fails to meet all of the requirements for the type of certification, who knowingly submits false information to the Fire Service Training Bureau, or who engages in fraudulent activity during the certification process.

Section 11.4 Revocation

(a) Per Iowa Administrative Code r. 661-251.204, The Fire Service Training Bureau may revoke the certification of any individual who is found to have knowingly provided false information to the Fire Service Training Bureau during the certification process or to have engaged in fraudulent activity during the certification process.

Section 11.5 Appeals

(a) Per Iowa Administrative Code r. 661-251.204, any person who is denied certification or whose certification is revoked may appeal the denial or revocation. An appeal of a denial or revocation of certification shall be made to the Commissioner of Public Safety within 30 days of the issuance of the denial or revocation using the contested case procedures specified in rules 661-10.301 (17A) through 661-10.332 (17A).

SECTION 12

PROCTORS AND EVALUATORS

Section 12.1 Selection Criteria Policy

(a) A cadre of Proctors and Evaluators will be formed from the Iowa FSTB Training Specialist list after attending the respective training and orientation program. A Training Specialist is a part-time, fully vetted DPS employee that has been hired by the Bureau Chief and is certified, at a minimum, to the Fire & Emergency Services Instructor I level. These employees must complete a formal application, provide references to their instruction experience, and have the necessary education and experience as described in the respective State of Iowa job classification. New hires into this classification are selected following recommendations made by an interview panel. Those Training Specialists designated as evaluators will be certified to the same or higher level as the practical skills examination they are assigned to evaluate.

(b) Any Proctor or Evaluator who fails to abide by the guidelines and conditions of an examination, whether written or practical skills, shall be removed from the list.

(c) Lead Proctors and Evaluators shall be selected for examination sites by the Certification and Accreditation Manager, on the basis of availability, expertise, and geographical area.

(d) A Lead Proctor or Evaluator shall:

- Have completed a proctor/evaluator orientation.
- Possess superior skills and have mastered the subject matter of the course to be proctored or evaluated.
- Possess supervisory skills necessary for proper supervision of assisting other proctors, evaluators, and students.
- Have the capacity to objectively evaluate the performance of students, as well as the performance of assisting proctors and evaluators.
- Ensure all NFPA safety and health standards are followed, including proper personal protective equipment, apparatus, and other testing materials.
- Be committed to the program, assignments, and practices of the FSTB.
- Review all components of a practical skills examination, and updates to JPRs.

(e) A Lead Proctor or Evaluator shall NOT:

- Proctor a written examination after instructing the same candidates.
- Evaluate a practical skills examination after instructing the same candidates.
- Be on a department with any candidate who is taking any component of the certification exam process.

Section 12.2 Code of Conduct

(a) Proctors and Evaluators are required to adhere to the following conduct standards:

- Follow all DPS, FSTB, and State of Iowa Employee policies and procedures for Code of Conduct.
- Obligated to provide consistent, quality examinations to each candidate.
- Administer examinations that are fair and impartial.
- Refrain from making remarks or telling stories / jokes that may be considered offensive to others.
- Be professional regarding socializing with candidates, including limiting time spent with candidates outside of an examination situation.
- Be professional in appearance, and maintain NFPA standards during any component of the examination process.
- Adhere to all safety rules and regulations during the examination process.
- Submit comments or complaints to the FSTB only, and refrain from discussions with other groups or individuals.
- Respect the rules as set for by the FSTB, Certification and Accreditation Manager, NFPA, IFSAC, and Pro-Board®.
- Not to reproduce or release any examination materials or divulge the contents of the test bank to anyone.

(b) Proctors and Evaluators who have a conflict of interest, cannot perform their job duties, or are unable to assist with an examination site, shall notify the Certification and Accreditation Manager as soon as possible.

(c) Proctors and Evaluators will be terminated upon violations that occur during an examination, after being thoroughly reviewed by the FSTB Bureau Chief or for failure to comply with DPS/FSTB policies and procedures, and/or rules and regulations following an investigation. Each employee will be afforded due process.

Section 12.3 Training and Corrective Actions

(a) The FSTB requires all Training Specialists who are seeking status as Proctors or Evaluators, to complete a training and orientation workshop and an annual refresher training to review policies, procedures, changes/updates to standards, administrative reviews, skills audit information, and general updates. Some of this information includes, but is not limited to:

- Examination time limits.
- Form completion and identification.
- Equipment lists and skill station set up.
- Proper handling of exam interruptions.
- Accommodation assistance procedures.
- General Life and Safety Instructions.
- FSTB forms of payment.
- Certification Policies and Procedures.
- Rules and Regulations.
- Computer tablet operation

(b) All Training Specialists designated as first-time Proctors or Evaluators are required to work (shadow) with an experienced proctor or evaluator prior to being approved as a stand-alone proctor or evaluator.

(c) The Certification and Accreditation Manager will periodically select examination sites to visit for the purpose of evaluation of Proctors and Evaluators during their performance of the written and practical skills exams.

SECTION 13

CERTIFICATION TEST BANKS

Section 13.1 Maintenance

(a) The Fire Service Training Bureau shall maintain test banks for all levels that the agency is accredited to. Test banks shall be updated when a new bank is released by the publisher along with the associated updated text book. Correlation sheets will be updated referencing the new test bank, concurrently with a Local Validation performed by FSTB Subject Matter Experts (SME) prior to inclusion into the examination process.

*Currently the FSTB utilizes textbooks and associated test banks provided from IFSTA and Jones & Bartlett.

(b) The FSTB shall maintain a minimum of twice as many test bank questions as are established on each level's written examination in compliance with IFSAC requirements.

(c) Each question within all test banks shall identify the appropriate NFPA Standard and edition being tested, which shall be the same standard and edition as the accredited level. Each question shall also be referenced to the standard being measured and to the appropriate reference source.

Section 13.2 Generation and Validation

(a) FSTB Central Staff identifies the number of questions per examination then the Certification and Accreditation Manager generates the examination using the NetExam computer-based platform. Then FSTB Central Staff review the distribution of questions across the applicable NFPA Standard and make adjustments, as needed.

(b) The Certification and Accreditation Manager reviews the NFPA Standards and objectives and based on the key words in the JPR, determines which methodology (cognitive, psychomotor, or product/project) is best to use.

(c) The FSTB administers a combined examination for the Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations levels. The first 25 questions are Awareness and the remaining 50 are Operations and Mission-Specific Competencies. Although combined, these 2 sections are graded as separate exams and 2 scores are provided to the candidate.

(d) Hard copy written examinations will also have multiple versions (A, B, C) to ensure fairness and reliability. This ensures there are different variations for each discipline. Computer-based examinations randomly select questions based on a pre-programmed matrix loaded into the platform.

(e) Test banks are provided to the FSTB directly from the publisher of the textbooks utilized for the instructional delivery of training courses. These test banks are reviewed and validated locally by a combination of FSTB Central Staff and SME's. During this process, every reference is checked against the NFPA Standard and JPR, and then verified in the textbook for content.

(f) When necessary, the FSTB will develop "in-house" questions to augment a publisher's test bank. FSTB Central Staff generates these questions and they are reviewed and validated by a panel of SME's to ensure validity on content before inclusion into the test bank.

Section 13.3 Security

(a) Security measures have been established at all phases of the examination process to ensure every candidate has an equitable chance for successful completion of the certification process.

(b) Test bank validation, including the development of additional questions, is conducted solely at the FSTB under the supervision of the Certification and Accreditation Manager and/or the Bureau Chief. The test banks are maintained electronically and all hard copy materials utilized during the validation process are stored in locked cabinets in the Certification Records Office. All other examination materials (hard copy examination booklets, answer keys, etc.) for each level of certification are also stored in this office. Only the Bureau Chief and Certification staff have keyed access to this office.

(c) All examination materials are inventoried by the Certification staff in the Certification Record Room and numbers of examinations sent are annotated in the exam kit. Exam kits are mailed to assigned proctors and evaluators utilizing UPS, which provides a tracking number to verify the shipment and delivery receipt. The proctor or evaluator verifies the inventory just before the start of the exam and then submits an inventory prior to returning the exam kit to the FSTB. The return mailing back to the FSTB is through USPS, which also provides a tracking number. Upon receipt at the FSTB, a final inventory of all exam materials is conducted by Certification staff in the Certification Records Room to verify all materials are accounted for. Any inventories discrepancies are immediately brought to the attention of the Certification and Accreditation Manager.

(d) All outdated hard copy examination materials are destroyed by a contracted shredding service on the FSTB premises.

Section 13.4 Examination Question Review and Analysis

(a) Examination question statistics data is updated by the NetExam platform after each administration of an exam. Item Statistics Reports are generated and reviewed regularly. The cumulative statistical data for the test bank is reviewed using the Learning Objective Analysis Report. These two reports are evaluated by the FSTB Central Staff to determine question reliability prior to any update work on a test bank.

(b) Utilizing the information provided by the Item Statistics Report, questions with a p value which falls below 25% or above 75% correct responses are evaluated by the FSTB Central Staff. If needed, SME's are involved and questions falling outside of these criteria are reviewed and compared to the lesson plan, textbook, and/or other course materials. These questions may be modified or removed from the test bank.

Section 13.5 Administration to On-Shift Candidates

(a) If candidates are on-shift during an examination, the following procedures must be followed:

- Only required personnel may leave the examination site to respond to an emergency call.
- Lead Proctor or Evaluator will collect exam booklets, answer sheets, or computer tablets of those candidates responding.
- Time will be noted upon leaving and returning of the candidate to adjust the total examination time to compensate for the emergency response.
- Upon returning from a call, the candidate must immediately resume the examination.
- If the emergency call is of long duration and / or involves the majority of the class, the Lead Proctor or Evaluator shall declare the examination stopped and inform the candidate of their requirement to reschedule an examination.
- It should be noted that the candidate should make an effort to find coverage during their examination to avoid the possibility of leaving an exam site after the examination has started.

SECTION 14

COMMITTEES AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Section 14.1 Advisory Committees

(a) The FSTB shall ensure that the concerns of our customers and stakeholders are met through the guidance of the Iowa Fire Service Emergency Response Council as an advisory committee. Selected personnel that encompass the various fire service organizations in Iowa are appointed to various terms by the Governor of the State of Iowa.

Section 14.2 Subject Matter Experts

(a) Subject matter experts (SMEs) consist of FSTB Training Specialists and various other experienced fire service personnel who are asked to validate examination test banks, written examinations, practical skill examination checklists (skill sheets) and project assignments. SMEs are certified to, at least the level of certification that they are tasked to validate and/or review.

SECTION 15

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Section 15.1 Examination Record-Keeping

(a) The FSTB shall keep written and practical skills examination records on file in an archive status. These materials will be maintained for the length of ten (10) years.

(b) The FSTB shall keep an electronic database of Certifications that have been issued to candidates indefinitely.

Section 15.2 Certification Reporting

(a) The FSTB shall report a candidate's certification information to the IFSAC and ProBoard® on a quarterly basis. This report will include:

- Name of Candidate
- Date of Birth
- Certification Level
- Certification Issue Date
- Current NFPA Standard Edition
- IFSAC and/or Pro-Board Seal Number Assigned