



Fire Service Training Bureau

Division of State Fire Marshal • Iowa Department of Public Safety

Junior Firefighter Program Guidance

Update 9/16/2026

On June 1, 2026, [Senate File 2086](#) was signed into law. This bill authorized schools to offer an elective junior firefighter program to students enrolled in grades eleven and twelve.

The intent of the program is to create a relationship between a local fire department and the local school system. The program allows students to learn the skills to become certified as a firefighter and hopefully join their local fire department or continue into the profession. The Iowa Department of Education continually updates a summary document of legislation that affects schools in Iowa.

- [Guidance on the Junior Firefighter Law](#)
- [Guidance on the Junior Firefighter Law starting on page 22.](#)

The legislation requires a written agreement between the board of directors of the school district or authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school with a local fire department that includes the following:

- How students participating in the program will be supervised,
- Activities in which Junior Firefighter students may participate,
- Activities in which Junior Firefighter students are prohibited from participating and
- The school districts or accredited nonpublic school's responsibilities related to providing medical and liability insurance coverage for all students participating in the program.

The curriculum that is to be used is the 5th edition of Firefighter Skills and Hazardous Materials Response published by the Public Safety Group. Discounted books can be purchased by the school or fire department directly through PSG. Please contact FSTB for the link to purchase the books keeping in mind the FSTB does not buy or fund the books. It is very important to understand that HazMat must be taught in addition to Firefighter 1 as HazMat is a prerequisite. Students who wish to test for certification as a Firefighter1 must pass HazMat Awareness and Operations before Firefighter 1.

Once the written agreement is in place, the fire department or school system should select an instructor. The FSTB recommends a member from the local fire department who is a certified Fire Instructor 1 along with Firefighter 1. If the school system uses a current licensed teacher in the district, they should have experience or certification as a firefighter. The law also requires the same procedure for background investigations and termination of these instructors as established in Iowa Code section 279.69 for school employees. Once the instructor is selected, the name and credentials of the person should be forwarded to the FSTB for approval. The FSTB will respond in writing with approval/denial.



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Instructors teaching the Junior Firefighter program shall be very aware of the limitations placed on students under 18 years of age. The legislation specifies the activities in which a student under 18 years of age is prohibited from participating and activities in which all students are prohibited from participating. The Act clarifies requirements and responsibilities related to waiver-of-liability, employment, employer-employee relationship and the provision of medical and liability insurance. Compliance with these limitations is the responsibility of the school district and instructor.

Testing: All students must [sign up for an Acadis account](#).

HazMat Awareness and Operations certification: Students under 18 years of age may take both the written and practical tests for certification in HazMat. Students should sign up for a test location in the Acadis portal.

Firefighter 1 certification: Students under 18 years of age may ONLY take the written test for FF1 certification once HazMat certification has been obtained. Because of limitations in the law, students under 18 years of age cannot conduct hazardous skills such as climbing a ladder over 6 feet and extinguishing a live fire. These two examples are found in both the practical skills exam and the local documentation form. Once a student reaches 18 years old, they will have one year to complete the practical skills exam and the local documentation. Once these are passed and completed, an FF1 certification will be issued. Failure to complete and pass the practical and submit the local documentation form by their 19th birthday will result in their progress being reset and they will need to retest the written exam.

Fire departments with a cadet program NOT affiliated with a school district:

Fire departments with minors involved in a cadet program should be aware that this law is not intended to cover their program. Departments with this type of program should be aware of the limitations on hazardous activities that OHSA does/does not allow minors to perform. In addition, cadets in those programs are not allowed to test for HazMat nor FF1 until they reach 18 years of age and must follow the current certification rules. Departments should consult with their city attorney's office on legalities and limitations of these programs.