



FIRE SERVICE TRAINING BUREAU HISTORY

In 1923, a group of firefighters came to what was formerly known as 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 state fire school, titled "First Short Course for Firemen" (1925) provided four days of training. Topics included fire prevention, fire fighting, 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, the Fire Service Extension changed names to become the Fire Service Institute, a component of Iowa State University-Extension. The annual fire schools continued to grow, and the Institute began offering many basic and advanced fire service training programs. In 1966, a legislative appropriation of approximately \$100,000 was made to build a facility called the Iowa Firemanship Building on the Iowa State University campus to help centralize and conduct the business of providing firefighter training and research along with training grounds to host said training.

In 2000, at the request of several state fire service fraternal organizations, legislation was drafted to remove the Fire Service Institute from Iowa State University and relocate it within the Iowa Department of Public Safety, Division of State Fire Marshal. Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack signed House File 2492, and the transfer of the Institute's responsibilities occurred on July 1, 2000. The "Institute" was dissolved, and the Fire Service Training Bureau (FSTB) was created within the Division of State Fire Marshal.

While the overall responsibility and budget were transferred immediately to the Division of State Fire Marshal in Des Moines, Iowa, the physical location of the Bureau continued in the Firemanship Building

on the Iowa State University campus in Ames, Iowa. The Bureau's accounting and procurement practices and employment of part-time field staff instructors were also still coordinated through Iowa State University. The Bureau continues to operate today from its original 1966 location and building.

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 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".

In November of 2018, field staff instructors of the Bureau were transferred from being employed by Iowa State University to being employees of the Iowa Department of Public Safety, Division of State Fire Marshal. The titles of these positions changed from "FSTB Field Staff" to "FSTB Training Specialist 1s."

In March of 2019, the Bureau's accounting and procurement processes were also transferred from Iowa State University to the Iowa Department of Public Safety, thereby completing a 100% transfer of the Bureau's operations into the Department of Public Safety. This completed transition made the Bureau a true "third party partner" with Iowa State University. The Bureau pays the University for any services requested, to include a monthly lease for the Firemanship Building, utilities, and other costs.

The Fire Service Training Bureau continues to advance in its practices. In June of 2019, the first successful computer-based certification testing opportunity occurred in Missouri Valley, Iowa. This type of testing is increasing in frequency as the Bureau's IT capacity increases.

Since 1966, fire service training has significantly expanded well beyond just learning to fight fires. Training must now incorporate responding to a vehicle, hazardous materials, technical rescue, EMS, agricultural, industrial, and many other incidents. The Bureau strives to be current and comprehensive in its training and to help support and be a primary resource to Iowa's fire service.

On the afternoon of May 5, 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed and fully executed by the Iowa Department of Public Safety and the Iowa National Guard to relocate the Fire Service Training Bureau to Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa, beginning July 1, 2020.

This move to Camp Dodge reflects a growing partnership between DPS and the Iowa National Guard. In addition to occupying newer facilities, FSTB will also will have larger training grounds with the ability to expand upon our current fire and rescue training offerings.

The facilities within which we will occupy is the current fire station, Building 59 – a 9, 239 square-foot facility that previously served as the Iowa National Guard's fire station. The space, design, and layout of this facility is ideal for the Bureau's current and future training needs. In addition to having access to many classrooms, the Iowa National Guard has also provided dedicated training grounds just west of the firing ranges suitable for live-fire training, storage of mobile training props, and additional space to expand. The training grounds also currently have multiple single and two-story shipping containers structured and aligned to simulate a small city. This "container city" will be part of the new training grounds and will be used for various training evolutions. In addition to these training grounds, there are many other opportunities for fire and rescue training afforded by the current and evolving Camp Dodge infrastructure and grounds.

Today, the Fire Service Training Bureau's core functions include promoting safety in all aspects of fire and emergency service training and response, and to coordinate training ranging from basic skills to more advanced specialized topics. The Bureau is also responsible for hosting and coordinating the Annual State Fire School, which trains approximately 700 firefighters, annually. On average, the Fire Service Training Bureau educates and trains approximately 12,000 students annually, and supports local training efforts with deployment of over 10 various training props/adjuncts. The Bureau offers professional certification through a program accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) to provide national certification in various firefighting specialties, to include Firefighter I and II, Fire Officer I and II, Fire Inspector, and Fire Investigator among other certifications. It also acts as a statewide point of contact and coordination for federal fire programs.

Relocation of the FSTB operation began the week of July 6, 2020 with a Grand Opening Ceremony and ribbon-cutting event scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2020.