

Fire Investigator

Certification Procedure Guide



This Certification Procedure Guide reflects the requirements of:

**NFPA 1033: Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator,
2014 Edition**

THIS INTRODUCTION REFERENCES SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF THE FSTB POLICY MANUAL FOR RULES, REGULATIONS, AND REQUIREMENTS

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)

727-3447.

(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.

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 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) 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 person wishing to become certified shall do so by successful completion of examination requirements.

(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) Candidates must meet all of the appropriate NFPA pre-requisites as required for the Standard for which they are being examined to be certified.

(d) 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 System Integrity

(a) The requirements, criteria, and processes explained are used to ensure the highest possible

credibility and stature for participants in the FSTB certification system. These processes ensure that Iowa trained and certified fire service personnel are among the most highly qualified and competent firefighters.

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 (JPR)

(a) The Fire Service Training Bureau Certification and Accreditation Program shall maintain the NFPA Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) for each discipline the agency is accredited to for the administration of certification examinations. The JPRs shall reflect the current edition of the standard the agency is accredited to certify and be available in written format, upon the request of a candidate.

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 3.1 Application for Certification

(a) Applications 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 ACCEPTED AT ANY EXAM SITE!**

Section 3.2 Fees for Certification

(a) 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) 727-3447 with credit card information)

(c) Registration fees may only be refunded within the first two (2) months after being received by the FSTB if the candidate has not taken any steps toward completing the certification process.

(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 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 5.5 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 5.6 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 5.7 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 testing process. Any candidate who is caught cheating on any element of the examination process will:

- Forfeit all fees.
- Be denied the certification.
- Be immediately expelled 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 examination for the purpose of soliciting or giving or comparing answers, copying or modifying another person's project/homework 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.

Section 7.5 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, or 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.

Section 7.7 Re-Taking of a Written Examination

(a) Any 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.

(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 8.1 Practical Skills Performance Examination

(a) Candidates are responsible for knowing ALL practical skills required by the applicable standard during the practical skills examination. An exact list of specific skills for each level of certification can be found in the appropriate Certification Procedures Guide published by the FSTB.

(b) A class roster of the registered candidates will be generated and sent to the Lead Evaluator.

(c) Candidates' identities will be verified with a photograph ID, i.e. (State issued driver's license or a department issued ID card) prior to the beginning of the examination.

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

(e) Candidates must adhere to the following protocols:

- Turn off their pagers and their cellular phones prior to the beginning of the examination.
- No talking to another student at any time.

- No food and/or drinks are allowed during the examination.
- No smoking or vaping is allowed during the examination.
- Only utilize approved materials during the examination (subject to verification).

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

(g) The evaluator will read the "Evaluator's Instructions to the Candidate," as listed on the skill sheet.

(h) Upon completion of the skill station, the candidate will be thanked for their time, and asked to return to the staging area.

Section 8.2 Variable Number of Skills Tested

(a) The exact number of skills tested for each NFPA Standard may vary by certification level. The number of skills to be tested is 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 drawn by the FSTB Certification & Accreditation Manager.

Section 8.3 Prior Knowledge of Practical Skills to be Administered

(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 integrity.

Section 8.5 Practical Skills Pass / Fail Criteria

(a) Practical skill examinations are graded on a pass/fail basis. Through the design of the evaluation checklist, components of the skills will be strictly evaluated. Candidates must successfully complete all skill stations at an examination test site to receive a passing grade.

(b) Each candidate is allowed two (2) attempts at each 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 an 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 9.1 Assignment of Projects

(a) The assignment of a project is determined by the methodology chosen to evaluate the JPRs based on the complexity of the standard. The assigned project may be submitted for evaluation to the Certification and Accreditation Manager or designated staff, any time after the certification process has begun.

Section 9.2 Project Time Frame

(a) The associated project must be completed within the one-year timeframe starting from their first time taking the written examination for this level of certification.

Section 9.3 Project Evaluation / Resubmission

(a) 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.

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 the 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 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 11.1 Appeals Policy

(a) All candidates shall have the ability to appeal any certification decision made by the FSTB. All appeals must be written and directed to the Certification and Accreditation Manager within 30 days. The letter shall include the date(s), time(s), discipline level, and reason for the appeal. A decision shall be based upon the facts of the case, and compliance with the JPRs of the discipline.

(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 Appeals Procedure

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

- Written 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 13.4 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, and 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 test.
- 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 invalid 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.

Please keep a copy of all your certification documentation for your records.

Certification Questions may be directed to:

fstbcert@dps.state.ia.us

515-727-3447

Introduction to Fire Investigator Certification

FSTB Certification website: <https://dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshall/fire-service-training/certification-accreditation>

Certification Program email: fstbcert@dps.state.ia.us

FSTB Certification phone number: 515-727-3447

Candidates wishing to attain national certification for Fire Investigator through the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau Certification System must start the process by submitting an Examination Registration Form along with the Registration Fee of \$50 due at the time of registration.

The form is available on the certification page of the FSTB website (link provided above) or you can click on the below link to go directly to the form:

[Written Examination Registration Form](#)

The Written Registration Form is updated regularly to reflect the current schedule of examination locations and dates. Candidates are given twelve (12) months to complete each certification process. This time limit starts when the candidate takes their FIRST written examination in this level.

Starting July 1, 2019 the initial Registration Fee of \$50 allows the candidate one (1) attempt to pass each component, written and practical skills (if required), of the examination. If the candidate fails both the written and practical skills exams, they are charged \$50 to retake **EACH** examination again (i.e., must pay \$100 to take both exams again). If the candidate fails only one of the examinations (either written or practical skills), they are charged \$50 to retake the failed exam.

If the twelve (12) month time limit expires and the candidate has not successfully completed all the requirements for this certification process, the candidate will have to restart the process. All information and documentation relating to the previous certification attempt will be removed from the FSTB database.

Projects must be submitted and approved within the twelve (12) months from when the candidate starts the certification process for this level.

Fire Investigator - Certification Requirements

Prerequisites:

Candidates pursuing certification at the Fire Investigator level must meet the following conditions:

1. Be a current member of a fire, emergency or rescue organization within the State of Iowa or enrolled in a Fire Science program within the Iowa College System. All candidates pursuing certification shall be at least 18 years of age.
2. Primary job role as a Fire Investigator and/or direct involvement in the fire investigation process within your jurisdiction.
3. Formal course attendance of either the FSTB 2-week Fire Investigation/Arson School or a NFA Basic Fire Investigation course. Attendance MUST have been within the past 2 years for relevancy.

An official picture ID (e.g., driver's license, state-issued identification card, military ID, etc.) must be presented for admittance to ANY written and practical examination.

Written Examination:

The Fire Investigator written examination is based on Job Performance Requirements listed in NFPA 1033 - Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator, 2014 edition.

- The Fire Investigator written examination contains 100 multiple choice questions.
- Candidates are required to score a minimum of 70% on the written examination. Candidates who fail the written examination are responsible for notifying the FSTB of their desire to retake the written examination by registering for another examination site and paying another registration fee of \$50. Candidates may not take the written examination more than once per day.
- The below chart shows the maximum time allowed for the written examinations based on the number of questions on the examination.

Number of Questions	Maximum Time Allowed
25	30 Minutes
50	60 Minutes
75	90 Minutes
100	120 Minutes

Project:

1. The Fire Investigator Project is based on Job Performance Requirements 4.2 through 4.7 listed in NFPA 1033 - *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*, 2014 edition. This project is a comprehensive assignment that involves investigation of two fire incidents. The first fire incident investigation must be determined as accidental in nature. The second fire incident must be determined as incendiary in nature. The candidate will be required to complete a thorough investigation and documentation of both incidents. The candidate's documentation will be evaluated using the included score sheet. Items to also include with the Fire Investigator Project submission are a photo log, scene diagram and at least 5 photos of the investigation. Instructions and associated documents associated with the Fire Investigator Project are located at the end of this Procedures Guide.

Recertification:

Once the candidate has received their certification as a Fire Investigator, the certification is valid for 3 years from the date of award. If recertification is desired, the following procedures **MUST** be completed **PRIOR** to the certification expiration date.

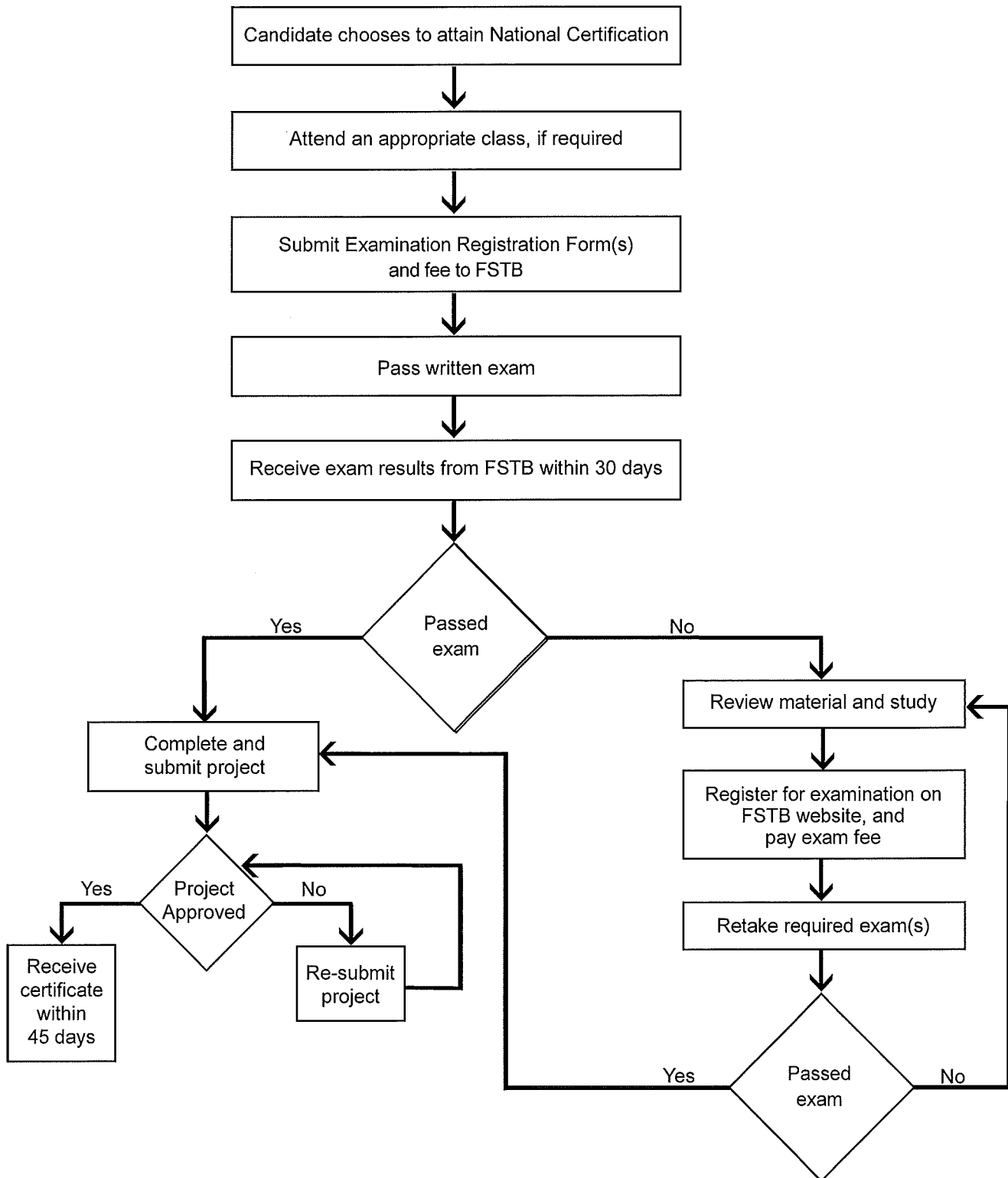
1. Complete the Fire Investigator Recertification form, located on the Certification page of the FSTB website (under the Fire Investigator level at the bottom of the page).
2. Provide written documentation of 30 hours of untested (informal) training as a student or instructor, or any combination, in fire investigation related courses or seminars. This can be in the form of attendance certificates such as from the Iowa Chapter of International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) annual conferences, or any other conference dealing with fire/arson investigation: **OR**
3. Provide written documentation of 15 hours of tested (formal) training (e.g., CFITrainer.net course certificates); **AND**
4. Submit a letter from the applicant's supervisor listing the applicant's current job description and attesting to the fact that the primary duty of the applicant is fire investigation. The supervisor shall be experienced in fire investigation as well; will review each of the applicant's reports and shall verify the number of fires that the applicant has investigated during the past 3 year period. A minimum of 10 fires, regardless of the determination, have to have been investigated.

In the event an individual certified as a Fire Investigator chooses **NOT** to recertify or does not submit the required documentation for recertification prior to the expiration date of their certification; their certification as a Fire Investigator will be canceled and removed from the Iowa certification database. The IFSAC will also be notified to remove the associated seal number from the national certification database. In order to regain this certification, the individual would need to successfully complete the required Fire Investigator course mentioned previously in this guide. If the Fire Investigator course has been taken within the past 2 years, the individual is eligible to register for and take the written examination and then complete the associated project as described in this guide.

References / Textbooks:

- IFSTA, *Fire Investigator*, 2nd Edition, 2010
- Jones & Bartlett, *Fire Investigator, Principles and Practice to NFPA 921 & 1033*, 5th Edition, 2019

Certification Flow Chart for Fire Investigator



You have twelve (12) months to complete this process or you start over.

Iowa Fire Investigator Certification

Fire Investigation Report (4.7)

Scoring Matrix (100 Points Total)

Must Obtain 80 Points (80%) to Pass

Fire investigation reports submitted for certification require investigating a fire of a substantial source. Such fires include vehicles, room and contents, garage, or a type of structure. Mailboxes, hay bales, vegetation, portable toilets, and similar types of smaller fires cannot be used for this project.

RECOGNIZE THE NEED and DEFINE THE PROBLEM (4.1.2)

I. Notification, Scene Arrival/Departure, and Need for Fire Investigation (2 Pts)

- a. ☐ Date and time notified
- b. ☐ Who notified and requested a fire investigator?
- c. ☐ General type of fire (structure, vehicle, vegetation, injuries, fatality, etc.)
- d. ☐ Address(s) of scene location(s)
- e. ☐ Date and time of scene arrival
- f. ☐ Date and time of scene departure
- g. ☐ Scene Security (4.2.1)
- h. ☐ Scene Safety Assessment (4.1.3)
- i. ☐ Coordinated investigation with Incident Command, Fire, Police, and other pertinent officials (4.6.3)
- j. ☐ Identify expert resources, if needed (4.1.4, 4.1.6)

COLLECTING THE DATA (4.1.2)

II. Weather conditions (1 Pt)

- a. ☐ Temperature
- b. ☐ Wind Speed / Direction
- c. ☐ Humidity
- d. ☐ Precipitation
- e. ☐ Lightning

III. Type of Structure or Vehicle Involved (2 Pts)

- a. ☐ Building Construction
- b. ☐ Residential vs Rural
- c. ☐ Ancillary Structures
- d. ☐ Vehicles (Year, Make, Model)
- e. ☐ VIN and License Plate Numbers of Vehicles Involved

IV. Fire Suppression Activities (3 pts)

- a. ☐ Fire Departments on Scene
- b. ☐ First Arriving Unit Suppression Strategy (Offensive/Defensive)
- c. ☐ Rescue/Recovery of Victims
- d. ☐ Ventilation Tactics
- e. ☐ Salvage/Overhaul Activities

V. Interviews (4.5) (12 pts)

- a. ☐ Contact Information of Owner/Renter of Property or Vehicle
- b. ☐ Insurance Coverage
- c. ☐ Medical and Social History (Owners/Renters/Victims)
- d. ☐ Smoking History
- e. ☐ Criminal History
- f. ☐ Details of Daily Events Leading Up to the Discovery Fire (timeline)

VI. Fire Scene Examination (4.2) (30 pts)

- a. External Scene Exam (4.2.2) 15 pts
 - i. ☐ Permissions (Owner Consent vs. Criminal Search Warrant) (4.1.5)
 - ii. ☐ Systematic Approach (Least Damage to Most Damage)
 - iii. ☐ Utilities (Natural Gas, Propane, Electric Panels/Wires, Telephone, Cable, Etc.)
 - iv. ☐ Evidence (Non-FD Forced Entry, Gas Cans, Footprints)
- b. Internal Scene Exam (4.2.3) 15 pts
 - i. ☐ Systematic Approach (Top to Bottom, Least Damage to Most Damage)
 - ii. ☐ Utilities (Natural Gas, Propane, Electric Panel/Wires, Furnace, Water Heater) (4.2.8)
 - iii. ☐ Appliances (4.2.8)
 - iv. ☐ Cleanliness
 - v. ☐ Interior Furnishings (Present or Absent,
 - vi. ☐ Evidence (Gas Cans, Non-FD Forced Entry, etc.)
 - vii. ☐ Arc Mapping in Structure Fires

VII. Evidence Collection (4.4.1, 4.4.2) (10 Pts)

- a. ☐ Items Collected?
- b. ☐ Location of Items Collected?
- c. ☐ How Packaged?
- d. ☐ Date/Time/ and Name of Collector
- e. ☐ Chain of Custody Form (4.4.4)
- f. ☐ Determine Lab Analysis for Evaluating Items (4.4.3)
- g. ☐ Disposal of Evidence (4.4.5)

ANALYZING THE DATA and DEVELOPING A HYPOTHESIS (4.1.2)

VIII. Origin Determination (4.2.4, 4.2.5) (10 pts)

- a. ☐ Area of Origin (identify all possible ignition sources in area and describe how each was ruled in/out)
- b. ☐ Point of Origin
- c. ☐ Use of Witness Statements
- d. ☐ Use of Fire Patterns (4.2.4)
- e. ☐ Use of Flow Paths
- f. ☐ Use of Evidence and Scene Re-creation (4.2.7)

TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS (4.1.2)

IX. Cause Determination (4.2.6) (10 Pts)

- a. ☐ Identify competent ignition source
- b. ☐ Identify fuel(s) first ignited
- c. ☐ Describe factors on how "a" and "b" were brought together
- d. ☐ Describe fire spread
- e. ☐ Test Hypothesis
- f. ☐ If hypothesis doesn't fit, start over and reevaluate or collect more data

SELECTING THE FINAL HYPOTHESIS (4.1.2)

X. Final Opinion as to Origin and Cause of Fire (4.6.1) (10 Pts)

- a. ☐ Summarize how the ignition source and fuel(s) first ignited came into contact with each to start the fire, in addition to witness statements, evidence, and other factors used to come to your conclusion.

XI. Scene Documentation (4.3.1) (5 pts)

- a. ☐ Scene Sketch (not to scale)
- b. ☐ Scene photographs (4.3.2)

XII. Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation (4.3.3) (5 pts)

- a. ☐ Shows professionalism of investigator and the quality of the report with respect to its content

Please submit scene photographs (up to 5) for each of your two fire investigator certification reports. Submitted photographs should show overall scene, area/point of fire origin, key evidence, and burn patterns.

Please make sure to include negative corpus in your report. Also include information that may not have been a part of your scene to demonstrate your consideration of other factors going into your determination of origin and cause.

TOTAL POINTS AWARDED: _____ REVIEWED BY: _____

PASS / FAIL

DATE: _____

Comments: