Rules and Regulations
For the
Career Recruit Firefighter Training Program
Massachusetts Firefighting Academy

I. UNIFORM OF THE DAY

A. Uniform shall be a clean departmental work uniform, Class B pants, shirt, black belt, and black leather shoes, unless otherwise specified by the Recruit Program Coordinator or the Officer of the Day (OD).

B. For physical training (PT) only, sneakers or gym shoes, navy blue t-shirt or sweatshirt, and navy blue sweatpants or navy blue shorts shall be worn. All t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, and workout shorts worn at the Academy shall be plain navy blue, either with no lettering or with the department-approved emblem only. All physical training clothing is subject to approval by the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. **Hooded sweatshirts shall not be worn.**

C. Students should report each day in a clean departmental Class B work uniform. Sneakers shall not be worn in the classroom or at any other time except physical training. Class B uniform shall include a collared button-down or "polo" type shirt. A clean class B departmental uniform shall be worn for graduation. Dungarees may not be worn in place of uniform pants.

On Fridays only, for "Support Our Troops Fridays," red shirts may be worn as part of the Class B uniform. Red shirts, however, must include a collared button-down or "polo" type shirt. Red shirts may be worn only according to the uniform protocol of the respective city or town.

D. All students shall change from PT clothing to clean departmental Class B uniform prior to start of classroom or practical evolutions for the day unless otherwise specified by the recruit program coordinator or the OD.

E. Only department issue or department approved hats or caps will be worn on Academy grounds or other training sites. Hats or caps are not to be worn in the classroom, during PT or during any practical evolutions. During outside PT in extremely cold weather, knit hats are allowed with permission of the lead PT instructor.

F. No glasses other than prescription glasses or clear safety glasses will be worn at the Academy or other training sites.

G. All students shall be clean-shaven at morning roll call. Mustaches may be allowed if allowed by the student's department; however, in no case shall beards or any facial hair be in contact with or impact the seal of the self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) face piece.

H. Hair shall be cut neatly and students shall be well groomed. Students with long hair must keep the hair secured in back neatly, away from the facial area, during the training day. For safety purposes, the student with long hair may be required to wear a Nomex hood for all training per discretion of the Recruit Program Coordinator.

I. Any jewelry, i.e. chains, hoop earrings, etc., which presents a safety hazard shall not be allowed.

J. Audio/video recorders and still photography equipment shall not be allowed except by permission of the Director of the Academy or his/her designee.

II. DEPORTMENT

A. No abusive language may be used and no obscene or offensive literature shall be brought onto any Academy training site.

B. All gambling is prohibited at any Academy training site.

C. Alcoholic beverages and/or narcotics are prohibited and may not be consumed at any Academy training site or during any break period or lunch hour. Students who appear at any training session while under the influence of alcoholic beverages or any illegal substance will not be allowed to participate in training for the day and their department will be immediately notified as to the alleged condition of the student. Students will not be allowed to leave the Academy training site until a departmental decision is made for their safe transportation back to the student's respective community.

D. Smoking or the use of tobacco products is prohibited.

E. No visitors other than chiefs of department and/or training officers shall be allowed at any Academy training site. All visitors shall check in with the Recruit Program Coordinator or Officer of the Day (OD).

~~F.~~ All telephone calls shall have prior approval by academy staff. All electronic devices including but not limited to pagers, cell phones, smart watches and other devices that would give an undue advantage shall remain the in the student's vehicle during the training day.

G. "Mr.", "Sir", "Ms." or "Ma'am" shall be used when addressing visiting lecturers and instructors.

H. All students and visiting officers will be respectful and courteous to each other, the staff and all other visitors. Harassment of any manner is prohibited.

I. Gum chewing, eating, and drinking (except via the MFA issued water bottle for hydration purposes) in the classroom areas are not allowed.

J. Students will not, for any reason, approach, enter, or remain proximate to their vehicles during the training day without the express permission of the Coordinator or OD.

III. ATTENDANCE

A. Students shall not leave the training sites while assigned to the Academy.

B. Any student who anticipates being absent or is absent from the recruit program due to illness or injury shall be required to notify the Program Coordinator and his/her Fire Chief.

C. The student shall call 978-567-3218 or 978-567-3219 at least one half-hour prior to roll call to report an absence.

D. Any student who is absent shall be required to complete an absence report immediately following any absence. Other documentation may be required. Absence reports will become part of the student's permanent record and copies shall be forwarded to the chief of department. In order to be eligible to return to recruit training following **any** absence due to injury or illness, the recruit "shall be required to" present medical authorization from a physician/physician assistant**.** The documentation must state the reason for the absence and must include authorization to return to training, "*full-duty with no restrictions*".

E. In the event of a one (1) training day or longer absence due to minor illness or injury, the Program Coordinator or Lead Instructor may request such other supporting documentation to determine if a student is fit for duty and able to return to full training activities.

F. Unexcused absences will be cause for dismissal. Any absence shall be evaluated as to the impact and effect on the student's attainment of proper skills and knowledge necessary to complete all graduation requirements. Any absence may be considered as grounds for dismissal from the class, and may result in consultation between the chief of department, academy representative, and the student, as to the student's continued attendance and participation in the recruit training program.

G. A student, who through verified illness or injury (or any other serious reason approved by the Chief of Department and the Academy Director) is absent from more than 5% of the mandated curriculum may be dismissed from the program. That student may be eligible for attendance at a future Academy recruit session, based on a review of the circumstances by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council.

H. A student, who is absent from more than 5% of the mandated curriculum because of the death of an immediate family member or because of other serious or extenuating circumstances may be allowed to continue only at the discretion and approval of the Academy Director or his/her designee in consultation with the Chief of Department. Without the approval above, the recruit firefighter will be dismissed from the program and will likely be eligible for attendance at a future Academy recruit session.

Immediate family member shall mean spouse, child, mother, father, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step-parent or grandparent only.

I. Any student who is not present at roll call at the start of each training day shall be recorded as absent for the period of time missed. This absentee time shall be recorded in hours and minutes. A student who is tardy 1/2 hour or more must call the academy at 978-567-3218 or 978-567-3219 prior to the start of the training day. The tardy time shall be included in the sum of absentee time noted in Section E above.

J. Platoon assignments will be given to students on Training Day One. Said platoon assignments will be rotated throughout the program on direction of the Recruit Coordinator.

All training days are mandatory. Any student who has an unexcused absence within his/her assigned platoon shall be dismissed from the program. Should a student request an excused absence, this will be determined by both 1) the ability for the missed academic and or practical skill to be offered in another mandatory training day as a make-up within a predetermined timeframe, 2) as well as the determination via a collaborative decision from the Academy Director and or Program Coordinator with the student's employer (Chief of Department) for the absence to be deemed excusable.

K. Attendance shall mean full and complete participation in and performance of all tasks that take place during the training day.

L. Any student unable, for any reason, to participate in physical fitness or other rigorous activities shall be counted as absent for the training day.

M. Student shall have an obligation to notify the Academy, in writing, of any change in employment status.

IV. CLASS CANCELLATIONS

A. Classes at all Academy training facilities - Scheduled Classes to be held at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy in Stow may be cancelled due to severe weather or other major reasons on the decision of the Academy Director, or the person designated in his/her absence. Students should call the recorded line, 978-567-3248, for information specific to the recruit program.

B. If the Academy must cancel a program for any other reason, every attempt will be made to notify all pre-registered students.

C. The Recruit Program Coordinator will also initiate a call-down tree to notify the affected recruits if there is a cancellation.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

A. No ball playing or Frisbee playing is allowed in any building or on academy property.

B. All students shall read the bulletin board daily before a.m. and p.m. roll call.

C. Students shall complete all study assignments as directed by the Academy Staff.

Violation of any of the above rules, regulations, or requirements shall be cause for appropriate punitive action leading to dismissal from the recruit training program.

VI. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF RECRUIT TRAINING

The following list contains skills that will be required for successful completion of the recruit training program, and are referred to as "Critical Skills". Testing on all of these skills will be conducted during the regularly scheduled training. If by the end of training day 49 the student is unable to perform any of these "critical skills", he/she will be dismissed from the program.

A. Failure, refusal or inability to proficiently raise, climb, or work from all types of fire department ladders both with and without hand tools, in the performance of accepted firefighting practices.

B. Failure, refusal or inability to wear self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) in the performance of accepted firefighting practices. This is to include the tendency to display any indication of claustrophobia.

C. Failure, refusal, or inability to operate effectively at all live fire training sessions in the presence of heat, smoke, flame, and other products of combustion.

D. Failure, refusal, or inability to perform all Academy evolutions proficiently and in accordance with Academy policy as prescribed by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council and taught by Academy instructors. Such evolutions of accepted firefighting practices include, but are not limited to, ladder carrying and raising, hose handling and movement, pump operations, tying and hauling, search and rescue, and use of SCBA.

E. Failure, refusal, or inability to proficiently carry, raise, and deploy a 16' roof ladder using the two-person method according to Academy policy. Deployment includes safely securing the ladder to the peak of the roof by means of the roof hooks. Proficiency shall be demonstrated in both the butt and tip positions.

F. Failure, refusal, or inability to proficiently advance and operate 1-3/4" and/or 2-1/2" hose lines while flowing appropriate gallonages using both fog and solid hose streams. Hose lines may require deployment to areas above and/or below grade within a structure. These skills will be completed as a member of a two or three person hose line team.

G. Failure, refusal, or inability to proficiently establish a positive water supply to the pump. The establishment of water supply shall include the connection of the supply hose to the hydrant using the appropriate gates and hydrant wrench.

H. Failure, refusal, or inability to safely and proficiently assist both a conscious and unconscious victim down a ladder.

I. Evidence of deception, cheating, or collaboration during any written or practical exam will result in dismissal from the program.

VII. GRADING SYSTEM FOR WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

A. Grades achieved on written examinations will be calculated as follows:

- There will be seven written quizzes during the 10-week period. Each module quiz will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions. One hour will be allowed to complete the examination.

- Students must achieve a minimum average of 70% in the module quizzes in order to be eligible to take the final written examination.

- Seven (7) weekly quizzes will be administered.

- The Final Certification Examination will be administered at the end of the program.

- Additionally the Hazardous Materials Operational Level First Responder (HazMat OLR) certification examination will be administered within the program. The HazMat OLR examination will not affect the academic average.

- Following each module quiz, any student who does not maintain a minimum of 70% will participate in a counseling session with the Recruit Training Coordinator or his/her designee.

- The final examination will consist of 150 questions. One hundred of these will be Firefighter-I (FF-I) questions. Fifty of these will be Firefighter-II (FF-II) questions. Three hours will be allowed to complete the final examination. A student must attain a score of 70% on the FF-I questions and 70% on the FF-II questions in order to graduate.

- A student who does not successfully complete the final certification examination will be allowed to take one re-examination. If he/she does not successfully pass this retake examination, he/she will be dismissed from the program without prejudice. The retake will be at the discretion of the student who, after consultation with the sponsoring Chief, has the following options: to retest the following day; during an upcoming open enrollment certification exam, if one is already scheduled; or on the day of the final exam of the next graduating class. However, this retest will be no later than the day of the final exam of the next graduating recruit class. The student will be given these options and will be required to give a decision by the close of business on that day.

B. Final grades will be determined as follows:

- The average of seven (7) intermediate module quizzes will count for 50% of the final grade.

- The final examination score will count for the other 50% of the final grade.

VIII. GRADING SYSTEM FOR PRACTICAL EVOLUTIONS - (Objective Evaluations)

Practical evolutions will be subject to grading at all times during the program. The individual techniques, evolutions, and proper sequence of accomplishment as stated in the drill manual or appropriate reference, i.e. instructor reference, student handout, etc. for the purpose of grading, have been divided into two categories, major and minor errors.

A. Major Errors - Major errors are those errors that are classified as an act or omission that does any of the following:

- Endangers the safety of personnel
- Prevents placing water on the fire
- Requires the assistance of another member of the crew for the evolution to be successful
- Causes total breakdown of the evolution due to lack of completion of a key technique
- Results in undue loss of time

Committing a major error will result in the student being charged with five (5) deficiency points for each error.

B. Minor Errors - Minor errors are those acts or omissions that, while incorrect, will not:

- Impair the safety of personnel
- Impair placing water on the fire
- Prevent completion of the evolution

Committing a minor error will result in the student being charged with one (1) deficiency point for each error. Minor errors will not be charged against the student if, in the opinion of the Instructor, the student, without assistance from other students, instructors or visitors, discovers and corrects the mistake within a reasonable time period.

IX. CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED BY ACCUMULATION OF DEFICIENCY POINTS

A. At 26 points, the student shall meet with a Recruit Coordinator or his/her designee.

B. At 52 points, the student shall meet with a Recruit Coordinator or his/her designee and the Director of the Fire Academy or his/her designee.

C. At 78 points, the student shall meet with a Recruit Coordinator or his/her designee, the Director of the Fire Academy, and his/her Chief of Department or his/her designee.

D. At 104 points, the student shall meet with a Recruit Coordinator or his/her designee, the Director of the Fire Academy or his/her designee, and his/her Chief of Department or his/her designee, and shall be terminated from the program and returned to his/her respective department.

X. SUBJECTIVE EVALUATIONS

A. Subjective evaluations will be written as necessary by all instructors to document each student's performance. These evaluations may be positive and/or negative in nature and will be written when a student operates outside the scope of his/her training skills during either a graded or non-graded evolution.

B. Subjective evaluations will be written to document a student's unprofessional or unsafe behavior, inability to operate within fire academy guidelines and training procedures, and non-compliance with the Rules and Regulations for the Career Recruit Training Program.

C. A subjective evaluation as written by an instructor, and verified by the coordinator, that meets any of the following criteria: endangers the safety of personnel, impairs placement of water on the fire, requires the assistance of an instructor for the evolution to be successful, or causes the breakdown of the evolution due to lack of completion of a key technique will be given five deficiency points.

D. There shall not be more than three of these counted that would amount to not more than 15 total deficiencies as a result. The coordinator or assistant coordinator must verify this particular subjective before points are assessed. If no points are assessed, then it will be treated as a normal subjective with a copy sent to the chief.

E. If a subjective evaluation is written, and points are assessed, then a consultation will be held with the Recruit Coordinator or his/her designee, the Director or his/her designee, the Chief of the respective department or his/her designee, and the candidate.

F. These subjective evaluations shall be limited to areas that have no grading associated with them, but still represent issues that could cause personal injury or meet the above stated guidelines:

- Burn Days 1 through 5, transitional fire attack, live fires with extinguishers, car fires, and dumpster fires.
- RIT hands-on skills
- The Draeger maze
- All gas evolutions, including vapor releases
- Aerial ladder practical evolutions
- Timed combined evolutions (after grading)
- Vehicle extrication practical scenario
- Rescue over ladders

G. If review of these evaluations indicates a need for realignment of a student's behavior or performance (as observed by an individual instructor or the Recruit Program Coordinator), all available methods will be utilized by the Academy to correct this behavior or performance. For those with adverse reports, the subject evaluations may be a contributing factor in prohibiting or denying graduation from the Academy.

XI. REPORTS TO CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT

Student grades are sent to the chief of department together with any late arrival and absence reports, injury reports, subjective evaluation reports, warning and dismissal notices, and consultation reports. These reports are sent on the following schedule:

- Initial progress report at the end of three weeks
- Second progress report at the end of six weeks
- Final report is sent following graduation

XII. WARNING AND DISMISSAL NOTICES

A. Warning notices shall be issued to students for the following reasons:
   - Academic deficiency
   - Failure to comply with Rules and Regulations
   - Unacceptable level of deficiency points

B. Warning notices shall become a part of the student's file with a copy sent to the chief of department.

C. Dismissal notices shall be issued to students who fail to meet the graduation requirements as set forth in the Rules and Regulations or who fail to comply with the Rules and Regulations as established by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council.

XIII. PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, DISABILITIES, INJURIES, AND ILLNESS

A. Any student with a diagnosed disability seeking a reasonable accommodation should, at the earliest time possible (but no later than thirty (30) days prior to the start date of the program), make a written request for such reasonable accommodations to the DFS Civil Rights Officer. Every request must be accompanied by either medical documentation by a qualified provider documenting the disability and providing the reasonable accommodations sought; or, in the alternative, a student may, if applicable, submit a valid individual education plan (IEP) which documents a learning disability and reasonable accommodations. Such IEP may not be older than five (5) years from its date of issue. All written requests will be acknowledged in writing within ten (10) business days, and approved or denied within twenty (20) business days of receipt unless further medical or technical documentation/evaluations are required by the Civil Rights Officer, who has granted such extension of time.

B. Every student is required to inform a Recruit Coordinator of any physical infirmity that he/she may have, on their first day of the program.

C. Every student is required, upon entry, to report to a Recruit Coordinator if he/she is using any form of medication.

D. Every student is required to report any injury or illness to a Recruit Coordinator or his/her designee immediately. If a student is required to withdraw from an Academy session due to injuries or illness not brought about by his/her own misconduct, he/she may be eligible for entry to another approved Academy session based on a review of the circumstances by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council.

E. If a student, through his/her own misconduct, becomes so incapacitated by injury that he/she is unable to complete the mandated course, he/she may not be eligible for entry to another approved Academy Career Recruit Training Program. Such final decision shall be the decision of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council.

XIV. DISMISSAL

A. Non-Disciplinary – A student who is dismissed for any non-disciplinary reason (i.e. absences, poor academics, inability to perform critical skills, failing final exam certification) is dismissed without prejudice and may attend a future Academy Recruit Training Program subject to all employment and applicable enrollment requirements.

B. Disciplinary – A student dismissed for disciplinary reasons is dismissed with prejudice and may not enroll or attend any future Academy Recruit Training Program.

XV. WITHDRAWAL

A student may be withdrawn without prejudice at the request of the head of his/her fire department and the approval of the Director of the Academy for any non-disciplinary reason which is unanticipated and serious in nature (i.e. serious medical issues affecting the student or his immediate family, military duty, jury duty, etc.).

XVI. READMISSION

A. Dismissal (Non-Disciplinary) – A student who has been dismissed without prejudice in accordance with this policy, shall be allowed to attend, subject to all employment and enrollment requirements, a future Academy Recruit Training Program starting on Training Day 1. Students seeking readmission as a result of failing the final examination under Section VII, A, shall submit a new career recruit application and follow the new candidate timeline.

B. Withdrawal – A student who has been withdrawn without prejudice at the request of the head of his/her fire department and with the approval of the Director of the Academy for any non-disciplinary reason which is: unanticipated and serious in nature, and substantially interferes with the student's ability to remain in the Recruit Training Program, shall be allowed to attend, subject to all employment and enrollment requirements, a future Academy Recruit Training Program, subject to the following provisions:

- The approval of the Director of the Academy is conditioned upon receipt of satisfactory evidence as requested by the Director of the Academy.

- If the basis for the withdrawal is medical, the student must submit to the Academy, a medical release from a physician/physician assistant stating that he/she may return to "full duty" with no limitations.

- A student who has been withdrawn for less than ninety (90) calendar days may be readmitted to the Recruit Training Program on Training Day 1 or any other day as determined by agreement of the Director of the Academy and the student's head of his/her fire department. A student who has been withdrawn for more than ninety (90) calendar days shall be readmitted to the Recruit Training Program on Training Day 1.

- A student withdrawn for less than ninety (90) calendar days will, upon his/her return, carry over any accrued absentee time, academic scores, deficiency points or subjective evaluations received prior to withdrawal.

- A student withdrawn for more than ninety (90) calendar days will not retain any previously accrued absentee time, academic scores, deficiency points and subjective evaluations received prior to withdrawal.

C. No student dismissed or withdrawn without prejudice shall be readmitted to a future Academy Recruit Training Program more than once. Any student who has been dismissed or withdrawn for a second time, shall be considered to be dismissed or withdrawn with prejudice.

All students shall be required to submit a rules and regulations compliance sheet signed by both the student and Chief of the Department.