
I've been on the job since before the fire service standards were developed. Can I be grandfathered into the certification process?

The Council does not offer grandfathering to any level of certification. Anyone who wants to become certified must participate in an appropriate evaluation process.

I have a fire science degree. Can any portion of the certification examination be waived?

The Council's system is based on NFPA job performance requirements and no portion of the certification process is waived for possession of educational degrees.

I have many certificates for training I have completed. Does this make me certified?

No. In earning your certificates you have no doubt learned much that will assist you with the certification process; however, anyone who wants to become certified to a particular level must successfully complete the certification examination process.

I have a Massachusetts Teacher License. How does that relate to fire instructor certification?

Teacher certification in the Commonwealth is an entirely different process than fire service certification. Certification in one Massachusetts system has no bearing on certification in another system.

What should I study for the examination?

The references for each level of certification are different. You should refer to the certification exam description in the DFS LMS Catalog for the specific references for the levels of certification in which you have interest.

Who is responsible for paying the certification fees?

The individual applying for certification is responsible for arranging payment of the certification fees. Some communities reimburse the fee while others make the fee the responsibility of the individual. Check your local department for their practices.

Is the Council accredited?

Yes, the Council is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (commonly referred to as The Pro Board). The Council entered into this system voluntarily to validate their program against international expectations. This rigorous assessment assures evaluations meet best national practices.

For more information or questions, please email MFA Deputy Director Joseph Klucznik at Joseph.Klucznik@mass.gov

Fire Service Certification in Massachusetts



Guide for the
Fire Service



This pamphlet is designed to answer frequently asked questions about the Massachusetts Fire Service Certification system.

It is not intended to be a comprehensive compilation of certification policies and practices nor is it intended to prevent you from posing specific questions on certification to the Massachusetts Fire Training Council or the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Certification Staff.

Questions and Answers

Why is there a fire service certification system in Massachusetts?

Fire service certification in Massachusetts is provided to stimulate professional development in the Massachusetts fire service and to allow members a means to demonstrate their ability to meet professional qualification standards through an objective measure of their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Who runs the Massachusetts certification process?

The Massachusetts Fire Training Council is a board appointed by the governor. This Council is comprised of representatives of the major fire service organizations of the state and citizens of the Commonwealth. The Massachusetts Fire Training Council has the statutory authority, under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 670, Section 165A, to administer the fire service certification process in the Commonwealth.

What role does the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy play in the fire service certification system?

The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy provides staff, equipment, and administrative support to the Council for the operation of the fire service certification system.

Do I have to become certified?

There is no state law or regulation requiring fire service personnel to become certified in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Fire Training Council offers fire service certification on a voluntary basis. Your local fire department regulations may require some level of certification.

Can my community require me to become certified?

The extent to which your community can influence your participation in the certification process depends on employment requirements, collective bargaining agreements and local protocols.

What standards are used to certify fire service personnel in this state?

The Massachusetts Fire Training Council bases fire service certification on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) professional qualification standards.

What types of certification are offered?

Currently, you can be certified to the following levels:

- Firefighter I, II, and I/II;
- Fire Instructor I, II, and III;
- Hazardous Materials Technician;
- Hazardous Materials: Operations Level Responder;

- Fire Officer I, II, and III;
- Driver Operator/Pumper and Aerial;
- Fire Investigator;
- Technical Rescuer: Rope Rescue I/II, Confined Space Rescue I/II, Trench Rescue I/II, Surface Water I/II, and Swift Water Rescue I/II.

Other levels may be offered in the future and can be found in the Department of Fire Services' (DFS) Learning Management System (LMS) Catalog (www.mass.gov/dfs).

Are the physical requirements adjusted to recognize limitations that age may place on an individual?

No. The standards are written to minimum performance levels. For certification, all fire service personnel must meet these minimum levels regardless of age or other factors.

I'm a certified firefighter in another state. How can I be recognized as a certified firefighter in Massachusetts?

To be certified to any level in Massachusetts, an individual must successfully complete the appropriate evaluation process. Fire service personnel certified in other states are not automatically certified in Massachusetts. In some cases, individuals certified in other states are allowed to use that certification to satisfy a prerequisite in our state.