



Utah Fire Service Certification Council

Minutes of November 15, 2023

The Utah Fire Service Certification Council met November 15, 2023
at UFRA, 3131 Mike Jense Parkway, Provo, UT 84601

1) **Certification Council meeting called to order – by Council Chair Scott Spencer**

2) **Welcome council members and visitors – by Scott Spencer**

Members attending: Scott Spencer, Rod “Hoss” Tomkinson, John Evans, Jeremy Raymond, Merlin Spendlove, Chris Trevino, TJ Brewer. Ron Harris, Dave Youngberg attended online via Teams.

Not in attendance: Krista Horting, Wade Snyder

Guests: Jon Ritchie of the Utah State Fire Marshal’s Office, for Ted Black

3) **Declaration of quorum – by Scott Spencer**

Scott Spencer declared a quorum.

4) **Approval of minutes from council meeting held on September 20, 2023 – by Scott Spencer**

Merlin Spendlove motioned to approve the minutes of September 20, 2023. Chris Trevino seconded the motion. The motion passed.

5) **Approval of the November 15, 2023 Certification Council agenda – by Scott Spencer**

TJ Brewer motioned to approve the agenda for November 15, 2023. John Evans seconded the motion. The motion passed.

An update on funding for cancer screening and the ARFF project – by Director Brad Wardle

Cancer screening:

- Firefighters Credit Union is donating \$25,000. UFRA is working with other universities on research. Questions are being asked, such as “Why and where are we getting cancer?”
- We will be meeting with the State Chiefs at Winter Fire School to discuss this topic. Dr. Hagerman from OCEA will be giving advice and info on ultrasound testing.
- With ultrasound screening, Brad mentioned an individual who had the ultrasound testing last year and they found bladder cancer. He said, “He has been treated and is now cancer-free. Early detection was key. That is why we are doing this.”
- Brad suggests departments continue with screening and testing if they have the funding.
- Galleri testing (by GRAIL) can come to your location for testing. The ultrasound may be different.
- Marc McElreath mentioned there is more information on the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation website.

ARFF project:

- UFRA is actively engaged to begin teaching Airport Rescue Fire Fighter (ARFF) training.
- They have identified paths that will help them buy a mobile ARFF prop.
- Currently, they are doing a feasibility analysis to build a fixed prop at the Provo Airport.
- There are 9 airports that require yearly training for certifications.
- There are 46 municipal airports that are not getting the needed training. It will take a lot to build the prop, but it will be a revenue producer for those coming in from out-of-state to train and test.
- Director Wardle has worked with the State Fire Marshal’s Office to get funding.
- The commissioner has approved funding for the mobile prop. They hope to have that prop within the next year and start training.
- Russ Young will be running the program.

- In the future, instructors will also be needed.
- Candidates will receive FAA & NFPA certifications.

6) Report from Forestry, Fire & State Lands – message from Wade Snyder

Wade Snyder was unable to attend. Scott Spencer shared a message from Wade.

They've moved into winter mode after a mild fire season and have been supporting additional areas in the nation.

7) Report on testing, certification, failed skills, and upcoming exams (3 months) – by Jennifer Lindley

Jennifer Lindley presented the Certification report as follows:

- Certification report: Good numbers. August includes July certifications, which is why the numbers are high. New Technical Rescue levels are listed on this report. Next time we will include the rest of the levels.
- Failed skills report: With the new database, there are issues exporting this report. We will present a double report in January.
- The upcoming test site list will be emailed after this meeting for council members to view.

8) Report on Fire Prevention Board meeting – by Scott Spencer

Scott Spencer reported on the FPB meeting held November 14, 2023. He mentioned that Director Brad Wardle shared information on the annual report. It was a short meeting. Jon Ritchie stated that there was not much more to report. The next Fire Prevention Board meeting will be January 9, 2024.

9) Discussion and motion to approve 2024 Certification Council meeting dates – by Joan Aaron

Wednesday, January 24, 2024 (after WFS) - UFRA

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 - UFRA

Wednesday, May 15, 2024 - UFRA

Wednesday, July 17, 2024 - UFRA

Wednesday, September 18, 2024 - UFRA

Wednesday, November 20, 2024 - UFRA

Wednesday, January 22, 2025 (after WFS) - UFRA

Rod Tomkinson motioned to approve the 2024 Certification Council meeting dates as presented. TJ Brewer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

10) Discussion and motion to approve/review the following submitted portfolios:

- Steve Chaffin (Inspector II) – Scott Spencer
Scott Spencer has given Steve Chaffin items to resubmit.
- Becky Steeneck submitted her Fire & Life Safety Educator Portfolio to be reviewed. TJ Brewer offered to review the portfolio.

Requested to skip to item 16 to do the online test demo before continuing.

11) Discussion and motion to approve additional levels of certification for non-affiliated, accredited recruit academies – “awareness.”

- Bridgerland Technical College asked to test on the following levels:
 - Common Passenger Vehicle Rescue - Awareness
 - Common Passenger Vehicle Rescue - Operations
 - Heavy Vehicle Rescue - Awareness
 - Rope Rescue - Awareness
 - Rope Rescue - Operations
 - Confined Space Rescue - Awareness
 - Trench Rescue - Awareness
 - Structural Collapse Rescue - Awareness
 - Machinery Rescue - Awareness

Tom Maples from Bridgerland is asking to teach these levels as a non-affiliated agency. The council had a few questions about this request:

Q: What is the reason for requesting each level of training?

Q: What is the demand for this training?

The council discussed that the value of a recruit candidate academy is to get candidates ready to be hired by a fire department. Technical Rescue levels come after basic training and after a firefighter is established. The department would then provide that training.

After the council discussed the matter and agreed on a response, John Evans motioned to reject the request. Chris Trevino seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12) Review, discussion, and motion to update Policies and Procedures edits – by Joan Aaron

UFRA’s editor April reviewed the verbiage in the Policies and Procedures manual and made several edits and corrections as needed for clarity. The “reciprocity” definition was added. Highlighted sections were updated.

Jeremy Raymond motioned to approve edits as presented. Rod Tomkinson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- a. Update other recommendations from the Certification Council.

Jeremy Raymond suggested to add a QR code to test instructions directing students to the policies for cheating.

13) Review, discussion, and motion to add two new levels: Fire Plans Examiner and Public Information Officer as certification levels in 2024. – by Scott Spencer

Inspector II and III are not available in the new NFPA 1030 edition.

- a. It was recommended to add a new certification level “**First Responder Inspector**” – in place of Company Officer Inspector. Scott mentioned there will be some overlap between the Fire Plans Examiner and Inspector. The class would probably be the same length as a Company Officer/Inspector class. This could count as a prerequisite to taking the new Inspector course.

Q: Could we send out a survey about Fire Plans Examiner to see if departments find this useful? Very few inspectors in the state have the ICC, as it is not required.

The council discussed the options. Rod Tomkinson motioned to add these levels (First Responder Inspector, Fire Plans Examiner, and Public Information Officer). Merlin Spendlove seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14) Review, discussion, and motion to approve Live Fire 1403 (ISFSI training) for reciprocity for state certification (if certification is IFSAC or Pro Board certified).

Joe Mannino asked regarding 1403 reciprocity. He has 1403 ISFSI certifications from outside of Utah. He is asking if we could also do reciprocity for our new Live Fire state certification.

The council came to an agreement and said “No” to reciprocity for Live Fire 1403 because our state standard and training is unique to our state.

15) Review, discussion, and motion to approve mandatory changes Pro Board requests for Structural Collapse “assigned role” requirements. Also, all Technical Rescue evolution exams need to be modified with those assigned role changes.

ProBoard suggested that UFRA have a sheet for the tester to fill out to assign team roles. This will be updated on the tester notes for each Technical Rescue exam.

Joan presented the new verbiage in red on the handout.

Jeremy Raymond motioned to approve the changes to Structural Collapse and all Technical Rescue exams. John Evans seconded the motion. The motion passed.

16) Review, demonstration and discussion of online testing and procedures

- a. A demo of a simulated online exam (using tablets) for each Certification Council member

Each Certification Council member was given a tablet, a user name and password, and an instruction sheet.

Joan mentioned that a PID number (personal identification number) will be the student's username. It is unique to each individual. The password will be provided on the day of the exam.

Departments will be responsible for looking up **PID numbers on the Lookup System** and adding them to the Online Examination Request form. Online Examinations Instructions have been created and will be posted when we launch.

Joan acted as the tester for the simulated exam and went through the instructions. After a short technical difficulty with QuestionMark Secure, the Certification Council members participated in the sample test.

On each tablet there is a lockdown app that does not allow access to internet or other programs during testing. This is downloaded on all our tablets and is called QuestionMark Secure. This is a "locked-down browser designed to provide a secure environment in which to deliver high stakes assessments such as tests and exams." It wasn't working.

There is a new online instruction sheet for testers which includes the requirement that testers walk around throughout the exam to make sure candidates don't leave the test site.

UFRA has 30 machines in the UVU testing center that could be used to take tests at UFRA in Provo. Pro Board and IFSAC are aware of other agencies that are using this program.

In May, the following procedure documents were created and presented to the Certification Council. A few minor edits and modifications were made.

- "Online Examination Request" form
- "Electronic Exam: Tester Instructions"
- "Candidate Agreement Form for Written Exams"
- A new form was created to collect materials before/after the exam.
- "Online Testing Check-Out/Check-In" form

Questions from the council:

Q: Can students bring their own table computer or laptop? This will be discussed in our next meeting. The answer was "no" to them bringing their own phone.

Q: Can someone get into the test bank while taking the test or after? No.

Q: How much Wi-Fi bandwidth will be used for taking the exams?

Chris Cox mentioned: There may be an option for sending a hotspot for areas needing more bandwidth. The UFRA iPads have had all apps removed.

Q: If someone is having problems with their own device and it is taking too long, at what point do they stop the testing process for that person and reschedule? Testers need to be able to monitor the other candidates.

Q: Are other states with this program using computer labs or allowing candidates to use personal devices?
Joan will follow up.

Recommendations from the council:

- Ron Harris recommends not allowing challenging the test questions.
- Send out beta tests to departments to try and see what other challenges may come up. Have people try to cheat to see if there are any issues we can correct.
- Have training for the testers before they are sent as testers for online versions.

- Jeremy Raymond recommends not allowing personal devices for taking the exam.
- We may need to conduct a site visit for all testing locations.

Policies to be created:

- Departments providing testing labs may need to install the lockdown app prior to the test.
- Tester training requirement
- Site visit of computer labs prior to exam

17) Old business – by Scott Spencer

- Structural Collapse and Hazardous Materials Awareness, Operations, and Technician info.
 - All 30 levels of Technical Rescue have been approved by Pro Board, as well as Hazardous Materials Awareness, Operations, and Technician, also NFPA 470, 9.2 and 9.6.
- The new Hazardous Materials standard will be implemented on January 1, 2024. Reminder to submit examination requests before November 16 with the holidays coming up.
- December 1 is Winter Fire School registration for students and vendors.
- Winter Fire School meetings have begun. This year's IC is Kevin Bowman. The dates are January 19–20. The “Chief’s Mixer” is Thursday, January 18, from 6:00–8:00 p.m.

18) New business – by Scott Spencer

- *Reminder: Non-affiliated, “accredited recruit academies” five-year site visits are due in November 2024 (all but Southwest Technical College). The applications, self-study, and emphasis supplements documents, edited with the new standard editions, will be sent by Jolene. The annual fee will increase (TBD). In January, site team members from the Certification Council will be assigned.
- Committee began updating Fire Inspector.
- Committee began updating Fire and Life Safety Educator I & II.
- Ephraim Fire Department recognition award dates – Council Members TBD
Scott Spencer will present it and work out a date for the department award presentation.
- Certification Council member resignation of Chris Whetton
- The Certification Office will be closed December 22 and reopen on January 2, 2024.

19) Next Certification Council meeting is after Winter Fire School, on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at UFRA.

20) Certification Council luncheon – a taste of Thanksgiving

TJ Brewer motioned to adjourn. Merlin Spendlove seconded the motion. The motion passed.