



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PRACTICAL SKILLS EVALUATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Will the PowerPoint presentation and training manual be available at the EMS Web site?

The power point and training manual are available on the Division of EMS Web site at www.ems.ohio.gov.

SKILLS TESTING PERSONNEL

Who can be a skills evaluator?

Ohio certified fire instructors and assistant fire instructors who complete the Practical Skills Evaluator Training program and complete a refresher once per year thereafter.

Is a fire charter permitted to designate more than one skills coordinator?

A fire charter may have as many skills coordinators and evaluators as necessary in order to effectively conduct practical skills testing.

Do skills evaluators need be Pro Board certified?

No. Skills evaluators are not required to have Pro Board certification in order to be skills evaluators. They are required, however, to be Ohio certified as fire instructors or assistant fire instructors and complete the Practical Skills Evaluator Training program.

Why do skills evaluators need to be certified instructors? It seems experienced firefighters would also be a valuable resource in evaluating practical skills.

After much discussion, it was decided that those holding instructor certifications have the curriculum knowledge required for examination integrity and consistency. Assistant fire instructors were included to increase the number of potential evaluators.

Are program directors and / or authorizing officials required to be certified instructors?

No. Their role is the administration of the fire charter. They have ultimate responsibility for the program.

SKILLS TESTING PROCESS

For a class of 20 students, how long does it take to complete testing, and how many evaluators are needed?

Testing duration and the number of evaluators varies based upon course level, the number of students, the skills to be tested, and the number of skills required for the course. With experience, the fire charter will inevitably become more streamlined as a result of improved testing processes.

Should candidates who miss a critical step be stopped, or should they be allowed to finish the skill?

A student must be stopped only if he or she becomes a safety risk to themselves or others. If there are no safety risks, allow the student to complete the skills station for the allotted time provided on the practical skills sheet.

Are candidates allowed to exceed the allotted time as provided on the practical skills sheet?

To facilitate efficient and timely testing, students shall be stopped after the allotted time shown on the practical skills sheet and directed to a holding station.

We understand that the state will provide a list of skills to be evaluated for each class. What is the process?

The number of skills will be determined by the level of fire training being conducted. Upon approval of an electronically submitted Course Request, the program director and skills coordinator will have access to information on the practical skills to be tested. Skills evaluators will be notified of the practical skills to be tested on the day of testing.

PRACTICAL SKILLS SHEETS

If we convert the Practical Skills Sheets to electronic format for signatures, notes, and check-offs, can we maintain the files only in electronic format (no hard copy)?

Course records are permitted under the Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.) to be maintained electronically. Course records shall be backed up, and course and testing records shall be available in hard copy format if requested by the Division of EMS.

With the inclusion of the Practical Skill Test Summary Sheet, do we need to retain the individual Practical Skills Sheets, and if so, for how long?

All testing documents shall be maintained by the program director as required by the O.A.C. for the current and previous charter period. All course related documents as outlined in O.A.C. 4765-11-03 are subject to review by the Division of EMS.

Where are the Practical Skills Sheets located on the EMS Web site?

Fire Service Examination materials are maintained at http://www.ems.ohio.gov/ems_fire_services.stm

The International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) has more skills sheets listed in its curriculum for course completion than are required by the state. Are we required to include IFSTA skills that are over and above the state requirements in order to achieve "course completion?"

No. Students shall successfully complete state-required knowledge and practical skills examinations in order to be eligible to receive state certification. Practical and written state certification examinations are developed based on the national standard with the cooperation of subject matter experts from Ohio. Text books written by publishing companies are used as reference materials.

RETESTING

Could a student who fails a practical skill at one institution take a retest of the same skill at another institution?

The Division of EMS Web-based test system will connect a student with a particular course at a specific fire charter. Permitting a student to retest at another institution is discouraged and may result in difficulties in tracking written and practical skills testing results. We also understand, however, that in order to provide practical skills testing within a reasonable timeframe, it may be necessary for students to complete practical skills testing at a fire charter other than the fire charter delivering the original course.

A student must obtain permission from the original and proposed (alternative) program directors to complete testing at another fire charter. The program director of the original fire charter accepts the responsibility for the course administration, testing, and recordkeeping for that student.

It is the alternative Ohio chartered fire training program's responsibility to provide the original chartered fire training program with any retest results and testing documentation for test administration.

If a student fails an attempt, is the same evaluator permitted to grade the student on second and third attempts?

A skills evaluator can evaluate a candidate's initial attempt or second attempt (cannot evaluate both the initial and second attempt) and may evaluate the third attempt, as all third attempts must be observed by the program director.

Additionally, a skills evaluator who taught a specific topic and / or skill during the course cannot evaluate that skills station, either initially or as a retest.

Is it mandatory to conduct same day testing of a failed first attempt of practical skills, or can the second attempt be conducted on another day?

On the initial testing date, the candidate decides. The candidate has the option to retest on the initial test date after adequate time for remediation. The fire charter program shall indicate any costs associated with retesting to the candidate.

Are students who fail a second attempt eligible to retest that day or must they wait?

Third attempts require a waiting period of at least one business day.

CERTIFICATION

Will you describe how a chartered institution applies for a student's Pro Board Certification?

It is the student's responsibility (not the fire charter's) to apply for Pro Board certification. The student will be e-mailed a Pro Board application once he or she has been issued an active Ohio Firefighter I or Firefighter II certification. The student completes the Pro Board application and returns the application with a \$15 check or money order to Pro Board. Pro Board will process the application and send the certificate.

If an individual coming to Ohio from another state has Pro Board and state firefighter certification, why is testing required? We allow EMS reciprocity, so why not fire?

All candidates from other states seeking Ohio firefighter certification must pass Ohio testing. Ohio's reciprocity process recognizes the candidate's training; however, individuals must demonstrate (through testing) they have the cognitive and practical skills to function as an Ohio firefighter before becoming certified.

Additionally, Pro Board or IFSAC certificates do not expire. Depending on when their certificate was issued, Pro

Board or IFSAC certification does not indicate that they still possess those skills.

Is there an advantage in having Pro Board certification versus IFSAC?

There are no advantages or disadvantages to holding a Pro Board certificate versus an IFSAC certificate. Holding either certificate indicates a student has completed a fire training program that meets the NFPA standards from a training institution that successfully completed the comprehensive accreditation process for that level.

Does Pro Board have continuing education (CE) and / or renewal requirements?

No. There are no CE requirements or renewal requirements.

Let's say an individual received his Level II certification prior to 2003 and subsequently passed the Ohio Fire Knowledge Exam as the pre-requisite for the Ohio Fire Instructor Course. Would that meet the written exam requirement for Pro Board, thus requiring only practical skills testing?

These situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis upon written request. The Division of EMS will take into consideration the circumstances and report the findings of the request in writing to the candidate.

What is the advantage / benefit of becoming Pro Board certified in Ohio?

- Because many states and territories recognize Pro Board, holding a Pro Board certificate offers portability relative to becoming certified in other states.
- A firefighter may be considered more marketable by receiving training and holding a certificate recognized by most states.
- Pro Board certificate holders are included in a nationally recognized database.

What type of grandfathering is set up for people trained and certified in the 80s and 90s?

For certifications issued prior to 2003, the candidate will be required to take a written and practical examination.

Is there a process for crossover for IFSAC to Pro Board or vice versa?

Not at this time. This will be a topic for future discussion with the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Committee.

For those certified before 2003, is there a review module available for preparing for the exam?

The Division of EMS Web site contains the Practical Skills Sheets that can be reviewed prior to testing.

Candidates can prepare for the written test by referencing the current edition of fire training texts published by IFSTA, Jones and Bartlett, or Pennwell.