



North Dakota Firefighter's  
Association  
Organized June 4, 1954  
Incorporated January 20, 1955

# ***NORTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION***



## ***Certification Policy and Procedure Manual***

North Dakota  
Firefighter's Association

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To promote the safety and welfare of the North Dakota Firefighter's Association members through uniform and established training standards.

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# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

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Section 1-4:	Scope

### Section 1-1: Purpose

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this *Certification Policy and Procedure Manual* is to define the North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA) policies and procedures governing the certification of fire and emergency service personnel within the State of North Dakota. The NDFA Certification Program also provides a means for personnel to obtain certifications recognized beyond the state of North Dakota.

### Section 1-2: Background

- 1.2.1 In March 2010, the NDFA explored the possibility of obtaining accreditation through the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (PRO BOARD®) for certifying firefighters in North Dakota. Following that discussion, NDFA agreed to pursue PRO BOARD® accreditation.
- 1.2.2 In August 2013, NDFA applied for membership in the PRO BOARD® Certificate Assembly. Membership was approved by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) on October 15, 2013, and presented to the Association at the 2014 Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. Accreditation was granted for the following standards:
- Hazardous Materials
    - Awareness level
    - Operations level
    - Mission Specific Responsibilities - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Product Control (PC)
  - Firefighter
    - Level I
    - Level II
- 1.2.3 Between NDFA's initial accreditation in 2013 and the reaccreditation site visit in November 2019, NDFA's Advisory Committee, along with representatives from across North Dakota, requested that additional levels of certification be included in NDFA's accreditation. These include:
- Fire Instructor I
  - Fire Officer I
  - Technical Rescuer with the following disciplines:
    - Rope Rescue
    - Confined Space Rescue
    - Structural Collapse Rescue.
    - Trench Rescue

### Section 1-3: Empowerment

- 1.3.1 Section 18-03-01.1 of the North Dakota Century Code outlines the duties and authority of the North Dakota Firefighter's Association as follows:

#### **18-03-01.1. North Dakota firefighter's association – Duties and authority.**

The North Dakota firefighter's association shall:

1. Develop and adopt a statewide fire education and training plan;
2. Coordinate fire service training at all levels;
3. Establish procedures to govern the certification process for firefighter training; and
4. Report quarterly to the state fire marshal.

**Section 1-4: Scope**

- 1.4.1 The NDFA Firefighter Certification Program is voluntary; there is no statutory requirement for firefighters in North Dakota to be certified. However, NDFA's Certification Program meets the certification standards required by certain fire departments, the Department of Defense (DoD), and other branches of the United States government when PRO BOARD® accreditation is recognized for the position.



## CHAPTER TWO - DEFINITIONS

### INDEX:

- Section 2-1:** Purpose  
**Section 2-2:** Definitions

### Section 2-1: Purpose

- 2.1.1 The definitions contained in this manual apply exclusively to the policies and procedures herein. They do not apply to the rules, regulations, practices, or procedures of any local fire service or organization.
- 2.1.2 All definitions appearing in the NDFA Certification Policy and Procedure Manual apply to the terms used in this manual. When a term is not defined in this chapter or another chapter, it shall be interpreted according to its commonly accepted meaning in context. Merriam-Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary* (11th edition) shall serve as the reference for such definitions.

### Section 2-2: Definitions

- 2.2.1 **ACCREDITATION** – The process by which a private, non-governmental body evaluates an entity and formally recognizes it as having met established criteria or standards.
- 2.2.2 **APPLICANT** – A person who has met the requirements to be examined for certification, or an entity seeking recognition as an accredited academy.
- 2.2.3 **BUSINESS DAY** – Standard working day of Monday through Friday excluding weekends and official public holidays.
- 2.2.4 **CANDIDATE** – A person taking a written and/or practical examination for certification.
- 2.2.5 **CERTIFICATE** – An award acknowledging completion of training, attendance, participation, or achievement. A certificate alone does not constitute certification. For example, a certificate of attendance recognizes participation in an activity or course, while a certificate of certification recognizes demonstrated competence and official recognition by an authorized governing body. Certification is further defined in Section 2.2.6.
- 2.2.6 **CERTIFICATION** – The formal process by which an accredited or authorized person, agency, or entity assesses and verifies an individual's qualifications in accordance with established requirements or standards, and confirms competence by issuing a certificate.
- 2.2.7 **CERTIFICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)** – The advisory body overseeing NDFA's certification program. The committee is responsible for establishing strategic direction, ensuring fairness and integrity, maintaining standards and compliance, and safeguarding the credibility and value of NDFA credentials. Specific responsibilities are detailed in Chapter 3.
- 2.2.8 **CERTIFIED** – An applicant who has successfully met or exceeded the required objectives of NDFA's certification program.
- 2.2.9 **EVALUATOR** – An individual qualified to assess a certification skills examination. May also be referred to as a tester.
- 2.2.10 **FACILITATOR** – A trained individual who conducts a live video presentation as part of a certification skills test. Approved facilitators include NDFA evaluators and/or proctors.
- 2.2.11 **FIREFIGHTER / FIRE FIGHTER** – A person whose vocation or avocation is firefighting; a member of a fire

service unit.

- 2.2.12 **FIRE SERVICE-RELATED ACCREDITING BODY** – An organization that meets the current edition of NFPA 1000, *Standard for Fire Service Professional Qualifications Accreditation and Certification Systems*, and accredits entities authorized to grant certifications. NDFA recognizes the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board®) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).
- 2.2.13 **INTERNATIONAL FIRE SERVICE ACCREDITATION CONGRESS (IFSAC)** – A peer-driven, self-governing accrediting body that accredits both fire service certification programs and fire-related postsecondary degree programs.
- 2.2.14 **JOB PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENT (JPR)** – A statement describing the performance required for a specific job, consisting of three critical components:
- The task to be performed;
  - The tools, equipment, or materials required; and
  - The evaluation criteria or performance outcomes.
- JPRs form the basis for evaluating candidates during certification at a given level.
- 2.2.15 **LEAD EVALUATOR (LE)** – A qualified and experienced individual designated by NDFA to oversee a certification examination. Only one lead evaluator is assigned per examination. If a test site only uses one evaluator, that individual shall follow all policies fit for the LE position. To qualify, an individual must have previously served as an evaluator in a certification test.
- 2.2.16 **LIVE VIDEO EVALUATION** – Any type of assessment that incorporates the use of live video in a remote location from an evaluator.
- 2.2.17 **METHODOLOGY** – A structured process used to evaluate performance or skills and determine their level of quality.
- 2.2.18 **NATIONAL BOARD ON FIRE SERVICE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (PRO BOARD®)** – A non-profit organization that accredits organizations that use NFPA professional qualification standards with certification programs. The term “Pro Board” will be used to describe this organization throughout the text in this manual.
- 2.2.19 **NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (NFPA®)** – An organization that develops and publishes consensus-based standards for fire service professional qualifications and other fire and life safety codes.
- 2.2.20 **NORTH DAKOTA RESIDENT** – An individual residing in North Dakota who holds a valid North Dakota driver’s license.
- 2.2.21 **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES** – Formal guidelines established by NDFA, in coordination with the Certification Advisory Committee, outlining methods, processes, and standards for implementing certification rules and administering the certification program.
- 2.2.22 **PRACTICAL EXAMINATION** – A psychomotor assessment conducted in accordance with NDFA certification policies and NFPA standards. It consists of randomly selected JPRs.
- 2.2.23 **PROCTOR** – An individual qualified to administer a certification examination, typically a written examination. May also be referred to as a tester.
- 2.2.24 **QUALIFIED** – A person trained in the certification process who meets all applicable requirements of NDFA’s certification policies and procedures.
- 2.2.25 **RECIPROCITY** – The recognition of certification, without additional testing, for individuals certified by a Pro Board® or IFSAC-accredited entity. Such recognition satisfies NFPA prerequisites for certification at higher levels.

- 2.2.26 **REQUEST TO TEST (RTT) APPLICATION** – An online form completed by candidates seeking certification testing. Link to the Request To Test – [RTT Application](#)
- 2.2.27 **REQUEST FOR RETEST (RFR) APPLICATION** – An online form completed by a candidate’s chief or designated authority to request an additional examination attempt. Link to the Request for Retest – [RFR Application](#)
- 2.2.28 **REVOCATION** – The withdrawal of certification due to mandatory grounds or ethical misconduct.
- 2.2.29 **REVOKE** – See “Revocation”.
- 2.2.30 **SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)** – Equipment meeting NFPA 1981 standards for open-circuit SCBA for emergency services, including a personal alert safety system (PASS) that complies with NFPA 1982 standards at the time of acquisition.
- 2.2.31 **SKILL ASSESSMENT SET** – A collection of skill assessment sheets representing at least 25% of the skills identified in the applicable NFPA standard. These sets are designed by NDFA subject matter experts (SMEs) to reflect a variety of difficulties and realistic scenarios. Each certification test site receives a randomly selected set for the level being assessed. Also referred to as a “Skill Set.”
- 2.2.32 **SKILL ASSESSMENT SHEET** – A document used to evaluate and record a candidate’s competency, knowledge, and ability in relation to JPRs. Also referred to as a “Skill Sheet.”
- 2.2.33 **SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT (SME)** – An NDFA-designated individual certified and experienced in a particular discipline, responsible for developing, maintaining, and evaluating NDFA-accredited standards and levels.
- 2.2.34 **STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTER PROTECTIVE CLOTHING (Turnouts)** – A complete ensemble of compliant protective gear, including helmet, coat, pants, gloves, boots, and hood, meeting NFPA 1971 standards at the time of acquisition. Often referred to as “PPE”.
- 2.2.35 **TESTER** – An individual responsible for evaluating skills, administering written exams, or monitoring live video sessions. This term may be used interchangeably with “proctor,” “facilitator,” or “evaluator.”
- 2.2.36 **TEST SITE REQUEST (TSR) APPLICATION** – An online form submitted by a department chief or designated authority to request certification testing at a specific site. Link to the Test Site Request – [TSR Application](#)

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# CHAPTER THREE – CERTIFICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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<b>Section 3-4:</b>	<b>Administration</b>
<b>Section 3-5:</b>	<b>Revocation of Certification</b>
<b>Section 3-6:</b>	<b>Certification Appeals Process</b>

### **Section 3-1: Purpose**

- 3.1.1 The purpose of this chapter is to establish the administrative authority, responsibility, and policies governing the North Dakota Firefighter's Association Certification Advisory Committee, hereafter referred to as the Certification Advisory Committee (CAC).
- 3.1.2 The NDFA Certification Program will be governed by the NDFA CAC, administered by the NDFA Certification Director, and overseen by the NDFA Executive Board, which retains ultimate responsibility for the program.

### **Section 3-2: Responsibilities**

- 3.2.1 The CAC holds general responsibility for the following functions:
- Approving revisions to examination content and eligibility criteria;
  - Acting as a liaison to all affected parties;
  - Assisting with the certification program reviews, examination, and equivalency determinations as requested;
  - Adopting of certification program appeals policies and rules;
  - Conducting and deciding appeals related to the certification program;
  - Conducting hearings regarding certification revocation;
  - Deciding on certification revocations; and
  - Responding to challenges and complaints submitted to the committee.
- 3.2.2 The CAC is responsible for interpreting certification program policies and procedures.
- 3.2.3 The CAC shall serve as the final authority in all certification program appeals.
- 3.2.4 The CAC shall serve as the final authority on all matters of certification revocation.

### **Section 3-3: Organization**

- 3.3.1 The CAC shall consist of ten (10) members representing the following entities:
- NDFA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President
  - Four NDFA Regional Representatives, one elected member from each of the four training regions: Northwest (NW), Northeast (NE), Southwest (SW), Southeast (SE)
  - A representative from the North Dakota Fire Marshal's Office (NDFM)
  - A representative from the North Dakota Forest Service (NDFS)
  - A representative from the North Dakota Fire Service Instructor Society (NDFSIS)
  - A representative from the North Dakota Fire Chief's Association (NDFCA)
  - A representative from the North Dakota Fire Prevention Association (NDFPA)
- 3.3.2 Members shall be selected as follows:

- NDFA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Elected at the annual Firefighter’s Convention; serves a one-year term.
- NDFA Regional Representatives – Elected at the annual Firefighter’s Convention; serve a two-year term aligned with the NDFA Trustee terms for their respective region.
- NDFM – Appointed by the ND Fire Marshal; serves a one-year term.
- NDFS – Appointed by the NDFS Manager; serves a one-year term.
- NDFSIS – Appointed by the NDFSIS Board President; serves a one-year term.
- NDFCA – Appointed by the NDFCA Board President; serves a one-year term.
- NDFPA – Appointed by the NDFPA Board President; serves a one-year term.

3.3.3 Terms shall begin at the conclusion of the annual Firefighter’s Convention, once NDFA Executive Board positions are finalized, and end at the conclusion of the following year’s convention.

- Members representing agencies or groups (non-elected positions) may serve consecutive terms at the discretion of their appointing body.
- Each constituent organization shall notify the Certification Director, prior to the annual Firefighter’s Convention, of their designated CAC representative for the upcoming term.

3.3.4 The NDFA Certification Director shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the CAC, without voting rights.

3.3.5 The Certification Director shall serve as Secretary and Compliance Officer for the CAC.

3.3.5 The NDFA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President shall serve as the chairperson, hereafter known as the Chair.

3.3.6 Meetings shall be held as necessary to address program changes, appeals, revocations, or other certification matters. A minimum of five (5) business days’ notice is required for any meeting.

3.3.7 Meetings will be held either in person or virtually as necessary. The Certification Director shall notify all members of the meeting’s date, time, and location.

3.3.8 The Chair shall be responsible for:

- Presiding over all CAC meetings;
- Conducting meetings in accordance with *Robert’s Rules of Order*;
- Appointing CAC members to subcommittees as needed; and
- Performing other duties as required.

3.3.9 The Secretary shall be responsible for:

- Scheduling and calling meetings as needed;
- Preparing and distributing meeting agendas;
- Recording and maintaining meeting minutes; and
- Ensuring timely distribution of CAC minutes, actions, and other official business.

3.3.10 CAC members shall be responsible for:

- Attending all scheduled meetings;
- Reviewing materials in advance of meetings;
- Acting in the best interest of the CAC;
- Remaining impartial in all appeals;
- Upholding ethical standards and confidentiality; and
- Signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the beginning of every term.

#### **Section 3-4: Administration**

- 3.4.1 A quorum shall consist of six (6) of the ten (10) voting members. No vote or decision may occur without a quorum present. In the absence of a quorum, discussions may proceed for informational purposes only, and votes shall be postponed until the next meeting.
- 3.4.2 A majority vote shall be determined by a simple majority of the voting members present.
- 3.4.3 Public notice of all CAC meetings shall be provided at least five (5) business days in advance and include the date, time, location, and agenda. The Certification Director shall be responsible for issuing such notifications.
- 3.4.4 Private discussions among CAC members or audience participants should be avoided during meetings. Members shall speak only when recognized by the Chair, and all discussion shall be directed through the Chair.
- 3.4.5 Minutes shall be recorded for all CAC and committee meetings and must be approved by the CAC.
- 3.4.6 The CAC shall maintain confidentiality regarding rulings, discussions, and matters involving personnel or sensitive issues. The Chair may convene an executive session when necessary.
- 3.4.7 Any CAC member found in violation of confidentiality requirements under Section 3.4.6 may be asked to resign by a majority vote of the remaining members. Such actions shall be reported in writing to the Certification Director.
- 3.4.8 In accordance with the North Dakota Open Records Law, all CAC records are public. However, individual certification and revocation records are considered personal and shall only be released in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

### **Section 3-5: Revocation of Certification**

- 3.5.1 The CAC may revoke certification for any of the following reasons:
  - Conviction of a felony or Class A misdemeanor involving *attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy* to commit a crime, or a felony reduced to a misdemeanor by plea bargain;
  - Conviction of a crime requiring registration as a sex offender;
  - Submission of false information on a certification application;
  - Falsification of training records or official signatures;
  - Intentional violation or misrepresentation of NDFA Certification Program policies or procedures;
  - Cheating or misconduct during examinations; or
  - Submission of falsified documentation for certification purposes.
- 3.5.2 Revocation shall apply only to the specific certification(s) in question.
- 3.5.3 The certification revocation process shall proceed as follows:
  1. Initiation:
    - *Agency Initiated:* A written request (email acceptable) is submitted to NDFA, detailing the reason and supporting evidence for revocation.
    - *NDFA Initiated:* NDFA may initiate revocation upon receipt of credible information suggesting a violation under Section 3.5.1.
  2. Investigation:
    - The Certification Director or a designated committee shall conduct a timely, professional investigation without prejudice or unnecessary exposure of involved parties.
  3. Notification:
    - The affected department and individual shall be informed that an investigation is underway, with an explanation of its purpose.
  4. Evidence Gathering:
    - Witnesses may be interviewed and evidence collected. Hearsay shall only be used to identify potential firsthand witnesses.

5. Report Preparation:
  - A written report summarizing findings, analysis, and conclusions shall be prepared, signed, and submitted to the CAC for review at a scheduled meeting.
6. Review and Action:
  - The CAC shall review the report to determine whether the request meets the criteria in Section 3.5.1.
    - i. If the criteria are not met, the case is closed, and the requestor is notified.
    - ii. If further information is required, the CAC may request additional details or conduct supplementary investigation.
7. Hearing:
  - If warranted, the CAC may conduct a formal revocation hearing and invite the affected individual to submit written input for consideration.
8. Decision:
  - The CAC shall evaluate all relevant information, including mitigating and aggravating factors.
    - i. If fewer than a majority vote in favor, no action will be taken, and the individual/entity will be notified in writing within fifteen (15) days.
    - ii. If a majority votes in favor, the revocation shall be enacted, and written notice will be provided within fifteen (15) days.

### **Section 3-6: Certification Appeals Process**

3.6.1 Refer to Chapter 11; Certification Appeals Process for detailed procedures.



## CHAPTER FOUR – CERTIFICATION

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<b>Section 4-4:</b>	<b>Methodology Assessment Policies</b>

### **Section 4-1: Purpose**

- 4.1.1 This chapter establishes the policies and procedures governing the NDFA Firefighter Certification Program.
- 4.1.2 The NDFA Firefighter Certification Program evaluates the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals seeking certification and verifies that they meet nationally recognized standards.

### **Section 4-2: General Certification Policies**

- 4.2.1 Under the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC), the North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA) holds the authority to certify fire service personnel within the state of North Dakota.
- 4.2.2 The NDFA is the sole entity authorized to issue certifications under the PRO BOARD® accreditation system. Certification authority is not delegated to any other entity unless a written request is made, the Certification Advisory Committee recommends approval, and the Executive Board grants final authorization.
- 4.2.3 The NDFA exclusively establishes and interprets all certification policies and procedures. No other individual or organization may create, modify, or interpret these policies.
- 4.2.4 Accreditation processes will not affect the certification status of individuals who are already certified.
- 4.2.5 All certification testing conducted under the PRO BOARD® accreditation system must comply with NDFA policies and procedures.
- 4.2.6 All applicants, regardless of certification level, must meet the following criteria:
  - Be at least 16 years of age before testing;
  - Be a member or associate member of the North Dakota Firefighter's Association;
  - Meet the applicable NFPA standard requirements for the certification level sought.
  - Meet all NDFA-specific requirements for that certification level. and
  - Complete all written and skill examinations within 12 months of the initial test date.
- 4.2.7 Certification testing is open to all individuals who meet the above criteria, without discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation, except where a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ) applies.
- 4.2.8 Certification will be granted only to candidates who successfully complete the required examinations and meet all requirements for the level sought.
  - If a requirement includes training under live-fire conditions, candidates must adhere to NFPA 1403. For more information, refer to the NDFA Training Division's "Live Fire Policy".
- 4.2.9 NDFA certifies personnel to the current editions of NFPA and other standards as adopted by the PRO BOARD®.
- 4.2.10 When the NDFA adopts a new edition of a standard, members will be notified through email, NDFA social media,

and other avenues available to members. A three-month transition period will be provided to complete certification under the previous standard, after which that edition becomes obsolete. Notifications will include:

- The effective date of the new edition; and
- The final date certification under the previous edition will be accepted.

4.2.11 NDFA will update certification testing to align with new NFPA standards within two years of their official adoption.

4.2.12 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are used to develop and maintain NDFA standards. SMEs must:

- Be NDFA members or associate members;
- Hold Fire Service Instructor I certification;
- Be certified, or meet certification requirements, in the subject area they represent; and
- Submit a formal endorsement from their department chief verifying experience, professionalism, and credibility.

4.2.13 Incumbent firefighters are not required to obtain certification under new standard editions. However, they may challenge a new certification level by:

- Completing all requirements of the new standard;
- Completing required training records; and
- Passing the written and skills examinations.

4.2.14 NDFA maintains written test banks and skill assessment sheets for each accredited level to ensure comprehensive testing of all Job Performance Requirements (JPRs), requisite knowledge, and skills.

4.2.15 When NFPA standards require prerequisite qualifications not accredited by the NDFA, such requirements will still be tested. Candidates who hold equivalent PRO BOARD® or IFSAC-accredited certifications may satisfy these prerequisites through the reciprocity process (see Chapter Ten: Reciprocity).

4.2.16 Once achieved, a certification remains valid indefinitely and does not require renewal unless revoked by the Certification Advisory Committee (see Section 3-5: Revocation of Certification).

4.2.17 NDFA Certification Standards are available online at: <https://apps.nd.gov/NDFA/members/Home/Dynamic/Standards>

#### **Section 4-3: Test Bank Policies**

4.3.1 Test banks will be available for review by PRO BOARD® site teams during site visits.

- Access is restricted to NDFA staff and approved SMEs during test validation.
- Test banks may not be removed from NDFA control except as outlined in Section 13.4.

4.3.2 Written certification tests are created through random sampling to assess requisite knowledge or, where applicable, qualification competencies in accordance with NFPA standards.

4.3.3 Tests will be randomly generated from the applicable level, chapter, or section of the test bank. The number of questions will be determined by SMEs to ensure adequate coverage of all tested competencies.

#### **Section 4-4: Methodology Assessment Policies**

4.4.1 Certification testing evaluates candidates based on the Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) and competencies identified in the applicable NFPA standards.

4.4.2 NDFA employs appropriate assessment methodologies aligned with NFPA action verbs to evaluate candidate performance. Assessment types include:

- Cognitive Assessment

- Psychomotor Assessment
  - Process Assessment
  - Product/Project Assessment
- 4.4.3 Cognitive assessments measure the requisite knowledge and knowledge-based competencies identified in NFPA standards.
- 4.4.4 Psychomotor assessments measure the requisite skills and skill-based competencies identified in NFPA standards.
- 4.4.5 Process-based assessments evaluate cognitive abilities such as understanding, application, analysis, decision-making, and evaluation. Skill assessment sheets are developed by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and reviewed by the Certification Director to ensure validity and compliance with NFPA standards.
- Any assessment sheet used 20 or more times with a failure rate exceeding 65% will be suspended pending review and revision. Updates will be made based on outcomes of a post-analysis meeting between the SMEs and the Certification Director to ensure continued alignment with the applicable standard.
- 4.4.6 Product/Project assessments measure skill-based competencies through defined performance goals and standardized supporting documents (SDs) or grading rubrics. All related materials must be developed and approved by SMEs prior to implementation.
- Fire Officer I online course projects will be graded using a standardized rubric built into the program.
  - The Certification Director will conduct an annual review of a random sample of SDs and rubrics to verify consistent evaluation across testers.
- 4.4.7 All NDFA testers are required to complete the NDFA Methodology Course upon initial appointment and every two years thereafter. This training ensures continued proficiency in approved assessment methodologies and testing procedures.

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## CHAPTER FIVE – EXAMINATION PROCESS

### INDEX:

Section 5-1:	Purpose
Section 5-2:	Test Sites
Section 5-3:	Examination Policies
Section 5-4:	Notification of Certification Examination Results
Section 5-5:	Written Examination Policies
Section 5-6:	Skills Examination Policies
Section 5-7:	Certification Fee Structure

### Section 5-1: Purpose

- 5.1.1 This chapter establishes the policies and procedures governing the NDFA Firefighter Certification Program examination process.
- 5.1.2 The examination process is intended to evaluate the knowledge, skills, and abilities of certification candidates in a fair, consistent, and impartial manner.

### Section 5-2: Test Sites

- 5.2.1 There is no fee for initial certification testing.
- 5.2.2 NDFA member departments or agencies utilizing NDFA-approved evaluators may continue to conduct certification testing as authorized.
- 5.2.3 NDFA member departments or agencies seeking to host an NDFA test site must:
- Ensure facilities comply with section **9-3: Certification of Facilities and Equipment**;
  - Submit a **Test Site Request (TSR)** application;
  - Register a minimum of ten (10) candidates; and
  - Notify the NDFA Certification Director at least two (2) weeks prior to the desired test date via TSR application or email.
- 5.2.5 Candidates must submit a **Request to Test (RTT)** application at least four (4) business days prior to testing, including all required documentation. Applications can be completed through the NDFA member portal.

### Section 5-3: Examination Policies

- 5.3.1 NDFA shall administer all examinations in accordance with established policies to ensure fairness, consistency, and non-discrimination.
- 5.3.2 Reasonable accommodations will be provided in compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §12101)* and applicable NFPA standards.
- 5.3.3 Testing and certification are available only to organizations that:
- Are recognized by the North Dakota Fire Marshal's Office;
  - Are members or associate members of the NDFA; and
  - Operate within the state of North Dakota.
- 5.3.4 Certification testing shall occur only at approved facilities suitable for the written and/or skills examination.

- 5.3.5 Any NDFA evaluation for certification will not be done under live-fire conditions.
- 5.3.5 Requests for certification examinations must:
- Be submitted at least four (4) business days before the desired date for any written exam or seven (7) business days prior to any skills examination;
  - Specify the certification level sought;
  - Include requests for written and/or skills components;
  - Confirm the ability to conduct all required NFPA JPR skills; and
  - Comply with ***Chapter 9: Facilities and Equipment Certification***.
- 5.3.6 NDFA will notify applicants regarding approval prior to the examination date.
- 5.3.7 Examination schedules will be published on the NDFA website.
- 5.3.8 NDFA will publish examination guides for each accredited level, detailing testing standards, content outlines, references, and evaluation criteria.
- 5.3.9 RTT applications must be received by the registration deadline. Walk-in candidates will not be accepted.
- 5.3.10 Applicants will receive confirmation of acceptance 3–5 business days prior to testing.
- 5.3.11 A valid photo ID is required for all examination events.
- 5.3.12 NDFA maintains custody of all testing materials until receipt by the Lead Evaluator, who then assumes responsibility for their security until returned.
- 5.3.13 Examination materials may not be reproduced without NDFA authorization.
- 5.3.14 NDFA representatives may visit test sites to ensure compliance. Evaluators are responsible for maintaining exam integrity.
- 5.3.15 Candidates who fail either the written or skills examination must retest the failed component(s).

#### **Section 5-4: Notification of Certification Examination Results**

- 5.4.1 Examination results are provided to candidates immediately following testing.
- 5.4.2 Results may also be released to the candidate's department head or designated authority. Results will not be shared with other parties unless authorized by the candidate through Section Four of the RTT application.

#### **Section 5-5: Written Examination Policies**

- 5.5.1 Written examinations shall be of sufficient length and rigor to accurately assess candidate knowledge.
- 5.5.2 A minimum score of 70% is required to pass, unless otherwise specified by the applicable NFPA standard.
- 5.5.3 Candidates scoring below 70% may retest up to two (2) times.
- 5.5.4 Retest Procedures:
- Candidates must coordinate with their department officer to schedule a written retest using the **Request for Retest (RFR)** application.
  - The first retest may occur no sooner than two (2) weeks after the previous (1<sup>st</sup>) attempt.
  - The second retest may occur no sooner than one (1) month after the previous (2<sup>nd</sup>) attempt.

- After a third failed attempt, candidates must wait one (1) year and restart the certification process.
- A fee applies to each retest attempt.
  - For the first retest (or second attempt), the fee will be \$100.
  - For the second retest (or third attempt), the fee will be \$150.

5.5.5 Failure to retest within twelve (12) months of the initial examination constitutes failure of the certification process.

5.5.6 Written examinations are administered exclusively by NDFA personnel using the Net Exam online platform.

5.5.7 Candidates who fail to appear for an examination will be marked as failing unless they provide valid notice or documentation as follows:

- Notice 24 hours' advance notice;
- Physician's note within 7 days for illness/injury; or
- Written explanation within 7 days for emergencies or conflicts.

5.5.8 Late arrivals will not be admitted once testing has begun..

5.5.9 Candidates who leave due to an emergency may reschedule without penalty. Non-emergency departures will result in a failed attempt.

#### **Section 5-6: Skills Examination Policies**

5.6.1 Skills examinations evaluate performance using realistic, randomly selected assessment sets representing at least 25% of the required skills for the certification level.

5.6.2 Skills are evaluated on a pass/fail basis unless otherwise specified on the applicable skills sheet. To receive a passing score, all critical steps and the majority of non-critical steps must be completed successfully.

- For any skills assessment that uses the "majority of non-critical steps" criterion, the combined total of critical and non-critical steps must also reflect a minimum overall score of 70% to be considered a successful evaluation.

5.6.3 Skills assessments will utilize "assessment sets" where possible to simulate more realistic scenarios

5.6.4 Skills assessments will follow the NDFA standard's guidelines for other criteria necessary to complete skills testing.

5.6.5 Candidates must pass all skill sheets to complete the certification examination.

- Two attempts are permitted per skill assessment sheet.
- Upon request, a different evaluator may assess the second attempt if available.
- Candidates failing any skill sheet after two attempts must retest the skills portion of an examination.

5.6.5 Retest Procedures:

- Candidates must coordinate with their department officer to schedule a skills retest using the **Request for Retest (RFR)** application.
- Candidates failing two or fewer skills at an initial test site must retest the failed skill(s) plus an equal number of new, randomly selected skills. Candidates failing three or more skills must complete an entirely new skill set.
  - The randomly selected skill(s) will be of similar difficulty. i.e., if a station skill was failed initially, a station skill will be randomly selected. If a fireground evolution skill was failed initially, a fireground evolution skill will be randomly selected.
- Candidates will be allowed two (2) attempts to pass each of the additional selected skill assessment sheets.
- Candidates who pass the previously failed skill assessment sheet(s) and the additional skill assessment sheet(s) shall be considered to have passed the skills examination portion of the certification examination.
- Candidates who fail a skill assessment sheet during the retest, either the previously failed skill(s) retest or the

additional randomly selected skill(s), will be considered to have failed the certification process.

- Retests may occur no sooner than two (2) weeks after the initial test.
- Retest fees apply as follows:
  - One failed skill: \$25
  - Two failed skills: \$50
  - Three or more failed skills: \$100

5.6.8 Failure to retest within twelve (12) months of the initial examination constitutes failure of the certification process.

5.6.9 Candidates scheduled to attend an examination event that fail to show for testing/retesting will be scored as failing the test. Exceptions include but are not limited to:

- Candidates that call 24 hours in advance;
- Candidates that provide documentation of illness or injury with a physician's note within 7 days following the missed examination; and
- Candidates provide documentation of a family emergency or department conflict with a letter of explanation within 7 days following the missed examination

#### **Section 5-7: Live-Video Evaluation**

5.7.1 Any standard that requires live-video evaluation must incorporate the use of a "Facilitator". The facilitator must ensure the testing environment is quiet, free from distractions, and safe.

5.7.2 During a live video evaluation of a candidate, facilitators must adhere to the instructions listed on the "Facilitator Instructions" form.

#### **Section 5-8: Certification Fee Structure**

5.8.1 All fees are at the discretion of the NDFA Board.

5.8.2 For current rates for initial testing, retest attempts (written or skills), applications for reciprocity, and all other certification costs contact the NDFA Office at 701-222-2799.



# CHAPTER SIX – NDFA EVALUATORS

## INDEX:

Section 6-1:	Purpose
Section 6-2:	Responsibilities
Section 6-3:	Evaluator Requirements and Training
Section 6-4:	General Guidelines for Evaluators
Section 6-5:	Criteria for Lead Evaluators
Section 6-6:	Criteria for Skill Evaluators
Section 6-7:	Guidelines for Test Administration
Section 6-8:	Test Site Surveillance and Evaluator Evaluations

### Section 6-1: Purpose

- 6.1.1 This chapter establishes the policies and procedures governing Lead Evaluators (LEs) and Skill Evaluators (SEs) within the NDFA Firefighter Certification Program.
- 6.1.2 The primary purpose of LEs and SEs is to ensure that written and skills examinations are administered by trained, impartial personnel, maintaining fairness and integrity throughout the certification process.

### Section 6-2: Responsibilities

- 6.2.1 The Lead Evaluator is responsible for:
- Ensuring all paperwork, equipment, and props are prepared prior to testing;
  - Determining the on-site resolution of any conflicts that arise during an examination.
  - Identifying any potential conflicts of interest requiring recusal; and
  - Submitting all completed documentation to NDFA within one (1) week following the event.
- 6.2.2 The LE supervises the administration of written and skills examinations, maintains test security, submits records and reports, and ensures compliance with all certification procedures.
- 6.2.3 The Skill Evaluator assesses candidates on assigned psychomotor skill sheets under the direction of the Lead Evaluator.

### Section 6-3: Evaluator Requirements and Training

- 6.3.1 To qualify as an NDFA evaluator, individuals must:
- Hold certification at or above the level they intend to evaluate, with a written score of 80% or higher;
  - Attend an NDFA Methodology class;
  - Complete the NDFA *Tester Affidavit* and *Tester Application* forms; and
  - Complete the Evaluator Shadow Program for the applicable level.
- 6.3.2 Evaluators must successfully complete the NDFA Evaluator Shadow Program to demonstrate competency. To do so, evaluators must:
- Coordinate with the Certification Director to schedule a shadow session at an approved test site;
  - Perform evaluations under supervision to demonstrate competency;
  - Complete a *Shadow Evaluator Evaluation* form with the supervising LE; and
  - Repeat the process until the LE formally approves the evaluator.
- 6.3.3 No prior certification is required to administer written exams or monitor live video presentations. Approved evaluators

may perform these tasks regardless of certification level.

- Written exams follow the *Proctor Instructions and Agreement* form.
- Live video monitoring follows the *Facilitator Instructions and Agreement* form.

6.3.4 Evaluators must be familiar with:

- Certification policies and procedures;
- Written and skill test administration protocols;
- Record keeping requirements;
- Ethical standards; and
- Updated policies and procedural changes.

6.3.5 To maintain active status as a skills evaluator, individuals must:

- Attend a Tester Methodology class at least once every two years; and
- Serve as an evaluator at least once every two years.

6.3.6 Testers (proctors) administering written exams must also attend a Tester Methodology class every two years to maintain their approval.

6.3.7 Testers (facilitators) monitoring live video presentations must likewise attend a Tester Methodology class every two years to maintain their approval.

#### **Section 6-4: General Guidelines for Evaluators**

6.4.1 Evaluators are selected from the qualified evaluator list maintained by the Certification Division of the NDFA..

6.4.2 Selection considerations for a specific test site include:

- Evaluator eligibility;
- Travel distance;
- Availability within the area of the test site;
- Frequency of test site rescheduling; and
- Whether the evaluation is in-person or online.

6.4.3 Evaluators are not eligible to serve when:

- They have more than a casual relationship with a candidate (e.g., family, spouse, roommate, employee);
- They directly supervise a candidate;
- They instructed any part of the candidate's preparatory course (except at State or Regional Fire School); or
- They are aware of any potential ethical conflict.

Other than any ethical reasons, these restrictions do not apply to written exams or live video monitoring.

6.4.4 When certification policies or procedures are updated, NDFA will revise all relevant documents and notify evaluators via email.

6.4.5 Evaluators are responsible for upholding the integrity and objectivity of the certification examination process and must follow all established policies and procedures.

#### **Section 6-5: Lead Evaluator Duties**

6.5.1 Lead Evaluators must comply with all applicable rules, policies, and procedures; ensure test security; and prevent

cheating by taking appropriate preventive measures.

- 6.5.2 LEs resolve all on-site appeals related to skills examinations. Appeals regarding written examinations must be referred to the NDFA Certification Director.
- 6.5.3 LEs are responsible for certifying facilities and equipment and for establishing safety protocols for all skill examinations.
- 6.5.5 LEs shall read all testing instructions to candidates for both written and skills exams.
- 6.5.6 Prior to testing, LEs must contact:
- **Host Department / Point of Contact** (at least one week before):
    - Confirm equipment availability;
    - Verify candidate email notifications and access to Net Exam;
    - Ensure training records are complete and available; and
    - Confirm the test site's time and location.
  - **Evaluation Team Members** (1–2 days before):
    - Confirm receipt and review of assigned skills;
    - Set an arrival time at least 30 minutes before testing unless worked out prior to the test day.
  - **NDFA Certification Division** (at least one week before):
    - Secure additional materials or equipment as needed.
- 6.5.7 LEs must ensure all required documents are available prior to testing, including:
- Proctor Instructions and Agreement;
  - Testing Roster;
  - Selected Skill Sheets;
  - Supporting Documents for the applicable standard; and
  - Any other approved materials or resources (ERG, DOT placards, etc.).

#### **Section 6-6: Skill Evaluator Duties**

- 6.6.1 Skill Evaluators must comply with all rules and procedures, maintain test security, and take appropriate steps to prevent cheating.
- 6.6.2 SEs may not instruct candidates on how to perform a skill. If clarification is requested, SEs may only repeat the “Read to Candidate” instructions or scenario text. Further clarification must be provided by the Lead Evaluator.
- 6.6.3 Candidates retesting a skill may be reassessed by a different evaluator upon request, provided another qualified evaluator is available.

#### **Section 6-7: Guidelines for Test Administration**

- 6.7.1 Before an examination, the LE must verify all materials correspond to the correct level and that sufficient materials are available.
- 6.7.2 At least one week before testing, NDFA will provide all necessary testing instruments and documents via email.
- Candidates testing will be preloaded into the Net Exam system and registered for their respective written exams.
  - Associated documents may include rosters, skill sheets, and supporting materials.
- 6.7.3 Facilities and equipment must be certified per *Chapter Nine: Facilities and Equipment Certification*.
- 6.7.4 Upon candidate arrival, the LE must identify any conflicts of interest or ethical issues with assigned SEs (see Section 6.3)

- 6.7.5 Written and skills examinations must be conducted strictly in accordance with their respective administration guidelines.
- 6.7.6 Failure to adhere to test administration policies will result in:
- A written warning and six (6) months' probation for the first offense;
  - One (1) year removal from the evaluator list for a subsequent offense during probation; and
  - Permanent removal for any deliberate violation, subject to investigation under ***Section 3-5: Revocation of Certification.***
- 6.7.7 NDFA Administration will periodically conduct test site surveillance to ensure compliance with all procedures in ***Section 6-8: Test Site Surveillance and Evaluator Evaluation.***

**Section 6-8: Test Site Surveillance and Evaluator Evaluations**

- 6.8.1 Test sites may be observed at any time by NDFA staff or trained evaluators to ensure adherence to testing protocols and to evaluate assigned evaluators.
- 6.8.2 Evaluator performance will be reviewed using the *Test Site Evaluation* online survey, assessing cognitive, psychomotor, process, and product methodologies. Evaluations result in a pass/fail outcome.
- 6.8.3 Evaluation results will be provided to evaluators within 30 days.
- Evaluators receiving a failing result will be removed from the qualified evaluator list for one year and must repeat the Evaluator Shadow Program for reinstatement.
  - Evaluators removed twice within five years will be permanently disqualified.
- 6.8.4 Candidate results are retained in their NDFA member file for a period of seven (7) years.

# CHAPTER SEVEN – REQUEST FOR ACCOMODATIONS

## INDEX:

- Section 7-1: Purpose**  
**Section 7-2: Responsibilities**  
**Section 7-3: Guidelines for Requesting Accommodations**

### **Section 7-1: Purpose**

- 7.1.1 This chapter establishes the policies and procedures governing Lead Evaluators (LE) and Skill Evaluators (SE) in relation to accommodation requests under the NDFA Firefighter Certification Program.

### **Section 7-2: Responsibilities**

- 7.2.1 NDFA is responsible for providing all reasonable accommodations necessary to enable candidates to complete written and/or skills examinations.
- 7.2.2 Evaluators must implement accommodations as directed by the NDFA.

### **Section 7-3: Guidelines for Requesting Accommodations**

- 7.3.1 Candidates may request accommodations for certification examinations.
- 7.3.2 Requests must be submitted in writing using the NDFA “Accommodation Request” form at least five (5) business days before the scheduled examination.
- 7.3.3 Candidates requesting accommodations must still meet all other prerequisites and requirements for the desired certification level.
- 7.3.4 Accommodations for written examinations may include:
- The use of a reader to assist during the exam;
  - A separate testing area; or
  - Additional time to complete the exam.

#### **Readers:**

- Candidates are responsible for identifying their own reader.
  - Readers must obtain NDFA approval by submitting the NDFA “Designated Reader (DR) Form.”
  - Once approved, a reader may continue in this role until any of the following occur:
    - A change in the reader’s role within the department/agency;
    - A change in the relationship between the reader and candidate; or
    - The reader becomes subject to any disqualifying conditions identified on the DR form.
  - In any of these circumstances, a new DR form must be submitted to the NDFA for approval.
- 7.3.5 NDFA will provide accommodations only within the limits of the Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) outlined in the applicable National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) professional qualification standard. For example, if the NFPA JPR requires a candidate to climb a ladder, the candidate must be able to perform that task.
- 7.3.6 If an accommodation request is approved, the candidate will be notified via the email address provided on the “Accommodation Request” form, specifying the accommodations granted.

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT – CERTIFICATES AND SEALS**

### **INDEX:**

- Section 8-1: Purpose**
- Section 8-2: Responsibilities**
- Section 8-3: Distribution of Certificates**

### **Section 8-1: Purpose**

- 8.1.1 This chapter outlines the policies and procedures governing the issuance of certificates and the registration of PRO BOARD® numbered seals.

### **Section 8-2: Responsibilities**

- 8.2.1 The North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA) is responsible for issuing certificates upon successful completion of all certification examinations.
- 8.2.2 NDFA shall affix a registered PRO BOARD® numbered seal to each issued certificate.

### **Section 8-3: Distribution of Certificates**

- 8.3.1 Certificates will be mailed to qualified candidates within 30 days of completing all written and practical examinations, as well as any requirements for the certification level.
- 8.3.2 A copy of certificates may be downloaded through a member's portal on the NDFA website.
- 8.3.3 Certificates will not be issued to any individual who has not successfully completed the full NDFA certification process.

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# CHAPTER NINE – FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT VALIDATION

## INDEX:

- Section 9-1: Purpose**  
**Section 9-2: Responsibilities**  
**Section 9-3: Facilities and Equipment Validation**  
**Section 9-4: Suspension of Testing**

### Section 9-1: Purpose

- 9.1.1 This chapter establishes policies and procedures governing the validation of facilities and equipment used for administering written and skills certification examinations.

### Section 9-2: Responsibilities

- 9.2.1 The **Lead Evaluator (LE)** is responsible for ensuring that all testing facilities provide an adequate, safe, and secure environment for examination activities. As part of this responsibility, the LE shall verify that each facility is capable of supporting all components of the standard to be tested and is suitable for the certification level associated with the upcoming examination.
- 9.2.2 The sponsoring entity of the certification examination is responsible for ensuring that all facilities and equipment comply with applicable NFPA safety and health standards as well as local codes and ordinances.
- 9.2.3 The **LE** shall confirm that all protective clothing and **Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)** used during skills examinations meet or exceed relevant NFPA standards.

### Section 9-3: Facilities and Equipment Validation

- 9.3.1 All facilities shall be evaluated prior to each certification examination to ensure compliance with NDFA standards. Evaluations must be conducted by the lead evaluator or NDFA-trained office staff. The evaluation shall confirm that the facility is safe, provides adequate space for testing, and is capable of supporting all required components of the standard and certification level being sought.
- 9.3.2 All equipment must be inspected prior to the skills examination to ensure that:
- It is safe, functional, and appropriate for the test; and
  - Sufficient quantities are available to conduct the examination.
- 9.3.3 Failure to meet facility or equipment validation requirements shall result in cancellation of the examination (written and/or skills).
- 9.3.4 Each candidate's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)—including protective clothing, SCBA, and Personal Alert Safety System (PASS)—must be inspected prior to the skills examination to confirm compliance with NFPA standards, proper function, and serviceability (e.g., no tears, holes, or improper fit).
- 9.3.5 Candidates whose PPE is deemed unsatisfactory will not be permitted to participate in the skills examination.
- Such candidates may still participate in the written examination.
  - No fee will be charged for rescheduling due to unsatisfactory PPE.
- 9.3.6 If a candidate's PPE is damaged during testing and deemed unfit for continued participation, the candidate must reschedule the remaining skills at a later date.

- Only the uncompleted skill assessment sheet(s) will be retested.
- No additional fee will be charged for rescheduling due to PPE damage incurred during testing.

#### **Section 9-4: Suspension of Testing**

9.4.1 The **Lead Evaluator (LE)** has the authority to suspend testing for any of the following reasons:

- Emergent equipment safety issues.
- Newly identified safety hazards.
- Weather-related safety concerns.

9.4.2 If testing is suspended, candidates who did not complete the examination will be rescheduled for the next available examination event at no cost.

- Candidates will only be required to complete the number of skill assessment sheets not completed prior to suspension. For example, if one skill remains, only one new skill—different from those previously completed—must be performed at the next examination.
- Candidates who failed a skill prior to suspension must retest the failed skill (one attempt permitted) and complete one additional randomly selected skill assessment sheet. They must also complete any remaining skills that were not tested before suspension; these will be randomly selected.

## CHAPTER TEN – RECIPROCITY

### INDEX:

- Section 10-1: Purpose**  
**Section 10-2: Responsibilities**  
**Section 10-3: Reciprocity**

#### **Section 10-1: Purpose**

- 10.1.1 The purpose of this chapter is to establish the policies and procedures governing the award of reciprocity to candidates certified by entities other than the North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA).

#### **Section 10-2: Responsibilities**

- 10.2.1 NDFA is responsible for evaluating and determining reciprocity requests on an individual, case-by-case basis.
- 10.2.2 Candidates are responsible for submitting all required applications and supporting documentation necessary for NDFA to determine eligibility for reciprocity.

#### **Section 10-3: Reciprocity**

- 10.3.1 NDFA will grant reciprocity only for certification levels for which it holds current accreditation.
- 10.3.2 Reciprocity may be granted only for certifications issued by a **PRO BOARD®** or **IFSAC** accredited entity, provided that written and, where applicable, practical skills testing were required for the original certification.
- 10.3.3 Candidates requesting reciprocity to meet certification requirements must submit a Reciprocity Application, including all required documentation, before NDFA issues certification for any level dependent on those requirements.
- 10.3.4 Candidates seeking reciprocity must meet the following criteria:
- Be a current resident of North Dakota;
  - Be an active member of a North Dakota fire department, district, or agency;
  - Submit a completed Reciprocity Application for each level requested;
  - Pay a non-refundable \$50 processing fee for evaluation; and
  - Provide a copy of the **PRO BOARD®** and/or **IFSAC** certificate(s) for each level requested, showing a legible seal and number.
    - All certification requirements not recorded in the NDFA database must also be included.
    - The edition of the certification must be current or one edition prior. Earlier editions will not be recognized.
    - NDFA will accept prerequisite certifications from the same edition of the applicable standard.
    - Certificates issued by an accredited entity under its own reciprocity provisions (i.e., secondary certificates) will not be accepted.
- 10.3.5 Upon review, NDFA will notify the candidate via email regarding the outcome of the Reciprocity Application.
- 10.3.6 A separate Reciprocity Application is required each time a candidate requests reciprocity.
- 10.3.7 NDFA will not issue an NDFA certificate of certification for any level obtained through reciprocity, nor will a **PRO BOARD®** seal or number be affixed to the reciprocity letter.
- 10.3.8 Intentional falsification of any document submitted during the reciprocity application process will result in denial of reciprocity. The reason for denial will be reported to the applicant's department chief.

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# CHAPTER ELEVEN – CERTIFICATION APPEALS PROCESS

## INDEX:

- Section 11-1: Purpose**  
**Section 11-2: Responsibilities**  
**Section 11-3: Appeals Policies and Procedures**

### Section 11-1: Purpose

11.1.1 This section establishes the policies and procedures governing the certification appeals process.

### Section 11-2: Responsibilities

11.2.1 The **Lead Evaluator (LE)** is responsible for all on-site decisions.

- Challenges regarding written test questions must be referred to the **Certification Director** for resolution.

11.2.2 The **NDFA Certification Director** is responsible for appeals that:

- Are not resolved on-site;
- Arise from the application process; or
- Arise from the certification process.

11.2.3 The **NDFA Certification Advisory Committee (CAC)** is responsible for appeals not resolved by the NDFA Certification Director.

### Section 11-3: Appeals Policies and Procedures

11.3.1 Issues arising during the testing process will be addressed by the **Lead Evaluator (LE)**.

- Candidates wishing to appeal an LE decision must do so verbally to the LE.
- All on-site decisions made by the LE are final.

11.3.2 Appeals regarding decisions made during the application or certification examination process must be submitted **in writing** within **30 days** of the certification examination date. Appeals should be sent to the **Certification Director** and must include:

- Name of the individual submitting the appeal;
- Contact information;
- Examination date;
- Type of examination; and
- Reason for the appeal

11.3.3 Appeals regarding any other NDFA policy, process, or methodology may be submitted at any time. All appeals, except those made on-site, must be sent to the **Certification Director** and must include:

- Name of the individual submitting the appeal;
- Contact information; and
- Reason for the appeal.

11.3.4 The **NDFA Certification Director** will review and decide on the appeal based on:

- The candidate's written appeal;
- The Lead Evaluator's report (if applicable); and
- Any relevant documentation.

11.3.5 If the candidate disagrees with the **Certification Director's** decision, they may appeal to the **Certification Advisory Committee (CAC)**.

- Appeals to the CAC must be submitted in writing within **14 days** of the Certification Director's decision.
- The CAC will render a decision based on the policies and procedures outlined in this document (see *Chapter 3: Certification Advisory Committee*).
- All CAC decisions are final.

11.3.6 The **Certification Director** will review CAC decisions. If corrections or revisions are deemed necessary in policies, procedures, test banks, or skill assessment sheets, the Certification Director will implement the required changes immediately.

11.3.7 Any corrections or revisions affecting a specific standard, policy, or manual must be implemented before related procedures may resume.

*Example:* If the procedure for a specific Firefighter I (FFI) skill is revised, that skill will not be used until the revisions are complete and officially adopted.

## CHAPTER TWELVE – CANDIDATE RECORDS

### INDEX:

- Section 12-1: Purpose**  
**Section 12-2: Responsibilities**  
**Section 12-3: Record Keeping**

### Section 12-1: Purpose

- 12.1.1 The purpose of this chapter is to establish policies and procedures for documenting and maintaining records related to the certification process.

### Section 12-2: Responsibilities

- 12.2.1 The North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA) is responsible for maintaining all records associated with the certification process in compliance with the State of North Dakota Records Management Policy.
- 12.2.2 The Pro Board® is responsible for maintaining the official certification registry.

### Section 12-3: Record Keeping

- 12.3.1 NDFA shall maintain an electronic record for each candidate, which includes the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Certification records, including examination results, test dates for each level attempted, certification dates, and Pro Board® seal numbers for each level awarded
- Equivalency and reciprocity determinations (if applicable)
- Appeal decisions (if applicable)

- 12.3.2 NDFA shall provide the following information to the Pro Board®:

- List of candidates tested since the previous report
- Certification level records
- Pro Board® seal numbers for each certified level
- Certification dates for each level
- Last four digits of each candidate's Social Security Number

- 12.3.3 The following statistical information shall be generated and maintained within the Net Exam program:

- Testing level
- Testing date
- Testing location
- Number of candidates tested
- Median score
- Highest and lowest scores
- Test version used

- 12.3.4 Test event records shall be securely retained for seven (7) years. These records may include, but are not limited to:

- Testing rosters
- Proctor agreements
- Failed skill assessment sheets

- Completed products or projects submitted as part of a failed examinations
- Other relevant testing materials and instruments

12.3.5 Candidate summary records shall be retained electronically on a permanent basis.

- All candidates must be NDFA members. Members may upload certificates to their profiles on the NDFA website.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN – TEST BANKS

### INDEX:

- Section 13-1: Purpose**
- Section 13-2: Responsibilities**
- Section 13-3: Written Test Banks**
- Section 13-4: Validity and Reliability of Test Banks**
- Section 13-5: Test Item Challenges**

### **Section 13-1: Purpose**

- 13.1.1 The purpose of this chapter is to establish policies and procedures for maintaining test banks used in the certification process.

### **Section 13-2: Responsibilities**

- 13.2.1 NDFA is responsible for maintaining secure written test banks.
- 13.2.2 The Lead Evaluator is responsible for safeguarding written tests while in their possession during certification examinations.

### **Section 13-3: Written Test Banks**

- 13.3.1 NDFA shall maintain a test bank for each PRO BOARD® certification level for which it is accredited.
- 13.3.2 NDFA shall identify the standard and edition being tested for each accredited level.
- 13.3.3 Test banks must correspond to the same standard and edition as the accredited level
- 13.3.4 Test banks shall be revised as necessary to align with updates to NFPA standards.
- 13.3.5 All test banks shall be evaluated for validity and reliability prior to use in certification testing.
- 13.3.6 NDFA shall use the Net Exam software platform to generate written examinations.
- 13.3.7 Net Exam will produce a unique written examination for each candidate based on parameters set by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) during test development. These parameters include:
  - Total number of questions for each certification level;
  - Total number of questions drawn from each Job Performance Requirement (JPR) of the applicable NFPA standard, not exceeding half of the total questions available for that JPR.
- 13.3.8 When multiple levels of a standard are tested in a single examination, candidates must successfully complete all associated NFPA JPRs.
- 13.3.9 If a commercial test bank lacks sufficient items to assess a specific JPR, NDFA shall develop additional questions to ensure full coverage of the NFPA standard. The process for developing such items is as follows:
  - SMEs identify JPRs requiring additional test items;
  - SMEs create new questions based on the corresponding curriculum;
  - SMEs verify that all items meet the cognitive requirements of the JPR; and
  - Approved items are uploaded into Net Exam.

- 13.3.10 Each test bank must contain at least two test items for every requisite knowledge statement identified in the NFPA standard for each accredited PRO BOARD® certification level.
- 13.3.11 To the extent practicable, all requisite knowledge components or cognitive competencies shall be assessed through objective written testing for each accredited certification level.
- 13.3.12 Each test bank shall contain at least twice the number of active test items required for the examination.
- 13.3.13 Each randomly generated examination shall identify the standard and edition being tested.
- 13.3.14 Test Security:
- Access to test banks is restricted to authorized NDFA staff through password protection.
  - Test banks shall be maintained exclusively within the Net Exam online platform and NDFA's secure network server.
  - A password is required to access both the computer and the test bank system.

#### **Section 13-4: Validity and Reliability of Test Banks**

- 13.4.1 All test items shall reference both the applicable NFPA standard and the NDFA-adopted reference manual.
- 13.4.2 All items shall be reviewed by SMEs to confirm alignment with the applicable NFPA standard (validity).
- 13.4.3 Validation Process:
- The Certification Director shall assemble SMEs for the identified standard.
  - Each SME receives a set of questions and must sign a "Validation Agreement" prior to review.
  - SMEs evaluate each question as appropriate or inappropriate based on relevance, accuracy, clarity, grammar, and geographic suitability.
  - SMEs may propose replacement items for review during the group session.
  - The group, facilitated by the Certification Director, will finalize all test bank content after reviewing items marked inappropriate or replaced.
- 13.4.4 All written tests and test items shall be analyzed for consistency (reliability), including evaluation of average, highest, and lowest scores.
- 13.4.5 NDFA shall conduct an annual analysis of written exam results to assess test item performance.
- Any question used at least 20 times with a failure rate exceeding 50% shall be made inactive pending review.
  - Such questions will be reviewed by the Certification Director and/or SMEs for reliability and validity before reinstatement.
  - Items inconsistent with accepted test item construction practices shall be revised or removed.
  - Items deemed invalid per the NFPA standard shall be revised or removed.
  - If the number of available questions for a JPR falls below established criteria (Sections 13.3.7, 13.3.10, and 13.3.12), the item will remain active until corrected or criteria are updated by SMEs.
- 13.4.6 NDFA shall maintain the following data for each test:
- Number of participants;
  - Distribution of scores (high and low); and
  - Average score.

#### **Section 13-5: Test Item Challenges**

- 13.5.1 Candidates may challenge any test item included in the examination.
- 13.5.2 Challenges must be submitted in writing before the candidate leaves the testing area.
- 13.5.3 Written challenges must include:
- Candidate's name;
  - Date of the challenge;
  - Test item number(s); and
  - Rationale for the challenge.
- 13.5.4 The Certification Coordinator will review all challenges, with final determination made by the Certification Director.
- 13.5.5 Candidates may appeal the Certification Director's decision to the Certification Advisory Committee (see ***Chapter 11: Certification Appeals Process***).
- 13.5.6 Decisions rendered by the Certification Advisory Committee are final.

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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN – SKILL ASSESSMENTS

### INDEX:

- Section 14-1: Purpose**  
**Section 14-2: Responsibilities**  
**Section 14-3: Skill Assessment Sheets**  
**Section 14-4: Validity and Reliability of Skill Assessment Sheets**

### Section 14-1: Purpose

- 14.1.1 The purpose of this chapter is to establish policies and procedures for the development, maintenance, and administration of skill assessment sheets.

### Section 14-2: Responsibilities

- 14.2.1 The North Dakota Firefighter’s Association (NDFA) is responsible for maintaining skill assessment sheets for all accredited certification levels.
- 14.2.2 The Lead Evaluator is responsible for ensuring test security during the skill assessment portion of the certification examination process.

### Section 14-3: Skill Assessment Sheets

- 14.3.1 NDFA shall maintain skill assessment sheets for each PRO BOARD® certification level for which it holds accreditation and where skill assessment is required.
- 14.3.2 Skill assessment sheets shall be reviewed and revised as necessary to align with updates to applicable NFPA standards.
- 14.3.3 To the extent practicable, all components identified under the Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) and requisite skills—or as performance competencies where the JPR format is not used—shall be evaluated through performance-based skill testing. This requirement applies to all certification levels for which NDFA is accredited.
- 14.3.4 For accredited levels where NFPA standards are not written in JPR format, NDFA shall, to the extent practicable, evaluate identified psychomotor skills through objective performance assessments.
- 14.3.5 Once skill assessment sheets are finalized, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) shall organize them into skill assessment sets for each applicable standard. These sets will be used to “spot-check” candidates during psychomotor testing. One skill assessment set will be randomly selected for each test site.

### Section 14-4: Validity and Reliability of Skill Assessment Sheets

- 14.4.1 All skill assessment sheets shall be developed by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and reference the corresponding NFPA standard’s JPRs.
- 14.4.2 SMEs, in coordination with the NDFA Certification Division, shall review all skill assessment sheets for validity and reliability prior to their implementation in the certification process.
- 14.4.3 The validation process for skill assessment sheets shall include the following steps:
- The Certification Director shall assemble a review team consisting of SMEs and NDFA staff.
  - Each team member shall be assigned relevant JPRs from the applicable NFPA standard.
  - Team members shall develop skill assessment sheets ensuring that each aligns with the assigned JPRs and can be effectively tested.

- The review team, facilitated by the Certification Director, shall meet to evaluate all developed skill assessment sheets and make final determinations regarding their compliance with NFPA standards and corresponding JPRs.

14.4.4 NDFA shall conduct an annual analysis of all skill exam results to assess the performance of each skill assessment sheet.

- Any skill assessment sheet that has been used at least 20 times and exhibits a failure rate greater than 65% shall be temporarily removed from testing until it has undergone a review.

14.4.5 The review process for a removed skill assessment sheet shall include the following steps:

- The Certification Director shall review the skill assessment sheet for reliability and submit it to SMEs for validation.
- Once verified and, if necessary, corrected, the skill assessment sheet shall be reinstated for use in the certification testing process.

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN – NOTIFICATION AND PROMOTION OF TESTING

## INDEX:

- Section 15-1: Purpose
- Section 15-2: Responsibilities
- Section 15-3: Notification Procedures
- Section 15-4: Promotion of the PRO BOARD®

### Section 15-1: Purpose

- 15.1.1 The purpose of this chapter is to establish policies and procedures for notifying prospective candidates and the PRO BOARD® of upcoming certification examinations.

### Section 15-2: Responsibilities

- 15.2.1 The North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA) is responsible for providing notice of all scheduled certification examinations. This notice shall be made available through the NDFA website.

### Section 15-3: Notification Procedures

- 15.3.1 NDFA will maintain an online schedule listing the date, location, and certification levels for all examination events.
  - Entities requesting an initial certification examination for any standard must ensure that each participant submits a **Request to Test (RTT)** application at least **four business (4) days** prior to the examination.
  - Entities requesting a retest for a written or skills examination must submit a **Request for Retest (RFR)** application **four business (4) days** prior to the written exam date desired, or **seven business (7) days** prior to the skills examination date desired.

### Section 15-4: Promotion of the PRO BOARD®

- 15.4.1 The North Dakota Firefighter's Association will promote the PRO BOARD® accrediting agency and the benefits of nationally recognized certification through the following methods:
  - Social media posts developed and managed by NDFA Office staff;
  - The NDFA website ([www.ndfa.net](http://www.ndfa.net)); and
  - Brochures made readily available to NDFA members:
    - Displayed at the registration table during the annual State Fire School; and
    - Available in the reception area of the NDFA Office.

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## CHAPTER SIXTEEN – TESTER CODE OF ETHICS

### INDEX:

- Section 16-1: Purpose
- Section 16-2: Responsibilities
- Section 16-3: Code of Ethics
- Section 16-4: Sanctions for Violations

### Section 16-1: Purpose

- 16.1.1 This Code of Ethics is established to promote integrity, accountability, and professionalism among certification testers of the North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA). As stewards of public trust and representatives of the fire service in North Dakota, instructors/testers are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards in all actions and decisions related to the NDFA's governance and mission.

### Section 16-2: Responsibilities

- 16.2.1 NDFA certification testers (proctors and evaluators), subject matter experts (SMEs), and anyone else involved in the management or implementation of the NDFA Firefighter Certification Program should be committed to honorable behavior, even at the sacrifice of personal advantage.
- 16.2.2 Individuals listed in 16.2.1 that do work for NDFA's Firefighter Certification Program must read and acknowledge by signing the Tester 'Code of Ethics' listed in section 16-3.
  - NDFA will keep this form in everyone's member profile indefinitely.

### Section 16-3: Tester Code of Ethics

- 16.3.1 Duty of Loyalty – Testers shall always act in the best interest of the NDFA, placing the organization's mission above personal or external interests. Members shall:
  - Avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof.
  - Refrain from using their position with the NDFA for personal gain or to advance outside interests.
  - Disclose any potential conflicts in writing to the full Board and recuse themselves from related decisions.
  - Seek no favor and accept no form of personal reward for influence or official action.
- 16.3.2 Duty of Care – Testers shall exercise due diligence in all organizational matters by:
  - Attending and actively participating in tester methodology sessions
  - Reviewing materials in advance of training or testing events.
  - Asking questions and seeking clarification to ensure understanding of NDFA operations and policies.
  - Carrying out NDFA policies to the best of their abilities.
  - Continually improving their competencies and quality of service.
- 16.3.3 Confidentiality – Testers shall maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive matters they may become involved in during the course of their duties as designated by policy. This includes:
  - Personnel matters, legal discussions, financial irregularities, and internal investigations.
  - Prohibiting the disclosure of confidential materials to unauthorized individuals not directly involved or subject to investigation.
  - Ensuring confidential records are not destroyed, altered, or deleted unless permitted by applicable policy.
  - Performing all responsibilities with the highest sense of integrity and confidentiality.
- 16.3.4 Integrity and Impartiality – Testers shall:
  - Remain impartial in all matters related to the NDFA.
  - Put aside personal opinions, biases, and beliefs when evaluating candidates.
  - Avoid pre-determining outcomes or influencing investigations involving NDFA employees, testers, or members.

- Never act unilaterally on behalf of the NDFA without authorization.
- Not cheat, plagiarize, or participate in cheating or plagiarism.
- Not furnish false information with the intent to deceive any organization, person, or agency.
- Not forge, alter, or misuse documents or records, whether in written or electronic form.
- Not use or access files, data, or equipment without proper authorization.

16.3.5 Professional Conduct – Testers shall:

- Treat all NDFA members, staff, candidates, fellow testers, Board members, and the public respectfully and professionally.
- Refrain from behavior that could discredit the NDFA, including unethical communications, gossip, or public criticism of the NDFA.
- Demonstrate sensitivity and professionalism in all activities with candidates, colleagues, and the public.
- Not abuse, harass, intimidate, or threaten by any means a candidate, staff member, visitor, invited guest, or member of the public.
- Not steal, misuse, or maliciously damage NDFA or private property entrusted to them.
- Follow all published NDFA policies and procedures.

16.3.6 Compliance and Accountability – Violations of this Code may result in disciplinary actions as outlined in NDFA's governing documents. The Executive Board reserves the right to review and respond to breaches through:

- Formal reprimand.
- Suspension from NDFA activities.
- Removal from the tester roster(s) under NDFA bylaws.
- Additionally, sanctions for violation of this Code may result in removal from participation in the Firefighter Certification Program on a temporary or permanent basis.

See following page for Acknowledgement and Commitment document required to be completed by all NDFA testers.

# North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA)

## Code of Ethics for Certification Testers

### Tester Acknowledgement and Commitment

As a tester for the North Dakota Firefighter's Association (NDFA), I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to uphold the principles outlined in the Tester Code of Ethics. I further acknowledge that I have reviewed, and will remain familiar with, the policies and procedures contained in the official NDFA Certification Policy and Procedures Manual to ensure proper application of this Code in all aspects of my service. I recognize my responsibility to act with integrity, maintain confidentiality, avoid conflicts of interest, and conduct myself in a professional manner that supports the NDFA's mission, values, and reputation.

I understand that adherence to this Code is a condition of my continued service to the NDFA and that failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, including possible removal from tester roster(s), under the NDFA Constitution and Bylaws.

All testers shall review and sign this Tester Code of Ethics initially upon becoming an NDFA tester, and annually as part of their service commitment to the NDFA.

First/Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



North Dakota Firefighter's  
Association  
Organized June 4, 1954  
Incorporated January 20, 1955

# ***NORTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION***



## ***Stay Safe!***