



**ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

**James C. Rovella, Commissioner
Peter S. Carozza, Jr., Chairman
Kevin J. Kowalski, Vice Chairman
Richard H. Nicol, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Morrissette, State Fire Administrator**

*Established - 1975 Statutory authority - Conn. Gen. Statutes. Sec. 7-323
Central Office - Connecticut Fire Academy, 34 Perimeter Road, Windsor Locks, CT 06096
Average number of full-time employees – 12 (General Fund)*

***Organization structure - Office of State Fire Administration, Training Unit and
Certification Unit***

Division Mission

***To prevent or mitigate the effects of fire and disasters through leadership and collaboration
with municipalities, fire departments and regional fire schools by delivery of quality
consulting services, technical assistance, training, education and professional competency
certification of career and volunteer fire service personnel.***

Statutory Authority

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 7-323(j) - 7-323(s) the Commission is charged with and has primary responsibility for training, public fire and life safety education and professional competency certification for members of Connecticut's fire service.

COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Appointed members of the Commission represent the statewide fire service organizations and serve to advise the Commissioner. The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control (CFPC) serves as the state's focal point for fire service training, public fire and life-safety education and professional competency testing and certification for members of Connecticut's fire service.

Office of State Fire Administration

The Office of State Fire Administration provides overall coordination, management and support of division activities and facilities including the administration of grants. The Office offers consulting services to communities regarding fire department administration and operations. Oversight of the Statewide Fire Rescue Disaster Response Plan continued as a priority, with staff serving as Fire Service Liaisons to the State Emergency Operations Center during statewide emergencies and exercises. County Fire Coordinator portable radios were upgraded to Motorola APX 6000 units. Also, Coordinator Hotspot Router MiFi devices were upgraded to operate on the FirstNet network. The Office actively supports the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard, ensuring Connecticut honors its fallen firefighters and their family members, consistent with the professions highest standards. Communication, collaboration and coordination continues with the nine independent Regional Fire Schools. Further, the Office coordinates the state's Regional Foam Trailer program with eight local fire departments hosting these resources and responding to emergencies requiring firefighting foam. We are actively engaged with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in research, outreach and guidance regarding the impact of AFFF firefighting foam containing Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances PFAS. The AFFF Take-Back Program for municipalities began in May and will continue to completion in early September. Work has begun on the second phase of the project that entails draining and decontamination of state and municipal fire apparatus with on-board foam systems. Upon completion, we expect to collect and dispose of approximate 40,000 gallons of this cancer causing substance. Construction and installation of a high-rise fire prop in the Academy's Training Tower was completed using federal grant funds. Also, a grant funded mobile ventilation/forcible entry and replacement SCBA Confidence Maze trailer received late the previous fiscal year were placed into operation to support firefighter training. Communications and information dissemination to fire service constituents continued primarily through expanded use of social media and the CFPC email Listserv. COVID-19 continued to have a profound impact upon division operations forcing a reduced training schedule. The impact to the delivery of training and certification services as compared to previous years is evidenced in the metrics below.

Training Division (Connecticut Fire Academy)

The Training Division delivers a wide range of training and education programs, extending from the comprehensive 15-week resident Recruit Firefighter Training program to Fire Officer and technical specialty level courses, many with collegiate transfer credits. Courses are available for delivery throughout the state at local fire stations, Regional Fire Schools and at the Connecticut Fire Academy campus in Windsor Locks.

During FY 21, the Training Division delivered 218 training programs reaching 2,732 students, providing 124,961 contact hours. In addition to training activity, the Division continued administration of N-95 respirator fit testing services, supporting the COVID response by healthcare professionals. A total of 2,909 individual tests were administered at 118 sessions statewide. In addition, as a licensed entity, the Division continued to offer Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) to municipalities to assist in identifying future firefighters with the capability of career and lifelong success. This past year, 665 candidates registered with 445 passing for an overall passing rate of 66.9%. Charter Oak State College continues to approve 22

CFA training programs for collegiate transfer credit adding value to our students. Collaboration with the Military Department and Department of Public Health at the New England Disaster Training Center (Camp Hartell) located in Windsor Locks, provides unique training opportunities for all emergency responders. A new partnership was established with Hero to Hero enabling active duty military personnel to register and attend the CFA Recruit Firefighter Training Program, providing a pathway for veterans to transition to the first responder civilian workforce. The incumbent Director of Fire Training, William Higgins retired in October, 2020 leaving the position vacant through the remainder of the fiscal year. His successor, P.J. Norwood was selected and began service on July 2, 2021.

Certification Unit

The Certification Unit assesses fire service personnel in areas ranging from basic firefighting skills to technical rescue specialties, and from instructional methodology to executive officer leadership including instructional methodology, curriculum development, public education and fire prevention. This knowledge and skills evaluation of specific competencies legitimizes the pre-requisite training requirements and instruction associated with fire service-related training courses and education. The certification process is an independent third party evaluation of requisite firefighter skills, developed from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), in support of the statewide fire service educational framework developed from the same standards. The certification process ensures emergency services personnel are better qualified to conduct significant incidents, while routinely operating in highly hazardous exposure areas, when serving the citizens of Connecticut.

The Certification Unit retains accreditation by two international entities, The National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) and International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). Accreditation of the certification process validates the professionalism and commitment of full and part-time staff, and provides portability to our customers as they pursue careers in the fire service. The Division Director attended the annual Pro Board and IFSAC Conferences virtually in FY 2021.

As with training related activities, the beginning of FY21 was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although as our testing operations resumed at the end of FY20, there was very little demand for classes and examinations at the start of the year. The 4th Quarter of FY21 brought out testing numbers back to pre-pandemic normal levels. We anticipate this trend to continue in FY22. The Certification Unit conducted 27 NFPA 1403 compliant Live Fire Training audits, 100 psychomotor skills examinations, 147 cognitive examinations, and 9 ADA compliant examinations; including foreign language examinations, assessing candidates in FY 2021 resulting in 1706 Pro Board and IFSAC accredited certifications. The overall written examination success rate was 81 percent. In addition, the Unit developed and administered (7) promotional examinations for municipalities. With our partner, Office of Higher Education computer laboratories being shut down due to COVID, our unit was not able to continue providing computer based cognitive testing. With the recent purchase of cache of computer tablets we are confident computer testing will resume in FY22 utilizing both Regional Fire Schools and local fire department facilities that can support internet access.