**Section 141.30 Establishing or Revising State Certification Standards**

a) When the NFPA releases a new or revised Standard related to a certification program, the Division shall determine the impact of the new or revised Standard on current certification requirements and based upon those determinations, will make recommendations regarding certification requirements to the State Fire Marshal. DPSE shall notify members of the Fire Advisory Commission (FAC) of the recommendations.

b) The Division will be responsible for contacting the publishers to determine an estimated publish date for new or revised student and instructor materials and test banks that will reference the new or revised NFPA Standard. The Division will request copies of those referenced materials and test banks when they are released and available.

c) After receiving the new or revised reference materials and test banks, the Division shall review the materials and test banks to maintain compliance with the most current Standards. This process will be completed within 3 months after the Division receives the new or revised published reference materials and test banks.

1) The Division shall be responsible for reviewing the published reference materials and test banks to ensure that the reference materials and test banks meet all the Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) for the new or revised Standards.

A) The Division review may include collaboration with Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) subject matter experts and IFSI Curriculum Staff, initiated by the Division contacting IFSI’s Director and Deputy Director.

B) If the Division determines that the published materials do not fully meet the JPRs for the Standard or Standards, the Division shall develop a plan to adequately address all JPRs. The plan may include contacting IFSI’s Director and Deputy Director to request input from IFSI subject matter experts and curriculum staff.

C) If the Division determines that changes to any level of certification significantly impacts members of a fire association, the Division may, informally and on an ad hoc basis, request input by contacting the affected fire association.

D) Notwithstanding specific requests from the Division for input on Standards, IFSI and fire associations may also contact the Division directly to offer input when a new or revised Standard is released.

2) Test questions shall be selected exclusively from a test bank, when such a test bank is available.

A) When a test bank is not available, the Division shall develop a bank of test questions based upon the Division-approved published reference materials and correlated to the JPRs of the applicable Standards.

B) The Division shall determine the minimum number of test questions needed for each battery of written examinations and accept or develop evolutions for practical examinations to ensure each JPR is referenced.

C) Only Division-approved test questions and evolutions shall be utilized for the State Written and Practical Examinations.

D) The Division is responsible for ensuring the security of all approved test questions.

d) Division recommendations to the State Fire Marshal (SFM) may include, but are not limited to:

1) Level of certifications to be added or revised;

2) Titles and editions of reference materials;

3) Written and Practical Examinations;

4) Certification requirements;

5) Recertification requirements (Task Books);

6) Proposed administrative rule changes; and

7) Certification transition periods, as needed:

A) When a certification is revised by the Office, a transition period may be necessary to allow fire service personnel to complete any remaining unfinished requirements under the current adopted administrative rules of Subpart D for that level of certification; and

B) When necessary, recommendations for a transition period will be included as part of the recommended revisions submitted by the Division.

8) Pilot courses, as needed:

A) When a new certification is created or an existing certification program is significantly revised by the Division, pilot programs may be scheduled as needed to validate new or revised coursework and examinations until the adoption of the new certification by the Office is completed;

B) The Division shall determine the criteria for selecting and recommending pilot courses and a pilot course host to the SFM. All pilot courses shall be approved by the SFM;

C) The Division shall be responsible for scheduling the initial pilot courses to ensure that the validation of the pilot courses is completed accurately and efficiently;

D) Fire service personnel who complete a pilot course and who meet all requirements of the newly established or revised certification may be eligible to obtain certification for that level; and

E) The Office shall bear no responsibility for costs incurred during a pilot course.

9) IFSI and fire associations may offer to conduct a pilot course for any new or revised certification that has been approved by the SFM for inclusion in the certification program.

A) If IFSI or a fire association is selected to host the initial pilot course, they may charge attendees tuition, but the total fees collected for the initial pilot course shall not exceed the reasonable material and equipment costs for that pilot course, as determined by IFSI or the fire association with SFM’s approval; and

B) Fee limitations shall not apply for subsequent offerings of a pilot course conducted by IFSI or the fire associations after the initial pilot course has been validated.

e) Once the Division makes determinations and recommendations pertaining to a new or revised Standard, the Division will notify the FAC.

1) FAC members will be requested to notify their subject matter experts of the proposed changes to respective certifications.

2) The Division will accept comments, concerns, suggestions or questions from FAC members' subject matter experts for 30 days after notifying the FAC:

A) If the Division receives comments regarding the proposed changes, it shall review all comments and, if deemed necessary by the Division, schedule a meeting with subject matter experts to address their concerns.

B) If a meeting is scheduled, subject matter experts will be invited and shall have the opportunity to review the proposed changes to the certification or recertification programs. Test questions shall not be reviewed.

C) If the Division does not receive comments within 30 days, the Division will present all recommendations to SFM for review, discussion and approval or rejection of recommendations.

3) Upon approval by the SFM, the topic will be added to the next FAC meeting agenda for final notification of the proposed changes.

4) Upon final notification to the FAC, the Division will begin disseminating information regarding the proposed changes and initiate the administrative rulemaking process. The FAC will be updated as to any developments at the next regularly scheduled FAC meeting.

f) IFSI or members of the FAC representing fire associations may request that the Office adopt a new certification.

1) IFSI or a fire association must submit a written request to the SFM requesting the consideration of a new certification. The written request shall include but is not limited to:

A) The title and edition of the referenced Standard;

B) The title and edition of the referenced publisher material; and

C) The title and publisher of the test banks.

2) Upon receipt of the written request, the SFM will discuss with the Division the anticipated impact of the new certification on the fire service and Office.

A) If approved, the Division shall contact IFSI or the fire association to begin the establishment of a new certification.

B) If approved, the SFM shall announce the development of the requested new certification at the next scheduled FAC meeting.

C) If denied, the SFM shall notify IFSI or the fire association in writing with an explanation of the denied request.

(Source: Amended at 47 Ill. Reg. 424, effective January 1, 2023)