



SUGAR HILL FIRE & RESCUE

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Office of the Chief
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To: NH Association of Fire Chiefs
From: Allan Clark, Non-Career Representative – NHFSTC
Subject: Firefighter I and Firefighter II Curriculum
Date: September 8, 2020

The New Hampshire Fire Standards and Training Commission (the “Commission”) has been busy working on revisions to the Firefighter I and II curriculum to comply with the NFPA 1001 version 2019. I am the Association’s representative for non-career chiefs. I also serve as chair of the Commission’s Curriculum Committee. This is my second detailed report to the Association on this matter. The first is also on the Association’s web site.

The Commission has recognized that the Firefighter I course has issues in its current format that needs to be addressed due primarily to the following:

- A) The statewide enrollment has consistently been dropping
- B) The course completion rate is dropping
- C) The pass rate is dropping
- D) The cost is inhibiting some Departments from sending candidates
- E) The completion rate is dropping
- F) That it is estimated that more than 50% of the non-career firefighters in NH are not certified at the Firefighter 1 level

The Commission recognized that the career fire departments do not send candidates to Fire Fighter I and II. The vast majority of students enrolled in Firefighter I classes are from call and volunteer departments throughout the state. The exception being students from the technical college program, high school programs and the Academy’s Rookie School.

The Commission provided explicit direction on what was expected of the Visiting Committee which was as follows:

The Visiting Committee is tasked with reviewing the current program and available curriculums to determine what shall be included in the updated NFPA 1001 Firefighter I and II programs. These programs must continue to meet the requirements of the NFPA standard and Pro-Board. The program should minimize the overall course time, offer as much of the course online as possible, maximize training time on practical skills without adding course hours and overall, focus on the basics and meet the minimum standard.

This direction from the Commission was consistent with the special Chief's Association committee's recommendations on Firefighter 1 and 2 that was appointed by Chief Buxton.

During the Visiting Committee process, each conversation and decision was based on the Commission's objective. One of the first tasks that was achieved, was the selection of the publisher's curriculum. Staff reviewed the three major publisher's curriculums: Jones and Bartlett, for which the program has been based on for more than a decade, IFSTA and Fire Engineering. The recommendation was the Fire Engineering textbook.

It was the opinion of the Academy Staff and the Visiting Committee that a reduction in hours that would require skills objectives to be removed from the program was not acceptable. To reduce the amount of time within the Firefighter I program, the committee decided to expand the prerequisites required for Firefighter I. Students attending the new edition of Firefighter I would still need a valid medical release as well as successful completion of ICS100, ICS200, ICS700, and hold a valid Professional Rescuer CPR card which would need to expire after the scheduled testing.

An area of the program that was determined to far exceed the NFPA 1001 standard for Firefighter 1 was the area of wildland firefighting. The recommendation approved by the committee keeps intact the actual skills from the original program but eliminates the Federal NWCG training program requirements which reduces an estimated 54 hours of online work and 3 hours of lecture to 3 hours online that will focus on New Hampshire wildland firefighting for an entry level firefighter. The practical portion was increased to 9 hours. Chiefs that desire more exposure to wildland firefighting for their firefighters have available the Academy's Wildland Firefighter course.

After a substantial review of the standard, it was identified that the current Firefighter II program exceeded the standard significantly. Staff's recommendation for the Firefighter II program was to reduce the program specifically to the requirements set forth by the standard in compliance with the Commission's directive. By doing this, many of the technical rescue modules were removed from the certification program. These programs will be delivered as standalone training programs for those departments which need them.

The recommendations approved by the Visiting Committee, meet the 2019 edition of the NFPA standard, all Pro-Board requirements, significantly reduces overall and in-person class time, moves didactic instruction to an online format, maximizes the amount of time students spend on practical skills, and focuses on the basics that are outlined in the standard. It complies with the specific direction from the Commission.

The Visiting Committee's recommendation as presented reduces in-person class time for Firefighter I and II by 21% and 71%, respectively. This is critical as many students outside of the Concord, Portsmouth Nashua triangle travel a significant amount of time just to attend class.

In addition, by moving lectures online, this reduces total class time by 18% for Firefighter I and by 58% for Firefighter II. This recommendation would allow a student to complete both Firefighter I and II in less in-person hours than the current Firefighter I program.

The recommendation of the Visiting Committee is summarized as follows:

<u>Course</u>	<u>Current Curriculum</u>	<u>Proposed Curriculum</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Firefighter 1	247	202	-45
Firefighter 2	124	77	-47
If Offered Combined	371	255	-116

The detail of the hours by module are attached to this report. It should be noted that the hours are estimates of the time needed to complete a module. The actual time may be different once the course are taught a few times.

The Commission’s Curriculum Committee approved the recommendation of the Visiting Committee and the full Commission on September 3, 2020 accepted the recommendation of the Curriculum Committee and will schedule public hearings.

Those interested in the proposed changes should plan on either writing a letter or attending one of the public hearings to express your thoughts. The Public Hearings have yet to be scheduled. Written comments can be submitted until November 3, 2020 at: <https://nhfa-ems.com/fst-commission-curriculum-public-feedback-form/>

All curriculum information of the proposed program can be found at: <https://nhfa-ems.com/nfpa-1001-2019-firefighter-i-and-ii-documents/>

The Commission, Visiting Committee and the Curriculum Committee have expended a substantial amount of time on the Firefighter I and II curriculum with the hope of substantially increasing the percentage of firefighters certified at least to the Firefighter I level in the State something that does not currently exist.

Should anyone have any questions or comments, please contact me at 603.494.1491 or via email at chief@sugarhillfd.org.