

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK FOR CERTIFIED FIRE INSPECTOR I



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NFPA

► **The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is a nonprofit membership organization** founded in 1896 and having today more than 75,000 members. The mission of NFPA is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life.

NFPA activities generally fall into two broad, interrelated areas: technical and educational. NFPA's technical activity involves development, publication, and dissemination of more than 300 timely consensus codes and standards intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other hazards. NFPA codes and standards are developed by nearly 250 technical committees, each of which represents a balance of affected interests. More than 7,000 representatives serve voluntarily on NFPA committees. NFPA codes and standards, which are developed under the approved process of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), are widely used as a basis of legislation and regulation at all levels of government. In some way, virtually every building, process, service, design, and installation in society today is affected by codes and standards developed through NFPA's system.

NFPA's educational activities are focused on motivating and enabling the public to be safer. Fire Prevention Week, which NFPA has sponsored for over 80 years, represents the association's largest annual public safety campaign. The newest addition to NFPA's public education product line is *Risk Watch*[™], a comprehensive school-based injury prevention curriculum that teaches children and their families how to protect themselves from unintentional injuries. NFPA's Center for High-Risk Outreach develops safety programs to reduce deaths and injuries, primarily from fires, burns, and falls, among high-risk populations: the very young, older adults, and the impoverished. The award-winning Sparky the Fire Dog[®] website entertains and teaches kids about fire safety.

Fire Inspector Certification Program

► **The overall mission** of NFPA's certification program is to enhance human and organizational performance as related to the use and application of NFPA codes and standards.

► **The goals** of the certification program are to:

- Enhance professionalism within the fire inspection community
- Ensure a uniform, fair process for certification that is accessible to everyone who is eligible
- Ensure proficiency in the use of codes and standards
- Facilitate success for those seeking certification
- Promote professional development through continuous learning
- Recognize and provide evidence of competence as related to NFPA 1031, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner*

Program History

► **The NFPA Fire Inspector Certification Program** was created in response to repeated requests by local entities, state agencies, and national organizations for certification programs founded on the NFPA 1031, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner*, and other applicable NFPA codes and standards. These requests suggested that NFPA be the main catalyst and ultimate certifying body for such programs.

In late 1996, an independent organization conducted research that validated this need. The current Fire Inspector I Certification Program has been operational since 1998.

NFPA has also developed the Fire Inspector II and the Fire Plan Examiner Certification Programs.

► **The benefits of the Certified Fire Inspector I program include:**

- Certification by NFPA, the most recognized international organization in the fire service industry
- International recognition
- CFI- I certificate
- CFI-I wallet card
- CFI-I lapel pin

Program Requirements

► Program Entry Requirements

- The attainment of a high school diploma or equivalent

► Program Entry Methods

The NFPA Fire Inspector program may be entered in two ways, either directly through the NFPA certification department or via an NFPA partnership agency (Appendix I) which may or may not offer Fire Inspector training courses.

► **The application** can be found in Appendix I. CFI-I application forms are also available from the NFPA Certification web page at www.nfpa.org/certification by contacting the NFPA Certification Department at (617) 984-7497 or by contacting an NFPA partnership agency (Appendix I)

► Transfer Applications

A special application for those interested in transferring from other CFI-I programs into the NFPA CFI-I Program can be found in Appendix I.

► Program Fees

The fee for certifying directly through NFPA is \$300 USD. Taking the *Written Examination* a second time requires an additional \$75 USD retest fee. Agencies who partner with NFPA to sponsor the Certified Fire Inspector I Program will assess and collect their own fees.

If you are applying through one of these Partnering Agencies, please contact the Agency directly to determine their fee schedule. A list of Partnering Agencies can be found in Appendix I as well as the NFPA Certification web page at www.nfpa.org/certification.

► Application Acceptance

An application is accepted only when both of these requirements are met:

- All required information is provided
- The fee is enclosed

► Once Accepted

- Two *Case Studies* must be completed and returned to the Program Administrator within 2 months of entering the CFI Program. The *Case Study Defined Responses* are provided for self-evaluation of the *Case Studies* according to the following parameters: correct application of the standards; case study analysis; and calculations. Failure to complete the *Case Studies* within the specified time period voids the application. The fee will not be returned, and reapplication to the program will be required.
- You will have to take and pass a *Written Examination* within 4 months of entering the CFI-I Program. You are allowed an additional 90 days from the test date if you need to retake the *Written Examination*.
- Complete the CFI-I Program by submitting practicum verification forms to NFPA within 6 months of passing the examination. In the case of those working with a

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Partnering Agency, please submit practicum verification forms to the Program Administrator.

THE EXAMINATION

► **The four-hour**, open book, 100-question, multiple-choice Written Examination is designed to evaluate the applicant's knowledge of fire inspection principles and code application skills at the level of Fire Inspector I (as defined in NFPA 1031).

During the Written Examination, applicants will be expected to interpret and apply code-related material in response to the test questions.

The Written Examination can be taken in one of two ways: As directed by the NFPA Program Administrator via an NFPA approved proctor; usually a fire department training director, or at a university or college-testing center (where a fee may be charged, for which the applicant is responsible) or under the direction of the Program Administrator of a Partnering Agency.

The Program Administrator or proctor should be consulted for Written Examination scheduling.

► **The Written Examination must be taken** within 4 months of entering the CFI-I Program. The Written Examination will be evaluated and the results communicated to the applicant or Partnering Agency Program Administrator. Applicants, who successfully pass the Written Examination, will then enter the *Practicum Phase*.

Applicants, who do not pass the Written Examination, have 90 days from notification to submit a retest exam request, a \$75.00 retest fee, and retake the exam.

EXAM PREPARATION/REFERENCE MATERIALS

The Fire Inspector I *Written Examination* is a four-hour open-book exam. Remember, it is your responsibility to obtain materials you will need for study purposes and to have present during the *Written Examination*.

Important Note: A number of the CFI-I examination questions are general knowledge items and require the examinee to recall the correct answer. These questions were developed from the *International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) Fire Inspection & Code Enforcement Manual*, 7th Edition, **which is not permitted at the examination.**

The following list contains the resources to be used in preparing for and to be used during the *Written Examination*.

NFPA 1, 2009 Edition	Fire Code
NFPA 13, 2007 Edition	Installation of Sprinkler Systems
NFPA 25, 2008 Edition	Standard for the Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems

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NFPA 72, 2007 Edition National Fire Alarm Code®

NFPA 101®, 2009 Edition Life Safety Code®

These five individual NFPA codes have been conveniently packaged into a single reference set at a special price, only available through the NFPA Certification Department. Please refer to the CFI-I Application form to order references.

► **The NFPA Fire Inspector I** Written Examination is based on the job performance requirements for the Fire Inspector I level that are defined in Chapter 4 of NFPA 1031, *Standard for Professional Qualification for Fire Inspector and Plans Examiner*, 2009 edition. (See **Appendix II**)

Review the layout of the material that will be used as references during the Written Examination. It is not necessary to memorize the references, but it is important to know what information may be covered, and how to quickly locate that information. Look for tables in the reference materials that *summarize* requirements; this can save you time during the examination. Know the format of documents such as the Life Safety Code® occupancy chapters. This will help you find specific information quickly during the examination.

The Case Studies (See **Appendix III**) guides the applicant through solving a problem by researching a code. The ability to look at a question or problem related to a code issue, identify the relevant code or standard, and then locate the correct answer is one of the most essential skills a Fire Inspector must develop. Try the activity on your own, and then look at the solution (**Appendix IV**) that is provided to see if you are on track. Follow the path through the codes until you can see how the problem was addressed and answered. During the written examination, understanding this process will help you to identify the issue, and use code documents to answer the questions.

Appendix V contains a number of sample questions to help you become familiar with similar types of questions found on the Written Examination. On the actual examination, you will have 4 hours to complete 100 questions. This is an average of 2.4 minutes per question. The answers to the sample questions can be found on the last page of **Appendix V**.

► **Begin preparing for the examination** by reading the *IFSTA Fire Inspection and Code Enforcement Manual*, 7th Edition. As stated previously, it is very important that you read this book. Your chances for success in passing the exam will be greatly reduced if you do not study it. Next, begin reviewing the layout of the - five codes you will use during the exam. For example, NFPA 1, *Fire Code*, covers all aspects of fire protection and prevention utilized in other NFPA codes and standards. Each NFPA document is laid out in the same way and divided into similar sections, beginning with administration and definitions, followed by the specific requirements in the code.

► **Additional Materials - Beyond the Codes**

In addition to the NFPA resources listed above, the *NFPA Fire and Life Safety Inspection Manual*, 8th Edition, and, *The Fire Protection Handbook*, 20th Edition are excellent resources for study and review.

► **Sample Question and Analysis**

Question - What is the occupant load factor used for determining the required means of egress for an existing business occupancy?

- (A) 20 sq ft (1.9 sq m)
- (B) 50 sq ft (4.6 sq m)
- (C) 100 sq ft (9.3 sq m)
- (D) 200 sq ft (18.6 sq m)

Analyze the Question - This is an occupancy question.

Find the right reference document – Means of egress provisions and other occupancy questions are addressed by NFPA 101[®], *Life Safety Code*[®], 2009 edition. Additionally, Annex D of NFPA 101 gives you a numerical listing of all NFPA codes and standards.

► **The following suggestions, regulations, and procedures** pertain to every applicant taking the *Written Examination*:

- You must have a valid photo ID at the test center.
- Bring three sharpened soft-lead (No. 2) pencils or mechanical pencils and a good eraser. Pencils and erasers will NOT be furnished at the center.
- You are permitted to use a calculator during the *Written Examination*. Only silent, hand-held, battery-operated (programmable or non-programmable) calculators, without paper-tape printing capabilities, can be used. Calculator malfunction during a test does not constitute grounds for challenging test scores or requesting additional testing time.
- Bring a watch. You will not be permitted to continue the test beyond the established four-hour time limit.
- You should bring those NFPA reference materials that were identified in this handbook. All materials taken into the test center must be published and copyrighted and are subject to review by the test center proctor. No handwritten materials will be allowed. The IFSTA manual and the NFPA *Fire and Life Safety Inspection Manual* are not allowed at the examination.
- Electronic versions of the reference materials are not permitted to be used at the test site.
- Visitors are not permitted at the test center.
- You may do scratch work only in the margins of the test book. Scratch paper is not permitted. Do not write on, mark in or tab the pages of your reference code books during the examination. Doing so will be grounds for dismissal from the test site.
- If you wish to leave the room during the test, you must secure the proctor's permission. You will not be allowed to make up lost time.
- Smoking, phones, and pagers are not permitted in the testing area.

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- Examination Security: Failure to follow candidate instructions regarding examination security will result in your application being voided and forfeiture of your application fee. Conduct that results in violation of examination security or disrupts the administration of the examination could result in cancellation of your examination and dismissal from the testing center. In addition, your examination will be considered void and will not be scored. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following: writing on anything other than the margins of your test booklet, looking at another candidate's examination, or talking with other candidates anytime during the entire examination period. You are particularly cautioned not to do so after you have completed the examination, as other candidates in the area might be taking a break and still not have completed the examination. You may not attend the examination only to review or audit test materials. You may not copy any portion of the examination for any reason. No examination information may leave the test room under any circumstances. This includes memorizing questions for distribution to any other person. No unauthorized persons will be admitted into the testing area. It is very important for you to note all examination content is strictly confidential. You may only communicate about the test, or questions on the test, using the appropriate forms provided within the examination delivery system. At no other time, before, during or after the examination, may you communicate orally, electronically or in writing with any person or entity about the content of the examination or individual examination questions.

The Practicum Phase

► **The objective of the practicum phase** is to provide the Certified Fire Inspector I candidate with an opportunity to demonstrate the application of the skills and knowledge that are used on the job through actual field inspections, and to satisfy NFPA 1031 JPR's not tested in the examination.

Successful completion of the practicum is a requirement for certification. Applicants have 6 months from passing the written examination to complete and submit the Practicum Phase. Once the candidate has passed the exam, they will receive the Practicum Phase Workbook in the mail.

The evaluation parameters are based on the standards identified in NFPA 1031, NFPA 1, and related sections in the NFPA *Fire and Life Safety Inspection Manual*, 8th edition.

► Procedures

Once the *Written Examination* is successfully completed, you will receive a Practicum Phase Exercises Workbook that includes:

- 12 target occupancies
- Performance checklists
- Verification forms for submittal.

Seven of the 12 inspection exercises (2 mandatory and 5 electives) must be conducted and their related performance checklists completed. This is to ensure appropriate evaluations are conducted at each of the sites. The applicant will check-off items identified in the performance checklist. Each Verification Form must be signed by either, (a) the Building Owner or Property Manager, or (b) a Supervisor, Fire Chief, Fire Prevention Officer, or Partnering Agency Program Administrator. The signatory of the verification forms is responsible for confirming the activities were completed.

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If above option (b) is chosen, then a single individual must be designated prior to the *Practicum Phase* being undertaken, and this individual must sign all of the occupancy checklists.

▶ **Mandatory Activities**

A site visit and performance checklist must be completed for each of the following:

- Sprinklered facility
- Commercial kitchen facility (in either a restaurant, school, or health care facility)

These mandatory different activities can be completed as part of a visit to one or more elective occupancies (see below) or at a separate facility. A separate verification form must be completed for each.

▶ **Elective Activities**

Site visits, performance checklists, and verification forms must be completed for any five (5) of the following occupancy types:

- Educational occupancy (elementary school);
- Assembly occupancy (for 50 or more people);
- Apartment building with 16 or more units and two or more stories, or a motel/hotel with 20 or more guest rooms;
- Mercantile occupancy between 3,000 and 12,000 sq. ft. (279 and 1,115 sq. m.) in area;
- Business/office occupancy with 5,000 or less sq. ft. (465 sq. m.);
- Industrial/Manufacturing occupancy between 5,000 and 30,000 sq. ft. (465 and 2,787 sq. m.) in area;
- Maintenance shop (industrial occupancy);
- Hot work facility (industrial cutting, welding, grinding occupancy);
- Storage occupancy (warehouse with noncombustible components on wood pallets).
- Health care occupancy (nursing home/limited-care facility).

▶ **Once the *Practicum Phase* requirements** have been fulfilled, the Verification Forms are sent to the CFI Program Administrator for auditing.

If the applicant entered the CFI program through a Partnering Agency, the 7 Verification Forms should be sent to the Partnering Agency. The Partnering Agency will audit the forms and forward them on to NFPA for processing.

If the applicant entered the CFI Program through the NFPA Certification Program Administrator, the 7 Verification Forms should be sent directly to NFPA's Certification Department.

The audit verifies that the applicant performed the appropriate practical exercises.

Once this audit is complete, and other certification program requirements are met, then you will receive your certification by mail from NFPA.

RECERTIFICATION

► **Once you have been certified** as a Fire Inspector I, recertification every three years is mandatory. It is important that you begin accumulating the required points as soon as possible.

The applicant must submit documented evidence of a total of 60 credit points from the following categories:

- Course certificates
- Letters of attestation from course sponsors
- College transcripts
- Letters from employers
- Other evidence as required

All training or instruction must be clearly related to the Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner field of practice. If college courses are declared for training hours, the same course cannot be taken twice within the 3-year period, and the applicant must convert credit hours to actual hours spent in the classroom.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Minimum Points</u>	<u>Maximum Points</u>
Training	One point per contact hour	Fifteen (15)	Sixty (60)
Teaching	Two points per contact hour	Zero (0)	Forty-five (45)
Professional Practice	½ point per inspection	Zero (0)	Thirty (30)
Writing for Publication	Five points per article	Zero (0)	Fifteen (15)
Writing for Publication	Ten points per book	Zero (0)	Fifteen (15)
Association Membership	One point per membership per year	Zero (0)	Ten (10)

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► **The fee for recertification** is \$130.00.

For more information, please contact:

NFPA Certification Department
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, MA 02169

Telephone: (617) 984-7497

Website: www.nfpa.org/certification

TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

► **Transfer** (Consideration for Acceptance) from a Certified Fire Inspector I program (recognized by NFPA) into the NFPA Certified Fire Inspector I Program.

The CFI-I Transfer Requirements are:

- Meet CFI-I eligibility requirements
- Provide Proof of current certification in a recognized Certified Fire Inspector I program
- Complete and submit the CFI-I Transfer Application along with supporting eligibility documentation
- Submit CFI-I Application fee of \$250
- Complete the 3 CFI-I Practicum Inspection Exercises
- Complete CFI-I 3-year Recertification requirements

Transfer Applications for the CFI I Program are available in Appendix I or at www.nfpa.org/certification

Forward the completed transfer application and supporting eligibility documentation and payment to the NFPA Certification department. If you are accepted as a transfer candidate, you can then proceed with the completion of the Practicum Inspection Exercises as outlined in this manual.