

FIRE PLAN EXAMINER CANDIDATE HANDBOOK



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ABOUT NFPA

► **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[®] Web site entertains and teaches kids about fire safety.

ABOUT THE 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.

It is the particular mission of this NFPA Fire Plan Examiner program to promote professionalism within the fire plan examiner field-of-practice through a widely accepted, recognized, appreciated, and practical Fire Plan Examiner Certification Program.

Further, a related mission is to introduce a performance-based certification model that can either fill a void when no Fire Plan Examiner Certification Programs exist, or build-on/validate active programs at the local or state level.

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

- Enhance professionalism within the fire plan examiner community
- Ensure a uniform, fair process for certification that is accessible to everyone
- Ensure proficiency in the use of codes and standards
- 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*

▶ **The impetus for NFPA Certification Program** was created by repeated requests by local entities, state agencies, and national organizations to develop certification programs founded on the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) Professional Qualification Standards 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. Their findings supported broad-based appeal for the NFPA to create fire inspector-related certification programs.

In response to these industry needs, the NFPA has also undertaken the responsibility for designing a valid and reliable Fire Plan Examiner Certification Program and implementing this program in the fire plan examiner field-of-practice.

▶ **The benefits of the program** include the following:

- Certification by NFPA, the most recognized international organization in the fire service industry
- National Recognition
- CFPE Certificate
- CFPE Wallet card
- CFPE Lapel pin

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

▶ **Applications** for the Certified Fire Plan Examiner program can be downloaded from the NFPA website www.nfpa.org/certification, or mailed or faxed from the NFPA Certification Department.

NFPA Certification Department
Certified Fire Plan Examiner Program
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, MA 02169

Telephone: (617) 984-7497
Fax a request: (617) 984-7127
E-mail: cfpe@nfpa.org

▶ **The application must be filled out in its entirety and signed or the application will be rejected.**

▶ **Entry Requirements**

The attainment of a high school diploma or equivalent.

▶ **Program Fees**

The fee for certifying directly through NFPA is \$300 USD. Taking the *Written Examination* a second time requires an additional retest fee. Agencies who partner with NFPA to provide the Fire Plan Examiner Certification assess and collect their own fees. If you are applying with one of NFPA's Partnering Agencies, please contact them to determine their fee schedule.

▶ **Application Acceptance**

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

- All required information is provided
- The fee is enclosed.

▶ Once a CFPE application is received and accepted, you will receive confirmation of the application's acceptance and the appropriate documents to schedule your exam.

- You will have to take and pass a *Written Examination* within 4 months of entering the CFPE Program. You are allowed an additional 90 days if you need to retake the *Written Examination*.

- Applicants successfully passing the *Written Examination* must complete a *Practicum Phase* within 6 months.

Complete the Fire Plan Examiner Certification Program within 10 months of application approval by NFPA.

THE EXAMINATION

► **The four-hour**, open-book, 100-question, *Written Examination* is designed to evaluate the applicant's plan examination principles, knowledge, and code application skills at the level of Fire Plan Examiner (as defined in NFPA 1031). The *Written Examination* was created and is continuously maintained by a professional development and validation service that also manage the test administration for NFPA. Only NFPA-titled reference documents may be used during the *Written Examination*.

Important Note: A portion of the CFPE examination questions are general knowledge items and require the examinee to recall the correct answer. These questions were developed from the IFSTA *Fire Plans Examiner for Fire and Emergency Services Manual*, 1st Edition, **which is not permitted at the examination**. It is very important that you obtain and read this book. Your chances for success in passing the exam will be greatly reduced if you do not study it.

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

It is *the applicant's responsibility* to bring or ensure those materials that are needed to complete the *Written Examination* are available at the test site. Applicants will need access to each of the referenced NFPA publications during the *Written Examination*.

It is highly recommended that applicants practice for the *Written Examination* using the sample test questions included at the end of this handbook and become familiar with each of the referenced document's content and organization.

► **The following regulations** and procedures pertain to every *Written Examination* administration:

- A photo ID will be required for entrance into the examination.
- Take three sharpened soft-lead (No. 2) pencils or mechanical pencils and a good eraser. Pencils and erasers will NOT be furnished at the center.
- Applicants are permitted to use a calculator during the *Written Examination*. Please note, however, that 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.

- Take a watch. Applicants will not be permitted to continue the test beyond the established four-hour time limit.
- 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 are allowed.
- Visitors are not permitted at the test center. Smoking, phones and pagers are not permitted in the testing area.
- Applicants can only do scratch work in the margins of the test book. Do not write on the Plan Set! Scratch paper is not permitted.

If an applicant wishes to leave the room during the test, the Test Center Proctor's permission must be secured.

EXAMINATION PREPARATION

Only the following 4 NFPA Reference Codes & Standards are permitted at the Written Examination site.

- **NFPA 1, 2009 Ed.** – Fire Code[®]
- **NFPA 13, 2007 Ed.** – Installation of Sprinkler Systems
- **NFPA 72, 2007 Ed.** – National Fire Alarm & Signaling Code[®]
- **NFPA 101, 2009 Ed.** - Life Safety Code[®]

The above **NFPA Reference Codes & Standards** are available from NFPA's Certification Department for an additional fee. Check the box on the CFPE Application to order the NFPA Reference Books.

Not permitted at the Written Examination site

IFSTA Fire Plans Examiner for Fire and Emergency Services Manual

▶ Sample Questions

This handbook contains sample questions in the similar style and content as the CFPE *Written Examination*. Use the sample questions to verify your understanding of the topics in the *Written Examination*. Answers are provided for the sample questions. If you miss the answers of some questions, use these as guidance toward areas where you may need to do additional studying.

The Certified Fire Plan Examiner training program is at least a 24-hour classroom program offered by Partnering Agencies. The building blocks for the programs are NFPA codes and standards, training materials from the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) and National Fire Academy resources.

Those participating in the Fire Plan Examiner training program will spend a minimum of 24 hours concentrated learning time. The course participant will learn how to locate applicable information relevant to particular types of fire plan reviews, interpret and apply codes and standards, and gain a deep understanding of issues related to fire plan reviews. Foundational knowledge is embedded throughout the Certified Fire Plan Examiner course design.

Once you have prepared, you will be allowed to sit for a scheduled *Written Examination*. The *Written Examination* must be taken when directed by your Program Administrator. You must contact the Program Administrator for examination scheduling.

Upon notification, those who do not pass the *Written Examination* must schedule to retake it within 90 days, by following the procedure sent with the did not pass notice, and submitting the required retest fee.

After 90 days, or if the *Written Examination* is not passed a second time, you must reapply to the program and submit the full application fee and application to endeavor to obtain Fire Plan Examiner Certification.

Upon successfully passing the Plan Examiner examination the candidate will then progress to the Practicum Phase of the certification program.

THE PRACTICUM PHASE

► **The Practicum Phase** is designed to ensure that an individual demonstrates experience in the particular field prior to becoming certified. A competency-based certification program without a *Practicum Phase* holds little weight with regard to determining whether or not an individual should be deemed capable of completing his/her duties correctly.

This phase not only ensures that you have relevant job experience, but also provides additional learning opportunities.

Applicants have 6 months to complete and submit *Practicum Phase* materials.

Of the five required fire plan reviews, you must complete at least two site plan reviews. For each fire plan review, a copy of the title block or other plan identification must be provided along with the Plan Review Report.

Please refer to the Practicum Phase section of this handbook for more details about the Practicum Phase of the CFPE Program. This section of the handbook contains:

- Detailed instructions
- Performance checklist
- Plan report submission guidelines
- Verification forms for submittal.

▶ **Five plan reviews must be conducted** and reported, including two site plan reviews. The applicant will check-off items identified in the performance checklist, and then must have each Verification Form signed by a Supervisor, Fire Chief, Fire Prevention Officer, or Partnering Agency Program Administrator.

The signer of the Verification Forms is responsible for confirming the fire plan reviews were completed, including:

- Two site plans reviewed and reported;
- Three other plans reviewed and reported.

For each fire plan review, a copy of the title block or other plan identification must be provided along with the Plan Review Report.

▶ **The evaluation parameters** are based on the standards and practices identified in:

NFPA 1031, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner*, 2009 edition

NFPA 1, *Fire Code*TM, 2009 edition

NFPA 13, *Installation of Sprinkler Systems*, 2007 edition

NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm & Signaling Code*[®], 2007 edition

NFPA 101[®], *Life Safety Code*[®], 2009 edition

IFSTA's *Fire Plans Examiner for Fire and Emergency Services Manual*, 1st edition, related sections

▶ **After the *Practicum Phase*** requirements have been fulfilled; the Practicum Phase documents must be submitted to NFPA or to the Partnering Agency Program Administrator for auditing. The audit verifies the quantity and quality of the plan reviews that you conducted.

For each fire plan review, please submit the Fire Plan Review Checklist, a Written Report, the signed Verification Form, and a copy of the Title Block or other plan identification.

Once this audit is complete and approved, you will receive your certification by mail from NFPA.

RECERTIFICATION

► **Once you have been certified** as a Fire Plan Examiner, 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.

Evidence may include:

- 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 job performance requirements in NFPA 1031, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner*.

If college courses are declared for training hours, the same course can not be taken twice within the three year period and the applicant must convert credit hours to actual contact hours.

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

► **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 FROM OTHER PROGRAMS

Transfers (Consideration for Acceptance) from a recognized Certified Fire Plan Examiner program into the NFPA Certified Fire Plan Examiner Program.

It is necessary to meet the following requirements:

- Meet CFPE eligibility requirements
- Provide proof of current certification in a related Certified Fire Plan Examiner program.
- Complete Transfer Application
- Submit Application Fee of \$250.00
- Complete 3 site reviews:
One Site Review
Two Non-Site Reviews
- Complete Recertification requirements – 60 recertification points

Transfer Applications for the CFPE Program are available at www.nfpa.org/certification

Once transfer candidates become certified, they are subject to all CFPE program requirements.