

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK - CERTIFIED FIRE INSPECTOR I



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NFPA's MISSION

The mission of the international nonprofit NFPA, established in 1896, is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.

FIRE INSPECTOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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 Certified Fire Inspector II and the Certified Fire Plan Examiner programs.

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 CFI-I 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*

BENEFITS

CFI-I credential holders receive the following benefits:

- Recognition as an expert by your colleagues
- Greater confidence in your abilities
- Improved job performance
- Career advancement opportunities

Certificate holders also receive a CFI-I certificate, wallet card and lapel pin that further highlights their accomplishment.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to take the CFI-I examination, candidates must validate on the CFI-I application that they meet the following criteria:

- The attainment of a high school diploma or equivalent

PROGRAM ENTRY METHODS

The NFPA CFI-I program may be entered in two ways, either directly through the NFPA Certification Department or via an NFPA partnership agency which may or may not offer fire inspector training courses.

APPLICATIONS

All CFI-I applications including the program application, transfer application, and retest application can be found in appendix I. They are also available at www.nfpa.org/certification, or by contacting NFPA's Certification Department at (617) 984-7432.

TRANSFERS

Transfer from a CFI-I program recognized by NFPA into the NFPA CFI-I Program requires the following:

- 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 the CFI-I transfer application fee.

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.

APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE

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

- The application is filled out completely
- The fee is enclosed along with the application

PROGRAM FEES

Current program fees are listed on the applicable applications and can be found in appendix I. The complete fee schedule for certifying directly through NFPA can also be found at www.nfpa.org/certification.

Agencies who partner with NFPA on the CFI-I program will assess and collect their own fees. Please contact the partnering agency directly to determine their fee schedule. A list of partnering agencies can be found at www.nfpa.org/certification.

STEPS TO CERTIFICATION

- **Case Studies** - Once your application has been accepted, it is recommended that you complete a minimum of two of the case studies (appendix IV). The case studies are designed to prepare for the examination, and while not mandatory will help you assess your readiness. The defined responses are in appendix V for self-evaluation according to the following parameters: correct application of the standards; case study analysis; and calculations.
- **Examination** - You will have to sit for a computer based or written examination *within 4 months* of entering the CFI-I program. Candidates, who successfully pass the written examination, will then enter the practicum phase. Candidates, who do not pass the examination, have *90 days from notification* to submit a retest examination request, a retest fee, and retake the examination.
- **Practicum** - 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 partnering agency, please submit practicum verification forms to the program administrator.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain materials needed for study purposes and to have present during the examination. The following list contains the resources to be used in preparing for and taking the examination. All items in the examination are compatible with both code sets. Please verify with your jurisdiction or certification partnership agency for the proper set.

2009 NFPA Code Set:

- NFPA 1, Fire Code - 2009 Ed.
- NFPA 13, Installation of Sprinkler Systems - 2007 Ed.
- NFPA 25, Standard for the ITM of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems - 2008 Ed.
- NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code® - 2007 Ed.
- NFPA 101®, Life Safety Code® - 2009 Ed.

2012 NFPA Code Set:

- NFPA 1, Fire Code - 2012 Ed.
- NFPA 13, Installation of Sprinkler Systems - 2010 Ed.
- NFPA 25, Standard for the ITM of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems - 2011 Ed.
- NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code® - 2010 Ed.
- NFPA 101®, Life Safety Code® - 2012 Ed.

These NFPA codes and standards have been conveniently packaged into reference sets and are

available for people registering for the CFI-1 exam at a special price, only through the NFPA Certification Department. Refer to the CFI-I application form (appendix I) or to www.nfpa.org/certification to order these references. **Please be sure to indicate which set you would like on your order form.**

EXAM PREPARATION

The NFPA CFI-I 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*. (See appendix II)

Review Reference Materials - It is not necessary to memorize the reference materials, but it is important to know what content is found in each of the referenced NFPA documents. For example, *NFPA 1, Fire Code*, covers all aspects of fire protection and prevention utilized in other NFPA codes and standards.

Know the general format of the NFPA documents. 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. Also, look for tables in the documents that summarize requirements.

These tips will help you find specific information quickly during the examination.

Case Studies - (appendix IV) The case studies help guide the candidate 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 V) 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 examination, understanding this process will help you to identify the issue, and use code documents to answer the questions.

Additional Materials - In addition to the NFPA resources listed above, the *NFPA Fire and Life Safety Inspection Manual, 8th Edition*, *The Fire Protection Handbook, 20th Edition*, and the *IFSTA Fire Inspection and Code Enforcement Manual, 7th Edition* are excellent resources for study and review. Please keep in mind that their use is not allowed during the examination.

Sample Questions - Appendix III contains a number of sample questions to help you become familiar with similar types of questions found on the examination. The answers to the sample questions can be found on the last page of appendix III.

Sample 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*®.

EXAM FORMATS

NFPA offers a paper and pencil as well as a computer based version of the CFI-I examination. Both formats are four-hour open-book examinations, containing 100 multiple-choice questions. The examination is only available in English. It is designed to evaluate the candidate’s knowledge of fire inspection principles and code application skills at the level of fire inspector I (as defined in NFPA 1031).

Paper and Pencil - The written examination can be taken in one of two ways:

1. 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 candidate is responsible)
2. Under the direction of the program administrator of a partnering agency.

The program administrator or proctor should be consulted for written examination scheduling.

Computer Based - The examination is available in a computer-based format at test assessment centers throughout the world. Upon receipt of the CFI-I examination application and test fee, the candidate will receive their authorization letter with instructions on how to schedule the computer-based examination. A list of computer-based test centers is available on the test administrator’s website at www.isoqualitytesting.com.

EXAM RULES AND PROCEDURES

The following suggestions, regulations, and procedures pertain to every candidate taking the 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. This applies to paper and pencil examination only.
- You are permitted to use a calculator during the examination. Only silent, hand-held, battery-operated (programmable or non-programmable) calculators, without paper-tape printing capabilities, can be used. Smart phone usage is not permitted during the test. 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.
- Only print versions of those approved NFPA reference materials that were identified in this handbook may be taken into the test center. Electronic versions of the reference materials and photocopies are not permitted to be used.
- No handwritten materials will be allowed. The IFSTA manual, The Fire Protection Handbook, and the NFPA Fire and Life Safety Inspection Manual are ***not*** allowed at the examination.
- Do not write on, mark or tab the pages of your code books during the examination. Notes and highlights on the pages of the code books made prior to the exam are acceptable. Scratch paper is not allowed. All scratch work must be limited to the margins of the test book. The use of removable tabs or place holders on your code books is NOT permitted. Permanent adhesive tabs, applied prior to the exam, are acceptable. Failure to comply will be grounds for dismissal from the test site.
- Visitors are not permitted at the test center.
- 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.

The NFPA shall have the right to revoke or invalidate any examination score with or without a finding of fault or misconduct if data forensic analysis or other credible evidence establishes a reasonable possibility that a score is not valid or the integrity or security of the examination was compromised.

EXAM 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 have not 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.

RESULTS

Paper and Pencil - The paper and pencil examination will be evaluated and the results communicated by mail within 3 weeks to the candidate. Results will not be provided via the telephone.

Computer Based – The computer based examination allows candidates to receive their results immediately upon completion of the examination.

RETEST

Candidates who do not pass the examination, have 90 days from notification to submit a retest examination request, a retest fee, and retake the examination. The retest application is found in appendix I or at www.nfpa.org/certification

CONFIDENTIALITY

The identity and information concerning all candidates is confidential. Information regarding exam results are only communicated in writing from the NFPA Certification Department directly to the candidate. Exam results are never provided over the phone.

PRACTICUM PHASE

After successfully completing the examination, candidates will receive the practicum phase workbook in the mail. The objective of the practicum phase is to provide the CFI-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 any NFPA 1031 JPR's that may not have appeared on the examination.

Successful completion of the practicum is a requirement for certification. Candidates have *6 months from passing the examination* to complete and submit the practicum phase.

The evaluation parameters are based on the requirements of chapter 4 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, the candidate will receive a practicum phase exercises workbook that includes:

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

Seven of the 12 inspection exercises must be conducted and their related performance checklists completed (2 mandatory and 5 elective). This is to ensure appropriate evaluations are conducted at each of the sites.

The candidate 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.

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.

FIRE INSPECTOR I CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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 different mandatory 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)

Verification Forms - Once the practicum phase requirements have been fulfilled, the verification forms are sent to the CFI-I program administrator for auditing.

If the candidate entered the CFI-I program through a partnering agency, the seven 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 candidate entered the CFI-I program through the NFPA certification program administrator, the seven verification forms should be sent directly to NFPA's Certification Department.

The audit verifies that the candidate 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 a candidate has been certified as a fire inspector I, recertification every three years is mandatory. In order to recertify the certified must accumulate continuing education points. It is important that you begin accumulating the required points as soon as possible.

All activities 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 candidate must convert credit hours to actual hours spent in the classroom.

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

<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)

Documentation – Reasonable proof of attendance or participation in the described categories will be accepted. Reasonable includes:

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

USE OF YOUR CFI-I CREDENTIAL

Once granted the CFI-I credential, the certified may refer to themselves as a CFI-I credential holder as long as the certified has an active certification status. The certified is authorized to use the CFI-I designation after their name on business cards, personal letterhead, resumes, websites and in their email signature.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

NFPA evaluates all CFI-I candidates without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age or disability.

RESCHEDULING, CANCELATIONS, AND WITHDRAWALS

Should you be unable to sit for the examination, NFPA must receive notification in writing no later than seven (7) business days prior to the examination date. You will be assessed a \$50 cancellation/rescheduling fee.

Candidates withdrawing from the program or canceling the examination will forfeit all application fees with no refund.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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