

# **Recommended Best Practices For Fire Department Training Programs**

## **1. Purpose:**

The NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control, with input from the Department of Labor's Public Employees Safety and Health Bureau (PESH) and fire service organizations, has developed a recommended set of "Best Practices" for use by fire departments. The purpose of these "Best Practices" is to assist fire departments in complying with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Regulation 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910.156(c)(1), ["§1910.156(c)(1)"]. In New York State this regulation is enforced for firefighters and public employees by the DOL's Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau (PESH).

This document and guidance herein is not intended to formulate a regulatory mandate nor is the purpose of this document to dictate specific training courses. It is intended to identify "best practices" and core competencies that should be included in all training programs based upon the job duties of individual firefighters. These recommendations should not be considered to be all inclusive of the subject areas necessary to develop a comprehensive training program, but will be useful in developing a training program that meets the intent of OSHA Regulation 29 CFR 1910.156(c)(1), ["§1910.156(c)(1)"].

## **2. Scope:**

OSHA Regulation Section 1910.156(c)(1), applies to all fire departments in New York State, and requires that members be provided with training and education commensurate with the duties and functions that such members are expected to perform. Further, §1910.156(c)(1) provides that those who may find themselves as or are designated as Incident Commanders and training instructors must be provided with training and education which is more comprehensive than that provided to the general membership.

Training and education is not required to come from any one particular source or class of instruction and may include experience, vendor training, department in-house training and training that is provided by the State's fire service organizations. Regardless of where the training is obtained it is imperative to document any and all training that is being utilized to satisfy the competencies listed in this policy.

## **3. Definitions:**

For the purposes of this guidance "fire brigade" as referenced in the OSHA regulation means fire department. Fire department is defined as any entity providing fire and emergency rescue services including but not limited to career, paid, volunteer or combination fire departments; for example a village fire department, fire district, fire protection district, independent fire company providing fire protection, or a privatized fire brigade providing fire protection in an industrial or commercial environment.

## **4. Training Program Best Practices By Function:**

Fire departments in New York State vary widely in type, function, capability and size. As such, each may establish training and education curriculum for their personnel which best reflects the hazards or complexity of their response area. Accordingly, a training and education curriculum which is developed in-house or by an outside consultant or vendor which addresses the specific competencies for each

category of duty or function as outlined below, would be deemed to satisfy compliance with §1910.156(c)(1). Nothing in these “Best Practices” is intended to limit a fire department from establishing training requirements which exceed these recommended core competencies or limit a fire department from developing and using past, current or future training classes, drills, or other classroom training and/or pertinent topical training subjects to satisfy section 1910.156(c)(1). It is imperative that all training curriculums and programs must be thoroughly documented as part of each fire departments recordkeeping policy(s) in order to afford training credit to its members.

The competencies listed in each section are not in order of importance or in any particular sequence. Included with the recommended core competencies for each category of firefighter are examples of specific training courses which could fulfill various core competencies and ultimately will help ensure compliance with §1910.156(c)(1). Contact information for each provider referenced herein, is listed on the last page.

#### **4.1 Exterior Firefighters:**

All firefighters should complete a training program(s) addressing these core competencies:

- 1) Complete a training program addressing the subject areas/core competencies associated with OSHA 29 CFR1910.120 requirements or Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations
- 2) Complete a training program addressing the subject areas/core competencies associated with Infection Control to achieve compliance with OSHA 29CFR1910.1030
- 3) Complete the objectives for Basic First Aid
- 4) Complete the objectives for Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation
- 5) Completion of the latest version of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) courses ICS-700 and ICS-100
- 6) Fire safety principles familiarization
- 7) Tool and scene safety awareness
- 8) Building Construction in relation to fire service operations
- 9) Understanding fire behavior and development
- 10) Familiarizations with personal protective equipment (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) as assigned;
- 11) Familiarization with fire service communication operations
- 12) Familiarizations with incident management principles
- 13) Familiarizations with fire prevention principles
- 14) Arson awareness
- 15) Familiarizations with fire extinguisher operations
- 16) Familiarizations with hose practices, nozzles and fire streams (excluding interior structural fire attack)
- 17) Understanding of water supply operations
- 18) Familiarization with ground ladder operations; and
- 19) Ropes and knots

Related training programs which may address some or all of the specific core competencies, stated above, for exterior firefighters include:

1. NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control
  - a. Basic Exterior Firefighting Operations (Competencies 6 – 19) and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations (Competency 1); or
  - b. Firefighter I (Competencies 1 and 6 – 19), *[Competencies 3 – 5 are prerequisites for graduation from the FF1 Program]*
2. NYS OFPC Legacy (Historical) Training recognized as equivalent:
  - a. Scene Support Operations (Competencies 6 – 19) and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations (Competency 1)

- b. Firefighting Essentials (Competencies 6 – 19) and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations (Competency 1), or
  - c. Basic Firefighter (Competencies 6 – 19) and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations (Competency 1)
3. Suffolk County Fire Academy, Scene Support Operations (in addition, a Hazardous Materials Operations level training program will need to be completed)

#### **4.2 Interior Firefighters:**

In addition to core competency training provided for all exterior firefighters, interior firefighters should complete a training program(s) addressing the following core competencies:

- 1) How to initiate a response to a reported emergency
- 2) Fire service communication operations
- 3) Familiarizations with assigned self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) during emergency operations
- 4) Safe fire apparatus response to an emergency incident
- 5) Scene safety and operating at an emergency incident
- 6) Familiarization with forcible entry techniques
- 7) Operating as a team member within a hazardous area
- 8) Familiarization with ground ladder operations
- 9) Familiarizations with safe operations at vehicle fires
- 10) Understanding outside or exterior fires and defensive operations
- 11) Familiarizations with structure fire search and rescue operations
- 12) Familiarization with interior fire attack operations
- 13) Familiarization horizontal and vertical ventilation operations
- 14) Understanding overhaul operations
- 15) Familiarizations with salvage and property conservation techniques
- 16) Familiarization with water supply operations
- 17) Understanding of fire chemistry and behavior
- 18) Familiarization with fire extinguisher operations
- 19) Ground cover fires
- 20) Fire equipment, hose and PPE inspection and maintenance
- 21) Building construction related to interior structural firefighting operations

Related training programs which may address some or all of the specific core competencies, stated above, for interior firefighters include:

- 1. NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control
  - a. Firefighter I (Competencies 1 – 21)
  - b. Certified basic firefighter training program under NYS Firefighter minimum training standards (Competencies 1 – 19 of the Exterior Firefighter and 1 – 21 of the Interior Firefighter)
- 2. NYS OFPC Legacy (Historical) Training recognized as equivalent:
  - a. Firefighting Essentials or Essentials of Firefighting, Initial Fire Attack and Hazardous Materials Operations (Competencies 1 – 21)
  - b. Basic Firefighter, Intermediate Firefighter and Hazardous Materials Operations (Competencies 1 – 21)
- 3. National Certification for Firefighter I and National Certification for Hazardous Materials Operations- Core Competencies
- 4. Nassau County Fire Academy
  - a. Essentials of Firefighting and Primary Firefighting
- 5. Suffolk County Fire Academy, Firefighter I

#### **4.3 Apparatus Operators:**

In addition to core competencies for exterior firefighters, apparatus operators should complete a training program addressing the following core competencies:

- 1) Performing routine preventive maintenance, inspection and being capable of initiating the service of vehicle systems, components, equipment, tools and appliances assigned to the vehicle and be capable of initiating correction of any deficiencies noted.
- 2) Be capable of documenting routine maintenance, inspection and service of the vehicle's systems, components, equipment, tools and appliances mounted on or assigned to vehicle. Be capable of initiating correction of any deficiencies noted during this process or any corrective actions required to address deficiencies
- 3) Be capable of demonstrating safe operation of the vehicle in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and standards during routine driving and emergency responses
- 4) Be capable of demonstrating defensive driving practices
- 5) Be capable of demonstrating safe maneuvering of the vehicle around obstructions and in restricted spaces both forward and reverse
- 6) Be able to demonstrate safe backing procedures and the use of a spotter
- 7) Be knowledgeable of operational capabilities and limitations of the vehicle, its systems and components, equipment, tools and appliances mounted on or assigned to that vehicle
- 8) Understand the operation of the functional systems, tools, equipment and appliances mounted on or assigned to the vehicle; and
- 9) Be capable of demonstrating the ability to operate the pump or other functional systems on the apparatus.

Related training programs which may address some or all of the specific core competencies, stated above, for apparatus operators include:

1. NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control
  - a. Apparatus Operator- Emergency Vehicle Operator's Course (EVOC), (Competencies 1 – 9, in addition to local training specific to the fire department's vehicles)
2. Insurance Company sponsored EVOC programs with a practical skills driving course component, in addition to local training specific to the fire department's vehicles
3. Suffolk County Fire Academy
  - a. Emergency Vehicle Operations (EVOC), in addition to local training specific to the fire department's vehicles
4. National Certification for any of the Apparatus Operator series, in addition to local training specific to the fire department's vehicles

#### **4.4 Incident Commanders:**

As outlined in section 1910.156(c)(1) of the OSHA regulations, those chiefs, officers or firefighters who have been designated or may perform the duties of a fire service incident commander must receive training which is superior than that provided to the general membership of the fire department. In addition to the training provided to the general membership those who may be acting as an Incident Commander should have received training prescribed for an interior firefighter, general knowledge of apparatus/pump operations, as well as education in incident command operations. Incident command training and education is not required to come from any one particular source or class. The training to educate those designated or who may find themselves in the position as an Incident Commander should include supervision, leadership, and command methodologies necessary for mitigating emergency situations during hazardous and stressful environments incorporating the best safety practices.

In addition to the core competencies required for interior firefighters and apparatus operators, incident commanders should have a demonstrated knowledge and experience in the following core competencies:

- 1) Safe and effective assignment and supervision of tasks, or responsibilities to managing unit officers at emergency incidents (including those on highways and roadways), during training and under routine or non-emergency circumstances
- 2) Be capable of communicating clear direction and supervision of members during training
- 3) Knowledge of administrative policies and procedures and records management, including incident reports
- 4) Knowledge of building construction and fire behavior, including structural soundness and the significance of fire load;
- 5) Be capable of evaluating and implementing scene security and evidence preservation;
- 6) Be capable of developing and implementing an incident action plan;
- 7) Be capable of conducting a post-incident analysis;
- 8) Be knowledgeable of safety principles, including injury and accident prevention;
- 9) Be familiar with fire department injury and accident reporting requirements according to department policies;
- 10) Be familiar with firefighter health and wellness for recognition of issues, e.g. stress, heart attack and other issues that would hinder firefighter's response capabilities.
- 11) An understanding of strategy, tactics and operations in fire suppression;
- 12) An understanding of vehicle extrication procedures and department capabilities and limitations;
- 13) Awareness of other situations expected to be encountered in the department's immediate response area
- 14) Be capable of initiating scene size-up procedures;
- 15) Be familiar with initial arrival report ("C.A.N. [Conditions, Actions, Needs] - Report") protocols
- 16) Be familiar with radio communications operations;
- 17) Be capable of communicating fire-ground reports (location of fire, water on fire, searches, knock-down, etc.) and
- 18) Be familiar with urgent & mayday communication protocols;
- 19) Be familiar with how to mitigate miscellaneous emergencies (Gas leaks, CO, Electrical, elevator rescues, hazmat containment etc.);
- 20) Understand RIT/FAST Operations and how to implement them;
- 21) Obtain a certificate for the latest version of NIMS ICS-200;
- 22) Understanding the use and limitations of special fire department equipment, e.g. gas meters, thermal imaging cameras, self-escape equipment, gas powered tools etc.

Related training programs which may address some or all of the specific core competencies, stated above, for incident commanders include:

1. NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control
  - a. Fire Officer I (2009) (Competencies 1 – 20 and 22) and ICS-200 (Competency 21)
2. NYS OFPC Legacy(Historical) Training recognized as equivalent:
  - a. Introduction to Fire Officer and Fire Officer I (Competencies 1 – 20 and 22) and ICS-200 (Competencies 21)
3. National Certification for Fire Officer I(Competencies 1 – 20 and 22) and I-200 (Competency 21)
  - a. First Line Supervisors Training Program(Competencies 1 – 22)
4. Suffolk County Fire Academy
  - a. Introduction to Fire Officer and Fire Officer I and ICS-200

#### **4.5 Training Guidance for Fire Department Training Instructors:**

Fire department training instructors must receive a higher level of training and education than the fire department members they will be instructing. This includes being more knowledgeable about the functions to be performed by the fire department and the hazards involved. The instructors should be qualified to train fire department members and demonstrate skills in communication, methods of teaching, and instructional motivation.

Training Instructors should demonstrate and possess the following skill set core competencies to instruct personnel effectively which includes but is not limited to:

- 1) Preparation
- 2) Presentation
- 3) Application
- 4) Testing
- 5) Summary and
- 6) Knowledge base of relevant subject matter, applicable policies, rules and regulations

Related training programs which may address some or all of the specific core competencies, stated above, for fire department training instructors include:

1. NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control
  - a. Principles of Instruction (Competencies 1 – 6)
  - b. Fire Instructor I (Competencies 1 – 6)
2. NYS OFPC Legacy(Historical) Training recognized as equivalent:
  - a. Training Officer Workshop I & II (Competencies 1 – 6)
  - b. Educational Methodology (Competencies 1 – 6)
3. National Certification for Fire Instructor I (Competencies 1 – 6)
4. Suffolk County Fire Academy
  - a. Principles of Instruction
  - b. Fire Instructor I
5. Nassau County Fire Academy
  - a. Principles of Instruction

#### **5. Training Provider Contact Information:**

NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control  
[www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc/training/training-outreach.cfm](http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc/training/training-outreach.cfm)

Suffolk County Fire Academy  
[www.scfa-li.org](http://www.scfa-li.org)

Nassau County Fire Academy  
[www.veebfsa.org](http://www.veebfsa.org)