

Department of Public Safety Standards and Training
Maintenance Requirements
Frequently Asked Questions
(June 2008)

Q: Why is there a maintenance requirement for certification?

A: The Fire Policy Committee formed a sub-committee five (5) years ago to address a number of certification issues. The maintenance requirements were a by product of that committee.

Q: Why is the State (DPSST) mandating this of local agencies?

A: DPSST is not mandating this process. Maintenance requirements were recommended by the Oregon Fire Service through your representatives on the Fire Policy Committee. The Fire Service asked DPSST to implement and facilitate this process.

Q: Why doesn't DPSST just forget this maintenance requirement?

A: DPSST is mandated by OAR to carry out this function. It was the Fire Service (through the Fire Policy Committee) who asked for this requirement and it was the Fire Service who revised the OARs.

Q: How can a requirement like this get adopted without the Fire Service knowing about the change?

A: This change was not accomplished secretly. The change in the OARs addressing the maintenance requirements were published, distributed statewide, and discussed at many fire service professional organizations such as the OFCA, OVFA, OFIA and others. The changes went to public hearings and no public comment was received.

Q: Why is the maintenance requirement necessary?

A: Most people recognize that the only way to maintain proficiency is to either frequently use the skills, demonstrate proficiency through some type of evaluation or assessment, or through continuing education.

Q: When do I have to apply for re-certification?

A: No later than December 31, 2008.

Q: How do I apply for re-certification?

A: DPSST will send Fire Agencies a packet of partially completed forms for each Fire Service Professional listed as active on the agency roster.

Q: What will the process for re-certifying be?

A: DPSST will send the Agencies the Maintenance Re-Certification packet, which will need to be completed and received by DPSST no later than December 31, 2008.

Q: Will Training Officers have to submit a separate form for each certification level they have?

A: No. There is only one (1) form per person.

Q: Will there be a way to submit Re-Certification forms electronically? Or, can we submit rosters of names who qualify for Re-Certification?

A: No. DPSST has developed a Re-Certification form which will be the only format they will accept.

Q: What are the methods of Re-Certification?

A: There are three methods. They are – Service Delivery, Task Performance, or Education and/or

Training.

Q: Which one do I have to use?

A: This is a local decision. DPSST will not be asking how the individual met the Re-Certification requirements. DPSST is relying on the local Fire Chief or Training Officer to make the determination that an individual has demonstrated proficiency in the essential functions of the certification they want to maintain.

Q: Can our agency use a combination of these methods?

A: Yes. If that is the preferred method for re-certifying the agency's personnel, then this would be allowable. It is important to remember the intent of Re-Certification is to ensure an individual maintains proficiency in the levels of certification they possess.

Q: What is meant by "Service Delivery"?

A: By OAR definition "service delivery" means; to be able to adequately demonstrate, through job performance, the knowledge, skills, and ability of a certification level. If the agency determines an individual has demonstrated proficiency in their certification level by doing the job then it is allowable to re-certify them using this method.

Q: What is meant by "Task Performance"?

A: By OAR definition "task performance" means, to be able to demonstrate the ability to perform the tasks, of a certification level, in a controlled environment while being evaluated. This may be accomplished through a formal task performance test, task book style verification by a field Training Officer or the agency Training Officer, or other performance measurement utilized by the agency.

Q: What is meant by "Education and/or Training"?

A: This term is not specifically defined by OAR definition. However, "Education and/or Training" is intended to mean that an individual has successfully completed accredited courses, college courses pertaining to the area of certification or a series of courses.

Q: Can a written test or combination of a written test and task performance test be used to meet the requirements?

A: Yes. Keep in mind that a written test does not demonstrate proficiency for practical skills. While a written test alone would be fine for some certifications, it would not be a good idea for those requiring practical skills. Ultimately, by design it is the local agency that determines the exact method utilized.

Q: Can a person who does not meet the hour requirements complete a task performance evaluation to demonstrate competency?

A: Yes.

Q: When using the Education and/or Training method of re-certifying what kind of training counts?

A: Any training related to the assigned Track is acceptable.

Q: If our agency chooses to use the Education and/or Training method for Re-Certification, will the agency be certifying that individuals achieved the hours per year in each of the two years, or can they double up in year two (i.e., 12 hours of officer development in 2005-06 or 24 hours in 2006)?

A: The intent is for the hours to be accomplished each year. But, once again, it is the responsibility of the local agency to certify that the individual is proficient in the areas they are re-certifying.

Q: If our agency chooses to use the Education and/or Training method for re-certification, and an individual has multiple certifications do they have to complete the hours for each certification?

A: This depends on what “Track” the certifications are located. Certifications are grouped into three (3) Tracks (Operations, Instructor, and Prevention/Public Education/Administration). An individual only needs to complete the total required hours for each Track they hold a certification. The worst case scenario would be an individual holding a certification in each of the three Tracks, using solely the hours requirement method, they would be required to complete 76 hours of education and/or training.

Q: I’m certified as a NFPA Fire Fighter I, NFPA Fire Fighter II, HazMat First Responder, NFPA Driver, NFPA Pumper Operator, NFPA Fire Instructor I, and NFPA Fire Officer I. If I use the Education and/or Training method, how many hours of education and/or training do I need to complete?

A: Sixty-four (64) hours total. Ideally these hours would include subject matter in each of the certification levels, but at a minimum it would include 60 hours from the Operations Track and 4 hours from the Instructor Track.

Q: I’m certified as a NFPA Fire Fighter II, HazMat On-Scene Incident Commander, and a NFPA Fire Officer IV. If I use the Education and/or Training method, how many hours of education and/or training do I need to complete?

A: Seventy two (72) hours total. Ideally these hours would include subject matter in each of the certification levels, but at a minimum it would include 60 hours from the Operations Track and 12 hours from the Prevention/Public Education/Administration Track.

Q: I’m certified as a NFPA Fire Fighter II and NFPA Fire Inspector III. I only conduct inspections in my current job and don’t care about re-certifying at NFPA Fire Fighter II. If I use the Education and/or Training method, how many hours of education and/or training do I need to complete?

A: Twelve (12) hours total. These hours must be in the Prevention/Public Education/Administration Track. Don’t forget that you could use the “Service Delivery” method. If your Training Officer will certify you as proficient through the frequency of conducting inspections, then you wouldn’t need to complete any hours.

Q: I’m certified as a Fire Officer I, II, III, and IV and I want to maintain all of these certifications. How many hours do I need to complete?

A: You certify at the highest level of certification. An individual can not be certified as a Fire Officer IV without first having been certified as a Fire Officer I. You would only need 12 hours from the Prevention/Public Education/Administration Track.

Q: Does the 60 hours per year include EMS/First Aid Training topics?

A: No. The hours need to be from a certification level listed in the Track.

Q: What will happen once the Maintenance Re-Certification forms are submitted?

A: The Maintenance Re-Certification forms will be processed in accordance to the date they are received. At that time, DPSST will then send a letter to the Fire Agency identifying their highest and implied levels of certification.

Q: Will our agency have to specify the method utilized for re-certifying our personnel?

A: No. DPSST will not be asking which method used.

Q: Will individuals receive a new certificate?

A: Not for Re-Certifications. They will receive a letter indicating their highest levels of certification.

Q: What happens if I receive a new certification during the two years in between Re-Certification periods?

A: DPSST staff will issue you a certificate; the data will be captured in the next Re-Certification cycle.

Q: Will DPSST notify those individuals whose certifications are revoked?

A: No. It will be the local agencies responsibility to communicate with individuals.

Q: Many agencies have expressed concern about the requirement of 60 hours per year and fear this will force members (especially volunteer members) out of the organization. Can this requirement be changed?

A: Yes it could, but since this is listed in the OARs for DPSST it is at least a nine month process unless the Fire Policy Committee were to issue an emergency rule. It is important to note, however, that the hour requirement is only one of three methods available for agencies to use. They can use "Service Delivery," "Task Performance," or "Education and/or Training." The most important thing to remember is that the Fire Chief or the Training Officer (not DPSST) are certifying that the individuals are maintaining proficiency in the areas they are certified. Safety and performance is the highest priority.

Q: There are several areas of the maintenance standard that I think need to be changed, how do I make that happen?

A: Changes to the OARs must come through the Fire Policy Committee. You can submit suggested changes to one of your Fire Policy Committee members or send them to DPSST staff. DPSST staff will then provide the suggestions and or comments to the Fire Policy Committee. As mentioned above this is not a quick process.

Q: Is there a challenge process for Re-Certification as with initial certification?

A: Yes. The process would fall under either the Service Delivery or Task Performance methods. It would be up to the local agency to determine if an individual can demonstrate proficiency sufficient for certification.

Q: What happens if a member, for whatever reason, leaves an agency and returns after a re-certification period?

A: If the person has been out of service for more than 12 months, the certifications would have lapsed. They would fall under OAR 259-009-0067 to regain their certifications.

Q: What if a person is on FMLA, injury leave, or some other leave of absence for a period of time, are the hours prorated?

A: No. However, Education and/or Training is only one method by which you can re-certify. The agency may chose to conduct a Task Performance or certify the individual through Service Delivery.

Q: Since the current certifications do not have an expiration date how will an agency know if a certification is still valid?

A: The Snapshot system will demonstrate their current levels of certification and they will also receive a letter of confirmation.