

OREGON OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

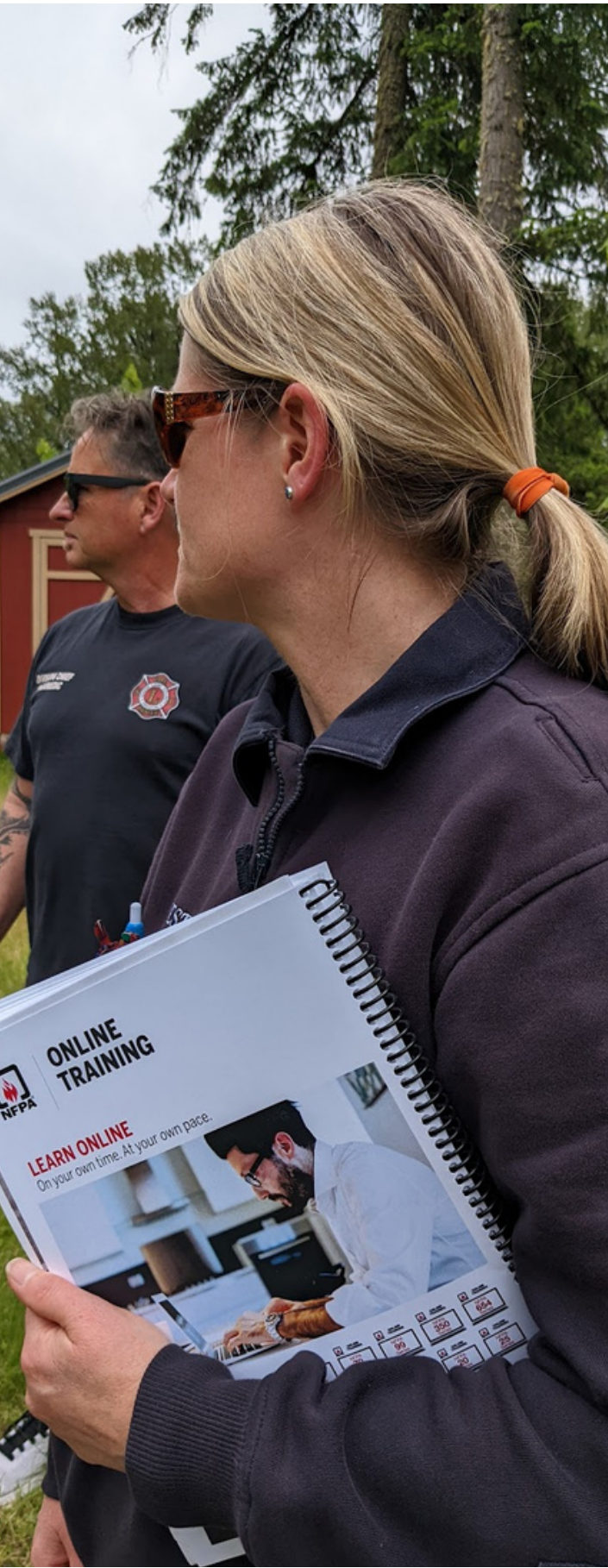
# OREGON FIRE & LIFE SAFETY COMPETENCY RECOGNITION



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# INTRODUCTION

In 2003, the Governor's Fire Service Policy Council investigated complaints about inconsistent application of the fire code from building industries. After investigation, the council agreed that inconsistent application of the fire code is a statewide problem.

These findings emphasized the need to develop training programs and scope of practice competencies for fire service personnel responsible for enforcing state or local fire codes. The Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and the Oregon Fire Marshals Association (OFMA) established a committee to develop fire and life safety competency recognition standards.

The fire and life safety competency recognition standards identify the scope of practice, training and technical certification, and experience required to administer and enforce the Oregon Fire Code.

## Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR)

In 2022, the OSFM revised Oregon Administrative Rule Chapter 837, Division 039, Administration of Fire Prevention Programs, establishing standardized certification and training requirements for fire officials responsible for fire code administration and enforcement.

The rule revision identified four levels of competency recognition standards:

1. Company Inspector
2. Oregon Fire Inspector 1
3. Oregon Fire Inspector 2
4. Oregon Fire Marshal

The revision updated the application process to obtain these levels and changed the requirements for obtaining the Oregon fire marshal level.

Oregon fire departments determine the level of code enforcement services they provide to their communities. Based on this analysis, the next step is to ensure all code enforcement personnel meet the training and technical certifications for their scope of practice. The information in this document will help determine the appropriate level of competency recognition for your fire code enforcement personnel.



# MEASURING COMPETENCY

The competency recognition and education program is focused on fire and life safety training, technical certifications, and experience to ensure competent fire code enforcement in Oregon.

The educational training is designed to ensure fire officials responsible for enforcing fire code have the same core level of understanding and knowledge.

The technical certifications include International Code Council (ICC) certifications, state certification through the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training's (DPSST) fire inspector task books, based on the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 1031 standards for fire inspectors, and Oregon-specific training (through OSFM).

Experience is the final element in professional development. While education provides knowledge, experience provides the necessary skills. Experience in the recognition program is represented through completing the DPSST's NFPA fire inspector task books and on-the-job training.

## Recognition Levels

The four fire and life safety competency recognition levels are designed to build upon each other. Each level is outlined below with a high-level description of the scope of practice associated with the recognition level. Fire officials who obtain recognition levels two, three, or four and have their ICC fire plans examiner certification will receive an ICC fire plan review endorsement on their competency recognition certificate.



# SCOPE OF PRACTICE

The fire and life safety competency recognition program identifies four levels of recognition. Each level has a scope of practice to identify the general code enforcement duties associated with that scope of work.

## Level 1: Company Inspector

- Conducts basic inspections using a checklist inspection form in business group B and mercantile group M occupancies with no high pile or rack storage, group R1/R2 hotels/motels with 15 or fewer rooms, and self-storage occupancies.
- Has a high-level understanding of their legal authority to conduct inspections, common fire code violations associated with these occupancies, and necessary steps to conduct a systematic inspection.

## Level 2: Oregon Fire Inspector 1

- Inspects structures to ensure compliance with applicable codes
- Performs common complaint-based inspections
- Identifies and applies corrective action to abate code violations
- Applies the codes to simple/moderate processes and associated equipment and operations
- Assists staff and the public in code interpretation and application
- Prepares written documents and processes permits
- Participates in other legal enforcement remedies
- Provides court testimony

## Level 3: Oregon Fire Inspector 2

- Conducts complex complaint-based inspections
- Identifies and applies corrective action to abate code violations
- Applies the codes to complex processes and associated equipment and operations
- Recommends changes to fire codes
- Initiates legal enforcement actions
- Provides court testimony
- Recommends revisions to division policies
- Assists and instructs lower-level inspectors
- Ability to perform plan review to the extent occupancies can be classified, occupant loads can be computed, protection systems plans can be reviewed, and verifies compliant egress elements and construction type

## Level 4: Oregon Fire Marshal

- Conducts and oversees inspections of highly complex facilities and operations
- Evaluates alternate methods of protection and compliance
- Evaluates emergency planning and procedures
- Has a robust knowledge of installing and testing fire protection systems
- Has experience in managing and developing a budget, division policy, recommending code updates, coordinating fire prevention programs and services, establishing staff development and mentoring programs, designing records management systems, and understanding legal authority, processes, and limits of code enforcement

# REQUIREMENTS

## ICC Fire Plans Examiner Endorsement

Fire and life safety personnel who have their ICC fire plans examiner certification and ICC fire inspector II certification will receive an ICC fire plans examiner endorsement on their recognition certificate.

## Company Inspector (Level I)

- Successfully complete the OSFM's company inspection training program
- Receive a test score of at least 70% on each module to obtain competency recognition

## Oregon Fire Inspector 1 and 2, and Fire Marshal (Levels 2-4)

The requirements for levels 2-4 are comprised of training and certification requirements related to the scope of practice.

## Oregon Core Curriculum Requirements for Levels 2 - 4

- Authorities and Responsibility (online or classroom)
- Access and Water Supply (online or classroom)
- Oregon Basic Building Code (online)
- Oregon Basic Mechanical Code (online)
- Current Oregon Fire Code Amendment (classroom)

## National and International Certification Requirements

### Level 2: Oregon Fire Inspector 1

- NFPA Fire Inspector 1 Certification
- ICC Fire Inspector 1 Certification

### Level 3: Oregon Fire Inspector 2

- NFPA Fire Inspector 2 Certification
- ICC Fire Inspector 2 Certification

### Level 4: Oregon Fire Marshal

- OSFM Oregon Fire Marshal Administration Class (classroom)

## How the Process Works

Candidates interested in pursuing fire and life safety competency recognition for Oregon fire inspector 1, inspector 2, or fire marshal through the OSFM should first identify the recognition level that meets their scope of practice.

If candidates do not meet the requirements (the required NFPA and ICC certifications), they should first pursue the certification prior to applying for recognition.

After candidates determine the best fit for their training, technical certification, and experience, they must complete the Oregon fire and life safety competency recognition application.

# APPLICATION

The online application must be completed by the applicant; the fire marshal (if applicable), and the fire chief will receive email to approve application. The applicant and fire chief are attesting the applicant has the required training and certifications for the level they are applying for. The application is submitted online; the applicant and fire chief will receive an email confirmation.

## Application Process

Once the application is received, OSFM has 30 days to process it. During the review, the applicant's training and certifications will be confirmed and the recognition certificate will be mailed to the applicant. If an application is denied, the applicant and fire chief will receive an email and the reason for the denial.

## Maintenance Process

To maintain your competency recognition status, you must maintain:

- ICC certificate (through ICC) - fire inspector I or II (every 3 years)
- NFPA certification through either NFPA or DPSST
- Current Oregon fire code amendment class (through OSFM, classroom) - must be completed within the first year following every code cycle change
- Employment at a local fire authority having jurisdiction (fire district or municipality)

Inspector 1	Inspector 2	Fire Marshal
ICC Fire Inspector 1 or 2 NFPA Fire Inspector 1 Oregon Fire Code Amendments Class	ICC Fire Inspector 2 NFPA Fire Inspector 2 Oregon Fire Code Amendments Class	ICC Fire Inspector 2 NFPA Fire Inspector 2 Oregon Fire Code Amendments Class

*To stay current with your competency recognition level, you must maintain the listed requirements. The Oregon fire code amendments class must be completed within 12 months following the effective date of the current state fire code. You are not required to renew your competency recognition level. You will automatically be considered in a lapsed status if any required certification lapses or you no longer work for a fire authority having jurisdiction (fire district or municipality).*

## View the status of the required certifications

[ICC](#) or [DPSST](#)

[Oregon Administrative Rule 837-039-0016](#) establishes standardization for certification and training requirements for fire officials responsible for fire code administration and enforcement. Current inspectors must be in compliance. Newly hired and promoted inspectors have one year to complete the required certifications and training.

If you are providing fire inspections without the appropriate state competency recognition status, you could be held personally liable.

# GLOSSARY

## Oregon Fire Code Amendment Class

As explained in Oregon Administrative Rule 837-039-0016, this class is a high-level training of the changes from the current version of the International Fire Code and Oregon amendments. This class is required within the first year of every code cycle change to maintain competency recognition for specialist I and II and fire marshal.

View [Professional Development](#) webpage for available training.

## Oregon Basic Building Code

The basic building code training provides an understanding of building codes not in the fire code but referenced in the fire code. [The online course is available here.](#)

## Oregon Basic Mechanical Code

The basic mechanical code training provides a comprehensive understanding of mechanical exhaust systems as they relate to the Oregon Fire Code. [The online course is available here.](#)

## Oregon Company Inspector

The company inspection training provides a broad framework for fire personnel who have little or no experience in conducting fire inspections. The course is designed to provide a high-level understanding of the legal authority to conduct inspections associated with certain occupancies and the various steps involved in the inspection process. The primary audience is firefighting company personnel who conduct fire and life safety inspections. After successful completion of the course, no further state requirements are necessary. This course may be available through your local deputy state fire marshal, [online](#), or from a qualified fire agency. You may also contact OSFM for available classes at [osfm.ofc@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:osfm.ofc@osfm.oregon.gov) or 503-934-8256.

## Fire Marshal Administrative class

Course covers issues that come with a higher level of service provided by your agency. For the inspector that conducts and oversees inspections of highly complex facilities and operations, evaluates emergency planning and procedures and has a robust knowledge of installing and testing fire protecting systems. Will review updates with coordinating fire prevention programs and services, establishing staff development and mentoring programs, designing records management systems, and understanding legal authority, processes, and limits of code enforcement; and will have responsibility and experience in managing and developing a budget, division policy and recommending code.

## Authorities and Responsibilities

The authorities and responsibilities training (formerly fire and life safety awareness I) is provided online or by OSFM deputy state fire marshals and provides a foundational understanding of Oregon's laws and attorney general opinions related to the power and duties of the state fire marshal (SFM), assistants to the SFM, inspection procedures, due process, investigation of fires, and fire and life safety concerns associated with assembly occupancies. [Log in here](#) to enroll and view the course.

## Access and Water Supply

The access and water supply training (formerly fire and life safety awareness II) is provided online or by OSFM deputy state fire marshals and provides a foundational understanding of the general provisions of fire department access, water supplies, and fire flows as established in the Oregon Fire Code (OFC) and NFPA 1142 Standards on Water Supplies for Rural and Suburban Fire Fighting. Log onto [Workday Oregon](#) to enroll and view the course. Equivalency includes ICC fire plans examiner.

## ICC Fire Inspector I and II Certifications

The International Code Council (ICC) offers professional certification for the fire inspector I and II certifications. You must pass a timed ICC exam based on the International Fire Code. The inspector I exam is a 2-hour open-book exam comprised of 60 multiple-choice questions. The inspector II exam is a 2-hour open-book exam comprised of 50 multiple-choice questions. The exams test knowledge in five areas: general inspection administration, general provisions for fire safety, occupancies, regulated materials, and processes. For more information, visit [iccsafe.org](http://iccsafe.org).

# GLOSSARY

## NFPA Fire Inspector I and II Certifications

The Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) offers a state certification to demonstrate the individual has the requisite knowledge and skills to perform within the scope of practice identified in [NFPA 1031: Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner](#). For more information, visit [oregon.gov/DPSST](http://oregon.gov/DPSST). You can also hold a certificate directly from NFPA for either of these levels.

## ICC Fire Plans Examiner

The International Code Council offers a professional certification that demonstrates the individual has the knowledge required to perform fire plan reviews. The fire plans examiner certification tests knowledge in five areas: administration, occupancies, hazardous materials, fire protection, and egress and safety. OAR 837-039-0011 requires fire officials who want to provide full plan review input to the building official must obtain this certification and their ICC fire inspector II certification.

## Workday Oregon

Fire service members and other outside agencies have access to the Workday Oregon Learning Management System (WDL). The State of Oregon's online learning management system can be used to enroll in OSFM's classroom and online courses. [Set up a new learner account to access training here.](#) [Access existing Workday Learning account here.](#)

## Conclusion

The challenges of today's fire service require fire professionals responsible for fire code administration and enforcement to meet the competencies identified for their scope of practice. Only by working together to identify and develop educational opportunities and competencies can consistent fire code application be achieved throughout Oregon.

If you have questions about the competency recognition or education programs, please contact the OSFM's Fire and Life Safety Division at [shari.barrett@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:shari.barrett@osfm.oregon.gov) or 503-934-8256.

## Resources

[Oregon State Fire Marshal \(OSFM\)](#)

[OSFM Competency Recognition Program](#)

[Helpful Links and Workday Learning information](#) — view and enroll in OSFM courses

[DPSST Fire Certification Task Books](#) — NFPA Fire Inspector & Fire Investigator

[International Code Council](#)

[Oregon Revised Statute 476](#)

[Oregon Administrative Rule Division 39](#)



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