



FIRE 175 Department Approval Letter

Student name: _____

Student ID Number: 820 _____

Course CRN#: _____

Introduction: Please read and initial each item where indicated. Your initials and signature acknowledge that you understand and agree to abide by all listed requirements as outlined in this document.

The State of Oregon Department of Public Safety and Standards require that firefighters become certified by having students meet standards of a criminal history check and fingerprinting.

See below for rule update and explanation for Fire Certification.

Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Fire Certification Program Rule Update and Explanation

The Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) relating to requirements for fire service certification as well as the rule governing the denial and revocation of fire service certifications were reviewed. These rules were filed permanently on December 29, 2014. To assist constituents in understanding the recent rule changes, Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) is providing the updated OAR language along with a brief explanation of how it applies to Oregon's fire service professionals.

Fire Service Professional Fingerprinting Requirement Update

NOTE TO READER: The following is for information only; it does not require action by the fire service. Fire Service Agencies impacted by this change will be notified by DPSST after receipt of application for certification.

Current statute and OAR prohibit fire service professionals who have been convicted of certain crimes from holding NFPA or Oregon-specific fire service certifications in the state. (Please refer to OAR 259-009-0070 for a complete list of mandatory and discretionary crimes.) This prohibition applies to Oregon convictions as well as convictions in another state of a crime that, if committed in this state, would constitute a disqualifying crime. In order to ensure that applicants for fire service certification have not been convicted of disqualifying crimes, DPSST must conduct a state and national criminal background check.

It was recognized by DPSST, the Fire Policy Committee and the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (Board) that rule language relating to minimum standards for fire service certifications did not allow DPSST to ensure that an applicant for certification had not been convicted of a disqualifying crime outside of the state of Oregon. (While it is possible to do a computerized check of Oregon criminal history, fingerprints are required to request a nationwide (FBI) criminal background check.)

The OAR has been updated to require any applicant for fire service certification who has never been fingerprinted for the purposes of certification, be fingerprinted. This change does not require action by the fire service agency unless you are notified by DPSST that fingerprints are required. The fire service agency or individual will be responsible for paying the appropriate fingerprinting fees once notified by DPSST. Fire service professionals who have been previously fingerprinted are not required to be re-printed unless they are identified as a multi-source offender (those who have committed a crime in a state other than Oregon) in the Oregon LEDS system as stated in the following rule:

OAR 259-009-0059

(4) Fingerprints. Any individual utilized by a fire service agency that has never been fingerprinted or is identified in the Oregon LEDS system as a multi- source offender is required to be fingerprinted on standard applicant fingerprint cards. The hiring agency is responsible for fingerprinting and must forward one card with the appropriate fees to the Department.

How does this effect applying for certification?

The initial certificated process will not change based on the new fingerprinting rule. No action needs to be taken until notified by DPSST. Fire service agencies should continue to apply for certification as usual. If it is determined that an applicant needs to be fingerprinted, the fire service agency will be notified via letter detailing the fingerprinting procedures which are as follows:

1. Individual must be fingerprinted on the DPSST fingerprint card provided by DPSST.
2. Return the fingerprint card along with appropriate fees (currently \$42.75 per individual) to DPSST.
3. Once DPSST receives the fingerprint card with appropriate fees, the information will be forwarded to Oregon State Police (OSP)/Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for processing.
4. If the individual has not been convicted of a Measure 11 or discretionary

disqualifying crime, the application for certification will be processed and the individual will receive certification.

Discretionary Conviction Section of OAR Update

The internal certification processes for fire service professionals who have been convicted of a mandatory crime as identified in OAR 259-009-0070(3) has not changed. (Conviction of a Measure 11 crime requires revocation of all certifications regardless of the date of conviction.)

The OAR which sets guidelines for denial and revocation based upon discretionary disqualifying convictions has been clarified:

OAR 259-009-0070(5)

(a) The Department may take action on any conviction constituting discretionary disqualifying misconduct identified in section (4) of this rule that occurred after January 15, 2008;

(b) Convictions that occurred seven years or more prior to the date of review may be appropriate for summary staff disposition or administrative closure.

What does this mean to you as a Fire Service Professional?

Individuals who hold certifications or apply for certifications that have been convicted of a discretionary disqualifying conviction after January 15, 2008 will require review by the Fire Policy Committee (FPC) to determine if the conduct that led to the conviction disqualifies the individual for receiving or holding fire certifications. Individuals convicted of a discretionary crime prior to January 15, 2008 will not be reviewed and the application will be processed as usual. Please note: this is not a change in the previous timelines established by the Fire Policy Committee and the Board. The purpose of this rule change was to simply clarify the language relating to the review timelines for discretionary criminal convictions.

Personnel/Agency Form (PAF) Update

DPSST is statutorily required to revoke the certifications of a fire service professional if they are discharged from a fire service agency for cause. (The discharge for cause standard, including DPSST definitions, can be found in OAR 259-009-0070(3)(b).) Previously, the Personnel/Agency Form (PAF) contained one personnel check box to indicate that a fire service professional has been discharged from an agency. This box, if checked, automatically triggered an investigation on that fire service professional regardless of the true reason for discharge. To simplify the notification process for agencies, the discharge section of the PAF has been expanded to include two distinct categories: "Performance" and "Behavior". The purpose of this change is to clearly distinguish the difference between a separation for issues related to performance and behavior. Performance, which would not lead to a DPSST investigation, would include such examples as lack of participation. Behavior would trigger a DPSST investigation into the discharged fire service professional's conduct. "Performance" and "Behavior" have been defined as follows:

1. Performance: the action or process of carrying out or accomplishing an action, task, or function.
2. Behavior: The way in which someone acts or behaves.

Background Investigations

Because of the nature of the fire service profession and the exposure to vulnerable people, the Fire Policy Committee and the Board recognized the need to conduct thorough background checks on any applicant wishing to become a career or volunteer fire service professional. The following rule language was developed to serve as a guideline for agencies:

Background Investigation

(1) A background investigation must be conducted by a fire service agency on each individual being considered for employment or utilization as a fire service professional to determine if applicant is of good character.

(a) The background investigation must include, but is not limited to, investigation into the following:

(A) Criminal history and arrests;

(B) Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records;

(C) Drug and alcohol use;

(D) Education verification;

(E) Employment history;

(F) Military history verification;

(G) Personal and professional references. Personal and professional references may include, but are not limited to, friends, associates, family members, and neighbors;

(H) Personal Interview. The personal interview may occur before or after the investigation and may be used to clarify discrepancies in the investigation;

(I) Records checks, which may include, but are not limited to:

(i) Police records, district attorney, court and Oregon Judicial Information Network (OJIN) records;

(ii) Open sources or social media, as permitted by law; (iii) Financial information, as permitted by law; and

(iv) Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Professional Standards records.

(J) Residential history; and (K) Work eligibility.

(b) Each individual being considered for employment or utilization as a fire service professional must provide a notarized personal history statement. The statement must include, but is not limited to:

(A) Verification of the background information referred to in section (1) (a);

(B) A complete list of all fire service agencies an individual has applied with; and

(C) A signed release allowing background investigation information to be shared with other public or private safety agencies in which the applicant may become affiliated with.

(2) Results of the background investigation on all fire service professionals must be retained by the fire service agency in accordance with the Secretary of State's Record Retention Schedule and must be available for review at any reasonable time by the Department.

 I have read and understand D.P.S.S.T. standards for applying for certification & will have all requirements met prior to the start of FIRE 175.

Department approval is required each time you attempt to register for FIRE 175 (Firefighter I Academy). This process requires you reading and completing this document and returning it to Fire@cocc.edu after which you will be approved to register. Approval to register for FIRE 175 **DOES NOT** guarantee you a place in the class. In addition, **you must be at least 18 years of age by the first day of this course**. Regular registration rules will apply. Attempts to register before you receive approval will be unsuccessful. Please remember: It is your responsibility to register for the class once you receive department approval. We do not register students in the Fire Program. In addition, this does not take the place of your responsibility to meet with your advisor to get clearance to register and ensure there are no holds on your student account.

 I have read and understand department approval portion.

Please note that all communications regarding this process will be made through your COCC email account. Check at least daily or have your COCC email forwarded to your personal address. Failure to complete these requirements because you did not check your COCC email account is not grounds for an extension.

If you are new to COCC, you must apply to the college and complete placement testing or submit transcripts for evaluation before registering. Follow the “Getting Started” steps at <http://www.cocc.edu/getting-started/>.

Instructions:

Carefully read the following information, which details the requirements you must meet to be eligible to enroll into FIRE 175.

You will receive an email confirming your approval after you have thoroughly read the requirements, signed the agreement page and emailed it to Fire@cocc.edu to authorize approval for registration. After approval you will receive a confirmation email and will be able to register for FIRE 175. Please note: completing this Department Approval letter only clears you for registration. It does not guarantee you a spot in the FIRE 175 class.

I have read and understand the approval for registration portion.

Physical Fitness Requirements

This course will encompass a significant level of physical effort that firefighting demands. Admission, progression, and graduation are contingent upon the student’s ability to perform these essential functions (with or without reasonable accommodation). Students must be able to perform these occupational requirements, including but not limited to:

- Heavy lifting, pushing, and dragging (50-180 lbs. or more)
- Climbing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, reaching
- Moving, lifting, and manipulating fire hoses, ladders, and equipment that can weigh 50 lbs or more, while wearing 60 lbs of protective gear.

Physical Training (PT) will occur each day at the start of the course, and at any other time deemed necessary by the lead instructor, and will run approximately one hour. Participation is mandatory to complete the course.

I have read and understand the Physical Fitness requirements for this course.

Claustrophobia & Acrophobia

During this course you will be required to work at height, usually off of a ladder or on the roof of a building. Additionally, you will be required to work in small areas of confinement while wearing all required PPE (utilizing supplied breathing air). Participation in these tasks are required for course completion.

I acknowledge that I do **NOT** have claustrophobia (*the fear of confined spaces*) or acrophobia (*the fear of heights*).

Minimum Grade & Attendance Requirements

Given that academic curriculum is essential to understanding material that is utilized during hands-on lab days, as well as the amount of material needed to be covered, students who are not completing assignments will delay the entire course. Therefore, a minimum grade of 76% is required to continue in the course. *If a student drops below this, they will be unable to participate in lab days.*

Additionally, the State of Oregon (DPSST) requires an attendance of 80% *FOR ALL PORTIONS* of the course to be eligible for certification. There are NO exceptions to this policy.

 I have read and understand the minimum grade and attendance requirements for this course.

Dress Code:

Students are to wear the following uniform during all class sessions throughout the duration of the fire academy. You will be required to be in uniform by the second week of academy.

- ♣ Navy blue slacks (no jeans) for ALL lecture days
- ♣ COCC Fire/EMT Program polo shirt for ALL lecture days
- ♣ Black boots
- ♣ COCC Fire Science Cadet T-shirt for ALL lab days
- ♣ Black or Blue shorts (if desired) for ALL lab days
- ♣ Black or Blue sweats (if desired) for ALL lab days

Acknowledgement

I understand that I will be required to meet all pre-registration requirements for departmental approval, upload and verify all required documents to the college-approved vendor. If I do not meet these requirements before the designated deadlines, I acknowledge that I will be administratively withdrawn from FIRE 175.

Print Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

COCC email address: _____

**Please return this form completed to
Fire@cocc.edu**