



Temporary certification program expired July 15, 2011.



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS
STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
PYROTECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
February 10, 2011 (Revised May 2, 2011)

The Board of Housing and Community Development adopted the 2009 edition of the Virginia Statewide Fire prevention Code (SFPC) at their meeting on January 24, 2011 with a projected effective date of March 1, 2011. Pursuant to § 27-97 of the *Code of Virginia (COV)*, the SFPC will now require at least one person at each fireworks display be certified by the State Fire Marshal's Office as a Pyrotechnician. As defined in § 27-97 of the COV, the use of "permissible fireworks" is exempt from Pyrotechnician certification.

Also, pursuant to § 27-97.2 of the COV, the SFMO requires a national criminal history record information check for any applicant seeking certification as a fireworks operator or pyrotechnician. Each applicant shall submit fingerprint cards to the SFMO fingerprint cards provided by the SFMO with personal descriptive information to be forwarded through the Central Criminal Records Exchange to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the purpose of obtaining a national criminal history record check on each applicant. Subsequently, in accordance with § 27-97 of the COV, the SFMO will deny certification as a fireworks operator or pyrotechnician if the applicant has been convicted of any felony.

The SFMO is currently finalizing a plan to meet the criteria in the SFPC, but could not begin accepting applications for pyrotechnician certification until the provisions and authority were finalized in the SFPC and the effective date reached. Because of the effective date of the SFPC, the time necessary to complete a criminal history check, and allowing sufficient time for companies to be able to access an approved certification exam, the SFMO has developed an interim policy to insure fireworks operators will not be negatively affected. The interim policy includes temporary certification procedures, application instructions including the obtaining and processing of fingerprint cards, and fees.

To begin the program, the SFMO will accept applications beginning March 1, 2011. The application for TEMPORARY certification, full certification, or Background Clearance Card (BCC) all of which includes a fingerprint card for the required criminal history records check. **NOTE: The fingerprint cards are available only from the SFMO headquarters because they are specifically coded to the SFMO and are not available on line. Therefore, each applicant for Pyrotechnician certification should contact the SFMO for the application and fingerprint card. Instructions and fee information are included with the application.** Requests for applications may be mailed to 1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, VA 23059, by phone at 804-371-0220 and ask for SFMO or by email at statefiremarshal@vdfp.virginia.gov.

Upon successful completion of the application for a TEMPORARY certification, a temporary certification will be issued that will expire on September 15, 2011. Only one temporary certification will be issued per applicant and are not renewable. Applications for temporary certification will not be accepted after July 15, 2011. All application after July 15, 2011 must be for the full 3-year certification that includes successful completion of the exam and criminal history records check.

Persons who were previously issued a temporary certification will be required to complete the examination that is presently being developed. Upon the submission of an individual's successful exam results, a new certificate will be issued that will expire 3 years from the date the temporary certification was issued. No additional fees will be required.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Based on the compressed time frame between the effective date of the '09 SFPC, the amount of time for obtaining the required criminal history records check, the general non-availability that existed for of the fully printed '09 SFPC and the examination, fireworks vendors, contractors, display operators, etc., may continue to operate without a temporary certification card until May 1, 2011 for any displays that will occur prior to May 1, 2011. In the mean time, all candidates for Pyrotechnician certification will be strongly urged to submit an application between now and May 1st for either the temporary certification, full certification, if the exam is available, or if appropriate, a Background Clearance Card.

May 2, 2011

While the SFMO will continue to accept applications for Temporary certification until July 15th, an examination is now available and all candidates for certification who have not applied for temporary certification are strongly encourage to seek full certification instead. Information can be found at http://www.vafire.com/state_fire_marshal/fireworks.htm.