

Virginia Fire Service Council

*"To promote in the best interest
of the Fire Service"*



August 9, 2011

Members of the Virginia Fire Services Board
c/o Chief Richard E. Burch, Jr., Chairman

Dear Chairman Burch and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the members of the Virginia Fire Service Council, I would like to thank you for taking the time to accept input regarding your consideration to establish a Fire Recertification Program in the Commonwealth. While members of our organization have expressed concerns about the implementation of recertification, we feel that there is insufficient information about how such a program would work and, therefore, the Virginia Fire Service Council is currently not prepared to take a position regarding this issue.

Although we have not currently taken a position on this issue, the Virginia Fire Service Council feels strongly that you consider the following as part of your deliberation related to this potential significant policy change:

- The VFSB is encouraged to seek input from every fire department in the Commonwealth through a formal questionnaire process that is sent to each department, preferably through its Fire Chief. It is suggested that the questionnaire have spaces for comments, as well.
- The VFSB is encouraged to re-establish the task force that previously considered minimum initial training standards and certifications as part of this process before creating an additional requirement of recertification.
- The VFSB should consider the fiscal impact and required logistical/management impacts of an additional program on the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and its staff.
- The VFSB should consider the fiscal impact and required logistical/management impacts of an additional program and State mandate on local fire departments, local governments and communities.
- If the VFSB establishes a policy of recertification, it should be done with due consideration to allow for use of a continuing education credit process through "in house" or "in station" training hours without a retesting requirement.
- If the VFSB establishes a policy of recertification, it should only require recertification or continuing education at the highest obtained level.

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- If the VFSB establishes a policy of recertification, it should only occur after a reasonable transition period, such as implementation five years out after approval, etc.

Finally, the Virginia Fire Service Council again reiterates that it has not taken a specific position. Should additional details be provided, we may then take a position regarding this issue. We do, however, urge the VFSB to consider all aspects of such a program and the potential short and long term implications on VDFP and, more importantly, on the Fire Service in the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen P. Kopczynski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S" and "K".

Fire Chief Stephen P. Kopczynski
Chairman, Virginia Fire Service Council

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