

**VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD**  
**Committee on Fire Education and Training**

**Recertification Stakeholder Group Meeting**

**August 12, 2011**

A special meeting of the Recertification Stakeholder Group was held at the Hampton Convention Center in Hampton, VA at 4:30 p.m. Mr. Tom Moffett served as Chair.

**FE&T COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

*Thomas Moffett – Committee Chair – Virginia Professional Firefighters Association*  
Michael Armstrong – VA Chapter of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors  
Edwin Smith – Virginia Fire Chiefs Association  
Richard E. Burch Jr. – Virginia Fire Services Council  
Kenneth J. Brown – Virginia State Firefighters Association  
James Wheeler – Virginia Municipal League

**FE&T COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Joe Wilson – Industry (SARA Title III & OSHA)

**VFSB MEMBERS PRESENT**

William Kyger – Virginia Association of Counties  
Elaine Gall – Virginia Fire Prevention Association

**AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT**

Billy Shelton	Dave Jolly	Russ Chandler
Don Hansen	Matthew Smith	Tim Estes
Dennis Price	Melvin Byrne	

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Bill MacKay	Kurt Kight	Wayne Gromsley
Brandon Proffitt	Pete Kirby	John Prillman
Caleb Wilson	Jeff Flippo	Robert Blakeslet
Robert Holloway Jr.	Lee Day	Eric Albert
Chris Hubbard	Scott Brazier	Dan Milton
Richard Miller	Terry Gwaltney	Nathan Aerlocker
Robert Green	Charlie Singleton	April Elmore
Rodney Ferguson	Jason Ferguson	Larry Logan
Kenneth Mills	Kevin Totten	Richard Harris

**AGENDA**

- A. Overview of the NFPA “1000 Committee on Recertification”

B. Public Comment

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Tom Moffett requested that Don Hansen provide a report on the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Technical Correlating Committee, "1000 Committee". Don Hansen provided the following report:

**Topic: Overview of the National Fire Protection Association's "1000 Committee" Meeting, see Enclosure 1 and 2**

**Motion:** N/A

**Discussion:** What does the Technical Correlating Committee's charge to review the Professional Qualifications (ProQual) Recertification Assessment mean to you?

The NFPA is leaning on the Authorities Having Jurisdiction's (AHJ), i.e. VDFP to set standards in compliance with the NFPA guidance to maintain training currency. The push for training currency is related to NIOSH studies and training being highlighted as a contributing factor to a line of duty death.

Timeline: NFPA review and recommendations will take 24 to 36 months; NFPA standard review and change will be 36 – 60 months depending on the standard year; finally, the AHJ will have time to review and implement, which could take an additional 24 months to do so.

This meeting is assembling a stakeholder working group to review considerations for recertification and discuss how we could implement a training currency system in the Virginia Fire Service, for those local jurisdictions that choose to take up NFPA Standards.

Topics for discussion: 1) recent training achieved; 2) continuing education units; 3) progressive movement training; 4) Knowledge Center flexible core content compliance.

Virginia's fire service is the only public safety group in Virginia without State regulations to recertify our people. However, 1031, 1033, and 1041 certifications are currently required to recertify. NFPA 1003 on Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting, requires airport fire fighters to "remain current with ARFF fire protection technology, ARFF fire suppression practices, and applicable standards as determined by the AHJ."<sup>1</sup> The areas of concern are now NFPA 1001 and 1021.

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<sup>1</sup> NFPA, page 1003-7, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1003>

Additional references include, NFPA Standard 405,

<http://www.nfpa.org/AboutTheCodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=405>; and Federal Aviation Administration,

Code of Federal Regulations, §139.319.i.2, <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text->

[idx?c=ecfr&sid=30df68dd97583d6e7d7c24a1e597f4a0&rgn=div5&view=text&node=14:3.0.1.1.12&idno=14#14:3.0.1.1.12.4.3.10](http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=30df68dd97583d6e7d7c24a1e597f4a0&rgn=div5&view=text&node=14:3.0.1.1.12&idno=14#14:3.0.1.1.12.4.3.10)

**Vote:** N/A

**Action:** N/A

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Billy Shelton commented that last year there were 423 Firefighter Injuries and 3 Firefighter Deaths in Virginia.

Bill Kyger commented that from a local government perspective, local governments are likely to want their emergency responders to be fully trained, especially since the Line of Duty Act has been shifted to the local government. Therefore the locality is taking on that risk and will look to minimize risk exposure.

Several stakeholders commented on the increased progression of training within the fire service, and wanted to focus on improving their firefighters and the service they provide. Tom Moffett clarified that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss a program that would facilitate recertification, training currency, or skills proficiency, for those that wish to be ProQual certified.

Stakeholders, the Committee and Agency discussed that there is no need to reinvent the wheel, as the skill are already laid out in the Job Performance Requirement (JPR). What are we trying to accomplish, it is not just about going up the ladder; you still have to maintain proficiency at the basic level. It is more of a philosophical question, do the line officers and chiefs officers need to maintain the same basic proficiency as your front-line firefighter.

Several stakeholders requested the statistical data and studies that show the correlation between firefighter injury and/or death, and training. Training time is very valuable and it is getting more valuable as we go. We have to ensure that the training and recertification is actually having an added value to that locality for the money that is being spent. Some departments already have a huge investment in training and recertification needs to be locally driven and on local hazards. Recertification needs to focus on the latest trends and hazards, i.e. electric and alternate-fuel vehicles, and also needs to be based on performance and proficiency not just training for training sake. What will the administrative costs to the local fire department? From a recordkeeping perspective, do not want to reinvest the money.

Ken Brown commented that we need to be proactive and responsive, as well as, understanding why we should not be doing in this, i.e. the downsides? Several stakeholders responded that the downsides are time, staffing and funding. We are talking about retraining, but there are no requirements to train them before they even enter a burning building. If we go to recertification or continuing education then we will lose volunteer members, especially the older members. The reality for rural departments is that we have volunteers and we need them because we cannot afford to hire firefighters.

Stakeholders commented that we need to take a global approach, it is not just about fire training, in fact fires account for roughly 4% of the fire service calls in Virginia. Additionally, are we looking at a collaborative approach with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the Office of Emergency Medical Service, for which we are already maintaining certification and counting the conference, seminar, educational courses to supplement re-certification.

Billy Shelton commented that the purpose of this meeting is to determine if we want recertification or continuing education, or, as with all NFPA standards, you can choose not to. As we live in a litigating society, they are trying to cover themselves and help cover the fire service. We want to be considered professionals, career and volunteer, so just like doctors and nurses, etc, we need to have continuing education of some type.

A Chief from a rural department commented that there needs to be more communication, because what they heard initially and what they heard yesterday and at the meeting today are two different things.

Dickie Harris thanked the Board for this discussion and commented that he would leave his prepared remarks in the interest of time, see **Enclosure 3**.

Below are several questions for continued review:

- What are the costs involved?
- What is the impact to local fire departments?
- Are firefighters actually safer due to training?
- Will need buy-in at local levels.
- Are line of duty firefighter deaths prevented because of training?
- Would in-station drills count for recertification or continuing education?
- Would online training count for recertification or continuing education? (Knowledge Center)
- Training leads to firefighter safety, data to quantify the statement is needed.
- Training should be value added for locality, i.e. cost vs. benefit.
- Must have local cooperation, listen to concerns, meet the needs of the locality, and not be a “one-size fits all.”
- Should be based on JPRs, proficiency.
- Is this an unfunded mandate?
- Should be a recommendation, rather than a mandate.
- If there is no initial certification requirement, how can there be a recertification or continuing education requirement?

- Need to take a global approach, this appears short sighted.
- Can we collaborate with OEMS, VDEM, and use Continuing Education Units'?
- Problem with time lapse: NFPA makes change and it is years before it is released to the public so change is already somewhat obsolete.
- Must balance the administrative elements: staffing, time, funding.
- Make this a recommendation, not a mandate (lack of funding to mandate).

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Special Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Clerk of the Committee  
Matthew C. Smith

## **REVIEWED BY:**

*Donald E. Hansen*

Don Hansen  
Branch Chief of Training and Operations

August 19, 2011

Date

## Enclosures

1. NFPA – Professional Qualifications “Now and Beyond Workshop” Report
2. VDFP – Professional Qualifications “Now and Beyond” Overview Presentation
3. Virginia State Firefighters Association – Certification vs Re-certification Response Letter
4. Southside Virginia Volunteer Firefighters Association – Re-certification Response Letter
5. Virginia Fire Services Council – Re-certification Response Letter