



**ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 2009 - JUNE 2010**



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

**PETER S. CAROZZA, JR., Chairman
Kevin J. Kowalski, Vice Chairman
Jeffrey J. Morrissette, State Fire Administrator**

Established - 1975 Statutory authority - Conn. Gen. Statutes. Sec. 7-323

*Central Office - Connecticut Fire Academy, 34 Perimeter Road
Windsor Locks, CT 06096*

Average number of full-time employees – 16 (General Fund)

Recurring operating expenses - \$2,136,003

Capital outlay - \$20,210

***Organization structure - Office of State Fire Administration, Training Division and
Certification Division***

The Commission proudly presents the following summary of activities for Fiscal Year 2010.

Agency Mission

To prevent or mitigate the effects of fire and disasters, either natural or man-made, on the citizens of the State of Connecticut. This objective shall be accomplished through the development and delivery of state-of-the-art educational programs designed to meet nationally recognized standards, certification of individuals to such standards and maintenance of up-to-date resources for use by fire service personnel, public educators and other first responders.

Statutory Authority

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 7-323(j) - 7-323(s) the Commission is charged with and has primary responsibility for training, public fire and life safety education and professional competency certification for members of Connecticut's fire service.

Public Service

The agency continues to leverage its limited resources in an effort to provide quality services. Economies and efficiency are gained through partnerships and synergy with state agencies like the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Military Department, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Public Health, Department of Public Safety, Department of Developmental Services, and the Department of Corrections. Further, we partner with the federal Department of Homeland Security, United States Fire Administration and National Fire Academy exchanging grants, curricula and data. Such collaborations yield significantly increased opportunities for Connecticut's fire service. A

conscious effort is made to schedule programs and services within every geographic region of the state to ensure equal access to both the career and volunteer fire service.

Agency staff members actively participate on state and national committees, boards and organizations in an effort to maintain a positive, proactive impact upon agency services as well as serve in an advocacy role on behalf of Connecticut's fire service. By Connecticut General Statutes, the State Fire Administrator serves on both the State Emergency Response and Enhanced 911 Commissions in addition to the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Coordinating Council and the Statewide Highway Incident Management Task Force. The Administrator completed serving his second three-year term as the Executive Board Chairman for the International Fire Service Training Association. Agency staff and Adjunct Instructors represent the Commission on the Department of Public Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board and various other agency/professional committees and working groups.

Improvements/Achievements 2009-10

The following accomplishments suggest the wide variety of activities offered by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control:

- A total of 151 fire officers from throughout Connecticut attended *Connecticut Fire Officer's Weekend* at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Students successfully participated in one of six courses resulting in 2,416 contact hours at the nation's premiere fire education institution.
- Hosted the 7th annual Connecticut Firefighters Memorial Service. The names of Charles D. Myshrall (North Coventry Fire Department 2/26/09), Patrick J. Reardon (New Haven Fire Department 4/21/09), Victor G. Vickstrom (Branford Fire Department 3/18/24) and Jerome W. Hayward (Branford Fire Department 12/23/64) were added to the Memorial Honor Roll as a result of line-of-duty deaths.
- Continued administration of the 800 FIRE LINE program, a national volunteer fire and emergency services recruitment tool. During the fiscal year, 27 calls were received with only 3 referred to local fire, EMS, and other emergency response related organizations.
- The Commission's Regional Foam Trailer program was activated for response to incidents including train derailments and chemical tanker accidents providing resources not available locally.
- Two *Introduction to the Fire Service* programs for youth 14 to 18 years were delivered to 69 students representing 60 different fire departments.
- Continued offering the Fire Officer Seminar Series and Instructor Development Seminar headlined by national speakers presenting on a variety of contemporary topics. Six, single day-long sessions were held with 396 students resulting in 3,168 contact hours.
- Academy dormitory rooms were made available and occupied by students attending Connecticut Fire Academy and New England Disaster Training Center programs. Occupancy again exceeded 4,000 room nights.
- Continued support to the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations including coordination of the 12th Annual Fire Service Day at the Capitol.
- The agency's electronic mail list service continued to provide dissemination of important and timely information to more than 4,000 subscribers. Communications were reduced

to a single daily message with multiple informational messages typically packaged. A total of 242 messages were transmitted during the fiscal year containing in excess of 1,000 items of public safety interest.

- Continued regular dissemination of press releases to the news media, most specifically, in areas of public fire and life safety education. Staff provided radio, television interviews and commentary on a whole host of fire service related topics.
- Actively participated on the Connecticut State Firefighters' Association Education Committee in support of the Regional Fire Training Schools. Construction and improvements to the New Haven Regional Fire School commenced with completion expected in late December, 2010. Expansion plans for the Harford County Regional Fire School at the Connecticut Fire Academy were placed out to bid. The Department of Public Works initiated land procurement for the Eastern Connecticut Fire Training School and Valley Fire Chiefs Training School.
- Continued support to the Statewide Honor Guard initiative. This group of volunteers provides direct support to local fire departments for both celebratory and grief assistance. In addition, they play a high profile and active role in the planning and execution of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, MD.
- Coordinated Table Top and Full Scale Chemical Emergency Planning Exercises for the State Emergency Response Commission.
- Hosted seven FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Workshops attended by 118 students.

Certification Division

The Certification Division assesses fire service personnel in areas ranging from basic firefighting skills to technical rescue specialties and instructional methodology to fire officer leadership skills. This knowledge and skills evaluation of specific competencies legitimizes the pre-requisite training requirements and instruction associated with certification-based, fire service-related training courses and education.

The certification process is acknowledged as a means of evaluation for departmental entry-level opportunities, promotions and professional development of firefighters across the state. With the requisite skills and knowledge established in each level of the national professional qualifications standards, and the testing and assessment aspects prescribed by the Commission, emergency services personnel are better prepared to operate more safely in highly hazardous exposure areas when serving the citizens of Connecticut.

Two international accreditation entities, the National Professional Qualifications Board (ProBoard) and International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) have examined and accredited the agency validating our administration of a fair and valid training and certification program. As a result, certification issued to members of Connecticut fire service is nationally and internationally recognized.

With a career staff of three highly dedicated customer-oriented professionals who maintain the daily operations and 50 part-time adjunct examiners responsible for field administration of the cognitive and psychomotor skills examinations, the Certification Division

has offered nearly 3,432 psycho-motor and 3,383 cognitive examinations awarding 2,723 certifications for FY 2010 (Figure 1).

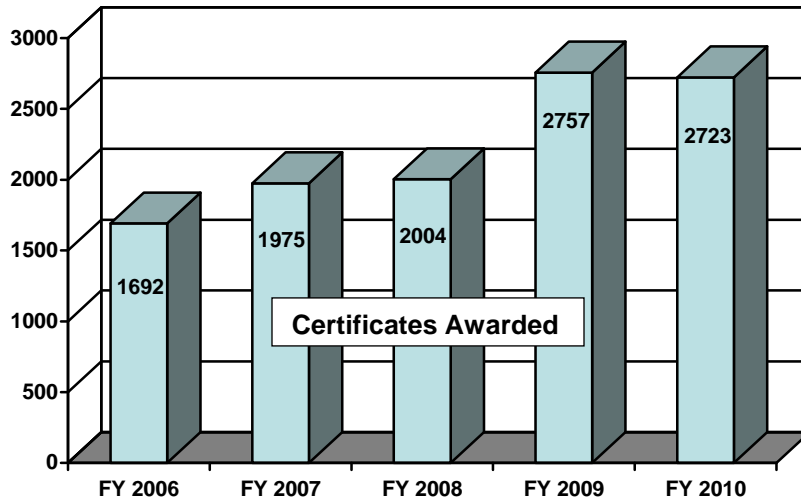


Figure 1 - Total Number of Certificates Awarded Over the Past Five Fiscal Years

FY2010 goals were designed to sustain viability and develop growth in deliverables while adhering to budget constraints and without compromising the certification process. The Division completed a rigorous self-assessment culminating in a site visit by IFSAC. Having attained accreditation to offer 40 levels of national professional qualification certification testing the Commission is recognized as a national leader in fire service certification.

Due to continued staffing constraints and popularity of the system, significant delays in issuance of examination results have continued. As a temporary initiative, test score results are now posted on-line, typically within one week of an examination. In cooperation with the Training Division, we continue to assess options for full on-line reporting of examination scores and issuance of certificates.

Natural occurrences, man-made disasters, cyber/technology catastrophe and economic adversity are threats to the well-being of any organization. The Certification Division developed a Business Continuity Plan to strengthen operational resiliency.

With momentum and the vision clearly set on increasing customer satisfaction for certification deliverables, the overarching goal for 2011 will be accomplished in a three-fold strategy: (1) Analyze and communicate significant candidate performance assessment data. (2) Optimize the delivery timeframe from application to the documented attainment of certification by a candidate. (3) Explore “Green” technologies for greater efficiency and effectiveness of the Certification Division operations.

Office of State Fire Administration

This Office provides fiscal and administrative support to the agency and Connecticut’s fire service. Continued budget reductions and rescissions along with limited staffing have impacted operations. As such, we continue to rely heavily upon contracted services including custodial,

food service, information technology, facility maintenance and instructional/consulting support.

This Office administered a legislated Supplemental Grant program for 160 eligible volunteer fire companies paying out a total of \$156,750.36 in direct payments and service vouchers representing a small decrease.

Funding totaling \$743,893 was disbursed to the nine independent Regional Fire Schools through the Connecticut State Firefighters' Association. This represents an approximate 5% reduction due to mandated budgetary rescissions during the fiscal year.

For a third year, administered the Entry Level Training Reimbursement Program, a program to reimburse municipalities or fire departments for 50% the cost of training their entry-level personnel achieving certification. Reimbursement totaled \$169,003.10 with \$266,583.90 lapsed, after rescissions, primarily as a result of decreased demand.

The Office continued to provide consulting services to communities regarding Juvenile Firesetter Intervention. Commenced work with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to review Firesetter Intervention program objectives. We anticipate large scale outreach in training during FY2011 as a result of this collaboration with DCF.

On the legislative front, Commissioners and staff provided technical assistance to members of the General Assembly, Office of Legislative Research and Office of Fiscal Analysis in support of numerous fire service legislative proposals.

The State Fire Rescue Disaster Response Guide is undergoing an update with the assistance of the Department of Emergency Management Homeland Security (DEMHS) staff attorney. We expect final approval of the Guide in early FY2011. Thanks and appreciation is extended to our cadre of volunteer Regional and County Fire Coordinators who are the true backbone of the system. Agency staff continues to be assigned to assist DEMHS during State Emergency Operations Center activations for exercises and storm events.

Training Division

The Connecticut Fire Academy is the facility and staff that fulfill the training and education missions of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control to develop a well qualified fire service workforce. A cadre of 200 part-time adjunct instructors delivers diverse classes ranging from the comprehensive 14 week resident entry-level Recruit Firefighter Training program to Fire Officer level courses with collegiate transfer credits. Courses are available for delivery throughout the state to allow local fire departments to maximize attendance without leaving the community.

During the year, the division offered 478 training programs reaching 8,786 students resulting in 207,476 contact hours. While the number of deliveries is down slightly (35) the contact hours are significantly increased (7,579). This is an indication of an increase in the number of five, six or more day long classes being attended.

The June Fire School is our largest on campus event. This year 53 classes were offered over a six day period attracting 917 students. During the reporting period we assisted the National Fire Academy in delivering seven grant workshops statewide and empowered over 118 individuals with the tools necessary for a successful Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant program request.

Our partnership with the New England Disaster Training Center has resulted in the construction of a trench rescue and separate railroad prop. Our first blended learning program, Fire Service Instructor III resulted in reduced tuition costs. From student and customer requests, a combined Fire service Instructor II/III was introduced. Highlighting another partnership, the Introduction to the Fire Service (youth program) was expanded to six days and students now receive basic Wildland fire training from the DEP allowing them to fight brush fires at the age of 16 with a Fire Chief's approval.

Other notable events were public life safety media (print and broadcast) releases on timely subjects including campus fire safety, fire prevention week, thanksgiving cooking safety, maintaining smoke alarms, fire service career day presentations, and in partnership with DEMHS support of their annual Civilian Emergency Response Team (CERT) weekend training.

The Connecticut Fire Academy offers a Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) to assist municipalities identify future firefighters with the capability of career and lifelong success. This year 45 four hour testing sessions were offered. 2,468 people registered with 1564 (92%) passing, 122 (8%) failing. No shows made up the difference of 782 (32%) of the registered candidates.

The Connecticut Fire Academy's Bookstore celebrated the conclusion of the fiscal year by topping \$400,000.00 in sales for the first time. The CFA Bookstore supplies books and study material to instructors, students, fire department promotional candidates, chief officers and family members. Bookstore sales attained \$422,865.91, an increase of \$78,983 during a tight economy. Total number of items sold is 13,659. Profits continue to be reinvested into the inventory that helps to reduce the contributory cost of Connecticut Fire Academy course materials.

Adam Piskura is the Director of Training who congratulates his team of Program Managers, Booksellers, Registrar, Storekeeper and Clerical Support staff for maintaining customer service while the demands increased, and the funding, available labor and options were reduced.

Commissioners

Members of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control are appointed by the Governor and represent statewide fire service organizations. Commissioners serving during the fiscal year:

Chairman Peter S. Carozza, Jr., Waterbury; Vice Chairman Kevin J. Kowalski, Simsbury; Secretary, Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Derby; Edward B. Gomeau, Old Saybrook; David J. Dagon,

Mansfield; Robert J. Ross, Middletown; Matthew Nelson, Glastonbury; Richard H. Nicol, Middlebury; Robert Walsh, Plantsville; John J. Brady, Madison; Megan Murphy, Trumbull; Victor Mitchell, Bristol; Philip K. Schenck, Avon and Frank C. Hilbert, Mystic.