

NFPA®

1021

Standard for
Fire Officer
Professional Qualifications

2020



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NFPA® 1021

Standard for

Fire Officer Professional Qualifications

2020 Edition

This edition of NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Fire Officer Professional Qualifications and released by the Correlating Committee on Professional Qualifications. It was issued by the Standards Council on November 4, 2019, with an effective date of November 24, 2019, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 1021 was approved as an American National Standard on November 24, 2019.

Origin and Development of NFPA 1021

In 1971, the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations (JCNFSO) created the National Professional Qualifications Board (NPQB) for the fire service to facilitate the development of nationally applicable performance standards for uniformed fire service personnel. On December 14, 1972, the Board established four technical committees to develop those standards using the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards-making system. The initial committees addressed the following career areas: fire fighter, fire officer, fire service instructors, and fire inspector and investigator. In July 1976, the Association adopted the first edition of NFPA 1021.

The original concept of the professional qualification standards, as directed by the JCNFSO and the NPQB, was to develop an interrelated set of performance standards specifically for the fire service. The various levels of achievement in the standards were to build on each other within a strictly defined career ladder. In the late 1980s, revisions of the standards recognized that the documents should stand on their own merit in terms of job performance requirements for a given field. Accordingly, the strict career ladder concept was abandoned, except for the progression from fire fighter to fire officer. The later revisions, therefore, facilitated the use of the documents by other than the uniformed fire services.

In 1990, responsibility for the appointment of professional qualifications committees and the development of the professional qualifications standards were assumed by the NFPA. The NFPA Standards Council appointed the Correlating Committee on Professional Qualifications, which assumed responsibility for coordinating the requirements of all of the professional qualifications documents.

The 1992 edition of NFPA 1021 reduced the number of levels of progression in the standard to four. In the 1997 edition, NFPA 1021 was converted to the job performance requirement (JPR) format to be consistent with the other standards in the Professional Qualifications Project. Each JPR consists of the task to be performed; the tools, equipment, or materials that must be provided to successfully complete the task; evaluation parameters and/or performance outcomes; and lists of prerequisite knowledge and skills one must have to perform the task.

The intent of the technical committee was to develop clear and concise job performance requirements that can be used to determine that an individual, when measured to the standard, possesses the skills and knowledge to perform as a fire officer. The committee further contends that these job performance requirements can be used in any fire department in any city, town, or private organization throughout North America.

In preparing the 2003 edition of the document, the technical committee did a task analysis to validate the continued need for the use of four levels in the document. It was found that several tasks were actually being performed at a level lower than indicated in the previous edition. Changes were made to reflect that fact, as well as to bring the document into conformance with the new *Manual of Style for NFPA Technical Committee Documents*.

In the 2009 edition of the document, the technical committee revised the Scope statement, added a skill maintenance requirement, and changed the term *certification* to *qualification* as directed by the Technical Correlating Committee to establish conformity across the Professional Qualifications project. The committee revised the duty statements for inspection and investigation in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. They also added new JPRs to clarify the committee intent.

In the 2014 edition, the technical committee further clarified the scope of the document to comply with professional qualifications project documents. The technical committee revised the text of the document as it relates to qualifications for Fire Officer III. The committee removed the requisite for Fire Service Instructor II for Fire Officer III, indicating that it exceeds the scope for that level. Fire Officer III is considered a managerial/administrative level. A Fire Instructor II has to have the knowledge, skills, and ability to develop individual lesson plans.

The technical committee also made several adjustments to the job performance requirements under Human Resource Management for Fire Officer II and III and Administration and Emergency Services Delivery for Fire Officer IV. The most significant change to the 2014 edition was to acknowledge and encourage prospective fire officers to consider formal higher education as part of their educational and professional growth while maintaining current knowledge.

For the 2020 edition, the technical committee has reviewed all job performance requirements for relevancy and accuracy. Emergency medical services delivery has been acknowledged and allotted to the fire officer's role. The concept of continuous quality improvement has been introduced to support service delivery of the AHJ. The fire officer's role has been refined at each level relative to community risk reduction (CRR) initiatives. Also, two new annexes have been added: Annex C provides an overview of the JPRs, and new Annex D recognizes the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) firefighter life safety initiatives.

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NFPA 1021

Standard for

Fire Officer Professional Qualifications

2020 Edition

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Information on referenced and extracted publications can be found in Chapter 2 and Annex F.

Chapter 1 Administration

1.1* Scope. This standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements (JPRs) for fire officer.

1.2 Purpose. The purpose of this standard shall be to specify the minimum job performance requirements for serving as a fire officer.

1.2.1 The intent of the standard is to define progressive levels of performance required at the various levels of officer responsibility. The authority having jurisdiction has the option to combine or group the levels to meet its local needs and to use them in the development of job descriptions and specifying promotional standards.

1.2.2 It is not the intent of this standard to restrict any jurisdiction from exceeding these minimum requirements.

1.2.3 This standard shall cover the requirements for the four levels of progression — Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, Fire Officer III, and Fire Officer IV.

1.3* General.

1.3.1 All of the standards for any level of fire officer shall be performed in accordance with recognized practices and procedures or as defined by an accepted authority.

1.3.2 It is not required for the objectives to be mastered in the order in which they appear. The local or state/provincial training program shall establish both the instructional priority and the program content to prepare individuals to meet the performance objectives of this standard.

1.3.3 The Fire Fighter II shall meet all the objectives for Fire Officer I before being qualified at the Fire Officer I level, and the objectives for each succeeding level in the progression shall be met before being qualified at the next higher level.

1.3.4* The fire officer at all levels of progression shall remain current with the general requirements for fire officers, human resource management, community and government relations, administration, inspections and investigations, emergency service delivery, and health and safety.

1.3.5* The fire officer at all levels of progression shall remain current with the general knowledge and skills and job performance requirements addressed in the level of qualification.

Chapter 2 Referenced Publications

2.1 General. The documents or portions thereof listed in this chapter are referenced within this standard and shall be considered part of the requirements of this document.

2.2 NFPA Publications. National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471.

NFPA 1001, *Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 1041, *Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 1600®, *Standard on Continuity, Emergency, and Crisis Management*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 1700, *Guide for Structural Fire Fighting*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1851, *Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 3000™ (PS), *Standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program*, 2018 edition.

2.3 Other Publications.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, MA, 2003.

2.4 References for Extracts in Mandatory Sections.

NFPA 1000, *Standard for Fire Service Professional Qualifications Accreditation and Certification Systems*, 2017 edition.

NFPA 1002, *Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications*, 2017 edition.

Chapter 3 Definitions

3.1* General. The definitions contained in this chapter shall apply to the terms used in this standard. Where terms are not defined in this chapter or within another chapter, they shall be defined using their ordinarily accepted meanings within the context in which they are used. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition, shall be the source for the ordinarily accepted meaning.

3.2 NFPA Official Definitions.

3.2.1* Approved. Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

3.2.2* Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). An organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure.

3.2.3 Labeled. Equipment or materials to which has been attached a label, symbol, or other identifying mark of an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with product evaluation, that maintains periodic inspection of production of labeled equipment or materials, and by whose labeling the manufacturer indicates compliance with appropriate standards or performance in a specified manner.

3.2.4* Listed. Equipment, materials, or services included in a list published by an organization that is acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction and concerned with evaluation of products or services, that maintains periodic inspection of production of listed equipment or materials or periodic evaluation of services, and whose listing states that either the equipment, material, or service meets appropriate designated standards or has been tested and found suitable for a specified purpose.

3.2.5 Shall. Indicates a mandatory requirement.

3.2.6 Should. Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

3.2.7 Standard. An NFPA Standard, the main text of which contains only mandatory provisions using the word "shall" to indicate requirements and that is in a form generally suitable for mandatory reference by another standard or code or for adoption into law. Nonmandatory provisions are not to be considered a part of the requirements of a standard and shall be located in an appendix, annex, footnote, informational note, or other means as permitted in the NFPA Manuals of Style. When used in a generic sense, such as in the phrase "standards development process" or "standards development activities," the term "standards" includes all NFPA Standards, including Codes, Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guides.

3.3 General Definitions.

3.3.1* Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. Planning document that includes preplan information and resources for the management of catastrophic emergencies within the jurisdiction.

3.3.2 Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). An ongoing, systematic process of review and analysis of department operations designed to identify opportunities for improving operational policies, treatment protocols, and processes.

3.3.3 Fire Department. An organization providing rescue, fire suppression, and related activities, including any public, governmental, private, industrial, or military organization engaging in this type of activity. [1002, 2017]

3.3.4 Fire Officer I. The fire officer, at the supervisory level, who has met the job performance requirements specified in this standard for Level I.

3.3.5 Fire Officer II. The fire officer, at the supervisory/managerial level, who has met the job performance requirements specified in this standard for Level II.

3.3.6 Fire Officer III. The fire officer, at the managerial/administrative level, who has met the job performance requirements specified in this standard for Level III.

3.3.7 Fire Officer IV. The fire officer, at the administrative level, who has met the job performance requirements specified in this standard for Level IV.

3.3.8 Incident Management System (IMS). A system that defines the roles and responsibilities to be assumed by personnel and the operating procedures to be used in the management and direction of emergency operations; the system is also referred to as an incident command system (ICS).

3.3.9 Job Performance Requirement (JPR). A written statement that describes a specific job task, lists the items necessary to complete the task, and defines measurable or observable outcomes and evaluation areas for the specific task. [1000, 2017]

3.3.10* Job Shadowing. Witnessing firsthand the work environment, employability, and occupational skills in practice, the value of professional training, and potential career options.

3.3.11* Member. A person involved in performing the duties and responsibilities of a fire department under the auspices of the organization.

3.3.12 Promotion. The advancement of a member from one rank to a higher rank by a method such as election, appointment, merit, or examination.

3.3.13 Qualification. Having satisfactorily completed the requirements of the objectives.

3.3.14 Supervisor. An individual responsible for overseeing the performance or activity of other members.

3.3.15 Unit. An engine company, truck company, or other functional or administrative group.

Chapter 4 Fire Officer I

4.1* General. For qualification at Fire Officer Level I, the candidate shall meet the requirements of Fire Fighter II as defined in NFPA 1001, Fire Instructor I as defined in NFPA 1041, and the job performance requirements defined in Sections 4.2 through 4.7 of this standard.

4.1.1* General Prerequisite Knowledge. The organizational structure of the department; geographical configuration and characteristics of response districts; departmental operating procedures for administration, emergency operations, incident management system and safety; fundamentals of leadership; departmental budget process; information management and recordkeeping; the fire prevention and building safety codes

and ordinances applicable to the jurisdiction; current trends, technologies, and socioeconomic and political factors that affect the fire service; cultural diversity; methods used by supervisors to obtain cooperation within a group of subordinates; the rights of management and members; agreements in force between the organization and members; generally accepted ethical practices, including a professional code of ethics; and policies and procedures regarding the operation of the department as they involve supervisors and members.

Δ 4.1.2 General Prerequisite Skills. The ability to effectively communicate in writing utilizing technology provided by the AHJ; write reports, letters, and memos; operate in an information management system; and effectively operate at all levels in the incident management system utilized by the AHJ.

4.2 Human Resource Management. This duty involves utilizing human resources to accomplish assignments in accordance with safety plans and in an efficient manner. This duty also involves evaluating member performance and supervising personnel during emergency and nonemergency work periods, according to the following job performance requirements.

4.2.1 Assign tasks or responsibilities to unit members, given an assignment at an emergency incident, so that the instructions are complete, clear, and concise; safety considerations are addressed; and the desired outcomes are conveyed.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Verbal communications during emergency incidents, characteristics of leadership, techniques used to make assignments under stressful situations, and methods of confirming understanding.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to condense instructions for frequently assigned unit tasks based on training and standard operating procedures.

4.2.2 Assign tasks or responsibilities to unit members, given an assignment under nonemergency conditions at a station or other work location, so that the instructions are complete, clear, and concise; safety considerations are addressed; and the desired outcomes are conveyed.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Verbal communications under nonemergency situations, characteristics of leadership, techniques used to make assignments under routine situations, and methods of confirming understanding.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to issue instructions for frequently assigned unit tasks based on department policy.

4.2.3 Direct unit members during a training evolution, given a company training evolution and training policies and procedures, so that the evolution is performed in accordance with safety plans, efficiently, and as directed.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Verbal communication techniques to facilitate learning.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to distribute issue-guided directions to unit members during training evolutions.

4.2.4 Recommend action for member-related problems, given a member with a situation requiring assistance and the member assistance policies and procedures, so that the situation is identified and the actions taken are within the established policies and procedures.

(A)* Requisite Knowledge. The signs and symptoms of member-related problems (such as behavioral health issues),

causes of stress in emergency services personnel, adverse effects of stress on the performance of emergency service personnel, and awareness of AHJ member assistance policies and procedures.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to recommend a course of action for a member in need of assistance.

4.2.5* Apply human resource policies and procedures, given an administrative situation requiring action, so that policies and procedures are followed.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Human resource policies, procedures, applicable laws, and legal concepts.

(B)* Requisite Skills. The ability to communicate and to relate interpersonally.

4.2.6 Coordinate the completion of assigned tasks and projects by members, given a list of projects and tasks and the job requirements of subordinates, so that the assignments are prioritized, a plan for the completion of each assignment is developed, and members are assigned to specific tasks and both supervised during and held accountable for the completion of the assignments.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Principles of supervision, leadership, and basic human resource management.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to plan and to set priorities.

4.3 Community and Government Relations. This duty involves dealing with inquiries of the community and communicating the role, image, and mission of the department to the public and delivering safety, injury prevention, and fire prevention education programs, according to the following job performance requirements.

4.3.1 Implement a community risk reduction (CRR) plan at the unit level, given an AHJ CRR plan, and policies and procedures, so that a community need is addressed.

Δ (A) Requisite Knowledge. Community demographics and service organizations, verbal and nonverbal communication, and the role and mission of the department and its CRR plan.

Δ (B) Requisite Skills. Familiarity with public relations and the ability to communicate.

4.3.2 Initiate action to a citizen's concern, given policies and procedures, so that the concern is answered or referred to the correct individual for action and all policies and procedures are complied with.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Interpersonal relationships and verbal and nonverbal communication.

Δ (B) Requisite Skills. Familiarity with public relations and the ability to communicate.

4.3.3 Respond to a public inquiry, given policies and procedures, so that the inquiry is answered accurately, courteously, and in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Written and oral communication techniques.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to relate interpersonally and to respond to public inquiries.

4.4 Administration. This duty involves general administrative functions and the implementation of departmental policies

and procedures at the unit level, according to the following job performance requirements.

4.4.1* Recommend changes to existing departmental policies and/or implement a new departmental policy at the unit level, given a new departmental policy, so that the policy is communicated to and understood by unit members.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Written and oral communication.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to relate interpersonally and to communicate change in a positive manner.

4.4.2 Execute routine unit-level administrative functions, given forms and record-management systems, so that the reports and logs are complete and files are maintained in accordance with policies and procedures.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Administrative policies and procedures and records management.

Δ (B) Requisite Skills. The ability to communicate.

4.4.3 Prepare a budget request, given a unit level need, so that the request is in the proper format and is supported with data.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Policies and procedures and the revenue sources and budget process.

Δ (B) Requisite Skill. The ability to communicate.

4.4.4 Explain the purpose of each management component of the organization, given an organization chart, so that the explanation is current and accurate and clearly identifies the purpose and mission of the organization.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Organizational structure of the department and functions of management.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to communicate verbally in a clear and concise manner.

4.4.5 Explain the needs and benefits of collecting incident response data, given the goals and mission of the organization, so that incident response reports are timely and accurate.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. The agency's records management system.

Δ (B) Requisite Skills. The ability to communicate.

4.5* Inspection and Investigation. This duty involves conducting inspections to identify hazards and address violations, conducting pre-incident plans, performing a fire investigation to determine area of origin and preliminary cause, securing the incident scene, and preserving evidence, according to the following job performance requirements.

4.5.1 Describe the procedures of the AHJ for conducting fire inspections, given any of the following occupancies, so that all hazards, including hazardous materials, are identified, approved forms are completed, and approved action is initiated:

- (1) Assembly
- (2) Educational
- (3) Health care
- (4) Detention and correctional
- (5) Residential
- (6) Mercantile
- (7) Business
- (8) Industrial

- (9) Storage
- (10) Unusual structures
- (11) Mixed occupancies

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Inspection procedures; fire detection, alarm, and protection systems; identification of fire and life safety hazards; and marking and identification systems for hazardous materials.

Δ (B) Requisite Skills. The ability to communicate and to apply the appropriate codes and standards.

4.5.2 Identify construction, alarm, detection, and suppression features that contribute to or prevent the spread of fire, heat, and smoke throughout the building or from one building to another, given an occupancy, and the policies and forms of the AHJ so that a pre-incident plan for any of the following occupancies is developed:

- (1) Assembly
- (2) Educational
- (3) Institutional
- (4) Residential
- (5) Business
- (6) Industrial
- (7) Manufacturing
- (8) Storage
- (9) Mercantile
- (10) Special properties
- (11) Mixed occupancies

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Fire behavior; building construction; inspection and incident reports; detection, alarm, and suppression systems; and applicable codes, ordinances, and standards.

Δ (B) Requisite Skills. The ability to use evaluative methods and to communicate.

4.5.3 Direct unit level personnel to secure an incident scene, given rope or barrier tape, so that unauthorized persons can recognize the perimeters of the scene and are kept from restricted areas, and all evidence or potential evidence is protected from damage or destruction.

(A) Requisite Knowledge. Types of evidence, the importance of fire scene security, and evidence preservation.

(B) Requisite Skills. The ability to issue instruction for securing an incident scene.

Δ 4.6* Emergency Service Delivery. This duty involves supervising emergency operations and deploying assigned resources in accordance with the local emergency plan and according to the following job performance requirements.

4.6.1 Develop an initial action plan, given size-up information for an incident and assigned emergency response resources, so that resources are deployed to control the emergency.

(A)* Requisite Knowledge. Elements of a size-up, standard operating procedures for emergency operations, and fire behavior.

(B)* Requisite Skills. The ability to analyze emergency scene conditions; to activate the local emergency plan, including localized evacuation procedures; to allocate resources; and to communicate orally.