



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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Training Requirements For Volunteer Firefighters Under 4A-62
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Florida statute 633.820, The Florida Firefighter Occupational Health and Safety Act (FFOSA) was passed in the past legislative session. That act specifically included volunteer firefighters.

Five workshops were held through out the state with the proposed language for Administrative Rule 4A-62, which includes the volunteer training requirement. Several revisions and clarifications resulted from the excellent input received from constituent groups and individual fire departments at the workshops.

A key component is the segments of Federal OSHA law that the FFOSHA law allows the State Fire Marshal to adopt in Florida Administrative Code (FAC). This includes the requirement that **firefighters be trained commensurate with those duties and functions that they are expected to perform, before they are expected perform those emergency activities.** It also requires more comprehensive training for leaders and training instructors.

The current status as this rule goes to administrative hearing is:

1. Volunteer firefighters must have the Florida Firefighter One course (160 hours including EMS First Responder and Hazardous Materials Awareness).
2. **Volunteer Firefighters having the old Basic Volunteer certificate by the state are exempted from having to have Florida Firefighter One certification, but they must still have EMS First Responder and the federally required Hazardous Materials Awareness. However, the Basic Volunteer course in itself does not meet “trained commensurate to duty” for interior structural firefighting, and other documented training would be required for personnel using this exemption.** This exemption was at the request of the Florida Fire Chiefs Association. It does allow many of the volunteers that are not used for interior firefighting operations, but rather as pump operators or support staff to maintain an active and productive role in their local fire service.
3. Another change to the initial proposal is the definition of an “exclusionary” or “hot” zone. Defined as “the area immediately around the incident where serious threat of harm exists, inclusive of the collapse zone for a structure fire. Entry into that zone would require the use of breathing apparatus; protective clothing and/or specialized training required under

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633.821 (2)". This also allows volunteers to be used that are not physically capable or not trained for interior firefighting training to respond and be of assistance in non-suppression support roles.

4. The rule does not require Florida Firefighter One for "wildland" firefighters that meet the Florida Division of Forestry's training of S-130, S-190 and the Florida Safety program.
5. There has not been a deadline set for compliance, however it is expected with passage of the rule that departments show good faith efforts to work towards compliance.

It should be noted that the "trained commensurate to duty" requirement has been around for roughly ten years, previously being required under Florida Administrative Code 38-20.

There have been concerns expressed by volunteers that their previous training doesn't count. This is not true, and for the most part has not been the case since Firefighter One was started a few years ago. Volunteer firefighters with equivalent training have the ability to test for Firefighter One after the proper documentation and application is provided to the Bureau.

Below is how the process works, with a new addition to make the process for volunteers that have been active for some time even easier when the local department's training records may not meet standard.

For New Volunteers :

Use current Firefighter One program as defined by FAC 4A-37.055 and paperwork with new detailed objectives/Job Performance Requirements (JPR). The detailed objectives could be downloaded from our website (<http://www.fsfc.ufl.edu/WhatsNew/FSNotice/Notices.htm> -there is a draft available there now). Negotiations are underway to make the classroom portions available online.

For Current Volunteers:

All fire departments with volunteer personnel would be required to provide the Bureau a roster on a Bureau provided form made available on our webpage (as Word template or in Adobe) of incumbent personnel, including those already certified as Firefighter One or Firefighter Two. This roster will serve several purposes, including the State Emergency Response Plan. The need for such rosters has become critical during much of the Domestic Security issues regarding training and funding. From the data collected by the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces, there appears to be only 6,000 volunteer firefighters in Florida. We believe the number is closer to 12,000. This becomes a funding issue as we try to secure funds for training and equipment of volunteers we currently can't prove are there. Proposed is a two-year window to gain compliance.

Option 1: Firefighters needing the training program attend the classes per FAC 4A-37.055. The use of certified Basic Instructors is required; however the program can be done "in-house" and does not have to be through a certified training center There is no charge by the state for the course. Form BFST # DI4-1380 "Firefighter I Training Record – Application for Competency Examination" is required per firefighter to verify meeting the JPA/Performance Objectives. This is the current process.

Option 2: Personnel can utilize previously documented training to meet the training requirements in order to test. A certified instructor must approve each topic area listed on Form BFST # DI4-1380 as being at least equivalent. This also is no change, allowing volunteers to use their previous state or local training towards certification.

Option 3: When existing documentation is insufficient to verify equivalency in meeting the required performance objectives/JPR for a specific topic, a certified instructor may sign-off completion of those items using the Bureau approved forms after verifying the individual firefighter's knowledge and/or ability to perform the practical skill(s). Said forms must be maintained by the individual fire department, and BFST form# DI4-1380 completed verifying all of the objectives have been met in order to test. NEW (as of October)

Another concern expressed is about the passing rate for the Firefighter One examination. **Currently, the passing rate for the exam is roughly 80%**, actually over the norm for such certification processes. There is no cost to test, and there is regional and even local testing.

Watch the Division of State Fire Marshal webpage for hearing notices and more information as it is announced at <http://www.fldfs.com/SFM/> or to www.fsfc.ufl.edu "What's New".

The new Florida Firefighter Safety and Health page has sample SOPs and plans, including the required Comprehensive Florida Firefighter Safety and Health.



Get class announcements, notices of meetings and hearings, special notices, and other important information sent directly to your e-mail. Go to www.fsfc.ufl.edu "What's New" page and sign up for the "A-list". NOTE: the practice of "blast" faxing documents to fire departments ends very soon. Be sure to be on the "A-list"