



Utah Fire Service Certification Council

Meeting Agenda

November 20, 2024, at 10 a.m.

Utah Fire and Rescue Academy, Room 147

1. Certification Council meeting called to order, by Council Chair Scott Spencer

Meeting called to order by Council Chair Scott Spencer at 10:01 a.m.

2. Welcome council members and visitors, by Scott Spencer

Members in attendance: Scott Spencer, Ron Harris, TJ Brewer, John Evans, Rod Kearn, Krista Horting, Wade Snyder, Dave Olsen

Members online: Dave Youngberg, Ted Black (for the first 45 minutes), Merlin Spendlove, Chris Trevino

Member not in attendance: Jeremy Raymond

Guests: Marc MacElreath, Brad Wardle

3. Declaration of quorum, by Scott Spencer

Quorum declared

4. Approval of Certification Council meeting minutes held on September 18, 2024, by Scott Spencer

John Evans motioned to approve the minutes from September 18, 2024, and it was seconded by David Olsen. No one opposed, and the motion carried.

5. Approval of the November 20, 2024, Certification Council agenda, by Scott Spencer

TJ Brewer motioned to approve the agenda for November 20, 2024, and it was seconded by Wade Snyder. No one opposed, and the motion carried.

6. Report from Forestry Fire & State Lands, by Wade Snyder

Wade acknowledged that the wildland fire season is over. He wanted to make the council aware of some key vacancies: FMO in central Utah (Fred Johnson retired after 25+ years). There is a warden in Kane County Utah who promoted and left a vacancy. These vacancies are posted, and any help would be appreciated to fill them.

Wade's director has been extremely busy with the legislative interim session and has seen a lot of proposals around a lot of wildland-urban interface and insurance issues. Keep an eye on that.

Working with Jolene to get a spot at Winter Fire School to display. Rod Hammer made a nice dip tank. Encouraged all to come by the booth and take a look at it.

7. Report on testing, certification, failed skills, and upcoming exams (3 months), by Jennifer Lindley

Certification Report: On almost every certification level offered, there was at least one person certified. There were 1,043 certifications and 773 recertifications (a bit above average).

Failed Skills Report: An average report (some Inspector and Fire Officer as the majority, as well as Fire I and Pumper). The same stuff that has been missed in past (fire flow, formatting, etc.)

8. Report on Fire Prevention Board meeting, by Scott Spencer

The Fire Prevention Board meeting was last week, and it was really a brief meeting. Gave information about Certification Council activities. In response to Brett's question about passing information down with regard to ADO and wildland, Scott said that it is being passed down to everyone.

Wade stated that he is trying to get the word out also with regard to ADO and wildland being eligible to take the test for certification.

Then Director Wardle gave his report at the FPB meeting. They were going to take some action to replace Chief Olsen, but they tabled that and will look at it in a couple of months.

9. Discussion and motion to approve/review the following submitted portfolios, by Scott Spencer

a. Jessie McKenna (West Jordan), Officer II portfolio: Krista Horting

Krista stated that the portfolio looks great and is very thorough.

TJ Brewer motioned to approve Jessie McKenna's Officer II portfolio, and it was seconded by Krista Horting. No one opposed, and the motion carried.

b. Abigail Smith, Fire and Life Safety Educator portfolio: David Olsen

David stated Abigail did a fantastic job and she is eager to teach.

David Olsen made a motion to approve Abigail Smith's Fire and Life Safety Educator portfolio, and it was seconded by Rod Kearn and Krista Horting. No one opposed, and the motion carried.

c. Michael Jensen, Fire Officer II portfolio (needs to reviewed)

Krista Horting will review the Fire Officer II portfolio for Michael Jensen.

10. Discussion and motion regarding evolution examinations with additional 1–2 skills, by Jolene Chamberlain/Mike Phillips

Joan Aaron discussed with the group regarding Mike Phillips's discussion with Jolene regarding SW Tech. There are issues with candidates only practicing the evolutions, not all the skills in the training record. After discussion with Jolene Chamberlain, it was suggested that one way to prevent candidates from only studying the evolutions is to also include one or two additional skills (chosen randomly) with each Firefighter I or II evolution. This also includes Technical Rescue, because all Operations and Technician levels are team evolutions. The concern also relates to accreditation coming up. We may be asked regarding team evolutions and how we test the skills for each individual. This would solve that issue.

Two changes/updates:

1. Our **standards** need to include the language for the additional skill (with the evolution).

For the standards: see "Updates to standards with evolution examinations" (the highlighted sections). We've added "plus one skill for that level (chosen randomly)" and "plus one skill" beneath that.

2. Our **policies and procedures** need to include the changes.

For the policies and procedures, see Sections 2.48, 12.39, 12.40, and 12.41. The yellow sections are updated with the new wording. Hopefully this will make it more clear in our policies and procedures.

Jolene was hoping Chief Mike Phillips (of Cedar City) would be here today. He reached out to Jolene with concerns about Southwest Technical college and their RCA program. There are several others concerned as well. Chief Phillips has some concerns regarding the way they do their evolutions and the way they run their program, with evolutions versus individual skills. Mike senses that they have kind of memorized the evolution and put time on evolutions knowing that is what is tested. Chief Phillips senses that they are not spending a lot of time on individual skills, meaning that there are some chiefs from the St. George area that have hired candidates from this program and they are not proficient on the skills. They don't know how to do certain skills: hydrant, pump, put on SCBA, etc., as if they have never done

them before or have only done them once. The concern is they are not putting enough time on individual skills.

We would like to put a couple of individual skills on the test. It would be an evolution plus two individual skills. For example, for pumping: the hydrant skill and SCBA, but we could possibly pull other random skills.

Jolene wanted to know thoughts on adding two individual skills to the test, in addition to the evolution, just to make sure they are hitting them. Not only that, but Jolene would like council members to go and do a random walk-in to watch their training, to make sure they are putting in enough time. Pull a skill and ask a random student to do that skill, to analyze their level of training. Council members have the power to do that.

Jolene asked: How do you feel about adding two individual skills into the exam with the evolution scenario?

Krista Horting: That would make the test longer.

Rod Kearn: Are you going to eliminate one evolution (because it has two evolutions) in order to add the two individual skills?

Jolene: I don't think we would eliminate one evolution, but that is the discussion we can have.

Krista Horting: Donning PPE and their SCBA mask are already on the evolution. Hydrant is not on there.

Dave Olsen: Discharge of pump pressure is an area of struggle from a pumper test I recently did.

Jolene: This was from a Fire II test.

Chris Trevino: I hesitate to add something to a process that has existed for some time, just because of a lack of preparation on the other end. Can we provide them information? This will affect everyone if we add it. It will add time, and there would be pushback from others (RCA). It could be a preparation piece.

Jolene explained that Chief Phillips reached out to Adam Scott, who in turn reached out to those departments that hired his students. He recognized the concern and said he would try to fix it. Maybe honing in on individual skills so that the students get the time to do them. It was great that he reached out and recognized and somewhat apologized to the departments on behalf of the students hired.

Jolene wants to make sure non-affiliated programs are hitting on the individual skills and giving them enough time to not only do scenarios but also individual skills.

Chris Trevino loves the fact that RCAs are built on taking someone from the ground up to make them firefighters. He teaches at an RCA and he works with them a lot on skills. The recruit has to become better than the state standard requires so that they are squared away. He is willing to have a conversation with that group if that needs to happen. Andy Byrnes would also be a great resource to help with the school. He said that with their last hire, they took two students out of the UVU RCA. Typically, they will run them through an academy, but since that RCA has such strict standards, they did not need to. He understands the concern that exists. He is wondering if the students need more time to become proficient in the skills. Historically, we have moved from skill-based to evolution because those skills were covered in the evolution. That same principle still exists, in that they have to be prepared with those individual skills in the evolution. He is happy to help where he can.

Ron Harris is not sure if adding a skill or a couple of skills is the answer. He has the same concern with other places also and not just RCA programs. In the areas he has been, there has been a lot of emphasis on making sure they can pass the evolution and they are fairly lax on individual skills. He has been concerned about that for about year as he has seen it around the state. He is not sure this is the answer to solve the problem or not. This may need to be a main topic in an instructor and tester update.

Scott Spencer suggested that the Certification Council send a letter out to all the non-affiliated programs about the concern that has been brought to our attention. Scott also suggested that we send council members out to spot check.

Ron Harris thinks the letter needs to go to everyone, because he has been involved in training programs, not just with RCAs, where there are shortcomings.

Dave Olsen: Since it's a teaching environment and that is a paying student, are they turning heads when they see a student struggle? When you see the evaluations enough, you can see the weakest link as you run them through that process. I am curious as to a specific like hydrants. Is it the school's issue because they are a paying customer?

Ron Harris stated that is just one example. There are other deficiencies. There have been quite a few problems. Again, it is a concern he has had in other places and departments.

Jolene addressed Dave Olsen's questions "Is it the school's issue?" A student wrote a letter and made positive comments about the academy itself and the instructors. They had nothing bad to say about the program. The student wished they had been pressed into individual skills and given more time in those areas versus the scenarios.

Dave Olsen asked if all the different schools have a variance on hours.

Jolene: They do it within a semester. Andy Byrnes does it in 15 weeks, which is not a whole lot of time. Jolene asked Chris Trevino to respond to Dave Olsen's question with regard to time and the RCA.

Chris Trevino explained that there is a lot of repetition on a daily basis based on the skill being taught. The morning often begins with turnout drills (12 or more drills). Hydrants are done on skills days, where you have groups rotating between hydrants, car extraction, master stream, and other evolutions. It is not done just one time and then they are on their own. They rotate through the skills, and they are able to capture time practicing them all. The students are allowed to come in and practice skills on their own, although there is a handful of things they cannot practice on their own without an instructor present. The instructors make time for the recruits to practice those individual skills. There is a calendar that is sent out. Learning basic skills has to become a matter of muscle memory.

Jolene: My concern is that I don't want Southwest Tech to get a reputation about its training program. We want to make sure that what they produce are strong, efficient firefighters that can do the job. So, what I am hearing is that you don't recommend adding two individual skills to the exam but possibly sending out a letter from the council stating what these type of programs need to produce and hitting the individual skills a little harder based on a recommendation from students and comments from chiefs from that area.

Scott Spencer: Yes. I don't see a problem with sending council members down to look and check out their academy to help reinforce what is desired. I don't see a problem with pulling some students aside and asking them to perform some skills. This will help reinforce that we are serious, and we want them to turn out a good product.

Dave Olsen: There is a lot that depends on the student and they need to buy in on working hard and being proficient on these skills.

Dave Youngberg: RCAs can have a good product if we give direction on expectation. They have probably just tried to develop their program and as they looked at it, they have concentrated on evolutions instead of the entire thing. I like the idea of sending someone down who is heavily involved in Fire I and Fire II to help coach them in a more efficient way to run the academy. I can go down and help. I'm heavily involved in Fire I and Fire II.

Jolene appreciated Dave Youngberg's willingness to go down and help. When Jolene asked if the council members were okay with that, Scott Spencer said yes.

Rod Kearn: The evolution should not be a teaching moment. The most we should teach them about that evolution is marrying skills together. If they are proficient with those skills, they should be able to do that evolution. We spend two nights on an evolution. Everything else is spent on skills. When they practice the evolution, they are not learning anything new, though they may stumble a bit on marrying the skills together.

Chris Trevino: They have in-house testing, so they teach the skill then they test the skill in that realm, prior to certification testers coming out, which would provide some proficiency in the skills.

Jolene: I will reach out to Dave Youngberg and talk a little bit more and then we will have you go down and give Southwest Tech a spot check.

11. Discussion and motion on submitted petitions, by Joan Aaron

None

12. Review and discussion regarding the new certification fee structure, by Jolene Chamberlain

Jolene: The new certification fees will be implemented on January 1, 2025. We have been working on our database with regard to region and county designations, so they will be charged the proper amount. It is really not that much money. This is helping us cover costs. It is needed where certification has gone (development and evolution), and the new things that certification is doing.

13. Review, discussion, and motion to update ADO-Pumper standard to clarify skills testing wording (specifically cones and hitting the “base of a cone”), by David Olsen

Joan Aaron brought to the group that there one issue where two candidates ran over the base of a cone. One tester failed one, another tester passed the other. After review, we decided to fail both of them, for consistency. Now, to clarify in the standard, do we need to add that striking the “base of a cone” is also striking the cone? As a rough draft, we've added it into each section that mentions the cone

“Please note: *Striking the cone (any part of the cone, including the base)”

Joan Aaron pulled up the standard to show the council.

Dave Olsen explained that the candidates get nervous. When you go into the smaller areas a lot of departments share apparatus. He tries to ask the candidates that are testing: “Are you comfortable driving this apparatus?” because they may be driving someone else's that is shared. It is all about repetition like what was previous talked about. There is only so much time for a student to take it seriously and get to know their apparatus. There have been struggles with that. The candidates who fail are frustrated with themselves and embarrassed and they hurry to try to push through because they think it's an easy skill. He tries to do different things to help them out, such as giving them time before re-testing or having another tester do it if there is another tester there.

Joan suggested adding wording with regard to striking the cone so that there is no issue.

Dave Olsen said that from his testing experience, usually the driver doesn't realize they have hit the base of the cone until they see the far side, because they are trying to move around without hitting anything.

Joan: We already have the wording about striking the cone, but this would specify that striking the cone includes the base of the cone as well.

John Evans made a motion to change the wording, and it was seconded by TJ Brewer. No one opposed, and the motion carried.

14. Review, discussion, and motion to update the ADO-Pumper standard and training record to meet the NFPA accreditation requirements for ADO-Pumper.

a. New skills 11–19, to meet NFPA general requirements

Joan: This has to do with the Fire I prerequisite. The prerequisite was in place because on the correlation sheet for IFSAC, it had the requirement being met by the Fire I prerequisite. This would not fly on an accreditation site visit, because they are going to ask us what skill it is and question it is. So we updated our correlation sheets by taking questions from Fire I that we could reference to the ADO book. There is an appendix in the ADO book that references Fire I information. We took questions that meet that NFPA number (not a lot, maybe 20 questions). We took Fire I skills and put them in ADO-Pumper. Some of the Fire I skills are on the training record to be checked off prior to testing.

b. ADO-Pumper standard was updated with “or NWCG FFT1” as a prerequisite option

Joan Aaron explained prior to the September 18, 2024 Certification Council meeting, the ADO-Pumper standard required Firefighter I as a prerequisite, but is not required in the old or upcoming NFPA.

However, we took a deeper dive into the correlation sheets used for accreditation. The previous program manager had marked “requirement met in FF I” for the written and skills needed in ADO-Pumper.

With the accreditation site visit coming this spring, we need questions and skills that correlate to the JPRs required for ADO-Pumper.

- We have added current FF I questions that correlate to the ADO-Pumper book appendix or chapters.
- We have added current FF I skills that tie to the required JPRs on the ADO-Pumper correlation sheet.
- We've updated the ADO-Pumper standard and training records.

Joan Aaron pulled up the standard for the council.

Joan: This is the only way we could do it for accreditation. This will accommodate those in wildland who want to take pumper test. Skill 12 is only new one. The rest were pulled from Fire I.

Krista Horting: Can we change the wording of the skill’s title? It doesn’t reference an apparatus. The new title could say “demonstrates the ability to operate **an apparatus** at an emergency scene.”

Joan explained that we take the wording from NFPA and adapt the skill to accommodate, to pass accreditation.

Ron Harris: When will this be updated? Fire I is being updated, so that means the Fire I information plugged into ADO-Pumper will have to be reviewed and updated.

Joan: ADO-Pumper and Firefighter I will be reviewed and changed in July 2025.

TJ Brewer made a motion to approve the changes to ADO-Pumper and it was seconded by Rod Kearn. No one opposed, so the motion carried.

15. Review, discussion, and motion to update the new Fire Inspector standard after Pro Board reviewed and approved requirements for testing (available to test on January 1, 2025)

Joan Aaron pulled up the “INSPECTOR_SKILLS_24” to show the council (with added new skills indicated in yellow)

Scott Spencer discussed how Inspector I updated new skills. Pro Board had questions on how we would meet and measure the performance. We had to add or update skills to meet those requirements.

Skill 7a: Getting photos, means of egress, and then code references. Looking at scenario rather than something written down. They have to do a full inspection.

Skill 14: Given an elementary fire drill record. Concerned with looking for deficiencies, and documentation that the school is efficient in fire drills. They need to find deficiencies if there are any. We don’t follow state amendments. This makes it more realistic.

Skill 15: Fire apparatus access roads. Give information given photos. They must determine from the width of the road if the egress is okay and allows for turning around and such (so they need width, height, if traveling more than 150 feet in one direction, the need to turn around, etc.).

Dave Olsen: How is the skill answered? Portables are added in some cases, especially with schools. This is a great and realistic skill.

Skills 18: Interior finishes in classrooms: what’s allowed and what’s not. Given pictures, look at them and determine if it’s up to code or not (fabrics, artwork, etc.). All of this is in Chapter 8. Artwork is okay on

walls, but putting something away from walls and ceilings is a violation (it's 3D, which provides more fuel loading). Other issues: exit sign not visible and hard-to-see exit doors. More information is given while they are looking at it.

Skill 20: For permits, more in-depth on what the process is to get a permit and what the code references are. An application for the permit is given to the tester. Does the application meet all the requirements or is something missing? They have to determine if it meets code. It gives more meat to the skill.

Dave Olsen: Are we reinforcing that we are going off IFC?

Scott Spencer: We are only using IFC as the reference, not following any city ordinances or state amendments. We are only following what the fire code has, nothing from outside it. With these changes, we will meet Pro Board requirements. Pro Board approved these changes.

Dave Olsen made a motion to approve the changes for the Fire Inspector skills and Rod Kearn seconded. No one opposed, so the motion carried.

16. Review and discussion regarding update to each standard to include the new fee structure

Joan Aaron discussed with Council that the exams fees are going into effect January 1, 2025 and that there is an example included in your documents of the "Changes to Exam Fees" flyer sent out to chiefs, and the update made to each standard in its appendix.

Joan: Wording about the fees was added to every standard. On the back of each standard, it says "See appendix." If anyone does not have the fees flyer, it is in every standard and posted on UFRA's website. All exams are billed, unless students come into UFRA in person to take a written exam. We are doing free Friday testing (online) at UFRA. If the written exam is taken the same day as the skills, the skills fee will be waived. We are not going to charge them for both the written and skills exams. For department testers that want to test the written and then test the skills on a separate day, we will charge for the written exam and waive the skills fee. If we have to send a tester out for onesies and twosies, it is going to cost the departments. If they are piling up tests, we will waive skills. They will only be billed for the written exam. For large groups, we will make a determination on a case-by-case basis.

Ron Harris: If a department tester does a written test for their department, will the fees still apply?

Joan: There will be a charge for the written test, but the skills fee will be waived.

Sharon: The written test will always be billed. At the time you do the skills test, that is when the fee will be waived.

Scott Spencer: So whether you do the written and skills test on the same day or separate days, the skills fee will be waived, because a department tester tested the written.

17. Review, discussion, and motion to update the Fire Officer standard for levels II, III, IV

Joan Aaron explained that The Officer II portfolio is missing a few items that need to be addressed for accreditation.

Joan pulled up the document showing the standards with changes for the council to see.

Joan: This has to do with accreditation. We had to add wording to the portfolio from the NFPA standard. Officer II, III, and IV are portfolios. The standard specified methods of communication, solving problems, increasing teamwork, etc. The correlation sheet specifies: How are you communicating this? We added wording describing the methods of how you will communicate it. A lot of the issues were about evaluation, communication, implementation, investigation, etc.

Krista Horting made a motion to approve the changes for the Fire Officer Portfolio II, III, and IV, and John Evans seconded. No one opposed, so the motion carried.

18. Review, discussion, and motion to approve an update to the Policies and Procedures Manual

a. "Professional" language including "profanity" updated in section 14.1

Joan explained that we had an incident with one of our testers and we got word back from three students. Foul language was used by tester.

Students wrote that the tester was egotistical, acting like he was better than them, and threw out a few "F" bombs. Jolene called Mike Shurtz and asked him to tell her what happened. Mike said the assistant tester acted inappropriately. The students did decide to write in and explain their experience. Jolene confirmed that the assistant tester was way beyond professionalism and did not represent UFRA well. Jolene asked if there should be disciplinary action from the council.

Jolene: The lead tester told the tester he was not acting appropriately.

The group emphasized that we are supposed to act professionally and the tester needs to know that this behavior is not going to be accepted or tolerated by UFRA.

Scott Spencer: For someone to act like that, there needs to be a suspension or termination. We should not act like that at all. For most of them, we suspend for one year.

Joan pulled up the Policy and Procedures Manual for reference. Section 20 was looked at by the council. Joan said we could add the profanity wording to 14.1, because it is not discussed directly.

John Evans made a motion to suspend the tester from testing, and Rod Kearn seconded that motion.

Further Discussion:

TJ Brewer asked if this is the type of behavior that we want to tolerate and allow to come back after one year.

Scott Spencer explained that we can re-evaluate in a year.

Rod Kearn suggested evaluating after a year and putting them on probation because then we have done our due diligence.

Krista Horting asked if anyone from UFRA has had a conversation with the tester saying you cannot act like this.

Joan explained that as far as UVU goes, we can terminate adjuncts at any time, no questions asked. They are treated differently than a full-time staff member and are not protected.

TJ Brewer asked if there was a way to keep the tester working on the training side as someone who could still represent UFRA.

Joan confirmed that we do not have any say when it comes to the training side.

Jolene said that we can let Marc McElreath know what the council has decided about one of our testers.

Scott Spencer confirmed that training is a different group.

TJ Brewer stated that there is a possibility that they (training) could allow him to keep working on the training side and someone representing UFRA. They wouldn't fire him on the training side.

Jolene: If there is not an issue on the training side, they won't do anything.

TJ Brewer stated that if we wanted to do our due diligence, we need to do an investigation.

Jolene did a minor investigation already with Mike Shurtz (the lead).

John Evans asked if this was the first time.

Jolene: With the testing side, this was the first time.

Krista Horting said that we need to let the training side know that we have suspended him and the reasons why, just letting them know so that they are aware.

After this discussion Scott Spencer asked for a motion to suspend and after the one year the Certification Council will re-evaluate.

Dave Olsen said there should be something on the student side also.

Jolene said that the tester was threatening to fail them all, and it was very inappropriate.

John Evans made a motion to suspend the tester from testing and Rod Kearn seconded that motion. One council member (TJ Brewer), opposed the motion, but the motion carried.

Ron Harris: Professional manner should be taught.

Krista Horting: Leave the wording open.

Jolene: Put it in tester training.

b. Fees wording updated in Policies and Procedures, to be posted January 1, 2025

Joan: The new fees go into effect on January 1, 2025.

19. New Business, by Scott Spencer

a. Bridgerland Technical College

An accreditation site visit is scheduled for December 5 at 10 a.m. Jolene said Chief Evans and Chief Olsen are going down to do validation. Jolene and Sarah said their application looked great. It is anticipated that it will be a great site visit.

b. Public Information Officer Standard: now posted and available to test on January 1

c. UFRA Portal, by Jolene Chamberlain

Jolene: The Lookup system is down. UVU put together a committee that had to go through some hoops to put us on a high priority list. We were approved. There had to be security clearance on the programs we use (FileMaker, Smartsheet, Acadis). Applications have to be filled out to verify that they are secure software programs. Jolene knows they have reached out to two. Once all three are contacted and it is known that it is secure, the portal will start to be developed. The portal is for anyone who has any business with UFRA. Jolene is hoping she gets good news today in her meeting at 3:30.

Jolene explained that the info from the portal will tie into FileMaker and Smartsheet. Acadis is down the road. This portal will be able to serve customers in a highly functioning way.

d. Updates of online testing, by Joan Aaron

Joan Aaron discussed that we are offering Free Friday online testing at UFRA. The Friday online exam form is on UFRA's website. There are two time slots available: 8:30 and 12:30. There are 34 computers, plus iPads, so we could probably do 40 people at one time.

e. Certification personnel news, by Joan Aaron

Joan announced that this may be her last Certification Council meeting. She is moving to New York. Her last day in the office is December 5.

• Holiday closures

Joan Aaron explained that the holidays are near. The Certification Office will be closed on the dates below. We've given this notice in the chief's notes. If you have scheduled exams for any of those dates, we are not open to help you if problems arise. Please schedule around those dates. Thank you!

- November 28–29
- December 24–January 1
- January 20

20. Old Business – Scott Spencer

None

21. The next Certification Council meeting will be on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at UFRA

Rod Kearn made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Dave Olsen seconded. No one opposed, and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:24.