



Utah Fire Service Certification Council

Meeting Minutes July 16, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Held at UFRA, 3131 Mike Jense Pkwy., Provo

1. **Certification Council meeting called to order, by Council Chair Scott Spencer**
The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.
2. **Welcome council members and visitors, by Scott Spencer**
In attendance: Scott Spencer, Ron Harris, Merlin Spendlove, Wade Snyder, Michael Slater, Jeremy Raymond, Krista Horting, John Evans, Rodney Kearl, Dave Youngberg, Ted Black
Attended online: Chris Trevino
Absent: TJ Brewer
Guests: Davis Technical College representatives, Jared Sholly
3. **Declaration of quorum, by Scott Spencer**
Scott Spencer declared a quorum.
4. **Approval of Certification Council meeting minutes from May 21, 2025, by Scott Spencer**
Ron Harris motioned to approve the May 21, 2025 meeting minutes, and Jeremy Raymond seconded the motion. The motion carried.
5. **Approval of July 16, 2025 Certification Council agenda, by Scott Spencer**
Rod Kearl motioned to approve July meeting agenda, and Merlin Spendlove seconded the motion. The motion carried.
6. **Recognition of Merlin Spendlove, Certification Council Member, by Jolene Chamberlain**
Merlin Spendlove from Hurricane Valley Fire SSD served on the Certification Council from September 2009 to July 2025. Brad Wardle presented him with a recognition award and certificate for his 16 years of service on the Certification Council.
Merlin said that it has been fun being on the council and he has loved it, especially getting to see all the changes that have been made. He is thankful he got to do it.
7. **Reaccreditation of Davis Technical College, by Jolene Chamberlain**
Chief John Evans and Chief Rod Kearl shared how impressed the reaccreditation team was with the Davis Technical College training program. Both Evans and Kearl left the site visit a little jealous. Jolene Chamberlain and Brad Wardle shared their congratulations and presented a reaccreditation certificate to Jared Sholly and the staff members from Davis Technical College.
8. **UFRA update, by Brad Wardle**
Brad announced some UFRA organizational changes. UFRA has created a Health & Wellness Committee that Jolene Chamberlain will head up. This will include the Utah Firefighter Cancer Initiative, total wellness, and training opportunities. UFRA has consolidated Logistics, Training, and Certification divisions to be led by Deputy Director Marc McElreath. Brad asked that we thank Jolene for the work she has done in Certification.
Brad offered congratulations to Michael Slater as the new fire chief at Ogden City Fire.

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

Scott Spencer reported that at the Fire Prevention Board meeting he updated the board on information from the May Certification Council meeting. Director Wardle gave the Fire Prevention Board updates about UFRA and the cancer initiative.

Ted Black reported on legislation impacting schools. VDA information in every school, based on the legislation. There will likely be legislation on CO₂ issues. Rolling out NERIS in November 2025. Will not know the level of impact until NERIS rolls out. The State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) is working to collect all data for the past 10 years from the old system, to be stored at the SFMO.

Nya from the SFMO is sending chiefs information regarding playing in the dummy portal.

10. Proposal from State Fire Marshal's Office regarding its "dept." status, by Scott Spencer

Ted Black is requesting a policy change that would designate the State Fire Marshal's Office as a fire department so they can recertify employees in levels other than the approved levels of Hazardous Materials Awareness, Hazardous Materials Operations, Hazardous Materials Technician, Inspector, and Fire Investigator.

The challenge is when hiring someone out of the field they may have several certifications. Their time in the office maybe an entire career or five years, and they would like to keep their certifications. The State Fire Marshal's Office is listed as a fire department with the State of Utah and it has functioned as one once, during the Olympics.

The employee that comes to work in the SFMO is punished, in a way, in that they are not allowed to keep up ADO and Wildland certifications, because they are not allowed to recertify in those levels. If the employee wants to leave, they would have expired certifications. Ted compared it to someone taking an administrative position within a fire department. They would have a similar involvement in those early certifications.

Ted is hoping to make a policy change to allow his office to recertify his people in the areas they can recertify in, so they can hold onto their certifications.

A Certification Council member asked if we need to change the designation of the SFMO from non-affiliated to affiliated so they can recertify in all the levels.

Jolene responded that it's about maintaining your training in the other levels. The pathway is to maintain your affiliation with a fire department so that you can maintain your training on the other levels and that department can request recertification for those levels that the SFMO cannot. There has been a precedent set by this council.

Ted said he understands that, but explained that the SFMO is essentially asking people to take on a second job.

Jolene said, "No, it's training hours and it would allow them to keep their certifications current."

Krista Horting asked if they have a record of the SFMO's employees' training through like Target Solutions.

Scott Spencer said that the SFMO goes to a lot of training.

Ted Black agreed and said they have to do all the law enforcement training, investigator training, and fire training. Ted said that the training they do should allow them to stay certified in FF I and II because they participate in live fire scenes all the time. They are there as the fire investigator, which allows them to train on those same skills. Ted does not want his guys to lose their certs. At a minimum, he wants to add FF I and II. They do not do anything with ADO training or Wildland training but would like to maybe put those certifications on hold if they are at the SFMO.

Chief John Evans recommended that we will have to have X amount of hours in certain areas. If you are going to keep certifications, you will have to have a certain amount of hours to keep those certifications. We may need to make a wholesale change. You can make it broad enough, but in certain areas you will need to have X amount of training in those areas to maintain those certifications.

Trudy has some experience with a person who works at the SFMO that decided, because he wants to maintain his certifications, to stay affiliated with a fire department.

Scott Spencer asked what the policies say about what a “fire department” is. Scott suggested tabling this and going more in depth into the policies.

Sarah read Section 26.3 from the UFSCS Policies and Procedures, which defines a “fire department.”

Ted Black said he is not looking for a sneaky way to get in the back door; he wants it to be done right. He said they don’t fight fire or do aerial operations, but they do some aspects of FF I and II. He wants it to be fair to his guys.

Mike Slater said the people in the office made a personal decision. He gave an example of a paramedic. They lose their certification when they stop practicing paramedicine. He cautioned the council and said what we do for one we have to do for all.

After the discussion among council members, Ted Black motioned to table this agenda item for the next council meeting, suggesting that a committee be created with 2–3 council members to discuss options. Mike Slater seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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

Wade Snyder reported on the following existing fires:

- **Monroe Fire:** Great Basin Team 3 is there. 103 secondary structures are threatened. Lost 3 buildings and 3 others are threatened. They are seeing extreme fire behavior out there.
- **Deer Creek Fire** (San Juan County): This is being led by Great Basin Team 4. The fire started on July 10 and on the 12th, they had a firenado. It created a tornado that damaged buildings and an engine. Nontypical conditions. The fire has moved into Colorado a couple of miles.
- **Forsyth Fire** (Pine Valley): It is winding down. 80% containment. Looking to transition back to a type III organization.
- **Buckboard Fire** (Pocatello, ID valley): This fire is being watched.
- **White Sage Fire:** It is burning on the Arizona border, north of the Dragon Nata Fire in the Grand Canyon that took out the Grand Canyon North Lodge and several other buildings.

Stage 1 restrictions are in place now statewide, with fuel advisories in the southern part of the state. This may change to stage II advisories.

The Great Plains Compact is being utilized, which allows us to bring in resources directly from other states and bill each other directly at favorable rates.

Four North Dakota engines are coming in today with a task force leader. We are leveraging state task forces to prepare for these conditions.

House Bill 48, by House Representative Snyder, passed this last year. They called it the WUE bill (wildland-urban Interface.) The training standard will come into place to help identify the level of exposure for a rural structure. Over time, this council may be able to help with the training for this system. They may possibly want to work with UFRA to help accomplish this training. It’s about reducing risk to the wildland-urban interface. There are about 90,000 structures within the WUE area. There will be a fee associated with the triage process and identity tools and techniques that will help reduce their fees. This was initially going to impact insurance companies. This is a big issue that they are trying to get ahead of. There will be more to come in the next year or so. Wade will keep us posted on meeting the goal of reducing the risk.

Merlin asked about the cause of the Monroe Fire. Wade said it was unknown but that it started pretty high up.

Scott Spencer asked about the structures in BLM and who was going to evaluate them. Wade said that their focus was going to be private land not federal land, but it is on their radar.

Wade said that there will be a distinction between wildland interface and urban interface.

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

Certification:

Total recertifications from March–May 2025: 1,745

Total certifications issued from March–May 2025: 639

Total exams in March 2025: 958

Total exams in April 2025: 1,560

Total exams in May 2025: 1,247

Total students tested in March 2025: 958

Total students tested in April 2025: 1,560

Total students tested in May 2025: 1,429

Failed Skills:

ADO Pumper: Struck cones

Fire Inspector: Code explanation, IFC references, Calculations, etc.

Officer I: Fire flow calculation, memo format, formula left blank, incident priorities, etc.

Mike Slater asked if it is typical for students to miss fire flow. Scott said that it is the most missed skill. Ron Harris asked if an officer committee is needed to review what is being trained and what is being tested. Sarah is working with an instructor/tester that will review the testing skills. Mike Slater said there may be some generational issues with math because Excel does the math for them.

Upcoming Test Sites:

Jennifer mentioned that a hard copy is in their packet and offered to send an update every month via email. Sarah asked that everyone go to at least one test site to evaluate so that we are making sure they are following our policies.

Krista asked if they can do an evaluation on a test they are proctoring and Sarah responded, “No, it has to be a test that you are not proctoring.”

13. Updates on online testing, by Trudy Meister

Trudy presented the following statistics for free Friday testing at UFRA:

- In June there were 9 candidates and 10 exams.
- In July there were 3 candidates and 3 exams (Machinery Awareness & ADO Pumper).

Trudy also presented the numbers for online exams by region from last fiscal year (July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025).

- Northern region: 226 exams with 729 participants
- Central region: 43 exams with 83 participants
- Southern region: 145 exams with 416 participants

14. Discussion and motion to approve/review submitted portfolios, by Scott Spencer

- Holly Smith, Fire Officer II portfolio, by Jeremy Raymond
Jeremy Raymond reviewed the portfolio and recommended approval. Rod Kearl motioned to approve. Merlin Spendlove seconded. The motion passed.
- Shaun Smith, Fire Officer II portfolio, by John Evans
John Evans reviewed the portfolio and recommended approval. Ron Harris motioned to approve. Dave Youngberg seconded. The motion passed.
- Bryan Fawcett, Fire Officer II Portfolio, by Chris Trevino
Chris Trevino reviewed the portfolio and recommended approval. Jeremy Raymond motioned to approve. Krista Horting seconded. The motion passed.
- Embret Fossum, Fire Officer IV portfolio, by Krista Horting
Krista Horting reviewed the portfolio and said it looks good. Missing a signature page, which she has requested to be sent.
Merlin Spendlove motioned to approve upon receipt of signature page. John Evans seconded. The motion passed.

- Blair Marshal, Fire Officer II portfolio: needs to be reviewed
Krista Horting offered to review the portfolio.

15. Discussion and motion on submitted petitions, by Sarah Head

Isaac G. McKean, Draper City Fire

- An email was sent on May 23 to Anders Pritchard, the training officer at Draper. He was informed that discussion of his petition was tabled until the council received military training records (as mentioned in his letter), and that the next council meeting would be in July. Training records were received that filled the gap while he was in the military.
- Krista Horting motioned to update his certifications based on receipt of his training records. Jeremy Raymond seconded. The motion passed.

Aaron Roane, Washington Terrace Fire Department

- Aaron Roane has been a member in good standing with the Washington Terrace Fire Department since 2016.
- In 2020, Aaron's certifications were not renewed, an admin oversight during the height of COVID-19 (per the chief).
- Aaron was promoted to captain in 2024.
- Aaron's statement said that he has consistently worked 120 hours a month since 2016, and he listed all the classes and trainings he has received from the department during that time.
- A training record has been submitted with dates from 1/2/2017 to present, but no hours are listed on the training record.
- Ron Harris motioned to update the certifications. Ted Black seconded. The motion passed.

16. Discussion and motion on reciprocity, by Sarah Head and Trudy Meister

Currently we issue reciprocity if a request comes in with an IFSAC or Pro Board seal. We do not look at our prerequisites. For example, if someone comes from another state with ADO Pumper, we will issue the reciprocity without confirming they have Firefighter I.

We have had certifications processed for reciprocity where a basic level was not met but later the candidate entered testing in Utah to complete the prerequisites.

Do we continue to issue the reciprocity before candidates meet the prerequisites or make them meet the prerequisites before issuing the reciprocity? Sarah pulled up Section 23 of the Policies and Procedures for the council to see.

Sharon suggested that we issue reciprocity but let them know they will have to take the Utah test to meet other prerequisites prior to any other certifications being issued.

Ted asked if we would have to change the policy if we do not issue reciprocity. He suggested that it be explained to them that they will not be able to test at any other levels until they meet state standards. He would hesitate to change the policy because the responsibility lies with the individual and the department. He suggested that we not take on problems that are not ours. We are not in the business of fixing other people's problems.

Krista suggested that we send a letter to the candidate and training officer when issuing reciprocity.

It was determined to continue following policy, issuing reciprocity for qualifying requests while informing departments of discrepancies, when applicable. Each department is responsible for meeting prerequisites before new certifications are issued. No motion was needed.

17. New business, by Scott Spencer

- Update on IFSAC and Pro Board site visits to UFRA, by Sarah Head

When IFSAC left at the end of May, there were 27 levels to fix. Sarah has submitted all levels for evaluation by the site team and is waiting to hear back on Hazardous Materials Operations, Fire and Life Safety Educator I and II portfolio only, PIO portfolio only, and Structural Collapse Awareness, Operations, and Technician. There is an issue with Fire Inspector, and we need to start over with this level. There is a hold on all testing of this level until it is updated and approved.

Pro Board visited at the beginning of June, and Sarah has been working through some of their fixes. The most time-consuming levels will be those with portfolios associated with them. Our portfolios do not match Pro Board's definition of portfolios. A grading rubric needs to be created for portfolios. We will need help. Volunteers to help create the rubric would be appreciated.

- Marc McElreath mentioned issues arising about the increased testing fees. Information has been sent several times but not recognized until invoices were received. We are open to making minimal changes but will not stop billing for testing. We will gather feedback and then review. Anyone with concerns can submit them to Sarah Head. Marc mentioned that there is a fee waiver and those interested need to contact Jolene for the application. Departments passing the payment onto the firefighter who has to take a second or third attempt has to be worked out with the employee, but we (UFRA) will still be billing the department. This will be on the agenda for September's Certification Council meeting. Marc will mention it at the next state chiefs' meeting. Ted mentioned that Davis County thought the fee was more than the cost. Ted said that if we could justify the fee to Davis County, it may be accepted. There was a group from the Certification Council (Ron Harris and John Evans were part of it) that met with Jolene and did a deep dive into the cost of testing which would justify the fees that are being charged.
- Marc also mentioned that he would like all certification testing to move to online—and possibly using testing centers (for example, for EMT testing).

18. Old business, by Scott Spencer

Test site visits, by Sarah Head

- Just a reminder that we need help doing the site visit evaluations for tests that are happening in your area or near you. Please try to attend at least one test in your area and fill out the survey by scanning the QR code.
- We were unable to do site evaluations in the month of June due to the accreditation site visits, and we had no evaluations submitted for June. We need to follow our policies.

19. The next Certification Council meeting will be on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at UFRA

Ted Black motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ron Harris seconded. The meeting was adjourned at noon.