



Utah Fire Service Certification Council Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2026 - 10 am

Located at UFRA
3131 Mike Jense Pkwy.
Provo, UT 84601

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

Council Members in Attendance: Michael Slater, Ted Black

Online: Scott Spencer, Ron Harris, Chris Trevino, Rodney Kearn, Matthew Evans, TJ Brewer, David Youngberg, Krista Horting

Excused: Wade Snyder, John Evans, Jeremy Raymond

UFRA Staff in Attendance: Brad Wardle, Marc McElreath, Sarah Head, Trudy Meister, Sharon Stokes

Online: Jennifer Lindley, Emma Scott

2. Welcome council members and visitors - Scott Spencer

Meeting called to order at 10:00 am.

3. Declaration of quorum - Scott Spencer

4. Approval of Certification Council meeting minutes held on November 19, 2025 - Scott Spencer

TJ Brewer motioned to approve the Certification Council meeting minutes held on November 19, 2025. Rod Kearn seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5. Approval of January 14, 2026 Certification Council agenda - Scott Spencer

Chris Trevino motioned to approve the January 14, 2026 Certification Council agenda. Rod Kearn seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

6. Report on Fire Prevention Board Meeting - Scott Spencer

Scott Spencer reported on the Certification Council agenda topics from November 2025. Director Brad Wardle gave a presentation about the UFRA reaccreditation with Pro Board and IFSAC. Ted Black spoke about running bills on all the codes this year; building, mechanical, etc. Fire Code is run separately. There is another bill that recommends the adoption of the Wildland Interface Code. Other bills such as regulating CO2 systems with carbonation are being presented to the Legislature with regards to the danger.

7. Certification Fees - Marc McElreath

Marc McElreath shared that we have been reviewing the fee schedule internally. Essentially, the fees are the same. What we heard from several departments was the desire for a discount when using a department tester. When fees initially came out, many department budgets were already set. We had one issue presented and a department was granted a fee waiver based on their situation. There is a fee waiver request available on the UFRA Certification website.

Key changes:

- A \$10.00 fee will be charged for all levels of written exam if a department tester is used for written exams. The written exam fee will be waived on the first attempt if taken on the same day as the skills test.
- The Reciprocity fee will be \$20.00 per certification with a maximum charge of \$200.00.
- The No Show fee, per exam, is \$10.00 unless it is due to operational circumstances. This applies to all exams. The No Show fee can be waived if approved by the Certification Program Manager.
- The new fee document will be updated on our website. Any fee waiver request needs to be submitted prior to testing.

Krista Horting said thank you for the changes. Scott Spencer also mentioned it is a good update and should help soothe and ease the changes.

Brad Wardle mentioned the consternation among the fire service. He asked council members to help get the word out and help explain that the fees go back into the program and the goal is not to gouge anyone.

Jennifer Lindley wants to be sure training officers and chiefs are aware of the No Show fees prior to the test date since that is brand new.

No motion is needed for these changes.

8. Report from Forestry, Fire & State Lands - Wade Snyder

Sarah reported on behalf of Wade. Wade will be presenting proposition HB48 at the State Chiefs meeting next week in St. George, UT and will have a booth at Winter Fire School, January 23-24, 2026.

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

Certification Report:

The total for certifications is 447 which is lower compared to previous months. We think this is due to the new paper testing process which delayed returning test scores. This process has been discontinued.

Exam requests increased Sept – Nov. This will lead to more certifications in coming months.

Failed Skills:

A couple Fire Inspector and several Officer I failed skills are listed in the report. Council members reviewed the exam results, and which skills are being missed. Certification Specialists have been helping explain things to training officers for ways to better prepare for a 2nd attempt for the Officer test by directing them to the standard and Appendix A.

Only a handful of people wanted to receive the Utah Fire Inspector Certificate of Completion. There have been a few that have certified at this level.

Rod Kearl has had quite a few fails on skill #13 for Officer I and has taken a lot of heat for it. Rod mentioned the NFPA reference on skill 13 is incorrect. Sarah will double check the reference but mentioned that both IFSAC and Pro Board went through the test banks and looked at the NFPA reference.

Mike Slater finds it interesting that candidates are continually failing the memo. Sarah responded that skill 4/5 candidates mix up or combine the memo and letter format. Marc McElreath said Officer instructors met to discuss training. Jason Earl will be making some changes to the training to better clarify the difference between a memo and letter. Currently candidates need to hand write this portion of the test. UFRA will allow online testing for this portion of the Officer skill exam in the near future.

Krista mentioned that the first class with the new assignments will be heavy in letter formatting instead of memo. The first class will be in Southern Utah and the other will be in Salem. Matt Evans reviewed with the Hurricane and St. George group after their first attempt. The whole group passed on the second attempt. Confusion was in the way their assignments were worded and he provided a quick explanation with the candidates.

Upcoming tests are now listed on the website. This allows council members to see upcoming exam dates and locations to help plan site visits. It will be updated twice a month.

10. Updates of online testing - Trudy Meister

Free Friday Testing:

December 5th - 4 candidates tested with 5 scheduled exams

December 19th - 5 Candidates tested with 6 scheduled exams

January 9th - 12 Candidates tested with 16 scheduled exams

February already has 20 people scheduled for Free Friday testing.

The Certification Division has relaxed the 30-day rule of sending a test request for Free Friday but are still asking for 2 weeks' notice so they are able to prepare for the exams.

11. Discussion and motion to approve/review the following submitted portfolios - Scott Spencer

- a. Ryan D'Ambrosio- Dammeron Valley Fire & Rescue - Officer II - Reviewed by Chris Trevino
Chris Trevino says the portfolio meets the minimum criteria and recommends issuing the certification.

Chris Trevino motioned to approve the Officer II certification for Ryan D'Ambrosio. Matt Evans seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

- b. Zack Summe r- West Jordan Fire Department - Officer II - Needs to be reviewed. Mike Slater will review this portfolio.
- c. Robert Stephens - Layton City Fire Department - Officer II - Needs to be reviewed Matt Evans will review this portfolio.

12. Discussion and motion on submitted petitions - Sarah Head

- a. Nick Christensen - North View Fire Department - Officer I
We tabled this from the November Certification Council meeting due to waiting on receiving training records. Sarah spoke with Tom on Jan. 5th with regards to providing training records and not total hours. Tabled until documentation is received as not all the information has been submitted.
- b. Scott Caldwell - Tooele City Fire Department - Hazardous Materials Awareness
Scott Caldwell passed Hazardous Materials Awareness exam in May 2015, and the certification was never requested. It sounds like there was some attrition in the department and that the certification was never requested. Sarah Head received and reviewed training records from 2015 to current.

Department failed to request the certification. At that time there was only a written exam for HazMat Awareness.

Ted mentioned that Scott tested ten years ago. He believes Scott should take the class again. We should not set precedent to award certifications ten years later. TJ mentioned that we have approved and set precedence on approving these in the past if training hours are submitted. Krista mentioned that it is the training officers' job to request the certification. Mike mentioned that this candidate did not do anything wrong, it falls on the training officer. Krista mentioned that the new portal will help alleviate these issues in the future. Ron mentioned that Tooele gets new chiefs every so many years, it is short term. Ted believes that the Chief is voted in every year or every other year. Jenn mentioned that Sean Loth was the training officer for around 6 years. Ted asked if we should go beyond one certification cycle and should we set a policy for this? We would be diluting the value of certification. The individual should be responsible for their own certifications; you cannot blame this on the training officer. Scott also tested Hazardous Materials Operations, Firefighter I & II in 2015 and failed the written exams for each level. Ted asked if Scott had any other certifications. Sarah said HazMat awareness is the prerequisite for all certifications. TJ mentioned that it does not look like he missed a training and he is wondering how accurate that is.

TJ Brewer motioned to deny this request. Mike Slater seconded the motion. The motion was approved. No one opposed.

- c. Jared Haas - Spanish Fork Fire Department - Officer I
Jared Haas initially entered the Fire Officer I testing process in April 2019 upon completing a class that he received a certificate of completion and credit for through UVU. He passed the written exam and skills at the time and certification was not granted because he did not have his Instructor I prerequisite. Jared received Instructor I in 2024 which is after the Officer I 2019 scores lapsed. His test scores expired and he re-entered the Officer I testing process in June 2024 and passed the skills test and failed the written.

He re-entered the testing processing in October 2025 after the one-year time frame and failed to pass the written and skills exams. Per policy, he would have to re-enter the testing process again for both written and skills exams. He is petitioning to go back to when he passed both the written and skills exams in 2019.

Mike said he put the cart before the horse, that is his fault. Ted said he had a year to take and get instructor. Krista said there is more to this and he needs to follow the rules as a company officer. Jared had 3 years to take and pass the Instructor I class and exams before the Officer I scores expired in April 2022.

Mike Slater motioned to deny the request. TJ Brewer seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

13. Accredited Firefighter Academy Training Program Application received from Dixie Technical College - Sarah Head

UFRA received a new RCA application from Dixie Technical College in St. George. They would like us to visit either March 25th or May 4th. We need two council representatives to go with Marc McElreath and Sarah Head to review and evaluate the academy.

Volunteers:

TJ Brewer can help May 4

Scott Spencer either day

Ron Harris either day

Matt Evans March 25

We will reach out to those who volunteered to schedule a date.

14. Fire Inspector - Scott Spencer

Fire Inspector was approved in December 2025. We completely updated the written test bank for the new book, 9th edition, and tweaked the skills to meet the new NFPA standard.

Scott shared that the team worked diligently on updating questions and skills we had already. There were not as many skills before. Now there are 21 skills in the test bank. The skills test bank needed new plan review questions and new graphics.

Both IFSAC and The Pro Board have approved this level. UFRA Training is working on updating the PowerPoints to decrease the number of slides. They are hoping to keep the same amount of training days. Once the new coursework is completed, we will begin testing Fire Inspector.

Anyone who started testing prior to this edition will need to begin the testing process again as a first attempt. A few people didn't care about the accreditation process and only wanted a completion certificate. They were issued the Utah Fire Inspector Certificate, not accredited.

15. New Business - Scott Spencer

- a. Council input - Feasibility of electronic documents - i.e. agenda, etc. - Marc McElreath**

A lot of work takes place to prepare a printed packet for Certification Council meetings. We would like to share documents electronically and would be willing to provide a tablet that could be used to access documents during the meetings, if needed.

Would the council be willing to move to sharing all meeting documents electronically? Members can use their own device or a UFRA provided device.

Mike and Scott said they like the idea of electronic documents.

Ron liked the idea of going electronic and does not need an I-Pad to do his cert. council job.

The Council agreed to use electronic documents for future Certification Council meetings. More information will be sent to council members in February.

Note of Information: Gary Kilgore retired from full time at UFRA and has been helping us on a temporary basis with curriculum development. Gary will now be officially retired from his part time position as of February 1, 2026.

b. Duchesne Pilot test with personal computers - Jeremy Raymond

Sarah Head reported for Jeremy Raymond. Sarah and Trudy Meister observed a written exam using personal devices for testing at Duchesne. Candidates downloaded the Questionmark Secure browser. The only problem encountered was when 4 candidates arrived without their personal device. In the future, department computers could be used as backup, if needed. Testing proceeded smoothly.

Marc McElreath reported that other academies are successfully testing this way. This removes the need to purchase and store hundreds of tablets for testing online. UFRA will still provide a tester to monitor the exams and 2 testers for larger groups. We will be testing all written exams online in the future. No phones are allowed for testing.

c. Discussion on Trench Rescue Technician Team Roles - Sarah Head

Sarah Head received an email from Bryan Davies and Wade Rigby regarding the Trench Rescue Technician level test. Essentially, they want to increase the team size to be 15 people for a trench test. Currently the team size is set at 10-12 people. Sarah has observed tests with 13 people and it seemed excessive. Understanding that in a true emergency more people on the ground is better for safety, but for a state certification exam we are ensuring that the candidates know how to do this safely to be certified. Council input was requested.

The following concerns were discussed.

- Smaller departments struggle to get enough people to test at the Technician level.
- Increasing the number in the team may not provide a proper testing opportunity.
- In a large group, it would be easy for people to stand in the background and move through the process with the group without being tested properly.

Chris Trevino stated that 10-12 is sufficient for the state testing process.
Mike Slater agreed. The council determined not to increase the team sizes.

16. Old Business - Scott Spencer

- a. Test site visits - Sarah Head
Please find time to visit test sites. Sarah tries to visit one in each region once a month.
- b. Anything that needs to be discussed

Ron Harris asked if all the recent changes are now part of the testing process. Sarah Head said “yes” beginning in January 2026.

Updated standards are online after the November 2025 meeting.

It was recommended that written information be sent out to Instructors and departments so they are aware of the changes. Marc McElreath will make sure this happens.

17. The next Certification Council meeting is on Wednesday, March 18th, 2026 at 10:00 am at UFRA.

Ted Black motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ron Harris seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 am.