



Utah Fire Service Certification Council Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2025 at 10 a.m.

UFRA, 3131 Mike Jense Pkwy., Provo

1. **Certification Council meeting called to order, by Council Chair Scott Spencer**
Meeting called to order at 10:10 a.m.
2. **Welcome council members and visitors, by Scott Spencer**
Members in attendance: Scott Spencer, Ron Harris, John Evans, Rod Kearnl, Krista Horting, Jeremy Raymond, Dave Olsen, Dave Youngberg, Merlin Spendlove, Chris Trevino, Michael Slater
Member attending online: TJ Brewer
Member not in attendance: Wade Snyder
Guests: Jon Ritchie (deputy state fire marshal), Marc McElreath, Brad Wardle
3. **Declaration of quorum, by Scott Spencer**
Scott Spencer declared a quorum.
4. **Approval of Certification Council meeting minutes from March 19, 2025, by Scott Spencer**
John Evans motioned to approve the minutes from March 19, 2025, and it was seconded by Rod Kearnl. No one opposed, and the motion carried.
5. **Approval of the May 21, 2025 Certification Council agenda, by Scott Spencer**
Jeremy Raymond motioned to approve the agenda for May 21, 2025, and it was seconded by Dave Youngberg. No one opposed, and the motion carried.
6. **Davis Technical College site team recommendation and vote, by Jolene Chamberlain**
Rod Kearnl and John Evans were both impressed with the building and the program. They have an agreement with Layton Fire Department.
Dave Youngberg motioned to recommend renewal of accreditation of Davis Technical College. Chris Trevino seconded the motion. The motion carried.
7. **Report on Fire Prevention Board meeting, by Scott Spencer**
No meeting was held in May 2025.
8. **Report from Forestry, Fire & State Lands, by Wade Snyder**
Sarah reported for Wade that all resources are getting ready for upcoming fire season. Statewide staffing is expected to be on par with only a few shortcomings from our federal partners. All state crews and our helicopter program are up and running. The new state ops center building has seen delays and won't be operational until late July.
9. **Report on testing, certification, failed skills, and upcoming exams (3 months), by Jennifer Lindley**
Upcoming test site locations will be emailed to council members to visit and evaluate the testers and test site.
Cert Report: 1,514 recerts. The First Utah Live Fire 1403 certification was issued to Chris Whetton. Lots of Tech Rescue testing taking place.
Failed skills report is short. Typical Officer and Inspector failed skills. Officer fire flow skill is the typically missed skill. Rod Kearnl says the paper being handed out shows divide rather than multiply.

Recommendation to introduce the skill earlier in the class so students can practice the math every night. Marc McElreath will check the handout being included in the Officer course box.

10. Update on online testing, by Trudy Meister

With the free Friday testing at UFRA, more and more candidates are taking advantage of it. In April 2025, three candidates tested. In May 2025, 6 candidates tested. A total of 278 people tested online from January 1 to May 6, 2025.

Online testing is best when people are on the roster prior to the test date. It is difficult to add people on the day of the exam. If departments are not able to create a roster 30 days before, it may be easier to test on paper exams.

Jeremy mentioned that the PID/password cards may not match the rosters. Can they open the envelope prior to test date to verify prior to the test? Sarah said that this issue is in process to make it easier for testers.

11. Southwest Technical College Live Fire site visit, by Merlin Spendlove

Sarah shared concerns that have been brought up by testers who don't want to be involved in testing at Southwest Tech. What was expressed to her is that the testers feel the candidates may not be ready to test.

Merlin Spendlove visited the Live Fire test on April 5, 2025. The testers were Jordan Smith and Chad Frisby. Instructors and teachers were there to help run the prop. They brought in an engineer from Washington city to run the engine. Merlin observed that they had learned it correctly and that it went well. There seems to be some conflict with some of the instructors and some Cedar City firefighters.

Dave Youngberg visited. The training schedule looked good. When looking at the props, he found that they don't have a hydrant. The city won't let them hook up to city hydrants. They were really spending time on passing the test but not as much time on the skills. They were using the UFRA test to weed people out rather than using an in-house test to help them be better prepared. It is a tight curriculum where they can't cut days short. He thinks with some coaching they could do better.

Sarah spoke with both testers from the recent FF II skills exam. The extrication equipment was unfamiliar. The individual skills were not pushed. Testers thought they were rushing through the training process, and not all candidates got the needed hands-on training.

Jolene would like to oversee their program and make sure candidates are getting the necessary hands-on training. Once the new standard is released, tests will include individual skills to test on as well as evolutions.

They have an agreement with Cedar City and there is some conflict with personnel.

Have these concerns been addressed with Adam Scott and the college directly?

Chris Trevino recommended that we bring someone in charge to observe the UVU RCA or have an RCA instructor visit their location. Can we share tools to help improve the program?

Dave Youngberg also suggested having Adam Scott visit on a testing date at another RCA program to find things that will help them be successful and help them keep their accreditation. We could create a needs assessment or some way to give the college support and suggestions to improve the program and help them be more successful. We could give them unbiased opinions to assist. We could possibly bring in other program directors to share ideas (such as Jared Sholly, Andy Byrnes, Tom Maples, and Brian Davies).

Brad Wardle would like to use the approach to help refine their program, by having people work directly with Adam Scott and their instructors. The end goal is to provide quality firefighters from the program.

Follow-up: Extend an invitation to Adam Scott and the instructors and other council members, to help them grow and strengthen their program.

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

- Larry Jo Hamblin, Fire Officer II portfolio: reviewed by Michael Slater
After reviewing the portfolio and asking the applicant to make needed changes, Mike feels he meets all the requirements. He motioned to approve the Fire Officer II portfolio. Rod Kearl seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- Christopher Aston, Fire Officer II portfolio: reviewed by Chris Trevino
Chris reviewed the portfolio and found it ready for approval. He motioned to approve the Fire Officer II portfolio. Krista Horting seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- Ryan McConaghie, Fire Officer II portfolio: reviewed by TJ Brewer
TJ Brewer reviewed the portfolio, and said Chief McConaghie did a fantastic job. He motioned to approve the Fire Officer II portfolio. Merlin Spendlove seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- Holly Smith, Fire Officer II portfolio: needs to be reviewed
Jeremy Raymond will review it.
- Shaun Smith, Fire Officer II portfolio: needs to be reviewed
John Evans will review it.
- Brian Fossum, Officer II portfolio: needs to be reviewed
Chris Trevino will review it.
- Embret Fossum, Fire Officer IV portfolio: needs to be reviewed
Krista Horting will review it.

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

Isaac G. McKean, Draper City Fire

Isaac McKean was previously employed by West Valley Fire, and he left for a full-time military assignment in 2021. He is currently employed with Draper City Fire, and his certifications expired in 2023.

Sarah has training records through 2022 and has asked that Isaac provide the training records from 2023 to current. Nothing has been received at this time.

If training records are received, the council will revisit the request. Mike Slater motioned to table this request until training hours are provided. Rod Kearl seconded the motion. The motion carried.

14. Policies on 1-year waiting period for retesting & reciprocity, by Sarah Head

- There is not a specific reason in the policies why there is a one-year waiting period for reentering the testing process. However, there is a section in the policy that says if a candidate wants to reenter the testing process prior to the one-year requirement, they can write a letter of petition to the Certification program manager, who MAY bring the petition to the council, at their discretion.

There is some gray area where these requests don't always need to be brought to the council for approval. If candidates are willing to take the class again, they may not need to wait a full year.

Ron Harris motioned to leave the policy as it is written and allow approvals by the Certification program manager. John Evans seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- The reciprocity policy only discusses the council. However, sections 8 and 9 in the Policies and Procedures mention the Certification Council and Certification administration. Section 8.3 states that "the director of the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy shall appoint a

Certification program manager and other support staff to handle the day-to-day operations of the certification system.” Section 9.1 states that “Certification administration is responsible for the management and administration of the Utah Fire Service Certification program.” In essence, there is a gray area where reciprocity can be handled by the administration without bringing it to the Certification Council unless there is something that needs to be addressed. We could add wording like the one-year waiting period, where it says the Certification program manager MAY bring it to the council, at their discretion.

Scott Spencer said that as this is addressed in the policies, there is no need to change the policy. The council agreed.

15. ADO-Pumper standard discussion, by Sarah Head

There has been some confusion about the updated ADO-Pumper standard that has come to my attention. In the September 18, 2024 Certification Council meeting notes, it was discussed and approved to add “**Firefighter I or NWCG FFT1**” to the prerequisites, if NFPA 1002 did not require Firefighter I as a prerequisite. This did not mean that the Firefighter I prerequisite was going to be removed from the ADO-Pumper standard. It meant that it would remain for all our firefighters but that we could allow the wildland firefighters to take the certification test by adding the words “or NWCG FFT1” to the prerequisite in our standard.

Candidates cannot currently get certified in ADO-Pumper without FFI. The training record sheet being handed out needs to be current. No change is needed.

16. New Business, by Scott Spencer

- Discussion on Officer I skills exam and instructions- Sarah Head

Past practice and some understanding of the memo appear to be a more relaxed approach as to what will be considered correct (for example, not holding to expected memo formatting as shown in the standard in appendix A). If we are going to vary from that in the grading process, the standard will need to be changed. What would you like to do?

Does the time on the first attempt need to be adjusted to match the time allowed for a 2nd attempt, or adjust the time of the 2nd attempt?

For scenarios A to D, it was brought to my attention that there may not be enough time to complete all those areas. On the second attempt for scenario A, the candidate gets 60 minutes and then for scenarios B to D, the candidate gets 20 minutes per scenario. The candidate gets a total of 60 minutes on the first attempt for scenarios A to D. Can we adjust the time?

Jennifer Lindley suggested 2 hours for the entire skill exam, with 2nd-attempt skills to be broken down as follows: 30 minutes for skills 4 and 5; 30 minutes for skill 16; 20 minutes for skill 14; 20 minutes for skill 13; and 20 minutes for skill 17.

Krista Horting motioned to accept the time changes as presented by Jennifer Lindley. Rod Kearn seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Can we add clarifying wording on scenario A, as there is a high failure rate due to students not including E-12 (themselves) on the skill that says “Give the incoming units initial assignments (don’t leave anyone out)”? The following question specifically requests, “Describe what your assignment is to your crew (E-12) and what your expectations of them are.”

Mike Slater suggests changing the wording to: Give the on-scene units initial assignments. (Remove Engine 12 from the answer.)

Scenario D has a high failure rate, and I think there is a discrepancy between the grading rubric, the book (pages 339–340), and the way it is taught.

Pull from the grading rubric that they need to list the incident priorities. Remove the incident priorities wording from the question.

The officer instructions for the tester need updating because we had a tester grade the Officer I exam in the field. (The exam came back and the Officer I skill had been graded in the field.) Instead of the instruction sheet saying you are “responsible for completing the ‘spot check’ examination results form (BOTH sides),” it needs wording for clarification so testers do not think they have to grade the exam. The intent for having the tester fill out the back side of the form was to ensure that the candidate’s name was written on there. I would like to add wording to the Officer skills instruction sheet stating that testers are responsible for filling out the front of the form and only the name on the back.

Approved.

Scott Spencer said candidates are taught memo format in multiple assignments. When they do the assignments on the computer, they just fill in the template.

Krista Horting asked why we are still pushing memos since most departments don’t use memos anymore. Also, handwriting is so terrible we can’t read their answers. Can we switch this skill exam to online?

Sarah stated that the Officer I online skill exams are in the process of being developed. Also, there will not be a spell check on the exam.

- Discussion on approving department testers to cover other nearby departments.- Sarah Head

It was brought to my attention that in some of the rural areas where departments are located, it would be nice for them to be able to use department testers from a close by department to administer written 2nd and 3rd attempts. Sharon’s example to me was that Big Water Fire is 57 miles from Kanab and 107 miles from Hildale. Big Water candidates drive 57 miles to Kanab to test because they are not near anyone else. Usually Sharon sends Porter Barlow from Hildale/Apple Valley to test in Kanab and he is 50 miles from Kanab. Kanab has three department testers: Chief Brett Pierson as well as Kelly Yates and Amy Syrett, who are both training officers. We would like to open a discussion on approving written 2nd and 3rd attempts using a department tester from a surrounding fire department.

It was stated that this falls under the day-to-day administration of the department.

Jeremy motioned to allow Certification administration to approve this based on need. Merlin Spendlove seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Discussion and motion to reinstate Unified Fire Authority department testers.- Sarah Head

In September 2023, Chief Dern was sent a letter explaining that due to policy violation alleged to have occurred during the in-house department testing process in May 2023, UFA would be suspended from department in-house testing for two years (until July 2025).

Jeremy Raymond suggested that someone monitor their first few tests. Chris Trevino suggested that instructors for the class shouldn’t be allowed to test those candidates.

Jeremy motioned to allow Unified Fire Authority to begin department testing in July 2025. Krista Horting seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Policy 12.66 proposed update- Sarah Head

Proposal to update the tester uniform policy (section 12.66) due to a lack of professionalism when random test site visits are done. Some testers are hard to identify as UFRA Certification testers.

Sarah would like to update the wording to: “wear a polo shirt, a tester badge, and khaki or station pants, or other attire as appropriate for the exam.”

Jeremy Raymond motioned to approve the changes as presented. Ron Harris seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Policy changes for Pro Board- Sarah Head

- Section 16.15. We need to be specific in our policy about how candidates will challenge written examination questions.
- Section 12.22. Pro Board wanted to know what set the minimum passing score for our written exams.
- Section 12.33. Pro Board wanted to make sure that we are following JPRs and local/state procedures when developing the skills exams.
- Section 12.34. Pro Board wanted specifics on how test items are reviewed to maintain validity and reliability.
- Section 12.43. Pro Board explained that we are using incorrect wording for portfolios. Portfolios are a collection of certifications and other things that have been completed throughout someone's career. Our portfolios are truly "products," in that the candidates are completing something to be turned in and evaluated. I would like to add "products" in front of portfolios in our policy, to comply with Pro Board in a way that will not confuse our candidates.

Ron Harris motioned to approve all changes as presented. Jeremy Raymond seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Skills updated for accreditation:
 - Structural Collapse Awareness: Skills 1, 3; Evolution
 - Structural Collapse Operations: Skills 1, 6A, 6B, 7, 10; Evolution
 - Structural Collapse Technician: Skill 2
 - Confined Space Operations: Skills 3, 4, 5, 7
 - Confined Space Technician: Evolutions 1, 2
 - Common Passenger Vehicle Operations: Skills 2, 3, 4, 7A, 7B, 7C, 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D
 - Common Passenger Vehicle Technician: Skills 2, 3
 - Heavy Vehicle Operations: Skills 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 8A
 - Surface Water Operations: Evolution
 - Swiftwater Operations: Evolution
 - Ice Rescue Operations: Evolution, Skills 2, 4
 - Trench Rescue Operations: Evolution
 - Machinery Operations: Skills 4, 5; Evolution

Ron Harris motioned to approve all changes as presented. John Evans seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- New 1010 Firefighter I/II standard:
 - Firefighter I/II was updated to the NFPA 1010 standard.
 - Using *Essentials of Fire Fighting: Firefighter I* (8th edition)
 - The Firefighter I written test will have 150 questions.
 - The Firefighter I skills test will consist of one live fire evolution, two examination evolutions, and one skill.
 - Using *Essentials of Fire Fighting: Firefighter II* (8th edition)
 - The Firefighter II written test will have 80 questions.
 - The Firefighter II skills test will consist of three skills picked at random.

Once approved, this level will go into effect on July 1, 2026. It must be submitted to IFSAC and Pro Board by December to allow 6 months for them to review it before approval.

Dave Youngberg motioned to approve the new FF I/II standard. Krista seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- The IFSAC reaccreditation visit to UFRA is scheduled for May 27–30, 2025 (Sarah Head). We have four people coming from various areas (Oklahoma; Texas; Kentucky; and Ontario, Canada) to evaluate our 53 levels for reaccreditation.

17. Old Business, by Scott Spencer

No other items needed to be discussed.

18. The next Certification Council meeting will be on Wednesday, July 16, 2025, at UFRA

Ron Harris motioned for the meeting to be adjourned. It was seconded by Rod Kearl. The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.