

How to Develop a Fire Department Training Program

8 Hour Workshop

Summary: Many fire departments struggle to provide a comprehensive and challenging training for their personnel whether career, combination, or volunteer. Frequently these are departments without a dedicated training bureau or division and the officer/instructor assigned the training responsibility continually searches for training programs and resources without a comprehensive plan.

This program will provide training officers with the tools and resources to establish a training program for their agency. Through a series of presentations and practical exercises, students will develop a step-by-step training program to identify their specific training needs, design a training course/program for their agency, plan the implementation of the program including budgetary considerations, and evaluate the delivery of their comprehensive fire department training program.

Program Abstract

Students will conduct a guided needs assessment of the training requirements of their fire department considering public expectations, mission statements and requirements of the authority having jurisdiction. During this process the student will identify subject areas or functions creating shortfalls in their existing training programs. Since the public looks to the fire service to solve many of its problems that may not be directly related to fire suppression, this is an essential function to meet both the organization mission statement and public expectations.

Once the needs assessment is completed, the student will analyze the degree of compliance for their fire department with respect to local, state or federal regulations and firefighter training requirements. This process will include a review of all regulations and national standards that may be applicable to fire suppression, technical rescue, emergency medical services and other specialized applications for the student's agency.

The student will then be given an overview of training resources available to meet their particular needs (developed from the needs assessment and the regulatory requirements overview) and processes to obtain and use these resources. This process is designed to keep the agency's training personnel from having to duplicate existing programs or "reinventing the wheel."

Upon completing the resource evaluation specific to the student's agency, the student will design a training documentation management plan for budget justification and delivery of firefighter training, through practical exercises. This plan will include resources necessary and justification for items such as personnel services, transportation and training aids.

The students will then participate in practical group exercises to describe the relationship of firefighter safety to firefighter training. This will include a review of firefighter line of duty deaths, the root cause of the incidents and an evaluation of training needs to prevent future incidents. The students will then demonstrate this relationship by preparing a five minute presentation for a budget justification to a simulated governing body meeting.

The student will then develop an annual firefighter training plan/schedules for both in-service and new members for their training program. At a minimum this plan will identify the number of attendees, instructor, facility location/use, training aids, safety and apparatus requirements. Budget considerations will also be addressed.

As a result of the several presentations and exercises, the student will identify the essential components of a firefighter training program to meet the basic needs of the student's department, including PPE and SCBA use, hand and power tool use and safety, ladder choice and deployment, the elements of victim search and rescue, ventilation, water supply and hose rolls, loads and carries, hand line and master stream use, as well as other local department considerations and service demands as identified from the needs assessment and other progressive exercises in the program.

Finally, the student will consider and develop the elements of evaluating the success of the training program, including personnel evaluations and overall training course success through the use of specific evaluation instruments.

Target Audience: Fire instructors, department and company training officers.

Relevance to target audience: This program will provide the students with a step-by-step systematic approach to the design and implementation of a comprehensive training program. This will include both basic or recruit training and an annual proficiency program.

Student Prerequisites:

- Fire Instructor Level I or greater; or equivalent state certification.
- Copies of any state or local training requirements/standards
- Minimum 3 years fire training experience

Program Objectives:

Upon completion of the Program, the students will:

1. Conduct an assessment of the training needs of their fire department considering public expectations, mission statements and requirements of the authority having jurisdiction;
2. Analyze the degree of compliance for their agency with respect to local, state or federal regulations and training requirements;
3. Identify and list appropriate training resources, programs available through the National Fire Academy, state fire training system, community colleges and commercial vendors;
4. Identify budget types, budget management principles applicable to funding a training program and create a preliminary budget for a training program;

5. Describe the relationship of safety to firefighter training and demonstrate this relationship in a five-minute presentation to a simulated governing council meeting;
6. Develop an annual training schedule for both in-service and new members; and
7. Describe the elements of a training program evaluation and complete a course evaluation document, all in accordance with the requirements of the Authority Having Jurisdiction.