



Fire Investigator

General Accreditation Information

Performance Standard

The NFPA 1033-2022 edition, Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator, will be the performance standard referenced for Fire Investigator Certification.

Entrance Requirements

The Fire Investigator candidate must meet the following entrance requirements before certification can be issued:

- Candidate must be a minimum of 18 years of age.
- Candidate must have a High School Diploma or GED
- Candidate must furnish a current (less than one year old) official Criminal Background report
- Candidate must possess a professionally recognized certification to the Hazardous Materials Awareness Level in accordance with NFPA 472/1072/470, through IFSAC or ProBoard.
- Candidate must possess building construction and basic electrical safety knowledge.
- Candidate must furnish a resume showing beyond entry level experience, fire investigation experience, and showing a minimum of five (5) years in a Fire Suppression Organization or Law Enforcement Agency.
- Candidate must furnish one (1) letter of recommendation from the Chief of the Fire or Law Enforcement Agency they are currently or most recently were affiliated with.
- Candidate must possess Fire Investigator Training that meets the intent of NFPA 1033-2022 Chapter 4, which has been approved to meet the requirement by the Bucks County Community College Department of Public Safety Training and Certification.

Program Requirements

The instruction and evaluation given a Fire Investigator candidate who achieves certification is critical to ensuring a quality program. Training and evaluation of the candidate must be accomplished by qualified individuals, certified at the prescribed level. All evaluators shall be contracted employees of the Bucks County Community College.

Candidate Evaluation

Evaluation of the candidate for certification is an important process. Candidates are evaluated in a manner that is separate from the educational and training process.

Physical Fitness Requirement

The candidate's sponsoring agency should ensure the candidate meets the requirements of NFPA 1582, Standard on Medical Requirements for Fire Fighters and Information for Fire Department Physicians, within a reasonable period prior to entering physical training or testing to ensure his or her ability to safely perform the required tasks.

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Written Examination

The written examination measures the cognitive skills of the Fire Investigator will follow guidelines set forth in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Bucks County Community College. The examination will be randomly generated and consist of one hundred (100) questions. Candidates will have a maximum of 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete the examination. A score of 70% or above shall constitute a passing grade for the candidate.

Written Examination Re-Test Policy

Candidates who are unsuccessful (less than 70%) on the written test will be allowed to retake the test up to two (2) times within one (1) year of the original test. The one-year time frame can be extended at the Director of Certification's discretion. After three (3) unsuccessful attempts the candidate will be required to seek remediation that is approved by the Certification Department on a case-by-case basis. All candidates eligible for re-testing may be given one chance to re-test if time and materials are available on the same day as their initial test but are not permitted to test more than two (2) times in one day.

Note: A candidate may be subject to a \$25.00 retesting administrative fee for any retest attempt, second or greater.

Practical Examination

Practical examinations are intended to measure the practical skills of the Fire Investigator and will follow guidelines set forth in accordance with the policies and procedures of Bucks County Community College. The agency is capable of testing 100% of the practical objectives; however, the examination may only test a pre-selected percentage based on the testing scenarios provided to the evaluator. A score of 100% for the skills shall constitute a passing grade for the candidate.

Practical Examination Re-Test Policy

Candidates receiving unsatisfactory grades on 50% or more of the skill set being tested (*Note: Minimum of three skill stations must be successful, for levels with two skills or less a retest will be authorized*) will fail the skills test and be advised to seek remedial education and reapply for another certification testing process.

Candidates receiving unsatisfactory grades on *less than 50%* of the skill set being tested (*Note: Minimum of three skill stations, for levels with two skills or less a retest will be authorized*) will be allowed to retest those unsatisfactory skill sets in accordance with policies and procedures. All candidates re-testing will be allowed to retest a skill station at a subsequent test date up to two (2) times, within one (1) year of the start of the testing process, or if the station allows by making an appointment to retest the station at an approved and designated site by the Certification Department. All candidates eligible for re-testing may be given one chance to re-test if time and equipment are available on the same day as their initial test but are not permitted to test more than two (2) times in one day.

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Appeal

All candidates have the right to appeal the decision of the certification department, so long as the appeal is submitted in writing and in accordance with the Policies and Procedures of Bucks County Community College.

Reciprocity

Any Fire Investigator's certified by another agency accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) or National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications may be granted an equivalency upon verification of the original certificate.

Recertification

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, certification is a voluntary process and currently there is no process or requirement for recertification. Each certificate issued to a candidate indicates the discipline and edition year that they were evaluated under at the time of certification. New certificates are not issued when the discipline changes.

Testing Assistance

Candidates who require assistance in completing the examination will need to contact the Bucks County Community College Accessibilities Office (accessibilities@bucks.edu) to request assistance and be evaluated for reasonable accommodations. Once provided with a letter from the Accessibilities Office you will be required to provide the Certification Department with a copy of the accommodation documentation at least ten (10) business days prior to your scheduled test.

Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism)

The expectation at Bucks County Community College is that the principles of truth and honesty will be rigorously followed in all academic endeavors. In support of this aim, Bucks County Community College requires all students to exhibit academic integrity in all their work.

A culture of academic integrity is built upon respect for others' work, commitment to doing one's own work, and intolerance for academic dishonesty in all its forms. This assumes that all work will be done by the person who purports to do the work without unauthorized aid(s). In addition, when making use of language and some idea not his or her own, whether quoting them directly or paraphrasing them into his or her own words, the student must attribute the source of the material in some standard form, such as naming the source in the text or offering a citation. Students are expected to represent such sources accurately and truthfully when incorporating them into their own work.

Background Check

The candidate will be required to sign a statement that attests to the candidate has never been convicted of an offense that constitutes the crime of "arson and related offenses" under 18 Pa.C.S §3301 or any similar offense under any Federal or state law. "I understand that if I knowingly make any false statement herein, I am subject to penalties prescribed by law, including, but not limited to, a fine of at least \$1,000."

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Bucks County Community College

Department of Public Safety Training and Certification

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Certification Issuance

Certificates indicating successful completion of the requirements set forth under the National Fire Protection Association standards shall be issued by the Bucks County Community College when the candidate has met all requirements for certification.

Recommended Classes

- Fire Investigator 80 hour course (FSC 0793) or equivalent National Fire Academy course
- Building Construction: Non-Combustible (16 hours) FSC 0707
- Building Construction: Ordinary (16 hours) FSC 0780
- Basic Electrical Safety course

Required Text

“Fire Investigator,” IFSTA, Third Edition
Kirk’s Fire Investigator Handbook, Eighth Edition
NFPA 921 (current edition) – “Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations”

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