

NFPA®

1021

Standard for
Fire Officer
Professional Qualifications

2020



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NFPA® 1021

Standard for

Fire Officer Professional Qualifications

2020 Edition

This edition of NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Fire Officer Professional Qualifications and released by the Correlating Committee on Professional Qualifications. It was issued by the Standards Council on November 4, 2019, with an effective date of November 24, 2019, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 1021 was approved as an American National Standard on November 24, 2019.

Origin and Development of NFPA 1021

In 1971, the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations (JCNFSO) created the National Professional Qualifications Board (NPQB) for the fire service to facilitate the development of nationally applicable performance standards for uniformed fire service personnel. On December 14, 1972, the Board established four technical committees to develop those standards using the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards-making system. The initial committees addressed the following career areas: fire fighter, fire officer, fire service instructors, and fire inspector and investigator. In July 1976, the Association adopted the first edition of NFPA 1021.

The original concept of the professional qualification standards, as directed by the JCNFSO and the NPQB, was to develop an interrelated set of performance standards specifically for the fire service. The various levels of achievement in the standards were to build on each other within a strictly defined career ladder. In the late 1980s, revisions of the standards recognized that the documents should stand on their own merit in terms of job performance requirements for a given field. Accordingly, the strict career ladder concept was abandoned, except for the progression from fire fighter to fire officer. The later revisions, therefore, facilitated the use of the documents by other than the uniformed fire services.

In 1990, responsibility for the appointment of professional qualifications committees and the development of the professional qualifications standards were assumed by the NFPA. The NFPA Standards Council appointed the Correlating Committee on Professional Qualifications, which assumed responsibility for coordinating the requirements of all of the professional qualifications documents.

The 1992 edition of NFPA 1021 reduced the number of levels of progression in the standard to four. In the 1997 edition, NFPA 1021 was converted to the job performance requirement (JPR) format to be consistent with the other standards in the Professional Qualifications Project. Each JPR consists of the task to be performed; the tools, equipment, or materials that must be provided to successfully complete the task; evaluation parameters and/or performance outcomes; and lists of prerequisite knowledge and skills one must have to perform the task.

The intent of the technical committee was to develop clear and concise job performance requirements that can be used to determine that an individual, when measured to the standard, possesses the skills and knowledge to perform as a fire officer. The committee further contends that these job performance requirements can be used in any fire department in any city, town, or private organization throughout North America.

In preparing the 2003 edition of the document, the technical committee did a task analysis to validate the continued need for the use of four levels in the document. It was found that several tasks were actually being performed at a level lower than indicated in the previous edition. Changes were made to reflect that fact, as well as to bring the document into conformance with the new *Manual of Style for NFPA Technical Committee Documents*.

In the 2009 edition of the document, the technical committee revised the Scope statement, added a skill maintenance requirement, and changed the term *certification* to *qualification* as directed by the Technical Correlating Committee to establish conformity across the Professional Qualifications project. The committee revised the duty statements for inspection and investigation in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. They also added new JPRs to clarify the committee intent.

In the 2014 edition, the technical committee further clarified the scope of the document to comply with professional qualifications project documents. The technical committee revised the text of the document as it relates to qualifications for Fire Officer III. The committee removed the requisite for Fire Service Instructor II for Fire Officer III, indicating that it exceeds the scope for that level. Fire Officer III is considered a managerial/administrative level. A Fire Instructor II has to have the knowledge, skills, and ability to develop individual lesson plans.

The technical committee also made several adjustments to the job performance requirements under Human Resource Management for Fire Officer II and III and Administration and Emergency Services Delivery for Fire Officer IV. The most significant change to the 2014 edition was to acknowledge and encourage prospective fire officers to consider formal higher education as part of their educational and professional growth while maintaining current knowledge.

For the 2020 edition, the technical committee has reviewed all job performance requirements for relevancy and accuracy. Emergency medical services delivery has been acknowledged and allotted to the fire officer's role. The concept of continuous quality improvement has been introduced to support service delivery of the AHJ. The fire officer's role has been refined at each level relative to community risk reduction (CRR) initiatives. Also, two new annexes have been added: Annex C provides an overview of the JPRs, and new Annex D recognizes the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) firefighter life safety initiatives.