

07-01 NOVA SCOTIA FIRE SERVICE OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS

1. PREAMBLE

It is of the utmost importance that we, as members of fire and emergency services, make substantive efforts to manage the risk associated with fire and emergency ground operations. The lives and safety of our firefighters and those of our intended efforts come first. To this end, it is incumbent that we maintain a progressive program of advancement for all members of the fire and emergency services. This policy provides for a graduated increase of knowledge, skill and ability in the areas of Chief Officers, Captains, Lieutenants, Fire Safety Officer, Fire Training Officer and Fire Prevention Officer.

2. PURPOSE

This policy provides a method of obtaining the appropriate level of knowledge, skill and ability to provide a professional, safe fire and emergency service.

3. DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

- a. "Fire Department" means a Volunteer Fire Department approved a Municipality.
- b. "Training Course" means a course meeting standards provided by, or approved by the Nova Scotia Fire Fighters School or other Accredited Fire Service Agency.

4. ESTABLISHMENT

No fire department shall be organized or formed within the Province of Nova Scotia unless the local Municipal Council grants approval.

- a. All fire and emergency services must register with their local Municipality.
- b. Each fire department shall determine their own requirement (meaning) for Captains and Lieutenants in articles of incorporation, but in all cases shall include the office of Fire Chief who shall be the Chief Executive of the Department.
- c. Each fire department shall have a Fire Prevention Officer, Fire Training Officer and a Fire Safety Officer. (For smaller fire departments, an officer can hold more than one of these positions). If these positions are by committee, then the chair of the committee would assume the position of officer in charge or this area.

5. QUALIFICATIONS OF OPERATIONAL LIEUTENANTS

Only those persons having the following qualifications shall be permitted to hold the rank of Fire Lieutenant: (There are exceptions to this rank/position, some departments use the rank of Lt within a fire department for responsibilities other than fire ground operations, and this could include the positions like Lt of Maintenance, Lt of Purchasing, etc. However, a person in this position should attend BFF training to achieve the knowledge of level one firefighter.)

- a. A minimum of 2 years experience.
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified.
- c. Incident Command
- d. Strategy & Tactics

- e. Fire Safety Officer, preferably before assuming the position, but no more than 12 months after promotion to Fire Lieutenant.

6. QUALIFICATIONS OF CAPTAINS

Only those persons having the following qualifications shall be permitted to hold the rank of Fire Captain:

- a. A minimum of 4 years experience, with previous experience as a Lieutenant preferred.
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified
- c. Incident Command
- d. Strategy & Tactics
- e. Fire Safety Officer

7. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER

Only those persons having the following qualifications may be appointed to the position of Fire Prevention Officer: (qualifications should be determined by each department due the different size of departments and demands of each department)

- a. A minimum of 3 years experience
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified
- c. Fire Prevention Educator (preferably before assuming the position, but no more than 12 months after assuming the position).

8. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRE TRAINING OFFICER

Only those persons having the following qualifications may be appointed to the position of Fire Training Officer:

- a. A minimum of 5 years experience
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified
- c. Incident Command Course
- d. Fire Safety Officer
- e. Strategy & Tactics

It is recommended that Training Officers complete the Instructional Techniques 1. A pre-requisite for this course is that the firefighter is Level 1 Certified.

9. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRE SAFETY OFFICER

Only those persons having the following qualifications may be appointed to the position of Fire Safety Officer:

- a. A minimum of 4 years experience
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified
- c. Fire Safety Officer
- d. Incident Command
- e. Strategy & Tactics

It is noted that this position is sometimes filled by a firefighter who is not 100% fit. This individual fills a very important and meaningful position albeit not operational front line attack. It is the strong recommendation of this committee that this individual attend the training listed, although they may not be able to fully partake in all the activities, they will have a better understanding of training and responsibilities for this position.

10. QUALIFICATIONS OF CHIEF OFFICERS

Only those persons having the following qualifications shall be permitted to stand for election, or be appointed to the office of Chief, Deputy Chief or Assistant Deputy Chief of a fire service department:

- a. A minimum of 5 years experience
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified (it is recommended that all Chief Officers become level one certified as soon a practical after assuming the position)
- c. Incident Command Course
- d. Strategy & Tactics Course
- e. Fire Safety Officer Course
- f. Fire Investigation basic NFPA 921 within 24 months of election/appointment

11. APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE - AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING

No Chief Officer or Officer will be required to relinquish their appointment to an office if they have not been provided the opportunity through local, municipal, or provincial training courses, to gain the stated requisites within the assigned timeframe. There are a few courses listed within this document that are not currently offered. These courses do exist and will be added to the training made available by the NSFS and other training establishments.

12. INCUMBENTS

All incumbent officers of any fire department within a Municipality at the time that this policy comes into force will be grandfathered into their present office. Incumbents are strongly encouraged to review the qualification requirements for their office and make a concerted effort to attain same. Grandfathering will cease to exist five (5) years after the approval and implementation of this policy. Officers who move into one of these positions will also be grandfathered for the 5 year period from the time this policy comes into force. 5 years after this policy comes into force, officers are expected to have the training required to fill the position. This is a doable time line; most of these courses only take a weekend or two to complete. The exception to this is the BFF level one training, which every firefighter should have, regardless of rank.

13. PERSONAL SKILLS

In addition to all Fire Service qualifications, it is recommended that all fire officers complete recognized training courses in the following subjects:

- a. Individual communication skills course
- b. Recognized 'Respect in the Workplace' course
- c. Fire Service Personnel Leadership course

These courses should be completed within 5 years of accepting any officer position, and they only need to be taken once, regardless of the number of different positions held. These courses are to be made available around the province. They are also available at Dalhousie University (was Henson College). Workplace equivalent courses are an acceptable alternative.

14. **REVIEW**

This policy shall be reviewed every five years commencing on the date of approval.

September 30, 2007

Footnote

This policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of FSANS at the Director's meeting in Brookfield Fire Station on September 30, 2007. It was also moved that this policy be forwarded to the Fire Service Advisory Board.