

**Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council
(GFSTC)**



**Individual Certification/Compliance Information
(Revised 08/12)**

Executive Summary

Effective July 1, 2004, each member of each fire department operating in this state must meet the employment/appointment requirements as specified by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. Currently, there are a total of five (5) recognized levels of state certification. They are Firefighter, Fire and Life Safety Educator, Fire Inspector, Fire Investigator, and Airport Firefighter. The state certification levels have been expanded to allow volunteer and part-time firefighters to be certified. For volunteers and part-time firefighters, registration with this agency is required and the state certification is optional.

This document is prepared to present current requirements and procedures of Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. Questions and comments may be directed to the agency office at Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC).

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Definitions

Unless the context requires otherwise, the following words and terms shall have the following meanings for the purposes of policy and procedures of GFSTC:

'Airport' means any airport located in this state, which has regularly scheduled commercial air carrier service or commuter air service as required for certification under Section 139.49 of the Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

'Airport firefighter' means any person assigned to any airport located in this state that performs the duties of fire fighting, or rescue.

'Airport fire department' means a fire department/station of any airport located in this state, which has regularly scheduled commercial air carrier service or commuter air service as required for certification under Section 139.49 of the Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

'Certified' or **'State Certified'** means any individual who has been certified as having met the requirements established by the GFSTC.

'Certification Package' means documentation for certification purposes approved by the GFSTC, completed, and kept on file by the sponsoring agency..

'Compensation' means paid on an hourly or salaried basis.

'Core-Exempt' are those individuals who by job function or by designation of the Fire Chief or his/her designee are exempt from core competencies in lieu of additional education approved by the GFSTC for continued certification.

'Dormant' is referring to individuals who holds multiple certifications and maintains certification for one level.

'Designee' means the Fire Chiefs representative designated in dealing with matters of the GFSTC .

'Executive Director' means the Executive Director of GFSTC.

'Fire Chief' is the Chief Administrative Officer of a Fire Department.

'Fire department' means any fire department, which is authorized to exercise the general and emergency powers enumerated in Code Sections 25-3-1 and 25-3-2. It also means any department, agency, organization, or company operating in this state with the intent and purpose of carrying out the duties, functions, powers, and responsibilities normally associated with a fire department, and specifically include public safety departments that provide both law enforcement and traditional fire department services. These duties, functions, powers, and responsibilities include but are not limited to the protection of life and property against fire, explosions, or other hazards.

‘Firefighter’ means any able-bodied person who is a full-time employee, part-time employee, or volunteer and is at least 18 years of age who has been duly appointed by a legally constituted fire department and who has the responsibility of preventing and suppressing fire, protecting life and property, and/or performing other duties as may be assigned or required.

‘Full-time’ means employed for compensation on a basis of at least 40 hours per week by any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

‘GFSTC’ is the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council.

‘GFSTC Staff’ are personnel appointed by the Executive Director and employed by the Georgia Firefighter Standards & Training Council.

‘Inmate Firefighter’ those individuals currently serving a sentence as a Georgia Department of Corrections inmate and currently enrolled or have successfully completed the Georgia Department of Corrections Inmate Firefighter program.

‘Lapsed’ refers to individuals who have not completed or reported their recertification requirements for an identified period of time.

‘Part-time’ means employed for compensation on less than a full-time basis by any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

‘Probation’ means administrative restrictions placed on an individual by GFSTC or the Executive Director for violations of GFSTC Rules.

‘Registered Firefighter’ means a volunteer firefighter who has been trained to the level of Registered Firefighter as specified by the GFSTC.

‘Support’ - means firefighters who are limited as to their function and do not participate in activities which may require them being in close proximity to any hazardous zone.

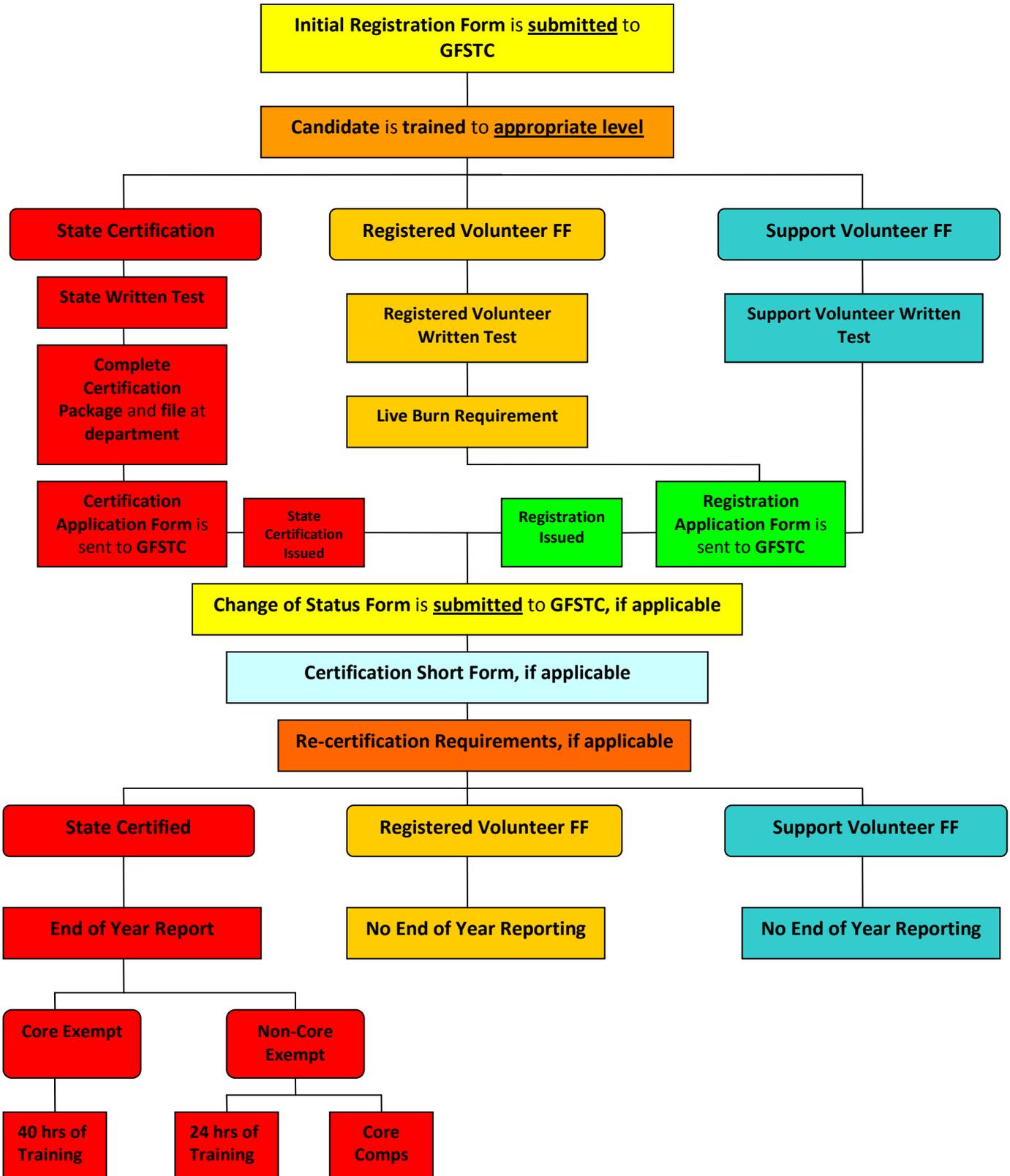
‘State Certified Firefighter’ means a firefighter who has met the requirements for certification as specified by O.C.G.A. 25-4-8 and these Rules.

‘Volunteer’ means not employed for Compensation but appointed and regularly enrolled to serve as a firefighter for any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

‘Volunteer Firefighter’ means for the purposes of the mission of GFSTC, volunteer firefighter may be referred to as a ‘Registered Firefighter’.



Candidate Reporting Flowchart



I. Candidate Initial Registration

Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training will need to be notified as soon as possible when a new member is appointed to or employed by the identified agency/department. This is accomplished by completing the candidate initial registration form and submitting it to GFSTC. The initial registration will attach the individual to an agency/department and provide them with a GFSTC ID.

Firefighters not currently within our system will not have a GFSTC ID. An agency/department may access the GFSTC ID by logging in under their agency/department login information at www.gfstconline.org.

The GFSTC ID is essential for firefighters to have readily available, since it is necessary for testing and obtaining personal information.

Below are the various capacities a firefighter can serve within the agency/department:

- Volunteer Support Firefighter
- Volunteer Firefighter
- Part-time Firefighter
- State Certified Firefighter*

*Career/Full-time firefighters are required to be **state certified**. Effective 07/01/2004, volunteers and part-time firefighters **may choose** to be state certified, if not required by the authority having jurisdiction.

Note: “Full-time” means employed for compensation on a basis of at least 40 hours per week by any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

The following information is required:

- Social Security Number
- First and Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Appointment/Employment Date
- Type of Service
 - *Career*
 - *Part-time*
 - *Volunteer*
 - *Support*
 - *Inmate*

Note: State Certified Firefighters- There are five levels of state certification

- Firefighter (**FF**)
- Fire and Life Safety Educator (**FSE**)
- Fire Inspector (**ISP**)
- Fire Investigator (**INV**)
- Airport Firefighter (**ARFF**)

II. Candidate Trained to Appropriate Level

In order for firefighters to be eligible to test for a **state certification** or **registration**, they are required to complete a course that meets the council approved training requirements identified on the prerequisite form. The prerequisite forms are located at www.gfstconline.org. (*Click forms, test related forms, prerequisite form, and select the level pursuing*).

GFSTC offers **five** levels of **state certifications**:

- **Firefighter**
- **Fire and Life Safety Educator**
- **Fire Inspector**
- **Fire Investigator**
- **Airport Firefighter**

Full-time firefighters are **required** to be state certified. Effective 07/01/2004, volunteers and part-time firefighters **may choose** to be state certified, if not required by the authority having jurisdiction.

Note: “*Full-time*” means *employed for compensation on a basis of at least 40 hours per week by any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.*

GFSTC offers **two** levels of **registration**:

- **Registered Volunteer FF**
- ***Support Volunteer FF**

***Note:** The Support Volunteer FF test is administered by the agency/department and kept on file. The prerequisite forms are located at www.gfstconline.org. (*Click search under Course Credit Lookup, login, agree to terms under the Accepted Courses for Recertification, select GFSTC under the search by agency, and click Basic Support Firefighter*).

➤ **State Certification**

State certifications require firefighters to **pass a written certification test** and **complete a certification package with one year of their hire date**. The certification package is to be filed at the department. Once the candidate has passed the state written test and completed the certification package, a certification application form is to be submitted to GFSTC. The certification application form is located at www.gfstconline.org (*click forms, state certification, and certification application*). This form is to be filled out and submitted to our agency. Test date can not be older than **1 year**, when the application is received.

It will require a joint effort between the firefighter and fire department. The following documents are used to complete the certification process:

- **Certification Package**
- **Certification Application**

The forms are located at www.gfstconline.org (*Click forms, state certification, and the link for certification package and certification application will be available for selection*).

State Written Test

Once the candidate completes the training requirements to be eligible to test, the agency/department is required to establish a test date with our agency. **The agency/department will have to submit a test request form to our agency. However, if they plan to attend an identified test event on the test event calendar, the candidate will have to sign up as a walk-on for the event.**

The state **certification** and **registration** test can be administered in a variety of methods and locations. The written test can be administered by hard copy or online test. In addition, the location can vary. *For example*, if the agency/department has at least 12 candidates to test, GFSTC or a representative of GFSTC can come to their location. This is available, if the agency/department has a location that is conducive for testing.

Note: For fewer than 12 candidates, agencies/departments will have to make other arrangements for testing, such as signing up as walk-ons or making arrangements at a local regional test site (a list of the regional test sites can be found on our home page on our website at www.gfstconline.org).

Also, agencies/departments have the ability to contact the nearest regional test site and schedule a test. The arrangements for the test location will have to be agreed upon between the agency/department and the regional test site. Once the location and date of the test is determined, the agency/department is responsible for ensuring a test request form is submitted to GFSTC at least **30 days** prior to the test event.

Note: The Test Request Form can be submitted by faxing or e-mailing the form (www.gfstconline.org: *click forms, test related forms, and test request form*) **or** logging on our website using the agency/department login information and clicking the online test request form.

Certification Package

The certification package requires a joint effort between the agency/department and individual to complete. The fire department is responsible for maintaining the completed certification package on each firefighter. ***All applicable supporting documentation is to be kept on file at the department and made available for review by GFSTC staff upon request.***

The following are areas within the certification package:

- Check-off Sheet for Completing the package
- Application information (completed by applicant)
- Personal History Release (signed by applicant)
- Age Verification (requires birth certification and one other)
- *Criminal History Fingerprint Search Results
 - *Criminal history search must be completed within the previous 18 months.*
- Verification of Good Moral Character (*see Good Moral Charter information below*)
- High School Diploma or State Issue GED (copy required)
- Medical Affidavit
 - *Medical affidavit is not required for FSE, ISP, or INV certification.*
- Physical Agility Test
 - *Physical Agility Test is not required for FSE, ISP, or INV certification.*

**Note: The Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council does not require criminal history records to be maintained. Criminal history records are to be processed, maintained, and/or disposed of in accordance with FBI, GBI, state, and local laws.*

Good Moral Character Procedure

O.C.G.A. 25-4-8 specifies the requirements for employed or certified firefighters, educators, inspectors, airport firefighters, and investigators. One of the requirements listed requires that an employed or certified individual have “good moral character” as determined by investigation under procedure approved by the Council. The procedure approved by the Council requires that good moral behavior be assessed by the candidate’s behavior as shown on a criminal history background report. More specifically, the local agency or fire department should assess the information included on fingerprint search reports or GCIC and NCIC reports, to determine the status of the candidate’s criminal history. Those whose histories don’t show a recent pattern of convictions of crimes involving stealing, cheating, or lying will be considered as having met the “good moral character” provision. This is verified through a statement signed by the local agency head or his/her designee attesting that he/she has investigated the criminal history of the individual and has determined that the candidate is of good moral character. This statement is included as part of the Certification Package.

Certification Application Form

The certification application form is used to inform GFSTC the candidate has completed all the standards as set forth in O.C.G.A 25-4 and policy of council has been successfully completed. Test date can not be older than **1 year**, when the application is received. Once the certification application form is processed and written test is verified, GFSTC will assign the candidate a state certification. The agency/department or firefighter can print the state certification at www.gfstconline.org.

The following are **required** on the form:

- Candidate Signature
- Fire Chief/Designee Signature
- Notary Public
- All Boxes Checked
- Sponsoring Agency/Department

Printing the State Certification

Agencies/departments will use their login information **and/or** firefighters will use their personal login information to print the state certification.

General Standards for State Certification:

(a) **General Certification Standards.** Each applicant for employment as a full-time or part-time firefighter, fire and life safety educator, fire inspector, fire investigator, and airport firefighter who are required to be certified or Volunteer Firefighter who chooses certification shall:

- (1) Be at least 18 years of age as verified by the Fire Chief or his/her designee through an inspection of a birth certificate, a valid Georgia Drivers' License, or a government issued photo identification that includes the applicant's date of birth.
- (2) Be fingerprinted and a search made within 18 months prior to employment/appointment date of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record.
- (3) Not have been convicted of a felony in any jurisdiction within ten years prior to employment/appointment. Firefighters who have been convicted of a felony and have successfully completed the Georgia Department of Corrections Inmate Firefighter program may be certified providing certain provisions have been met. Refer to O.C.G.A. 25-4-8 (2) for specifics.
- (4) Have a good moral character as determined by investigation of the criminal history of the candidate to verify that there is no recent pattern involving stealing, cheating, lying, or other offenses that may indicate less than good moral character.
- (5) For continued employment, he/she must possess or achieve within 12 months of employment a high school diploma or a general education development equivalency.
- (6) For continued employment, he/she must meet the following training and testing requirements:
 - I. Complete the training approved by GFSTC and pass the State of Georgia certification written test within one year prior to the date of application for certification.
 - II. If the date of completion of the required training course is in excess of 60 months the candidate must:
 - a) Present proof of an average of 24 hours per year of GFSTC accepted training since the course completion.

OR

- b) Present documentation to the applicable GFSTC Staff Review Committee, appointed by the Executive Director, requesting acceptance recommendation through a combination of training and/or experience.
- i. GFSTC Staff Review Committees shall consist of a minimum of **3 members** who make recommendations to GFSTC staff regarding minimum training requirements. The committee shall consist of subject matter experts such as representatives from the following:
- Georgia State Fire Marshal or his/her representative.
 - Georgia Fire Academy Director or his/her representative.
 - County Fire Department Fire Chief or his/her representative
 - City/Municipal Fire Department Fire Chief or his/her representative
 - The Georgia (discipline specific) Association(s) President or his/her representative.

(b) **State Certified Firefighter.** In addition to complying with the General Standards for State Certification, the candidate shall:

- 1) Be in good physical condition as determined by a medical examination conducted by a licensed physician, physician's assistant or nurse operating under the direct authority of a licensed physician and meeting specific criteria and completed the medical affidavit as approved by GFSTC.
- 2) Successfully pass the minimum physical agility skills test requirements and complete the physical agility affidavit as approved by GFSTC.
 - a. The minimum physical agility test shall include at a minimum the Stair Climb, Ladder Extension, Ventilation Exercise, Hose Advance, Rescue Drag, and Ladder Removal/Replacement elements as approved by GFSTC.
- 3) An individual hired as a recruit shall complete all appointment requirements, submit GFSTC approved documentation, and receive State Certification within 1 year of the date of hire. Any other individual seeking State Certification shall complete all appointment requirements and submit GFSTC approved documentation in order to be considered for State Certification.

(c) **State Certified Fire and Life Safety Educator.** In addition to complying with the General Standards for State Certification, the candidate shall:

- Complete all appointment requirements, submit GFSTC approved documentation, and receive certification within 1 year of the date of appointment.

- (d) **State Certified Fire Investigator.** In addition to complying with the General Standards for State Certification, the candidate shall:
- Complete all appointment requirements, submit GFSTC approved documentation, and receive certification within 1 year of the date of appointment
- (e) **State Certified Fire Inspector.** In addition to complying with the General Standards for State Certification, the candidate shall:
- Complete all appointment requirements, submit GFSTC approved documentation, and receive certification within 1 year of the date of appointment.
- (f) **State Certified Airport Firefighter.** In addition to complying with the General Standards for State Certification, the candidate shall:
- 1) Be in good physical condition as determined by a medical examination approved by the GFSTC.
 - 2) Successfully pass the minimum physical agility requirements as established by the GFSTC.
 - 3) Complete all appointment requirements, submit GFSTC approved documentation, and receive certification within 1 year of the date of appointment.
- (g) **Continued Annual Training for State Certification(s).** Those individuals who are certified by GFSTC must meet minimum requirements to maintain their certification status each calendar year thereafter.
- (1) Successful completion of a total of 24 or 40 hours of professional development each year as approved by GFSTC is required for maintenance of each certification(s).
 - (2) Completion of defined core competencies for position-specific duties, unless designated as core exempt.
 - (3) Records shall be developed, maintained, and available for review by GFSTC at the local department.

National Certifications

GFSTC holds accreditation with the Pro Board to offer the following levels of **national certifications**:

- Airport Firefighter
- Firefighter I/II
- Fire and Life Safety Educator I
- Fire Inspector I
- Fire Investigator
- Fire Instructor I/II
- Hazardous Materials Awareness
- Hazardous Materials Operations
- Hazardous Materials Technician
- Driver Operator Pumper/Aerial
- Rope Rescue
- Confined Space
- Trench Rescue
- Structural Collapse
- Fire Officer I-IV
- Public Safety Telecommunicator
- Incident Safety Officer
- Health and Safety Officer

The requirements to be eligible to test follow the same requirements established to test for state certifications. For example: *For firefighters to be eligible to test out for a **national** certification, they are required to complete a course that meets the training requirements identified on the prerequisite form. The prerequisite forms are located at www.gfstconline.org. (Click forms, test related forms, prerequisite form, and select the level pursuing).*

National certifications require candidates to pass a written **and** skill test.

Note: Participation in the national certification system is **voluntary; however, several career and volunteer departments use them within their hiring and career ladder processes.*

➤ **State Registered**

In addition to state certifications, GFSTC offers a registration for volunteer firefighters. This recognizes volunteers as a firefighter in Georgia and identifies the individual has met the training requirement established by Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council.

State registered requires a firefighter to **pass a written test** and have a **registration application form** submitted to GFSTC. Once the candidate has passed the registration written test and the agency/department has submitted the registration application form to GFSTC, a registration is issued. The registration application form is located at www.gfstconline.org (click forms, state certification, and registration application). This form is to be filled out and submitted to our agency.

GFSTC offers **two** levels of **registration**:

- **Registered Volunteer FF**
- ***Support Volunteer FF**

**Note: The Support Volunteer FF test is administered by the agency/department and kept on file. The prerequisite forms are located at www.gfstconline.org. (Click search under Course Credit Lookup, login, agree to terms under the Accepted Courses for Recertification, select GFSTC under the search by agency, and click Basic Support Firefighter).*

To complete the registration form, **Registered Volunteer Firefighters** will be required to:

- Pass a written test
- Complete the live-fire training or accepted equivalent
- Submit Registration Application

To complete the registration form, **Support Volunteer Firefighters** will be required to:

- Pass a written test
- Submit Registration Application

Registered Written Test

Once the candidate completes the training requirements to be eligible to test, the agency/department is required to establish a test date with our agency. ***The agency/department will have to submit a test request form to our agency. However, if they plan to attend an identified test event on the test event calendar, the candidate will have to sign up as a walk-on for the event.***

The state **certification** and **registration** test can be administered in a variety methods and locations. The written test can be administered by hard copy or online test. In addition, the location can vary. *For example*, if the agency/departments have at least 12 candidates that need to be tested, GFSTC or a representative of GFSTC can come to their location. This is available, if the agency/department has a location that is conducive for testing.

Note: For fewer than 12 candidates, agencies/departments will have to make other arrangements for testing, such as signing up as walk-ons or making arrangements at a local regional test site (a list of the regional test site can found on our home page at www.gfstconline.org).

Also, agencies/departments have the ability to contact the nearest regional test site and set up a test date. The arrangements for the test location will have to be agreed upon between the agency/department and the regional test site. Once the location and date of the test is determined, the agency/department is responsible for ensuring a test request form is submitted to GFSTC at least **30 days** prior to the test event.

Note: The Test Request Form can be submitted by faxing or e-mailing the form (www.gfstconline.org: *click forms, test related forms, and test request form*) **or** logging on our website using the agency/department login information and clicking the online test request form.

Live Burn Requirement

Those **appointed July 1, 2005, and later** must satisfactorily complete the Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course, Registered Volunteer Firefighter Course, or accepted equivalent **and** have completed a live-fire course taught by or through the Georgia Fire Academy. For credit from the Council, the live-fire component will meet the following conditions:

- The live-fire component shall be taught by the Georgia Fire Academy **or** by instructors who have completed an apprenticeship as a live-fire instructor with the Georgia Fire Academy.
- The live-fire component must be instructed in accordance with NFPA 1403 and the applicable EPD regulations.
- The Module-1 or Registered Volunteer Firefighter component must be completed prior to the live-fire evolution.

Support Written Test

The Support Volunteer FF test is administered by the agency/department and kept on file. The prerequisite forms are located at www.gfstconline.org. *(Click search under Course Credit Lookup, login, agree to terms under the Accepted Courses for Recertification, select GFSTC under the search by agency, and click Basic Support Firefighter).*

Registration Application Form

The registration application form is used to inform GFSTC the candidate has completed all the standards as set forth in O.C.G.A 25-4 and policy of council have been successfully completed. Once the registration application form is processed and written test is verified, GFSTC will assign the candidate a state registration. The agency/department or firefighter can print the state registration at www.gfstconline.org *(click forms, state certification, and registration application).*

The following are **required** on the form:

- Candidate Signature
- All Boxes Checked
- Fire Chief/Designee Signature
- Notary Public
- Sponsoring Agency/Department

Printing the State Registration

Agencies/departments will use their login information **and/or** firefighters will use their personal login information to print the state certification.

General Standards for Registered Volunteer Firefighters

❖ Registered Volunteer FF

“**Volunteer**” means not employed for compensation by but appointed and regularly enrolled to serve as a firefighter for any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

Minimum Training:

Those **appointed prior to July 1, 2004** must hold valid certificates of training for one of the following:

- FDC 101 Basic Firefighter or,
- Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course or,
- Georgia Basic Firefighter or,
- NPQ Firefighter I or,
- Accepted Equivalent

Those **appointed July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005** must satisfactorily complete the Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course or accepted equivalent.

Those **appointed July 1, 2005, and later** must satisfactorily complete the **Module 1** of the **Georgia Basic Firefighter Course**, Registered Volunteer Firefighter Course, or accepted equivalent and have completed a live-fire course taught by or through the Georgia Fire Academy. For credit from the Council, the live-fire component will meet the following conditions:

1. The live-fire component shall be taught by the Georgia Fire Academy **or** by instructors who have completed an apprenticeship as a live-fire instructor with the Georgia Fire Academy.
2. The live-fire component must be instructed in accordance with NFPA 1403 and the applicable EPD regulations.
3. The **Module-1** or **Registered Volunteer Firefighter Course** component must be completed prior to the live-fire evolution.

Continued Annual Training:

At this time there are no annual training requirements for non-state certified volunteer firefighters established by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC). Please note that Insurance Services Office (ISO) requirements are not affected by GFSTC decisions.

General Standards for Registered Support Firefighters

➤ **Support Volunteer FF**

“**Support**” means firefighters who are limited as to their function and do not participate in activities which may require them being in close proximity to any hazardous zone.

Minimum Training:

Satisfactorily complete the Georgia Basic Support Firefighter Training Course or equivalent.

Continued Annual Training:

At this time there are no annual training requirements for non-state certified volunteer firefighters established by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC).

III. Change of Status Form

The change of status form is used to change the service status of firefighters within an agency/department, such as part-time to career or support to volunteer, core exempt, non-core exempt, medical or military leave, or departure date. Examples include:

- Personnel departing from the fire department
- Classifying personnel as core exempt or non-core exempt
- Placing personnel on medical leave
- Personnel returning from medical leave
- Placing personnel on military leave
- Personnel returning from military leave

Note: *The Council has approved medical and military leave as approved leaves of absences. The required continuing annual training (re-certification hours) will be pro-rated for personnel on approved leave of absence.*

The following is required:

- **GFSTC ID**
- **Last Name**

The **agency/department** will be required to provide the following:

- Identify the **type of service** the firefighter will serve:
 - Career
 - Part-time
 - Volunteer
 - Support
 - Inmate

The type of **classification**:

- Employment
- Appointment
- Departure

In addition, the agency/department will be required to include the firefighter's **appointment/employment** or **departure date**.

The change of service form has a section for state certified individuals only. This area allows the agency/department to change the following:

- **Core Competency Status**
- **Leave Status**
- Approved Leave **Start Date**
- Approved Leave **Return Date**

Core Competency status is divided into two areas, which are **non-core exempt** and **core exempt**:

- **Non-core exempt:**
 - *24 hrs of training plus core competences
- **Core exempt:**
 - *40 hrs of training with no core competence

***Note:** Approved training requirements are certificates issued by state, national agencies, in-service training taught from purchased instructional package, and/or courses assigned course credit numbers by GFSTC.*

Leave Status has two types to choose from, which are **medical** and **military leave**:

- **Medical**
- **Military Leave**

Medical leave and **Military leave** must be reported using the Change of Status form. When returning from leave in excess of **180 days**, submit a **hard copy** Change of Status form.

Medical Leave:

Individuals placed on medical leave shall be reported as such using the Change of Status Form within **30 days**. Individuals placed on **medical leave** exceeding **180 calendar days** will require a signed affidavit from a licensed physician or surgeon attesting said individual is fit for return to duty, along with a completed Change of Status Form indicating the date for the return to duty in order to be considered for recertification by GFSTC. In addition, an individual's certification status will revert to "lapsed" if and when medical leave exceeds one calendar year.

There are **three classifications** of **medical leave**:

- **Returning to duty prior to 180 days**
- **Returning to duty exceeding 180 but less than 365 calendar days**
- **Returning to duty exceeding 365 calendar days**

Below are the requirements for each:

✓ **Returning to duty prior to 180 days:**

If the individual returns to duty **prior to 180 days**, submit a Change of Status Form indicating the date. Those allowed to return to duty by their health care professional as “light duty” may be reclassified as core exempt until released to full duty.

✓ **Returning to duty exceeding 180 but less than 365 calendar days:**

In addition to the Change of Status form, Individuals on medical leave exceeding **180** but less than **365** calendar days shall require a ***signed affidavit from a licensed physician or surgeon attesting said individual is fit for return to duty in order to be considered for acceptance by GFSTC.***

✓ **Returning to duty exceeding 365 calendar days:**

The certification of Individuals who are on medical leave exceeding 365 calendar days shall be **lapsed** and **shall remain** so until the following are completed:

- Receive **refresher training** equal to or exceeding an average of **24 or 40 hours per year** for the time on leave. 24 hours is required for individuals listed as non core exempt. 40 hours is required for individuals listed as core exempt.
- Complete the current recertification requirements for core competencies, if applicable.
- **Pass** the discipline specific written certification examination.
- **Letter from fire chief** on department letter head stating refresher training and core competencies (if applicable) have been completed and the discipline specific written certification examination has been passed. In addition, include in the letter a **signed affidavit** from a licensed physician or surgeon attesting said individual is fit for return to duty.
- Submit a completed **Change of Status Form** indicating the return date from medical leave.

Military Leave:

Individuals placed on **military leave** exceeding 180 calendar days will require a **copy of military orders** indicating said individual was placed on active military duty, along with a **completed Change of Status Form** indicating the reinstatement date for the return to duty in order to be considered for recertification by GFSTC. Individuals placed on military leave exceeding one calendar year will be considered on a **case-by-case basis**.

Military leave has two classifications to choose from to determine the requirements that will be required to meet in order to meet the re-certification requirements:

- **Returning to duty less than 365 calendar days**
- **Returning to duty exceeding 365 calendar days**

The following are the requirements for each:

✓ **Returning to duty less than 365 calendar days:**

- Requires a **copy of military orders** indicating said individual was placed on active military duty, along with a **completed Change of Status Form** indicating the reinstatement date for the return to duty in order to be considered for recertification by GFSTC.

✓ **Returning to duty exceeding 365 calendar days:**

- Individuals placed on military leave exceeding one calendar year will be considered on a **case-by-case basis**.

IV. Certification Short Form

The **certification Short Form** is used to add an additional level of certification for individuals who have meet all requirements and are currently state certified in one or more of the 5 levels. **In addition**, certified individuals who move from one fire department to another or are **rehired** within **1 year** of the departure date may use the certification short form providing all requirements are met and the receiving department chooses to accept previous hiring requirements from the previous department.

The **certification short form** is used when:

- **Adding** additional levels of state certification.
- **Certified individuals:**
 - Move from one department to another; or
 - Hired within 1 year of the departure date may use the certification short form providing all requirements are met and the receiving department chooses to accept previous hiring requirements from the previous department.

V. Re-certification Requirements

Re-certification Requirements are established by Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. Currently, this only applies to state certifications. Registered Volunteer Firefighters, who are not state certified, and Support Volunteer Firefighter are not required to report annual training to GFSTC.

Non-core exempt and **core exempt** are two classifications for recertification requirements:

- **Non-core exempt:**
 - *24 hrs of accepted training plus core competences
- **Core exempt:**
 - *40 hrs of accepted training with no core competences

**Note: Accepted training includes certificates issued by state or national agencies for applicable training. In-service training taught from purchased instructional package and courses assigned course credit numbers by GFSTC are also accepted.*

Recertification for **non-core** exempt certifications:

Re-certification for **Airport Firefighter** and **Firefighter**:

- **24 hours of approved training**
- ***Complete Core Competences**

**Note: The core competences for each level are identified in a task book approved by Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. The task books are available at www.gfstconline.org. (Click forms, state certification, state recertification task books, and select the appropriate task book).*

Re-certification for **Fire and Life Safety Educator, Fire Inspector, and Fire Investigator**:

- 24 hours of approved training
- *Demonstrate the ability to perform basic skills for the identified level

**Note: These identified levels should demonstrate the ability to perform basic skills for the identified level, which is reported to this agency by one of two methods. Fire departments may indicate on the GFSTC report that the individual has performed the basic skills (core competencies) during the calendar year or submit a letter under the signature of the Agency Head or his/her designee stating these skills have been demonstrated. In addition, the individual must have a minimum of 24 hours of training in relevant GFSTC pre-accepted training program(s) annually.*

Recertification for **core exempt** report the following:

Recertification for **Airport Firefighter, Firefighter, Fire and Life Safety Educator, Fire Inspector, and Fire Investigator**:

- Core exempt individuals are not required to demonstrate annual core competencies, but the continued annual training increases from 24 to 40 hours.

Re-certification for state certified Firefighters, Fire and Life Safety Educators, Fire Inspectors, Airport Firefighters, and Fire Investigators consists of two (2) parts, core competencies and continued annual training. The only exception is the core exempt designated by the fire chief. Core exempt are individuals who do not participate in physical duties as those identified in the core competencies. As an example, individuals that are designated as core exempt will not don PPE and perform fire suppression duties. Core exempt individuals are not required to demonstrate annual core competencies, but the continued annual training increases from 24 to 40 hours.

Accepted Re-certification Training

There are currently **four (4) methods** in which certified Firefighters, Fire and Life Safety Educators, Fire Inspectors, Airport Firefighters, and Fire Investigators may accrue continued annual training credit (re-certification hours).

1. Certificates issued by state or national agencies for training that is applicable for the defined level of certification is accepted. For example, Georgia Fire Academy, Department of Homeland Security/Georgia Emergency Management Agency, National Fire Academy, etc. are accepted.
2. Fire Departments who have purchased the instructional package from one of the 3 basic firefighter-training manuals approved by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council and have a qualified instructor may accrue re-certification hours. The 3 GFSTC approved manuals are the Essentials of Firefighting by IFSTA, the Firefighter's Handbook by Delmar, and the Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills by Jones and Bartlett. To receive re-certification credit, the local training records must be maintained indicating the issued GFSTC course number as well as good record keeping practices. Course numbers by chapter for the GFSTC approved training manuals may be found at www.gfstconline.org or by contacting our office. Good record keeping practices include the GFSTC course number, a description of the training, course objectives, student's names and signatures, instructor name and signature, with dates and times.
3. Classes, courses, and schools developed and delivered locally by qualified instructors may be accepted. The agency head or his/her designee must submit a completed "Course Credit Request Form" for acceptance. As these courses are accepted, GFSTC will issue a course number. The fire department must in turn maintain training records tracking each individual's progress using the course number and good record keeping practices.
4. Fire service associations may also submit a Course Credit Request Form for credit for attendees. GFSTC in conjunction with the Educators, Inspectors, Investigators, Firefighters, and Fire Chiefs associations in this state have developed accepted practices to use for credit. In affect, the respective association submits a Course Credit Request Form to GFSTC who in turn issues a course number. In addition, assurances must be made that training occurs, attendees are present, and the training is applicable for the level(s) of certification credited. The individual's fire department must in turn maintain training records tracking each individual's progress using the course number and good record keeping practices.

VI. Returning to the Fire Service

State Certification

Individuals returning to the fire service and seeking certification status will fall into one of the following areas:

- Within one year
- Exceeding **one year** and ***initial training** within **five years**
- Exceeding **one year** and ***initial training** over **five years**

*Note: Initial training date is determined based on the date the written test was passed to obtain state certification.

The following requirement will be required to obtain registration status:

✓ **Within one year:**

Individuals who return within one year and their still current with the previous year's recertification requirements; a **change of service status** and **certification short form** will be required.

✓ **Exceeding one year and initial training within five years:**

Individuals who return after one year and their initial training is within 5 years, the following will be required; a **change of service status**, **pass written test**, **complete certification package**, and **submit certification application form** to GFSTC.

✓ **Exceeding one year and initial training over five years:**

Individuals who return after one year and initial training over five years, the following will be required; a **change of service status**, **trained to appropriate level** or ***complete remedial training determined by the Fire Chief or designee**, **pass written test**, **complete certification package**, and **submit certification application form** to GFSTC.

**Note: The Fire Chief or designee should evaluate the individual's level of competency for the level pursuing. If needed, remediate the individual to meet the current training requirements to be eligible to test for the identified level.*

State Registration

Individuals returning to the fire service and seeking registration status will fall into one of the following areas:

- Within one year
- Exceeding **one year** and ***initial training** within **five years**
- Exceeding **one year** and ***initial training** over **five years**

*Note: Initial training date is determined based on the date the written test was passed to obtain state registration.

The following requirement will be required to obtain registration status:

✓ **Within one year:**

Individuals who return within one year of initial test date, a **change of service** will be required.

✓ **Exceeding one year and initial training within five years:**

Individuals who return after one year and their initial training is within 5 years, the following will be required; a **change of service status** and **pass written test**.

✓ **Exceeding one year and initial training over five years:**

Individuals who return after one year and initial training over five years, the following will be required; a **change of service status, trained to appropriate level** or ***complete remedial training determined by the Fire Chief or designee, pass written test, and submit registration application form** to GFSTC.

**Note: The Fire Chief or designee should evaluate the individual's level of competency for the level pursuing. If needed, remediate the individual to meet the current training requirements to be eligible to test for the identified level.*

VII. Fire Chief Certification Exemptions

The Chief Executive Officer (Fire Chief) of a fire department, in lieu of submitting proof of training equal to or exceeding the Georgia Basic Firefighting Training Course, may submit documentation for consideration consisting of:

- Resume indicating previous employment as an Executive Officer or Command Staff
- Certifications, courses, schools indicating Executive Officer, Management, and/or Leadership training.

The Chief Executive Officer (Fire Chief) of a fire department may be exempt from taking and passing the Firefighter Certification written examination.

The Chief Executive Officer (Fire Chief) of a fire department may be exempt from taking and passing the GFSTC Physical Agility Test (PAT).

The Chief Executive Officer (Fire Chief) of a fire department may be exempt from submitting a medical affidavit.

All other certification requirements for Firefighter apply. Firefighter certification is as followed:

Firefighter Certification Requirements: O.C.G.A. 25-4-8

1. At least 18 years of age;
2. Not have been convicted of a felony within 10 years prior to employment; There is an exception: Firefighters who have been convicted of a felony and have participated in the Georgia Department of Corrections Firefighter program may be state certified providing certain provision have been met. Refer to O.C.G.A. 25-4-8 (2) for specifics.
3. Have good moral character as determined by investigation under procedure approved by the council;
4. Be fingerprinted and a search made of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record;
5. Be in good physical condition as determined by a medical examination and successfully pass the minimum physical agility requirements a established by the Council;
6. Possess, or achieve within 12 months after employment, a high school diploma or a general education development equivalency.

Those (five bugle) Fire Chiefs who choose to claim the Council approved exemptions shall submit a Firefighter Certification Package* complete with any required supporting documentation.

*The medical affidavit and the physical agility form may not be required to be completed.

The **“Georgia State Firefighter Certification”** test may be omitted providing supporting documentation is submitted for consideration along with the certification package indicating **“training equal to or exceeding the Georgia Basic Firefighting Training Course”**. This documentation may consist of a **resume indicating previous employment as an Executive Officer or Command Staff, certifications, courses, schools indicating training as an Executive Officer, Management, and/or Leadership.**

VIII. Previous Training Considerations

Previous training considerations refers to training received in-state or out-of-state within **5 years** and seeking consideration for state certification, registered volunteer firefighter, or support volunteer firefighter. The following applies:

➤ State Certifications

- ❖ Completed training as determined by the Georgia Firefighter Review Committee as equal to or exceeding the established training requirements for the identified level.
- ❖ Passes the State certification examination within one year prior to the date of certification.
- ❖ If the date of completion of the equivalent training course is in excess of 60 months or prior to 07/01/2004, (which ever is the lesser), the candidate must:
 - Present proof of an average of 24 hours per year of accepted relevant training for identified level.

OR

- Present documentation to the Georgia Firefighter Review Committee requesting acceptance recommendation through a combination of training and/or experience for the identified level.

Georgia Firefighter Review Committee:

The Georgia Firefighter Review Committee shall function with an advisory capacity to Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council and consist of subject matter experts such as representatives from the following:

- Georgia State Fire Marshal or his/her representative.
- Georgia Fire Academy Director or his/her representative.
- County Fire Department Fire Chief or his/her representative
- City/Municipal Fire Department Fire Chief or his/her representative
- Georgia Fire Chiefs Association President or his/her representative
- Georgia State Firefighters Association President or his/her representative

➤ **Registered Volunteer Firefighter**

- ❖ Must satisfactorily complete the Registered Volunteer Course or accepted equivalent and have completed a **live-fire** course taught by or through the Georgia Fire Academy. For credit from the Council, the live-fire component will meet the following conditions:
 - The live-fire component shall be taught by the Georgia Fire Academy or by instructors who have completed an apprenticeship as a live-fire instructor with the Georgia Fire Academy.
 - The live-fire component must be instructed in accordance with NFPA 1403 and the applicable EPD regulations.
 - The Registered Volunteer component must be completed prior to the live-fire evolution.
- ❖ Passes the Registered Volunteer Test

➤ **Support Firefighter**

- ❖ Satisfactorily completed the Georgia Basic Support Firefighter Training Course or equivalent.

IV. Differences between State and National (Pro Board) Certifications

State Certifications

State certifications require firefighters to **pass a written test** and **complete a certification package**.

GFSTC offers five levels of **state certifications**:

- **Firefighter**
- **Fire and Life Safety Educator**
- **Fire Inspector**
- **Fire Investigator**
- **Airport Firefighter**

Individuals who are employed on a full-time basis for a fire department are required to be certified through GFSTC. **Volunteers** and **part-time** members may pursue state certification, if desired or required by their agency/department.

State certification consists of submitting a certification package indicating the following:

- Required training completion
- Satisfactory completion of the certification written examination
- Proof of 18 years of age or older
- High School diploma or G.E.D
- Criminal history report to determine felony conviction (Fingerprint search)
- Good moral character investigation
- Medical examination (if required by the level of certification)
- Physical Agility Test (if required by the level of certification)

National Certification (Pro Board)

At this time, there are no GFSTC requirements for individuals to obtain Pro Board certification at any level. Pro Board certification consists of the following:

- 18 years of age
- Member of a Agency or Fire Department
- Obtain the required training
- Satisfactory completion of the written **and** skills examination within 1 year of the written test date.

GFSTC holds accreditation with the Pro Board to offer the following levels of **national certifications**:

- Airport Firefighter
- Firefighter I/II
- Fire and Life Safety Educator I
- Fire Inspector I
- Fire Investigator
- Fire Instructor I/II
- Hazardous Materials Awareness
- Hazardous Materials Operations
- Hazardous Materials Technician
- Driver Operator Pumper/Aerial
- Rope Rescue
- Confined Space
- Trench Rescue
- Structural Collapse
- Fire Officer I-IV
- Public Safety Telecommunicator
- Incident Safety Officer
- Health and Safety Officer

The requirements to be eligible to test follow the same requirements established to test for state certifications. For example: *For firefighters to be eligible to test out for a **national** certification, they are required to complete a course that meets the training requirements identified on the prerequisite form. The prerequisite forms are located at www.gfstconline.org. (Click forms, test related forms, prerequisite form, and select the level pursuing).*

National certifications require candidates to pass a written **and** skill test.

****Note:*** *Participation in the national certification system is **voluntary**; however, several career and volunteer departments use them within their hiring and career ladder processes.*