



## **FIRE 175 Department Approval Letter**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number: 820\_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:** Please read and initial each item where indicated. Your initials and signature acknowledge that you understand and agree to abide by all listed requirements as outlined in this document.

The State of Oregon Department of Public Safety and Standards require that firefighters become certified by having students meet standards of a criminal history check and fingerprinting.

*See below for rule update and explanation for Fire Certification.*

## **Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Fire Certification Program Rule Update and Explanation**

The Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) relating to requirements for fire service certification as well as the rule governing the denial and revocation of fire service certifications were reviewed. These rules were filed permanently on December 29, 2014. To assist constituents in understanding the recent rule changes, Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) is providing the updated OAR language along with a brief explanation of how it applies to Oregon's fire service professionals.

### **Fire Service Professional Fingerprinting Requirement Update**

**NOTE TO READER:** The following is for information only; it does not require action by the fire service. Fire Service Agencies impacted by this change will be notified by DPSST after receipt of application for certification.

Current statute and OAR prohibit fire service professionals who have been convicted of certain crimes from holding NFPA or Oregon-specific fire service certifications in the state. (Please refer to OAR 259-009-0070 for a complete list of mandatory and discretionary crimes.) This prohibition applies to Oregon convictions as well as convictions in another state of a crime that, if committed in this state, would constitute a disqualifying crime. In order to ensure that applicants for fire service certification have not been convicted of disqualifying crimes, DPSST must conduct a state and national criminal background check.

It was recognized by DPSST, the Fire Policy Committee and the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (Board) that rule language relating to minimum standards for fire

service certifications did not allow DPSST to ensure that an applicant for certification had not been convicted of a disqualifying crime outside of the state of Oregon. (While it is possible to do a computerized check of Oregon criminal history, fingerprints are required to request a nationwide (FBI) criminal background check.)

The OAR has been updated to require any applicant for fire service certification who has never been fingerprinted for the purposes of certification, be fingerprinted. This change does not require action by the fire service agency unless you are notified by DPSST that fingerprints are required. The fire service agency or individual will be responsible for paying the appropriate fingerprinting fees once notified by DPSST. Fire service professionals who have been previously fingerprinted are not required to be re-printed unless they are identified as a multi-source offender (those who have committed a crime in a state other than Oregon) in the Oregon LEDS system as stated in the following rule:

OAR 259-009-0059

(4) Fingerprints. Any individual utilized by a fire service agency that has never been fingerprinted or is identified in the Oregon LEDS system as a multi- source offender is required to be fingerprinted on standard applicant fingerprint cards. The hiring agency is responsible for fingerprinting and must forward one card with the appropriate fees to the Department.

How does this effect applying for certification?

The initial certificated process will not change based on the new fingerprinting rule. No action needs to be taken until notified by DPSST. Fire service agencies should continue to apply for certification as usual. If it is determined that an applicant needs to be fingerprinted, the fire service agency will be notified via letter detailing the fingerprinting procedures which are as follows:

1. Individual must be fingerprinted on the DPSST fingerprint card provided by DPSST.
2. Return the fingerprint card along with appropriate fees (currently \$42.75 per individual) to DPSST.
3. Once DPSST receives the fingerprint card with appropriate fees, the information will be forwarded to Oregon State Police (OSP)/Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for processing.
4. If the individual has not been convicted of a Measure 11 or discretionary disqualifying crime, the application for certification will be processed and the individual will receive certification.

## Discretionary Conviction Section of OAR Update

The internal certification processes for fire service professionals who have been convicted of a mandatory crime as identified in OAR 259-009-0070(3) has not changed. (Conviction of a Measure 11 crime requires revocation of all certifications regardless of the date of conviction.)

The OAR which sets guidelines for denial and revocation based upon discretionary disqualifying convictions has been clarified:

OAR 259-009-0070(5)

(a) The Department may take action on any conviction constituting discretionary disqualifying misconduct identified in section (4) of this rule that occurred after January 15, 2008;

(b) Convictions that occurred seven years or more prior to the date of review may be appropriate for summary staff disposition or administrative closure.

What does this mean to you as a Fire Service Professional?

Individuals who hold certifications or apply for certifications that have been convicted of a discretionary disqualifying conviction after January 15, 2008 will require review by the Fire Policy Committee (FPC) to determine if the conduct that led to the conviction disqualifies the individual for receiving or holding fire certifications. Individuals convicted of a discretionary crime prior to January 15, 2008 will not be reviewed and the application will be processed as usual. Please note: this is not a change in the previous timelines established by the Fire Policy Committee and the Board. The purpose of this rule change was to simply clarify the language relating to the review timelines for discretionary criminal convictions.

## Personnel/Agency Form (PAF) Update

DPSST is statutorily required to revoke the certifications of a fire service professional if they are discharged from a fire service agency for cause. (The discharge for cause standard, including DPSST definitions, can be found in OAR 259-009-0070(3)(b).) Previously, the Personnel/Agency Form (PAF) contained one personnel check box to indicate that a fire service professional has been discharged from an agency. This box, if checked, automatically triggered an investigation on that fire service professional regardless of the true reason for discharge. To simplify the notification process for agencies, the discharge section of the PAF has been expanded to include two distinct categories: "Performance" and "Behavior". The purpose of this change is to clearly distinguish the difference between a separation for issues related to performance and behavior. Performance, which would not lead to a DPSST investigation, would include such examples as lack of participation.

Behavior would trigger a DPSST investigation into the discharged fire service professional's conduct. "Performance" and "Behavior" have been defined as follows:

1. Performance: the action or process of carrying out or accomplishing an action, task, or function.
2. Behavior: The way in which someone acts or behaves.

## Background Investigations

Because of the nature of the fire service profession and the exposure to vulnerable people, the Fire Policy Committee and the Board recognized the need to conduct thorough background checks on any applicant wishing to become a career or volunteer fire service professional. The following rule language was developed to serve as a guideline for agencies:

### Background Investigation

(1) A background investigation must be conducted by a fire service agency on each individual being considered for employment or utilization as a fire service professional to determine if applicant is of good character.

(a) The background investigation must include, but is not limited to, investigation into the following:

(A) Criminal history and arrests;

(B) Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records;

(C) Drug and alcohol use;

(D) Education verification;

(E) Employment history;

(F) Military history verification;

(G) Personal and professional references. Personal and professional references may include, but are not limited to, friends, associates, family members, and neighbors;

(H) Personal Interview. The personal interview may occur before or after the investigation and may be used to clarify discrepancies in the investigation;

(I) Records checks, which may include, but are not limited to:

(i) Police records, district attorney, court and Oregon Judicial Information Network (OJIN) records;

(ii) Open sources or social media, as permitted by law; (iii) Financial information, as permitted by law; and

(iv) Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Professional Standards records.

(J) Residential history; and (K) Work eligibility.

(b) Each individual being considered for employment or utilization as a fire service professional must provide a notarized personal history statement. The statement must include, but is not limited to:

(A) Verification of the background information referred to in section (1) (a);

(B) A complete list of all fire service agencies an individual has applied with; and

(C) A signed release allowing background investigation information to be shared with other public or private safety agencies in which the applicant may become affiliated with.

(2) Results of the background investigation on all fire service professionals must be retained by the fire service agency in accordance with the Secretary of State's Record Retention Schedule and must be available for review at any reasonable time by the Department.

I have read and understand D.P.S.S.T. standards for applying for certification.

*Initial here*\_\_\_\_\_

***Department approval is required each time you attempt to register for FIRE 175*** (Firefighter I Academy). This process requires you reading and completing this document and returning it to [Fire@cocc.edu](mailto:Fire@cocc.edu) after which you will be approved to register. Approval to register for FIRE 175 **DOES NOT** guarantee you a place in the class. In addition, **you must be at least 18 years of age by the first day of this course**. Regular registration rules will apply. Attempts to register before you receive approval will be unsuccessful. Please remember: It is your responsibility to register for the class once you receive department approval. We do not register students in the Fire Program. In addition, this does not take the place of your responsibility to meet with your advisor to get clearance to register and ensure there are no holds on your student account.

I have read and understand department approval portion.

*initial here*\_\_\_\_\_

Please note that all communications regarding this process will be made through your COCC email account. Check at least daily or have your COCC email forwarded to your personal address. Failure to complete these requirements because you did not check your COCC email account is not grounds for an extension.

If you are new to COCC, you must apply to the college and complete placement testing or submit transcripts for evaluation before registering. Follow the “Getting Started” steps at <http://www.cocc.edu/getting-started/>.

## **Instructions:**

Carefully read the following information, which details the requirements you must meet to be eligible to enroll into FIRE 175.

You will receive an email confirming your approval after you have thoroughly read the requirements, signed the agreement page and emailed it to [Fire@cocc.edu](mailto:Fire@cocc.edu) to authorize approval for registration. After approval you will receive a confirmation email and will be able to register for FIRE 175. Please note: completing this Department Approval letter only clears you for registration. It does not guarantee you a spot in the FIRE 175 class.

I have read and understand the approval for registration portion.

*initial here* \_\_\_\_\_

***All students registered in FIRE 175 must have their VCI accounts completed and validated prior to the first day of FIRE 175. Students who have not completed their accounts may be administratively withdrawn from FIRE 175.*** If you do not complete this requirement prior to the start of the course another student from the waiting list will be given the seat in class. Any waitlisted students that are added to the FIRE 175 class will then have until the second week of the course to submit their VCI requirements. Accordingly, if the added students’ VCI requirements are not completed by the day of the FIRE 175 midterm, then those students will receive a failing grade for the course.

I have read and understand applying for the VCI background test and drug screening.

*Initial here* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Requirements for Fire Students Verified Credentials:**

After you have successfully registered for FIRE 175, you will receive an email with directions for opening an account with Verified Credentials (VCI). VCI is the online service the college uses to submit immunization, criminal history check and drug screening requirements. *If you completed a VCI check within the last year from the start of the course we will accept that information, and you will not need to complete another VCI background check.*

***Your VCI requirements must be completed prior to the first meeting of your FIRE 175 class.***

This means your documentation must not just be uploaded, but also validated. The process of validating your documents often takes VCI more time than you might anticipate. A criminal history check and urine drug screening are also included in your VCI requirements. These requirements must be performed through VCI and/or its designated vendors. Criminal history checks and/or drug screens not conducted through VCI and using the code provided will not be accepted. You will receive an email with an access code that will allow you to begin uploading your documentation and instructions from the Structure Fire Director.

I have read and understand VCI background check.

Initial here \_\_\_\_\_

## **Dress Code:**

***Students are to wear the following uniform during all class sessions throughout the duration of the fire academy. You will be required to be in uniform by the second week of academy.***

- ♣ Navy blue slacks (no jeans)
- ♣ COCC Fire/EMT Program polo shirt
- ♣ Dark-colored boots (clean and polished)
  
- ♣ COCC Structure Fire Cadet T-shirt (to be worn during lab days)

## **Acknowledgement**

I understand that I will be required to meet all pre-registration requirements for departmental approval, upload and verify all required documents to the college-approved vendor. If I do not meet these requirements before the designated deadlines, I acknowledge that I will be administratively withdrawn from FIRE 175.

Lastly, I acknowledge that I do **NOT** have claustrophobia (*the fear of confined spaces*) or acrophobia (*the fear of heights*).

Below is the VCI information.

**Your VCI requirements will be the same as those for EMT. Therefore, please make sure you can meet the following requirements:**

The process of validating your documents often takes VCI more time than you might anticipate. A criminal history check and urine drug screening are also included in your VCI requirements. These requirements must be performed through VCI and/or its designated vendors. Criminal history checks and/or drug screens not conducted through VCI and using the code provided will not be accepted. You will receive an email with an access code that will allow you to begin uploading your documentation and instructions from the EMS Administrative Clerk.

The following immunizations and screenings are required by the Oregon Health Authority Standardized administrative Rule 409-030-0100 for healthcare providers. Only medical exemptions are accepted.

#### Hepatitis B Vaccine

Documentation of 3 vaccinations and results of Hepatitis B surface antibody test (titer) showing immunity.

**OR**

Series in progress with first dose administered.

**OR**

Hepatitis B titer showing immunity

In\*2ndseries must be completed if the titer is negative. Negative titer after the 2ndseries will be considered a non-responder and will require no further action.

#### MMR Vaccine

(measles, mumps, rubella)

Documentation of 2 MMR vaccinations at least 4 weeks apart.

**OR**

Results of Measles, Mumps, & Rubella titers showing immunity.

\*if any component titer is negative, vaccine series must be completed.

#### Varicella Vaccine

Documentation of 2 doses of Varicella vaccine at least 4 weeks apart.

**OR**

Results of Varicella titer demonstrating immunity

**OR**

Series in progress with first dose administered.

#### Tdap

Documentation of 1 time dose after 18 years old. Tetanus must be within the past 10 years.

#### TB Test

Documentation of 2 negative TB skin tests, with 2nd test administered within the past 30 days.

- both tests must be read within 48 hours of placement.
- if either test is positive, provide documentation of physician evaluation & treatment.

**OR**

Documentation of either a Quantiferon Gold or T-Spot blood test within the past 30 days.

\*Students with a past positive TB test must provide documentation of the test and follow-up chest x-ray and treatment must be completed by the 1st day of class.

### Influenza Vaccine

Documentation of current years influenza vaccination

### **BLS for Healthcare Providers**

\_\_\_\_\_ EMT students are required to hold and maintain a valid CPR certification consistent with the standards of American Heart Association Basic Life Support for the Healthcare Professional. Certification from other sources, such as American Red Cross or American Safety & Health Institute (ANSI), will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

•Copies of valid certifications must be scanned and emailed to Fire@cocc.edu before the midterm exam date.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

COCC email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Course CRN: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form completed to  
Fire@cocc.edu**