



**Columbia Fire Department**  
**Standard Operating Guideline ADM-027**

**Officer Candidate Program**

Effective: 03/01/09

Issued by Wm. Bradley Anderson, Chief of Department

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**Rescinds**

ADM-027 dated 03/26/03

**Purpose**

To establish an Officer Candidate Program for the purpose of training perspective officers of Columbia Fire Department with the appropriate management skills necessary to perform the duties of the position. This guideline also establishes a course curriculum to facilitate the training of personnel to perform the duties and responsibilities of the ranks of Captain and Battalion Chief.

**Scope**

This program will be applicable for all operations personnel in the Columbia Fire Department who wish to progress to the rank of Captain. This guideline also pertains to all personnel who currently hold the rank of Captain and Battalion Chief.

**Policy**

**I. Objectives**

- A. To identify the eligibility of personnel for the rank of Captain and Battalion Chief within the Columbia Fire Department
- B. To make available to those individuals the requirements and training to allow personnel to competently perform the duties and responsibilities of a Captain or Battalion Chief.
- C. To establish minimum requirements necessary to test for the rank of Captain and Battalion Chief.

- D. To provide the Columbia Fire Department with highly trained individuals who can perform the duties of Captain and Battalion Chief at a nationally recognized level.

## **II. Program Eligibility**

- A. Personnel must be at the rank of Firefighter with their six-month probationary period successfully completed to begin participation in the Officer Candidate Program.
- B. Personnel holding the rank of Fire Engineer, Volunteer Officers, Captain, and Battalion Chief will have first priority in attending classes. Firefighters, career or volunteer and Senior Firefighters will be considered for all other vacancies.

## **III. Application Process**

- A. No formal applicant process is needed to enroll in the Officer Candidate Program although the Chief of Training is responsible for approving individual class registrations.

## **IV. Curriculum for Captain**

- A. Leadership I: This is a National Fire Academy certified course entitled, "Strategies for Company Success", which presents the basic leadership skills and tools needed to perform effectively in the fire service. It includes techniques for problem solving, ways to identify and assess the needs of subordinates, methods for running meetings effectively, and decision making skills for the company officer. This is a 16-hour course.
- B. Leadership II: This is a National Fire Academy certified course entitled, "strategies for personal success", which provides the basic leadership skills and tools needed to perform effectively in the fire service environment. It addresses ethics, use and abuse of power at the company officer level, creativity in the fire service environment, and management of multiple roles. This is a 16-hour course.
- C. Leadership III: This is a National Fire Academy certified course entitled, "Strategies for Supervisory Success," which provides the basic leadership skills and tools to perform effectively in the fire service environment. It covers the following; delegating to subordinates, assessing personal leadership styles through situational leadership, disciplining subordinates, and applying, coaching and motivating techniques. This is a 16-hour course.

- D. Fire Instructor I: This program covers speech, psychology of learning, planning instruction, teaching techniques, presenting instruction, audiovisual materials and methods, testing and evaluation. Successful completion of the course practical and written exams will certify students to NFPA 1041-Level 1 in accordance with NFPA 1041-*Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications* and accredited through the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress. This is a 40-hour course.
- E. Fire Officer I: This course addresses the needs of the company officer as defined by NFPA 1021 Fire Officers Professional Qualifications level one. The course includes subjects related to human resources management, community and government relations, inspections, investigations, emergency services delivery and safety. Students will apply accepted managerial and organizational skills to situations within their own department. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will receive a Fire Officer I, IFSAC-endorsed certificate. Homework and other out of class work will be necessary to complete the course. The ISFAC Firefighter II and Fire Instructor I course are prerequisite for program. This is a 40-hour program. After July 1, 2009, this is a 56-hour program
- F. Fire Ground Simulation: This computer simulation offers the student the opportunity to practice and improve their tactical skills at a variety of fire-related incidents. This course helps to reinforce personnel and resource management skills, decision making skills and test department standard Operating procedures/guidelines. In this interactive course, students will have the opportunity to practice, standardized arrival reports, size up a variety of fire related incidents, plan tactical operations, conduct personnel accountability reports, conduct mayday events and critique operations at all levels. This is a 16-hour course.
- G. NIMS IS800,B National Response Framework, An Introduction: This online course introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the National Response Framework. Course objectives include the purpose of the National Response Framework, the response doctrine established by the National Response Framework, the roles and responsibilities of entities as specified in the National Response Framework, the actions that support national response, the response organizations used for multi-agency coordination, and how planning relates to national preparedness. This is an online course and takes approximately three hours to complete.
- H. Columbia Fire Department Assessment Preparation Workshop: This course is offered through the department to prepare personnel in the test preparation process. Areas will include study habits, the use of departmental KSAs, identifying critical elements of the promotional process and preparation for the written examination and structured oral interview. This is an 8-hour course.

The following Engineer requirements will also be met to test for Captain if not completed for the Engineer candidate program:

- I. Preparation for Initial Company Operations: This course is designed to develop a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of a Company Officer in preparing a company for incident operations. In addition, it will clarify the transition from firefighter to company officer and the new roles relating to leadership and safety. This course is designed for company officers, acting company officers or senior firefighters responsible for the management of a single fire company at an emergency scene. This is a 16-hour course.
- J. Strategies and Tactics for Initial Company Operations: This course is designed to meet the needs of Company Officers responsible for managing the operations of one or more companies during structural firefighting operations. This course is also designed to develop the management skills needed by company officers to accomplish assigned tactics at structure fires. This is a 16-hour course.
- K. Building Construction Principles (Combustible): This is a National Fire Academy certified course designed to educate prospective officers with the necessary awareness of the principles and special characteristics of wood and ordinary construction. Primary emphasis is on improving the officer's ability to ensure firefighter safety by recognizing common causes and indicators of failure or hazards related to building construction. This is a 16-hour course.
- L. Building Construction Principles (Non - Combustible): This is a National Fire Academy certified course designed to educate prospective officers with the necessary awareness of the principles and special characteristics of non-combustible and fire resistive construction. Primary emphasis is on improving the officer's ability to ensure firefighter safety by recognizing common causes and indicators of failure and hazards related to building construction or contents, and overall reaction of a building construction or contents and overall reaction of a building to fire conditions. Fire suppression personnel will be able to better identify operational and safety concerns in a non-combustible or fire resistive structure through analysis of its design, material, and construction. This is a 16-hour course.

- M. Incident Safety Officer: This course offers methods to identify and analyze safety concerns as they relate to all-hazards scene evaluation and communicate recommended solutions to command authority. This course examines the safety officer's role at emergency response situations. This is an 8-hour course.
- N. IS-700 NIMS: This on-line course introduces NIMS. It explains the purpose, principles, key components and benefits of NIMS. The course also contains "Planning Activity" screens giving you an opportunity to complete some planning tasks during this course. This is an online course and takes approximately three hours to complete.

## **V. Requirements for Program Completion**

- A. All participants will be allowed unlimited time to complete the core curriculum. However the core curriculum must be completed to be eligible to participate in the promotion process for the rank of Captain.
- B. All training will be made available through the Columbia Fire Department Training and Safety Bureau. All records be kept and completed by the Training and Safety Bureau.
- C. All training and class participation will occur on participant's personal time and will not be attended while on shift. Participants may attend training on duty, as long as a valid Swap-time Agreement has been initiated. Exceptions may be made if programs are taught on shift by suppression personnel, but all members of the department must be informed before courses are instructed.
- D. All courses will include testing at the conclusion of the course and participants will be given a grade upon completion of the course. Certificates will be issued to all who successfully pass the course objectives.
- E. Participants will be given credit for courses completed in other locations or other organizations other than the Columbia Fire Department if course content is the same, and the course was offered by an accredited source of education. This is to be determined by the Chief of Training.
- F. Appeals are to be made to the Assistant Chief of Professional Services in writing.
- G. It is the participant's responsibility to keep track of his/her status within the program. The participant is encouraged to keep a copy of all certificates in case of any discrepancies.

- H. The Training Bureau will furnish the Assistant Chief of Professional Services with a list of eligible participants for promotional exams within three days of the closing date of exam registration.

## **VI. Program Implementation**

- A. The Officer Candidate Program has already been implemented for the rank of Captain, and has produced well-trained candidates. Effective immediately, all applicants for the position of Fire Captain testing must have completed the following elements of the program: Leadership I, Leadership II, Leadership III, PICO, STICO, Building Construction: Combustible, Building Construction: Noncombustible, Incident Safety Officer, Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer I, and NIMS 700.
- B. On July 1, 2009, all applicants for the position of Fire Captain testing must have completed the entire Officer Candidate Program.

## **VII. Program Responsibility**

- A. Chief of Training shall be responsible for the overall management of the Officer Candidate Program and the continuing evaluation of the program on a daily basis.
- B. Training Bureau: The Training Bureau shall be responsible for the course curriculum management and course security to include
  1. Providing multiple opportunities for course offerings per year
  2. Providing instructors
  3. Providing teaching outlines and teaching aids
  4. Facility management
  5. Coordination with outside agencies to provide training
- C. Selection Committee: The Selection Committee along with the Assistant Chief of Professional Services shall be responsible for the subjects of the OCP through a periodic evaluation of the job analysis and job requirements of the Fire Captain.