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**Date:** October 9, 2020

**To:** State Board of Fire Service  
Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee

**From:** Andrew Henning, Chief of State Fire Training

**SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:**

Chief Fire Officer Certification – Associate Degree Requirement

**Recommended Actions:**

Approval of the Chief Fire Officer Certification – Associate Degree Requirement  
Temporary Modification

**Background Information:**

In 2014, the Chief Fire Officer Certification and curriculum was approved by STEAC and SBFS. The Chief Fire Officer Certification replaced the legacy Chief Officer Certification which was established in 1983. An Associate's degree (any major) or higher from an accredited post-secondary institution is currently required for the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Officer certifications.

SFT recently introduced several temporary changes to expand the system use. These included the Fire Fighter 2 Tenured Path and the Mid-Career CFSTES Prerequisites. These two temporary modifications allow persons or departments who never participated in the SFT system a way to obtain Fire Fighter 2 Certification and enter into the CFSTES certification track at an rank appropriate level.

**Analysis/Summary of Issue:**

The Associate's degree requirement has inhibited some from obtaining the Chief Fire Officer certification. Many of these potential students have technical or vocational Certificates of Completion from California Community Colleges, but never completed a degree.

The Steering Committee is proposing a one-time, temporary option for applicants without an Associate's degree to obtain their Chief Fire Officer Certification. These options would retire on December 31, 2024. Persons applying for Chief Fire Officer Certification on or

after January 1, 2025, will be required to have an Associate's degree or higher. This proposal does not apply for the Executive Chief Fire Officer Certification.

If approved by the State Board of Fire Service, applicants seeking Chief Fire Officer certification will have 4 options to meet the educational requirements. The options are:

- Option 1 – Current Requirements for Chief Fire Officer Certification:
  - Associate's degree (any major) or higher from an accredited post-secondary institution
  - Experience (one of the following):
    - Have a minimum of five (5) years' full-time paid experience in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter performing suppression duties. At least two (2) years of experience must be at the Officer level (Lieutenant or higher) or CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer.
    - Have a minimum of ten (10) years' part-time paid or volunteer experience in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter performing suppression duties. At least four (4) years of experience must be at the Officer level (Lieutenant or higher) or CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer.
- Option 2:
  - Sixty (60) semester units or ninety (90) quarter units from an accredited post-secondary institution
  - Experience (one of the following):
    - Have a minimum of ten (10) years' full-time paid experience in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter performing suppression duties. At least five (5) years of experience must be at the Officer level (Lieutenant or higher) or CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer.
    - Have a minimum of twenty (20) years' part-time paid or volunteer experience in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter performing suppression duties. At least ten (10) years of experience must be at the Officer level (Lieutenant or higher) or CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer.
- Option 3:
  - Forty-five (45) semester units or sixty-seven-and-one-half (67.5) quarter units from an accredited post-secondary institution
  - Experience (one of the following):
    - Have a minimum of fifteen (15) years' full-time paid experience in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter performing suppression duties. At least five (5) years of experience must be at the Officer level (Lieutenant or higher) or CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer.
    - Have a minimum of thirty (30) years' part-time paid or volunteer experience in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter performing suppression duties. At least ten (10) years of experience must be at the Officer level (Lieutenant or higher) or CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer.

- Option 4:
  - Certificate of Achievement from a California Community College in one of the following fields of study:
    - Fire Science
    - Fire Technology
    - Company Officer
    - Pre-Hospital Care
  - Experience (one of the following):
    - Have a minimum of ten (10) years' full-time paid experience in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter performing suppression duties. At least five (5) years of experience must be at the Officer level (Lieutenant or higher) or CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer.
    - Have a minimum of twenty (20) years' part-time paid or volunteer experience in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter performing suppression duties. At least ten (10) years of experience must be at the Officer level (Lieutenant or higher) or CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer.

Once approved by the State Board of Fire Service (SBFS), SFT will implement this on or before January 1, 2021.