



## STEAC Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2023 – Teleconference Meeting

### I. Introductions and Welcome

#### Members Present

Gregory Barton, League of California Cities  
Richard Beckman, California Fire Technology Directors Association  
Greg Belk, CAL FIRE  
Jeff Boyles, League of California Cities (alternate)  
Taral Brideau, California Fire Fighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee  
Jarrod Clinkenbeard, CAL FIRE Training Center  
Bret Davidson, Cal Chiefs – Training Officer Section (South)  
Cat Frazer, CAL FIRE (alternate)  
Stephen Gutierrez, California Metropolitan Fire Chiefs  
Darren Hall, California Fire Technology Directors Association (alternate)  
Gareth Harris, Fire District Association of California  
Jason Hosea, California State Fire Fighters Association (alternate)  
Javier Lara, CAL OES (alternate)  
Andrew Kibby, Cal Chiefs – Training Officer Section, (South) (alternate)  
Scott Lewis, FIRESCOPE  
Brian Marshall, CAL OES  
Gaudenz Panholzer, California Fire Chiefs Association  
Mike Richwine, STEAC Committee Chair  
Ken Sebastiani, California Fire Technology Directors Association (alternate)  
Jason Serrano, FIRESCOPE (alternate)  
Gail Warner, California Fire Technology Directors Association

#### Members Absent

John Bagala, California Professional Fire Fighters  
Tom Carlisle, California State Fire Fighters Association  
Donavan Lacy, Cal Chiefs - Training Officer Section, (North) (alternate)  
Kirk Noffsinger, Cal Chiefs - Training Officer Section, (North)  
Glen Pavlovsky, California Professional Fire Fighters (alternate)  
Rob Wheatley, CAL FIRE Training Center (alternate)  
David Winnacker, California Fire Chiefs Association

## State Fire Training Staff

Eddie Aguilar, SFT, Deputy State Fire Marshal  
Jill Bennetts, SFT, Associate Governmental Program Analyst  
Chris Fowler, SFT, Supervising Deputy State Fire Marshal III  
Dustin Franks, SFT, Staff Services Analyst  
Luke Gamboa, SFT, Office Technician  
Selena Garcia-Villicana, SFT, Staff Services Analyst  
Andrew Henning, SFT, SFT Division Chief & OSFM Assistant Deputy Director  
Derek Lueth, SFT, Associate Governmental Program Analyst  
Caryn Petty, SFT, Deputy State Fire Marshal III (Specialist)  
Kris Rose, SFT, Staff Services Manager I  
Frank Vue, SFT, Associate Governmental Program Analyst

## Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 09:00 by Chief Mike Richwine.

### A. Introductions

A quorum was established during introductions.

## II. Agenda Review

Presenter: Chief Mike Richwine

Mike Richwine stated that State Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant will be attending the meeting at some point to join in Honoring the late Ronny Coleman.

## III. Approval of the July 14, 2023, Minutes

Presenter: Chief Mike Richwine

<b>Motion:</b>	<i>Bret Davidson moved to accept the minutes from July 14, 2023. Stephen Gutierrez seconded the motion.</i>
<b>Action:</b>	<i>All members voted unanimously.</i>

## IV. State Board of Fire Services (SBFS) Update

Presenter: Andrew Henning

Andrew Henning began stating that State Board of Fire Services did not have a quorum at their last meeting in August and were unable to reschedule. A prior change to statute allowed proxy members to qualify for a quorum, and when they updated their membership to include tribal burning those changes were accidentally undone and so a quorum could not be established without the use of the proxy members. The office is actively working with the appointment secretary to fill the vacancies on SBFS, as well as working to get the statute changed back to what it was to allow the proxy members to count towards a quorum. There was also a “trailer bill” language attached to the budget

that reinstated virtual meetings until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, so it is anticipated that with the virtual meeting option a quorum can be established for the November SBFS meeting.

State Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant joined at this time and Mike Richwine opened with congratulations to D. Berlant for his recent appointment as the 18<sup>th</sup> California State Fire Marshal. D. Berlant stated it has been an honor serving following M. Richwine's retirement and it is an honor to move forward at the helm. He then moved to recognize the passing of former State Fire Marshal, Ronny J. Coleman, his achievements, influence, and the legacy he leaves behind.

D. Berlant then noted that SBFS did not have a quorum for the August meeting, however on the same day Governor Gavin Newsom appointed himself (D. Berlant) as the State Fire Marshal as well as appointing Chief Deputy Director Anale Burlew, who will add to the representation at SBFS.

M. Richwine thanked D. Berlant, then again recognizing the influence of Chief Ronny Coleman and his passing and held a moment of silence in his honor.

## **V. Consent Items**

### **A. Incident Safety Awareness for Hired Vendors Card Issuance**

Presenter: Brandon Erickson

Brandon Erickson opened stating the Incident Safety Awareness for Hire Vendors course is a unique course in the State Fire Training (SFT) catalogue as it has an expiration date and requires annual renewal. It is also the only course where you do not get an 8.5x11 diploma, instead receiving an operator card. Physical challenges regarding the card include the need for it to be mailed out with the course approval and issued to graduates, unused cards need to be collected or returned, uncollected cards can become lost and have also been counterfeited. The proposal with this motion is to convert the operator card to an 8.5x11 diploma, bringing the course in line with the rest of SFT courses. An advantage to this is that the diploma is available on the SFT portal at any time to download at no cost.

To address the counterfeiting, in July of 2023 SFT implemented a validation database for hired vendors where users can look up and validate a vendor's status, such as if they are active or not. This site is now live, and the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) website is going through an update. In the update the website will have additional search capabilities allowing users to start typing a name or SFT ID and received filtered search results to find who the user is looking for.

These items were vetted through Fire Protection who also vetted this through the United States Forest Service. Operators will still receive a credential that they can take to an incident.

Andrew Henning added recognition to Derek Lueth and Brandon Erickson as this project has been on the back burner for about 2 years due to staffing requirements. The feedback received for program coordinators in the field is positive towards the website. This course is also one of SFTs most popular courses with 6500 students and a couple

hundred course offerings across the state every year, stating this update will be a large reduction in SFT workload and cost, and further streamline the process.

### **B. Retirement of SFT ID Legacy Look Up**

Presenter: Brandon Erickson

Brandon Erickson stated State Fire Training (SFT) transitioned away from scantrons in 2019 and moved to the electronic Excel roster. This implementation eliminated the collection of social security numbers (SSN) and now strictly use SFT ID numbers. The SFT ID Legacy Look Up tool allowed users to enter their last name and last four digits of their SSN to receive their SFT ID. This tool was intended to be used for about a 1-2 year period to facilitate the transition. With the availability of other tools to look up an SFT ID, this tool can now be retired. One of these tools is on the SFT user portal, the login page has a tool called "Retrieve My SFT ID". This works similarly to the Legacy Look Up where a user will click the link, enter their last name, and email address, and will instantly receive an email with their SFT ID. For those who do not have an email on file, there is a webform called SFT ID Request Form – New User, where users can request a new SFT ID. These requests are processed within 48 hours.

For all other inquiries, SFT implemented a help desk email where users can receive assistance from staff in obtaining their SFT ID as well as other user account assistance. These inquiries are responded to within 48 hours as well.

Bret Davidson asked if there are any stats on how often the Legacy tool is currently being utilized this year so far. B. Erickson stated he did not have current stats, but it is estimated to be about a couple hundred per month. It is believed that this is due to users not fully aware of the other tools now available to them. A bulletin has been drafted listing out the options available and is pending the passing of this motion to be published.

B. Davidson asked if these other tools are quick as the Legacy Look Up Tool was. B. Erickson stated that if a user has taken an SFT course within the last 5 years, then their email has been captured and the Retrieve My SFT ID tool provides an instant response to their email. The other two options are responded within 48 hours as it requires staff to manually look up the ID. Andrew Henning added that any courses or diplomas received in the last 5 years also have the SFT ID printed on them.

### **C. NWCG ICS Ratio Update**

Presenter: Chris Fowler

Chris Fowler began stating in June of 2023 State Fire Training (SFT) had updated several NWCG based course plans to align with SFT program standards which included amending maximum class size and student-to-instructor ratios. This resulted in lower total class sizes and smaller instructor-to-student ratios. Based on stakeholder feedback since the implementation of this change, SFT is now recommending that the maximum class size and student-to-instructor ratios carry the caveat of "recommended, not required", and compliance for the recommendation would be at the discretion of the instructor.

The changes came from recommendations from higher education partners which included reducing then number of students in some courses from 50 to 30 to achieve better outcomes for the adult learner. It is believed class participation and number of students is proportional to student achievement. Changes were made but some stakeholders were concerned about reducing the number of classes and adding instructors, so SFT is carrying this as a recommendation and not a requirement.

#### **D. FC 3 (2018) – Amendment of Max Class Size & Instructor/Student Ratios**

Presenter: Eddie Aguilar

Eddie Aguilar stated currently there is a max class size for Fire Control 3 at 25, with a ratio of 1 registered instructor to 25 students for lecture, and 2 registered instructors to 25 students for demonstrations. With the increased enrollment numbers for this course, State Fire Training (SFT) is seeing a significant increase in variance requests to increase the class sizes. SFT is proposing the instructor to student ration be adjusted to 1 instructor to 30 students for lectures, and 2 instructors to 30 students for demonstrations. These amendments will not affect live fire training, nor will it affect the quality of training for students as it is lecture and lab based. Ratios for activities and live fire training will remain the same. These amendments are expected to begin on December 1<sup>st</sup> pending approval from State Board of Fire Services in November.

The variance request process is still available for agencies who wish to request a larger roster size on a case-by-case basis for each class held.

#### **E. Columbia College ARTP Reaccreditation**

Presenter: Caryn Petty

Caryn Petty stated that the Columbia College Reaccreditation visit took place on September 6, 2023. Columbia College is part of the Yosemite College Dstrict, serving the Tuolumne and Stanislaus County areas. Unique to the college, they have dormitories on site for out of area students, as well as a fully functioning fire station that is conducted in partnership with CALFIRE, allowing students in the academy to attend class and then work in the fire station to gain hands on experience. Columbia College has a strong focus on recruitment and development, they have pre-apprenticeship program where they partner with grade-school aged students to provide them access to the formal academy setting through instruction, job shadowing, support and information services, and hands-on learning. Columbia College recognizes the unique training opportunities in their area as they are remote and serving a unique area of the state and understand the importance of fostering interagency partnerships to provide quality education to the community.

State Fire Training (SFT) is recommending the continued recognition of Columbia College as an Accredited Regional Training Program in the SFT system for a reaccreditation period of 5 years.

<b>Motion:</b>	<i>Gaudenz Panholzer moved to accept the motion for all consent items. Scott Lewis seconded the motion.</i>
<b>Action:</b>	<i>All members voted unanimously.</i>

## **VI. Curriculum Development & Delivery**

### **A. Tower Rescue Technician (2021) Curriculum**

Presenter: Chris Fowler

Chris Fowler stated State Fire Training (SFT) has developed a new Tower Rescue Technician Curriculum in alignment with NFPA 1006 (2021). This is the first read of this course and the training will provide a student with the knowledge and skills to conduct tower rescue operations. In order build out the cadre for this new course, SFT will authorize cadre members and existing registered instructors who meet the requirements detailed in the staff report and implementation plan to teach the class. SFT will draw on the pool of Rope Rescue instructors and FEMA instructors. This will be brought back in January for approval.

### **B. Roper Rescue (2021) Curriculum**

Presenter: Chris Fowler

Chris Fowler stated Rope Rescue curriculum has been updated in alignment with NFPA 1006 (2021). A CTS guide has been developed for this material which includes awareness, operations, and technician-level job performance requirements. The course plans have been aligned to remove topics that are not included NFPA 1006, and 5 Job Performance Requirements (JPRs) have been added. SFT will authorize existing Rope Rescue Awareness and Rope Rescue Technician instructors to teach all the 2021 courses, and upon implementation and approval of the courses in 2024 Acadis will be updated accordingly. The proposal is effective June 30, 2024, at that time the current 2017 Rope Rescue Awareness/Operations and Rope Rescue Technician would be retired. No rollout will be needed as the changes are not substantial.

## **VII. State Fire Training Updates**

### **A. Pro Board Reaccreditation**

Presenter: Andrew Henning

Andrew Henning stated earlier in October he was in in Maryland to attend the North American Fire Training Directors Association, a group of all the State Fire Training Directors across the United States as well as some provinces of Canada gathering to discuss high level items across state fire academies. One of the biggest things A. Henning took from the meeting is there are a lot of people leaving California and seeking reciprocity across the United States, and there was some confusion about which of State Fire Trainings (SFT) certifications are IFSAC and Pro Board accredited, which right now are the Fire Fighter 1 and Fire Fighter 2 certifications. SFT staff are going to put together a guide, with the intended audience of the other state fire training

programs across the country, to offer recommendations and best practices for reciprocity. A. Henning added some states have looked at SFTs training and believe it to be very robust and are accepting SFT certifications or course diplomas to allow candidates to challenge their state exam. This guide is expected to be completed in 2 months and will assist with transitioning their career out of the state of California.

A. Henning then stated SFT recently went through its first reaccreditation with Pro Board in August, SFT was first accredited in 2016 by both Pro Board and IFSAC. The IFSAC reaccreditation took place in spring of 2022. The site visit went very well and Pro Board recommended SFT to receive reaccreditation with no requirements or changes needed. There were best practices recommendations which SFT is in the process of implementing. Several staff will be attending Pro Boards conference in January to accept the reaccreditation which unfortunately overlaps with the January STEAC meeting, so some staff will be attending the STEAC meeting virtually.

Lastly, the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) partnered with California Fire Protection Institute which is the Cal Chiefs Fire Prevention Officers education wing. They hold an annual conference where attendees come from across the country to present educational items and deliver state fire training courses. This year, they held a certification week hosted at the California Natural Resources building in Sacramento where they delivered 3 SFT courses including the first delivery of the SFT Fire Life Safety Educator 1 course.

## **B. SFT User Portal Invoicing Feature Development**

Presenter: Brandon Erickson

B. Erickson stated this item has been a long running effort and hopes to return to STEAC in January with a demonstration on how this would work as State Fire Training (SFT) is waiting for a final piece to get built in the sandbox site, which is the testing ground for new features. In the current process, an instructor will submit a roster in the form of an excel file. SFT then takes that roster file and processes the course and issues the students diplomas. SFT sends the course information to the CAL FIRE accounting department who have 10 days to issue an invoice. This process results in a 3-4 week discrepancy between when an instructor submits a roster and when host agencies and/or instructors receive their invoice. This has resulted in some challenging situations for SFT such as students receiving their diplomas but no payment has been received for an extended time, and some agencies have developed a large sum of outstanding invoices. Payment is usually made via check to the address listed on the invoice.

This new feature enhancement has two goals: to streamline the payment process, and add the ability to pay via credit card for those who wish to make digital payments. There is a 2.99% credit card fee, however the option to pay via check remains. To use this feature, a user would log into their SFT portal as a registered instructor for the course, build out their roster using SFT IDs electronically with no need to use a spreadsheet, and then submit the roster with a submit button. SFT would then have 48 hours to review the roster to ensure compliance with SFT course plans and procedures. From there, the invoice is generated instantly and is sent to the person listed on the course

scheduling request form for billing. They will receive an email notification from Acadis as soon as SFT reviews and approves the submission. Payments can be made the same day and students will receive diplomas as soon as payments are made. This will greatly reduce the time needed to receive an invoice and will reduce and streamline the process for collecting payments.

There will be a different process for ARTPs and ALAs. SFT understands that courses are often taught in an Academy setting as a compilation of courses. SFT has tentatively come up with an amount of \$30,000 that these agencies can accumulate on a sort of credit before needing to pay, and these courses can be paid all at once. SFT staff will continue to process ARTP and ALA courses as they currently do but will stop processing courses when \$30,000 has been reached until payment is made.

Chief Gaudenz Panholzer asked if e-checks would be an option with this new process. B. Erickson stated that e-checks should be an available option and is something currently being researched. Initial quotes show the fee would be the same as the credit card at 2.99% but may be negotiated in the future depending on how heavily it is used.

### **C. Fire Fighter Instructor**

Presenter: Caryn Petty

Caryn Petty began by giving kudos to Derek Lueth and Brandon Erickson on this project as it has been a long time coming. The Fire Fighter 1 and Fire Fighter 2 curriculum are not courses that State Fire Training (SFT) currently register in the system and as such there is no way to track or verify that the individuals instructing the material are qualified instructors. There is language in the procedures manual that captures who is appropriate for course instruction. C. Petty states that through her travels in the accredited academy system over the last 6 years, she has found non-compliance statewide.

C. Petty, Brandon Erickson, and Derek Lueth performed a system wide query of the SFT system to verify if users do meet the requirements set forth by STEAC in 2017. An individual teaching firefighter 1 and firefighter 2 material shall be Instructor 1 certified of any variation of the instructor 1 level, they shall have completed an ethics course of any version and must possess the certification of which they are intending to instruct. A subsection of section 6.6 of the procedures manual requires the individual have 3 years of occupational experience from a recognized California fire service agency. Because SFT cannot track occupational experience in the Acadis system, a solution was developed that includes running a systemwide query verifying the instructor qualification, the ethics course completion, and the firefighter 2 or firefighter 2 tenured path certification level. SFT will not be recognizing the firefighter 1 certification level as those individuals are unlikely to have reached the 3-year threshold. This does not mean that those individuals cannot participate in instruction, however it will become the responsibility of the academy or training entity to verify those individuals are qualified. The individuals who do have their firefighter 2 or tenured path will be queried through the system and provided a notation on their Acadis that they are a Firefighter Instructor. SFT staff will conduct these queries on a quarterly basis.



Bret Davidson asked if there was consideration in having individuals take the Certified Evaluators course. C. Petty responded this was considered however, there is a requirement at the evaluator level that an individual cannot be the instructor of record for a parallel topic. For example, someone who is the instructor of record for Firefighter 1 Ropes and Knots cannot be the evaluator of record for Ropes and Knots.

Andrew Henning stated SFT will be in the process of updating their Firefighter 1 and Firefighter 2 certifications. NFPA 1010 will be released between the end of 2023 and early 2024. SFT plans to have a cadre meet in the spring of 2024 and bring to STEAC updated course plans, CTS guides, and skill sheets in July 2024 and seeking approval in October with the goal to implement the new Firefighter 1 (2024) on January 1, 2025 and phasing out Firefighter 1 (2019) on December 31, 2025. Feedback from the North American Fire Training Directors indicate there are no substantial changes to Firefighter 1 & 2. The largest change to the Firefighter 1 & 2 (2024) editions is the plan to move to stand alone test banks, one being an IFSTA test bank and the other a Jones and Bartlett test bank.

## **VIII. Public Comment**

Scott Lewis stated he is a representative from FIRESCOPE taskforce and at the last couple meetings at the taskforce level, they have been instructed to get the 4 task books they have hosted on caloes.gov moved to State Fire Training (SFT). These task books are the Fireline EMT/Medic, DINS and DEM, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), and Critical Incident Stress Lead task books. Scott Lewis restated FIRESCOPE would like to host these task books on the State Fire Training website.

Andrew Henning replied that this is something that can be discussed internally as SFT has never hosted CICCIS task books in the past. There was discussion about the logistical issues with ADA compliance as well as maintaining the correct versions. Mike Richwine ended stating this should be a conversation at the FIRESCOPE Board and the State Board of Fire Services.

## **IX. Roundtable/Announcements/Correspondence**

Mike Richwine utilized this time to check in with each of the organizations present for any updates and current projects.

## **X. Future Meeting Dates**

**January 12, 2024; April 12, 2024; July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024; and October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
Presenter: Mike Richwine

## **XI. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:44 AM.