



**DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
STATE FIRE TRAINING**

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Date: July 12, 2024

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

From: Caryn Petty, Deputy State Fire Marshal

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:

Merritt College, Accredited Regional Training (ARTP) Reaccreditation

Recommended Actions:

Recommend Merritt College remain a Accredited Regional Training (ARTP) in the State Fire Training (SFT) system for the reaccreditation period of five (5) years.

Background Information:

A Reaccreditation Site Evaluation was conducted on June 4, 2024, at the Merritt College training facilities at 250 Victory Court in Oakland, CA. The Accreditation Site Evaluation was conducted by Deputy State Fire Marshal Caryn Petty, State Fire Training, with Dr. Demond Simmons, Fire Technology Coordinator, serving as site host and representative.

The Merritt College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was reviewed and discussed, with requirements for supplemental documentation noted. Said documentation has since been received and has met the requirements as set forth by State Fire Training policies and procedures. The review of the SAR was followed by an evaluation of all classrooms and training facilities with opportunity to review training course records and equipment compliment.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

An evaluation of the training sites and facilities indicated sufficient classroom space with a fully functioning and compliant training facility complete with all necessary props, tools, equipment, and vehicles to accommodate a fire academy training program. The College utilizes the Fire Fighter (2019) curriculum and possesses all necessary materials for successful Certification Examination delivery. The training grounds exhibit appropriate a California Fire Code-compliant classrooms equipped with enhanced audio/visual

equipment and necessary learning aids. All Academy recruits are provided sufficient study materials, devices, and equipment for applicable success within the Academy training. Several Registered Instructors and Evaluators participate in the Academy and Certification Exam delivery making the entity self-sustaining and the College will focus on hosting additional State Fire Training courses in conjunction with cooperating and neighboring agencies. All student records are maintained in a compliant and confidential manner in accordance with State Fire Training requirements.

The Merritt College Fire Academy is conducted at various sites in the region with the majority of delivery held at the Oakland Fire Department Training Center. The logistics surrounding student and equipment transport identifies a need for procurement of a college-specific training center to centralize structures, equipment, and apparatus, while providing the region with a single location for enhanced training course availability. A designated College site would allow for the Academy delivery to focus on well-rounded training, student safety, and learning proficiency. The OFD training grounds lacks appropriate locker rooms, shower facilities, and extractors to accommodate a safe and healthy learning environment for the many personnel and students utilizing the space. It is recommended that cleansing stations and shower trailers be procured to ensure student safety. It is further recommended that the College begin exploring financial allocation for training grounds renovation and the feasibility of constructing a designated training center to be utilized by the College students and partners nearer, or on, the College campus.

Area(s) of focus for growth and improvement:

- Consistent participation at technology directors meetings is recommended to continue fostering the growing relationships in the region for enhanced networking and partnership opportunities.
- The current staffing is at its capacity with workloads beyond the Academy delivery that would be offset with additional resources and personnel. The College has identified a specific need for additional personnel to lessen the workload of existing staff and ensure the thorough delivery of the Academy free of peripheral assignments, tasks, and duties.
- The training facility exhibits ongoing needs for equipment and facility maintenance. Upkeep and preventative maintenance of the facility, equipment, and apparatus will serve to ensure longevity of the training program.
- Improved locker rooms, shower facilities, and decontamination stations with extractors will serve to accommodate a safe and healthy learning environment. It is recommended that procurement of additional facilities be explored to ensure student and instructor safety.
- Ongoing outreach via fire camps and community events is recommended for continued diversifications efforts.

Program coordinators recognize the underserved student and small and midsized agency populations in the region and have an expressed desire to bridge the regional fire service training and education gap. This focus on providing education for all students, regardless of economic or social status, is indicative of the training devotion serving as the foundation of this exceptional program. Coordination personnel possess an energetic approach to program development with a strong focus on maintaining diversified student populations while adhering to the standards set forth by State Fire Training.

Merritt College is proactively building cooperative relationships founded on producing strong, well-rounded fire service professionals. All participants, staff and students alike, adhere to the strong values and ethics that have served as the foundation of this important fire service training program. State Fire Training recommends continued recognition of Merritt College as an Accredited Regional Training Program in the State Fire Training system for a Reaccreditation period of five (5) years.