



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

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Date: July 11, 2025

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

From: Chris Fowler, Division Chief

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:

Non-Motorized Watercraft Rescue (2021) Curriculum Train-the-Trainer Course

Recommended Actions:

Consent

Background Information:

SFT developed the Watercraft Rescue Technician curriculum in alignment with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1006: Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications, 2021 edition.

A virtual rollout was the format originally proposed by the Watercraft Rescue Technician cadre for Non-Motorized Water Rescue Registered Instructors. The cadre identified safety concerns within the dynamic water environment that required in-person training. In January 2025, the cadre proposed modifying the Watercraft Rescue Technician Implementation Plan to an SFT Non-Motorized Rescue Technician Train-the-Trainer Course (in-person course).

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

Since January 2025, the existing Registered Instructors within the curriculum cadre have developed the two-day in-person rollout course. The train-the-trainer course(s) is based on the Non-Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician course plan.

With statewide emergencies, staffing challenges, and cadre availability, there have been delays in scheduling the train-the-trainer courses.

The SFT recommendation is to remove the Non-Motorized curriculum from the SFT website and current Watercraft Rescue Implementation Plan, and coordinate with the cadre to schedule the train-the-trainer courses for February, March, and April 2026,

SFT will draft a separate Implementation Plan with an updated curriculum publication date for July 2026. This will ensure we have instructors qualified to teach courses before the course is made available.

The cadre will deliver the courses following the standard process in Chapter 5 of the State Fire Training Procedures Manual. It will be the responsibility of the cadre to establish and collect the course fees for in-person delivery.



Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) Implementation Plan

Issued: August 2024

OVERVIEW

This document is intended to provide information for all State Fire Training (SFT) stakeholders on the Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) curriculum requirements. Stakeholders are encouraged to study this information carefully and seek clarification from SFT if questions arise.

The Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) curriculum is presented as a Fire Service Training and Education Program (FSTEP) series. SFT developed a new curriculum training standard (CTS) guide, three course plans (motorized watercraft, non-motorized watercraft, and personal rescue watercraft), three instructor task books, and three student training records based on the current National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard, NFPA 1006: Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications (2021).

IMPLEMENTATION

Candidates entering the SFT system should enroll in the 2021 Watercraft Rescue courses and comply with the 2021 Watercraft Rescue Technician requirements.

New Curriculum	Hours
Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021)	40 hours
Non-Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021)	40 hours
Personal Rescue Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021)	32 hours

Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) Curriculum..... September 1, 2024

Retirement of River and Flood Rescue Boat Technician / Personal Watercraft Rescue Operations Curriculum..... December 31, 2024

Effective December 31, 2024, SFT will retire:

- FSTEP River and Flood Rescue Boat Technician (2017)
- FSTEP Personal Watercraft Rescue Operations (1996)

On January 1, 2025, SFT will remove these curricula from the SFT course catalog, and they will no longer be available.

INSTRUCTOR REQUIREMENTS

Instructor Registration..... September 1, 2024

Instructors for any Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) curriculum must meet the SFT requirements for Registered Instructor. Instructors must have appropriate education and practical experience relating to the specific course content.

Existing Registered Instructors and Cadre Members

Existing Registered Instructors and Watercraft Rescue Technician cadre members must meet the following requirements to teach the 2021 curriculum:

Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician

- Be an SFT Registered Instructor
- Be a Registered Instructor for River and Flood Rescue Boat Technician (2017)
- Complete the following courses:
 - California Safe Boaters Safety (CBT – CA Boating and Waterways)
 - Urban Search and Rescue Boat Operator (CBT – FEMA)
- Submit a webform verifying all requirements

Personal Rescue Watercraft Rescue Technician

- Be an SFT Registered Instructor
- Be a Registered Instructor for Personal Watercraft Rescue Operations (1996)
- Complete the following courses:
 - California Safe Boaters Safety (CBT – CA Boating and Waterways)
 - Urban Search and Rescue Boat Operator (CBT – FEMA)
- Submit a webform verifying all requirements

Existing River & Flood Rescue Boat Technician (2017) and Personal Watercraft Rescue Operations (1996) Registered Instructors and Watercraft Rescue Technician cadre members must complete these requirements by June 30, 2025. Anyone who misses this deadline will be required to meet the New Instructor Registration requirements (below).

Non Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician

- ~~Be an SFT Registered Instructor~~
- ~~Be a Registered Instructor for River and Flood Rescue Technician (2017)~~
- ~~Complete the SFT Non Motorized Rescue Technician Train the Trainer Course (in-person course is in development for 2025 delivery)~~
- ~~Submit a webform verifying all requirements~~

~~Existing River & Flood Rescue Technician (2017) Registered Instructors and Watercraft Rescue Technician cadre members must complete these requirements by August 31, 2025. Anyone who misses this deadline will be required to meet the New Instructor Registration requirements (below).~~

~~* Cadre members are not required to complete the SFT Non-Motorized Rescue Technician Roll Out course.~~

In Process Instructor Candidates – River and Flood Rescue Boat Technician (2017)

Candidates actively pursuing River and Flood Rescue Boat Technician (2017) instructor registration must submit all documentation postmarked on or before June 30, 2025. SFT will return any 2017 task book postmarked on or after July 1, 2025, and require candidates to follow the New Instructor Registration requirements.

In process instructor candidates may teach two River and Flood Rescue Boat Technician (2017) courses **or** one River and Flood Rescue Boat Technician (2017) **and** one Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) course to meet their task book requirements. If an in-process instructor chooses to teach two Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) courses, they are required to adhere to the New Instructor Registration requirements.

In Process Instructor Candidates – Personal Watercraft Rescue Operations (1996)

Candidates actively pursuing Personal Watercraft Rescue Operations (1996) instructor registration must submit all documentation postmarked on or before June 30, 2025. Beginning July 1, 2025, SFT will require candidates to follow the New Instructor Registration requirements.

New Instructor Registration

New instructors who wish to teach Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) courses must meet the following requirements:

Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician

- Be an SFT Registered Instructor
- Completed one of the following course options:
 - SFT Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) **or**
 - River and Flood Rescue Boat Technician (2017) **and** California Safe Boaters Safety Course (CBT – CA Boating and Waterways) **and** Urban Search and Rescue Boat Operator (CBT – FEMA)
- Complete the Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) Instructor Task Book
- Have a minimum of three years' full-time or six years' volunteer or part-time paid suppression/rescue experience in a recognized fire agency in California
- Provide a letter signed by their Fire Chief or authorized designee that verifies qualification to deliver Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician training
- Submit an SFT Instructor Registration Application
- Pay the registration fee

Non-Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician

- ~~Be an SFT Registered Instructor~~
- ~~Complete the SFT Non-Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) course~~

- Complete the Non-Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) Instructor Task Book
- Have a minimum of three years' full-time or six years' volunteer or part-time paid suppression/rescue experience in a recognized fire agency in California
- Provide a letter signed by their Fire Chief or authorized designee that verifies qualification to deliver Non-Motorized Watercraft Rescue Technician training
- Submit an SFT Instructor Registration Application
- Pay the registration fee

Personal Rescue Watercraft Rescue Technician

- Be an SFT Registered Instructor
- Complete the SFT Personal Rescue Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) course
- Complete the Personal Rescue Watercraft Rescue Technician (2021) Instructor Task Book
- Have a minimum of three years' full-time or six years' volunteer or part-time paid suppression/rescue experience in a recognized fire agency in California
- Provide a letter signed by their Fire Chief or authorized designee that verifies qualification to deliver Personal Rescue Watercraft Rescue Technician training
- Submit an SFT Instructor Registration Application
- Pay the registration fee

POTENTIAL AGENCY IMPACTS

Fire agencies desiring to use the Water Rescue (2021) curriculum as a requirement for their recruitment/promotion activities need to review the Watercraft Rescue (2021) curriculum requirements to be sure that all agency training needs are met. After review, fire agencies should update their job specifications and recruitment documentation to reflect these new courses and certification requirements.

Accredited Regional Training Programs (ARTP), Accredited Local Academies (ALA), community colleges, and all other local delivery venues need to review the curriculum and seek approval from their curriculum committee / program sponsor, as appropriate. ARTPs should review the new Watercraft Rescue (2021) curriculum and discuss potential impacts with their advisory committees.