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OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
STATE FIRE TRAINING**

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Date: July 10, 2026

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

From: Chris Fowler, Division Chief
Caryn Petty, DSFM III (Specialist)

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:
Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) Update

Recommended Actions:
First read of the Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) curriculum.

Background Information:
SFT updated the Ethical Leadership for Instructors curriculum to strengthen instructional consistency. SFT recognizes that ethics instruction requires demonstrated instructional proficiency by facilitation of discussion, application of policy, and modeling of professional conduct.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:
The Ethical Leadership for Instructors course directly influences instructor behavior, student engagement, and public trust in the fire service.

Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) Curriculum Launch
SFT will release the Ethical Leadership for Instructors curriculum on December 1, 2026.

Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2017) Curriculum Retirement
Effective December 1, 2026, SFT will retire Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2017). On December 1, 2026, SFT will remove the curriculum from the SFT course catalog, and it will no longer be available.

Course Plan ELI

Considerations (changes to document):

- Course Details
 - Instructor 1 (2012) or (2019) is now a prerequisite
- Units/Topics
 - The topics were revised and reordered.
 - Topic 1-2 was removed; this is part of the instructor's discretion and process.
 - Topic 2-1 was added to provide an overview of ethical instruction.
 - Topic 2-2 (formerly 2-1) was revised.
 - Topics 3-1, 5-1, and 5-2 were combined and revised into 2-3.
 - Units 2, 3, and 5 were combined into Unit 2: Foundations of Ethical Practices.
 - Units 4, 6, and 7 were combined into Unit 3: Ethics in Action.
 - Topics 4-1 and 4-2 were combined and revised into Topic 3-1.
 - Topic 6-1 was divided into 3-2 and 3-3.
 - Topic 7-1 was revised and turned into 3-4.
- TLOs were given standards.
- More activities were added.

Instructor Verification Requirements

SFT developed the following verification document to promote instructor quality and consistency:

- Ethical Leadership (ELI) Instruction Requirement Verification

Effective December 1, 2026, all Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) Registered Instructors are required to complete and submit the Ethical Leadership (ELI) Instruction Requirement Verification.

Existing Registered Instructors

SFT will authorize existing Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2017) Registered Instructors who meet the following requirements to teach Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026). SFT will update the SFT User Portal.

- Review and complete the SFT Ethical Leadership for Instructors Update webform by December 1, 2026.

New Instructor Registration

New instructor candidates shall meet the following requirements:

Category	Requirement
Instructor Registration	Be an OSFM Registered Instructor
Education	Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026)
Instructor Task Book	Ethical Leadership (ELI) Instruction Requirement Verification
Experience	<p>A minimum of five (5) years' experience as an OSFM Registered Instructor in good standing</p> <p>A minimum of five (5) years' full-time paid experience as a Fire Fighter</p> <p>A minimum of two (2) years' full-time paid experience working as a Company Officer or above in a recognized California fire agency</p> <p>Have taught a minimum of three (3) SFT courses in the last three (3) years or a minimum of 160 hours providing fire-service-related instruction within the last three (3) years</p>
Chief's Letter	Provide a letter signed by their Fire Chief or authorized designee that verifies qualification to deliver Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) curriculum.
Application	Submit an SFT Instructor Registration Application
Fee	Pay the registration fee (if applicable)



Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) Implementation Plan

Issued: Month ##, ####

OVERVIEW

This document is intended to provide information for all State Fire Training (SFT) stakeholders on the updated Ethical Leadership for Instructors’ curriculum requirements. Stakeholders are encouraged to study this information carefully and seek clarification from SFT if questions arise.

Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) is presented as a Fire Service Training and Education Program (FSTEP) curriculum. SFT updated the course plan based on State Fire Training’s authority.

IMPLEMENTATION

Candidates entering the SFT system should enroll in the 2026 Ethical Leadership for Instructors courses and comply with the most current Ethical Leadership for Instructors requirements.

New Curriculum	Hours
ELI: Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026)	8.0 hours

Ethical Leadership for Instructors 2026 Curriculum Launch.....December 1, 2026
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Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2017) Curriculum Retirement December 1, 2026
Effective December 1, 2026, SFT will retire Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2017). On December 1, 2026, SFT will remove the curriculum from the SFT course catalog, and it will no longer be available.

INSTRUCTOR REQUIREMENTS

Instructor Registration..... December 1, 2026
Instructors for the Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) curriculum must meet the SFT requirements for Registered Instructor. Instructors must have appropriate education and practical experience relating to the specific course content.

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Instructor Registration	Be an OSFM Registered Instructor
Education	Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026)
Instructor Task Book	Ethical Leadership (ELI) Instruction Requirement Verification
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A minimum of five (5) years' experience as an OSFM Registered Instructor in good standing• A minimum of five (5) years' full-time paid experience as a Fire Fighter• A minimum of two (2) years' full-time paid experience working as a Company Officer or above in a recognized California fire agency• Have taught a minimum of three (3) CFSTES courses taught in the last three (3) years or a minimum of 160 hours providing fire-service-related instruction within the last three (3) years
Chief's Letter	Provide a letter signed by their Fire Chief or authorized designee that verifies qualification to deliver Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) curriculum.
Application	Submit an SFT Instructor Registration Application
Fee	Pay the registration fee (if applicable)

POTENTIAL AGENCY IMPACTS

Fire agencies desiring to use the Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) curriculum as a requirement for their recruitment/promotion activities need to review the Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) 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 Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) curriculum and discuss potential impacts with their advisory committees.

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Ethical Leadership for Instructors

Course Plan

Course Details

Description: The intent and purpose of this course is to provide State Fire Training (SFT) instructors with a foundational understanding of ethical awareness, professional standards, and ethical decision-making within the instructional environment.

This course provides the skills and knowledge needed for the State Fire Training Registered Instructor to safely, effectively, and competently describe ethical instructional behavior; define terms and identify distinctions; define and identify ethical norms and core values and how they affect behavior; describe policies, procedures, laws, standards, and commitments; describe proactive decision-making and communication, define ethical dilemmas, and describe ethical decision-making models; model proactive decision-making and communication, navigating ethical dilemmas, and using ethical decision-making models; and model reporting and documenting.

Designed For: Individuals seeking to teach State Fire Training (SFT) courses as Registered Instructors, as well as instructional personnel who seek to strengthen their understanding of ethical behavior, professional standards, and ethical decision-making within an instructional setting.

Prerequisites: Instructor 1: Instructional Methodology (2012) or (2019) (course completion)

Standard: Complete all activities.

Hours (Total): 8:00 hours
(4:25 lecture / 3:75 application)

Maximum Class Size: 30

Instructor Level: SFT Registered Instructor

Instructor/Student Ratio: 1:30

Restrictions: None

SFT Designation: FSTEP

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Required Resources

Instructor Resources

To teach this course, instructors need:

Online Instructor Resources

The following instructor resources are available online at <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/state-fire-training/fire-service-training-and-education-program>

1. SFT Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct (current)
 - State Fire Training Procedures Manual
 - 4.5: Individual Integrity and Ethics (for reporting purposes)
 - Sample Complex Ethical Dilemma Scenarios (in Activities Folder)
 - The Williams Institute's *Ethical Awareness Inventory*
 - Digital: *Online Assessment: EAI* (2017) www.ethics-twi.org/products/onlineassessments/
 - Hard copy: *Ethics Awareness Inventory: A Guide to Personal Awareness of Your Ethical Perspective and Style* (2012) www.ethics-twi.org/product/1/
 - Psychology Today: "How Ethical Are You?"
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/personality/values-profile>
 - Brené Brown's *Dare to Lead* "Living into Our Values Exercise":
<https://brenebrown.com/resources/dare-to-lead-list-of-values/>
 - Values Cards (in Activities Folder)
 - *Why Everyone Agrees to Bad Ideas — The Psychology of the Abilene Paradox*:
https://youtu.be/a_F1-j1d6Do?si=p73MGN0JZGVAC-HD
 - *Normalizing Deviance* (Brian Strobel):
<https://youtu.be/5UHj4Ekq3gY?si=gyvO2qXgPboFlwqz>
 - *Normalization of Deviance* (Mike Mullane):
<https://youtu.be/GN80sx3s4LA?si=eAsTSW6VaiDcS2Cl>

Student Resources

To participate in this course, students need:

2. SFT Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics
 - Digital access to the State Fire Training Procedures Manual
 - Device with internet capability

Facilities, Equipment, and Personnel

Facilities

The following facilities are required to deliver this course:

- Standard learning environment or facility, which may include:
 - Writing board or paper easel chart
 - Markers, erasers

- Amplification devices
- Projector and screen
- Laptop or tablet with presentation or other viewing software
- Internet access with appropriate broadband capabilities

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Timetable

Segment	Lecture	Application	Unit Total
Unit 1: Introduction			
Topic 1-1: Orientation and Administration	0.25	0.0	
Unit 1 Totals	0.25	0.0	0.25
Unit 2: Foundations of Ethical Practices			
Topic 2-1: Describing Ethical Instructional Behavior	0.50	0.50	
Topic 2-2: Defining Terms and Identifying Distinctions	0.50	0.00	
Topic 2-3: Defining and Identifying Ethical Norms and Core Values and How They Affect Behavior	1.0	1.0	
Unit 2 Totals	2.0	1.5	3.5
Unit 3: Ethics in Action			
Topic 3-1: Describing Policies, Procedures, Laws, Standards, and Commitments	0.75	0.50	
Topic 3-2: Describing Proactive Decision-Making and Communication, Defining Ethical Dilemmas, and Describing Ethical-Decision-Making Models	1.00	0.50	
Topic 3-3: Demonstrating Identifying Ethical Dilemmas and Applying an Ethical Decision-Making Model	0.25	0.75	
Topic 3-4: Describing Reporting and Documenting	0.25	0.25	
Unit 3 Totals	2.25	2.0	4.25
Course Totals	4.5	3.5	8.0

Timetable Key

1. The Timetable documents the amount of time estimated to deliver the content included in the course plan.
2. Time is documented using the quarter system: 15 min. = .25 / 30 min. = .50 / 45 min. = .75 / 60 min. = 1.0.
3. The Course Totals do not reflect time for lunch (1 hour) or breaks (10 minutes per each 50 minutes of instruction or assessment). It is the instructor's responsibility to add this time based on the course delivery schedule.
4. Application (activities, skills exercises, and formative testing) time will vary depending on the number of students enrolled. The Application time documented is based on the maximum class size identified in the Course Details section.
5. Summative Assessments are determined and scheduled by the authority having jurisdiction. These are not the written or psychomotor State Fire Training certification exams. These are in-class assessments to evaluate student progress and calculate course grades.

Unit 1: Introduction

Topic 1-1: Orientation and Administration

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student will be able to identify facility and classroom requirements and identify course objectives, events, requirements, assignments, activities, skills exercises, resources, evaluation methods, and participation requirements in the course syllabus.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Identify facility requirements
 - Restroom locations
 - Food locations
 - Emergency procedures
2. Identify classroom requirements
 - Start and end times
 - Breaks
 - Electronic device policies
 - Special needs and accommodation
 - Other requirements as applicable
3. Review course syllabus
 - Course objectives
 - Calendar of events
 - Course requirements
 - Student evaluation process
 - Assignments
 - Activities
 - Required student resources
 - Class participation requirements

Discussion Questions

1. Determined by instructor

Application

1. Determined by instructor

Unit 2: Foundations of Ethical Practices

Topic 2-1: Describing Ethical Instructional Behavior

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic a student, given information on Bloom's Taxonomy and ethical instructional considerations, will be able to describe ethical instructional behavior so that the value of ethical behavior is established.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Identify Bloom's Taxonomy
 - Cognitive, psychomotor, affective
2. Describe the affective domain
3. Describe how to protect your students, yourself, State Fire Training, and your organization(s)
 - Emotionally safe classroom environment
 - Cultural competence
 - Dealing with sensitive terms and content
 - Confidentiality
 - Physical safety
 - Risk management
 - Consistency
4. Identify ethical assessment
5. Identify incorporating personal ethics into instructional practice

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains in an instructional setting?
2. What is the instructor's role in mitigating the risks created by unethical practices in the instructional setting?
3. What are considerations for maintaining emotional versus physical safety in the instructional setting?
4. What does it mean to be a culturally competent instructor?

Application

1. Give students writing materials and either present them with an instructor-provided case study or have them work in groups to discuss unethical behavior they have witnessed in instructional settings and present lessons learned to the group.

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor must provide a disclaimer to students that the content of this course can be sensitive and provoke emotional reactions and that all interactions must be respectful, dignified, and professional.
2. The instructor should use high-quality academically appropriate case studies.

Topic 2-2: Defining Terms and Identifying Distinctions

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic a student, given key terms, will be able to define the terms and identify distinctions so that the terms can be used within the context of the fire service.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Identify the historical context of ethics
2. Ethics originated as a philosophical discipline in Ancient Greece
3. Shifted from mythology to a human-centered analysis pioneered by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.
4. Focuses on defining virtue, character, and moral duty.
5. Define key terms and identify distinctions within the context of the fire service
 - Ethics
 - Morals
 - Values
 - Principles
 - Critical thinking
 - Culture
 - Character

Discussion Questions

1. What are the differences between the culture and characteristics of the fire service and public perception of these?
2. How do we uphold public perception in our decision-making processes?
3. How are ethics different from morals?
4. How are principles and values different? How do these impact your decision-making professionally and personally?

Application

1. Determined by instructor

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor may research information on public trust in the fire service.

Topic 2-3: Defining and Identifying Ethical Norms and Core Values and How They Affect Behavior

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given information on ethical norms and values and an ethics-awareness inventory, will be able to define ethical norms and core values, identify how ethical norms influence core values, identify how ethical norms and core values affect behaviors, and identify personal core values so that they can describe how their own personal perspectives influence their behaviors.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Define “ethical norms”
2. Identify sources of ethical norms:
 - Personal (family, friends, coworkers, culture, community)
 - Professional (the law, career, employer, geographic location, affiliations)
 - Clubs and affiliations (Rotary, scouting, sports teams, etc.)
 - Religious or spiritual beliefs
 - Generational
 - Internet and social media
3. Describe how ethical norms lead to individual, group, and organizational behaviors
 - Implicit bias
 - Decision-making
 - Problem-solving
4. Define core values
 - Established early in life
 - Can be modified in response to significant emotional events
 - Often subconscious or not recognized
 - Can be in competition with each other
 - Cannot be taken from you (only you can change them)
5. Identify your personal core values
6. Identify your personal biases that may impact your behavior as an instructor

Discussion Questions

1. How does social media impact our ethical norms?
2. What are some common values within your organization?
3. What factors might contribute to the emergence of multiple sets of ethics within an organization or group?
4. What is the difference between problem-solving and decision-making?

Application

1. Give students materials for assessing their core values and have them complete the assessment.
2. Give students an ethics-awareness assessment and have them complete the assessment.

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor may choose to use info from Dr. Morris Massey's three periods of values imprinting (the Imprint Period, 0–7 years, the Modeling Period, 8–13 years, and the Socialization Period 13–21 years).
2. For the application, the instructor may use their own tools or choose from these:
 - Brené Brown's "Dare to Lead Core Values" Living into Our Values Exercise
 - An online game-based, interactive learning platform
 - The Williams Institute's *Ethical Awareness Inventory* (online or hard copy)
 - Psychology Today: "How Ethical Are You?"
 - Brené Brown's Dare to Lead "Living into Our Values Exercise"
6. Values Cards (in Activities Folder)

Unit 3: Ethics in Action

Topic 3-1: Describing Policies, Procedures, Laws, and Standards

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given the policies, procedures, laws, and standards of the AHJ, will be able to describe policies, procedures, laws, and standards governing the instructor's role and ethical duties so that local, state, and federal requirements are met.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Describe the instructor's role as an ambassador for State Fire Training
 - Perform duties with integrity
 - Serve as a role model
 - Adhere to the State Fire Training Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics
2. Identify applicable laws; federal, state, and local policies and procedures; and professional standards for instructors
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
 - Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2008)
 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 §504 and §508
 - Title IX
 - Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (1974)
 - NFPA standards, including:
 - NFPA 1020 Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor, Fire Officer, and Emergency Medical Services Officer Professional Qualifications (2025)
 - California Code of Regulations (19 CCR § 1990.11)
 - California Health and Safety Code
 - HSC § 13159(d)
 - HSC § 13159.8(a)
 - State Fire Training Procedures Manual
 - Jurisdictional/organizational mission and values
3. Describe the commitments included in the State Fire Training Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics and the stated purpose for each:
 - The instructor's mission statement
 - Principle 1: The instructor's commitment to the student
 - Principle 2: The instructor's commitment to the training and education profession
 - Principle 3: The instructor's commitment to State Fire Training

Discussion Questions

1. How do your AHJ's policies and procedures align with the Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics?
2. Why do you think the Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics exists?
3. How can the Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics support you as an instructor?
4. What are reasonable accommodations protected by the ADAs and Section 504?

Application

1. Give students the State Fire Training Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics and have them engage in an instructor-moderated process of identifying, evaluating, and discussing at least seven standards spread across the three principles.

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor must call attention to the purpose statement paragraphs under the mission statement and principles in the State Fire Training Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics and thoroughly go through each of the numbered standards.

Topic 3-2: Describing Proactive Decision-Making and Communication, Defining Ethical Dilemmas, and Describing Ethical-Decision-Making Models

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given ethical-decision-making models, will be able to describe proactive decision-making and communication, define and identify types of ethical dilemmas, and describe ethical-decision-making models so that proactively preventing dilemmas is described, ethical dilemmas are defined and differentiated, and ethical-decision-making models are described.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Define “ethical dilemma”
2. Identify different types of ethical dilemmas
 - Right vs. wrong
 - Right vs. right
 - Wrong vs. wrong
3. Describe the role of proactive decision-making in preventing ethical dilemmas
 - Applying applicable laws, policies, and procedures
 - Bias, equity, and fairness in the instructional setting
 - Personal and professional boundaries in the instructional setting
 - Valid and reliable formative and summative assessment
4. Describe the role of proactive communication in preventing ethical dilemmas
 - Syllabus and lesson plan requirements
 - Communicating boundaries, expectations, and policies
 - Positive classroom climate
 - Learner characteristics
5. Describe the psychology of decision-making
 - Normalization of deviance
 - The Abilene paradox
6. Describe ethical decision-making models
 - Universal ethics
 - Situational ethics
7. Identify the components of an ethical-decision-making model

Discussion Questions

1. What are examples of each type of ethical dilemma?
2. How do the syllabus requirements communicate course expectations and minimize ethical dilemmas?
3. What are hindrances to ethical decision-making?
4. What are components you feel are important to include in an ethical-decision-making model?
5. What is the difference between universal and situational ethics?

Application

1. Give students videos discussing the psychology of decision-making and have them relate the situations in the videos to situations that could arise in their instructional environments.

Instructor Notes

1. This topic lays the cognitive groundwork for teaching the application of the skills in Topic 3-3.
2. In *Situational Ethics*, Joseph Fletcher defines “ethical dilemma” as a complex situation where ethical principles and values are in conflict.
3. The instructor should consider conflict avoidance, complacency, social or group acceptance, and rationalization/justification when discussing hindrances to ethical decision-making.
4. For the “types of ethical dilemmas,” the instructor should refer to the Rushworth Kidder model.
5. The instructor may choose to show *Why Everyone Agrees to Bad Ideas — The Psychology of the Abilene Paradox* and *Normalizing Deviance (Brian Strobel)* or find comparable videos.
6. Potential components of an ethical decision-making model would be:
 - Gather facts from all parties
 - Listen to rationale
 - Evaluate alignment between what is being said and what is occurring
 - Determine ethical issue
 - Identify your individual or group principles that impact the situation
 - List of alternatives
 - Compare alternatives
 - Consider consequences of each alternative
 - The greater the consequences the greater the need for careful decision-making
 - Questions to consider:
 - Could you or someone else suffer physical harm?
 - Could you or someone else suffer serious emotional pain?
 - Could the decision hurt your reputation, undermine your credibility, or damage important relationships?
 - Could the decision impede the achievement of any important goal?
 - Make decision
 - Implement and observe

Topic 3-3: Demonstrating Identifying Ethical Dilemmas and Applying an Ethical Decision-Making Model

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given an ethical dilemma in an instructional scenario and an ethical decision-making model, will be able to demonstrate identifying ethical dilemmas and apply an ethical decision-making model, so that the dilemma is ethically navigated.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate identifying ethical dilemmas
2. Apply an ethical decision-making model
 - Universal ethics
 - Situational ethics
3. Demonstrate navigating different levels of ethical dilemmas using an ethical decision-making model
 - Low-level intervention
 - Mitigating
 - Resolving

Discussion Questions

1. How can you determine when an ethical dilemma has arisen?
2. What is the difference between a policy violation, a legal issue, and an ethical dilemma?
3. How can you apply universal and situational ethics when making a decision?

Application

1. Give students complex ethical dilemma scenarios and have them break into small groups to identify the ethical dilemmas and apply an ethical-decision-making model to make decisions for each of the scenarios.

Instructor Notes

7. The instructor must include each of the following scenarios in the application: manipulating grades, student-instructor boundaries, artificial intelligence, hazing or harassment, adherence to course and curriculum requirements, being an ambassador of State Fire Training, and a situation involving multiple policy violations. There are samples that may be used in the Instructor Resources section.

Topic 3-4: Describing Reporting and Documentation

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given a complex ethical dilemma scenario and policies, procedures, and federal, state, and local laws, will be able to describe reporting and documenting harmful or negative course-delivery dynamics, noncompliant behaviors, and associated events so that applicable policies, procedures, and laws are applied and the dilemma is properly reported and documented.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Identify situations requiring reporting
2. Identify to whom situations must be reported (AHJ, state)
3. Describe the appropriate reporting and documentation methods

Discussion Questions

1. When do dynamics, behaviors, and events need to be reported to the state?
2. How will implementation of your decisions and the results reflect on you as an instructor?

Application

1. Give students the various ethical dilemma scenarios from Topic 3-3 and have them work with their small groups to describe how to properly report and document one of the scenarios.

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor should provide the contact information or a template for reporting problems to the state.
2. The student groups can work with the same scenario they had in Topic 3-3, or the instructor may assign them a different one.

How to Read a Course Plan

A course plan identifies the details, logistics, resources, and training and education content for an individual course. Whenever possible, course content is directly tied to a national or state standard. SFT uses the course plan as the training and education standard for an individual course. Individuals at fire agencies, academies, and community colleges use course plans to obtain their institution's consent to offer courses and provide credit for their completion. Instructors use course plans to develop syllabi and lesson plans for course delivery.

Course Details

The Course Details segment identifies the logistical information required for planning, scheduling, and delivering a course.

Required Resources

The Required Resources segment identifies the resources, equipment, facilities, and personnel required to deliver the course.

Unit

Each Unit represents a collection of aligned topics. Unit 1 is the same for all SFT courses. An instructor is not required to repeat Unit 1 when teaching multiple courses within a single instructional period or academy.

Topics

Each Topic documents a single Terminal Learning Objective and the instructional activities that support it.

Terminal Learning Objective

A Terminal Learning Objective (TLO) states the instructor's expectations of student performance at the end of a specific lesson or unit. Each TLO includes a task (what the student must be able to do), a condition (the setting and supplies needed), and a standard (how well or to whose specifications the task must be performed). TLOs target the performance required when students are evaluated, not what they will do as part of the course.

Enabling Learning Objectives

The Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO) specify a detailed sequence of student activities that make up the instructional content of a lesson plan. ELOs cover the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills students must master to complete the TLO.

Discussion Questions

The Discussion Questions are designed to guide students into a topic or to enhance their understanding of a topic. Instructors may add to or adjust the questions to suit their students.

Application

The Application segment documents experiences that enable students to apply lecture content through cognitive and psychomotor activities, skills exercises, and formative testing. Application experiences included in the course plan are required. Instructors may add additional application experiences to suit their student population if time permits.

Instructor Notes

The Instructor Notes segment documents suggestions and resources to enhance an instructor's ability to teach a specific topic.

CTS Guide Reference

The CTS Guide Reference segment documents the standard(s) from the corresponding Certification Training Standard Guide upon which each topic within the course is based. This segment is eliminated if the course is not based on a standard.

Skill Sheet

The Skill Sheet segment documents the skill sheet that tests the content contained within the topic. This segment is eliminated if the course does not have skill sheets.

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State Fire Training also extends special acknowledgement and appreciation to the Conference and Training Services Unit with the College of Continuing Education at California State University, Sacramento, for its ongoing meeting logistics and curriculum development support, innovative ideas, and forward-thinking services. This collaboration is made possible through an interagency agreement between CAL FIRE and Sacramento State.



Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics

Ethical Leadership for Instructors

(REV. ####)

Mission Statement

The instructor, believing in the worth and dignity of every person, recognizes the importance of the pursuit of truth and devotion to excellence. Essential to these goals is the protection of the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The instructor accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The instructor recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The respect and confidence of colleagues, students, peers, and members of the community are earned through consistent ethical conduct.

To achieve this endeavor, you are expected to read, understand, and follow the Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics as outlined below.

Principle 1 – Commitment to the Student

The instructor strives to help each student realize their potential as a capable and worthy member of the fire service. The instructor works to stimulate inquiry, support knowledge acquisition, and promote thoughtful professional development. In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the instructor:

- 1) Shall create a positive learning environment for all students.
- 2) Shall encourage students to think and act independently in their pursuit of learning.
- 3) Shall encourage critical thinking and respectful expression of varying points of view.
- 4) Shall make reasonable efforts to protect students from physical conditions harmful to learning or to, health and, or safety.
- 5) Shall not be under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol during any portion of a course.
- 6) Shall foster and support the diversity each student brings to the classroom.
- 7) Shall treat all students with equal respect and provide equal opportunities.
- 8) Shall ensure that the student is provided with a learning environment free of distractions to aid in the learning process.
- 9) Shall establish and maintain the student/instructor professional relationship.
- 10) Shall not intentionally expose a student to embarrassment or disparagement.
- 11) Shall promote an environment free of harassing, discriminatory, or unprofessional comments, including those related to race, ethnicity, religion, politics, or sex.
- 12) Shall not use profane or abusive language.
- 13) Shall maintain each student's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- 14) Shall do everything possible to ensure reasonable accommodations are provided for students with verified disabilities
- 15) Shall impart knowledge relevant to the student's success.

Principle 2 – Commitment to the Training and Education Profession

The training and education profession is vested by the public with trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service. In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the instructor:

- 1) Shall be honest when presenting their instructional qualifications by giving only accurate information.
- 2) Shall maintain classroom integrity by allowing only authorized instructors to teach.



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- 3) Shall disclose information obtained in the course of professional service only when disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
- 4) Shall maintain professional integrity by not accepting any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.
- 5) Shall commit to leveraging technology to enrich the learning environment while maintaining ethical, inclusive, and human-centered practices.

Principle 3 – Commitment to State Fire Training (SFT)

In recognition that the quality of instruction directly influences the fire service and the citizens it serves, the instructor shall exert every effort to raise professional standards and promote sound professional judgment. In fulfillment of the obligation to SFT, the instructor:

- 1) Shall maintain exam integrity by not distributing old or new exams for student review.
- 2) Shall teach courses to meet the objectives and course goals established by SFT.
- 3) Shall administer all summative and formative examinations under direct visual supervision.
- 4) Shall adhere to the policies and procedures of SFT.
- 5) Shall monitor student attendance daily and promptly document approval of any absences.
- 6) Shall remain current on the topics they are registered to teach.
- 7) Shall prepare students to meet course objectives and competency standards.
- 8) Shall adhere to all copyright laws.
- 9) Shall meet or exceed course content requirements.
- 10) Shall use, at a minimum, the course materials identified by SFT as required.
- 11) Shall request course approval prior to course delivery in accordance with SFT policy.
- 12) Shall return all SFT course materials promptly and in accordance with SFT policy.
- 13) Shall confirm with the registrar that all students meet the course prerequisites.
- 14) Shall ensure the student/instructor ratio is maintained at all times.
- 15) Shall inform SFT on any issues found with the curriculum or course delivery.
- 16) Shall ensure that maximum and minimum enrollment parameters are adhered to.
- 17) Shall inform SFT of any issues within the curriculum or course delivery.
- 18) Shall report to SFT any courses and/or instructors that do not meet established standards.
- 19) Shall report to SFT any negative or harmful classroom dynamics that occurred during the delivery of or in relation to an SFT course.
- 20) Shall teach only courses or portions of courses for which they are qualified.
- 21) Communicate about SFT with honesty and professionalism and avoid false or defamatory statements at all times.
- 22) Shall support the mission of SFT at all times and assume the responsibility of an ambassador of the program.



Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics
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Instructor Information

I have read, understand, and agree to comply with SFT's instructor code of ethics.

Full Name & SFT ID: _____

Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____

Draft

Ethical Leadership (ELI) Instruction Requirement Verification

Justification

In 2026, State Fire Training (SFT) updated the ethics curriculum to strengthen instructional consistency. SFT recognizes that ethics instruction requires demonstrated instructional proficiency by facilitation of discussion, application of policy, and modeling of professional conduct.

The Ethical Leadership for Instructors course directly influences instructor behavior, student engagement, and public trust in the fire service. This verification ensures that individuals teaching Ethical Leadership for Registered Instructors have demonstrated aptitude under the guidance of a State Fire Training–Registered Ethics Instructor. Requiring verification supports statewide consistency and maintains the integrity of State Fire Training curriculum delivery.

Evaluator Verification Statement

1. The Ethical Leadership for Instructors trainee has observed **and** participated in instruction delivered by a State Fire Training Registered Ethics Instructor and has demonstrated proficiency by accurately presenting ethics content and facilitating a guided discussion while maintaining professionalism and instructor neutrality, applying State Fire Training policies, and incorporating instructor feedback, as verified by the Registered Ethics Instructor.

Evaluator Signature: _____ Date Verified: _____

Fire Chief

Candidate's Fire Chief*:

(please print): _____

I, the undersigned, am the person authorized to verify the candidate's qualifications for certification. I hereby certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, that the completion of all requirements documented herein are true in every respect. I understand that misstatements, omissions of material facts, or falsification of information or documentation may be cause for rejection.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) Interim Procedures

Issued: **Month** 2026

Procedure Changes

Edition: 2025 edition of the State Fire Training Procedures Manual

Effective Date: December 1, 2026 (anticipated)

Section Changes: Update the following sections:

- 6.2: REGISTERED INSTRUCTOR
- 6.2.7: RESPONSIBILITIES
- 6.5: FIRE FIGHTER INSTRUCTOR
- 6.7.6: RESPONSIBILITIES
- 6.8: VENDOR EXPERT
- 6.9.10: INSTRUCTOR SERIES INSTRUCTOR
- 11.4.2.2: REGISTERED SKILLS EVALUATOR
- 11.4.4: APPROVAL
- 12.1: FORMS AND CHECKLISTS

Justification: Following approval by the Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) and State Board of Fire Services (SBFS), the Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) curriculum will go into effect on December 1, 2026.

SFT Contact: SFT Staff assigned to Instructor Registration.

Note: Using the 2025 edition of the State Fire Training Procedures Manual:

- Update all sections referenced above

6.2: REGISTERED INSTRUCTOR

6.2.1.2: Instructor Requirements

- A. Has completed SFT's Registered Instructor Orientation (RIO) within the previous twenty-four (24) months
- B. Has completed SFT's Ethical Leadership in the Classroom (2018 or newer) or Ethical Leadership for Instructors course and signed the SFT Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct (See 12.3: Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct.)

6.2.7: RESPONSIBILITIES

6.2.7.1: Ethical Conduct

- A. A Registered Instructor shall abide by the SFT Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct (2026).
 - 1. See 12.3: Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct.

6.5: FIRE FIGHTER INSTRUCTOR

6.5.1.2: Instructor Requirements

- A. Has fulfilled the following instructor training qualifications:
 - 1. Has met one (1) of the instructor requirements
 - i. Certified SFT Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1; or
 - ii. Certified SFT Instructor 1; or
 - iii. Certified SFT Training Instructor I; or
 - iv. Certified SFT Fire Instructor I; or
 - v. SFT Historically Recognized Fire Fighter 1 & 2 Academy Instructor
 - 2. Ethical Leadership in the Classroom (2018 or newer) or Ethical Leadership for Instructors course

6.7.6: RESPONSIBILITIES

6.7.6.1: Ethical Conduct

- A. An Instructor of Record shall abide by the SFT Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct (2026).
 - 1. See 12.3: Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct.

6.8: VENDOR EXPERT

6.8.1.1: Vendor Expert Requirements

- A. Has completed SFT’s Ethical Leadership in the Classroom (2018 or newer) or Ethical Leadership for Instructors course and signed the SFT Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct (See 12.5: Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct.)

6.9.10: INSTRUCTOR SERIES INSTRUCTOR

6.9.10.1: Eligible Courses

Table 6.9.10.1: Instructor Series Eligible Courses

CFSTES Courses	FSTEP Courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1 • Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 2 • Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Leadership for Instructors (2026) • Employing Audiovisual Aids • Group Dynamics and Problem Solving • Techniques of Evaluation • Instructor: Live Fire Training – Fixed Facility (2018) • Instructor: Live Fire Training – Acquired Structure (2018)

6.9.10.3: Instructor Requirements

- A. Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1 or Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 2
- B. A Registered Instructor for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1 or Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 2
 - 1. Must have attended and passed Instructor 1 or Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1, Instructor 2 or Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 2 as well as Employing Audiovisual Aids, Group Dynamics and Problem Solving, and Techniques of Evaluation.
 - 2. A Registered Instructor authorized to teach Training Instructor 1A, 1B, or 1C is authorized to deliver Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1 and 2.
- C. Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 3
 - 1. A Registered Instructor for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 3 must have attended and passed Instructor 1, 2, and 3 or Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1, 2, or 3.
- D. Ethical Leadership for Instructors
 - 1. A Registered Instructor for Ethical Leadership for Instructors must have attended and passed Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1, and Fire and Emergency

- Services Instructor 2, and Techniques of Evaluations, Group Dynamics and Problem Solving, and Employing Audiovisual Aids.
2. An SFT staff member or SFT approved Ethical Leadership for Instructors Primary Instructor must evaluate a Registered Instructor candidate during their first delivery of Ethical Leadership for Instructors. Instructor candidates shall complete the Ethical Leadership (ELI) Instruction Job Performance Requirement Verification and Task Book.
 - f. Candidate shall coordinate the course preparation and delivery with the SFT designee a minimum of six (6) weeks prior to the intended course delivery date.
 3. The candidate shall teach at least 50% of the entire course including units specified by an SFT Staff Member or an SFT designated and approved Ethical Leadership Registered Instructor.

6.9.10.5: Professional Experience

Table 6.9.10.5(B): Instructor Series Professional Experience for FSTEP Courses

FSTEP Courses	Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Leadership for Instructors 	<p>All required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a minimum of five (5) years’ experience as an SFT Registered Instructor in good standing • Have a minimum of five (5) years’ full-time paid experience as a Fire Fighter, two of which must be full-time paid experience working as a Company Officer of above in a recognized fire agency in California as a Fire Fighter • Held the rank of Company Officer or above for a minimum of two (2) years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Two (2) letters of recommendation from current Registered Ethical Leadership in the Classroom Registered Instructors waives this requirement. • Have taught a minimum of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Three (3) SFT courses for a minimum of eight (80) hours and a total 160 hours within the last three (3) years. • Taught a minimum of three (3) CFSTES courses within the last five (5) years, or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Taught a minimum combination of 120 hours of State Fire Training courses or Community College courses within the last five (5) years ◦ Utilize a PACE 2 review for candidates who do not meet the identified experience

11.4.2: PERSONNEL

11.4.2.2: Registered Skills Evaluator

- A. The primary responsibility of the Registered Skills Evaluator is to evaluate and score candidates on a specific skill or station.
- B. A Registered Skills Evaluator must:
1. Be certified in the job function of the SFT Certification Exam that they administer.
 2. Have completed the following coursework:
 - i. Certification Examination Evaluator Training Course (within twenty-four (24) months prior to submitting application)
 - ii. Ethical Leadership in the Classroom **(2018 or newer)** or **Ethical Leadership for Instructors course**
 - iii. Met the instructor requirements of **11.10: Personnel Registration**
 3. Have a signed Evaluator Code of Conduct on file with SFT
 4. Have a verification letter attesting to mastery of subject matter and meeting the objective evaluation psychomotor skills requirements.

12.1: FORMS AND CHECKLISTS

- A. State Fire Training (SFT) periodically revises its forms to address program changes and student needs. It is the responsibility of the individual using a form or checklist to ensure that they have the most current version of any SFT form or checklist.
- B. See forms and checklists on the following pages.
- 12.1: Transcript Request Application
 - 12.2: Instructor Registration Application
 - 12.3: Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics
 - 12.4: Course Scheduling Request Form
 - 12.5: Certification Exam Agency Evaluator Agreement
 - 12.6: Registered Skills/Lead Evaluator Application
 - 12.7: Registered Examination Evaluator Code of Conduct
 - 12.8: State-Certified Prescribed-Fire Burn Boss Application
 - 12.9: Distance Education Application
 - 12.10: Accredited Academy Application
 - 12.11: Instructor Reciprocity Application
 - 12.12: Course Challenge Application
 - 12.13: NFPA Professional Qualifications Reciprocity Application
 - 12.14: Notification of Name Change