Fire Officer (FO) Series
Significant Changes and Best Practices

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OVERVIEW

This document is intended to provide information for all State Fire Training (SFT) Officer Series Registered Instructors on changes in the delivery and format of the updated Fire Officer curriculum. Stakeholders are encouraged to study this information carefully and seek clarification from SFT if questions arise.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

1. Course names have been changed to align with NFPA terminology:
   - Fire Officer 4 (formerly Executive Chief Fire Officer)
   - Fire Officer 3 (formerly Chief Fire Officer)
   - Fire Officer 2 (formerly Company Officer)

2. All FO courses fill three general categories:
   - "A" courses: Human Resources
   - "B" courses: General Administrative Functions
   - "C" courses: Emergency Incident Management

3. Each track consists of three separate 54-hour, 3-unit courses to align with higher education semester unit requirements at community colleges, Cal-Poly Humboldt, and other institutions:
   - FO4 A, B, and C = 9 total semester units of graduate-level learning outcomes
   - FO3 A, B, and C = 9 total semester units of bachelor/upper division level learning outcomes
   - FO2 A, B, and C = 9 total semester units of associate/lower division level learning outcomes

4. Course structure and delivery methods:
   - "A" and "B" courses are designed to be taught over several weeks or a semester, *not* as traditionally delivered in a single block (e.g. Monday-Friday 0800-1700)

5. In addition to NFPA 1021, "C" courses have additional standards integrated into the curriculum.
   - FO2C contains NFPA 1143 Wildfire Officer I and NWCG S-200 Initial Attack IC standards.
   - FO3C contains NFPA 1143 Wildfire Officer II and NWCG S-300 Extended Attack IC standards.

- FO4C is geared towards the ICS Agency Administrator position.

6. Course activities are focused on the Certification Task Book (CTB) Job Performance Requirements (JPRs).
   - Each course is approximately one-third lecture/discussion and two-thirds CTB activities.
   - CTB's may be initiated at the first class for that series (e.g. FO 2A, FO3A, FO4A).
   - Instructors should discuss all topics in the Course Plan before assigning the CTB activity.
   - Student activities are designed to be conducted outside of class and turned in at the next class session.
   - Students may need a day or two to complete CTB activities in between course sessions.
   - Instructors should give feedback on course activities (refer to Best Practice Guidance below).
   - "C" courses may contain their own scenario task sheets which are required for CTB completion.

7. Specific changes to each course and instructor requirements can be found in their respective Implementation Plans and within the Course Plans available on the SFT website.

BEST PRACTICES

1. CTB activities should align student interests with agency needs to meet Fire Chief priorities. Ideally, students should be able to complete CTB activities while on duty because it meets both employee development and agency goals by completing real work that furthers the organization's strategic direction. Students should be encouraged to meet -either separately or as a group- to discuss their agency's needs with their superior(s) and how to best align CTB activities with individual organizational goals, gaps, and needs.

2. Each student should create a portfolio for each track that contains the memos, staff reports, or other documents from the A, B, and C courses that verify individual completion of course activities for submission to their Fire Chief for CTB sign-off and final approval. Your reputation as a FO instructor may be based on how well you have prepared students to complete and document course activities in their portfolio to meet Fire Chief's standards for CTB completion and approval.

3. Adult learners can only absorb so much lecture and discussion, which shouldn't exceed 4 hours in one day. If you've taught all morning, there isn't capacity to push out more material in the afternoon. Dismiss class and use afternoon time for completion of course activities. Allow gap days so students can produce a quality product.

4. It is recommended that instructors establish office hours or times for remote availability to help students with their activities between course sessions.

5. Instructors should give students feedback on student activities with grades, symbols, or comments.
   - Student CTB activities may be graded if required by the institution.
   - If student activities are not graded, instructors are still encouraged to provide feedback on student activity documents with:
     - A "minus" sign where student products are below standard, or improvement is needed
     - A "check" sign to indicate the student meets the minimum standard
     - A "plus" sign may indicate where students have exceeded the standard
   - The best type of student feedback on activities is specific written or oral comments.

6. Courses should be taken in order (A, B, then C). It is also recommended that courses be delivered in cohorts or as part of promotional academies to ensure consistency and to build relationships between student peers and their superiors as they align with organizational needs.

7. "C" courses should follow the "crawl, walk, run" methodology, with initial incident scenarios starting out relatively simple, and gradually increasing complexity as new lecture/discussion material is learned and practiced.
   - "C" courses are intended to be delivered in-person, with lecture in the mornings and incident-based CTB activities in the afternoon for the first few days, then to longer scenarios as fundamental skills are mastered.
   - Break students into rotating groups for scenarios:
     - IC and overhead
     - Dispatch and radio voices for other units
     - Role players and/or disruptors
     - Peer evaluators with CTB scenario task sheets
   - FO3C suggested scenario progression:
     - Begin with 1-2 alarm all-risk scenarios
     - Then greater alarm all-risk scenarios
     - Transition with an all-risk, multi-operational period greater alarm scenario
     - Finally, progress to extended attack wildland and WUI scenarios
   - FO4C scenario(s) should be focused on how an AHJ will use their emergency plan to interface with and delegate to a formal IMT within their jurisdiction for a complex incident. The final scenario should be delivered in conjunction with a local multi-agency tabletop drill.