

# STATE FIRE TRAINING

## ANNUAL REPORT 2025



OFFICE OF THE STATE  
FIRE MARSHAL

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



State Fire Marshal  
**DANIEL BERLANT**

***"Together, we will  
keep strengthening  
California's fire  
service and  
preparing for the  
challenges ahead."***

As we close another year, I want to thank our stakeholders for their continued partnership and support of State Fire Training (SFT). Your engagement is vital to ensure California's fire service is prepared for emerging risks, evolving technology, and the increasing demands placed on our responders.

Over the past year, we advanced several key priorities. The rapid expansion of battery energy storage systems (BESS) has highlighted the need for updated training and guidance, and we have begun integrating new content to prepare firefighters for these complex incidents. We also strengthened our focus on behavioral health and cancer awareness, reflecting our shared responsibility to support both the operational readiness and long-term well-being of California's fire service members.

A major accomplishment was the rollout of the updated Fire Fighter curriculum, aligning our training with current science, national standards, and modern fireground realities. In parallel, we continued improving the SFT User Portal, streamlining processes and enhancing usability for departments, instructors, and candidates across the state.

Throughout these efforts, the State Fire Training team remained committed to delivering reliable, responsive customer service, ensuring our stakeholders receive the support and clarity needed to navigate the system effectively.

Thank you for your continued collaboration. Together, we will keep strengthening California's fire service and preparing for the challenges ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Berlant".

# FY 2024 STATISTICS

## STATE FIRE TRAINING OVERVIEW

### CALIFORNIA FIRE ACADEMY SYSTEM

41 ACCREDITED REGIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS (ARTPS)

30 ACCREDITED LOCAL ACADEMIES (ALAS)

### CALIFORNIA FIRE SERVICE TRAINING & EDUCATION SYSTEM (CFSTES)

27 CERTIFICATIONS

55 COURSES

### FIRE SERVICE TRAINING & EDUCATION PROGRAM (FSTEP)

95 COURSES

## TOP COURSES SCHEDULED

### CFSTES

1. Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator 1A  
Driver/Operator (2017)
2. Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator 1B  
Pump Apparatus Operations (2017)
3. Instructor 1  
Instructional Methodology (2019)
4. Company Officer 2B  
General Administrative Functions (2014)
5. Company Officer 2A  
Human Resource Management (2014)

### FSTEP

1. Incident Safety Awareness for Hired Vendors (2018)
2. Confined Space Rescue Awareness (2021)
3. Fire Control 3  
Structural Firefighting - Fixed Facilities (2018)
4. Fire Fighter Survival (2023)
5. Common Passenger Vehicle Rescue Technician (2021)

State Fire Training is committed to providing the highest level of quality training and education to the California fire service. In FY 2024, these 10 courses represented the most frequently scheduled courses within the State Fire Training catalog, highlighting areas of highest demand and utilization across the program.

## COURSES

### HOURS

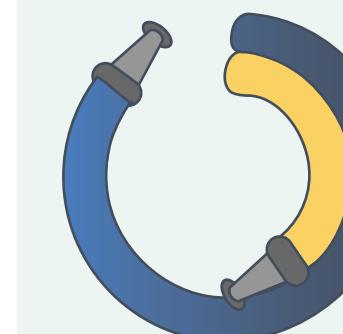
TOTAL HOURS  
1,232,438



FSTEP: 798,298  
CFSTES: 434,140

### DIPLOMAS

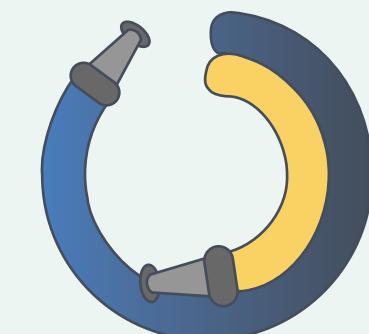
TOTAL DIPLOMAS  
60,051



FSTEP: 43,426  
CFSTES: 16,625

### COURSES

TOTAL COURSES SCHEDULED  
3,355



FSTEP: 2,126  
CFSTES: 1,229

## CERTIFICATIONS AND EXAMS

### PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES

11,701  
4,870

NATIONALLY ACCREDITED  
CALIFORNIA SPECIFIC

### EXAMS \*

13,620

TOTAL STUDENTS

### INSTRUCTOR

2,566

COURSE REGISTRATIONS

\* State Fire Training (SFT) holds national accreditation for Fire Fighter 1, Fire Fighter 2, Hazardous Materials First Responder Awareness and Operations, Wildland Fire Fighter 1, Fire & Emergency Services Instructor 1, and Fire & Emergency Services Instructor 2. Consequently, SFT currently offers seven distinct certification exams.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## CURRICULUM AND CERTIFICATION UPDATES

### Courses updated to meet evolving training standards

	FIRE FIGHTER 1A (2024)
	FIRE FIGHTER 2A (2024)
	FIRST RESPONDER INSPECTOR (2024) & FIRE INSPECTOR (2024)
	BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & CANCER AWARENESS (2025)
	FIRE PLANS EXAMINER (2024)

	NON-MOTORIZED WATERCRAFT RESCUE TECHNICIAN
	FIRE INVESTIGATOR (2022)
	WATER RESCUE (2021)
	FIRE OFFICER 2, 3, & 4
	FIRE CHIEF CERTIFICATION (PACE 4)
	FIRE MARSHAL (2024)

## CURRENT BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

### Continuous Improvement Plans

SFT has expanded its national accreditation to include Fire and Emergency Services Instructor (FESI) 1 and 2 certifications. This expansion aligns with the standards set by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and the Pro Board and is an additional option for those seeking FESI certification. The FESI 1 and 2 certification exams can be scheduled by any California ARTP and ALA.

### UPCOMING PROJECTS

- **Title 19 – 2025 Procedures Manual**- Anticipated publication date February 2026.
- **Blueprint 2030** – SFT's Strategic Plan publication in January 2026.
- **Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Series** - NFPA curriculum update.
- **SFT Webpage Update** – SFT is incorporating short how-to videos to the SFT website.
- **SFT User Portal/ACADIS Enhancements** – A proposed 3-year contract to include valuable online enhancements.
- **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Workgroup** – A workgroup with Subject Matter Experts will be formed to review the SFT curriculum catalog.
- **Fire and Emergency Services Instructor 1 and 2 (2024)**- NFPA curriculum update.

# COURSE SURVEYS



**SFT has revamped the course evaluation survey for student feedback. The new course survey is now available for students to complete.**

Feedback plays a crucial role in enhancing course quality and ensuring safety, making it vital for instructors to understand the importance of feedback from the start. A well-designed student evaluation tool directly links these goals, as it fosters a constructive feedback loop that drives curriculum improvement, acknowledges instructional excellence, and supports student empowerment.

SFT Registered Instructors offer an optional Course Evaluation Survey at the end of each course, which allows students to provide feedback on course content, learning environment, online learning experience, and their instructor. In FY 2024, students submitted more than 4600 surveys. At the end of each student evaluation, there is a field for students to indicate whether they consent to a follow-up contact from SFT or request one. Of the 4600 students who completed the survey, 307 requested and were given an opportunity to provide feedback about their course experience. Most of the time, students are impressed with the way their instructors blend classroom and

applied content and want to share how effective or amazing their instructor was. Occasionally, students have constructive feedback that they would like to share with SFT or return to their instructor for further consideration. In FY 2024, 5 instructors were contacted regarding student feedback about SFT courses.

The information from these surveys is valuable, which is why SFT has an initiative to generate even more feedback related to course experiences. In collaboration with CSU-Sacramento, SFT has designed a new student evaluation tool, which will be launched in parallel with this report. This initiative is rooted in a shared commitment to enhance the safety and effectiveness of firefighting efforts throughout our communities.

## **There are three intentions behind the new design:**



Facilitate recognition of instructors for their dedication to students and stakeholders.



Enable students to provide feedback that informs quality improvement of SFT curriculum and practices.



Develop a tool to support SFT in generating mini-reports and course analytics.



## **Scan the QR Code for the new SFT Student Evaluation**

Please ensure that you distribute this QR code to your classes and instructors, so that all students can access the evaluation tool.

[\\*Click Here for a printable PDF of the QR Code](#)

## **Here is a three-step process to facilitate survey distribution:**

**1**

Display the QR code on your classroom projector or distribute copies to students.

**2**

Allow 5+ minutes for students to scan the code with their mobile devices on the last day of the course, but not in the last 5 minutes of class if possible.

**3**

Confirm with each student that they have successfully accessed the evaluation tool.

# PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES

A space for colleagues to contribute expert insights and perspectives on key industry trends.



## IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



By Captain Darren Hall  
San Diego Miramar College

The fire service has long been regarded as a profession rooted in skill, courage, and community trust. Yet, as society's expectations evolve, so too must the professional development of those working in Fire and Emergency Services. Modern challenges—ranging from increasingly complex fire behavior, hazardous materials, terrorism threats, climate change, and wildland-urban interface fires—require a workforce that not only excels in tactical operations but also demonstrates leadership, critical thinking,

and evidence-based decision making. Higher education is central to meeting these demands, and the partnership between State Fire Training and the California Community College (CCC) system provides an ideal pathway for firefighters to advance their education while honoring the value of their professional experience.

The CCC system, the largest higher education network in the nation, is uniquely positioned to support fire and emergency services professionals. Its accessibility, affordability, and statewide reach allow firefighters in every region to pursue coursework that enhances their technical expertise while strengthening administrative and leadership competencies. Established fire

technology programs offer foundational instruction in fire behavior, prevention, incident command, and public administration. However, the system's true strength lies in its ability to create clear career ladders, linking associate degrees with transfer pathways to the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems. This academic continuum promotes long-term professional growth from firefighter to fire officer, chief officer, and ultimately, executive leadership roles.

*"Its accessibility, affordability, and statewide reach allow firefighters in every region to pursue coursework that enhances their technical expertise..."*

Several institutions already demonstrate how this model advances the profession. Cal Poly Humboldt proudly welcomes firefighting professionals each semester into its Leadership Studies Bachelor's Degree Completion Program. At the graduate level, UC San Diego is developing a Master's Degree modeled after State Fire Training's Executive Chief Officer Program, bridging advanced leadership skills with academic recognition. Additionally, the California Community Colleges Baccalaureate Degree Program (BDP) has expanded opportunities by offering applied bachelor's degrees at the community college level. For example, San Diego Miramar College

recently launched the state's first Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Management, with emphasis areas in Emergency Management, Emergency Medical Services, and Modern Policing—designed for students who have already completed associate degrees in related fields.

A key innovation supporting firefighter advancement is **Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)**. Firefighters acquire extensive knowledge and skill through California State Fire Marshal certifications, National Fire Academy coursework, agency-based academies, and CAL-JAC apprenticeship programs. Historically, this training did not translate directly into college credit, often leading to discouragement and unnecessary duplication of effort. CPL addresses this challenge by formally recognizing certifications, training records, and documented skills as equivalent to college-level coursework. For instance, completion of the Fire Officer certification sequence may yield articulated credit toward fire technology or public safety management degrees. This not only accelerates academic progress but also reduces costs and validates the professionalism of fire service training.

# PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES



## BALANCING READINESS AND REALISM



By Chief David Sprague  
Berkeley Fire Department

The American fire service stands at a pivotal moment. Our profession has always evolved to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and in doing so, we have built a proud reputation as society's all-hazard problem solvers. When someone dials 911 and law enforcement is not the appropriate responder, the responsibility almost always falls to the fire department. That reality has defined our identity as one of capability, ingenuity, and public trust. Firefighters today are called upon not only to

extinguish fires, but also to deliver emergency medical care, mitigate hazardous materials, conduct technical rescues, respond to natural disasters, manage hazardous energy incidents, and now, increasingly, confront the consequences of emerging technologies. The strength of the fire service lies in this adaptability, our ability to encounter novel, complex, and often dangerous situations and find solutions under pressure. But this strength also exposes a vulnerability. The sheer breadth of our responsibilities brings an almost insurmountable training and education challenge: how to remain proficient across an ever-expanding set of disciplines.

### The Expanding Scope of "All Hazards"

The fire service's growth beyond fire suppression was not the result of a single decision, but of decades of incremental adaptation. Communities turned to us because we are organized, available, and capable. When new risks emerge, the fire service steps forward. Today, we are witnessing yet another inflection point in our expanding mission, the rapid proliferation of lithium-ion batteries in electric vehicles, home battery energy storage systems (BESS), and utility scale storage facilities represents both a technological revolution and a public safety challenge.

### A Case Study in Emerging Risk

Recently, two incidents occurred in California which highlighted the challenge. The first involved an electric vehicle (EV) that caught fire following a collision. Approximately four hours after the vehicle struck a tree around midnight, its damaged battery system entered thermal runaway while being moved by a tow truck. The impact had compromised the battery compartment, scattering roughly 300 small, cylindrical (AA-sized) battery cells across the roadway.

After the driver was transported for medical care, on-scene crews requested a HazMat response to assist with the cleanup. The scattered cells were collected and placed into 55-gallon drums for disposal. As the vehicle was later loaded onto a flatbed tow truck for transport to a wrecking yard, the remaining batteries reignited in a thermal runaway event, producing a dense cloud of toxic gases.

Although suppression crews quickly extinguished the flames, the gas plume drifted several hundred yards through the night air, enveloping members of the HazMat team who were still monitoring the cleanup operation. Several firefighters inhaled the fumes before they could evacuate the area.

Separately in another jurisdiction there was a structure fire, crews made their way to the seat of the fire in the basement and extinguished the fire. Interestingly, when firefighters were performing overhaul, they noticed that all the copper (water) pipes in the basement were red hot and energized. They determined that the BESS was somehow installed in a way that allowed power to charge the pipes and ignite the structure fire. These home emergency storage systems require no exterior placarding that would indicate their presence to responding firefighters and often operate silently until something goes wrong. Aside from this incident, firefighters have encountered unexpected explosions, illegal battery chop shops, and thermal runaway events that reignite hours or even days later.

These examples are not isolated; they are a harbinger of the evolving environment in which we operate. Each new technology introduces unknowns such as materials, chemistries, and behaviors that differ from what our traditional training has prepared us to handle.

# PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES

## The Imperative of Investment

The solution is not to pull back from our mission, but to ensure that our foundation, our training, education, and research infrastructure, keeps pace with the challenges we face. This must happen at every level of the fire service.

At the **local level**, chiefs must continue to prioritize and defend training budgets, recognizing that a robust training division is not a luxury, but an operational necessity. Training must be realistic, frequent, and forward looking, integrating lessons learned from both within and beyond our own jurisdictions.

At the **state level**, sustained investment in institutions such as State Fire Training (SFT) is critical. SFT has long been a cornerstone of professional development in California, setting the standard for credentialing and curriculum development. But the accelerating pace of change demands that SFT adopt an even more proactive stance, developing new courses, competencies, and standards for emerging threats such as energy storage, alternative fuels, and advanced building systems.

At the **federal level**, funding must expand to support education, equipment, and research. Funding is desperately needed to support firefighter training, technology acquisition, and post incident analysis, all essential tools for safety and continuous improvement.

When things do not go as planned, there must be structured mechanisms for national learning so that those experiences inform future training and response strategies. What happens in one department should not remain an isolated lesson.

## Building a Culture of Continuous Learning

The fire service has always been defined by its commitment to readiness. But readiness today requires more than muscle memory and mechanical skill; it demands curiosity, adaptability, and a lifelong commitment to learning. The operational environment is changing faster than ever, and the tools, materials, and hazards we face are increasingly complex.

If we are to remain true to our mission to protect lives, property, and the environment, we must embrace education not as an occasional requirement, but as a core operational function.

***"We must embrace education not as an occasional requirement, but as a core operational function."***

## The Path Forward

The fire service's greatest strength is its people. Every generation of firefighters has faced new challenges, and each has risen to meet them. The expansion of our mission is not something to fear, but to manage with foresight and discipline. We will continue to be the ones who show up when no one else can or will. But to do that safely and effectively, we must invest intellectually, institutionally, and financially in the systems that prepare us for tomorrow's problems. The communities we serve expect nothing less.

The Fire Service is more than a profession – it's a calling defined by courage, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to community. These perspectives and stories bring intriguing and diverse viewpoints from State Fire Training (SFT) stakeholders.



# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**State Fire Training's (SFTs) Behavioral Health & Cancer Awareness curriculum has been updated. The new Behavioral Health & Cancer Awareness (2025) curriculum will be available for scheduling at the beginning of 2026.**

In 2020, State Fire Training (SFT) recognized the need to develop a course that teaches California's frontline responders and supervisors how to take care of themselves and their people. The answer to this need was the development of the FSTEP Behavioral Health and Cancer Awareness Series (1A, 2A, 3A). Since its launch in September 2020, there have been 118 BHCA 1A course offerings, reaching over 2900 students.

From Deputy State Fire Marshal III, Chief Caryn Petty, who has taught this course more than 50 times: "Emergency responders and support personnel face risks that extend beyond incident response with two of the greatest threats to long-term health being behavioral health challenges and occupational cancer. Training in these areas is essential – not only to raise awareness, but to equip all members with the knowledge and resources to protect themselves and each other.

**"This ground breaking curriculum is saving lives."**



## Key Updates – Behavioral Health & Cancer Awareness (2025)

Implementation
<b>New curriculum active: Jan 1, 2026</b>   <b>Old curriculum retired: Dec 31, 2025</b>

### Course Structure & Content Changes

- **BHCA 1A:** Now requires a self-assessment before class.
- **BHCA 2A + 3A (2020):** Combined into one 32-hour Multilevel Supervisor course.
- **BHCA New topic:** Recognizing Behavioral Health Distress (Communicating about Distress).
- **Prerequisites for BHCA 2A:** BHCA 1A + Peer-Based Suicide Awareness.

### Course Delivery & Instructor Changes

- **Class Size Increase:** 32 - 50 students. Instructor ratio adjusted (1:50 lecture).
- Existing instructors remain authorized, with transitional rules for new candidates.

### BHCA RESOURCES: click the links to learn more

[Firefighter Health + Safety Collaborative | FIIRE Initiative](#)

[FFCSN | Firefighter Cancer Support Network | Toolkits](#)

[IAFF Continued Education | Resiliency, Peer Support | Trauma Support | Fire Service Families | Clinical Trainings | Addiction | Strategies for Success & More](#)

[FIRESCOPE | Cancer Diagnosis FAQ | Risk Management & Worker's Compensation](#)

**\*RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLINICAL PROVIDER**  
take these to your doctor

[\\*FFCN | Firefighter Annual Evaluations](#)

[\\*FFCN | Women Firefighter Annual Exam](#)

[\\*IAFF IAFC NVFC, FSTAR | Providers Guide to Firefighter Medical Evaluations](#)

# ACCREDITED ACADEMIES



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The CAL FIRE, OSFM, State Fire Training (SFT) is the division that establishes, develops, and delivers standardized training and education for the California fire service. The State Fire Training website serves as a valuable resource and a one-stop shop for all things related to State Fire Training.

## OUR MISSION

To enable the California Fire Service to safely protect life and property through education, a training, and certification.

## COMMUNICATION

Visit our website each month, as content is updated periodically.

### FOLLOW US!



[JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER](#)

[SFT WEBSITE](#)

## LEADERSHIP

**Daniel Berlant**  
State Fire Marshal

**Vickie Sakamoto**  
Assistant State Fire Marshal

**Tim Spears**  
Assistant Deputy Director

**Chris Fowler**  
Chief, State Fire Training

**Brandon Erickson**  
Staff Services Manager I

**Kris Rose**  
Staff Services Manager I

