



South Carolina
Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



South Carolina Fire Academy

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State Fire Academy Graduates 20 in February

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 20 recruits, Friday, Feb. 28, 2020, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Chief Colleen Walz, St. John's Fire District. These firefighters underwent a 320-hour training program of classroom and hands-on firefighting skills development.

"This challenging eight-week program requires commitment, passion, and dedication," Fire Academy Superintendent Dennis Ray said. "These recruits have successfully worked together as a team, performed extensive hands-on training with live fires, and passed intensive practical skills evaluations and written tests to meet the National Fire Protection Association standards," he said.

The comprehensive training, offered quarterly at the Fire Academy, includes emergency responder first aid training, hazardous materials operations training, auto extrication, flammable liquids and gas firefighting, rescue training, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firefighter I and Firefighter II levels.

"With the successful completion and graduation of these new firefighters who will now be dedicating their lives to serving their communities and the state, our South Carolina fire service is enhanced," Ray said. "I am proud of their accomplishments and I also commend the dedicated Fire Academy instructors who brought the recruits through these weeks of instruction leading to graduation."

The following recruits graduated Feb. 28, 2020:

- DeTuan Beck, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Zykiesis Cannon, Parker District Fire Department
- Morgan Clifton, Burton Fire District
- Andrew Dumais, Troops to Firefighters
- Alexander Fields, Wade Hampton Fire Department
- Larry Glover, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Daniel Gregory, Moncks Corner Rural Fire Department
- William Knafelc, Parker District Fire Department
- Julian Marcano, St. John's Fire District
- William Matthews, St. John's Fire District
- Brandon Maxwell, Parker District Fire Department
- Stetson Mayson, Merriwether Fire Department
- Patrick O'Reilly, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Hunter Palmer, St. John's Fire District

- Eric Riffard, Fort Mill Fire Department
- Raheem Samuel, Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Benjamin Tomlinson, Boiling Springs Fire District
- Justin Toohey, St. John's Fire District
- Brandon Valdivia, Troops to Firefighters
- Fayaadh Van Dieman, Ascension Auxiliary Airfield

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Brandon Maxwell, Parker District Fire Department

This award is chosen by the class recruits. The Maltese Cross is a firefighter's badge of honor, signifying that he or she works in courage – a ladder rung away from death. The Eight Obligations of The Maltese Cross are: Live in Truth, Repent of Sins, Love Justice, Be Sincere and Whole-Hearted, Have Faith, Give Proof of Humility, Be Merciful, and Endure Persecution.

Chief Robert Frick – Eric Riffard, Fort Mill Fire Department

The Chief Robert Frick Award is given to the recruit with the highest grade point average.

Pride of the Battalion – Fayaadh Van Dieman, Ascension Auxiliary Airfield

This award recipient is chosen by the instructor staff who worked with the recruits during the eight-week program. The Pride of the Battalion award is given to the recruit who has demonstrated "Leadership, Integrity, Determination and Good Value."

The Fire Academy provides emergency services training to the municipal fire service - both paid and volunteer - airport crash rescue departments, industrial fire brigades and emergency teams and service organizations including EMS, law enforcement and military from around the state and the world. The Fire Academy is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) for multiple NFPA firefighter levels.

The Fire Academy and the State Fire Marshal's Office make up the Division of Fire and Life Safety, which is a division of the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.