



South Carolina
Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



South Carolina Fire Academy

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State Fire Academy Graduates Nine in October

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated nine recruits, Friday, Oct. 9, 2020, in Columbia from its first offering of a 13-week hybrid firefighter candidate school adapted to address safety concerns related to COVID-19. Keynote speaker was Chief Dennis Ray, Academy Superintendent.

These firefighters underwent a 320-hour training program of online classroom training as well as hands-on firefighting skills development. The firefighters reported to the Academy every weekend for skills training and testing. For the last two weeks of the program, recruits resided on the Fire Academy campus. Additionally, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes were made to class structure and facilities to promote social distancing and recommended precautions.

"The firefighters who participated in the hybrid Recruit School proved their commitment, passion, and dedication to the profession while enhancing their ability to learn lecture material virtually," Superintendent 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."

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 Oct. 9, 2020:

- Curtis Barnes, Belvedere Volunteer Fire Department
- Andrew Bowen, Belvedere Volunteer Fire Department
- Cameron Carver, Walterboro Fire Department
- Elijah George, Caromi Rural Volunteer Fire Department
- James Grayson, Clemson University Fire & EMS
- Brooks Hineman, St. Paul's Fire Department
- Joseph Lyons, Murrells Inlet-Garden City Fire District
- Timothy Sheriff, Oconee County Emergency Services
- Harrison Warren, Belvedere Volunteer Fire Department

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Curtis Barnes and Harrison Warren, Belvedere Volunteer Fire Department Members

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 – Joseph Lyons, Murrells-Inlet-Garden City Fire District

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

Pride of the Battalion – Brooks Hineman, St. Paul's Fire Department

This award recipient is chosen by the instructor staff who worked with the recruits during the 13-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.