



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
**Investigative Hearing**

Norfolk Southern Railway general merchandise freight train 32N  
derailment with subsequent hazardous material release and fires,  
in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3, 2023

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>EXHIBIT</b>	
7	

Agency / Organization

**Ohio Department of Public Safety**  
**Division of Emergency Medical Services**

Title

**Fire Service Certificates to Practice**



## Fire Service Certificates to Practice

In accordance with section [3737.66](#) of the Ohio Revised Code no person shall claim to the public to be or act as a firefighter, volunteer firefighter, member of a fire department, chief of a fire department, or fire prevention officer unless the person has received a certificate issued under section [4765.55](#) of the Ohio Revised Code evidencing satisfactory completion of a fire service training program. In the case of a volunteer firefighter, a certificate evidencing satisfactory completion of a firefighter training program shall be received within one year after appointment by the governing board of a firefighting agency.

In accordance with section [4765.55](#) of the Ohio Revised Code the Executive Director of the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services (EMFTS), with the advice and counsel of the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Committee of the EMFTS Board, shall assist in the establishment and maintenance of fire service training programs and shall develop rules to regulate firefighter and fire safety inspector training programs. In accordance with section [4765.55](#) of the Ohio Revised Code the Executive Director issues certificates to fire service providers at the following levels:

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### Volunteer Firefighter (VFF)

A Volunteer Firefighter certification is the minimum level of certification required to provide firefighting services in the State of Ohio. The certification is a stand-alone certificate specific to the State of Ohio which **does not meet the minimum “Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications”** established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 as a qualifying level of public safety responder for trained firefighters.<sup>(1)</sup>

To be eligible for a Volunteer Firefighter certification, an individual shall complete a State of Ohio Certified Volunteer Firefighter Course; a 36-hour **introductory, awareness-level course**, provided by an Ohio chartered fire training program. The course is designed to introduce the student to the basic

elements of fire ground safety and support operations, and to provide the student with the knowledge, skills, and abilities, (KSAs) to assist in firefighting support operations with a fire department.

As an **awareness-level course**, the Ohio Volunteer Firefighter Course is intended to be a foundation upon which firefighters can begin to build their training portfolio. Due to the 36-hour time constraint as set forth in section 4765.55 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Volunteer Firefighter course limits exposures to hazardous environments as described in the Ohio Administrative Code. The course **does not permit student participation** in any instruction involving the type of hazardous environments in which their fire department may operate. Prohibited activities include environments which are considered to be “Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health” (IDLH), including but not limited to, hot zone operations at uncontrolled fires or hazardous materials releases involving fixed structures, mobile equipment, or outdoor areas as well as operation of emergency vehicle apparatus.

Due to the limitations of the Ohio Volunteer Firefighter Course, firefighters certified to the Volunteer Firefighter level shall be provided the additional training necessary to participate in fire department activities that exceed the training provided in the Volunteer Firefighter Course. **The fire chief or the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) is responsible to provide additional proper training in these expanded areas if the firefighter is expected to function safely within an IDLH environment or operate emergency vehicle apparatus.**

The certification must be renewed every three years, with fifty-four (54) hours of continuing education required during each three year cycle.

All of the course objectives in the Ohio Volunteer Firefighter Course are approved by the Executive Director, with advice and counsel of the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee.

#### Initial certification information

<sup>(1)</sup>The Firefighter I certification meets the minimum “**Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications**” established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 as is the recommended minimum level of certification to provide firefighting services in the State of Ohio.

# Firefighter I (FFI)



The Firefighter I certification is the minimum level of certification recommended to provide firefighting services in the State of Ohio. The certification meets the **minimum requirements set forth in the “Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications”** established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 as a qualifying level of public safety responder for trained firefighters.

To be eligible for a Firefighter I certification, an individual shall complete a State of Ohio Firefighter I Course, a one-hundred-sixty (160) hour course provided by an Ohio chartered fire training program. The Firefighter I Course requirements meet or exceed the nationally recognized standard, NFPA 1001: Standard for Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

The course includes firefighter training, hazardous materials awareness and operations level training, and training on the National Fallen Firefighters Association Sixteen Life Safety Initiatives. In addition to the Firefighter I course, students are required to complete an Emergency Vehicle Operations Course and training on the National Incident Management System (NIMS), to be eligible for **“Firefighter I”** certification as recognized in the Ohio Revised Code.

An individual certified at the Firefighter I level will have demonstrated competency in the knowledge and practical skills required to perform at the Firefighter I level. The certification must be renewed every three years, with fifty-four (54) hours of continuing education required during each three year cycle.

All of the course objectives in the Ohio Firefighter I Course are approved by the Executive Director, with advice and counsel of the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee.

## Initial certification information

*NOTE:* The Ohio Administrative Code includes an option for firefighters certified as a Volunteer Firefighter to transition from the Volunteer Firefighter certificate to a Firefighter I certificate. The course is titled “Firefighter I Transition Course” and consists of a 124-hour course provided by an Ohio chartered fire training program. All other qualifications for certification as a Firefighter I apply.

## Firefighter II (FFII)



Firefighter II is the highest level of firefighter certification available in Ohio. The Firefighter II certification is typically required for career firefighters in the State of Ohio. The certification meets the **minimum requirements set forth in the “Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications”** established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 as a qualifying level of public safety responder for trained firefighters.

To be eligible for certification, students shall successfully complete the two-hundred-forty (240) hour Ohio Firefighter I and II Course through an Ohio chartered fire training program. The course includes firefighter training, hazardous materials awareness and operations level training, and training on the National Fallen Firefighters Association Sixteen Life Safety Initiatives. In addition to the Firefighter I and II Course, students are required to complete an Emergency Vehicle Operations Course and training on the National Incident Management System (NIMS), to be eligible for “**Firefighter II**” certification as recognized in the Ohio Revised Code.

An individual certified at the Firefighter II level will have demonstrated competency in the knowledge and practical skills required to perform at the Firefighter II level.

The certification must be renewed every three years, with fifty-four (54) hours of continuing education required during each three year cycle.

All of the course objectives in the Ohio Firefighter I and II course are approved by the Executive Director, with advice and counsel of the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee.

### Initial certification information

*NOTE:* The Ohio Administrative Code includes an option for firefighters certified as a Firefighter I to transition from the Firefighter I certificate to a Firefighter II certificate. The course is titled “Firefighter II Transition Course” and consists of an 84-hour course provided by an Ohio chartered fire training program. All other qualifications for certification as a Firefighter II apply.

## Hazard Recognition Officer (HRO)

The Hazard Recognition Officer certification provides certificate holders with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to conduct fire and life safety inspections in Ohio. The certification is optional and meets the **minimum requirements set forth in the nationally recognized standard, NFPA 1031: "Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner" for Fire Inspector I.**

To be eligible for certification, students shall successfully complete the forty-hour Hazard Recognition Officer Course through an Ohio chartered fire training program. Course participants gain an understanding of the fire inspector's role in code enforcement, general fire prevention practices, fire safety requirements related to HAZ MAT, electrical systems and fire protection systems, as well as learning the skills necessary to properly conduct fire safety inspections.

**The Hazard Recognition Officer certification *does not* permit certificate holders to write citations. Uncorrected fire code violations must be forwarded to individuals holding an Ohio Fire Safety Inspector certification for follow up.**

The certification must be renewed every three years, with six hours of continuing education required during each three year cycle.

All of the course objectives in the Ohio Hazard Recognition Officer course are approved by the Executive Director, with advice and counsel of the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee.

### Initial certification information

*NOTE:* The Ohio Administrative Code currently does not provide for a transition course to allow a Hazard Recognition Officer certificate-holder to transition to a Fire Safety Inspector certification.

## Fire Safety Inspector (FSI)

The Fire Safety Inspector certification provides certificate holders with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to conduct fire and life safety inspections in Ohio. The certification is optional and meets the **minimum requirements set forth in the nationally recognized standard, NFPA**

## **1031: "Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner" for Fire Inspector I and II.**

To be eligible for certification, students shall successfully complete the eighty-hour Fire Safety Inspector Course through an Ohio chartered fire training program. The course contains all course objectives included in the Hazard Recognition Officer Course, as well as more advanced training necessary to perform duties required at the Fire Inspector II level including interpreting codes, implementing policies, testifying at legal proceedings, applying local fire and life safety codes to complex situations, analyzing and recommending modifications to local codes, reviewing and evaluating fire protection systems, analyzing egress elements of a structure, and evaluating code compliance in the storage, use, and manufacture of flammable and combustible liquids and gases and hazardous materials.

*NOTE:* Although the Fire Safety Inspector course contains basic requirements to review plans, the function is technical and requires additional training beyond the scope of the Fire Safety Inspector course.

The certification must be renewed every three years, with twenty-four hours of continuing education required during each three year cycle.

All of the course objectives in the Ohio Fire Safety Inspector course are approved by the Executive Director, with advice and counsel of the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Subcommittee.

***NOTE:*** In accordance with section 3737.34 of the Ohio Revised Code, no person shall serve as a fire safety inspector for any fire agency unless he/she has received a certificate issued under section 4765.55 of the Revised Code evidencing satisfactory completion of the Fire Safety Inspector training program.

Initial certification information