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Company Officer Development in the Goshen Fire Company

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EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy

as part of the Executive Fire Officer Program

October 2009

Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

The problem was that supervisory deficiencies had been observed in the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company that had the potential for compromising their effectiveness. The purpose was to ascertain relevant professional qualifications standards and professional development opportunities that could be utilized to enhance company officer preparation.

Four research questions framed this descriptive research: (1) What are the recommended professional qualifications standards that have been established for company officers? (2) What knowledge and skills are required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company based on their assigned roles and responsibilities? (3) What professional development opportunities are available to the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to enhance the preparation of its company officers? and (4) What professional development approach should the Goshen Fire Company utilize in the preparation of its company officers?

The procedures included a comprehensive literature review of resources available through the NETC Learning Resource Center, the Internet, and academic research databases. Sources of information included books, journal articles, EFOP applied research projects, NFPA standards, and trade publications. Relevant fire company administrative documents were also examined, as were available training and certification opportunities. Data collection included personal interviews and observations.

This research identified the following results: (a) the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* articulates recognized qualifications for company officers; (b) the job performance requirements identified in this standard are consistent with those required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company; and (c) the training and

certification opportunities for company officers available within the region should fully meet the needs of the fire company in preparing its company officers.

The recommendations included that the fire company implement a comprehensive approach to company officer development based on the NFPA 1021 Standard that incorporates regional training and certification opportunities and its own officer training.

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Introduction

This research project examined company officer development within the Goshen Fire Company. This research topic was selected based on the recognition of the integral role of company officers, both on and off the incident scene, in contributing to the effectiveness, efficiency, and safety of the contemporary fire department. As a firefighter "makes the transition" to the company officer ranks, his or her basic firefighting knowledge and skills must be supplemented with a complementary set of supervisory skills.

The problem was that supervisory deficiencies had been observed in the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company that had the potential of compromising their effectiveness. The purpose of this research was to ascertain relevant professional qualifications standards and professional development opportunities that the Goshen Fire Company could utilize to enhance the preparation of its company officers.

Descriptive research, including conducting a series of personal interviews with company and chief officers, was utilized to answer the following research questions:

What are the recommended professional qualifications standards that have been established for company officers?

What knowledge and skills are required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company based on their assigned roles and responsibilities?

What professional development opportunities are available to the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to enhance the preparation of its company officers?

What professional development approach should the Goshen Fire Company utilize in the preparation of its company officers?

Background and Significance

The Goshen Fire Company provides primary coverage to approximately 23 square miles of Chester County, PA, serving 35,000 residents. Chester County is one of the five counties, along with Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia, that comprise the five-county Philadelphia region. The primary coverage territory of the Goshen Fire Company includes East Goshen Township, West Goshen Township, Westtown Township, and Willistown Township. The fire company also provides automatic and mutual aid to a number of surrounding communities, including deployment of a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT).

In addition to a substantial residential population, the primary coverage territory includes a significant business and industrial community, including the headquarters or division offices of numerous corporations. The QVC Network, as an example, has its corporate headquarters and primary studios within East Goshen Township. The fire company also responds to incidents on a number of major state roads, such as Routes 3, 100, and 202.

The Goshen Fire Company operates out of two stations - the headquarters station is in East Goshen Township and the other station is in West Goshen Township. Goshen Fire Company is a combination fire department with a limited cadre of career staff (8 full-time and a number of part-time personnel) that supplement a volunteer cadre of 90 volunteers that serve as firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, and/or fire police.

Each of the three fire company divisions (fire, emergency medical services, and fire police) has a chief who is appointed by and reports to the Board of Directors. The Fire Chief is subsequently authorized to appoint the necessary officer cadre to provide the supervision, management, and leadership necessary to fulfill the mission of the fire company, both on and off the incident scene. The composition of the fire officer cadre at the present time is:

- Fire Chief
- Deputy Chief
- Assistant Chiefs (2)
- Staff Battalion Chiefs (2)
- Captains (2)
- Lieutenants (5)
- Sergeant
- Chief Engineer
- Assistant Chief Engineers (2)

All of the officer positions listed above are filled by members serving in a voluntary capacity, with the exception of the Sergeant position, which is filled by the Career Staff Supervisor. As company officer position openings occur, the Fire Chief solicits interest in serving in the position(s) from the firefighter ranks. Interested candidates submit cover letters along with a summary of their qualifications for promotion. The six chief officers then interview candidates and subsequently discuss appointments.

While the above process, which has been implemented over the past two years, represents a significant improvement, the fact that the fire company bylaws do not stipulate required experience, training, and certification levels for advancement to the officer ranks has proven to be problematic over the years. This is not a new problem – it appears to have existed throughout the history of the fire company, since it was founded in 1950. The new and varied challenges facing all contemporary fire and emergency services organizations, including the Goshen Fire Company, make the issue of company officer development a “mission critical” area that the fire company should address. While many of the current officer cadre have taken the initiative to

secure the necessary officer training and certifications on their own, or have participated in opportunities to attain Fire Service Instructor I and Fire Officer I certification when offered in-house at Goshen Fire Company through the Montgomery County Fire Academy, the need for a more structured approach to company officer development has been apparent and has been a subject of discussion at several chief officer meetings.

The problem selected for this research initiative is thus the supervisory deficiencies that have been observed in the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. These supervisory deficiencies have the potential of compromising effectiveness, efficiency, and safety, as well as detracting from organizational climate and morale. It is thus important to address this crucial issue in the interest of not having it continue to perpetuate itself and the associated resulting undesirable organizational consequences in the future. The purpose of the research is thus to ascertain relevant professional qualifications standards and professional development opportunities that the Goshen Fire Company could utilize to enhance the preparation of its company officers.

This research project was conceptualized during participation in the Executive Development course within the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. While the problem addressed in this research relates to several of the topical units in the NFA Executive Development course, three of these units provided insights with respect to conceptualizing and conducting this research. These units were: Unit 3 - Change Management; Unit 7 - Organizational Culture and Change; and Unit 10 - Service Quality. The relationship to the course content in the first two referenced units is based on the reality that this research project involves challenging traditional ways of doing things as well as the status quo. The relationship of the research to Unit 10 is based on the project's potential to enhance the quality of

the services that the Goshen Fire Company delivers to its stakeholders – those who live in, work in, and travel to and through its jurisdiction. Successful execution of this research and implementation of its recommendations will support a number of the United States Fire Administration (USFA) Operational Objectives, particularly (1) “reduce the loss of life from fire of firefighters” and (2) “to respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues.”

Literature Review

The stated research problem and purpose provided the guidance necessary to plan and implement an appropriate literature review in the interest of addressing the identified research questions. Descriptive research was utilized to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the recommended professional qualifications standards that have been established for company officers?
2. What knowledge and skills are required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company based on their assigned roles and responsibilities?
3. What professional development opportunities are available to the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to enhance the preparation of its company officers?
4. What professional development approach should the Goshen Fire Company utilize in the preparation of its company officers?

While a comprehensive literature review was conducted, only representative sources that served to guide the design and execution of this research project will be discussed in this section and listed in the reference section of this paper. The literature review included a comprehensive review of resources available through the NETC Learning Resource Center, the Internet, and academic research databases. Sources of information included books, journal articles, EFOP applied research projects, NFPA standards, and trade publications. Relevant fire company administrative documents were also examined, as was documentation on available training and certification opportunities. This researcher found that the order in which the four research questions were presented provided a logical flow in conducting the literature review. That same order will be followed in organizing the presentation of material within this section of the paper.

The first research question was “What are the recommended professional qualifications standards that have been established for company officers?” The context here is much broader than the fire service alone. Fire departments are no different than other contemporary organizations in that their success and survival, as determined by their ability to meet the expectations of their stakeholders, requires that those individuals who manage and lead them have the necessary knowledge and skills. Thus the insights gleaned from such disciplines as business management and public administration provide a useful context for viewing the role of professional qualifications for the fire service officer ranks.

The individuals who manage and lead the contemporary fire department fall into a number of categories of fire officers, based on their management level, roles and responsibilities, and accompanying rank within the fire department. Within the organizational hierarchy, company officers logically fall within the first level of management, referred to as the operational or functional level. As such, they function as supervisors of personnel, activities, and projects. Plunkett and Greer (2000) advocated that supervisors, like actors, must learn and enact certain specific roles in order to successfully enact their duties. Hunsaker (2005) expands upon this in advocating that managers require both general skills and specific skills that correspond with their roles and responsibilities.

The concept of professional certification is not new in that it had its beginning in the fire service in 1971, when the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations (JCNFSO) created the National Professional Qualifications Board (NPQB) and charged it with the development of national standards for uniformed fire service personnel (National Fire Protection Association, 2009, p. 1). The inclusion of fire officers, along with firefighters, fire service instructors, and fire inspectors and investigators, as the initial areas that the committees were

charged to address, attests to a recognition of the need for and importance of professional qualifications standards for fire officers. The first edition of NFPA 1021 was adopted in July 1976.

The recognition of the need for professional certification of business professionals, including managers, paralleled the aforementioned progression in the fire service. Manzi and Grocki (1980) found a need to provide for the certification of business professionals resulting from the growing complexity of the business world. Falconer (1981) discussed the role of certification programs in measuring the excellence of the professions, specifying that in some fields certification was required, while in others it may not be required, but still certainly added to the prestige of those who attained it and also to that of their organizations. Finkle (1985) discussed the role of certification in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of supervisors and managers engaged in public administration. In a recent journal article, Pilenzo (2009) further emphasized the importance of professional standards in reporting on his research on the professional certification of human resource professionals as an integral element of a new paradigm for contemporary human resource management.

Dr. Denis Onieal (2003), Superintendent of the National Fire Academy, articulated the central role that professional qualifications standards play in enhancing the professional status of the fire service in a series of articles entitled “Professional status: The future of fire service training and education,” which were published in all of the major fire service publications. These provocative articles laid the conceptual foundation for much that has been accomplished through the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) initiative of the National Fire Academy.

Further recognition of the integral role of professional qualifications standards is found in the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) *Officer Development Handbook* (2003), which articulated that "professional development is a journey, not a destination," (p. 1) and that professional qualifications standards are necessary in the establishment and maintenance of professional qualifications and competency. The IAFC *Officer Development Handbook* (2003) further states "we want our officers to have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in supervisory, management, administrative and executive positions" (p. 7).

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), through its standards-making process, has developed, issued, and periodically revised a series of professional qualifications standards for a number of generic positions within the contemporary fire service. The NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* addresses the required competencies for fire officers. The current edition (NFPA1021, 2009 Edition) was prepared by the Technical Committee on Fire Officer Professional Qualifications and issued by the Standards Council on May 30, 2008, with an effective date of July 18, 2008. It superseded all previous editions, including the 2003 edition. A contribution of the 2003 document had been a task analysis that validated the continued use of four levels of officer qualification.

In 2007, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that it had adopted eleven National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards (Anonymous, Fire Engineering, 2007). The NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* was one of the professional qualifications standards adopted by the Department of Homeland Security. This action on the part of DHS further validated the relevance of the NFPA 1021 Standard with respect to the preparation and professional qualifications of fire officers.

The NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) identifies job performance requirements that serve as a basis for four levels of fire officer certification (Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, Fire Officer III, and Fire Officer IV). These levels of certification correspond with the increasing levels of responsibility as one progresses through the fire officer ranks as follows:

- Fire Officer I – "supervisory level"
- Fire Officer II – "supervisory/managerial level"
- Fire Officer III – "managerial/administrative level"
- Fire Officer IV – "administrative level"

Two of the levels, Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II, correspond with the typical roles and responsibilities of company officers in contemporary fire departments. These two levels were thus selected for examination within the literature review and to provide direction for other components of this research project. The job performance requirements for both of these levels of fire officer professional qualifications are stated within the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications.* The job performance requirements for both of these levels of fire officer certification include: general prerequisite knowledge and general prerequisite skills, as well as knowledge and skills in the following categories: intergovernmental and interagency cooperation, human resource management, community and government relations, administration, inspection and investigation, emergency service delivery, and health and safety. A summary of the job performance requirements for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II, as identified in Chapter 4 of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) can be found in Appendix A – Summary of NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) Job Performance Requirements.

The second research question was "What knowledge and skills are required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company based on their assigned roles and responsibilities?" A prerequisite to answering this research question was the development of a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the current roles and responsibilities of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. The positions of Captain, Lieutenant, and Sergeant fall within the designated "company officer" ranks within the Goshen Fire Company.

Smoke (2005) stated that "a company officer is a first-line supervisor responsible for the performance and safety of assigned personnel in an emergency service organization" and that "the company officer's job is as varied as all of the activities of the organization" (p. 5). He further stated that "company officers are expected to lend a hand when needed, whether it be advancing hose, forcing doors, or similar activities that do not compromise their roles as leaders" (Smoke, 2005, p. 6). The company officer role is thus critically important in ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and safety of the fire department. The roles of the company officer as a supervisor, as a subordinate, and as a public servant are discussed in the first chapter of the esteemed training and reference manual, *Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer* (4th Edition) (International Fire Service Training Association, 2007).

In a series of two articles that appeared in *Fire Chief* and have been subsequently cited in a number of EFOP applied research projects, Fleming described the process of advancement from the firefighter ranks to a line officer position and also later to a chief officer position as a process that involves "making the transition." He further advocated the importance of recognizing the role that contemporary fire departments must embrace with respect to preparing candidates for this transition (Fleming, 2002a, 2002b).

Katz (1955), in a seminal contribution to the study and practice of management, found that managers utilize three sets of management skills: technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. Technical skills involve the specialized knowledge and skills necessary to perform work-related techniques, such as advancing a firefighting hoseline or extricating a trapped victim from a vehicle. Human skills are the interpersonal skills required to work collaboratively with others. Conceptual skills involve seeing the big picture or the organization as a whole. The roles and responsibilities of the typical company officer and of those within the Goshen Fire Company require that position incumbents possess and are skilled in utilizing both technical and human skills. Fleming advocated that "successful line officers must complement their technical training with supervisory and leadership training" and that "line officers need the same type of training that's provided by businesses and other organizations to individuals accepting first-line supervisory positions" (Fleming, 2002a, p. 51).

The importance of properly defining the roles and responsibilities of the various positions in an organization, including those of company officers within a fire department, is extremely important in ensuring that positions are staffed by individuals who possess the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully perform the roles and responsibilities of the position. A failure to properly define and communicate roles can result in role ambiguity, where there is a discrepancy between an organization's expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of a position and that of the position incumbent, and/or role conflict, where the position incumbent enacts a set of roles and responsibilities that differ from his or her understanding of the organization's expectations (Greenberg and Baron, 2008).

Documentation of the roles and responsibilities of each of these positions was reviewed. It was found that generic position descriptions exist for the positions of Captain and Lieutenant,

while a more detailed and specific position description exists for the Career Staff Supervisor position with its accompanying rank of Sergeant. Further review of administrative documents of the fire department, including the minutes of meetings of the fire officers and posted lists of functional duties and assignments revealed further insights as to the specific duties and responsibilities of the various company officer positions. In conducting this portion of the literature review, it was evident that the roles and responsibilities of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company correspond with the job performance requirements of Fire Officer I, as a "supervising fire officer," and Fire Officer II, as a "supervising/managing fire officer" (National Fire Protection Association, 2009; International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003). This was also confirmed by the results of personal interviews regarding the perceived importance of the NFPA 1021 job performance requirements for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II with respect to the established roles and responsibilities of the company officers within the Goshen Fire Company and in the preparation of fire department members to successfully enact these roles and responsibilities. These personal interviews are described in the "Procedures" section of this paper, with a presentation of the results in Table 1 – Perceived Importance of Inclusion of Fire Officer I Job Performance Requirements (NFPA 1021) in Company Officer Development and Table 2 – Perceived Importance of Inclusion of Fire Officer II Job Performance Requirements (NFPA 1021) in Company Officer Development, respectively, and a discussion of the results in the "Results" section of the paper.

The third research question was "What professional development opportunities are available to the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to enhance the preparation of its company officers?" This component of the literature review involved a comprehensive review of

professional development opportunities available at the regional, state, and national levels, in terms of training, education, and certification.

Review of the training and development records of the Goshen Fire Company revealed selected members of the fire officer cadre, including those serving in the capacity of company officer, have availed themselves to training and certification opportunities available through regional fire and emergency services training academies, particularly the Montgomery County Fire Academy. Training and certification programs have been offered by the Montgomery County Fire Academy and the Delaware County Emergency Services Training Center at the Goshen Fire Company. The fire company has conducted a number of professional development sessions for its fire officers, usually in connection with scheduled officers' meetings. One such topic of these professional developments sessions was "Effective Delegation within the Fire Department." A limited number of the current fire officers have taken resident classes at the National Fire Academy.

A literature review of published course catalogs and announcements and relevant websites revealed the existence of a robust set of professional development opportunities for company officers available within the region, as well as through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, and the National Fire Academy. It was also found that many of these training and certification opportunities are consistent with the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) and thus corresponded to the professional development needs of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company.

A review of available training and certification offerings revealed that the Montgomery County Fire Academy is properly positioned to support the Goshen Fire Company in the

preparation of its company officers through providing both training courses and certification opportunities. Its designation as an approved training site by the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and as a "delegated authority" certification test site by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner enable it to effectively and efficiently serve the company officer professional development needs of fire and emergency services organizations throughout the region, including the Goshen Fire Company.

The Montgomery County Fire Academy currently offers the following two course-based fire officer certification opportunities at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Campus (MCPSTC) in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania and as an in-house course delivery at selected fire stations:

- Fire Officer I
- Fire Officer II

The Fire Officer I program was delivered at the Goshen Fire Company last year.

Additionally, courses and certification testing opportunities for the following certification levels, which serve as prerequisites for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II certification under the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition), are offered:

- Fire Fighter I
- Fire Fighter II
- Fire Service Instructor I

The Fire Service Instructor I program was delivered at the Goshen Fire Company two years ago.

As a "delegated authority" certification test site, the Montgomery County Fire Academy is authorized to conduct certification testing under both the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualification (NBFSPQ) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress

(IFSAC) (Montgomery County Fire Academy, 2009). A summary of the relevant fire officer training and certification programs offered through the Montgomery County Fire Academy is presented in Appendix C – Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II Offerings through the Montgomery County Fire Academy.

The following information from the Office of the State Fire Commissioner website summarizes the State Fire Commissioner's Voluntary Fire Service Certification Program and information on its Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, and Fire Service Instructor I certification levels. The information on Fire Service Instructor I is included because this certification level is a prerequisite to Fire Officer I.

> In accordance with Act 61, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner is responsible for the implementation of firefighter training and certification developed in accordance with and consistent to established standards. The Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) is the certifying agency within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State Fire Academy is the administering agency.
>
> This program was established in 1983 when a committee known as the Fire Service Certification Advisory Committee (FSCAC) was formed to explore the implementation of a voluntary certification program for firefighters. The FSCAC provides the OSFC with program guidance and peer review. In October 1985, the National Pro-Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ) approved the certification processes and procedures established by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and accredited Pennsylvania to offer Fire Fighter I certification. The State Fire Commissioner's Volunteer Fire Service Certification Program has received its five-year reaccreditation each time since 1985 and currently offers twenty-three (23) levels of

certification. To make the program easily accessible to emergency services providers there are twenty-seven (27) approved test sites geographically dispersed throughout the Commonwealth at which certification testing is conducted.

The purpose of this program is to identify and recognize emergency service personnel whose accomplishments in training and education meets or exceeds nationally recognized standards. The NFPA standards for Fire Service Professional Qualifications identify the minimum requirements for a person at a particular level of progression. A person certified to one of the Fire Service Professional levels will have demonstrated competency in the knowledge and skills required to perform at a particular level. The service that can be offered to the citizens, visitors and communities of the Commonwealth will be enhanced by the professional competency attained through this certification process.

Fire Officer I

The purpose of this program is to identify emergency service personnel who demonstrate knowledge and skills competency related to fire officership. The NFPA Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications identifies the minimum requirements for a person at the first level of progression. A person certified at the Fire Officer I level will have demonstrated the ability to perform the tasks at the supervisory level.

Fire Officer II

The purpose of this program is to identify emergency service personnel who demonstrate knowledge and skills competency related to fire officership. The NFPA Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications identifies the minimum

requirements for a person at the second level of progression. A person certified at the Fire Officer II level will have demonstrated the ability to perform the tasks at the supervisory level.

Fire Service Instructor I

The purpose of this program is to identify emergency service personnel who demonstrate the knowledge of and skills competency related to adult instruction. The NFPA Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications identifies the minimum requirements for a person at the first level of progression. A person certified at the Fire Service Instructor I level will have demonstrated competency in the knowledge of and the ability to conduct instruction from prepared lesson plans (Office of the State Fire Commissioner, 2009).

A significant milestone in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Voluntary Fire Service Certification Program was achieved in July 2009 when the Office of the State Fire Commissioner received accreditation from the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) to certify candidates under their auspices. This positioned the Office of the State Fire Commissioner to offer dual certifications to candidates who successfully meet all certification requirements.

A summary of the relevant fire officer training and certification programs offered through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner is presented in Appendix B – Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II Offerings through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner.

The fourth research question was “What professional development approach should the Goshen Fire Company utilize in the preparation of its company officers?” The literature review

associated with the first three research questions provided important insights with respect to answering this final research question. In addressing the first research question, it became clear that whichever approach is selected by the Goshen Fire Company should be based on the competencies identified in the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition). The second research question and its associated literature review indicated the need to make sure that the selected professional development approach fully addressed both the generic knowledge and skills required of a company officer, as well as any specific competencies deriving from the fire department's organizational mission and scope of operations. The information on the available training and certification opportunities for fire officers within the region, including the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company, affords the Goshen Fire Company the ability to select appropriate training and professional development opportunities that best address the professional development needs of its present and future company officers.

Procedures

The literature review, reported in the previous section of this paper, provided instrumental guidance and direction in designing and implementing this research project. The literature review included a comprehensive review of resources available through the NETC Learning Resource Center, the Internet, and academic research databases. Sources of information examined included books, journal articles, EFOP applied research projects, NFPA standards, and trade publications. Relevant fire company administrative documents were also examined, as was documentation on available training and certification opportunities.

While valuable guidance was gained from all of the aforementioned sources, the value of reviewing a number of past EFOP applied research projects must be recognized. This review revealed that a significant number of these projects addressed a range of issues related to company officer development. The insights gained from reviewing these past contributions to the fire service body of knowledge enabled this researcher to define and structure this research project in a manner that corresponded with its stated research problem and purpose. Review and consideration of the procedures utilized by past researchers enabled this researcher to determine appropriate procedures to answer the stated four research questions utilizing descriptive research.

The procedures utilized in answering the first research question, “What are the recommended professional qualifications standards that have been established for company officers?” included a comprehensive review and analysis of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition). In addition to reviewing the general job performance requirements categories for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II, as articulated in Chapters 4 and 5 of the Standard respectively, this researcher conducted a comprehensive analysis of the specific “requisite knowledge” and “requisite skills” delineated within each of the

job performance requirement categories. These general categories included: general prerequisite knowledge, general prerequisite skills, human resource management, community and government relations, administration, inspection and investigation, emergency service delivery, and health and safety. In addition to the value of this review in answering the first research question, it also served as a basis for the personal interviews that were conducted in the interest of answering the second research question and served as a basis for evaluating whether available training and certification professional development opportunities conformed to the stipulations of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition).

The review of the research of past EFOP participants also served to emphasize that the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* has become the recognized national professional development standard for use in the preparation, certification, and future credentialing of fire officers. This researcher has been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to serve on the NFPA 1021 Technical Committee on Fire Officer Professional Qualifications for a number of years. This experience has likewise served to inform this researcher in the development and implementation of this research project.

The second research question was "What knowledge and skills are required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company based on their assigned roles and responsibilities?" The insights gained regarding the roles and responsibilities of first-level supervisors in fire departments and other contemporary organizations and corresponding knowledge and skills required to successfully perform at this supervisory level provided a baseline for further data collection.

A number of the Goshen Fire Company's relevant administrative documents were secured and reviewed in the interest of ascertaining both the generic and specific roles of the

various company officers within the Goshen Fire Company. A review of position descriptions, as well as officer assignment lists, was used to develop an accurate understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. Minutes of officers' meetings were reviewed in the interest of further clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company.

A series of personal interviews was conducted with fire company members. The members asked to participate in these interviews were selected based on their background within the fire service and as a member of the Goshen Fire Company. These interviews followed a structured format and were designed to solicit information regarding the roles and responsibilities of company officers of the Goshen Fire Company, as well as the requisite knowledge and skills required to successfully enact these roles and responsibilities. In examining each aspect, the interviews sought to solicit the perceptions of the importance of each of the job performance requirement category within the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II.

The interviews typically ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. Twenty members of the fire company participated in these interviews. Those interviewed included representation from the chief officer, company officer, and firefighter ranks. This enabled the researcher to consider this issue from the perspective of position incumbents, their supervisors, and their subordinates. During the interviews, participants were asked to rate each of the job performance requirement categories for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II with respect to perceived importance in terms of the knowledge and skills required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company. Four options were given for use in this rating process: "very important," "important," "not important," and "not applicable."

During the personal interviews, a number of participants related their personal experiences and observations. These insights were useful in developing a comprehensive understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company and the corresponding requisite knowledge and skills that the fire company should ensure that its fire officers possess. The personal observations of the researcher, both on and off the incident scene, further contributed to this understanding.

The third research question was "What professional development opportunities are available to the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to enhance the preparation of its company officers?" The procedures utilized to answer this question involved a comprehensive review of training and certification opportunities that would be available to the present and future officers of the Goshen Fire Company. This review included an examination of the websites of the Montgomery County Fire Academy, the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, and the National Fire Academy. The current course catalogs and course schedules of each of these entities were also reviewed. The course materials, including instructor and student manuals, were examined for the Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II course-embedded certification courses offered by the Montgomery County Fire Academy through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy. Materials issued by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner with respect to Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II certification (i.e., candidate handbooks, certification applications, and practical skill sheets) were also reviewed. A focal point in reviewing both the training and certification opportunities was to determine if they fully addressed all of the job performance requirements specified in the 2009 Edition of NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*. Analysis, involving a "crosswalk" of these programs with the specific job performance requirements for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II of

the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) was conducted to determine if these course-embedded offerings of the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and Office of the State Fire Commissioner address all of the specified Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II competencies.

While most of the aforementioned material regarding training and certification offerings is publically available, this researcher was able to access certain documents that are not readily accessible based on his involvement in training and certification within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. His current service includes serving as Chairman of the Fire Service Certification Advisory Committee (FSCAC) and as President of the Keystone Chapter Fire Service Instructors (KCFSI).

The fourth research question was "What professional development approach should the Goshen Fire Company utilize in the preparation of its company officers?" The collective procedures outlined with respect to addressing the first three research questions further contributed to answering the final research question regarding what approach the Goshen Fire Company should adopt to ensure the preparation of its present and future company officers.

There are several limitations that should be considered with respect to this research. The first is that only a representative sample of fire company members was selected for and participated in the personal interviews. A second possible limitation is that participants may not have fully and accurately presented their thoughts, insights, and perceptions during the personal interviews.

The following definitions are provided for terms that appear within this paper.

AHJ – Authority having jurisdiction

ARP – Applied research project

Company Officer – A first-level supervisor within a fire department, such as a captain or lieutenant

DHS – Department of Homeland Security

EFOP – Executive Fire Officer Program

FESHE – Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education

Fire Officer I – A “supervisory level” fire officer

Fire Officer II – A “supervisory/managerial level” fire officer

Fire Officer III – A “managerial/administrative level” fire officer

Fire Officer IV – An “administrative level” fire officer

FSCAC – Fire Service Certification Advisory Committee

IAFC – International Association of Fire Chiefs

IFSAC – International Fire Service Accreditation Congress

JPR – Job performance requirement

MCFA – Montgomery County Fire Academy

MCPSTC – Montgomery County Public Safety Training Campus

NBFSPQ – National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualification

NETC – National Emergency Training Center

NFA – National Fire Academy

NFPA – National Fire Protection Association

NFPA 1021 – *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*

OSFC – Office of the State Fire Commissioner

PSFA – Pennsylvania State Fire Academy

USFA – United States Fire Administration

Results

The procedures utilized to answer the first research question, "What are the recommended professional qualifications standards that have been established for company officers?" were based on a comprehensive literature review, including a review and analysis of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition). This review revealed that the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* is a comprehensive document that serves as the recognized standard for fire officer professional qualifications. This recognition of NFPA 1021 as the recognized standard for fire officer professional qualifications, including that of company officers as discussed in Chapter 4 – Fire Officer I and Chapter 5 – Fire Officer II, is supported by numerous EFOP applied research projects that have examined issues related to the qualifications and preparation of company officers.

The fact that the Department of Homeland Security adopted the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* in 2007 further attests to the recognition within the fire and emergency services that this is the accepted standard for fire officer professional qualifications. The Office of the State Fire Commissioner, of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, likewise acknowledges the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* as the recognized standard establishing minimum requirements for fire officers.

The second research question was "What knowledge and skills are required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company based on their assigned roles and responsibilities?" A number of relevant administrative documents of the Goshen Fire Company were reviewed in the interest of ascertaining both the generic and specific roles of the various company officers within the Goshen Fire Company. A review of position descriptions, officer assignment lists, minutes of officers' meetings, and other written documentation revealed that the roles and responsibilities

of the company officers within the Goshen Fire Company appear to be consistent with the job performance requirements for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II as delineated in the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition).

The results of the personal interviews conducted with twenty members of the fire company further collaborated the findings of the review of fire company administrative documents in that all twenty participants in the interview process rated all of the job performance requirements categories for both Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II, with the exception of the "Inspection and Investigation" category as either being "very important" or "important" with respect to the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. The responses from the personal interviews with respect to the Fire Officer I job performance requirements categories are summarized in Figure 1. Figure 2 presents the summary of the responses regarding the Fire Officer II categories.

Figure 1

Summary of Results of Personal Interviews on Importance of

Fire Officer I (NFPA 1021) Job Performance Requirements (N=20)

General Prerequisite Knowledge Very Important = 20
General Prerequisite Skills Very Important = 20
Human Resource Management Very Important = 18 Important = 2
Community and Government Relations Very Important = 19 Important = 1
Administration Very Important = 18 Important = 2
Inspection and Investigation Very Important = 3 Important = 5 Not Important = 4 Not Applicable = 8
Emergency Service Delivery Very Important = 20
Health and Safety Very Important = 17 Important = 3

Figure 2

Summary of Results of Personal Interviews on Importance of

Fire Officer II (NFPA 1021) Job Performance Requirements (N=20)

General Prerequisite Knowledge Very Important = 15 Important = 5
General Prerequisite Skills Very Important = 16 Important = 4
Human Resource Management Very Important = 17 Important = 3
Community and Government Relations Very Important = 18 Important = 2
Administration Very Important = 12 Important = 8
Inspection and Investigation Important = 3 Not Important = 6 Not Applicable = 11
Emergency Service Delivery Very Important = 19 Important = 1
Health and Safety Very Important = 4 Important = 16

The reason that the category "Inspection and Investigation" received lower ratings than the other categories is explained by the fact that under the AHJ, the Goshen Fire Company and its officers do not have responsibility or authority with respect to conducting inspections and fire investigations. The complete response sets can be found in Table 1 – Perceived Importance of Inclusion of Fire Officer I Job Performance Requirements (NFPA 1021) in Company Officer Program and Table 2 – Perceived Importance of Inclusion of Fire Officer II Job Performance Requirements (NFPA 1021) in Company Officer Program.

A comprehensive review of training and certification opportunities that are available to the members of the Goshen Fire Company, including those available through the Montgomery County Fire Academy, the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, the Office of the State Fire

Commissioner, and the National Fire Academy, was conducted to answer the third research question, "What professional development opportunities are available to the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to enhance the preparation of its company officers?" This review revealed that the course-embedded Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II programs available through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner fully meet the training and certification needs of the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to prepare its current and future company officers. Further analysis, involving a "crosswalk" of these programs with the specific job performance requirements for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition), revealed that these course-embedded offerings of the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and Office of the State Fire Commissioner address all of the specified Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II competencies. These programs also correspond with the requirements of the Goshen Fire Company in preparing its company officers.

The Montgomery County Fire Academy is strategically positioned, as a regional fire and emergency services training center and "delegated authority" certification testing site, to meet the training and certification needs of the Goshen Fire Company in enhancing the preparedness of its present and future officers. The Montgomery County Fire Academy is prepared to offer these programs at regional fire stations, such as the Goshen Fire Company, as well as at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Campus. The fire company also conducts periodic professional development sessions for its fire officers, which contribute to the maintenance of the "supervisory/administrative" skills of its company officers. Last, but certainly in no way least, the National Fire Academy offers a robust array of management and technical courses that will further contribute to the development of the fire officers of the Goshen Fire Company.

The fourth research question was “What professional development approach should the Goshen Fire Company utilize in the preparation of its company officers?” The collective procedures outlined with respect to addressing the first three research questions are germane to this final research question regarding what approach the Goshen Fire Company should adopt to ensure the preparation of its present and future company officers. The research results indicate that the Goshen Fire Company should adopt the NFPA 1021 compliant course-embedded Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II programs available through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and delivered through the Montgomery County Fire Academy. The fire company should also continue to encourage its personnel, particularly those who currently serve as fire officers or aspire to become a fire officer in the future, to participate in relevant professional development opportunities offered through the National Fire Academy as resident courses and as regional deliveries.

Discussion

The company officers of a contemporary fire department play an integral role is ensuring that the department is prepared and positioned to operate effectively, efficiently, and safely both on and off the incident scene. These officers play an integral "linking" role between the chief officers of the fire department and the firefighters who execute their orders and directives. The company officer is thus instrumental in determining whether the fire department fulfills its mission, accomplishes its goals, and meets - and where possible exceeds - the expectations of its stakeholders.

This research project was initiated based on the recognition that supervisory deficiencies had been observed in the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. The purpose of the research was to ascertain relevant professional qualifications standards and professional development opportunities that the Goshen Fire Company could utilize to enhance the preparation of its company officers. Four research questions were examined in this research project:

1. What are the recommended professional qualifications standards that have been established for company officers?
2. What knowledge and skills are required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company based on their assigned roles and responsibilities?
3. What professional development opportunities are available to the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to enhance the preparation of its company officers?
4. What professional development approach should the Goshen Fire Company utilize in the preparation of its company officers?

A literature review included a comprehensive review of resources available through the NETC Learning Resource Center, the Internet, and academic research databases. Sources of information examined included books, journal articles, EFOP applied research projects, NFPA standards, and trade publications. Relevant fire company administrative documents were also examined, as was documentation on available training and certification opportunities.

The procedures utilized to answer the first research question, "What are the recommended professional qualifications standards that have been established for company officers?" were based on a comprehensive literature review, including a review and analysis of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition). The central role that professional qualifications standards play in enhancing the professional status of the fire service and the preparation of its officers was clearly and convincingly advocated by Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent of the National Fire Academy, in a visionary position paper that laid the conceptual foundation for much that has been accomplished through the National Fire Academy's Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) initiative (Onieal, 2003). The recognition of the need for professional certification based on recognized professional standards advocated by Manzi and Grocki (1980), Falconer (1981), Finkle (1985), and Pilenzo (2009) was also supported by the present research.

Further recognition of the integral role of professional qualifications standards is provided by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) *Officer Development Handbook*, which states that "professional development is a journey, not a destination" and that professional standards are necessary in the establishment and maintenance of professional qualifications and competencies (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003). The fact that the IAFC *Officer Development Handbook* is based on the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional*

Qualifications further attests to the recognition of this professional qualifications standard within the fire and emergency services.

The inclusion of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* as one of the eleven standards adopted in 2007 by the Department of Homeland Security further validates the relevance and recognition of the NFPA 1021 Standard with respect to the preparation and professional qualifications of fire officers (Anonymous, Fire Engineering, 2007). The NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* has also become the recognized standard referenced in courses offered through the National Fire Academy (United States Fire Administration, 2009) and in the various documents prepared under the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) initiative.

The review and analysis of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) conducted as part of this research project revealed that the NFPA 1021 Standard was written to address the necessary minimum qualifications that correspond with the various levels of fire officers within a contemporary fire department. Four levels (Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, Fire Officer III, and Fire Officer IV) are addressed within the NFPA 1021 Standard. Fire Officer I ("supervisory level") and Fire Officer II ("supervisory/managerial level"), as outlined in this professional qualifications standard, were found to correspond to the generic roles and responsibilities of company officers, as well as to the roles and responsibilities of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. Numerous EFOP applied research projects have referenced this standard in examining issues related to the preparation and professional qualifications of company officers.

The second research question addressed in this applied research project was "What knowledge and skills are required of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company based

on their roles and responsibilities?" A number of the Goshen Fire Company's relevant administrative documents were reviewed in the interest of ascertaining the generic and specific roles of the various company officers within the Goshen Fire Company. A review of position descriptions, officer assignment lists, minutes of officers' meetings, and other written documentation revealed that the roles and responsibilities of the company officers within the Goshen Fire Company are consistent with those of the first-level supervisors advocated by Plunkett and Greer (2000) and Hunsaker (2005). The roles and responsibilities of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company were found to fall primarily within the "technical" and "human" skills previously identified in the landmark work of Katz (1955). The present research findings were consistent with the company officer's role as advocated by Smoke (2005) in terms of first-line supervisory responsibility for the performance and safety of assigned personnel, as well as the suggested role stated in the well known and respected training and reference manual, *Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer* (4th Edition) (International Fire Service Training Association, 2007).

The earlier writings of this researcher with respect to "making the transition" from firefighter to company officer (Fleming, 2002a) and the chief officer ranks (Fleming, 2002b) proved consistent with the results of this present study. Both the review of the fire company's administrative documents and the personal interviews conducted with fire company members, illustrated the importance, as advocated by Greenberg and Baron (2008), of properly defining and communicating the expected roles of company officers in the interest of preventing the potential role-related issues of "role ambiguity" and "role conflict."

The results of the personal interviews conducted with fire company members further collaborated the findings of the review of fire company administrative documents in that all

participants in the interview process rated all of the Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II job performance requirements categories delineated in the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition), with the exception of the "Inspection and Investigation" category, as either being "very important" or "important" with respect to the roles, responsibilities, and preparation of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company (Tables 1 & 2). The competencies associated with Fire Officer I, under the NFPA 1021 Standard (2009 Edition), involve "conducting inspections to identify hazards and address violations, performing a fire investigation to determine preliminary cause, securing the scene, and preserving evidence," while "conducting fire investigations to determine origin and preliminary cause" is the specified competencies for Fire Officer II. The low ratings regarding this job performance requirements category are understandable given that under the AHJ, the Goshen Fire Company and its fire officers are not given the responsibility or authority to conduct inspections or cite violations. The company officers do play a crucial role in recognizing the need to conduct a fire investigation and have a role in properly securing the scene pending the arrival of representatives from the Chester County Fire Marshal's Office, who serve as the designated investigators for fires within the Goshen Fire Company's fire district. The job performance requirements delineated for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II under the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) were found through this research project to fully address the roles and responsibilities of company officers within the Goshen Fire Company.

A comprehensive review of the training and certification opportunities that are available to the members of the Goshen Fire Company, including those available through the Montgomery County Fire Academy, the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, and the National Fire Academy, was conducted to answer the third research question, "What professional development opportunities are available to the Goshen Fire

Company as it seeks to enhance the preparation of its company officers?" This review revealed that the course-embedded Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II programs available through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner fully meet the training and certification needs of the Goshen Fire Company as it seeks to prepare its current and future company officers. Further analysis, involving a "crosswalk" of these programs with the specific job performance requirements for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II of the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition), revealed that these course-embedded offerings of the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner address all of the specified Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II competencies. These programs thus correspond with and address the requirements of the Goshen Fire Company in preparing its company officers.

The Montgomery County Fire Academy is strategically positioned, as a regional fire and emergency services training center and "delegated authority" certification testing site, to meet the training and certification needs of the Goshen Fire Company in enhancing the preparation of its present and future company officers. In addition to offering these programs at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Campus, the Montgomery County Fire Academy is prepared to offer these programs at the Goshen Fire Company. The periodic professional development sessions that the Goshen Fire Company delivers to its fire officers were found to contribute to the maintenance of the "supervisory/ administrative" skills of its company officers. The National Fire Academy was also found to offer a robust array of management and technical courses that will further contribute to the development of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company.

The fourth research question was “What professional development approach should the Goshen Fire Company utilize in the preparation of its company officers?” The collective procedures and results outlined with respect to the first three research questions contribute to answering this final research question regarding what approach the Goshen Fire Company should adopt to ensure the preparation of its present and future company officers. The research results indicate that the Goshen Fire Company should adopt the NFPA 1021 compliant course-embedded Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II programs available through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and delivered through the Montgomery County Fire Academy. The fire company should also continue to encourage its personnel, particularly those who currently serve as fire officers or aspire to become a fire officer in the future, to participate in relevant professional development opportunities offered through the National Fire Academy as resident courses and as regional deliveries.

Recommendations

This EFOP applied research project was conceptualized and conducted in response to the supervisory deficiencies that have been observed in the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. The purpose of this research was to ascertain relevant professional qualifications standards and professional development opportunities that the Goshen Fire Company could utilize to enhance the preparation of its company officers.

The NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Development* was found to be the recognized professional qualification standard for contemporary fire officers, including the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. The competencies, delineated in terms of job performance requirements, for the Fire Officer I ("supervisory") and Fire Officer II ("supervisory/managerial") levels correspond with the roles and responsibilities of the company officers within the Goshen Fire Company. The Goshen Fire Company should recognize and adopt the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) as the basis for the preparation of its company officers and commit to the adoption of future revisions of this standard.

The Goshen Fire Company should further adopt and utilize the NFPA 1021 compliant course-embedded Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II programs available through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and delivered through the Montgomery County Fire Academy. While at the present time, no requirements exist with respect to the required training and certifications of those serving as fire officers within the Goshen Fire Company, it is recommended that the fire company consider requiring Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II certification as a prerequisite to appointment to a company officer position.

The Goshen Fire Company should also continue to encourage its personnel, particularly those who currently serve as fire officers or aspire to become a fire officer in the future, to

participate in relevant professional development opportunities offered through the National Fire Academy as resident courses and as regional deliveries.

The implementation of these recommendations will enable the Goshen Fire Company to address the supervisory deficiencies that have been observed in its company officers and thus prepare them to more effectively, efficiently, and safety supervise and lead the fire company members both on and off the incident scene. This enhanced level of professional qualification will in turn enhance the fire company's ability to more fully achieve its mission, including meeting, and where appropriate, exceeding the expectations of its stakeholders.

While this applied research project was delimited to the preparation of the company officers within the Goshen Fire Company, conducting additional research in the future on the related topic of preparing company officers to "make the transition" to chief officers is suggested.

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Appendix A

Summary of NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) Job Performance Requirements

The NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition) identifies the job performance requirements that serve as a basis for four levels of fire officer certification (Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, Fire Officer III, and Fire Officer IV). These levels of certification correspond with the increasing levels of responsibility as one progresses through the fire officer ranks as follows:

- Fire Officer I – "supervisory level"
- Fire Officer II – "supervisory/managerial level"
- Fire Officer III – "managerial/administrative level"
- Fire Officer IV – "administrative level"

Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II were found to be the relevant certification levels to enhancing the preparedness of the company officers of the Goshen Fire Company. A summary of the major categories of job performance requirements (JPRs) for each of these levels follows. This information is cited from the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition).

Fire Officer I

Summary of Job Performance Requirement Categories

(Excerpted from NFPA 1021 – Chapter 4 (2009))

General Prerequisite Knowledge

The organizational structure of the department; geographical configuration and characteristics of response districts; departmental operating procedures for

administration, emergency operations, incident management system and safety; departmental budget process; information management and recordkeeping; the fire prevention and building safety codes and ordinances applicable to the jurisdiction; current trends, technologies, and socioeconomic and political factors that affect the fire service; cultural diversity; methods used by supervisors to obtain cooperation within a group of subordinates; the rights of management and members; agreements in force between the organization and members; generally accepted ethical practices, including a professional code of ethics; and policies and procedures regarding the operation of the department as they involve supervisors and members.

General Prerequisite Skills

The ability to effectively communicate in writing utilizing technology provided by the AHJ; write reports, letters, and memos utilizing word processing and spreadsheet programs; operate in an information management system; and effectively operate at all levels in the incident management system utilized by the AHJ.

Human Resource Management

This duty involves utilizing human resources to accomplish assignments in accordance with safety plans and in an effective manner. This duty also involves evaluating member performance and supervising personnel during emergency and nonemergency work periods.

Community and Government Relations

This duty involves dealing with inquiries of the community and communicating the role, image, and mission of the department to the public and delivering safety, injury, and fire prevention education programs.

Administration

This duty involves general administrative functions and the implementation of department policies and procedures at the unit level.

Inspection and Investigation

This duty involves conducting inspections to identify hazards and address violations, performing a fire investigation to determine preliminary cause, securing the scene, and preserving evidence.

Emergency Service Delivery

This duty involves supervising emergency operations, conducting pre-incident planning, and deploying assigned resources in accordance with the local emergency plan.

Health and Safety

This duty involves integrating health and safety plans, policies, and procedures into daily activities as well as the emergency scene, including the donning of appropriate levels of personal protective equipment to ensure a work environment that is in accordance with health and safety plans for all assigned members.

Fire Officer II

Summary of Job Performance Requirement Categories

(Excerpted from NFPA 1021 – Chapter 5 (2009))

General Prerequisite Knowledge

The organization of local government, enabling and regulatory legislation and the law-making process at the local, state/provincial, and federal levels; and the functions of other bureaus, divisions, agencies, and organizations and their roles and responsibilities that relate to the fire service.

General Prerequisite Skills

Intergovernmental and interagency cooperation.

Human Resource Management

This duty involves evaluating member performance.

Community and Government Relations

This duty involves dealing with inquiries of allied organizations in the community and projecting the role, mission, and image of the department to other organizations with similar goals and missions for the purpose of establishing strategic partnerships and delivering safety, injury, and fire prevention education programs.

Administration

This duty involves preparing a project or divisional budget, news releases, and policy changes.

Inspection and Investigation

This duty involves conducting fire investigations to determine origin and preliminary cause.

Emergency Service Delivery

This duty involves supervising multi-unit emergency operations, conducting pre-incident planning, and deploying assigned resources.

Health and Safety

This duty involves reviewing injury, accident, and health exposure reports, identifying unsafe work environments or behaviors, and taking approved action to prevent reoccurrence.

Appendix B

Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II Offerings through the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and the Office of the State Fire Commissioner

The following information from the Office of the State Fire Commissioner website summarizes the State Fire Commissioner's Voluntary Fire Service Certification Program and information on its Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, and Fire Service Instructor I certification levels. The information on Fire Service Instructor I is included given that this certification level is a prerequisite to Fire Officer I.

Professional Certification Program

In accordance with Act 61, the Office of the State Fire Commissioner is responsible for the implementation of firefighter training and certification developed in accordance with and consistent to established standards. The Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) is the certifying agency within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State Fire Academy is the administering agency.

This program was established in 1983 when a committee known as the Fire Service Certification Advisory Committee (FSCAC) was formed to explore the implementation of a voluntary certification program for firefighters. The FSCAC provides the OSFC with program guidance and peer review. In October 1985, the National Pro-Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ) approved the certification processes and procedures established by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and accredited Pennsylvania to offer Fire Fighter I certification. The State Fire Commissioner's Volunteer Fire Service Certification Program has received its five-year reaccreditation each time since 1985 and currently offers twenty-three (23) levels of

certification. To make the program easily accessible to emergency services providers there are twenty-seven (27) approved test sites geographically dispersed throughout the Commonwealth at which certification testing is conducted.

The purpose of this program is to identify and recognize emergency service personnel whose accomplishments in training and education meets or exceeds nationally recognized standards. The NFPA standards for Fire Service Professional Qualifications identify the minimum requirements for a person at a particular level of progression. A person certified to one of the Fire Service Professional levels will have demonstrated competency in the knowledge and skills required to perform at a particular level. The service that can be offered to the citizens, visitors and communities of the Commonwealth will be enhanced by the professional competency attained through this certification process.

Fire Officer I

The purpose of this program is to identify emergency service personnel who demonstrate knowledge and skills competency related to fire officership. The NFPA Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications identifies the minimum requirements for a person at the first level of progression. A person certified at the Fire Officer I level will have demonstrated the ability to perform the tasks at the supervisory level.

Fire Officer II

The purpose of this program is to identify emergency service personnel who demonstrate knowledge and skills competency related to fire officership. The NFPA Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications identifies the minimum

requirements for a person at the second level of progression. A person certified at the Fire Officer II level will have demonstrated the ability to perform the tasks at the supervisory level.

Fire Service Instructor I

The purpose of this program is to identify emergency service personnel who demonstrate the knowledge of and skills competency related to adult instruction. The NFPA Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications identifies the minimum requirements for a person at the first level of progression. A person certified at the Fire Service Instructor I level will have demonstrated competency in the knowledge of and the ability to conduct instruction from prepared lesson plans.

Appendix C

Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II Offerings through the Montgomery County Fire Academy

The Montgomery County Fire Academy stands prepared to support the Goshen Fire Company in the preparation of its company officers through providing both training courses and certification opportunities. Its designation as an approved training site by the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and as a "delegated authority" certification test site by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner enable it to effectively and efficiently serve the firefighter training and officer development needs of fire and emergency services organizations throughout the region, including the Goshen Fire Company.

The Montgomery County Fire Academy currently offers the following two course-based fire officer certification opportunities at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Campus (MCPSTC) in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania and as an in-house course delivery at selected fire stations:

- Fire Officer I
- Fire Officer II

Additionally, courses and certification testing opportunities for the following certification levels, which serve as prerequisites for Fire Officer I and Fire Officer II certification under the NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (2009 Edition), are offered:

- Fire Fighter I
- Fire Fighter II
- Fire Service Instructor I

As a “delegated authority” certification test site, the Montgomery County Fire Academy is authorized to conduct certification testing under both the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualification (NBFSPQ) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).

Table 1

Perceived Importance of Inclusion of Fire Officer I

Job Performance Requirements (NFPA 1021)

in Company Officer Development Program

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Not Applicable
General Prerequisite Knowledge	20	0	0	0
General Prerequisite Skills	20	0	0	0
Human Resource Management	18	2	0	0
Community and Government Relations	19	1	0	0
Administration	18	2	0	0
Inspection and Investigation	3	5	4	8
Emergency Service Delivery	20	0	0	0
Health and Safety	17	3	0	0

N=20

Table 2

Perceived Importance of Inclusion of Fire Officer II

Job Performance Requirements (NFPA 1021)

in Company Officer Development Program

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Not Applicable
General Prerequisite Knowledge	15	5	0	0
General Prerequisite Skills	16	4	0	0
Human Resource Management	17	3	0	0
Community and Government Relations	18	2	0	0
Administration	12	8	0	0
Inspection and Investigation	0	3	6	11
Emergency Service Delivery	19	1	0	0
Health and Safety	4	16	0	0

N=20