Creating a Comprehensive Acting

Company Officer Development Program

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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.

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Abstract

Public expectations of the fire service continue to expand along with their expectation of doing things the right thing every time. Fire departments are expected to be experts in every type of emergency. This puts a huge amount of pressure on the first arriving officer at an emergency scene, especially when that officer is acting in the capacity of (AIC) the regular officer. The problem was that the Corvallis Fire Department (CFD) had not established a comprehensive AIC company officer development program for firefighters wishing to become acting company officers placing the public and firefighters at risk. The purpose of this research was to identify the components of a comprehensive AIC company officer development program to properly prepare new officers for many of the expected challenges they would likely face in the fire station, in the public, and during emergencies. A descriptive research method was used to answer the following four research questions: (a) What components are necessary for a comprehensive AIC company officer development program, (b) What are other departments doing to provide AIC company officer development training, (c) What training methods would work best to provide effective training, and (d) What benchmarks could be used to determine when an AIC company officer candidate is properly prepared to fill the position?

A thorough search for literature pertaining to AIC company officer standards was conducted along with a questionnaire to determine how other departments are preparing AIC company officers. Literature results mostly uncovered an all-or-nothing approach, expecting all company officers to be equal in education, training, and certifications. The questionnaire revealed that departments generally use the methods that best fit their circumstances. The recommendations were to use the information and data gathered along with the identified tools to establish a workable solution for CFD.

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As the fire service continues to transition from a trade to a profession, public expectations continue to increase. During this transition over the last 40 to 50 years the fire service has accepted many new roles and responsibilities that have very little connection to fire prevention and fire suppression. Examples include emergency medical response, specialized rescue, disaster response, hazardous materials, and terrorism, commonly referred to as all-risk or all-hazards approach (FEMA, 1996). Each of these new roles adds a new set of responsibilities and expectations on the fire department in general, but specifically on the company officer and crew of the first arriving unit. In his risk management presentations, Gordon Graham shares the idea that the public expects us (*emergency responders*) to get it right the first time regardless of the situation, and to be transparent with the public regarding our operations (Graham, 2012a, p.2; 2012b; 2002, p. 2).

The challenge facing every fire department is how to prepare our company officers for all of the potential situations to which they may respond. High expectations are placed on company officers to be able to very quickly and properly assess the situation, choose the best course of action, and mitigate the situation. This is true whether the person has been a company officer for 20 years or two years, or if this is their first day as the Acting In Capacity (AIC) company officer. Fire departments are expected to ensure that every employee in every position has the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) to perform the required duties of that position (National Fire Protection Association, 2013).

The problem was that the Corvallis Fire Department (CFD) had not established a comprehensive AIC company officer development program for firefighters wishing to become acting company officers. This allowed each mentoring company officer to determine what

KSA's the AIC candidate needed to be prepared for the position. This approach was haphazard at best and was placing firefighters and the public at risk. The purpose of this research was to identify the components of a comprehensive AIC company officer development program to properly prepare new officers for many of the expected challenges they would likely face in the fire station, in the public, and during emergencies. A descriptive research method was used to answer the following four research questions: (a) What components are necessary for a comprehensive AIC company officer development program, (b) What are other departments doing to provide AIC company officer development training, (c) What training methods would work best to provide effective training, and (d) What benchmarks could be used to determine when an AIC company officer candidate is properly prepared to fill the position?

## Background and Significance

The City of Corvallis, Oregon, is located in the Mid-Willamette Valley about 80 miles south of Portland, Oregon. CFD is a combination department that provides all-hazard response to the City of Corvallis and the Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District (CRFPD). Within the City of Corvallis the population fluctuates from 54,998 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012) to just over 81,000 when Oregon State University (OSU) is in session (Oregon State University, 2012).

The City of Corvallis owns and operates five fire stations and contracts staffing to one fire station in the CRFPD. In 2011 the City of Corvallis was forced to close one of the five city-owned fire stations as a result of the economic downturn. Each of the city-owned stations has a minimum staffing level of three paid people per 24-hour shift with one of those three being a Lieutenant or AIC Lieutenant. Staffing can then be supplemented with volunteers when they are available to make a four- or five-person crew. This typically will only occur in the evenings or on weekends since most of the volunteers are also college students or are working full time. The

CRFPD station is staffed 24-hours per day with a minimum of two volunteers. This is the only

station where the volunteers are used to fill the company officer and apparatus operator

positions. The volunteers at that station are supervised by one paid 40-hour Lieutenant.

Back in the early 1970's CFD based company officer promotions on seniority and

perceived aptitude for the job (Louden, 2014). During the 1980's the promotions were based

almost completely on the evaluation of fireground strategy and tactics knowledge and abilities.

This was an improvement, but it only captured one of many components of the job. In the early

1990's the department added the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Fire Officer I and

Fire Instructor I as requirements to be able to apply for promotion. Again, this was an

improvement from the 1980's, but there was no internal verification that the candidate had

learned the material from the required courses, and no instruction given by the department

regarding how the Fire Officer I material applied to CFD systems. Over the past 10 years the

company officer promotional processes began to include assessments of fire prevention

knowledge and writing skills of the candidate.

In the 1990's CFD required anyone wanting to be an AIC company officer to go through

strategy and tactics testing scenario. The testing was conducted separately from promotional

tests, but utilized the same method of evaluation. A single candidate would view a series of

photos with various fire, rescue, or hazardous materials situations requiring timely size-up and

decision-making to determine the initial actions. Knowledge of department procedures on the

incident command system and expected actions were evaluated by current battalion chiefs and

lieutenants using an evaluation tool with critical fail criteria. Those who were unsuccessful were

required to wait until the next AIC test to become qualified or re-qualified. This system worked

well, but was viewed as unnecessary since the battalion chiefs were already familiar with the capabilities of their crews.

The company officer position had always been a critical component to the success of the department in the station, interacting with the public, and during emergencies. The department could no longer trust on-job-training alone to ensure each candidate possessed the necessary KSA's to do the job. And while CFD's system of performance appraisals helped to ensure the acceptable performance of current company officers, CFD still needed a method or process to verify that AIC company officers were qualified and competent to fill the position.

Two of the topics in the Executive Leadership class that helped address the problem in this research paper were systematic thinking and political thinking. By viewing the AIC company officer qualification as a part of the overall system, and by understanding the various factions involved in the creation of the current system, the author was able to better understand the entire scope of the problem. The recommendations in this research paper were made in order to meet goal number three of the U.S. Fire Administration by improving the fire and emergency services' capability for response to and recovery from all-hazards (2010).

Literature Review

There is a multitude of resources available on the subject of officer development in general, and still a large amount specifically addressing company officer development. Much less is written on the subject of the development needs of the AIC company officer. The literature in this report was chosen for the purpose of finding answers to the four research questions identified in this report.

Handbooks and Textbooks

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) has created an Officer Development Handbook (IAFC handbook) (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003). The purpose of the IAFC handbook was to "provide a clear roadmap for success as a fire service officer" (p. iii). Interestingly, it primarily takes the standards provided in NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (National Fire Protection Association, 2014), and provides some specific objectives or activities to accomplish. The IAFC handbook has identified four distinct elements of education, training, experience, and self-development; however, they state that the first two, education and training, are "especially critical" and "form the basis of a nationally recognized model for fire service professional development" (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003, p. 4). While this handbook outlines the same four elements for all four officer levels – supervising, managing, administrative, and executive – this report will focus only on the supervising level created specifically for the company officer level.

The IAFC handbook lays out the requirements for each of the four elements and refers to them as the "minimum standard for successful performance" (see appendix A) (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003, p. 10). Within the four elements the IAFC seems to stress the importance of college level courses for the area of education and NFPA certifications for the area of training (pp. 13-15). The only part of the IAFC handbook that speaks specifically to AIC company officers is in the area of experience where it recommends 200 hours of acting as the company officer "directing others", which is to include both emergency response and non-emergency activities (p. 16).

The fourth edition of the *Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer* textbook identifies 21 areas (see Table 1 below) that should be covered to prepare for the NFPA Fire

Officer I, supervising fire officer certification (International Fire Service Training Association,

2007). Transition to the role of company officer is "one of the most challenging within the fire

and emergency services" (p. 13). It is important for the company officer to understand that there

are three distinct roles that they must fill: supervisor, subordinate, and public servant (pp. 13-16).

| **Table 1** |
| :---: |
| **IFSTA Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer 4<sup>th</sup> ed.** |

- Transition to the Role of Company Officer
- Leadership
- Supervision
- Logic, Ethics, and Decision Making
- Legal Responsibilities and Liabilities
- Interpersonal Communications
- Oral Communications
- Written Communications
- Administrative Functions
- Safety and Health Issues
- Organizational Structure
- Company-Level Training
- Human Resource Management
- Labor/Management Relations
- Community Relations and Public Fire
- and Life Safety Education
- Records Management
- Pre-Incident Planning
- Incident Scene Communications
- Incident Scene Management
- Incident Scene Operations
- Post-Incident Activites

(International Fire Service Training Association, 2007, p. iii)

They are responsible for the actions of their crew and enforcing department policy and

procedures, and yet they are very much a part of the crew. IFSTA refers to this as being the

parent figure in a family where there are "bonds of friendship, experience, tradition,

professionalism, and a mutual mission" (p. 14). IFSTA points out that the acting company officer

"may not have the level of authority of a company officer while still having the same

responsibility (p. 20).

The IAFC and NFPA partnered to create the *Fire Officer: Principles and Practice*

textbook (Ward, 2006). Like the IFSTA textbook above, the Fire Officer textbook offers a list of

only 18 areas (see Table 2 below) that should be covered to prepare for the NFPA Fire Officer I

certification. Transitioning from a fire fighter to a company officer brings with it the expectation

of being "the fire chief's representative at the work location" (p. 44). Three main roles listed in

this text are supervisor, commander, and trainer (pp. 44-48). The company officer sets the tone

of the crew through their actions in these three areas. As a supervisor the company officer must

lead the crew in completing assigned daily tasks whether the orders are popular or not (p. 45).

| Table 2 |
|---|
| **Fire Officer Principles and Practices** |
| <ul><li>Introduction to Fire Officer</li><li>Preparing for Promotion</li><li>Fire Fighters and the Fire Officer</li><li>Understanding People: Management Concepts</li><li>Organized Labor and the Fire Officer</li><li>Safety and Risk Management</li><li>Training and Coaching</li><li>Evaluation and Discipline</li><li>Leading the Fire Company</li><li>Working in the Community</li><li>Handling Problems, Conflicts, and Mistakes</li><li>Pre-Incident Planning and Code Enforcement</li><li>Budgeting</li><li>Fire Officer Communications</li><li>Managing Incidents</li><li>Fire Attack</li><li>Fire Cause Determination</li><li>Crew Resource Management</li></ul><br>(Ward, 2006, p. iii) |

As a commander they must provide very clear and concise direction to meet incident objectives and prevent freelancing (p. 45). The company officer is also responsible for determining what training their crew needs and ensuring that it is done. The book mentions everything from basic firefighter skills to specialized skills based on the needs of the district (pp. 46-48). This text makes no mention of the AIC role as being different than that of the company officer.

NFPA Standards

A standard that is widely used across the United States for many fire and emergency services roles and activities is the NFPA standards. NFPA standards are not laws and cannot be enforced as law unless referenced in a law as is the case in Oregon; however, because they are consensus standards and widely accepted throughout the fire service, it is this author's opinion that they are often viewed as the "right way" of conducting fire department business. While NFPA 1021, *Standard on Fire Officer Qualifications*, is not referenced in the Oregon OSHA (OR-OSHA) law (OR-OSHA, 2012), NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, and NFPA 1561, *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*, are both mentioned and must be followed in the specific areas referenced.

The fire officer qualifications found in NFPA 1021 makes no mention specifically about the application of this standard toward the roll of AIC company officer. In section 1.2 it states that this standard specifies "the minimum job performance requirements for serving as a fire officer" (National Fire Protection Association, 2014). The fire officer must also remain current with "the general knowledge and skills and job performance requirements" to continue to be a qualified officer. These general statements apply to all four levels of fire officer in the standard.

NFPA 1021 includes seven general areas that must be covered in order to become qualified (see

Table 3 below). Each of the general areas listed in this table include more specific knowledge or

| TABLE 3 |
| :---: |
| **NFPA Fire Officer I Requirements** |
| • General Knowledge<br>• Human Resource Management<br>• Community and Government Relations<br>• Administration<br>• Inspection and Investigation<br>• Emergency Service Delivery<br>• Health and Safety |

skills that must be demonstrated. In total, there are 47 job performance requirements (JPR's) that

must be covered just for the company officer level.

 Comparing the three NFPA documents referenced in this report, NFPA 1500 reads the

most like a law that must be followed instead of a consensus standard. Rather than using the

words should or may, they primarily use the words shall and will.   Within NFPA 1500 there are

a number of items in Chapter 5 that can be directly applied to the topic of the AIC company

officer as well as any other position. In sections 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.3.1, and 5.3.2 the document

indicates that the fire department is responsible for establishing and providing training,

education, and professional development for every position and assigned function (National Fire

Protection Association, 2013). In addition, the section specifies that the training must be

"commensurate with the duties and functions that they are expected to perform". Section 5.2

references NFPA 1021 and states that all fire officers must meet these requirements. Fire

departments are then required to ensure proficiency and provide training that will maintain skill

level and proficiency for each position.

Another document that is referenced in the OR-OSHA law is NFPA 1561 (National Fire Protection Association, 2014). Section 4.8.3 states that the fire department must ensure that all members that could become an incident commander, or could take on any sort of supervisory position, be properly trained and familiar with the duties that they will be assigned. Then in section 4.8.4 it indicates that each department can decide what the training and education requirements will be for each of those positions.

Learning Methods and Strategies

There is a large amount of literature available explaining how people learn. There are also studies of the best methods of delivery to ensure that the material is understood and able to be applied at a later time. While this is not a formula that will guarantee success, these are the best practices based on research.

In an article on the American Psychological Association web site, Murray (2000) gives direction to both the student and the instructor. Students tend to learn better when they "self-regulate – set their own academic goals, develop strategies to meet them and reflect on their academic performance". She goes on to say that because students don't always know the best way to self-regulate, instructors can help by creating and delivering courses in a way that encourages goal-setting and reflective learning. This can be done by (a) helping students define the task, (b) teaching note organization, (c) imparting learning devices such as mnemonics and outlines, and (d) modeling and encouraging self-reflection.

Mintz (Mintz, n.d.) suggests that "students learn best when learning is active". The student needs to be actively involved in "inquiry, discovery, investigation, and interpretation". Involving students in the process of gathering and making sense of the information tends to help them to be able to remember and apply what they have learned. Regularly asking questions to

assess understanding, small group discussions, student taught subject matter, and conducting a quiz at the end of the lesson to confirm comprehension are a few of the methods listed involve the student in the learning process.

Jeffrey D. Karpicke (as cited in Patterson Neubert, 2011) indicates that practicing retrieval of information learned is also an effective way to enhance learning. Karpicke points out that students often believe they know the material better than they actually do when the book is open in front of them. By putting the books away and practicing retrieval, students performed 50 percent better on tests even one week after learning the material.

A standard text book in the fire service on instructional methods and learning styles is *Fire and Emergency Services Instructor, 6$^{th}$ ed.* (International Fire Service Training Association, 1999). Regarding the topics of learning and remembering they discuss Dale's Cone of Learning where it is explained that "individuals retain about 10 percent of what they read, 20 percent of what they hear, and 30 percent of what they see" (p. 69). However, when there is a combination of methods combined the level of learning and amount of remembering increases significantly. For example, students will remember nearly 50 percent when they can see and hear the message. If they say or repeat the information the learning goes up to 70 percent. But when the individual can say what they are doing while they are doing it, the retention level goes up to about 90 percent. They summarize that "the more senses used in the learning process, the more information is remembered for later recall" (p. 69).

In an online presentation Gordon Graham (2012b) discusses a strategy for prioritizing the topics on which the fire department should focus their training. Over the years, his presentations have been widely accepted as a method for assessing risk and the well-known graph used to illustrate risk assessment was placed into NFPA 1500 (see figure 1 below) (2013, p. appendix A

4.2.3). Low-risk items are labeled that way because they are unlikely to result in legal action or

to cause damage or injury, and as a result are not a significant concern (Graham, 2012b). He also

| **Figure 1** |
| --- |
| **NFPA 1500, Appendix A, Figure 4.2.3** |
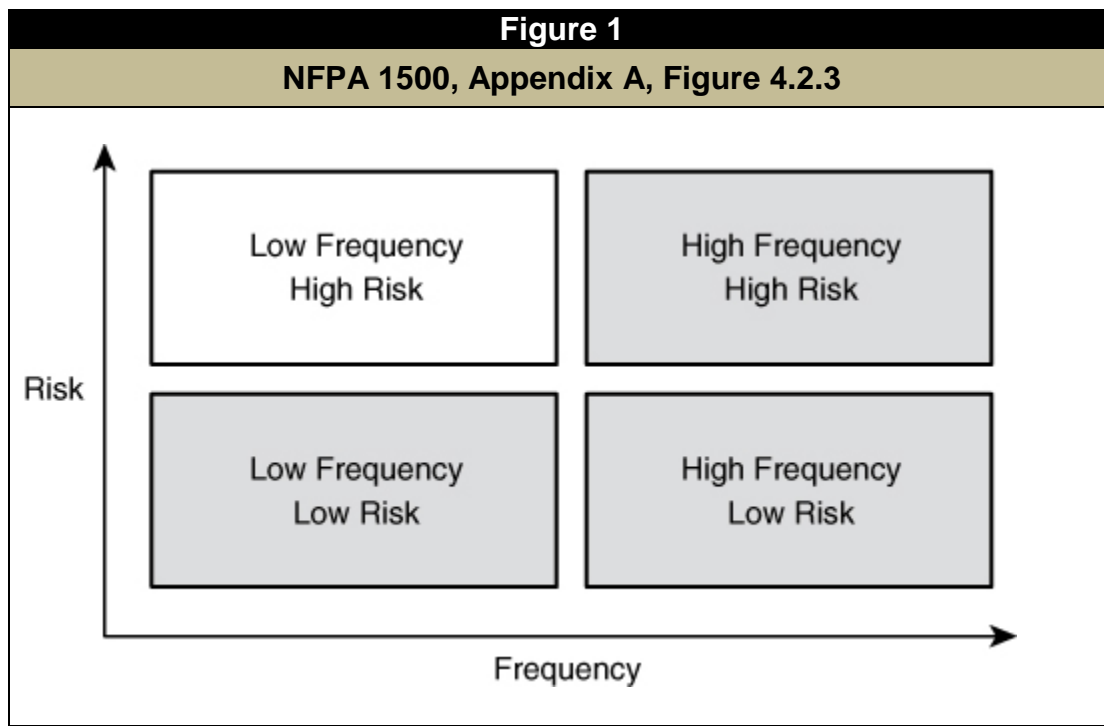


states that anything that fits into the high-frequency area is not a significant concern primarily

because the skills are constantly being used, reviewed, and revised.  Graham (2012b) asserts that

the only real concern is anything that fits into the category of "high-risk/low-frequency". These

are the topics that are seldom used or needed in real situations, but when they are used the

consequences are significant if something goes wrong.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

Procedures for this research paper included a thorough literature review and a

questionnaire sent out to other fire departments. The purpose of this research was to identify the

components of a comprehensive AIC company officer development program to properly prepare

new officers for many of the expected challenges they would likely face in the fire station, in the

public, and during emergencies. A descriptive research method was used to gather and analyze

the necessary data to recommend a direction for developing an AIC company officer

development program for CFD.

The literature review began with well know documents and text books as a starting place.

The two text books used to start were *Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer 4th ed.*

(International Fire Service Training Association, 2007), and *Fire Officer Principles and*

*Practices* (Ward, 2006). In addition, the IAFC Handbook (International Association of Fire

Chiefs, 2003) provided a good base to start from. All three sources raised clarifying questions

and gave some direction for additional materials to review including scholarly articles on the best

methods for teaching, as well as the science behind how students learn.

A questionnaire was created using Survey Monkey to answer the research question of

what other departments are doing to provide AIC company officer training (see appendix B). The

questionnaire was distributed via email to a list of the author's contacts from the Oregon Fire

Instructor's Association (OFIA) and from contacts from classes taken at the National Fire

Academy. A total of 83 email requests were sent out with 29 questionnaires started, and 27

questionnaires completed.

The questionnaire was separated into three pages. The first page consisted of five

questions about basic department demographics such as size of the department, number of

company officers, and number of AIC company officers, if any. The last question on page one

asked whether the department had a formal process for approving AIC company officers. If the

answer was "no", the respondent was sent to page three with the final optional questions. If the

respondent answered "yes" to having a formal process for approving AIC company officers, they

were taken to page two to provide specific information about their process.

Page two had eight questions regarding the specifics of the AIC company officer program in their fire department. Only those respondents that indicated their department had a formal process were taken to this page. These included questions about required time with the department, level of education, training, and certifications. The remaining questions were focused on verification of knowledge in three specific areas: (a) administrative tasks, (b) personnel management tasks, and (c) emergency scene management tasks.

Page three of the questionnaire focused on the opinion of the respondent. The questions were developed with the idea that improvements can always be made. All respondents were given the opportunity to answer these questions, even if their department did not have a company officer development program. The questions asked what components they felt were necessary, what methods of instruction would work best, and what benchmarks should be used to determine when a candidate is ready to fill in as an AIC company officer. The final question asked which fire department the respondent was with.

There were a number of limitations to the research conducted in this paper. Literature available on the specific topic of AIC company officer development is very limited. Most of the literature spoke toward company officers in general and not to the specific needs of the AIC company officer position. While many of the expectations are, or should be, the same as the regular company officer, there are noted differences in the level of experience and authority as and AIC company officer. The limitation of the questionnaire includes a limited sample size from which to gather data for the topic and difficulty in quantifying some of the open-ended questions. To gain a better understanding of the trends in AIC company officer development, a much larger group would need to be included. And although the information gathered in the

open-ended questions will be useful to the author, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from those answers.

Another limitation is that one size of AIC program does not fit all departments. While it is recognized that a larger sample size would provide more definitive data from which to draw conclusions, every department is different in the way they operate administratively, organize and conduct training, respond to public requests for assistance, and how they interpret the laws and standards that apply to this topic. Open-ended responses in the questionnaire made it clear that each department creates and implements the standards in a way that work best for their department.

<center>Results</center>

The first research question was *what components are necessary for a comprehensive AIC company officer development program?* The document that sets the standard with regard to company officer qualifications is NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (National Fire Protection Association, 2014). The components listed in NFPA 1021 are identified in Table 3 above and include 47 different JPR's (not listed) outlining the duties and functions for a company officer. According to section 1.2 these are expected to be the "minimum job performance requirements for serving as a fire officer" (National Fire Protection Association, 2014).

Another NFPA document that provides direction toward answering question number one is NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program* (2013). This document implies that in order for a fire department to maintain a safe working environment, professional development, training, and proficiency must be provided and

maintained for every position and assigned function. A specific reference to NFPA 1021, and

therefore to all fire officers, is made in section 5.2 stating that these requirements must be met.

The final NFPA document that infers the need to comply with NFPA 1021 is NFPA

1561, *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*

(2014). Any member that could take on the role of incident commander or any supervisory role

on scene must be properly trained and familiar with those duties, according to section 4.8.3. The

document then allows the department to determine what training and education is needed to

prepare the officer for those roles and responsibilities.

The *Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer* (International Fire Service Training

Association, 2007) and *Fire Officer Principles and Practices* (Ward, 2006) text books both use

this NFPA document as a foundation for their writings. Each one expounds upon the NFPA

requirements a little differently, but the end result is the same. As seen in Table 1 and Table 2,

the lists of topics are a little different, but they all fit into the seven general areas created by

NFPA 1021.

The *Officer Development Handbook* (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003) was

created to provide specific examples to guide individuals and organizations in the process of the

officer development process. The one thing that differentiates this document from the others is

the identification of the four distinct elements of education, training, experience, and self-

development. With the well-developed education and training sections the IAFC suggests that

this has created a professional development model that can be used nationwide as the standard

for fire officers.

Reponses to question number 14 in the questionnaire provided some useful information

on the subject. The question asked *what components do you believe are necessary to prepare a*

*person for the AIC company officer role?* This was an open-ended question with 24 of the 29

respondents answering the question. It is important to note that only 14 of the 29 respondents

actually have an AIC company officer qualification program. In addition, this question was

asking the opinion of all the respondents, regardless of whether their department does or does not

have a program. The responses gained do not reflect whether the respondent's department uses

this idea, only that the respondent believes it is a necessary component.

Fourteen of the 24 respondents indicated that incident command training is important for

an AIC company officer. In contrast, only 6 of the departments that currently have an AIC

company officer qualification program actually require incident command training according to

question number 8 in the questionnaire. The other items identified as the most important

components included dealing with people with nine (9) responses, administrative duties such as

reports and paperwork with six (6) responses, and mentoring and knowing the expectations of

the job both having five (5) responses.

The second question was *what are other departments doing to provide AIC company*

*officer development training?* This question involves both the content and the delivery of

training for the AIC company officer role. Of the 29 respondents, 15 (51%) indicate that they

have a formal process or specific requirements that must be met to become qualified as an acting

(AIC) company officer. None of the respondents use a commercial product of any sort to

accomplish this task.

The education and training expectations for each department are varied. Of the 14

respondents with AIC programs, seven (7) indicated they do not require any college, two (2)

indicate they require some college, four (4) require an associate's degree, and none of the

respondents require a bachelor's degree for the AIC company officer position. Respondents

indicated that there are three main areas that are important with regards to training. They include

a certain number of years on the job (10 responses), firefighter II certification (11 responses),

and fire instructor I (9 responses). Responses for number of years on the job varied from 2 years

to 5 years before being eligible to apply for the position. The only other two requirements of note

are the fire officer I certification and a tactics and strategy class, which both received six (6)

responses. Almost 93 percent of respondents indicated that they use a combination of internal

and external training to prepare the AIC company officers.

The questionnaire also asked if the department verifies knowledge in three specific areas.

Of the 14 respondents, eight (57 percent) indicated that they verify knowledge of administrative

skills, seven (50 percent) indicated that they verify personnel management skills, and 10 (71

percent) indicate that they verify emergency scene management abilities.

The third question was *what training methods would work best to provide effective*

*training?* According to the *Fire and Emergency Services Instructor* text retention levels increase

significantly when multiple human senses are involved (International Fire Service Training

Association, 1999, pp. 69-70, fig. 4.13). If the student is only allowed to read the material prior

to testing, they will likely only retain 10 percent of the material in their long-term memory. If the

student only hears a lecture on the subject, they may only retain 20 percent in their long-term

memory. Likewise, only 30 percent is retained in long-term memory when the student is only

allowed to see an example. But when senses are combined, long-term retention significantly

improves, with the highest retention at 90 percent occurring with hands on practice while reciting

the information that explains the topic.

Karpicke (as cited in Patterson Neubert, 2011) echo's the information found in the *Fire*

*and Emergency Services Instructor* text, declaring that practicing retrieval of information is the

most effective way to enhance learning. He believes that students are much more confident in

their knowledge of a subject when the book is in front of them. Taking the book away and

practicing retrieval of the information is where the learning really begins. After practicing

retrieval students performed 50 percent better on tests even one week after learning the material.

Mintz (Mintz, n.d.) believes that active learning allows for the best learning. When

students are involved in "inquiry, discovery, investigation, and interpretation, they are better able

to make sense of the information which enhances the ability to recall the information. Instructors

can involve students to a greater extent in classes by asking questions during class to keep the

student engaged, creating small group discussion periods for the students to reach their own

conclusions, allow students to teach subject matter, and conducting quizzes at the conclusion of

each lesson to confirm comprehension of the material.

Murray (2000) points out that students learn better when they "set their own academic

goals, develop strategies to meet them and reflect on their academic performance". She calls this

process self-regulation. Again, this creates an environment where the student is engaged in and

responsible for the learning process. She also points out that the instructor can help by creating

courses in a way that encourages goal setting and reflective learning. While this takes extra time

and effort on the part of the instructor, the student benefits from having more control of their

learning experience.

The fourth and final question was *what benchmarks could be used to determine when an*

*AIC company officer candidate is properly prepared to fill the position?* As mentioned in

question 1, all three NFPA documents point to completion of the fire officer I certification

through NFPA 1021 (2014). The *Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* (2007)

and *Fire Officer Principles and Practices* (2006) both provide explanatory material and useful

approaches to achieving the NFPA Fire Officer I certification, but no other benchmarks are

mentioned. The IAFC Handbook (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003) provides

additional guidance and examples for suggested benchmarks for achieving the NFPA Fire

Officer I certification (see appendix A). By using the four elements of education, training,

experience, and self-development they have created a series of areas to focus on along with

suggestions for application, which can easily be utilized by the fire department as benchmarks.

Question number 16 in the questionnaire asked *what benchmarks does your department*

*use to determine when a candidate is ready to be an AIC company officer?* This question was on

page three (3) of the questionnaire allowing people to respond whether or not their department

currently has an AIC company officer qualification system. Keeping in mind that there were only

14 departments that have AIC company officer programs, this question elicited 20 responses.

The greatest number of responses (12) indicates that the number of years with the

department is an important factor. As indicated in response to question 1 above, department

requirements for the number of years with the department varies from 2 years to 5 years before

they are eligible to apply for the position. Ten (10) respondents signified that it is important for

the candidates' officer to say they are ready for the position, while nine (9) say that they require

the Fire Officer I certification. Another nine (9) pointed out that their department really doesn't

have any benchmarks for approving a person to become an AIC company officer.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

This research was conducted in an attempt to identify the components of a

comprehensive AIC company officer development program to properly prepare new officers for

many of the expected challenges they would likely face in the fire station, in the public, and

during emergencies. After reviewing all of the literature and data the real question is what is the

right solution for Corvallis Fire Department? The limited time and funds of CFD need to be

spent wisely to maximize the efforts of generating competent and well-trained individuals to fill

the position of AIC company officer.

One of the most useful tools in determining the components of a comprehensive AIC

program is the risk and frequency graph used by Graham (2012b) (see figure 1 below). An

evaluation of all of the duties and responsibilities of the AIC company officer utilizing this graph



**Figure 1**

**NFPA 1500, Appendix A, Figure 4.2.3**
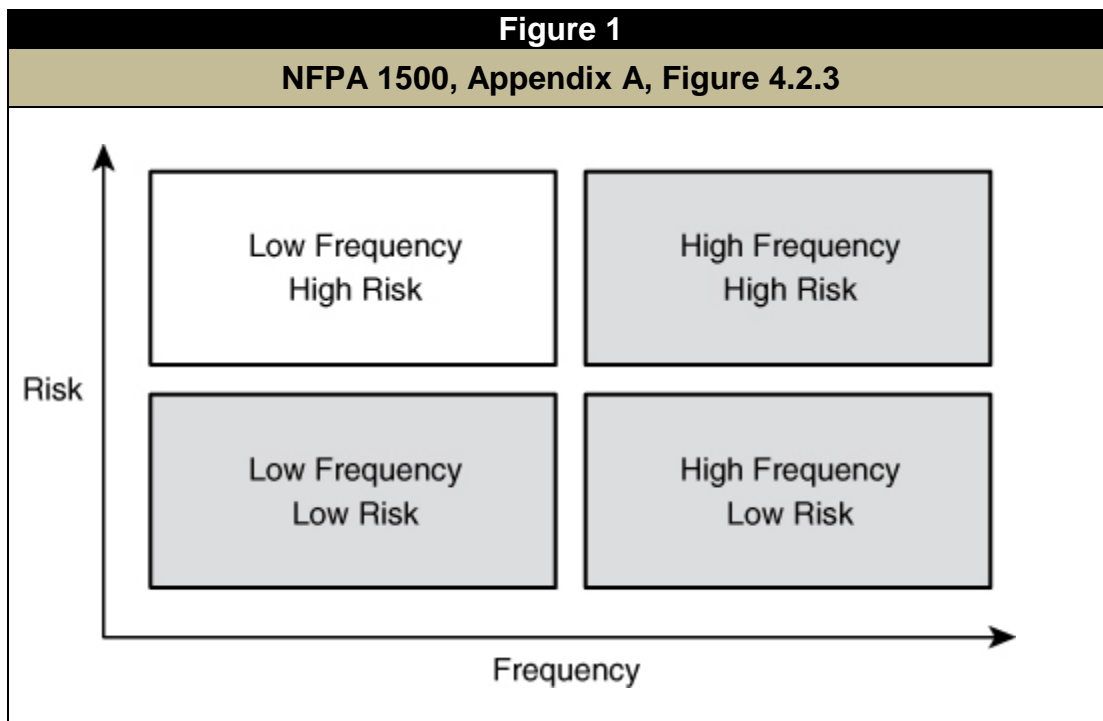
will separate the areas of greatest risk and concern to the individual and the department. The

Corvallis Fire Department, for example, has a high frequency of conducting fire and life safety

inspections. Depending on the occupancy this could fall into either the high risk or low risk area,

but because it is a high frequency event, the need for extensive additional training is reduced.

Time might be better spent on department policies for accidents, injuries, or exposures since they

are a much lower frequency with a potential for high risk. This does not mean that the low risk or

high frequency events are ignored, but rather placed into the proper hierarchy of priority

(Graham, 2012b).

The nationally recognized NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional*

*Qualifications* (National Fire Protection Association, 2014), is the foundation upon which many

of the officer development texts and documents are built. While it does provide seven (7) general

| TABLE 3 |
| --- |
| **NFPA Fire Officer I Requirements** |
| • General Knowledge<br>• Human Resource Management<br>• Community and Government Relations<br>• Administration<br>• Inspection and Investigation<br>• Emergency Service Delivery<br>• Health and Safety |

areas of focus and 47 JPR's, the overall feel of the document is fairly non-specific (see table 3).

This is likely an intentional layout to cover every size and type of department. On the positive

side, each department can utilize this document to create a program that works for their situation.

Supporting documentation found in the *Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer*

*4th ed.* (International Fire Service Training Association, 2007) text and the *Fire Officer*

*Principles and Practices* (Ward, 2006) text, as well as the IAFC handbook (2003) were very

helpful in clarifying each of the general areas and JPR's found in the NFPA 1021 document. As

you might expect with text books, each of them covered the general areas and JPR's from the

NFPA Fire Officer I material giving real world examples of how the JPR's might be interpreted

and accomplished. At the beginning of each chapter there was a list of objectives that would be

covered as well as the related JPR being addressed. In appendix A of each book was a list of the

JPR's and which chapters in the book corresponded with that JPR. This would be especially

helpful if CFD decides that the AIC company officer position only requires certain portions of the Fire Officer I requirements based on the risk and frequency graph analysis.

The most useful of these three supporting documents for assisting CFD in deciding what should be included in and AIC company officer program was the IAFC handbook (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003). The four distinct elements of education, training, experience, and self-development provided a very short yet comprehensive list of expectations based on the JPR's (see appendix A). The items in this document could easily be used with the risk and frequency graph to determine the priority of each item based on the department need. The same process could be followed with the other two text books, but the process would take much longer.

The education and training portions of the IAFC handbook are considered to be "especially critical" for the fire officer and "form the basis of a nationally recognized model for fire service professional development" (International Association of Fire Chiefs, 2003, p. 4). This is true because of the extensive requirements for college level courses to complete the education requirements and the multiple NFPA certifications for the training requirements (see appendix A). The intent was to provide legitimacy to the professional development process rather than allow department created and approved trainings to meet the intent of the JPR's (2003, p. 8). Respondents from the questionnaire indicated that only 30% of those that have an AIC company officer program require an associate's degree, and 15% require the candidate to have some college. Although education level is an important step toward being recognized more as a profession than a trade, being required to take all of the college courses and certification classes listed could be a significant financial deterrent to some candidates, and may even be difficult for fire departments to support as a result of the present fiscal realities.

The experience and self-development sections provide insight that the text books begin to touch on, but overall are lacking. Rather than just taking a class or receiving a certification for a specific area, the IAFC handbook outlines areas where experience is necessary. This includes the only point that can be applied directly to the AIC company officer position. The suggestion is that the acting officer should have 200 hours of time directing others in both emergency and non-emergency situations. This author does not believe that the number of hours is the point of this suggestion, but that the department must ensure the candidate has the opportunity to practice directing others in various situations with some form of feedback from a supervisor. Some departments may be able to use 200 consecutive hours to obtain more than enough experience to operate as an AIC company officer, where another department would need years to gain a minimally adequate experience level.

This language also appears to be a bit of a contradiction with the NFPA 1021 document; however, without this important form of AIC training there is little assurance that the candidate is ready for the position. NFPA 1021 maintains in section 1.2 that the 47 JPR's are "the minimum job performance requirements for serving as a company officer" (National Fire Protection Association, 2014). The implication is that nobody should serve as a company officer unless they have completed all of the JPR's. The respondents from the questionnaire are dealing with this issue in a couple different ways. Between half and three-quarters of respondents conduct some form of verification of administrative, personnel management, and emergency scene management knowledge prior to approving the candidate to work as and AIC company officer (see appendix B, questions 9-11). More than one-third of respondents include mentoring as part of their development program, although they do not indicate whether or not it meets the suggested 200 hours of acting time that the IAFC suggests.

Another area of concern that was found from the research is the difficulty in the transition from crew member to the crew leader. The *Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer, 4ᵗʰ ed.* begins on the first page of chapter 1 stating that the transition to the role of the company officer is "one of the most challenging within the fire and emergency services" (International Fire Service Training Association, 2007, p. 13). Challenges can be found in each of the eight general areas outlined in NFPA 1021, and the department should prepare the AIC candidate to deal with those challenges. The *Fire Officer Principles and Practices* text points out that the company officer position brings with it the expectation of being "the fire chief's representative at the work location" (Ward, 2006, p. 44). It also brings up the point that the company officer may have to make decisions that are not popular with the crew. Classroom training can help an individual identify those situations, but dealing with these challenges takes practice and feedback from a mentor or supervisor. The AIC company officer is much like the substitute teacher in high school. They have the same responsibility to perform their job as the real teacher, but they are not given the respect of the real teacher. IFSTA similarly asserts that the AIC company officer "may not have the level of authority of a company officer while still having the same responsibility" (International Fire Service Training Association, 2007, p. 20).

A great deal of insight was gained regarding the best delivery methods to ensure the greatest level of learning. A commonly used text to teach instructional methods in the fire service is the *Fire and Emergency Services Instructor* text (International Fire Service Training Association, 1999). The most useful tool found in this text was Dale's Cone of Learning (p. 69). This teaching shows that students only "retain about 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, and 30% of what they see" (p. 69). But when a combination of methods is used, the ability to recall increases significantly. When students see and hear a message they will remember

nearly 50%, learning increases to about 70% if they say or repeat the information, and is 90% if

they say what they are doing while they are actually doing the skill. The conclusion was that "the

more senses used in the learning process, the more information is remembered for later recall"

(p. 69). This directly correlates with research conducted by Karpicke (as cited in Patterson

Neubert, 2011) which showed that students that practice retrieval of information perform 50%

better on tests.

Murray (2000) found that students tend to learn better when they self-regulate. This

means that the students "set their own goals, develop strategies to meet them and reflect on their

academic performance". The correlation with the AIC company officer program is that students

are much more likely to want to learn and remember when they have decided they want to

pursue the goal of becoming AIC qualified. From another point of view, Mintz (n.d.) believes

that "students learn best when learning is active". He suggests that when they are actively

involved in "inquiry, discovery, investigation, and interpretation" they are more motivated to

make sense of the information, which helps significantly with the process of recalling

information.

Findings from the questionnaire show that there is a wide variety of delivery methods

used, but there is no indication regarding the effectiveness of these methods. Thirteen (13) out of

24 respondents indicate that mentoring would be the most useful way of teaching the role of AIC

company officer. This corresponds with the recommendation from the IAFC handbook regarding

the need for 200 hours of directing others as an acting officer (International Association of Fire

Chiefs, 2003). In addition, 10 of the 24 respondents showed that their department utilizes

classroom training, and 7 of the 24 indicate that they utilize scenarios or tabletop exercises. As

stated above, the more variety of delivery types used, the more effective the recall will be (International Fire Service Training Association, 1999).

Recommendations

The literature review and research conducted in this report point to three primary recommendations for the Corvallis Fire Department to consider. Those recommendations include: (a) identifying all necessary KSA's needed to become an AIC company officer, (b) utilizing the risk and frequency graph to evaluate the KSA's chosen by CFD, (c) utilizing multiple instructional methods to enhance learning and long-term recall of information.

The IAFC handbook provides a great starting point for creating a list of KSA's for the AIC company officer. With input from current battalion chiefs and lieutenants, the department should be able to produce a comprehensive list that can later be prioritized. Gaining input from current officers provides validity to the process as well as building in a sense of ownership in the process.

Once the list of KSA's has been created and approved by the current officers, the risk and frequency graph found in NFPA 1500 can be used to establish the priority of importance and possibly the order of instruction. Preparation for the low-frequency/high-risk items first will better insure AIC company officer preparedness.

The last recommendation involves the way in which the information is shared and learned.  The days of just reading a book to pass a test at CFD should be a thing of the past, replacing it with the utilization of all of the senses to reinforce the lesson. This will provide a more comprehensive approach to helping candidates recall critical information when they need it most.

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Appendix A

From the IAFC Officer Development Handbook, pp. 13-17

## Supervising Fire Officer: *Training*

| Element | Note |
|---|---|
| Firefighter I | NFPA 1001; Firefighter I |
| Firefighter II | NFPA 1001; Firefighter II |
| Fire Officer I | NFPA 1021; Fire Officer I |
| Incident Safety Officer | NFPA 1521 |
| IMS | NIIMS |
| Instructor I | NFPA 1041 or equivalent |
| Inspector I | NFPA 1031 or equivalent |
| Emergency Medical Services | Per state/local requirements |
| Valid Driver's License + related endorsements | Per state/local requirements |
| HazMat; Operations Level | NFPA 472 |

## Supervising Fire Officer: *Education*

The following studies are to be undertaken through an accredited institution of higher education.

| SFO–01  Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Communications |
|---|---|---|
| Ability to write detailed prose. | LEVEL: | 100 |
|  | SUGGESTED: | English Composition |

| SFO–02  Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Communications |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding and using basic interpersonal, group and public communication skills. | LEVEL: | 100 |
|  | SUGGESTED: | Public Speaking |

| SFO–03  Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Communications |
|---|---|---|
| Ability to write accurate and clear letters, memos, technical reports and business communications. | LEVEL: | 100 |
|  | SUGGESTED: | Business Communications |

| SFO–04  Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Science |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding about ecosystem construction and destruction, energy production and use and waste generation and disposal. | LEVEL: | 100 |
|  | SUGGESTED: | Biology |

| SFO–05  Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Science |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding basic principles of general chemistry including the metric system theory and structure. | LEVEL: | 100 |
|  | SUGGESTED: | Chemistry |

| SFO–06 Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Social Science |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding basic principles of areas of psychology: physiology, cognition, motivation, learning, intelligence, personality, and mental health. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 100<br><br>Psychology |

| SFO–07 Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Social Science |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding basic principles of social groups, forces, structures, processes, institutions and events. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 100<br><br>Sociology |

| SFO–08 Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Quantitative (Math) |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding and using the basics of mathematical models; elementary concepts of probability and simulation; emphasis on business applications. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 100/200<br><br>Intro to Finite Math; Algebra |

| SFO–09 Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Technology (Computer) |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding basic principles of information technology and business computer systems for effective daily use. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 100<br><br>Business Computer Systems |

| SFO–10 Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Health and Wellness |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding and implementing the basic principles of health, fitness and wellness. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 100<br><br>Health/Wellness |

| SFO–11 Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Political Science |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding basic concepts of government at the federal, state and local levels. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 100<br><br>American Government |

| SFO–12 Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Business |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding functional areas of human resource management and laws; job analysis, testing; performing interviewing, selection, training and performance evaluation. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 200<br><br>Human Resource Management |

| SFO–13 Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Fire Science |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding basic theories and fundamentals of how and why fires start, spread and are controlled. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 100<br><br>Fire Behavior and Combustion |

| SFO–14  Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Fire Science |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding the components of building construction related to fire and life safety, including inspections, preincident planning and emergency operations. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 100<br><br>Building Construction |

| SFO –15  Outcome | DISCIPLINE: | Administration |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding and performing basic responsibilities of company officers including supervision, delegation, problem solving, decision making, communications and leadership. | LEVEL:<br><br>SUGGESTED: | 200<br><br>Fire Administration  I |

## Supervising Fire Officer: *Experience*

| Element | Application |
|---|---|
| Agency Operations | Qualified Responder:  3–5 years |
| Coaching | Peer coaching; e.g., recruits and other organizational workgroups<br>Small group leadership; sports teams, youth clubs, etc. |
| Directing Resources | Acting officer:  200 hours<br>Include emergency response and non-emergency activities |
| Incident Management | Function as the supervisor of a single resource unit |
| Planning | Participate in a planning process |
| Instruction | Develop and deliver training classes |
| Human Resource Management | Develop teamwork skills |
| Financial Resource Management | Participate in or contribute to a station, project or small program budget |
| Project Management | Participate in an organizational work project |
| Interagency | N/A |
| Emergency Management | Participate in mass casualty training, exercises and incidents |
| Community Involvement | Interact with homeowners associations, service clubs, etc. |
| Professional Associations | Network with others in the service; involvement in local, state and/or regional professional association(s);  e.g., instructors, EMS, inspectors, investigators, safety officers |

## Supervising Fire Officer: *Self-Development*

| Element | Application |
|---|---|
| Health/Fitness | Ongoing health and wellness program |
| Physical Ability | Maintain according to job requirements |
| Career Mapping | Personal and professional inventory; identify personal traits, strengths and areas for development |
| Communication | Written and oral communication; listening; giving/receiving constructive feedback |
| Interpersonal Dynamics/Skills | Customer service skills, teamwork, conflict resolution |
| Diversity | Understanding the value/importance of organizational and community diversity |
| Ethics | Understand, demonstrate and promote ethical behavior for the individual |
| Legal Issues | Understanding the value/importance of law in its application to the organizational work unit |
| Technology | Awareness of the importance and value of technology in the work unit; develop/maintain skills to use technology in the work unit |
| Local and/or Contemporary Hazards/Issues | Develop a current awareness and understanding of unique local hazards and emerging issues |

Appendix B
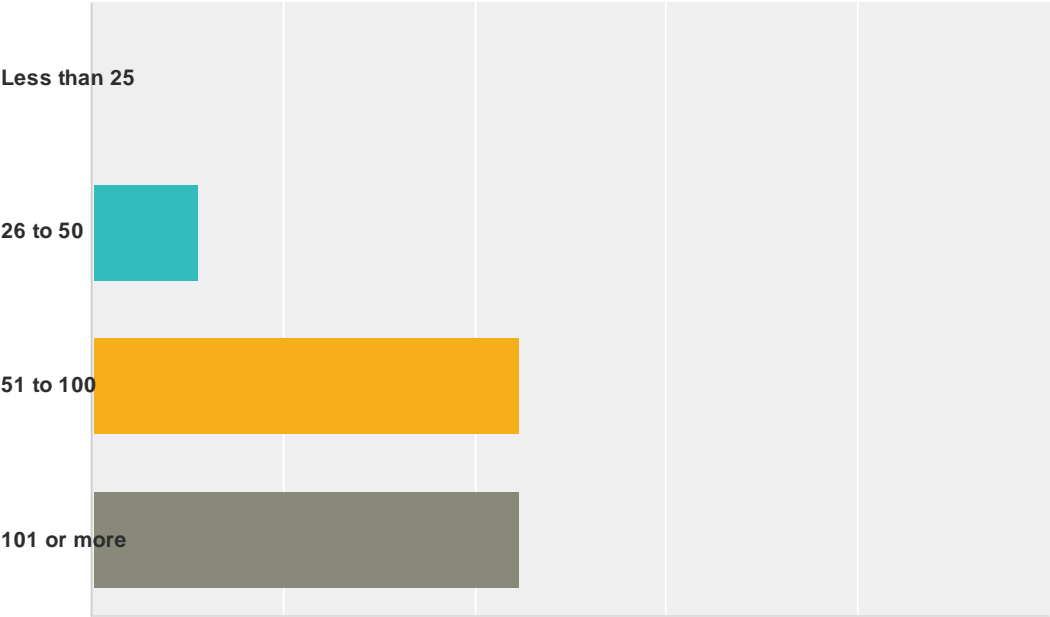
Questionnaire Results

## Q1 My department is:

**Answered: 27    Skipped: 0**
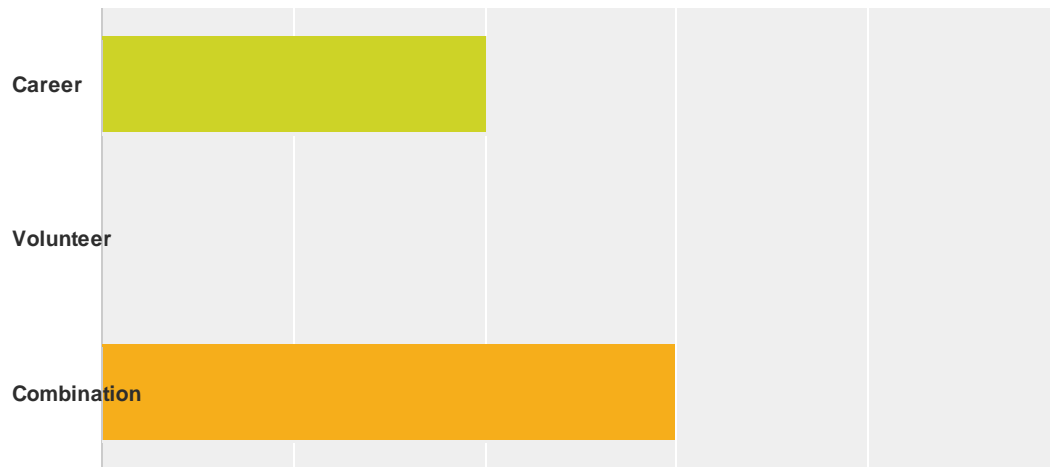


| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Career | **40.74%** | 11 |
| Volunteer | **0%** | 0 |
| Combination | **59.26%** | 16 |
| **Total** | | **27** |

# Q2 We have _____total members in my department.

**Answered: 27    Skipped: 0**



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 25 | **0%** | 0 |
| 26 to 50 | **11.11%** | 3 |
| 51 to 100 | **44.44%** | 12 |
| 101 or more | **44.44%** | 12 |
| **Total** | | **27** |

# Q3 How many company officers do you currently have in your department?

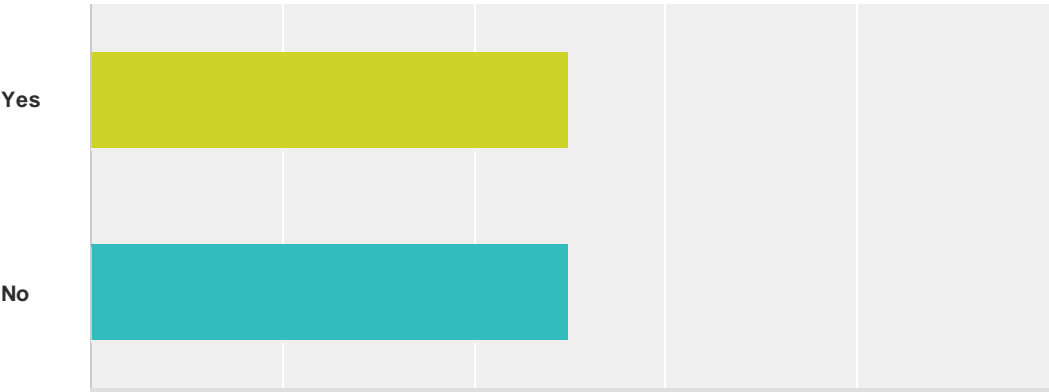| # | Responses |
|---|-----------|
| 1 | 4 career, 10 volunteer |
| 2 | 8 |
| 3 | 12 |
| 4 | 8 |
| 5 | 110 Captains 105 Lieutenants and 26 vacancies to be filled in April 2014 |
| 6 | 57 currently assigned to Operations |
| 7 | 18 |
| 8 | 5 |
| 9 | 7 |
| 10 | 27 |
| 11 | 10 |
| 12 | 11 |
| 13 | 18 |
| 14 | 33 |
| 15 | 9 |
| 16 | 86 |
| 17 | 21 |
| 18 | 4 |
| 19 | 17 |
| 20 | 10 |
| 21 | 9 |
| 22 | 55 |
| 23 | 162 |
| 24 | 6 |
| 25 | 10 |
| 26 | 9 |

# Q4 How many acting (AIC) company officers do you currently have in your department?

**Answered: 26   Skipped: 1**

| # | Responses |
|---|---|
| 1 | 3 career |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 | All Senior Firefighters are eligible |
| 4 | 3 |
| 5 | We do not have permanent AICs. Instead, Driver Engineers/Fire Rescue officers ride up and receive Temporary Assignment pay (24 hours) if the need arises |
| 6 | Our FAO's currently serve as acting company officers when the officer is not at the station. |
| 7 | 3 |
| 8 | Multiple, most senior acts |
| 9 | 2 |
| 10 | 0 - engineer steps up when CO is off. 30 of them |
| 11 | 2 |
| 12 | 2 |
| 13 | 8 |
| 14 | 33 |
| 15 | 2 |
| 16 | 12 |
| 17 | 0 |
| 18 | 4 |
| 19 | 9 |
| 20 | 0 |
| 21 | 12 |
| 22 | 0 |
| 23 | 385 |
| 24 | 0 |
| 25 | 4 |
| 26 | 3 |

# Q5 Does your department have a formal process or specific requirements that must be met to become qualified as an acting (AIC) company officer?
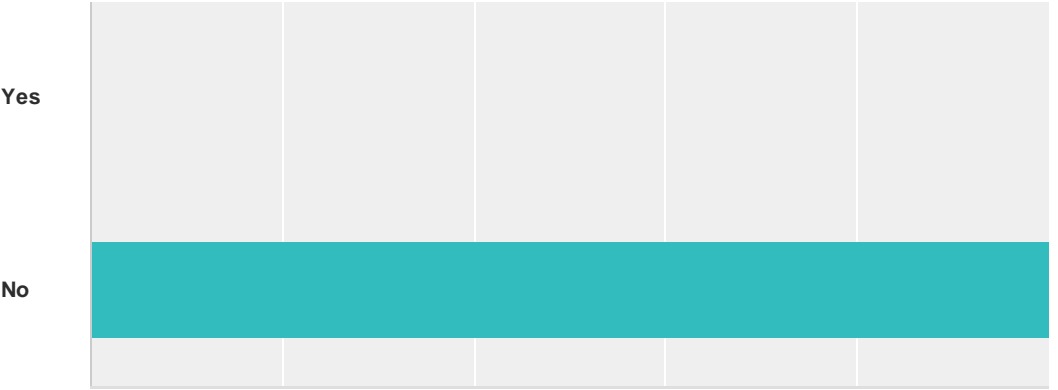
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 50% | 13 |
| No | 50% | 13 |
| **Total** | | **26** |

# Q6 If you do have a formal process, is it a commercial product?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | **0%** | 0 |
| No | **100%** | 12 |
| **Total** | | **12** |

# Q7 What are the education requirements for AIC company officer?

Answered: 11    Skipped: 16
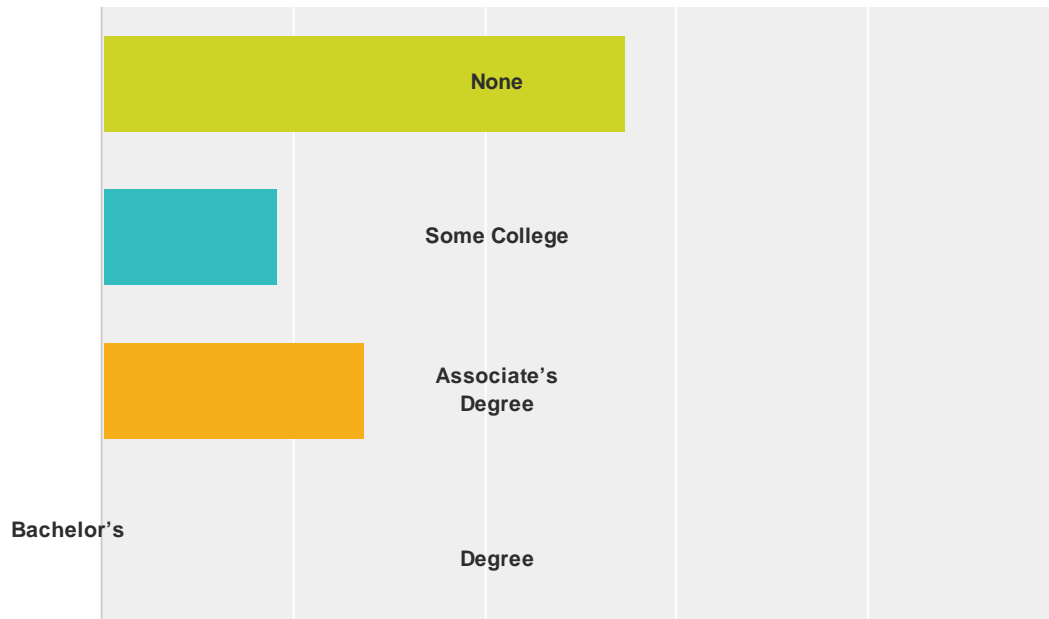


| Answer Choices | Responses | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| None | **54.55%** | 6 |
| Some College | **18.18%** | 2 |
| Associate's Degree | **27.27%** | 3 |
| Bachelor's Degree | **0%** | 0 |
| **Total** | | **11** |

| # | Other (please specify) |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Fire officer #1 is a requirement... |
| 2 | See Question 8 for educational requirements |
| 3 | We require an Associate's Degree to apply for a career FF position |
| 4 | use state certifications |

# Q8 What are the minimum training and certification requirements for an AIC company officer to be qualified to ride in the right front seat? (Select all that apply)
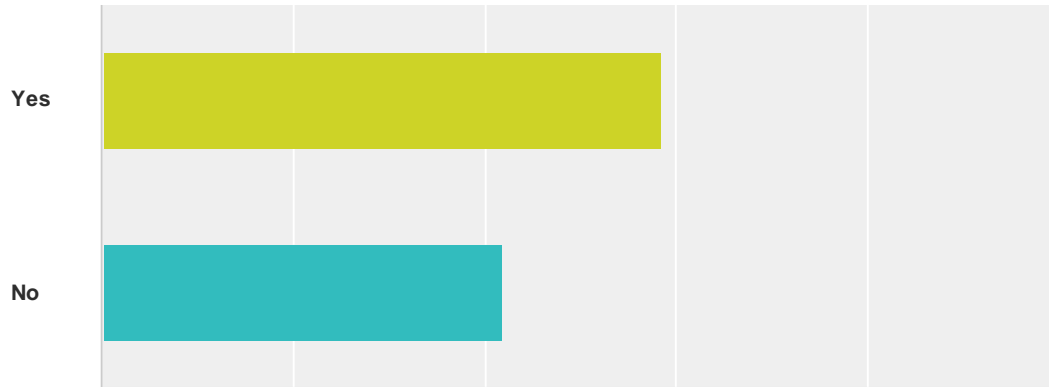
Answered: 12    Skipped: 15
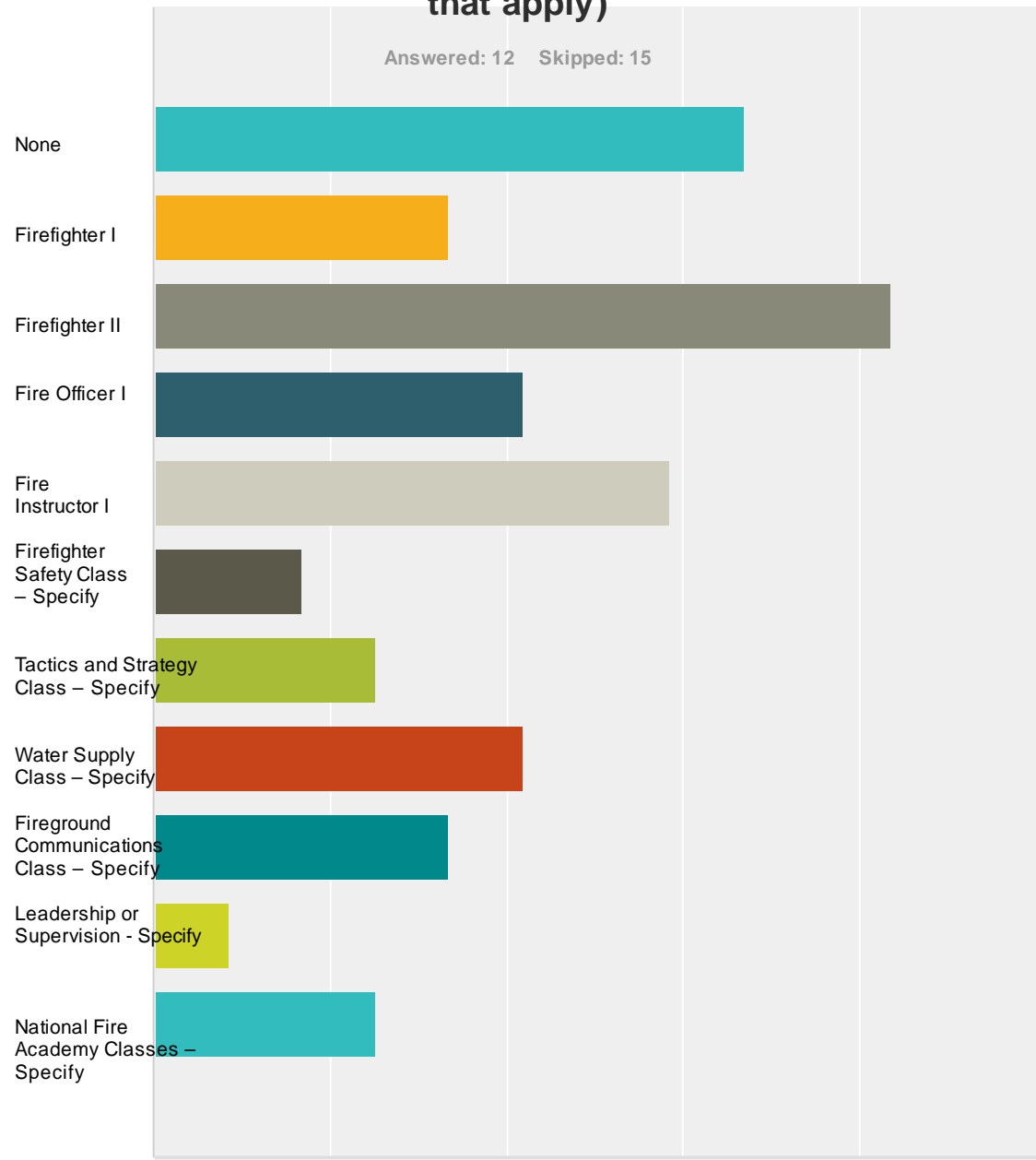
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| None | **0%** | 0 |
| A certain number of years in the department – Specify | **66.67%** | 8 |
| Firefighter I | **33.33%** | 4 |
| Firefighter II | **83.33%** | 10 |
| Fire Officer I | **41.67%** | 5 |
| Fire Instructor I | **58.33%** | 7 |
| Fire Behavior Class – Specify | **16.67%** | 2 |
| Firefighter Safety Class – Specify | **25%** | 3 |
| Tactics and Strategy Class – Specify | **41.67%** | 5 |
| Water Supply Class – Specify | **33.33%** | 4 |
| Fireground Communications Class – Specify | **8.33%** | 1 |
| Leadership or Supervision Class – Specify | **25%** | 3 |
| National Fire Academy Classes – Specify | **0%** | 0 |
| **Total Respondents: 12** | | |

| # | Other (please specify) |
|---|---|
| 1 | NWCG Firing ops and Urban interface Engineer Certified 4 years career |
| 2 | 4 years in the fire service |
| 3 | All of the NIMS certifications as required for a Lieutenant. Haz Mat OIC within 24 months NFPA FO I within 24 months |
| 4 | AIC Engineer 2 yrs or Engineer for one to enter program. Advanced Wildland FFT1 Wildland Engine boss classroom requirements completed, task book issued (completion needed to take Capt exam). A mentorship with a Captain and a task book. Once in the program, 9 - 12 months to complete. |
| 5 | Also Fire Officer II |
| 6 | minimum 3 years fire service experience, Incident Safety Officer, ICS 100, 200, 300 |
| 7 | we use DPSST FGL certification |

## Q9 Does your department verify knowledge of department specific administrative tasks the AIC company officer is expected to know? (documentation of employee exposure, accident or injury, run reports, etc)
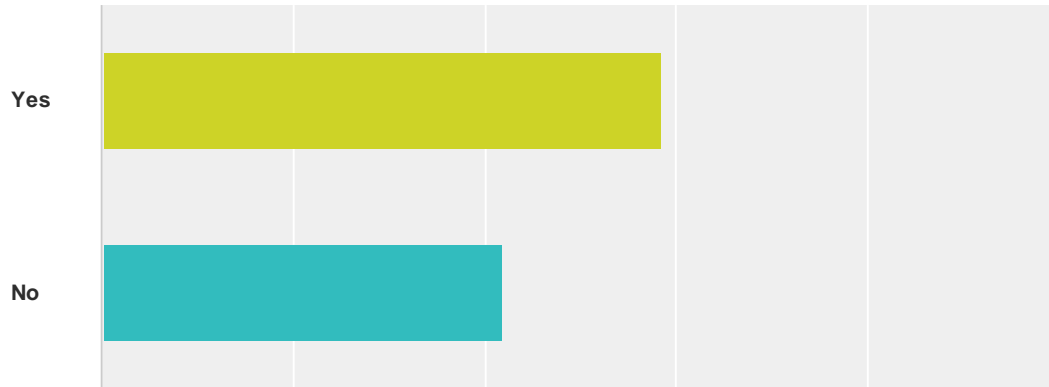
Answered: 12    Skipped: 15



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | **58.33%** | 7 |
| No | **41.67%** | 5 |
| **Total** | | **12** |

| # | If Yes, please explain |
|---|---|
| 1 | We have a task book they must complete, it includes all types of paperwork. |
| 2 | The AIC company Officer must be able to document all reports used by the fire district. This is done by a shadow program. |
| 3 | Upon promotion to FAO, personnel are required to complete an FAO orientation checklist with the company officer which includes the aforementioned tasks. All FAO's in the Department also receive 3 hours of quarterly training with a portion of this training dealing with administrative issues they would be expected to perform in the role of acting company officer. |
| 4 | Annual AIC testing, formal mentoring |
| 5 | We created an AIC-CO taskbook they must complete before being eligible to participate in an AIC- CO assessment center. |
| 6 | Through task book and mentorship. |
| 7 | All the same tasks our company officers are responsible for |
| 8 | Acting company officers must have successfully passed the Captain's examination process. |

# Q10 Does your department verify knowledge of department specific personnel management tasks? (AIC role in disciplinary process, conflict resolution, etc)

**Answered: 12    Skipped: 15**



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | **58.33%** | 7 |
| No | **41.67%** | 5 |
| **Total** | | **12** |

| # | If Yes, please explain |
|---|---|
| 1 | Task book, via scenario if needed. |
| 2 | Only for training. The AIC is not albwed to do discipline. UNLESS it's a gross safety issue. |
| 3 | Annual AIC testing, formal mentoring |
| 4 | We created an AIC-CO taskbook they must complete before being eligiblee to participate in an AIC- CO assessment center. |
| 5 | SAA |
| 6 | If the any incident started while acting then they are to follow through with it all the way. |
| 7 | Acting company officers must have successfuly passed the Captain's examination process. |

# Q11 Does your department verify knowledge of department specific emergency scene management tasks (size up, initial actions, risk benefit analysis, etc.)?

Answered: 12    Skipped: 15
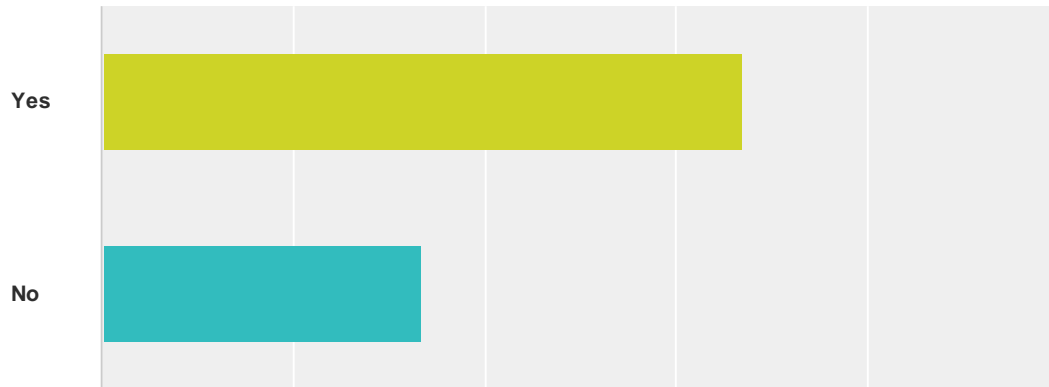


| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | **66.67%** | 8 |
| No | **33.33%** | 4 |
| **Total** | | **12** |

| # | If Yes, please explain |
|---|---|
| 1 | All of our AIC's are required to attend our officers training. |
| 2 | FAO's receive approximately 6 hours a year of scenario-based training via Flame Sim simulation software to develop skills involving scene management. |
| 3 | Annual AIC Testing, mentoring, tactical training |
| 4 | We created an AIC-CO taskbook they must complete before being eligible to participate in an AIC- CO assessment center. |
| 5 | SAA |
| 6 | The personnel acting up has to have the same training level as the company officer |
| 7 | Acting company officers must have successfully passed the Captain's examination process. |

# Q12 Does the department provide training internally?

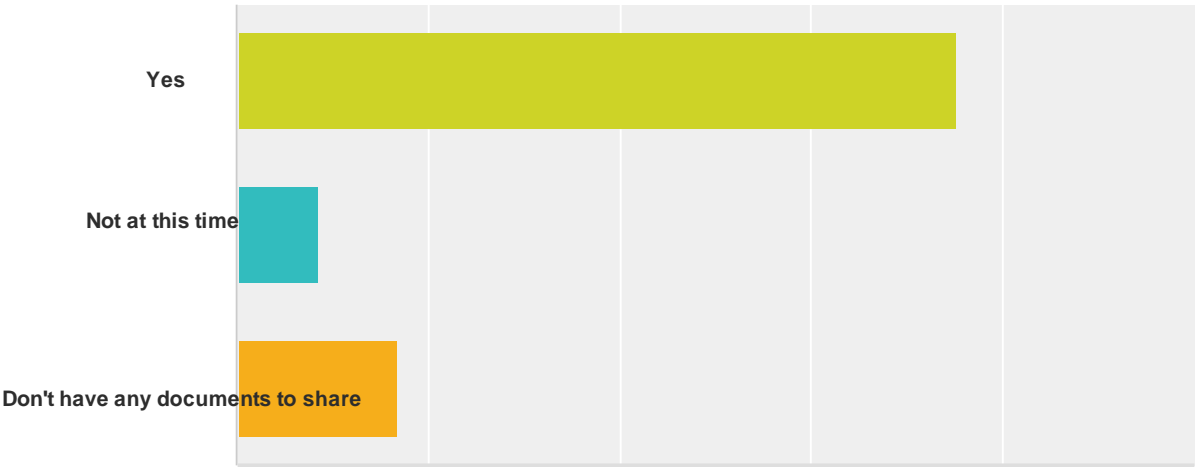Answered: 12    Skipped: 15
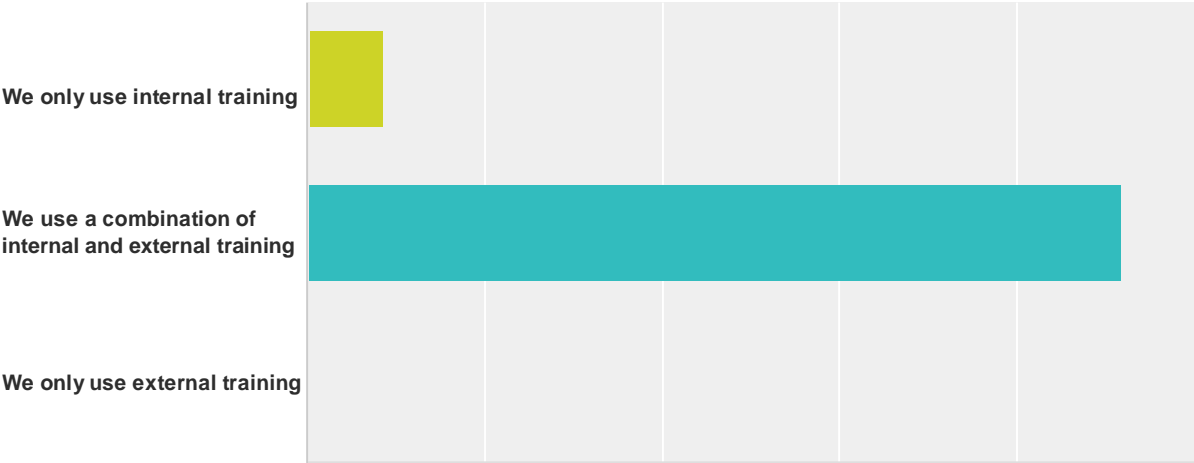


| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| We only use internal training | 8.33% | 1 |
| We use a combination of internal and external training and instructors | 91.67% | 11 |
| We only use external training | 0% | 0 |
| **Total** | | **12** |

| # | Other (please specify) |
|---|---|
| 1 | Try to have all AIC's attend Metro Fire Officers Schools - 1 and 2. |

# Q13 Would you be willing to share your policy and documents?

Answered: 12   Skipped: 15



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | **75%** | 9 |
| Not at this time | **8.33%** | 1 |
| Don't have any documents to share | **16.67%** | 2 |
| **Total** | | **12** |

# Q14 What components do you believe are necessary to prepare a person for the AIC company officer role?

**Answered: 22    Skipped: 5**

| # | Responses |
|---|---|
| 1 | Mentoring, observing, formal education, years of experience. |
| 2 | Paperwork, ride time, and just a lot of shadowing a qualified officer. NOT the same officer. should ride with all of the qualified officers in the district. |
| 3 | OSHA minimum required Hazmat ISO and IC, wildland interface Engine Boss, and IS-200 |
| 4 | If this was a long-term proposition in our department, it would include: Incident Safety officer certification/Fire Instructor I and Fire Officer I certification per the Texas Commission on Fire Protection's training requirements. Additional training would include two "Hot-seat" training scenario days |
| 5 | Scene management Administrative duties Personnel conflict resolution |
| 6 | Mentoring by company officer, FOI, testing process |
| 7 | Basic leadership, human resources (interpersonal skills), administration (reporting), fireground decision making |
| 8 | They need to know what is expected |
| 9 | A clear expectation of the AIC responsibilities. |
| 10 | Higher education Higher levels of certification such as FO I Our AIC-CO Taskbook is fairly intensive |
| 11 | Level head; desire; good rapport with peers; confidence in and of command staff; education. |
| 12 | Officer certification Incident Command Leadership Management Communication |
| 13 | Scene management, crew resource, and dealing with those difficult conversations. |
| 14 | They should possess the Skills, Knowledge, and Ability to be an officer along with having attended some in-house professional development. |
| 15 | offering and mandating the training at each level for the next |
| 16 | Pople skills. We look for how people will conduct themselves on Day 1. We can teach tactics, but if a candidate's personality is such that they don't assert themselves from day 1, they most likely will not be effective officers. Also, an administrative training program that teaches them to use basic computer programs such as Word and Excel, and how to properly report using the NFIRS system. |

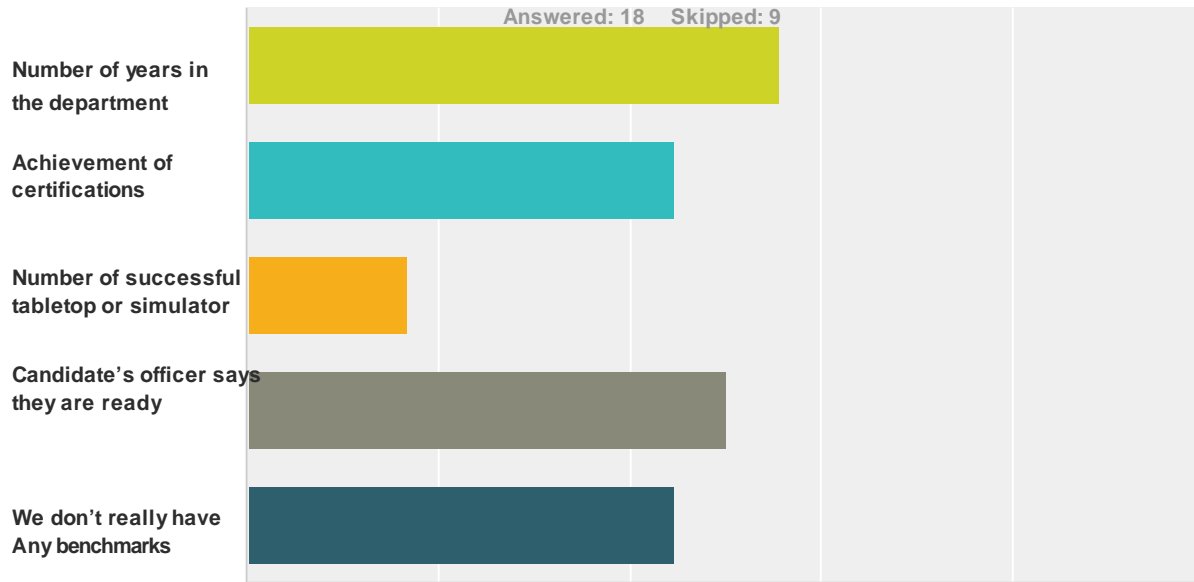| | |
|---|---|
| 17 | 1. Administrative 2. Leadership 3. Strategy and tactics 4. Public education 5. Training methodology 6. Customer service |
| 18 | Certifications, training and experience |
| 19 | We do not currently allow AIC, but a formal training plan to include a skills check off would be necessary. Also, the candidate would have to be in the top 5 on a promotional list for that position as well. |
| 20 | They must be familiar with basic command functions for a company officer, they should have an intimate knowledge of policies and procedures and have a good understanding of company responsibilities regarding daily operations. |
| 21 | training, knowledge and experience they need training on dealing with people |
| 22 | Company level command training. Knowing how to initiate the first action plan and implement initial activities |

# Q15 What methods of instruction do you believe would best prepare the candidate for the AIC company officer position? Please explain.

Answered: 22    Skipped: 5

| # | Responses |
|---|-----------|
| 1 | Lecture and practical, on the job shadowing. |
| 2 | Shadow, ride along, and the monthly officers training. Also we use an assessment center to evaluate were the candidate for AIC is. Each AIC will do the assessment center 3 to 4 times a year to evaluate their progress. |
| 3 | Situational where the student is forced to make a judgment call and cannot rely on classmates for guidance. |
| 4 | Scenario based traitraining in a classroom setting to address decision making on the fireground as well as any remediation that would need to happen. Additionally, the Fire Instructor I training could be online or via classroom delivery. The same would apply to Incident Company Officer and Fire Officer I because it is difficult for a department of our size to deliver such training at all times via a classroom instruction with a live instructor(s) |
| 5 | Scenario based training using some type of scenario software to place the candidate in a decision- making position to mitigate an incident. Also, an assessment center to see how the candidate would deal with administrative and personnel issues. |
| 6 | Mentoring by company officer with direct observation |
| 7 | Classroom, computer-based (reporting & fireground decision-making), role playing (interpersonal) and shadowing |
| 8 | Working with experienced CO's Hands on drills/experience |
| 9 | Procedure and policy review, tabletop exercises, OJT |
| 10 | During the completion of the AIC-CO taskbook they must log time in the right front seat under direct observation of a company officer; real life application. During this process they must also be involved in 'box' assignments to get all of the required boxes checked off. |
| 11 | Mentorship and task books, review of task book by training and battalion chiefs regularly. MFOA 1 and 2 |
| 12 | Experience Education - specific courses on Incident Command, Leadership, Management, Communication Skills Training-practice in size-up, radio communication, reporting, time management |
| 13 | Hands on, thinking and project management (direction, time management and deadline) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 14 | Having a good understanding of the ICS system along with having strong knowledge of strategies and tactics. |
| 15 | Combination of classroom and OJT |
| 16 | One-on-one or small group instruction that includes hands-on learning of needed skills. We prefer to allow our acting officers to act in the role under the supervision of their officers to gain experience. |
| 17 | A combination of classroom, simulation, training ground, and mentoring on emergency scenes. |
| 18 | Drills including table top exercises |
| 19 | Complete a promotional test for the position and be on a ranked list, skills check off (comms, MDC, report writing, etc..) shadowing another CO prior to being able to AIC |
| 20 | Formal classes on leadership and company officer development. |
| 21 | Agency experience and attending classes and conferences |
| 22 | Practical experience through training scenarios and classroom sessions to include first arriving company command |

# Q16 What benchmarks does your department use to determine when a candidate is ready to be an AIC company officer? (Select all that apply)



Answered: 18    Skipped: 9

Bars (top to bottom):
- Number of years in the department
- Achievement of certifications
- Number of successful tabletop or simulator
- Candidate's officer says they are ready
- We don't really have Any benchmarks

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|---|
| Number of years in the department | 55.56% |
| Achievement of certifications such as NFPA Fire Officer I | 44.44% |
| Number of successful tabletop or simulator exercises | 16.67% |
| Candidate's officer says they are ready | 50% |
| We don't really have any benchmarks. Person is appointed based on the need of the moment. | 44.44% |
| Total Respondents: 18 | |

| # | Other (please specify) |
|---|---|
| 1 | We are in the process of changing the requirements in our department to include our Company Officer F-TEP and the OSHA and Wildland minimum standards. |
| 2 | Complete annual AIC training/testing |
| 3 | We have our driver step up whenever the CO is off duty. If the driver is new, then generally they won't step them up for at least a few months. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 | Successful completion of required certifications Successful completion of AIC-CO Taskbook<br>Successful completion of AIC-CO Assessment Center with unanimous BC approval |
| 5 | See 15 |
| 6 | All Driver/Engineers are eligible to be the Acting Company Officer regardless of experience or education |
| 7 | We are trying to set a standard to have company officers meet, it used to be the good 'ol boy system, we like you so you get promoted. Now I have set requirements and a testing process. |
| 8 | Each AIC is taken off the current civil service list based on their position and score. This does not always mean they are the best suited for the position. IT is also unfortunate that at the present time the department does little to prepare the individual for the responsibilities that come with being a company officer; I hope this will soon change as we just got a new Fire Chief who is more focused on professional development. |
| 9 | Again, acting company officers come from the Captain's promotional list, so they must have successfully passed the written examination and oral assessment process. The recommendation of their Captain and Battalion Chief is also taken into account. |
| 10 | We have had acting positions in the past. Those acting were on the list for promotion. |
| 11 | We do not currently allow. |
| 12 | achievement of certification FGL |
| 13 | We just initiated this. The top 3 individuals on the promotion list for lieutenant are the AIC personnel. One is assigned to each shift. |

# Q17 What department are you with?

Answered: 21    Skipped: 6

| # | Responses |
|---|-----------|
| 1 | Campbell County Fire Department |
| 2 | Jefferson fire |
| 3 | Klamath County Fire District No. 1 |
| 4 | Dallas Fire-Rescue Department |
| 5 | Plano Fire Rescue, Plano, Texas |
| 6 | Forest Grove |
| 7 | Town of Brookfield, WI |
| 8 | Kingsport Fire/Rescue |
| 9 | Polk Co Fire Dist. No.1 |
| 10 | Marion County Fire District #1 |
| 11 | Bend Fire |
| 12 | Sandy Fire District |
| 13 | Rochester FD |
| 14 | College Station Fire Department |
| 15 | Manchester Township Dept. of Fire |
| 16 | Colerain Fire & EMS |
| 17 | York City Fire, York PA |
| 18 | Clackamas Fire District #1 |
| 19 | Lebanon Fire Division, Ohio |
| 20 | Stayton Fire District |
| 21 | Clearcreek Fire District |