

In late 2004 questions were raised regarding how live fire trainings were being conducted across North Carolina. It seemed that more and more injuries resulting from live fire trainings were occurring. As a result, methods of conducting live fire trainings were called into question, including the use of both Class "A" and Class "B" fuels. The North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission Certification Board at its January 26, 2005 meeting addressed this issue.

The Certification Board appointed two task groups to develop written policies and procedures regarding the use of Class "A" and Class "B" fuels. Class "A" Task Group members included Larry Hughes, Jim Pharr, Phil Welch, and Dale Burkett. Class "B" Task Group members consisted of Chris Best, Tim Fitts, Carnie Hedgepeth, and Wes Lail. These groups solicited input from additional fire service professionals and reported their perspective reports to the Fire & Rescue Certification Board on July 20, 2005. After careful review of both Task Group reports, the NC Fire & Rescue Commission adopted policies and procedures for Live Fire Instructor qualification training, and policies and procedures for Live Fire Instructors conducting live fire training. The policies and procedures are listed below in bold followed by explanatory information.

- **The Live Fire Instructor shall successfully complete the Live Fire Qualification Course approved by the Certification Board and delivered by the NC Department of Insurance/Office of State Fire Marshal Staff.** The North Carolina Fire & Rescue Commission (NCF&RC) recommends all instructors conducting live fire training exercises attend and successfully complete a Live Fire Qualification Program.
- **The Live Fire Qualified Instructor shall abide by all policies, procedures, competencies, and processes of the qualification class. This includes the proper use of 1) pre-burn application of Class 'B' fuels to the fire set or, 2) the proper use of Class 'A' fuels **only** to the fire set.** This policy and procedure is a big change for previously qualified instructors using class "A" or class "B" fuels. The process of "throwing fuel" into a fire-involved room is no longer taught or accepted by the NCF&RC. In other words, suitable amounts of class "A" or class "B" fuels may be pre-applied to the fire set before it is ignited, however throwing additional fuel after the set has been ignited, whether class "A" or class "B", has been eliminated.
- **The Delivery Agency shall notify the Fire and Rescue Commission staff 15 days prior to a Live Fire training class, providing the location, time and the name of the Lead Instructor of the class for the purpose of random audits.** Due to the increase in injuries reported during live fire training exercises and lack of accountability by some

instructors, the NCF&RC has adopted mandatory notification of all live fire trainings where NCF&RC Live Fire Qualified Instructors are involved so random audits can be conducted. This notification shall be made by the Delivery Agency to the perspective Certification Specialist with the NCF&RC at least 15 days prior to any live fire training. In the event that a live fire training involves an instructor qualified by the NCF&RC, but the training is not being conducted by a Delivery Agency, the NCF&RC Live Fire Qualified Instructor shall be responsible for notifying the Certification Specialist. The Certification Specialists include Mike Edwards - Eastern Certification Specialist, Wes Lail - Central Certification Specialist, and Wayne Bailey - Western Certification Specialist. These individuals may be reached by calling the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal at 1-800-634-7854.

- **The Delivery Agency shall notify the Fire and Rescue Commission, as soon as possible, within 72 hours, of an accident and/or injury associated with Live Fire Training.** The NCF&RC has adopted mandatory notification of **ANY** injury associated with fire and rescue training involving a NCF&RC qualified instructor. The main purpose of this notification is so that accurate data of North Carolina fire and rescue injuries can be recorded to target specific injury trends. Notification of an injury shall be made to the Deputy Director for the NCF&RC or his designee within 72 hours of the injury by calling the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal at 1-800-634-7854. If the class involves a Delivery Agency, the delivery agency is responsible for reporting the incident. If the class does not involve a Delivery Agency, then the NCF&RC qualified instructor is responsible for reporting the injury.
- **The Fire and Rescue Commission staff shall be directly involved with any investigation to determine the cause of the accident and/or injury.** The involvement of NCF&RC staff shall be for the purpose of determining the cause of an accident and/or injury. However the NCF&RC may use this information in determining if correct policies and procedures were used in accordance with the policies and procedures taught in any NCF&RC approved course. Upon notification of an accident and/or injury, the Deputy Director for the NCF&RC or his designee will record initial information through a phone interview. It shall be at the discretion of the Deputy Director for the NCF&RC or his designee if a detailed on site investigation should occur.
- **The Fire and Rescue Commission staff shall complete a detailed report of the investigation maintaining all data collected.** In the event of an injury a complete investigation report shall be produced by the NCF&RC staff and submitted to the NCF&RC Certification Board during the next quarterly board meeting. The NCF&RC Certification staff will maintain records of all data collected.

- **The Fire and Rescue Commission staff shall provide to the Certification Board a complete report of the incident making recommendations based on the conclusion of the investigation.** The NCF&RC staff will provide all members of the NCF&RC Certification Board a complete report of the incident including recommendations based on the investigation. The NCF&RC Certification Board shall use this information as it sees fit in accordance with their scope of practice including focusing new policies and procedures on problematic recurring injuries, or instructor accountability including probation or revocation of an instructor's qualification.
- **The NCF&RC has adopted a mandatory re-qualification class for all LFQ and LPGQ instructors to be taken every 5 years, as the NFPA 1403 standard is revised.** Beginning on January 1, 2006, all Live Fire Qualified instructors and LPG instructors who have been qualified before this date shall attend a mandatory re-qualification course administered by NCF&RC staff. These instructors shall have until July 1st, 2006 to obtain this re-qualification. This re-qualification shall be mandatory for all LFQ and LPGQ instructors to maintain their qualification, and shall be taken at the beginning of each new revision cycle of NFPA 1403 Standard On Live Fire Training Evolutions.

It is important that all instructors understand that these policies and procedures have been made to ensure the safest training scenarios for North Carolina Fire and Rescue personnel. We should all strive to conduct challenging and exciting training scenarios in a safe and effective manner understanding injuries are unacceptable.