

International Fire Service Accreditation Congress

Certificate Assembly

Accreditation Procedures

**Prepared
by the
IFSAC Certificate Assembly
Committee on Site Teams**

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IFSAC Certificate Assembly Accreditation Procedures

Accreditation: Within five (5) years from the date of election to membership, each voting entity must have at least one level of certification accredited. The Certificate Assembly Board of Governors shall evaluate the entity's status at that time and report to the Assembly.

NOTE 1: If an entity wishes to have a standard other than NFPA accredited, they must first submit the alternative standard to the Committee on Alternative Standards through IFSAC Administration. To ensure the Committee and the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors are adequately prepared for decision-making, Administration requires all submissions arrive in their office no later than 60 days prior to the CABOG meeting. The Committee will review the standard and make a recommendation to the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors. The alternative standard may then be adopted by the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors or forwarded on to the Certificate Assembly for further discussion and/or adoption.

NOTE 2: IFSAC Administration will schedule the site visit no sooner than 60 days after receiving all documents (d. 1-4 below) required for the site visit. Site visits scheduled during the months of March, April, August, and September will be voted on at the next meeting following those months. For example, site visits conducted in March or April will be voted on at the following September meeting. Site visits conducted in August or September will be voted on at the following April meeting.

Process for becoming accredited:

1. Completed applications must be submitted by the entity to IFSAC Administration. Enclosed, the entity must provide appropriate documentation which will include:
 - a. Evidence of empowerment
 - b. Documentation showing financial support (source(s) of funding) for the continuous operation of the certification process
 - c. Documentation that indicates staffing levels adequate to implement and sustain the certification process described
 - d. A completed self-study document including completed:
 - 1) application for accreditation
 - 2) completed *Site Visit Worksheets for the Criteria for Certificate Accreditation*
 - 3) test item correlation sheets in the IFSAC format
 - 4) certification policies and procedures manual
 - e. Any culturally sensitive information that the entity feels the site team should know.

- f. An application fee of \$500 (US) for accreditation or reaccreditation (may be invoiced)
2. Administration will review the documents to ensure compliance with the *Criteria for Certificate Accreditation*. Administration will ensure that all documents are complete, that there is evidence of empowerment and the entity is in good standing with the organization. Administration will notify the entity of its findings. Upon successful review, the entity authorizes the scheduling of a site-visit.
3. Administration notifies the Committee on Site Teams who schedules and facilitates all site-visits. This will be done in consultation with Administration, the site team leader, and the entity host. Copies of all supplied materials will be forwarded from the entity seeking accreditation/reaccreditation to the site team members. The site team leader will develop and supply team members with a site visit agenda. The entity will supply the travel agenda, directions to the facility, and program information.
4. The site team examines aspects of the applicant's certification system to ensure compliance with the *Criteria for Certificate Accreditation*. Any items on the *Site Visit Worksheets for the Criteria for Certificate Accreditation* that can be answered in advance should be completed prior to arrival at the entity. A pre-visit list of questions should be started prior to the site team's pre-visit meeting.

When the team arrives at the entity site, there should be a pre-visit team meeting prior to starting the formal process. This will allow the team to work out the details concerning the visit while allowing for discussion on issues already discovered. The site team leader is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the site visit are carried out during the visit. Should difficulties arise, the site team leader should contact the Chairperson of the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors or other designated person for more direction.

Once the review is completed the site team must hold an exit conference during which the visit is discussed with the entity. When the team ends the visit and departs from the entity, there should be no surprises concerning the visit brought out in the report or in discussion from the team that the entity is not already aware.

5. Within thirty days of the site visit, the site team leader prepares and submits to Administration, a consensus report that includes at least:
 - a. evaluation documentation as provided for in the *Criteria for Certificate Accreditation*;
 - b. a narrative report of the findings (positive aspects and noncompliance issues);
 - c. a recommendation to:
 - 1) accredit certification levels applied for; or
 - 2) accredit only certain levels; or
 - 3) accredit levels conditionally upon further action by the applicant; or

- 4) deny accreditation; or
 - 5) any combination of these actions deemed appropriate by the site team*
- d. any voluntary recommendations that are in order for the applicant, but not required for accreditation.

* **Note:** Conditional accreditation shall include specific details as to what the condition(s) must be prior to the granting of accreditation, and how completion of the conditions will be measured. Documentation submitted by the applicant to meet the condition(s) shall be reviewed by the site team within thirty days of submission. Upon review of the documentation, the site-team leader has thirty days to submit a final report through Administration to the Chairperson of the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors containing a recommendation either to grant or deny accreditation.

6. Upon receipt of a site visit report, Administration will distribute to all members of the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors. Administration shall place consideration of the report on the agenda of the next Board of Governors meeting.
7. Additional levels of accreditation for voting members with at least one accredited level may be sought by submitting an application and appropriate documentation that complies with the *Criteria for Certificate Accreditation*. Entities submitting additional levels for accreditation should review the *Administrative Review Procedure* contained in the Handbook CD.

Administration will forward the materials to the appointed member for review. The member will in turn notify Administration, either approving the additional levels if compliance is achieved or reporting deficiencies. Administration will notify the entity as to the results of the review.

Reaccreditation

Reaccreditation is required on a five year basis. The five year period begins at the time of the initial certificate accreditation received by the entity.

1. The initial reaccreditation evaluation begins with a desk audit of the entity's programs by Administration. The desk audit is then followed by a site visit.
2. If the *Criteria for Certificate Accreditation* are met, the site team shall recommend to the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors that reaccreditation be granted.
3. If, in the opinion of the site team, the criteria have not been met, Administration shall report this to the Chairperson of the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors. The Certificate Assembly Board shall determine if additional time should be afforded to comply or the certificate accreditation should be withdrawn.

Appeals Process

The appeals process can be found in Article 12.5 *Appeal Process* of the Certificate Assembly By-laws.

Site Team

1. The site team for initial/reaccreditation shall consist of a minimum of three (3) personnel selected by the Committee on Site Teams from a list of qualified members.
3. The site team leader and members shall be selected from a list compiled by Administration and approved by the Committee on Site Teams.
4. Cost for site visits will be the responsibility of the entity requesting certificate accreditation.

Site Team Duties

1. Pre-Visit Duties:
 - a. Travel arrangements must be confirmed between the entity and the site team. The entity forwards the travel agendas to the site team members.
 - b. The site team leader contacts the entity to formalize the site visit agenda.
 - c. The site team leader contacts site team members to inform them what materials to bring and of the site visit agenda. The site team leader sends team members a copy of the site visit agenda and the meeting ground rules.
2. Pre-Visit Meeting:
 - a. The site team leader shall ensure the agenda includes at least one hour for the site team to meet prior to the start of the site visit.
 - b. The site team leader will discuss the site visit agenda, the site visit ground rules, the IFSAC Site Team Code of Ethics, and team member assignments.
 - c. The site team will discuss any pre-visit findings.
 - d. The team will have a general discussion about the site visit approach.
3. The Site Visit Duties:
 - a. The site team will meet with entity representatives and the site team leader will begin the site visit accreditation process.
 - b. The site team leader will facilitate the site visit process. As a minimum the site visit shall include the following:
 - 1) Meet with entity leadership and certification staff
 - 2) Review support services
 - 3) Review test banks

- 4) Interview staff and applicants of the certification system
 - 5) Observe testing procedures
 - 6) Tour the facilities, if applicable
- c. The site team shall conduct a pre-exit conference for team members first and then with entity representatives.
 - d. The site team leader shall conduct an exit conference on the site visit results with team members and entity representatives.
4. Post-Visit Duties:
- a. The site team shall allow the entity to respond to findings provided in the exit conference.
 - b. The site team leader shall develop the site visit report and mail it to Administration within thirty days of the site visit. Any unresolved issues from the visit shall be contained in the report.
 - c. The site team leader shall work with the entity, and other team members to facilitate the review of additional material after the report is filed. If the site team determines that the initial site visit report requires modifications, then the site team leader shall update the report and submit it to Administration.
 - d. Administration will forward the initial report and any subsequent materials to the Certificate Assembly Board of Governors.