MONTHLY BUGLE

May 2025

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Academy Training Staff

Academy Director
John Shafer

Field Operations Section Chief
Mike Parks

Planning Section Chief
Zach Mathews

Academy Program Manager (Districts 1 and 4)
Ryan Thoma

Academy Program

Message from the Director

Greetings to all,



As spring turns to summer, I hope everyone has recovered from FDIC and that May is treating you well. I want to say a special thank you to the Indiana Volunteer Fire Association (IVFA) for allowing the Academy staff to co-locate at their FDIC booth this year so we could answer training questions from volunteer firefighters. I also want to thank everyone who visited the booth to introduce themselves and engage in meaningful conversations. It was a pleasure meeting you all.

In the last edition of the Bugle, we discussed the steps if your fire instructor certification was randomly selected for an audit. We also covered how the Academy will no longer allow re-test codes to be shared with a person's proctor of choice but instead must have the original proctor's approval before a re-test code could be given out.

In this edition of the Bugle, I am focusing on specifics concerning the proctoring of written tests. We've received several complaints concerning the use of smart watches or AI during tests. Adjustments have been made to address that issue.

I will also share a list of the most commonly requested weblinks to help people look up the information straight from the source instead of calling the office for information that is widely available and published on our website.

Thanks,
John Shafer
Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy Director

Proctoring Information

Due to an increase in allegations of cheating during written exams, the Planning Section of the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy updated the handbook formerly known as the Lead Instructor

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DHS Makes $360 Million Available to Increase Number of Trained Firefighters

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is offering grants to increase the number of trained firefighters by making $360 million available to communities. Under President Trump's leadership, states and localities will be empowered to manage disasters and

Handbook. It now covers the three key positions in a certification course: lead instructor, lead evaluator and proctor.

Instructor, Evaluator and Proctor Handbook

It is important that instructors review this document regularly. The Academy will continue to update it with changes to fire academy rules and state laws related to certification. The Academy's goal is not to focus solely on responding to incidents of misconduct, but instead to serve as a guide and resource to reduce them through education.

One such improvement is the enhanced coaching process. Previously, coaches assisted lead instructors with course setup in Acadis. Now, coaches also contact lead evaluators and proctors to ask specific questions about how they plan to conduct job performance requirements (JPRs) and ensure they have the necessary logistics and equipment. The goal of this change is to reduce the practice of completing paperwork without performing the required skills.

As part of the coaching process, all three primary course positions must confirm that they have reviewed the updated handbook before the course can go live in Acadis.

While this article cannot cover the entire proctoring section of the handbook, here are answers to two frequently asked questions:

1. Why is a proctor not allowed to read the test to a student?

The Americans with Disabilities Act does not apply in certification testing, as there is no employer-employee relationship. Indiana administrative rule 655 IAC 1-1-12 (J)(12) states that a proctor shall not discuss any test question or possible answer with any student.

2. Are any books or reference materials allowed during the written exam?

No. The proctor must ensure there are no books or notes on the student's desk. In the past, the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) was allowed for certain test questions. However, since most ERGs are now accessed electronically, there is no reliable way for a proctor to prevent other sources from being accessed. The ERG is no longer allowed during written exams, and the Academy has removed all questions from test banks that required its use.

The handbook now includes "read verbatim" language, providing proctors with detailed guidance on exactly what to say and do when administering a state exam.

Informational Resources

The Academy continues its efforts to educate instructors and reduce call volume by sharing an Informational Links page on social media.

emergencies. These fire grant programs align with that vision by helping communities build the response capabilities to keep their citizens safe.

Recently, FEMA announced that $360 million is available for the Fiscal Year 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program. At the direction of Secretary Kristi Noem, SAFER will award these funds directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations across the nation to help them increase or maintain the number of trained firefighters available in their community.

FEMA also announced that applications will be accepted for $36 million available through the Fiscal Year 2024 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grant program. These funds help strengthen community fire prevention programs and support scientific research on innovations that improve firefighter safety, health and well-being.

The purpose of the FP&S grant program is to award grants directly to fire departments, national, regional, state, local, tribal nations and non-profit organizations such as research foundations, public safety institutes and academic, public

Stay up to date with information and events from the Academy by following the Academy on Facebook.



INDIANA FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMY INFORMATION

BOARD RULES
https://beta.iar.iga.in.gov/code/2025/655/1

PREREQUISITE LIST
https://on.in.gov/academy-prerequisites

LEAD INSTRUCTOR, EVALUATOR AND PROCTOR HANDBOOK
https://www.in.gov/dhs/files/academy-instructor-evaluator-proctor-handbook-general-information.pdf

INSTRUCTOR MATERIAL AND RESOURCE ONE ACCESS GUIDE
https://www.in.gov/dhs/files/Acadis-Instructor-Material-ResourceOne-Access-Guide-February-2021.pdf

IFSTA FREE ELIBRARY SUBSCRIPTION
https://on.in.gov/ifsta-library-request

CREATE AN IFSTA RESOURCE ONE ACCOUNT FOR ELIBRARY ACCESS
https://moodle.ifsta.org/

FIRE TRAINING EQUIPMENT REQUESTS
https://on.in.gov/fire-equipment

New Acadis Feature: Verify Certifications

You can now verify a person's certifications on Acadis without needing a PSID or email address. This new feature, available from the Acadis homepage before logging in, improves transparency and makes it easier to confirm certification levels.

To access this, click "Submit a request verification" under the "Verify Certifications" tab.

health, occupational health and injury prevention institutions for fire prevention programs and to support firefighter health and safety research and development, such as clinical studies that address behavioral, social science and cultural research.

The application period for both the FY24 SAFER and FP&S programs are open and will close on July 3, 2025, at 5 p.m. ET.

Since 2005, the SAFER program has awarded approximately $5.2 billion in grant funding. FP&S has awarded nearly $900 million since its inception in 2002.

The FY 2024 SAFER and FP&S Notices of Funding Opportunity and technical assistance documents for both programs are available at grants.gov and on the FEMA website here: SAFER and FP&S. The FEMA website also provides additional information about upcoming webinars to assist applicants.



Hub and Spoke Update

The latest Hub and Spoke fire training building is up and running. The Rushville Fire Department and the Academy's cadre of live fire instructors spent four days training the department on how to conduct safe live fire scenarios according to NFPA 1403 standards last month.

The site is locally owned and maintained. Nearby fire departments are able to request to use this new training facility.



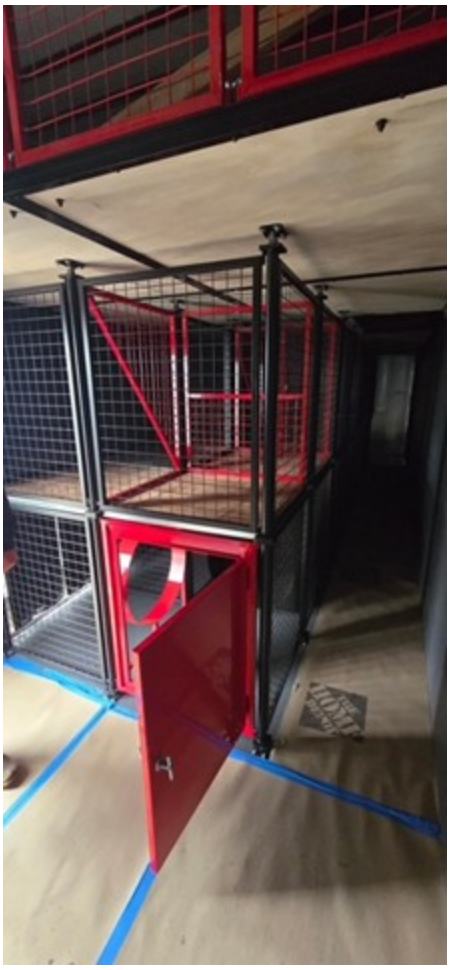


Logistics Update: SCBA Trailer

The Academy is pleased to announce the arrival of a second SCBA confidence trailer. The original trailer is in high demand and regularly loaned out to support local fire department training.

The addition of a second trailer, funded through an Assistance to Firefighters Grant, will allow the Academy to accommodate more departments. The Academy thanks former administrators Wade Walling and Elizabeth Westfall for securing the grant that made this expansion possible.





The Fire and Public Safety Academy is dedicated to providing outstanding customer service and delivering professional fire and public safety training, education and certification to Indiana's first responders in support of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security's mission of protecting the people, property and prosperity of Indiana.

Contact the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy at

firecertifications@dhs.in.gov



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