



VANCOUVER ISLAND EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACADEMY



CANDIDATE GUIDEBOOK

VIERA 

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CANDIDATE GUIDEBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy (the Academy) has been accredited by Pro Board to certify individuals to the following National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards:

- NFPA 472 Hazardous Materials Awareness and Hazardous Materials Operations – Core Competencies and Product Control
- NFPA 1001 Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications Level 1 and 2
- NFPA 1002 Fire Apparatus Driver Operator Qualifications
- NFPA 1006 Technical Rescuer Rope Technician Level 1 and 2
- NFPA 1006 Technical Rescuer Confined Space Technician Level 1 and 2
- NFPA 1021 Fire Officer Level 1 and Level 2
- NFPA 1031 Fire Inspector
- NFPA 1033 Fire Investigator
- NFPA 1041 Fire Service Instructor Level 1 and Level 2
- NFPA 1521 Fire Service Incident Safety Officer – Suppression, Technical Rescue and HazMat Ops

Candidates successful in meeting the requirements of both the written exam and the practical skills evaluation for the respective NFPA standard will receive certification and be registered on the Pro Board registry.

This guidebook has been developed to assist the candidate by providing valuable information and guidance of the certification process from start to finish.

The Academy:

The core objectives for providing certification training in our region are as follows:

1. To provide high quality and internationally-recognized training and certification to members of Fire Departments and other Emergency Response Organizations.
2. To provide cost effective and accessible training by providing it locally at the Academy facility or by hosting it at the clients on-site facility.
3. To create opportunities for all emergency response organizations to have their training recognized by Pro Board, and provide international reciprocity with other institutions that are Pro Board or IFSAC accredited, for laddering into advanced diploma and degree programs for professional career advancement.
4. To work cooperatively with all learning institutions, all local fire services and emergency response organizations to accomplish these objectives.

The Academy Director

The Academy Director will be the Nanaimo Fire Rescue Fire Chief or designate and will be the chair of the VIERA Advisory Committee.

The Academy Director will decide on appropriate action to be taken with a candidate's appeal.

Advisory Committee

The Academy has created an Advisory Committee to provide stakeholders a forum in which they can voice their opinion and provide advice and recommendations to the Academy on the development and ongoing management of certification programs.

The Advisory Committee consists of representation from the following stakeholders:

- Nanaimo Fire Rescue Department
- Vancouver Island Career Fire Departments
- BC Volunteer Firefighter's Association
- Industrial Emergency Response Representatives
- BC Fire Chiefs' Association
- BC Training Officers' Association
- BC Office of the Fire Commissioner

Training Facility

The Academy training facility includes a 4.2 acre training site, with a four-storey concrete burn structure, technical rescue props, natural gas prop, fire pit prop, car fire prop, dumpster fire prop and pump testing facility. The training facility also comes with a fully-equipped classroom for electronic media presentation, showers, and washrooms. The training facility is located at 1900 Labieux Road, Nanaimo, BC. For a map to the facility see Appendix 1.

REGISTRATION

Who is eligible to apply for Certification Programs?

It is the policy of the Academy that candidates must be employed by, or be a member of, one of the following:

- Career or Volunteer Fire Department
- Emergency Paramedic Service
- Law Enforcement
- Military
- Industrial Fire Brigade
- Land or Water Search and Rescue
- Any other Emergency Response Organization deemed acceptable by the Fire Chief

What are the prerequisite requirements?

Most NFPA standards require that an individual seeking certification in a specific NFPA standard meet prerequisite requirements. Prerequisites for each of the NFPA standards are listed in Appendix 3.

In addition, most NFPA standards have a practical skills evaluation that must be completed for certification. These practical evaluations are physically demanding, therefore individuals must meet the physical requirement of NFPA 1500 or those physical requirements set by the candidate's fire department or industry. NFPA 1500 physical requirements can also be found in Appendix 3.

Course Calendar

Candidates can find dates for training courses, written exam tests and practical skills evaluations on the Academy web page (www.vierafire.ca). Please note: course and evaluation dates are subject to change based on demand.

How to Apply?

Candidates can be registered by completing a Registration and Consent Training Form and sending it to the Academy by mail or email (viera@nanaimo.ca). Once a course has been confirmed for date and class size, the candidate will be informed that they are registered and given any prerequisite or pre-reading information.

What if the course date is changed or you cannot make the original registration date?

The Academy will contact you in the event a course and/or evaluation is cancelled due to lack of registrations. Candidates registered will be transferred to the next available date and notified by email.

If a candidate cannot attend the course and/or evaluation date he/she is registered for, it is the responsibility of the candidate to contact Academy at viera@nanaimo.ca. Candidates can transfer to an alternative course or evaluation date providing space is available. A transfer fee may apply.

Register for Evaluations Only

Candidates are not required to attend the actual training course, and are entitled to challenge the written exam and practical skills evaluations providing they meet the required prerequisites.

Applying for Reciprocity

Candidates that have attended courses at other accredited institutions and have achieved certification and are registered with Pro Board or International Fire Service Accreditation Conference (IFSAC) are entitled to reciprocity. When registering for a VIERA course or evaluation and reciprocity applies, please include a copy of your certification with your registration form. The Academy will then verify your certification with Pro Board and/or IFSAC.

Course Reference Material

All accredited courses will meet or exceed the NFPA Standards and/or local, provincial or national standards or regulations.

Unless otherwise specified, the reference material will be Jones & Bartlett reference manuals. Candidates will be informed of the recommended reference manual and edition at the time of registration.

Candidates can purchase the reference materials through the VIERA book store at 250 755-4551 or viera@nanaimo.ca.

The candidate will be notified of the sections of reference material that will be covered in the course and written exam evaluation in the registration package and verified by the instructor.

The candidate may receive supplemental reference material hand-outs for any given course. It is possible some, or all, of the content in the hand-out may be included in the written exam, the candidate will be notified as such by the instructor.

TRAINING COURSES AND EVALUATIONS

Certification Programs

The Academy conducts all certification programs in strict compliance with the procedures, policies and accepted evaluation practices established by Pro Board. All certification programs are conducted to ensure all candidates are evaluated fairly, consistently, equitably and without discrimination regardless of gender, ethnic origin, age or organizational status.

Student Safety

Students will adhere to all Academy safety rules and regulations. Safety will not be compromised, each course and practical skills evaluation is designed and executed with the candidate's personal safety as the highest priority. Each candidate, instructor and evaluator has the duty and obligation to ensure they follow approved safety practices during training and evaluations. A candidate will **NOT** be penalized for interrupting training or an evaluation if a safety issue arises. If a candidate identifies a safety issue, he/she must inform the instructor or evaluator immediately. Horseplay will not be tolerated.

Student Conduct

Students may be subject to expulsion at the discretion of the Academy for dishonest behaviour.

Dishonesty is any word, action or deed performed alone, or with others, for the direct or indirect intention of proving an unfair advantage or benefit to self or other student(s) that includes:

- Coaching during evaluations
- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Unapproved collaboration
- Alteration of records
- Bribery
- Lying
- Misrepresentation

Students expelled for dishonesty are **not** eligible for a tuition refund.

Tardiness

Course and evaluation start times and locations will be clearly identified in the candidate's registration package. Tardiness is not permitted and may result in the candidate not being permitted into the course or evaluation.

Personal Protective Equipment

Any candidate actively participating in any training course or practical skill evaluation is required to come equipped with approved NFPA 1971 turnout gear. This must include boots, pants, coat, jacket, balaclava, helmet and gloves. All candidate turnout gear will be inspected by instructors or evaluators at the beginning of the course or evaluation.

SCBA Fit Test

If any candidate's facial hair extends into the area covered by the seal of a SCBA facemask, the individual will not be permitted to participate in any practical skills evaluation where SCBA is required. This limitation also applies to any candidate that cannot obtain a seal between their face and mask.

Practical Skills Requirements

Most NFPA standards have a number of requisite practical skills that must be demonstrated in order for a candidate to be successful and receive certification. A candidate's skills are assessed through a series of practical skills evaluations.

These evaluations can come in one of three forms:

- Individual practical tasks
- Table top scenario evaluations
- Hands-on controlled live scenario evaluations

Candidates are required to properly demonstrate requisite skill requirements for that NFPA standard to be successful and to be certified. Evaluators use practical skills check sheets to assess a candidate's skills. Practical skills check sheet can be found on the VIERA web page or will be given to students at the time of evaluation.

Pre-Practical Skills Evaluation Instruction

Prior to the start of any practical skills evaluation all candidates will receive clear instructions from the evaluator on the evaluation, scenario, procedures and process. The evaluator will review the practical skills check sheet with all candidates and explain what tasks and skills must be demonstrated. In addition, the evaluator will specify each candidate's role and responsibility during the evaluation process. Candidates are encouraged to ask questions or seek clarification at this time.

Post Practical Skills Evaluation

Immediately concluding the practical skills evaluation, evaluator(s) will score each candidate. The candidates will then receive feedback on their result as being successful or unsuccessful. If unsuccessful, the evaluator will explain to the candidate where he/she did not demonstrate a required skill or where skills were demonstrated incorrectly.

Time permitting, and at the lead evaluator's discretion, a remedial evaluation can be conducted. If time does not permit, or the lead evaluator feels that the candidate is not adequately prepared, the candidate will be required to register for a future evaluation date.

Written Exam Evaluation

The Academy conducts all written exams in strict compliance with the policies and procedures as set by Pro Board.

The proctor will provide instructions to the candidates prior to the start of the written evaluation and answer any related questions.

Written exams are limited to 1.5 minutes per question, for example: A 50 question exam is limited to 75 minutes.

Written exam results will be sent to the employer or sponsor in approximately 2 weeks from the time the Academy receives the completed exams.

Upon registration the candidate will be informed of the reference material required to prepare for the written exam.

All exam questions will come in one of two forms:

- Multiple Choice Example:

The Capital City of British Columbia is:
A – Campbell River C – Victoria
B – Nanaimo D – Sooke

- True or False Example:

T F Victoria is the Capital of British Columbia

All necessary resources will be provided to candidates at the written exam location by the proctor, i.e. pencils, erasers, paper, exam question sheet and exam answer sheet. One exception is if a calculator is required for a particular NFPA standard. Candidates will be notified at the time of registration if they are required to bring a calculator on exam day.

No cell phones or pagers will be permitted in the supervised exam area. Once a written exam has started candidates will not be permitted to leave the supervised area (except in the event of an emergency) until they have completed and handed in their exam question and answer sheet. Once a candidate leaves a supervised evaluation area they will not be permitted back in until time has expired or all candidates have completed the exam.

Exams are electronically marked by the Academy. The pass mark for all written exams is 75%. Candidates will be notified by mail of their results as PASS or FAIL and their percentage.

DISPUTES AND APPEALS

What if a Candidate Fails a Written Exam or Practical Skills Evaluation?

In the event a student is unsuccessful on a written or practical evaluation, the student is to have their employer or sponsor contact the Academy and arrange for a re-evaluation date and time.

What if a Candidate wants to Dispute or Appeal their Result?

The Academy accepts appeals from candidates and constituents in three main categories:

Candidate test item appeals – Candidates may appeal any cognitive test question in writing to the Academy Accreditation Manager once the written evaluation is completed. There are no informal appeals allowed during the test administration.

Candidate skills test result appeals – Candidates may appeal their skills test results (pass/fail result) upon receipt of the result from the Evaluator.

Appeals regarding Academy policies and procedures – Candidates and constituents may appeal any Academy policy or procedure they believe negatively impacts themselves.

All appeals are to be directed to the Accreditation Manager in writing, within 15 days of the test session, by completing the form VIERA013 and submitting it either in hard copy to the Academy Administration at 580 Fitzwilliam Street, Nanaimo, BC or electronically to viera@nanaimo.ca.

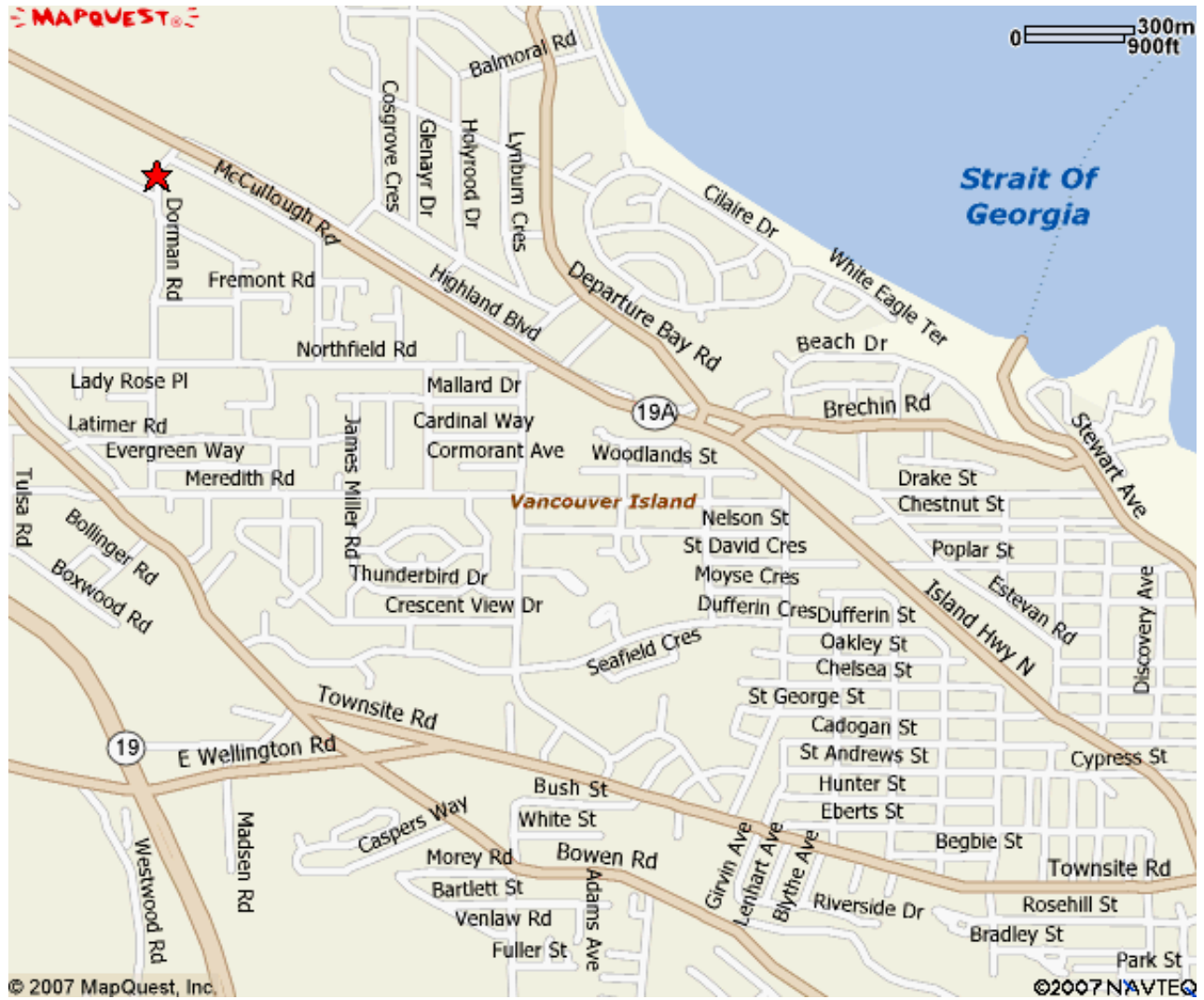
Within 15 days of receipt, the Accreditation Manager will investigate the appeal including interviewing necessary staff, contractors, and candidates to understand the situation. Within 30 days, the Accreditation Manager will respond in writing to the appellant with a decision.

The appellant can, within 15 days of receipt of the Accreditation Manager's decision, submit an appeal of that decision to the Academy Director for reconsideration. The appeal for reconsideration will be submitted with the same form and process as the initial appeal.

The Academy Director will respond to the appellant within 30 days with a decision that is final.

NOTE: All information contained in the candidate's written appeal will be kept confidential.

Appendix 1
Facility Map



★ Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy Training Facility

Appendix 2

Operational Guidelines

and Forms

Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy

Operational Guidelines

Evaluation Failure and Re-ChallengeOG5910
Disputes and Appeals.....OG5911

Forms

NFPA 1001 Level 1 and Level 2 Equivalency Application FormVIERA003
Unsuccessful Candidate.....VIERA009
Appeals Submission.....VIERA013
Re-Evaluation Request.....VIERA014
Confirmation of Employment or Membership.....VIERA020

Appendix 3
NFPA Prerequisite
Requirements
and References

NFPA Prerequisite Requirements and References (for PA3)

NFPA	Course	Level	Prerequisites	
				“Meet” or “Certified”
472	Hazardous Materials	Awareness	n/a	n/a
472	Hazardous Materials	Operational	NFPA 472 - Awareness	Certified
1001	Fire Fighter	Level 1	NFPA 472 – <i>Chapter 5: Core</i> Competencies for Operations <i>Chapter 6.6: Mission Specific</i> Competencies – Product Control	Meet
1001	Fire Fighter	Level 2	NFPA 1001 – Level 1	Certified
1001	Fire Fighter	Level 1 & 2	NFPA 472 – <i>Chapter 5: Core</i> Competencies for Operations <i>Chapter 6.6: Mission Specific</i> Competencies – Product Control	Meet
1002	Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator	n/a	NFPA 1001, Fire Fighter I or NFPA 1081 Advanced Exterior Industrial Fire Brigade or Interior Structural Brigade Member	Certified
1041	Fire Service Instructor	Level 1	n/a	n/a
1041	Fire Service Instructor	Level 2	NFPA 1041 - Level 1	Certified
1021	Fire Officer	Level 1	NFPA 1001 – Level 2 NFPA 1041 – Level 1	Meet Meet
1021	Fire Officer	Level 2	NFPA 1021 – Level 1	Certified

NFPA Prerequisite Requirements and References *(for PA3) (continued)*

NFPA	Course	Level	Prerequisites	
				“Meet” or “Certified”
1031	Fire Inspector	Level 1	NFPA 472, Section 4.2	Meet
1031	Fire Inspector	Level 2	NFPA 1031, Fire Inspector 1	Certified
1031	Fire Inspector	Level 3	NFPA 1031, Fire Inspector 2	Certified
1033	Fire Investigator	n/a	Employed in an approved investigative field	n/a
1521	Incident Safety Officer	n/a	NFPA 1021 – Level 1	Meet

Note: Candidates must meet NFPA 1500 physical requirements or the requirements of the authority having jurisdiction.