

Fire Service Career Development Map

Training – Education – Certification by Rank

Based on:

- *The International Association of Fire Chiefs Officer Development Handbook*
- *The United States Fire Academy Professional Development Matrix*

The IAFC document can be accessed here: [odp_handbook.pdf](#)

The USFA document can be accessed here: [Fire and Emergency Services Professional Development Matrix](#)

Rank	Training & Experience	Education	Certification & Credentialing
Fire Chief	• Vision-setting and governance • Budgeting • Labor Relations • Public Engagement • National leadership & policy influence	• Master's degree preferred • Executive education (Harvard, NFA, etc.)	• CFO credential (Chief Fire Officer) • EFOP graduate (Executive Fire Officer Program) • IAFC/CPSE recognition programs
Deputy Chief/Division Chief of Training	• Organizational leadership • Curriculum design & delivery • Officer development oversight	• Bachelor's degree required • Master's degree preferred in Education, Leadership, Public Admin	• Fire Officer IV • Instructor II/III • CFO credential strongly recommended • EFOP graduate
EMS Chief	• EMS system oversight • QA/QI • Protocol development • Interagency EMS coordination	• Bachelor's degree in EMS Admin, Health Services, or Public Admin	• EMS Chief credential (state or NAEMSE) • NIMS 300/400 • CFO credential optional
Chief Fire Marshal	• Code enforcement & prevention leadership • Public education & legislative interface	• Bachelor's degree in Fire Prevention, Public Admin, or related field	• Fire Marshal credential (state-specific) • Plans Examiner & Inspector certifications • CFO credential recommended

Rank	Training & Experience	Education	Certification & Credentialing
Battalion Chief	• Fire Officer III • Strategic command & interagency coordination • Oversight of multiple companies	• Bachelor's degree strongly recommended	• Fire Officer III • CFO credential optional • ICS 400
Captain	• Fire Officer II • Incident command at moderate events • Mentorship of junior officers	• Associate's degree preferred • Progress toward Bachelor's in Fire Admin, Emergency Mgmt, or Leadership	• Fire Officer II • Instructor I • ICS 300
Lieutenant	• Fire Officer I • Initial supervisory experience • Crew leader & tactical operations	• High school diploma or equivalent • Begin Associate's in Fire Science or related field	• Fire Officer I • ICS 100/200/700