



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation  
**South Carolina Fire Academy**  
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**Dennis Ray, Academy Superintendent**



**For Immediate Release:**

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**State Fire Academy Graduates 20 in May**

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 20 recruits, Friday, May 11, 2018, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Chief Charles D. Barranco with Aiken Department of Public Safety.

The firefighters from nine fire departments across the state, and one open enrollment, underwent a 320-hour training program of classroom and hands-on firefighting skills development.

"This challenging eight-week program requires commitment, passion, and dedication," Fire Academy Superintendent Dennis Ray said. "These recruits have successfully worked together as a team, performed extensive hands-on training with live fires, and passed intensive practical skills evaluations and written tests to meet the National Fire Protection Association standards."

The comprehensive training, offered quarterly at the Fire Academy, includes emergency responder first aid training, hazardous materials operations training, auto extrication, flammable liquids and gas firefighting, rescue training, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firefighter I and Firefighter II levels.

"With the successful completion and graduation of these new firefighters who will now be dedicating their lives to serving their communities and the state, our South Carolina fire service is enhanced," Ray said. "I am proud of their accomplishments and I also commend the dedicated Fire Academy instructors who brought the recruits through these weeks of instruction leading to graduation."

The following recruits graduated May 11, 2018:

- Austen Condon, St. John's Fire District
- Tyler Courtright, St. Andrews Public Service District
- Robert Davidson, Burton Fire District
- Matthew Estes, Northwest Volunteer Fire Department
- Deacon Gerard, Gowensville Volunteer Fire Department
- Charles Giordano, Corinth-Shiloh Volunteer Fire Department
- Dewann Goodwin, North Charleston Fire Department
- Alexander Jackson, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Kevin Kacer, Open Enrollment
- Robert Kelly, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Kelley Landers, Burton Fire District
- Ashley Marshall, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Parker Payne, Darlington County Fire District
- Joshua Starke, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Kevin Ta, North Charleston Fire Department
- Ryan Templeton, North Charleston Fire Department

- David Vinson, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Jonathan Wallace, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- William White III, North Charleston Fire Department
- Zakia Wilson, Aiken Department of Public Safety

The following awards were also presented:

**Order of the Maltese – Kelley Landers, Burton Fire District**

The Maltese Cross is a firefighter’s badge of honor, signifying that he or she works in courage – a ladder rung away from death. The Eight Obligations of The Maltese Cross are: Live in Truth, Repent of Sins, Love Justice, Be Sincere and Whole-Hearted, Have Faith, Give Proof of Humility, Be Merciful, and Endure Persecution.

This award is chosen by the class recruits.

**Chief Robert Frick – Kevin Kacer, Open Enrollment**

The Chief Robert Frick Award is given to the recruit with the highest grade point average.

**Pride of the Battalion – Kelley Landers, Burton Fire District**

The Pride of the Battalion award is given to the recruit who has demonstrated “Leadership, Integrity, Determination and Good Value.”

This award recipient is chosen by the instructor staff who worked with the recruits during the eight-week program.

The Fire Academy provides emergency services training to the municipal fire service - both paid and volunteer - airport crash rescue departments, industrial fire brigades and emergency teams and service organizations including EMS, law enforcement and military from around the state and the world. The Fire Academy is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) for multiple NFPA firefighter levels.

The Fire Academy and the State Fire Marshal’s Office make up the Division of Fire and Life Safety, which is a division of the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.