



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 24 in March**

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 24 recruits, Friday, March 2, 2018, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Chief Shaun Simpson with the Mount Pleasant Fire Department.

The firefighters from 12 fire departments across the state and two open enrollments 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," he said.

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 March 2, 2018:

- Rachelle Adkins, Mount Pleasant Fire Department
- Jeffrey Anderson, North Augusta Department of Public Safety
- Esteban Becerril, St. Johns Fire District
- Dylan Beheler, Union Public Safety Department
- Mark Blades Jr, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Aaron Fulbright, Duncan Chapel Fire Department
- Katharine Hanson, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Shaqore Harrington, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Gregory Harvey, Union Public Safety Department
- Tomislav Luburic, North Charleston Fire Department
- Collin Modzelewski, U.S. Army – Open Enrollment
- James A. Morris, Clarendon County Fire Department
- Emily Palmer, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Terrance Patten, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Bryan Pittman, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Logan Prince, North Charleston Fire Department

- Andrew Randazzo, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Lauren Riley, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Justin Rousseau, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Elizabeth Sailer, McCrady Fire Rescue
- Kameron Satterfield, Berea Fire Department
- Dylan Searson, St. Pauls Fire Department
- Hunter Varone-Chenard, Open Enrollment
- Luke Wilkos, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue

The following awards were also presented:

**Order of the Maltese – Dylan Beheler, Union Public Safety Department**

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 – Mark Blades, Jr., Aiken Department of Public Safety**

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

**Pride of the Battalion – Elizabeth Sailer, McCrady Fire Department**

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.