



South Carolina
Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



South Carolina Fire Academy

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State Fire Academy Graduates 20 in September

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 20 recruits, Friday, Sept. 25, 2020, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Chief John Thompson, Bluffton Township Fire District. These firefighters 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. Additionally, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes were made to class structure and facilities to promote social distancing and recommended precautions.

"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 Sept. 25, 2020:

- Lester Burgess, Simpsonville Fire Department
- Stephen Campbell, Simpsonville Fire Department
- Christian Cramer, Hardeville Fire Department
- Owen Galli, Simpsonville Fire Department
- Jeremy Garber, Lady's Island – St. Helena Fire District
- Ka'Nya Givens, Chester City Fire Department
- Cameron Joye, Cheddar Fire Department
- Colby Kea, Bethel Volunteer Fire Department
- Michael Loucks, Simpsonville Fire Department
- James Masters, Lady's Island – St. Helena Fire District
- Samuel Mauney, Simpsonville Fire Department
- Mitchell McBride, North Augusta Department of Public Safety

- Brandon Morgan, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Shawn Morin, Newberry Fire Department
- Jonathan Ouellette, Hardeeville Fire Department
- Travis Pedlar, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Christopher Rodrigues, North Augusta Department of Public Safety
- Taylor Smith, Sumter Fire Department
- Robert Stone, Simpsonville Fire Department
- Athniel Thomas, Jr., Virgin Island Port Authority

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Christian Cramer, Hardeeville Fire Department

This award is chosen by the class recruits. 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.

Chief Robert Frick – Jeremy Garber, Lady’s Island – St. Helena Fire District

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

Pride of the Battalion – Brandon Morgan, Bluffton Township Fire District

This award recipient is chosen by the instructor staff who worked with the recruits during the eight-week program. The Pride of the Battalion award is given to the recruit who has demonstrated “Leadership, Integrity, Determination and Good Value.”

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.