



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



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South Carolina Fire Academy

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State Fire Academy Graduates 23 in May

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 23 recruits, Friday, May 6, 2022, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. These firefighters underwent a 320-hour training program of classroom and hands-on firefighting skills development. Keynote speaker was Chief Keith Minick, Newberry City Fire Department.

"This challenging 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 Friday, May 6, 2022:

- Joshua Althoff, St. Paul's Fire District
- Daniel Bannister, Newberry City Fire Department
- Shawn Brandt, Dorchester County Fire Rescue
- Troy Bray, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Ryan Burnett, Walterboro Fire Department
- Matthew Edmunds, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Joseph Galasso, Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Zachary Greppi, Lady's Island – St. Helena's Fire District
- Amanda Highland, South Carolina Fire Academy
- Meghan Jones, Whitesville Rural Fire Department
- Ty'Jean Lynn, Tyger River Fire Department
- Carson McAlhaney, Dorchester County Fire Rescue
- Joshua Preston, City of Beaufort/ Town of Port Royal Fire Department
- Nicholas Rogers, Aiken Department of Public Safety

- Gavin Schroder, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Shashanna Sharkey, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Jeffrey Shirley, Jr., Sumter City Fire Department
- Alexander Sotirolou, St. Paul's Fire District
- Brent St. Jacques, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Joshua Swindler, Newberry City Fire Department
- Aaron Traynham, St. Paul's Fire District
- Jaleah Vason, Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Taylor Watters, McEntire Joint National Guard Base

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Zachary Greppi, Lady's Island – St. Helena's Fire District

This award recipient 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 – Aaron Traynham, St. Paul's Fire District

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

Pride of the Battalion – Matthew Edmunds, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue

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.