



South Carolina  
Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



141 Monticello Trail  
Columbia, SC 29203  
Phone: (803) 896-9800  
FAX: (803) 896-9856  
www.scfa.state.sc.us

South Carolina Fire Academy

Henry D. McMaster  
Governor

Emily H. Farr  
Director

**For Immediate Release: Dec. 9, 2022**  
**Contact: Susan Duncan, Office Manager**  
**S.C. Division of Fire and Life Safety**  
**(803) 896-5790**

**State Fire Academy Graduates 22 in December**

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 22 recruits, Friday, Dec. 9, 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 Captain Darin Cromer, Greenwood 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, Dec. 9, 2022:

- Celeste Almendarez - Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Patrick Baggott - St. Andrews Public Service District
- Cameron Banks - Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Clint Broadwater - James Island Public Service District
- Paul Casey - Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Steven Clark - Hilton Head Fire Rescue
- Nolan Conklin - Ware Shoals Volunteer Fire Department
- William Dolfi - Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Preston Estep - Lugoff Fire Department
- Timothy Freeze - Aiken Department of Public Safety
- John Gaffney - City of Beaufort/Town of Port Royal Fire Department
- Barrett Goff - Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Ariel Guzman - James Island Public Service District
- Michael Lewis - Sumter Fire Department
- Grant McDaniel - Jasper County Fire-Rescue

- Andrew Morris - Cayce Department of Public Safety
- Samantha Parker - Aiken Department of Public Safety
- David Rivers - St. Paul's Fire District
- Vincent Rowell - James Island Public Service District
- Monica Shimp - Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Riley Thomson - Lady's Island - St. Helena Fire District
- Christina Williamson - Jasper County Fire-Rescue

The following awards were also presented:

**Order of the Maltese – William Dolfi - Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue**

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 – Patrick Baggott - St. Andrews Public Service District**

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

**Pride of the Battalion – Steven Clark - Hilton Head 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.