



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



South Carolina Fire Academy

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

Henry D. McMaster
Governor

Emily H. Farr
Director

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Contact: Susan Duncan, Office Manager
S.C. Division of Fire and Life Safety
(803) 896-5790

State Fire Academy Graduates 18 in May

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 18 recruits, Friday, May 12, 2023, 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 Deputy Chief Darran Vaughn, Jasper County Fire Rescue.

"Today, we celebrate graduation and welcome these new members to the South Carolina fire service," State Fire Academy Superintendent Jason Pope said. "The past eight weeks has been a challenging program requiring commitment, passion, and dedication. These recruits have 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.

"From this day on, these new firefighters will be dedicating their lives to serving their communities and the state," Pope said. "All of us at State Fire are proud of their accomplishments. I also want to commend the dedicated Fire Academy instructors who brought the recruits through these weeks of instruction leading to graduation."

The following recruits graduated:

- Branden Antley, Orangeburg County Fire District
- David Augner, Bluffton Township Fire District
- William Garigen, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Ryan Humbert, Hardeeville Fire Department
- Quianah Joyce, Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Timothy King, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Terrance Little, St. Andrews Public Service District
- Micah Nguyen, Clemson University Fire Department
- Connor Oxendine, Fort Mill Fire Department
- Benjamin Pairman, Pelham-Batesville Fire Department
- Casey Phelps, City of Beaufort/ Town of Port Royal Fire Department
- Alliel Phillips, Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Ethan Rodgers, Jasper County Fire Rescue
- Christopher Snowden, Jr., Bluffton Township Fire District
- Matthew Storz, St. Andrews Public Service District
- Jacob Sullivan, Jasper County Fire – Rescue

- Christopher Watkins, Plum Branch Volunteer Fire Department
- Lindsey Watts, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese: Lindsey Watts, 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: Casey Phelps, City of Beaufort/ Town of Port Royal Fire Department

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

Pride of the Battalion: Lindsey Watts, 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.