



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 22 in December

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 22 recruits, Friday, Dec. 3, 2021, 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 Battalion Chief Richie Brogdon, City of Sumter 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. 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 Dec. 3, 2021:

- Lee Batchelor, St. Andrews Public Service District
- Mikayla Blanton, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Joseph Bryant, Dorchester County Fire-Rescue
- Craig Coaxum, North Charleston Fire Department
- Brayden Crawford, High Point Fire Department
- Travis Crisp, St. Johns Fire District
- Kyle Day, Chesterfield Fire Department
- Jonathan Eubanks, Denmark Fire Department
- Jacob Hardee, Sandy Run - Calhoun Volunteer Fire Department
- Conner Huff, Pelham-Batesville Fire Department
- Chance Joachim, Troops to Firefighters
- Matthew Lamountain, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue

- Matthew Leister, St. Johns Fire District
- Brandon Martell, North Charleston Fire Department
- Elizabeth Mayes, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Joseph Mayo, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Tyreke Nathaniel, Sumter Fire Department
- Nicholas Nhung, Landrum Area Fire and Rescue District
- William Porter, Sandhill Volunteer Fire Department
- John Rizos, II, Jasper County Fire Rescue
- Kurt Rogers, St. Johns Fire District
- Alexander Thompson, St. Andrews Public Service District

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Elizabeth Mayes, Bluffton Township 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 – Jacob Hardee, Sandy Run - Calhoun Volunteer Fire Department

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

Pride of the Battalion – Alexander Thompson, St. Andrews Public Service 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.