National Fire Academy
FESHE
Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education

BACHELOR



U.S. Fire Administration
Fire is Everyone's Fight®

National Fire Academy FESHE Model Curriculum

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FEMA

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Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education

Bachelor Core Courses

Legal and Political Foundations of Fire and Emergency Services (C0258)

Course Description

This course explores the legal foundations of fire and emergency services and the political and social impacts of legal issues. Topics include the American legal system, employment and personnel law, administrative operations, planning and code enforcement, and legislative processes affecting the fire and emergency services.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Understand the American system of government, the principle of due process and potential legal and political issues in fire and emergency services.

2. Explain legal lessons learned from recent cases and summarize best practices in the fire and emergency services to avoid legal liability.

3. Examine the role of emergency services in influencing public policy and legislative processes.

4. Identify the Authority Having Jurisdiction's (AHJ’s) role in shaping, supporting, and enforcing fire and life safety regulations within the context of community risk reduction (CRR).

5. Analyze political issues and legal rules to manage risk.

Personnel Management for Fire and Emergency Services (C0266)

Course Description

This course examines relationships and issues in personnel administration and human resource development within the context of fire and emergency service organizations, including personnel management, organizational development, productivity, recruitment and selection, performance management systems, discipline, and collective bargaining.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Analyze the influence of societal trends and organizational culture on personnel management practices within emergency services.

2. Differentiate between performance management, corrective action, and discipline, and analyze their appropriate use in supporting personnel development and accountability.

3. Assess the effectiveness of key personnel development functions such as recruitment, training, retention and succession planning.

4. Compare and contrast major motivation theories and managerial approaches to assess their impact on employee performance and organizational productivity.

5. Explain labor relations in emergency services, including collective bargaining, contract administration, grievance handling and arbitration, and conflict resolution.

6. Assess the implications of federal, state and local employment laws and related legislation on emergency services operations.

Fire and Emergency Services Administration (C0271)

Course Description

This course explores key concepts in public administration, with a focus on resource management, organizational performance and strategic leadership. Students will examine the principles of public sector budgeting and financial planning and apply techniques for effective resource allocation. The course also addresses performance assessment methods, policy development and emerging trends in fire and emergency services management. Emphasis is placed on understanding organizational behavior, leadership dynamics and modern communication strategies to support collaboration, decision-making and public service delivery.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Explain the principles of public sector budgeting and analyze how financial planning influences organizational priorities, decision-making and resource allocation.

2. Apply techniques for allocating resources effectively based on organizational goals, community needs and performance data.

3. Evaluate emerging trends in fire and emergency services management and analyze how strategic change initiatives can prepare the department to meet future challenges.

4. Evaluate methods for assessing organizational performance and use metrics to identify improvements in public service delivery and guide future policy development.

5. Analyze the impact of organizational behavior on public administration, including the role of leadership, motivation and workplace culture.

6. Apply modern communication strategies to effectively engage internal teams and external stakeholders, facilitate collaboration, resolve conflict and ensure consistent messaging.

Community Risk Reduction for Fire and Emergency Services (C0287)

Course Description

This course provides a theoretical framework for the understanding of the ethical, sociological, organizational, political and legal components of community risk reduction (CRR) and a methodology for the development of a comprehensive CRR plan.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Explain the role of CRR in the broader context of fire and emergency services.
2. Collect and analyze community risk data to develop objectives that support targeted risk reduction efforts.
3. Develop a focused risk reduction program that supports an overall community-based CRR strategy.
4. Formulate appropriate intervention strategies based on identified community risks.
5. Evaluate existing risk reduction plans and programs and recommend modifications to improve effectiveness.

Principles of Emergency Management (C0296)

Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive overview of emergency management principles as they relate to fire departments and emergency services. Students will explore the five phases of emergency management — mitigation, preparedness, protection, response and recovery — and examine the roles of key agencies and stakeholders in each phase. Emphasis is placed on understanding the legal framework governing emergency operations, analyzing community vulnerabilities, coordinating resources and employing effective communication strategies.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Differentiate between the emergency management phases of mitigation, preparedness, protection, response and recovery.

2. Examine how federal, state and local disaster laws influence emergency response operations and interagency coordination.

3. Analyze community vulnerability and risk assessments to determine potential hazards and prioritize emergency planning efforts.

4. Identify the roles and responsibilities of the fire department and other emergency services in the emergency management cycle (mitigation, preparedness, protection, response and recovery).

5. Identify funding sources, resources, stakeholders and other partner organizations, and utilize logistics management practices to ensure effective support during large-scale emergencies.

6. Explain communication strategies using multiple channels and methods to provide consistent messaging that reaches all segments of a community, including at-risk and vulnerable populations, during emergency situations.

Ethics for Fire and Emergency Services (C0303)

Course Description

This course explores the foundational principles of ethics as they relate to fire and emergency services. Emphasis is placed on analyzing contemporary ethical challenges and examining their impact on decision-making, professional conduct and organizational culture. Students will engage with real-world scenarios to develop ethical reasoning skills applicable to a range of operational and managerial contexts.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Contrast foundational ethical theories and principles to explain how they inform professional conduct and decision-making in the fire and emergency services.

2. Discuss how an emergency responder's personal and professional actions and behavior impact their organization and the profession as a whole.

3. Investigate how the concepts of accountability, obligation and responsibility define ethical behavior.

4. Apply structured ethical decision-making frameworks to identify ethical dilemmas, analyze potential consequences and make justifiable decisions.

5. Analyze contemporary ethical challenges in emergency services to identify underlying causes and potential implications for policy and practice.

Fire and Emergency Services Budgeting and Finance (C0305)

Course Description

This course introduces the fundamentals of budgeting and financial management in emergency services organizations. Students will explore government budget processes, development cycles and revenue sources, including taxes, fees, grants and alternative funding. Emphasis is placed on outcome-based budgeting, financial reporting, purchasing practices and strategies for maintaining fiscal responsibility. The course also examines how public policy influences budget decisions and the presentation of budgets to elected officials.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Examine basic budget processes by identifying governmental budget stages, cycles and types.

2. Describe an outcome-based budget development process that emphasizes planning, creation and presentation of the budget to elected officials.

3. Summarize the sources of revenue for emergency services organizations to include taxes, fees, grants and alternative revenue sources.

4. Describe the importance of budget reporting, financial management and purchasing practices, and apply strategies to monitor expenses and ensure that operations stay within budget.

5. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between policy and the budgeting process, recognizing how budgets are shaped by policy priorities.

Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education

Bachelor Elective Courses

Applied Fire Dynamics and Hazard Analysis (C0257)

Course Description

This course examines fire behavior and hazard analysis, with an emphasis on fire dynamics, smoke movement and explosions. Students apply the principles of combustion, heat transfer, ignition, flame spread and heat release to assess fire growth, compartment hazards and life safety concerns and to examine plume behavior, detection and suppression activation, and explosive effects. Students then integrate these fire science concepts with community risk reduction (CRR) strategies to evaluate hazards, support mitigation planning and inform decision-making in fire protection and emergency response operations.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Explain how fires start and grow using core fire dynamics concepts, including combustion, heat transfer, gas behavior and the fire tetrahedron.

2. Analyze how solid, liquid and gaseous fuels ignite and spread flame to evaluate how fires grow under different conditions.

3. Analyze plume behavior and compartment fire dynamics, including flame height, thermal radiation, heat release rate, detection and suppression activation, and flashover potential.

4. Analyze explosion hazards by examining explosion types, blast effects and overpressure, including TNT equivalence, and their impacts on life safety and structural damage.

5. Assess how smoke is produced, moves and creates hazards by evaluating visibility, toxicity, smoke filling rates, stack effect and smoke control strategies.

6. Evaluate fire, smoke and explosion hazards against National Institute of Standards and Technology and Underwriters Laboratories research findings to justify CRR strategies, public education approaches and mitigation plans.

Applications of Emergency Services Research (C0260)

Course Description

This course introduces the application of research principles to contemporary issues in emergency services. Students locate, evaluate and analyze scholarly and professional research; conduct a brief literature review; and develop the foundational elements of a research proposal, including a problem statement, purpose statement, research questions and methodology. The course also examines the responsible use of artificial intelligence in the research process, including its applications, limitations, ethical considerations and potential pitfalls.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Apply emergency services-related research to the examination of a problem or issue related to emergency services.

2. Conduct a brief literature review of current research on an emergency services-related topic.

3. Analyze emergency services-related research located from credible scholarly and professional sources.

4. Select an appropriate research methodology (e.g., qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods) for a chosen research topic.

5. Evaluate the applications, limitations, ethical considerations and potential pitfalls of using artificial intelligence to locate, analyze, conduct and communicate emergency services research.

6. Develop a problem, purpose statement and research questions for a research proposal.

Human Behavior During Emergencies (C0263)

Course Description

This course examines human behavior in crisis and emergency situations, with emphasis on how individuals, crowds and emergency responders react and make decisions under stress. Students analyze evacuation challenges and crowd behavior and draw on historical emergency incidents to identify the factors that shape incident management and outcomes. The course also examines emergency responder decision-making and post-incident trauma mitigation strategies to support effective performance and responder well-being before, during and after emergency events.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Analyze human behavior concepts during crisis situations, including panic responses, evacuation decision-making, herd behavior, affiliative behavior and risk perception.
2. Discuss evacuation challenges and opportunities that improve incident management.
3. Examine concepts of crowd behavior, including crowd density, crowd psychology, bottleneck formation and crowd movement patterns to manage crowds during an incident.
4. Compare and contrast human behavior patterns across historical emergency incidents.
5. Assess factors that affect emergency responders' decision-making during an incident, including time pressure, incomplete information, risk tolerance and training/experience.
6. Analyze strategies used to mitigate post-incident trauma in emergency responders, including critical incident stress debriefing, peer support programs, PTSD screening and resilience training.
7. Evaluate common human responses to emergencies and nonhuman-based strategies to determine how each reduces risk to individuals and first responders.

Analytical Approaches to Public Fire Protection (C0265)

Course Description

This course examines the use of data and analytical methods to support decision-making in fire and emergency services organizations. Students use data to analyze organizational performance and community risk, with emphasis on applying analytical findings to organizational priorities, resource allocation, budgeting and other management decisions.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Explain how data and analytical methods support organizational decision-making in fire and emergency services.

2. Interpret statistical information, data visualizations, geographic information and other analytical outputs to support organizational decision-making.

3. Apply appropriate analytical methods and tools to examine organizational problems, trends and resource needs.

4. Identify alternative courses of action considering factors such as cost, benefit, risk, organizational priorities and available resources.

5. Evaluate sources of operational, financial, community and performance data used by emergency services organizations, assessing their reliability, relevance and applicability to decision-making.

6. Develop evidence-based recommendations for resource allocation, budget priorities and other organizational decisions.

Managerial Issues in Hazardous Materials (C0274)

Course Description

This course examines managerial responsibilities related to hazardous materials preparedness, prevention and response in fire and emergency services organizations. Topics include local, state and federal regulatory requirements; organizational planning and training; interagency coordination; terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) considerations; and application of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to hazardous materials incidents. Emphasis is placed on developing effective departmental preparedness and incident management strategies for complex hazardous materials and terrorism-related emergencies.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Describe how representatives of multiple agencies, levels of government and organizations coordinate within an organized incident management structure.

2. Discuss issues related to terrorism and incidents involving WMD, including preparedness, response and planning.

3. Apply local, state and federal regulations concerning hazardous materials (hazmat) to organizational decision-making.

4. Describe the process of planning, organizing and training for response to hazardous materials and terrorist incidents.

5. Interpret and act on hazmat response preparedness, incident prevention and incident response requirements at the departmental level.

6. Develop an incident command organizational structure for a hazmat response using the guidelines set forth in the NIMS.

Principles of Fire Investigation and Analysis (C0285)

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the principles, processes and professional practices associated with fire investigation and analysis. Students examine how fire dynamics, building characteristics, suppression activities, evidence and scientific methodology inform origin-and-cause analysis, along with legal and ethical issues, interagency coordination, intentionally set fires, investigative technologies, and the communication of findings. Emphasis is placed on using fire investigation information to support prevention, community risk reduction (CRR), organizational learning and mitigation efforts.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Explain the purpose, principles, terminology and professional roles associated with fire investigation and analysis.

2. Apply fire investigation findings and fire-loss information to prevention, CRR, organizational learning and mitigation strategies.

3. Analyze how fire dynamics, fire behavior, building characteristics and suppression activities relate to the interpretation of fire scenes and investigative findings.

4. Analyze the legal, ethical and interagency considerations associated with fire investigations, including investigations involving intentionally set fires.

5. Analyze fire incident information using scientific methodology, fire science, available evidence and appropriate investigative technologies.

6. Evaluate methods used to document fire scenes, preserve evidence, develop origin-and-cause hypotheses and communicate investigative findings.

Fire Protection Systems in the Built Environment (C0295)

Course Description

This course examines the role, application and integration of fire protection systems within the built environment. Students evaluate how building and occupancy characteristics influence system use; examine the capabilities and limitations of detection, suppression and smoke management systems; and explore how active and passive fire protection features work together to support fire and life safety. The course also introduces fire protection plans, specifications, codes, standards and design criteria, with emphasis on their relationship to system performance, occupant safety and emergency response operations.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Explain the purpose and basic elements of fire protection system plans, specifications and other technical documentation.

2. Describe the role of applicable codes, standards and design criteria in the development and installation of fire protection systems.

3. Analyze the applications and limitations of fire detection and alarm, water-based suppression, special hazard suppression and smoke management systems in various occupancies and hazards.

4. Analyze how fire protection system features, limitations, impairments and interactions may affect occupant safety and emergency response operations.

5. Evaluate how active and passive fire protection features work together as part of a comprehensive fire and life safety strategy.

6. Evaluate building and occupancy characteristics that influence the selection and use of fire protection systems and features.