National Fire Academy
FESHE
Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education

PATHWAYS
HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE



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

National Fire Academy FESHE Model Curriculum

September 2026

FEMA

Table of Contents

Contributors 2

Pathways Core Courses 4

- Introduction to Fire and Emergency Services (C0273) 5
- Building Construction for Fire Protection (C0275) 6
- Principles of Fire and Emergency Services Safety and Survival (C0281) 7
- Fire Prevention and the Integration of Community Risk Reduction (C0286) 8

Contributors

Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Advisory Council

Executive Board

Executive Director
Joseph Guarnera, M.Ed., CFO, EMT, FIT, CFVI
Chief of Department, Merrimack Fire Rescue

Assistant Director
Mark Rivero, M.S., EdD, FF
Las Vegas Fire & Rescue (Ret.)

Administrative Officer
Ann Jarvis, M.A.
University of New Mexico (Ret.)

Governance Officer
Robert E. Baker Jr., MSEd, MSOM, FF/EMT
Sandusky Fire Department (Ret.)

USFA-NFA Liaison
Michael Bercaw, M.Ed.
U.S. Fire Administration | National Fire Academy

Council Ex-Officio Liaisons

USFA-NFA Liaison
Michael Bercaw, M.Ed.
U.S. Fire Administration | National Fire Academy

NFA Board of Visitors (BOV) Liaison
Vacant

FESHE Emeritus Liaison
Byron Mathews
Wyoming State Fire Marshal

Pathways Division

Chair
Aubrey W. "Buddy" Hyde Jr., B.A., FF/EMT
Emergency Services Director, Nottoway County, VA

Vice Chair
Ann Jarvis, M.A.
University of New Mexico (Ret.)

Robert E. Baker Jr., MSEd, MSOM, FF/EMT
Sandusky Fire Department (Ret.)

Frank E. Friend, III, M.S., CFPS
Assistant Professor, Liberty University

Patrick G. Haverty, B.A., CFO
Chair, Fire Science, Mount Wachusett Community College

Community Risk Reduction Committee

Chair
Bonita M. Watters, MSM, MSIDT
Curriculum Manager, South Carolina Fire Academy

Jim Crawford, B.S., FIFireE
Deputy Chief & Fire Marshal Vancouver Fire Department (Ret)

David Lynam, B.S., MBA, LSSGB, EFO
Fire Marshal & Building Official, Kitsap County Washington

W. Faron Taylor, B.S., M.S.
Maryland Office of the State Fire Marshal (Ret.)

Mike Whitsell
Fire Marshal, West Des Moines Fire Department

Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education

Pathways Core Courses

Introduction to Fire and Emergency Services (C0273)

Course Description

This course provides an introductory overview of fire and emergency services within the United States.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Outline the history and evolution of fire protection in America and explain the current U.S. fire problem.

2. Identify public and private fire and emergency service organizations and describe their purpose, structure and how they operate.

3. Identify fire and emergency services career opportunities, describe the paths to attainment and navigate selection processes.

4. Differentiate training from education, provide examples of each and explain how they fit within the national professional development models for fire and emergency services professionals.

5. Discuss the basic chemistry and physics of fire, and identify the stages of fire, the methods of heat transfer and factors that influence fire behavior.

6. Identify the major types and components of fire protection systems and summarize the primary, secondary and tertiary roles of fire prevention.

7. Explain how planning and incident management systems are applied within fire and emergency services organizations.

8. Provide examples of technology being employed by modern fire and emergency service organizations and perform basic crisis communication functions.

Building Construction for Fire Protection (C0275)

Course Description

This course will provide a foundational knowledge of building construction for fire protection. It will provide focus on elements of the construction and design structures, and their impact on fire inspection, pre-planning and emergency operations.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Describe building construction as it relates to firefighter safety, building codes, fire prevention, code inspection, firefighting strategy, tactics and community risk reduction (CRR).

2. List of major types of building construction in accordance with a local/model building code.

3. Identify the hazards and tactical considerations associated with various types of building construction and understand the importance of applying risk assessment in the context of CRR.

4. Explain the different loads and stresses that are placed on a building and their interrelationships.

5. Describe the function of each principal structural component in typical building design.

6. Differentiate between fire resistance and flame spread, and describe the testing procedures used to establish ratings for each.

7. Identify the role of geographic information systems (GIS) in relation to building construction for fire protection.

Principles of Fire and Emergency Services Safety and Survival (C0281)

Course Description

This course introduces the student to the practice of engaging in a culture of safety within fire and emergency services organizations. Students will examine basic principles of the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives by the National Fallen Firefighter's Foundation (NFFF) and explore fundamental concepts of organizational behavior, risk management and occupational safety and health. It is designed to provide students with the basic tools necessary to study historical and current trends of safety, injuries and fatalities within fire and emergency services organizations and to influence a positive organizational culture change.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Identify potential risks within organizations, assessing their potential for loss and probability of occurrence.
2. Explain the value of historical traditions and how they can be honored while influencing a culture of risk reduction within organizations and the community.
3. Summarize the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives and identify advocacy strategies for their implementation.
4. Justify the need for a safety-centered culture within fire and emergency services organizations and identify barriers to developing, effecting and maintaining organizational culture change.
5. Explain how effective wellness influences behavioral health, outline the requirements for National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) compliant behavioral health and wellness programs, and present strategies for their implementation.
6. Explain the need for research within fire and emergency services disciplines and describe the fundamentals for conducting, producing and using effective research.
7. Utilize research data and techniques to manage risk and enhance occupational health and safety.

Fire Prevention and the Integration of Community Risk Reduction (C0286)

Course Description

This course provides foundational knowledge of fire prevention, community risk reduction (CRR), and the impact of CRR integration on modern fire prevention strategies.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Summarize the U.S. fire problem from past to present and discuss the evolution of fire prevention and community risk reduction (CRR) initiatives.

2. Provide examples of public and private fire prevention and CRR organizations, discuss their roles, and identify opportunities for partnership.

3. Describe the organizational structure and administration of a public sector fire prevention bureau; summarize the bureau's primary, secondary and tertiary fire prevention objectives; and provide examples of initiatives that support those objectives.

4. Discuss the legal aspects of fire prevention, differentiate codes from standards, and explain the process for their development and application to fire prevention and CRR initiatives.

5. Explain the importance of fire service data collection and analysis, describe how evidence-based practitioners use research methodology to guide operational practices and priorities, and discuss technology's impact on fire prevention efforts.

6. Define the 5 E's of CRR, explain their role in dealing with community risks, and identify strategies that could provide solutions to fire and life safety issues.

7. Explain the six steps of the CRR planning process and participate in a community risk assessment.

8. Participate in the development of a CRR plan, outline the process to implement and evaluate a CRR plan, and identify potential barriers to success.