



South Carolina
Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



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South Carolina Fire Academy

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State Fire Academy Graduates 20 in March

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 20 recruits, Friday, March 4, 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 Deputy Chief William Shiver, Jr., Clemson University Fire & EMS.

"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 March 4, 2022:

- Jordan Barrow, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Britton Beatson, Sumter Fire Department
- Matthew Brown, Newberry City Fire Department
- Matthew Charnock, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Sebastian Colon-Aviles, Fort Mill Fire Department
- Bradford Dawson, Burton Fire District
- Nicholas DeMuis, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Carson Eckhardt, St. Andrews Public Service District
- Christopher Ellington, James Island Public Service District
- John Esposito, James Island Public Service District
- Brandon Evans, C&B Fire Department
- Jerome Foy, St. Andrews Public Service District

- Valentino Gario, U.S. Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Darian Hair, Newberry Fire Department
- Daniel Norton, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Jelani Prince, U.S. Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Jason Proctor, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Caroline Shreve, Clemson University Fire & EMS
- Lucas Sosa, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Nathan Tarkenton, Easley Fire Department

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Jason Proctor, 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 – Nathan Tarkenton, Easley Fire Department

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

Pride of the Battalion – Britton Beatson, Sumter Fire Department

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.