



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



South Carolina Fire Academy

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For Immediate Release: Dec. 8, 2023
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State Fire Academy Graduates 20 in December

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation’s South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 20 recruits, Friday, Dec. 8, 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. The keynote speaker was Chief Marquis Solomon, West Columbia Fire Department.

“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 have 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:

- Olivia Airington, Sandhill Volunteer Fire Department
- Jacob Anderson, Darlington County Fire District
- Mahliqe Andrews, Hartsville Fire Department
- Dylan Ballew, Pelham - Batesville Fire Department
- Noah Burton, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Cameron Collins, Sumter City Fire Department
- Nathaniel Courson, Boiling Springs Fire District
- Matthew Craig, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Lindsey Dalton, Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Alexander Gerards, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Geraldo Greaves, Sumter City Fire Dept
- Nicholas Hatchell, Cainhoy Rural Fire Department
- Elizabeth Hrach, Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Isaac Johnson, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Joshua Kendall, Hartsville Fire Department
- Taylor Marchant, Newberry Fire Department
- Cullin McLeod, Piedmont Park Fire District
- Samantha Price, Newberry Fire Department
- Skyler Sabado, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Taylor Scott, Aiken Department of Public Safety

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese: Cameron Collins – Sumter City Fire Department

The class recruits choose this award recipient. 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: Samantha Price – Newberry Fire Department

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

Pride of the Battalion: Order of the Maltese: Cameron Collins – Sumter City Fire Department

The Pride of the Battalion award is given to the recruit who has demonstrated "Leadership, Integrity, Determination, and Good Value." The instructor staff who worked with the recruits during the eight-week program chose this award recipient.

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 the 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.