



Pro Board Progress

National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications

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Pro Board



As we start the Fall season here in North America, we reflect back on a very busy summer for the Pro Board. Long gone are the days when Summer season means things slow down - certainly not so in our world of Accreditation and Certifications. Indeed two new agencies have been accredited this summer by our very busy Committee on Accreditation (COA): the Safety and Technical Rescue Association (SATRA) of Michigan and the Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy of British Columbia. This brings our number of accredited entities to 46.

On July 1st, we were once again able to lower the fees on those entities which register all of their qualified individuals electronically into the Pro Board certification registry. This "automatic" registration plan represents the fastest growing segment of our Pro Board system and over 60% of our certificate volume. Speaking of volume, we passed the 300,000 number of certificates registered in our certification registry this past summer.

The Pro Board certificate registry is a unique service that captures all certificates going back to the beginning of the Pro Board 25 years ago. Confirmation of an individual's Pro Board certificate on a confidential basis is readily accessible on the Pro Board web site. This service is more important than ever as firefighters and fire departments alike look to verify the credentials of our first responders.

As we look towards the next several months of Pro Board activity, please mark your calendars for our Accreditation Conference to be held on January 25-26, 2008 in Tampa, Florida. The Conference program is shaping up to be highly informative and educational. As always, it will also provide that unique opportunity to mix with your peers and take home new insights to help improve your operations. And I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,
Jim Estep - Chairman, Board of Directors



The past 3 months has seen continued steady growth in the program. During that time, Certification Coordinator Amy Sturtevant has added over 16,500 new certifications to the Certification Registry.

Amy and I are busy working with the Embassy Suites USF Hotel in Tampa on the arrangements for next year's Accreditation Training Conference to be held on January 25-26, 2008. The hotel is only a mile away from Busch Gardens - Adventure Island Tampa Bay Theme Parks, the University Square Shopping Mall and the Museum of Science and Industry. Also nearby are the Florida Aquarium and the

Tampa Museum of Art. Don't forget to return your conference registration forms, and please let Amy know if there will be anyone accompanying you to the conference dinner on Friday night (January 25). This promises to be an interesting conference, and coupled with this exciting locale, we're sure to see all of you there!

Recently, Fred Piechota, Amy and I took a look at the Pro Board exhibit booth that we use at the FDIC and IAFC (and other) conferences, and decided to update the look of the display panels. Consequently, our exhibit display (affectionately known as "Barney" due to the fact that its predecessor was shipped in a large purple case) has undergone a substantial upgrade. Changes include a new center panel display that includes a map and list of Pro Board accredited entities (see illustration below). The display had its premiere at the Atlanta IAFC conference in August, and will next appear at the Canadian Fire Chief's Conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario in September.

While we were busy upgrading the display booth, we also decided to update and reprint the Pro Board brochure and the Accreditation folder. Amy and I will bring these to the conference in Tampa. In the meantime, if you would like to get some copies before then, please let us know.

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Accredited Entities

United States Entities:

Alabama Fire College & Personnel Standards Commission
 Arkansas Fire Academy
 California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI)
 Colorado Department of Public Safety
 Colorado Metropolitan Certification Board (CMCB)
 Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control
 Delaware State Fire School
 Florida Bureau of Fire Standards and Training
 Georgia IT Standards and Training Council
 Hawaii D.O.L. Airports Division
 University of Kansas Fire Service Training
 Maine Fire Training & Education
 Maryland Fire Services Personnel Qualifications Board
 Massachusetts Fire Training Council
 Michigan State Police Fire Marshal Division
 Montana State University Fire Service Training School

Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division
 New Hampshire Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Standards & Training
 Fort Monmouth Fire & Emergency Services, NJ
 New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control
 Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development - Public Safety Services, OH
 Sinclair Community College, OH
 Oklahoma Fire Service Training
 Pennsylvania, Office of the State Fire Commissioner
 Bucks County Public Safety Training Center, PA
 Rhode Island Fire Academy
 Texas Emergency Services Training Institute (ESTI)
 Utah Fire and Rescue Academy
 Vermont Fire Service Training Council
 Virginia Department of Fire Programs
 West Virginia University Fire Service Extension
 Wyoming Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety

Canadian Entities:

The Erie-Lakeland College
 BC - College of the Rockies
 BC - District of North Vancouver
 BC - Justice Institute
 Nova Scotia Fire Service Professional Qualifications Board
 Ontario, Office of the Fire Marshal
 Vancouver Island Emergency Resource Academy
 Other Accredited Entities:
 United States Department of Defense
 SAFC Fire Training Center
 Salsar, Commonwealth Ports Authority
 International Association of Arson Investigators
 International Code Council
 The Department Safety Officers Association (DSOA)
 Safety and Technical Rescue Association

The following are highlights of the COA's activities over the past few months:

- COA members staffed the Pro Board booth at the Fire Rescue International Conference in Atlanta. Preparations are being made to staff the booth at the Canadian Fire Chief's

Conference in Niagara Falls at the end of September.

- Plans are being finalized in preparation for the 2008 Pro Board Accreditation Training Conference to be held in Tampa in January. A number of interesting and informative informational sessions are planned. For the first time in several years, the Pro Board has invited vendors to participate in the Conference. Those vendors that choose to attend will be able to set up tables just outside of the meeting rooms.
- The COA conducted telephone conference calls in July and September. During the July call two new entities were approved for accreditation by the COA. The Safety and Technical Rescue Association and the Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy became the 45th and 46th accredited entities in the Pro Board System. Also during the call, West Virginia University Fire Service Extension and the Maryland Fire Service Personnel Qualifications Board were approved for Reaccreditation. A number of entities were granted approval for Extensions of Accreditation.
- Reaccreditation Site Visits to Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Utah are scheduled to be conducted in the upcoming months. In the near future, letters will be sent to those entities that are due reaccreditation visits in 2008 reminding them of that requirement.

Pro Board promotes accreditation and Certification of Fire and Emergency Personnel at several industry Trade Shows each year.



Kevin O'Connell (left) and Liz Summers (middle) man the Pro Board both at IAFC Fire Rescue

International Convention.



Fred Piechota (right), Accreditation Manager, at old booth at FDIC.



COA members Theresa Staples, Fred Piechota, and Bob Grunmeier were pleased to participate in the dedication of the West Virginia Fire Service Extension Mobile Training Unit during a recent site visit.

The Committee on Accreditation recently received an Application for Extension of Accreditation from an Accredited Entity to allow certification testing to be conducted in accordance with the requirements of an Annex to NFPA Standard 472 for the level of Competencies for the Technician with a Flammable Liquids Bulk Storage Specialty.

Because an Annex is typically explanatory text for mandatory requirements in the body of the standard and is not a mandatory requirement itself, the Pro Board has not previously used an Annex for accrediting an entity for certification testing. The COA carefully reviewed the request and the requirements of the Annex and agreed to make a recommendation to the Board of Directors that the specific Annex be recognized as a standard against which certification testing may be conducted and for which accredited entities may be granted an Extension of Accreditation.

After deliberation the Board provided the following guidance to the COA:

The response confirms agreement from the Board to allow certification testing to Annex material of an NFPA Standard:

- *when written in a format that lends itself to certification testing and*
- *when the Annex will be used in the same manner as the other levels in the NFPA Standard*

Some of the rational for this decision included the fact that NFPA documents are approved by ANSI

on a cover to cover basis so the approval includes any annex material. While Annex A material in NFPA documents is generally just explanatory material to support requirements in the standard, other annexes can be material that the committee is presenting for people to use but which it is not ready to make part of the requirements of the standard. Annex material goes through the same NFPA Technical Committee development and review process as the requirements in the body of the standard.

Annex B of NFPA 472 is written in a format that lends itself to testing for professional qualification with the exception that it uses the word "should" instead of "shall". Annex B of NFPA Standard 472 has been added to the list of acceptable standards for which an entity may be accredited. Requests to extend to any other Annex of any other Standard will need to be processed through the submission of a COA Form 1.1, Application for Extension of Accreditation.

Tell us about your Entity Activities

Articles for the next Pro Board Progress are being planned now.

Contact the Pro Board newsletter at editor@theproboard.org with information about your entity activities that we can highlight in a future issue of the newsletter.

Send us your feedback on this e-newsletter format - we'd love to hear from you what you think of it. Email comments to editor@theproboard.org.

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