

Texas Fire Academy Fire Education Division



Student Policy Manual For the BASIC FIREFIGHTER COURSE

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Important Contact Information

**Hays County ESD #3
Texas Fire Academy:** 3528 Hunter Rd.
San Marcos, TX 78666
512-749-1200
Office Hours 9am – 3pm, M-F

Course Coordinator: Brad Elkins, Lead Instructor/Paramedic
firelead@texasfireacademy.com

Admissions Coordinator: Rebecca Malik, Admissions Coordinator
admissions@texasfireacademy.com

After Hours Emergency: 512-749-1199

**Hays County ESD #3
Texas Fire Academy
San Marcos TX locations:** 3528 Hunter Rd (Station 11)
Main office/registration/training
8301 Ranch Road 12 (Station 12)
Training/Sleeping Quarters
3301 Hilliard (Station 13)
Sleeping Quarters

**Training at Offsite
Locations:** 2301 Hwy 21, San Marcos @ Gary Job Corps
William Pettus Rd, Maxwell @ ALERRT Field
320 Fire Field Rd, New Braunfels @ Guadalupe Fire
Field
209 Jack C Hays Trail, Buda @ Buda FD Fire Field
1691 Carne Lane, Wimberley @ Wimberley
Burn Field

Additional Resources

My Brady Lab Course Page www.mybradylab.com
Texas Commission on Fire Protection www.tcfp.com

Any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this Policy Manual should be addressed with the Texas Fire Academy Course Coordinator.

Disclaimer

Completing this course does not certify you as a firefighter.

The object this course, offered by Texas Fire Academy, is to provide you with the necessary information, training, skills and knowledge for you to pass the state exam and to give you a foundation to function as a firefighter.

Successfully completing this course makes you eligible to take the Texas Basic Firefighter exam. It is up to you to study for and pass the Texas Commission on Fire Protection Examination.

Registration Procedures

Registration opens approximately two months before class starts. You may hold a spot in the class with a deposit equal to 25% of the total tuition, a completed Course Application and the signed Refund Policy. Outstanding documents and remaining tuition must be submitted no later than the last day of registration. **All cadets are required to appear in person during the last week of registration** at 3528 Hunter Road, San Marcos, Texas. Office hours are normally Monday thru Friday from 9am to 3pm except on holidays.

Acceptance Requirements – Student Check List

Cadets will not be accepted until the following documents are submitted, approved and full payment is received no later than the last day of registration.

Basic Firefighter Course

_____ 18 years of age by the completion of the course.

_____ Medical/Physical Exam. The [Physician's Release for Firefighter Training Form](#), available at TexasFireAcademy.com, must be completed by a doctor and submitted to TFA Admissions Office.

_____ Background Check. [Instructions available](#) at TexasFireAcademy.com.

- All arrests, charges and dispositions must be fully disclosed.
- No pending, deferred adjudication or conviction on Felony or Class A Misdemeanors.
- Class B and C Misdemeanor arrests, charges, deferred adjudication and convictions will be evaluated.
- Any concerns should be directed to the TFA Admissions Office.

_____ [Course Application](#). **Incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

_____ [Refund Policy](#).

_____ [Release of Liability](#) (notarized).

_____ Copy of Driver's License.

_____ Copy of Diploma, GED or College Transcript.

_____ Tuition paid in full.

_____ [TCFP/FIDO Personal Identification Number](#).

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 emphasizes that individuals with disabilities are not to be excluded from jobs that they can perform merely because a disability prevents them from taking a test or negatively influences the results of a test that is a prerequisite to the job. Passing a written test and skills evaluation during a Firefighter course and passing the Texas Basic Firefighter certification examination are prerequisites for a job as a paid firefighter.

The law permits testing that requires the use of sensory, manual and speaking skills where the tests are intended to measure essential functions of the profession.

Performing a skill within a certain time frame can be required if speed of performance is an integral part of the skill being measured. Both the ability to read and the ability to perform skills, within time frames, are essential functions of a Firefighter. Therefore, a person with a disability may not be denied the opportunity to take an examination, but this person will be required to pass a written exam and successfully complete skills verification within established criteria.

There will be no accommodation that will compromise or fundamentally alter the testing of skills during screening tests or course testing. Texas Commission on Fire Protection allow SOME test accommodation. For Accommodation and request form see appendix.

Individuals who have a documented disability which may hamper their success on a Texas Commission Fire Protection written examination may request special testing accommodations. A qualifying disability is one protected under the Americans with Disability Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). Please download the [Testing Accommodations Request](http://www.TexasFireAcademy.com) application and instructions from www.TexasFireAcademy.com.

Physical and Health Requirements

The Basic Firefighter Course has very rigorous and physically demanding components which are directly related to the job of a career firefighter. All cadets are expected to meet minimum physical requirements to begin the course. These physical requirements are listed in the Physician's Release for Firefighting Training included in this manual. Each cadet is required to obtain a medical exam from a doctor, who will complete the Physician's Release for Firefighting Training form. The cadet must submit the form to Admissions, when they register for the course.

Each cadet is required to participate in the Physical Training (PT) portion of the course. PT is graded and becomes a part of the cadet's overall grade. PT may include, but is not limited to, stretching, running, push-ups, leg lifts and core strengthening. Each cadet is expected to continue their physical training during their time between skills weekends.

Physical Assessment (PA) is conducted twice during the Academy. This assessment is designed to determine any of your strengths, weaknesses and improvement. It is also designed to prepare cadets to complete physical agility testing when applying for jobs after graduation.

Each cadet must keep the Academy informed of any changes to their physical capabilities, limitations, injuries, and chronic or acute health issues. Including allergies, asthma, cold/flu, heart problems, etc. This will be done by notifying Admissions or the Course Coordinator in writing.

Examination and Grading

The cadet's failure to maintain a 75% average in the course will result in being dismissed from the Academy.

Online Quizzes - After completing the other assignments, cadets will take a quiz that corresponds with the chapter completed. Tests can only be attempted once and will be timed based on the number of questions. Each cadet must make sure they are prepared to take the quiz and manage their time to allow adequate time to finish the quiz. Once the test has begun, the computer will score the test when the time has run out or when the cadet has finished, whichever comes first. The computer sees an interruption (closing the window, logging out) as a completion and will grade the test at that time.

Exams - Cadets will complete examinations throughout the course including a mid-term and a final exam. Examinations will be given during skills weekends. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false and matching questions. There will be **NO** retests, including the **final examination!!!**

Performance Skills - The performance skills, as specified by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) curriculum, will be tested throughout the Academy during skills weekends. The cadet is required to pass each skill when tested. If the cadet is unable to pass, they may receive a refresher of the skill. The cadet will be allowed to retest twice, if necessary. If the cadet is still unable to pass the skill, they will not be able to receive a Course Completion Certificate.

The cadet will also be required to pass random TCFP skills in order to be eligible to take the written test for the state certification. All skills evaluation sheets must be turned in, and the cadet must have successfully completed all required skills, before a Course Completion Certificate is issued.

Physical Training – Each cadet is required to participate in the Academy Physical Training (PT) program and Physical Assessment. PT/PA is graded and becomes a part of the cadets' overall grade. PT has two grade components, participation and improvement.

Instruction

This course is divided into three instructional sections.

Online Classroom – The cadet will participate in the online learning environment in accordance with the Academy's rules and regulations. The cadet will be required to have access to a computer and the Internet to complete the online portion of the class. The online classroom requires the cadet to read the assigned chapters in their textbook and complete assignments online. For each chapter in the Essentials of Fire Fighting the cadet will complete PowerPoint presentations, discussion questions, required forum postings, chapter reviews and viewing the online resources provided. Each cadet is required to read the assigned textbook in its entirety. Each course or chapter begins on Friday at 00:00:00 CST/CDT and ends on Thursday at 23:59:59 CST/CDT. There may be several chapters assigned each week. The cadet should check into the site regularly to read all instructor correspondence.

Classroom – The cadet will participate in a traditional classroom setting during the skills weekends. The instructors will offer the cadets a chance to ask additional questions and research

answers. All examinations, with the exception of chapter reviews and chapter quizzes, will be given in the classroom.

Skills Weekends – Cadets are required to participate in Physical Training, emergency scenarios and firefighting evolutions as required by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) curriculum. All skills will be completed during the scheduled class times and will follow TCFP criteria. Cadets will be able to skills test outside of class time, only if the Course Coordinator approves, and a skills examiner is available to perform the evaluation. Basic Firefighter skills sheets are provided to cadets. The skills sheets can also be downloaded from the TCFP website at http://www.tcfp.texas.gov/manuals/curriculum_skills/basic_fire_suppression_skills_1-1-14.pdf.

General Academy Rules and Procedures

- All damaged or unsafe equipment must be brought to the instructor's attention as soon as discovered. Out of service items must be red tagged, noting the problem, cadet's name and date.
- Mobile phones, pagers and similar electronic equipment are NOT allowed on the cadet's person during Academy class/training times. Exceptions may be made by the instructor on a case by case basis for emergency situations.
- No recording may be done at any time without the permission of the instructor. Recording includes digital or analog audio recording, video recording or photographs of any type. No pictures may be taken of any person associated with the class without their permission.
- No disrespect towards instructors, fellow cadets, or guests.
- All instructors and guests will be greeted using their title; i.e. Lieutenant, Captain, Chief, Mr., Mrs. followed by their last name.
- Yes sir, No sir, Yes ma'am and No ma'am will be used at all times.
- Follow chain of command at all times.
- Cadets are to refer to other cadets, designated as an officer, by their title as either Captain or Lieutenant.
- All training facilities are tobacco free facilities. Smoking, dipping or chewing of tobacco will be permitted outside in designated areas only, and only during official break, meals or off time.
- Cadets shall not be in possession or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, except for medications currently prescribed for the cadet only, and approved by the Course Coordinator.
- All training facilities are gun free zones. All firearms are prohibited.
- While at the Academy, the cadets shall treat their time as if they were on the job. The cadet's time at the station will be spent studying and preparing for the State Exam.
- Cadets must obtain permission from the instructor prior to leaving the training facilities, other than when dismissed at the completion of each training period.
- The Academy Admissions Office or Coordinator must be notified within 72 hours if, at any time during the Academy, you receive a citation, are arrested, charged with a crime or are involved in civil process.
- Any cadet that plagiarizes will be removed from the Academy.
- Cadets are not permitted to drive, operate, or use any apparatus or equipment without the permission of the instructor.

Classroom Conduct

- Stand at attention when an instructor enters the room. If in doubt, just stand up.
- Food and drinks may be brought into the classroom as long as they don't become a disruption to the class.
- All training equipment will be put away at the end of each class, skills training or evaluation session, and placed in an area designated by the instructor.
- Any disruptive behavior during class may result in dismissal from the course.

Cadet Conduct

It is the philosophy of this Academy that all fire service professionals be highly disciplined in order to perform their duties efficiently, effectively and safely. Because of the stressful situations, physical and emotional demands that fire fighters encounter, discipline is of the utmost importance.

Cadet behavior and conduct will be closely scrutinized throughout the Academy. The cadets' adherence to the rules, regulations and policies of this Academy and the TCFP is as important as any other phase of the training.

Disciplined behavior, professional demeanor and conduct are required. Conduct unbecoming a firefighter or disciplinary infractions can result in dismissal from the Academy. Remember, if you are currently employed by an agency, you are also subject to its policies, rules and regulations during the Academy.

Attendance

In accordance with course guidelines recommended by the TCFP, attendance at all scheduled class sessions and skills are **mandatory**. Attendance is defined as participating in the online environment and completion of all assignments during the seven-day week for each chapter assigned and participation in the skills weekends for hands on training. The cadet will be required to view Power Points, complete essay questions and take quizzes for each chapter before the deadline at the end of each week. The combination of online participation and skills weekends will count as the cadet's attendance. These weekends are **mandatory**. Any hours missed during skills weekends, must be made up. Failure to maintain attendance will result in removal from the Academy.

Tardiness is disruptive to the class and **is not** tolerated. Repeated tardiness could result in automatic dismissal from the course. Inability to arrive for class by the scheduled start time, due to a known conflict, should be discussed with Admissions and or the Course Coordinator prior to the known conflict, or at the earliest known date.

Absence or tardiness due to responding to emergency calls, by your organization, is not an acceptable excuse. It is the responsibility of the cadet to make appropriate arrangements for coverage to ensure the cadet's capability to attend class.

Dress Code

The following dress code will be enforced at all times:

- Shirts – Cadets are issued three (3) uniform T-shirts to be worn to every class, skills session and practical exercise. Shirts must be clean and tucked in.
- Pants – Navy blue, 100% cotton station pants.
- Shorts – Each cadet will be issued 2 pairs of shorts to be worn for Physical Training. Shorts of a similar design may be worn after cadets have been dismissed for the day.
- Belt – Only a plain black or basket weave black is acceptable. No extravagant belts or buckles are allowed. A belt must be worn at all times.
- Shoes – Black steel or safety toe boots. Appropriate running shoes are required for PT. All shoes or boots must be in good repair and shined at all times.
- Caps – Any cap or hats are not to be worn inside buildings. Only Academy issued caps may be worn at Academy functions. Each cadet will be issued one cap.
- Hair – Hair will be kept neat and clean at all times. Hair must not interfere with the cadet's ability to perform any Academy required skills.
- Facial Hair – Cadets must be clean shaven before class each day. Facial hair must be neat and trimmed so as to not interfere with making a seal with issued face mask.
- Jewelry – Earrings may be worn during class. One ring per hand is allowed. One necklace may be worn as long as it is under your shirt and not visible.
- Tattoos, Body Art/Piercing – No tattoos, body art or piercing will be permitted to be exposed. The cadet must maintain complete coverage of tattoos using an approved sleeve, stocking, etc. Any questions regarding tattoos should be directed to Admissions or the Course Coordinator.

Cadets must be dressed in uniform or approved attire by the beginning of class. The class uniform shall **NOT** be worn when not at the Academy except while en route to or from class. Cadets shall **NOT** consume alcoholic beverages in the class uniform regardless of location. Cadets must be dressed after showering and before leaving the bathrooms. Cadets will wear clothing for sleeping attire. Only approved clothing will be worn during Physical Training. Bunker gear may not be worn or stored inside the quarters at stations (the bay is ok).

Class Participation

All cadets are expected to actively participate in all course activities. Skills practice sessions are intended for intense practice on the skill being presented. Any cadet not participating will be advised that continued non-participation may result in dismissal from the course.

Probation

Anytime a cadet's grade falls below 75% in the course or the cadet becomes a disciplinary problem, that cadet will be placed on probation. The probation will last as long as needed as directed by the Course Coordinator. When a cadet is placed on probation, a written copy of the probation form will be given to the cadet describing the specific problem and the amount of time given to correct the problem. Both the cadet and the Course Coordinator will sign this probation form, and the form will be forwarded to the Admissions Office. A permanent copy of the probation form will be kept with the course paperwork.

Harassment

There will be absolutely no tolerance for harassment or inappropriate conduct of any type because of sex, race, age, disability, religion, marital status, life choices or ethnicity. If you believe you have been harassed or discriminated against in any way, you should contact the Course Coordinator. All claims of harassment or inappropriate conduct will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with appropriately.

Grievances

Any time a cadet has a problem that involves an instructor, another cadet or any aspect of the course, it should be brought to the attention of the Course Coordinator in writing. This information should describe all details of the problem, and what is desired or expected by the complainant. All information will become the property of the Texas Fire Academy, and will remain with the course paperwork. If a problem does occur, the cadet should first take their concerns to the Instructor. If the cadet does not feel it was handled properly or completely at that point, they should go to the Lead Instructor. If the problem or concern is still not resolved completely, it may be elevated to the Course Coordinator. The Course Coordinator's decision will be the final resolution to the dispute.

Removal from the Course

If any cadet is found to be in violation of any of the following rules, the cadet will be immediately dismissed from the Academy.

- Cheating on any written examination or quiz.
- Coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Falsification of Academy documents or records.
- Wearing the Academy uniform while consuming alcoholic beverages or conducting illegal activity.
- Fighting. No cadet will be allowed to touch another cadet or instructor during a confrontation.
- Sexual harassment.
- Discrimination of any form against any protected class.
- Pornography of any kind in any form.
- Possession or under the influence of drugs not prescribed to the individual taking them.
- Breaking any law that would disqualify a cadet from being accepted into the Academy.

If a cadet is dismissed from the Academy, the cadet will not be entitled to any refund. Hays County ESD #3 or the Texas Fire Academy, its agents or employees will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by the cadet as a result of dismissal from the Academy. All gear, equipment or property issued to the cadet by the Academy, must be returned. Failure to do so will result in legal action and/or paying for the replacement of the property.

Address/Phone/Email Changes

The cadet shall advise Academy administration of any changes to personal information. Time sensitive information will be sent by the Academy from time to time. Texas Fire Academy assumes no liability for the failure of the cadet to respond appropriately.

Eligibility for Course Completion

Eligibility for a Course Completion Certificate will be determined as follows:

- Minimum overall GPA of 75% or better.
- Successful evaluation of competency in all required skills.
- Compliance with the course attendance policy. Completion of the Physical Training Program
- Compliance with the Policy Manual.
- Minimum of 18 years of age by the date of course completion.

Software/Hardware Recommendations

Cadets must have access to a computer with internet access. It is highly recommended you have a back-up plan in case of failure or difficulties with your computer. Possibly a friend, roommate, relative or public computer such as at the public library.

Student Signature

Print Name

Witness Signature

Date