

NEW MEXICO FIREFIGHTERS TRAINING ACADEMY

Testing Accommodations

The candidate should ensure that **before** entering into certification testing they understands the competencies and tasks that are required for the given test. Furthermore, the candidates should be made aware of the procedures for applying for a reasonable accommodation if the candidate has a disability. Candidates who have received an accommodation during the instructional course (local level training) should fully understand that there is a separate process for requesting an accommodation for state certification examinations.

Scenarios Not Accommodated

Below are five examples of accommodations that are **NOT** likely to be allowed during the certification exams:

- Additional time to perform skills, which are to be performed within specific timeframes based on conditions likely found in an emergency situations;
- Accommodation not reasonably available at an emergency incident. Candidates are permitted to use performance aids that could be readily available and easily accessible to them at an actual emergency incident. It is the responsibility of the candidate to provide any personal aid he/she deems necessary and the New Mexico State Fire Academy approves as appropriate.
- Unlimited time to complete a written examination. Such a request is not reasonable since completing a written exam within a finite time is a measure of a candidate's ability to read and react to written information relevant to the emergency incident and respond quickly and perform tasks/duties needed to bring the incident under control.
- An oral reader to assist the candidate to take the written examination. The ability to read and understand small English print (12 point) is an essential function of the profession, and the written examinations are designed, at least in part, to measure that ability.
- A written examination with a reading level, which is lower than the reading level required by the profession to function safely and efficiently.

Documented Learning Disability

The New Mexico State Fire Academy permits a standard time extension to a candidate taking the written certification examination who has presented documentation of a learning disability relating to reading, decoding, or comprehension. The standard time extension the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy allows for completing a written examination is time-and-a-half. Thus, if the examination were normally administered in two hours, the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy would permit the candidate an extra hour to complete the examination. This accommodation is allowed since the New Mexico Fire Fighters Training Academy believes that if the candidate is able to pass the written examination with the standard time extension, the

NEW MEXICO FIREFIGHTERS TRAINING ACADEMY

individual would be able to perform the essential functions of the position effectively and efficiently within acceptable time parameters.

The critical nature of reading in emergency situations requires reading finite amounts of material in measured amounts of time. In addition, the reading level examined by an examination, which the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy does not believe may reasonably be lowered to accommodate a disability, is not impacted by the time permitted for completion of the examination.

Request for Accommodations

The New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy will review, on a case-by-case basis, only written requests for accommodations for certification examinations. Requests must be submitted on the "Accommodation Request" form.

The New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy provides written notification of its decision to the candidate upon completing its review of the request for accommodation. It is the responsibility of the NMFTA staff to explain accommodation request procedures to candidates.

The "Accommodation Request" form is available from the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy. The candidate who is requesting an accommodation must complete the request form at the time of application submission or as soon as the need for an accommodation is recognized. All requests must be made prior to the scheduled date of the examination. Any request for accommodation not submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled examination will result in a delay in the candidate's date of examination.

Documentation of a specific disability which would impact a performance on the written examination must include a signed explanation on letterhead stationery from a professional who is familiar with the applicant's disability or a copy of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) from an educational institution.

The statement must confirm and describe the disability for which the accommodation is requested. The professional must have expertise in the specific disability for which the accommodation is being requested.

Reasonable Accommodations

The New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy offers reasonable accommodations for the written certification exams for those persons with written documented disabilities. The goal of the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy is that all firefighters with documented disabilities are able to perform the assigned tasks safely without harm to themselves or the public.

NEW MEXICO FIREFIGHTERS TRAINING ACADEMY

Based upon an analysis of the NFPA job performance requirements (JPR's) and the written examinations, the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy has determined that persons with learning disabilities manifested in the academic areas of reading, decoding or comprehension may be eligible for additional time to take a written certification examination as a reasonable accommodation.

Documentation of a specific disability, which would negatively affect one's performance on the written examination, must be included with a completed "Accommodation Request" form with the signature of the applicant. This statement must confirm and describe the disability for which an accommodation is being requested and clearly state the accommodation being sought.

Requests for accommodations are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the appropriateness of the requested accommodation is in doubt, the Instructional Staff Supervisor will discuss options with the candidate and will consult with professionals knowledgeable about the disability and functions of the profession.

Diagnostic information related to an individual's disability is highly confidential and is not disclosed to third parties. The request for accommodation and supporting documentation shall be placed in a sealed envelope and kept in the course folder.

Accommodation Requests

A candidate with a documented disability that could negatively impact performance on a certification test shall complete and submit the Request for Accommodation Form along with supporting documents. This form must be submitted to the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy. The New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy offers reasonable and appropriate accommodations for written certification examinations for individuals with documented disabilities.

APPENDIX C

Request For Accommodation Form

Name of Candidate: _____
Last Name First Name Middle Name

Address of Candidate: _____

Telephone Number (please include area code): _____
(Please list a number you can be reached during daylight hours 8am – 4pm)

County of Residence: _____

Certification Level Requesting Accommodation for: _____

Test Site to which you have submitted your application: _____

I have reviewed the NFPA job performance requirements for the level of certification I am seeking and request the following accommodation due to my disability related needs:

I have attached a statement on letterhead stationary from a professional who is familiar with my disability. I understand that the professional must have expertise in the specific disability for which I am seeking an accommodation for and the statement must confirm and describe the disability for which the accommodation is requested. Statement is signed by the professional.

I am submitting a copy of an IEP (Individual Education Plan) which I have obtained from my educational institution.

Signature of individual Completing this form Date

Printed or type name of the individual completing this form

Return this form to: New Mexico State Fire Academy
Attn: Deputy State Fire Marshal
600 Aspen Road
Socorro, NM 87801
(575) 835-7500