

18. Discussion and possible action on matters from the Executive Director.

- A. Report on decisions of the Executive Director in contested cases and consent orders.**

18. Discussion and possible action on matters from the Executive Director.

B. Status of division functions.

Agency Status Report
December 1, 2013 – February 28, 2014

Overview

The agency continued operations at normal levels of activity. Processing and issuance of state certifications returned to a more typical pace following extremely high activity levels the previous two quarters. The high activity levels were due to special provisions that had been allowed for Wildland and Incident Safety Officer certifications; the provisions expired September 1st. Onsite testing continued, with the introduction of online testing still in the future. Compliance efforts also continued at a normal pace, with 244 inspections of regulated entities completed during the quarter.

In what can only be described as a significant enhancement to the agency's credentialing program, the Commission adopted rules during the quarter to allow certain ProBoard certificates issued by the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service to be accepted toward the agency's issuance of state certifications. TCFP and TEEX staff worked closely together to prepare for the anticipated adoption of the rules, and established procedures for the verification of applicant-submitted documents as necessary.

The agency filled a vacant position during the quarter, hiring an accountant in the Financial Services Section. However the agency also was carrying three vacancies at the end of the quarter: the Financial Services Manager, the Certification Program Supervisor, and the Injury Reporting Specialist. All three positions will be posted and filled as soon as possible.

As did many areas of the state, the agency experienced some winter weather related disruptions to its operations during the quarter. One incident required the Austin office to be closed altogether for a day, and another forced it to open late (noon). Both incidents were caused by icing on area roads, making the commute extremely hazardous for personnel. You never know about Texas weather!

Executive Office Activities

The Executive Director attended the following functions during the quarter:

- December 17th: Commission update presentation at the Central Texas Regional Fire Chief's Association meeting
- January 8th: Participated in a panel discussion at the TEEX Leadership Symposium, Frisco.
- January 15th: Participated in Fire Consortium meeting, Austin
- February 12th: Commission update presentation at the Texas Association of Fire Educator's Conference, San Antonio
- February 18th: Accepted award on behalf of the agency at the Fire Chiefs' Executive Conference, San Marcos

Additionally, the agency established an information booth at the following functions:

- State Association of Fire and Emergency Districts (SAFE-D) Conference, Galveston
- Texas Association of Fire Educators Conference, San Antonio
- Fire Chiefs' Executive Conference, San Marcos

❖ The group tasked with reviewing proposals for the TCFP Administrative Attachment Study met on February 18th to discuss the two proposals that had been received. It was decided that neither of the proposals would be acted upon. Instead, the four stakeholder groups involved (TSAFF, TFCA, SFFMA, SAFE-D) chose to submit the names of two members from each group who would comprise the team that would:

- Develop the interview document that would be used in the information-gathering phase of the study
- Gather the required information from each identified agency

- Compile and prepare the gathered information for purposes of analysis and eventual formulation of recommendations

Certification, Renewal, and Curriculum 2nd Quarter Report, FY 2014

Certification/Renewal:

- 2,336 certificates issued
- 1,400 IFSAC seals issued
- 214 training facilities holding 1,197 active or renewable certifications (training facility renewals occurring during this period; some entities will renew late)
- 51 training facility certificates issued to 19 different entities
- 444 certificate holders renewed (entities and individuals)

Other Activities:

- The continuing education audit program, instituted on December 1st, progressed smoothly. Staff is auditing continuing education that individuals would have completed as part of the requirements for renewal of their certifications from 11/1/13 to 10/31/14. For the most part, audited individuals were able to provide the required information. In consideration of the fact that this is the first year of the audit program, those who were unable to provide the required documentation initially were allowed an opportunity to submit corrected or additional information. The Certification Section's goal is to audit the CE of 50% of individual certificate holders each year.
- Certification staff coordinated efforts with Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service staff to prepare for the anticipated acceptance of certain TEEX-issued ProBoard credentials toward TCFP state certification. The rules regarding acceptance were approved for adoption in the Commission's January 16th meeting (the rules became effective on March 3rd).
- Training facility renewals began on December 1st, with entities again utilizing the Texas.gov online payment portal. Entities currently have three options for payment: (1) Electronic Funds Transfer (draft from entity's account), (2) credit card, or (3) payment by mail.

Curriculum Development:

The following Curriculum & Skills Manuals were updated to new editions of NFPA standards, effective January 1, 2014:

- Firefighter I
- Firefighter II
- Instructor I
- Instructor II
- Instructor III

Committees

- The Head of Department ad hoc committee met in December to continue the discussion on how to regulate HOD positions in Texas, if at all. The committee had several representatives make a presentation at the annual TX Fire Chiefs Assn meeting in San Marcos in February 2014 in order to gain feedback. (This was at the suggestion of the FFAC at their December 2013 meeting.) Since there was no push-back from the TFCA, the ad hoc committee will begin working on drafting preliminary rules to bring to the FFAC meeting in June 2014. **Work in progress.**
- The Curriculum & Testing committee met in January. Discussions included:
 - Whether or not to add new certifications. Possibilities include rescue tech, health & safety officer, DROP/aerial, RIT and must take into account staff workload limitations.
 - The need to review all curricula and identify all skills that may be evaluated by simulation or by some other alternative means, as was done recently for F1 & 2.
 - Reviewed and updated Pilot question language in program area's SOPs.
 - On-line testing
 - On-line training
 - Head of Dept "orientation"
 - TEEX/ProBoard reciprocity
 - Possible future changes to curriculum committees to alleviate staff workload
 - Requirements for IFSAC seals
 - Inspection/audit reference & equipment lists
 - Upcoming NFPA new editions – those relative to TCFP certifications
 - Upcoming IFSAC audit
 - Possibility of offering IFSAC seals for FO 3 & 4, HMIC, ISO and Wildland

Test Development and Test Bank Maintenance

- Created 141 monthly certification exams.
- Finished re-checking all test banks and testing skills with IFSAC correlation sheets for upcoming (2014) IFSAC audit/review.
- Working on validating HM Awareness and Ops test questions to new editions of textbooks.
- Finished updating the Fire Officer III and IV test banks to the newest (2nd) edition of the IFSTA *NIMS* text book. (>450 test questions).
- Finished updating the FF1 and FF2 test banks to go with the new curricula that became effective January 1, 2014.

Compliance Report for Commission Notebook Second Quarter FY 2014 December 2013 – February 2014

Large Department Inspections

- February 3 through February 12 the Region 7 Compliance officer led the entire group of Compliance Officers in the biennial compliance inspection of the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD). In comparison to the 2012 inspection 2014 inspection resulted in significantly less compliance violations. The SAFD inspection was successfully closed in March.

Training

- All Compliance Officers attended one training session with the Compliance Manager during this quarter. The training provided updates on TCFP activities: including status of the Commissioner's search for an Executive Director, status of compliance program procedures and guideline revisions, discussion, clarification, definition and procedure for reporting the number of inspected certificate holders with uncorrected violations, the process for inspecting continuing education requirements during biennial inspection, and other current compliance issues.

Informal Conferences and Applicant Background Reviews

- There were no informal hearings during this quarter.
- The Compliance Manager and Certification staff team continued meeting weekly to review individual applicant files to make determinations about applicant qualifications and to notify the applicants about the decision to approve or deny acceptance of applications.

Meetings

- The Compliance Manager attended the Emergency Management Council meeting at the State Emergency Operations Center. The meeting was the initial meeting to launch a statewide disaster drill with Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). The disaster drill simulated a statewide blackout of the electric grid system to test the ability of ERCOT to bring the electric grid back up for Texans.

Communication Tools

- Good communications in the workplace is essential for success and almost always a challenge, given the decentralized nature of the compliance program team. The field officers are located in different regions of the state and normally traveling across their regions doing inspections audits, etc. their primary means of communicating within the team and to customers is via cell phone utilizing voice, email and text capability. The Executive Director approved the purchase of new state of the art smart phones for the compliance team with enhanced services for improved communications.
- Always seeking ways to perform work better by improving communications, the Compliance team experimented with Team Viewer software designed to support teams to collaborate on line, with online meetings, online presentations, and online training. Our testing of the program proved that it was useful and would help fill a communication gap in the workforce. However, we determined the version of the software we have does not support multiple team members online at the same time. The compliance team would still like to improve its team communication capability.

State Fire Marshal LODD Assist

- The Compliance Manager reviewed and commented on two of the State Fire Marshal's Line of Duty Death reports. Jalen Smith of the Jackson Heights Fire Department and Neal Smith of the Atascocita Volunteer Fire Department.

Commission Quarterly Report

Training Approval and Testing Section

- **Test Administration, Training Approvals, Record Reviews, and Training and Skill Testing Audits Statistics – 2nd Quarter, FY 2014**

- Test Administration – 2148 exams were administrated during this quarter with an average grade of 81.99% and a pass rate of 91.11%.
- New certification testing statistics:

Fire Officer III	Quarter (FY 2013 - partial)	Quarter (FY 2013)	Quarter (FY 2014)	Quarter (FY 2014)	Totals
First Attempts	29	46	51	59	185
Failures	8*	7*	3	7	25
Average Grade	73.33	80.00 (1 st Att.)	81.73 (1 st Att.)	81.83 (1 st Att.)	80.10 (1 st Att.)
		71.33 (2 nd Att. – one failure)	72.00 (2 nd Att.)	79.14 (2 nd Att. – two failures)	76.36 (2 nd Att. – three failures)

*Corrected Data

Fire Officer IV	3 rd Quarter (FY 2013 - partial)	4 th Quarter (FY 2013)	1 st Quarter (FY 2014)	2 nd Quarter (FY 2014)	Totals
First Attempts	1	28	22	66	117
Failures	0	8*	7	13	28
Average Grade	92	75.86 (1 st Att.)	71.73 (1 st Att.)	78.94 (1 st Att.)	76.96 (1 st Att.)
		68.00 (2 nd Att.)	76.67 (2 nd Att.)	74.86 (2 nd Att. – two failures)	74.73 (2 nd Att. – two failures)

*Corrected Data

HazMat IC	3 rd Quarter (FY 2013 - partial)	4 th Quarter (FY 2013)	1 st Quarter (FY 2014)	2 nd Quarter (FY 2014)	Totals
First Attempts	13	24	41	58	136
Failures	0	0	9	16	25
Average Grade	86.77	84.17	75.51 (1 st Att.)	75.25 (1 st Att.)	78 (1 st Att.)
			72.00 (2 nd Att.)	76.39 (2 nd Att.)	74.92 (2 nd Att.)

- Below are the Incident Safety Officer (ISO) test scores since September 2013. Due to the high failure rate, this has been placed as an agenda item on the Curriculum and Testing Committee's June 2014 meeting agenda.
 - ◆ As of April 10, 2014, 65 students have taken the ISO exam. Out of the 65, 38 students have failed. The overall average on the first attempt is 66.09. Four have retested, with only one retest failure, with an overall average score of 87.
 - ◆ Of the 65, 30 students completed a commission-approved course with a commission-certified training facility. Of the 30, 20 failed the first attempt. The overall average score on the first attempt is 64.00. Three retests have occurred, in which all were passed, with an overall average score of 97.33.
 - ◆ Of the 65, 35 students have tested using the National Fire Academy (NFA) or Fire Department Safety Officers Association (FDSOA) ISO route. Of the 35, 18 have failed. The overall average on the first attempt is 67.89. Only one retest attempt has occurred in which a score of 56 was obtained. Note: The system does not capture separately the test results of those who qualified with NFA course work versus the FDSOA course because they are all grouped together under the "National Provider" eligibility code.
- Total of 2118 training approvals have been submitted since January 2013 in the commission's Training Facility Management System.
- Record Reviews – Twelve (12) paid record reviews for equivalency were conducted and 389 test packets were distributed in the 2nd quarter. Since January 2013, 685 Qual #s have been issued in which 271 individual skill evaluations have been scheduled in the Training Facility Management System.
- Training and Skill Testing Audits – Thirteen (13) on-site audits were conducted during this quarter in which nine (9) were skill testing audits. No deficiencies were found.
- **International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC)**
 - The upcoming 2014 IFSAC Annual Conference is scheduled for April 23-26, 2014 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. One major item that will be discussed at this year's meetings, along with possible adoption of associated bylaws, is the addition of a Training Assembly. The proposed mission of the Training Assembly would be "To plan and administer a high quality, uniformly delivered accreditation system with an international scope for entities providing fire service related training, including hazardous materials and technical rescue." The proposed membership requirement to this assembly is limited to those training entities that provide fire service training programs and are either recognized/sanctioned by the certificate/degree assembly member within its scope of empowerment

or able to provide evidence of a legal act, legislation, etc..., that the entity is authorized to provide or accredit fire related training.

- The commission's self-study report, which is required to be submitted 90 days prior to site visit, was submitted to IFSAC administration on March 28, 2014.
- The site visit is planned to occur in June, but it may be pushed up to May or pushed back to July due to the number of site visit IFSAC already has on the books for June.

- **Activities for the Next Quarter**

- Continue to work with IT staff on the online test scheduling procedures, payment processes, and web-based testing project.
- Work with the various agency sections in preparation for the impending IFSAC site visit.
- Focus on conducting training and record audits of online training providers.

FY 2014 Injury Reporting Program

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Totals
Reported Injuries	939	984			1923
Burns	45	29			74
SOP-related*	0	10			10
Environmental-related	14	8			22

*Injuries involving SOP violations

<i>Publications/postings</i>					
AvoidInjury! blog posts	6	2			8

FY 2014 Library Program

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Totals
<i>Items loaned</i>					
AV items	67	65			132
Print items	11	12			23
<i>Research and reference requests</i>					
Internal	1	1			2
External	30	36			66
New library borrowers (new users)	7	5			12
Responses to borrower follow-up surveys	57				
<i>Items cataloged</i>					
AV items	0	0			
Print items	0				
Desk copy items ordered and processed	22				
<i>Publications/postings</i>					
Library newsletter	3	3			

FY 2013 Other Public Information and Outreach Activities

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Totals
Fire department job postings	80	100			180
Number of departments requesting postings	74	86			160
Website home page articles	3	2			5
Facebook posts	30	32			30
Twitter "tweets"	16	44			60
Open records requests	7	9			16

Public Information and Outreach activities (2Q)**Library program activities**

- Submitted agency records retention recertification packet, 2/13/2014
- Sylvia attended Texas Government Social Media Alliance meeting. 2/28/2014
- Sylvia attended State Agency Council Meeting for Women in Texas Government, 2/4/2014

Conferences

- Sylvia and Molly attended Texas Fire Chief's Conference in San Marcos, 2/18/2014

Other Activities

- Safety Committee Meetings
 - 2/17/14
 - 3/17/14
- Launched 2014 customer satisfaction survey, 3/10/14

**Information Technology Section
2nd Quarter Report
Commission Meeting**

In this quarter

Applications/Projects

- Continued working on FARM/FIDO
- Continued work on Training module
- Began work on disaster recovery plans (as per new law)
- Began working on new agency security plan (as per new law)

Infrastructure

- New systems support specialist started
- Deployed network security system
- Deployed mobile device management system
- Configured new backup systems
- Consolidated servers to align with licensing
- Deployed new computer update service

Education

- Bruce going to IRM class (TAC 202)
- Amanda working on project management classes
- Mohammed attended PHP class

Inter-agency initiatives

- Acted as small agency representative for tablet study by DIR as required by legislation
- Participated on state-wide committee on drafting the new TAC 202, Information Security Rules under DIR

18. Discussion and possible action on matters from the Executive Director.

- C. Status of online testing program and agreement with Performance Training Systems, Inc. (PTS).**