



*A cooperative effort of*  
**Porterville College**  
*and the*  
**South Valley  
Training Officers'  
Association**



# Porterville College Firefighter I Academy

# CADET MANUAL



California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
***Office of the State Fire Marshal***

# ACCREDITED



## **Introduction**

The Porterville College Firefighter I Academy is "ACCREDITED" by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Office of the California State Fire Marshal. As such, it will be conducted to standards established by CDF/SFM, and persons attending shall be expected to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this manual. Cadets who successfully complete this Academy may indicate on fire service job applications that they attended a California State Fire Marshal "ACCREDITED" Firefighter I Academy.

### **Academy Staff:**

#### **Academy Administrator**

Mr. Tim Brown, Division Chair, Career and Technical Education, Porterville College

#### **Academy Coordinator**

Mario Garcia, Chief (Retired) – Porterville Fire Department

#### **Academy Instructors and Instructor Assistants**

Fire Officers and Firefighters from fire departments in Tulare, Kings and Kern Counties

### **Training Location:**

The Firefighter I Academy will be conducted at the Porterville Fire Department Regional Training Facility, located behind fire station #2, at 500 N. Newcomb in Porterville, CA.

### **Hours of Operation:**

The Fire Academy will meet Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights from 1745-2200 hours and on Saturdays and Sundays from 0700-1700 hours. Training hours may be adjusted to fit special circumstances.

Cadets will receive an Academy schedule, and Academy staff will give advance notice of any time and/or location change. It is the responsibility of each cadet to note changes on their copy of the schedule and to know the date, time, and location of all classes or field drills.

### **Pre-class reading assignments:**

There will be no formal reading assignments given in advance of classes. Cadets are responsible for looking ahead at the class schedule and studying pertinent sections of the required textbooks before each subject area is presented. Classroom and field instruction will build upon the introductory material presented in the textbooks, and course examinations will include questions related to textbook material.

### **Special Requirements for Admission**

In addition to meeting all general entry requirements for students at Porterville College, Academy Cadets must also meet other specific requirements:

- \* EMT-I and Fire P101 "Fire Protection Organization" (or equivalent)
- \* Medical Evaluation and SCBA Fit Testing
- \* Ability to participate in rigorous physical exercise and training
- \* Ability to provide required Personal Protective Equipment (Turnouts)
- \* Ability to commute to training sites

### **Personal Information Sheets:**

Each Cadet will complete a biographical information sheet. This sheet will assist instructors in becoming acquainted with the Cadets and in making lessons more applicable.

## Confidential Cadet Medical Information form:

Each Cadet will complete a Confidential Cadet Medical Information form. This document shall be sealed in an envelope maintained by Academy staff and only opened for the purpose of emergency notification and medical assistance if a Cadet becomes ill or injured.

## Medical Evaluation:

This Academy is rigorous and physically challenging. Cadets will also be required to use a tight-fitting positive pressure respirator (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus). As such each Cadet MUST be evaluated by a physician and cleared to participate. Prospective Cadets will receive three documents related to this requirement: A *Firefighter Physical Agility Handbook*, *Firefighter Recruit Medical Evaluation* guide, and a *Cadet Medical Release* form.

To be eligible to participate in this Academy, prospective Cadets must take these documents to a physician, at their expense. The physician must review the documents, conduct an appropriate physical examination, and complete the *Cadet Medical Release* form. Those who receive a “Not Recommended” rating from the physician will not be allowed to participate in the Academy. Prospective Cadets must bring the completed form with them to the first day of class.

Cadets who do not have personal physicians, should go to a medical group that specializes in “Industrial” or “Sports” medicine for the medical evaluation.

**EXCEPTION:** This requirement may be waived for prospective Cadets who are active firefighters and can provide documentation that, within the past 12 months, they have been medically evaluated and deemed fit for duty. Two forms of documentation will be accepted: A copy of a fire department SCBA fit-test card, issued in the past 12 months OR a letter on fire department letterhead, signed by an authorized department official, which states that a medical evaluation has been completed and passed in the last 12 months. This documentation will be due the first day of the Academy.

## Attendance

Cadets are expected to report for training on the first day, and every day thereafter, on time, in the proper uniform and ready for work. Cadets reporting in improper uniforms, or missing equipment or materials, will be considered not ready for work and therefore tardy. The classroom and “drill” uniforms are outlined in Appendix A. Cadets will be advised in advance if they are to report to class in other than the classroom uniform.

## Tardiness

Cadets must allow ample time to travel to the various training locations so they will arrive on time. **Vehicle breakdown, traffic congestion or climatic conditions are not valid reasons for being tardy.** Being late for class is a serious breach of conduct and will be dealt with accordingly. Each instance of tardiness will require completion and submission of a “Late To Class” form by the offender. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in formal disciplinary action and, if habitual, may result in dismissal from the Academy.

## Absences

Absences deprive the Cadet of information necessary for the successful completion of the Academy. Unexcused absence will be grounds for dismissal from the Academy. Cadets should not make appointments, take vacations, schedule work or otherwise plan absences that will interfere with the Academy. Severe illness, or death in the immediate family, will generally be the only acceptable reasons for missing a class. All unplanned absences require completion and submission of an “Excused Absence Request” form upon return to class. This form must also be completed in advance should a Cadet wish to request an excused absence for some other extraordinary reason. The Academy Coordinator will have sole authority to grant or deny the request.

**A word of warning...** Cadets who are Volunteer, Reserve, Seasonal or Paid firefighters are expected to be in class. Response to routine medical emergencies, structure or vehicle fires,

traffic accidents, etc., or VOLUNTARILY accepting an extended “out of county” assignment, is not grounds for being tardy or absent. If a Cadet is ordered to respond or work as the result of an EXTRAORDINARY emergency event, and is tardy or misses a class, the Cadet must submit a letter from a fire department supervisor explaining the circumstances. The Academy Coordinator may or may not grant an excused absence. Failure to heed this warning may result in dismissal!

### **Make Up Work:**

This Academy has an extremely tight schedule. Each subject is presented ONCE, and will not be repeated. State Fire Marshal required manipulative drills and skills testing, in particular, can require substantial set up of props and use of fire department training facilities, and it is not feasible to ask our instructors to attempt to repeat these kinds of sessions. For these reasons, Cadets must make every effort to attend every class. If the Academy Coordinator determines that a Cadet has missed a critical element that cannot be otherwise made up, the Cadet maybe immediate dismissed from the Academy.

On the rare occasion where a Cadet must miss a lecture class, due to severe illness for example, the Company Captain shall collect copies of any class handout materials for the absent Cadet. It is the individual Cadet’s responsibility to contact their Company Captain to get any materials and information distributed during their absence.

### **Academy Standards**

The firefighter’s job today is highly complex and requires skill, knowledge, and abilities which can only be gained through a mature approach to learning. There will be a lot to learn in an adequate, but short, time. Cadets will be required to participate physically and mentally 100% of the time in all activities. While there will be an element of personal risk associated with some of the training events, the Academy instructors are professional firefighters who will adhere to safety and other guidelines to ensure that training is conducted in a manner that minimizes risk, yet provides for a realistic training experience.

Inspections, exams, and evaluations will be conducted frequently to assure that Cadets are meeting the necessary standards. Disregard for, or inability to meet, Porterville College Fire Academy standards will be cause for immediate corrective action up to, and including, dismissal.

As detailed below, Cadets will adhere to the standards established for these general areas:

- \* Cadet Code of Honor
- \* Chain of Command
- \* Simple Discipline
- \* Progressive Discipline
- \* Personal Appearance
- \* Personal Conduct
- \* Interpersonal relationships
- \* Academic performance
- \* Physical performance

### **Cadet Code of Honor**

1. *Cadets will neither cheat nor lie.*
2. *No Cadet shall plagiarize the writings of another person to complete an assignment.*
3. *Cadets shall not offer or otherwise willfully allow their examination answer sheets or written assignments to be viewed by others.*
4. *Cadets shall not offer or otherwise willfully allow their own written assignments to be copied by others.*
5. *Cadets shall not seek nor receive answers from other Cadets or possess covert notes prior to or during an examination.*
6. *Any viewing of another Cadet’s answer sheet during an examination, for whatever purpose, shall be deemed as cheating.*
7. *Any other behavior which can reasonably be construed as cheating, will be deemed as such.*
8. *Any Cadet witnessing any of the violations of this code of honor is honor bound to report such activity to the instructor or the Academy Coordinator.*

## Chain of Command:

Cadets will be grouped into “Companies” and the Academy Coordinator will appoint one Cadet Company Captain for each group. The number of Companies will be dictated by the number of Cadets enrolled, but there are typically six companies.

Two Cadet Battalion Chiefs will also be appointed and serve as the overall Academy class leaders. Once appointed, these officers will serve for the duration of the Academy, but may be replaced at any time at the discretion of the Academy Coordinator.

This chart outlines the expected Academy Chain of Command.

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES	AUTHORITY
Academy Coordinator	1. Overall operation of the Academy	1. Set the Academy schedule 2. Hire Instructors 3. Mediate Disputes 4. Remove Cadets from Academy 5. Appoint Academy Cadet Officers
Academy Instructors	1. Take Direction from Academy Coordinator 2. Provide quality instruction 3. Provide direction to Cadets 4. Provide for safety of Cadets 5. Coordinate through Cadet Battalion Chief	1. Maintain decorum of Academy 2. Mediate in-class disputes 3. Provide discipline as appropriate 4. Take action as necessary in absence of Academy Coordinator
Cadet Battalion Chiefs	1. Take direction from and coordinate with Academy Coordinator and Academy Instructors 3. Lead Cadet Activities, i.e.: class formations, etc. 4. Distribute handouts to the Captains 5. Collect homework assignments from Company Captains 6. Collect memos to the Coordinator	1. Report issues to Coordinator/Staff 2. Maintain decorum of Academy 3. Direct Captains and Cadets in assigned tasks 4. Appoint acting Captains in absence of Academy Coordinator 5. Provides discipline for minor infractions during class
Cadet Company Captain	1. Follow directions of ALL above 2. Distributes & collects handouts from Cadets in their Company 3. Leads their Company in drills, exercises and class formations. 4. Assists Company Cadets with makeup information for missed classes	1. Report Company related issues to Cadet Battalion Chief 2. Direct Company in assigned tasks 3. Maintains decorum of Company 4. Provides discipline for minor infractions during class
Cadets	1. Follow instructions of Academy Coordinator, Instructional Staff, Academy Battalion Chiefs and Company Captains at all times	1. Has full authority of Captain if placed in “acting Captain” role

## Simple Discipline

The Academy Coordinator, Instructors, Cadet Battalion Chiefs and Cadet Company Captains will use simple discipline to address minor infractions that occur during classroom or field training sessions.

Infractions are such things as being a minute late for class after a break, failure to remove a ball cap upon entering the classroom, not lining up in formation properly, talking out of turn, etc.

Doing 25 pushups or running in place for 30 seconds are examples of “simple discipline”.

Simple discipline does not, however, replace the need for the Cadet Officers or Instructors to advise the Academy Coordinator when minor infractions by a Cadet are becoming habitual, or that simple discipline is not resolving an ongoing issue with a particular Cadet or Company.

## Progressive Discipline

### Philosophy:

The Academy staff will employ only those rules and disciplinary protocols necessary to ensure a safe, courteous and functional learning environment. Cadets are expected to collectively discipline themselves so that external discipline is not necessary. It is the intent of the Academy Staff to work with each individual to provide every possibility for success. However, Academy Staff will document, counsel and discipline on a progressive basis to ensure that Cadets who do not meet the expected standards are not allowed to remain in the program. A Cadet who falls below standard can expect corrective action. Outlined below are the levels of discipline used in this Academy.

### Verbal Warning:

A verbal warning may be issued for any infraction. The warning is issued when an instructor, staff member or Cadet Officer believes it necessary to correct a minor problem.

### Notice of Special Counseling:

This written notice is used to advise the Cadet of an obvious negative trend in conduct and/or performance. The intent is to document concern and to cause dialogue and agreement on the proper route to improved performance. The Academy Staff issues the notice.

### Written Reprimand:

This written letter is used to document a serious breach of conduct or performance. The Academy Coordinator issues written reprimands, with copies to the Cadet's Fire Chief if he or she is being sponsored by a fire department). The intent is to notify the Cadet of disciplinary action for cause as noted in the letter. Cadets receiving such notice are being warned that further breach of conduct or performance will not be tolerated and any further such activity will place their continued attendance in question.

### Termination:

Failure to meet all standards of the Academy will result in termination from the Academy. The Academy Coordinator issues termination letters, with a copy to the Cadet's sponsoring Fire Chief if applicable. The Academy Coordinator's decision to terminate a Cadet is administratively final; however, the terminated Cadet may appeal the decision to the Academy Administrator.

## Personal Appearance

### Uniforms:

**Appendix A** describes the Academy uniform. Cadets are expected to report to all training sessions in the appropriate uniform as established by the Academy Staff. "Appropriate uniform" means that the uniform components are correct AND in presentable condition.

### Personal Protective Equipment:

**Appendix B** describes the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worn during the Academy. Cadets are expected to report to each training session with all PPE ready for immediate use. Academy Staff will indicate when it is appropriate to wear PPE, and indicate the type to be used during specific training sessions. Personal Protective Equipment is to be kept clean and in safe working condition at all times.

### Grooming:

**Hair** will be neatly trimmed, well groomed and clean. Length is optional but will be properly secured back, up off the collar, and not covering the ear. Hair will be styled so as not to interfere with the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) face piece seal or other personal protective equipment. No items are to be worn in the hair that may injure the wearer when the helmet is worn. There are evolutions which require the helmet to be removed and replaced in a timely manner. Academy Staff STRONGLY recommends you consider this in your selection of hairstyles. Sideburns may extend no lower than the midpoint of the ear. Cadets may have no facial hair except a mustache. Mustaches must be neatly trimmed, and may not extend below the corners of the mouth. Hair or mustaches MUST NOT interfere with the SCBA face piece seal.

## **Jewelry**

Because of the intense manipulative nature of the Academy, necklaces, bracelets, (Medic-alert excepted) body piercing, and other decorative jewelry are not to be worn. Small stud earrings, at the discretion of the coordinator, may be worn to maintain patency of the pierced ear. Watches are recommended.

## **Personal Cleanliness**

Cadets will report to training clean and well groomed. Hands and fingernails are to be kept clean. Fingernails MUST be kept short to avoid injury to the Cadet and others.

## **Personal Conduct**

### **Smoking:**

Smoking is not permitted in a school, County, or City building or vehicle. Cadets may smoke only on designated breaks and in designated areas. Cigarette butts are to be disposed of in proper receptacles and NOT tossed on the ground, etc.

### **Chewing Tobacco:**

Chewing tobacco will be under the same restrictions as smoking. Cadets who chew will only deposit the chewed tobacco in a proper container and then dispose of it in a sanitary manor. Spitting in facility trash receptacles or on facility grounds is prohibited.

### **Drugs, Alcohol, Etc.:**

The use of alcohol during the hours of operation or within sufficient time to impair the Cadet's ability to perform is cause for immediate dismissal.

The use of drugs or other controlled substances at any time is cause for immediate dismissal. The use of prescription drugs is to be cleared through Academy Staff.

### **Horseplay:**

While Cadets are encouraged to show enthusiasm and spirit, horseplay and destruction of property will not be tolerated. In addition to disciplinary action, each cadet is responsible to provide full financial reimbursement for damaged property whether public, private or personal.

### **Theft:**

Any theft, of anything, anytime, will be grounds for immediate dismissal.

### **Automobile Use and Parking:**

Operation of vehicles to and from training sites shall be in accordance with all applicable laws. Cadet are to park in areas identified by Academy staff, both at the Porterville Fire Training Facility and at each off-site training location.

Also note: While car-pooling is encouraged, Cadets should pick their car pool partners carefully as tardiness will affect all members of the carpool, regardless of who is driving.

### **Cell phones, pagers, etc.:**

The use of cell phones, pagers, or similar electronic devices during classroom or field hours, including normal breaks, is PROHIBITED. The devices may be used during dinner or lunch breaks only. All devices are to be turned off or set to silent mode. This prohibition also applies to fire department pagers.

Because of the potential for these devices to get wet or smashed during training, Cadets would do well to leave the devices locked in their vehicles during class hours.

Cadets who have spouses about to give birth, a serious family illness or other extenuating circumstances, may seek permission from Academy staff to monitor their cell phones/pagers and make phone calls during times other than the lunch or dinner breaks. Phones are to be set to silent mode and calls received or made from outside the instructional area so as not to interfere with the class.

## Individual Training Record:

Each cadet will receive a copy of the State Fire Marshal Fire Fighter I training record. Cadets are to bring this document with them to each class, including Saturday field days. The instructor will sign-off the completed tasks. It is each Cadet's responsibility to keep the training record current, and subjects signed off as the Academy progresses. The training record will be reviewed before graduation for completeness. **DO NOT LOSE IT!**

## Interpersonal Standards

### Courtesy:

Cadets will treat each other, and the Academy Staff, with the utmost courtesy and respect. Discrimination or harassment in any form will not be tolerated. The terms "his", "he", "her", or "she" used in this or any training document will apply to all employees regardless of gender.

### Classroom Conduct:

- The classroom environment is important to proper learning. Therefore, the following rules of classroom conduct will apply:
- Cadets are to be in the classroom on time. To be considered **on time** the Cadet shall be in his/her assigned seat, with all necessary materials, and wearing the proper uniform.
- Conversation is to be left at the door. Once in the classroom, the Cadets will remain quiet unless asking or answering a question, or unless involved in general discussion **as directed** by the instructor.
- Cadets will address the instructors by their rank and last name until told differently by that individual, e.g. "Captain Smith", "Engineer Thompson" etc.
- Affirmative and negative questions asked by the instructors or higher-ranking officials will be answered; "yes sir", "yes ma'am", "no sir", "no ma'am" etc.
- Cadets may request to ask a question or make a comment by raising their hand and addressing the instructor appropriately.
- All Cadet materials are to be removed from the classroom at the end of each day of instruction.
- Cadet companies will alternate cleaning the classroom as directed.
- Unless specifically approved by the Academy staff, **no food or drinks**, except bottled water, are **allowed in the classroom**.

### Conduct in the Field:

- During field exercises, the following conduct will be followed:
- Cadets are to be at the training site on time and prepared to perform.
- Areas will be designated for the cadets to meet the instructor.
- At approach by the instructor or the coordinator, the cadets will line up in company formation, and await further direction.
- Conversation is to cease once in the company formation.

### Drinking Water/Hydration:

It is critical that Cadets drink sufficient water to remain hydrated during field training sessions. Cold water (Igloo) containers will be available for use during the Academy. It will be the responsibility of the Cadet Battalion Chief and Company Captains to ensure that these containers are filled and taken to all-field training sessions. However, Cadets may be required to bring additional drinks and sack lunches for certain field training sessions. Small personal water coolers, and hydration kits such as the "Camo-Pak" are also permitted and encouraged. Sport drinks such as Gatorade are allowed, but carbonated drinks such as Pepsi or Coke, can be detrimental to proper hydration and chemical balance, and are NOT recommended.

## Academic Performance

### Objective:

The Academy staff has established a grading system, which will take into account as many variables of student learning as possible. This system will allow for short-term declination of student progress while requiring an overall high degree of student achievement.

Students are expected to set goals to strive for maximum learning. Those who work to attain only the minimum standard required are flirting with dismissal.

### Process:

The evaluation process may consist of these activities:

- \* Quizzes
- \* Manipulative tests
- \* Mid-term written examination
- \* Final written examination
- \* Mid-term Manipulative examination
- \* Final manipulative test
- \* Physical Agility test

### Testing/Retakes:

Cadets can expect to take in excess of 30 written quizzes over the course of the Academy. The minimum passing score for each quiz is 80%. Cadets who score less than 80% on a quiz will have one opportunity to retake a comparable quiz. When a quiz is retaken and passed, regardless of the score, the Cadet will be credited with only 80% of the total points possible.

Additionally, **each Cadet will be limited to retaking three quizzes.** If a fourth quiz is failed, the Cadet will be dropped from the Academy.

A written Final Exam will also be given. Cadets will have one opportunity to retake each. Failure of a retake of either will result in failure of the class and immediate dismissal. As indicated below, 70% is the required passing score for these exams.

Manipulative (Skills) exams are discussed below under "Physical Performance".

### Grades:

Each written quiz measures the Cadets comprehension of material covered in each discipline and will be scored as a percentage of points possible. The following percentages/grades apply for each discipline:

95 - 100%	= A
85 - 94%	= B
80 - 84%	= C
79- Or below	= F

These percentages/grades apply to the Final Examination and the final course grade:

91 - 100%	= A
81 - 90%	= B
70 - 80%	= C
69- Or below	= F

### Academic Counseling:

Each Cadet is encouraged and will have the opportunity to discuss educational and career goals with the Academy Coordinator and/or Academy staff. Cadets should take advantage of this opportunity to better prepare for competing in the fire service job market.

## **Physical Performance**

To be successful in the fire service, firefighters must exhibit a high degree of manipulative skill in conducting basic tasks such as donning a self-contained breathing apparatus or raising a ladder. Firefighters must also have the ability to follow directions and work as a team member.

The ability of Cadets to perform required individual and group manipulative skills will be assessed throughout the Academy. Manipulative skills tests are typically graded on a pass/fail basis, which means the Cadet must pass the test in order to remain in the Academy and graduate. There is no cumulative total points or percentage score kept for the manipulative exams. If a Cadet fails a manipulative exam, he or she will have the opportunity to practice the skill, and will have one opportunity to retest. If the Cadet does not pass the retest, he or she will be dropped from the Academy.

Physical performance, as it relates to team work and following directions, is assessed through Staff observations of how participative the Cadet is in physical activities such as field day equipment set-ups, and post-class equipment and facilities maintenance. Failure to take direction from staff or Cadet Company Officers and fully and actively participate in these activities may result in negative individual evaluations from instructors, and progressive disciplinary action by the Academy Coordinator. If improvement is not made, the Cadet may ultimately face dismissal.

## **Physical Agility/Physical Fitness**

A Physical Agility Test will normally be conducted at least twice during the Academy. This test mimics the tests commonly given by fire departments as part of their job candidate assessment process. During the Academy this test is not graded. It does, however, give Cadets an opportunity for self-assessment of their physical conditioning and should be taken seriously. Cadets should show improvement each time the agility test is taken. Failure to complete the Physical Agility test in the prescribed time is a good indicator that a Cadet will have difficulty passing graded manipulative tests, such as raising ladders or advancing hose lines, during the Academy.

Due to time constraints, physical fitness training is not an element of this Academy. However, a few group warm-up/loosening exercises will normally be conducted before beginning rigorous field activities.

Cadets should actively participate in a regular personal physical fitness program outside of Academy hours. The Physical Agility Test will assist Cadets in identifying physical weaknesses that should be addressed in their personal physical fitness program.

## **General Evaluations**

### **Instructor/Course Evaluations by Cadets:**

Cadets are required to complete an Instructor/Course Evaluation for each lead instructor and major subject area. The Academy is generally broken into one-week segments, but some weeks will contain multiple lead instructors/subject areas. Unless otherwise advised by the Coordinator, evaluations for all lead instructors/subjects for the preceding week are due each Monday at the beginning of class.

The Academy Coordinator will review these evaluations to identify strengths and weaknesses in the Fire Academy program and facilities. These evaluations are critical to our goal of maintaining a quality instructional program.

### **Individual/Company Evaluations by Instructors:**

Each lead instructor will complete an evaluation on their experience with the Cadets for each segment they instruct. This evaluation provides an opportunity for the instructors to provide positive or negative feedback to the Academy Coordinator about individual Cadets, Companies, or the Academy class as a whole. It allows the Academy Coordinator a means to monitor the conduct of the Academy, and address individual or group issues if necessary.

### **Interpretation of Academy Policies and Procedures:**

Questions regarding this Cadet Manual should be directed to the Academy Coordinator who has the final say in the interpretation and application of this document.