

REQUIREMENTS TO MEET THE 9S RATING FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION/RE-INSPECTION OF FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Pursuant to G. S. 58-2-40, and G. S. 58-36-10 (3), the Insurance Commissioner authorized the standard known as Administrative Procedures Code Section .0500, **Initial Certification/Re-Inspection of Fire Departments**. The result of this action was the development of requirements by which all rural fire departments will be certified with a 9S rating (effective 1987) for insurance grading purposes. This provides for the eligibility of the department's personnel to participate in the Fireman's Pension Fund and the Firemen's Death Benefit Act and the fire department's participation in the Firemen's Relief Fund. The "S" attached to the 9 classification designates that fire department as having met the current, minimum standards for a rated class 9 or split 9 fire department in North Carolina, (Ref.: G.S. 86-25; G.S. 58-84.1; G.S. 143-166.1).

In July, 1991, a plan was established to bring all class 9 or split 9 departments up to a level of 9S or split 9S within a three year period (please refer to the document entitled, **New Rating Plan for Class 9S Fire Districts in North Carolina** which is available through your Fire Marshal's Office or the Fire and Rescue Services Division).

The following are minimum requirements which a fire department must meet in order to meet and/or retain the 9S classification:

Fire Department Organization (Section .0503)

1. The fire department shall be incorporated under Chapter 55A of the General Statutes of North Carolina or be operated by a city, county or sanitary district as a division of that governmental unit.
2. If the fire department is incorporated, it shall operate under a contract with either a city, county or sanitary district or an combination thereof.
3. The board of county commissioners shall establish and define the area of responsibility outside of a given municipality. A map and description of the insurance fire district shall be approved by the Fire and Rescue Services Division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance. Changes in the insurance district boundaries shall be noted on an appropriate map and be approved by the Fire and Rescue Services Division (see Section .0507, Items 4 and 5 for map requirements).

Personnel (Section .0504)

1. A. A fire department shall have a minimum of 20 personnel with 18 designated as firefighters and 2 as traffic personnel **or** show through documentation that an average of 12 firefighters have responded to each of the previous 20 structure fires.

- B. Initial certification of a new fire district shall require the 20 personnel roster.
- C. Substation: If the 20-personnel option (as described in Section A above) is used, 8 additional personnel shall be added to the roster for each substation. If the average responding personnel is used by the main station, 4 additional personnel shall be required for each substation.

Meeting and Drills (Section .0505)

1. All members shall comply with the training requirements set forth in 58-86-25, which states that fire departments shall provide four hours monthly of drills and meetings, for a total of 48 hours per year. Each firefighter shall attend at least 36 hours of drills and meetings in each calendar year.
2. While it is left up to the chief of the department to determine what constitutes these 36 hours of meetings and drills, personnel are encouraged to attend as many hours as possible of actual fire training.

Alarm and Communications (Section .0506)

1. Communications must be reliable for reporting of emergencies, notifying firefighters and dispatching apparatus.
2. The system must have a telephone listing for fire emergencies that reaches a location that can receive calls and dispatch apparatus and personnel 24 hours per day.
3. The fire station shall be equipped with a siren or each listed firefighter shall be equipped with a pager capable of being toned by the central communications center.

Records and Documents (Section .0507)

A copy of the following documents should be on file in the Fire and Rescue Services Division office. If one is not on file, the inspector will obtain it at the time of inspection:

1. **Charter (Articles of Incorporation)** - indicates that the fire department is chartered as a nonprofit corporation under G.S. 55A through the Secretary of State's Office. If a municipal department operates under municipal government, they will not have a separate charter.
2. **Contract with County** - this is an agreement between the fire department and the county which gives the fire department the authority to provide fire protection in an area outside of the municipality. If the fire district operates in more than one county, a contract must be obtained from those counties.
3. **Verification by city/town** - if the fire department is chartered as a part of municipal government, there should be written verification of that recognition.
4. **Map and Description** - a current map and description of the insurance fire district with a maximum distance of five road miles from the fire station. The district should be indicated on a "one-inch equals one-mile" map which can be obtained from the North Carolina Department of Transportation.
5. **Designation of Insurance District** - a Designation form, resolution or other verification that the county commissioners have approved the boundaries of the insurance district.

6. **Roster of Active Firefighters** - this document should show the name, social security number and designation as firefighter or traffic control personnel (see Section 0504, Item 1, for personnel requirements).
7. **Service Test on Pumper** - the service test on the "first out" pumper must be complete and accurate and have been run within 12 months prior to the fire department inspection. The test should be run the full 40 minutes, form filled out and signed.
8. **Certified Weight Tickets** - weight tickets from a certified scale showing the gross (full) weight of the "first out" pumper and tanker are required. It is also recommended that all vehicles be periodically weighed.
9. **Protective Clothing Form** - if the required sets of protective clothing are not available for inspection, a notarized statement indicating the quantity and type of clothing and signed by the chief may be submitted.

The following documents will be reviewed by the inspector on the inspection site but are not needed for Fire and Rescue Services Division files.

1. **Alarm Log** - records showing the date, time, location, type of alarm and names of responding firefighters.
2. **Business Meetings** - this record should indicate the member attendance at all business meetings.
3. **Meetings and Drills** - this record should indicate that each firefighter whose name appears on the roster has had a minimum of 36 hours of meetings and drills per year.
4. **Inventory of Equipment** - this list should include equipment carried on the "first out" pumper and tanker. It is recommended that an inventory of equipment be kept on all department vehicles.
5. **Apparatus Check Off List** - thorough records should be kept on all apparatus inspections performed on "first out" pumper and tanker. Inspection forms for the previous 12 months will be reviewed and should include items such as lights, brakes, steering, tires, siren, etc.

Apparatus (Section .0508)

- A. **Pumper (Minimum Requirements)**
 1. Pumper shall be certified by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. or National Bureau of Fire Underwriters.
 2. Pumper shall be constructed in accordance with NFPA 1901, Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus.

3. Pumper shall be equipped with a GVW (gross vehicle weight) plate from the manufacturer attached to the vehicle. The vehicle shall not be loaded beyond the specified limits.
4. Pump shall be rated at not less than 750 gpm at 150 psi net pump pressure.
5. Pumper shall be equipped with a minimum 500 gallon tank.
6. As noted above, a complete and accurate service test shall be performed annually; if the pumper has been purchased within the previous twelve months, the UL certificate will meet this requirement.
7. Two, 150-foot, 1 1/2-inch pre-connected hose lines with fog nozzles attached.
8. One booster reel or three pre-connected hose lines.
9. Two, 10-foot sections suction hose - size necessary to flow the capacity of pumper.
10. Four, OSHA-approved self-contained breathing apparatus in good working condition.
11. OSHA approved (at the time of purchase) protective clothing including helmet, coat, pants, boots, gloves and hoods for all firefighters. Total number of sets of protective clothing can include reflective vests for traffic personnel (see Section 0507, Item #9 for the Protective Clothing Form provision).
12. One, 12-foot roof ladder.
13. One, 24-foot extension ladder.
14. One, axe.
15. One, crowbar (Haligan Tool can replace crowbar).
16. One, prybar (Haligan Tool can replace prybar).
17. One, pike pole.
18. Two, portable hand lights.
19. 100 feet of 1/2" rope.
20. Two, shovels.
21. Two, class B-C portable extinguishers.
22. One, first aid kit
23. One, bolt cutter.

B. Tanker (Minimum Requirements)

1. Tanker shall be equipped with a minimum of 1000 gallons capacity or enough to equal 1500 gallons total for pumper and tanker. Recommended that tanker not exceed 1500 gallons.
2. Tanker shall be equipped with necessary hose for filling tank and hose for transferring water to the pumper.
3. When fully loaded, the tanker shall not exceed the GVW limits as posted on the Gross Vehicle Weight plate located on the vehicle.
4. Tanker shall be properly baffled.

Fire Station Building (Section .0509)

Building shall be provided with suitable heating for all weather protection of required pumper and tanker.

Inspection (Section .0510)

Personnel from the Fire and Rescue Services Division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance shall conduct a field inspection to determine whether the initial certification requirements have been met. Re-inspections on all rural fire departments, insurance class 9 or split 9, will be conducted on a 3-year schedule.

For more information contact,

by mail:

North Carolina Department of Insurance
Office of State Fire Marshal
Mail Service Center 1202
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1202

or visit:

North Carolina Department of Insurance
Office of State Fire Marshal
322 Chapanoke Road, Suite 200
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

Telephone number: (919) 661-5880

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Fire Insurance District Mapping Requirements

1. Individual district maps must be consistent within county (either GIS generated or hand-drawn).
2. District boundaries must be clearly defined. (A point on every road where the district line crosses).
3. Map must be scale to 1" or 2" equals one mile.
4. Scale must be identified on map.
5. Roads must be identified by legible state road numbers.
6. Fire stations location must be plainly marked.
7. A written description must accompany the district map.
8. If a portion of the fire insurance district extends into another county, the district boundaries at the county line must be compatible.

NOTE: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A MAP LIES WITH THE COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL OR FIRE CHIEF. THE APPROVAL OF THAT MAP LIES WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE WHOSE STAFF WILL DRAW MAPS ONLY IN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

FIRE PROTECTION DEFINITIONS

1. **Response District**

The area which a fire department responds to and provides protection. May not be a "Legal District". Could simply be a gentlemen's agreement. Not registered. Not recorded. No Limit. Can be made legal by presenting to "County".

2. **Insurance District (G.S. 153A-233)**

THIS IS WHAT 9S REQUIRES

An area outside corporate limits with boundaries approved by the County Board of Commissioners for fire insurance grading purposes. Cannot overlap and cannot extend more than 5 miles from the station. An "insurance district" is not supported by either a referendum type fire tax (G.S. 69-25) or a special service district tax (G.S. 150A-300).

3. **Rural Fire Protection District (G.S. 69-25)**

An area outside corporate limits with boundaries designed by petition of 35% of the resident free-holders in which a fire tax not to exceed .15 per \$100 valuation has been authorized by the resident qualified voters within the district.

4. **Fire Service District (G.S. 150A-300)**

An area outside corporate limits with boundaries approved by the County Board of Commissioners in which a fire tax is levied without referendum for fire protection services. Such district or districts may include territory within corporate limits if approved by resolution of the municipal governing body.

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING FORM

I, _____, Fire Chief of the
_____ Fire Department,
do hereby certify that the Fire Department has the following inventory of Protective Clothing:

Nomex(or equivalent) _____
Coats _____ Pants _____

PBI(or equivalent) _____
Coats _____ Pants _____

Traffic Control / Reflective Vests _____

Total # Helmets _____

Total # Pr. Gloves _____

Total # Pr. Boots _____

Total # Hoods _____

Minimum number of **complete outfits** available from the totals above: _____
(1 Complete Outfit = 1-Coat, 1-pair Pants, 1-Helmet, 1-pair Boots, 1-pair Gloves & 1-Hood)

Date: _____ Signed: _____
(Fire Chief signature)

Witness my Hand and Seal, this the _____ day of _____, 20_____.

_____ (Seal)

My Commission Expires: _____

FIRE MARSHAL & COUNTY MANAGER CONTACT SHEET

County: _____

Please provide the name, address, daytime telephone number, email & fax number for the following:

Fire Marshal: _____ Phone: (____) _____

_____ Fax: (____) _____
_____ Email: _____

County Manager: _____ Phone: (____) _____

_____ Fax: (____) _____
_____ Email: _____

VERIFICATION FROM MUNICIPALITY RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Volunteer Fire Department of the Town of _____
serves as an Agency of the Town; and

WHEREAS, The Volunteer Fire Department of the Town of _____
has requested confirmation of this Agency relationship; and

WHEREAS, This Agency's relationship is long-standing and generally acknow-
ledged.

NOW, THEREFORE, Be it resolved, that the Town of _____ does hereby
confirm this Agency's relationship and does verify by this
Resolution that relationship.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

ATTEST:

Clerk

Mayor

RESOLUTION

For Approval of Insurance District Boundaries

NORTH CAROLINA

_____ COUNTY

Upon motion by Commissioner _____, seconded by Commissioner _____, RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the County of _____ approve the boundary lines of the _____ Fire Insurance District in accordance with the maps and description filed this date with the Board of County Commissioners and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Said _____ Fire Insurance District being described as follows:

NORTH CAROLINA

_____ COUNTY

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of excerpt from the Minutes of the Board of County Commissioners of _____ County, adopted this the _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Clerk to the Board

(SEAL)

_____ FIRE DEPARTMENT
WEEKLY CHECK-OFF LIST

Month of

Truck #

	1 ST WK	2 ND WK	3 RD WK	4 TH WK	5 TH WK
Radiator Level					
Fan Belts					
Oil Level					
Check Battery					
Tires					
Ignition					
Does Engine Misfire					
Road Test / Transmission					
Clutch Working Properly					
Brakes					
Steering					
Windshield Wipers					
Fuel					
Siren					
Horn					
Radio Check					
All Lights					
Pump Shift					
Water Level					
Relief Valve					
Transfer Valve					
Check Gauges					
Check Primer & Oil					
Valves Movable					
Initial & Date Inspected					

Remarks:

Borrowing/Sharing of Equipment to Satisfy NC RRS Survey Requirements

North Carolina Fire Suppression Ratings Schedule (NCFRSRS) will be used for the purpose of determining Fire Insurance District Ratings Classifications.

The sharing or borrowing of equipment between fire departments, between stations within a department or apparatus for the purpose of falsely satisfying the apparatus/equipment grading score of a NC RRS survey, is strictly prohibited and will be considered **fraud**.

Any department determined to have **borrowed** equipment for the purpose of manipulating the apparatus/equipment score for NC RRS survey purposes will be placed on **probation**, following an investigation*** confirming such actions. The period of probation shall be a minimum of 12 consecutive calendar months commencing at such time deemed appropriate by OSFM. There will be a loss of survey credit equaling 20% of the score attained from the survey records; Hose Tests, Apparatus Service Tests, Hydrant Inspections and Training provided by the chief of the department.

Any department determined, following an investigation,*** to have **provided/loaned** equipment to another department for the purpose of the falsifying apparatus/equipment scores of the department being graded, will be immediately scheduled for an NC RRS survey update visit at the earliest possible date. This department will also be subjected to the same 20% reduction in survey credit received, from the chief's records, for these actions.

***The investigation will be initiated by OSFM and may be turned over to the NC SBI if warranted by findings of OSFM.

Retrogression Policy

Following evaluation of information and data collected during an NC RRS survey site visit, where the results indicate the fire department has retrogressed in Class Rating, the following must occur.

Tim Bradley, Senior Deputy Commissioner will notify the appropriate City/Fire Department officials, informing them of the Retrogression.

Information to be included within the written notification to the fire department officials shall include:

Hydrant Flow Tests/Hauled Water Evaluations
Current Classification Detail
Improvement Statements.

The City/Fire Department official must notify the Senior Deputy Commissioner, in writing, within 30 days of the Retrogression letter of the desire to retain their Previous Ratings Classification.

The current Ratings Classification will become effective, per established schedule, if **no** written notification is received within the 30 day time frame.

If required written notification is received, a letter from the Senior Deputy Commissioner will be forwarded to the City/Fire Department officials acknowledging the departments' desire to retain the Previous Ratings Classification. In this letter the department will be instructed to contact the Inspector, assigned to this survey, and to develop a "Plan of Action" for use in the attempt to retain the Previous Ratings Classification.

The time limit, for development and submission to OSFM for review and acceptance, of the "Plan of Action" will be 90 days from the date of the acknowledgment letter sent to the City/Fire Department officials.

The City/Fire Department officials will be notified, in writing, once the proposed "Plan of Action" is received and approved by OSFM.

Depending upon the identified needs addressed in the approved "Plan of Action", time limits for achieving the desired results will be established by OSFM on a case by case basis. Up to 12 months, as deemed necessary by OSFM, may be allowed to attain the defined goals of the approved "Plan of Action".

Non-Response Policy

North Carolina Fire Suppression Ratings Schedule (FSRS) will be used for the purpose of determining Fire Insurance District Ratings Classifications.

The department shall have sufficient membership to assure the response of at least 4 members and 1 Engine to all fires and fire alarms in structures. The chief may be one of the 4 responding members.”

Therefore, the **minimum** acceptable response to a structure fire/alarm will be 1 Engine and 4 firefighters.

Response of a fire department, as primary first alarm department, to a structural fire/alarm within its established fire insurance district with less than the minimum required Engine or manpower will be considered by OSFM to be a “Non-Response”.

Any department determined to have 2 or more “Non-Response” alarm records will be placed on **probation** for a period of 12 months.

To exit probationary status; the department must submit to the OSFM Inspection Division complete copies of all structural fire/alarm response records, without any additional “non-responses”, for a 12 consecutive calendar month period established by OSFM.