

# **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 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).

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

## **Fire Department Organization**

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 Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) 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 Office of State Fire Marshal.

## **Personnel**

- 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 averages of 12 firefighters have responded to each of the previous 20 structure fires.
- B. All certified firefighters shall be a minimum of 18 years of age. **Junior firefighters or firefighters under the age of 18 will not count toward the required minimum needed 20 personnel.**
- C. Initial certification of a new fire district shall require the 20 personnel roster.
- D. **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.

- E. Each fire department shall assure the response of at least four members and one engine to all fires and fire alarms in structures. The chief may be one of the four responding members. Response of a fire department, as primary first alarm department, to a fire or fire alarm in a structure within its established fire insurance district with less than the minimum required engine or manpower shall be considered by the OSFM to be a Non-Response. Any department determined by the OSFM to have two or more "Non-Response" records shall be placed by the OSFM on probation for a period of 12 months. A fire department on probation shall submit quarterly to the OSFM inspector all fire and fire alarm in structure response records for the next 12 consecutive calendar months that show there have been no additional "non-responses" within that 12 month period. If the fire department fails to submit the quarterly report, the insurance district for the fire department shall be designated a "Class 10" by the OSFM.

### **Meeting and Drills**

1. All members shall comply with the training requirements set forth in G.S. 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. ***The chief officer of each fire department shall within one year of appointment complete a class on basic management of fire department operations and records approved by the North Carolina Fire Commission for chief officer.***
3. 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**

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 and/or each listed firefighter shall be equipped with a pager capable of being toned by the central communications center.

### **Records and Documents**

A copy of the following documents should be on file in the Office of State Fire Marshal. 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 Governing body 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 hand drawn map and written description or a GIS computer generated map of its initial or revised fire district. For Rural Districts a maximum distance of five road miles (9S), or 6 road miles (9E) from the fire station applies. For Municipal Districts a maximum distance of five road miles from the fire station(s) applies. The district's approved boundary must be indicated on the map.
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. **Incident Reporting** - *Whenever the fire department responds to a fire, a chief of that department shall complete or cause to be completed a fire incident report on the current version of the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). Refer to [www.nfirs.fema.gov](http://www.nfirs.fema.gov).*
7. **Roster of Active Firefighters** - this document should show the name, and designation as firefighter or traffic control personnel.
8. **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.
9. **Certified Weight Tickets** - weight tickets, with weighmaster signature completed within 12 months prior to the fire department inspection, 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.
10. **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 Office of State Fire Marshal files.

1. **Alarm Log** - records showing the date, time, location, type of alarm and names of responding firefighters.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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

### 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; nor shall the vehicle be modified in a manner that would invalidate this certification..
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. 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 proper working condition.
11. OSHA approved (at the time of purchase) protective clothing including helmet, coat, pants, boots, gloves and hoods for all firefighters and reflective clothing and helmet for traffic control personnel.
12. One, 12-foot or 14-foot roof ladder.
13. One, 24-foot or 35-foot extension ladder.
14. One, axe.
15. One, claw tool (Haligan Tool can replace claw tool and crowbar).
16. One, crowbar (Haligan Tool can replace crow bar and claw tool).
17. One, pike pole, minimum of 8 feet
18. Two, portable hand lights. ("4V" wet or "6V" dry)
19. 100 feet of rope, minimum of 1/2 inch.
20. Two, shovels.
21. Two, 20 pound, class B-C portable extinguishers.
22. One, first aid kit
23. One, bolt cutter, 14 inches or longer.

**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.
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; nor shall the vehicle be modified in a manner that would invalidate this certification.
4. Tanker shall be properly baffled in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1901 – Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus which is available from the National Fire Protection Association.

**Fire Station Building**

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

**Inspection**

Personnel from the Inspections Division of the Office of State Fire Marshal 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 fire departments, insurance class 9 or split 9, will be conducted on a 5-year schedule.

For more information contact,

by mail:

or visit:

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

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. Boundaries defining the area of responsibility shall be established by a County Board of Commissioners for areas outside of municipalities pursuant to G.S. 153A-233.
2. The Fire Department shall provide the OSFM with a hand drawn map and written description or a GIS computer generated map of its initial or revised district.
  - Individual district maps must be consistent within county (either GIS generated or hand-drawn).
3. District boundaries must be clearly defined. (A point on every road where the district line crosses).
4. Scale must be identified on map.
5. Roads should be identified by legible state road numbers or name.
6. Fire stations location must be plainly marked.
7. 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 6 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. 153A-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.



## **SIX MILE INSURANCE DISTRICT**

To extend its insurance district to six miles, each fire department shall apply and meet the following criteria:

- (1) The fire department shall provide the OSFM with a hand drawn map and written description or a GIS computer generated map of its fire district.
- (2) The map and written description shall be presented to the County Commissioners for their approval, as set forth in G.S. 153A-233.
- (3) The department applying to extend its insurance district to six miles shall enter into a written automatic aid contract with the adjoining districts specifying that “an apparatus capable of transporting” a minimum of 1000 gallons of water shall be dispatched simultaneously with the department whose district the incident is occurring within.
- (4) The County shall establish automatic aid protocols. These protocols shall be maintained at the county communication center and shall be used on all alarms involving reported structure fires.

# **STANDARDS AND POLICIES**

The NCFRS shall be used by the OSFM when the OSFM inspects fire departments for the purpose of determining Fire Insurance District Ratings Classifications. Each fire department shall assure the response of at least four members and one engine to all fires and fire alarms in structures. The chief may be one of the four responding members. Response of a fire department, as primary first alarm department, to a fire or fire alarm in a structure within its established fire insurance district with less than the minimum required engine or manpower shall be considered by the OSFM to be a Non-Response. Any department determined by the OSFM to have two or more "Non-Response" records shall be deemed Non-Compliant by the OSFM for a period of 12 months. A fire department deemed Non-Compliant shall submit quarterly to their assigned OSFM inspector copies of all structure fire and fire alarm response records for the next 12 consecutive calendar months to verify there have been no additional "non-responses". If the fire department fails to submit the quarterly report, or there are additional instances of "non-response", the insurance district shall be designated a "Class 10" by the OSFM.

After evaluation of data collected during an NCFRS inspection, if the results of the inspection indicate that a fire department's ratings classification must be reduced, OSFM shall notify the city or county manager or fire department chief or county fire marshal in writing of the reduction in ratings classification. The notification shall include:

- (1) Hydrant flow tests and hauled water evaluations.
- (2) Ratings classification details.
- (3) Recommendations for improvement.

If the city or county manager or fire department chief or county fire marshal fails to acknowledge receipt with 30 days after receipt of the notification, the OSFM shall reduce the ratings classification of the fire department.

If the city or county manager or fire department chief or county fire marshal acknowledges receipt of the notification to the OSFM within 30 days after receipt of the notification and advises the OSFM that the fire department wants to retain its ratings classification, the city or county manager or fire department chief or county fire marshal shall consult with the individual who conducted the NCFERS inspection and develop a plan to correct the deficiencies that caused the reduction in ratings classification. Within 90 days after the consultation, the city or county manager or fire department chief or county fire marshal shall submit the plan to the OSFM which shall determine whether the plan is satisfactory to cover the deficiencies. The OSFM shall notify the city or county manager or fire department chief or county fire marshal in writing when the OSFM approves the plan.

The fire department shall have one year after the receipt of the approval to complete the plan to correct the deficiencies that caused the reduction in ratings classification.

The sharing or borrowing of equipment between or among fire departments or between or among stations within a fire department, the falsifying of documents, or engaging in any other act of misrepresentation, for the purpose of falsely satisfying the apparatus/equipment grading score of a NCFERS inspection is prohibited.

# **Sample Forms**

# 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 acknowledged.

**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 <sup>ST</sup> WK	2 <sup>ND</sup> WK	3 <sup>RD</sup> WK	4 <sup>TH</sup> WK	5 <sup>TH</sup> 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:









