

California State Fire Training Streamlines Certification Testing with Acadis

**CALIFORNIA
STATE FIRE**



TRAINING

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Brandon Erickson

National Accreditation and Certification
Exam Manager

California oversees the Professional Certification procedures for its fire service personnel.

California State Fire Training (SFT) is a division within the CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) that manages certifications while providing standardized training and education for the nation’s most populous state.

Despite maintaining a staff of just 15 personnel, SFT is responsible for delivering course plans, setting standards, and tracking Professional Certifications for all fire service personnel in the state.

To better serve the California fire service, SFT accredits Instructors, Community Colleges, and fire departments to deliver courses and certifications.

SFT’s previous paper-based system caused challenges when issuing students their test results. Brandon Erickson, national accreditation and certification exam manager for SFT, explained, “Our processing times for certificates used to be upwards of 12 weeks, and processing test results had the same time frame.”

SFT recognized the need for a more modern, streamlined approach to reduce administrative time and provide a more digital, accessible registration and certification process for its stakeholders statewide.





Saving Admin Time with Online Registration

SFT turned to the [Acadis® Readiness Suite](#) to streamline course registration with a digitized approach.

When a Registered Instructor or Accredited Academy wants to offer an SFT course, they simply request to deliver it through a web form within Acadis. Once submitted, SFT staff reviews and approves the request based on the criteria set in the course plan and compliance with the State Fire Training Procedures Manual.

Through a deferred enrollment option in Acadis, SFT enables instructors and hosts to register students externally, enroll them in the system after training is completed, process the end-of-course results, and issue diplomas for a smoother, more efficient approach.

“We’ve significantly improved our processing times, reducing what used to take one to three months for these services to less than five business days. In the case of Certification Exam results, it’s instant,” Brandon described.

With the increased efficiency provided by Acadis, SFT staff can dedicate more time to supporting their stakeholders, remediating training issues, providing career counseling, and offering other types of program assistance.

Simplifying Testing while Increasing Exam Security

SFT's pre-digital process presented significant logistical challenges, especially regarding exam security and integrity. Staff were required to manually inspect each exam to ensure no marks were present, a labor-intensive process.

In 2016, SFT transitioned to online Certification Exams. However, there was still room for improvement, as the 3rd party test software was not integrated within Acadis, which created challenges that frustrated both staff and students.

"I provided after-hours technical support to our stakeholders during testing to help troubleshoot and overcome challenges, such as login and payment errors," Brandon explained. "Oftentimes, in the middle of testing, it is natural for fear and anxiety to increase, causing stressors which can lead to human error."

Today, SFT utilizes Acadis Testing and course templates for cognitive and skills tests. The automated online testing platform requires a secure name and password, provided to proctors for distribution on test day. "We have not had a single issue with our online testing, which is essential to the success of our Certification Exams," Brandon emphasized.

With Acadis, SFT can provide students with immediate results, access to missed learning objectives, and the ability to schedule test retakes when needed.

Scalable Solution Solves Complex Challenges

With support from Acadis, SFT has optimized its approach to training and Certification Exam management, empowering its staff to effectively serve California's incredibly large base of fire service personnel. Acadis' agile, highly configurable system is adaptable and scalable, enabling even the most complex operations to maximize efficiency.

"By adopting Acadis and updating our business processes, we were able to modernize our testing platform and improve customer service," Brandon concluded.

