



# OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS STATE FIRE MARSHAL

JB Pritzker, Governor  
Matt Perez, State Fire Marshal

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## **New Basic Operations Firefighter 1 Blended Pilot Course**

*This is a game changer for the fire service in Illinois!*

Springfield, Ill- An exciting opportunity is being offered to firefighters with a new Basic Operations Firefighter 1 Blended pilot course. The Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) at the University of Illinois will be offering this training. The course is 18 weeks long and will use a blend of on-line learning during the week and 9 weekend practical hands-on training sessions at IFSI that will lead to the Basic Firefighter 1 certification.

The classroom portion of this program will be online. This will allow firefighters participating in the program to do their classroom work throughout the week at home and allow the flexibility to work at their full-time jobs. The 9 weekends for the pilot program, students will do their practical's or hands-on training on the firegrounds at IFSI in Champaign. Once the next round of the program starts, there will be a few sites selected across Illinois helping prevent students from having to travel more than 150 miles to do their weekend practical training. The courses' objective is certification for the firefighter while providing training for them to respond safely and effectively to fire scenes.

In Illinois over 70 percent of firefighters are volunteers who work a full-time job and don't have the opportunity to attend the usual 8 week/40 hour a week fire academy. Illinois Fire Marshal Matt Perez says, "This is a game changer for much of our fire service!" "This program will allow volunteer fire fighters the chance that they might not be able to receive otherwise, to obtain the certification, knowledge and training needed to be safe, while protecting people in their communities."

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is excited to provide a grant to IFSI to help this course be offered at no cost to the students and departments. During the August pilot program, OSFM's grant will help to waive tuition and provide lodging during the 9 weekends the fire fighters will have to stay in Champaign for hands-on training. Fire Marshal Perez says, "the grant wouldn't be possible without the Governor and his teams continued support and dedication to the Illinois fire service community."

The Director of IFSI, Royal Mortenson, states; "This concept of a blended Firefighter I certification course has been in development by IFSI for several years. With support of the SFM and the Governor it is now a reality. Volunteer and paid-on-call firefighters will now have the opportunity to be *Basic Operations Firefighter/NFPA Firefighter I* certified at no cost to the department or the firefighter and without the burden of having to attend a resident academy. This initiative will exponentially increase firefighter safety, success at the incident scene, and inter-operability between departments."

The Office of the State Fire Marshal's mission is dedicated to working with our partners and providing assistance to the fire service in protection of life, property and the environment, through communication, inspection, investigation, certification and licensing.