

CHARLESTON

FIRE DEPARTMENT



Charleston Fire Department Awarded Accreditation

Contact: Community Educator Ryan Kunitzer

Phone: 843-958-6401

E-mail: kunitzerr@charleston-sc.gov

Charleston, SC (August 26, 2015): The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) has completed a comprehensive review and appraisal of the Charleston Fire Department and has granted the department Accredited status. After a vote of approval by members of the CFAI, the Charleston Fire Department became the eighth department in South Carolina and the 208th in the United States to receive accreditation.

Accreditation is a comprehensive assessment and evaluation model for fire and emergency service organizations. The accreditation process evaluates the performance of the agency and helps to determine community risks and fire safety needs. The assessment process identified strength and weaknesses within the department, provided a detailed evaluation of the services the department provides to the community, created methods for addressing deficiencies, and encourages professional growth for both the department and its personnel.

“Pursuing CFAI accreditation over the past few years has been one of the most significant and important endeavors ever undertaken by the department. This achievement is a direct reflection of the caliber and professionalism of the men and women who make up the CFD,” said Fire Chief Karen Brack. “Accreditation required the combined best efforts of all members of our organization and strengthened a culture of quality and commitment to the community. This would not have been possible without the tremendous support of Mayor Riley, City Council, and our community.”

In 2012, the Charleston Fire Department became a registered agency with the CFAI and involved in the accreditation process. The department entered Applicant status in 2013. As part of the accreditation process it was necessary for the Department to develop and adopt several key documents, including a Strategic Plan, a Standards of Cover, and a Self-Assessment Manual. The Self-assessment manual provides the ability to evaluate programs and demonstrate compliance with 243 performance indicators. After completing all requisite steps and providing documentation the department was elevated to Candidate Agency status by the CFAI in early 2015.

During the week of May 25th, 2015 a four-member CFAI Peer Assessment Team conducted an on-site visit of the Charleston Fire Department. On May 29th, 2015 the Peer Assessment team announced the department would be recommended for International Accreditation. Department representatives went before the Commission today in Atlanta and received accredited status after a vote of approval.

The Charleston Fire Department becomes only the 22nd fire department in the United States to receive both Accreditation and an Insurance Service Office (ISO) Class 1 rating. Earlier this year, the Charleston Fire Department announced the ISO rating would be elevated from a 3 to a rating of 1. The ISO independently evaluates municipal fire protection in communities throughout the United States. The ISO Class 1 is the highest rating possible and has been achieved by approximately 90 of

the 30,052 fire departments nationwide. Insurance companies use rating information to help establish fair premiums for fire insurance, generally offering lower premiums in communities with a higher rating.

“The accreditation process helped us to better understand community risks and evaluate the performance of our agency,” stated Chief Brack. “There will be no resting on our achievements – accredited agencies must continue to strive for improvement to maintain their accredited status. I am very proud of the work of our members to achieve both accreditation and an ISO Class 1. Our entire team is committed to providing the best fire and emergency response possible to our community.”

A press conference to announce this historic achievement has been scheduled for Thursday, August 27, 2015 at 3:30 PM inside the City Council chambers located at 80 Broad Street.

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