

# **Wilson Community College Regional Fire Academy Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct, & General Information**



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# **Policies and Procedures**

## **STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The Academy Guidelines of the Wilson Community College Fire and Rescue Academy (WCC/FRA) are to operate in strict accordance with regulations mandated by the North Carolina Community College System and the North Carolina Fire/Rescue Commission concerning Wilson Community College Fire and Rescue Academy.

In addition, the Academy Guidelines of the Wilson Community College Fire and Rescue Academy are to operate in strict accordance with policies, procedures, rules, and regulations mandated by the North Carolina Community College System and Wilson Community College.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Discipline is stressed throughout the service as a firefighter. A high standard of discipline will also be required while attending the Academy. At the Academy, discipline is defined as learning to do what has to be done in an orderly, planned, and team-like manner. It is development of self-control, character, orderliness, efficiency, and dependability. Development of these characteristics will help to ensure the ability to perform the duties of a firefighter correctly, safely, and in a manner that reflects positively on departments and the public.

In order to promote discipline and ensure an effective training program, all cadets must adhere to the following rules and regulations. Failure to follow these rules and regulations may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- Cadets attending the Academy are considered “on duty” and shall conduct themselves accordingly. All rules and regulations governing conduct mandated by their department shall be followed. In addition, all cadets shall conduct themselves in a positive, productive, and mature manner.
- Cadets shall perform all duties in a thorough and precise manner and carry out all appropriate and lawful directives and instructions given by Academy staff and instructors.
- Cadets shall not commit any acts, either during or outside normal training hours, that are incompatible or harmful to public service, or which might reflect unfavorably upon their department or the Wilson Community College Fire and Rescue Academy.
- Cadets shall be always attentive and alert in class. (Sleeping in class will not be tolerated).

**Cadets shall not:**

- Violate any laws or ordinances, or exhibit any behavior unbecoming an Academy cadet.
- Drink or use alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, tobacco products, or any substitute thereof during training hours.
- Encourage discord among cadets, including practicing or encouraging any manner of discrimination.
- Display discourteous treatment of others, including the use of insulting, abusive, satirical or **profane** language.
- Cheat or falsify in any way, any test, report, or request.
- Deliberately falsify a statement in response to any question from Academy staff.
- Willfully or carelessly destroy or damage properties of the College or affiliate agency.
- Endanger any person, including him/herself, through careless or willful violations of safety rules or instructions.
- Display negligence or show willful disobedience of any lawful order, directive, or regulation.
- Be careless, indifferent, lazy, unalert, or inattentive to instruction.

The semi-military nature of the Academy requires that certain rules of courtesy be extended to all members of the Academy staff, instructors, College personnel, and all other persons with whom cadets come in contact during his/her stay at this Academy. Cadets shall refer to individuals referenced above as “Mr./Mrs./Miss”, or by their rank. Cadets shall stand behind their chairs at the beginning of each class until told to sit by the Academy staff or the instructor. Cadets shall refer to each other as “cadet” in public and shall treat each other with the respect due to a fellow firefighter. Cadets shall strictly adhere to the chain of command. Any special requests, complaints, personal problems, etc. should be directed to the class instructor before going to the Fire and Rescue Training Academy Director.

A more in-depth description of all Code of Conduct policies can be found in the most current release of the **Wilson Community College Catalog**. **\*All Code of Conduct Policies in the catalog shall be followed.\***

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

All cadets are expected to observe all Academy schedules. Each cadet shall attend **100%** of the class sessions for successful completion of the WCC Fire and Rescue Academy. The Fire/Rescue Academy Director is authorized to grant excused absences from class sessions for valid reasons, provided all excused absences are satisfactorily made up prior to the completion of the course. However, in no event are excused absences permitted to exceed **10%** of the total class hours. Failure to adhere to the Academy attendance policy will result in progressive discipline:

- Cadets will be provided with a course schedule, which will act as a general guide for reporting times. However, there may be occasions wherein the instructor or the Fire/Rescue Academy Director will alter the times listed on the schedule to accommodate certain situations. Each cadet will be responsible for reporting for duty at the time directed by the instructor or the Director.
- Cadets shall report at least five (5) minutes prior to the time noted on the schedule at the beginning of each day, after meal breaks, and at other times as directed by the Academy staff.
- Cadets not at the assigned location at the designated time for Academy activities are considered late.
- Cadets who report later than ten (10) minutes for Academy activities shall be considered as having an unexcused absence and may not be allowed to participate in activities scheduled that day at the discretion of the instructor or the Director.
- Cadets reporting late for duty will be required to make up missed time and may additionally be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the instructor or the Director.
- Cadets who report late for duty twice shall be reported to their agency for counseling.

The Director will advise cadets who have more than one unexcused instance of reporting late for Academy activities in writing that any future instances of reporting late will result in a recommendation for dismissal.

### **Excused Absences:**

The Fire/Rescue Academy Director or his designee is authorized to grant "Excused absences" from class sessions for valid reasons. Excused absences must be approved in advance.

Absences that may be approved include, but are not limited to, serious illness, death in the family, accidents and other unavoidable situations that prevent the cadet's attendance from a class, practical exercise, or physical fitness activity.

Cadets will be afforded an opportunity and must make up all classes, practical exercises, and physical fitness training missed as a result of an excused absence. **It is ultimately the cadet's responsibility to see that the time missed is made up. The cadet shall schedule the make-up time within five (5) working days or seven (7) calendar days. The makeup time shall be completed within 30 calendar days or by the last day of class, whichever comes first.**

The Fire/Rescue Academy Director shall report all absences to the cadet's employing or affiliated agency.

## **Unexcused Absences:**

Absences not approved in advance by the Fire/Rescue Academy Director or his/her designee and did not result from circumstances beyond the control of the cadet shall be susceptible to disciplinary action. Examples include oversleeping, running out of gas, the alarm didn't go off, etc. All instances of unexcused absences will be reported to the cadet's employing/affiliated agency, and a joint decision will be made as to whether the cadet may continue in the Academy. In instances where cadets report late for Academy activities or are absent, a Cadet Absence Form shall be completed and submitted to the Fire/Rescue Academy Director.

In instances of snow, ice, or severe weather, the Academy will follow the same schedule for closing or delayed openings as Wilson Community College. Cadets should monitor local radio or television station for delayed opening or canceled classes due to inclement weather or call Wilson Community College's Inclement Weather Number (252) 246-1234. Closings and delays are also posted on the College's website and social media pages, and an alert will be sent via telephone call, text message, and email.

## **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

**\*The following policies and procedures are not only for appearance purposes, but also for one's own safety.\***

Cadets shall be neat and clean and maintain an appearance that complies with Academy standards at all times. Cadets shall be free of offensive odors and will maintain personal hygiene habits so as not to offend or disrupt the Academy.

**Male** cadets shall keep their hair neat and clean at all times. Hair should be cut close, so it does not touch the ears or collar and braids, corn rows, dreadlocks, beads, and designs are not allowed. Cadets shall be clean-shaven at all times. Beards are not allowed. **Female** cadets shall keep their hair neat and clean at all times. Hair shall be as close to the head as possible to prevent interference with physical or practical training exercises. Cadets shall be cleanly manicured at all times and only clear fingernail polish is allowed.

Cadets may not wear any type of jewelry which is not compatible with the Academy uniform or that may pose a safety problem. Only wedding rings and watches will be permitted during Academy activities. unless in the opinion of the instructor or Academy Director, they pose a safety concern during an activity.

Cadets shall wear the B or C Academy uniform during all blocks of classroom instruction directed by the Fire/Rescue Academy Director. Cadets shall wear the Academy t-shirt and gym shorts during all physical fitness training. Cadets shall wear the Academy sweatshirt and sweatpants in cold weather.

All clothing shall be clean and neat at the beginning of each block of instruction. Black safety-toe shoes shall be shined daily or as needed.

All cadets must shower at the end of each physical fitness activity.

## **MAINTENANCE OF ACADEMY**

The Academy shall serve as a safe, clean, and neat workplace. Accordingly, the Academy facilities and grounds must be maintained in a neat and clean manner and in a fashion that reflects respect for the Wilson Community College Fire and Rescue Academy.

The classroom shall always be maintained in a neat and orderly manner. No eating of any kind will be permitted in the classroom. Only water is allowed. Cadets shall assist instructors in keeping blackboards clean and all audio/visual equipment in its proper place. Chairs shall be placed under the desks when not in use.

Cadets are encouraged to use the multi-purpose area during breaks, lunch, and other informal periods. This area shall be constantly “policed” by all cadets to ensure that it remains neat, clean, and free of litter. Tables shall be wiped clean after each use and the trash should be placed in the outside dumpster on a regular basis.

Cadets are responsible for cleaning and maintaining all Academy areas, including the designated shower areas, bathroom facilities, floors, and training grounds. Work assignments for clean-up will be given by the Fire/Rescue Academy Director or his/her designee.

Cadets shall keep all books, supplies, clothing, and issued gear in the assigned area and in the manner as instructed by the Director.

Cadets will be instructed on the proper maintenance of physical fitness obstacle course areas, fire training grounds, and areas used for practical exercises when appropriate.

## **ACADEMIC POLICY**

The Academy registers with the NC Fire Rescue Commission as a block instructional Academy. Practical skill training and chapter/topic testing will occur throughout the Academy. Certification examinations will be administered in accordance with the NC Fire Rescue Commission rules and regulations. Cadets must successfully complete all required components of instruction and physical fitness to graduate from the program.

The learning model for the Academy relies on a three-sided approach. Instructional lecture and practical skill training are two sides of the learning model and are provided by the instructional staff. Each cadet is required to read the applicable chapter prior to the course of instruction, thereby completing the three-sided learning model. Failure to read the material prior to each section will result in academic struggle and challenge the learning process.

Cadets are required to successfully complete all courses and academic requirements. Failure to complete the requirements as provided herein will result in dismissal from the Academy.

The Fire/Rescue Academy Director or his/her designee will administer examinations each week (or as applicable to the scheduled instruction). The examinations cover blocks of instruction completed during the previous week. Cadets must, on their own time, make the necessary outside preparation for all exams. The passing score on all exams is seventy percent (70%). Exams will be graded and the results returned as promptly as possible. All NC Fire Rescue Commission exams are protected documents. Photographing, making copies, or otherwise duplicating the exam document is strictly prohibited. Answer sheets from completed exams will be stored on file with college records in accordance with the NC Fire Rescue Commission, NC Community College System, and Wilson Community College records retention requirements.

Cadets whose exam scores fall below 75% may be required to attend remedial study sessions.

A cadet absent when an exam is administered may take the exam on the next test day following an excused absence.

All retest opportunities shall be scheduled within 30 days of the original test date. Every effort will be given to schedule a retest in the best interest of the cadet schedule, preparation, and Academy schedule.

Instructors are authorized to give subject matter tests; however, these tests will not be counted as weekly exams, nor will they be averaged into the cadet's final academic average.

Any cadet who feels a mistake has been made in grading his/her exam should contact the Fire/Rescue Academy Director immediately. Once notified, the Fire/Rescue Academy Director will start the appeal process with the proper authorities, **as outlined in the most currently adopted Wilson Community College catalog.**

If a cadet fails an exam, one retest will be allowed. If the cadet passes the retest, his/her retest score will be recorded as a 70, regardless of the grade attained. If the cadet does not pass the retest, he or she will be automatically dismissed from the Academy.

Any cadet who fails more than **three (3)** initial exams, regardless of make-up scores, will be dismissed from the Academy.

In the event of Academy dismissal, the cadet will receive full credit for all components successfully completed in accordance with the NC Fire Rescue Commission program delivery and testing standards.

Cadets are encouraged to participate in study groups with other cadets.

Testing guidelines will comply with the NC Fire and Rescue Commission Policy for Testing and the Wilson Community College Policy for Testing.

The policy of the affiliated agency must be on file and followed.

## PHYSICAL FITNESS

Physical fitness is considered an integral component of the Academy's preparation of cadets for the rigors of the profession. Therefore, all cadets must participate in and satisfactorily complete physical fitness activities and requirements to graduate. Each cadet must be prepared mentally to engage in all activities that the rest of the platoon engages in. Although the staff recognizes that no two individuals will perform at the same level, we do insist that each cadet give **100% effort** in carrying out activities designed to bring about an appropriate fitness level.

There are three distinct physical fitness performance measures required to graduate from the Academy. These include successful completion of the following:

1. The 5-Mile Platoon Run
2. Successful completion of the Firefighter Combat Challenge
3. Successful completion of 50 single-count push-ups.

Each cadet must be able to successfully complete two physical fitness tests, the 5-mile platoon run, and the push-up test. Passing each is mandatory, and each is considered an exam. If any physical fitness test is failed, the cadet will have an opportunity to retake the test within (five) 5 class days. However, if a cadet fails one of the physical fitness tests and the failure was his or her 4th failure, no retest will be allowed, and the cadet will be removed from the Academy as per #12 of the Cadet Contract.

The parameters of the 5-mile platoon run in order to successfully pass will be as follows: the class will start the platoon run **together**, run at a challenging and steady pace, and finish the platoon run **together**. Each cadet must stay in formation with the class and continue to run at the same pace. If a cadet falls behind the class and does not complete the run with the class, the cadet will receive a failure for that test. At no time will a cadet be allowed to finish with anyone other than the PT Instructor leading the platoon run to be considered a pass. Each cadet must start with the group, and finish with the group in order to receive a pass.

The Firefighter Combat Challenge test includes physical agility tasks that include stair climb, hose hoist, Keiser sled forcible entry, hose advancement, and dummy drag. Successful performance includes completing all components of the Firefighter Combat Challenge in proper sequence while wearing full personal protective ensemble (breathing SCBA air) within the consumption capacity of the user's SCBA.

In order for a Cadet to successfully pass the push-up test, the cadet must complete 50 proper push-ups. Once the Cadet starts the test, if his or her knee touches the ground, the test is immediately over, and will receive the push-up count as their score when the test was stopped. The cadet's back must be straight and chest must go low enough to touch the counter in order to be counted as a push-up. The proper way will be taught by a PT Instructor.

Weekly physical fitness progress assessments will be conducted. This progress assessment may include, but is not limited to:

- 1-mile run (personal performance, not a platoon run)
- 60-second push-up count
- 60-second sit-up count
- 60-second burpee count
- Measure of current weight

**By the decision of the Physical Fitness Coordinator, cadets who are unable to progress and keep up with the rest of the group at an acceptable level of physical fitness will be recommended for dismissal.**

### **ILLNESS AND INJURY**

Cadets employed by an agency shall be covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance and may be covered for illness under health insurance provided by or through their agency. Therefore, it is extremely important that cadets understand and comply with their agency's policy and the guidelines outlined below.

- The policy of the affiliated agency must be on file and followed.
- Cadets shall purchase the required Wilson Community College Accidental Policy (\$2.00)
- Cadets shall report all injuries or illnesses to the instructor and the Director immediately, no matter how minor the injury or illness may be.
- The Fire/Rescue Academy Director shall determine the appropriate course of action and shall so instruct the cadet.
- The injured cadet, with the assistance of the Director, shall complete a Wilson Community College injury report within 24 hours. The cadet and/or Director shall also notify the cadet's employer or affiliated agency.
- Cadets whose injuries or illnesses prohibit them from participating in Academy activities for 72 hours may be dismissed from the Academy.

## **DISCIPLINARY POLICY**

Any student who fails to adhere to any policy and/or procedure outlined in the most currently adopted Wilson Community College catalog will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate dismissal.

A Conduct Violation Form shall be filled out for every violation, which requires the signature of the cadet in violation, the instructor that is reporting the violation, and the Fire/Rescue Academy Director.

Failure to adhere to any of the Academy policies and/or procedures will result in disciplinary actions that may include one of the following levels of discipline:

- Level One - verbal warning by Academy staff with documentation to affiliated agency.
- Level Two - written warning with a copy forwarded to affiliated agency.
- Level Three - recommendation for further disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from Academy.