

**Survey of Fire Science  
Training Needs**

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## Introduction

The Michigan Fire Fighter Training Council has adopted the Fire Fighter I, II, and III Professional Qualification Board Standards. To assist the fire fighters of Macomb County, the Macomb Community College Fire Training Institute is currently using these standards in their Fire fighter qualification instruction.

As a means to inform the Macomb County Fire Departments of the Fire Training Institute's instruction and to serve the needs of these departments in the training area, a survey was conducted. This survey assessed the attitudes of the Macomb County fire chiefs and gathered information regarding the potential training population. The data collected will help to establish the goals and objectives for the short and long range functions of the organization.

Of the twenty-six (26) fire departments in Macomb County, twenty-one (21) fire chiefs responded. It should be noted that not all survey participants who responded, chose to respond to every question.

## Findings

Number of Fire Fighters

The fire chiefs were asked to give the number of full time and volunteer fire fighters in their department. Two departments listed a third category, part paid, which was explained as being neither full time or part time. A break down of the total number (955) of fire fighters in Macomb County is shown in Table 1. A complete list by departments can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1

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Question: Number of fire fighters in department.

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent of Fire Fighters</u>	<u>Total Number of Fire Fighter</u>
Full-time	67%	644
Volunteers	27	256
Part paid	6	55
(Base Size)		(955)

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Of the nine hundred and fifty-five (955) fire fighters in Macomb County, six hundred and forty-four (644) or sixty-seven percent (67%) are full time while two hundred and fifty-six (256) or twenty-seven percent (27%) are volunteers.

Program/Schedule

The majority of fire departments, eighty-six percent (86%) have advantage of courses/seminars offered by the Fire Training Institute (Table 2). Only three of the fire departments responding have not taken advantage of these courses. These three departments stipulated location and receiving training through other organizations as reasons for not attending the courses/seminars offered.

Table 2

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Question: Have you and/or staff taken any courses/seminars offered by the Fire Training Institute?

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Total Percentage</u>
Yes	86%
No	14
(Base Size)	(21)

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A choice of four responses were given as to whether the courses/seminars were beneficial to the fire departments. The choices were: (1) Very useful, (2) Somewhat useful, (3) Not useful, and (4) A waste of time. The fire chiefs were very positive in their responses (Table 3). Thirteen (13), fifty-seven percent (57%), of the fire departments felt the course/seminars were very useful, six (6), twenty-nine percent (29%), felt they were somewhat useful, and three (3), fourteen percent (14%) did not respond. Of the twenty-one (21) departments, no one viewed the courses/seminars as not useful or a waste of time.

Table 3

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Question: Were the courses/seminars beneficial to you?

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Total Percentage</u>
Very Useful	57%
Somewhat Useful	29
Not Useful	0
A Waste of Time	0
No Response	14
(Base Size)	(21)

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The Fire Training Institute concentrated on morning and /or evening classes and department preference for time of year if a yearly calendar were established. Thirty-four percent (34%), three hundred and twenty-five (325) fire fighters, would attend course/seminars if they were offered in the morning, while seventeen (17%), one hundred and sixty-two (162) firefighters, would attend evening classes (Table 4). Approximately half of the respondents listed undetermined, due to their rotating schedule and/or the fire fighter being paid for overtime whenever they attend classes.

Table 4

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Question: How many people need morning classes? How many people need evening classes?

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Total Percentage</u>
Morning	34%
Evening	17
Undetermined	49
(Base Size)	(955)

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The majority of respondents suggested the winter and spring months (December thru May) to be the most convenient and preferred months to have the courses/seminars offered. Many of the respondents felt that more fire fighters would tend to enroll in courses if a yearly calendar were established.

The fire chiefs were asked if they would send more people for training if the sessions were offered in their area. Sixty-two (62%) responded in favor of having the courses offered in their area, while thirty-three percent (33%) responded negatively (Table 5).

Table 5

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Question: Would you send more people for training if the sessions were offered in your area rather than in Fraser?

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Total Percentage</u>
Yes	62%
No	33
No Answer	5
(Base Size)	(21)

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Fire Training Institute/Advisory Committee

The fire departments of Macomb County were asked if they were members of the Macomb Community College Fire Training Institute. The majority, seventy-one (71%), are members. Twenty-four percent (24%) are not (Table 6) and comments were directed to the cost of membership as a reason for non membership.

The following comments were noteworthy:

"Training is scheduled through the St. Clair County Fireman's Association."

"Cost of membership is too restrictive."

"Cost is not equitable; can;t afford overtime to send personnel."

"Cost of membership."

"Economically not beneficial; cost too high."

"The way cost is determined is unfair. Cost is not determined on a fair basis. Cost should be the same for everyone."

Table 6

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Question: Are you a member of Macomb Community College Fire Training Institute?  
If no, what do you think are the reason(s) for not joining?

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Total Percentage</u>
Yes	71%
No	24
Sometimes	5
(Base Size)	(21)

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The respondents were also asked if they would serve on the Fire Training Institute Advisory Committee and/or if anyone else in the department who is qualified would want to serve on the Committee. Of the fire chiefs responding, seventy-one percent (71%) were in favor of serving on the Advisory Committee (Table 7). A complete list of fire departments and individuals who are willing to serve on the Advisory Committee can be found in Appendix B.

Table 7

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Question: If requested, would you serve on the Fire Training Institute Advisory Committee? Is there anyone else who works with you who is qualified and would want to serve on the Advisory Board?

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<u>Response</u>	<u>Total Percentage</u>
Yes	71%
No	24
No Answer	5
(Base Size)	(21)

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## Courses

The fire chiefs were asked to name the courses they would send their staff to and to list these sources in priority order. A partial list of the courses mentioned most often are listed in Table 8. The complete list of courses are given in Appendix C.

Table 8

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Question? Name the courses and list them in priority order that you would send your staff if offered by the Fire Training Institute?	
<u>Courses Requested</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
Hazardous Materials Training	9
Officers Training	6
Basic & Advanced Fire Fighters	5
Equipment Maintenance	4
Fire Service Supervision	3

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## Suggestions

A number of suggestions were offered by the fire chiefs who responded. These suggestions are noteworthy and are listed below.

"It is evident that a full time coordinator is needed."

"A minimal membership fee, with a charge for classes attended may be an effective route to take for a rate structure."

"Although fire ground officers and fire inspectors are in the minority more emphasis towards review and updating should be offered."

"Develop teleconferencing and/or video instruction with the follow up testing of practical skills."

"It is difficult to list courses, but the ones offered have been adequate. Evening training is needed."

"Good arson seminar; more pump operations; more courses specializing in knowing truck from top to bottom."

"Try to make programs individually supported and large enough to support program; moderate fee for membership--everyone pays the same fee. I'm ashamed to take visiting fire chiefs to facilities. Training facilities need to be changed--classrooms are disgusting and it needs to be treated as a professional organization. Departments that provide equipment should be given some credit."

"Doing a good job. Hard to motivate people and force them to attend courses/seminars to enhance their careers."

"Classes should be held in different areas to make it more convenient."

"Time and schedule of whom classes are available. Location of classes has been a problem; Having a certified state training instructor on the department has been more convenient because we run own training."

## Appendix A

<u>Fire Department</u>	<u>Full Time</u>	<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>Part Paid</u>
Armada	--	--	25
Bruce Township	--	24	--
Center Line	22	20	--
Clinton Township	41	--	--
East Detroit	26	20	--
Fraser	39	1	--
Harper Woods	23	--	--
Harrison Township	18	20	--
Mount Clemens	18	30	--
New Haven	--	28	--
Ray Township	--	25	--
Richmond	--	25	--
Romeo	--	--	30
Roseville	38	--	--
St. Clair Shores	59	--	--
Selfridge ANG	54	--	--
Shelby Township	35	--	--
Sterling Heights	88	--	--
Utica	--	24	--
Warren	182	--	--
Washington Township	1	39	--

## Appendix B

Fire chiefs and/or qualified individuals willing to serve on  
Fire Training Institute Advisory Committee.

<u>Fire Department</u>	<u>Fire Chief/Marshall</u>	<u>Other Qualified Staff Person</u>
Armada	--	--
Bruce Township	--	--
Center Line	Dep. Dir. Guy I. Swanson	Det. Sgt. Gil Bourgeois
Clinton Township	George Walker	--
East Detroit	Carl Gerds	--
Fraser	James C. Flynn	--
Harper Woods	Howard Lefever	--
Harrison Township	Nicholas G. Barsheff	--
Mount Clemens	Charles Seehasc	Lt. M. Coyle
New Haven	--	Bob Harsig
Ray Township	Jim Di Maria	--
Richmond	--	--
Romeo	Chuck Richardson	Paul Falker
Roseville	Morley L. Ireland, Jr.	--
St. Clair Shores	Henry Graul	Chief Bob Sass
Selfridge ANG	--	--
Shelby Township	Roger Wolgast	Robert Nightingale
Sterling Heights	Eugene J. Schoenherr	Cap. Joseph H. Myny
Utica	--	--
Warren	Thomas Johnson	--
Washington Township	Gerald Alward	--

## Appendix C

## Priority List of Courses by Fire Department

<u>Fire Department</u>	<u>Priority List of Courses</u>
Armada	--
Bruce Township	--
Center Line	1) Advance/Basic Firemanship Training 2) Hazardous Materials
Clinton Township	--
East Detroit	1) Hazardous Materials 2) Officers Training
Fraser	--
Harper Woods	--
Harrison Township	1) Hazardous Materials 2) Firefighters Testifying in Court Procedures 3) Building effective interdepartment radio programs for public relations and training 4) Presenting quality programs for group and public relations 5) Handling the unruly 6) Fire ground tactics 7) Nozzle and valve repairing 8) Heavy water delivery 9) AFFF and Foam delivery and trouble sorting 10) Sharing unusual fire ground experiences 11) Pump operations 12) Radio communications (dispatcher giving life saving instructions after dispatching necessary equipment)
Mount Clemens	1) Hazardous materials training 2) Office management training 3) Incident control/command training
New Haven	1) Basic fireman training 2) State requirement courses 3) First aid courses (Basic and Advanced; not EMS)
Ray Township	--
Richmond	--
Romeo	--