

North Country International Fire Training Service Inc.

2026 Regional Fire School - JUNE 6th & 7th, 2026

Alburgh, Vermont

WWW.NCIFTS.ORG

All courses involving live fire meet the requirements outlined in NFPA 1403

Surface Water Rescue with Boat Operations and Vehicle Extrication meet the requirements outlined in NFPA 1006

Two Day Classes

1. Introduction to Firefighting (Rookie)

This course addresses the needs of new firefighters in their duties, obligations and requirements necessary for basic firefighting and instructs them in the tactics, equipment and safety of fire ground operations. Students should be new recruits in the fire service with less than one year experience.

INSTRUCTORS: Tim Girard – Retired Chief, Swanton Fire Department and Bill Gett – 2nd Assistant Chief, Alburgh Fire Department

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full protective gear, SCBA and spare cylinder.

2. Not a Rookie Anymore

This course is designed to expand upon topic areas covered during an Introduction to Firefighting or Rookie course. Participants in this program will spend two days doing practical skill stations and scenario-based exercises for structural firefighting incidents. This course will allow the students to develop their abilities in incident scene size-up, deploying and advancing hose lines to the seat of the fire, providing tactical and sufficient ventilation, and searching the structure for victims in survivable spaces. Students should have a minimum of one-year fire service experience and expect to work hard. **This course conducts practical evolutions utilizing live fire.**

INSTRUCTOR: Michael Groening – Lieutenant, Fairfax Fire Department

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full protective gear, SCBA and spare cylinder.

3. Introduction to Pump Operations

Introduction to Pumps is an entry-level pump operation course. The intent of the class is to provide the student with the basic mechanical and theoretical knowledge needed to become a pump operator. The class will help the student develop an understanding of the basic theoretical, mechanical and operational concepts that govern the use and operation of a fire pump. Emphasis is on the practical application of pump operation theory. Course content is a balance of NFPA/IFSTA published guidelines and the practical real-world experiences of the instructors and past students. The class includes approximately 4 hours of classroom instruction and 8-10 hours of hands-on exercises. Each exercise is specifically designed to simulate operations performed on fire scenes. The short evolutions are designed to provide maximum pump panel time for the students.

INSTRUCTOR: J.P. Fillion – Chief, Champlain Fire District, NY

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full protective gear – No SCBA

4. **Officer Leadership & Development**

Right Front Seat: The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love. This course is for the firefighter with a few years of experience who hopes to become an officer, the senior firefighter who is riding the right front seat to scene, to the current fire officer looking to have a solid review. Day one we are going to cover building construction, fire behavior with a live fire demonstration, the challenges of fighting fire in Vermont, the difficult parts of being an officer (from the personnel side), and work on our tactics during the first 20 minutes of the run. Day two we will finish up the classroom work and work on scenarios focusing on radio traffic, size up, and decision making.

INSTRUCTOR: Micah Genzlinger – Chief, Fairfax Fire Department and Retired Captain, South Burlington Fire Department

5. **Fire Investigation**

The course provides the student with basic Fire Investigation knowledge and skills that will aid them in what to look for and preserve during fire suppression and overhaul operations. The course instruction includes lecture, several practical exercises and is designed to walk the student through several fire scene investigations. The student will also learn the statutory obligations given to the Chief of their Departments and the Fire Service as a whole, relative to Origin and Cause determination.

INSTRUCTOR: Jesse Dobecki – Assistant State Fire Marshal, Vermont Division of Fire Safety and member of the Vermont State Police Fire & Explosions Investigation Unit

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full protective gear – No SCBA

6. **Large Area Search & Rescue**

Firefighting has evolved over the years and so have the fires we face. With today's fire burning hotter and quicker and new structures that seem to be designed to burn, seconds can be the difference between life and death. In this class we will work on the different techniques on how to conduct an aggressive and effective search without compromising safety. We will go over how we move in the building to be quick and effective, the different ways on how to remove a victim and use the tools we have available to help us in our search. We will also cover the large area search with the use of rope bags. Too often we see departments training in wide open clear rooms and nothing in their way but the victims. I don't know about you, but I have kids at home and there's always stuff on the ground, furniture, etc. In the class you can expect to work hard and be challenged. Looking forward to seeing you!!

INSTRUCTOR: David Lachance Riel – Lieutenant, Beauharnois Fire Department

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full Protective Gear, SCBA and spare cylinder.

7. **Truck Company Operations**

Manpower is often limited in the North Country, and not every fireground presents the straightforward conditions we hope for. This program is designed to sharpen the truck company skills that rural departments may not deploy on every run but must execute flawlessly when it counts: forcible entry, search ahead of the line, VES, and vertical ventilation. Participants will train under an instructor cadre with decades of combined experience—firefighters who began their careers in Colchester, Vermont and now serve with the FDNY. This class goes beyond basic skill acquisition; each evolution integrates strategic and tactical considerations to help you recognize when conditions dictate it is time to make the move. Whether you serve a small town or a growing district, this course will enhance your proficiency, confidence, and fireground decision-making.

INSTRUCTOR: Thomas Farragher – Lieutenant, FDNY

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full Protective Gear, SCBA and spare cylinder.

8. **Surface Water Rescue w/ Boat Operations**

This course provides first responders with the knowledge, skills, and operational guidelines necessary to safely and effectively conduct rescue operations using boats on lakes. By the end of this training, participants will be able to identify hazards associated with lake and boat rescue operations, demonstrate proper boat handling, launching, and navigation during rescue missions, perform victim search and recovery techniques appropriate for lake environments, integrate safety practices to protect rescuers, victims, and equipment, and operate within the Incident Command System (ICS) during lake rescue incidents.

INSTRUCTOR: Chris Bresett – Team Leader, Adirondack Regional Technical Rescue Team

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Students will need to bring a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) level three or above, a water rescue helmet, and either a dry or wet suit

9. **Vehicle Extrication**

Vehicle extrication is quickly becoming more common in the fire department world than structure fires. This class will give students an understanding of the basic principles involved with extrication to include scene size up, safety and techniques. Class will encompass both classroom and hands on practice utilizing both basic hand tools and specialized hydraulic equipment.

INSTRUCTOR: Matt Depatie – Lieutenant, Swanton Fire Department

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full Protective Gear – No SCBA

10. **Modern Fire Behavior: Flashover Recognition**

This revised course goes beyond its Advanced Fire Behavior predecessor. Today's firefighters must understand the complexities involved in the science of fire and fire dynamics. This updated course uses evidence-based information, derived from modern fire research, to highlight key educational areas. It will provide you with the tools necessary to understand modern fire propagation, fuel packages, and ventilation and how they relate to firefighter safety and tactical deployment on today's fireground. The course begins with a classroom presentation and concludes with a live fire exercise where you observe fire development from ignition to flashover. The culminating live fire exercise will "flip the classroom", where the student will be able to recognize the warning signs of flashover from inside a live fire environment. **This course conducts practical evolutions utilizing live fire.**

INSTRUCTORS: Vermont Fire Academy

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full Protective Gear, SCBA, and spare cylinder

You must fill out the VFA registration form along with the registration for this class.

One Day Classes
(Offered Saturday Only)

1. **Man vs Machine**

Students are instructed on methods they can use to disentangle victims from a variety of situations. Basic techniques for removing rings are addressed. Evolutions progress in complexity to include auger entrapments, impalements (fencing/inside vehicles), persons trapped under vehicles, torch operations, as well as other "tips & tricks" learned from real-world experiences. The Classroom and Practical Skills portion of the program focus on finding the least complicated method of performing such rescues rather than "overthinking" the given situation.

INSTRUCTORS: PL Vulcan Fire Training

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full Protective Gear – No SCBA

2. **Automobile Fires**

This vehicle fire course covers the dangers that are present in new vehicles due to the crash safety features now installed and the changes in the materials used in the construction of modern cars and trucks. The course will explain why we need to change the tactics previously taught to better ensure the safety of firefighters putting out vehicle fires today. The morning session is classroom, and the afternoon session will be live fire work burning several vehicles.

This course conducts practical evolutions utilizing live fire.

INSTRUCTORS: Todd Bedard – Retired Captain, Derby Line Fire Department and Jeff Limoge – Retired 1st Assistant Chief, Morrisville Fire Department

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Full Protective Gear, SCBA, and spare cylinder

3. **Staying Well, Being Safe, and Serving Strong**

First responders are the only renewable resource in public safety. Everything else is a consumable tool. Some tools like gloves may be used once, other protective equipment may be certified for 10 years, departments have replacement plans for replacing apparatus, and even buildings are outgrown. Responders do not live forever but we have heart! And that heart is what drives, motivates, and calls us forward. That heart inspires, can be renewed, and can overcome great odds to serve others. Perhaps best of all that heart can be passed from one to another and one generation to another. This course will explore responder wellness, self care as the most underrated leadership skill, and how to care for teams of people who experience trauma in unprecedented ways. This course will provide an overview of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation tools and protocols.

INSTRUCTOR: Bill Elwell – Executive Director, First Responder Core Wellness, LLC

4. **Thermal Imaging Cameras (TIC)**

Thermal Imaging: The Tool in Your Toolbox You Thought You Knew

For more than three decades, thermal imaging technology has evolved dramatically — but has the fire service evolved with it? This program takes a hard, honest look at how firefighters are using (and often misusing) one of the most powerful tools on the fireground. From the early days of heavy, slow cameras to today's lightweight, feature-packed models, manufacturers have flooded the market with bells and whistles that promised better performance. But how many of those options truly improve tactical decision-making? Through an instructor-centered, safety-focused approach, this course cuts through the marketing hype to focus on what really matters: understanding fire behavior, interpreting what the camera is telling you, and applying that information to strategic and tactical operations that save lives.

Students will learn how to use thermal imaging to enhance:

- Search and rescue operations
- Fire attack, confinement, and ventilation strategies
- Overhaul and rekindle prevention
- Special operations including Haz-Mat, technical rescue, and law enforcement support

Whether you're a new firefighter or a seasoned instructor, this class will challenge what you think you know about thermal imaging and show you how to use this tool safely, effectively, and intelligently — to get everyone home.

INSTRUCTOR: John Forristall – Retired Captain, Boston Fire Department, Special Operations Division Technical Rescue

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC)