

NEW URBAN SEARCH & RESCUE QUALIFICATION

A new National Certificate in USAR has just been registered by NZQA. The qualification provides an optional training path beyond Category 1 Responder and meets international training standards set by the United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory group (INSARAG). The qualification was developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management and the USAR working group.

The qualification is set at Level 3 on the National Qualifications Framework. There are a number of core skills or compulsory unit standards to obtain, after which the learner can choose from a range of strands (specialisations) such as Canine Search, Response Leader, Response Medic, and Training etc.

Steve Glassey, convener of the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management's USAR Working Group comments, "Internationally, New Zealand leads the way in urban search and rescue with the introduction of the world's first national qualification



Responder Paul Blum carries out a descent from Paekakariki Hill during a Rope Responder course.

in urban search and rescue. This initiative also enhances the national USAR incident ground certification system (Orange Card) with the introduction of specialist endorsements and a new Task Force Card. Task Force Cards will be issued to personnel attached to one of the three USAR Task Forces for the duration of their operational membership. The new Orange Cards and endorsements will assist incident controllers to easily identify competent specialist personnel at urban search and rescue incidents, ensuring the right people for the right task are selected with confidence."

Employers with USAR trainees can apply for FRSITO Structured Training Programmes (STPs) and therefore receive generous training subsidies towards training and assessment of the unit standards. If you are interested in this option, contact us for further information.

AROUND ABOUT WITH JUSTIN

Justin Murtha is a man of many talents. A full-time fire fighter for NZFS and a volunteer Ambulance Officer, he also travels the Canterbury/Westland region providing customer support for FRSITO. Things are busy with training humming along in this region.

Recently, Justin organised tuition and assessment at Tai Poutini Polytechnic for Greymouth, Moana and Runanga NZFS volunteers on Rural Fire Unit Standards 3285, 3286, 3287 and 3268. The Greymouth Volunteer Fire Brigade have more reason to celebrate. After winning FRSITO's Excellence in Training Award, they have gone on to win the Greymouth District Community Award, Health and Well-being section. This \$500 award comes with a plaque, recognising the effort the team put into training for the benefit of community service. Well done Greymouth Volunteer Fire Brigade!

Keeping the pace up, Justin also facilitated the enrolment of thirty Ashburton District Council Rural Fire Officers into STPs. To continue FRSITO's record of excellent trainee support, Justin spent time explaining the training and assessment process. Moving to Arthur's Pass, Justin met with Department of Conservation regional Rural Fire Officers to promote STPs and the benefits of training. The response was good and FRSITO looks forward to introducing new trainees soon. Carrying on to Timaru, Justin is currently facilitating training agreements between Waimakariri and Hurunui District Councils, and Aoraki Polytechnic.

Thanks Justin for your impressive work and ability to cover a lot of ground. If you would like Justin to visit and discuss FRSITO training, you can contact him on 027 480 0065 or email justin@frsito.org.nz

TEC AUDIT

FRSITO is well placed to work with its industry partners in implementing structured training, as a recent full management audit completed by Audit NZ on behalf of TEC confirmed. The formal Audit Report has yet to be released, but the preliminary report states: 'Our findings from the audit of FRSITO are positive, however there are some minor improvements in the following areas that could lead to better performance.' These areas include:

- ... developing three new policies,
- ... developing a business disaster recovery plan,
- ... and improving financial monitoring/reporting.

Positive comments on our overall performance included;

- ...FRSITO has comprehensive administration policies and procedures in place,
- ...we are satisfied that the trainee database is accurate and data is supported by valid documentation,
- ...we noted that quarterly reporting was completed in a timely manner,
- ...FRSITO has an efficient credit achievement reporting process in that all credit achievement information is reported and a robust process is in place for ensuring that such information is correctly recorded in the database,
- ...The Assessor Manual, the approved Accreditation and Moderation Plan [AMAP] and the Policy Manual contain comprehensive policies and procedures dealing with complaints, assessments and assessor management, moderation of assessments as well as qualification management.

The Auditor commented that for a small/medium ITO we were doing very well!

GOVERNMENT 'INTO' INDUSTRY TRAINING

Government has set ambitious growth targets for the training of 250,000 people in Industry Training by 2007. In 2002 there were 106,000 people in formal Training Agreements and in 2003 that number increased to 126,800. Of those trainees the fire and rescue industry has 1000 in Training Agreements through FRSITO.

Ashley Chisholm FRSITO National Manger said, "Our task is to work with you, the industry, to gain the increase in training numbers. We anticipate that the fire and rescue industry will 'do its bit' by tripling our trainee numbers over the next year. This will mainly be due to increases from NZ Fire Service via TAPS, Department of Conservation, and the NZ Defence Forces fire services. Because of the limited chance of a corresponding increase in government subsidy FRSITO will need to work harder with key industry employer groups to implement suitable training and assessment to match the increase. This will be a good challenge for the industry as a whole, but one we are looking forward to. This increase will still only have us reaching a small proportion of employees and volunteers in the industry, so we have much to do in the future to make sure everyone is well trained, competent and recognised through NZQA National Qualifications."

CIMS UNITS REVIEW

The 3 CIMS units are currently being reviewed by the CIMS Working Group. If you want more details on this, please contact Leonce by email - Leonce@frsito.org.nz

QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW - UPDATE

Following on from the unit standard review which was finished late last year, FRSITO is currently reviewing all of the Fire and Rescue Service industry qualifications in order to include the reviewed unit standards, and to ensure that the qualifications continue to reflect current industry training requirements, the most up-to-date skill techniques and procedures, and reflect the latest safety practices and regulations.

Finalised drafts of the National Certificates in Urban Fire and Rescue Operations have recently been forwarded to NZQA for evaluation, and will be the first of the reviewed qualifications to be registered on the NZQA National Qualifications Framework. Revised drafts for the other sectors will follow over the next few months.

The draft qualifications will be posted on the FRSITO website if you want to check them out and make comments.

Even though all the newly-reviewed qualifications are anticipated to be approved for registration on the NQF later this year, transition arrangements are made to enable any trainee who is currently undergoing training towards one of FRSITO's current qualifications to have 2 years in which to complete training and qualify for the current version of the National Certificate. However, if you wish, you can transfer the credits you have already gained towards the new version of the qualification.

DELIVERING APPLIED E-LEARNING IN THE WORKPLACE



FRSITO is one of the three ITOs and their respective industries working collaboratively with five Polytechnics in a pilot project to deliver applied e-learning in first line management. The project is supported by funding from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

The Polytechnics and ITOs are working with trainees and employers to promote unit standards and National Qualifications via an e-learning website. The project hopes to identify any e-learning obstacles within industry sectors. It also endeavours to develop and enhance e-learning capabilities for the industries and trainees involved in the Public Sector.

There are 17 trainees from the Fire and Rescue industry enrolled with FRSITO to complete this on-line learning. The National Certificate in First Line Management (Level 4) will be awarded to successful completions. Four of the trainees are FRSITO staff, with the others coming from New Zealand Fire Service Operations, Training, Fire Safety and Administration groups. There are another 65 trainees from Public Sector and local government organisations.

Dennis Thomas, Team Leader - Training, Auckland Fire Region is one of the trainee guinea pigs. "Getting into the training was different, you need to be familiar with IT, computer systems and be able to navigate material on-line. I consciously make time to fit the training into my schedule. It would be easy to get left behind if you were not motivated. There are eight units in the certificate and I am aiming to complete one a week. Although you can complete everything on-line, I recommend saving reading material to your hard drive in case of access problems. I find it easier to print out the worksheets."

" This is an attractive way for staff to gain a nationally recognised qualification, by applying their IT skills. "

Peter Dempsey, Assistant Fire Region Manager, Arapawa Fire Region comments "I see the potential in this method of learning and we have enrolled two staff. It can be difficult to access first line management training. This is an attractive way for staff to gain a nationally recognised qualification, by applying their IT skills. It is working well as our trainees are very IT savvy and this flexible method of learning suits our working arrangements. I look forward to enrolling more staff into the programme soon."

It is great to see ITOs, Polytechnics and industry working collaboratively to develop "cutting edge" training benefiting both employers and employees. This is an ideal way for volunteer officers to gain national recognition of their skills, through an e-learning system that is easy to access and a cost effective learning medium. FRSITO looks forward to presenting certificates to our first e-learning graduates.