



National Fire Academy

R0254 – Special Operations Program Management

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Quarter:

ACE Credit: In the upper division baccalaureate degree category, two semester hours in fire service administration or fire management.

IACET Continuing Education Units: 4.0

Length of Course: 6 Days (34 hr., 10 min. contact hours, Sunday – Friday)

Prerequisite: Yes

Curriculum: Hazardous Materials

Training Specialist: Wayne Yoder

Instructor:

Instructor email/phone:

Classroom: J-

Meeting Time: 8 AM – 5 PM

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Course Description (Catalog)

R0254 – “Special Operations Program Management.” This six-day course is designed to guide students in gaining and sharing the knowledge, skills and abilities to effectively develop, manage and lead hazardous materials and/or other all-hazards special operations response capabilities used in specialized emergency response.

Upon completion of the course, students learn how to analyze the complexities, dynamics and interrelationships of the components of special operations. Through the interactive lecture, group activities and testing, the students will study:

- Identification of special operations components.

- Identification of the interrelationships between each discipline and then demonstrate how the manager balances the influences of diverse components.
- Managing all related disciplines under the same programmatic procedures.
- Balancing the “spider web” with an understanding of all the unique internal and external demands and influences.

The course uses lessons learned on how to identify the needs and develop, implement and sustain a Hazardous Materials/Special Operations Program. Students will learn to ensure the program meets the needs of the community and the current standard of care. Included in the course materials are historical examples, current models, and best practices for community risk-based special response capability development and sustainment. This course is not an operational incident management course.

Student Qualifications (Primary and Secondary Audience)

Hazardous Materials/Special Operations Teams coordinators, managers, and personnel aspiring to become coordinators and managers; personnel responsible for training, equipping and sustaining specialized response resources; and personnel responsible for the supervision or leadership of a hazardous materials or special operations team or company.

Course Scope (Goal)

Upon successful completion of this course, each student will be able to effectively manage a Special Operations program while administering their program with a focus on constant quality improvement. To include

- Personnel and resources.
- Enhanced operational performance.
- Sustainment of response capability.

Course Objectives (Course Learning Outcomes – TLOs)

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to accomplish the following:

- Recognize that the Special Operations Program Manager must balance the demands of a variety of specialized services within the scope of a single program consisting of interdependent program elements.
- Evaluate the organization’s ability and willingness to meet the mission of Special Operations.
- Evaluate the organization’s regulatory obligations to meet the mission of Special Operations.
- Evaluate the jurisdictional characteristics of a community to include the potential for natural, technological, and man-made hazards that constitute risk to the community.

- Identify the financial considerations and processes to apply to effectively support and manage a Special Operations Team.
- Evaluate the equipment necessary to accomplish the defined Special Operations program mission.
- Evaluate an organization's staffing capability to meet the mission of Special Operations.
- Demonstrate the processes required for "selling" or gaining approval of a Special Operations program.

Course Delivery Method

The National Fire Academy (NFA) offers specialized training courses and advanced management programs of national impact in an academic classroom environment [on campus at the National Emergency Training Center \(NETC\) in Emmitsburg, Maryland](#). This classroom course is designed for the national level fire service officer from State and local fire service organizations. During this 6-day delivery, students will reside in dormitories provided on campus with classes conducted in classrooms designed for critical student/instructor interaction. All course materials are designed for interactive classroom environments, in either paper notebook or electronic formats.

Course Schedule

The purpose of the course schedule is to give you, at a glance, the required preparation, activities, and evaluation components of your course.

DAY 1	DAY 2
Unit 1: Defining Special Operations Activity 1.1: Student Introductions	Unit 3: Laws, Regulations, Standards, and Guidance
<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
Unit 1: Defining Special Operations (cont'd) Activity 1.2: Building a “Web of Influences”	Unit 3: Laws, Regulations, Standards, and Guidance (cont'd)
<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
Unit 1: Defining Special Operations (cont'd) Unit 2: Cultural Influences	Unit 3: Laws, Regulations, Standards, and Guidance (cont'd) Activity 3.1: Applying Laws and Standards — Scenarios
<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
Unit 2: Cultural Influences (cont'd) Activity 2.1: Identifying Cultural Influences	Unit 3: Laws, Regulations, Standards, and Guidance (cont'd)
Reading: Unit 3: Laws, Regulations, Standards, and Guidance Optional Reading: Unit 1: Defining Special Operations; Unit 2: Cultural Influences	Reading: Unit 4: Community Risk Assessment and Jurisdictional Analysis

DAY 3	DAY 4
Unit 4: Community Risk Assessment and Jurisdictional Analysis Activity 4.1: Probability of Occurrence and Vulnerability/Rating of Risks	Unit 5: Financial Considerations
<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
Unit 4: Community Risk Assessment and Jurisdictional Analysis (cont'd)	Unit 5: Financial Considerations (cont'd)
<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
Unit 4: Community Risk Assessment and Jurisdictional Analysis (cont'd) Activity 4.2: Strategic Analysis Session	Unit 5: Financial Considerations (cont'd) Activity 5.1: Competing Financial Priorities
<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
Unit 4: Community Risk Assessment and Jurisdictional Analysis (cont'd) Activity 4.3: Introduction to Team Project	Unit 5: Financial Considerations (cont'd)
Reading: Unit 5: Financial Considerations	Readings: Unit 6: Equipment; Unit 7: Staffing; Unit 8: Selling Your Program

DAY 5	DAY 6
Unit 6: Equipment Activity 6.1: Critical Equipment Discussion Activity 6.2: Equipment Maintenance Program	Final Exam
<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
Unit 6: Equipment (cont'd) Activity 6.3: Equipment Solutions	Activity 8.1: Final Presentations
<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
Unit 6: Equipment (cont'd) Activity 6.3: Equipment Solutions (cont'd)	Activity 8.1: Final Presentations (cont'd)
<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
Unit 7: Staffing Activity 7.1: Staffing and Training Solutions Unit 8: Selling Your Program	Graduation
Complete Activities 6.3 and 7.1, if not completed in class Prepare for Final Exam Prepare for Final Presentations	

Course Resources (Instructional Materials)

In order to be fully prepared, obtain a copy of the required textbooks and other instructional materials prior to the first day of class.

Required Readings

The student must complete required readings during the course to be able to thoughtfully participate in discussions and activities.

None.

Suggested Reading/Resources

Suggested readings and resources are not evaluated, but may enhance the student's understanding, serve as additional sources for citation and promote discussion of course material.

None.

Required Resources (Course Textbook)

Student Manual.

Supplemental Resources (Supplemental Course Textbook)

None.

Grading Methodology (Evaluation Procedures)

Students are evaluated on three course outcomes:

1. Final Presentation.
2. Final Presentation Backup Materials.
3. Final Exam.

The evaluation methodology is broken down as follows:

Evaluation Component	Percentage of Final Grade
Final Presentation (Group Evaluation)	40 points (40%)
Final Presentation Backup Materials (Group Evaluation)	40 points (40%)
Final Exam (Individual Evaluation)	20 points (20%)
Total	100 points (100%)

Outcomes 1 and 2 evaluate group performance. The groups are evaluated by two instructors, according to the criteria on the forms on the following pages, Evaluation Form for Group Presentation and Evaluation Form for Final Presentation Backup Materials. The total number of points assigned by each instructor will be averaged together in the grading sheet. Each individual in the group will be assigned the group's averaged score. Item 3, the Final Exam, is an individual grade.

Students may appreciate having feedback from their peers as well as the instructor. For this reason, students may peer evaluate one another's group presentations, using the Evaluation Form for Group Presentation, but the peer evaluation will not count toward a student's final score. The Evaluation Form for Group Presentation will be provided as Handout 4-2 to students for the peer evaluation.

A minimum final grade of at least 70 percent is required to pass this course.

Numerical Score	Letter Grade
100-90	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69 or below	F

Required Reading Assignments

Student completion of reading assignments will be done via evaluation of their class participation and will not be a separately graded activity.

Suggested Readings

Suggested readings are not evaluated, but may enhance the student's understanding and promote discussion of course material.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Defining Special Operations

Objectives

Unit Objective

The students will be able to:

- 1.1 Recognize that the Special Operations Program Manager must balance the demands of a variety of specialized services within the scope of a single program consisting of interdependent program elements.

Enabling Objectives

The students will be able to:

- 1.1 Review the course goal.
- 1.2 Review the course structure, including content, sequence, and methodology.
- 1.3 Participate in an activity allowing students to introduce themselves to one another.
- 1.4 Define the Special Operations Program Manager.
- 1.4 Develop a list of influences on a Special Operations program.
- 1.6 Identify different types of Special Operations Teams.
- 1.7 Identify challenges to managing the different types of Special Operations.

Unit 2: Cultural Influences

Objectives

Unit Objective

The students will be able to:

- 2.1 Evaluate the organization's ability and willingness to meet the mission of Special Operations.

Enabling Objectives

The students will be able to:

- 2.1 Evaluate the organization's culture and team dynamics.
- 2.2 Identify how cultural influences can drive the formal and informal decisionmaking processes within an organization, both negatively and positively.

Unit 3: Laws, Regulations, Standards, and Guidance

Objectives

Unit Objective

The students will be able to:

- 3.1 Evaluate the organization's regulatory obligations to meet the mission of Special Operations.

Enabling Objectives

- 3.1 Identify various laws, regulations, and standards that have the potential to affect a Special Operations program.
- 3.2 Define Standard of Care.
- 3.3 Identify the relationship between Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs)/Best Practices, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and Standard of Care.
- 3.4 Apply the applicable laws, regulations, and standards required to manage a Special Operations program.

Unit 4: Community Risk Assessment and Jurisdictional Analysis

Objectives

Unit Objective

The students will be able to:

- 4.1 Evaluate the jurisdictional characteristics of a community to include the potential for natural, technological, and man-made hazards that constitute risk to the community.

Enabling Objectives

The students will be able to:

- 4.1 Identify three methods of conducting a community risk assessment.
- 4.2 Explain capability assessment.
- 4.3 Explain threat/hazard, vulnerability, and risk analysis.
- 4.4 Explain risk mapping to include the process for determining the level of risks.
- 4.5 Given a scenario for a simulated community:
 - Conduct a community risk assessment.
 - Evaluate the probability of occurrence for a community.
 - Conduct a vulnerability analysis.

Unit 5: Financial Considerations

Objectives

Unit Objective

The students will be able to:

- 5.1 Identify the financial considerations and processes to apply to effectively support and manage a Special Operations Team.

Enabling Objectives

The students will be able to:

- 5.1 Explain financial management for Special Operations Program Management (SOPM).
- 5.2 Distinguish between budgeting and purchasing.
- 5.3 Identify types of budgets; determine advantages and disadvantages of each type.
- 5.4 Identify elements of budget preparation and the dynamics involved in the budget process.
- 5.5 Explain decisionmaking models for program management.
- 5.6 Use a decisionmaking template for making logical and informed purchases.
- 5.7 Analyze the financial impact of routine spending and capital purchases.

Unit 6: Equipment

Objectives

Unit Objective

The students will be able to:

- 6.1 Evaluate the equipment necessary to accomplish the defined Special Operations program mission.

Enabling Objectives

The students will be able to:

- 6.1 Identify the impacts that a maintenance program will have on the management of a Special Operations program.
- 6.2 Identify the types of records that are required for specialized equipment and the reason to keep equipment records.
- 6.3 Determine the impact of the purchase/use of new technology on the overall organization.

Unit 7: Staffing

Objectives

Unit Objective

The students will be able to:

- 7.1 Evaluate an organization's staffing capability to meet the mission of Special Operations.

Enabling Objectives

The students will be able to:

- 7.1 Identify personnel requirements.
- 7.2 Develop a staffing plan.
- 7.3 Identify requirements for sustainment of personnel.

Unit 8: Selling Your Program

Objectives

Unit Objective

The students will be able to:

- 8.1 Demonstrate the processes required for "selling" or gaining approval of a Special Operations program.

Enabling Objectives

The students will be able to:

- 8.1 Identify the process to achieve approval for a program from a jurisdictional authority.
- 8.2 As a group, develop and deliver a presentation to persuade a jurisdictional authority of an essential need that supports a viable Special Operations program.

Policies

Class Attendance and Cancellation Policy

Attendance

- You are required to attend all sessions of the course. If you do not, you may not receive a certificate, and your stipend may be denied.
- If you need to depart campus early and miss any portion of the course and/or graduation, you must make the request in writing to the NFA training specialist. The training specialist, in collaboration with the superintendent, may waive the attendance requirement in order to accommodate you with extraordinary circumstances as long as you complete all course requirements. If you receive approval for departing early, you must forward the approval to the Admissions Office so your stipend reimbursement is not limited.

Student Substitutions

Substitutions for NFA courses are made from waiting lists; your fire department can't send someone in your place.

Cancellations or No-Shows

NFA's mission for delivery of courses is impaired significantly by cancellations and no-shows. It is very difficult and costly to recruit students at the last minute. Currently there is a two-year ban on student attendance for students who are no-shows or cancel within 30 days of the course start date without a valid reason. If you receive such a restriction, your supervisor needs to send a letter to our Admissions Office explaining the cancellation/no-show.

Course Failure

If you fail an on-campus course, you will not be issued a stipend for that course. You can reapply for the failed course or any other NFA course and go through the random selection process. You don't have to successfully complete the failed course before attending another NFA course.

Student Code of Conduct Policy

Students, instructors and staff are expected to treat each other with respect at all times. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and may result in removal from campus and denial of stipends.

Writing Expectations

Student writing will conform to the generally accepted academic standards for college papers. Papers will reflect the original work of the student and give appropriate credit through citations for ideas belonging to other authors, publications or organizations. Student written work should

be free of grammatical and syntax errors, free of profanity or obscene language or ideas, and reflect critical thinking related to the course subject matter.

Citation and Reference Style

Attention Please: Students will follow the APA, Sixth Edition as the sole citation and reference style used in written work submitted as part of coursework to NFA. Assignments completed in a narrative essay, composition format, abstract, and discussion posts must follow the citation style cited in the APA, Sixth Edition.

Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date (11:59 p.m. EDT/EST) and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, you must manage competing demands on your time. Discussion board postings submitted within 3 days after the submission deadline will receive up to a 20% deduction. Those that do not submit their discussion board postings within this timeline will receive a “0” grade for the week. Final assignment papers will not be accepted after the deadline. Any paper submitted after the deadline will receive a “0” grade for that assignment.

Netiquette

Online learning promotes the advancement of knowledge through positive and constructive debate – both inside and outside the classroom. Forums on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and “flaming.” Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a professional learning setting – basic academic rules of good behavior and proper “Netiquette” must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the rewards and excitement of learning which does not include descent to personal attacks or student attempts to stifle the forum of others.

- Technology Limitations. While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple. The NFA Online classroom may not fully support MIME or HTML encoded messages, which means that bold face, italics, underlining, and a variety of color-coding or other visual effects will not translate in your e-mail messages.
- Humor Note. Despite the best of intentions, jokes and especially satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add “emoticons” to help alert your readers: ;-), :), ☺ .

Disclaimer Statement

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

Grading

Please review the following rubrics that explain how grades will be awarded.

Students who do not complete the entire course will be awarded an Incomplete (I) grade. In accordance with National Fire Academy academic policies, an Incomplete (I) grade must be removed by the end of the next semester following the course, or it automatically becomes a Failing (F) grade.

If you fail an on-campus course, you will not be issued a stipend for that course. You can reapply for the failed course or any other NFA course and go through the random selection process. You don't have to successfully complete the failed course before attending another NFA course.

http://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/admissions/student_policies.html

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to exhibit exemplary ethical behavior and conduct as part of the NFA community and society as a whole. Acts of academic dishonesty including cheating, plagiarism, deliberate falsification, and other unethical behaviors will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to report academic misconduct when they witness a violation. All cases of academic misconduct shall be reported by the instructor to the Training Specialist.

If a student is found to have engaged in misconduct and the allegations are upheld, the penalties may include, but are not limited to one or a combination of the following:

- expulsion,
- withholding of stipend or forfeiture of stipend paid,
- exclusion from future classes for a specified period; depending on the severity it could range from 1-10 years, and/or
- forfeiture of certificate for course(s) enrolled in at NETC.

Refer to NFA-specific Standard Operating Procedure 700.1 – *Academic Code of Conduct and Ethics* for more information.

Grading Rubrics

EVALUATION FORM FOR GROUP PRESENTATION

Project or Group Name: _____ **Evaluator:** [] Peer [] Instructor

Please rate the criteria below on the following scale:

- 1 — Strongly disagree
- 2 — Disagree
- 3 — Neutral
- 4 — Agree
- 5 — Strongly agree

Part 1: Presentation Components

Effectively used applicable regulations and standards to justify its program. _____

Clearly described how the proposed program will address a risk in Central City. _____

Clearly addressed the impact of the proposed program on financial processes. _____

Clearly addressed equipment issues related to its proposed program. _____

Clearly addressed staffing issues related to its proposed program. _____

Part 2: Presentation Format

The group delivered the presentation in a format appropriate for presentations to city government officials. _____

The group was able to effectively defend their justification for their program, or a component of their program, when challenged by the audience. _____

The group effectively used their backup material to support its presentation. _____

Total _____
(40 possible)

Students are graded as part of their group for this portion of the student evaluation. Each student within the group will receive the same grade.

EVALUATION FORM FOR FINAL PRESENTATION BACKUP MATERIALS

Project or Group Name: _____

Component of Backup Material*	Complete?** (circle 0 pts if incomplete; circle 10 pts if complete)
Resolution (optional) — formal document presented for the agenda.	N/A
Executive Summary — one-page overview of the problem and solution.	(0 pts) (10 pts)
Project Overview — detailed description of the program and how it solves the identified problem.	(0 pts) (10 pts)
Equipment Requirements — detailed description of any additional equipment requirements including justification, specifications, acquisition, training, and maintenance costs.	(0 pts) (10 pts)
Staffing Requirements — detailed description of the manpower requirements, staffing options, labor costs, and training requirements.	(0 pts) (10 pts)
Budget — spreadsheet summarizing the projected costs of implementing and maintaining the proposed program expansion.	(0 pts) (10 pts)
Total Points	

(40 possible)

*For a component to be considered complete, it must be clearly labeled and its content must be consistent with the description in the above form.

** These components are evaluated only on completion, so the assignment options are either 10 points if completed, or 0 points if not completed. A group can receive a maximum of 40 points toward the final grade if all components are completed. If a component is designated as optional, no points are assigned; an optional component has no impact on the grade.

Students are graded as part of their group for this portion of the student evaluation. Each student within the group will receive the same number of points.

**EVALUATION FORM FOR FINAL PRESENTATION BACKUP MATERIALS
(40 POINTS)**

Project or Group Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____

Points: Adjectival Rating

7-8 Consistently does all of the following:

- Information is presented in a logical and interesting sequence.
- Students demonstrate full knowledge by answering all questions with explanations.
- Graphics explain and reinforce text and presentation.
- Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.
- Maintains good eye contact, uses clear voice.

4-6 Does most or many of the following:

- Information is presented in a logical sequence.
- Answers questions, but without elaboration or explanation.
- Graphics relate to text and presentation.
- Very few misspellings or grammatical errors.
- Maintains eye contact but frequently returns to notes, uses clear voice.

1-3 Does most or many of the following:

- Information is not clearly organized.
- Unable to answer questions.
- Occasionally uses graphics that rarely support text and presentation.
- Presentation has multiple misspellings and/or grammatical errors.
- Student occasionally uses eye contact, mostly reads presentation.

0 Essentially incomplete or does not turn in assignment:

- No organization to presentation.
- Unable to answer questions.
- No graphics.
- Reads report.
- No eye contact.
- Does not speak clearly so that the audience can understand.