



Customer Spotlight Q&A:

University of Akron Training Center for Fire and Hazardous Materials

Matthew Claflin, Chief of Training & Educational Contact

Overview

The University of Akron Training Center for Fire and Hazardous Materials is located on the campus of The University of Akron and is a part of the College of Applied Science and Technology. Despite its ties to the University of Akron, the Training Center is a self-sufficient program that takes no money from the university. The Training Center brings the University, government agencies, and industries together into one comprehensive regional center to integrate educational programs, fire and hazardous materials training, and other related applications of fire and safety technology. Offered courses include Fire Fighter I and II, Fire Officer I-IV, Fire Safety Inspector, Fire Instructor, and more.

Matthew Claflin is the Chief of Training & Educational Contact at the Training Center. We had the chance to speak with him regarding his experience using Jones & Bartlett Learning Public Safety Group products in the Training Center's fire service courses.

What led you to choosing Public Safety Group for your programs?

I've been with the University for 10 years, originally starting as a lead instructor. The school was using the *Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills* book when I started, and we've always had great success with it and other PSG products. One of the high school programs we were running was using IFSTA material, and our success with their books was not as great as it was with PSG.

The content and format are both different from PSG's books, and while some may like it, we preferred the layout of PSG books. We feel PSG is at the top when it comes to consistency in its products and convenience of course delivery with the online learning system [Navigate] that comes with the books.

PRODUCTS USED:

- *Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills and Hazardous Materials Response, Fourth Edition (Preferred Package)*
- *Fire Officer: Principles and Practice, Third Edition (Advantage Package)*
- *Chief Officer: Principles and Practice, Third Edition (Advantage Package)*
- *Fire Service Instructor: Principles and Practice, Third Edition (Advantage Package)*

Key Benefits

- ✓ Summer Firefighter I and II classes achieved a 95% first-time pass rate and 100% overall pass rate for the Ohio state fire fighter certification exam.
- ✓ Fall Fire Instructor class achieved a 90% first-time pass rate and 100% overall pass rate on the Ohio state fire instructor certification exam.
- ✓ Navigate Gradebook delivered an easy way to manage student and overall class grading.
- ✓ Navigate TestPrep helped students feel more prepared for both their course final exams and the state certification exams.

What do you like the most about Public Safety Group products compared to the competition?

As an administrator, I really like the Grader Report in Navigate. It's so easy to go into the Grader Report, look at each student, see how they've been doing in their quizzes and exams, and compare scoring to measure both individual student and overall class progress. We showed the Grader Report to the state in our last charter review/audit in April. The state approved it and agreed that it seems very useful in showing how students are doing and maintaining a clean gradebook.

I set up a lot of the courses in Navigate myself (with input from my instructors). The system is easy to use, and I like that once I create a course and add the content, it's there, it's created, and I don't have to duplicate efforts to re-create the course since I can clone it for future classes. We've found that there is a mild learning curve for students, particularly older ones, in learning how to use Navigate, but once they get in and use it, they seem to love it.

Additionally, we love the TestPrep tool within the *Fundamentals Preferred* package. We require students to pass their course's final exam with an 80% or higher before they can sit in on the state certification exam. We've gotten excellent feedback from students on how TestPrep helped them prepare for both their class final exam and the state exam, with many students commenting on how the questions in TestPrep are worded very similarly to the ones in the state certification exam.

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What kind of success have you seen with certification using Public Safety Group products?

I can share some statistics from a couple of our latest classes. Our fall Fire Instructor class, which uses the *Fire Service Instructor book*, achieved a 90% first-time pass rate and a 100% overall pass rate on the Ohio state fire instructor certification exam. Our last Fire Academy (Fire Fighter I and II) in the summer, which uses the *Fundamentals book*, achieved a 95% first-time pass rate and a 100% overall pass rate on the Ohio state fire fighter certification exam. Overall, we've found that our pass rates have gone up using PSG's products.

Are there any closing words you'd like to share with the PSG team or anyone considering using PSG products?

PSG customer service is great and unmatched. My sales rep, Korie, is incredible and quick to respond to any requests or phone calls I make to her. The PSG team makes a real effort to develop personal relationships with its customers.

I would recommend PSG products and the Navigate system to everybody, whether you're a program director, training chief, or general fire instructor. Navigate is very user friendly, and even our less tech-savvy instructors and students have grown to like it.