

Accreditation Benefits

Dear Reader:

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Accreditation Benefits

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Benefits of Fire Department Accreditation

So why would a fire department want to conduct an evaluation of its fire service program? According to the CFAI, there are so major reasons to earn accreditation:

- Raise the profile of your agency with your community
- Emphasize your agency's dedication to excellence to your stakeholders
- Establish an agency-wide culture of continuous improvement
- Assist with communicating your leadership's philosophies
- Build positive relationships with your labor groups
- Offer independent verification and validation of your agency's operations
- Provide tangible data and information for your elected officials

These are all proactive reasons with a purpose to improve, but the primary goal of a self-assessment process is to answer three basic questions:

- Is the organization effective?
- Are the goals, objectives, and mission of the organization being achieved?
- What are the reasons for the success of the organization?

CFAI further describes the benefits of an accreditation program as: The promotion of excellence within the fire and emergency services:

- Assure colleagues and the public that they have definite missions and objectives that are appropriate for the jurisdictions they serve
- Provide a detailed evaluation of the services they provide to the community
- Identify areas of strength and weakness within the department
- Create methods or systems for addressing deficiencies while building organizational success
- Encourage professional growth for both the department and its personnel
- Provide a forum for the communication of organizational priorities
- Foster national recognition by colleagues and the public
- Create a mechanism for developing strategic and program action plans
- Fostering pride in the organization from department members, community leaders and citizens

These benefits range from abstract concepts to practical, day-to-day improvements. However, improvement will not occur unless the organization applies the findings from the self-assessment to local planning and implementation activities. The willingness to allow for improvement and accept change is another challenge the department must accept.

Self-assessment focuses on whether the organization is meeting goals that are commensurate with its responsibility. In today's world of government where the focus is on reinventing, re-engineering, rethinking and quality management, a department must continue to ask itself if there is value added by the actions it is taking within the organization. This process assists the fire service by asking questions to determine if the fire department is effective in meeting the needs of its community.

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