

North Carolina Pyrotechnic License FAQs

1. What is the difference between 1.4g and 1.3g pyrotechnic materials?

In the most basic terms 1.3g pyrotechnic materials are the fireworks used by professionals in a typical 4th of July celebration. 1.4g pyrotechnic materials are typically the type of fireworks sold over the counter in South Carolina and Tennessee. Both of these types of pyrotechnics are illegal in North Carolina unless you possess a license issued by the state, and a permit for a show issued by a city or county. The 1.3g pyrotechnic materials also require ATF approval to handle and/or be in possession of. The 1.4g materials do not require ATF permission but do require the same licensing and permitting as 1.3g in North Carolina.

2. Does the 1.3g outdoor pyrotechnic license cover 1.4g materials or do I need another license?

The 1.3g outdoor pyrotechnic license covers 1.4g outdoor pyrotechnic operations. Only one license is required. However a 1.3g outdoor pyrotechnic license does not cover any proximate materials (1.4g or otherwise) used in a proximate setting (closer than 75 feet). However the 1.4g limited outdoor pyrotechnic license does not cover 1.3g outdoor or proximate audience operations. In both cases an additional license for the respective discipline would be required.

3. What is the difference between a county issued permit and a state issued license?

A county or city issued permit is typically issued to the sponsor of a show with the intent of verifying the safety of the intended site, anticipated weather conditions and the qualification of the operators. The N.C. Pyrotechnics License is a certification issued by the N.C. Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to a single operator that lasts for three (3) years and verifies that the operator is qualified in the handling of pyrotechnic or proximate fireworks. It permits an operator or assistant to conduct pyrotechnic operations throughout N.C. Both the Pyrotechnics License and a local permit are required to conduct a pyrotechnic or proximate show in N.C.

4. Do certifications issued by firework associations meet N.C. licensing requirements?

The licensing system has three basic components: documentation, experience and training and education. The Pyrotechnic Guild International (PGI) and American Pyrotechnic Association (APA) certification programs have been audited by OSFM and meet the training and education portion of the N.C. licensing process. Additional programs developed using the applicable NFPA standards will have to be evaluated by staff. These programs must be submitted to OSFM for review before receiving "acceptable" status.

5. What if I have a pyrotechnics show in early February, and I will not have a chance to get licensed?

If you have a show in the month of February, and you will not have a chance to be licensed prior to your show please contact Rob Roegner at rob.roegner@ncdoi.gov or Brandi Maynard at brandi.maynard@ncdoi.gov. The Office of State Fire Marshal is committed to making the transition from a non-regulated state to a regulated state as seamless to the pyrotechnics industry as the law will allow.

6. If one person in my tour group has an operator's license, do I still have to take the class and get my own license?

All workers associated with the operations will be required to understand a certain level of safety, depending on the responsibility. These levels of safety are broken down by specific licenses as follows:

1) State Licensed Operator – there can be as many of these as desired; however, the Law requires at least one state licensed operator on each site before, during and after each show.

2) State Licensed Operator Assistant – All assistants onsite can follow a similar path as the Operators have. This process consists of documentation and an exam.

3) On-site Certified – The Office of State Fire Marshal has developed a process which involves the local code official and the operator in charge of the pyro show. This is a three step process:

a) A safety briefing from the operator.

b) The assistant filling out a form provided by the operator and downloaded from our Web site.

c) The Fire inspector from the local jurisdiction issuing an on-site certification card for each assistant during their inspection.

7. What if I'm with a traveling tour group, and I can't get to N.C. to take a class before we're scheduled to perform?

OSFM already recognizes the PGI and APA certification programs, which are national programs and do not necessarily, have to be attained in North Carolina. Contact the N.C. Office of State Fire Marshal if the class is not available or your schedule does not allow attendance at a class prior to your N.C. event.

OSFM may be able to offer some assistance in locating or providing a class for your group.

8. What is considered proof of training?

Currently the training considered adequate is either APA or PGI Certification. OSFM is auditing individual classes based on the APA or PGI guidelines to approve equivalent classes by certified and experienced instructors.

9. What are the requirements for a substantially equivalent training program?

The basic requirements for a substantially equivalent class are a minimum of 6 hours of classroom education on NFPA 1123 for Pyrotechnic and 1126 for Proximate and two hours of practical time.

10. What training does OSFM conduct?

OSFM does not conduct any training classes, but we do host classes at 322 Chapanoke Road, Raleigh.

11. Where and when is the training offered?

You can get updated information about classes for pyrotechnic operators at

http://fscpublic.ncdoi.net/public/PublicCourseSchedPyrotechnicList.html?psCourseType=PS_COURSE_TYPE:PY13

12. How do I sign up for classes?

All the approved classes with the contact information for the class organizer are listed on the respective OSFM web page. As more classes are offered, additional postings will appear. Simply contact the class organizer to sign up for a class.

13. How much do the classes cost?

The class cost varies depending on the sponsor. Typically the sponsor is attempting to cover the expense of the instructors and the pyrotechnics used in the practical session of the class.

14. How much does the license cost?

The cost of the license application \$100.00 and extends for three (3) years. If an operator desires to be licensed to operate outdoor Pyrotechnics and Proximate Audience Pyrotechnics, then the cost would be \$200.00 (\$100 for each license). Renewal of Licenses will Cost 60.00 for operators and 30.00 for assistants. There is a additional 10.00 testing fee for each test taken.

15. If I am licensed in another state, am I permitted to operate pyrotechnics in N.C.?

No. Although licensing in another state will assist in the application process, it is still necessary to fill out and provide the information requested in the N.C. application. Your out of state license may fulfill some N.C. requirements. However, which requirements are affected will depend on the requirements of the different state licenses you have obtained. We require documentation of your existing license. A listing of the different states and the requirements they fulfill are listed at:

http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Fire_Safety_Programs/Documents/Pyrotechnic_Operator_Certification/R reciprocityWorksheet.pdf

16. How long should I allow for the licensing process (application, class, test etc.)?

The process will be highly dependent upon the individual applicant. The training must be completed prior to submitting the application, and is solely the responsibility of the applicant to schedule and complete. Upon approval of their application, each applicant will be able to sign up for a test date based on the schedule available. Review of the application should be completed by OSFM staff within 14 days of receipt.

17. How do I take the licensing test?

The first step to obtaining approval for testing status is to file an application with the Office of State Fire Marshal. Upon filing an application and obtaining “approved” status the applicant will receive a letter allowing them to schedule themselves for the state exam. The test is administered by the Office of State Fire Marshal. For information about upcoming tests go to

http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Fire_Safety_Programs/Documents/Pyrotechnic_Operator_Certification/Test%20Dates.pdf

18. Can I take the test online?

Unfortunately we can't offer the test online at this time. We will do everything we can to accommodate the schedule limitations of out of town operators.

19. What is considered a passing grade on the pyrotechnic operator test?

You must score at least 75% to pass either the pyrotechnic operator test or the proximate test. You may retake the test only twice.

20. What should I use to study for the test?

Currently the only study guides for the test administered by OSFM are NFPA 1123, the 2000 edition; NFPA 1126, the 2001 edition; the N. C. Fire Code Chapter 33; and N.C. General Statute 14-410 – 14-415 and 58-82A 1-3. You may purchase a copy of the NFPA materials from NFPA or ICC. General Statutes are available online. There are no sample tests available as study guides.

21. Are there different versions of the test or one test that requires knowledge of both large outdoor displays (1.3g displays) small outdoor (1.4g displays) and proximate displays?

There are three different versions of the test; one for 1.3g Pyrotechnic, one for 1.4g pyrotechnic and one for Proximate Fireworks.

22. When and where do I take the test?

Right now, the test is offered in Raleigh, New Bern, and Ashville on a regular basis. Additional testing locations, all dates for Raleigh, and the form for regional office testing (New Bern and Ashville) are located at:

http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Fire_Safety_Programs/Documents/Pyrotechnic_Operator_Certification/Pyro%20Regional%20Office%20Testing%20Registration.pdf

23. When is the deadline for July 4th Operators and Assistant Operators Licensing?

The deadline to be assured an application will be reviewed and an applicant has an adequate opportunity to schedule an exam date is June 1 of each year.