



Dear National Fire Academy Student:

The faculty and staff of the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy are pleased that you have been accepted into the *Executive Leadership* course. This course is designed for executive level administrators and officers, focusing on the skills and attributes of exercising leadership at the executive level.

The curriculum provides a holistic examination of executive effectiveness when confronting significant issues and problems that are adaptive in nature. Content areas include purpose and integrity, using feedback, thinking systemically, thinking politically, developing self to exercise leadership, decision-making, politics and public policy, influence and persuasion, negotiating, storytelling, an exercising leadership practicum, managing multiple roles, taking risks, networking, transitions, and staying alive. There is also a *Staff Ride* to the Gettysburg National Military Park. Methodology for the course includes self and observer feedback (multi-rater assessment tools) and case study analysis.

Please note the following precourse requirements:

As a student in the Executive Leadership course, you will be required to participate in a 360° Multi-Rater Assessment process through NFA's Online Distance Learning Web site. You must be or become a registered user of NFA Online at [www.nfaonline.dhs.gov](http://www.nfaonline.dhs.gov) at least eight weeks prior to your class attendance to be assigned and access the two assessment instruments. Please see the immediately following letter from Chuck Burkell for more information.

If you move or change jobs during the year, please write to Admission to provide your new mailing address, email address, and other pertinent information. Both Admissions and the Academy need this information. A telephone call with your new address is not sufficient.

In making plans for your stay at the National Fire Academy, please be aware of the fact that this course will require a great deal of reading. In terms of making plans for your weekend, it is important that you leave sufficient time for class preparation. (NOTE: On some interim Saturdays, the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation may be offering their course "*Taking Care Of Our Own.*" If you are invited to participate in this 6-hour program, time will be available to do so.)

Those individuals who are enrolled within the Executive Fire Officer Program are responsible for completing an Applied Research Project as a post-course activity to fully satisfy the requirements of the program.

End-of-class graduation ceremonies are an important part of the course and you are expected to attend. Please do not make any travel arrangements to leave campus until after you and your classmates graduate.

Increasing numbers of students and instructors are bringing laptop computers to campus. You alone are responsible for the security and maintenance of your equipment. The Academy cannot provide you with computer software, hardware, or technical support to include disks, printers, scanners, etc. There are a limited number of 120 Volt AC outlets in the classrooms. A Student Computer Lab is located in Building D and is available for all students to use. It is open daily with technical support provided in the evenings. The lab uses Windows XP and Office 2007 as the software standards.

Should you need additional information related to course content or EFOP requirements, please feel free to contact Mr. Chuck Burkell, Executive Education Instructional Systems Specialist at (301) 447-1072 or email [Chuck.burkell@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Chuck.burkell@fema.dhs.gov)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denis Onieal", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent  
National Fire Academy  
U.S. Fire Administration



R125

Dear *Executive Leadership* Participant,

Welcome! An exciting opportunity awaits you at the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy (NFA) during your attendance in the *Executive Leadership* Course (EL), the final *Executive Fire Officer Program*. Your two weeks at the NFA will be busy and challenging, yet there will be some time for introspection and reflection.

In order to properly prepare for the *Executive Leadership* course, it is necessary to ask you to complete several tasks in advance. ***Please read these instructions carefully.*** All of these are tasks are mandatory, with no exceptions. As an enrolled participant you must agree to make every effort in completing each assignment. Most of these involve reading books, cases, or articles. There are some additional activities that will be described in this communication as well.

1. **360° Multi-Rater Assessment Instruments (immediate action required):** Attendance in the *Executive Leadership* course requires participation in a 360° Multi-Rater Assessment process through NFA's Online Distance Learning Website. The 360° Multi-Rater Assessment process consists of two instruments; the Adaptive Leadership Instrument and the Executive Leadership Assessment. In order to access the assessment instruments, you must be or become a registered student in NFAOnline at [www.nfaonline.dhs.gov](http://www.nfaonline.dhs.gov) at least eight weeks prior to your class attendance.

-Once you become a registered user in NFAOnline, a system administrator will assign the assessment instruments to you. A system generated email from [NFAOnlinehelp@dhs.gov](mailto:NFAOnlinehelp@dhs.gov) with further instructions and a job aid will be sent. If you are not a registered user of NFAOnline, the assessments cannot be assigned to you and therefore you will not receive the email notification.

-Both of the assessment instruments are multi-rater in nature. This means that each instrument has a "self" component (you will complete this part for each of the two instruments) and an observer component. You will identify and ask eight observers (up to 16 different people) to complete each of the assessment instruments. (More specific instruction will be provided when assigned.) As a result, the feedback report you receive during class will contain both self and observer rating information. The system is designed to protect the identity of your observers; please convey this fact to your observers when you ask them to participate.

The government has invested considerable resources in the 360° Multi-Rater Assessment process. We believe each of the assessments will provide you with valuable feedback during your course of instruction.

Failure to complete and submit the self-assessment component for both of the instruments by the stated due date will remove your eligibility to attend this *Executive Leadership* course offering.

Likewise, failure for your observers to complete and submit their components for both of the instruments by the stated due date will remove your eligibility to attend this *Executive Leadership* course offering.

These assessments will need your immediate attention. Both you and your observers must complete the assessments at least two weeks prior to your course start date. For questions concerning the assessment instruments, contact Roxane Strayer at [roxane.strayer@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:roxane.strayer@fema.dhs.gov) or (301) 447-1642.

2. You will receive a collection of readings with study questions (in the mail). It is essential that you carefully read these documents before traveling to Emmitsburg. Please bring this "course-reader" with you. Written assignments will be required of these readings during the course; therefore it is imperative that you read these in advance.
3. Required Texts: There are two required texts for the EL Course. The most critical assignment is the first listed as the entire course will be based on this text:

*-The Practice of Adaptive Leadership. Tools and Tactics for Changing Your World and Organization.* Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., Linsky, M. (2009). Harvard Business Press. ISBN 978-1-4221-0576-4

*-The Killer Angels.* Shaara, M. (1974). ISBN-13: 978-0345407276. (Note: There are a number of re-printings of this semi-fictional account of the Battle of Gettysburg. Any edition is acceptable.)

Both of these are readily available at either Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble.com. Many local bookstores also stock these books.

4. The course features a one-day Staff Ride to the *Gettysburg National Military Park*. You are encouraged to bring the necessary clothing, footwear, and rain gear in case of inclement weather.
5. Since this is the final Executive Fire Officer Program course, we are requesting that you bring with you and wear either your Class A Uniform (preferred) or business attire for the graduation ceremony.
6. Adaptive Challenge Presentation

Among the potential resources for our learning in the Executive Leadership Course is to use the ideas we discuss to work through leadership challenges or dilemmas from your experience and that of other participants.

Toward that end, please bring with you a brief (one page) statement of a leadership challenge, ideally current, but a past one is okay as long as it is one for which unresolved issues remain. Presumably you will bring something from your work life, but it could be from your personal, civic, or community life as well. (Ideally this will be more of an adaptive problem than technical in nature. Refer to *The Art & Practice of Adaptive Leadership* if you need to do so regarding the differences between Adaptive and Technical problems). You should prepare yourself to present this challenge by describing the problem within a small group in 5 minutes.

You need not reveal the identities of the other individuals or organization/group or setting involved, but write enough of a description of the situation so that it could be the starting point for a meaningful discussion/consultation. The norm is that all our conversations will stay in the room. No one will be required to discuss her/his leadership challenge publicly.

In writing it up, characterize the challenge from your perspective. Who are the major players and, briefly, what are their interests? How do they view the situation? What are your stakes? Describe what action you have taken or are thinking about taking in reference to the challenge. And frame the question you would most like to have us address.

We look forward to your arrival and to the expectation that Executive Leadership will provide you with an excellent opportunity for professional growth and development. Should you have any questions regarding these instructions, please email me at [chuck.burkell@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:chuck.burkell@fema.dhs.gov) or call (301) 447-1072.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Burkell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Chuck Burkell  
Executive Education Instructional Systems Specialist  
National Fire Academy  
U.S. Fire Administration