



Fire Service Training, LLC
LMS Student User Manual

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Overview

This manual is intended to assist students of Fire Service Training, LLC with navigating the various components of our Learning Management System (LMS.) This is not intended to be an all-encompassing manual, but rather a quick reference guide covering the key features that students may not be familiar with.

For aspects of the LMS not addressed in the manual that you may have questions about, feel free to contact our support staff to assist you. If your question is related to course content, contact your instructor for further information.

Technical Requirements

Minimum technical requirements:

If on a PC:

- 56.6 Kbps Modem (or Cable Modem / DSL if available)
- Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or Vista
- Internet Explorer 5.5 or later, Firefox

If on a Mac:

- 56.6 K Modem (or Cable Modem / DSL if available)
- Macintosh OS 9 or OS X
- Firefox

The LMS used by Fire Service Training, LLC works best if used through Firefox (<http://www.mozilla.com/firefox>) and on a high speed internet connection.

NOTE: Some courses may have additional hardware, software and version compatibility requirements.

How to Log in

To log in to our online LMS, first use your web browser to visit <http://fstrainingllc.com/online> (note there is no www at the beginning.) Also, from our homepage at <http://www.fstrainingllc.com> you can click the link at the bottom of the page for “Online.”

Once on the main screen for the LMS, you have two options to log in. The first is using the login box at the top left of the screen. The second option is a link on the top right of the homepage for the LMS to Login. Your User ID is your first initial and last name (i.e. for John Smith, the login would be jsmith.) Your password is sent to you the first time you register for a class and we create a user profile. After logging in for the first time, you will need to change your password to something you will remember.

If you have forgotten your password, there is a link on the login box for forgotten passwords. Follow the prompts to retrieve your password.

Editing your Profile

Basic Profile Information

To edit any components of your profile, click on your **name** in the top right portion of the screen after logging in. This takes you to the “View profile” screen. From this screen, click on the Edit profile link in the Settings block. Fields notated in red and with an asterisk (*) are required fields. All other fields are optional.

Please ensure your email address is set to a current email address. This is the method used to send your password if forgotten, as well as notifications for forum posts and a means of communication for your course instructors.

The Description field is for you to post a basic profile/bio on yourself. This information lets your instructor and fellow students know more about you.

Several optional fields may require explanation. For email display, if you change it from “allow only other course members to see my email address” your classmates will not know who is sending messages throughout the course. Our recommendation is to leave this set as the default. Email format can be changed if your email host does not allow HTML messages and requires plain text. Email digest type can be adjusted to reflect either “No digest” (you will receive an email for every post made to every discussion forum you are a member of), “Complete” (you will receive a daily email with the full body of all posts made to all discussion forums you are a member of), or “Subject Only” (you will receive a daily email with the subject lines only, to read the posts you will have to access each discussion forum.)

When using discussion forums in classes, there are two additional options that may be of interest: forum auto-subscribe and forum tracking. Forum auto-subscribe will automatically sign you up for email notifications of any discussion forum, and forum tracking is a tool that can let you easily review forums for new postings you have not yet viewed.

If you are using a screen reader for accessibility purposes, there is an option labeled “Screen reader.” If this is set to yes, the LMS will reformat many aspects to make the system more user-friendly for screen reader capabilities.

All other fields are relatively self-explanatory and are optional for your use.

Changing your Password

To change your password, you can click on your name on the upper right portion of the screen to go to the View Profile page. From here, click on the “Change password” link in the settings box on the lower left side of the screen. Alternately, from your home screen you can click on the Settings box and Change Password link from there.

Accessing Your Courses

After logging into the LMS, your currently enrolled courses should be visible in the middle of the screen under “My Courses.” To access the course, simply click on the course title.

If your course is missing, your instructor may not have made it available yet. Courses are typically available within one week of the listed start date to allow review of the material, syllabus, and to gain familiarity with specific layouts and activities within a given offering. Contact your instructor to find out the available date for your course if you feel it should be showing under “My Courses” and it is not there.

Navigating the LMS

General Navigation

While navigating in the LMS, you can use the traditional backward and forward navigation buttons (the back and forward arrows for your browser.) You may get confused as to where you are or where you have been by using this method. A better option is to use the feature known as the “Breadcrumb Trail” located across the top of the LMS screen.

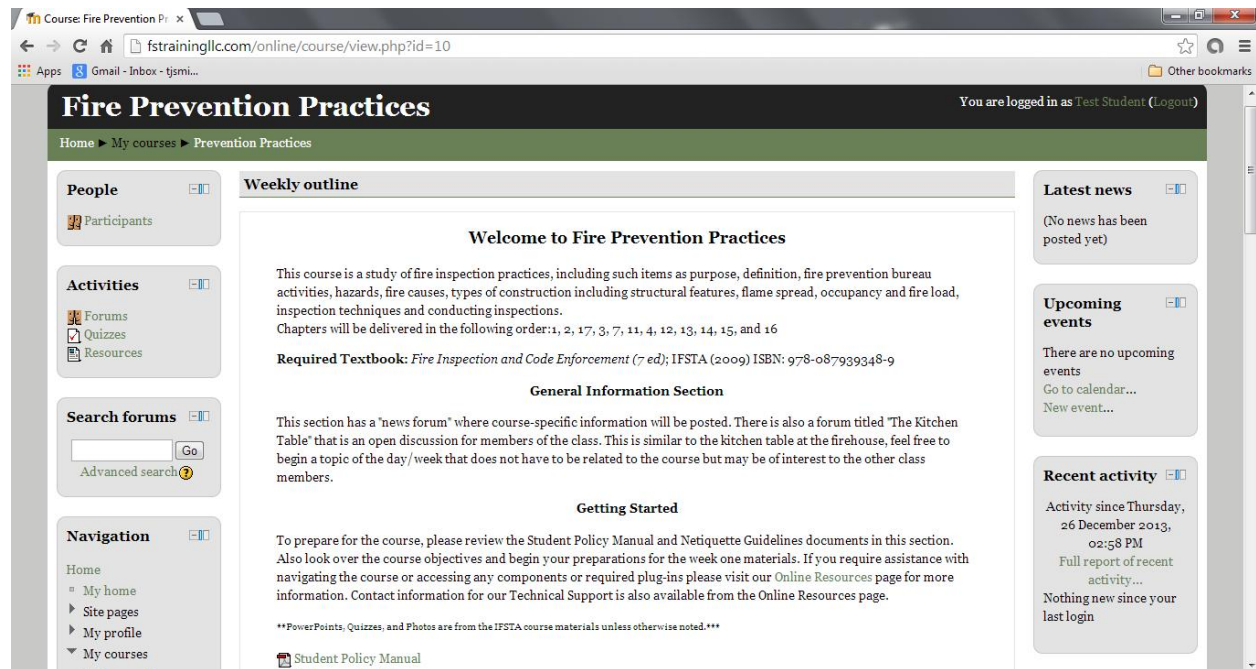
This Breadcrumb Trail shows what pages have brought you to your current view. You can click on a component of the Breadcrumb Trail to take you to a different point within your course or within the LMS.

Course Navigation

Navigating within courses works similar to the General Navigation for the LMS. The easiest way to begin navigating the course is to simply access your course and browse around looking at the various information and features your instructor has enabled for the course you are enrolled in.

Page Layout and Blocks

The LMS uses a system known as “blocks.” On each page, there are is a variety of information grouped into common sections of information. The basic layout for classes using our LMS is:



The blocks visible on the left of the screen are People, Activities, Forums, and Navigation. The block in the center of the screen is the main course information screen. The right side contains Latest News, Upcoming Events, and Recent Activity blocks.

The people block can be used to view profiles or contact members of your class as well as the instructor staff. Simply click on Participants, then the individual's name.

The Activities block contains a summary of activities for your registered class. This block will change slightly depending on what activities your instructor has built for you to participate in.

The Search Forum block lets you search within the forums for the class you are viewing. This does not search the forums for all classes you are enrolled in, only the course you currently have open.

The Navigation block provides a means of navigating throughout the LMS site. Feel free to browse the various links available to you.

Below the Navigation block is also the Settings block, where your course grades are visible.

The Main Course Information section contains a description of your course, course expectations, and all the materials needed for your course. Individual courses can be set up either by topic or by weekly session, depending on the instructor preferences. Under each week/topic you can find any materials your instructor has provided, weekly discussions if required, quizzes/tests, and other activities. Information for specific activities is located further in this document.

The Latest News block will be any announcements your instructor has made to your course, as well as any institution-wide announcements that may be distributed.

The Upcoming Events block lists assignments, discussions, and quizzes/tests that are due for your course as well as any other specific events your instructor has listed (such as required classroom days.)

The Recent Activities block will list any items added to the class, and can show any updates made to the class.

There are additional blocks that can be added by your instructor to further facilitate the class, should you have any questions feel free to contact your instructor or our tech support.

Viewing Your Grades

To view your grades, in the Settings block on your screen go to Grades to view your gradebook. Some assignments due during the course may not show; your instructor may have them "hidden" until the assignment is due. The LMS will also show what your current course grade is at this point in the course. Do not worry if it appears you have a very low score in a course, several components of your grade may not reflect accumulated points until your instructor or the system posts a grade for a specific assignment.

Activities

Activities within the LMS are items that require a student to perform some action to complete. These can be either online or offline activities. Offline activities are any actions that are completed outside of

the LMS and do not require students to complete anything through the LMS for completion. Online activities require the student to interact with the LMS in some manner; these are detailed below.

Assignments

Types of Assignments

Assignments fall into four categories and are used to submit materials to your instructor for grading. The four categories are: advanced uploading of files, upload a single file, online text, or offline activity.

- Advanced uploading of files – this provides a link that allows students to submit one or more files for grading. This type of assignment can also be configured to allow students to submit multiple drafts of an assignment by using the same link.
- Upload a single file – provides a link where you can upload a single file one time only.
- Online text – this is a textbox for students to enter text directly into the LMS as directed by the instructor.
- Offline activity – this provides information on an activity completed outside of the LMS (such as classroom assignments, workbooks, performances, etc.)

File Formatting

Your instructor must be able to open and view files submitted for grading purposes. For word processor files, this is typically a .DOC or .RTF format. If you are not using Microsoft Word, use the “Save as...” command and select .DOC or .RTF format. Prior to submitting assignments, verify with your instructor what format they require for a given course. Also follow any requirements for formatting such as APA or MLA for citations, font and layout requirements, etc.

Naming Your Files

To prevent possible problems, when naming your files only use alphanumeric characters (numbers and letters.) Avoid using any special characters when naming files. Be sure to include your name in the body of your file and name your file as directed by your course instructor. If in doubt, use your last name, first initial, and assignment name when saving your file (i.e. SmithA_report.doc.)

Submitting Assignments

To submit an assignment, click on the assignment title to access the assignment. When you are ready to submit, follow these steps:

1. Open the assignment and read the instructions from the instructor.
2. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on “Upload a file”
3. On the next screen, click “Choose a file” and navigate to the file you want to upload.
 - a. On the “File picker” screen, you may have to go to “Upload a file” to access files on your computer.
4. Once you have the file selected, click on “Upload this file”
5. Look for a “File Uploaded Successfully” confirmation message. If your browser gives an error uploading, you may need to set your browser to Compatibility Mode. For directions on Compatibility Mode, contact our tech support or visit our FAQs page.

6. If you are submitting multiple files, repeat the above directions for each file.
7. Once the file is attached, click “Save changes” to submit the file for grading.

***There is a file size limit of 10 MB for files uploaded through the LMS. If you have or need to submit a larger file, contact your instructor for specific guidance.

Reviewing Instructor Feedback

To view any feedback your instructor provides, click on the assignment name to reopen the assignment or click on Grades under the Administration block on your course screen. Open the assignment link to view any files your instructor has posted to provide feedback on your assignment.

Chat

The chat feature similar to Discussion Forums, with the primary difference being that chats are “real-time” (synchronous) and Discussion Forums are asynchronous (posters not online at the same time.) The Chat feature is similar to a chat room, in that all participants are online at the same time and communicate in real time with each other. To access the chat, click on the chat name.

If your instructor is using the chat feature, you will have an assigned time to be “logged in” to the chat room. Ensure you verify the required participation times for the chats in a given class.

Participating in Discussion Forums

Discussion forums are designed for student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction. These forums are typically considered a class assignment, so ensure that when making forum posts (also referred to as Discussion Boards) that you use spell check and proper writing review prior to posting your information. Also ensure that you have followed your instructor’s directions to ensure proper credit for your forum postings.

Depending on the settings your instructor has selected, you may not be able to view other student’s postings until you have made your initial posting to the forum.

Viewing Forum Posts

To access a Discussion Forum, simply click on the name of the forum. You can also locate the class forums by clicking on the Forum title under the Activities block on the main class screen.

Discussion forum layout can be changed by selecting options on the screen while viewing the forum, and other options can be set by the instructor when the forum is developed.

Posting a Message

If there are no topics yet posted to a Discussion Forum, simply click on the Add a New Discussion Topic button on the screen. From this screen, there are two required fields: Subject and Message. Ensure you have a meaningful subject for your forum post. The message field is where you compose the actual message to be posted to the Discussion Forum. If you are composing a lengthy message, it is highly recommended to use a word processing program (such as Microsoft Word or Notepad) to compose your message first, and then copy and paste the posting into the message field.

Below the two required fields are two option fields to make choices on: Subscription and Attachment. The Subscription field can be set to send email copies or I don't want email copies. Your instructor may "force" this field to send copies to ensure that students are receiving all messages; however, it is recommended to not force this due to the frequency of emails that may be sent. The second field, attachment, allows for attachments to be made to the messages. For Discussion Forums, attachments are not recommended.

When you are completed with composing your message, click the Post to Forum button to make your posting. You will have 15 minutes to make edits to your posting before it becomes visible to your classmates and instructor.


You can also reply to posts made by your classmates by simply clicking the Reply button at the bottom of their posting and following the instructions above.

Quizzes/Tests

Before Taking a Test

- When taking quizzes/tests through our LMS, use a recent version of Firefox or Internet Explorer. DO NOT use Chrome, Safari, or any other browser as they have compatibility issues with the quiz/test module.
- Disable any firewall settings if you are using a computer or network that has a firewall.
- If possible, use a high-speed wired connection not wireless.
- if you must use a dial-up modem, ensure you have disabled call waiting.
- Plan your test-taking time carefully. Note the closing date and time as well as the time limit for taking the quiz/test. Quizzes/tests automatically close at whichever time comes first, even if the other limit has not been reached. The speed of your computer and your internet connection determine how quickly the test is displayed and answers are saved and/or submitted. If you are taking a timed test, ensure you save and submit your test several minutes before the timer runs out.
- Do not wait until the last minute to take your test; have a backup plan in case your computer crashes or you lose your internet connectivity.
- Close all applications and restart your computer prior to starting the LMS and taking the quiz/test (this is especially important when using a public or shared computer.)

Taking Tests

- Click on the quiz/test title to open the quiz/test, or open it from the Quizzes link in the Activities block on the left side of your screen. Quizzes/tests are identified by the  icon.
- Click on the Attempt quiz now button, then OK to confirm you want to start the quiz/test.
- Note any special instructions, including the time limit if set.
- Select or enter the best answer to each question.
- If the test contains a large number of questions or you remain on the same page for more than 15 minutes, ensure you click periodically on the Save without submitting button to save your answers.

- Do not click outside the test window or open any other window or program while taking a test (unless it is required for the test.)
- Be careful when using a mouse with a scroll wheel. Click in a blank area of the screen before using the scroll wheel to prevent accidentally changing a response on your test.
- A test may have multiple pages. If so, you will see a series of page numbers across the top and bottom of the screen along with a Next link. If you see page numbers, be sure to click on a page number or Next to see the next question(s). Your answers are automatically saved when you move to a new page.
- Review your answers and be sure that you have answered all questions. When you have completed all the questions, click on Submit and finish and click on OK to confirm your submissions.

After Taking a Quiz/Test

- After submitting the test, you should see a confirmation of your submission. If you see a test page with no answers selected, use the Back button and return to your test and resubmit.
- If you receive an error message, note the message word-for-word, along with the date and time, and the steps preceding the error. Report the message to our help desk by emailing info@fstrainingllc.com.
- If your test allows multiple attempts, log out of the LMS and exit the browser before making another attempt.
- Log out and shut down the computer when you are done using a shared computer.

Logging Out

When you are done working in the LMS, you should log out. This is especially important when working on a shared or public computer. To log out:

1. Click on the Logout link next to your name at the top or bottom of the screen.
2. As an added precaution, close your browser after logging out.