

Candidate Selection Procedures

For

Firefighter Applicants
Including Preparation Guidelines

THE CITY OF RALEIGH



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The Raleigh Fire Department

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HOW THIS MANUAL CAN HELP

The Firefighter selection process is time consuming and complex for the City of Raleigh Fire Department. The process cannot be fully described in a typical position advertisement because of its complexity. This complexity is necessary to reduce hiring error in key public safety positions.

This manual is intended to provide basic information on our firefighter requirements and screening procedures. A major purpose of this manual is to provide guidelines for applicants to help them prepare for participation in the various selection steps. We believe that applicants who study this detailed information will be more comfortable with the selection process, because they will know what to expect, and what will be expected of them at each step.

Applicants are urged to review the manual as soon as they receive a copy so they can pace themselves to take full advantage of the preparation time allowed. This manual should enable most applicants to determine whether or not they will be competitive in the hiring process. Some applicants, upon reading sections detailing firefighter eligibility requirements and job duties, may decide that the position is not one they are able or willing to pursue.

We welcome you as an applicant and wish you success.

Professional Development Staff

CHAPTER I

FIREFIGHTER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Firefighters must be thoroughly fit in order to meet the rigorous physical demands of the job. They must be able to think and act quickly and competently in emergencies. Before a new firefighter is employed, hiring officials must be sure that he or she is capable of learning to operate complex mechanical equipment, as well as safely working in hazardous situations, and dealing with dangerous chemicals. They must also be sure that each firefighter meets high character standards; since he or she will be entrusted with the safety and property of citizens and co-workers. Applicants must be able to work as part of a team. Firefighters do not work alone in emergency situations.

Specific eligibility requirements and conditions are as follows:

AGE

Firefighter applicant must be at least **19** years of age by the first day of the academy. Applicants must be able to verify age by supplying a copy of his or her birth certificate.

EDUCATION

A high school diploma or the equivalent is required. Applicants must be able to verify educational background by submitting a copy of his or her high school diploma, or GED certificate.

VISION

Each applicant must have corrected vision to at least 20/30 in both eyes.

PHONE

All employees of the Fire Department are required to have an operational telephone.

RESIDENCY

As required by the City Code, firefighters must reside within the state of North Carolina. Anyone who does not meet the residency requirement when hired must meet the residency requirement before being assigned to shift work.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

Each applicant must possess a valid driver's license. A license check will be conducted and driving records are subject to approval by the City prior to any offer of employment. A poor driving record may result in automatic disqualification during the current recruitment. Where timeframes are referenced, time periods are from the end of the application period.

APPLICANTS WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY REJECTED FOR ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- (a) Conviction for driving while impaired (DWI) and/or refusal to submit to a Breathalyzer test within the last three years.
- (b) Suspension or revocation of license within the last three years resulting from violation of motor vehicle laws of North Carolina or state where licensed.
- (c) Conviction for death by vehicle.
- (d) Conviction for traffic violations totaling seven points or more within the last three years or five points or more within the last one year on separate occasions.
- (e) When an applicant's overall driving record reveals a pattern of convictions for traffic offenses and the applicant's capacity to safely operate a City vehicle or piece of heavy equipment is questionable, the Personnel/Safety Office shall reserve the right to approve or deny an applicant based on their overall driving record.

WRITTEN TEST

Applicants must pass the Candidate Written Aptitude Test. The written test is based on a standardized aptitude test. Prior fire service experience is not necessary.

AGILITY TEST

In order to be considered for selection, firefighter applicants must pass the physical agility test conducted at the City's Fire Training Center. This test consists of a series of physical tasks, such as running and raising ladders, which closely approximates physical tasks routinely performed by firefighters on the job. Most tasks are timed. The agility test is described in detail in Chapter V of this manual.

Applicants are advised to prepare for the agility test for their safety, as well as to enhance their chance for a higher score. With adequate preparation, the average healthy, fit individual should be able to successfully complete the test safely. This is a competitive test and simply passing does not guarantee employment.

CAUTION: Applicants are advised to consult their personal physician before starting a preparation training program, and before participating in the agility test. **The City does not accept liability for physical or medical conditions experienced by applicants as a result of the agility test.** Each applicant must sign a statement accepting personal liability for such conditions before being permitted to participate in the agility test.

INTERVIEWS

Candidates who have successfully completed the Candidate Aptitude and Physical Agility Tests may be invited for an interview at the Keeter Training Center. This is an oral interview conducted by a panel of 5-6 people.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION and DRIVING CHECK

All applicants are subject to a complete background investigation including, but not limited to; a review of available court, driving, and employment records. Additionally, candidates will be fingerprinted by the CCBI/SBI for a formal criminal background check. A criminal background check, covering all addresses for the last 10 years, will be conducted during the recruitment process. A verification of the criminal background record will be made, and its contents subject to approval by the City prior to offer of employment. For a reference of specific driving history disqualifiers, see listing above under Driver's License.

PREEMPLOYMENT TESTS

Employment as a firefighter is contingent upon successful results of a thorough medical examination, controlled substances test and psychological evaluation conducted by the city and/or a contracted 3rd party company.

SHIFT WORK

Applicants must be willing and able to adapt to shift schedules. After initial training, Raleigh firefighters work on a rotating shift schedule. This schedule consists of a 9-day work cycle in which the firefighter is on duty for the first 24 hours, off duty for the second 24 hours, on again for the third 24 hours, off again for the fourth 24 hours, on once more for the fifth 24 hours, then off for 4 consecutive days. When he or she returns to work, the cycle is repeated. Appropriate sleeping and meal preparation facilities are provided at each station to accommodate firefighters while on duty. Shift changes, changes in working hours, or assignment location are made at the sole discretion of the Fire Chief.

HIRING OF RELATIVES

No person shall be employed, promoted, demoted, transferred, or otherwise appointed to a position supervised directly by a relative. Department heads may make transfers or reassignments, when possible, that will allow the appointment to take place but avoid supervision or other situations where influence over a relative's employment conditions could be exercised.

No person serving as evaluator of applicants for employment (interviewer, selection panel member, assessor, etc.) may be a relative of any applicant for that position.

Definition of Relative: For purposes of this policy, relative is defined as wife, husband, mother, father, daughter, son, sister, brother, half-sister, half-brother, stepmother, stepfather, stepdaughter, stepson, stepsister, stepbrother, grandmother, grandfather, granddaughter, grandson, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law. Also included is aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, including such relationships by marriage, and first cousin.

APPLICANT DISQUALIFICATIONS

An applicant may be disqualified for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to submit online a **completed** application within the application acceptance period.
2. Failure to arrive before the scheduled time for any testing.
3. Failure to achieve a passing score on the Candidate Aptitude Test.
4. Failure to complete the entire physical agility course, or any part thereof, during the allotted times; or failure to wear the proper required attire for the physical agility test.
5. Driving record does not fall within the guidelines of the Fire Department's driving record policy.
6. Any information reflecting unfavorably upon a candidate's ability to perform as a Firefighter.
7. Results of the medical examination reveal that the candidate fails to meet physical standards.
8. Background investigation reveals information that indicates the candidate is not suitable for the position of Firefighter.
9. Psychological evaluation reveals information that indicates the candidate is not suitable for the position of Firefighter.
10. The candidate does not meet the minimum age requirement.
11. The candidate does not meet the education requirement.
12. Failure to pass drug screen.

CHAPTER II

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR FIREFIGHTER

NATURE OF WORK

After completing the City of Raleigh Fire Department's training academy, the work consists of entry level firefighting and technical work in rendering basic emergency medical treatment to the sick and injured.

Work requires technical knowledge of firefighting, rescue, hazardous materials (HAZMAT), emergency medical equipment, and procedures. Employees must act calmly, quickly, and proficiently in potentially life-threatening emergencies; and under extremely adverse conditions such as heat, smoke, fire, toxic fumes, and subjection to highly contagious diseases, cramped surroundings, and strenuous physical exertion. The position involves responding to, rendering aid, and participating in the mitigation of fire, hazmat, or emergency medical situations. When not directly involved in firefighting, rescue, or emergency medical activities, employees participate in training programs and perform routine duties in the care and maintenance of station equipment and facilities. Work is performed under close supervision in accordance with established policies and procedures.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES

1. Responds to fire alarms with a fire company, lays and connects hose lines, dons self-contained breathing apparatus, operates nozzles and directs water streams, climbs ladders, uses portable fire extinguishers, tools, and appliances.
2. Enters and works within burning structures and other hazardous environments using a self-contained breathing apparatus.
3. Ventilates burning structures by opening windows and skylights or by cutting holes in roofs, ceilings, and floors.
4. Works in close quarters: crawl space, shafts, manholes, small enclosed rooms, attics, and other areas which could cause claustrophobia such as narrow passageways.
5. Removes persons from danger, and frees trapped victims using a variety of power tools.
6. Performs salvage operations such as spreading salvage covers, removing water and debris.
7. Performs overhaul operations such as searching for and extinguishing any hidden or remaining fires.

8. Participates in fire apparatus practices and attends training classes in firefighting, emergency medical treatment, hazardous materials (HAZMAT), and related subjects.
9. Maintains and improves stations, grounds, apparatus and related equipment, cleans kitchens, sleeping quarters, dayrooms, apparatus, washes and/or paints walls, cleans floors, maintains grounds around stations, cleans and polishes fire apparatus and related equipment.
10. Responds to emergencies and first responder calls; assesses emergencies at scenes and, when required, initiates the appropriate basic emergency medical treatment; relays information regarding patient to Emergency Medical Service personnel.
11. Assists Emergency Medical Service personnel upon their arrival, including accompanying ambulance to medical facility when requested and/or when a patient is unstable.
12. Responsible for preventing loss of life and minimizing the effect of injuries in emergency situations and rendering basic emergency medical treatment of shock, severe bleeding, trauma, fractures and dislocations, heart attack, respiratory arrest, and many other potentially life-threatening medical disorders.
13. Responds with other personnel to acts of violence where there is significant bodily injury suspected.
14. Inspects buildings and premises for familiarization; checks for fire hazards.
15. Maintains Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Level 1.
16. Maintains Emergency Medical Technician ratings by attending appropriate courses; and re-certifying every 4 years.
17. May be required to perform other essential duties.

REQUIREMENTS OF WORK

The position of firefighter requires candidates to be versatile in their ability to learn new skills and physically perform the following:

- a. Obtains Emergency Medical Technician certification during basic training in the recruit academy.
- b. Obtains Hazardous Materials Level I certification during basic training in the recruit academy.
- c. Obtains NC State Firefighter certification during basic training in the recruit academy.
- d. Develop knowledge of the occupational hazards of the work, and of essential safety precautions required.
- e. Ability to learn a wide variety of firefighting and basic emergency medical duties and methods within a reasonable working test period.
- f. Ability to climb ladders and work effectively at considerable heights.
- g. Ability to act quickly and calmly in emergency situations.
- h. Ability to follow oral and written instructions.
- i. Ability to perform arduous work for long periods of time under adverse and dangerous conditions, hazardous atmospheres, and confined working areas.
- j. Ability to establish and maintain working relationships with other employees and the general public.
- k. Maintain a valid motor vehicle operator's license and obtain a motor vehicle license issued by the State of North Carolina within 30 days of the date of hire.
- l. Graduation from high school or GED, preferably supplemented by courses related to Fire Science Technology and/or Emergency Medical Technology – or any equivalent combination of experience and training.

NOTE: Drug screening is required as part of the employment process, and periodically during the course of employment.

CHAPTER III

FIREFIGHTER SELECTION

Since firefighter selections have an ultimate impact on human life, the City of Raleigh Fire Department has developed a carefully detailed selection process in order to control hiring error to the greatest possible extent.

Important goals in the selection process are to, as objectively and accurately as possible; predict how well the applicant will be able to learn the firefighter's job, and how well he or she will perform in the job after being trained.

The process is made up of a series of selection steps which applicants must successfully complete before being eligible to continue to the next step. The process is a lengthy one, so applicants should not become discouraged when they do not hear from the City shortly after making application. Since the number of applicants is large as compared to the small number of administrative staff; firefighter **applicants are requested to refrain from calls to the Personnel Office, or Keeter Training Center to check on application status.** All applicants will be notified when initial selections are made.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SELECTION STEPS

- STEP 1. **APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED** - During the dates advertised for recruitment, the applicant submits an application online at www.raleighnc.gov/employment. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO COMPLETE ALL PORTIONS ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTIONS, AND SUBMIT ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS, SINCE FAILURE TO PROVIDE THE REQUIRED INFORMATION WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION.** Completion of the Equal Employment Opportunity form is optional, but applicants are requested to provide this information to assist the City with Federal record keeping requirements.
- STEP 2. **TESTING SCHEDULE** – Eligible applicants will receive instructions concerning the aptitude test date, time, location and other pertinent facts.
- STEP 3. **PRACTICE TESTING** – We encourage you to participate in the practice sessions. Familiarity with the process may enhance your success. Practice testing is optional.
- STEP 4. **WRITTEN EXAMINATION** – All eligible applicants will be invited to take the Candidate Aptitude Test (CAT). No retest will be administered, and no scheduling adjustments can be arranged. Applicants must present a government issued photo ID at the test site before being permitted to take the test; Applicants who do not report as scheduled or who fail to present the above verification will be disqualified. Applicants will be required to report to the test site early enough to allow time for registration and verification procedures.
- STEP 5. **PHYSICAL AGILITY TEST** – All eligible candidates who have met the requirements of the CAT will be eligible to participate in the physical agility test (PAT).
- STEP 6. **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW** - An Administrative Review Team will evaluate all candidates. Criteria will include a review of applications, agility test scores, candidate aptitude test results, and departmental needs.

STEP 7. INTERVIEW – Candidates who successfully complete the CAT and PAT and have competitive scores may be invited for an oral interview.

STEP 8. PREEMPLOYMENT TESTINGS - The candidates who receive contingent job offers will have their criminal and driving backgrounds checked and will be scheduled for controlled substance testing, medical exam and psychological evaluation. Final job offers will be contingent on candidates passing all four steps.

STEP 9. NOTIFICATION OF JOB OFFER - Candidates who receive job offers will be notified in time to give proper notice to their current employer. All other applicants will be notified of their status after all recruitment steps are complete.

CHAPTER IV
INITIAL TRAINING AND PROBATION
FOR NEW FIREFIGHTERS

THE TRAINING PROGRAM

Soon after firefighter selections are made, new recruits begin an extensive training program at the City's Fire Training Center. This program or academy, conducted by the City's Fire Training Staff lasts approximately 32 weeks. During that time; through classroom instruction, and practical experience; recruits develop a wide range of technical and physical knowledge and skills needed to perform as an entry level firefighter. Recruits should expect training in such subjects as: Organization of the Fire Department, Departmental Rules and Regulations, Forcible Entry, Self-contained Breathing Apparatus, Salvage, Fire Hose, Nozzles and Appliances, Ladder Application and Drills, Fire Behavior, Hazardous Materials, Rescue Practices, Fire Alarm Systems, Safety, Fire Streams, Ropes, and more. Emergency Medical Technician training includes; but is not limited to: Anatomy and Physiology, Patient Assessment, Basic Life Support, Shock and Hemorrhage Control, Medical and Environmental Emergencies, Pediatric Emergencies, Extrication, and the use of a Defibrillator. The Academy includes an extensive physical fitness program, and a multitude of live firefighting simulations. In order to complete the academy, each candidate must maintain an overall average score of 70% in the classroom. If a recruit does not maintain an average score of 70% or greater, they are subject to termination.

An important function of the academy is Emergency Medical Technician Training (EMT). Every new firefighter must obtain a State of North Carolina Certification as an Emergency Medical Technician. A period of 10 weeks of the academy is devoted to EMT training and certification, at which time a written and practical state test will be administered. Any firefighter who fails to achieve the minimum standards required for EMT after taking the first tests administered by the State of North Carolina will be allowed to take the test a second and third time. Any firefighter who fails to achieve the minimum standards required for EMT after the third attempt will be terminated from the academy.

Firefighters must also maintain Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Responder Level I certification.

At the end of the training academy, a physical agility test will be administered to all recruits to insure completion of the academy.

Training does not stop at the end of the academy. Throughout their careers, firefighters are expected to keep physically fit and continue their education. Toward this end, training is made available. Training is conducted on a routine basis by supervisors at every fire station. Every firefighter is also encouraged to strengthen his or her fire protection skills through the City's tuition refund program. Pursuing job-related educational opportunities off-duty will enhance a Firefighter's chances of promotion.

THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

All firefighters are on probation for a period of 6 months following graduation from the academy.

TRAINING ACADEMY

The first 7 months of employment will be in the Recruit Training Academy, including the following:

- 10 weeks EMT training
- 18 weeks fire suppression and prevention training
- 2 weeks hazardous materials (HAZMAT) training

This schedule is subject to change as needed.

DUTY ASSIGNMENT

Upon completion of the Recruit Academy, a recruit is subject to duty assignment in any division of the Fire Department. Acceptance of duty assignment within any division, including specialist assignments, is a condition of employment in the City of Raleigh Fire Department, and extends throughout the employee's career.

CHAPTER V

AN OVERVIEW OF PHYSICAL SCREENING PROCEDURES

Physical screening procedures meet the following criteria: 1) they are job related; 2) they are not discriminatory on the basis of sex, race, age, etc.; 3) they represent what experts feel are the most crucial phases of firefighting and emergency medical activities, and are indicative of a variety of firefighting and emergency tasks; and 4) they are quantifiable. During testing, all procedures will be explained in detail and demonstrated if necessary.

Your score will be determined from the total time in seconds on all tests. A maximum time limit is imposed on each tested event. This time limit is enforced merely to avoid a situation in which a candidate cannot complete a given task, and/or rests for prolonged periods between attempts. Exceeding the liberal time limit on any test event, or voluntary termination of any task before completion, results in disqualification. If disqualified, the entire application process must be started over the next time the applicant applies.

Neither gloves nor shoes with cleats are allowed during any task. Proper attire is required to participate in the Physical Agility Test. **Long pants or sweatpants are required and must be worn to participate in the Obstacle Course portion of the Physical Agility Testing process;** shorts may be worn for all other events. Applicants must pass each task, in order to proceed to the next task.

TASK #1: LADDER RAISE

Requirement: Raise a 24-foot aluminum ladder; extend/retract a 24-foot extension ladder

Grading: Time in seconds

Time Limit: 35 seconds

To complete this station, you must complete two tasks:

Task 1 – Walk from a “Start” line, 12 feet, to the top rung of the 24-foot aluminum extension ladder. Lift the unhinged end of the ladder from the ground. Using every rung in a hand over hand fashion; walk the ladder up, until it is stationary against the wall. Both the applicant’s hands must touch the marked rung before proceeding to the next part of the task.

Task 2 – Move to the next ladder and stand with both feet within the marked box (36” x 36”). Extend the fly section using the halyard; hand over hand, until it hits the stops. Then, lower the fly section hand over hand, in a controlled fashion to the starting position. The halyard must not slip through the applicant’s hands. The applicant’s time starts when the proctor announces “go,” and ends when the applicant steps out of the box in front of the second ladder. A competitive time for this event is 20 seconds or better.

Job Relatedness: This task is performed regularly by firefighters.

TASK #2: RESCUE DRAG

Requirement: Drag 165-pound Rescue manikin a distance of 100 feet

Grading time: Time in seconds

Time Limit: 60 seconds

This task requires grasping a 165-pound Rescue manikin and dragging it a distance of 100 feet. Two parallel lines, 100 feet apart are marked on the ground. The applicant must drag the manikin from behind one line, to a location completely across the other line. The manikin is wearing a harness with loops in the shoulder area. The applicant must use the loops to drag the manikin, using one or two hands and facing forward or backward. The applicant may position the manikin to get ready and time will start when the candidate crosses the start line. The test should be completed without stopping. While stopping does not automatically disqualify an applicant, it will penalize him or her in terms of the seconds used to complete the task. Care and caution on this test event will help avoid injury and time penalties. Time begins when the applicant crosses the start line and ends when the end of the manikin crosses the finishline. A competitive time for this event is 30 seconds or better.

Job Relatedness: This test simulates a rescue procedure of an unconscious individual.

TASK #3: RUN

Requirement: Complete 1½ mile run

Grading: Time in seconds

Time Limit: 15 minutes

A distance of 1 ½ miles is marked off in a predetermined path. Applicants pace themselves throughout the run and attempt to complete the 1½ miles by starting from the starting point and running to complete the course. Not following the designated course will result in disqualification from the employment process. Care and caution on this test event will help avoid injury and time penalties. A competitive time for this event is 12 minutes or better.

Job Relatedness: This test gives an indirect assessment of aerobic power which has been shown to be one of the highest physical factors necessary for firefighters.

TASK #4: OBSTACLE COURSE RUN

Requirement: Complete three full circuits

Grading: Time in seconds

Time Limit: 4:15 minutes

The obstacle course requires physical agility, strength, endurance, and aerobic capacity.

The Obstacle Course Run includes:

- The Serpentine Run
 - The applicant runs around three cones, in a serpentine fashion. The end cones are spaced 30 feet apart with one cone in between; the proper direction is marked with arrows painted on the concrete.
- The Simulated Hose Drag
 - The applicant stands inside the rear square of two adjacent and identical 4 foot by 4 foot squares marked with paint on the ground. The applicant must remain entirely inside the rear square. A hose (approximately 40' long), with a tire attached to the opposite end is pulled; hand over hand, in a controlled fashion. The tire must be pulled so it rests completely inside the 4 foot by 4 foot square, located in front of the applicant.
- The Equipment Carry
 - The applicant lifts two kettle bells by the handles from an elevated compartment. The equipment must be carried around a cone located 30 feet away from the start box, and must be carried around the cone in the direction of arrows marked on the concrete. Both pieces of equipment must then be placed inside the start box (5 feet wide by one foot deep). Both kettle bells must be returned to the compartment on the third time around the course.

- The Kaiser Force Machine Prop
 - The applicant must strike a beam with a dead blow hammer, simulating swinging a fire axe. The applicant must move the beam a set distance during each circuit of the obstacle course.
- The Pipe Crawl
 - The applicant crawls/slides through a 20-foot long pipe which is 24 inches in diameter. A 90° bend must be navigated and is located half-way through the pipe. At least one foot must be placed on the entrance pad at the beginning of the pipe before entering, no diving into pipe is allowed.

Each event is performed per circuit; three consecutive circuits are required. Care and caution on this test event will help avoid injury and time penalties. **Long pants or sweatpants are required and must be worn to participate in the Obstacle Course portion of the Physical Agility Testing process.** A competitive time for this event is 3:30 or better.

Job Relatedness: Shows physical agility, strength, endurance, and aerobic capacity.

TASK #5: STAIR CLIMB WITH VEST

Requirement: While wearing a 50-pound weighted vest, move up five flights of stairs to the fifth floor landing

Grading: Time in seconds

Time Limit: 30 seconds

The applicant lifts, dons vest, and stands at the start position. At the command "go"; time starts, and the applicant climbs five flights of stairs while wearing the vest. Time is stopped when both feet reach the 5th floor landing. The applicant then carries the vest back down so that it is ready for the next applicant. A competitive time for this event is 18 seconds or better.

Job Relatedness: This test simulates the act of carrying full gear to upper stories in a building for firefighting or rescue activities.

