



Preparing for A Fire Service Career



Overview

- This document provides prospective applicants a general overview of firefighter job requirements in the fire service.
- It also provides information concerning which efforts may be helpful to those seeking a firefighter career.



JOB OVERVIEW

- A career in the fire service is both challenging and rewarding.
- Fire suppression is only one of a wide variety of duties performed by Firefighters.
- In fact, approximately 85% of all fire department responses are to emergency medical calls.



JOB OVERVIEW

- Other typical assignments may include:
 - fire prevention education
 - commercial and residential fire inspections
 - community outreach and services
 - post-fire-salvage and cleanup
 - equipment maintenance.



JOB OVERVIEW

- Interesting facts about the job:
 - When fighting fires, work apparel and equipment weighing approximately 45 pounds are worn.
 - A significant amount of time is spent inspecting, cleaning and maintaining this equipment and training in its use.
 - A firefighter is usually a member of a four member team that lives and works together in close quarters throughout a shift.



JOB OVERVIEW

- Interesting facts about the job:
 - Living at the Fire House entails rigorous housekeeping, cooking, cleaning and yard maintenance.
 - Teams may be diverse by gender and ethnicity and each member is heavily dependent on fellow members to successfully perform the duties of the position.



JOB OVERVIEW

- Interesting facts about the job:
 - Firefighting is twenty-four hour work done in shifts that vary by jurisdiction.
 - Calls for assistance can and do come at any hour.
 - Many firefighters contend that the best way to ensure that a call comes in is to prepare a meal or begin a good nights sleep!



JOB OVERVIEW

- Interesting facts about the job:
 - A typical Firefighter may earn between \$2,800.00 and \$4,800.00 per month.
 - Other benefits include excellent medical, dental and retirement plans.



JOB OVERVIEW

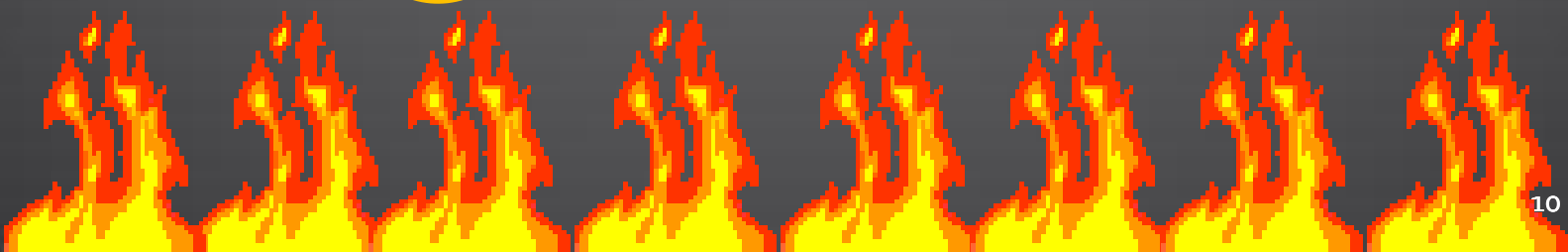
- Interesting facts about the job:
 - A typical firefighter works a 24-hour shift with 24-hours off-duty in between shifts.
 - On occasion there may be mandatory overtime.



The hiring process for entry-level Firefighter is extremely competitive and requires much effort.

It is not uncommon for a department to have upwards of 5000 applicants for as little as three or four job openings.

In 1994, the city of Anaheim distributed approximately 4000 applications for Firefighter Trainee; Of the 400 successful candidates from the overall test process, approximately 17 candidates were hired over a two year period.



Selection Process

- Most jurisdictions will distribute an examination announcement.
- To get specific information about a particular agency, contact their personnel office.
- The application and selection process will be described in the announcement which will be published when a Firefighter position opens.



Selection Process

- Most selection processes for entry-level firefighter consist of the following:
 - application screening
 - written exam
 - physical ability test
 - one or more oral interviews
 - qualifying background investigation
 - medical evaluation



General Qualifications to become a Fire Fighter:

In the past, the minimum requirements for the average Firefighter testing process have included:

- A minimum age of 18, possession of a valid California driver's license, a clean driving record
- An education equivalent to a high school graduation.
- Physical requirements have included visual acuity of 20/70 uncorrected in each eye and correctable to 20/50 in both eyes, with normal range depth perception and ability to identify primary colors.



General Qualifications to become a Fire Fighter:

In the past, the minimum requirements for the average Firefighter testing process have included:

- Hearing has been expected to be within normal range
- Weight must be in proportion to height.
- A Firefighter must have good judgment, good communication skills, demonstrated mechanical aptitude, basic math skills, and ability to understand and learn fire fighting material.



General Qualifications to become a Fire Fighter:

In the past, the minimum requirements for the average Firefighter testing process have included:

- a firefighter must be able to face hazardous, life threatening situations, and have coping skills for managing unpleasant and difficult situations.
- A Firefighter must be a team player and be able to get along with a variety of people living in close quarters.



General Qualifications to become a Fire Fighter:

In the past, the minimum requirements for the average Firefighter testing process have included:

- A firefighter needs the ability to follow orders and work in a paramilitary organization.
- Fire fighting is physically demanding and personnel in the fire service must be in excellent physical condition.



WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

- Becoming a firefighter often takes a great deal of long-term preparation, self motivation, and commitment.
- The following slides identify some areas in which you can prepare yourself.



WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

Physical Fitness:

- In order to prepare for firefighting work, it is important to have and maintain a physical fitness program.
- While no one course of physical fitness will suit every individual, a physical regimen that stresses endurance and total body strength can assist in developing a level of physical preparedness that is needed to succeed in physical agility performance testing.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

Community Involvement:

- Applicants are not required to participate in extracurricular activities. Nevertheless, participation in various types of community programs does establish a record of interest and motivation.

Volunteer in Fire Service Work:

- Reserve Programs
(Check with your local Fire Dept.)
- Auxiliary Programs
(Check with your local Fire Dept.)
- Office of Emergency Services (OES)
- California Conservation Corp (CCC)

Volunteer in Community Services:

- Church Programs
- Scout Troops
(Explorer Programs)
- Community Organization
- Hospitals
- Schools

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

Physical Fitness:

- We recommended that you consult your private physician before starting any fitness program.
- Several Institutions may assist you in deciding on a physical fitness program:
 - The community colleges
 - YMCA/YWCA
 - A private health club
 - A health maintenance organization (i.e. Kaiser Permanente).

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

Education and Training

- Some Community colleges offer Fire Science degrees and/or certificates. This listing is only a sample and does not serve as an endorsement for any one program. Check the availability of classes at your local school.
 - First Aid Courses
 - Advanced First Aid Certificate (contact the local American Red Cross for a course schedule)
 - Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificate.
 - Fire Service Related Courses (offered at Community Colleges)
 - Basic English Grammar & Reading Comprehension
 - Basic Math
 - Emergency Medical Technician I Certificate

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

Education and Training (Continued)

- Fire Service Technology Courses
 - Fire Science A. A. degree :
 - [Mount San Antonio College \(Mount. SAC\)](#)
 - [Crafton Hills College](#)
 - [Santa Ana College](#)
 - [Rio Hondo College](#)
 - Physical Agility Training
 - [Santa Ana College](#)
 - [Mount SAC](#)
 - Firefighter Academy
 - [Mount SAC](#)
 - [Santa Ana College](#)
 - [Crafton Hills](#)
 - Foothill Academy
 - South Bay Academy
 - Jim Shern Academy

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

There are several other ways to prepare for a career in the fire services:

- Occasionally, there are civilian jobs in dispatch, administration, or fire prevention.
- Most jurisdictions have a recorded job information hotline that lists vacancies.
- For Anaheim, that number is (714) 765-5197. Current employment as a paramedic, nurse, medical assistant, or in any direct service capacity in an emergency environment is helpful.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

There are several other ways to prepare for a career in the fire services:

- Anaheim also has an interest card that can be completed by prospective applicants. Interest cards can be obtained in person or by calling (714) 765-5111.
- Other cities may have something similar. The Anaheim Fire Department offers a Reserve work experience program for those who are interested in exploring a career in the fire service.
- For more information contact the Anaheim Fire Department Reserve Coordinator (714) 765-5100 ext. 5930.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

There are several other ways to prepare for a career in the fire services:

- Visit a Fire Station - this is an excellent opportunity for interested individuals to talk to personnel and discuss the pros & cons of the profession.
- It will also provide the opportunity for you to determine whether or not the day-to-day routine(s) match their own skills and interests.
- TIP: Develop a resume to include all Fire Service related information so it is easily available when the application period opens.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW TO PREPARE?

**Be prepared, start
your physical
fitness training and
education now!**

