



Fire Fighter

Applicant Handbook

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Firefighter Applicant

This pamphlet was developed for firefighter applicants by the City of Fargo Fire Department. It explains what the job involves and how to prepare for the examination process. Adequate preparation and familiarization with the various parts of the examination process may greatly improve your chances of passing the tests and becoming a firefighter with the City of Fargo. Conscientious physical training that develops the upper body and legs and increases stamina will help you to prepare for the physical agility test. Past experience indicates that individuals in poor physical condition find it difficult to pass the physical agility test.

Physical fitness, common sense, a desire to serve their community, and the ability to embrace the kind of discipline which ultimately could save their own lives as well as others are pre-requisites for successful fire fighter candidates.

If you are serious about an interesting and fulfilling career as a professional firefighter, you are urged to prepare thoroughly for the extensive hiring process. The hiring process for new firefighters has many steps that take longer to complete than many other hiring processes. The firefighter hiring process normally takes several months to complete. **To increase your odds of success we recommend that interested applicants attend a firefighter applicant orientation session and at least one practice agility test session. Both of these will help new applicants learn more about the process, the timeline, and all the steps.** It is also beneficial to visit one of Fargo's fire stations to converse with the firefighters or to schedule a ride-along to learn more about what the job is really like.

What is the job of a Fire Fighter really like?

Firefighting is extremely strenuous and physically demanding work and involves the ability to cope with emergency life-or-death situations. The physical and mental demands of firefighting are sometimes underestimated; consequently, the challenging examination process employed in the testing of prospective recruits overwhelms many applicants. Rigorous entry standards are absolutely necessary because firefighting requires a high level of physical fitness and mental alertness.

Firefighter recruits must also be good students, because new Fargo Firefighters go through a 16 week academy where they work toward earning their Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and EMT certifications. The academy schedule most weeks is 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. After academy graduation new firefighters are assigned to a crew where they begin work as a firefighter working 24 hours shifts.

How can I apply to become a Fire Fighter?

The Fargo Fire Department only accepts applications once or twice per year. If you are interested you must complete an application with the City of Fargo Office of Human Resources (225 4th Street North, City Hall, telephone 701-241-1321) during an open application period. Applications are available during the open application period at:

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/fargond> Individuals who meet the minimum requirements will be contacted with information regarding the rest of the process including the written test date and time.

If the application period is not currently open applicants can complete a job posting alert where they will be notified when the application period opens. To sign up for an alert follow the link above, click on “Menu” in the upper left hand corner, click on Job Posting Alerts, complete the form (check the box for Fire & EMS), and fill in your name and email address, click submit. By completing the job posting alert you will receive notification when the next firefighter application period opens.

What are the minimum qualifications and requirements?

- A. Must have a valid driver’s license.
- B. Must be at least 18 years of age.
- C. Must have the ability to understand the English language, written and spoken.
- D. Must have a high school diploma or GED.
- E. Must be of sound mental and physical health and meet all established standards.
- F. Candidates who are successful in the process and accept a qualified job offer will also be required to complete a pre-employment drug test, a background investigation, a polygraph examination, a rigid medical examination, a psychological examination, and the pass/fail agility test.
- G. Must obtain national certification as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Education Transcript Requirements

You must provide a copy of your high school diploma or GED. At any time during the hiring process, the Fargo Fire Department may request an official transcript or may contact the institution to determine the validity of the transcript.

Hiring Policies

1. You can easily determine whether you meet the Fargo Fire Department’s illegal drug/alcohol abuse policy by answering the following questions:
 - A. Have you used any illegal drug at all within the last three years?
 - B. Have you ever sold any illegal drug for profit?
 - C. Have you ever been convicted of a drug related felony?
 - D. Have you had a DUI or minor consuming/possessing within the last two years?
 - E. Have you had two DUI’s in the last 5 years?
 - F. Have you displayed conduct that is considered contrary to community standards or justice, honesty or good morals?

If you answered Yes to any of these questions, you are not eligible for employment with the Fargo Fire Department.

2. There shall be no visible body art, i.e. tattoos, branding, etc., above the collar of the approved Fargo Fire Department tee-shirt. Body art must be covered if deemed offensive by any persons, employee or public.
3. Visible forms of intentional body modification are not authorized. Examples include excessive ear piercing/stretching, tongue splitting, beneath the skin decorative implants, decorative tooth planting/engraving, etc.
4. Being deceitful during any portion of the hiring process will make you ineligible for employment with the Fargo Fire Department.
5. You cannot be hired by the Fargo Fire Department if you have been convicted of, or are under pending indictment for:
 - A. A crime which bears upon your ability or fitness to serve in the capacity;
 - B. Any felony; or
 - C. A misdemeanor which involved force or threat of force, controlled substances, or was a sex-regulated offense.

The Selection Process Steps

Application

The application is the first step in the process. All firefighter applicants must complete an application with the City of Fargo during the open application time. Applicants who meet the minimum qualifications will move to the written test stage of the process. Applicants can find the application at <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/fargond>.

Written Test

The written exam is the second stage of the testing process and has a time limit of three hours. It evaluates reading, writing, mathematics, logic, human relations, decision making, and reasoning. The written test also includes a work styles inventory. Applicants can prepare for the written test and gain familiarity by going to <https://www.fpsi.com/fire-candidate-orientation-guides/> and ordering the CEB/PST Candidate Orientation Guide that includes sample test questions.

Physical Agility Test

Applicants who score 75% or better on the written test move on to the physical agility acceptance tests. The exercises that you will be required to perform are representative of duties actually performed by firefighters at the scene of an emergency. The physical agility portion of the test is pass/fail. Failure in one phase of the test constitutes failure of the entire test. **In order to participate in the physical agility test, applicants must submit to a pre and post agility test medical check (respirations, blood pressure, and heart rate). Applicants must also sign a release waiver stating that the applicant understands the physical demands and dangers of the test prior to participating.** (release from liability form - See attachment 1).

Preparing for the Physical Agility Test

It must be emphasized that regardless of their level of fitness, individuals should be in good health before beginning any physical training program. There are several ways to approach physical fitness training. One way is to join a gym where a fitness specialist will help design a training routine to fit your needs. A less expensive method is to design your own program or look online for programs. Preparation for the physical agility test can include general exercises such as weight lifting, push-ups and pull-ups for muscular strength, jogging, running in place, and deep breathing for cardio-respiratory fitness. Most people can improve their level of physical fitness through an intensive training program. Practice agility test sessions are conducted in the weeks leading up to the agility test to allow applicants to build fitness and familiarity with the agility test.

The Fargo Fire Department Physical Acceptance Test has two parts:

- 1. The physical agility test**
- 2. The ladder climb test**

1. The Physical Agility Test

Applicants will wear a 50-pound weighted vest, helmet, and gloves during this event and during the ladder climb test. Wear loose fitting, comfortable clothes, long pants - no shorts. We suggest that you bring a towel and an extra shirt as you will perspire. Drinking water will be available at the test. No showers are provided.

Hose Roll Event

Roll and unroll one 50-foot length of 2.5-inch fire hose. Roll hose tightly. This will help prevent hose from falling apart. Applicant must be in contact with hose continually while unrolling it, throwing the hose to unroll it is not acceptable. Coupling must be returned to the starting point.

Hose Line Advance Event

Pick up a nozzle attached to 2.5-inch hose, place over shoulder and drag 150 feet to a designated line. Nozzle may be on the front or back of the shoulder. You may pick up additional hose and carry it in hand. After crossing line, turn around and return nozzle to starting point. Place the nozzle at the starting point. Forward progress must be maintained during this event.

Ladder Carry Event

Remove a 14-foot ladder from mounting bracket by grasping two rungs. Turn and carry ladder walking around the traffic cone, and return the ladder to the mounting bracket. The total distance traveled is 90 feet. At no time shall the ladder be set down or dropped.

Fire Extension Event

Here you will crawl through an opening onto simulated ceiling joists spaced 16 inches apart. You are to crawl on hands and knees to the opposite wall. After touching the wall with one hand, return by crawling and exiting through the same opening. You must stay on the joists.

Ladder Hoist Event

This event utilizes a 35-foot extension ladder. Grasp the rope and pull until the ladder is fully extended and stops, then lower the ladder fly. Do not allow rope to slip through the hands. You must maintain a standing position while raising and lowering the ladder.

Ventilation Event

This event is meant to simulate chopping a hole in a floor or roof. The candidate uses a sledgehammer to drive a 170-pound steel beam a distance of five feet.

High Rise Event

This event is divided into three continuous parts.

Part 1. Carry a 50-foot package of 1.75-inch hose and a 2.5-inch to 1.5-inch gated wye from a designated point at ground level to the fourth floor of the building, taking one step at a time. This equipment is then set down on the landing of the fourth floor.

Part 2. Now grasp a rope from a test monitor. Pull until the hose is within reach. Now grasp the 1.75-inch hose and pull in 50 feet. At this point the monitor will take control of rope and hose.

Part 3. Return to stairway, pick up the 50-foot package of hose with the fitting and carry them to ground level taking one step at a time. The hose and fitting are to be set down outside the first floor window in the designated area.

Rescue Event

You will drag a 185 pound dummy by the harness to the designated finish point (60 feet) where it is to be set down.

Time limit for the above items – 12 minutes.

2. Forty-foot Ladder Climb Test

Description of Test: Applicant will climb to the top of ladder, extended to 75-degree angle. The applicant is required to wear a 50-pound weighted vest, helmet, and gloves.

Measures: This exercise determines if an applicant has vertigo or acrophobia; it also tests ability to climb a ladder.

Time Limit: 45 seconds.

Oral Interview

Applicants who have successfully passed the written and physical agility tests will be scheduled for an oral interview examination. After passing the physical agility test, applicants are notified and scheduled for a specific date, time, and place they are to appear for the oral interview. The oral interview is conducted by a panel consisting of Fargo Fire Department personnel, personnel from other city departments, and/or other fire service personnel outside from outside of Fargo. A representative from the City of Fargo Human Resources Department is also present during the interview.

Qualified veterans are eligible for veteran's preference as per State and Federal Law. Any questions concerning eligibility should be directed to the Office of Human Resources.

After the initial application process is complete

Candidates who successfully pass the written, physical agility, and interview portions of the process are put on a list in the order of their scores. The fire chief uses this list to hire from by making conditional job offers as the fire department has openings. The list can be used for up to one year. Conditional job offers are made based upon fire department openings from retirements, new positions, etc. The department rarely hires one person at a time because all recruits must go through an academy class. When the department has enough openings for a new class applicants from the list are contacted. The number and frequency of hiring and recruit academies vary depending upon openings. Candidates who are given conditional job offers go through the following additional six steps prior to a final job offer and starting in an academy.

1. Background Investigation

- a. Candidates who receive a conditional job offer are investigated as to his or her character and reputation. The candidate's present and previous employer(s) may be contacted for information regarding the work history of the candidate. The background investigation also includes a thorough check into the candidate's criminal and non-criminal record.

2. Mask fit test, simulated smoke conditions test, and uniform sizing

- a. Candidates receiving a conditional job offer will have an appointment at the training center where they will complete a mask fit test to identify the size of mask they need and to ensure that they can get a proper mask seal on the candidate. The candidate will also be required to complete a simulated smoke conditions test that checks for claustrophobia and their ability to wear a mask. Lastly, the candidate will also be sized for their uniforms.

3. Pre-Employment Drug Test

- a. A pre-employment drug test is administered to candidates who receive a conditional job offer. Failure to successfully pass this drug examination will result in the withdrawal of the qualified job offer. The test is conducted by a medical establishment designated by the City of Fargo and is paid for by the City of Fargo.

4. Psychological Examination

- a. Candidates who receive a conditional job offer will undergo a psychological examination. Firefighters are required to work together in close proximity for extended periods of time, often in adverse conditions. In order to assess a candidate's ability to function within these conditions, a psychological evaluation is performed. The examination will consist of five separate events.
 - i. Reuven Bar-On EQI Assessment Tool
 - ii. Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
 - iii. Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI)
 - iv. 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)
 - v. Clinical Interview
- b. The candidate's personal information and documents from the potential employer are also reviewed. Once all of the tasks are complete, the data are interpreted and integrated into a report presented to the employer. Candidates will have the opportunity to review the psychological information by making an appointment with the Psychologist, at the candidates own expense.

5. Polygraph Examination

- a. Candidates who receive a conditional job offer are required to take a polygraph examination. This examination helps to verify the accurateness of the candidate's application and that his or her oral statements were truthful. Examples of questions that may be asked are those pertaining to the use of non-prescription drugs, the use of alcohol, and involvement in illegal activity. A professional polygraph examiner gives the examination. All of the questions asked are discussed with the candidate prior to taking the test. A fire department representative will notify the candidate as to the time, date, and location of the examination.

6. Medical Examination

- a. Candidates who receive a conditional job offer must undergo a medical examination. The examination shall be in accordance with the current

edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1582, *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments*. The examination is conducted by a medical authority designated by the City of Fargo's Office of Human Resources and is paid for by the City of Fargo. A fire department representative will notify the candidate as to the date, time, and location of the medical examination.

Miscellaneous Information

- All applicants should be aware that the normal tour of duty for fire suppression personnel encompasses a twenty-four hour period, commencing at 7:30 a.m. one morning and ending at 7:30 a.m. the following day. **While on duty, the employee will be allowed to leave his or her duty station ONLY at the discretion of the Officer-in-Charge.**
- The new employee will serve a probationary employment period of one year and will be evaluated monthly.
- The employee will be required to dress in a proper uniform, which is furnished by the City of Fargo.
- All Fire Department employees are required to reside no further than 60 minutes from Fire Station 1 (637 NP Ave N), as determined by Google Maps. The Fire Chief will be the final authority to determine compliance with this policy. A copy of the map and a letter of authorization from the Fire Chief will be placed in the employees file.
- Probationary employees receive most of the same benefits as do non-probationary employees; however, some benefits vary depending upon the length of service of the employee. These benefits include sick and injury leave, pension and disability plan, and paid vacation, which is picked on a seniority basis.
- A residential or cellular telephone number, where you can be reached, must be maintained.
- Any questions pertaining to the pay scale and salary in general should be directed to the City of Fargo Office of Human Resources.
- We hope that the material contained on the previous pages will help answer any questions that you may have regarding the procedures as they apply to persons seeking the position of fire fighter with the Fargo Fire Department. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to call the Office of Human Resources at 701-241-1321 or the Fargo Fire Department at 701-241-1540.



Fargo

Fire Department



Informed Consent/Waiver of Liability

I, _____, wish to participate in the physical agility course test conducted by the Fargo Fire Department (“FFD”) at the city of Fargo’s Fire Training Tower or Training Center(s) on the following dates _____.

I understand the test will be administered by members of the FFD. I have been informed of the nature of the activities that are required as part of the employment process; and

I understand the physical agility test course includes strenuous physical activity and may be stopped at any time by a member of the FFD; and

I understand that there are extreme physical demands placed upon participants while wearing the weighted vest used during the physical agility test exercise, and that the physical agility course carries a risk of physical injuries, including death to participants; and

I understand that my participation in this activity is voluntary and that I assume the risk for injury or death that may result from my participation; and

I understand the FFD recommends, but does not require, that I obtain a physician’s approval prior to my participation. I further state that I am sufficiently physically fit to participate in the activities and tests associated with the FFD physical agility test.

In consideration of my participation in this training course, I agree to the following:

- 1) The city of Fargo retains the right to control and manage its facilities and its training course and may enforce all reasonable rules for its management as determined by the city of Fargo in its sole discretion. I agree to abide by any such rules, policies and conditions that may be in effect from time to time. The city of Fargo absolutely forbids the use of its facilities in any manner, or any conduct which violates any governmental rule/law. Use of the facility at any other time than specified herein is strictly forbidden.*
- 2) I agree to indemnify the city of Fargo, the FFD, officers, agents and employees against all liability and costs, including attorneys’ fees in any way connected with the training course or use or occupancy of any city of Fargo facility or vehicle. I agree to bear all responsibility and shall hold the city of Fargo harmless from any responsibility for any bodily injury, including death, to any and all persons or property damage arising out of or in any way connected with my participation in the training course. I understand and agree that this Release binds me, my spouse, and all heirs, successors and assigns, executors and administrators of those individuals.*
- 3) I understand and agree that the city of Fargo FFD reserves the right and sole discretion to refuse participation in any program or training provided by the FFD, or terminate my use of its facilities at any time.*

(Please sign on next page)



Fargo

Fire Department



The above terms and conditions are accepted.

Signature of Participant

Date

Phone Number

Address

Name of Emergency Contact Person

Phone Number

If participant is under 18:

PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN: _____

DATE:

CITY:

City of Fargo Signature

Date

Title of City Official

Phone Number