



# 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 takes longer to complete than many other hiring processes. The firefighter hiring process can take from several months up to a year for successful applicants. It is 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. If you would like to schedule a ride-along you can call fire department administration at (7001)241-1540.

### **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. New Fargo Firefighters go through a 18-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 shift where they begin working 24 hours shifts as a probationary firefighter.

### **How can I apply to become a Fire Fighter?**

The Fargo Fire Department only accepts applications once per year. If you are interested you must complete an application with the City of Fargo Office of Human Resources (225 4<sup>th</sup> 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

hiring requirements will be contacted with information regarding the rest of the process including the written test date.

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 (college credits are preferred but not required).
- 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) in the first six months. This certification class is part of the academy.
- H. Must pass the academy and classes (Firefighter I & II, Hazmat Awareness & Operations, etc.)

## **Education Transcript Requirements**

You must provide a copy of your high school diploma, GED, or college diploma. 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 person, 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 provide all required information on the application and 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. Applicants can prepare for the written test and gain familiarity by going to <https://www.fpsi.com/product/vb-online-testcpw-guide/> and ordering the Candidate Orientation Guide Version B, C, or D for the Online Firefighter CEB Test. A candidate can also order all three versions if they would like to see more practice questions. The test is online and proctored. Candidates will be required to have a computer with camera, microphone, and speakers. If a candidate does not have these, they are welcome to take the test at the City of Fargo Human Resources Department where the computer and accessories will be provided.

### **Oral Interview**

Applicants who pass the written test may get an interview. Applicants are scheduled for interviews based on their written test score. The number of applicants called for interviews

is dependent upon the number of fire department openings. The fire department usually calls groups of applicants in two to three times a year from the list of scores on the written test. The oral interview is conducted by a panel consisting of Fargo Fire Department personnel. There may also be personnel from other city departments and/or other fire service personnel from outside of Fargo. A representative from the City of Fargo Human Resources Department is also present during the interviews.

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.

## **Physical Ability Tests**

Probationary firefighters who are hired for an academy class must successfully complete the physical agility test in the required time prior to the end of the academy. Probationary firefighters in the academy will be given up to three attempts to pass the physical agility test during the academy. The first attempt is in week one of the fire academy. The second attempt is midpoint in the academy. The last attempt is given prior to the end of the academy. Probationary firefighters must also successfully complete the ladder climb test in the required time. 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. Probationary firefighters must 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 Ability Tests**

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.

## **The Fargo Fire Department Physical Acceptance Test has two parts:**

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

## **1. The Physical Agility Test**

### Event 1: Dry Hose Deployment

Candidate advances pre-connected 1.75-inch dry hose line for 110 feet. Each 50-foot section weighs approximately 21 pounds, for a total of approximately 63 pounds of dry weight dragged. This event simulates extending a dry offensive hose line from an apparatus to a fire scene for firefighting operations.

### Event 2: Charged Hose Deployment

Candidate advances pre-connected 1.75-inch charged hose line for 70 feet. This event simulates extending a charged offensive hose line to the seat of a fire for firefighting operations.

### Event 3: Halyard Raise

Candidate raises and lowers the fly section of a 24-foot aluminum extension ladder with a halyard. The pull resistance of the ladder is approximately 26 pounds. This event simulates raising and lowering the fly of a 24-foot aluminum extension ladder in order to access higher floors for rescue, ventilation, and other firefighting operations.

### Event 4: Roof Walk

Candidate ascends and descends a 10-foot distance walking/crawling on the rungs of a 12-foot straight ladder while carrying a simulated 23-pound chain saw (not to exceed 23 pounds). This event simulates walking on a straight ladder with the appropriate equipment in order to perform ventilation operations.

### Event 5: Attic Crawl

Candidate crawls a distance of 20 feet across a simulated attic area while carrying a simulated flashlight in his/her hands. This event simulates walking/crawling on joists in an attic to search for the extension of a fire.

### Event 6: Roof Ventilation

Candidate stands on a pitched rooftop and strikes the roof 30 times with an 8-pound sledge hammer. This event simulates making a ventilation opening in a roof with an axe or sledge hammer in order to ventilate a fire.

### Event 7: Victim Removal

Candidate carries or drags a dummy for 18 feet. This event simulates removing an injured or unconscious victim from a hazardous area.

### Event 8: Ladder Removal/Carry

Candidate removes a 14-foot aluminum straight ladder from mounted hooks, carries the ladder 54 feet around a diamond shaped course, and replaces the ladder to the mounted hooks. The weight of the ladder is 28-30 pounds (not to exceed 30 pounds). This event simulates removing a straight ladder from an apparatus, carrying it to the site of use, and replacing it to the apparatus.

### Event 9: Crawling Search

Candidate crawls on the ground floor a distance of 60 feet. This event simulates crawling while conducting search and rescue, hose deployment, or attic operations in a burning structure.

### Event 10: Stair Climb with Hose

Candidate ascends and descends three flights of stairs with a high-rise pack (comprised of 100-feet of 1 ¼" inch hose, weighing between 46-50 pounds). This event simulates climbing stairs with a high-risk pack in order to fight fires in multiple-story buildings.

## **2. Aerial 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.

## **The Rest of the Process**

Candidates who pass the written test remain on the list for a year until it expires. During that year candidates from the list may be called for an interview at any time during the year. Candidates who are called for an interview and successfully pass the interview are put on a list in the order of their scores. The fire chief uses this list to schedule a second interview.

Candidates who are successful at the second interview may receive a conditional job offer as the fire department has openings. A conditional job offer begins the background process. 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. The department usually runs two academy classes per year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Candidates who are given conditional job offers go through and must pass the following background 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.