



# Fire Fighter

## Applicant Handbook

*Last update – August 20, 2020*



An equal opportunity employer

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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.

Essential qualities for members of the Fargo Fire Department are:

- The desire to serve
- The ability to perform, and
- The courage to act

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 written test, the physical agility test, and the oral interview. You are also encouraged to visit one of Fargo's fire stations and to converse with the firefighters and officers regarding the nature of the job. By doing that, you may better determine whether the fire service is the right career for you.

### 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 firefighters undergo continuous in-service training to maintain their competencies and keep them abreast of new technology and the latest fire prevention and suppression procedures.

It is necessary that a formalized training system be maintained to provide planned progressive work and learning experiences combined with classroom instruction. In-service training includes subjects such as firefighting tactics, emergency medical procedures, hydraulics, ladder work, hose practices, ventilation techniques, handling of hazardous materials, fire code enforcement, public education in fire prevention, and arson investigation. Firefighters would not be able to adequately fulfill the demands of the job without continued training in these areas.

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

File an application with the City of Fargo Office of Human Resources, 225 4<sup>th</sup> Street North, City Hall, telephone 701-241-1321. Applications are available during the open application period at <http://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/human-resources/career-opportunities> Those individuals who meet the established qualifications listed below may participate in and must pass a series of tests.

## What are the qualifications and special requirements?

- A. Must have a valid driver's license.
- B. Must be at least 18 years of age.
- C. Must be of sound mental and physical health and meet all established standards. Those candidates accepting a qualified job offer will have a pre-employment drug test, background investigation, polygraph examination, eye examination, a rigid medical examination, psychological examination, and a pass/fail agility test.
- D. Must have successfully completed 60 college semester credit hours in any subject.
- E. Ability to obtain national certification as an Emergency Medical Technician within the probationary period. Employee is responsible for the tuition costs associated with obtaining the initial certification. Thereafter, recertification costs are assumed by the Fargo Fire Department.
- F. Must have the ability to understand the English language, written and spoken.

## Education Transcript Requirements

You must provide a copy of your transcript from an accredited post-secondary educational institution. Your copy of your transcript must be included with your application materials. 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.

## Selection Process

The selection process is comprised of ten components designed to measure an applicant's potential for fulfilling the job duties of a firefighter. The selection process testing is as follows:

- A. Written examination
- B. Physical agility test
- C. Oral interview
- D. Background investigation
- E. Pre-employment drug screening
- F. Psychological examination
- G. Polygraph examination
- H. Eye Examination
- I. Medical examination
- J. Face piece fit test

## What types of tests must I take?

The written exam, the first stage of the testing process, is comprised of a series of questions that cover various areas of general knowledge, skills and abilities. Below is a list of five sample test questions.

## Sample of Written Test

Select the best or most correct response:

1. If Fire Fighter Erstad walked 15 yards up Lake Street, turned left and walked 30 yards down Belleview Avenue, turned right and walked 20 yards up James Street, turned right again and walked 30 yards down another avenue, turned to the right again and walked 20 yards down another street, turned to the left and walked 5 yards, which of the following streets or avenues would the fire fighter be located on?
  - A. Belleview Avenue
  - B. James Street
  - C. An unnamed street
  - D. Lake Street
  
2. If Fire Fighter Jones saved more money from his/her salary than Fire Fighter Smith, and Fire Fighter Smith saved more than Fire Fighter Davis, and Fire Fighter Davis saved more than Fire Fighter Wilson, which of the following could not be true?
  - A. Fire Fighter Davis saved more than Fire Fighter Jones
  - B. Fire Fighter Smith saved more than Fire Fighter Wilson
  - C. Fire Fighter Davis saved less than Fire Fighter Jones
  - D. Fire Fighter Smith saved less than Fire Fighter Jones
  
3. If there are 500 candidates applying for the entry level fire fighter position and there are only 20 openings, what percentage of candidates will be successful?
  - A. 4%
  - B. 7%
  - C. 9%
  - D. 25%
  
4. As a ship sails away from shore it appears to go below the horizon. The one of the following that best explains this observation is that it results from:
  - A. Rise and fall of tides
  - B. Curvature of the earth's surface
  - C. Refraction of light
  - D. Effect of gravity on moving bodies
  
5. A clay pitcher of water will crack if the water freezes chiefly because:
  - A. During the process of freezing, the water expands
  - B. During the process of freezing, the water contracts
  - C. The crystallization process of ice formation causes the ice to solidify
  - D. The tension strength of clay decreases as the temperature decreases

All applicants meeting the selection criteria will be given the written test administered by the City of Fargo Human Resources Department. The top applicants that score 80% or more on the written test (not to exceed 15 applicants) will be permitted to attempt the physical agility test.

## Physical Agility Test

The physical agility test is the second stage of the testing process. Successful candidates will complete the physical agility test following the written exam. 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 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, the applicant must obtain a signed statement from a medical provider stating that the applicant can safely participate in the test, which MUST BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS IN ORDER TO TEST** (See attachment 1). The applicant must also sign a release from liability form (See attachment 2).

## 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.

## Fargo Fire Department Physical Acceptance Test

Applicant will wear a 50-pound weighted vest, helmet, and gloves during this event. 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.**

### Simulated Smoke Conditions

Description of Test: The applicant, while wearing a blacked-out face piece, shall be required to find his or her way out of the second floor of the Fire Department “burn building” via an exit door. Failure to find the exit or signs of panic or distress shall be reason for failure of this test.

Measures: This exercise determines if the applicant displays signs of claustrophobia; also tests for orientation and ability to reason under stress.

### Forty-foot Ladder Climb

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 test will be given an oral interview examination.

After passing the physical agility test, all eligible candidates are notified as to the 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. A representative from the City of Fargo Human Resources Department is also present during the interview.

The types of questions that could be asked are:

1. Why do you feel that you would like to pursue a career as a fire fighter?

2. A fire fighter's duty day is 24 hours long. Do you feel you have the ability to work closely for an extended period of time with a group of people? Explain why you feel the way you do.

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.

### Background Investigation

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.

### Pre-Employment Drug Test

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.

### Psychological Examination

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.

1. Reuven Bar-On EQI Assessment Tool
2. Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
3. Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI)
4. 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)
5. Clinical Interview

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.

### Polygraph Examination

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.

### Medical Examination

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 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 the same fringe 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.

#### Sample test answers

1. a            2. a            3. a            4. b            5. a

*Good Luck!*

*Last update – August 20, 2020*

**Notice to Applicant for Fire Fighter Position  
Fargo Fire Department**

We require, as part of the employment process, that you participate in the physical agility test consisting of the elements attached to this document. In order to participate in this test, you must complete the following statement and have your personal medical provider complete the applicable portion no earlier than 60 days prior to the scheduled test date. **Any and all costs incurred to complete this form are the responsibility of the applicant.** You will not be allowed to take the test without this document and therefore, will not be considered in the current selection process for this position.

**Applicant's Statement**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (please print full name) understand what is required as described in this document and in the physical agility test. I am aware of my physical condition and I understand that I am not required to perform this test if I believe it would endanger my health or well-being. I have decided to take this test and will assume all risks associated with this test.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

Medical Provider's Statement

Medical Provider's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

It is my opinion that this individual **CAN** safely participate in the physical agility test attached to this document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Provider's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Fargo Fire Department Physical Acceptance Test

**Provide this Test description to your personal medical provider when the form above is being completed.**

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Time Limit: 45 seconds.

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**Physical Agility Test  
Fargo Fire Department**

**RELEASE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (print full name) am an applicant for fire fighter with the Fargo Fire Department. As part of the application process, I am required to undergo a physical agility test. I hereby release the City of Fargo and its employees or agents from any liability as a result of any injuries that may be sustained resulting from my performing the physical agility test.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candidate's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date