

Cleveland Fire Department

New Employee Selection Process



CITY OF CLEVELAND, TN

SELECTION PROCESS CLEVELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Cleveland Fire Department makes every effort to conform to all applicable state and federal hiring guidelines. The department is interested in recruiting, selecting, and employing the most qualified applicants to serve in the areas of fire prevention and fire suppression. Individuals applying for a position at the Cleveland Fire Department will have to complete the following guidelines. The selection process will apply to all individuals who are seeking a fire fighter's position at the Cleveland Fire Department, including present city employees who desire a transfer from their present job into the fire department.

At the discretion of the Fire Chief, entry level examinations and physical agility tests maybe given, even if a position is not available, to bring the applicant pool up to sufficient numbers. If the number of candidates in the pool falls below five (5) candidates, a new test must be given. The cost associated with the selection process and the limited number of vacancies that are created at the fire department necessitate this practice. The City Personnel Office will make formal announcements through various media sources as to when applications will be accepted.

Applicants applying for a position at the Cleveland Fire Department shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age and meet the qualifications in NFPA 1001 Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications and NFPA 1582 Medical Requirements for Fire Fighters. Qualified applicants shall have a high school education or a state recognized equivalent. Two years of college level related courses and/or Tennessee State Firefighter Certification is preferred. Successful candidates not already certified at the level of Firefighter II, will be required to pass the State Certifications exam of Firefighter II within thirty (30) months of employment. All new employees will also be required to attain TN First Responder Certification within eighteen (18) months of employment. Employees of the Cleveland Fire Department are required to have a valid Tennessee Driver's License or acquire one before completion of their probationary period of six (6) months.

Following the formal announcement by the personnel office that applications are being accepted, the applicant may pick up an application package at the personnel office. The application package will contain a basic city employment application, a "Personal History Form", and the selection process document which provides the applicant with additional instructions and information about the hiring process. Once the applicant has completed all necessary forms, they should return the forms to the personnel office for further instructions concerning the date, time, and location for the written examination. During this visit to the personnel office, the applicant will also receive instructions concerning the necessity for a physical exam prior to going through the agility test.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION

The written examination is a validated exam developed by a professional test development agency. It is administered by members of the personnel office and the Cleveland Fire Department. No prior training or experience in the job of fire fighter is assumed of candidates taking this test.

This test is supported by criterion-related evidence and psychometric analysis. A nationwide analysis of the job of an entry-level fire fighter resulted in development of examinations designed to assess abilities related to the following content areas: Observational Judgment, Spatial Scanning, Association Memory, Mathematical Computations, Spatial Orientation, Reading Comprehension, Memory for Ideas and Mechanical Aptitude.

All applicants completing the written examination will be notified by the personnel office concerning the results of their score. These notifications will be on a **PASS or FAIL** basis. Applicants that are notified their score is in the **FAIL** category will be eligible to retest any time another test is given. These applicants will have to obtain a new application package from the personnel office if they desire to take the test in the future.

PHYSICAL AGILITY

Applicants who pass the written examination and choose to continue with the selection process will be notified of the date and time of the second phase of the process, which is the physical agility test. All applicants must have a physician's statement confirming their competence to perform this testing. Applicants should wear attire suitable for physical fitness activity and weather conditions and be prepared to spend the entire day at the testing facility. This portion of the selection process has been designed around job specific events commonly associated with the duties that fire fighters are confronted with on a routine basis. Applicants that do not pass the agility test are eliminated from the selection process and are not eligible to retest until a new test is given. This means that they must obtain another application package from the personnel office and start the process over beginning with the written examination.

The entire agility test will be performed by the applicant while wearing a fire helmet, turnout (fire) coat, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, and any other safety equipment as needed for the events. These items will be provided by the Cleveland Fire Department.

The agility test will be divided into two (2) segments. The first segment will be the Aerial climb, which is a non-timed Pass/Fail event. The second segment will be timed and will consist of five (5) events. **There will be two (2) practice sessions made available for all candidates. Practice times will be posted so that each candidate will have ample opportunity to arrange their schedules. Candidates must attend a minimum of one (1) practice session to be eligible to take the physical agility test.**

SEGMENT ONE

Aerial Climb

Pass/Fail

The applicant, wearing the previously mentioned safety equipment, with the addition of a safety line and belt, will climb a free standing aerial device to a height of eighty-five (85) feet. Each rung of the aerial device must be touched with either foot (no rung skipping) until the applicant can touch the top rung with either hand. The proper placement of the hands while climbing should be on the rungs of the device.

At no time will the applicant be allowed to stop on the device once the climb has started. If the applicant stops on the device, they will be given a warning to continue their climb. After five (5) seconds, they will be issued their second warning to continue the climb. If the applicant does not resume the climb within five (5) seconds they will be given a fail mark and will be disqualified from the agility test. A total of three (3) warnings at any time during this event will result in elimination from the entire agility test.

Although it is not a timed event as far as score, each applicant will be allotted a maximum time of five (5) minutes to complete this portion of the agility test. Failure to complete this segment in the allotted time will result in a "Fail" score for the entire agility test.

After all applicants successfully complete the "Aerial Climb" the second segment of the physical agility test will begin.

SEGMENT TWO

TIMED EVENTS:

- 1) Stair Climb
- 2) Hose Hoist
- 3) Forcible Entry
- 4) Hose Advance
- 5) Victim Rescue

Wearing the same safety equipment (with the exception of the "safety line"), the applicant will challenge the timed events. This score will be based on a continued time for all five (5) events, the time beginning at the signal from the timekeeper and ending when the final event is completed.

RULES:

- 1) Absolutely “no running” during the events. A fast walk is permitted.
- 2) All safety equipment must remain intact and in place on the applicant during the test.
- 3) You must touch every rung and step with your feet, both ascending and descending on the aerial and stair climb.
- 4) When climbing the aerial device, you must grasp the rungs of the ladder with your hands.
- 5) If you do not complete the event, you fail the agility test.
- 6) Failure to complete the agility events will result in the elimination of the applicant from the hiring process.

STAIR CLIMB:

Applicant will begin at the start line and ascend to the top of the exterior stairs at the training tower carrying one section of 2 1/2 inch fire hose folded "accordion style" and carried over the right shoulder. The fire hose will be placed in a square marked on the floor at the top of the training tower. Each flight of stairs will consist of thirteen steps and a landing. The applicant must touch every step when ascending the stairs.

The applicant will then proceed to the next event, which will be the "Hose Hoist."

HOSE HOIST:

From the top of the tower, using a hand over hand motion, pull a 1/2 inch rope to hoist two (2) sections of 1 3/4 inch fire hose (approximately 42 pounds). This evolution is complete when the fire hose clears the rail and is dropped in the square marked on the floor. Applicant will then descend to the bottom of the exterior stairs touching every step and utilizing the handrail. The applicant will then proceed twenty-one (21) feet from the bottom of the training tower to the forcible entry phase of the event.

FORCIBLE ENTRY:

Using a weighted shot mallet (sledge hammer) and Keiser Force Machine, the applicant will drive a 158 pound I-beam five (5) feet. This event is complete when the end of the beam crosses the five (5) foot marker. Upon completion of this event the applicant will proceed twenty-five (25) feet to the obstacle course and negotiate five (5) cones placed fifteen (15) feet apart in a zig zag pattern. Upon completion of the obstacle course the applicant will proceed fifteen (15) feet to the hose advance event.

HOSE ADVANCE:

The applicant must pick up and advance a 1 3/4 inch charged (80psi) hose line seventy (70) feet (Do not drop or throw the nozzle). Upon completion of this event the applicant will proceed seventy (70) feet to the Victim Rescue.

VICTIM RESCUE:

The applicant must drag (cannot lift and carry) a rescue mannequin (weighing 165 pounds) backwards for a distance of seventy (70) feet to the designated finish line. This event (and the course) is complete when both the victim and competitor (applicant) completely cross the finish line.

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Applicants tend to underestimate the arduous nature of the effects it can have on them physically. To help minimize negative effects, remember there is no substitute for training. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1) Drink plenty of water 1-2 hours prior to the event.
- 2) Completely avoid the consumption of alcohol for at least 48 hours prior to the event.
- 3) Avoid the use of any over the counter medication for 48 hours. In particular, you should avoid all aspirin-containing products as well as the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents like Advil, Nuprin, Motrin, Medipren, and Midol to name a few. In addition, you should avoid products containing acetaminophen (Tylenol), decongestants, cold pills, and diuretics.
- 4) Amphetamines, ephedrine, and related substances as well as illegal drugs should be completely avoided.
- 5) Avoid strenuous exercise for 48 hours prior to the event.
- 6) Cut back on caffeine (especially coffee) at least 10 hours before the event.

AFTER THE EVENT

- 1) Drink plenty of water. Keep walking to aid in recovery. Your blood lactate will return to normal levels faster if you walk vigorously rather than sit down.
- 2) Completely avoid the consumption of alcohol for at least 48 hours. Alcohol will exacerbate dehydration.
- 3) Avoid the use of any over the counter medication for 48 hours (aspirin, Advil, Aleve, Nuprin, Motrin, Medipren, Tylenol, decongestants, etc.)
- 4) Amphetamines, ephedrine, and related substances as well as illegal drugs should be completely avoided.
- 5) Avoid strenuous exercise for 48 hours.

Although it is unlikely that any significant medical problems will develop, we ask you to watch for the following warning signs.

- 1) Nausea and vomiting that persists beyond the event.
- 2) Feeling lightheaded, dizzy, confused, disoriented, or having poor coordination after leaving the event site.
- 3) Trouble breathing or low back pain after leaving the test site.
- 4) A change in the color of the urine to an unnaturally dark color (sometimes resembling cola).
- 5) Decreased amounts of urine despite drinking plenty of fluid.
- 6) Severe muscle tenderness that persists longer than 24 hours.
- 7) Weakness that persists longer than 24 hours.

If you develop any of these symptoms, please see a physician immediately. You should tell the physician that you participated in the event.

ORAL BOARD

The next step in the selection process requires the applicant to appear before an oral board. The personnel office will notify the applicant concerning where and when to appear. This board is comprised of ranking members of the Cleveland Fire Department. Applicants are asked a series of questions that are designed to observe the candidate's overall skills. Candidates are evaluated on their responses to specific questions with regard to poise, confidence, ability to make proper ethical decisions, and how they may react in an emergency situation. Additionally, the board has an opportunity to observe the total communications skills of the candidate as well as their dress and grooming habits. The board is not designed to be a stress test. Simply having to appear before the board provides the candidate with enough apprehension for board members to observe the candidate under light stress conditions.

Since the fire fighter is engaged in fire prevention and communicating with the public, the board members have a chance to observe the interpersonal skills of each applicant to determine if they possess the skills necessary to perform in the different areas of fire prevention. The candidates are scored by each board member.

SCORING

Once candidates complete the written examination and physical agility (pass/fail), they will be placed in the eligibility pool for consideration, as positions become available. Candidates will remain in the pool for a period of two (2) years.

There are other factors that will be considered in selecting candidates for a conditional offer of employment. These include work history, special education or experience, unique skills, Fire Certifications, etc. These factors will be considered by the Fire Chief during the final selection stage.

FIRE CHIEF'S INTERVIEW

After the applicants have been placed in the eligibility pool the Fire Chief will interview a minimum of three (3) applicants depending on the number of vacancies available. The recommendations of the Fire Chief are important considerations for the successful staffing of the Department. The Fire Chief shall determine based on available information, whether the applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities match those of the vacant position. During this part of the selection process the applicant will be given consideration for any skills and abilities not addressed in the prior sections of the selection process.

NOTE:

The Fire Chief and City Manager will have final authority in the selection of candidates and may eliminate candidates based on factors not otherwise included in the evaluation process such as criminal history, poor or unstable work history, or other relevant factors.

The successful applicant will then be offered "Conditional Employment" as a probationary firefighter. At this stage of the process the candidate will be sent for a complete medical examination (including drug screen) and a psychological examination. If the Fire Chief is satisfied with the candidate or candidates, they will be hired and placed on a probationary status. Probationary status will be for a period of six (6) months. With approval of the Fire Chief, probationary status may be extended for an additional ninety (90) days.

All candidates hired after November 26, 2007 will be subject to the Fit for Duty Policy for Certified Public Safety Personnel, as stated in the Personnel Policies of the City of Cleveland, Tennessee.

The Cleveland Fire Department and the City of Cleveland are equal opportunity employers and do not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. The City of Cleveland has initiated a policy that requires all emergency personnel (fire and police) to reside within thirty (30) miles of the Main Fire station. A newly hired Cleveland Fire Department employee will have the duration of their probationary period of six (6) months to comply with this policy and relocate within the thirty (30) miles of the Main Fire station.