



RECRUITMENT PACKET

Our Mission

"To serve and protect our community through education, prevention, preparedness and response."

Hiring Process Information for Fort Worth Fire Department Applicants



Firefighter Recruitment

The City of Fort Worth Fire Department recruits men and women to become firefighters on an as needed basis. Applications for fire trainee are accepted only after a training class has been authorized through the budgetary process.

Once a class is authorized, a beginning and ending date for application acceptance will be set through a joint effort of the City of Fort Worth Human Resources Department and the Fort Worth Fire Department.

Note: During the times when there is not active application process, individuals are encouraged to go online and submit a job interest card (electronic version). <http://www.fortworthgov.org/forms/default.aspx?ekfrm=30310> This data base is held until a class is authorized at which time applicants are notified via the information provided giving them the dates and locations where applications will be accepted.

For more information visit our website at: www.fortworthgov.org/hr or call (817) 392-7750. Information concerning the Fort Worth Fire Department can be found at www.fortworthgov.org/fire.

Minimum Requirements

- High school diploma **or** GED certificate **or** 12 semester hours of college
- 18 to 35 years of age (Cannot have reached your 36th birthday by date of training class certification)
- Valid Class "C" drivers' license (will be required to obtain Class "B" while in training)

Employment Benefits

- 3 weeks paid vacation
- Credit Union
- 9 paid holidays
- Military Leave
- 7 days family sick leave
- 15 days sick leave each year
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Co-paid group hospitalization
- Retirement Fund
- Life Insurance

Base Salary (FY 10/11)

- \$3,104 monthly while in training (\$37,253 annually)
- \$3,999 monthly upon graduation (\$47,986 annually)



Pre-Screen Application Process

Once the application has been completed, a staff member will conduct a pre-screening process. This process is designed to determine if an applicant meets all minimum qualifications based on the information provided. If a qualification violation is noted, the applicant is informed that they do not meet the standards and are disqualified from continuing through the process. If no qualification violations are found, the person is given information regarding the next phase in the process, the written examination.

Written Exam

The written exam is given in accordance with the State of Texas Civil Service Chapter 143 of the local government code. This process is managed by the City of Fort Worth Human Resources Department. The current exam is a commercially available exam chosen by the Human Resources Department with the approval of the Fort Worth Fire Department. There are 105 cognitive questions and 50 non-cognitive questions and the time limit for completion of the exam is two and one half hours. Honorably discharged men and women of the armed forces will be awarded an additional 5 points upon successfully passing the examination with a score of 70 or higher.

Test results are posted at the Fort Worth Fire Training Academy and Fort Worth City Hall, usually within 3 weeks. The scores are also posted on the City of Fort Worth website.

Candidates are listed in rank order by score from highest to lowest. An established tie breaking system is used to break tied scores. The eligibility list will remain in effect for a minimum period of 9 months but not more than 12 months from the date of the written exam.

At the written exam an "Orientation Notice", prepared by the fire department is given to all applicants. This notice explains how the top number of candidates needed by the fire department will go forward in the process. The number of candidates to go forward is determined by the number of candidates needed for the class. Candidates may be disqualified at different segments of the process, making it necessary for the fire department to choose a 4 to 1 ratio of candidates.

Orientation / Physical Ability Practice

Candidates must attend an orientation to continue in the hiring process. Failure to attend an orientation will result in the candidate's disqualification. The ranked order candidates needed to continue in the hiring process are scheduled for their respective practice sessions by phone or electronic mail. Candidates are told to wear some type of physical training clothing if they plan to participate in the practice sessions. Physical ability **practice** participation is optional, however **orientation is mandatory**. The orientation portion normally takes 30 to 45 minutes. The location of the orientation and



PAP will be at the fire and police training center. Items given to candidates at the orientation include:

- Claims release for the physical ability practice
- Claims release for two part physical assessment (1 1/2 mile run and PAT)
- Copy of the Rescheduling Policy
- Map of 1 1/2 mile run location
- Diagram and written description of the physical ability course
- An overview of the remaining steps in the hiring process
- Each candidate will receive their scheduled time and date aerobic capacity run.

After the paperwork has been completed, the group of candidates will see a video demonstration of a firefighter going through the entire physical ability course. Each candidate is given an opportunity to participate in the practice session. Coaching is permitted during the physical ability practice.

Aerobic Capacity Run (NEW 2008/2009)

Candidates will meet staff at an approved location and time for the **one and one-half mile** aerobic capacity run. Failure to attend any scheduled event including the aerobic capacity run will result in the candidate's disqualification. The run is a pass/fail only. Failure to complete the aerobic capacity run in the allowable time of 13 minutes and 57 seconds will result in a failed test and disqualification. Candidates that successfully complete the aerobic capacity run in the allotted time will receive an appointment date and time for their physical ability exam.

Physical Ability Examination

Positive photo identification and **notarized liability release** are required and mandatory to participate in the physical ability examination. Failure to present both documents is the same as a missed appointment and will result in disqualification. The physical ability examination will be located at the fire and police training center. The physical ability exam is a timed continuous event consisting of the following tasks:

- Humat and Boot Bag Carry
- Fan Carry
- Ladder Extension
- Hose Load Carry / Stair Climb
- Hose Advance
- Victim Rescue

The exam is a pass/fail only, with the maximum allowable time of 5 minutes and 30 seconds. Anything over this time is a failed exam and the candidate will be disqualified. **No coaching or cheerleading** is permitted during the physical ability examination. Background orientation will be conducted after each morning session and again after



each afternoon session. Successful candidates must attend the background orientation the same day as completion of their physical ability examination.

The effort in the pictures is not representative of the actual strenuous effort required to successfully complete the course.

View the PAT at: www.fortworthgov.org/fire/info/default.aspx?id=2552

Background Orientation

The background orientation process is scheduled on the same day as the physical ability exam. Candidates that successfully complete their Physical Ability Examination must attend the background orientation. The candidate will receive a brief overview, covering the remaining steps in the hiring process and must complete the required documentation to be returned at a specified date and time. The background orientation normally last about 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on how many questions are asked. Each candidate will also receive a handout that describes the physical fitness benchmarks required in recruit training academy. Next, the candidates are scheduled for a meeting with a Fort Worth fire department background investigator. All documentation and forms requested/assigned during the background orientation meeting must be completed and presented to the investigator on the scheduled date and time. Failure to complete the background forms and booklets in the required time frame will result in a missed appointment and ultimately disqualification.

Meeting with the Background Investigator

The candidate must meet with a background investigator to begin the background process. At this meeting, background investigators will review the information provided by the candidate for areas of concern and minimum standard violations. Candidates will be given a polygraph booklet to be completed during this same meeting. The candidate is given instructions about how to schedule his/her polygraph. The candidate schedules his/her own polygraph appointment with the polygraph facility within the timeframe given by the Hiring Coordinator and/or background investigator. The candidate will be given a packet of information that includes a map to the facility and some general instructions. Polygraph examinations results are returned directly to the Fort Worth Fire Department.

Polygraph Examinations

The Fort Worth Fire Department uses an independent contractor for polygraph examinations. A missed appointment with the contractor is the same as a missed appointment with us and will result in disqualification.

Background Investigation

A comprehensive background investigation is conducted on candidates to establish evidence of good moral character, a well-adjusted personality, community commitment, fire service adaptability, and a pattern of conduct acceptable to the City of Fort Worth Fire Department. Remember to list all convictions and tickets on your application, and



do not withhold any information. Do not let us discover an incident during our investigation. The background investigation will begin when the candidate first meet with the background investigator. During the background investigation phase of the process, if a minimum standard violation is discovered, the candidate is notified that he/she does not meet minimum standards and will be removed from the process. The candidate should receive an explanation of why they are being eliminated, and what minimum standard they have violated. Normally, the background process will take 4 to 6 weeks to complete. Following the background investigation, candidates will be scheduled for oral interviews.

Interview Process

Candidates are given a briefing and some general information concerning the interview process via electronic mail, USPS or in person. An electronic or hand-written signature will be verification of the interview appointment time and date. All interviews are done in rank order thus eliminating any chance for changes or alterations in the interview schedule once established. Interviews may take 2 to 3 hours. Candidates must be on time for all appointments including the interview process or it will result in a missed appointment and ultimately disqualification. Once all interviews are complete, certification of the training class may take an additional two weeks. After the appointment of the training class, a conditional offer of employment is made to each successful candidate. This offer is contingent on the successful completion of the medical physical examination, including a drug screening. Candidates are then scheduled for medical physicals.

Medical Physicals

All medical physicals are done at Huguley Hospital Assessment Lab. The medical physicals cannot be completed until after all candidates are certified. Each candidate is given a hand-out that has general information and instructions about the medical physical. Candidates must give their maximum effort during all activities. Categories of fitness range from very poor to superior. All medical physical results (non-medical fitness results) are retained and transferred to the recruit fitness coordinator establishing a base line of fitness for each recruit prior to the start of Recruit Training. After the medical physical, candidates are scheduled for the Aerial Ladder and SCBA evaluation just prior to the beginning of class.

Aerial Ladder and SCBA Evaluations

These two exercises are the last two events the candidate has to complete before entering the academy. Candidates are also fitted for uniforms and turn out gear on this date.

Aerial Ladder Exercise – the candidate must climb to the top of an aerial ladder set to an angle of 70 degrees and come back down. There is no time limit for this exercise



however it should be completed in a timely manner. This exercise is designed to possibly uncover any unusual fear of heights.

SCBA Exercise – the candidate is fitted with a bunker coat and a black out face piece. The candidate is placed on one end of a hose line and must follow it out of the building. This exercise is designed to uncover any claustrophobia type issues.

Recruit Training

The Fort Worth fire department is committed to recruiting, hiring and training those that qualify to become part of our team and serve the citizens of our community. Candidates currently holding EMS and Fire certifications must also attend FWFD fire recruit school. The first day of recruit training is also the first day of employment with the City of Fort Worth. At this time candidates should have already terminated employment with their previous employer. Candidates are not allowed to attend any other schools or be employed outside of the recruit training academy. The normal work day for recruit school is 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Monday through Friday. Alterations in the schedule are permitted by the training staff. The duration of FWFD recruit training school is approximately 7 months beginning with 6 weeks of emergency medical technician curriculum followed by the National Registry test. Fire school begins immediately thereafter meeting the Texas Commission on Fire Protection requirements for structure firefighters. Upon completion of fire school, trainees are required to sit for the State of Texas firefighter examination.

PHYSICAL STANDARDS DURING TRAINING

TRAINING PHILOSOPHY:

Physical fitness is an integral part of Fire Training. Your maintained fitness level may determine the quality of life you will experience as a career firefighter. Our desire is to hire physically capable uniformed personnel today, so that we can meet the challenges of tomorrow's fire service. Physical fitness, for the fire service, is the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue and to meet the above average physical stresses encountered in emergency situations. The physical training program is a rigorous and demanding process designed to improve the fire trainee's physical and mental conditioning.

PHYSICAL TESTING:

As a trainee in the Fort Worth Fire Academy, you will be required to satisfactorily qualify in the physical training program. Each trainee will be required to complete a physical test.

BENCHMARKS:

The physical fitness (running) benchmarks that will be assessed of all trainees are as follows:

- 1) First day – 1.5 mile run in 13:30 minutes (9-minute mile pace)
- 2) 2 weeks – 1.75 mile run in 15:45 minutes
- 3) 4 weeks – 2.0 mile run in 18:00 minutes



In addition to the above, Qualified Fitness Instructors using the Cooper Aerobics Research Institute of Dallas (fitness norms and protocol) will determine a score for each trainee's fitness evaluation. These norms are based on the age and sex of the trainees and include the evaluation of five (5) areas:

- 1) Dynamic Strength Push-Ups: Max push-ups in one (1) minute
- 2) Dynamic Strength Sit up/Curl up: Max sit-ups in one (1) minute
- 3) Flexibility: Sit and reach (flexibility test of the back and hamstring muscles.)
- 4) Cardiovascular: 1.5 mile run
- 5) Body Composition: % of body fat

SCHEDULE FOR GROUP RUNS:

The following is an example of the endurance standards and maximum time allowed for the daily runs. This schedule could increase or decrease according to the overall fitness performance level of the class. This is at the discretion of the Chief of Training.

Week	Avg. Per Mile	Minimum Distance	Maximum Time
1	11:00	1.50 Miles	16:30
2	11:00	1.75 Miles	19:15
3	11:00	2.00 Miles	22:00
4	10:30	2.25 Miles	23:15
5	10:30	2.50 Miles	26:15
6	10:00	2.75 Miles	27:50
7	10:00	3.00 Miles	30:00
8	9:30	3.00 Miles	28:30

NOTE: The training will vary in distances and times beginning with Week 9, or possibly earlier depending on the overall fitness of the class, throughout the remainder of the academy.

The trainees must maintain the pace for the run as set by the physical training instructor or be subject to point deductions. A trainee shall be considered below minimum standards for physical training if the trainee fails to complete the run with the instructor within the maximum time allowed. In addition to the run, the trainees will be required to successfully complete a strength-training program as follows:

On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of the first week, trainees shall properly perform three (3) sets of ten (10) push-ups and sit-ups for a total of 30 each. Pull-ups and chin-ups will be performed to the maxim effort of the trainee. Each week one repetition will be added to each set. For example, Week 6 three (3) sets of 15, for a total of 45 push-ups and sit-ups.



Helpful Hints:

Preparing for the physical ability testing

The four major areas of fitness include:

- Flexibility
- Cardiopulmonary endurance
- Muscular strength
- Muscular endurance

Warm-up and Flexibility – a warm-up serves several functions, including:

- Increased blood flow to working muscles and joints
- Decreased likelihood of injury
- Decrease in pre-event tension
- Possible improved performance
- Improved flexibility

A proper warm-up should begin with a few minutes of the same type of activity you are about to do at a very light exertion level. The next step is to stretch to improve flexibility and further your warm-up.

Flexibility rules – No bouncing, Stretch slowly, No pain, Stretching is not competitive, Breath slowly to help you relax, and Stretching should feel good.

Types of Stretches

Knee to chest
Straddle stretch
Forearm stretch
Cross over stretch

Knee to chest – diagonal
Side quadriceps stretch
Leg cross
Upper back stretch

Calf Stretch
Chest stretch
Butterfly stretch
Triceps stretch

Cardiopulmonary endurance – is the ability of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems to deliver oxygen to working muscles. It consists of both aerobic and anaerobic energy systems.

Aerobic activities include: bicycling, hiking, climbing stairs, and running when performed at a low enough intensity. These should be done 3 to 5 days a week.

Anaerobic activities include sprinting and circuit training and should be done 2 to 3 days a week, resting at least a day in between for recovery necessary to prevent over training.

Muscular strength/endurance- a resistance program designed to improve your total body strength and endurance. If you are not familiar with lifting programs, have any joint pain or feel uncomfortable performing any weight training exercises, you should seek the advice of a professional trainer.



The workout should follow a warm-up and stretching program.

- General safety tips while performing resistance training:
- Always lift with a partner
- Ask for help from an expert if you don't know what you are doing
- Progress slowly to avoid injuries
- Never show off by attempting to lift more weight than you normally lift
- Use proper lifting technique when lifting weight plates and dumbbells
- Never drink alcohol or take medications that may cause drowsiness prior to lifting weights
- Always use strict form – proper technique is more important than the amount of weight lifted
- Keep your head in a neutral position – looking straight ahead and not upwards or downwards

Preparing for the Interview

One of the first things you should do in the preparation to become a Fort Worth Firefighter is to find out as much as you possibly can about the Fort Worth Fire Department and the job of a firefighter. You are encouraged to thoroughly familiarize yourself with the firefighter's job responsibilities and operating philosophies of modern fire departments. There are several ways to obtain this information: 1) Use the internet 2) Go the library; 3) Visit a Fort Worth Fire Station during business hours (8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

You are free to ask any firefighter on duty questions regarding what the department expects from its firefighters, what the department's organizational structure is, what different assignments are available to firefighters and what firefighter's wages and benefits are. You may also ask questions about recruit training and what the typical day to day duties are and how they perform them. Asking questions will help you make an informed decision about becoming a City of Fort Worth Firefighter.

*Visits to the fire station are not a prerequisite nor have any direct influence on the hiring process other than your own personal knowledge.

Interviews are somewhat subjective even though there are standardized criteria that must be addressed. It is critical to prepare for the interview. Many techniques for interview preparation have been devised. Each candidate should choose techniques he/she feels are appropriate and begin preparation. The following are suggestive techniques that may improve your interview skills:

- Take college classes (speech, public speaking)
- Join your local toastmasters or other public speaking organizations
- Set up mock interview boards and have them ask you questions
- Video the mock interviews for in depth review and study
- Audio record yourself answering some questions, try to take out the "ums" and "ands"



Successful interviewing requires communication skills that aren't typically developed through normal life experiences. Many candidates have found it helpful to apply and test for several fire departments simultaneously. This seems to speed up interview skill development.

Station Life (Daily schedule may change to accommodate emergency and non-emergency calls and priority duties)

The majority of sworn firefighters work at fire stations as part of a three platoon system (i.e. A-Shift, B-Shift, and C-Shift). Firefighters work 24 hours on duty followed by 48 hours off duty.

The following is an example of a typical day (shift) for a Fort Worth Firefighter

7–8 a.m. (Shift Change)	Arrive at the fire station and begin checking equipment
8 a.m. (Information Exchange)	Meeting at the dinner table to discuss the day's agenda (i.e. inspections, drills, training, station projects, community events, daily chores, hydrants, cooking schedule, etc.
8:30 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. (Physical Training)	One hour exercise period (weight lifting, running, tread mill, aerobic and anaerobic exercise)
9:30 a.m. (Clean Up)	Shower and get into Station Uniform
10:00 a.m. (Station Work)	Clean fire station (i.e. make beds, toilets, kitchen, showers, sweep and mop all floors, empty all trash cans, vacuum all carpets, dust surfaces, polish surfaces, clean all fire trucks)
11:00 a.m. (Market Run)	Go shopping for lunch and dinner (note: assigned cook must prepare lunch and dinner for entire shift – personal income is pooled together to pay for meals)
12:00 p.m. (Lunch)	Prepare lunch and eat
1:30 p.m. (Clean Up)	Scrub/Wash dishes, sweep and mop floor
2:00 p.m. (Daily Work)	Inspections, chores, drills, training, hydrants, community events, weekly maintenance as needed
5:00 p.m. (Supper)	Cook prepares dinner and fire crew(s) eat together
7:00 p.m. (Clean Up)	Scrub/Wash dishes, sweep and mop floor
8:00 p.m. (Personal Time)	Firefighters are encouraged to study or catch up on documents
10:00 p.m. (Bed Down)	Try to get some sleep. Firefighters are expected to respond to emergency and non-emergency calls for the entire 24 hour shift regardless of the time of day or night
7:00 a.m. Wake Up Tone (Bell)	Daily dispatch (alarm) test (7 a.m. sharp) get up, make your bed, exchange pertinent information with on-coming firefighters before going home.



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the baseline requirements to apply for the Fire Trainee Exam?

- High school diploma or GED certificate or 12 semester hours of college
- At least 18 years old however cannot have reached your 36th birthday by date of certification
- Valid Class C drivers' license (will be required to obtain a Class "B" license while in training)

What will absolutely disqualify me from being a Fort Worth Firefighter?

- Felony conviction(s)
- Dishonorable military discharge
- On probation as directed by a court
- Other disqualifiers found during screening

Is there a cost to take the exam or physical ability test?

- No, there is no cost to the candidate for testing. Candidate must supply his/her own transportation and time off from school/work to make appointments

What if I'm already a firefighter?

- You will be required to apply, test, and compete with all other candidates. Also, you will have to go through the training academy as any other firefighter trainee. If you are currently certified in both EMS and Fire, you will not need to repeat the required state or national exams. Your experience as a firefighter may help in the testing process and be of great value to your classmates.

How long is the Fire Recruit Training Academy?

- The Recruit Academy last approximately 28 weeks. Those who successfully complete the recruit academy are placed in the field as probationary firefighters for approximately 12 months after graduation. During that time period an on-going structured journeyman training program will be provided along with evaluations. Probationary firefighters will be required to return to the Training Academy periodically for evaluation.

What happens after completion of my probation?

- Probationary firefighters will be assigned to a battalion as vacation relief personnel. After or during probation (at the Fire Chief's discretion) firefighters will be assigned a permanent duty station.



Do firefighters get to sleep during their shift?

- Every fire station is designed to accommodate personnel for 24 hours. This includes a kitchen, dorm/bedrooms, restrooms, showers, exercise equipment, and a day room. Sleeping is permitted during designated hours as is cooking, working out, and studying. However, you must be ready to respond to alarms and fulfill other duty requirements at all times.

Who is in charge?

- A chain-of-command system establishes a clear line of authority within an organization and is necessary for situations when individuals may not receive direction, orders, or commands from their immediate supervisor.
- Chain-of-command is a "superior-by-rank" system and exists as follows:
- Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Battalion Chief, Captain, Lieutenant, Engineer, and Firefighter respectively.
- The station is a microcosm of this system beginning from the bottom up with the firefighters, a fire engineer (driver) in charge of the apparatus, a fire lieutenant in charge of an engine crew or the station at a single company house, a fire captain in charge of the entire station at a single company house or multiple crews and apparatus and the shift at multiple company houses. Each area of the city has a battalion chief in charge of operations and stations in his or her battalion.

How are promotions made in the Department?

- Currently, the first promotional opportunity (written test) after two continuous years on the department is to rank of Fire Engineer. After an additional two continuous years at the rank of Fire Engineer, firefighters are eligible to sit for the Fire Lieutenant's exam. Next, following two continuous years at the fire lieutenant rank, fire fighters are eligible to sit for the fire captain's exam. Further, after two continuous years at fire captain, firefighters are eligible to sit for the Battalion Chief's exam. The rank of Deputy Chief is appointed by and works at the discretion of the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief rank is appointed by the City Manager with the approval of the City Council.

Is it harder for a woman to get hired?

- The Fort Worth Fire Department is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against race or gender. With that said, some candidates find that our physical ability exam is very difficult to pass. Therefore, we offer orientation classes, physical ability practice, and this manual so that all candidates can try out the parts of the exam to know which segments of the exam they need to work on improving. Women have to pass the same physical ability exam as men do. Women enjoy respect in the Department because they have demonstrated their abilities in order to be hired. In the training academy women are held to the



same standard as men. The Fort Worth Fire Academy instructors look for all recruits to give 100 percent effort at all times.

What is the job of a Firefighter really like?

- Firefighting involves extremely hard, skilled physical work, and firefighters must be able to handle emergency, life-or-death situations. Firefighters must also be willing learners. Continuous in-service training throughout their careers keeps them up-to-date on the latest technologies and newest fire suppression methods. Training in the fire service encompasses many subjects, such as building construction, emergency medical procedures, hazardous materials, technical rescue, public education, and community relations. Firefighters must have strong social skills, and the ability to think and communicate clearly in very stressful situations.

How much does all that gear weigh?

- Firefighters must carry an array of specialized tools and equipment that can weigh over 70 pounds, plus breathing apparatus and gear that weighs about 35 pounds.

What if I have a criminal (police) record?

- All fire candidates go through an extensive background check before being offered employment. A criminal conviction may not automatically eliminate you from the process. What are considered are: crimes committed, when it occurred, your age at the time, the relationship between the crime and your position as a firefighter, and other criterion set forth by the civil service rules and regulations.

Police records never go away, so be sure that you are totally straightforward on your application and all other documents submitted to us.