

City of Cincinnati Fire Recruit Exam Information Guide



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This Fire Recruit Exam Information Guide will help you prepare for the upcoming Cincinnati Fire Recruit Selection Process. Please read this booklet carefully and completely. It will answer many of your questions. This booklet contains the following sections: (1) Overview of Fire Recruit Selection Process; (2) Summary of Physical Ability Test and Exercise Training Program Description, (3) Selection/Disqualification Criteria for Fire Recruit, and (4) Application for Veteran's Credit.

OVERVIEW OF FIRE RECRUIT SELECTION PROCESS

In the increasingly complex environment in which sworn fire personnel work, the assessment, selection, training, and probationary period is critical for the Fire Department to succeed. Our goal is to attract and recruit a high quality, diverse group of candidates who will succeed at training and in the job of Cincinnati Firefighter. The Fire Department puts forth considerable time, effort, and expense recruiting candidates. We strive to attract and hire highly motivated and qualified applicants.

The testing process is simply a measurement tool designed to predict a candidate's suitability, trainability, and potential for success in fire and rescue work. As with most cities, Fire Recruits are selected based on a series of screening devices. The selection process components include:

- A written, video based exam (worth 60% of the exam grade) to assess the candidate's human relations, reading, and math skills. This portion of the exam is worth 60% of the exam grade. (Top scorers on the written exam will be asked to participate in the physical ability test.)
- A physical ability test (PAT) to assess the candidate's physical capability to do the job of a firefighter. This portion of the exam is pass/fail. Those who pass the PAT will be asked to participate in the Oral Board portion of the process.
- Oral Board portion will be conducted to assess a candidate's communication and reasoning skills. This portion of the exam is worth 40% of the exam grade.

Following the Oral Board, the top scorers remaining in the process will be asked to participate in the following portions of the process:

- An extensive background investigation including an intense polygraph examination conducted by the Fire Department's Recruiting Unit and a Polygraph Unit.
- Behavior assessment to determine suitability for a career in the fire service.
- Complete medical exam including eight panel drug screen conducted by City Employee Health Services under authority of the City Physician (*if offered employment*).

It is important to remember that all phases of the selection process are reviewed and approved by the City of Cincinnati Civil Service Commission. Additionally, candidates have appeal rights to the Civil Service Commission if they feel that they have not been treated in a fair and equitable manner.

After completing all phases of the selection process, candidates are placed on a civil service eligible list. The Fire Chief considers all information gathered during the selection process and makes final selections from the eligible list. Selected candidates then receive a tentative offer of employment pending results of a medical exam in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Specific information about each portion of the exam is as follows:

1. **Written Exam** – All candidates must participate in and successfully complete the written, video based exam. Top scoring candidates will continue in the screening process. **Do not bring cell phones or other electronic devices to the exam.** (Please review the "Additional Written Exam Information" section below.) Applicants will receive written exam results by email. Exam results will not be given out by phone.
2. **Physical Ability Test** – The next step in the selection process is the physical ability test, which will be held after the written exam. Top scorers on the written exam will be scheduled for the physical ability test. Included in this document is information covering the test events. It is in your best interest to begin preparing yourself for the physical ability test as early as possible. A practice session will also be scheduled to allow candidates to familiarize themselves with the events prior to taking the actual test.
3. **Oral Board** – An oral board exercise will be conducted. Each applicant is assessed by a panel of three raters on communication and reasoning skills.
4. **Background Investigation and Polygraph** – Those applicants who have successfully completed the previous portions of the Fire Recruit process may be scheduled for an extensive background investigation, which includes an intensive polygraph exam (including work, credit, and criminal history as well as drug usage), review of the Personal History Questionnaire, fingerprinting, and a records check through BCI (S.B.number.258).
5. **Behavior Assessment** – Candidates who have successfully completed all previous components may be scheduled for the behavior assessment to determine suitability for a career in the fire service.
6. **Selection Review Committee** – After completion of the background investigation and polygraph, a review committee will screen applicants based on the information obtained and in accordance with the background criteria approved by the Civil Service Commission (found in the Selection/Disqualification Criteria for Fire Recruit Section).
7. **Eligible List** - After successfully completing all phases of the screening process, candidates will be placed on a Civil Service eligible list. The Fire Chief will choose the recruit class from that eligible list. It is important to remember that successful completion of the screening process **does not guarantee** a position. Those candidates chosen for the class are offered employment contingent on passing a thorough medical examination, including 8 panel drug screen.

Additional Information

If you are scheduled for any portion of the process, it is your responsibility to appear at the scheduled time, date, and place. Please be prompt for all your appointments. Failure to appear will be considered as your voluntary withdrawal from the process. **You must keep the Civil Service Staff (513-352-2429) and Fire Department recruiters (513-352-1684) informed of your current address, telephone number, and email address.**

No Weapons Permitted - Weapons are not permitted to be carried during any stage of the selection process regardless of the fact that you may be legally authorized to carry such a weapon. Please do not appear at any testing venue wearing any type of firearm or weapon.

Note: The information gathered during this selection process is used to make employment decisions. All information gathered may be subject to public disclosure under the Ohio Freedom of Information Law. This includes the polygraph and background investigation results.

Additional Written Examination Information

All candidates must participate in and successfully complete the written, video based exam. You must bring with you your print-out of your exam ID number from the online application as well as a driver's license as positive identification. You will not be permitted to take the exam without these items. **Do not bring cell phones or other electronic devices to the exam.** Such equipment is **PROHIBITED** at the exam site and you will be disqualified if you bring such items to the exam.

The written video-based exam will take approximately three hours. Parking will not be provided. It will be necessary for applicants to make individual arrangements. Parking at a meter is not recommended, as candidates will not be permitted to leave the exam site once the exam begins. Please be prompt. No one will be admitted to the exam room once the exam begins.

Because this is a video based exam, it is advisable that you bring any listening (hearing aid) or sight (eye glasses or contact lenses) enhancement devices that will allow you to see the video and/or hear the audio sound for this examination. Calculators are not allowed.

We understand many candidates can experience test anxiety and nervousness prior to testing. In preparation for the test, we would like to notify you of a practice test that is offered by our testing vendor, Ergometrics. This practice test will allow you to see examples of video scenarios (like the real test) with multiple choice questions so you can understand the format of the upcoming exam.

The practice test called **FireTEAM** is located at www.ergopracticetests.com and has a fee of \$22.95 which is paid by the applicant with a credit card. The practice test lasts between 30-45 minutes and will give you human relations-video simulation test examples for your upcoming live testing. When visiting the site please make sure to review the details of cost, system requirements, technical support and other frequently asked questions that might arise.

****This practice test is not a requirement for the upcoming exam and is offered as an option to you in preparation for the exam at your own expense.****

SUMMARY OF PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST AND EXERCISE TRAINING PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Physical Ability Test

The Physical Ability Test consists of six events that require you to perform simulations of activities that are part of a Firefighter's job. These events require cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility. Some of the events are timed and all are pass/fail. You will be required to wear a weighted vest which approximates the weight of the clothing, equipment, and breathing apparatus that a Firefighter normally wears during these types of activities (approximately 40 pounds). The six events are:

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|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Rescue Drag | 4. Hose Drag |
| 2. Extension Ladder Removal/Raise | 5. Stair Climb |
| 3. Ladder Raise and Hold | 6. Maze |

You are advised of the following:

- Wear clothing appropriate for physically demanding work. Wear long pants, such as warm-up suit or sweatpants.
- You may wear gloves and/or kneepads; however, these items **will not** be provided for you. You must bring your own gloves and kneepads if you want to wear them.
- Wear sneakers or rubber-soled shoes.

Because the Physical Ability Test is physically demanding, you are urged to drink plenty of fluids beginning the day before the test and continuing up until the time you are tested. Avoid drinking caffeinated beverages. You are also advised to stretch and warm-up before participating in the test.

You must complete all events of the Physical Ability Test within the required time periods. If you cannot complete the test for any reason, you will automatically fail the test and be removed from the Fire Recruit process. The events are described below.

Weighted vest is put on for the following events:

1. **Rescue Drag**: You will be required to drag a 150 lb. dummy approximately 20 feet, across an established line. This event simulates the actions necessary to drag an unconscious victim to safety. This event tests upper body, arm, grip, leg, and cardiovascular strength. (*Maximum Time Permitted – 15 Seconds*)
2. **Extension Ladder Removal/Raise**: You will be required to remove a ladder from a rack and carry it some distance. You will then raise a weight of approximately 45 lbs. that is attached to a rope. You will then lower the weight. This event simulates various activities related to using ladders, including the raising of an extension ladder. This event test upper body, arm and leg strength. (*Maximum Time Permitted – 45 Seconds*)

3. **Ladder Raise and Hold:** Candidate will raise one end of a 75 lb. (approximate weight) aluminum extension ladder over his/her head. Once the ladder is fully extended over the candidate's head, he/she must hold it here for 20 seconds and then lower it to the ground. The ladder is placed with one end against a wall so it will not slip. This simulates raising and lowering of a ladder against the wall of a house or building. This event tests upper body, arm and leg strength. *(3 Attempts Permitted)*
4. **Hose Drag:** You will be required to pull 50 feet of hose 50 feet. This event simulates the actions necessary to manipulate a hose. This event tests upper body, arm, grip, leg, and cardiovascular strength. *(Maximum Time Permitted – 15 Seconds)*
5. **Stair Climb:** You will be required to climb seven flights of steps carrying a rolled hose. This event involves continuous stair climbing, an activity that Firefighters may perform when getting to a fire at an incident scene. This event is a measure of strength or stamina and helps to ensure that a candidate possesses the minimum leg, arm, and cardiovascular strength to make such a climb. *(Maximum Time – 90 seconds)*

Weighted vest is removed for the following event:

6. **Maze:** This event is designed to simulate working in confined, dark spaces. You will be required to crawl through a maze wearing protective gear, including a blacked-out respiratory mask that simulates the limited visibility you encounter in a smoke-filled room. *(Maximum Time Permitted – 3 minutes)*

Application of the Exercise Training Program for Firefighter Tasks and the Physical Ability Test

The Physical Ability Test is designed to assess your capacity to perform the tasks ordinarily performed by a Firefighter during his/her job. The exercise-training program described below provides you with the information necessary to improve your level of physical fitness in preparation for taking the physical ability test. All of the exercises described in the training program are selected to improve muscle strength, muscle power, flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, and muscular endurance. The training program will condition the muscles and muscle groups involved in the tasks performed by a Firefighter and the events that make up the physical ability test. The following provides information to explain the link between the exercises in the program and specific events that make up the physical ability.

Event	Firefighter Task	Exercises to Get in Shape
Rescue Drag	Dragging an unconscious victim (150 lbs) from a burning building or other emergency structure	Warm-up: Side-to-side look, forward and down look, standing cat stretch, shoulder turn, chest stretch, shoulder stretch, arm circles, side stretch or reach, stride stretch, modified hurdler, knee to chest, wall lean

**Extension Ladder
Removal/Raise
and
Ladder Raise
& Hold**

Raising/carrying a ladder

Calisthenics: Curl-ups, chin-ups, leg lifts, chair squats, squat jumps, dips, bench steps

Weight Training: Curl-ups, squats, standing overhead press, heel lifts, lateral pull-downs, trunk lifts, arm curls, bench press, side leg raises, triceps extension, upright rowing

Warm-up: Side to side look, forward/down look, standing cat stretch, shoulder turn, chest stretch, arm circles, side stretch or reach

Calisthenics: Push-ups, chin-ups, chair squats, dips

Weight Training: Squats, standing or overhead press, lateral pull-downs, trunk lifts, arm curls, bench press, triceps extension, upright rowing

Hose Drag

Moving and handling hose at the scene of a fire

Warm-up: Standing cat stretch, shoulder turn, chest stretch, shoulder stretch, arm circles, side stretch or reach, stride stretch, knee to chest, wall lean

Calisthenics: Push-ups, chin-ups, leg lifts, side leg lifts, chair squats, squat jumps, dips, bench steps

Weight Training: Squats, standing or overhead press, heel lifts, lateral pull-downs, trunk lifts, arm curls, bench press, side raises, triceps extension, upright rowing

Stair Climb

Continuous stair climbing to get to the fire floor or reach a victim

Warm-up: Standing cat stretch, shoulder turn, stride stretch, modified hurdler, toe pull, knee to chest, wall lean

Calisthenics: Leg lifts, side leg lifts, chair squats, squat jumps, bench steps

Weight Training: Squats, trunk lifts, side leg raises

Aerobic Training: Walk/jog program, stair running

Maze	Working in confined space	Practice crawling on hands and knees (wearing sweatpants and/or kneepads) at least 70 feet while making several turns during the crawl. For the major portion of the crawl keep low enough so as not to contact an object three feet above the ground. Periodically, drop your stomach and crawl ten feet along the ground.
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SELECTION/DISQUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR FIRE RECRUIT

I. PROCEDURE

- A. Any person who makes application for the position of Cincinnati Fire Recruit shall be considered as an active participant in its selection process.** All individuals who apply to the Cincinnati Fire Department as a Fire Recruit must submit to an extensive background investigation. The background investigation consists of many component parts. As a prerequisite to such an investigation, the applicant must complete a two-part Personal History Questionnaire as a supplemental application. The information submitted on the questionnaire by candidates should be complete and accurate and will be verified by a polygraph examination. All portions of the Personal History Questionnaire must be completed before the administration of the polygraph examination. Failure to complete the questionnaire will be grounds for exclusion from the selection process.

Applicants must submit the following changes to their original Personal History Questionnaire:

- Personal address
- Telephone number
- Employment
- Criminal history

All changes must be submitted to the Fire Department within one week of such changes. Failure to do so may result in your elimination from the selection process.

Another component of the selection process is the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation/ Federal Bureau of Investigation request for information. This information survey will require that the candidates provide their fingerprints as specified by the Cincinnati Fire Department.

- B. Investigations will be conducted by Fire Department investigators. The goal of the investigation is to provide information on candidates that will help determine their suitability for the job. Any portion of the background investigation can be initiated at any time during the selection process.**

- C. During the background investigation, information obtained will be evaluated by the Selection Review Committee consisting of Human Resources Department and Fire Department representatives. Those candidates who are deemed disqualified, based on the job-related criteria adopted by the Civil Service Commission, will be notified by mail.
- D. If the candidate feels the disqualification is not justified, he/she may appeal to the Civil Service Commission in accordance with the rules of the Commission. At the appeal hearing, candidates will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues of concern with the Commissioners.

II. CRITERIA

The offenses listed below are criteria for which candidates may be disqualified. All persons who attempt to commit or admit to committing any of these offenses listed may be disqualified as though they had been convicted.

- A. **Felonies:** Any person who has been convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of a felony regardless of degree, will be disqualified. Any candidate who is indicted or commits a felony during the process shall be disqualified.
- B. **Misdemeanors:** Any person who has been convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of a misdemeanor within five years of the date of application may be disqualified. The five year time parameter is fixed from the date of application and is not a moving threshold of elapsed time. Conviction or the commission of any misdemeanor during the selection process shall be grounds for disqualification.
- C. **Drugs (excluding marijuana):** Any person who has been convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of usage, possession, and/or sale of narcotics, dangerous drugs and hallucinogens, or any other controlled substance which the Civil Service Commission determines to relate to job performance or an attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit such a criminal act, shall be disqualified. Candidates who use or possess any prohibited or controlled substance during the selection process shall be disqualified.
- D. **Marijuana:** Any person who has been convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of the sale of marijuana, or an attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit such a criminal act, shall be disqualified.

Candidates who use or possess marijuana during the selection process shall be disqualified. Any use of marijuana which predates the filing of application for employment by less than two years shall be grounds for disqualification. Any use of marijuana which predates the filing of application for employment by more than two years may be disregarded.

- E. **Sex Offenses and Bodily Harm:** Any person who has been convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of a sex offense as defined in Chapter 2907 of the Ohio Revised Code, or an offense causing or threatening bodily harm as defined in Chapter 2903 and Chapter 2919 of the Ohio Revised Code, or an attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation, to commit such a criminal act may be disqualified.
- F. **Guns, Concealed Weapons, and Dangerous Ordinance:** Any person who has been convicted in any court of competent jurisdiction of violating any gun control ordinance, carrying any concealed weapon, or possession of any dangerous ordinance may be disqualified. Any attempt to violate any law, statute, or regulation to the above may be grounds for disqualification.
- G. **Automobile:** Any person who has been convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction within five years of the date of application of any of the following offenses will be disqualified: Revocation or suspension of driving privileges on two or more occasions, vehicular homicide, driving under the influence, leaving the scene of an accident, or reckless driving. Any person currently under suspension or revocation of driving privileges will be disqualified. Any person with six or more points on their current record may be disqualified. All persons who have not possessed a valid drivers license for more than one year shall be disqualified.

The five year time parameter is fixed from the date of application and is not a moving threshold of elapsed time.

No person shall be appointed to the Cincinnati Fire Department without a valid Ohio Driver's License, without restrictions (except for eyeglasses).

III. DISQUALIFYING EMPLOYMENT-RELATED CONDUCT

- A. Any person who within five years of the date of application has been terminated or resigned in lieu of termination from previous employment for insubordination, serious job misconduct, unexcused or excessive absenteeism or tardiness, or neglect of duty may be disqualified. All persons who within five years of the date of application have been suspended or received written reprimands on two or more occasions for insubordination, serious job misconduct, unexcused or excessive absenteeism or tardiness, or neglect of duty may be disqualified.
- B. Theft of cash, goods, credit, or services from an employer may be cause for disqualification.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS DISQUALIFYING CONDUCT

- A. Any person who within five years of the date of application has failed to obey or honor any judgments entered by a court of record, including, but not limited to, alimony or support payments, or have failed to pay any fine imposed by a court of

record, may be disqualified. Any person who within five years of the date of application has failed on two or more occasions to honor an order (i.e., *capias* or subpoena) to appear in court may be disqualified.

The five year time parameter is fixed from the date of application and is not a moving threshold of elapsed time.

- B. Any person who has been discharged from the United States military service under other than honorable conditions for reasons which are job related may be disqualified.
- C. Any person who has made any intentional false alarm or a false report to any police or fire agency may be disqualified.
- D. Any person who was once or is currently a member of any organization which advocates or has advocated crime or the violent overthrow of the United States government will be disqualified.
- E. Any person who has made false statements regarding any material matter during the selection process or has intentionally omitted any requested material information on the questionnaire or who has cheated during any portion of the selection process will be disqualified.
- F. Any person who has paid or accepted a bribe or favor to cover or hide any criminal offense, or acted in any manner to prevent discovery and/or apprehension of any criminal by any duly constituted law enforcement agency, or was involved in any plan or attempt to accomplish any of the above, will be disqualified.

APPLICATION FOR VETERAN'S CREDIT

Do you qualify?

To receive veteran's credit, you must have successfully completed and passed all portions of the testing process, have served on active duty **AND**:

1. Have an honorable discharge from the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Merchant Marine **or** have transferred to the reserve with evidence of satisfactory service, **or** have been a Red Cross Nurse, **AND**
2. Be an Ohio resident as of the test application closing date, **AND**
3. Have served on active duty meaning full-time duty in the active military service of the United States for more than 180 days, including duty on the active list, full time training duty, annual training duty, and attendance, while in active military service at a school designated as a service school by law or by the Secretary of the military department concerned.

How much credit can you get?

- A qualified veteran receives five points.
- A qualified disabled veteran receives ten points.

What steps must you take to apply for veteran's credit?

To apply for **five points veteran's credit**, you must:

- Submit a clear long form copy of your DD-214 indicating honorable discharge to the Human Resources Department staff as soon as possible but **no later than September 14, 2012**.

To apply for **ten points veteran's credit**, you must:

- Submit a clear long form copy of your DD-214 indicating honorable discharge to the Human Resources Department staff as soon as possible but **no later than September 14, 2012**.
- Submit a clear copy of an official statement from the Veteran Administration of service agency verifying the existence of a ten percent or greater service-connected disability. This statement must be dated within six months of the closing date for this exam.

How often must you apply for veteran's credit?

In order to receive veteran's credit, you must show that you qualify **each time** you apply to take an open-to-the-public civil service exam with the City of Cincinnati.

**GOOD LUCK IN YOUR ENDEAVOR
TO BE A CINCINNATI FIREFIGHTER**