



Vancouver Fire Rescue Services

Guide for Applicants





A. GENERAL INFORMATION

This guide is intended to provide you with information about Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services (VFRS) as it pertains to recruiting. It will help to answer questions you may have about our minimum and preferred qualifications, our application process, and working as a firefighter. Please read all the information in this guide before applying. This will give you the opportunity to learn about becoming a firefighter, to determine whether you have all the required qualifications and to consider whether you are in suitable physical condition for Fire Fighting.

VFRS typically runs one recruitment intake per year, but may run more as needed. Dates for upcoming recruitment intake periods are advertised on our webpage and applicants can **only** apply during these intake periods. VFRS only recruit for the position of entry level firefighter. Recruitment numbers are based on attrition of current members and thus hiring numbers can fluctuate year to year. Generally, up to 30 new firefighters are hired per year. All administrative and support positions within VF&RS are hired through the City of Vancouver.

B. FIREFIGHTING AS A CAREER

Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services strives to hire the best. We are looking for qualified men and women who are pursuing a demanding, exciting and rewarding career in firefighting to join our team.

Today's firefighter is a skilled professional able to face every kind of emergency. Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services will train recruit firefighters to the NFPA 1001 standard. Through this training and experience, Vancouver firefighters gain knowledge of the latest developments in firefighting, rescue techniques, medical emergency procedures and public education. We also cover such subjects as the control of hazardous materials, communication systems, fire prevention legislation and fire investigation techniques.

If you are interested in becoming a Vancouver firefighter, you need be:

- Physically fit
- Well-coordinated
- Highly motivated
- Willing to work cooperatively as part of a team
- Committed to continuous learning

Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services is a customer-focused organization, and the ability of our firefighters to speak other languages and have knowledge of different cultures is an asset.

C. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Applications will be screened to ensure the following qualifications have been met. If you do not meet ALL of these, please do not submit an application it will be screened out:

1. **Transcripts** demonstrating high school or GED completion (**NOT diploma**)
2. **Transcripts** demonstrating 30 post-secondary credits or a transcript demonstrating 1 year minimum approved apprenticeship. If you have the NFPA 1001 Level I & II, with appropriate IFSAC / Pro Board Seals, this will be recognized as 20 post-secondary credits.

Military training and qualifications will be recognized as post-secondary credits on a **case by case basis**. Applicants with Military service will need to submit a valid Military Personnel Record Resume (MPRR) or the equivalent from their Country of service in order to have their service assessed for educational credit equivalence for the purpose of the VF&RS recruitment process.

The University of Manitoba's Military Transfer Credit Database may be of use to some candidates with Canadian Military Service in identifying Credit hours:

<http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/coned/military/credit/>

Any assessment using this online tool must still be submitted along with a valid MPRR.

3. Current driver's abstract (dated no more than **30 days** prior to the VF&RS application closing date)
4. Valid Class 3 Driver's License with air brake endorsement or equivalent for vehicles with more than 2 axles (Automatic transmission is accepted).
5. Driving record that demonstrates responsible and safe driving behavior. A current record with:
 - Infractions on your Driver's Abstract (within the last 5 years) for **Driving under the Influence (DUI) will eliminate** applicants from consideration.
 - more than **6 points may eliminate** an applicant from further consideration in the current process.
 - A **24 hour Roadside Prohibition** (for possible DUI), within last 2 years of application closing, **may eliminate** an applicant from further consideration in the current process
6. A valid Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) certificate
7. Two years of accumulated work experience after the completion of high school
8. No job-related conviction of a criminal or summary offense for which you have not received a pardon

9. Valid BC Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board (EMALB) License in one of the following:

- B.C. First Responder Level III with AED and Spinal Endorsements
- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)
- Primary Care Paramedic (PCP)
- Advance Care Paramedic (ACP)

First aid license must be maintained throughout the application process, failure to do so may eliminate you from consideration.

Upon acceptance and signing of the job offer letter, the new employee will maintain their current level of EMALB First-Aid License held at time of hire throughout their term of employment.

10. Legal entitlement to work in Canada (Must be a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident/Landed Immigrant - a work visa will not suffice).
11. Color vision safe (Refer to NFPA 1582 Chapter 6)
12. 20/30 corrected binocular vision and 20/100 uncorrected binocular vision or better (Refer to NFPA 1582 Chapter 6)
13. Normal hearing without artificial aids (Refer to NFPA 1582 Chapter 6)

D. PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

These additional skills and experiences will enhance your application and *do not* replace the minimum qualifications or requirements:

1. Completion of NFPA 1001, Level I and II with appropriate IFSAC or Pro Board Seals (see www.ifsac.org or www.TheProBoard.org for a list of accredited fire academies)
2. Practical experience transferable to areas of firefighting
 - Experience/training in Emergency Services: Fire, Police, Coast Guard, EMS, Military, Nursing, Search and Rescue, and Forest Fire Service.
 - Trades: Construction, Heavy equipment operator, Truck driving tandem axle vehicles with a class 1, 2 or 3 licenses, Plumbing, Electrical.
 - Valid British Columbia Class 4 Driver's License
 - Academic studies - college/university
 - Knowledge of different cultures/fluency in languages other than English
 - Advanced medical training (Paramedic PCP/ACP, EMT, EMR)
 - Coaching, teaching or instructional experience
 - Ability to swim and related lifesaving and rescue certificates
 - Volunteer experience and community involvement
 - Demonstrated athletic or physical capabilities and achievements
 - Knowledge and ability to work effectively with computers, programs and software
 - Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a team environment

3. Completion of other fire service related courses or programs. Completion of Fire Inspector Level 1 course (NFPA 1031 -Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner)
4. Completion of BC Fire Code for the Fire Service course, or BC Building Code -Part 3 course
5. Completion of Fire Life Safety Educator Level 1 (NFPA 1035 -Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, and Juvenile Firesetter Intervention)

E. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applications will be available to download from our webpage during application intake periods. Instructions pertaining to how the application is to be filled out and submitted will be provided with the application. Failure to **follow all instructions** and submit **all supporting documents** with the application will result in that application being screened out. If **all minimum requirements have not been met** the application will be screened out.

Completed applications must be delivered to us by Canada Post or other courier service (Fedex UPS Purolator etc.) Applications must not be dropped off in person.

F. SALARY, PENSION, WORKING CONDITIONS AND RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS

Annual Salary (June 2015)

- \$64,889 - \$95,477 Firefighter
- Attractive benefits package

Pension

Firefighters are covered by the Municipal Superannuation Act and contribute approximately 8% of their monthly salary. Contribution to the Canada Pension Plan is additional.

Work Schedule

Work is on an eight day schedule, the schedule consists of two day shifts, followed by two night shifts and four days off.

Residency Restrictions

If you are selected to be a firefighter, residency restrictions will apply. Firefighters must reside between the City of Vancouver in the west, the Municipality of Chilliwack in the east, the Canadian/U.S. border in the south and the Municipality of Squamish in the north.

G. SELECTION PROCESS

Step 1. Applications To Be Completed, Printed and Submitted

In order to be considered in the selection process an application must be submitted. Please ensure that you meet **all of the minimum qualifications** before you complete and submit an application. Application forms will be available to download from our webpage **ONLY during recruitment intake periods**. The checklist on the first page of the application form requires your **signature** and will assist you with filling out and submitting the application in the proper order. A “Personal History Statement” that is part of the application form **must be completed, signed, and included in your application package**.

Completed applications will be thoroughly screened by the Recruitment Team. After which, selected applicants will move forward to the written exam.

Please Note: The Department will not consider applications from persons who have been **unsuccessful in interviews** with Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services **on three or more occasions**.

Due to the number of applications we receive we are unable to confirm receipt of each application with individual candidates. Applications must be mailed or delivered by a courier that allows the candidate to track the delivery of the application package.

After you submit your application, if you do not move on to the written test stage please do not contact Recruitment to inquire as to why you were not selected. Again, due to the number of applicants we are unable to provide individual feedback for each candidate regarding the selection process.

Step 2. Written Test

Short listed applicants will be invited to take a written test. This test could include but is not limited to: math, mechanical reasoning, reading comprehension, spatial analysis, following directions, and a general aptitude component.

Applicants may order the “**NFST Candidate Orientation Guide**” from the Fire & Police Selection Inc. website:

<http://www.fpsi.com/firefighter-applicants/>

Under the **Candidate Orientation Guide** section, choose the “Download with Credit Card” option. On the following page, *applicants must read and agree to the disclaimer in order to download the orientation guide properly. Guides download properly in the form of a PDF document only when the right “software and readers” are used per the disclaimer.*

Applicants will be given the option to pay with PayPal or a credit card in the shopping cart. The download link will be located on the thank you page receipt that appears as soon as payment is submitted. Applicants will then click on the link and the guide will either *open up automatically in another browser tab OR will appear as a downloadable file on the bottom left corner of the page. Please pay attention to how the file opens as guides cannot be accessed more than once!* Guides can be printed or saved to desktops.

You can also use firefighter study guides available in bookstores and the Vancouver Public Library.

This test will take place in the Lower Mainland and **must be taken in person**. We do not allow proctoring of this test in other locations. Once you are assigned a date and time to write the test we will not be able to accommodate requests to change the date and or time. You do not need to have attended fire school to be successful on this test. A recruitment file number will also be assigned to you at this time. This will serve as your identification number throughout this process. Any future correspondence or inquiry must include this number.

Step 3. Panel Interview and Reference Checks

The interview consists of several types of questions including behavioral style questions. It is an in-depth structured assessment that consists of specific selection criteria. It may include information provided from the completed "Personal History Statement". It is also an opportunity to verify some of the information provided on the application form.

Reference checks are typically completed following a successful panel interview. Conducting reference checks does not necessarily indicate advancement to the next step. An applicant's overall cumulative results at this step will determine if the applicant advances further.

Step 4. Skills Evaluation & Ride-Along Program Orientation / Criminal Record Check

The Skills Evaluation may include but is not limited to:

- Deploying 35 ft Ground Ladder
- Climb to top of a fully extended Aerial Ladder
- Hose handling skills
- Donning and doffing an SCBA
- Primary search wearing SCBA
- Handling Hydraulic Spreader/Cutter

***No previous firefighting experience is required to complete the skills evaluation.**

Ride-Along Orientation

Successful candidates selected from the Skills Evaluation will be asked to participate in a 2 day Ride-Along program. To facilitate this, all candidates must undergo a safety orientation prior to the commencement of their Ride-Along. This orientation will outline candidate expectations & conduct, safety requirements, attire, and Departmental expectations.

Criminal Record Check

During this stage candidates will be required to submit a current Criminal Record Check. Since firefighters are in a position of trust, completion of a Criminal Record Check by your local Police Department will be required at your cost. You cannot have any criminal charges or convictions that are related to the duties of the position for which you have not received a pardon. You must be open, honest and willing to disclose all information pertaining to this record check.

Step 5. Ride-Along Program

Candidates chosen for the Ride-Along Program will be required to sign a Deed of Release (Waiver) to participate. Over the duration of two day shifts, the candidate will be evaluated by two separate on-duty crews. During this time the candidate must adhere to the safety requirements and expectations outlined in their Ride-Along Orientation. Candidates will keep a journal of their activities and submit them to the fire hall Captain at the conclusion of their participation.

Candidates will be involved with a variety of activities which may include:

- Observing/attending emergency calls
- Fire Hall & Equipment maintenance
- Training scenarios
- Company inspections
- Apparatus and equipment checks

Step 6. Candidate Presentations to Fire Chief, Executive Board, and Human Resources

During this step all of the remaining Candidates will have their application package reviewed by the Fire Chief, his Executive staff and HR. Depending on VF&RS staffing needs and the Fire Chief's approval, Candidates will proceed on to a health & medical examination.

Step 7. Health & Medical Examination

Applicants selected for this step must pass a health & medical examination with the City's Occupational Health Physician. The cost for the screening will be the responsibility of the applicant. The Occupational Health Physician is required to ensure that only those applicants who are medically suitable for all firefighting duties will be accepted. Please refer to NFPA 1582 Chapter 6 for Medical Suitability.

The health & medical examination is a Physician's medical/physical screening with comprehensive medical testing that may include but is not limited to: urinalysis, vision test - colour vision, tuberculosis test, audiometry, pulmonary function studies, treadmill exercise stress test and a substance abuse test.

Step 8. Chief's Meeting / Job Offer

After the health & medical examination a final review with Human Resources of all aspects of a candidate's application and results in all tests is conducted. The most qualified candidates are then invited to meet the Fire Chief (or authorized designate) and an Executive Member from IAFF Local 18, where the candidate is presented with a job offer.

H. PROBATIONARY PERIOD

New employees will serve a 12 month probationary period. Continuous training, testing and assessment by the Training Department, your Battalion Chief, your shift Captain and crews will continue throughout this probationary period. Upon being hired you will undergo a period of intensive training at the VF&RS Training Facility. Pending successful completion of training you will then be posted to a Firehall for 6 months. After 6 months you will undergo a skills and written test at the VF&RS Training Facility. Upon passing this test you will serve the final 6 months of probation at a second Firehall. Probationary employees may be terminated at any time. It is an expectation that you will contribute 100% of your effort to be successful in your role as a firefighter with the City of Vancouver at all times.

I. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long should my resume be and what should I include?

Your resume should be 2 - 3 pages long. This does not include a cover page or references. It will focus on work experience, education and community involvement/volunteer experience. Depending on your education and work experience you may not be able to list everything within 3 pages. In this case it is up to you to determine what you would like to include. After reviewing this guide you will have a good idea of the qualities we are looking for and this will help you to determine what to include/ leave out on your resume to give you the best chance of being selected.

What if my Medical license or C-PAT certification expires while my application is in process?

FR3 and other medical licenses as well as C-PAT certification MUST be kept current as long as you are active in our recruitment process.

May I apply to EMALB for an extension to my FR3 license in order to stay current in the recruitment process?

No. Medical license extensions are not acceptable. If your license is due to expire, you must recertify for a full 3 years in order to remain active in our process

If my first aid license is from a province other than B.C. is it still valid to submit with my application?

We will only accept first aid licenses issued from EMALB British Columbia. Please contact them directly to learn how to transfer your qualifications to a BC License.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=7EE60FAD834E4FB08914A5A0BD1876D0>

If I have a college diploma or university degree do I still need to submit my high school transcript?

Yes. You are still required to submit your high school transcript (not diploma).

What will cause my application to be screened out during the initial application process?

Every year we screen out numerous applications because of a lack of attention to detail on the candidates part when submitting the application. It is **very important to read and follow all instructions that are provided to you.** The most common reasons for applications being screened out are:

- Applicant did not meet **ALL** of the minimum qualifications
- Applicant forgot to sign the application package/personal history statement in both locations
- High school **transcripts** were not supplied (do not submit just a high school diploma)
- Post-secondary **transcripts** proving 30 credits were not supplied
- Military documentation incomplete/post-secondary equivalencies not provided
- Supporting documentation is missing
- Drivers abstract missing/not within **30 days** of application closing date
- First aid license has expired or was not supplied
- Questions were missed - answers were not supplied
- Error printing application - answers to questions cut off
- A page from the application is missing
- Application received after the closing deadline

Before submission, carefully review all aspects of your application and supporting documentation to ensure YOU do not make these mistakes.

If I have only partially completed or just registered for any of the required certifications/licenses can I still submit an application?

No. In order to submit an application you must meet **ALL** of the minimum qualifications at the time of submission (prior to the application closing date).

May I update my qualifications after I submit my application?

Yes. If you finish a course and want to update your qualifications after you have submitted your application you can. You will be given a candidate number if you are selected to move past the initial application screening process. Send in your updated qualifications by mail or e-mail, referencing this number and we will add it to your application package.

My education took place in a country other than Canada and the credit system is not the same - what do I do?

Applicants who have completed their education outside of Canada need to contact a Credential Assessment and Qualification Recognition Service to have their educational background transferred to the Canadian system of credits. Please visit the following website to obtain more information about this process.

http://www.workingincanada.gc.ca/content_pieces-eng.do?cid=223

How do I know if I am medically suited for a career in firefighting? If I have a specific question relating to medical suitability how do I get it answered?

For specific information regarding medical suitability refer to NFPA 1582, Chapter 6. Our medical requirements are taken directly from these criteria. If you have a specific question pertaining to one of these criteria that you are unsure of after reviewing the document consult your family doctor. Recruitment is not able to provide you with answers to specific medical questions.

What is NFPA 1001 certification?

NFPA stands for National Fire Protection Association. The NFPA 1001 is the Standard for Professional Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications. Someone who has received this certification has undergone the necessary training to be qualified to carry out the duties of a professional firefighter.

Currently VF&RS does not require an applicant to have this certification in order to apply, but it is a preferred qualification. Upon receiving a job offer VF&RS will provide all necessary training to the NFPA 1001 standard.

Where can I obtain NFPA 1001 certification?

There are a number of academies across North America certified to deliver the NFPA 1001 program. If you plan on pursuing NFPA 1001 certification ensure the academy you select is International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) or Pro Board accredited. Different academies may have different offerings in terms of courses offered, length of programs and price. Select the academy that works the best for you.

Does VF&RS have a preference in terms of which academy I attend to receive NFPA 1001 certification?

No, we do not favor one academy over another. As long as you receive NFPA 1001 certification that is IFSAC and/or Pro board accredited you should select the academy that best suits your needs.

What can I do to prepare for the Written Test?

You can use firefighter study guides available in bookstores, the Vancouver Public Library, and online such as Fire & Police Selection Inc. website:

<http://www.fpsi.com/>

The purpose of a guide is to help you identify your areas of strength and weakness so you know where to focus your time during preparation for the test. Choose the study guide that best suits your needs.

[Are there particular courses/ training that VF&RS recommends to become a firefighter?](#)

There are no courses or training that is recommended in particular. Each candidate should be familiar with our Minimum Qualifications and Preferred Qualifications. Based on these criteria a candidate needs to determine for themselves what courses/ training would be beneficial.

[Does VF&RS have any volunteer positions?](#)

VF&RS does not have any volunteer firefighter positions. There is an opportunity to volunteer with us through our Disaster and Emergency Planning Division. For more information please review the following [webpage](#).

[Can I apply if I reside outside of Canada?](#)

Yes. However, if you are applying from outside of Canada **you must be a Canadian Citizen or have Permanent Resident status in Canada to be considered**. A work visa will not suffice.

Please Note: All testing throughout the recruitment process takes place in Vancouver and all applicants must attend in person.

PLEASE RETAIN THIS INFORMATION FOR REFERENCE DURING THE SELECTION PROCESS

If you have any questions that are not answered in this guide please e-mail Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services, Recruitment & Outreach Division at:

E-mail: fire.recruitment@vancouver.ca

Website: vancouver.ca/fire

We will make every effort to respond to e-mails as soon as possible. We thank you for your patience especially during application intake periods as we receive a high volume of e-mails/questions.