



# CITY OF ABBOTSFORD FIRE RESCUE SERVICE

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## Career Fire Fighter Recruitment Application Manual

(Previous Fire Fighting training or experience is not required)



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The Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service is **“making a difference in our community”**  
through prevention, response and safety.

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## **MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a career member of the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service. We are committed to recruiting talented and motivated individuals, who possess a high level of integrity, to serve our community.

Our citizens place their trust in the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service and it is important that our members have a strong commitment to professionalism both on and off duty. It is our aim to select recruits who demonstrate that they will honour our standards and value our [\*vision and mission\*](#) statement.

Fire fighter recruits are the foundation of the Fire Rescue Service. They are role models who will become leaders within our organization and the community. We pledge to treat each applicant fairly and respectfully. We select recruits who are serious about the responsibility of leadership and pursue excellence as part of their daily activities. Accountability earns trust and respect, and it is our expectation that applicants display personal accountability and the capacity to lead by example.

The role of a career fire fighter is not suited to everyone. Desire alone does not suggest a suitable career fit. The daily pressure, sacrifice and risks that fire fighters face separate this job from many other careers.

We ask you to conduct an honest self-evaluation before you send us your application. Familiarize yourself with the job functions and use the information to build your skill-sets. Review our screening process in its entirety in order to gain a full understanding of your role in the application process.

Should you decide to apply, it is important to understand that the competition will be strong. Strong competition results in strong candidates and strong candidates produce quality fire fighters.

Preparation, combined with a positive attitude and solid foundation are essential to your success.

Don Beer, CFO  
Fire Chief

## **THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING**

Abbotsford's fire fighter recruit selection process is lengthy, competitive and complex. You need to be prepared to complete the various stages on demand and in a short period of time.

A commitment to maintaining a daily fitness regime and monitoring personal wellness is essential to ensuring fire fighter safety and longevity. It is important that you have the strength, stamina and cardiovascular conditioning required to take on the physical challenges of this career. Ethical behaviour and accountability must be part of your nature. Taking responsibility for and ownership of your actions is vital to success.

## **TIPS DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

There is no single factor to ensure success in your pursuit to join the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service; however, we do offer you these tips:

1. Stay current with recruiting information by visiting our website [www.abbotsford.ca/fire](http://www.abbotsford.ca/fire) - click on Recruitment.
2. If your personal contact information changes, please inform Human Resources immediately (604) 864-5549
3. You will be assigned an ID number. This number will be your identification throughout the recruitment process. Test results will be posted using this ID number, names will not be posted.
4. Before you submit your fire fighter application, take the time to learn all you can about the job. Familiarize yourself with the job tasks, the different steps in the hiring process and the current economic and social environment in Abbotsford. Do your homework, it is better to be over prepared!
5. You must be able to follow and act on complex oral and written instructions; you will be evaluated on these skills throughout the recruitment process and throughout your career as a fire fighter.
6. We expect you to be prepared and ready to participate in our assessments at all times. Sometimes you may experience little advance warning to participate in tests; other times, you may experience lengthy delays with little feedback. The very nature of our business is being prepared to respond.
7. Your demeanor and effort throughout the selection process are taken into consideration as part of the final hiring decision.
8. Job fit/suitability is one of many critical factors considered in our decision making processes. Completion and/or passing all steps in the recruitment process does not ensure a job offer.
9. If at any point in the process you do not meet the required competencies, you will be advised if a future application will be accepted. If you are deemed unsuitable for the position, your file will be permanently closed. In this instance, we will not accept a future fire fighter application from you.

## **SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Use these questions to help you decide if fire fighting is the appropriate career choice for you.

### **ASK YOURSELF:**

- ? Does my lifestyle support ethical and responsible choices and actions?
- ? Am I prepared to maintain a level of professionalism on and off duty?
- ? Does my lifestyle align itself with the Fire Rescue Service values of respect, pride, professionalism and teamwork?
- ? Have I been free from involvement in unlawful activities?
- ? Am I actively supporting my community for the benefit of others?
- ? Have I adopted and do I maintain physical fitness as a way of life [i.e., daily workouts]?
- ? Am I physically able to perform fire fighter job tasks?
- ? Am I able to work 14-hour night shifts on weekends and holidays with little or no sleep?
- ? Can I work for extended periods of time under difficult and strenuous conditions?
- ? Am I free of phobias relating to height, confined spaces and able to maneuver with limited or no visibility?
- ? Am I comfortable using different hand/power tools and technical equipment?
- ? Can I disengage from emotional suffering, tragedy or loss of life in order to complete essential job tasks?
- ? Do I have a support system in place for debriefing and stress relief?
- ? Have I considered the impact shift work will have on my family environment?
- ? Am I familiar with and able to operate within a paramilitary working environment?
- ? Do I understand and will I abide by the hair and jewellery operational guideline and other grooming standards?
- ? Am I able to work harmoniously in close quarters with other persons?
- ? Do I treat all people with respect, dignity and professionalism regardless of race, creed, gender or beliefs?
- ? Am I able to and do I take steps to maintain a positive attitude?
- ? Am I able to motivate myself? Do I motivate others?
- ? Do I actively engage myself in a problem solving capacity?
- ? Am I able to follow and carry out complex oral and written instructions?
- ? Does my lifestyle allow me to commit to a minimum of two hours daily to studying training materials during the recruit training process?
- ? Do I have a thirst for life-long learning?
- ? Is my family aware of the time demands that I would be under during recruit training?
- ? Do I meet and am I prepared to maintain the minimum qualifications?
- ? Have I familiarized myself with the fire fighter wages and Abbotsford's economic and social climate?

## **FIRE FIGHTER WAGES, BENEFITS & PENSIONS**

In accordance with the January 1, 2007 – December 31, 2009 Collective Agreement with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 2864, an Abbotsford Fire Fighter receives the following rates of pay during the first four years of employment:

YEAR	RATES OF PAY (As of September 26, 2009)	
	HOURLY	MONTH
First Six Months (Probationary)	\$24.50	\$4,459
Second Six Months (Probationary)	\$26.25	\$4,777
Second Year	\$28.00	\$5,096
Third Year	\$31.50	\$5,733
Fourth Year (First Class)	\$35.00	\$6,370

### **FIRE FIGHTERS' BENEFITS**

New fire fighters make benefit coverage decisions at the start of their employment tenure. IAFF Local 2864 offers Abbotsford fire fighters benefit choices including life insurance, optional life insurance, and extended health and dental coverage. As well, Abbotsford fire fighters receive complete medical assessments.

Abbotsford fire fighters are provided with full work and dress uniforms, and personal protective equipment including duty gear.

### **FIRE FIGHTERS' PENSIONS**

Abbotsford fire fighters are enrolled in the British Columbia Municipal Pension Plan.

### **ANNUAL VACATIONS**

- 1 year of service - paid in lieu
- 2 years of service - 9 duty shifts
- 3-9 years of service - 13 duty shifts
- 10-15 years of service - 17 duty shifts
- 16-23 years of service - 21 duty shifts
- 24+ years of service - 25 duty shifts

### **STATUTORY HOLIDAYS**

Fire fighters are granted 11 duty shifts in lieu of the eleven Statutory Holidays granted to other civic employees and are taken separately from Annual Vacations.

### **HOURS OF WORK (Fire Suppression)**

Rotating day and night shifts for 48 hours – comprised of two day shifts (08:00 – 18:00) followed by two night shifts (18:00 – 08:00). After each set of four duty shifts, a fire fighter has four days off.

## **APPEARANCE AND GROOMING GUIDELINE**

Proper deportment and appearance by Abbotsford fire fighters indicates a sense of pride and professionalism and projects these values to the public.

Please be aware of our appearance and grooming operational guideline that all members must follow.

### **Both Genders:**

- Hair covering the ear shall not extend below the bottom of the ear opening.
- Hair may be coloured, frosted or tinted in a colour naturally occurring in human hair.
- Etching or other extreme hair cutting is not permitted.
- The hairstyle must not interfere with the proper wearing of regulation headgear nor impede the donning/utilization of any equipment, and/or accomplishing any function that a member may be required to perform
- Depth or bulk of hair must not exceed 50mm from the scalp.
- Ribbons, hairnets or combs will not be allowed while on duty or representing the Service.
- Ponytails are not permitted.

### **Male:**

- Hair must be contoured to the general shape of the head and to a maximum length that does not extend beyond the top of the shirt collar, measured while standing at attention.
- Sideburns must be neatly groomed and cannot extend below the bottom of the earlobe, and cannot encroach onto the area covered by the self contained breathing apparatus face piece or respirator mask.
- Beards, goatees and soul patches will not be allowed. Moustaches are permitted but must be neatly trimmed and be clean shaven to within 10mm of the corner of the mouth and 10mm below the centre line of the mouth. Moustaches must not interfere with the proper seal of the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus face piece or respirator mask.

### **Female:**

- Hair must be worn to the general shape of the head and to a maximum length that does not extend beyond the top of the shirt collar, measured while standing at attention. Hair that is longer will be bound with hairpins, barrettes or elastics of a neutral colour, in a way that keeps it from extending past the top edge of the shirt collar and not interfere with the headband or secure fit of uniform hats and protective headwear.

### **Jewellery:**

- All members are encouraged to refrain from wearing jewellery while on duty.
- Any jewellery worn above the neck is prohibited, i.e. earrings, ear bands, elaborate hair accessories, piercing paraphernalia, etc.
- Necklaces must be worn in a fashion that makes them not visible.
- A wristwatch or medic-alert bracelet may be worn on either wrist, provided it is snug enough to prevent a snagging hazard.
- The safest practice for rings is removal at the beginning of shift.
- Sunglasses shall not be of a mirrored type lens, they may be worn whenever conditions warrant their use. Sunglasses will be removed while addressing a member of the public, and/or participating in any media interview or photograph.

### **Tattoos:**

- Tattoos are permitted if they are:
  - Not exposed above the shirt collar.
  - Not offensive in nature (eg. offensive - nudity and/or slang).

**Application:**

- All requirements set out in this guideline will be applied in a manner consistent with human rights laws. Where applicable, Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service will provide reasonable accommodation short of undue hardship.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND WORKING CONDITIONS**

Environmental factors play a large role in the performance of a fire fighter's duties. Some working conditions that fire fighters experience as part of normal operating procedures include:

- The requirement to report for each shift "fit for duty", both mentally and physically.
- Working 14-hour night shifts with little or no sleep, including holidays and weekends.
- Performing required tasks while wearing full personal protective equipment including self-contained breathing apparatus.
- Withstanding strong vibrations over extended periods of time i.e., riding in emergency vehicles, operating/holding heavy power tools in awkward positions, etc.
- Working quickly to extinguish fires in extreme heat and when visibility is poor/non-existent.
- Experiencing physically demanding tasks during extreme fluctuations in temperature.
- Lifting, carrying, butting, extending and climbing ladders to extreme heights, while maintaining balance and maneuvering in unwieldy positions.
- Working in hazardous areas that are hot, wet, slippery, muddy, icy, dirty, cramped, etc.
- Working on and around moving machinery, vehicles and equipment.
- Being aware of and protecting against: burns and other injuries; exposure to sharp objects, hazardous substances through inhalation, injection, ingestion and absorption; high noise levels; infectious agents/biological hazards; radiation hazards; smoke; dust; noxious odours and contaminants; uninstalled or unshielded electrical equipment.

**TASKS AND DUTIES OF A FIRE FIGHTER**

Typical day-to-day job duties that meet the primary functions of the position include:

**FIRE SUPPRESSION DUTIES**

All on-scene fire ground operations are performed while wearing department issued protective personal equipment and may include donning, doffing and regulating a self-contained breathing apparatus.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE / INITIAL SCENE ASSESSMENT**

- Accurately receiving/comprehending radio dispatched information
- Responding to residential/industrial/structural/wildland fire emergencies
- Responding to rescues/requests for assistance/reports of smoke
- Responding to electrical hazards/potential sites of ignition
- Safely driving/riding in fire fighting/emergency apparatus in response mode
- Identifying on-scene hazards and seeking the source of the fire
- Advising commanding officers of on-scene fire conditions and hazards
- Assessing the emergency scene and determining if assistance from additional fire personnel, law enforcement, medical examiner and/or utility personnel is required
- Determining the stability of supporting surfaces
- Determining the safest route for extricating/evacuating victims
- Following radio response protocols including exchanging information with other crew members, dispatchers and commanding officers at the scene
- Shutting off utility services to building

## **HOSE HANDLING**

- Calculating building height in metres from its floors
- Determining water stream required to reach the fire
- Calculating liters or gallons per minute out of a particular size hose
- Determining the number of lines needed to extinguish the fire
- Wrapping hose around a hydrant to stretch it out and ensure it reaches the port
- Removing the hydrant cap with a wrench
- Coupling a hose connection to the hydrant
- Coupling and uncoupling hose connections
- Dragging/extending accordion folded or flat load, uncharged
- Opening hydrant to charge fire hose
- Dragging/holding a charged hose unassisted and opening the nozzle
- Applying a hose clamp to a charged/uncharged hose

## **PUMP OPERATIONS**

- Calculating, achieving and maintaining correct water pressure for hose lines
- Operating foam dispensing equipment
- Inspecting and maintaining fire apparatus during operation by checking gauges and preventing freeze up

## **PRIMARY SEARCH**

- Verbally communicating while wearing personal protective equipment [i.e., a face piece and self-contained breathing apparatus]
- Crawling on floors with limited visibility, feeling around for the heat of the fire source
- Systematically searching for victims including missing fire fighters
- Extricating trapped conscious/unconscious victims
- Dragging/carrying/removing conscious/unconscious victims from danger source
- Unassisted, dragging/carrying conscious/unconscious victims down stairs/out of buildings
- Unassisted, carrying conscious/unconscious victims down ladders

## **FIRE GROUND OPERATIONS**

- Calculating building height in meters from its floors to elevated fire apparatus and/or ground ladders to correct height
- Being aware of electrical lines/hazards when positioning fire apparatus, ladders, etc.
- Setting up Aerial Apparatus jacks/out-riggers and placing chocks
- Operating the ladder pipe from Aerial platform and positioning/raising ladder
- Removing extension ladder from apparatus and placing in position
- Butting ladder, raising halyard to desired length and then positioning the ladder by lowering it into its objective
- Climbing Aerial Apparatus and/or ground ladders
- While on a ladder or from other heights [i.e., rooftops], directing hose/nozzle at fire
- Removing from apparatus and transporting/placing heavy equipment into operation [i.e., positive pressure fans, power plants, ladders, tools]
- Hoisting equipment to upper levels with a rope
- Carrying heavy equipment up stairs
- Determining when to open roofs, walls and doors
- Making openings for ventilation using hydraulic/power/hand-tools
- After a fire is extinguished, checking for smouldering fire inside walls and ceiling
- Lowering ladders and re-bedding them onto apparatus
- Reloading wet hose back onto apparatus

## **FIRE SUPPRESSION**

- Using unwieldy tools [i.e., axes, sledge hammers, etc.] to make forcible entries
- Entering smoke filled buildings/rooms with a hose in hand
- Dragging charged hose on stairs and around obstacles [i.e., furniture, walls]
- Extending the hose line to a fire
- Opening a nozzle on a charged hose line
- Operating/holding a charged line in confined spaces/awkward positions
- Monitoring hot spots/preventing flare ups

## **SALVAGE/OVERHAUL**

- Securing/preserving evidence at fire scene
- Stabilizing walls/roofs
- Moving furniture/valuables and protecting them with salvage covers
- Creating dikes for channeling water out of building
- Removing burned and charred waste

## **PRE-HOSPITAL CARE**

On-scene pre-hospital care is performed while wearing department issued protective personal equipment.

- Accurately receiving/comprehending radio dispatched information
- Removing from apparatus and carrying to scene heavy trauma bag
- Donning additional personal protective equipment i.e., gloves, masks, etc.
- Assessing patient condition and providing initial medical care
- Managing hysterical/agitated/unstable patients requiring medical attention
- Applying resuscitation measures as necessary
- Performing CPR or other appropriate cardiac emergency procedures
- Setting up and operating an Automatic External Defibrillator
- Administering oxygen
- Controlling bleeding/immobilizing fractures/bandaging wounds
- Treating shock
- Assisting in childbirth
- Gathering information from a patient or family regarding the patient's medical history
- Providing concise/complete information to paramedics regarding status of patient(s)
- Assisting paramedics with continued care of the patient
- Preparing and transferring a patient to an emergency vehicle

## **VEHICLE EXTRICATION**

Vehicle extrication is performed while wearing department issued protective personal equipment, which may include donning, doffing and regulating self-contained breathing apparatus.

- Controlling the accident scene to protect self, crew, victims, witnesses, etc.
- Directing traffic around accident scene
- Stabilizing vehicles using cribbing and other necessary tools
- Removing from apparatus, carrying, starting and operating heavy/hydraulic equipment to extricate trapped victims
- Safely freeing/removing persons from entrapments
- Preserving evidence at the scene
- Sweeping up/picking up glass, debris and hazardous material spills

## **FIRE STATION DUTIES**

- Maintaining physical and mental abilities to be 'fit-for-duty'
- Reporting for duty early to maintain a crew accountability system
- Presenting a clean/neat personal appearance to maintain proper deportment
- Maintaining positive and harmonious working relationships with crew members
- Removing used equipment from apparatus after calls for cleaning/drying
- Removing hoses from hose tower and storing them
- Preparing the emergency vehicles for the next response, including decontaminating and disinfecting unit and equipment, restocking supplies, inspecting equipment and making arranging for necessary repairs or replacement
- Performing facility repairs or requesting maintenance calls
- Storing fire equipment and supplies
- Replenishing fire hall supplies when needed
- Maintaining an inventory of tools and equipment
- Thoroughly inspecting, cleaning, polishing and maintaining apparatus, tools, equipment and personal protective equipment
- Inspecting, servicing and performing tests of personal protective equipment including self-contained breathing apparatus
- Performing equipment overhaul operations
- Performing regular service tests on all apparatus
- Participating in ongoing training drills to further develop and maintain proficiency
- Maintaining a neat and clean working/living environment at the fire hall
- Maintaining the exterior of the fire hall [i.e., lawns, walkways, driveways]
- Answering routine phone calls in the fire hall
- Conducting fire hall tours
- Making own bed and changing linens when appropriate
- Working out/participating in group sporting activities to maintain physical fitness

## **FIRE PREVENTION/INSPECTIONS**

- Inspect commercial buildings for fire hazards
- Inspect multi-residential complexes for fire hazards, dangers or violations
- Determine and accurately document fire code violations
- Check operation of exit lights, emergency lights and fire extinguishers

## **ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES**

- Writing First Responder Patient Forms and completing other administrative forms
- Completing computerized incident reports [data entry]
- Writing building fire inspection reports
- Completing in-station training materials and following departmental directions

## **TRAINING/DRILLS**

Reviewing training materials to learn and have a working knowledge of:

- Fire behaviour and various causes of fire
- How to successfully attack a fire
- Building construction to predict fire reaction
- Forcible entry into buildings
- Ventilation methods to aid in extinguishing fires
- Appropriate fire streams given factors that can affect flow of water through air
- Water supply systems
- Hydraulics and pump operation
- Practicing and performing evolutions

- Caring for hoses, hose lays and hose use
- The characteristics of and proper use of ladders
- Various methods of rescue
- Ropes and knots to accomplish rescues, stabilize vehicles and haul tools
- Extricating victims from vehicles
- Principles of shoring trenches, hydraulics and weights/gravity
- Technical High Angle Rope Rescue techniques
- Confined Space awareness
- Aircraft Rescue and Suppression techniques
- Computers and Computer programs
- Respective Workplace and Diversity
- Salvage and Overhaul
- Fire alarms and automatic sprinkler systems
- Hazardous materials and techniques
- The most direct routes to various addresses in a response area
- The locations of streets, water mains and hydrants in a response area
- Fire Rescue Service operational guidelines
- Other learning as identified by the Fire Hall Captain and/or Training Division

#### **PROMOTING POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS**

- Using tact and diplomacy when dealing with all citizens
- Treating citizens, co-workers and members of mutual aid agencies respectfully and with dignity and professionalism regardless of race, creed, gender or beliefs
- Interacting and working successfully with citizens and any outside agencies
- Providing fire education programs to the public
- Making public education appearances
- Conducting demonstrations at community events
- Volunteering time and/or participating in fundraisers for charitable work

#### **FITNESS REQUIREMENTS**

The Fire Service views fitness as an integral component in fire fighting due to the physical strain induced while performing operational tasks varies according to each person's muscular strength/endurance, cardiovascular conditioning, motor coordination and flexibility.

#### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS / BACKGROUND**

The risk of injury in fire fighting and rescue work results mainly from:

- The use of various heavy machines and apparatus
- Dangerous entrances and awkward spaces
- Extreme heat exposures
- Rapidly changing environmental conditions

In emergency situations, fire fighters must be physically able to act quickly and at times, under duress.

#### **FOR EXAMPLE**

In a multi-storey structure fire, a fire fighter climbs stairs while wearing heavy and cumbersome personal protective equipment [weighing up to 25-kg] and carrying tools [weighing up to 15-kg]. Following this strenuous stair climb, the fire fighter must be fit enough to then carry out physically demanding operational tasks.

In rescue operations associated with traffic accidents, a fire fighter must be capable of handling hydraulic tools [weighing up to 15 kg] in strenuous and awkward work positions for considerable lengths of time.

### **PHYSICAL FITNESS PREPARATION**

A personal commitment to a life-long fitness regime is essential to safely performing fire fighter duties. To prepare for this challenging career, you need to follow and maintain a total body program that is specific for the job tasks and one that focuses on:

- Flexibility
- Cardiopulmonary Endurance
- Muscular Strength
- Muscular Endurance

Body composition is also considered an area of physical fitness. Excess body fat increases the workload placed on the body and decreases its ability to dissipate heat. Consulting a Certified Personal Fitness Trainer or Certified Fitness Consultant can help you achieve your fitness goal.

### **CAUTION**

#### ***PHYSICAL ACTIVITY READINESS***

Before beginning any exercise routine or aerobic fitness evaluation, it is essential you have an awareness of your ability to partake in physical activity.

Please read the following questions carefully and answer each one honestly. Common sense is your best guide when selecting the appropriate choice:

	Yes	No
• Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and recommended only medically approved physical activity?		
• Do you have chest pain brought on by physical activity?		
• Have you developed chest pains (while resting) in the past month?		
• Do you lose consciousness or balance as a result of dizziness?		
• Do you have a joint or bone problem that could be aggravated by prescribed activity?		
• Is your doctor currently prescribing medication for your blood pressure or a heart condition?		
• Are you or have you been pregnant within the last six (6) months?		
• Are you aware, through your own experience or a doctor's advice, of any other reason against your exercising without medical approval?		

**If you have answered "Yes" to any of the above questions, please consult your physician BEFORE you begin aerobic fitness training.**

If you are uncertain how to interpret any of the questions and/or their relationship to your health, please discuss with your doctor.

### **EXERCISE STRESS TESTING**

Cardiopulmonary health is essential for emergency responders. The physiologic burden of wearing bulky protective clothing and breathing through a self-contained breathing apparatus while performing physically demanding work at an incident scene places an enormous strain on the body. Fire fighter work environments are known to contain toxic chemicals that may also contribute to the development of heart disease over time.

"Exercise Stress Test" refers to stressing the body by putting an exercise load on it and measuring the response. Most people relate the term exercise stress testing to cardiovascular testing.

Exercise stress testing is an important tool used by physicians and exercise specialists to:

- Determine whether an individual is physically fit to perform essential job tasks without undue risk of harm to self or others.
- Monitor the effects of exposure to specific biological, physical or chemical agents that may be related to hazardous working conditions.
- Detect any patterns of disease that might indicate underlying work-related problems.
- Provide the fire fighter with information about his/her current health.
- Provide a cost-effective investment in the early detection, disease prevention and health promotion of the fire fighter.
- Develop recommendations for exercise prescription and rehabilitation.
- Comply with federal, provincial and local health, safety and wellness requirements.

### **MAXIMAL OXYGEN CONSUMPTION [VO<sub>2</sub>MAX]**

The Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service uses Maximal Oxygen Consumption Testing, also known as VO<sub>2</sub>max testing, to measure cardiovascular conditioning levels prior to commencement of employment.

Oxygen uptake is the amount of oxygen cells can absorb from the blood stream. VO<sub>2</sub>max is defined as the maximum amount of oxygen one uses in one minute per kilogram of body weight (O<sub>2</sub>/kg/minute). No matter how much air is breathed in, the limiting factor in determining an individual's fitness is the body's ability to extract oxygen from the blood and supply it to the working muscles. The more aerobically fit one is, the more oxygen the muscle cells can absorb.

The purpose of VO<sub>2</sub>max testing fire fighter applicants is to:

- Ensure that the individual's heart displays no abnormalities at intense workloads.
- Measure the applicant's oxygen uptake ability.
- Confirm that the individual's cardiovascular capacity is sufficient to obtain required workloads during strenuous fire fighting operations.

### **VISION REQUIREMENTS**

Far visual acuity is at least 20/30 binocular, corrected with contact lenses or spectacles. Far visual acuity uncorrected is at least 20/40 binocular for wearers of contacts or spectacles. Note: Successful corrective eye surgery or laser surgery may be acceptable providing it has been performed prior to six months of this application or after an acceptable waiting period as defined by your Ophthalmologist. Inadequate far visual acuity can result in the failure to be able to read placards and street signs or to see and respond to imminently hazardous situations.

### **MEDICAL CONDITIONS AFFECTING ABILITY TO SAFELY PERFORM ESSENTIAL JOB TASKS**

Medical standards follow the requirements outlined under the National Fire Protection Association Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments (referred to as "NFPA 1582").

Recruit candidates will undergo a comprehensive medical examination and exercising stress test to determine if they are medically "fit-for-duty" and also to rule out any medical conditions that are classified as "CATEGORY A" under NFPA 1582.

### **NFPA 1582, CHAPTER 6, SECTION 6.2.2 – CATEGORY "A" MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

"Candidates with Category "A" medical conditions shall not be certified as meeting the medical requirements of this standard."

The following information is provided as a general guideline and is not all-encompassing. A complete copy of the NFPA 1582 standard can be purchased from the National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) or phone (617) 770-3000.

## **CATEGORY “A” MEDICAL CONDITIONS NOT ACCEPTED FOR FIRE FIGHTER POSITIONS**

### **SECTION 6.3 – HEAD AND NECK**

Skull/facial deformities that prevent adequate helmet or respirator face-piece fit.

### **SECTION 6.5 – EARS AND HEARING**

Chronic vertigo or impaired balance as demonstrated by the inability to tandem gait walk; On audiometric testing, average hearing loss in the unaided better ear greater than 40 decibels [dB] at 500 hertz [Hz], 1000 Hz, and 2000 Hz when the audiometric device is calibrated to ANSI Z24.5.

Any ear condition or hearing impairment that results in a person not being able to safely perform essential entry level job tasks.

### **SECTION 6.9 – HEART AND VASCULAR SYSTEM**

**Section 6.9.1** – Heart Coronary Artery Disease, Cardiomyopathy or Congestive Heart Failure, Acute Pericarditis, Endocarditis or Myocarditis Recurrent Syncope, Condition requiring an automatic implantable cardiac defibrillator, Third-degree Atrioventricular Block, cardiac pacemaker, Idiopathic Hypertrophic Subaortic Stenosis

**Section 6.9.2** – Vascular System Hypertension not controlled by approved medications. Thoracic or Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm. Carotid Artery Stenosis or Obstruction. Peripheral Vascular Disease.

### **SECTION 6.10 – ABDOMINAL ORGANS AND GASTROINTESTINAL SYSTEM**

Presence of uncorrected Inguinal/Femoral Hernia regardless of symptoms

### **SECTION 6.12 – URINARY SYSTEM**

Renal Failure or insufficiency requiring continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD) or haemodialysis

### **SECTION 6.13– SPINE AND AXIAL SKELETON**

Scoliosis of Thoracic or Lumbar Spine with angle greater than 40 degrees. . Multiple spinal surgeries or spinal surgery involving fusion of more than two vertebrae, discectomy or laminectomy, or rods still in place. . Any spinal or skeletal condition producing sensory or motor deficits or pain frequently requiring narcotic analgesic medication; Cervical, Thoracic or Lumbosacral vertebral fractures

### **SECTION 6.14 – EXTREMITIES**

Metal plates or rods supporting bone during healing.

Total joint replacement.

Amputation or congenital absence of upper or lower extremity (i.e., hand, foot, thumb proximal to the mid-proximal phalanx).

More than one shoulder dislocation without surgical repair or recurrent shoulder disorder within last five years.

### **SECTION 6.15 – NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS**

Ataxias of heredo-degenerative type.

Cerebral arteriosclerosis.

Hemiparalysis.

Multiple sclerosis or Myasthenia gravis with activity within previous three years.

All epileptic conditions without complete control during previous five years.

Dementia and Parkinson's diseases.

### **SECTION 6.18 – ENDOCRINE AND METABOLIC DISORDERS**

Diabetes mellitus which is treated with insulin.

Diabetes which is not treated by insulin nor controlled.

For reference, a complete copy of the NFPA 1582 standard can be purchased from the National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) or (617) 770-3000.

## **MINIMUM PHYSICAL FITNESS HIRING STANDARDS**

### **PRE-JOB OFFER ASSESSMENT – CANDIDATE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST (CPAT)**

In 1997, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and International Fire Chiefs' Association [IAFC] teamed up with 10 major North American fire services and unions to create the IAFF/IAFC Wellness-Fitness Task Force to address national standards on fire fighter health and fitness.

Through this mutual IAFF/IAFC partnership, an entry-level fire fighter task specific test was created known as the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). This physical ability test was developed to allow fire departments to assess pools of trainable candidates who have the minimal physical ability to perform essential job tasks at fire scenes.

The CPAT is a minimal task-analysis initiative that requires no prior fire fighter knowledge to be successful. The intent of this test is to establish an individual's ability to perform physical job tasks with enough reserve for emergency situations and normal activities. Successful applicants are those who have incorporated fitness as a lifestyle, as this is important to a fire fighter's health and safety considering the profession's physical demands.

## **MINIMUM FIRE FIGHTER QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Important Qualifications Notes**

- It is your responsibility to understand and meet the minimum qualifications before you submit your application.
- You are to provide legible proof of minimum qualifications at the interview.
- You will need to maintain your qualifications throughout the assessment processes.
- Failure to meet the minimum requirements will result in the rejection of your application file.
- If you are found to have falsified or intentionally misrepresented your credentials, your application file will be permanently closed. No future applications will be accepted from you.

### **You must be:**

- At least 19 years of age on the date of your application
- Eligible for employment in Canada - You must be a Canadian citizen, a holder of a Permanent Resident Card, a Landed Immigrant or otherwise legally entitled to work in Canada (i.e., holder of a work visa).
- You must provide documented proof of receiving the following inoculations:
  - Measles, Mumps, Rubella – (also known as MMR); we will accept childhood vaccination records and/or the results of an antigen titres test.
  - Tetanus/Diphtheria – (also known as Td); your most recent Td inoculation must be within the past 10 years.
  - Hepatitis A & B.
- You must provide documents verifying you have:
  - A High School Diploma or equivalency - equivalencies can include a High School Equivalency Diploma (i.e., G.E.D.), or a two-year diploma, or an undergraduate/applied degree or journeyman certificate.
  - A valid Class 5 Provincial driver's licence with no more than six-(6) demerits/points for the past 5 years and **no present suspensions or charges pending**. Probationary or Graduated Driver's licenses will not be accepted.
  - A current Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) card; Must be Basic Rescuer – Level "C" or Instructor Level, or you must attain your CPR certification prior to the start of the interview process.
  - Successfully completed a recognized First Aid program within the past calendar year. Must have prior to the start of the interview process.

**Note:** On receipt of a job offer, you will be required to acquire (at your cost) a Class 3 with Air Brake Endorsement allowing you to operate fire apparatus with air brakes. If you are from out-of-province, you must transfer your licence before you begin employment. Your Class 3 with Air Brake Endorsement must be obtained prior to the start of the interview process.

Accepted licences:

- BC Class 1, 2, or 3 licences with an air brake endorsement.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

The application process for the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service has been broken down into seven (7) different stages.

- Stage 1 - Application Process
- Stage 2 - Ergometrics FireTeam Testing (maximum of 75 will move onto next step)
- Stage 3 - AW Fraser Psychological Testing (maximum of 30 will move onto next step)
- Stage 4 - CPAT Testing
- Stage 5 - Interviews, Reference Checks
- Stage 6 - Selection Process and Notification
- Stage 7 - Conditional Job Offer

All applicants will be notified during the process if they will be moving on to the next stage via email. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure email addresses are valid and up-to-date and computer firewalls/security is set up to accept emails from the City. It is the candidate's responsibility to check emails on a regular basis as there are deadlines issued for payment and scheduling. All testing stages are in person, and cannot be faxed, emailed or taken online.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSING FEES**

Administrative processing fees are payable to the Abbotsford Fire Rescue throughout the fire fighter recruit selection process. Fees will be collected at the beginning of each of the applicable stages. Administrative fee payments must be made when each candidate is notified of their successful move to the next stage. Fees will be as follows:

- Stage 2 – \$52.50 (\$50.00 + 5% GST)
- Stage 3 – \$157.50 (\$150.00 + 5% GST)
- Stage 4 – \$210.00 (\$200.00 + 5% GST)

Stage 2 fees must be paid online once you have received confirmation that your application package has been accepted. Payments are only accepted by Visa or MasterCard. You will be notified (via email) during the application process how and when to pay Stage 2, 3 and 4 fees.

**IMPORTANT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSING FEE NOTES** - Fees may be subject to Goods and Services Tax [GST # 89725 6350 RT]. All fees collected in the recruit selection process are **non-refundable**. All processing fees are subject to change. Payment must be received before you can proceed to the next applicable stage. You will be advised via email when the payment is due.

## **RULES OF THE FIRE FIGHTER RECRUIT SELECTION PROCESS**

- You must be successful at each stage in order to be considered further in the process.
- If you are unsuccessful at any stage in the process, you will be informed if you are eligible to re-apply and the date when you become eligible to re-apply.
- If you are eligible to re-apply, you will restart the process at Stage 1; you must be successful again in all stages of the recruitment process regardless of your past performance.
- If you are re-applying, you will be required to follow all process steps as identified at the time you are re-applying; this includes any fee increases or additions.
- Re-applying multiple times may be allowed.
- If it is determined you are unsuitable for this position, your application file will be permanently closed.
- Permanent file closure can occur at any stage in the process.
- If your application is permanently closed, no future fire fighter applications will be accepted.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION FORM**

Complete the application form **in full** online at [www.abbotsford.ca/fire](http://www.abbotsford.ca/fire). Carefully review each section thoroughly. It is your responsibility to understand the application form and to provide all the requested information. Answer all questions completely and honestly. You are responsible for the accuracy of all statements. Full disclosure of information is expected; no sections are to be left blank. Should a particular section not apply to you, write 'n/a'.

Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service will not be accepting resumes or any other forms of applications. All applicants must follow the application protocols outlined in this manual.

### **Personal Information**

This section allows you to tell us who you are. Answers to questions in this section are mandatory.

### **Entrance Qualifications**

This section is to verify that you meet the minimum qualifications on the date you submit your application. You are to provide legible photocopies of supporting documentation for specific items to confirm that you meet the requirements and that your certifications are valid. Be prepared to produce the original or certified copies of these documents for review at your interview. You are also required to bring an original driver's abstract to your interview from all jurisdictions in which you have been a licensed driver in the last five years.

**Note:** All items submitted during your interview become Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service property. Please do not bring any items you wish to have returned.

### **Additional Information**

This section lets us know what types of licenses and certificates you have received as well as any special skills you may have. This section also demonstrates your commitment to your community by detailing activities that you have carried out as a volunteer. This area will also allow you to showcase your personal achievements or experiences that you believe are relevant to this position. You are to provide information to the best of your ability for this section. Please write "n/a" if a section does not pertain to you.

### **Education and Training**

This section details any accreditation you may have attained (i.e., certificates, diplomas, degrees, etc.) at an accredited school. Provide full details as indicated. Please write "n/a" if a section does not pertain to you.

### **Previous Employment**

This section represents your employment history. Please ensure employment dates include the month (for example: May 2006). Outline information to the best of your ability for these types of jobs. If contact information is no longer available for a past employer, indicate so. There is only room for four employers.

### **Applicant's Declaration**

Carefully review each statement thoroughly. It is your responsibility to understand and answer each statement as indicated.

### **Ergometrics Fireteam Testing**

FIRETEAM Testing was designed with professionals from six fire departments to improve accuracy in pre-screening entry-level fire fighter applicants and **save staff time historically spent in days of oral board pre-screening**.

FIRETEAM Training was developed to improve fire fighter teamwork skills and provide strategies for maintaining high levels of cooperation in the unique fire fighter living and working environment. Both FIRETEAM Testing and Training **focus heavily on teamwork and human relations skills**-aspects of the job that are critical, yet ordinarily not assessed in academies and other fire fighter preparation programs.

The aptitude test has a passing score that is pre-determined and not based on the number of candidates writing the test. This step is measured as pass/fail; your test score is not used to determine a ranking order nor will it be utilized in your hiring decision. You must achieve a passing score to be eligible to proceed to Stage 3.

If you fail to achieve a passing score, you will be advised of your eligibility to re-apply during the next recruitment intake.

If eligible, you are to wait one-(1) year before re-applying and will be required to begin the process again at Stage 1.

**Note:** If your responses are significantly below the minimum criteria required for job success, you will be considered unsuitable for this position and therefore ineligible to re-apply in the future. Your fire fighter application file will be closed permanently.

More information on the testing can be found at [www.ergometrics.org](http://www.ergometrics.org)

### **A. W. Fraser Psychological Testing**

[AW Fraser](#) psychological testing identifies the technical and personal competencies and abilities needed by an individual, and ensures an applicant has the required skills to perform the tasks of a career fire fighter.

### **CPAT (Candidate Physical Abilities Test) Overview**

To assist you with your overall fitness conditioning, we offer you access to the [CANDIDATE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST \(CPAT\)](#) PREPARATION GUIDE AND CPAT ORIENTATION GUIDE that was developed by the IAFF/ICHIEFS Fire Service Joint Labour Management Wellness/Fitness Initiative in 1997.

CPAT consists of eight separate stations in sequence requiring you to progress along a predetermined path from event to event in a continuous manner:

- Station #1 - Stair Climb
- Station #2 - Hose Drag
- Station #3 - Equipment Carry
- Station #4 - Ladder Raise and Extension

- Station #5 - Forcible Entry
- Station #6 - Search
- Station #7 - Rescue
- Station #8 - Ceiling Breach and Pull

The eight events are placed in a sequence that best simulates fire scene events while allowing an 85-foot (25.91-m) walk between events. This walk allows you approximately 20 seconds to recover and regroup before the next event.

To ensure the highest level of safety and to prevent exhaustion, you are not allowed to run between the events.

Throughout the test, you will wear a 50-pound (22.68-kg) vest (provided) to simulate the weight of a self-contained breathing apparatus and fire fighter protective clothing. An additional 25-pounds (11.34-kg), composed of two 12.5-pound (5.67-kg) weights (provided) that simulate a high-rise pack (hose bundle), is added to your shoulders for the first event, the stair climb.

Throughout all events, you are to wear long pants and footwear with no open heel or toe. Watches and loose or restrictive jewellery are not permitted. We will provide you with a hard hat with chin strap and work gloves.

All props were designed to obtain the necessary information regarding your physical ability. The tools and equipment were chosen to provide the highest level of consistency, safety and validity in measuring this ability.

To ensure scoring accuracy by eliminating timer failure, we use two stopwatches to time the CPAT. One stopwatch is designated as the official test time stopwatch, the second is the backup stopwatch. If mechanical failure occurs, the time on the backup stopwatch is used. The stopwatches are set to the pass/fail time and count down from 10 minutes and 20 seconds. If time elapses prior to the completion of the test, the test is concluded; you have failed the test.

A copy of the IAFF/IAFC CPAT PREPARATION GUIDE AND ORIENTATION GUIDE is available to download from [www.abbotsford.ca/fire\\_rescue\\_service/training/cpat.htm](http://www.abbotsford.ca/fire_rescue_service/training/cpat.htm).

Although the conditioning programs listed in the *CPAT PREPARATION GUIDE* are best accomplished at a gym with an array of equipment, a section is included with exercises that require little or no equipment.

## **THE INTERVIEW**

The interviewers will be rating you based on the responses you provide; they have been trained to objectively capture data for this purpose. It is your responsibility to provide thorough information in a clear and concise manner.

The behavioural questions will be measured to determine if you meet the criteria for successful job performance. Your scores will not be used to determine a ranking order.

If you fail to demonstrate suitability in the required competencies, you will be advised of your eligibility to re-apply.

If eligible, you are to wait one-(1) year before re-applying and will be required to begin the process again at Stage 1.

**Note:** If your responses are significantly below the minimum criteria required for job success, you will be considered unsuitable for this position and therefore ineligible to re-apply in the future. Your fire fighter application file will be closed permanently.

The intent of the personal interview is to allow us to learn more about you, your experiences and your abilities from your perspective. The interview is also an opportunity for you to display your best attributes and sell yourself for the job.

Historically, the interview is the step in our fire fighter hiring process where we lose the most candidates. Often, the main reasons for an unsuccessful interview are due to lack of preparation by the candidate.

As with the other steps in our hiring process, your interview is based on a pass/fail rating. Each of your responses are rated to determine whether you have met the competency's criteria for successful job performance and fit.

The interview is the first opportunity for you to meet with us face-to-face to sell yourself for the position. It is not enough that you want the job; you must demonstrate through awareness and past behaviours that you are suitable for this career.

### **Tip # 1 - Research the Position / Conduct a Self-Analysis / Compare Your Results**

**First Step** -Research the position to build a list of essential job tasks.

Do what you can to research the tasks and activities performed by a fire fighter. Begin building a list of typical fire fighter job duties.

Use whatever resources are available to you to identify the duties and the different types of work environments in which these tasks are performed. (i.e. Internet, your local fire crew, fire training programs, or our website [www.abbotsford.ca/fire](http://www.abbotsford.ca/fire))

**Second Step** - Conduct a self assessment to help determine your Job Fit.

Job Fit is an important factor to consider when preparing for your interview. If you enjoy the activities that are important to successful job performance, you are more likely to find this type of work personally satisfying.

Begin building a list of activities that you know you find satisfying and enjoy performing. Simply telling the interview panel you enjoy all activities isn't sufficient. The panel wants to know specifically what activities you like.

**Next Step** -Reflect on past personal experiences to identify similar behaviours to the job tasks.

Think of and build a list of situations in the past four or five years where you have demonstrated similar behaviours to those on your list of fire fighter tasks.

You do not require prior fire fighter experience to successfully meet the position's competencies. Consider all your experiences including those gained through your school years, team/sporting activities, volunteer opportunities, etc.

**Final Step** -Compare your lists to identify common factors or shortfalls.

Compare all of your lists to see how closely they match. By conducting this comparison, you will be able to:

- Identify what factors of this job you are drawn to
- Identify any shortfalls you may have in the areas of experience and skill
- Compile a list of related examples to draw from during your interview

### **Tip # 2 - Know the structure, culture and community which the Fire Rescue Service serves**

Your objective should be to develop an understanding of the type of community, the nature and history of the position and the particular issues the organization and the department is facing.

If you are not familiar with the City of Abbotsford and its surrounding communities, learn what you can of its structure (i.e., the climate and geographical layout, the sociological issues, Council's priorities, economic environment, etc.) to better identify the types of emergency response calls and the resources utilized by the Service.

**Tip #3 - Commit to adequate preparation before your interview**

Preparation is vital to the fire service. Prepare for your interview with the same energy you would commit to responding to an emergency as a fire fighter. You may have little advance notice of your interview spot. Ensuring you are adequately prepared will lessen some of the stress associated with an interview and allow you to focus on marketing yourself for the position.

**Tip # 4 - Presentation is important**

This is your opportunity to form a positive impression with your interviewers. A professional and confident demeanour will go a long way.

Your dress, grooming and deportment will be considered. Err on the side of conservative and present a professional image.

Be well versed with the Service's hair and jewellery operational guideline and recognize that the fire rescue service is a paramilitary organization which incorporates a rank and structure model. A respectful approach is warranted.

Recognize any distracting nervous habits you may have and develop strategies to curtail or lessen their impact on your behaviour. Practice maintaining good posture and direct eye contact.

Plan your arrival for no more than 10 - 15 minutes before your appointed time to avoid confusion for the interviewers. Arriving late always creates a bad first impression. If circumstances beyond your control prevent you from arriving on time, ensure you contact the Human Resources Division at (604) 864-5549 to discuss your options.

**Tip # 5 - Use your interview time wisely**

A job interview is a communication process. Hone your verbal communication skills to ensure you:

- Listen carefully (ask for clarification if needed)
- Remain professional and positive
- Speak clearly and audibly
- Answer the questions with specific examples
- Moderate your volume and animation
- Although it is wise to avoid excessively lengthy responses, ensure that you provide relevant details - you don't want to leave your interview thinking "oh, I forgot to tell them about...".
- When given the opportunity, ask well-thought out questions which demonstrate your interest in the position. Let your interviewers know why you want the job and what you can offer

**REFERENCE CHECKS**

We use a number of tools throughout our assessment processes to validate your information and to capture a clear representation of your history. At this stage of the process, we substantiate this information through the following:

As part of our information gathering process, you will be provided with documents to distribute to your work experience references. It will be your responsibility to contact these references, solicit their involvement in completing the document, and ensuring that it is returned to the City of Abbotsford Human Resource Division in a timely manner.

Our reference documents will ask your references to rate you based on their experiences with you as an employee/co-worker. Your references will also be asked to provide their assessments of you in your present/past employment as well as their beliefs on your suitability for an Abbotsford Fire Fighter position. As standard protocol, Human Resources will follow-up with your references to validate and clarify any comments made.

**Note:** You may be asked to seek out additional references if the data received is insufficient.

## **SELECTION AND CONDITIONAL JOB OFFER**

Once you successfully advance to this step, your file has reached the point where a hiring decision is made. All data is compiled and your file is presented to Senior Management.

The purpose is to review the perspective on your suitability for this position to determine if you are to receive a job offer. Our hiring decision is based on consideration of your competencies, skills, physical abilities and job fit. All information such as Class 3 with Air Brake Endorsement, CPR and First Aid must be obtained prior to the interview process.

### **CONDITIONAL JOB OFFER**

The Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service hiring needs are difficult to predict and fluctuate as a result of a number of factors (i.e., retirements, city growth, funding/resource availability, etc.). This may mean you have successfully advanced through the hiring process, yet have to wait until there are enough open positions available in the department to be offered employment.

When the Fire Rescue Service requires additional Fire Fighters, a Fire Recruit training class is scheduled. Successful applicants are contacted and provided with a conditional job offer. Stated within the terms of the conditional job offer will be time-sensitive information to ensure you are ready to begin fire recruit training. If you are from out-of-city/province, you will be required to travel to Abbotsford to complete the required tasks; several trips may be required.

### **IMPORTANT JOB OFFER NOTES**

- All tasks identified in your conditional job offer must be completed in order to begin employment.
- Failure to meet the BC driver's licensing standards prior to the start of the interview process will directly impact your ability to begin employment.
- You must be prepared for medical and fitness evaluation testing.
- The information contained within the fire recruit instructional materials is property of the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service.
- Individuals with a Job Offering with a scheduled recruit class date are classified as a 'Candidates'.

### **MEETING THE CONDITIONS OF YOUR JOB OFFER**

Before your employment can begin, several steps must occur to prepare you to begin recruit training:

#### **MEDICAL / FITNESS EVALUATION**

You will need to attend a comprehensive medical/fitness evaluation with Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service to be assessed in accordance with the NFPA 1582 standards. You must be cleared by a physician contracted by the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service as medically "fit-for-duty" in order to begin recruit training.

- Your fitness assessment will include a direct gas analysis VO<sub>2</sub>max test on a treadmill where you must complete a minimum of 12 minutes 30 seconds on this test.

**Note:** Your application may be deferred or rescinded at the discretion of the Fire Rescue Service's physician.

## **KNOWLEDGE TEST**

Prior to your employment start-date, you will be issued an International Fire Service Training Association Essentials Version 5 (IFSTA) manual as a resource for the theoretical knowledge required to begin practical, hands-on learning. After approximately six weeks of independent study, you will be required to pass a written knowledge test based on these study materials.

Failure to achieve a passing grade of (75%) on the exam will cause your job offer to be rescinded.

- If you fail your test, you will be advised of your eligibility to re-apply.
- If eligible, you are to wait one-(1) year before re-applying and will be required to begin the process again at Stage 1.

## **UNIFORM ISSUE**

You will be required to attend a personal uniform fitting appointment in Abbotsford or Vancouver to ensure your uniform issue will be available at the start of your recruit training. All uniforms and materials provided to you during the recruitment process will be returned to AFRS if you are unsuccessful.

## **PREPARING FOR FIRE RECRUIT TRAINING**

As you are expected to maintain standards throughout your career as an Abbotsford Fire Fighter, you must physically and mentally prepare yourself to begin a rigorous and challenging fire recruit training program. Your abilities, attitude and demeanour will be assessed throughout this process, and throughout your career.

Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service training programs are designed to give fire fighters the knowledge and skill to cope with the dangerous and hostile environments they face. Recruit training curriculum incorporates in-class theory, practical, hands-on training on a simulated training ground, daily fitness conditioning [i.e., running, weight training] and evaluations.

During your recruit training, you will complete the NFPA 1001 level II fire fighter certification program. If successful in completing the training, you will be placed on your assigned shift for the remainder of your probationary period.

## **KNOWLEDGE PREPARATION**

During recruit training, you will be tested frequently on your theoretical and practical knowledge to ensure you meet the standards. Failure to meet these standards will result in letter(s) of warning and could result in dismissal.

**Note:** A recommended amount of study time is 1½ to 2 hours per day. Preparation is essential.

## **PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

To enhance the likelihood of success during recruit training and to reduce the risk of injury, you must report to training in top physical shape. It is imperative that you are prepared for a high volume of fitness activity.

Fire ground training conditions will tax you physically (i.e., breathing compressed air, extreme heat/temperature changes, constant physical activity during inclement weather conditions, etc.). Daily recruit fitness conditioning includes outdoor running, circuit training with weights, aerobic, plyometric and isometric training.

During recruit training, there is a scheduled 60-minute fitness period. Fitness activities involving running will be performed, at a minimum three times a week.

## **PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

During your probationary period, you will undergo extensive training and evaluation to determine ongoing suitability as a Fire Fighter. You will undergo quarterly evaluations regarding your strengths and weaknesses, to ensure you have the tools (information/feedback) to successfully complete your probationary period. Candidates who fail to meet the training standards will be released from Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

**Q** “Can I apply before I have met all of the minimum qualifications if I intend to complete them once you’ve accepted my application (e.g. Class 3 with Air, CPR, basic first aid?)”

**A** Yes. Provided you have them all completed prior to the start of the interview process.

**Q** “Where can I find information on becoming eligible for employment in Canada?”

**A** Please contact the Government of Canada’s Citizenship and Immigration Centre at [www.canadainternational.gc.ca](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca) or toll free 1888-242-2100

**Q** “How can I determine if a medical condition I have makes me ineligible for hire?”

**A** Your physician is the best resource for information on your personal health. We encourage you to book a complete physical with your physician before you decide to submit a fire fighter application to identify and/or discuss any conditions that may affect your ability to perform essential fighter job tasks.

**A** To aid your physician in understanding the job tasks, a copy of the NFPA 1582 standard can be purchased through the National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) or phone (617)770-3000. Please do not submit a vision report, audiogram report or any other medical information with your application.

**Q** “How can I demonstrate that I meet the immunization requirements if I do not have my childhood vaccination records?”

**A** Please contact your local health provider or physician for their guidance in requesting an antigen titers test or to receive the required inoculations.

**Q** “I did not complete a High School Diploma. What will you accept as a suitable equivalent?”

**A** We will accept a High School Equivalency Diploma [i.e., G.E.D.], a two-year diploma, an undergraduate or applied degree or an apprenticeship or journeyman certificate.

To find the guidelines for completing High School equivalency programs, please refer to the Provincial and Territorial Departments and Ministers Responsible for Education in Canada at [www.cmec.ca](http://www.cmec.ca) or phone (416)962-8100.

**Q** “I do not have a copy of my High School or equivalency diploma? What will you accept as a suitable replacement?”

**A** We will accept a copy of an official school transcript providing that it clearly indicates you have met the requirements to be awarded the diploma.

**Q** “I completed my education outside of Canada. How can I be sure it meets your qualifications?”

**A** Please contact BC International Qualifications Program at [www.aved.gov.bc.ca/internationalqualifications/](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/internationalqualifications/) or phone (250) 952-0247 to determine how your education compares to British Columbia’s educational standards.

If applicable, please have your non-English documents translated prior to including them with your application.

**Q** “I do not live in British Columbia. How can I determine if my operator’s license and/or demerit points meet your driver license qualifications?”

**A** Please contact the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com) or in the Lower Mainland: phone (604)-661-2800, or send a fax to (604)-646-7400. Elsewhere in B.C., Canada and the U.S.: 1-800-663-3051, or send a fax to (604)-661-2896.

- Q** “At what point in the fire fighter hiring process am I required to upgrade/transfer my driver’s license?”
- A** You do not require this advanced driver certification to apply for a fire fighter position. However, prior to the interview process, you will need to be licensed to a Class 1 or 3 with an air brake endorsement.

**Note:** Your license must be valid and have no more than six-(6) demerit points throughout the hiring process. Proof will be required.

- Q** “What do you accept as a suitable Commercial license?”
- A** We will accept either of the following licenses:
- British Columbia Class 1, 2 or 3 licenses with an air brake endorsement.

- Q** “Do I require previous fire fighting experience or training prior to making application?”
- A** No. Training will be delivered prior to being placed on active duty.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – APPROVED CPR COURSES**

- Q** “How can I find out if my CPR courses have been approved by the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service?”
- A** The approved agencies and courses (in bolded and underlined text).

Canadian Red Cross [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)

- Approved EMR Course: “**First Responder**”
- Approved CPR Course(s): “**CPR – Level C; CPR – Level HCP (Healthcare Provider)**”
- Atlantic Zone 70 Lansdowne Ave, Saint John, NB E2L 3X3 and 1-877-356-3226
- Quebec Zone 6, place du Commerce, Verdu, PQ H3E 1P4 and 1-877-356-3226
- Ontario Zone 5700 Cancross Court, Mississauga, ON L5R 3E9 and 1-888-890-1997
- Western Zone #100, 1305 – 11 Avenue SW, Calgary, AB T3C 3P6 and 1-888-307-7997

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)

- Approved CPR Course: “**HeartSaver AED (C)**”
- National Office, Suite 1402, 222 Queen Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 5V9 and 613-569-4361

St. John Ambulance [www.sja.ca](http://www.sja.ca)

- Approved CPR Course: “Level C – HCP (Healthcare Provider)”

Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) [www.jibc.bc.ca](http://www.jibc.bc.ca)

- Approved CPR Course: “**CPR Level C (HCP) Certification**”
- 715 McBride Boulevard, New Westminster, BC V3L 5T4 and 604-525-5422

WorkSafe BC (Workers’ Compensation Board of BC) [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)

- First Aid Certification Services, PO Box 5350 Stn Terminal, Vancouver, BC V6B 5L5 and 604-276-3090

- Q** “Do I need Basic First Aid or Higher if I already have the First Responder Certificate?”
- A** No, the First Responder Certificate will be considered as equivalent.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – APPLICATION**

**Q** “Can I include copies of other certificates or awards I have attained?”

**A** No. We recognize your need to include this information, however, please bring copies to the interview. There are sections in the Fire Fighter Application for you to provide us with these details.

**Q** “What happens after you’ve received my application?”

**A** Your application package will be assessed for compliance and completeness. A review of your file will be conducted to determine its viability. You will be advised via email if you are advancing to the next stage or not, and/or of your eligibility to re-apply.

**Q** “Can I pay in any other form other than Visa or MasterCard?”

**A** Not at this time. Our current online payment system can only accept Visa or MasterCard.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – CPAT**

**Q** “I have CPAT certification from another fire agency. Can I use this certificate in Abbotsford’s process?”

**A** The Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service will recognize CPAT certification from other fully licensed IAFF jurisdictions at Stage 4 of the recruitment process as long as it is dated within the last year (within 12 months of application date). You will need to complete an Abbotsford CPAT; however no payment will be required.

**Q** “Is there a physical fitness training program available for CPAT?”

**A** Yes. The IAFF/IAFC Wellness-Fitness Task Force has created a CPAT PREPARATION GUIDE complete with stretches and training recommendations. A copy of this document is available for downloading from our website at [www.abbotsford.ca/fire\\_rescue\\_service/training/cpat.htm](http://www.abbotsford.ca/fire_rescue_service/training/cpat.htm).

**Q** “Can I see and/or try out CPAT before my test day?”

**A** Yes. Included in the CPAT preparation program are several different types of CPAT site/test orientations. The CPAT orientation day will give you an opportunity to see stations and layout. You will also have opportunity to try the course out while being timed.

### **CPAT Orientation Sessions**

Attendance at these orientation sessions is optional; should you choose not to participate, you will be required to sign a waiver indicating you declined the offer to participate.

- Candidates may choose to attend up to two timed practice CPAT run-throughs in the 30-days prior to their test. Should a candidate be successful at the timed practice event, this will be considered as a successful CPAT. The timed practice runs are intended to offer a sequential, non-punitive run-through of the entire course.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – INTERVIEW**

**Q** “What do I need to bring with me to my interview?”

**A** When your interview has been booked, we will send you an e-mail outlining items you are expected to bring to your appointment.

### **Items required for your interview:**

- Your driver's license - for identification purposes
- A copy of your immunization records
- A Driver's Abstract
- A current copy of your resume (optional)
- Any of the certificates and licenses you mentioned in your application form

**Note:** Failure to bring the requested items could result in the cancellation of your interview.

**Q** “What if I cannot come up with an answer to an interview question?”

**A** You can ask to gather your thoughts or to bypass the question and return to it later. If you still cannot recall a specific experience to share, try to reflect back on any volunteer experiences or situations that you have dealt with involving your family or friends.

**Q** “How can I prepare for my interview?”

**A** Don't wait until the last minute to prepare! Practice and preparation ahead of time are essential to your success. Our hiring needs may dictate a rapid turnaround between your aptitude test session and your interview. If you are from out-of-town/province, be prepared to travel to and/or stay in Abbotsford on short notice. Refer to the tips on pages 18-20 of this manual.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – SELECTION PROCESS**

**Q** “How long is the selection process?”

**A** Unfortunately, there isn't a set time frame to follow as the hiring needs of our department fluctuates and are dependent on outside factors such as retirements, funding, city growth, legislation, etc. It may be necessary for us to “speed up” or “slow down” our process in order to meet operational needs. You may be asked to participate in one or more tests in a short period of time or you may need to wait for a period of time until sufficient resources are available.

**Q** “How often should I expect to hear from Human Resources?”

**A** We endeavor to keep you informed and current with information on the City website relevant to the status of your recruitment file through the ID number assigned to you. It is your responsibility to keep us informed of any changes in contact information (email, telephone, address) or if you will be unavailable for a period of time (i.e., on vacation, out of the country, etc.).

**Q** “Do you accept out-of-province applicants?”

**A** Yes. However, be aware you will be required to travel to Abbotsford on many separate occasions to participate in the different tests, sometimes with little advance notice.

**Note:** Any costs associated with travel and/or relocation expenses are your own responsibility.

**Q** “I am currently a professional fire fighter in another City/Municipality. Do you have an experienced fire fighter transfer program?”

**A** Not currently. We will continue to seek entry-level fire fighters until further notice. If hired, and providing you have at least 3 years experience you would start at the third year rate of pay.

- Q** “I have completed the Professional Fire Fighter Certification [i.e., NFPA 1001 Professional Fire Fighter]. Do I have an advantage?”
- A** Not necessarily. We accept applications from individuals from all walks of life and assess their files based on individual skills, experiences, attributes, values, etc. Applicants are measured on their ability to meet/exceed our standards rather than how they compare to other candidates.
- Q** “Can you recommend courses that I can take to better my chances of being selected?”
- A** Due to the competitive nature of the assessment process, we do not counsel or provide recommendations to potential applicants on how to increase their competitiveness.
- Q** “Why do you ask for fees to participate in the selection process?”
- A** As a municipal organization, our department must be fiscally responsible for managing funds we receive through taxes. To ensure there are enough resources to provide emergency response services, fire fighter applicant testing procedures must run on a cost-recovery basis. All fees assigned to a specific step in our process are non-refundable and will be required before you can participate in that step. Simply stated - we cannot justify maintaining numerous applications if we are responsible for payment of each candidates tests throughout the process. If we were responsible for payment of each test, we would need to restrict the amount of applications we can proceed with – thereby narrowing the applicant pool .
- Q** “If I am unsuccessful at any step in the selection process, what feedback can I expect?”
- A** General feedback will be provided wherever possible, which will outline your eligibility to re-apply and if applicable, the length of time that must transpire before a future application will be accepted.
- Q** “Why wouldn’t you accept another application if you’ve closed an applicant’s file permanently?”
- A** Organizational and job fit are vital to success in this profession. When it is determined an applicant cannot, did not, and is unlikely to meet our standards in the future, the applicant is considered unsuitable for this position. Continuing to assess an unsuitable individual is neither cost-effective nor respectful to that person.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – CONDITIONAL JOB OFFER**

- Q** “Why must I achieve a passing grade on my written knowledge test?”
- A** Owing to the short time frame under which recruit training is completed, you must have the knowledge tests based on IFSTA Essentials V to assure all training standards can be met. Ensuring you commit an appropriate amount of pre-study and following learning objectives outlined in the instructional materials will be vital to your success.
- Q** “I have already successfully completed a recognized fire fighter training program through a college or other fire department. Will I need to re-write the exams?”
- A** Yes. You will need to learn our methods, techniques and protocols to perform your duties as an Abbotsford fire fighter. While your prior knowledge will be helpful in acquiring the required theoretical knowledge, it will not be sufficient in meeting our training standards.