

CAREER FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

APPLICATION MANUAL

CITY OF ABBOTSFORD
Fire Rescue Service

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MESSAGE FROM THE CITY OF ABBOTSFORD FIRE RESCUE SERVICE HIRING COMMITTEE

Thank you for your interest in becoming a career member of the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service (AFRS). 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 reflect the diversity of our community and demonstrate that they will honour and convey the mission, vision, and values of our organization.

Firefighter recruits 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.

We are honoured that you have expressed an interest in a career with the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service. It is our goal for you to be successful with your quest for employment with us. Please feel free to contact us at any time. We are committed to doing our very best to support and guide you through our hiring process.

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

The Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service
Hiring Committee

Erick Peterson
Fire Chief - Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service

Shane Petrie
President - IAFF Local 2864

GENERAL INFORMATION

OUR CITY

Abbotsford, “The Hub of the Fraser Valley”, is continually striving to grow its dynamic and diverse community. Abbotsford is known for its innovation, knowledgeable workforce, sustainability, broadband, and digital equity, which is why we are recognized as one of the top seven (7) intelligent communities in the world.

Abbotsford is one of the country’s most culturally diverse communities, with more than 50 languages spoken within the community.

Abbotsford is in the Fraser Valley near the Pacific Coast and offers a moderate climate that defies the national stereotype. With average highs in the summer of 24 degrees Celsius and average lows in the winter often above the freezing mark, Abbotsford sees an average of twelve snow days per year.

Abbotsford is home to 192 parks, which cover more than 841.5 hectares of parkland and feature 276 kilometers of trails suitable for walking, running, or cycling. It is estimated that 84% of residents live within 500 meters of a park.

We are home to several signature events each year, including the Abbotsford International Air Show, which attracts more than 100,000 spectators for the three-day festival. Other events include the long-running Abbotsford Agri-Fair, the Abbotsford Tulip Festival, the Berry Festival, and the traditional Canada Day celebrations, which highlight more than 150 outdoor events hosted each year. These, combined with sporting events, trade shows, and concerts held at the Abbotsford Centre and the Tradex, signal an active social calendar that caters to a wide range of interests.

We are also home to the Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre, which is the first new hospital built in British Columbia in over 30 years and the first facility of its kind in Canada.

ABOUT THE CITY OF ABBOTSFORD FIRE RESCUE SERVICE

The City of Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service has nine (9) Fire Halls. Five (5) are staffed with career firefighters, and four (4) are staffed by Paid On-Call staff.

The AFRS responds to an average of 15,000 incidents a year. The top three categories of those calls are medical incidents, motor vehicle incidents (MVIs), and fire alarm activations. Abbotsford is known for a mixture of urban and rural agriculture, which means the members of the AFRS must have a broad skill set to be able to manage a wide variety of unique incidents.

The AFRS provides its services to over 145 square miles of infrastructure. We conduct residential, industrial, and high-rise firefighting and are called out to a variety of different incidents, including motor vehicle incidents, urban and rural structure fires, wildland fires, technical high-angle rescues, technical water rescues, hazardous materials incidents, farm equipment rescues, large animal rescues, and airport incidents.

We have a state-of-the-art training facility where we conduct recruit training and most of our annual skills maintenance training. The Riverside Training Centre (RTC) is a one-stop training facility with the ability to train our firefighters on almost all firefighter competencies. The RTC contains training props and facilities to provide for the delivery of motor vehicle incident rescue training, tower crane rescue training, confined space training, search and rescue training, structure fire suppression training, motor vehicle fire suppression training, emergency vehicle operation training, as well as classrooms for lectures and virtual training.

SCOPE

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with information about the AFRS and our corresponding recruitment process. It will help to answer questions you may have about our required 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 suited for a career in firefighting.

Abbotsford's firefighter recruitment 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. Dates for upcoming recruitment intake periods are advertised on our webpage, and applicants can **only** apply during these intake periods.

FIREFIGHTER CAREER

Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service strives to hire the best. Today's firefighter represents the diverse community we serve. We are looking for qualified recruits who are pursuing a demanding, exciting, and rewarding career in firefighting to join our team.

Today's firefighter is a skilled professional who is able to face every kind of emergency. The AFRS will provide training on preferred methods for various job tasks. Through this training and experience, Abbotsford firefighters learn 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. The AFRS is a community-focused organization; the ability to speak other languages and have knowledge of different cultures within the community is an asset.

If you are interested in becoming an Abbotsford firefighter, you need to possess:

- Dedication.
- Adaptability and good problem-solving skills.
- An ability to think critically.
- Teamwork and communication skills.
- A lifestyle that exemplifies fitness, health, and wellness.
- A desire to serve the public.
- Strong mechanical aptitude.
- Mental and physical equanimity.
- Empathy and compassion.

FIREFIGHTER QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates should review their application documents before final submission. Remember, how you present yourself through your application will be evaluated during the recruitment process. If you are found to have falsified or intentionally misrepresented your credentials, your application will be rejected, and no future applications will be accepted from you.

You are required to provide legible proof of minimum qualifications at the application stage with your application. It is your responsibility to maintain your qualifications, at your cost, throughout the assessment processes.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Applications will be screened to ensure all the following qualifications have been met. If you do not meet **ALL** the required qualifications, your application will be rejected.

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, hold a valid Permanent Resident Card, a Landed Immigrant, or otherwise legally entitled to work in Canada (i.e., holder of a work visa).

Basic Qualifications:

- Completion of NFPA 1001- Level II (Including HazMat Operations) from an approved accredited agency.
- No criminal convictions, no pending adult criminal charges, and an ability to obtain Vulnerable Sector Police Information Check clearance.
- A valid unrestricted class 1, 2, or 3 Driver's Licence (or provincial equivalent) with air brake endorsement (Automatic-only restriction is accepted) with no restrictions and a good driving record. (A current driver's abstract dated no more than 30 days prior to the recruitment competition. The abstract should demonstrate responsible and safe driving behavior.)
- High school diploma completion or equivalency:
    - Equivalencies can include:
        - General Educational Development (High School Equivalency Diploma)
        - An undergraduate/applied degree or journeyman certificate
        - Completed 2 years of a recognized apprenticeship program
- A current First Responder Licence with Spinal and AED or greater (e.g., EMR or PCP Licence).

It is the applicant's responsibility to keep all licenses current throughout the recruitment process; all costs associated with obtaining and maintaining these licenses are at the applicant's expense. You are required to provide documentation to verify the above qualifications.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

These additional skills and experience will enhance your application, but do not replace the required qualifications:

- Work experience related to firefighting, such as auxiliary/volunteer firefighting, first aid attendant, paramedic, or forestry firefighting.
- Completion of a post-secondary education program (Certificate, Diploma, associate degree or Degree).
- Enrollment in or completion of a Trade Certification (Interprovincial Standards Red Seal).
- Employment in a profession that demonstrates mechanical aptitude.
- Experience in volunteering and community involvement.
- Fluent in other languages.
- Additional fire-related courses.
- Team participation and ongoing commitment to physical activity.
- Work experience, highlighting dependability, initiative, and a high work ethic.
- An Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) or Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) Licence.

THE FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

TIPS

Although there is no single factor to ensure success in your pursuit of joining the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service, we would like to offer you these tips:

1. Stay current with recruiting information by visiting our website at **www.abbotsford.ca/fire**.
2. If your personal contact information changes, contact the Human Resources Division immediately at careers@abbotsford.ca.
3. Before you submit your firefighter 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!
4. You must be able to follow and act on complex verbal and written instructions. You will be evaluated on these skills throughout the recruitment process and throughout your career as a firefighter.
5. We expect you to be prepared and ready to participate in our assessments at all times. 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.
6. Your demeanor and effort throughout the selection process are taken into consideration as part of the final hiring decision.
7. 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.

RULES

- Due to the high volume of applications we receive, we are unable to confirm receipt of applications with individual applicants.
- 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 via email.
- Again, due to the high volume of applicants, we are unable to provide individual feedback for each applicant regarding the selection process.

PROCESS

The recruitment process for the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service has been broken down into seven(7) stages as follows:

Stage 1 - Application and Pre-Screening
Stage 2 - Written Exam - Online
Stage 3 - Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT)
Stage 4 - Occupational Skills Assessment- Day 1
Stage 5 - Occupational Skills Assessment- Day 2
Stage 6 - Reference Checks, Police Information Check & Vulnerable Sector Search and Pre-Employment Medical Evaluation
Stage 7 - Fire Chief Interview

The City of Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service appreciates all applications; however, only short-listed candidates will be contacted via email to proceed to the next stage.

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure email addresses are valid and up-to-date, and computer firewalls/security are 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.

STAGES

Stage 1 - The Application and Pre-screen

All applications must be submitted electronically through www.abbotsford.ca/careers. We will not accept applications submitted by any other means. Factors to consider when you decide to apply:

- The job posting will only be open to receive applications for a specified period.
- Applications will not be accepted if submitted after the closing date.
- You will need to create an online account at www.abbotsford.ca/careers to submit your application.
- The online application system is not compatible with Safari- be sure to use a different browser if you are using an Apple computer.
- An active email address will be required to create an account and receive updates on the status of your application.
- Have an updated resume prepared prior to beginning your online application. You will be asked to upload your resume during the application process.
- The system will not allow you to start an application and finish it later. You must complete your application, from start to finish, at one time.
- Answer all the questions at the time of your initial application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Your answers to the online questions will determine whether you are invited to the second stage of the process. Make sure you answer questions completely and accurately.
- You must be fully certified or licensed to complete the online application. Indicating that you possess a licence or certificate that you have not been issued at the time of application will result in your elimination from the process. Dates will be verified.
- **All requested documents must be attached at the time of application, or the application will be considered incomplete and will not be considered. Candidates should review their application document downloads before final submission.**

Stage 2 - Written Assessment – BL Associates Firefighter Competency Assessment (Online)

Candidates who are successful in Stage 1 of the selection process will be invited to participate in a Firefighter Competency Assessment:

- The cost of this exam is the responsibility of the applicant.
- Those invited to this stage of the recruitment process will receive payment instructions and testing location details prior to the day of the assessment.
- You will be required to provide proof of payment and photo identification before being permitted to participate in the testing process.
- If you have previously completed a Firefighter Competency Assessment with BL Associates within 12 months of our written assessment date, you have the option to use your previous test score for our process. Please see BL Associates' website for more information regarding the transfer of your test scores: https://blassociates.ca/information-for-applicants/.

Stage 3 - Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT)

Candidates who are successful in Stage 2 of the selection process will be invited to complete the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT).

- Information about this test can be found at AFRSBC.

- Candidates who submit a current and valid CPAT certificate will receive full credit for this stage of the process.

Stage 4 - Occupational Skills Assessment – Day 1

Candidates who are successful in Stage 3 of the selection process will be invited to participate in Day 1 of the Occupational Skills Assessment portion of the process.

- Those invited to this stage of the recruitment process will receive testing location details prior to the test.
- You will not be allowed to participate in the testing process without photo identification.
- The assessment consists of approximately four to six hours. Occupational skill assessments will include the successful completion of the following:

    - 100 metre swim and the ability to tread water for 5 minutes.
    - 20m Shuttle Run/ Beep Test up to level 8
    - 100’ aerial ladder climb
    - 35’ ladder extension (fixed to wall)
    - Mechanical skills assessment

Stage 5 - Occupational Skills Assessment – Day 2

Candidates who are successful in Stage 4 of the selection process will be invited to participate in Day 2 of the Occupational Skills Assessment portion of the process.

- Those invited to this stage of the recruitment process will receive testing location details prior to the test.
- You will not be allowed to participate in the testing process without photo identification.
- The assessment consists of approximately four to six hours. The occupational skill assessment will include the successful completion of several skill stations designed to assess your suitability and fit for a firefighter position with the AFRS.

Stage 6 - Reference Checks, Police Information Check & Vulnerable Sector Search and Pre-Employment Medical Evaluation

Successful candidates will advance to the next stage of the recruitment process, which includes reference checks, a police information check & vulnerable sector search, and a pre-employment medical evaluation.

We use several tools throughout our assessment processes to validate your information and to capture a clear representation of your employment history. At this stage of the process, we will request that you complete the following documents:

- Reference Release Form - providing the City of Abbotsford Human Resources authorization to contact the employment references you have provided.
- A detailed list of your current and previous direct supervisors/managers of employment.
- Our reference process will ask your references to rate you based on their experiences with you as an employee. Your references will also be asked to provide their assessments of you in your present/past employment.

Police Information Check & Vulnerable Sector Search are required for this position. Candidates are responsible for making an application to their local police department. Contact your local police department for the application and applicable fees.

Pre-Employment Medical Evaluation is required for this position. Human Resources will contact you and provide all the information required for completion of the medical evaluation.

- The medical evaluation is a comprehensive third-party medical/fitness evaluation and will screen for medical conditions that might affect your ability to function as a firefighter - No cost to the candidate

- **Note:** The Medical Evaluation must be done in person.

Stage 7 - Fire Chief Interview

Upon completion of a final review of all aspects of each candidate's application and results from all stages of the selection process, the most qualified candidates will be invited to meet the Fire Chief.

Job Offer

Candidates who successfully complete all stages of the recruitment process may receive an offer of employment, outlining the terms and conditions of their appointment.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

During your one-year probationary period, you will undergo extensive training and evaluation to assess your ongoing suitability as a firefighter. Practical and theoretical evaluations will be conducted at eight (8) weeks, six (6) months, and eleven (11) months. In addition, you will receive ongoing feedback and support to ensure you have the information and resources needed to successfully complete your probationary period