



Firefighter Recruitment Process 2009

Details of our application process and key dates will be posted on our website – www.rbfrs.co.uk . You are advised to check regularly.

Application form

Application forms will be available only at the beginning of the recruitment process, and the number available will be limited. You are advised to telephone as early as possible when the recruitment line opens. The first 2 hours will be reserved for people who have attended career awareness events.

The first section of the form includes a couple of checklists. One is for you to check that the job is really what you want to do, so it asks questions like whether you are prepared to work at heights.

The other checklist enables you to check that you meet the basic criteria for employment as a Firefighter. Where the question relates to a disability or medical condition, an answer in the grey box won't debar you from employment but you need to talk to us to discuss what adjustments you would need to enable you to do the job, and whether we are able to make them.

There is a question about employment eligibility. If you are not a citizen of the European Economic Area, Switzerland or the UK, you need to check what the stamp in your passport says about working in the UK. It is not possible to sponsor a Tier 2 migrant for a Firefighter post, as we have plenty of applicants from within the EU.

There is also a question about whether you have made any other applications to be a Firefighter. If you have previously submitted an application form and been rejected within the last 3 months (from any UK Fire & Rescue Service), or have an application pending with another Fire & Rescue Service, we may not be able to proceed with your application.

The question about convictions only relates to ones which are not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act – if you are not sure whether they are spent or not, do check (internet, Citizen's Advice). Criminal convictions do include driving offences but not parking tickets.

The qualifications section only relates to qualifications that might mean that you don't need to do all the units of the recruit training course – we don't need to know about your school qualifications. It's not used for shortlisting.

Check that your referees are happy to provide a reference before including their names.

Section 5 asks about your career history and interests. Again, this is not used for shortlisting – it's to help interviewers understand the answers that you give, because you will be talking about things that you've done in the past. You then have all the usual questions that you get on a job application form – personal details, career history etc.

There is also a question about why you think you would be a good Firefighter and why you would enjoy it. This is to check that you really understand what the role is about (the negatives as well as the positives).

Section 7 is designed to assess your personal qualities and attributes (PQA) in the following areas:-

- Working with Others
- Commitment to Diversity & Integrity
- Commitment to Self Development
- Confidence & Resilience
- Commitment to Excellence
- Openness to Change

For each PQA you are asked to describe a situation where you demonstrated that quality. Your answers will be used in shortlisting so it's important to put some thought into them. The person doing the sifting will be looking for evidence that you have demonstrated the quality, so don't waste too much space describing the situation – concentrate on what you did, (especially things that you did proactively, without being told to), why, and what the outcome was. The person doing the shortlisting only has what you have written to work from, so be very clear – if something was your idea, or you actively sought input from other team members, or you learned something from the experience – SAY SO!

Written Tests

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to take 4 written tests.

The National Firefighter Questionnaire also explores your personal qualities and attributes. You will be presented with a number of statements, and you need to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each one. There will be 127 questions to answer – there is no time limit to this test, but most people take about 40 minutes to complete it. Check the meaning of what you've put by saying the sentence to yourself – "I agree that....". Before you hand in the questionnaire, double-check that you have answered all the questions, especially if you left some to go back to later.

In the Working with Numbers test you will be given some numerical information such as a table, a diagram, or a graph and asked questions about it. Some of the questions will require you to make simple calculations – you will need to do these without a calculator, so make sure that you are comfortable doing simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. There will be 32 questions to answer in 45 minutes.

In the Understanding information test, you will be given a paragraph of text and asked questions about it. Be careful only to use the information given in the paragraph to answer the question. There will be 25 questions to answer in 35 minutes.

In the Situational Awareness and Problem Solving test you will be given a scenario and asked what you would do. You should try to think what you would do as a new Firefighter and answer accordingly. There will be 30 questions to answer in 35 minutes.

You need to pass each test, plus achieve a minimum cumulative score. If you have a disability such as dyslexia or dyspraxia and have declared it on your application form, we will contact you to discuss what kind of adjustments we may be able to make for you.

Physical Tests

Candidates who are successful in the written test will be invited to take the physical tests. These will consist of:-

Ladder Climb – you will be asked to climb a ladder, lock your legs on the rungs, stretch out your arms to the side, look down and identify a symbol on the ground, and then climb down. This is not a speed test, but you will need to proceed in a confident manner without undue hesitancy. To ensure your safety you will be wearing a full body harness during this test.

Casualty Evacuation – you will be asked to drag a 55kg dummy backwards around a 30m course in 41 seconds. The time allowed is enough that you can complete the course without needing to run.

Ladder Lift – you will be asked to operate a piece of equipment which simulates lifting a ladder onto a cradle and lowering it again. The total load (bar plus weights) weighs 30kg and you will need to lift it to a height of 190cm.

Confined Space – you will be asked to make your way through an enclosed crawl/walkway wearing a breathing apparatus facemask. You will first complete the route with unobscured vision, then return along the same route with your vision obscured, completing the task within 5 minutes.

Equipment Assembly – you will be asked to assemble and disassemble a piece of equipment. An instructor will demonstrate the process first, and there will be a set of pictures available to help you. You will be wearing gloves and your helmet visor will be down, and you will need to complete the task in 5 mins 8 secs.

Equipment Carry – you will be asked to pick up, carry and put down various pieces of equipment over a course in 5 mins and 47 secs. To complete this task you will need to run/jog at times.

You will wear full Firefighters' personal protective equipment while taking all the tests this will consist of tunic, overtrousers, helmet with visor, boots and gloves.

Interview

Candidates who successfully complete the physical tests will be invited to interview. You will be asked questions designed to find out how you have used personal qualities and attributes that are important for Firefighters:-

- Working with Others
- Commitment to Diversity & Integrity
- Commitment to Self Development
- Commitment to Excellence
- Communicating Effectively

The interview will last approximately one hour.

Medical

The final stage in the selection process will be a medical examination. We will invite only the highest-scoring candidates from the interview stage, but because timescales may be tight, we might have to invite more people to medical than we will actually be able to offer contracts to, in case some candidates need further medical evaluation.

Next Steps

The application process can take several months to complete, and it may be that we have more candidates who reach the required standard than we have vacancies. If this happens, we will take candidates in merit order from the pool of those who have passed the process. It's therefore vital that you do not assume that you will be employed until you receive a formal offer of a job, in writing. In particular, do not give notice to a current employer just because you have passed the interview stage.

Useful Websites

www.rbfrs.co.uk

www.fire.gov.uk

www.fireservice.co.uk (not an official website)