

CITY OF CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA

NUMBER: 2.25

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/18/2017

**SUBJECT: DEPARTMENTS OF FIRE AND HUMAN RESOURCES
FIREFIGHTER/EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (EMT)
ENTRANCE SELECTION POLICY**

SUPERSEDES: 8/11/2017

I. PURPOSE

To establish consistent and objective criteria for determining the best-suited candidates for sworn employment in the Chesapeake Fire Department (CFD).

II. DEFINITIONS

Conditional Reemployment – The reemployment of a former sworn CFD employee in the sworn service of the CFD, under prescribed conditions, into the next available vacancy following the Fire’s Chief’s approval of the reemployment request, provided the former CFD employee’s written request for reemployment is made within one year of separation.

Conditional Reinstatement – The reinstatement of a former sworn employee of the CFD, under prescribed conditions, provided the former sworn employee of the CFD submits a written request to the Fire Chief within ninety (90) calendar days of separation.

Eligibility List – A list of Firefighter/EMT Trainee candidates who have successfully completed all required phases of the Fire entrance selection process.

Fire Entrance Selection Process – A process of oral, written and/or practical tests and such other requirements as may be determined by the Fire Chief and the Director of Human Resources with the approval of the City Manager for the purpose of establishing an eligibility list for entrance into the Fire service.

Firefighter/EMT Trainee Candidate – A Fire entrance candidate who meets all minimum entry eligibility requirements of the CFD as outlined in Section IV of this Policy.

Veteran – Any person who provides a DD-214 with an honorable discharge and (i) provided more than 180 consecutive days of full-time, active-duty service in the armed forces of the United States or reserve components thereof, including the National Guard, or (ii) has a service-connected disability rating fixed by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Personal History Statement (PHS) – The candidate’s presentation of credentials, in an approved format, including but not limited to leadership skills, supervision, technical knowledge, skills and abilities, relevant training and certifications, and service to the community.

III. RESPONSIBILITY

The Fire Chief and the Director of Human Resources have oversight responsibility for the administration of the Fire entrance selection process. For the purpose of this policy, it shall be understood that references to the City Manager, Fire Chief or Director of Human Resources shall include their designees. Any third-party vendor contracted by the City to administer the Fire entrance selection process shall manage the entrance selection process from onset to completion to include coordination with and reporting directly to the Fire Chief and the Director of Human Resources.

IV. CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY

In order to qualify to participate in the Fire entrance selection process, or to be considered for reemployment or reinstatement, a candidate must meet the following minimum eligibility requirements:

- A. Be legally authorized to work in the United States;
- B. Be 18 years of age at the time of conditional offer;
- C. Be a high school graduate or possess a GED; and
- D. Possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license with an acceptable driving record in accordance with the City Driving Standards policy.

V. FIRE ENTRANCE SELECTION PROCESS FOR CONDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

The selection process shall consist of an entrance examination, panel interview, physical agility test, assessment of credentials, and an optional Chief's interview. The Appendix contains additional details concerning the selection criteria.

- A. Entrance Examination (40%)

An entrance examination will be administered by a third-party vendor, under the direction of the Fire and Human Resources Departments, to determine the candidates' knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to function successfully as a Firefighter/EMT with the Chesapeake Fire Department.

- B. Panel Interview (60%)

1. A panel comprised of two or more Fire Department employees from various levels within the department are appointed by the Fire Chief to conduct interviews with each candidate who reaches this phase of the process. The interview questions will evaluate a candidate's qualifications, reasoning ability, communication skills, ability to handle stress, and suitability for a career in the fire profession.

2. Each panel member shall assign a total score between 0 and 20 to each candidate. The average of the panel members' scores shall be multiplied by three.

C. Physical Agility Test

Candidates shall be tested for the abilities needed to successfully perform the duties of a Firefighter/EMT Trainee and Firefighter. This phase of the process is conducted by the Fire Department. Candidates' performance is evaluated on a pass/fail basis.

D. Assessment of Credentials

An assessment of candidate credentials will be performed by the Fire Department to ascertain basic information pertaining to the candidate's related fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) education, as well as paid experience in a career department.

E. Chief's Interview (Optional)

The Fire Chief may elect to conduct a personal interview with a candidate as part of the selection process to clarify issues revealed through the process. This step of the process is not graded and shall not be factored in the total score.

VI. ESTABLISHING THE FIRE ENTRANCE ELIGIBILITY LIST

- A. Each Firefighter-Trainee candidate who successfully completes all required phases of the Fire entrance selection process will be placed on the Fire entrance eligibility list for a period of 24 months.
- B. Ranking on the Fire entrance eligibility list shall be all inclusive based upon the candidate's combined scores of the components of the Fire entrance selection process.
- C. A candidate who successfully completes all phases of the Fire entrance selection process and provides appropriate documentation (DD-214) to the CFD validating his/her status as an honorably discharged U.S. veteran or certifying possession of a service connected disability rating shall have two points added to his/her overall score for ranking on the Fire entrance eligibility list.

VII. SELECTING CANDIDATES FOR HIRE

Prior to extending conditional offers of employment, the Fire Chief shall submit to the Director of Budget a written request detailing the vacancies to be filled. This request shall include the names of the separating employee creating a vacancy and/or the approved documentation for creating new vacancies.

- A. The Fire Chief shall select from among the top candidates on the Fire entrance eligibility list each time there is a need to fill a vacancy. The Director of Human Resources shall provide the Fire Chief with an unranked alphabetical list of eligible candidates, consisting of the top five candidates for each requested vacancy or as close to that ratio as the list of

qualified candidates will permit. In instances where there is one vacancy to be filled, the top ten candidates will be referred or as close to that number as the list of qualified candidates will permit.

- B. Upon written request from the Fire Chief and with written approval of the City Manager, the Fire Department may over-hire a specified number of positions to address expected and unexpected vacancies and the potential for turnover in the training academy.
- C. The Fire Chief has the discretion to waive the Trainee status for a candidate who has previously met minimum basic training standards for the position of Firefighter/EMT in the Commonwealth of Virginia, or any other state with whom there is reciprocity.

VIII. TERMS FOR CONDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT OF FIREFIGHTER-TRAINEES

- A. The initial pay rate for a Firefighter/EMT Trainee shall be Grade PS-01/Step 1 of the Firefighter/EMT Trainee grade in the Public Safety Step Plan.
- B. Firefighter/EMT Trainees shall be entitled to those benefits applicable to all new full-time employees.
- C. Firefighter/EMT Trainees shall be subject to a 24-month probationary period, which may be extended in accordance with City Code § 2-279(c).

IX. POST-CONDITIONAL OFFER PROCESS

After the Fire Chief has extended a conditional offer of employment, the candidate must pass a four-part post-conditional offer process.

A. Polygraph Examination

At the discretion of the Fire Chief, a polygraph examination may be administered to determine the truthfulness of the candidate's responses to questions during the selection process. A summary report of the examination shall be released to the Fire Chief. All other documents relating to this examination shall be maintained in a confidential file, separate from the personnel file, in the Fire Department.

B. Fitness for Duty Examination

1. A fitness for duty examination shall be performed by a City-appointed physician to determine if the candidate has any condition which would impair his/her ability to meet the demands (i.e. physical, mental) of the Firefighter/EMT Trainee position. Documents relating to this examination shall be maintained in a confidential file, separate from the personnel file, in the Fire Department.
2. The City's appointed physician may require the candidate be evaluated by a specialist. Any specialist exams required by the City's appointed physician, as

part of the post-conditional offer fit for duty medical examination process, shall be at the candidate's expense.

C. Drug and Alcohol Testing

In accordance with the City's Substance Abuse Policy, Administrative Regulation 2.44, all candidates reaching the post-conditional offer phase shall be required to submit to drug and alcohol testing. A candidate who tests positive for illegal or unlawfully used drugs and/or alcohol shall be determined ineligible for consideration for hire for a minimum period of three years.

D. Background Investigation

1. The background investigation phase will be conducted by the Fire and Human Resources Departments. The investigation includes, but is not limited to, a verification of the candidate's employment history and education, driving record, credit standing, National Sex Offender Public website, the Virginia State Department of Social Services' Child Protective Services Central Registry, military service, and other information pertinent to evaluate the candidate. The candidate must certify the release of this information and provide documentation as requested in order to proceed in the selection process.
2. Candidates shall be required to submit to fingerprinting in order to obtain criminal history record information via the Central Criminal Records Exchange from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Virginia State Police.
3. Discovery of a disqualifying factor shall be cause to rescind the conditional offer of employment. Other background investigation discoveries will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may prevent a candidate from continuing in the process. Disqualifying factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Criminal History

1. Felony or misdemeanor convictions involving acts of violence, dishonesty, or deceit;
2. A conviction of any crime involving sexual misconduct where the lack of affirmative consent by the victim is an element of the crime;
3. A conviction involving the sexual or physical abuse of a member of a vulnerable population (e.g. children, elderly, incapacitated);
4. A conviction of any crime (including abuse, neglect, theft from, or financial exploitation) against a person entrusted to his/her care or protection in which the victim is a patient or is a resident of a health care facility;

5. A conviction of any crime involving controlled substances or synthetics, including unlawful possession or distribution or intent to distribute unlawfully Schedule I through V drugs as defined by the Virginia Drug Control Act (§ 54.1-3400 seq. of the Code of Virginia) unless at least five years have passed since the conviction or five years have passed since release from custodial confinement whichever occurs later;
6. A conviction of any “Crimes Against the Person” within the last five years, as prescribed by Administrative Regulation 2.46, Workplace Violence Prevention Policy; or
7. A conviction of any barrier crimes or offenses enumerated in Code of Virginia §19.2-392.02, as amended from time to time, or equivalent offenses in another state.

B. Inappropriate Conduct

1. Inclusion on either the National Sex Offender Public Website or the Virginia State Department of Social Services’ Child Protective Services Central Registry;
2. Use of Cocaine, LSD, PCP, or any type of hallucinogenic drug in the last five years or use of marijuana in the last three years, unless the candidate has successfully completed, or is currently participating in, a supervised drug rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs. The candidate may also demonstrate that he/she has been otherwise rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs;
3. Identified by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General as excluded from Medicare and other federal health-care programs;
4. Any disciplinary or enforcement action from another state’s Office of EMS, or other recognized state or national healthcare provider licensing or certifying body within the last five (5) years;
5. Permanent revocation or a history of revocation of license or certification by another state’s Office of EMS, or other recognized state or national healthcare provider licensing or certifying body;
6. Dishonorable discharges or any conduct-related discharge from any military service. Uncharacterized discharges will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis;
7. Untruthfulness or the intentional withholding of pertinent information during any phase of the application process (e.g. application, examination, interview, paperwork).

8. Cheating on any examination associated with this process.

X. RE-ENTRY INTO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

A. Reinstatement

1. At the discretion of the Fire Chief, a former sworn employee of the CFD may be reinstated following voluntary resignation, at a level not to exceed the pay grade PS02 for Firefighter/EMT position, pay grade of PS04 for Firefighter/Paramedic, ALS Tech/ Firefighter, Senior Firefighter positions, or PS05 for any of the Master positions identified in the Chesapeake Fire Department Career Development Program .

Reinstatement at the Senior (PS04) or Master (PS05) positions, as identified in the Chesapeake Fire Department Career Development program will be at the discretion of the Fire Chief based on department need.

2. The request for reinstatement must be made in writing to the Fire Chief within 90 days of voluntary resignation, and approved by the Fire Chief and the Director of Human Resources.
3. Candidates for reinstatement may be exempt from certain phases of the pre-conditional offer process, at the discretion of the Fire Chief, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources.
4. Reinstatement is not an option if the former employee voluntarily resigned in lieu of impending discipline and/or possible termination, or otherwise separated from the Fire Department under unfavorable terms, as determined by the Fire Chief.
5. The former employee must meet all candidate eligibility requirements as outlined in Section IV of this Policy.
6. A former employee reinstated to a sworn position in the rank structure of the CFD must satisfy a six-month reinstatement probationary period and any time remaining in the initial 24-month probationary period at the time of separation.
7. Upon reinstatement, the employee shall have no recordable break in service, thus ensuring accrual rates, salary, and length of service return to pre-resignation rates.
8. The effective date of any voluntary benefits made available through the City that are elected by the employee (e.g. health insurance, dental insurance, etc.), will be based on the employee's return to work date and will follow the new hire effective date schedule. The employee will be responsible for the employee's share of the premiums.

B. Reemployment

1. At the discretion of the Fire Chief, former employees in the sworn service of the CFD may qualify for conditional reemployment at a level not to exceed the pay grade PS02 for Firefighter/EMT position, pay grade of PS04 for Firefighter/Paramedic, ALS Tech/ Firefighter, or Senior Firefighter positions, or PS05 for any of the Master positions identified in the Chesapeake Fire Department Career Development Program .

Reinstatement at the Senior (PS04) or Master (PS05) positions, as identified in the Chesapeake Fire Department Career Development program will be at the discretion of the Fire Chief based on department need.

2. Former employees are not eligible for conditional reemployment to previously held positions of assignment or rank positions, as these positions are filled either by appointment or through a competitive process.
3. Reemployment is not an option if the former employee's status is not eligible for re-hire, voluntarily separated in lieu of impending discipline and/or possible termination, or otherwise separated from the CFD under unfavorable terms, as determined by the Fire Chief.
4. Within one year of the effective date of separation, the former employee must submit a letter to the Fire Chief requesting conditional reemployment with a copy to the Director of Human Resources. If the request for reemployment is granted, the candidate will be issued a conditional offer to fill the next available vacancy, provided the candidate meets all required criteria. Should the candidate decline the offer, any further consideration for employment would be through the standard Fire entrance selection process.
5. The former employee must successfully complete a physical ability test, as well as all phases of the post-conditional offer process. The assessment of credentials and oral board examination are waived.
6. Terms for Reemployment
 - a. Salary Considerations
 - 1) Upon acceptance, the former employee shall be conditionally reemployed at a rate determined by the Fire Chief based on the former employee's qualifications and approved by the Director of Human Resources.
 - 2) The Fire Chief has the discretion to waive the Trainee status if the former employee possesses all certifications required by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the CFD. If the Trainee status is waived, the former employee shall be conditionally reemployed at a rate determined by the Fire Chief

based on the former employee's qualifications and approved by the Director of Human Resources.

- 3) A candidate for reemployment, who separated from the Department as a Firefighter/EMT, Firefighter/Paramedic, or ALS/Technician Firefighter but is no longer certified in said position or eligible for re-certification, shall be reemployed as Firefighter-Trainee. In such instance, the candidate shall be reemployed at the minimum salary within the Firefighter-Trainee grade, for the duration of the training academy, unless the Director of Human Resources approves an exception. Upon successful completion of the academy, the employee shall be elevated to the position of Firefighter/EMT PS02 – Step 1, Firefighter/Paramedic PS04 – Step 1, or ALS/Technician Firefighter PS04 – Step 1, unless the Director of Human Resources approves an exception not to exceed the midpoint of the Firefighter/EMT PSO2 grade, Firefighter/Paramedic or ALS/Technician Firefighter PS04 grade.

b. Benefits

A former employee in the rank structure of the CFD who is reemployed under this provision shall be entitled to those benefits applicable to all new full-time employees.

c. Probationary Status

A former employee reemployed to a sworn position in the rank structure of the Chesapeake Fire Department shall serve a six-month reemployment probationary period and any time remaining in the initial 24-month probationary period at the time of separation.

d. Credit for Past Experience

Conditionally reemployed employees shall receive no credit for past experience towards promotional eligibility or other seniority-related considerations upon their conditional reemployment.

XII. POLICY INTERPRETATION

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for rendering official interpretations of this Policy.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:



Dana E. Sanford, Deputy City Attorney

12.14.2017

Date

APPROVED AND ADOPTED:



James E. Baker, City Manager

12/15/2017

Date

APPENDIX TO THE FIRE ENTRANCE SELECTION PROCESS

The following procedures shall be followed in assigning points/weights to each phase of the Fire entrance selection process for basic entry Firefighter-Trainee candidates and certified Firefighter candidates:

- I. Entrance Examination (40%)**
- II. Panel Interview (60%)**
- III. Assessment of Credentials (Not to exceed 7 points total)**
 - A. Education**

Points for education shall be assigned as follows:

Non-cumulative Points	Criteria
2	Completion of Firefighter/EMT Course at <i>Chesapeake Career Center</i>
3	Completion of Firefighter/EMT Course at <i>Chesapeake Career Center</i> and graduated at Honor Roll status
4	Related associate's degree or Commonwealth of Virginia EMT-B Certification
5	Related bachelor's degree or Commonwealth of Virginia EMT-P Certification

B. Paid Career Experience

Non-cumulative points for paid experience shall be assigned as follows:

Non-cumulative Points	Criteria
1	Paid experience between one and less than three years in a career department, and a graduate of a recognized basic recruit fire academy, with current certifications for Commonwealth of Virginia Firefighter II.
2	Paid experience of three years or more in a career department, and a graduate of a recognized basic recruit fire academy, with current certifications for Commonwealth of Virginia Firefighter II.

IV. Chief's Interview (Optional)

The Chief's interview is optional and shall be used in the Chief's discretion to clarify issues revealed through the entrance process. This phase of the selection process shall not be assigned a point or weight.