

CITY OF CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA

NUMBER: 2.25 (22.2)

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

EFFECTIVE DATE: 09/01/06

**SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
RESOURCES - FIRE ENTRANCE
POLICY**

SUPERSEDES: 09/15/05

I. PURPOSE

To establish consistent and objective criteria for determining the best-suited candidates for entrance into the Fire Department.

For the purposes of this Policy, it shall be understood that references to the Fire Chief, Director of Human Resources, or City Manager shall include their designees.

II. DEFINITIONS

Fire Entrance Examination shall be defined as a process of written, oral, and physical ability tests and background investigations administered by the Department of Human Resources and the Fire Department for entrance into the Fire service.

Firefighter-Trainee Candidate shall be defined as a Fire Entrance Examination candidate who meets all standard entry eligibility requirements of the Chesapeake Fire Department.

Certified Firefighter Candidate shall be defined as a Fire Entrance Examination candidate who possesses all certifications required by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Chesapeake Fire Department.

Veteran shall be defined as any person who has received an honorable discharge and has (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 Veterans Affairs.

III. CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY

A. In order to qualify to participate in the Fire Entrance Examination process, either as a Firefighter-Trainee, a Certified Firefighter, or a candidate for reinstatement, the following qualifications must be met and the required documentation produced, when requested, to show eligibility:

- Be legally authorized to work in the United States;
- Be 18 years of age at the time of conditional offer;

- Be a high school graduate or possess a GED;
- Possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license with a driving record that complies with City driving standards. (The candidate is required to provide a current (within 30 days), official driving record at the written examination test site. Candidates whose driving record is found to not be in compliance with City driving standards will not be allowed to sit for the written examination); and
- Have no felony convictions or any convictions involving acts of dishonesty, deceit, or immorality.

IV. **DISQUALIFYING FACTORS**

- A. The background investigation shall contain an inquiry into the following factors, among others. The discovery of any of these factors at any time during the application process shall automatically disqualify a candidate from continuing in the application process.
1. Convicted or found guilty of any crime involving sexual misconduct where the lack of affirmative consent by the victim is an element of the crime, such as forcible rape;
 2. Convicted of a felony involving the sexual or physical abuse of children, the elderly or the infirm, such as sexual misconduct with a child, making or distributing child pornography or using a child in a sexual display, incest involving a child, assault on an elderly or infirmed person;
 3. Convicted or found guilty of any other act that is a felony except that the felon is eligible for affiliation five years after the date of final release if no additional felonies have been committed during that time;
 4. Convicted or found guilty 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. Convicted or found guilty of any "Crimes Against the Person" within five (5) years immediately preceding application for employment, as prescribed by Administrative Regulation 2.46 (24.0), Workplace Violence Prevention Policy;
 6. Convicted or found guilty of reckless driving or speeding 20 mph above the speed limit or any other serious traffic offense with an assessment of six or more demerit points within the past three years; or more than two any other moving violations within the past three years;
 7. Convicted or found guilty of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, assigned to any alcohol safety action program or driver alcohol rehabilitation program pursuant to § 18.2- 271.1 hit and run, or operating on a suspended or revoked license within the past five years. A person having any of these convictions in Virginia or another state may be eligible for reinstatement as an

operator after five years and after successful completion of an approved emergency vehicle operator's course (EVOC) within the year prior to reinstatement;

8. Convicted or found guilty of any crime involving the use, possession, manufacturing, and/or distribution of illegal drugs except that the person is eligible for affiliation five years after the date of final release if no additional crimes of this type have been committed during that time;
 9. Use of Marijuana, Cocaine, LSD, PCP, or any type of hallucinogenic drug in the last five years, unless the candidate has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs, or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs, or is participating in a supervised rehabilitation program and is no longer engaged in such use. Proof of rehabilitation must be furnished to the Department of Human Resources;
 10. Identified by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General as excluded from Medicare and other federal health-care programs;
 11. Not currently under any disciplinary or enforcement action from another state EMS office or other recognized state or national healthcare provider licensing or certifying body. Personnel subject to these disciplinary or enforcement actions may be eligible for certification provided there have been no further disciplinary or enforcement actions for five years prior to application for certification in Virginia;
 12. Never been subject to a permanent revocation of license or certification by another state EMS office or other recognized state or national healthcare provider licensing or certifying body;
 13. Other than Honorable discharge from any military service;
 14. Untruthfulness or the intentional withholding of information on any application, interview, or paperwork associated with the application; and
 15. Cheating on any examination or testing associated with the position.
- B. The disqualification of any candidate shall be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources to assure compliance with this section.

V. THE FIREFIGHTER-TRAINEE EXAMINATION PROCESS

In order to qualify for placement on the Firefighter-Trainee Eligibility List, a candidate must pass each successive phase of a four-part examination process including a written examination, physical agility test, assessment of credentials, and panel interview. Ranking on the Firefighter-Trainee Eligibility List shall be based upon the combined scores from the assessment of credentials and the panel interview. Candidates successfully completing all four phases shall be placed on the Firefighter-Trainee Eligibility List for a period of up to twelve months from the date of assignment to the list.

The Fire Chief shall select from among the top candidates of the Firefighter-Trainee Eligibility List each time there is a need to fill a Firefighter-Trainee vacancy. This shall be accomplished by the Director of Human Resources providing the Fire Chief with an unranked alphabetical list of eligible candidates, consisting of fifteen (15) 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 thirty (30) candidates will be referred or as close to that number as the list of qualified candidates will permit.

The four phases are detailed as follows:

A. Written Examination (Pass/Fail)

A written examination for basic entry into the Fire service shall be administered by the Department of Human Resources upon a determination of necessity by the Fire Chief and the Director of Human Resources. The candidate must pass the written examination to be considered to continue to the next phase of the process.

B. Candidate Physical Agility Test (Pass/Fail)

The physical fitness test measures the candidate's ability to meet the strength, endurance and fitness standards established as essential in the performance of the duties of Firefighter. The candidate must pass the physical agility test to continue to the next phase of the process. A candidate who fails the physical agility test initially will have the opportunity to participate in a fitness training program before retesting on this phase of the process.

C. Assessment of Credentials (25%)

This phase of the process is designed to provide the City with basic information pertaining to the candidate's education and paid and volunteer experience. Each candidate must provide documentation necessary to complete this portion of the selection process. Assessment of credentials and assignment of points shall be the responsibility of the Fire Department.

D. Panel Interview (75%)

A panel of three (3) Fire Department employees, appointed by the Fire Chief, shall conduct an interview with each candidate who reaches this phase of the process. The Fire Department may elect to include one member of the community as a member of the panel. The questions, which must be approved by the Department of Human Resources, will evaluate a candidate's communication skills, reasoning abilities, ability to handle stress, and interest in the fire profession.

E. The Fire Chief may elect to conduct a personal interview with any candidate when deemed necessary to clarify issues revealed through the qualifying process.

VI. CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT OF CERTIFIED FIREFIGHTERS

In order to qualify for placement on the Certified Firefighter Eligibility List, a candidate must pass each successive phase of a three-part examination process including a physical agility test, assessment of credentials, and panel interview. Ranking on the Certified Firefighter Eligibility List shall be based upon the combined scores from the assessment of credentials and the panel interview. Candidates successfully completing all three phases shall be placed on the Certified Firefighter Eligibility List for a period of up to twelve months from the date of assignment to the list.

The Fire Chief shall select from among the top candidates of the Certified Firefighter Eligibility List each time there is a determination to hire a Certified Firefighter. This shall be accomplished by the Director of Human Resources providing the Fire Chief with an unranked alphabetical list of eligible candidates, consisting of five (5) 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 (10) candidates will be referred or as close to that number as the list of qualified candidates will permit.

In addition to the qualifications listed in Section III, Certified Firefighter candidates must meet the following qualifications and must produce the required documentation, when requested, to show eligibility:

- Be employed within the last six months in a sworn firefighting position (full-time/paid) in good standing with a duly organized government firefighting agency; and
- Possess all certifications required by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Chesapeake Fire Department.

A. Salary Considerations

The pay rate for the Certified Firefighter who receives lateral entry into the Fire Department shall not exceed the market rate of the Firefighter/EMT or Firefighter/Paramedic range, as appropriate.

B. Benefits

1. Certified Firefighters who receive lateral entry into the Fire Department shall be entitled to those benefits applicable to all new full-time employees.
2. Credit for past experience shall not be given towards promotional eligibility or other seniority-related considerations upon lateral entry.

C. Probationary Status

Certified Firefighters who laterally transfer into the Fire Department shall be subject to a 24-month probation period.

VII. CONDITIONS FOR REINSTATEMENT

A. Criteria for Reinstatement

Former employees in the rank structure of the Fire Department may qualify for reinstatement at the entry-level not to exceed the position of Firefighter/EMT or Firefighter/Paramedic. Former employees are not eligible for reinstatement to previously held positions of assignment or career path or rank positions as these positions are filled either by appointment or through a competitive process.

In addition to the qualifications listed in Section III, candidates for reinstatement must comply with the stipulations outlined below.

1. The former employee must hold an eligible for re-hire status and have separated from the Fire Department under favorable terms, as determined by the Fire Chief.
2. The former employee must write a letter to the Fire Chief requesting reinstatement within one year of the effective date of separation.
3. If the former employee separated from the Department as a Firefighter/Paramedic, he/she must provide proof of possession of the appropriate ALS certifications to the Fire Chief to be considered for reinstatement at that level.

4. The former employee must successfully complete the physical agility test in the pre-offer phase of the Firefighter-Trainee Entrance Examination process and all post-conditional offer screenings associated with the process.
5. At the discretion of the Fire Chief, employees may be reinstated within thirty (30) calendar days of their termination date following a voluntary resignation [only]. Request for reinstatement within the 30 calendar days must be made to the Fire Chief in writing. Reinstatements made within the 30 calendar days may, with the Fire Chief's recommendation, be reinstated with no recordable break in service ensuring accrual rates, salary and length of service return to pre-resignation rates. *Reinstatements exceeding 30 calendar days shall will constitute a break in service and will be treated under the general conditions outlined in this section of the policy.*

A. Salary Considerations

1. Upon appointment, the candidate shall be reinstated at his/her pay rate at the time of separation, not to exceed the market rate of the Firefighter-Trainee range.
2. The Fire Chief has the discretion to waive the Trainee status if the candidate's certification is current. If the Trainee status is waived, the candidate shall be reinstated at his/her pay rate at the time of separation, not to exceed the market rate of the Firefighter/EMT or Firefighter/Paramedic range, as appropriate.

B. Benefits

1. Reinstated employees shall be entitled to those benefits applicable to all new full-time employees.
2. Reinstated employees shall receive no credit for past experience towards promotional eligibility or other seniority-related considerations upon their reinstatement.

C. Probationary Status

The probation period for a reinstated employee shall include a six-month reinstatement probation period as well as the balance of the initial 24-month probation period that remained at time of separation.

VIII. CONDITIONAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

- A. Prior to extending conditional offers of employment, the Fire Chief shall submit to the Director of Human Resources a written request detailing the vacancies to be filled. This request shall include the names of the separating employees creating the vacancy and shall include documentation for new vacancies.

- B. Once the vacancies have been verified by the Department of Human Resources, the Fire Chief may elect to extend conditional offers to candidates who have complied with the requirements for reinstatement. The Fire Chief may consider extending conditional offers of employment to Certified Firefighters for lateral transfer into the Fire Department, or exercise the option of selecting candidates from among those included on the Eligibility List for Firefighter-Trainee. To insure the Fire Department's workforce reflects the diversity of the community it serves, under-representation of a particular sex or minority group may be considered as a relevant factor in the selection process when selecting among candidates who are fully qualified.
- C. Upon written request from the Fire Chief and approval of the City Manager, the Fire Department may over-hire by a specified number of positions.

IX. POST-CONDITIONAL OFFER EXAMINATION PROCESS

After the Fire Chief has extended a conditional offer of employment, the candidate must pass the post-conditional offer examination process. Each of these examinations is evaluated as pass/fail.

The post-conditional offer examination phases are detailed as follows:

A. Background Investigation

A candidate who has been extended a conditional offer of employment shall undergo a background investigation conducted by the Fire Department. The investigation includes, but is not limited to, a review of the candidate's employment history, police record, driving record, credit standing, and education. The candidate must certify the release of this information and provide documentation, as requested, in order to proceed in the hiring process. Discovery of a disqualifying factor (Section IV) shall be cause to rescind the conditional offer of employment.

B. Polygraph Examination

A polygraph examination may be administered at the discretion of the Fire Chief to determine the truthfulness of the candidate's responses to questions during the preceding phases of the application process. In such instance, the candidate shall be notified as to what information will be verified and for what purpose it will be used. A summary result of the examination shall be released to the Fire Chief. All other documents relating to this examination shall be maintained in a separate file in the Fire Department.

C. Medical Examination

A medical examination shall be performed by a City-approved physician to determine if the candidate is free from any disease or physical defect which would impair his/her ability to meet the physical demands of the position of Firefighter-Trainee. Documents relating to this examination shall be maintained in a confidential file, separate from the personnel file, in the Fire Department.

In certain cases, the City's physician may require the candidate to submit to further testing by a specialist. Any specialist exams requested by the City's physician, as a part of the post-conditional offer medical examination process, shall be at the candidate's expense.

D. Drug and Alcohol Testing

In accordance with the City's Substance Abuse Policy (Administrative Regulation 2.44), all candidates reaching this phase in the Fire Entrance Examination process shall be required to submit to drug and alcohol testing. Candidates who test positive for drugs and/or alcohol shall be determined ineligible for hire.

X. TRANSFER (INTERNAL)

Any City employee who desires to transfer to the Fire Department to become a Firefighter-Trainee must go through the Fire Entrance Examination process. The Fire Chief has the discretion to waive the Trainee status if the candidate possesses all certifications required by the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Chesapeake Fire Department. Upon appointment, the standard policies for transfer, demotion, and promotion shall apply. Such employees shall receive no credit for past experience toward promotional eligibility or other seniority-related considerations in their new positions.


Anne F. Odell, Acting City Manager

9-1-06
Effective Date

APPENDIX TO FIRE ENTRANCE POLICY

The following procedures will be followed in assigning points to the Assessment of Credentials and Panel Interview phases of the Firefighter-Trainee and Certified Firefighter Entrance Examination processes.

I. ASSESSMENT OF CREDENTIALS (25%)

A. Education

Points for education shall be assigned as follows.

Points	Criteria
1	30 college credits
2	Unrelated associate's degree
3	Related associate's degree or unrelated bachelor's degree
4	Related bachelor's degree or unrelated master's degree
5	Related master's degree

B. Paid and volunteer experience

Points for paid and volunteer experience shall be assigned as follows.

Points	Criteria
1	No work experience
1	Unrelated part-time, summer, or seasonal volunteer or paid experience
2	Unrelated volunteer or paid experience totaling up to two years
3	Unrelated volunteer or paid experience totaling between two and five years
4	Unrelated volunteer or paid experience totaling five years or more
5	Up to one year of directly-related volunteer or paid experience
6	Directly-related volunteer or paid experience totaling between one and three years
7	Directly-related volunteer or paid experience totaling three to five years

- 8 Directly-related volunteer or paid experience totaling five to seven years
- 9 Directly-related volunteer or paid experience totaling seven years or more
- 10 Directly-related volunteer or paid experience *and* certified Firefighter/EMT in the Commonwealth of Virginia

C. Consideration of Veteran's Status

Five (5) points shall be awarded to each candidate who provides appropriate documentation validating their status as an honorably discharged U. S. veteran and who has passed all preliminary phases of the entrance examination process.

The assessment of credentials score shall be the total points (education, experience, and veteran's status) multiplied by 1.25.

II. **PANEL INTERVIEW (75%)**

Each candidate shall be rated between 0 and 10 by each of the three panelists. The panel interview score shall be the total of the scores multiplied by 2.5.