

CITY OF CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA

NUMBER: 2.65

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1/30/2018

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENTS OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND FIRE - ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT TECHNICIAN/FIREFIGHTER ENTRANCE SELECTION POLICY

I. PURPOSE

To establish consistent and objective criteria for determining the best-suited candidates for sworn employment in the Chesapeake Fire Department (CFD) as Advanced Life Support Technician/Firefighter Trainees and Advanced Life Support Technician/Firefighters.

II. DEFINITIONS

Advanced Life Support Technician/Firefighter Entrance Selection Process (ALST/FF) - A process of written, oral, and/or practical assessments 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 as an ALST/FF.

ALST/FF Trainee Candidate – An ALST/FF entrance candidate who meets all candidate eligibility requirements of the Chesapeake Fire Department as outlined in Section IV of this Policy.

Certified ALST/FF Candidate – An ALST/FF entrance candidate who has previously met minimum basic training standards as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Paramedic, or Emergency Medical Technician - Intermediate in the Commonwealth of Virginia, or the National Registry of EMT's.

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 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 ALST/FF Trainee candidates who have successfully completed all required phases of the ALST/FF entrance selection process.

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.

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.

III. RESPONSIBILITY

The Fire Chief and the Director of Human Resources have oversight responsibility for the administration of the ALST/FF entrance selection process. For the purpose of this policy, it shall be understood that references to the City Manager, Fire Chief and Director of Human Resources shall include their designees. Any third-party vendor contracted by the City to administer the ALST/FF 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 ALST/FF entrance selection process or to be considered for reinstatement or reemployment, 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. Possess a current Emergency Medical Technician – Paramedic certification from the Commonwealth of Virginia or the National Registry of EMTs, or possess a current Emergency Medical Technician – Intermediate certification from the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- D. Be a high school graduate or possess a GED; and
- E. Possess a valid motor vehicle operator’s license with an acceptable driving record in accordance with City Driving Standards policy.

V. ALST/FF ENTRANCE SELECTION PROCESS FOR CONDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

The ALST/FF entrance selection process for conditional employment includes a panel interview, an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Skills assessment, a physical agility test, and an assessment of credentials, as well as an optional interview with the Chief Medical Officer or the Fire Chief.

A. 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/EMS 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.

B. EMS Skills Assessment (40%)

A series of EMS Skill stations will be established to assess a candidate's knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform EMS tasks in accordance with National Core Competencies. These skill stations will use approved score sheets and the stations administered by released to practice Fire Department ALS providers.

C. Physical Agility Test

Candidates shall be tested for the abilities needed to successfully perform the duties of an ALST/FF Trainee and ALST/FF. 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 Services (EMS) education, as well as EMS experience in a public, private, hospital, military setting and/or career fire department.

E. Chief's Interview (Optional)

The Fire Chief or Chief Medical Officer may elect to conduct a personal interview with any 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 ALST/FF ENTRANCE ELIGIBILITY LIST

- A. Each ALST/FF candidate who successfully completes all phases of the ALST/FF entrance selection process will be placed on the ALST/FF entrance eligibility list

for a period of 24 months or until a new eligibility list is established, whichever occurs first.

- B. Ranking on the ALST/FF entrance eligibility list shall be all inclusive based upon the candidate's combined scores of the components of the ALST/FF entrance selection process.
- C. A candidate who successfully completes all phases of the ALST/FF 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 ALST/FF 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 name of each separating employee creating a vacancy and/or approved documentation for creating new vacancies.

- A. The Fire Chief shall select from among the top candidates on the ALST/FF 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 ALST/FF in the Commonwealth of Virginia, or in any other state with whom there is reciprocity. This must include EMT-Paramedic certification from the Commonwealth of Virginia or National Registry of EMT certification and must also include certification from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs at a minimum of Firefighter Level 1 or equivalent Pro Board® Fire Service Professional Qualifications System certification.

VIII. TERMS FOR CONDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT OF ALST/FF TRAINEE

- A. The initial pay rate for an ALST/FF Trainee shall be Grade PS-03/Step 1 in the Public Safety Step Plan.

- B. ALST/FF Trainees shall be entitled to those benefits applicable to all new full-time employees.
- C. ALST/FF Trainees shall be subject to a 24-month probationary period, which may be extended in accordance with City Code § 2-279(c).
- D. The Fire Chief, with approval of the Director of Human Resources, has the discretion to offer a higher rate of pay, up to Grade PS-04 of the Public Safety Step Plan, to any ALST/FF Trainee who possesses all certifications required by the Commonwealth of Virginia and CFD.

IX. POST-CONDITIONAL OFFER PROCESS

After the Fire Chief has extended a conditional offer of employment, the candidate must pass the 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 ALST/FF 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
 - i. Felony or misdemeanor convictions involving acts of violence, dishonesty, or deceit;
 - ii. A conviction of any crime involving sexual misconduct where the lack of affirmative consent by the victim is an element of the crime;
 - iii. A conviction involving the sexual or physical abuse of a member of a vulnerable population (e.g. children, elderly, incapacitated);
 - iv. 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;

- v. 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;
- vi. 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
- vii. 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

- i. Inclusion on either the National Sex Offender Public Website or the Virginia State Department of Social Services’ Child Protective Services Central Registry;
- ii. 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;
- iii. Identified by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General as excluded from Medicare and other federal health-care programs;
- iv. 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;
- v. 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;

- vi. Dishonorable discharges or any conduct-related discharge from any military service. Uncharacterized discharges will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis;
- vii. Untruthfulness or the intentional withholding of pertinent information during any phase of the application process (e.g. application, examination, interview, paperwork).
- viii. Cheating on any examination associated with this process.

X. RECLASSIFICATION FROM ALST/FF TO FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDIC

ALST/FF employees that have completed the probationary requirements for the ALST/FF position will have the opportunity to be reclassified as a Firefighter/Paramedic.

ALST/FF employees who want to be reclassified as a Firefighter/Paramedic must meet the following criteria:

- A. The employee must submit a request in writing to the Fire Chief for a reclassification.
- B. The employee must have completed training to the level of Virginia Department of Programs Firefighter level II.
- C. The employee must have an overall score of at least 3.75 on their most recent annual performance evaluation or have an average of 3.75 on the three most recent annual performance evaluations.
- D. The employee must have a record of proficiency in conformance with the City's customer service initiatives, Chesapeake Fire Department Vitals Handbook, Fire Department Code of Ethics, and punctuality.
- E. The employee must have exhibited conformance to the Fire Department policies, as demonstrated by satisfactory work history with no discipline (suspension, demotion, or termination) or significant performance concerns within two years prior to the date of request for reclassification.
- F. The employee must have demonstrated conformance to the City driving standards. In addition the employee may not have more than one preventable accident within two years prior to the date of application. A preventable accident is defined as an accident where the employee's negligence and/or violation of policy contributed to or caused the accident.

Reclassification requests will be granted based on departmental staffing needs. In the event that the requests received exceed the department's need, candidates will be placed on an eligibility list based on the highest scores from their last 3 annual performance evaluations.

In the case of tied evaluation scores, the candidate with the longest service as a sworn officer in the CFD will be placed above those with whom he/she is tied.

ALST/FF employees who are reclassified to Firefighter/Paramedic will retain all seniority within the department and will be eligible to compete in the promotional process in accordance with A.R. 2.27, Department of Fire and Human Resources, Fire Promotional Policy.

XI. 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 the probationary entry level not to exceed the position of ALST/FF.
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 pay grade PS04.
2. Former employees are not eligible for conditional reemployment 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.
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, oral board examination, and/or panel interview are waived.
6. Terms for Reemployment
 - a. Salary Considerations
 - i. 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.
 - ii. 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.

iii. A candidate for reemployment, who separated from the Department as an ALST/FF, but is no longer certified in said position or eligible for re-certification, shall be reemployed as ALST/FF Trainee. In such instance, the candidate shall be reemployed at the minimum salary within the ALST/FF 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 ALST/FF, PS04 – Step 1, unless the Director of Human Resources approves an exception, not to exceed the midpoint of the pay 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

Date

APPROVED AND ADOPTED:

James E. Baker, City Manager

Date

APPENDIX TO THE ALST/FF ENTRANCE SELECTION PROCESS

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

- I. EMS Skills Assessment (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	Thirty (30) college credit hours from an accredited college or university
3	Unrelated associate's degree from an accredited college or university.
4	Related associate's degree or unrelated bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
5	Related bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

- 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 as an Advanced Life Support provider (Paramedic or Intermediate) in a designated emergency response agency.
2	Paid experience of three years or more as an Advanced Life Support provider (Paramedic or Intermediate) in a designated emergency response agency.

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.