



COMMUNITY • INNOVATION • SERVICE • INTEGRITY • TEAMWORK

FIREFIGHTING

APPLICATION MANUAL

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

If you are thinking about pursuing a career with the City of Surrey Fire Service, I encourage you to continue reading this manual to gain an in depth understanding of the City's steps and requirements.

The Surrey Fire Service is a positive place to work. We are an organization that has chosen to work together through a focus on cooperation and win-win rather than being locked into roles and practices that do not meet the real needs of our community or of staff. Over the last decade, we have become known to the community as a team of exceptional women and men who are innovative, willing to take risks, and are prepared to take on all challenges with enduring resilience.

Throughout North America, the Surrey Fire Service has provided mentorship to other Fire Services as we have gained credibility through our vision, aspirations, and effective leadership as a modern fire service.

Our officers assume strong leadership roles in our day-to-day operations and they model three essential attributes:

1. Earn the trust and respect of their staff, their elected officials, and their community;
2. Clearly articulate our vision of a multifaceted, diverse, safety focused, fire protection and emergency response service. This is accomplished in a manner that all can understand, empathize with, and embrace; and
3. Encourage their staff and the community to champion our vision through a style of management, which welcomes all stakeholders into the process. Prominent within this group of stakeholders are elected officials, fire officers, firefighters, and representatives from the community at large.

These attributes are simple enough to describe but, are profoundly difficult to maintain. It is not because they are difficult to learn, but because they require people to step out of their comfort zones to implement and bring to maturity. We encourage all members of the Fire Service to constantly strive for the future, and while honoring the past; resist being limited by doing things the old way.

Clearly, the Surrey Fire Service focuses on a shared leadership vision. Staff has the right to make mistakes and learn as they experiment with new ideas. We encourage staff to be courageous in implementing innovative and evolutionary solutions while meeting the needs of the community and the Fire Service.

Finally, the role of Fire Chief is not for the faint of heart. This position will be the most demanding challenge of my working life. Our success will be because of the people I work with. A work force that sees the rewards of a new and dynamic Fire Service, bold enough to change with community needs, will provide us all with great satisfaction in our collective contributions.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the Surrey Fire Service as a career opportunity. I wish you every success in your endeavor to become the next Surrey firefighter.

Larry Thomas, Fire Chief

INTRODUCTION

General Information

Becoming a firefighter takes time and effort, but when you succeed, you will have found the career that will keep you engaged and fulfilled for the duration of your professional life.

The type of candidates the Surrey Fire Service is looking for has changed. Today, firefighters represent the diverse nature of the community we serve. We are looking for firefighters who are mature, well-educated and team oriented.

We encourage women and diverse candidates to bring their unique strengths and experiences to the Fire Service. Our diversity strengthens us and improves our ability to serve our community.

Firefighting has evolved a great deal in the last twenty years. The number of medical assistance calls that departments like the Surrey Fire Service (SFS) attend have increased to where over 72% of the incidents we respond to are medical assistance calls or motor vehicle accidents; only 15% were fire related. Structure fires have declined due to increased public education on fire safety and to the promotion of working smoke alarms, resulting in firefighters having the time to focus on safety, customer service and fire prevention initiatives.

Compensation and Hours of Work

The Surrey Fire Service offers excellent pay and benefits. First class firefighters (those who have completed three years of employment) can expect to earn approximately \$98,000 a year, with a comprehensive benefit and pension package. These terms of employment can be found in the collective agreement which is available at <https://www.surrey.ca/about-surrey/emergency-services/surrey-fire-service/about-the-surrey-fire-service>.

A Surrey firefighter's hours of work are based on a schedule of 24 hours on, 24 hours off, 24 hours on followed by 5 days off.

During these 24 hour shifts, firefighters engage in a variety of activities, such as emergency response, annual fire inspections, fire hall chores, vehicle and equipment checks, HomeSafe visits, assisting with radio dispatch, smoke alarm installations, training, and fire hall assigned tasks such as first aid supply, administration or hose testing. All crews are provided an opportunity to maintain their physical fitness in fitness centres located in every fire hall.

Volunteering

Outside of working hours, firefighters take part in many charitable functions organized by the Surrey Firefighters Union, Local 1271 of the International Association of Fire Fighters. Thousands of dollars are raised each year for the Surrey Firefighter's Charitable Society. This money supports many firefighter-sponsored programs, local charities, and community organizations, with a focus on the well-being of children.

Factors for Consideration

Like any career, there are challenges when working as a firefighter. Make sure you understand what you are committing to prior to pursuing all the required certifications. Things to consider include:

Shift Work

- Rotating shifts require firefighters to work weekends and statutory holidays.
- Shift work may require firefighters to make significant adjustments to their personal schedules.
- Shift work also requires firefighters to be away from home over night on a regular basis.

Physically Demanding

- The work of a firefighter is physically demanding.
- Firefighters must maintain their physical fitness and lead a healthy lifestyle to perform their duties safely and to guard against the health risks of the job, which include heart disease and several forms of cancer.

Psychologically Demanding

- The work of a firefighter will expose you to tragic and traumatic incidents.
- Firefighters must be the kind of people who have the emotional fortitude, healthy coping mechanisms, and mental resiliency to deal with these situations.

We hope we have given you a realistic view of a career in the Fire Service. If you choose to become a firefighter, we wish you the best of luck. In the following document you will find an outline of the Surrey Fire Service's hiring process. Please be aware that we amend the hiring process from time to time in order to best meet the evolving needs of our community. Prior to each hiring process, we will update this document. Make sure you are using the most current version of this document when you apply.

BEGINNING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Typically, the Surrey Fire Service runs one career firefighter hiring process per year. The number of annual hires depends on various factors, such as retirements and operational requirements. The hiring process involves a significant time commitment by the candidate and is very competitive.

Pursuing the preferred job qualifications will make your application more competitive. The required, and some of the preferred, job qualifications are shown below:

Minimum requirements to apply:

- Legally entitled to work in Canada (you must be a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident/Landed Immigrant).

- Grade 12 completion or equivalent.
- Two years or more of accumulated work experience after high school completion.
- Valid Class 3 or Class 1 Driver's License with air brake endorsement or equivalent for vehicles with more than two axles (automatic transmission is accepted) and a safe driving record.
- A current BC EMA Licensing Board First Responder License or higher level of EMA License (EMR, PCP, ACP). We do not accept OFA licensing.
- Fluency in English (written and verbal).
- Physically and psychologically suitable for the position of firefighter.
- Willing to work 24 hour shifts (day and night) including weekends and holidays and extra shifts as required.
- Successful completion of the Surrey Fire Service Basic Firefighting Knowledge Course* (this will be made available to all applicants following Stage 3) or equivalent**

* The Surrey Fire Basic Knowledge Course is an online course where students will learn the knowledge required to be a firefighter. Students who require this qualification will be given opportunity to sign up for the course during the selection process.

** Equivalency for the Basic Knowledge Course is candidates with NFPA 1001, Level 1 or Level 2 IFSAC or ProBoard certifications.

Preferred Qualifications: These additional skills and experiences will enhance your application but do not replace the minimum qualifications:

- 30 post-secondary credits or one year minimum in a trade apprenticeship program (you will be asked to submit transcripts).
- Previous experience in: Emergency services: structural firefighting, wildfire service, police, coast guard, EMS, military, health care, lifeguarding, or search and rescue, hospitality
- A history of volunteerism and community participation.
- Experience in team-oriented activities or organizations.
- Coaching, teaching, or instructional experience.
- Knowledge and ability to work effectively with computers and computer programs.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a team environment.
- Fluency in languages other than English.

Amassing all the required and preferred qualifications takes time, dedication and some financial resources. We encourage you to reflect fully on these factors prior to committing yourself to becoming a firefighter.

Recruitment Process Guidelines

The career firefighter recruitment process is extensive and takes time for both candidates and City of Surrey staff involved in the recruitment. In order to make the process run smoother for everyone, we ask that the

following guidelines are adhered to as you work through the Fire Service application process.

1. **The ability to follow instructions is an important attribute in firefighting. Make sure you understand and follow any instructions you are given during the hiring process. Failure to do so may affect the final hiring decision.**
2. Keep your profile current on the City Jobs and Career hiring portal. If your contact information changes during the process, log into your profile in the hiring portal and update as this is how all correspondence regarding the process will be delivered.
3. Make sure that you conform to all the physical, psychological and professional requirements of the job. You do not want to invest the time and money in the process to be disqualified because your education, driving record, health or professional certifications do not meet the minimum qualifications.
4. As we are dealing with large numbers of candidates, the length of time between hiring stages may be protracted as we tabulate results and prepare for the next stages. **Please do not contact the City of Surrey HR department to ask about your status.**
5. You may receive notice of testing stages, skills refresher workshops, ride-along and interviews with little advanced warning. While we will make every effort to keep you informed and schedule testing in a convenient fashion, we will expect you to be ready and willing to participate in testing and activities when they are scheduled.
6. You will be required to provide accurate copies of the required certifications and licenses.
7. **NOTE:** If you do not have NFPA 1001 Firefighter I and II you will need to complete the Surrey Fire Basic Knowledge Course. The course information will be made available to you during the hiring process.
8. Your attitude and enthusiasm are noted throughout the process and can influence the final hiring decision. Please keep this in mind when dealing with fire department and Human Resources staff.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The major stages of the recruitment and selection process for the Surrey Fire Service are listed below. Only candidates who are successful at the previous stage will move forward to the next stage. The dates and timelines are estimates and may change due to operational factors. More details pertaining to each of the stages noted in the table below are outlined throughout this manual. For the most current information and dates, please visit surrey.ca/about-surrey/emergency-services/surrey-fire-service/career-firefighters

Stage	Recruitment and Selection Stage
1	Job Posted – 3-week application period, late applications will not be accepted.
2	Driver’s Abstract Review – those who are successful at Stage 2 will be contacted by HR through email to submit their current Driver’s Abstract
3	Psychometric Screen (Written Exam - in person only)
4	Physical Abilities Testing
5	Surrey Fire Basic Knowledge Course
6	Skills Assessments
7	Interviews
8	References/PIC
9	Conditional Offers
10	Medical Assessment/ First Responder Suitability Assessment
11	Offers Confirmed
12	Gear Fitting/Uniform/SCBA Fit Testing
13	Start Date
14	The first 6 weeks of your employment will be a focused learning period to help prepare you

Stage 1: The Application

All applications must be submitted electronically through <https://www.surrey.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 submitted after the closing date will not be accepted.
- You will need to create an online account at <https://www.surrey.ca/careers> in order 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 in order to create the 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 of 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 are answering questions completely and accurately.
- Any licenses or certifications submitted must have been completed prior to including them in your application. Indicating that you possess a license 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.

Stage 2: Submission of Driver's Abstract

Those candidates who are successful in the initial review of both the required and preferred qualifications will be asked to submit a driver's abstract. The driver's abstract will be reviewed to determine if the candidate has a safe driving history that meets the criteria outlined in the City of Surrey's policy. Candidates who are deemed to have a safe driving record will be invited to the next stage of the recruitment process.

Stage 3: Psychometric Screening

Candidates who are successful in Stage 1 and 2 will be invited to participate in the psychometric testing portion of the process. There is a \$355.00 fee (plus GST) that is non-refundable and payable in advance for this testing. Those invited to this Stage of the hiring process will receive payment instruction and testing location details prior to the test. You will not be allowed to participate in the testing process without proof of payment and photo identification.

If you are unfamiliar with psychometric screening, please see the following:

The assessment consists of approximately four hours of paper and pencil testing and is conducted in a group setting. The testing is based on current findings from the research literature with respect to the factors that predict success as a firefighter "on-the-job". Three main areas are assessed: general learning ability and specific aptitudes (e.g., mechanical reasoning); personality traits associated with success as a firefighter; and career interest patterns.

Stage 4: Physical Abilities Testing

Candidates successful in Stage 3 will be invited to the physical abilities testing. To take part in this stage of the process, you will need to have a medical evaluation completed by your doctor. The City will provide you with the documents to take to your physician prior to attending the physical abilities test. If you arrive at the testing with incomplete or missing documents, you will not be allowed to participate in the testing and will be disqualified from the process. It is your responsibility to ensure your doctor has provided all of the required information on the forms.

There are nine stations in the Physical Abilities Testing. At each station, you will complete a task in a specific amount of time. If the task is completed in the allotted time, you will move on to the next station. If you fail to complete the station in the allotted time, you will not be allowed to continue with the testing.

You must follow the instructions and adhere to safety guidelines during the testing. Failure to do so will result in elimination from the testing. There will be no rest periods between the stations. You will move to the next station immediately upon completion of the prior station.

Please refer to the Surrey Fire Service website or Surrey Fire Service Firefighter Candidate Physical Abilities Testing Guide for more information about each station.

The Stations:

- Station 1: Confined Space - The objective of this task is to ensure you are comfortable with the low visibility and restricted working space.
- Station 2: The Aerial Climb - The objective of this task is to ensure you are comfortable with the heights.
- Station 3: Sled Drag - The objective of this task is to simulate a rescue scenario. This test replaces the traditional mannequin drag.
- Station 4: 10.67 Meter Ladder Extension - The objective of this task is to simulate raising a ladder in a vertical manner.
- Station 5: Tower Climb - The objective of this task is to simulate equipment deployment in multi-story buildings.
- Station 6: Hose Roll Raise - The objective of this task is to simulate hoisting equipment by rope to elevated buildings.
- Station 7: Hydrant Kit Carry - The objective of this task is to simulate carrying equipment in environments which require balance.
- Station 8: Hose Advance - The objective of this task is to simulate fire hose operations.
- Station 9: Storz Roll Carry - The objective of this task is to simulate the post incident equipment clean up.

If you have successfully completed each task in the allotted time, you will be eligible for the next stage of candidate testing. Human Resources personnel will be in contact with you to schedule the next stage at the appropriate time.

Stage 5: Surrey Fire Basic Knowledge Course

Candidates who are successful in the previous stages of the hiring process and do not have NFPA 1001 Firefighter I and II will be required to sign up for the Surrey Fire Basic Knowledge course. This will provide the candidate with theoretical knowledge of firefighting prior to the interview. Should the candidate be selected to begin training with Surrey Fire, they will have foundational knowledge to support the practical application of firefighting during training.

Stage 6: Skills Assessments

This stage involves a one day assessment of firefighting skills performed at a fire hall location. The candidates will participate in a variety of fire hall type drills while being assessed on their ability to communicate well and work as a team. The assessments will be conducted by Surrey Fire Fighters from varying seniority levels to simulate a fire crew.

The activities may include but not limited to:

- First aid drills

- Hydrant dressing
- Rope tying
- Hose handling
- Ladders
- Communication drills

**The candidate reports to the fire hall for personal protective gear fitting. They will also be provided a hard helmet and utility gloves. The candidate must wear and is responsible for providing their own steel-toe footwear, water and any snacks needed according to a dietary or medical requirement.*

The skills assessment is an unpaid activity as are all stages of the hiring process. While participating in the skills assessment process, you will be evaluated in several areas that relate to the position of firefighter. Some of the areas you'll be assessed on include:

- Follows direction
- Listens and learns
- Communicates well with others
- Contributes to the team
- Relates well with others
- Exhibits a good attitude and work ethic
- Demonstrates adaptability and an ability for basic mechanical aptitude

Stage 7: The Interview

If you have successfully completed the previous stages of the process, you will be invited for a panel interview. The interview will take place with representatives from the fire department management team, the City of Surrey Human Resources Department and the IAFF Local 1271 Executive.

The interview will include behavioral based questions that focus on things you have done in the past to achieve an outcome. An example question would be; “Describe a time when you were part of a team that was having difficulty achieving its intended purpose and describe what you did to help the group get back on track.” What we are looking for is clear examples of when you have displayed the values and characteristics we are looking for.

- Leadership
- Interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Initiative
- Communication Skills
- Adaptability

Key to doing well in the interview stage is ensuring you have prepared ahead of time. Use the City’s website to learn more about both the City and the Surrey Fire Service. You can also use www.surreyfirefighters.com to gather information on Local 1271 and the Surrey Firefighters’ Charitable Society.

It is important that you have a good understanding of the City of Surrey, the Surrey Fire Service and the position for which you are applying. You should be able to articulate the reasons why you would be a good fit with the Surrey Fire Service.

When attending the interview, you should:

- Plan to arrive early and make allowances for the unexpected.
- Dress appropriately, you are applying for a career position that you have worked very hard to prepare for. Your attire should reflect the importance of the interview. Abiding by the fire department’s grooming guidelines is recommended.
- Bring all your supporting documentation to the interview. Panel packages should be professional, stapled and not in a binder or folder.
- **Please provide only the following in your interview documentation package (copies only):**
 - **Current resume**
 - **Confirmation of EMA First Responder or higher license**
 - **High school transcript or equivalent**
 - **Any post-secondary transcripts (including Red Seal training transcripts)**
 - **NFPA 1001 certificate (if applicable)**
 - **Any other documentation requested by HR.**
- Please use regular white paper only for documentation packages. You should have enough copies for each member of the interview panel.
- **Important: Please only include documentation that supports the required AND preferred qualifications. DO NOT include the following items in your package: pictures, call logs from a previous department, driver’s abstracts, letters of reference, unrelated certifications or courses and any other items that do not directly support the required and preferred qualifications.** These items can be included in your resume.

The interview process is lengthy and takes 4-6 weeks to complete. Candidates will be notified of the result of their interview at various times with the bulk of candidates being notified after all the interviews are completed. **Do not contact Human Resources to find to the results of your interview.**

If you are successful in the interview process, you will receive notification from Human Resources of the next steps in the recruitment process. Unsuccessful candidates will receive a notification of regret.

Stage 8: Reference Checks/Police Information Checks

References are to be professional not personal and must include the candidate's current and previous manager or supervisor. References will be asked a series of questions related to the candidate's employment record, work habits and interpersonal skills. Human Resources may ask for supporting references to verify the information provided. The reference checks are exhaustive in nature. All references may be contacted. Police Information Check (PIC) documentation will be forwarded to the candidate. Please note that a vulnerable sector check must be completed as part of the PIC process.

Stage 9/10: Conditional Offers/Pre-Employment Medical Evaluation and First Responder Suitability Assessment

Successful completion of reference checks and the Police Information Check process will lead to a Conditional Offer of Employment, which is dependent on passing the medical evaluation and a First Responder Suitability Assessment.

- Human Resources personnel will contact the candidate and provide all of the information required for the completion of the medical evaluation. Medicals completed for other fire departments will not be accepted by the City of Surrey.
- The medical evaluation is provided by a qualified third party selected by the City of Surrey and will screen for medical conditions that might affect the candidate's ability to function as a firefighter.
- The cost of the medical testing is TBD (around \$800). **The cost is the responsibility of the candidate.**
- The First Responder Suitability Assessment (FRSA) is provided by a qualified third party and will include a series of written tests followed by an interview with a clinical psychologist. There is no cost for the candidate.

Note: Both the medical evaluation and FRSA must be done in person.

Stage 11: Confirmation of Employment

When all conditions of employment are satisfied, Human Resources will issue a letter removing the condition from the employment offer.

Human Resources will notify the candidate of uniform fittings, turn-out gear fittings, SCBA and N95 fit testing and commencement of employment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This is a general guide to the Surrey Fire Service hiring process. The stages and requirements may change from hiring process to hiring process. At the beginning of each hiring process, you should download the manual

dated with the current year. Using an outdated manual may lead to errors in your application that might disqualify you from the process.

Please review the Frequently Asked Questions section of this document for more information. If any your questions or concerns are not addressed in this document, you may contact the City of Surrey's Human Resources representative **through email only** at humanresources@surrey.ca

Q: I will not have completed all my certifications for Drivers license or EMA license at the time of application but anticipate completing them before the end of the process. Can I still apply?

A: No, you cannot submit an application if you have not fully completed the required certifications (with exception of the online Surrey Fire Basic Knowledge Course which will be completed during the process). You must be fully certified and/or licensed in order to complete the online application process. All license dates will be verified against the date of application. Falsification of any of your answers will eliminate you from the hiring process and may negatively impact future applications to the City of Surrey.

Q: Do I need to attach all my supporting documentation when I submit my online resume?

A: No, you do not need to upload all your certifications when filling out the online application. The only documents you will need to upload are your resume and cover letter. We will ask for any supporting documentation/certifications later in the process.

Q: Do I need post-secondary education?

A: No. Post-secondary education is not a mandatory requirement, although we do consider it a preferred qualification.

Q: Do you accept Pro Board certification?

A: Yes. We consider Pro Board certification to be the equivalent of IFSAC certification.

Q: How long is the hiring process?

A: Although it may vary in length from year to year, you may expect the process to take up to 6 months.

Q: Which medical licensing do you require?

A: We will only accept candidates with current BC Provincial EMA First Responder licensing (formerly FR3) or greater (e.g. Primary Care Paramedic or Emergency Medical Responder licensing). A valid license can only be issued by the BC EMA Licensing Branch within the Province of British Columbia. Please refer to the Ministry of Health website at <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/ema/> for further information.

Q: I was eliminated from the last hiring process. Can I reapply for the next hiring?

A: Although it can vary year to year, often a candidate who has interviewed and was unsuccessful in one year will be made to sit out a year. They can then reapply the following year.

Q: I am not sure I understand the vision standard. Can you explain the requirement?

A: The standard for vision in the SFS Operating Guideline states that you must have minimum 20/100 vision, combined, uncorrected and 20/30 vision, combined, corrected. What this means is:

20/30 vision, combined, corrected – If you wear corrective lenses, the lenses must correct your vision to a minimum of 20/30 combined. One eye may be better than 20/30 and the other worse, if the Employer’s eye specialist can determine that the average vision between both eyes can be corrected to 20/30 or better (between 20/30 and 20/20, combined, corrected).

If you do not require corrective lenses and your eye specialist has never suggested that you should consider corrective lenses, it is reasonable to believe you exceed the standard for vision. An eye care practitioner should confirm this.

Meeting or exceeding above vision standard means you would indicate “Yes” for the vision question in the on-line application. Your answer will be verified if you proceed to the medical evaluation stage of the process.

The vision standard also states that you will have colour and peripheral vision suitable to the position of firefighter and disqualifies anyone with a disease of the eye that would render them unfit for the position of firefighter. If you are not informed as to the condition of your eyes, it would be recommended that you receive a full eye exam from an ophthalmologist prior to pursuing your firefighter certifications.