

# CAREER FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

## Application Manual

*The Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service  
is "making a difference in our community"  
through prevention, response and safety.*

[abbotsford.ca/fire](http://abbotsford.ca/fire)



**CITY OF ABBOTSFORD  
Fire Rescue Service**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Thank you for your interest in becoming a career member of the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service. We are committed to recruiting talented and motivated individuals, who possess a high level of integrity, to serve our community.

Our citizens place their trust in the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service and it is important that our members have a strong commitment to professionalism both on and off duty. It is our aim to select recruits who reflect the diversity of our community and demonstrate that they will honour our standards and value our *vision and mission* statement.

Firefighter recruits are role models who will become leaders within our organization and the community. We pledge to treat each applicant fairly and respectfully. We select recruits who are serious about the responsibility of leadership and pursue excellence as part of their daily activities. Accountability earns trust and respect, and it is our expectation that applicants display personal accountability and the capacity to lead by example.

The role of a career Firefighter is not suited to everyone. Desire alone does not suggest a suitable career fit. The daily pressure, sacrifice and risks that firefighters face separate this job from many other careers.

We ask you to conduct an honest self-evaluation before you send us your application. Familiarize yourself with the job functions and use the information to build your skill-sets. Review our screening process in its entirety in order to gain a full understanding of your role in the application process.

Should you decide to apply, it is important to understand that the competition will be strong. Strong competition results in strong candidates and strong candidates produce quality firefighters.

Preparation, combined with a positive attitude and solid foundation are essential to your success.

Don Beer, CFO  
Fire Chief



## GENERAL INFORMATION

This guide is intended to provide you with information about Abbotsford Fire Rescue Services (AFRS) as it pertains to recruiting. It will help to answer questions you may have about our required and preferred qualifications, our application process and working as a Firefighter. Please read all the information in this guide **before** applying. This will give you the opportunity to learn about becoming a Firefighter, to determine whether you have all the required qualifications and to consider whether you are suited for a career in firefighting.

Abbotsford's firefighter recruitment process is lengthy, competitive and complex. You need to be prepared to complete the various stages on demand and in a short period of time. Dates for upcoming recruitment intake periods are advertised on our webpage and applicants can **only** apply during these intake periods.

## FIREFIGHTER CAREER

Abbotsford Fire Rescue Services strives to hire the best. Today's Firefighter represents the diverse community we serve. We are looking for qualified recruits who are pursuing a demanding, exciting and rewarding career in firefighting to join our team.

Today's Firefighter is a skilled professional who is able to face every kind of emergency. Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service will provide training on preferred methods for various job tasks. Through this training and experience, Abbotsford Firefighters learn the latest developments in firefighting, rescue techniques, medical emergency procedures and public education. We also cover such subjects as the control of hazardous materials, communication systems, fire prevention legislation and fire investigation techniques. Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service is a community focused organization and the ability of our Firefighters to speak other languages and have knowledge of different cultures within the community is an asset.

If you are interested in becoming an Abbotsford Firefighter, you need to possess:

- Dedication
- Adaptability and good problem solving skills
- An ability to think critically
- Teamwork and communication skills
- A lifestyle that exemplifies fitness, health and wellness
- A desire to serve the public
- Strong mechanical aptitude
- Mental and physical equanimity

Working as a Firefighter, you will be exposed to prolonged hours of physical and mental exertion. You will experience sleep deprivation and may be awake for up to 24 hours at a time. You will be exposed to stressful situations that will be mentally, physically and emotionally challenging. You will work in situations that have a risk of injury or death. You will be expected to maintain a professional level of conduct both on and off the job.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Failure to meet the minimum requirements will result in the rejection of your application. Candidates should review their application document downloads before final submission. Remember, how you present yourself through your application is also part of the process. If you are found to have falsified or intentionally misrepresented your credentials, your application will be rejected and no future applications will be accepted from you.

You are to provide legible proof of minimum qualifications at the application stage with your application. It is your responsibility to maintain your qualifications, at your cost, throughout the assessment processes.



## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Applications will be screened to ensure the following qualifications have been met. If you do not meet **ALL** of the required qualifications, please do not submit an application as it will be screened out.

### You must be:

- At least 19 years of age on the date of your application
- Eligible for employment in Canada - You must be a Canadian citizen, a holder of a Permanent Resident Card, a Landed Immigrant or otherwise legally entitled to work in Canada (i.e., holder of a work visa).

### Basic Qualifications:

- No criminal convictions, no adult criminal charges pending, related to employment, ability to obtain Vulnerable Sector Police Information Check clearance.
- A valid Unrestricted Class 1, 2, or 3 Drivers Licence (or provincial equivalent) with Air Brakes endorsement (Automatic Only restriction is accepted) with no restrictions and a good driving record.

### You must provide documents verifying you have:

- Transcripts demonstrating high school diploma completion or equivalency
  - Equivalencies can include:
    - General Educational Development (High School Equivalency Diploma)
    - or an undergraduate/applied degree or journeyman certificate
    - or completed 2 years of a recognized apprenticeship program
- A current First Responder Licence with Spinal and AED or greater (e.g. EMR or PCP Licensing)
- A Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) certificate (valid in last 12 months)
- Completion of NFPA 1001 Level 2 with HazMat Operations
- A current driver's abstract (dated no more than 30 days prior to the recruitment competition). The abstract should demonstrate responsible and safe driving behavior.

It is applicant's responsibility to keep all licences current through 2020, all costs associated with obtaining and maintaining these licences are at the applicant's expense.

## PREFERED QUALIFICATIONS:

These additional skill and experiences will enhance your application but do not replace the required qualifications:

- Work experience related to firefighting such as, auxiliary/volunteer firefighting, paramedic or forestry firefighting.
- Post-secondary education or two years of an apprenticeship program.
- Trades experience demonstrating a mechanical aptitude.
- Experience volunteering and community involvement
- Fluent in other languages
- Additional fire-related courses
- Team participation and on-going commitment to physical activity.
- Work experience highlighting dependability, initiative and high work ethic
- EMR or PCP Licensing





## TIPS DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

There is no single factor to ensure success in your pursuit to join the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service; however, we do offer you these tips:

1. Stay current with recruiting information by visiting our website at [www.abbotsford.ca/fire](http://www.abbotsford.ca/fire).
2. If your personal contact information changes, contact Human Resources Division immediately at (604) 864-5549.
3. Before you submit your Firefighter application, take the time to learn all you can about the job. Familiarize yourself with the job tasks, the different steps in the hiring process and the current economic and social environment in Abbotsford. Do your homework. It is better to be over-prepared!
4. You must be able to follow and act on complex verbal and written instructions. You will be evaluated on these skills throughout the recruitment process and throughout your career as a Firefighter.
5. We expect you to be prepared and ready to participate in our assessments at all times. You may experience little advance warning to participate in tests; other times, you may experience lengthy delays with little feedback. The very nature of our business is being prepared to respond.
6. Your demeanor and effort throughout the selection process are taken into consideration as part of the final hiring decision.
7. Job fit/suitability is one of many critical factors considered in our decision-making processes. Completion and/or passing all steps in the recruitment process does not ensure a job offer.

## RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process for the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service has been broken down into nine (9) different stages.

Stage 1 - Application and Pre-Screening

Stage 2 - Written Test - National Fire Select Test (NFST)

Stage 3 - Occupational Skills Assessment

Stage 4 - Interviews

Stage 5 - Ride-along

Stage 6 - Reference Checks and Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Search

Stage 7 - Fire Chief Meeting

Stage 8 - Conditional Offer

Stage 9 - Pre-Employment Medical Evaluation and Psychometric Assessment

All applicants will be notified during the process if they will be moving on to the next stage via email. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure email addresses are valid and up-to-date and computer firewalls/security is set up to accept emails from the City. It is the candidate's responsibility to check emails on a regular basis as there are deadlines issued for payment and scheduling. All testing stages are in person, and cannot be faxed, emailed or taken online.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSING FEES

Administrative processing fees are payable to the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service throughout the Firefighter recruit selection process. Fees will be collected at the beginning of each of the applicable stages. Administrative fee payments must be made when each candidate is notified of their successful move to the next stage. Fees will be as follows and may be subject to change:

- Stage 2 –National Fire Select Test \$50.00 CND plus applicable taxes
- Stage 3 –Occupational Skills Assessment \$50.00 CND plus applicable taxes

You will be notified (via email) during the recruitment process how and when to pay for the applicable fees. Payments are only accepted by Visa or MasterCard.



Fees will be subject to Goods and Services Tax [GST# 89725 6350 RT]. All fees collected in the recruit selection process are non-refundable. All processing fees are subject to change.

## RULES OF THE FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- Due to the high volume of applications we receive, we are unable to confirm receipt of applications with individual applicants
- You must be successful at each stage in order to be considered further in the process.
- If you are unsuccessful at any stage in the process, you will be informed via email.
- Again, due to the high volume of applicants, we are unable to provide individual feedback for each applicant regarding the selection process.

## THE FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

### Stage 1 - The Application and Pre-screen

All applications must be submitted electronically through [www.abbotsford.ca/careers](http://www.abbotsford.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 of time.
- Applications will not be accepted if submitted after the closing date.
- You will need to create an online account at [www.abbotsford.ca/careers](http://www.abbotsford.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.
- You must be fully certified or licenced to complete the online application. Indicating that you possess a licence 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.
- **All requested documents must be attached at time of application or the application will be considered incomplete and will not be considered. Candidates should review their application document downloads before final submission.**



## Stage 2 – Written Test - National Fire Select Test (NFST)

Candidates who are successful in Stage 1 of the selection process will be invited to participate in an “Aptitude and Character” test portion of the process. There is a fee of \$50.00 CAD, plus applicable taxes that is non-refundable and payable in advance for this test. Those invited to this stage of the recruitment 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.

- Candidates may purchase a copy of the “NFST Candidate Orientation Guide” (There are fifteen (15) practice test questions included in this guide that were derived from Essentials, 6th Ed. only.) from the Fire & Police Selection Inc. website:

<https://www.fpsi.com/product/nfst-candidate-orientation-guide/>

- The **NFST Candidate Orientation Guide** can be downloaded on the page following the instruction and disclaimer page that applicants must read and agree to. This will ensure the orientation guide is downloaded successfully.
- Once the guide is in the FPSI shopping cart, applicants will be given the option to pay with a PayPal account or as a PayPal guest with credit card. The download link will be located on the Order Received-Checkout Page that appears on the FPSI website as soon as payment is submitted and applicants are redirected from PayPal back to FPSI. Applicants must pay close attention to ALL instructions, on both FPSI and PayPal’s websites, in order to download any guide properly.
- Assessments must be done in person

## Stage 3 - Occupational Skills Assessment

Candidates who are successful in Stage 2 of the selection process will be invited to participate in the Occupational Skills Assessment portion of the process.

- There is a fee of \$50.00 plus applicable taxes that is non-refundable and payable in advance for this assessment.
- Those invited to this stage of the recruitment 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.
- The assessment consists of approximately four to six hours. Occupational skill assessment will include the successful completion of the following:
  - Run
  - Swim
  - Ladder Climb
  - Ladder Raise
  - Extrication Tool Simulation
  - Zero Visibility
  - Tool Recognition





## **Stage 4 - Panel Interview**

Candidates successful in the Occupational Skills Assessment stage will be invited to a panel interview. The panel consists of representatives from Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service Management team, IAFF Local 2864 Executive, with the support of the City of Abbotsford Human Resources Department.

- The Interview consists of several types of questions including behavioral style questions.
- It is an in-depth structured assessment that consists of specific selection criteria.
- The interviewers will be rating you based on the responses you provide; they have been trained to objectively capture data for this purpose. It is your responsibility to provide thorough information in a clear and concise manner.

## **Stage 5 – Ride-Along Orientation and Program**

Successful candidates selected from the panel interview will be asked to participate in a four (4) day Ride-Along program.

- To facilitate this, all candidates must undergo an orientation prior to the commencement of their Ride-Along. This orientation will outline safety requirements, candidate expectations and conduct, attire and departmental expectations.
- Candidates chosen for the Ride-Along program will be required to sign a Release Waiver to participate
- Over the duration of four (4) day shifts, the candidate will be evaluated by two separate on-duty crews. Candidates will be evaluated on attendance, interpersonal/communication skills, problem solving, initiative, work ethic, first responder skills and personal suitability.
- During this time, the Candidate must adhere to the safety requirements and expectations outlined in their Ride-Along Orientation. Candidates will keep a journal of their activities and submit them to the fire hall Captain at the conclusion of their participation.

## **Stage 6 - Reference Checks and Police Information Check**

Successful candidates will be moved to the next stage which includes reference checks and Police Information Check.

We use a number of tools throughout our assessment processes to validate your information and to capture a clear representation of your employment history. At this stage of the process, we will request you complete the following documents:

- Reference Release Form - providing City of Abbotsford, Human Resources authorization to contact the employment references you have provided.
- A detailed list of your current and previous direct supervisors/managers of employment.
- Our reference process will ask your references to rate you based on their experiences with you as an employee. Your references will also be asked to provide their assessments of you in your present/past employment.
- Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Search are required for this position. Candidates are responsible to make application to their local police department. Contact your local police department for application and applicable fees.



## Stage 7 - Fire Chief Meeting

Upon completion of a final review of all aspects of each candidate's application and results from all stages of the selection process, the most qualified candidates will be invited to meet the Fire Chief.

## Stage 8 - Conditional Job Offer

Successful candidates will receive a conditional offer of employment, dependent on passing a pre-employment medical evaluation and psychometric assessment.

## Stage 9 - Pre-Employment Medical Evaluation and Psychometric Assessment

Human Resources will contact you and provide all of the information required for completion of the medical evaluation and psychometric assessment.

- The medical evaluation is a comprehensive 3<sup>rd</sup> party medical/fitness evaluation and will screen for medical conditions that might affect your ability to function as a firefighter - *No cost to the candidate*
- The Psychometric Assessment is provided by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party and will include a written test - *No cost to the candidate*

Note: Both the Medical Evaluation and Psychometric Assessment must be done in person

## PROBATIONARY PERIOD

During your one-year probationary period, you will undergo extensive training and evaluation to determine ongoing suitability as a Firefighter. You will undergo practical and theory evaluations at five (5) weeks, six (6) months, and eleven (11) months. Additionally, you will be receiving ongoing feedback to ensure you have the tools (information/feedback) to successfully complete your one-year probationary period. Candidates who fail to meet the training standards will be released from Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service.

