

CAPE GIRARDEAU FIRE DEPARTMENT
Fire Fighter Applicant Handbook



Protecting the
Quality of Life
in our Community

CAPE GIRARDEAU FIRE DEPARTMENT

City of Roses - On the River

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January 2011

Dear Fire Fighter Applicant:

The purpose of this booklet is to aid each firefighter applicant in preparing successfully for the challenging screening procedures employed by the Cape Girardeau Fire Department in testing for the position of firefighter. We believe that adequate knowledge and prior familiarization with the test items will greatly increase the probability of passing these tests.

I wish to emphasize that merely following the guidelines will not guarantee success. There are individuals who, for a variety of reasons, may not be capable of the demands of firefighting. Nevertheless, if you intend to apply, we urge you to prepare as well as possible and wish you good luck!

If, after reading this booklet carefully, you have questions about any aspect of the testing process, please feel free to call us at the above number. We will be happy to assist you in any way possible.

Sincerely,

Rick Ennis
Fire Chief

“Safe in the Cape”

CAPE GIRARDEAU FIRE DEPARTMENT

OUR MISSION

We are a team of professionals, dedicated to delivering services to protect lives and property in the most effective, most efficient, safest manner possible, with the resources available to us.

The Principles of Our Mission

Team: Refers to a group of individuals working together towards a common purpose; putting the good of the team ahead of one's self.

Professional: Refers to an attitude and image we have of ourselves and project to others, which reflects a high degree of knowledge, skill, ability, confidence, pride and integrity.

Service Delivery: Refers to the fact that we respond into the homes, businesses, and streets of the community to deliver services to those in need; anyplace, anytime.

Effectiveness: Refers to achieving our desired results; getting the job done.

Efficiency: Refers to achieving our desired results with the least waste of time and effort; doing our job in the best way possible.

Safety: Refers to maximizing our knowledge, skills, abilities, and available equipment to minimize the risks associated with doing our job. Safety will be habitual, not to delay the effectiveness or efficiency of our operations.

Resources: Refers to our people, our apparatus, equipment, and facilities; our available time; our available revenue; and, other city departments and regional agencies.

Background Examination

The final hurdle in the hiring process for Firefighter with the Cape Girardeau Fire Department is an examination of each candidate's personal background. This examination involves a routine check of criminal and driving records by the Cape Girardeau Police Department, as well as discussions with previous employers and references as provided by the candidate.

Our Vision

*We are a team of professionals,
committed to being the leader in
protecting the quality of life in our community*

Our Values

*We are a team of professionals,
Who Value Honesty, Integrity, Trust, Accountability,
Leadership, and our Commitment to Duty and Responsibility.*

OUR MISSION

*We are a team of professionals, dedicated to delivering services to
protect lives and property in the most effective, most efficient,
safest manner possible, with the resources available to us.*

Prior to being offered a position with the Cape Girardeau Fire Department, each candidate will participate in a "one-on-one" interview with the Fire Chief. When an actual offer of employment is made to the candidate, he or she must successfully complete additional testing criteria as noted below prior to starting work.

Physical Examination

Each candidate will be required to pass a physical examination prior to being hired. The examination is comprehensive and includes blood work, cardio step test requiring a minimum aerobic capacity of 12 METS, cardio treadmill test revealing no disqualifying conditions, pulmonary function test, chest x-ray and negative drug screening. This examination is rated on a "pass-fail" basis.

Psychological Examination

Firefighters are exposed to a considerable amount of emotional and mental stress at fire, medical, and other emergency situations. The capacity to withstand stressful situations is essential for efficient performance.

Firefighters who fail to perform satisfactorily in stressful situations may place not only themselves in jeopardy but may contribute to the loss of life or property of others. Consequently, candidates for firefighter positions receive psychological testing in order to determine their emotional stability to function in the above noted environment. Like the physical examination, the psychological examination is rated on a "pass-fail" basis.

Introduction

Firefighting involves extremely hard and skillful physical exertion, as well as the ability to cope with emergency situations. The physical demands of firefighting are often underestimated. Because of this, many firefighter applicants are overwhelmed by the challenging screening procedures employed in the selection of new recruits.

Demanding physical standards are absolutely necessary because firefighting requires a high level of physical fitness. For example, consider the following circumstances: A four-story building is on fire. As a firefighter rushes upstairs to the fourth floor, a cry for help is heard. The firefighter must react quickly in order to rescue the victim. When the victim is reached, he/she must be led or carried outside to safety. Once this is accomplished, the firefighter must re-enter the building and battle the fire.

The level of physical activity as provided in the above example would exhaust the average person very quickly, especially when working in a hostile environment. Without an elevated level of physical fitness, the firefighter would not be capable of meeting the demands of the job.

Written Examination

An applicant who is accepted for testing will begin with the written examination. Applicants must achieve a passing grade of at least 70% on the written portion of the examination in order to proceed onto the next phase of the examination process.

The type of written examination employed by the Cape Girardeau Fire Department is a standardized instrument employed by many fire departments throughout the nation. In general, the examination tests general aptitude and reading comprehension. Prior knowledge of the fire/rescue service is not a prerequisite for successful completion of this examination.

Physical Ability Test

After successful completion of the written examination, applicants will go on to perform the physical ability test. The physical ability test is composed of six stations designed to simulate actual evolutions that must be performed by firefighters working at emergencies. The physical ability test must be completed within seven (7) minutes, and is graded on a “pass - fail” basis; passing this portion of the examination qualifies the candidate to move onto the next phase of the examination process.

Traditionally, applicants with slight builds or those in poor physical condition have experienced difficulty with the physical ability screening process. This situation can be corrected through a conscientious physical-conditioning program. The physical conditioning program should emphasize cardio respiratory (heart-lung) fitness, strength, and muscular endurance. A program which includes both running and weight training is desirable in order to achieve the desired results.

The physical ability test is intended to be physically challenging. The test should only be taken by applicants who consider themselves physically fit. Applicants who are unsure of their own physical fitness should consult with their physicians before taking the test. Applicants who participate in the physical ability test will be asked to sign a Release of Liability form before proceeding with the test.

The Oral Interview

The next phase in the selection process for the position of firefighter with the City of Cape Girardeau Fire Department is the oral interview. The oral interview is designed to give interviewers a “first look” at the candidate, and allow him or her the opportunity to respond to a set of verbal questions.

The interview process is highly structured, with four or five interviewers participating in the process. Each candidate will be asked to respond to the same set of questions, and may be asked to elaborate on specific responses. Candidates will be graded by the interviewers based on their overall responses to questions, general appearance, and perceived ability to contribute to the organization in a positive manner.

Following successful completion of the written examination, physical ability test, and oral interview, remaining candidates will be placed on an eligibility list for employment with the Fire Department, based on their aggregate score.

- State of Missouri and/or NFPA 1001 “Firefighter II” certification: 2.5 points
- State of Missouri Emergency Medical Technician: 2.5 points
- State of Missouri/National Paramedic certification: 5 points
- Possession of an Associate’s Degree from an accredited institution: 2.5 points
- Possession of a Bachelor’s Degree or greater from an accredited institution: 5 points

5. High-Rise Pack Carry: The candidate shall advance a simulated department high-rise pack for a pre-determined distance while ascending and descending stairs.

Procedure: A high-rise pack is placed on a stand, which is approximately the same height as on a fire engine. The applicant picks up the high-rise pack from the stand and carries the pack a pre-determined distance while ascending and descending stairs.

Job Relatedness: When preparing to operate on fires above ground level or extend existing hose lines, firefighters must have the capability to aggressively and rapidly advance standardized department high-rise packs of fire hose.

6. Body Drag: Given a simulated fire victim with a weight of approximately 160 lbs. (rescue dummy), the candidate will drag same for a distance of 120 feet.

Procedure: The applicant will approach the rescue dummy and drag same 120 feet to the finish line.

Job Relatedness: Firefighters are required to remove fire victims from structures during emergency situations, and this task is often completed by one firefighter. A weight of 160 lbs. represents the average weight of potential victims.

Applicants who successfully complete the first two phases of the testing process will appear before the Fire Department Hiring Task Group for an oral interview.

General Instructions for Applicants
Participating in Physical Ability Test

A. All listed evolutions will be performed while wearing protective clothing and a weighted vest. Protective clothing and vest will be supplied by the Fire Department and includes helmet and gloves. This equipment must be worn at all times during the test.

B. Shoes for the physical ability test are the responsibility of the applicant. It is suggested that applicants wear jogging or athletic-type (non-cleated) shoes to the test site.

C. All applicants must successfully complete the physical ability test in order to proceed with the examination process. Failure to perform any of the six (6) evolutions in a satisfactory manner will result in failure of the physical ability test, and elimination from further consideration as a candidate for employment.

D. The maximum acceptable time for the physical ability test will be seven (7) minutes. Time will start at the beginning of the first evolution and will stop upon completion of the sixth evolution, or when passing the 7 minute maximum allowable time. Applicants will be permitted to rest during any portion of the evolutions; however timing will continue unchecked during any rest period.

E. At no time during the physical ability test will applicants be permitted to run or jog. Running is defined as moving so quickly that both feet are simultaneously off the ground.

F. Safety will be observed at all times during the test. If a candidate becomes sick or if it appears that he or she could become injured, the Test Evaluator will stop the test.

The Physical Ability Test in Detail

The six (6) evolutions of the test are as follows:

1. Simulated Roof Ventilation: Utilizing the Keiser sled the candidate will strike the sled with the provided dead blow hammer, moving the sled the designated distance.

Procedure: While standing on two runners, the applicant will strike the sled to the pre-determined distance.

Job Relatedness: In order to effectively ventilate the roof of an average building, the firefighter would be required to strike the roof a minimum of 50 times in order to complete the evolution. This evolution is normally accomplished using an eight-pound pickhead axe; however, a sledgehammer is substituted for safety purposes and improved testing practices.

2. Ladder Carry: The candidate will remove a one-person ladder from the height equivalent of a fire engine, place it on the ground, and replace same.

Procedure: The applicant will approach a fire engine (or its height equivalent), remove a ladder, and replace same when directed to do so.

Job Relatedness: Firefighters must have the ability to remove and maneuver ladders from fire apparatus to the scene of emergencies.

3. Hose Extension: Given a dry 200' length of hose, the candidate shall drag the hose for a distance of 200'.

Procedure: The applicant will approach 200 feet of dry 2-1/2" fire hose and nozzle which is in an extended accordion fold and grasp same. The applicant then moves forward until the entire 200 feet of hose is stretched out.

Job Relatedness: 2-1/2" hose, which is used for structural firefighting, is carried on many engine companies. A firefighter occupying the nozzle position on an engine company must be able to extend the hose line to the point of fire attack.

4. Hose Raise: Given a section of 3 inch hose, the candidate shall demonstrate the ability to raise the hose a designated height and place it in the designated area.

Procedure: The applicant shall approach the edge of the railing and grasp the rope attached to the section of hose. Using the hand over hand method they will raise the hose in a controlled manner and then lift it over the railing. They will then place the hose in the designated area.

Job Relatedness: Firefighters must have the ability to hoist various equipment on the scene of an emergency including fire hose. This task specifically relates to fire hose deployment and advancement of multi-story structures.