



City of West Kelowna Career Firefighter Information Package

Updated February 2019



INTRODUCTION

Becoming a career 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 City of West Kelowna is seeking mature, well-educated individuals interested in working in a challenging and dynamic team environment.

The hours of work of a WKFR firefighter are based on a 4-on, 4-off schedule (4 days of work followed by 4 days of rest) consisting of two 10-hour day shifts and two 14-hour night shifts. Crews cook and eat meals together each shift and maintain their physical fitness.

During their shifts, firefighters will be engaged in a variety of activities such as emergency responses, on and off duty training, annual fire inspections, hall chores, vehicle and equipment checks, public education and hall assigned tasks such as first aid supply, administration or hose testing.

Outside of working hours, firefighters take part in many charitable functions organized by the Union, Local 4457 of the International Association of Fire Fighters. Thousands of dollars are raised each year for the West Kelowna Fire Rescue Charitable Society. This money supports many firefighter-sponsored programs, local charities, and community organizations, with a focus on the well-being of children.

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

- Due to the rotating shifts, you will frequently work weekends and statutory holidays, which may mean adjusting your personal schedule significantly. The shift work also means you will be away from home overnight.
- The work of a firefighter is physically demanding. You must maintain your physical fitness and lead a healthy lifestyle to perform your duties and guard against the health risks of the job, which include heart disease and several forms of cancer.
- Consider the situations you will be exposed to as an emergency responder. Some of the calls you will respond to can be gruesome and tragic. You must be the kind of person who has the emotional fortitude to deal with these situations and you must have healthy coping mechanisms.

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 this document, you will find an outline of the West Kelowna Fire Rescue's hiring process.

BEGINNING THE PROCESS

The hiring process involves a significant time commitment by the applicant and is very competitive. The table below sets out the essential and preferred job qualifications. The list of essential qualifications is required. Possessing any of the preferred qualifications will give the applicant a competitive edge.

Essential Job Qualifications:
Grade 12 education
NFPA 1001 Level 1 and Level 2
NFPA 472 Hazmat Awareness and Operations
Valid EMA First Responder License. Certification is not equivalent to licensing.
Unrestricted valid Class 3 Driver's License with Air Brake Endorsement
A driver's abstract with no more than 6 points in the last 3 years, and no suspensions or prohibitions in the same period.
A clean current criminal records check as it pertains to the position of firefighting
Physically and medically fit for the position of firefighter
Preferred Qualifications/Skills:
Work experience related to firefighting, such as auxiliary firefighting, wildland firefighting or paramedic.
Post-secondary education
Additional fire service related courses not included in NFPA 1001/1002 training
A history of volunteerism and community participation
A work history demonstrating dependability, strong work ethic and initiative
Trades experience (demonstrating mechanical aptitude)
Participation in team sports and on-going physical fitness activities

Compiling all of the required and preferred qualifications takes time, dedication and financial resources. Again, we encourage you to reflect fully on these factors prior to committing yourself to becoming a firefighter.

Tips to the Recruitment Process

We cannot offer you a guaranteed method for successfully securing a position with West Kelowna Fire Rescue, but we can provide some tips to help the hiring process run smoothly. Please keep the following suggestions in mind while you work through the application process:

1. If your personal contact information changes during the process, inform Human Resources.
2. Take time to review all materials on the City's website (www.westkelownacity.ca), including general information about the City and West Kelowna Fire Rescue.
3. Make sure that you comply with all of the essential requirements of the job. It would be unfortunate to invest the time and money in the process only to be disqualified because your education, driving record, health or certifications do not meet the required qualifications.
4. An ability to accurately follow instructions is an important attribute in firefighting. Ensure you understand and execute any instructions you are given during the hiring process. Failure to do so may affect the hiring decision.
5. The length of time between hiring stages can be lengthy, with limited communication from the City, as we tabulate results and prepare for the next stages. Please be patient.
6. You may receive notice to participate in testing with little advanced warning. While we will make every effort to keep you informed and schedule testing in a convenient fashion, you are expected to be ready and willing when it is scheduled.
7. You must have copies of the required certifications when you submit your application. If you indicate in your application that you do have a certain certification and it is discovered that you did not receive that certification until later in the process, you will be disqualified from the current hiring process.
8. Your attitude and enthusiasm is noted throughout the process and can influence the hiring decision.

THE PROCESS

STEP 1: THE APPLICATION

- Your application will only be accepted for a specified period, please note the closing date on the job advertisement. Applications will only be received online at www.westkelownacity.ca/jobs.

STEP 2: FIREFIGHTER KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

West Kelowna Fire Rescue requires candidates to be pre-qualified in structural firefighting knowledge and as such, candidates must possess a strong knowledge base. Failure to successfully complete the following test will result in elimination from the process:

- 100 question NFPA 1001 Firefighter 1 and Firefighter 2 examination based on IFSTA Essentials 6

STEP 3: PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTING

To take part in this stage of the process, you will need to have a medical evaluation completed by your doctor, see Doctor Consent Form. If you arrive at the testing without the form or it is incomplete you will not be allowed to participate and will be disqualified from the process. It is your responsibility to ensure your doctor has provided all of the required information on the form.

What to wear

- You should arrive in appropriate workout clothing that includes: runners, comfortable clothing and layers if needed
- For tests that require, you will be provided structural firefighting gear or full breathing apparatus.

What to bring

- Bring two pieces of government issued ID, one with a photo. These must be brought to every stage of the recruitment process.
- You will be working physically hard. Consider bringing drinking water and a snack for after the testing.

The Test

- There are multiple stations in the Test.
- At each station, you either will complete a task in a specific amount of time or be timed on how long it takes to complete the task.
- If you fail to complete the station in the allotted time, you will not be allowed to continue with the Test.
- You must follow the instructions and adhere to safety guidelines during the Test, failure to do so will result in elimination from the Test.
- There will be no rest periods between the stations, you will move to the next station immediately upon completion of the prior station.

THE STATIONS

Station 1: Minimum Swimming Assessment

West Kelowna Fire Rescue provides Swift Water Rescue, Static Water Rescue and Ice Rescue services. Candidates must be strong swimmers and demonstrate confidence working in and around aquatic environments. The following swim tests must be completed wearing appropriate attire. Failure to successfully complete the following tests will result in elimination from the selection process:

- 200 meter freestyle swim
- 50 meter rescue tow with the simulated victim wearing a life jacket
- 5 minutes treading water

Station 2: Firefighter Physical Aptitude Evaluation

West Kelowna Fire Rescue provides structural firefighting and rescue services. Candidates must possess strong musculoskeletal and cardiovascular fitness and demonstrate comfort working in both confined spaces and at height.

The physical evaluating program will be administered by a 3rd party. Information and instructions will be shared with candidates moving forward to this stage.

STEP 4: RIDE-ALONG

West Kelowna Fire Rescue requires candidates to work in a team environment for extended periods and provide the public with excellent customer service. Applicants will be asked to complete a work-experience based ride-along to ensure their fit into the organization. Failure to successfully complete the following tests will result in elimination from the process.

- Complete a 7-hour ride-along (approximately)

Some of the things candidates will do include:

- Vehicle maintenance
- Equipment maintenance
- Hall chores and maintenance
- Training
- Drills and general firefighting skills
- Emergency response*
- Company inspections
- Pre-fire planning
- Public education

* The candidate reports directly to the Captain and must work under the direct supervision of the Officer in charge at all times. The Captain will determine the degree of candidate involvement. Failure to follow the directions of the Captain may result in elimination from the hiring process.

The ride-along is an unpaid activity, as are all stages of the hiring process.

While participating in the ride-along process, you will be evaluated in a number of areas that relate to the position of firefighter, such as:

Firefighting Skills

The candidate is evaluated on their firefighting capabilities through training activities and incidents to which they may respond.

Problem solving

Problem solving is an essential skill in the firefighting profession. Candidates will be assessed on their ability to provide solutions to the many situations that may occur in training, emergency responses or other daily activities.

Listening

The ability to comprehend and follow instructions and orders as given by an Officer is critical. The candidate is evaluated on their ability to comprehend and execute orders.

Adaptability

Firefighters must quickly adapt to many different work environments and circumstances. Candidates are evaluated on how quickly they are able to successfully adjust to new or different situations.

Interpersonal Skills

The ability to work well with other firefighters and meld into a cohesive team is very important to firefighting. The candidate will be evaluated on how well they function as a team member during training, emergency response and routine activities.

Initiative

Candidates are evaluated on their level of involvement and activity when taking part in training, routine assignments, emergency activities or under direction of the officer. The candidate's ability to recognize things that need to be done and their willingness to complete whatever needs doing (in a safe manner) will be noted.

Community Relations and Diversity Management

Firefighting is first and foremost a public service. It is important that future firefighters understand their role in relation to the public they will serve. Candidates will be evaluated on their customer service skills, empathy towards those in distress, and ability to communicate clearly and calmly. This includes communicating and interacting well with the diversity that exists in the population of West Kelowna.

Composure

Firefighters are expected to remain calm and collected during very intense situations. The candidate will be assessed on their ability to handle the pressure of performing tasks during training, the ability to take criticism and correction, and the ability to function at an emergency.

Attendance

The candidate's punctuality and preparedness will be evaluated throughout the process.

Ride-Along Clothing

Clothing:

- Ride-Along Program candidates shall be dressed in appropriate attire. Steel toe and shank work boots are required.
- The candidate will be issued structural firefighting equipment and clothing for use during the ride-along. Confirm that you have received all of the necessary gear and ensure all of the gear is accounted for and ready for return to the Fire Hall at the end of your ride-along.

Ride-Along Protocol

- We recommend that candidates arrive at least 20 minutes early for their ride-along shift.
- Candidates must read, understand and sign the required waiver before participating in the ride-along.
- Bring a notebook and pens/pencils for the day. You will find it beneficial to take notes throughout the day.
- Your Captain will state their expectations of your behavior over the course of your time under their supervision. Make sure you understand what is expected.
- The ride-along will demand you work very hard and drill several times each day.
- Bring a water bottle and snacks in order to stay hydrated and energized.
- The crews normally prepare and eat lunch together at the hall. However, it is recommended that you bring a lunch in the event that it is not provided on that day.
- Career crews may take coffee breaks or engage in physical fitness activities while on duty. The candidate will not take part in these activities unless expressly invited to by the Officer in charge. While the crew is otherwise engaged, the candidate will be expected to keep busy around the hall.

STEP 5: PANEL INTERVIEW

Candidates that have successfully completed the previous stages of the process will be invited for a panel interview. The interview will take place with representatives from Management, Union Executive and the City of West Kelowna Human Resources Department. The interview will include behavioral based questions that focus on:

- Leadership
- Interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Initiative
- Communication Skills
- Community Service

The key to doing well in the interview stage is ensuring you have prepared ahead of time. Use the City's website to learn about both the City and West Kelowna Fire Rescue. It is important that you have a good understanding of the employer and the position you are applying for. You should also be able to articulate the reasons that you would be a good fit with West Kelowna Fire Rescue.

When you come to your interview, you should:

- 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.

STEP 6: NFPA FIREFIGHTER MEDICAL

An NFPA based medical evaluation shall be provided by a qualified 3rd party Physician and will screen for medical conditions that might affect the candidate's ability to function as a firefighter. Failure to complete the medical evaluation or contrary indication as to an individual's fitness will result in elimination from the recruiting process. It is the candidates' responsibility to pay for this exam.

STEP 7: Online Firefighter Behavioral Assessment

West Kelowna Fire Rescue requires candidates to work in a team environment for extended periods and provide the public with excellent customer service. Applicants will be asked to complete an online survey that will help gain insight into their traits and characteristics profile in order to ensure their fit into the organization. Demonstrating the necessary behaviours to effectively carry out the job activities and responsibilities is a critical factor in achieving high performance.

- Complete "Profile People" online survey

STEP 8: PERSONAL REFERENCE CHECKS and CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

The next stage of the process will be checking references. 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.

A current Criminal Records Check from your local RCMP Detachment will be required at this point. Applicants will be responsible for all associated costs.

STEP 9: FORMAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

The successful candidate will be provided an opportunity to meet with the Fire Chief and Human Resources for a brief interview before formally signing their offer of employment with the City of West Kelowna.

CONCLUSION:

This is a general guide to the West Kelowna Fire Rescue hiring process. During the recruitment process the Fire Rescue – Recruitment page will be updated regularly. Please check the website for instructions. The candidates shortlisted to the knowledge assessment stage will be contacted and given a **confirmation number**. This confirmation number will stay with that person for the entire recruitment process. If your confirmation number does not appear on the list, you have not been shortlisted to proceed further in the process. We thank you for your interest.

Please see the frequently asked questions document for more information.