CSD-03: Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Selection Process

COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to set out guidelines and procedures regarding recruitment and selection of volunteer firefighters.

Implementation Procedure

Selection Criteria

Definitions:

Applicant:

A person who applies for the position of volunteer firefighter, but has not been accepted into the selection process.

Candidate:

An Applicant who has met the minimum requirements and is being considered through the selection process.

Recruit:

An entry-level firefighter who has been offered an available position as a volunteer firefighter by virtue of successfully challenging the selection process.

Probationary:

A firefighter who has successfully completed Recruit training and is on active duty but is still within his/her probationary period.

Permanent:

A volunteer firefighter who has completed all Probationary requirements.

All available openings for Volunteer Firefighters shall be advertised in the local media and posted within Norfolk County.

All Applicants for the position of volunteer firefighter in Norfolk County shall, as a minimum, meet all of the following criteria:

1. Complete the application form and truthfully include all information requested.
2. Be at least 18 years of age and employable in Ontario as at the date of closing for applications.
3. Have completed high school or have a substantial equivalent in education or experience such as a recognized community college certificate in a trade with a standing that demonstrates academic ability.
4. Be available to attend training, to attend emergencies, and to participate, as required, in the operations of the Division.
5. Hold a valid unrestricted Ontario driver's license (G)
6. Have access to a reliable vehicle or means of transportation so that he/she may attend to the fire station or emergency scene as required or needed.

All Candidates in order to be considered for appointment to an available position, as a volunteer firefighter shall meet as a minimum all of the following criteria:

1. Have good oral and written communication skills.
2. Be of sound mind and body as required to perform the duties of a firefighter.
3. Be of good character, be strongly motivated, and exhibit a positive attitude.
4. Be willing and able to learn, to take direction, and to be a team player.
5. Successfully complete the Applicant selection process.
6. Submit acceptable vulnerable criminal reference check and driver's abstract record.

All Probationary firefighters in order to receive a permanent appointment as a volunteer firefighter must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Successfully complete all learning and participation expectations.
2. Within two (2) years of successful completion of probation, obtain a class "D" license with "Z" endorsement.
3. Demonstrate that they can meet the requirements of the job description for Volunteer Firefighter.

Selection Process Overview

In general, an Applicant who meets minimum criteria will pass into the selection process and become a Candidate under consideration. All Candidates who pass the selection process shall be placed on a list for possible appointment as a firefighter. Firefighter vacancies will be filled from such a list and any remaining listed Candidates will be considered for appointment over the 12-month life of the list if there are further vacancies and the Candidate remains suitable and available.

An Applicant or Candidate participating in the application and selection process will not be eligible for reimbursement or compensation of any costs or for any loss of income. An Applicant or Candidate is not considered an employee until such time as he/she is formally appointed and meets all conditions of the appointment.

Newly recruited firefighters who are appointed and meet the requirements of the appointment shall be placed on Probation for a period of one calendar year from the effective date of the appointment. Probationary requirements include the completion of all required training and exams as are set down, and the receiving of good reports on quarterly evaluations. Probationary firefighters not meeting these requirements may be subject to dismissal.

Thereafter the first year, Probationary firefighters may be conditionally placed on Permanent status pending their obtaining a DZ driver's license within 2 years of this permanent status date. The new firefighter who fails to obtain an Ontario Class "D" driver's license with "Z" endorsement by the end of his/her second year shall be deemed to have not completed the probationary requirements and shall be subject to dismissal.

Procedural Steps and Requirements

1. Information on the selection process and application forms shall always be made available at all Fire Stations and at Fire Headquarters at 95 Culver Street, Simcoe, Ontario.

2. When active recruiting is taking place, an orientation meeting shall be held at a designated time and location for all prospective Applicants, and at least two weeks prior to the deadline for the receiving of applications. Meeting attendance by Applicants is not mandatory but all Applicants and spouses will be encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to ask questions and to get more information on what it takes to be a Volunteer Firefighter.

3. Candidates considered for appointment, as a Volunteer Firefighter shall reside in the fire district for which he/she is applying and in which he/she will serve. No out-of-County Applicants will be considered. In the case of the Applicant who lives relatively near district boundaries, and where there is a greater need for firefighters in one district over another district, at the discretion of the Fire Chief an application may be received and a subsequent appointment of a successful Candidate may be made to other than the Candidate's home district.

4. All complete applications will be submitted to Headquarters before the posted deadline. No consideration of late applications will be made.

5. Each station that requires new firefighters to fill available vacancies shall strike a Recruiting Committee consisting of not less than three, and not more than four, senior firefighters and officers. The Committee shall contain at least one senior firefighter not of officer rank. Committee members from other stations are permitted.

6. Candidate selection shall be on the basis of qualifications, ability and potential. At each stage in the screening process the Candidate will be evaluated for eligibility to proceed to the next step. All Candidates shall be screened through the following steps of the selection process:

a. Screening of Applicant's basic requirements through the application form.

b. Completion of an objective written aptitude test that does not require firefighting specific knowledge but that evaluates general knowledge and intellectual skills. This evaluation will be scored with a pass mark of 70%.

c. Completion of an objective and timed physical ability and agility test consisting of multiple events that does not require any firefighting specific skills or knowledge but that evaluates job-related strength, agility, and comfort with tasks similar to firefighting. This test will be pass/fail based on whether the Candidate can complete each event successfully and within the allotted time period.

d. Completion of an individual interview with the Candidate where factors such as character, motivation and team skills will be evaluated. This is a subjective interview based on pre-set questions and with a structured evaluation scheme and will be scored.

7. The appropriate Recruiting Committee shall review all applications for basic requirements. Through the use of the established evaluation system the Recruiting Committee shall select Candidates at each evaluation stage, deciding who are eligible to proceed to the next step. Where several stations are recruiting at the same time combined testing events will be scheduled where possible.

8. The successful Candidates from the selection process shall be ranked and the list of all successful Candidates shall be recommended by the Recruiting Committee to the applicable District Chief. The District Chief shall review the selection documents of all the Candidates for errors in process.

9. The District Chief shall present to the Fire Chief a list of recommended Candidates for Recruitment, and a list of waiting-listed Candidates. The Fire Chief shall review the District Chief's recommendations and may issue conditional letters of appointment to sufficient Candidates to fill available vacancies in the particular station. Any remaining ranked Candidates shall be notified that they are placed on a 12-month waiting list for further vacancies that might appear over that period.

10. Candidates receiving conditional offers of appointment shall have to provide the following required documentation:
    a. At least a "G" Driver's License
    b. A satisfactory Vulnerable Reference Check
    c. A satisfactory Driver's Abstract
    d. A Doctor's certificate of health using the County's recommended form.

11. The Candidate who provides satisfactory documentation within the time allotted will be required to sign an Acceptance-of-Offer form and job description, and shall be placed on the list as a Recruit Firefighter. He/she will be signed onto the County benefit programs.

12. All Recruit Firefighters shall attend and shall successfully achieve a program of recruit training as is laid down by the Training Bureau of the Division. Recruit Firefighters failing to successfully achieve the recruit program will be terminated.

13. The Recruit Firefighter who successfully completes the Recruit Training Program shall be accepted for service in his/her station as a Probationary Firefighter with limited duties and expectations. For the balance of his/her first year after accepting his/her appointment, the Probationary Firefighter will be expected to pass such tests and to acquire such skills and knowledge as are laid down by the station Training Officer and the Training Bureau of the Division. Failure to satisfactorily achieve these or failure to maintain adequate attendance will be cause for dismissal.

14. The Probationary Firefighter will be formally evaluated by the station Training Coordinator and the station District Chief at the completion of 3 months, 6 months, 9 months, and 12 months of his/her first year. These reviews shall evaluate the Probationary Firefighter's progress and potential in meeting the Job Requirements of a volunteer firefighter. Concerns identified in these evaluations shall be resolved before the subsequent evaluation. Failure to resolve concerns within those periods will be cause for dismissal.

15. The Probationary firefighter who successfully completes his/her first year shall be appointed as a Permanent volunteer firefighter. However, such appointment shall be conditional on the firefighter obtaining his/her DZ Driver's License prior to the expiry of the second year past this permanent status date. Failure to obtain the Driver's License will be cause for dismissal.

Applicants with Prior Firefighting Experience

An Applicant who has previous firefighting experience may, at the discretion of the Fire Chief, be recruited through a modified evaluation process as follows:

a. The Applicant shall submit an application, and if suitable shall participate in the Candidate selection process in the normal manner, and if successful shall be ranked as are other Candidates.
b. Credit shall be provided for previous experience that is deemed relevant and significant and at the discretion of the Fire Chief be exempt from aptitude and physical agility testing.
c. If the Candidate is suitable for appointment he/she may be offered a conditional appointment to a vacancy in the normal manner.
d. The experienced Recruit may be excused from recruit training to the extent that the station Training Coordinator determines is acceptable and provided the Candidate submits suitable records of previous training and experience for review by the Recruiting Committee and the station Training Coordinator.
e. The experienced Recruit may be immediately placed on 12-month probation, and is subject to periodic mandatory review in the normal manner.

f. The experienced Probationary firefighter shall be assigned tasks in accordance with demonstrated ability, which may exceed those of other Probationary firefighters without previous experience.

Norfolk Firefighters Transferring to Another Station

Any Permanent Norfolk County firefighter who moves his principal domicile from the fire district in which he/she is a volunteer firefighter to another fire district may apply for a transfer from one station to another. Such transfer is subject to the following:

1. The firefighter receives a suitable recommendation from the District Chief of the station to which the firefighter currently belongs.
2. The District Chief of the station to which the firefighter is requesting transfer interviews the firefighter and recommends his transfer.
3. There is a vacancy in the receiving station.
4. The Fire Chief reviews and approves the transfer.