



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the requirements to be eligible to test?

The current requirements to test for the Rochester Fire Department include IFSAC/Pro-Board Firefighter 1 and 2 certifications, NREMT-Basic certification, a high-school diploma or GED, and a valid driver's license.

How long are the eligibility rosters good for?

Typically speaking, each list is certified for two years. The commission that certifies this list has the option to extend a list up to one year after the initial two-year certification if they choose.

How long does it take to be hired?

Simple answer: it depends. Hiring off of the eligibility roster is done to fill vacancies accrued through attrition or when new positions are created. Hiring depends on the amount of turnover from current staff and each year is different. A recruit academy is sought when approximately three or more positions are vacant or need to be filled. Typically, recruit academies begin in either the spring and/or fall.

How many people are placed on the eligibility roster?

Historically, 50 people make up the eligibility roster. If less than 50 people make it through the hiring process, the list would be made up of those who successfully complete the hiring process in ranked order.

How many people typically test for firefighter?

On average, around 100 people have taken the entrance exam when it is given. Over the last ten years, we have seen numbers vary from test to test.

What does the initial testing process entail?

The current testing process includes an application process, an initial phone screening and an in-person interview that are scored. Once the scores are computed, the eligibility roster is derived from these scores in ranking order.

How long does it take to get the certifications?

Generally speaking, firefighter 1, firefighter 2, and HazMat operations are lumped into one group of classes that typically take around six months to complete. Emergency Medical Technician generally takes another six months to complete. Timelines may vary depending on the layout of the course and the institution one uses to complete them.

Where do you get the EMT class?

Most community technical colleges offer EMT programs. In close proximity to Rochester, you may look into Rochester Community and Technical College and Riverland in Austin, MN. Aside from that, SEEMS (Southeast EMS) has a list of all of the local ambulance services who run their own classes as well. Some of these courses are completely in person while others may be a blended learning where the coursework is completed at home and the practical skills are completed in-person.

<https://www.riverland.edu/customized-training/training-areas/emergency-medical-and-fire-rescue-services/fire-rescue-training/>

<https://www.rctc.edu/program/emt/>

<http://www.seems.com/>

Where can you get firefighter 1 and 2?

The closest school locally that offers the firefighter courses is Riverland in Austin, MN or Century College in White Bear Lake, MN. However, many local volunteer fire departments may have options for you as well.

<https://www.riverland.edu/customized-training/training-areas/emergency-medical-and-fire-rescue-services/fire-rescue-training/>

<https://www.century.edu/continuing-education/program-areas/public-safety-ems-fire-law-enforcement/firefighting-and-emergency>

Is there a physical agility test?

There is no graded physical agility test during the initial hiring process. However, there is a pass/fail physical agility test that must be completed after a job offer has been extended as part of the conditional employment offer.

What do you do if you have the certifications but aren't affiliated with a fire or EMS agency and my certifications may lapse before I get a job offer?

Currently, you need to do whatever is necessary to keep your certifications active, as they are required upon hiring. Keep the certifications current even if that means challenging the certification test before it expires to keep it active. We cannot guarantee how every situation may play out with the certification board so it is always best to come in with active, current certifications to avoid any issues.

As for EMT, one option is to look into local ambulance services as many of them offer programs where they maintain your certifications in exchange for you carrying a certain amount of hours or call-time during the month. Hayfield, Dodge Center, Elgin, Chatfield, and other smaller services offer these programs but availability changes over time. If you are facing the end of your certification with the National Registry, another option is to challenge the test for renewal. One viable option people have had great luck with is an on-line recertification process that can be found at <https://alliedmedtraining.com/emt-refresher-course/>.

What does the recruit academy entail?

The 10-week recruit academy builds upon your initial certification training and we dive deeper into every aspect of fire, rescue, EMS, HazMat, etc. We work to show you the fine intricacies of how Rochester operates and gives you a detailed look at our equipment, policies, and procedures. During the recruit academy, you will be assigned to the Training Division and will work a 40-hour week until after graduation when you are assigned to an operations Battalion.

What is the starting pay rate for a new firefighter?

Per the collective bargaining agreement for local 520, City of Rochester and IAFF Firefighters, the pay rates are as follows:

2020-\$20.849 hourly

2021-\$21.37 hourly

2022-\$21.958 hourly

***These rates are based on a shift schedule of 2912 hours worked annually.

The pay scale for firefighter tops out after 4 years of service with the department. Top scale after four years are as follows based on the same collective bargaining contract:

2020-\$27.788

2021-\$28.483

2022-\$29.266

***These rates are based on a shift schedule of 2912 hours worked annually.

Does RFD accept lateral transfers from other departments for various positions?

The City of Rochester does not currently accept lateral transfers from position from other departments for the position of Firefighter.

How long until I can work on promoting within the fire department?

As with any organization, there are limits on when you can start working towards promotions to Captain and Motor Operator. To test for Motor Operator, the employee must be employed within the RFD for 4 years. To be eligible to test for Captain, the employee must be employed within the department for 5 years.

What kind of person does well at RFD and what is the department looking for?

We are looking for people of character. The citizens of Rochester love our firefighters, not because of their skills, but because of how they are treated. We are not looking for experienced firefighters, although we will gladly take them if they meet our demands for good character. We will train you to be a firefighter. We can take a good person and make them a great firefighter, but we cannot make a great firefighter a good person. We want to know what you have done for others. We want to know what you have done to make your community, your State, your Nation, the World a better place because of your efforts. We are looking for humble, servant leaders that put service before self.

How does a criminal history affect my possible employment with the City of Rochester?

Certain offenses on a background investigation may disqualify you from being hired with our organization. For details on specific questions, we would advise you to call our Human Resources department at 507-328-2555 to speak with a specialist.

According to Section 8 of the Fire Civil Service Commission:

SECTION 8. REJECTION OF APPLICANTS: (AMENDED 09/14/2011, 12/21/2011, 03/06/2012, 07/10/2012, 11/15/2012)

- A. *Automatic Disqualification. An applicant shall be disqualified and rejected at any time prior to the examination and their name removed from an application list, or if later discovered from the Eligibility Register, if it is found that the applicant lacks any of the minimum qualifications required for the position in question. The Human Resources Department is authorized to reject an applicant whose application fails to meet the minimum qualifications for the position sought. Additionally, Minn. Stat. section 299F.035 authorizes a fire department to consider criminal history data that is directly related to the position of employment sought. The Commission considers the following offenses to be directly related to entrance positions and to result in the automatic disqualification of the applicant. For the purposes of this section, "conviction" means that a person has been charged with a crime and the person was found guilty of that crime, regardless of length of or imposition or execution of any sentence received, any deferred finding of guilt or imposition of sentence by the court, any continuance for dismissal granted by the court, or any expungement of the offense records or conviction.*
- 1. The applicant has been convicted of a felony in this or another state.*
 - 2. The applicant has been convicted of a violation of Minn. Stat. chapters 169 or 169A involving driving under the influence, or a statute or an ordinance from another state in conformance thereto, within five years of the application deadline.*
 - 3. The applicant has been convicted of a violation of Minn. Stat. chapters 169 or 169A involving driving under the influence, or a statute or an ordinance from another state in conformance thereto, that would have been a gross misdemeanor or felony under the provisions of Minnesota law.*

4. The applicant has pending criminal charges at any time during the employment process at the felony level or that would be a violation of Minn. Stat. chapters 169 or 169A involving driving under the influence, or a statute or an ordinance from another state in conformance thereto, that were initiated by complaint and approved by the court, or for which a court has determined that probable cause exists for such charge. A current employee of the Department who, after July 10, 2012 (the effective date of this rule amendment), commits an act that would be an automatic disqualifier for an entrance applicant, and who is allowed to retain employment with the Department, shall be prohibited from participating in any promotional testing process. The Human Resources Department is directed to inform applicants of the automatic disqualifiers identified above and is authorized to reject an applicant whose application identifies any of such disqualifiers.

B. *Rejection for other causes.* Rejection of a candidate for any reason other than the automatic disqualifiers identified above must be made by the Commission following a public meeting. This may occur during the review of a background evaluation or such other time when a candidate's eligibility may come into question. An applicant may be rejected and their name removed from an application list or the Eligibility Register for any of the following or other causes that substantially impair the applicant's fitness for appointment:

1. The applicant is physically or mentally unfit to perform the duties of the position to which appointment is sought.
2. The applicant is addicted to or engages in the excessive use of drugs, narcotics or intoxicating beverages.
3. The applicant has engaged in disgraceful conduct or criminal conduct that did not require disqualification.
4. The applicant has been dismissed from employment or reprimanded in the public service or in a commercial or other organization for delinquency or misconduct.
5. The applicant has intentionally falsified the application or provided misleading information with regard to any material fact.

The Secretary shall notify in writing any applicant rejected by the Commission, specifying the cause for rejection. The Commission shall, upon written request of the applicant, received within 10 (ten) calendar days of the notice of rejection, give the applicant an opportunity to show cause why he or she should not be rejected.