

# ENTRY LEVEL FIREFIGHTER/EMT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (“FAQS”)

## APPLYING TO TAKE THE EXAM

### 1. What are the requirements to sit for the exam?

- a. You must reach the age of 18 by December 31, 2014 and cannot be over the age of 37 per the Municipal Code of Chicago.
  - i. You will be required to present proof of your age on the day of exam. Failure to do so will result in your disqualification.

### 2. What are the minimum qualifications for the Firefighter/EMT position?

- a. Applicants must reach their 18th birthday by December 31, 2014. Verification of age will be checked at the entrance of the written exam. Candidates who will not reach the age of 18 by December 31, 2014 will not be allowed to take the written examination
  - i. Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago, no person may enter the Fire Training Academy as a probationary Firefighter/EMT after the person’s 38<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- b. Applicants must be a high school graduate or possess a general equivalency diploma (GED) by June of 2015.
- c. Must have a valid, non-expired CPAT (Candidate Physical Ability Test) certification.

**Note: The CPAT certification must be current and valid by the candidate’s start date in the Fire Training Academy. The City of Chicago recommends that candidate’s work on obtaining their CPAT certification after successful completion of the written exam with consideration of their assigned lottery number. Please note, CPAT certifications are only valid for one year and will need to be renewed annually.**

- i. For more information on the CPAT certification program, please visit the following website: [http://www.iaff.org/hs/CPAT/cpat\\_index.html](http://www.iaff.org/hs/CPAT/cpat_index.html)
- ii. For information about where to obtain the CPAT certification, please visit the following website:  
<http://www.iaff.org/HS/Well/statelist.htm>
- iii. To access a video of the CPAT, please visit the following website:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FLkb3QVv2U>
- d. Must have a valid U.S. driver's license at the time of pre-employment processing.
- e. Must be a U.S. citizen or a legal resident at the time of hire.
- f. Must be a resident in the City of Chicago at the time of hire.

- g. Please refer to the section “After the Exam Administration” for additional information about what happens after you take the written exam.

**3. When can I apply to sit for the next Firefighter/EMT exam?**

- a. You will be able to apply from Wednesday, July 16, 2014 through Tuesday, September 16, 2014.
- b. If your application is successfully received, you will be notified of the date and time of the exam, which will be on either December 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> of 2014. You will be provided adequate time to study for the exam.

**4. How can I apply?**

- a. There is only one way to apply, and that’s online. You can find the application at [www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication) starting Wednesday, July 16, 2014.
- b. The online application requires you to create an account with a user name and password. Please write your user name and password down. That way, you can access your application anytime during the application period, which closes on Tuesday, September 16, 2014. If you are unable to log into your account, you can call (312) 744-4976 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and we can assist you.

**5. What if I don’t own or have access to a computer?**

- a. All Chicago Public Libraries have computers with Internet access available for free, public use. To locate your nearest Chicago Public Library, you can call (312) 747-4300 or visit [www.chipublib.org](http://www.chipublib.org).
  - i. To access Chicago Public Library computers, you have to have a library card, which is free of charge. Please refer to [www.chipublib.org](http://www.chipublib.org) for the requirements for obtaining a library card.
- b. You can also check with your alderman’s office to see whether other free computer resources might be available.

**6. The application is requiring me to provide an e-mail address. What if I don’t have an email address?**

- a. You must have an email address, because that is the only form of communication the City will use to provide you with the status of your application and test information.
  - i. You can set up a free email address at various internet service providers. Two that we recommend are:
    - 1. Gmail: [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com)
    - 2. Yahoo: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

- 7. While in the application system, I hit the back browser arrow and now the computer screen is showing me an error page. What should I do?**
- a. You should not use the back browser in the payment system, as you may get an error page. If you receive an error page, you **MUST** start over. First close out of the error page, and then click back on the application link at [www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication), log in, and start over.
- 8. Do I have to be a resident of the City of Chicago to apply?**
- a. You are not required to be a resident of the City of Chicago at the time of application. However, you will be required to be a resident of the City of Chicago at the time you enter the Fire Training Academy.
- 9. What if I owe the City money (for example, through unpaid parking tickets or water bills)?**
- a. You can still sit for the exam, provided you submit proof that you are the age of 18 or older or will turn 18 by December 31, 2014.
  - b. You must pay all debts or participate in a debt payment plan before you can enter the Fire Training Academy. To prove that you have paid your debts, you must provide proof from the Department of Finance that (1) the debt is not attributable to you; (2) you have paid the debt in full; or (3) you have enrolled in a debt payment plan.
- 10. How will I know the status or result of my application?**
- a. The application will ask a few questions to assess whether you meet the requirements to sit for the exam. If any of your answers to those questions indicates that you do not meet those requirements, you will immediately be informed that your application is disqualified.
    - i. If, during your attempt to submit your application, you are informed that your application is disqualified and you feel that your application was erroneously disqualified, please call (312) 744-4976 or email [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org) as soon as possible. Once the application period closes on Tuesday, September 16, 2014, we will be unable to correct any errors.
    - ii. If your application is successfully submitted, you will receive an email within the next few days prompting you to submit payment of the exam registration fee. Please refer to the section titled “Exam Application Fee Payment Information” for more detail regarding payment.
      1. If you have not received any such correspondence within three (3) days of submitting your application, you should call (312) 744-4976 or email [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org) to check on the status your application. Please be sure to check the spam filters on your email account first.
      2. If you have any uncertainty about the receipt of your application, we strongly advise you to contact us at the above number or email address as soon as possible. You must contact us before the application period closes on Tuesday, September 16, 2014. **NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2014.**

- iii. The next correspondence you receive from us will provide the date, time, and place of the exam. You will receive this information via email by mid-November. If you have not received an email with this information by the end of November, please call us at (312) 744-4976 or email us at [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org) as soon as possible.

**11. Is there an exam fee?**

- a. Yes, it's \$30, which is non-refundable. Please refer to the page titled "Exam Application Fee Payment Information" for additional information.

**12. What if I can't afford the exam fee?**

- a. You can request a fee waiver. Please refer to the page titled "Fee Waiver Request Information" for instructions on how to submit a request.

**13. Can I create multiple accounts and pay for each one to increase my chances of being higher on the eligibility list?**

- a. No. You can only have one application on file. We will delete all duplicates, and you will forfeit any additional exam fees paid.

**14. How do I update my contact information if I move or change my telephone number or email address?**

- a. You can update your contact information by logging into your account, which you can find at [www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication)

**15. What if I can't log into my account?**

- a. Contact (312) 744-4976 or stop by City Hall, Room 100 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide your user name and reset your password.

**16. What are the requirements for the Veterans, Chicago Public Schools, and Line of Duty Preferences, and if I believe I qualify, how do I receive the preference?**

- a. Please refer to the page titled "Information Regarding Line of Duty, Veterans, Chicago Public Schools, and Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy (CPFTA) Preferences" for details about those preferences and their requirements.

**INFORMATION REGARDING LINE OF DUTY, VETERANS, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND  
CPFTA PREFERENCES**

**1. What are the Veterans, Chicago Public Schools, and Line of Duty Preferences?**

- a. For information about the Veterans and Line of Duty Preferences, please refer to [http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dhr/supp\\_info/APPLICANT\\_PREFERENCE\\_1.pdf](http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dhr/supp_info/APPLICANT_PREFERENCE_1.pdf) The Chicago Public Schools Preference, which is new, is similar to the Veterans Preference and is available to applicants who graduated from a Chicago Public High School.
- b. When setting up your application profile, you will be asked if you qualify for any of these preferences. If you believe that you do, make sure you answer “yes” to the applicable question. Please remember, however, that in order to actually receive a preference, you must also provide the required documentation. Preferences will not be applied without the required documentation.

**2. To qualify for the Veterans Preference, you must provide one of the following:**

- a. Veterans must attach a letter from the United States Veterans Administration on official stationery stating dates of service and character of service. Active military personnel must attach a letter from their Commanding Officer on official stationery verifying their active duty, length of service, and character of service in the Armed Forces of the United States. This letter should also include a copy of the applicant’s Military ID; **OR**
- b. A DD214 for Veteran Status. The copy must include discharge status, which is traditionally known as the Member Copy 4.
  - i. If you lost your DD214, you should contact the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at <http://www.va.gov> or (800) 827-1000.
  - ii. If a copy of the DD214 can’t be obtained, then a letter from the U.S. Veterans Administration on official stationery indicating dates of service and character of service can be accepted in lieu of the DD214.

**3. To qualify for the Chicago Public Schools’ (“CPS”) Preference, you must provide one of the following:**

- a. A copy of your diploma from a Chicago Public High School; **OR**
- b. A copy of your transcript from a Chicago Public High School verifying that you graduated.

**4. To qualify for the Line of Duty Preference, please visit [http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dhr/supp\\_info/line\\_of\\_duty\\_preference.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dhr/supp_info/line_of_duty_preference.html) for further instructions.**

## 5. How do I provide the required documents for the Veterans and CPS Preferences?

- a. The quickest and easiest way to submit the required documents is to scan them, log into your online application account, and upload them into your account. You can access your account at [www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication)
- b. You may also provide documents via email, US Mail, or in person.
  - i. You can email documents to [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org), and you should keep a copy of the email you sent, making sure that it has the date and time stamp showing when you sent it.
  - ii. For U.S. Mail, we STRONGLY recommend that you use either certified mail or delivery confirmation.
    1. If you choose to send documents via regular mail, you run the risk that the documents will be lost, and there will be no way for you to prove that you sent the documents. Without such proof, we cannot consider the documents received.
  - iii. If you wish to bring documents in person, you must come to Room 100 in City Hall, and a receipt will be provided to you.
- c. We advise providing the documents as soon as possible. The sooner they are in our system, the sooner we can apply the preferences.
  - i. These documents can be added to your account at any time. There is no cutoff date for the submission of documents showing eligibility for Veterans or CPS Preferences. However, the later you get them into our system, the later those preferences may become available to you.
- d. Some applicants will become eligible for a preference at a later time. For example, you may be a senior at a Chicago Public High School when the eligibility list is generated and thus ineligible for the CPS Preference at that time. However, upon graduation in the spring of 2015, you will qualify for the preference but must change your answer to the question about preferences in your profile and provide the required documentation to receive it. We advise updating your application as quickly as possible. As stated above, the later we receive the documents, the later the preference will be available to you.
  - i. Please remember to update your answer to the preferences question in your profile AND provide the required documentation. If one of these steps is not followed, you will not receive the preference.

**6. What is the Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy (CPFTA) Preference?**

- a. Qualified applicants that have successfully completed the Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy will be granted preference for an entry position for the sworn Police or uniformed Fire Department position, providing the preference is not superseded by a collective bargaining agreement.
- b. To qualify for the preference, the applicant must otherwise qualify for the job and must be eligible for the position. The preference granted under this section shall be in the form of preference in processing.
- c. Applicants who qualify under this section will receive consideration before other qualified applicants for approved, vacant positions unless superseded by a collective bargaining agreement.

**7. What if I can't log into my account?**

- a. Contact (312) 744-4976 or stop by City Hall, Room 100 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide your user name and reset your password.

## **EXAM REGISTRATION FEE PAYMENT INFORMATION**

### **1. How do I pay the exam registration fee?**

- a. You can pay the exam registration fee with a valid credit card that possesses a credit card logo such as American Express, Discover, Master Card, or Visa, as pictured here:

- i.  American Express
- ii.  Discover
- iii.  Master Card
- iv.  Visa

### **2. If I don't have a credit card, can I use my debit card to pay the application fee?**

- a. Yes. Debit cards are acceptable as long as your debit card possesses one of the credit card logos depicted above.

### **3. Do you accept checks or money orders for payment of the application fee?**

- a. Unfortunately, no. We are unable to accept checks or Money Orders.

### **4. Will my exam fee be refunded if I am not selected for the position?**

- a. No. Application fees are non-refundable.

### **5. Will a receipt be available for printing after I make the \$30 payment?**

- a. Yes. At the completion of the payment process, a confirmation page containing a confirmation number signifying your payment was successful and complete will appear. You should print a copy of this page and retain it for your records.
- b. You will also receive a copy of the confirmation page via e-mail once your payment has been submitted. You should also save this e-mail and retain it for your records.

### **6. I went to the payment website and entered my user name and e-mail address, but the system will not let me log in.**

- a. The user name and e-mail address that you must use to enter the payment website is the SAME user name and e-mail address you used to enter your online application.

- b. If you continue to have difficulties, please call our administrative support staff at (312) 744-4976 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, or e-mail us at [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org)

**7. What if I can't log into my account?**

- a. Contact (312) 744-4976 or stop by City Hall, Room 100 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide your user name and reset your password.

**8. On the payment website, I noticed that my information was listed incorrectly on the summary page. Can I correct this information?**

- a. Yes. You can update your contact information by logging into your account, which you can find at [www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/FireApplication)

**9. While in the payment system, I hit the back browser arrow and now the computer screen is showing me an error page. What should I do?**

- a. You should not use the back browser in the payment system, as you may get an error page. If you receive an error page, you MUST start over. First close out of the error page, and then click back on the payment link, log in, and start over.

## **FEE WAIVER REQUEST INFORMATION**

### **1. Who is eligible for a fee waiver?**

- a. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 2-74-020 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, if you are presently receiving unemployment compensation, SSI, or general assistance OR your income is below the federally defined poverty level, you may be eligible to receive a fee waiver.
- b. To identify whether or not you meet the federally defined poverty level, please visit the following website: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm>

### **2. How do I request a fee waiver?**

- a. The online exam registration fee payment site provides the opportunity to request a fee waiver. You must log into this site when you receive the payment link via e-mail after your application has been submitted successfully.
- b. Your request for a fee waiver **MUST** be accompanied by at least one current document listed below. Please attach one of the required documents to the resume tab of your application. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete request, and you will not be permitted to sit for the exam.
  - i. IDES Wage Information Sheet
  - ii. IDES Benefit Payment Stub
  - iii. IDPA Medical Card
  - iv. IDPA Verification of Benefits Form / Grant Information Request
  - v. LINK Card and Receipt
  - vi. The receipt must be from a recent purchase such as a grocery bill within the last month.
  - vii. Food Stamp Issuance Document
  - viii. Federal Income Tax Return (most recent tax year)
  - ix. Letter (on shelter letterhead) from the homeless shelter where you currently stay.
- c. If you have any questions about attaching your documents, please contact our administrative staff at (312) 744-4976 between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday or e-mail us at [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org)
- d. You will receive an email indicating whether your fee waiver request was granted or denied.
  - i. If the payment period is nearing the end, which is Tuesday, September 16, 2014, and you have not received a decision on your waiver request, please contact administrative staff at (312) 744-4976 between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday or e-mail us at [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org) as soon as possible. You **MUST** contact us before the end of the payment period, which is Tuesday, September 16, 2014. Once the payment period closes, if you have not submitted payment or obtained a fee waiver, you

will not be allowed to it for the exam. NO LATE PAYMENTS OR FEE WAIVER REQUESTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

*e. Any falsification or omission of information that you provide in support of your financial status for the purpose of receiving this fee waiver may result in your disqualification and/or termination of employment; and may be punishable under laws governing perjury and/or a violation of Municipal Code of Chicago 2-74-020.*

**3. I received an e-mail stating that my fee waiver request was denied. I checked my application and realized that I attached the wrong documentation for my fee waiver request. What can I do?**

a. Please call our administrative support staff at (312) 744-4976 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday or e-mail us at [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org), and we can assist you. You MUST contact us before the end of the payment period, which is Tuesday, September 16, 2014. Once the payment period closes, if you have not submitted payment or obtained a fee waiver, you will not be allowed to it for the exam. NO LATE PAYMENTS OR FEE WAIVER REQUESTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

## **AFTER THE EXAM ADMINISTRATION**

### **1. If I receive notification that I've passed the exam, what happens next?**

- a. All applicants who pass the exam are placed on an eligibility list, and that list is sorted in lottery order. You will be referred to the Chicago Fire Department in lottery order as vacancies become available.

### **2. What minimum qualifications must I meet if I am referred off the eligibility list?**

- a. You must be at least 18 of age by December 31, 2014.
  - i. Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago, no person may be appointed as a probationary Firefighter/EMT after the person's 38<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- b. You must possess a current, valid State of Illinois driver's license.
- c. You must be a high school graduate or possess a general equivalency diploma (GED) by June of 2015.
- d. Must have a valid, non-expired Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) certification.

**Note: The CPAT certification must be current and valid by the candidate's start date in the Fire Training Academy. The City of Chicago recommends that candidate's work on obtaining their CPAT certification after successful completion of the written exam with consideration of their assigned lottery number. Please note, CPAT certifications are only valid for one year and will need to be renewed annually.**

- i. For more information on the CPAT certification program, please visit the following website: [http://www.iaff.org/hs/CPAT/cpat\\_index.html](http://www.iaff.org/hs/CPAT/cpat_index.html)
  - ii. For information about where to obtain the CPAT certification, please visit the following website: <http://www.iaff.org/HS/Well/statelist.htm>
  - iii. To access a video of the CPAT, please visit the following website: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FLkb3QV2U>
- e. Must pass background investigation including, fingerprinting among other pre-employment procedures.
- f. Must be a resident in the City of Chicago at the time of hire.
- g. You must be a U.S. citizen or a legal resident at the time of hire.

**3. If I meet the minimum qualifications and am placed on the eligibility list in lottery order, how long am I on the eligibility list? When does the eligibility list expire?**

- a. You remain on the eligibility list until it is either fully exhausted or retired. A Firefighter/EMT eligibility list typically lasts around six (6) years.
- b. Please be sure to keep your contact information (*i.e.*, address, phone, and e-mail) up-to-date to ensure that we can reach you if you are referred from the eligibility list. To update your contact information as necessary by either logging into your account or e-mailing your updated contact information to [fire-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:fire-application@cityofchicago.org)

**4. What if I can't log into my account?**

- a. Contact (312) 744-4976 or stop by City Hall, Room 100 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide your user name and reset your password.

**5. If I'm referred to the Chicago Fire Department, am I immediately admitted to the Fire Training Academy?**

- a. No. Before you can be admitted to the Fire Training Academy, you must pass drug screenings, a background investigation including fingerprinting, and other pre-employment procedures as determined by the Chicago Fire Department. Successful candidates will be given a conditional offer of appointment and must pass a comprehensive medical examination prior to final appointment into the Fire Training Academy as a Probationary Firefighter/EMT.

**6. What happens if I fail any portion of the hiring process?**

- a. If you fail any portion of the pre-employment hiring the Chicago Fire Department will request that your name be removed from the eligibility list and will cease to process your application.

**7. If I am admitted to the Fire Training Academy, what kind of training will I receive?**

- a. Candidates receive approximately twelve (12) weeks of EMT-B training and twelve (12) weeks of fire suppression training at the Fire Academy before graduating and receiving a field assignment as a Probationary Firefighter/EMT. Any person appointed to the position of Firefighter/EMT will be required to become EMT/B certified before graduation from the Fire Academy, and maintain said certification or be subject to dismissal from the service of the City of Chicago. All new appointment Probationary Firefighter/EMTs must serve a nine (9) month probationary period effective the date of appointment.
- b. Please note that candidates processed from the 2014 Firefighter/EMT eligibility list will be the last group offered the EMT/B certification as part of the Fire Training Academy. For all future Firefighter/EMT postings, candidates will be required to obtain the EMT/B certification by the time they are called in for pre-employment processing.

**8. How long does it take to graduate from the Fire Training Academy?**

- a. Approximately six (6) months. Probationary Firefighter/EMTs must successfully complete all training modules and applicable licensure tests and requirements in order to graduate.

**9. If I graduate from the Fire Training Academy, where will I be assigned?**

- a. Assignments of graduates are selected randomly and depend on the operational needs of the Chicago Fire Department at the time of graduation.

**10. When does the probationary period start? How long is it?**

- a. The probationary period starts when you are appointed as a Probationary Firefighter/EMT. The probationary period is nine (9) months.

**11. Do I have to graduate from the Fire Training Academy in order to work as a Firefighter/EMT?**

- a. Yes.

**12. I am a Firefighter/EMT in another jurisdiction. Do I still have to go through the Chicago Fire Department's training program?**

- a. Yes. Regardless of your current status, everyone hired for the position of Firefighter/EMT must attend and graduate from the Fire Training Academy in order to hold that title.

**13. What is the salary of a Firefighter/EMT?**

- a. A Firefighter/EMT starts at an annual salary of \$50,490.

**14. What are the benefits that are offered with the Firefighter/EMT position?**

- a. There are many benefits, which include:
  - i. Starting annual salary of \$50,490
  - ii. Tuition Reimbursement
  - iii. Medical, Dental, Prescription and Vision Insurance
  - iv. Opportunity for Advancement
  - v. Attractive Work Schedule
  - vi. Paid Holidays and Vacation Days
  - vii. Retirement Plan
  - viii. Annual Uniform Allowance
  - ix. Home Purchase Assistance