



Bernalillo County Fire and Rescue Department

Training Division

Fire Cadet Applicant Handbook

This booklet provides information regarding the position of Fire Cadet with Bernalillo County. Included is information about the job itself as well as specific information about the entire recruitment and application process, including testing requirements.

INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet was developed for fire cadet applicants by the Bernalillo County Fire Department Training Division. It explains the entire application process from open enrollment up to the first day of the Academy. It includes information on each step in the selection process. Reviewing this handbook and preparing your self for each stop may improve your chances of passing the tests and becoming a fire cadet with the Bernalillo County Fire Department.

If you are looking for a challenging and fulfilling career as a member of the Bernalillo County Fire Department, you are encouraged to study this booklet, attend all optional preparation sessions, and work to improve any area of personal weakness you might identify. A firefighter's normal duties require not only physical stamina and strength but also a high degree of mental alertness. Our standards for selection are high but only because the demands of the job are challenging.

Some applicants underestimate the high standards required to be a firefighter; as a result, they do not prepare adequately to ensure success in each step of the selection process. Physical Agility Tests (PAT) Workshops will be offered so that applicants can become familiar with the simulated job tasks prior to the actual test.

Our experience with previous selection processes demonstrates that proper physical conditioning is essential to success. Don't wait to begin a training program; start right away! A program which develops the upper body and leg strength will improve the likelihood of success in the PAT. The importance of general body stamina cannot be emphasized too strongly. Maintaining the level of fitness, even after the PAT will certainly help make your first weeks at the Academy more successful. As a firefighter, you will be required to maintain a high level of fitness throughout your career.

You may wish to visit a fire station if you have never done so. A visit will help you experience the environment and decide whether or not you feel you would be comfortable working in the "close quarters" of a station. A visit to a station is certainly not a prerequisite to selection, but it may help you decide if this is the career for you.

APPLICATION PROCESS

I. Interest Cards: (Unless the need to hire arises and there is a Job Posting on the County Web-site).

The Fire Department will provide “interest cards” in order to identify a person or persons interested in Fire Department Membership.

Interest cards will be distributed and received at the Fire Department Headquarters by the Chief of Fire and Rescue, or designee.

A completed interest card will be maintained by the Chief of Fire and Rescue, or designee. The person or persons identified will be identified as “recruits” in order to facilitate notification of upcoming membership activities..

Other recruitment means such as job fairs, advertisements, or mailings may proceed at the discretion of the Chief of Fire and Rescue.

II. Application:

The application process for employment will proceed as directed by the Bernalillo County Human Resources Department.

The application process for Volunteer Membership will proceed as directed through the Volunteer Section of the Fire Department.

All conditional and official offers for employment will occur through the Human Resources Department or Office of the Chief of Fire and Rescue.

All conditional and official offers for Volunteer Membership will occur through the Volunteer Section of the Fire Department upon approval of the Chief of Fire and Rescue.

In cooperation with the Human Resources Department, the Chief of Fire and Rescue shall facilitate a background investigation on all applicants.

III. Testing Overview:

In order for an applicant to become a member of the Bernalillo County Fire Department, all applicants must take and complete a test for physical ability, knowledge, communication, experience, and be placed on an applicant eligibility list..

Testing will consist of three (3) foundational elements:

Knowledge, Physical Ability and Communication.

Knowledge: Two categories make up knowledge: a 100 point written test and an education evaluation. Education is further broken down into academic and professional certification. A minimum score of 75% or at least 75 correct answers on a 100 question written test. This will allow the applicant to proceed to the next step of the process.

Physical Ability: The applicant shall be required to pass a physical fitness assessment. All physical ability testing shall be completed on the same day under the direction of the Training Division. The physical ability testing will be conducted in three phases which include a pack test, physical agility test, and aerial ladder climb. Successful completion of the physical ability testing will allow the applicant to proceed to the next step of the process.

Communication: An interview panel will be assigned and interview each applicant independently.

IV. Knowledge Element:

Exam Scores The Training Division will give a proctored written exam of 100 questions. A minimum score of 75% or at least 75 correct answers is required to pass the written examination. Examination will consist of 100 questions. 50 of which will be emergency medical questions (EMT-B level for firefighters and EMT-P level for all paramedic) and 50 questions of general aptitude.

V. Physical Ability Element:

Phase I Pack Test: This is a three (3) mile brisk walk with a 45 pound vest supplied by the Training Division of the BCFD. Test must be **completed in 45 minutes and 45 seconds** to proceed through the hiring process. Applicants **will not** be permitted to use their own packs. This test will be timed by Training Division Personnel. Test will be monitored by a Safety Officer/EMT. End of Phase I.

Phase II Physical Agility Test: Test must be **completed within 6 minutes and 30 seconds**. The agility will be timed by Training Division Personnel. This event will take place at fire station twenty-nine (29) training tower. Applicant will be provided a bunker coat, helmet, and SCBA. Applicants must have their own leather-type work gloves.

Applicant will place 100 foot of 1 ¾ inch high rise pack on right shoulder and ascend the stairs of the tower to the 4th floor. Applicant will then place the pack in the painted box on the floor: first (1st) event completed.

Applicant proceeds to the Northwest corner of the building to a painted square located at the base of the railing. Here they will grasp a 50' rope and haul a three (3) inch roll of hose from the ground, up and over the railing: Second (2nd) event completed.

Applicant will then pick up the first (1st) event high rise pack and places it on his/her left shoulder and descend the stairs to the ground level without skipping any stairs. Applicant will place the high rise pack in its original painted box: Third (3rd) event completed.

Applicant proceeds to Keiser™ sled, grasps the mallet and positions him/herself on the platform. Beginning with a chopping motion drive the sled to the other end of the platform. Applicant will be signaled by the timer when they have completed the Fourth (4th) event.

Applicant will then proceed through a serpentine of cones where they will follow arrows approx 100 feet, Fifth (5th) event completed.

Applicant will then grasp the nozzle of a 100foot charged 1 ¾ inch structural hose line and advance the hose to the painted line (approx 100 feet), place the nozzle in the closed position in the painted box: Sixth (6th) event completed.

Applicant proceeds to the 175 pound mannequin where they will grasp and drag 100 feet to the finish line. Applicant is not permitted to use any fastening devices or mechanical advantages to move mannequin, i.e. (webbing, rope etc.) End of physical agility phase II.

The Physical Agility test starts when the applicant touches the high rise pack and is timed until applicant passes the finish line with the mannequin. Any equipment malfunction during testing will automatically stop the clock. The Training Division Personnel can stop applicant at anytime for unsafe practice or safety hazards during challenge. All testing will be monitored by a Safety Officer/EMT.

Phase III Aerial Ladder Climb: Test will not be timed. Applicant will be provided with bunker coat, SCBA, type II ladder harness and helmet. Applicant must have their own leather-type work gloves.

Applicant will proceed to the Aerial Ladder where Training Division Personnel will attach a belay line to the applicants harness and give instructions on the task.

Applicant, when instructed, will ascend to the top of the aerial ladder and lock into a rung using the ladder hook provided on the harness.

Applicant will then look down at the Training Division Personnel and identify verbally the item they are pointing at.

Training Division Personnel will signal the applicant to descend the Aerial Ladder. Once the applicant completes the descent, Training Personnel will remove the belay line. Phase completed.

Successful completion of the Physical Ability Testing allows the applicant to move to the next step of the process.

VI. Communication Element:

Interview: Points are awarded by each interviewer up to the maximum per question and category. The maximum score of the interview will be factored to reach the maximum of 20 points available on the matrix.

Once applicant has completed all phases of the hiring process, the applicant will be scheduled for an OSHA 202 pre-hire physical exam at Manzano Medical. Upon completion of the physical and the applicant has passed, the applicant may be given a conditional offer of employment. Once the conditional offer has been given the candidate will be given the next Academy start date.

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Question: I missed passing the written test by one point! That's so close to passing. Can I test again?

Answer: During each application process we receive numerous applications. We feel very strongly about giving all candidates the same opportunities. Since we cannot retest all applicants, we do not allow anyone to retest until the next recruitment.

Question: My son (or my husband, brother, boyfriend, girlfriend, daughter, wife) took the test and failed. Can you tell me what his (her) score was?

Answer: Test information is confidential and cannot be given out to anyone except the applicant, even at the applicant's request. You may tell your scores to anyone, but we can provide that information only to you personally.

Question: Can you tell me what area of the test I did poorly on so I can study it for next time?

Answer: Again, we can't tell you because we could not possible provide this service to all applicants.

Question: I can't make it to the test at my scheduled time (or date). Can I reschedule?

Answer: No, exceptions to scheduling may be made only if there is a death in the immediate family (documentation required) or if an applicant is hospitalized due to a sudden injury or illness. Any rescheduled test must be taken before the testing for that phase is completed (usually in the same work week).

Question: How important is my written test and scores for the interview?

Answer: The interview panel looks at you as a whole person, whereas the other parts of the selection process tend to look at you in specific and distinct areas. Scores are important, but so are the things you accomplished in your life, as noted on your Recruit Candidate Investigation Questionnaire. You should complete this form carefully and truthfully to ensure that the Fire Chief knows as much about you as possible.

**Punctuality is critical.
If you are late for any test, you are out of the
process!**