

City of Coquitlam

# Firefighter Application Manual



Coquitlam



# Table of Contents

Message from the Fire Chief ..... 3

Becoming a Firefighter ..... 4

Overview of the Firefighter Recruitment Process..... 5

*Applying Online* ..... 5

*Shortlisting*..... 6

*Psychometric*..... 6

*Physical Testing Part 1 and Fire Services Test* ..... 7

*Ride-Along Program (RAP)* ..... 7

*Interviews*..... 8

*Physical Testing Part 2*..... 9

*Medical* ..... 9

*Background Checks*..... 9

*Offers and Acceptance*..... 9

*Orientation/Training* ..... 9

*Regrets* ..... 9

*Requests for Accomodation*..... 9

Frequently Asked Questions..... 10



## Message from the Fire Chief

During my career at Coquitlam Fire/Rescue, I've seen nearly a hundred of our members retire, most of whom say this is the best job ever and express pride in their service. One reason for this high satisfaction is that we genuinely get to help people every day. It's not always like in the movies; often, it's about supporting someone on their toughest day, bringing calm to chaos, and guiding them toward recovery. Helping others, whether on or off duty, brings deep satisfaction to our firefighters.

Another source of satisfaction lies in the tight-knit community forged among our dedicated team. This camaraderie serves as crucial support as we tackle challenges together. Though our training standards may seem daunting at first, they become achievable through dedication, teamwork, and mutual support. These standards foster the confidence, inclusivity and resilience needed to overcome obstacles as a unit.

Before you consider applying, it's essential to understand the real world physical and psychological challenges. The demands of the job, like handling heavy equipment in intense heat, require exceptional strength, stamina, and ongoing fitness commitment. Exposure to toxins increases the risk of occupational disease, emphasizing the importance of healthy living. Moreover, exposure to grief and trauma is common, necessitating psychological self-care and support from social networks and mental health professionals. We have a many tools and supports in place and I've had to rely on them frequently.

Despite these challenges, my love for this profession has only grown stronger. The fulfillment of serving the community outweighs the difficulties, and I would choose this path again without hesitation. Coquitlam Fire/Rescue stands out for its unwavering support of firefighter well-being, from City Council to fellow firefighters—a support system I deeply appreciate.

Joining us demands sacrifice, dedication, and resilience, but the difference you make in people's lives makes it all worthwhile. If you're ready for the challenge, I encourage you to apply and become a proud Coquitlam firefighter.

—Chief Scott Young



## Becoming a Firefighter

Firefighters in Coquitlam serve a diverse and vibrant community. The nature of firefighting has changed over time. Firefighters respond a number of medical assistance calls, motor vehicle accidents in addition to fighting fires. The kind of individuals that Coquitlam Fire and Rescue are seeking has changed over time. Firefighters reflect the diverse community we serve. We are searching for firefighters who are emotionally intelligent, resilient, value teamwork, and give back to the community and reflect the diverse community we serve. Currently we work a four day rotation, but we expect to adapt to a 24hr shift model within the next year that will further enhance work-life balance for our firefighters.

Becoming a Firefighter in Coquitlam Fire/Rescue requires dedication and hard work. However, once you achieve this goal, you'll discover a career that will keep you interested and satisfied throughout your professional life.

We welcome candidates from various backgrounds to bring their unique strengths, experiences and resiliency to the Fire service. Our diversity makes us stronger and enhances our ability to serve the community.



**Watch:** [Town Centre Firehall and Training Centre](#)



**Watch:** [What it's like to be a Coquitlam Firefighter](#)

# Overview of the Firefighter Recruitment Process

## Applying Online

All applications are completed online at [coquitlam.ca/414/Career-Opportunities](https://coquitlam.ca/414/Career-Opportunities). Applications must be made before the closing date and time indicated on the job posting. We do not accept paper based submissions.

We have created guides to help both internal and external candidates with the application process. If you encounter any difficulty, please contact Human Resources.

- [External Applicants Guide \(PDF\)](#)
- [Internal Applicants Guide \(PDF\)](#)

## Minimum Qualifications

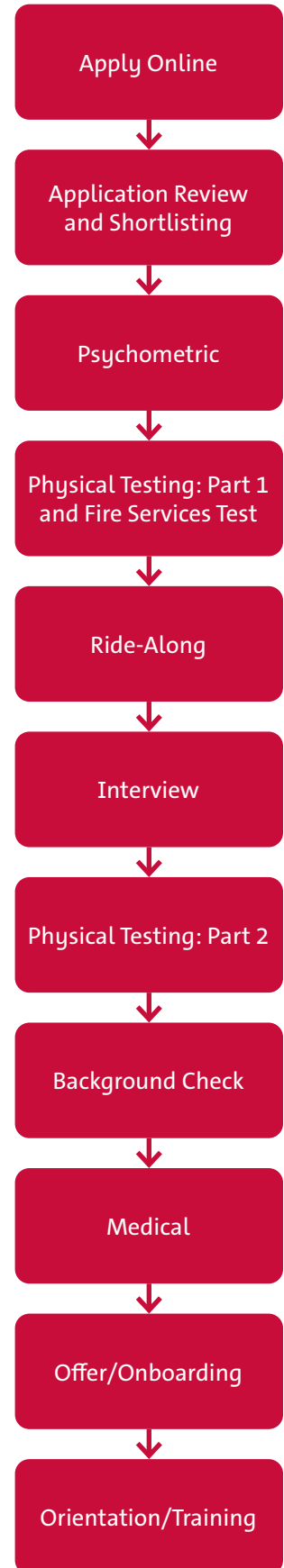
Candidates must clearly demonstrate how they meet the minimum qualifications indicated on the job posting. Proof of completion must be uploaded to your online application.

Minimum qualifications include:

- Completed Grade 12 or GED.
- Possess a valid Class 3 British Columbia Driver's License with a safe driving record.
- EMA First Responders License (or higher) valid until January 2025 at a minimum.
- Successfully completed NFPA 1001 Level 1 and 2 Certification.
- Proof of completion must be uploaded as one PDF document to your online application. Documents required to be uploaded include:
  - » Grade 12 Diploma/Transcript or GED. Note, if you have completed a 2-year Diploma, University Degree or higher from a recognized post-secondary institution, you do not need to include your Grade 12 Diploma or GED.
  - » Copy of your NFPA 1001 Level 1 and 2 Certification.
  - » Copy of Driver's Abstract with no adverse reports. This can be [requested online](#) and obtained from ICBC.

Other requirements include:

- Being legally able to work in Canada on a permanent basis.
- Must be 19 years of age on the date of the application.
- Must be physically capable and psychologically able to perform the duties of a Firefighter.
- Must be willing to relocate to one the following cities prior to commencing employment. These include:
  - » Abbotsford
  - » Burnaby
  - » Chilliwack
  - » Coquitlam
  - » Delta
  - » Langley City
  - » Langley Township
  - » Maple Ridge
  - » Mission
  - » New Westminster
  - » North Vancouver, City and District
  - » Pitt Meadows
  - » Port Coquitlam
  - » Port Moody
  - » Richmond
  - » Surrey
  - » Vancouver
  - » West Vancouver
  - » White Rock
- Must be willing to successfully complete a Police Information Check.



## Preferred Qualifications

Candidates have a much higher chance of being shortlisted if they possess preferred qualifications. These should be clearly demonstrated on your resume. Preferred qualifications include:

- Successful completion of any one of the following technical courses:
  - » Hazardous Materials Tech Level
  - » Swift Water Tech Level
  - » Technical Rope Tech Level
- Valid Emergency Medical Responder, Primary Care Paramedic or Advanced Care Paramedic license through EMALB or a Registered Nurse/Licensed Practical Nurse in BC.
- Successful completion of a trades qualification or relevant post-secondary degree.

## Preferred Competencies/Experience

- Accumulated work experience related to the needs of the Fire Service such as paid firefighting, auxiliary firefighting, forestry firefighting and/or, paramedic experience.
- Experience giving back to the community by volunteering and community activities.
- Experience in the construction industry or trades is considered an asset.
- Ability to fluently speak languages other than English.
- Knowledge and awareness of other cultures.
- Committed to a lifestyle that prioritizes physical and mental well-being, including a focus on fitness and health.
- Committed to continuous learning.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a team environment

When you apply online you will be asked pre-qualification questions based on the minimum qualifications. Those who meet the minimum qualifications will be asked to complete an online questionnaire regarding preferred qualifications. This will be sent via email from Human Resources.

*Candidates are encouraged to reach out to [ConfidentialHR@coquitlam.ca](mailto:ConfidentialHR@coquitlam.ca) should they wish to discuss financial hardship and/or the costs associated with testing. If any candidates has financial difficulty or hardship covering these costs, an application for limited funding can be made by sending an email to [ConfidentialHR@coquitlam.ca](mailto:ConfidentialHR@coquitlam.ca)*

## Shortlisting

Once we receive your online application, it is reviewed by the hiring committee. Candidates are assessed based on their qualifications and experience in relation to the career opportunity, and the competitiveness of their application. Those shortlisted for consideration are contacted by Human Resources.

Human Resources most often contacts shortlisted candidates through email. We recommend you check your email inbox and spam folder to ensure you do not miss notifications from the City.

## Psychometric

If you've been shortlisted, you will be asked to complete psychometric testing as part of the hiring process. You will be sent an email from Human Resources inviting you register for the group testing with other Firefighter candidates. When you attend the testing you will need to bring a government issued photo ID and sign-in at reception. Please note that the cost of this test is \$340 plus taxes and is the responsibility of the candidate. Candidates shortlisted will be sent instructions on payment.

If this is your first time completing psychometric testing, it's approximately 3 to 4 hours of pencil-and-paper testing done in a group. Information is gathered to figure out your potential suitability to be a successful firefighter and how well you learn in general, your specific skills (like mechanical reasoning), personality traits, and your motivation to be a career Firefighter.

Please note that your psychometric test result may be applied to other BC fire department hiring processes and is valid for up to one year. If you have completed a psychometric test with BLA from another process within the past 12 months and wish to use those results for Coquitlam, please contact BLA (details below) to confirm if that your results meet the minimum threshold and are eligible to be used. Once you have received confirmation that your previous results are eligible, you will receive instructions from BLA about how to proceed. There is a \$115 fee to have your test result sent to Coquitlam. Email [ConfidentialHR@coquitlam.ca](mailto:ConfidentialHR@coquitlam.ca) to advise if your test result will be coming from BLAssociates.

More about Firefighting Competency Testing can be found at [blassociates.ca/information-for-applicants](http://blassociates.ca/information-for-applicants). To contact BLA, email their Testing Coordinator, Naomi Stinton, at [nstinton@blassociates.ca](mailto:nstinton@blassociates.ca).

## Physical Testing Part 1 and Fire Services Test

Coquitlam Fire/Rescue Skills Challenge is done over a one-day period. Candidates will be scheduled to attend testing on 1 of the 2 dates. This testing day consists of a Smokehouse Drill, Ladder Climb, Ladder Raise, and Hydrant Evolution.

The Fire Services Test takes up to 1-hour to complete and consists of multiple choice questions based on NFPA 1001 materials and information about Coquitlam Fire/Rescue, available on the City website.

## Ride-Along Program (RAP)

This part of getting hired by the City of Coquitlam's Fire Department means you'll be heading to a specific Fire Halls for three shifts in a row within the same time frame. During this time, you'll be working as part of the fire crew, responding to calls, and doing everyday tasks like taking care of the vehicles and equipment, keeping the hall in order, training, handling emergencies, inspecting equipment, planning for potential fires, and helping with public education.

The schedule for the ride-along follows the day shift routine. RAP participants will be required to be scheduled for 3 consecutive days at different fire halls.

You'll be reporting directly to the Captain and working under their direction. The Captain will determine your level of involvement and you will need to follow their directions to be successful.

**While participating in the RAP, prepare yourself to experience events and situations that could be mentally and/or physically challenging, such as seeing people in medical distress or motor vehicle incidents.**

The ride-along is not a paid activity, just like the other parts of the hiring process.

Your ability to adapt to feedback and apply it will be beneficial to your success during this stage of the process.

If you are invited to participate in the ride along process, you will receive an email with specific instructions.





## Interviews

The Coquitlam Fire/Rescue primarily uses behavioral, situational, and technical questions to determine if a candidate will be a good fit for a career in firefighting. Behavioural questions ask you to describe past situations or challenges you may have faced, and how you handled them. We may also ask situational questions to gain a better understanding of how you might approach a situation.

### **Examples of behavioural interview questions:**

- Give an example of a time when you saw someone doing something you knew was unsafe. What did you do?
- Tell us about a stressful work-related situation you were involved with. How did you deal with this?

### **Example of situational:**

- You are on a fire scene and a member of the public wants to cross the line to get to their car. How would deal with this?

### **Example of a technical question:**

- Describe what a Higbee Cut is.

Interviews are typically conducted by a panel consisting of an Assistant Chief and/or Deputy Chief, Human Resources representatives(s) and, a member of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 1782.

Should you be invited to the interview stage, you will be sent an invitation.

*You will also be provided with an opportunity to participate in an optional group interview preparation session over Microsoft Teams. Note that the participants will not be anonymous in the group session.*

## The STAR Method

Job candidates tend to fare better when they use the STAR method to answer behavioural interview questions, and focus specifically on their role and/or impact on the situation.

- **Situation:** Briefly describe the situation you were in. It is good to provide some details to help the interviewer(s) understand context of the situation.
- **Task:** What was the goal, opportunity or challenge you were trying to achieve in the situation?
- **Action:** What were the specific actions you took to accomplish the task you were faced with? Try to avoid using words like “we” or “you” in describing the actions; instead focus on “I” statements. It is best use real life examples rather than hypothetical ones. This helps the interviewer(s) understand what your contributions were in the situation.
- **Result:** End your example with the outcome of your actions. This is also your opportunity to tell the interviewers how you made an impact. If it is possible, share data or metrics.

## Other useful tips for interviewing:

- Research the City of Coquitlam and Fire/Rescue. The City’s website has a lot of very useful information.
- Review the job posting to anticipate what types of questions you may be asked.
- Do a mock interview with a friend or family member that you trust will give you honest feedback.
- During the interview, take time to understand the question being asked. It is okay to ask the interviewer for clarity before proceeding. If you need to, take a few minutes to think about your response prior to answering the question.
- It’s acceptable to bring notes for reference to help recall details of situations.
- We are looking for individuals who can add their skills, attributes and character to our team. It is important to be yourself and avoid “canned” or pre-defined responses you may think we want to hear.



## Physical Testing Part 2

Physical Standards Testing are scheduled at Langara College over 4 days. Candidates will be scheduled to attend testing on 1 of the 4 dates. This physical testing follows the University of Alberta protocol. For a demonstration on the Firefighter Fitness Testing you can [watch these series of videos](#) from the University of Alberta. Check back on the Langara College website for offerings of practice days to familiarize candidates with the testing process and receive tips on preparation. Langara Firefighter Fitness Testing

If you have a current University of Alberta Fitness test result (Dated September 1st 2023 or later) from U of A or from UVIC, Coquitlam will accept your result and testing at Langara will not be required. Please email your result to [confidentialHR@coquitlam.ca](mailto:confidentialHR@coquitlam.ca) and we will verify your result with the institution and respond back to you. For more information on the [Firefighter Fitness Testing at Langara College](#) by visiting their website.

## Medical

Human Resources will contact candidates with details on medical evaluation.

Medical evaluations are conducted by a third party provider selected by the City of Coquitlam. Candidates are screened for medical conditions that may limit candidates' ability to work as a firefighter. Upon successful completion of a medical evaluation, we will issue you a letter confirming your employment as a Coquitlam Firefighter.

## Background Checks

Up to three professional references are required (no personal references are accepted). References must include the candidate's current and previous managers/supervisors. The reference check is to verify the information you shared during the recruitment process.

The Firefighter positions require shortlisted candidates to complete a Police Information Check (PIC). The PIC forms are sent to shortlisted candidates to process at the Coquitlam RCMP Detachment. Once the PIC forms are completed, the candidate drop off the forms to HR Front Desk at City Hall. The process is free for candidates to complete.

## Offers and Acceptance

If you are successful in the recruitment process, a representative from Fire/Rescue or Human Resources will be in contact with you offer a position. After we receive a verbal acceptance we will send you a written offer of employment for you to review and accept.

## Orientation/Training

Congratulations on becoming a Coquitlam Firefighter!

Along with your offer of employment, Human Resources will send you forms to complete so we can have all your benefits and employee information ready to go on your first day.

During your first day, you will come to City Hall (Human Resources) to complete your onboarding and to take part in our Employee Orientation.

## Regrets

As one of B.C.'s Top Employers, Coquitlam often attracts multiple highly-competent candidates to job opportunities with the City and, as a result, the recruitment process can take time. We understand that it is important that you are notified on a hiring decision. Every candidate deserves to be treated with respect and we will made every effort to notify you of a hiring decision after each stage of the process. Unsuccessful candidates are notified via email if they are not moving forward in the process or once the position is filled. We are not at liberty to provide feedback on individual applications. We encourage you to keep an eye on our career site and apply for suitable roles that match your skills and experience.

You can also monitor your application by going to the "Track My Applications" by logging into your online application account.

## Requests for Accommodation

The City of Coquitlam is committed to [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) and continuously enhancing progress in this area of service as well as our workforce. If you are a person with a disability and require an accommodation in the recruitment process, please [contact Human Resources](#) for confidential support.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)?**

The NFPA serves as the world's leading advocate of fire prevention, establishing codes and standards for Firefighters and fire safety.

## **What is the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Level 1 and 2?**

NFPA 1001 is the nationally recognized standard for the training of professional Firefighters. It identifies professional levels of competency required of fire department members, especially the requirements for entrance into the fire service.

## **What is International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) accreditation?**

As the governing body in North America, the IFSAC ensures that standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are maintained by fire training academies that administer their programs.

## **Does the Coquitlam Fire/Rescue prefer that a candidate receive their National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 level 1 and 2 training from a particular fire academy?**

We do not favour one academy over another. All candidates must ensure that the academy they attend is International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and/or ProBoard accredited.

## **If I have only partially completed, or just registered for any of my licenses or certifications, can I still apply?**

No. You must have completed all of the required qualifications to be eligible to apply for a position.

## **Are there any courses that the City of Coquitlam recommends that will help me strengthen my résumé?**

We do not recommend any particular courses. Please refer to our preferred qualifications listed above in this document.

## **Can a Firefighter who is employed in another municipality interchange or transfer their position to the City of Coquitlam?**

All applicants, regardless of previous training or experience, must apply to the City of Coquitlam as an entry-level Firefighter. There are no transfers between municipalities. If successful, all new Firefighter employees begin a 12-month probationary period.

## **Does the Coquitlam Fire/Rescue recruit other positions other than Firefighter personnel?**

Yes, all support positions are filled through the City of Coquitlam's Human Resources Division. Please visit the City of Coquitlam's [Career Opportunities page](#) regularly for newly posted vacancies.

## **Can interested persons ride along with fire personnel to learn more about the Firefighter position?**

Presently, the City of Coquitlam Fire/Rescue only offers ride-alongs to candidates in the hiring process.

## **Where can I obtain the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 certification?**

There are a number of academies located across North America that are certified to deliver the NFPA 1001 program. Candidates should ensure that the academy they select is International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) or ProBoard accredited. Make sure to ask the academy or check the IFSAC website and ProBoard website.

## **Is the City accepting applications for Auxiliary Firefighter Recruitment?**

No. Due to increased demand for career firefighters, the City is not accepting applications for Auxiliary Firefighters. This may be subject to change in the future. Please monitor the Firefighter Recruitment page for future updates.





Coquitlam