

# FIREFIGHTER JOB PREVIEW

## CHERRY HILL FIRE DEPARTMENT



CAMDEN COUNTY

An Equal Opportunity Employer



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## PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE TAKING THE FIREFIGHTER TEST

### THE FIREFIGHTER JOB PREVIEW

The Township of Cherry Hill strives to hire the best candidates for every position. Our goal is to fill each job with a person who is well qualified, has an interest in the job, and who will be committed to a career in that field. To do this, we feel it is important to give each applicant a realistic description of the job and its tasks so that the candidate can decide for him or herself if the position is truly one in which there is interest and ability to do well.

As a firefighter with the Cherry Hill Fire Department, you will be required to perform a large variety of tasks. These tasks are very diverse and may include rescue and care of victims, fire prevention, clean-up, hazardous materials containment, and community service. We urge you to consider the entire job of firefighter and not just the exciting or glamorous aspects.

What follows is a realistic preview of the types of tasks which are required of all Cherry Hill firefighters. It is intended to give you a better understanding of the job so you can decide whether you are really willing and able to perform the job on a daily basis. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to describe **every** task required to be a firefighter. Please take a moment to truly consider whether this job fits you, as well as whether you fit the job of firefighter.



### RECRUIT TRAINING ACADEMY AND PROBATION

Upon hire, firefighters enter training at the Cherry Hill Fire Department Training Academy as a recruit firefighter (a temporary training position). Employment in the temporary position is limited to the training period, after which time a regular appointment to the position of probationary firefighter is received and a twelve-month probationary period begins.

The Training Academy is a fast-paced, high-intensity program with a comprehensive curriculum both academically challenging and physically demanding. The Academy instructs recruit firefighters in the manipulative skills and academic knowledge needed to perform basic firefighting and emergency medical duties; indoctrinates recruit firefighters in the work habits and discipline expected of an emergency response crew in public service; and imparts a culture emphasizing life-long maintenance of physical fitness, teamwork, professionalism and personal accountability within the framework of a chain of command.

The Academy evaluates each recruit firefighter's proficiency in the major skills and knowledge taught and certifies that each graduate has fully demonstrated competence in all of these areas.

Prior to completing the twelve-month probationary period, firefighters must have obtained an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certificate.



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Emergency Response calls come in at any time of the day or night and require immediate response. Sleep may be frequently interrupted.

Firefighters must be adept at getting themselves dressed in the appropriate gear/equipment and onto the emergency vehicles quickly when responding to an emergency call, regardless of what they may be involved with at the time the emergency call comes in.

Emergency calls can cover anything—brush fires, structural fires, automobile accidents, false alarms, life threatening and non-life threatening medical calls. All must be responded to with the same speed and professionalism.

In order to effectively deal with an emergency situation, upon arrival on the scene, firefighters must immediately size-up the situation. Types of calls could include: fires involving a number of properties—what's the probability of its spreading; assessing the medical conditions of victim(s); weather conditions and its effect on the medical emergency, etc.

Once on an emergency scene, firefighters are responsible for gathering information from witnesses and other sources; while maintaining composure to think quickly and acquire the appropriate information to deal with each unique situation.

Firefighters must immediately coordinate their activities and work as a team, which includes working directly with the emergency, directing traffic, and/or standing by to relieve other firefighters. They must also coordinate their activities with those of other public agencies, such as law enforcement and public work agencies.



## FIRE SCENES

Firefighters must enter burning structures, and once inside the structure, must search for victims, the source of fire, and ways to extinguish it. In this process, firefighters are exposed to extreme heat, smoke and gases and often come into contact with hazardous and infectious materials.

Firefighting is very physically demanding. Firefighters carry 80-100 lbs. of equipment such as hoses, axes, ladders, chain saws and extinguishers into and around the fire to rescue victims and extinguish the fire. This may include climbing many flights of stairs.

Firefighters make forced entries into grounds and structures by cutting locks and breaking doors, windows or roofs, as needed, to ventilate or get into structures. This may involve using hand tools such as axes, sledge hammers, battering rams and power tools.

While at a fire scene, firefighters must constantly evaluate personal safety by examining the structure for cracks, breaks, charring or partial collapse.

Firefighters locate hydrants and other sources of water. Firefighters connect hoses to sources of water using various tools and a considerable amount of physical strength. They operate handheld lines without assistance and get the hose into position by dragging, carrying, or hoisting it into place.

Firefighters occasionally are overcome by smoke and/or are burned while working to put out fires.

Firefighters are responsible for the clean-up of fire scenes and often need to carry burnt furniture, clothing, appliances, etc. from buildings to reduce fire and smoke damage. Firefighters scoop, shovel, sweep and mop excess water and debris caused by the fire and firefighting efforts. They also tear down or shore-up weak or dangerous parts of fire structures such as floors, roofs or overhangs.

## RESCUE OPERATIONS

Firefighters utilize systematic search procedures to try to find trapped victims without getting lost or trapped themselves.

Firefighters free trapped victims from a variety of situations including car crashes, cave-ins, structural collapses, chemical spills and many other types of unusual emergencies, and may be required to use special tools to accomplish a rescue.

After locating and freeing the victim, the firefighter must determine the safest path of evacuation. Firefighters may be required to lift and/or carry the victim with or without assistance in dangerous situations.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

Firefighters now perform the task of Emergency Medical Technician and are required to qualify as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) as a condition of probation.

Firefighters must assess the victim's general condition by checking pulse, respiration, bleeding, consciousness, etc. This will require physical contact with the victim(s) who will often be bleeding from open wounds and/or broken bones and other severe injuries. Firefighters must use first aid and emergency medical techniques to treat victims to the best of their ability.

Firefighters must obtain specific information from or about the victim, load the victim into the ambulance and stabilize the victim to the best of their ability.

Firefighters may also come into contact with victims who have died before they could be rescued. Sometimes victims will die despite the best efforts of firefighters.



## PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Firefighters work a 24 hour consecutive shift, living at the station the entire shift. Shifts are organized as follows: 24 hour shift/day off; 24 hour shift/day off; 24 hour shift—four days off.

Firefighters are expected to volunteer to work overtime (extra shifts), and occasionally may be *required* to work overtime. Firefighters may be away from home for days at a time during severe emergency situations.

Firefighters work on holidays. Should your shift fall on a holiday, you will be expected to work at the station over the holiday period.

Firefighters must work during unusual and/or catastrophic events such as major brush fires, earthquakes, floods, or civil unrest.

The duties and equipment of firefighting make special demands on the physical attributes of firefighters. Personal preference for hair length, nail length, jewelry, etc. may be overruled for firefighter safety.

The Fire Service is regimented and firefighters receive orders which must be carried out promptly and without question.

Firefighters pay for their meals while on-duty. They also assist in food preparation and clean-up.

After completion of the Training Academy, firefighters are routinely assigned to the busiest fire companies for further training and probationary evaluations.

While not out on a call, firefighters must constantly work at keeping the station and equipment in excellent condition. Much of the firefighter's time is spent cleaning and scrubbing living quarters, including floors and restrooms, the Fire Station and the equipment.

