

Interview Process Tips

Doing Your Best in the Interview Process

1. Do thorough research on the organization you are applying for.
 - Review their web site
 - Look at the budget
 - Visit fire stations and speak with their Firefighters. Learn about the culture of the department. Are people happy working for the department and what compels them to stay?
2. Carefully review the job flyer and know the requirements, duties and pay for the position. Have a clear understanding of the process if you are selected. Find out the length of the academy and probation period. Also, how many written and manipulative exams probationary firefighters will need to complete?
3. Know the names of the elected officials. (Mayor and City Council) Also, senior management. (City Administrator, Fire Chief and Division Chiefs)
4. Figure out the challenges facing the organization and think through how you would help to address those issues. **Interview Question:** What will your biggest challenge be if we hire you?
5. Interview skills can be learned and practicing will improve your performance and score. Buy a recording device or better yet video yourself. You will be amazed what you see and hear.
PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!
6. Use quality paper for your resume. It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** there are no typos, grammatical or spelling errors. This is a reflection of you and we will be looking at the content closely. Preferable length is one page and should never exceed two pages. Have at least two people review your resume for you.

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7. Dress conservatively. A pressed suit, shoes shined and a power tie. Get a haircut before the interview and make sure you meet the grooming standards of the department. No long moustaches or side burns.
8. Get an adequate amount of sleep the night before the interview.
9. On the morning of the interview eat a medium breakfast and stretch. You will be more comfortable and gesture normally.
10. Be sure to arrive early. **At least** 20 minutes.
11. Have a firm handshake when you meet the board.
12. Maintain good posture, eye contact and gestures during the interview and remember to smile. Over 40% of communication is non-verbal.
13. Be careful not to ramble or be too detailed with your answers. Use your clear natural voice and avoid sounding monotone.
14. Remain positive and enthusiastic. Be yourself and show your personality. Don't be afraid to make the board laugh but avoid sarcasm.
15. Explain why you are greatly motivated to obtain this position and how you will do a great job if given the chance. In other words, be "hungry".
16. Listen carefully and don't be afraid to ask the board to repeat a question. Do not do this to stall for time, only if you truly do not understand the question.
17. Know your resume like the back of your hand. We will ask you questions about it. Under no circumstance should you exaggerate or fictionalize your answers.

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- 18.** Have a well organized opening statement, not to exceed two minutes providing a brief overview of your background, qualifications and education as they relate to the position for which you are applying.
- 19.** Know your strengths and what your positive personality traits are.
- 20.** Be prepared to respond to weaknesses or areas needing improvement and how you plan to address them.
- 21.** View each question as the most important. If you make a mistake don't focus on it.
- 22.** Be prepared to discuss your experiences as a team player and how those have prepared you to fit in at the firehouse.
- 23.** Have an understanding of the role in the position you are applying for in the overall organization.
- 24.** When responding to situational questions remember to take a common sense approach. Maintain interpersonal sensitivity and don't be reluctant to involve supervision if appropriate.
- 25.** Be able to explain a time when you failed in a job or assignment or could have done better and what you learned from that experience.
- 26.** Have an example of an accomplishment from a previous job.
- 27.** If you state an educational goal, be sure to include when and where it will be completed. You should be currently enrolled in school. Be able to tell the panel your plan for completing your degree.
- 28.** Know your short and long term career goals.

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- 29.** Have a brief closing statement prepared not to exceed one minute that reaffirms your interest in the position. Be passionate about the position. Let us know what kind of employee we will be getting and what the job would mean to you.

- 30.** Plan to do something you enjoy after the interview to reward yourself. This actually helps you face the challenge.

- 31.** Remember, it is an honor for the panel to have the position of picking the future of their fire department. They want to give you a good score and are rooting for you. It's up to you to give them a reason to do so.