

TIPS FOR DOING YOUR BEST IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

1. Do thorough research on the organization you are applying to, including visiting their web site, reviewing the budget, visiting fire stations, talking to their Firefighters, etc. Learn about the culture of the department. Why are people happy to work for the department? 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. How long is the academy? How long is probation? How many written and manipulative exams do probationary firefighters complete?
3. Know the names of the elected officials (Mayor and City Council), as well as senior management (City Administrator, Fire Chief, Division Chiefs).
4. Find out the biggest challenges facing the organization and think about how you will help to address those issues. What will YOUR biggest challenge be if we hire you?
5. Practice, PRACTICE, **PRACTICE!** Interview skills can be learned and practicing will improve your performance/score. Buy a tape recorder and/or video camera. You will be amazed at what you see and hear.
6. Use good quality paper for resumes, make absolutely sure there are no typos, grammatical or spelling errors, and have at least two people carefully review it. The preferable length is one page and it should never exceed two pages. **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** and frequently overlooked. We will look for grammatical and punctuation errors. This is a reflection of you.
7. Dress conservatively, including a suit, shined shoes, power tie, etc. Get a haircut before the interview. 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 so you are limber, more comfortable, and gesture naturally.
10. Be sure to arrive early.
11. Have a firm handshake when you meet the board.
12. Maintain good posture, eye contact and gestures during the interview and smile ☺ (over 40% of communication is non-verbal).

13. Be careful not to ramble or be too detailed with your answers and do not speak in a monotone voice.
14. Always be positive and enthusiastic, don't be afraid to make the board laugh, but do not be sarcastic. Be yourself and show your personality
15. Explain why you are greatly motivated to obtain this position and will do a great job if given the chance (in other words, be "hungry").
16. Remember to listen carefully and don't be afraid to ask the board to repeat a question. Only ask for a repeat if you truly do not understand the question. Do not do it to stall for time.
17. Under no circumstances should you exaggerate or fictionalize answers, or "puff" your resume. Know your resume like the back of your hand. We will ask you questions about it.
18. Have a well-organized opening statement, not to exceed two minutes, in which you provide a brief overview of your background, qualifications and education as they relate to the position for which you are applying.
19. Know what your strengths/positive personality traits are.
20. Be ready to respond if asked your weaknesses/areas needing improvement and explain your plans for addressing deficiencies.
21. Concentrate on every question as if it is the most important and 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 of the position you are applying for in the overall organization.
24. In responding to situational questions remember to take a common sense approach, always maintain interpersonal sensitivity, and don't be reluctant to involve supervision, if appropriate.
25. Be able to explain a time you failed in a job or assignment, or could have done better, and what you learned from it.
26. Be ready to provide an example of accomplishments in a previous job.

27. If you state an educational goal, be sure to say 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. Be able to explain your short range and long-term career goals.
29. Have a brief closing statement prepared, not exceeding one minute that reaffirms your interest in the position. Be passionate about the position. What kind of employee will we be getting and what would the job mean to you. What will I get if I hire you?
30. Plan to do something fun after the interview to reward yourself. This actually helps you to face the challenge.
31. Remember that it is an honor for the panel to be in the position to pick the future of their fire department. They are rooting for YOU. They want to give you a good score. It's up to you to give them a reason to do so