

Most Frequently Asked Fire Department Interview Questions

All of the following questions are answered completely including the rationale as to why they are correct in:

“Smoke Your Firefighter Interview”

Below is a sample of Smoke Your Firefighter Interview. Notice the format of Question, Answer and Reasons why it is the right answer. Instead of simply memorizing correct answers, candidates who understand the concept behind the right answer will always score higher as their confidence level is high. Knowing you are giving the right answer will greatly boost your confidence.

Question:

You are at the scene of a fire in a retail store. While you are performing overhaul to make sure the fire is completely extinguished, you notice your senior firefighter pick up an object, put it in his turnout coat pocket and is now walking out of the building. What would you do and why?

Answer:

The first thing I would do is to gather the facts. The question stated that I saw my fellow firefighter put something in his pocket. I am pretty sure that it is something that fell out of his pocket when he bent over. I am not going to assume that he is stealing something. I believe that firefighters are an honest group of people. I am certain that once I gather the facts, I will find that there is a simple explanation.

Keeping this in mind, I would feel an obligation to investigate the matter. I would approach the firefighter and ask him if he is keeping the valuables in his turnout coat pocket for safekeeping. His response will dictate my reactions. If he tells me yes, I would give him any valuables that I have collected and continue with my duties. This is consistent with what firefighters do on the fire ground during salvage operations. Yes, it is a little unconventional to put something in your turnout coat pocket instead of a salvage bag, but it is what we do nonetheless.

If he looks at me like I am crazy and denies putting anything into his pocket, we would have a problem. I will reiterate that I believe that I saw him put something into his pocket. If he still denies it, I would feel like now I am at a crossroads. I will tell him what I saw. I will make it clear to him that I have no intention of letting this issue pass without taking proper action. It is important that the captain find out about this situation. It is an uncomfortable set of circumstances but I would not be willing to let it pass without taking the appropriate action. My objective would be to show my fellow firefighter the value of him bringing it to the captain's attention on his own.

If I am unable to convince him, or he is not willing to tell the captain, I have no recourse but to tell him myself. I know it will make the firefighter look better in the eyes of the captain if he comes forward with the information. If he is unwilling to come forward on his own, I will have to do it myself. Lastly, by doing so it will make it much easier on my relationships with my fellow firefighters.

The firefighter apologizes, says he lost his mind for a moment, and offers to put the item back. He says he is sorry and that he doesn't know what he was thinking. He asks to keep this between us “brother firefighters.”

I will be sympathetic but firm. I will explain to him that even though I understand that this is a difficult situation, one way or another the captain needs to be informed. I will tell him that it will sound better if he tells the captain himself. I will ask him if he would be more comfortable, I will go with him. Make no mistake about it; if he is not willing to tell the captain, I will.

Reasoning:

The fire service is looking for people who have the intestinal fortitude to handle uncomfortable situations. You cannot sweep this under the carpet. This is a serious offense. This goes against everything we stand for in the fire service. The fire service is looking for people who aren't afraid of sticking up for what they believe.

In this situation, the path of least resistance would be to turn your head and take no action. Unfortunately, although this would be much easier, it would be unacceptable. There are hundreds of people who are interested in becoming a firefighter. It takes a special person with conviction to become a one.

The firefighter who stole needs help. Do not try to counsel him. The only reason he was willing to return the object is because you caught him. Had you not done so, he would probably continue to steal at every chance.

It is important that the Captain find out about this situation. It is an uncomfortable set of circumstances but you had better not let this pass without taking proper action. Your objective is to show your fellow firefighter the value of bringing something like this to the Captain's attention.

The only reason he is remorseful is because he got caught. You have to wonder how many times he has done this in the past without getting caught. How many times will he do this in the future? The only difference is that he will be much more careful. It is my responsibility to ensure that does not happen again.

This goes against everything we stand for in the fire service. Many firefighters do not even lock their lockers in the fire station because we trust each other. Firefighters do not steal! Firefighting is one of the only occupations where you can enter someone's home with all of their worldly possessions and not have the citizen worry that something will turn up missing.

The public trust rating of firefighters is tremendous. There is no way this should be violated. If you are unable to convince your fellow firefighter to tell the Captain you have no recourse but to tell him yourself.

This situation is not an ethical dilemma or moral decision for you. It might be for him, but there is no doubt that you are going to do the right thing. The dilemma is getting him to come forward on his own.

Question:**Why do you want to be a firefighter?****Answer:**

Years ago, when I was researching potential career choices, I learned that the father of one of my friends was a firefighter. As I quizzed him about his job, I was struck by how much he loved what he was doing. It was rare to find someone who truly enjoys what he does.

The more I researched the fire service, the more convinced I became that it was the right choice for me. Since then I have visited many fire stations and have gone on several ride-alongs. The reasons I want to become a firefighter are numerous.

They include the following:

I enjoy helping people. It gives me great pleasure and it would be very fulfilling to have a profession in which I was able to help people every day. I would like to be part of a team that solves problems in the community. Whether it is a fire, flood, hazardous material spill, or medical emergency, it feels good to know that citizens can rely on the fire department to help solve their problems.

Being a role model in the community is also important to me. I know children look up to firefighters and I feel we have an obligation to be there for them. I realize the importance of having a smile on my face and being respectful at all times. I also know that firefighters volunteer their time to promote good will within the community. I feel this is a vital part of a firefighter's job.

What also appeals to me is the camaraderie that develops in the fire station. Living and working together for 24-hours at a time allows firefighters to develop some incredibly strong bonds.

I like the challenges that a day at the fire station can bring. Even though our on-duty days are planned out, plans can be interrupted at a moment's notice for an emergency response. Since I am a problem solver, I would thrive on contributing my problem solving skills to the team. But I know if I'm having difficulty solving a problem, I would be able to rely on the other crewmembers to come up with a solution.

The amount of shared knowledge among firefighters is tremendous. I know being a firefighter will provide many opportunities for learning. There is a tremendous amount of information that a firefighter must learn in order to become competent in his or her job. It would be up to me to set a goal and study hard to achieve that goal. Once I have mastered the roles and responsibilities of a firefighter, I know that I will have many opportunities to test for more challenging roles such as paramedic, engineer, lieutenant or captain.

I like working with my hands. I know the fire service uses a myriad of specialized power, hydraulic and hand tools. I know the community will always need firefighters. It is comforting to know that firefighters rarely get laid off.

I like the benefits package offered by the fire department. I currently have to pay for healthcare benefits out of my own pocket. I know that healthcare and retirement benefits are part of the fire department's employment benefits package.

The fire department pays good salaries, which will help me provide for my family. The fire department's flexible schedule would allow me to continue my education and also frees up more time for family activities such as coaching my daughter's soccer team.

I like fighting fire. It is exciting and challenging to arrive on scene and perform hose lays, throw ladders, and rescue people. What a great sense of accomplishment that would be. Since I am interested in medical calls, I would enjoy being an EMT. If the opportunity ever came up, I would like to consider being a paramedic.

Reasoning:

It amazes me how unprepared people are to handle this basic question. Invariably, when faced with this question, they are usually stumped for an answer. This is the easiest question of all since there is really no right or wrong answer. The panel is trying to determine what your motivation is for wanting to become a firefighter.

Do you believe that firefighters have a lot of time off and make good money? If this is your primary motivation, you are in for a rude awakening. If those are your first two answers you are unlikely to get a job in the fire service. If you do manage to get a job with that perception in mind, you will probably have difficulty during your initial training.

These are just a few why firefighters want to become firefighters. I suggest you write the reasons that motivate YOU to become a firefighter.

When asked the question in an interview, it is important that you not try to remember what you have written down, but rather speak from the heart. If you truly have thought about it, the answers all come naturally. It is discouraging to listen to someone try to figure the answer to the question during the course of the interview. On the either hand it is refreshing to listen to a candidate who has given a great deal of thought as to why he or she wants to be a firefighter. Also, try to avoid using "canned" (rehearsed) answers. As a rater, it is discouraging to hear a candidate try to repeat what someone has instructed him or her to say. It is also important to speak from the heart, rather than to parrot some catchy phrases that you learned in an interview class. Raters usually volunteer to be on the oral boards. As a general rule, most firefighters really enjoy their job. A candidate who demonstrates enthusiasm for the fire service will most likely strike a chord with the raters. If the raters love their job, you can bet they will be looking for firefighters who will also appreciate the job.

Remember, evaluators want to give you a good score. It is up to you to give them a reason to do so.

1. You are a rookie firefighter. Your Captain tells you that it is your responsibility to clean the bathrooms every shift. You know this is not the normal cleaning rotation. What would you do and why?
2. You are a rookie firefighter who is assigned to vacuuming the dormitory. As you are performing your duties, you notice a bottle of alcohol under the Engineer's bed. You know that alcohol is strictly forbidden on fire department premises. What would you do and why?
3. You are a rookie firefighter. You know that it is inappropriate for you to watch television during your probationary period. The crew has invited you in to watch a movie. What would you do and why?
4. You are at a fourth of July party. The host of the party knows you are a firefighter. He begins to light fireworks. You know that fireworks are illegal in the city. Most of the guests have been drinking heavily and are partying hard. What would you do and why?
5. You are a rookie firefighter assigned to an engine company. The Captain decides to take the engine out of its first response district to run a personal errand. He orders the Engineer to park behind the building so nobody can see it. What would you do and why?
6. You have been given the responsibility of conducting a fire prevention inspection at a business. The business owner is adamant about not letting you enter the business. What would you do and why?
7. You are at a fire in a retail store. While you are performing overhaul to ensure the fire is completely extinguished, you notice your senior firefighter pick up an object and put it in his pocket and is now walking out of the building. What would you do and why?
8. You are at the scene of a fire in an apartment building. You have been given the assignment to hook up with the crew on the top floor and conduct a search for victims. While you are on your way, a female stops you and says that she has been burned and is in need of medical attention. What would you do and why?
9. You are at the scene of a fire. Your captain tells you to shut off the utilities to the building to keep firefighters from getting shocked. While you are on your way to carry out the assignment, the Battalion Chief stops you and orders you to grab a hose line and make an exterior attack on the fire where it is extending to the apartment building next door. What would you do and why?
10. You are a probationary firefighter preparing for your manipulative ladder proficiency exam. A female firefighter on your crew is also preparing for the same test. Your Captain tells you he wants you to help her with her skills because she is having difficulties. You comply with his wishes, and spend a great deal of time teaching your fellow firefighter. On test day she passes and you fail. You feel the reason you failed is that you spent so much time helping her get ready. What would you do and why?
11. A citizen comes to the fire station appearing quite agitated. He has a question about a fire prevention violation that was written for his business. What would you do and why?
12. You are working at the scene of a shooting. While you are treating the patient, a family member keeps harassing you about your patient care and is continually trying to "help" you. He appears to have been drinking and will not leave the patient's side. What would

- you do and why?
13. You are a probationary firefighter. You feel that you are being harassed by one of the members of the crew. You tried to handle it on your own, but it just seemed to make the situation worse. You approach your Captain and he tells you that this is normal fire station kidding around. He says not to worry about it. You feel it is much more than that and want it to stop. What would you do and why?
 14. You are at the scene of a structure fire. Your Captain tells you and another firefighter to make an interior attack on the fire. You feel it would be unsafe to do so. What would you do and why?
 15. You are a probationary firefighter. You are giving a ventilation drill as required by your Captain. In the middle of your drill, your Captain says, "We don't do things that way at this station. I don't care what you are taught at training; this is the way we do things here." What would you do and why?
 16. You are probationary firefighter at the scene of a fire. Your Captain tells you to enter a building with known hazardous materials. What would you do and why?
 17. You are with an engine company assigned on a mutual aid on a large brush fire. Your company has been assigned to protect a house (structure protection) that has been evacuated by the owner. You enter the house and find a fellow firefighter using the telephone, making a sandwich and using the shower. What would you do and why?
 18. You are at the scene of a structure fire. An individual comes up to you and says he saw two people running from the scene of the fire. He is pretty sure they started it. He says he doesn't want to talk to anyone but you. As you talk to him he begins to get nervous and starts to leave. What would you do and why?
 19. You are a rookie firefighter. Your senior firefighter is conducting a school tour in the station for a bunch of fourth graders. You notice the firefighter, Fred, is being short with the kids. The teacher is becoming noticeably agitated. What would you do and why?
 20. You are a rookie firefighter. You answer the phone at the fire station. The caller on the other end asks to speak to a firefighter on the other shift. You inform the caller that the firefighter he is looking for is off-duty and will not return for a few days. The caller identifies himself as the brother of the firefighter and requests his home number. What would you do and why?
 21. You are a rookie firefighter heading to your first fire. As you round a corner, your breathing apparatus mask slides off the engine cowling and falls into the street. What would you do and why?
 22. You are a rookie firefighter. You feel that you are being assigned all of the duties that nobody else wants. What would you do and why?
 23. You are a rookie firefighter. Part of your morning routine is to come in early to raise the flag, lay out the newspaper and make the coffee. In your efforts to get the kitchen ready for shift change, you notice that the off going shift rarely empties the dishwasher. What would you do and why?
 24. You are a rookie firefighter at the fire station. A group of your friends show up unannounced and want to see the fire station. What would you do and why?
 25. You are helping a fellow firefighter teach CPR for his private business on his days off. As you are listening to his lecture, you realize that the information he is giving is incorrect.
 26. As a new firefighter you have just completed your probationary period. You are looking forward to learning more about your job and taking it easy for a while. Your Captain informs you that you have just been selected to go into the Fire Prevention Bureau. This

- means that you will be working in office environment conducting fire prevention inspections. The schedule is four, ten-hour days per week. What would you do and why?
27. You are a rookie firefighter. Part of your Saturday routine involves mowing the lawn and cleaning up the grounds of the fire station. When the crew arrives the next morning, another firefighter is upset because you have pulled out his favorite plant. What would you do and why?
 28. You are a rookie firefighter assigned to your first engine house. Your Engineer has a higher expectation of you than the Captain. The Captain tells you that you are doing fine and your evaluations have been above average. The Engineer, however, says, that you are in danger of failing your probationary period. What would you do and why?
 29. You are a rookie firefighter. Your Captain gives you your first evaluation. You feel that the evaluation is much lower than you deserve. When you approach your Captain, she says the rating is deserved. What would you do and why?
 30. You are a rookie firefighter. One of the firefighters on your crew (firefighter Smith) is always on your back. No matter what you do it is not good enough for him. What would you do and why?
 31. You are a new firefighter with little experience. You are making a series of mistakes that are consistent with your lack of experience. Your Captain tells you that you are doing fine within the learning curve. You hear from your peers that a firefighter on your shift is spreading rumors about your mistakes while working at other stations. What would you do and why?
 32. You are a probationary firefighter. Your probationary reviews have been better than average. You hear through the grapevine that one of your classmates is having trouble with his crew. You approach him and he tells you that even though he is going to complete probation he is going to have a bad reputation. He tells you he does not care about his reputation. What would you do and why?
 33. You are a rookie firefighter. You receive a phone call from a friend who is excited about completing her first CPR course through her job. It seems that a firefighter on your job has a side business and teaches for profit. It comes to your attention that he taught this class while wearing his fire department uniform. You know that wearing the fire department uniform while off duty is strictly prohibited. What would you do and why?
 34. You are a rookie firefighter in an engine house. You notice that the other shift routinely ignores several cleaning details around the station. They rarely empty the trashcans or dishwasher, and fail to restock the cleaning supplies. What would you do and why?
 35. You are shopping at the grocery store. You have a limited amount of time to shop and get the meal on the table because of an afternoon drill that your crew is attending. While in the grocery store an elderly woman approaches you and asks you to take her blood pressure. What would you do and why?
 36. You are a rookie firefighter. You respond to an elderly woman who is having chest pain. While on the run, she tells you that she is the grandmother of one of your classmates. You know that this classmate was terminated on probation for poor performance just this morning. What would you do and why?
 37. You are in the academy. You notice that one of your classmates does not seem to be getting along with the other recruits. It is the general feel of your classmates that this individual is not a team player. Whenever there is work to be done, he always does the easiest detail. He feels like everyone is picking on him. What would you do and why?
 38. You are a rookie firefighter. You arrive early for your shift. As you walk in the door, the engine catches a medical run. You take the run for the off-going firefighter. When you look in the EMS box for some EKG patches to put on the patient, you realize that the

- firefighter did not restock the box from the day before. The Captain asks you to patch the patient with the EKG leads. What would you do and why?
39. You are a rookie firefighter showing up to work your first day at the station. You have donuts in one hand and your uniforms in the other. As you reach for the doorknob you are hit with a bucket of water that is dropped from the roof. What would you do and why?
 40. As a rookie firefighter you understand that you are expected to wash the dishes. As you near the sink, your Engineer beats you to the suds. You ask him politely to let you in, knowing that you will look bad if you allow him to stay. He refuses to do so. What would you do and why?
 41. You are a rookie firefighter. You know that pornographic material is not allowed in the fire station. While vacuuming the station you notice a poster of a Playboy centerfold hanging on a fellow firefighter's locker. What would you do and why?
 42. You are a probationary firefighter. Your Captain tells you to rearrange the tools on the truck so that work can be done more efficiently. While you're doing this, the Engineer stops you and tells you to leave things as they are. What would you do and why?
 43. You are with a habitual medical aid patient. Your Captain starts yelling at the patient, telling her she is wasting his time. What would you do and why?
 44. You are in the back of the ambulance with one of the firefighter/ paramedics. You feel that he is being abusive to the patient. What would you do and why?
 45. While at the academy you are tested on the proper use of a chain saw. The instructor asks you a series of questions. When the session is over. He says he is giving you deficiency points for failing to mention that once you are finished with the chain saw, you would fill it with fuel after performing the evolution. You know that you covered this important point. In fact, one of your classmates overheard you mention it. What would you do and why?
 46. While on duty at the fire station an angry citizen comes to the door. She says that she lives next door and that you firefighters are making too much noise with your after dinner basketball game. She says that she is a taxpayer and does not want you to play basketball. What would you do and why?
 47. You have been assigned to collect the crew's personal money to purchase groceries for dinner. The crew is waiting by the engine in the parking lot while you shop. As you are pushing the cart through the store, an elderly lady approaches you and asks in a loud voice, "How can you spend my tax dollars on steaks when I can only afford to buy hamburger?" Other shoppers are in the store too. What would you do and why?
 48. You arrive at the grocery store to shop for dinner. The Engineer parks in the red zone in front of the store. You know this is against department policy. The crew gets off the engine and heads into the store. What would you do and why?
 49. A group of 3rd graders are at your station for a school tour. As the rookie, you are responsible for the tour. The rest of the crew is upstairs. The teacher tells the class that they will be touring the entire fire station and will have an opportunity to slide the pole. The children are very excited. Knowing that fire department policy allows classes to tour the first floor only and that no one is allowed to slide the pole. What would you do and why?
 50. You are at the scene of a shooting. While working on a critical patient, a gang member emerges from the crowd and points a gun at you. He tells you to back away from the patient and clear the scene. What would you do and why?
 51. You are at the scene of a crime to provide medical aid to a suspect. The police have arrested the suspect who was involved in the assault. As you arrive, he is being

handcuffed in the back of a squad car. You have him stand up so you can get a better look at him. As he stands up, a photographer with a video camera moves in. The victim begins to complain about the police to the camera. What would you do and why?

1. Tell us about yourself
2. What have you done to prepare yourself to become a firefighter?
3. Why do you want to become a firefighter?
4. Describe the job of a firefighter.
5. What is the primary goal of the fire department?
6. What is the mission statement of this fire department and what does it mean to you?
7. What is the most appealing aspect of the fire service?
8. What is the least appealing aspect of the fire service?
9. What is the advantage of working in teams?
10. What is the disadvantage of working in teams?
11. Why is teamwork so important in the fire service?
12. What kind of problems might arise in the firehouse? What might you do to prevent such problems?
13. If hired what contribution will you make to our fire department?
14. How will you maintain good relations in the firehouse?
15. What will you do with your spare time while on duty?
16. What are the duties of a rookie firefighter?
17. When do these duties come to an end?
18. Describe the daily routine of a rookie firefighter.
19. Why are you applying for our department?
20. If another department calls would you leave?
21. What does customer service in the fire department mean to you?
22. Give some examples of how you provide customer service in your current job.
23. What do you know about the organizational structure of our fire department?
24. Describe the chain of command and how it works in the fire service.
25. What is the incident command system and how is it used?
26. Define honesty and integrity. What do they mean to the fire service?
27. Define pride and loyalty. What do they mean to the fire service?
28. What do you think the future holds for the fire service?
29. What is the greatest challenge faced by the fire service today?
30. Do you consider the job of a firefighter to be dangerous?
31. What personal attributes do you possess that will make you successful in the fire station?
32. Define hazing and how it relates to the fire service.
33. How do you envision your first day in the fire station?
34. What kinds of stresses are firefighters subject to? How do you plan to cope with them?
35. There is a lot of competition for this position. Why should we hire you?