



West Pierce Fire & Rescue ENTRY-LEVEL Firefighter & Firefighter/Paramedic FAQs

WPFR FAQs

This guide contains Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) by topic specific to the 2026 ENTRY-LEVEL Firefighter & Firefighter/Paramedic hiring process. There are important dates and information on what to expect. We encourage you to save a copy as a reference.

**There is a separate LATERAL Firefighter & Firefighter/Paramedic hiring process, with FAQs available on our [Career Resources](#) webpage.*

If you have questions not addressed, please email employment@westpierce.org.

Our primary form of communication is email. It is important to check messages frequently throughout this process. The timeline and dates are subject to change without notice. We will advise candidates of changes as quickly as possible via email.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- **Are there application and/or testing fees?** West Pierce Fire & Rescue (WPFR) does not charge any fees.
**Websites requiring fees to view job postings and/or submit applications are not affiliated with WPFR. Applications are only accepted via our [Employment Opportunities](#) webpage with a free [GovernmentJobs.com](#) account.*
- **I can't access my GovernmentJobs account. Can you reset my password?** For GovernmentJobs technical assistance, please call 855-524-5627. WPFR personnel do not have the ability to reset passwords and/or provide account support.
- **Is Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification required to apply?** No, recruits attend WPFR's Red Knights fire academy, which includes an EMT course.
- **Do I need a Candidate Physical Abilities Test (CPAT) to apply?** CPAT is not required to apply. It is a condition of employment, please see page 5.
- **There is a closing date of July 26 noted for the application period, and a maximum volume of 1,000. When should I apply?** We are unable to predict how quickly applications will be received. You're encouraged to apply early. The application period will close automatically if the maximum is received, which may occur before the closing date.

- **Employment conditions note a background investigation and driving abstract review will be conducted. Are there automatic disqualifiers for employment?** We encourage candidates to review [RCW 43.43.830](#) for further information. Findings from a civil adjudication proceeding and/or convictions of crimes listed within the RCW are possible disqualifications. Records are reviewed on an individual basis as a condition of employment. Employees must have the ability to legally operate a vehicle in Washington State and are required to provide proof of a valid driver's license prior to hire date. The driving record must be clear of restrictions or limitations, which would negatively impact ability to be covered by WPFR's insurance.
- **I've submitted application(s) in the past. Do I have to complete a new application?** Yes, each hiring process has its own application requirements.
- **What is required as application?**
 - o **GovernmentJobs online application in its entirety**
 - *There are three attachment fields within the online application:*
 - **Cover Letter is required** (maximum one page)
 - **Resume is required** (maximum of two pages)
 - o **Other* may be utilized for** Paramedic certification (if applicable), Veteran documentation, and/or letters of recommendation (optional, to a maximum of three). If there are no applicable documents, please attach a blank page to complete the application.
 - ***Please do not attach any other documents (driver's license, CPR card and/or other training documents).**
 - o If you need to combine multiple files, we suggest using [ilovepdf.com](#).

Failure to submit an online application, with the required attachments indicated, will result in removal from the testing process.

- **What is required for veterans' preference?** Please review [Washington State Careers](#) for detailed information. Preference is added to the final, passing (minimum of 80%) score. You must attach documentation (DD214, NGB form 22 or equivalent) to your online application in the **Other** field.
- **I want to revise my application but can't make changes from my GovernmentJobs account. Do I need to submit another application?** No, submitting another application creates a duplicate record. Changes to your contact information can be sent via email to employment@westpierce.org.
- **With a separate lateral hiring process, how many positions will be entry-level?** We have not determined how many positions will be entry-level or lateral. There will be two separate hiring lists, and we anticipate offers will be made to both groups.

- **What documentation is required for educational incentive?** If hired, we will advise of the process for requesting educational incentive. Please do not attach documentation (degree or transcript) to the online application.
- **Can I speak to and/or meet with employees, for tips on getting hired?** With a potential maximum of 1,000 applications, we are unable to accommodate calls and/or meetings with employees.
- **Can I schedule a ride along?** During the hiring process, a ride along is not permitted for candidates. We are unable to fulfill the high-volume of requests.

ONLINE EXAMINATION

Date Options: Friday, August 7 OR Saturday, August 8 (accessible from 12:00 AM to 11:59 PM each date)

Candidates can access the exam ONCE either date. There are no alternative dates, you must be available to complete the exam August 7 or August 8.

- **How many questions are there? How long is the exam?** The exam has 100 questions, with a time limit of 2.5 hours.
- **What do I need to take the test online?**
 - o **Candidates must ensure the following:**
 - Use a laptop or desktop computer (Windows, Mac, or Linux).
 - Disable any scheduled updates or scans on the test day.
 - Ensure a stable internet connection for the entire duration of the test, with at least 20 Mbps upload and download speed. Check speed: <https://fiber.google.com/speedtest/>
 - Do not use a mobile or cellular hotspot.
 - Use an up-to-date internet browser: Chrome, Safari, Edge or Firefox. (Google Chrome is preferred.)
 - Internet Explorer **is not** permitted.
 - **Mobile devices (cell phones), iPad, tablets, and Chromebooks are not allowed.**
- **I do not have access to a device and/or internet. Is there a written test?** The exam is not available in written form. Most library systems offer free computer and internet use. We encourage you to explore options in advance.
- **Do I need to buy a study guide?** WPFR provides the official Candidate Orientation Guide, which includes a practice test, at no cost. This will be sent via email a few days after your application is submitted.
- **I've taken exams before. Can I provide proof of my score and bypass this exam?** We do not accept scores from other Fire Departments or testing agencies.

- **What kind of questions can I expect?** The exam assesses reading ability and comprehension, mathematical reasoning, map reading, writing ability, human relations, and reasoning skills. There is no material to study and memorize, the exam will provide all content relative to the questions.
- **I couldn't take the exam on either date. Is it possible to have a makeup date?** We unable to offer alternative dates. As the exam is a required phase of testing, failure to complete it will result in removal from the hiring process.
- **How do I request testing accommodation due to a disability?** Please email employment@westpierce.org with the accommodation needed.
 - o ***Do not email health and/or medical information.**
- **Am I able to review my exam to see which questions were missed?** WPFR contracts with a third party and reviews are not possible.
- **How soon after the exam will I have my score?** We anticipate email notification of pass/fail* status will be sent by August 17. Candidates achieving a passing score will be randomized and invited to the next phase of testing.
 - o ***Numerical scores will not be provided.**

INTRODUCTORY INTERVIEWS

The week of August 24; dates and times will be included via the invite email.

- **What is an introductory interview?** This is a brief phone interview; we anticipate with 2 or 3 WPFR evaluators. Specifics on duration and what to expect will be noted in the invite.
- **When will I know results?** There is no numerical scoring; evaluators vote for candidates to proceed for oral board interviews. Based on the fast-paced nature, feedback will not be provided. Candidates will receive an email by August 31, if proceeding to oral board interviews or not.

ORAL BOARD INTERVIEWS

We anticipate Oral Boards will occur within the timeframe of September 14 to 25, with dates and times defined in the August 31 emails.

- **I live out of state. What options are there if I'm selected for an interview?** Video (Zoom) or phone interviews may be considered.
- **I am unavailable during this timeframe. Are there alternative dates?** We are unable to accommodate alternative dates.
- **What can I expect during this process?** There will be a panel of 4-6 WPFR employees. You will be asked general interview questions. The panel will have your

application packet, including any attachments you submitted. You do not need to bring anything to your interview and the panel will not accept any documents in-person.

- **Do you provide questions ahead of time?** We do not.
- **How soon after my interview will I know results?** We anticipate certification of a hiring list and notification of results will occur October 1.
- **Can I meet with panel member(s) for feedback? Can I get email/verbal feedback?** Based on volume of candidates, we are unable to schedule meetings with the panel or provide individual feedback via email/verbally.

EMPLOYMENT OFFER

We anticipate conditional offers of employment will occur by October 1.

- **What are the conditions of employment?** Criminal history background investigation, driving abstract review, medical exam with drug screening, psychological/suitability assessment and Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT)*. Employment references and/or verifications are also conducted.
 - o **If you have completed CPAT within the 2026 calendar year, via an IAFF-approved testing center, documentation will be reviewed and may fulfill this requirement.*
 - o **Paramedics must provide National Registry EMT-P or Washington State Paramedic certification as a condition of employment (if not provided prior to offers).*
- **How are conditions scheduled?**
 - o All costs associated with conditions are paid by WPFR.
 - o The background investigation is generally completed first via an online process. Results are usually available within 10 business days.
 - o The psychological/suitability assessment is two parts: both remote. HR will coordinate scheduling, generally morning, afternoon and evening appointments are available.
 - o HR will coordinate the medical exam and drug screening; the provider usually conducts all pre-hire services in the mornings. There are locations in Renton and Gig Harbor. HR will coordinate alternatives for those living outside of Washington.
- **I have not completed CPAT this year. How is that scheduled?** WPFR pays for one practice and one test (orientation is included). Candidates requiring CPAT will be provided information on self-scheduling.
- **I've already completed CPAT. What documentation is required?** Documentation (email or letter) from an IAFF-approved testing center, with your name, CPAT test date and clearly identifies a passing score/grade.

- **When do I need to complete conditions by?** Candidates must successfully complete all conditions of employment by **December 4**.
- **Is COVID vaccination required for employment?** Vaccination is not required and/or a condition of employment.
- **What is the hire date? How many recruits is WPFR hiring?** The hire date is January 4, 2027, and volume will be finalized prior to offers.

ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINING QUESTIONS

- **What type of training is provided for entry-level Firefighters?** Entry-level recruits will complete The Red Knights Fire Academy.
 - o January 4 is orientation for payroll, benefits, and IAFF Local 1488.
 - o The rest of that week is utilized for academy preparation.
 - o Red Knights Fire Academy starts January 11. The schedule for this 22-week academy is Monday-Friday.
 - o Red Knights is a comprehensive, fire training program where recruits obtain ProBoard certifications in Firefighter I and II, HazMat Awareness, and HazMat Operations. EMT certification also occurs during academy.
 - o During the EMT course, Paramedic recruits will complete Pierce County Protocols and refresher training.
 - o Probationary Firefighters complete a 5-week mini-academy for training in Rescue Systems I, pump operations, and other WPFR specific operational training prior to being assigned to shift.
 - o Upon successful completion of all the above, Probationary Firefighters are assigned to a 24-hour shift schedule and a primary Field Training Officer (FTO). At this phase, they are expected to function as a Firefighter/EMT and will begin completion of the probationary task book. Probationary time on shift consists of nearly all major fire suppression and emergency medical services functions.
 - o Probationary Firefighters are evaluated by FTOs during this time, complete a mid-term exam (after about 35 shifts) and final exam (after 60-70 shifts). Upon completion of the final exam, Probationary Firefighters will officially have completed probation.
- **What is the 24-hour shift work schedule?** WPFR has a 4-platoon schedule: 24 hours ON duty, 24 hours OFF duty, 24 hours ON duty, and 120 hours (five-day) OFF duty. To achieve an approximate 46.15 average hours per week, employees are assigned a twenty-four (24) hour debit shift every 40 days, on the second or fourth day of their "five-day" off.

January

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1 A1	2 C2	3 A2
4 B1	5 D1	6 B2	7 D2	8 C3	9 A3	10 C4
11 A4	12 B3	13 D3	14 B4	15 D4	16 C5	17 A5
18 C6	19 A6	20 B5	21 D5	22 B6	23 D6	24 C7
25 A7	26 C8	27 A8	28 B7	29 D7	30 B8	31 D8