



# Become a Firefighter

Firefighting is a very strenuous and demanding career, physically, mentally and emotionally. Firefighters must be skilled and prepared to respond to a wide variety of emergencies like structural and wildland fires, hazardous materials spills, canyon rescues, traffic collisions, life threatening medical emergencies, and more. Outside of the emergency environment, Firefighters are constantly engaged in public education, daily equipment and station maintenance, training, inspections and various other non-emergency activities. This webpage is designed to give individuals interested in pursuing a Firefighting career some direction and information on general job requirements.

## Education

High School Diploma or G.E.D. - (required)

Community College Programs:

- EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) - (required) typically a semester course
- Paramedic Accreditation - (desirable) minimum of six months to one year of EMT experience required, typically a one year full time program (part-time programs available as well)
- Fire Science Courses - (desirable) Associates Degree
- Basic Fire Academy - (required by many Fire Departments, desirable in Rancho Cucamonga) Check individual colleges for pre-requisites

Participating Colleges and programs in the area:

- [Chaffey College](#)
- [Crafton Hills College](#)
- [Mt. SAC College](#)
- [Victor Valley College](#)
- [Baldy View ROP](#)

Bachelors Degree (desirable, especially for career advancement)- Fire Service Administration, Public Administration, Emergency Medical Management, Human Resources Management, or other related degree areas.

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## Skills

Bilingual - (desirable) especially Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, etc. based on individual community demographics

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## Physical Fitness

Physical fitness is an important part of a Firefighter's ability to perform critical job tasks in a safe and efficient manner. Individuals seeking a Fire Service career must have and maintain a regular physical fitness program that involves cardiovascular and strength training. The previously listed Community Colleges may have physical fitness courses to help guide you in your fitness goals and practices.

Standardized Tests utilized by several Fire Departments\*\*:

- CPAT (Candidate Physical Ability Test)- [California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee](#)
- Consolidated Physical Ability Test (aka- Biddle Physical Ability Test) -  
[Mt. SAC](#)  
[Rio Hondo Community College](#)

\*\*Research individual Fire Department application requirements. Pay special attention to the physical agility test requirements and timeframes for certification.

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## Work Experience

- Fire Service - U.S. Forest Service, CalFire, Volunteer, Reserve or Paid-Call Programs, Prevention
  - Emergency Medical Services - Ambulance EMT and/or Paramedic; Emergency Room Technician
  - Trade experience - Construction; trades involving use of tool, heavy equipment, and automobile service/repair
  - Service jobs - Working with people/customer service; supervision; project management
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# Community Involvement (Volunteer Work)

- Fire department - RCFD [Fire Corps](#) Volunteers (age 18+) as well as [Explorer Program](#) (ages 16-21)
  - Boy or Girl Scouts
  - Hospitals
  - Schools
  - Senior Programs
  - Churches
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When applying for a Firefighting position, it is important to:

- Make wise decisions for your future. Extensive background checks are part of the hiring process, including the DMV inquiries (looking for a good driving record) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).
- Visit Fire Stations— Be prepared with basic knowledge of the community and individual fire department (utilize internet for information) and dress in a professional manner. Have pertinent questions prepared and bring a notepad and pencil to take notes.
- Develop a resume to include your education, work experience and community involvement.
- Practice your interview skills (set up “mock interviews” with family/friends/fire station; utilize community groups like “Toastmasters” to improve public speaking ability; tape record yourself or sit in front of a mirror).
- Start your education and physical fitness training now!

Many public safety organizations have strict grooming standards or guidelines, which often include references to body art. View [Rancho Cucamonga Fire District's grooming guidelines](#) that pertain to all uniformed personnel.

For current job opportunities, [CLICK HERE](#).