

# **Firefighter Interview**

## **PREPARATION BOOKLET**

## **Introduction**

This booklet has been developed to help you prepare for the Firefighter Selection Interview.

It is strongly recommended that you set aside some time to read through this booklet. Consider the best examples you can use to demonstrate your experience. Also consider the types of activities you may be involved in as a Firefighter and the skills or knowledge this may require.

The interview will be conducted by a panel consisting of three people; they will take it in turns to ask you questions and both will be making notes to ensure that a record is kept of all the responses you give.

Your interview will last for approximately 1 hour. Initially your interviewers will introduce themselves and explain the procedure of the interview. From then on, the main aim of the interview is to gather examples of knowledge and skills that are important for potential firefighters.

You will be asked 6 main questions although some may be in two parts. The interviewers will however advise you if this is the case and advise you when you are moving on to the second part of the question. Questions may be derived from either or both of the Key Accountabilities and Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs) sections of the Retained Firefighter job description.

## **Preparing for the interview**

Here are some suggestions of what you can do ahead of your interview to prepare:

- Review the Key Accountabilities and the PQAs section of the Retained Firefighter job description which you have been given a copy of in your initial application pack.
- Utilise this booklet in preparation.
- When looking at the PQAs section think of skills and knowledge that you have that are transferable to the firefighter role such as computer skills, communication skills.
- Taking into account both areas think about what questions an interviewer might ask and what examples you would give.

## **Practical Tips**

- Confirm the date, time, location and route, the name and telephone number of the person you are meeting and what they expect you to bring. Carry this information with you to the interview.
- If you cannot attend the interview, call and let the Recruitment Team know as soon as possible.
- Leave plenty of time to arrive at your interview destination, always plan to be 10-15 minutes early. If you think that you are going to be late, call and let them know as soon as possible.
- Take a moment before answering any questions allowing time to think about your response.
- If you are unsure of a question ask the interviewer to repeat or rephrase the question.
- You may ask the interviewer to repeat the question at any time whilst responding; this may prove useful if you feel you may be going off the subject.
- There is no time limit in answering each of the questions so some you may spend longer answering than others.

## **What to Wear**

- You should present yourself in a manner becoming of a potential Firefighter; your attire should be smart and comfortable. Wear a suit if possible.

## Job Role Questions Guidance

Some of the questions may be developed from the key accountabilities section of the job description.

These questions will be in a scenario style to provide you with a situation or activity that you would be required to undertake in the Firefighter role. They are designed to get you to think about the general skills, knowledge or information you may require to assist you in the role or the types of personal responsibilities such as Health and Safety expectations.

## PQA Style Questions Guidance

Some of the questions may require you to provide examples of your experience and how you have actually used the relevant PQAs that are being assessed. Specifically, your interviewer will be looking for examples of what you have actually said, done or decided.

Your interviewer will not be able to give you credit for hypothetical examples of what you would or might do in a particular situation. In the same way, your interviewer cannot give you credit for what other people may have done. It is acceptable to describe the context of an example within a team effort, but you must also specifically refer to what you did within that team. For example, if you are talking about a team effort and referring to, 'what we decided', it is important to clarify what specific contribution you made to that team's decision.

Don't say ☒	Do say ☑
'We said...' 'It was decided...' 'Usually we spoke to...' 'I would write 'We solved the problem by...'	'I said...' or 'he said...' 'I decided...' or 'she decided' 'I spoke to...' 'I wrote...' 'My contribution was to...'

## Structuring Your Answer

When structuring your answer for questions that ask for examples of your experience try to make sure that you:

- set the scene by describing the **context** of your example; (Situation)
- clearly describe **what** you did and said; (Task)
- state **why** you chose that course of action; and (Action)
- say what the **outcome** of your actions were. (Result)

After you have given your example, your interviewer may ask follow up questions to clarify his or her understanding of how you have used the particular personal quality and attribute being investigated. This is to ensure that your interviewer has a full picture of how you have used a particular attribute or personal quality and what the result was.

### **Choosing an Example**

Your interviewer is primarily interested in your personal experiences. How you may have gained experience should be less of a focal point than the actual demonstration of your personal qualities and attributes. When you are choosing an example you are encouraged to think about situations at work, college, in your home life, in your hobbies, or in any other clubs or organisations you may be a member of. It is important that you choose an example that is clear in your memory, enough that you will be able to confidently talk your interviewer through what you did and why.

### **Example Questions**

Below is an example of how a job role question and PQA style question are phrased. You may wish to use these to practice how you structure your responses to both styles. Keep in mind the STAR and the need to give specific examples about what you have actually done when responding to a PQA style question.

You will not be asked these actual questions during your interview.

#### **Job Role Style Question**

What skills do you think a Firefighter would have to demonstrate when attending an incident such as a house fire with persons reported?

#### **PQA Style Question**

**PQA Area – Working with Others:** This is about working effectively with a variety of people whether they are in your team or in the community.

Question: Tell me about a time when you have worked to resolve an issue that was negatively impacting your team.