

Town of Lakeshore “Volunteer Firefighter” Information Package

Introduction

The fire department consists of just under 100 volunteer firefighters serving 5 fire districts across the municipality. Each fire district is unique in its building stock inventory, population and emergency call volumes. In 2018 the department responded to 551 calls for assistance with only 18 as actual structure fires. The remaining calls included 90 other fire related events, 100 motor vehicle collisions, 180 alarm activations, 60 medical calls and 100 other various assistance categories.

For 2019 the department is **only** recruiting in fire districts 1 through 4 (see Recruiting Map 2019). The travel time from your residence to the closest fire station is one of several considerations in candidate selection. The department reserves the right to determine your station placement. You must be physically able to perform tasks and duties of the job. You cannot have a criminal offense related to the job duties of a firefighter. You must have and maintain a valid driver’s license.

Things to Consider Before Applying

A commitment to maintaining a regular fitness regime and monitoring your personal wellness is key to ensuring firefighter safety and longevity. It is important that you have the strength, stamina and cardiovascular conditioning to take on the physical challenges of the volunteer firefighter role. Ethical behaviour and accountability must be part of your nature. Taking ownership and responsibility for your actions is vital to success.

If scheduled for an interview, you must provide the following documents at that meeting:

- A **Doctor’s Note** (at your expense) stating the words “you are fit for firefighting duties”.
- A **Vulnerable Sector Search** (at your expense) from the OPP detachment in Belle River
- A **Driver’s Abstract** (at your expense) for your driver’s license number from a Service Ontario location (one in Belle River) or obtainable on-line

Failure to provide the 3 documents at the interview will discontinue your involvement in the recruiting process.

Volunteer Firefighter Attendance Expectations

Availability: Paid on call firefighting can be very demanding. It is understood that family life and work life will impact your *availability* for firefighting. Getting ready for work, travelling to and from work, personal business outside the community and going away on vacation are activities that will impact your *availability*. We understand that this is all part of normal life and know you can’t get to every fire department event. The town is looking for individuals interested in committing the time required to continue the high level of service provided by the Lakeshore Fire Department.

Training and equipment checks are pre-scheduled each month with an expectation you will attend. Emergencies can occur at any time and when at work, we know you can’t get there. Firefighter participation is tracked and compared to other fire district staff member attendance and then further compared against the overall 5 station averages.

Your **Pre-scheduled** monthly time commitments (approx. 8 hrs total) include:

- 2 monthly training sessions each 2 to 3 hours long
- 1 monthly equipment check lasting around 2 hours

Your **Un-scheduled** emergency response varies depending on the fire district and your *availability*:

- Station 1 – around 230 calls per year (estimated 230 hours)
- Station 2 – around 55 calls per year (estimated 55 hours)
- Station 3 - around 145 calls per year (estimated 145 hours)
- Station 4 – around 50 calls per year (estimated 50 hours)

Annual emergency response call volumes are subject to change and variation.

Your **Pre-scheduled** Fire Prevention/Public Education Activities vary throughout the year during week days and weekends and are dependent on the number of staff required and your *availability*. Programs like door to door smoke alarm checks, fire prevention week school visits, parades and other public events require firefighter participation.

Steps to becoming a Volunteer Firefighter

A **cover letter** explaining why you are interested and your **resume** can be emailed with the subject line stating “Volunteer Firefighter” to jobs@lakeshore.ca before noon on Friday April 5, 2019. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Interviews (max 40 minutes) are arranged after resumes are reviewed and potential candidates selected. The intent is to learn more about you, your experiences and your abilities. The interview panel will rate you based on your responses.

Successful completion of a 42 question **Aptitude Test** (max 45 minutes) is a requirement for the short-listed interview candidates.

Successful completion of the **Physical Agility Tests** is a requirement for the short-listed interview candidates. This test is comprised of a series of 8 tests. Each of the 8 tests are evaluated. Except for the tread water and hydraulic tool carry, all tests are done in full firefighting gear including self-contained breathing apparatus. The physical agility testing consists of:

- Lift a 24’ ladder butted against a wall from horizontal to vertical position and back
- Climb 50’ up and back down the aerial ladder
- Complete a manual dexterity evolution using fire hose connectors and a wrench
- Climb up and down flights of stairs carrying a 100’ roll of fire hose
- Crawl into a 30’ long by 3’ tunnel with a blacked out mask and bring back a target object
- Move a hydraulic extrication tool (jaws of life) from one location to another
- Advance a charged hose line 100’
- Using the indoor pool, tread water unassisted for 15 minutes

Firefighter gear will be provided EXCEPT footwear - Bring your own certified safety shoes. Bring something comfortable to wear under the firefighting gear - short-sleeved shirt (no sleeve-less), sweatpants/ track pants, socks to protect feet/ankles in safety footwear.

Bring your own swim wear and towel for the tread water event.
Bring your own water bottle/ sports drink and small snacks for timed rest periods
Maximum agility evaluation time from start to finish is estimated to be 4 hours.

Final candidate selection is based on the resume, interview, aptitude and physical agility test scoring and a quantitative fit test pass for both an SCBA air mask and N95 mask. Fit testing consists of electronically measuring the ability to seal a mask against the contours of your face to prevent entry and exposure to air-borne contaminants. If after all reasonable attempts to obtain a seal fail, the candidate will not continue in the process. **Facial Hair** must never interfere with the seal of your personally assigned face mask.

Recruit training is required to be firefighter. As a new recruit you must complete 180 hours of studies through self-study, online testing, classroom theory and practical hands on training. Classroom sessions will be 8 hours, one Saturday per month for approximately 12 months with the possibility of an occasional single week night - 3 hour session if needed. The training prepares you for the provincial practical skills testing and theory exams that you must complete for your certification as an NFPA 1001 Level 1 and 2 firefighter.

Additional training includes obtaining a class DZ license (paid for by the municipality), medical training, mental wellness, Occupational Health & Safety Act awareness and fire prevention and public education awareness. Once you have successfully completed all the required recruit training and obtained your DZ license, you will then move into the department's regular pre-scheduled ongoing training program. Failure to obtain the DZ license within your probationary period will terminate your employment as a volunteer firefighter.

Once certified in your first step as a Level 1 firefighter, an initial one year **probationary** period begins in order to evaluate job performance, attendance and suitability as a volunteer firefighter. As a Level 1 firefighter you will have the opportunity to practice your skills under restricted emergency response conditions.

Important Information

Recruit **wages** (no honorarium) are provided for the training and certification process. Another compensation package applies for emergency response, training and equipment checks after obtaining NFPA 1001 Level 1 and 2 certification. The department has a VFIS Accident and Sickness Program Policy and provides maximum WSIB insurance coverage. Firefighters are also provided an annual clothing allowance for fire department items, issued a dress uniform and begin a one year probationary timeframe upon completion of the certification process.

Mental wellness plays a significant role in your experiences with the fire department. As an emergency responder you will be exposed to situations that can be both visually and mentally traumatizing. You will be provided with training tools to help you understand and cope with the symptoms of mental wellness associated with being a first responder. The department also has a peer support team that can assist you including access to a formal employee assistance program.

The department has a strong **safety culture** where adherence to operating guidelines, use of personal protective equipment and watching out for one another is expected to ensure a safe working environment.

Firefighters are required to wear a **pager** that alerts you to calls when you're fit (both mentally and physically) and *available* for duty.

You must have a **smart phone** with an active data plan for use when paged for emergencies and attending training and hall duties.

Job fit/ suitability is one of many critical factors considered in our decision-making processes. Completion and/ or passing all steps in the recruitment process does not ensure a position on the department.

If at any point in the process you do not meet the required competencies, you will be advised that you will not proceed to the next step.

Most importantly, consult with your significant other and family members to discuss the volunteer firefighter commitment you are considering. There is a significant time obligation to get through the first year of training and testing to become a firefighter. Then, twice monthly training, equipment checks, public education activities and emergency response become the normal expectations. Emergencies are not planned and can happen on holidays, in the middle of the night and on special occasions. Do you have the time and just as important, the support of your family to be a volunteer firefighter? Please see the Self-Evaluation Questionnaire.

Thank you for your interest in the Town of Lakeshore Fire Department.

Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

Use these questions to help you decide if becoming a Town of Lakeshore volunteer firefighter is a good fit for you. Ask yourself:

1. Does my lifestyle support ethical and responsible choices and actions?
2. Am I prepared to maintain a level of professionalism on and off duty?
3. Does my lifestyle align with the department values of respect, pride, professionalism and teamwork?
4. Have I been free from unlawful activities?
5. Have I adopted and do I maintain physical fitness as a way of life?
6. Am I physically able to perform firefighter job tasks?
7. Am I able to meet the training requirements?
8. Can I work for extended periods of time under difficult and strenuous conditions?
9. Am I free of phobias relating to height, confined spaces and able to maneuver with limited or no visibility?
10. Am I comfortable using hand/ power tools and technical equipment?
11. Can I disengage from emotional suffering, tragedy or loss of life in order to complete essential job tasks?
12. Do I have a support system in place for debriefing and stress relief?
13. Have I considered the impact that volunteer firefighting may have on my family environment?
14. Am I familiar with and able to operate within a para-military working environment?
15. Do I treat all people with respect, dignity and professionalism regardless of race, creed, gender and beliefs?
16. Am I able to and do I take steps to maintain a positive attitude?
17. Am I able to motivate myself? Do I motivate others?
18. Do I actively engage myself in a problem-solving capacity?
19. Am I able to follow and carry out complex oral and written instructions?