



SAANICH FIRE DEPARTMENT



2021 Fire Fighter Application Guide



Introduction

The Saanich Fire Department was established in 1919. Today, the Department consists of 135 professionals who provide a multitude of fire rescue and emergency management services to the District of Saanich. Our professional services are delivered through Suppression and Rescue, Fire Prevention, Training, Communications, Staff Development, Mechanical and Administration.

The Saanich Fire Department services an area of 103.4 square kilometres with an estimated population of 122,000 people. Saanich's urban density, diverse terrain, with ocean coastline, lakes, forests and mountains make for a unique variety of emergency responses by our team.

The Department's mandate is to protect citizens and property; to provide all proper measures to prevent, control and extinguish fires and provide assistance to medical emergencies, land and marine rescue operations, requests from other fire services, hazardous materials incidents and requests for public service.

In addition to the delivery of firefighting and rescue services, the Department is responsible for a variety of contract services and programs. Contracts for delivery of fire dispatch, high angle rescue and mechanical services are in place with neighbouring municipalities as well as participation in the CRD Regional Hazmat Team.

Programs delivered by the Department include marine fire rescue, medical first responder, technical rescue, juvenile fire setter intervention, incident pre-planning, general fire safety and public building inspections. The Fire Department is also responsible for administration of the Saanich Emergency Program.

The Department's good standing in the community is attributed to the commitment and dedication of its members and their desire to provide the highest level of public service.



Join Our Team

The Saanich Fire Department continues to hire the best. We are looking for qualified and ambitious men, women and diverse candidates to join our team. Firefighting is an employment opportunity that offers a challenging, demanding, exciting and rewarding career where ongoing training and education never ends.

Today's fire fighter is a skilled professional, able to face every kind of emergency. Through training and experience, Saanich fire fighters learn best practices in firefighting, rescue techniques, dispatch/communications, medical emergency procedures and public education. We also cover such subjects as the control of hazardous materials, communication systems, fire prevention legislation and fire investigation techniques.

Compensation and Hours of Work

The Saanich Fire Department offers excellent pay and benefits. First class fire fighters (those who have completed three years of employment) can expect to earn approximately \$91,000 a year, with a comprehensive benefit and pension package.

A Saanich fire fighter's hours of work are based on a 4 on and 4 off schedule, consisting of 2 consecutive 10 hour day shifts, immediately followed by 24 hours off duty, immediately followed by 2 consecutive 14 hour night shifts and then 4 days off.

Factors for Consideration

Like any career, there are challenges to working as a fire fighter. Make sure you understand what you are committing to, prior to pursuing all of the required certifications. Things to consider include:

Shift Work

- Rotating shifts require fire fighters to work most weekends and statutory holidays.
- Shift work may require fire fighters to make significant adjustments to their personal schedules.
- Shift work also requires fire fighters to be away from home overnight on a regular basis.

Physically Demanding

- The work of a fire fighter is physically demanding.
- Fire fighters must maintain their physical fitness and lead a healthy lifestyle to perform their duties safely and to guard against the health risks of the job, which include heart disease and several forms of cancer.

Psychologically Demanding

- The work of a fire fighter will expose you to tragic and traumatic incidents.
- Fire fighters must be the kind of people who have the emotional fortitude, healthy coping mechanisms, and mental resiliency to deal with these situations.

Working as a fire fighter, you will be exposed to prolonged hours of physical and mental exertion, both as a suppression fire fighter and a fire dispatcher. You will experience sleep deprivation and may be awake for up to 24 hours at time. You will be exposed to stressful situations that will be mentally, physically and emotionally challenging. You will work in situations that have a risk of injury or death. You will be expected to maintain a professional level of conduct both on and off the job. Your actions and behavior may be captured and put on media and/or social media by news teams and the general public.

The Fire Department has many systems in place to support and help our members, due to the numerous challenges we face in this profession. We are a tightly knit family of professionals that come together to look out for and support each other on and off of the job. We have a Critical Incident Stress Management Team that debriefs and supports crews after difficult calls. All members receive Resilient Minds training that focuses on strategies to deal with the challenging mental and occupational stress aspects of our profession. We have an Occupational Health and Safety Team dedicated to making our daily jobs as safe as possible. We also have an Employee Assistance Program that not only supports our members but also their families, because we recognize that issues at work can affect family members too. You can be sure that members of the Saanich Fire Department are well supported.



Applications for employment are advertised on the District of Saanich website, <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/careers-at-saanich.html> and selectively in the Times Colonist newspaper. It is our policy to not accept general applications for employment prior to a recruitment competition.

Required Qualifications

Applications will be screened to ensure the following qualifications have been met. If you do not meet ALL of these, please do not submit an application as it will not be considered.

1. Proof of Grade 12 / high school graduation or equivalent.
2. NFPA 1001, Fire Fighter Level I and II with appropriate IFSAC or Pro Board Seals (see www.ifsac.org or www.TheProBoard.org for a list of accredited fire academies).
3. Driver's Abstract reflective of no more than six points in the last three years (dated no more than 45 days prior to the Saanich Fire Fighter Application closing date).
4. Valid Class 3 Driver's License, with air brake endorsement or equivalent, for vehicles with more than two axles (automatic transmission is accepted). Equivalent licenses from other Canadian provinces or territories are acceptable. (Contact BC Driver Licensing for equivalency clarification at 1-250-978-8300.)
5. Criminal Record Check — Vulnerable Sector, from the police department serving the area the applicant resides in, dated within three months of the posted date of the competition or a receipt showing that one has been requested. Since fire fighters are in a position of trust, applicants cannot have any criminal charges or convictions that are related to the duties of the position for which you have not received a pardon. You must be open, honest and willing to disclose all information pertaining to this record check.
6. A current BC EMA Licensing Board First Responder License or higher level of EMA License (EMR, PCP, ACP). Your first aid license must be maintained throughout the application process.
7. Legal entitlement to work in Canada must be shown by submitting a clear copy of one of the following:
 - Canadian birth certificate
 - Canadian passport
 - Current Permanent Resident Card
 - Current Landed Immigrant Card*Note: A work visa is not acceptable.*
8. Vision and hearing that meet the criteria in NFPA 1582 Chapter 6:
 - Color vision safe
 - 20/30 corrected binocular vision and 20/100 uncorrected binocular vision or better
 - Normal hearing without artificial aids

Applicants will be assessed during the Pre-Employment Medical Screening Stage for vision and hearing requirements.



Preferred Qualifications and Attributes

These additional skills and experiences will enhance your application, and the required qualifications:

1. Completion of other fire/rescue service related courses or programs. (We do not recommend any particular course/program.)
2. Practical experience transferable to areas of firefighting:
 - Experience/training in emergency services: fire, police, coast guard, EMS, military, search and rescue and forest fire service
 - Construction or mechanical related trades
 - Heavy equipment operator, truck driving tandem axle vehicles with a Class 1, 2 or 3 license
 - Advanced medical or first aid training (FR, EMR, PCP/ACP, EMT, Nursing)
 - Valid Class 4 BC Driver's License
 - Academic studies – college/university
 - Knowledge of different cultures, fluency in languages other than English, travel experience
 - Coaching, teaching or instructing experience
 - Ability to swim and related lifesaving and rescue certificates
 - Volunteer experience and community involvement
 - Demonstrated athletic or physical capabilities and achievements
 - Knowledge and ability to work effectively with computers, programs and software
 - Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a team environment

Submitting an Application

Applications will be available on our website, <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/careers-at-saanich.html> only during application intake periods. Failure to follow all instructions and submit all supporting documents with the application will result in that application being screened out.

Due to the high volume of applications we receive, we are unable to confirm receipt of each application with individual applicants. Applicants will automatically be notified by email (from the District of Saanich) when applications are received.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

1. The recruitment and selection process consists of 9 stages:

Stage 1	Recruitment Posted (3 week application period)
Stage 2	Resume and Application Screening
Stage 3	Fire Fighter Competency Assessment (online)
Stage 4	Physical Abilities Testing
Stage 5	Saanich Fire Fighter Orientation
Stage 6	Interview
Stage 7	Selection for Eligibility Pool (subject to reference checks)
Stage 8	Medical Examination
Stage 9	Employment Offer

2. The Saanich Fire Department reserves the right to limit the number of candidates who will proceed to the next stage.
3. Candidates with the minimum qualifications may not automatically proceed to the next stage.
4. During the recruitment process, all applicants will be notified by email, if they will be moving on to the next stage. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure their email address is valid and current.
5. **The ability to follow instructions is an important attribute in firefighting. Make sure you understand and follow any instructions you are given during the hiring process. Failure to do so may affect the final hiring decision.**
6. As we are dealing with large numbers of candidates, the length of time between hiring stages may be protracted as we tabulate results and prepare for the next stages. Please **do not** contact the Saanich Fire Department or District of Saanich Human Resources department to ask about your status.

STAGE 1: THE APPLICATION

All applications must be submitted electronically through <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/careers-at-saanich.html> We will not accept applications submitted by any other means.

Factors to consider when you decide to apply:

- The job posting will only be open to receive applications for a specified period. Applications submitted after the closing date will not be accepted.
- You will need to download the Saanich Fire Department application form in order to submit your application. The online application system may not be compatible with Safari – be sure to use a different browser if you are using an Apple computer.
- An active email address will be required to create the account and receive updates on the status of your application.
- Have an updated resume prepared prior to beginning your online application. You will be asked to upload your resume during the application process.
- The system will not allow you to start an application and finish it later. You must complete your application from start to finish at one time.
- Answer all of the questions at the time of your initial application. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Your answers to the online questions will determine whether you are invited to the second stage of the process. Make sure you are answering questions completely and accurately.
- Any licenses or certifications submitted must have been completed prior to including them in your application. Indicating that you possess a license or certificate that you have not been issued at the time of application will not be considered.

STAGE 2: RESUME AND APPLICATION SCREENING

Careful and thorough review and screening of all candidates' applications and resumes will be completed.

Minimum qualifications, preferred qualifications, driver's abstract, life and work experience, as well as education and current employment, are all considered when assessing applicants. Those candidates who are successful in the initial and comprehensive review will be invited to the next stage.

STAGE 3: FIRE FIGHTER COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Candidates who are successful in Stage 1 and 2 may be invited to participate in the online written testing portion of the process. There is a \$290.00 fee (plus GST) that is non-refundable and payable in advance for this testing. Those invited to Stage 3 of the hiring process will receive payment instruction and testing details by email, prior to the test, with specific instructions in

advance of the test date. The total test duration is approximately 2 ½ to 4 hours. Candidates will have 24 hours to complete all portions of the testing.

There will be no opportunity to write this test other than the specified date.

If you are unfamiliar with competency testing, please see the following:

The assessment consists of approximately four hours of paper and pencil testing and is conducted in an online setting. The testing is based on current findings from the research literature with respect to the factors that predict success as a fire fighter “on-the-job”. Three main areas are assessed: general learning ability and specific aptitudes (e.g., mechanical reasoning, personality traits associated with success as a fire fighter, and career interest patterns).

For more details on the testing and how to prepare, visit http://blassociates.ca/fire_fighter-competency-testing/.

STAGE 4: PHYSICAL ABILITIES TESTING

Candidates successful in Stage 3 will be invited to the physical abilities testing. To take part in Stage 4 of the process, you will need to have a medical evaluation completed by your doctor. The Saanich Fire Department will email you with the form to take to your physician prior to attending the physical abilities test. If you arrive at the testing with incomplete or missing documents, you will not be allowed to participate in the testing and will be disqualified from the process. It is your responsibility to ensure your doctor has provided all of the required information on the form.

There are 9 stations in the physical abilities testing. At each station, you will be required to complete a task in a specific amount of time. If the task is completed in the allotted time, you will move on to the next station. If you fail to complete the station in the allotted time, you will not be allowed to continue with the testing.

You must follow the instructions and adhere to all safety guidelines during the testing. Failure to do so will result in elimination from the testing. There will be **no** rest periods between the stations. You will move to the next station immediately upon completion of each testing station.

Refer to the Saanich Fire Fighter Candidate Physical Abilities Testing Guide – 2021 for more detailed information.

STAGE 5: SAANICH FIRE FIGHTER ORIENTATION

(Due to changing COVID-19 health and safety requirements, this stage may be cancelled.)

Candidates will be evaluated and assessed by on-duty Saanich Fire Department crews, Training Division personnel and Chief Officers. Evaluations will take place at our fire stations over a 1-2 day period, where applicants will take an active role in some fire station duties, review basic firefighting techniques, train with the fire crews and attend routine and emergency incidents.

Candidates will also be observed and assessed on their involvement, effort and engagement with crews during regular station duties, maintenance training, inspections etc.

Involvement in any activity will be at the discretion of the Orientation Day Fire Officer.

STAGE 6: THE INTERVIEW

Candidates that have successfully completed the first 5 stages of the process will be invited for a panel interview. The interview will take place with representatives from the Fire Department management team, District of Saanich Human Resources Department and IAFF Local 967 Executive.

The interview will include behavioral based questions that focus on things you have done in the past to achieve an outcome. An example question would be: “Describe a time when you were part of a team that was having difficulty achieving its intended purpose and describe what you did to help the group get back on track.”

What we are looking for in these types of questions are answers that demonstrate the following:

- Leadership
- Interpersonal Skills
- Teamwork
- Initiative
- Communication Skills
- Adaptability

Preparation is the key to success in the interview stage. Refer to the District's website to learn more about both Saanich and the Saanich Fire Department. You can also refer to <http://www.saanichfirefighters.com> to gather information on IAFF Local 967 and the Saanich Fire Fighters' Charitable Society. It is important that you have a good understanding of the District of Saanich Fire Department and the position for which you are applying. You should be able to articulate the reasons why you would be a good fit with the Saanich Fire Department.

When attending the interview, you should:

- Plan to arrive early and make allowances for the unexpected.
- Dress appropriately. You are applying for a career position that you have worked very hard to prepare for; your attire should reflect the importance of the interview.
- Provide an interview documentation package to the panel. The package should be professional, stapled and not in a binder/folder, and should only include copies of the following documentation:
 - Current resume
 - Confirmation of BC EMA First Responder License or higher license
 - Proof of Grade 12 / high school graduation or equivalent
 - Any post-secondary transcripts, including Red Seal training
 - NFPA 1001 certificate
- Please only use regular white copy paper for interview documentation packages. You should provide 5 copies, enough for each member of the interview panel.

- Only include documentation that supports the required AND preferred qualifications. DO NOT include the following items in your package: pictures, call logs from a previous department, letters of reference, unrelated certifications or courses, and any other items that do not directly support the required and preferred qualifications. These items can be included with your resume.

The interview process is lengthy and takes 4-6 weeks to complete. Candidates will be notified of the result of their interview at various times, with the bulk of candidates being notified after all of the interviews are completed.

STAGE 7: SELECTION FOR ELIGIBILITY POOL

Following completion of the interview, the selection panel will meet to review all of the results. Successful candidates will be notified of their placement in the Saanich Fire Department Fire Fighter Eligibility Pool.

A recruit fire fighter eligibility pool size will be established, concurrent with the immediate and future needs of the Department.

Placement in this pool does not guarantee employment. The Department will contact pool candidates when and if a vacancy occurs, or position is available.

Note: The Saanich Fire Department reserves the right to terminate the eligibility pool and commence a new recruitment competition at any time.

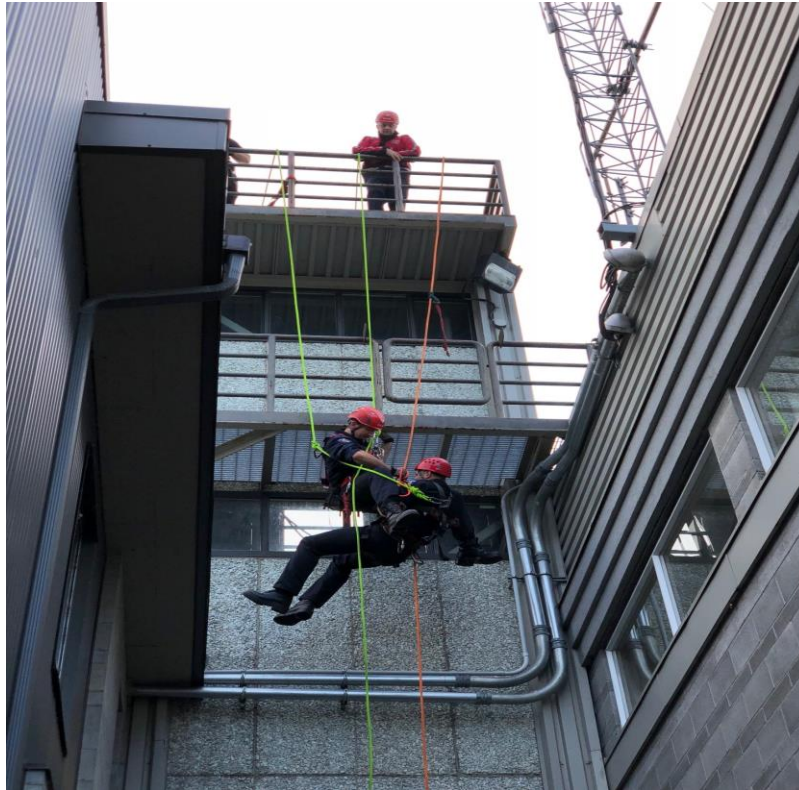
STAGE 8: MEDICAL EXAMINATION

This comprehensive medical examination is in accordance with NFPA 1582 Chapter 6 – Medical Evaluation of Candidates. This examination also includes vision and hearing testing. A complete copy of the NFPA 1582 Standard is accessible online as follows: [NFPA 1582: Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments](#).

Condition of employment is subject to all NFPA 1582 Medical Examination Standards being met. Scheduling and details for examination will take place immediately prior to Employment Offer. The cost of this medical examination is the responsibility of the applicant.

STAGE 9: EMPLOYMENT OFFER

Offers of employment from the Fire Chief may be made to applicants selected in Stage 9, from the Eligibility Pool when a vacancy becomes available, subject to a satisfactory medical examination as identified in Stage 8. Notification to attend a medical examination may require a brief interview with the selection panel and Fire Chief.



2021 Fire Fighter Recruitment Schedule*		
Stage 1	Recruitment Posting 3 week application period	March 1 to 19
Stage 2	Resume and Application Screening	March 22 to April 9
Stage 3	FF Competency Assessment (online)	April 19 - 23
Stage 4	Physical Abilities Testing	May 15
Stage 5	Saanich Fire Fighter Orientation**	June 1
Stage 6	Interviews	June 14- 30
Stage 7	Selection for Eligibility Pool	July
Stage 8	Medical Examination	As needed for intake
Stage 9	Employment Offer	As needed for intake

* Schedule may vary

**Subject to change or cancellation