

Section 5.0

Employment

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Position Open Authorization

The Fire Chief will notify the Board of Directors and make recommendations when a position vacancy exists or when there is a desire to fill a newly created position. The Board of Directors will review the request and recommendations and will advise the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief will approve the proper course of action in accordance with Article IX; Section 1 in the document entitled ***Second Amendment and Restatement of Joint and Cooperative Agreement Crystal-New Hope Joint Fire District (February 21, 2017)***. The Fire Chief is the final authority in the filling of all positions.

Recruitment

The Fire Chief oversees the recruitment processes to assure compliance with state and federal laws as well as WMFRD policies. The Fire Chief will assist appropriate supervisor(s) in determining the best methods of recruitment.

Qualifications shall be determined by education, experience, and ability based on written, oral, or other job-relevant examinations evaluating the candidate's ability. The Fire Chief will establish and maintain a job description for each position which shall include a job title, Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status, example of duties, minimum qualifications, and desirable knowledge and skills.

It is the desire of the WMFRD to fill vacancies in the District by promotion or transfer of regular full-time and paid, on-call employees insofar as practical in the professional judgment of the Fire Chief. An employee must possess the qualifications necessary for the position to which they seek promotion or transfer.

Posting of Position Vacancies

All vacancies for regular full-time or part-time positions shall be posted internally if practical. Vacancies for regular full-time and part-time positions will be published by posting announcements on internet sites and through email.

Such postings will normally specify the title and salary of the positions, the nature of the work to be performed, the minimum and essential requirements of the position, the time and place to apply, the closing date for receiving applications, and other pertinent information. All postings will include the statement "Equal Opportunity Employer" or a similar statement that conveys the WMFRD's commitment to equal employment opportunity.

It is at the discretion of the Fire Chief to fill the vacancy through an external recruitment process at any time. When/if the WMFRD recruits a position externally, the position will be advertised in selected newspapers, periodicals, newsletters, web pages, and/or through direct mailings, and using the internal posting methods mentioned above.

Application Materials

To be considered for any position, all candidates must complete required application materials with original signatures and ensure they are submitted by the application deadline. The deadline for application may be extended by the fire Chief.

The Fire Chief will hire his/her choice of the qualified candidates. Evaluation of qualifications is based solely on job-related criteria. In no case is selection based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, status with regard to public assistance or disability, or any other factor not related to the duties and responsibilities of the position and the needs of the organization.

Promotions

Promotional opportunities may be offered on a competitive basis, or the Fire Chief may select a candidate at his/her discretion. This does not preclude the WMFRD from recruitment and/or selection of applicants outside the WMFRD. This procedure is not a waiver of job-relevant qualifications for the position, nor is it a guarantee of preference to existing employees. The Fire Chief will select his/her choice of the qualified candidates.

Acting or Interim Appointments

Position vacancies may be filled on an “acting” basis as needed before filling a position through the normal process. The Fire Chief will approve all acting appointments for all positions. If a current employee is appointed to an acting position and is later hired to fill the regular appointment, with no break in service in the new position, the effective date of the regular appointment may be considered to be the date on which the acting appointment was made. Pay rate adjustment for acting appointments will be determined by the Fire Chief.

False Information

Any applicant who gives false or misleading information on an application form, cheats on an examination, or falsifies a statement, certificate, or evaluation will not be considered for employment. Fraud or attempts to commit fraud will be cause for the WMFRD to refuse to hire an applicant.

Driver's License / Driving Record

Section 5.15

WMFRD employees both paid, on-call and full-time, whose position responsibilities include firefighting duties are required to hold a valid State of Minnesota driver's license.

All WMFRD employees, whose position responsibilities include firefighting duties, shall notify the Fire Chief of a notice of suspension, revocation, cancellation, lost privilege, disqualification to operate a vehicle and/or actions taken that would affect the employee's licensure or insurability within 24 hours after the employee receives such notice.

Loss or restriction of a State of Minnesota driver's license will require a paid, on-call firefighter to take a personal leave of absence.

The WMFRD will periodically conduct driver's license checks, on employees whose responsibilities include firefighting duties, to verify driving records and the current status of each employee's Minnesota State driver's license.

Paid, On-Call Eligibility / Response Requirements

Section 5.20

The WMFRD provides critical services to its communities and it is imperative that qualified candidates are chosen for employment.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a paid, on-call firefighter position, all applicants must:

- be 18 years of age and older
- be a high school graduate or equivalent
- hold a valid State of Minnesota driver's license
- successfully complete and pass a background check, physical ability test, physical and psychological exams
- must be able to respond to their assigned station from their residence within six minutes under normal driving conditions while obeying all traffic laws

In addition, among other things, employees of the WMFRD are expected to:

- carry out his/her responsibilities and provide good communication in a calm, positive and professional manner, especially in emergency situations
- successfully complete training requirements established by the WMFRD
- understand and follow this handbook, standard operating guidelines, and any other WMFRD policies or procedures

Paid, on call firefighters are expected to meet/exceed minimum attendance, training and work detail requirements.

Paid, on-call firefighters must be able to respond to their assigned station from their residence within six minutes under normal driving conditions while obeying all traffic laws.

Continuation of a paid, on-call firefighter's employment with WMFRD due to the relocation of their primary residence is not guaranteed. Station transfers must be approved by the Fire Chief.

Any paid, on call firefighter who moves their primary residency outside of a six minute response to a WMFRD station will no longer be eligible for employment with the District.

While our primary consideration must remain service delivery and especially response time, requests will be considered from a firefighter who wishes to be assigned to a particular station, as long as the response time to that station is less than six minutes and an opening exists.

Paid, on-call Firefighter Staffing Levels and Assignments

The authorized paid, on-call staffing level is set by the Fire Chief with Board approval.

Reference/Background Checks

Reference Checks

The WMFRD reserves the right to conduct reference checks on all applicants before making a job offer. This may include inquiries into all statements contained on the application for employment or made during the selection and/or interview processes, including, but not limited to:

- former employers for information concerning employment, ability, experience, and behavior on the job
- records maintained by an educational institution or licensing/permitting agency relating to academic performance and including, but not limited to, transcripts and proof of licensure

Applicants are required to cooperate by executing releases for prior employers and other entities. Refusal to sign release may disqualify applicant from further consideration.

Background Checks

The WMFRD reserves the right to conduct background checks at the finalist stage or after a conditional job offer has been made for all positions. This may involve:

- a computerized history check through the State of Minnesota or Hennepin County to ensure there are no relevant felony, gross misdemeanor, or misdemeanor convictions
- a warrant check to ensure there are no warrants for arrest

If anything in the in the applicant's background makes them ineligible for employment or prompts the WMFRD to reconsider the job offer, the WMFRD will withdraw the job offer at that time.

Credit Checks

Certain positions may require procurement of a consumer credit report as part of the background check. In these cases, the WMFRD will obtain the necessary authorizations and otherwise comply with the Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970 (FCRA).

Physical Ability Testing

Section 5.30

Upon a conditional offer of employment, all prospective regular full-time, part-time or paid, on-call firefighting personnel may be required to take a physical ability test. Such examination shall be at the WMFRD's expense and shall be given by NovaCare. This physical ability test measures job related activities. The tasks in this test were developed to mirror real situations that WMFRD firefighters encounter on the job. These tasks represent basic skills that do not require training or previous experience as a firefighter to successfully complete.

Present employees who apply for and are offered a new position as firefighting personnel or other positions within the WMFRD may be required to take the physical ability test.

Physical Examinations

Upon a conditional offer of employment, all prospective regular full-time, part-time or paid, on call firefighting personnel and other applicants for other positions may be required to have a physical examination. Such examination shall be at the WMFRD's expense and shall be given by a licensed, qualified doctor who will be designated by the WMFRD. Such examination will be given to determine if the prospective employee is physically able to perform the duties of the specific position for which he or she is being considered.

Present employees who apply for and are offered a new position as firefighting personnel or other positions within the WMFRD may be required to take the physical examination.

Information given by the applicant related to their health history as well as information provided to the examining physician must be accurate and complete in order for the applicant to qualify for employment. The purpose of this exam is to determine whether the applicant can perform the basic job duties of the relevant position.

Psychological Examinations

Section 5.40

Upon a conditional offer of employment, all prospective regular full-time, part-time or paid, on-call firefighting personnel will, and other applicants for other positions may, be required to have a psychological evaluation. As with physical examinations, the examination will be conducted at WMFRD expense and administered by a WMFRD-designated qualified examiner. Such an examination may be given to determine if the prospective employee is psychologically fit to perform the duties of the specific position for which he or she is being considered.

Present employees who apply for and are offered a new position within the WMFRD may also be required to take a psychological exam.

Notification of Appointment

Section 5.45

The Fire Chief will notify the candidate selected for appointment. The notification must include the employment starting date and salary. For full time employees, the Fire Chief may authorize additional vacation, sick leave, accruals or benefits for newly hired experienced employees. However, in no case may an employee earn more than the maximum authorized benefits.

The Fire Chief must provide the newly appointed employee with a current position description to indicate those duties and responsibilities for which the employee is accountable.

Probationary Period

The WMFRD requires all employees to serve a probationary period of employment. The probationary period is regarded as an integral part of the hiring process and is used for closely evaluating an employee's work and for allowing the employee to adjust to the new position. During this time employees have the opportunity to show their ability to meet the standards of work performance while they get to know the job and co-workers.

If an employee's work proves to be unsatisfactory, the individual may be transferred, demoted to another position, this is not guaranteed, or dismissed without cause at any time and without advance notice.

Length of Probation

All new employees will serve a one-year probationary period. Employees are at-will.

Extension of Probation

Probation for an individual employee may be extended up to an additional year by the Fire Chief upon recommendation of the supervisor. In addition, probationary periods may be extended by absences from work, such as an unpaid leave of absence.

Completion of Probation

Performance of employees is evaluated throughout the probationary period. Informal discussions and a formal performance review are scheduled to reinforce good performance and discuss areas that need improvement.

The Fire Chief shall determine if the probationary employee's conduct or job performance is such that the employee is eligible for regular status.

Dismissal during the Probationary Period

The Fire Chief may dismiss a probationary employee at any time without cause and without advance notice. The dismissed employee must be notified in writing of the separation. Employee's remain "at will" following completion of probation.

Benefits during Probationary Period

Section 5.55

For benefit earning employees sick leave and vacation earned accrue during the initial probationary period but may not be used during the first six months of employment. Personal holidays, if credited, also may not be used during the first six months of employment.

There are five personal holidays per calendar year which must be used or lost. An employee whose initial twelve months of employment bridges two calendar years will not receive the personal holidays for the year in which they began but will receive the personal holidays for the year in which they successfully complete twelve months of employment.

In rare cases, the Fire Chief may approve the use of sick leave, vacation, and the personal holiday during the first six months of employment.

Employees who successfully complete their probationary period are eligible to use their accrued sick and vacation leave.

Probationary Period Paid, On-Call

Section 5.60

A newly hired paid, on-call firefighter with the WMFRD will typically serve a one-year period as a probationary firefighter in order to receive proper training and experience.

A paid, on-call probationary firefighter may be separated from service with the WMFRD without recourse to appeal.

After successful completion of FFI State Certification, FFII State Certification, Hazardous Materials Operations Certification, First Responder Certification with the EMSRB, and skill evaluation, the probationary paid, on call firefighter will move on to apprentice status and will receive a raise in pay.

The Assistant Chief of Training must prepare a probationary performance evaluation report along with a final written recommendation to the Fire Chief prior to the completion of the probationary period.

Emergency Response

When paged for an emergency, a probationary firefighter shall respond to their station, don his or her protective gear and standby. The officer in charge will advise a probationary firefighter if he/she shall respond on a vehicle.

When responding on a WMFRD vehicle to an emergency, the officer in charge shall not use a probationary firefighter for any task he or she has not been trained for or is not capable of completing at that time. It is the probationary firefighter's responsibility to inform the officer if he or she has not been trained in a given assignment or task. Any assignment given to a probationary firefighter shall be with a senior firefighter partner or mentor.

Apprentice Period Paid, On-Call

Section 5.65

After successfully completing the requirements of a probationary firefighter a WMFRD paid, on call firefighter will then serve as an apprentice firefighter. An apprentice firefighter will complete training in fire apparatus operator, defensive and emergency driving, aerial operations and WMFRD response area/operations.

After successful completion of their FAO III state certification, evaluations in district knowledge relating to operations, equipment and apparatus along with twenty four months of time on, an apprentice firefighter will move to the rank of firefighter and will receive full firefighter pay.

The Assistant Chief of Training must prepare an apprentice performance evaluation report along with a final written recommendation to the Fire Chief prior to the completion of the apprentice period.

A paid, on-call apprentice firefighter may be separated from service with the WMFRD without recourse to appeal.