

Fire Cadet Candidate Interview Prep Guide

This guide has been created to help you prepare for the interview for the Milwaukee Fire Department's Fire Cadet hiring process. In this guide, you will learn about the interview process and the types of questions you may encounter in order to help you prepare for the interview.

The Interview

The interview is a face-to-face examination consisting of a series of questions that will assess the skills and abilities necessary to perform as a Fire Cadet in the Milwaukee Fire Department. **The questions will not assess knowledge of firefighting.** All candidates will answer the same questions in the same order. The questions will ask you to describe specific situations you may have experienced. If the question asks about a situation you have not experienced, you should answer based on *how you would react* in that situation.

Once your interview has been scheduled, *please be sure to arrive on time.* Candidates who neglect to arrive on time for their interviews put themselves at risk of disqualification due to the number of candidates interviewing and the strict schedule we must adhere to. On the day of your interview, you will first check in and then be directed to a waiting area. When it is time for your interview, you will go to an exam room.

The examination will be conducted by three panelists and a moderator. The moderator will seat you and provide an introductory statement. You will then be asked six questions. You will have a copy of the questions in front of you. You will be allowed 1-2 minutes to answer each question. The average candidate takes approximately 10 minutes to complete the exam.

Exam moderators *cannot* clarify exam questions for you. Additionally, they *will not ask you* to clarify answers that are incomplete or confusing. You will be allowed to ask to have the questions repeated, if necessary.

After you have completed all interview questions you will check out at the main desk where you first checked in. You should then leave the exam site.

The Panelists

How you respond to the interview questions and environment will be evaluated by the panelists, all who understand the essential duties and critical skills and abilities of Firefighters/Fire Cadets. *The panelists have been trained to evaluate your responses to the questions.*

Areas of Measurement

The interview environment is designed to assess the job-related skills and abilities. Areas that may be assessed include the following: team orientation, situational judgment, diversity, motivation/initiative, integrity and working under pressure. Your responses will *not* require that you have knowledge of department procedures or specific firefighting knowledge.

Preparing for the Interview Exam

- Practice answering behavioral questions (e.g. how would you react/have you reacted in a specific scenario). If a question has more than one part, make sure you answer all parts. For example: Please describe how you have worked on a team in the past. What did you learn from this experience?

- Video record or practice responding to questions in front of a mirror. Try to identify and avoid any distracting habits such as fidgeting, saying “um” too often, etc.
- Practice interviewing with friends or family.
- Review the duties and abilities from the Fire Cadet Job Announcement bulletin at www.city.milwaukee.gov/jobs/FireCadet.
- Remember, none of the questions will require fire department knowledge.
- Attend the interview practice sessions offered by the Milwaukee Fire Department. These are 90 minute sessions that will be offered in early February, 2015.
 - Contact Jason Stenglein at (414) 286-5068 or jsteng@milwaukee.gov to get registered for the practice sessions. Space is limited!

Suggestions for the Interview

- Be sure to listen carefully to the question and provide an answer for that specific question. If you do not understand the question you may ask to have it read again.
- Be sure to answer the entire question. Be aware your time is limited to 2-3 minutes per response.
- Think of the acronym “STAR” when formulating your answers to questions:
 - S – Describe the **situation** in which you were involved.
 - T – Describe the **task** to be performed.
 - A – What was your **approach** to the problem?
 - R – What were the **results** of your actions?

Exam-Day Instructions and Tips

- Arrive ten minutes early for your interview. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the site, and to park. **If you are late you may not be allowed to take the test.**
- If the parking lot behind the Safety Academy is full overflow parking is available across the street and next door.
- Bring a valid photo identification card, e.g., driver’s license, school ID.
- As with all interviews, it is recommended that you dress appropriately. While you are not being rated on your appearance, professional attire is encouraged.
- Be sure to throw away any gum/candy/mints before the interview.

Test Confidentiality

There are a number of candidates competing for a limited number of positions. If another candidate or person asks you about the interview, or any of the questions that were asked, do not provide an answer. Anyone who obtains an unfair advantage or helps another to gain an unfair advantage may be disqualified. In addition, this is a violation of Fire and Police Commission Rules.

Location

The interviews will take place on the 2nd floor of the Milwaukee Safety Academy located at 6680 N. Teutonia Ave. Know where this location is ahead of time and what your parking options are. Milwaukee county transit offers Route #12 that is an option for getting to the Safety Academy.

Contact Information

Please contact Jason Stenglein, HR Representative at the Milwaukee Fire & Police Commission, with questions. (414) 286-5068 or jsteng@milwaukee.gov