



FIRE & EMS NEWS

October 2003

Volume 2 – Issue 4

Welcome to the latest issue of the Fire & EMS News! My goal is to provide you with information about your Chabot College Fire Technology Program, the local Fire Departments, in addition to other information that might be beneficial to you in your pursuit of better preparing yourself for the career of your dreams! Some of the highlights of this issue include:

- Chabot College Firefighter 1 Academy information
- Spring semester 2004 Chabot College registration information
- FREE Oral Board Seminar - Cancelled
- Becoming a firefighter – Captain Bob's new book is available now!
- 15 tips to successfully complete the job application!

CHABOT COLLEGE FIREFIGHTER – 1 ACADEMY INFORMATION

I receive numerous inquiries about the Firefighter 1 academy at Chabot College. I want to take the time and discuss what the Firefighter 1 academy at Chabot College consists of. Many students get disappointed when they find out they can't just "jump into the academy" their first semester. Welcome to reality.

When does the academy meet (days and times)?

- The Academy is held twice a year - once in the Fall semester (August - November) and once in the Spring semester (January - April). ***THERE IS NO SUMMER ACADEMY AND I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY COLLEGES THAT OFFER A SUMMER ACADEMY.***
- The Academy meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and also on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. That is 16 hours of class / lab time per week.

Where does the Academy meet?

- Fire Technology 90A, 90B, and 90C meet at the Alameda County Fire Department training tower in San Leandro.
- Fire Technology 91A, 91B, and 91C are tentatively scheduled to meet at Chabot College. See the latest course schedule for exact location.

Prerequisites to get into the Chabot College Firefighter 1 Academy:

- **Fire Technology 50** (Fire Protection Organization)

- **Fire Technology 51** (Fire Service Operations)
- **Fire Technology 52** (Firefighter Safety and Public Education)
- **Health 61** (First Responder) and/or
- **Health 81** (EMT)

NOTE: If you took your EMT at another college or private institution, then you won't be required to take the Health 61 - that is why it says and/or. However, registration priority will be given to those students who have already completed the EMT course (whether at Chabot or elsewhere) as opposed to just Health 61). It is also in your best interest to get your EMT done first, before your firefighter 1 academy. Why? Because it opens up more doors for you and makes you more marketable as a candidate (you can take more tests as an EMT than by having just your firefighter 1 academy certificate).

Fire Technology 50, 51, and 52 can only be taken at Chabot College or Las Positas College. The reason is that those classes contain some of your Firefighter 1 educational requirements (since the Academy does not contain enough hours to complete all of your Firefighter 1 educational requirements, some of them are also contained in classes such as Fire Technology 50, 51, 52 and Health 61).

Courses that make up the Chabot College Firefighter 1 Academy:

- **Fire Technology 90A** (Firefighter 1 certification preparation)
- **Fire Technology 90B** (Firefighter 1 certification preparation)
- **Fire Technology 90C** (Firefighter 1 certification preparation)
- **Fire Technology 91A** (Wildland Interface Firefighting)
- **Fire Technology 91B** (Hazardous Materials First Responder - Operational)
- **Fire Technology 91C** (I-200: Basic Incident Command System)

NOTE: Fire Technology used to be known as Fire Technology 86. Fire Technology 91B and 91C together used to be known as Fire Technology 65. If you have completed any or all of those classes prior to the numbering change, you do not have to take them again. You will need to show proof of completion to the Firefighter 1 Academy Coordinator (Mike Litvinchuk) prior to your receiving your Firefighter 1 Academy completion certificate. If you took those classes at another institution other than Chabot College, please contact me (Steve Prziborowski) at any of the contact numbers on the last page of this newsletter and I will determine if it is acceptable and advise you of what you have to do to get those certificates into the Chabot system.

When does the academy meet (days and times)?

- The Academy is held twice a year - once in the Fall semester (August - November) and once in the Spring semester (January - April). ***THERE IS NO SUMMER ACADEMY AND I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY COLLEGES THAT OFFER A SUMMER ACADEMY.***

- The Academy meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and also on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. That is 16 hours of class / lab time per week.
- The Academy is a total of 16 weeks in length.
 - Fire Technology 90A is the first four weeks of the Academy
 - Fire Technology 90B is the second four weeks of the Academy
 - Fire Technology 90C is the third four weeks of the Academy
 - The last four weeks of the Academy are for Fire Technology 91A (40 total hours), Fire Technology 91B (27 total hours), and Fire Technology 91C (27 total hours).

Registration / application procedure for the Chabot College Firefighter 1 Academy:

Registration for the Chabot College Firefighter 1 Academy is done on a first-come, first-served basis. Students who get first shot at registration are those that have the highest priority numbers at the college. The Academy usually fills up very quickly; this semester it filled up in about one week if I remember correctly. The only suggestion I have is to build up that priority number, and register the first day you are eligible to register.

If the Academy is full by that point, there is nothing else I can do for you. **Please do not contact me and ask if I can "pull any strings to get you in."** This semester alone I have had about 20 students contact me and give me every possible story in the world on why I should let them in. I do not coordinate the Academy - that is Mike Litvinchuk's job. I oversee the Academy, but I leave all of those issues to him. Contacting me with your requests of me doing you a favor is not fair to the other students who have been plugging away at Chabot taking their other classes and building up their priority number. Additionally, that is not my job. Also, please don't ask me for the contact information of the Academy instructors so that you can contact them and beg to get in or whatever. They do not need the extra phone calls. They will take the 32 students that are registered when they get there on the first night. If for some reason there are no shows (very rare), then any adds will be done based on priority number; we do not utilize any type of waiting list.

Also, if for some reason the Academy is full, make sure you have a back-up plan in place. Yes, I think we have a great Academy. However, would it be the end of the world if you went to another Academy? No. As much as I wish everyone had the chance to go through the Chabot College Firefighter 1 Academy, I understand that might not work out in everyone's situation. Do your research. Your goal is to get your firefighter 1 academy certificate. If it means going to another Academy (as opposed to waiting another 6 months or year just to get in, then you must do what you have to do). Those that are successful in life always have backup plans (also known as contingency plans) in place for every situation.

To view websites of other Firefighter 1 Academies around the state, go to the [LINKS](#) page of the Chabot College Fire Technology website and scroll down to FIREFIGHTER 1 ACADEMIES. As much as I would like you to attend our Academy, I understand it is my job to

also point you to another one if that would best fit your situation. I look at myself as a resource to you, even if that means sending you to another college. You have to do what you have to do!

SPRING 2004 FIRE TECHNOLOGY SCHEDULE

- **R**egistration for the Spring 2004 semester should begin in late October / early November. For the most up-to-date registration dates, check the [Chabot College](#) main website.

Presently, the following fire-technology related courses are going to be offered this Spring:

COURSE	DAY	TIMES
FT 50 (Fire Protection Organization)	Monday (am)	0800 – 1200 hours
FT 50 (Fire Protection Organization)	Monday (pm)	1800 – 2200 hours
FT 51 (Fire Operations)	Wednesday (am)	0900 – 1150 hours
FT 52 (Firefighter Safety/Public Education 1) <i>**State Fire Marshal certificate course</i>	Tuesday (am)	0900 – 1150 hours
FT 52 (Firefighter Safety/Public Education 1) <i>**State Fire Marshal certificate course</i>	Wednesday (pm)	1800 – 2050 hours
FT 53 (Fire Behavior & Combustion)	Tuesday (pm)	1800 – 2050 hours
FT 55 (Equipment & Systems)	Thursday (pm)	1900 – 2150 hours
FT 90A (Firefighter 1 Academy) <i>**Must also be registered in FST 90B and 90C**</i>	Tue & Thurs (pm) Saturday (all day)	1700 – 2050 hours 0830 – 1650 hours
FT 90B (Firefighter 1 Academy) <i>**Must also be registered in FST 90A and 90C**</i>	Tue & Thurs (pm) Saturday (all day)	1700 – 2050 hours 0830 – 1650 hours
FT 90C (Firefighter 1 Academy) <i>**Must also be registered in FST 90A and 90B**</i>	Tue & Thurs (pm) Saturday (all day)	1800 – 2150 hours 0830 – 1650 hours
FT 91A (Wildland Interface Firefighting) Note: Class only meets on the following dates: April 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24 and 25	Tue & Thurs (pm) Saturday (all day) Sunday (all day)	1800 – 2150 hours 0800 – 1650 hours
FT 91B (Haz Mat 1 st Responder-Operations) Note: Class only meets on the following dates: May 4, 6, 8 and 9	Tue & Thurs (pm) Saturday (all day) Sunday (all day)	1800 – 2150 hours 0800 – 1650 hours
FT 91C (I-200; Basic ICS) Note: Class only meets on the following dates: May 11, 13, 15, 18 and 20	Tue & Thurs (pm) Saturday (all day)	1800 – 2150 hours
FT 95 (Work Experience) <i>**Must also be registered in FST 96**</i>	TBA	TBA
FT 96 (Work Experience Seminar) <i>**Must also be registered in FST 95**</i> Note: Class only meets on the following dates: January 26, February 2, March 1, April 5, May 3 and May 24	Monday (pm)	1800 – 2050 hours
Health 61 (First Responder)	Monday (mid)	1330 – 1820 hours
Health 61 (First Responder)	Tuesday (pm)	1800 – 2150 hours
Health 61 (First Responder)	Friday (am)	0900 – 1250 hours

Health 81 (EMT) **Must also be registered in Health 83**	Thursday (all day)	0800 – 1650 hours
Health 83 (Extrication and Triage) **Must also be registered in Health 81**	Saturday (one day only – May 1)	0830 – 1620 hours
Health 9909 (EMT Refresher) Note: Class only meets on the following dates: May 4, 6, 8, 11, 13 and 15	Tue & Thurs (pm) Saturday (all day)	1800 – 2200 hours 0800 – 1700 hours
PE2FSC (Fire Science Conditioning)	Mon & Wed (mid)	1300 – 1415 hours
PE2FSCI (Fire Science Conditioning – Intermediate)	Tuesday (mid)	1200 – 1415 hours

NOTE: The above information is to the best of my knowledge as of the time this went to print. For the most up-to-date information (including room numbers & registration numbers) regarding Spring 2004 scheduling, check the Chabot College web site at <http://www.chabotcollege.org>

My suggestion to everyone is to register as soon as you are eligible to. Classes fill up very quickly, and I with more people wanting to become firefighters, I don't see our numbers of students decreasing, only increasing. I would have liked to offer more classes in the summer time and in the fall; however the state budget crisis does not appear to be going away anytime soon. I think we are very fortunate if we get to keep the above courses that I have scheduled. Also, if you are registered in the Chabot College system, you are eligible to take classes at Las Positas College in Livermore as well. Just because one class is full (or does not fit your schedule) at Chabot doesn't mean it isn't being offered at Las Positas. When you register for classes on the Chabot College website, you can see both schedules – Chabot and Las Positas.

FREE ORAL BOARD SEMINAR - Cancelled

As originally stated in the [September 2003 issue of the Fire & EMS News](#), we have unfortunately had to postpone the free oral board seminar that was to be hosted by Captain Bob. Due to scheduling conflicts, Captain Bob is not available on the original date we had planned to host the seminar (Sunday November 2). Stay tuned to this newsletter for a new date once I am able to work out a mutually agreeable date. Realistically the new date will probably be in early 2004. I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you. For more information about Captain Bob, including numerous web pages of free information to better assist you during your oral interviews, visit his website at <http://www.eatstress.com>

BECOMING A FIREFIGHTER – A NEW BOOK AUTHORED BY CAPTAIN BOB

I have just had the opportunity to review a copy of the new book that has been authored by Fire “Captain Bob,” titled Becoming a Firefighter: The Complete Guide to your Badge!; and I have to say it is worth your time, money, and effort to purchase and read. Captain Bob has put together 159 pages of information on various subjects such as:

- Applications
- Resumes
- Written Tests
- Physical Agility Tests

- Oral Board Preparation
- Attire to Wear to the Oral
- The Oral Interview
- Oral Board Coaching
- Station Visits/Ride Alongs
- Speaking Skills
- Sample Thirty Plus Oral Board Questions
- Chief's Oral
- Medical Examinations
- Polygraph Examinations
- Background Failure Appeals
- The Fire Academy
- Being a New Rookie

Since 100% of your score in obtaining a firefighter's job is in the oral board, what are you missing that's keeping you from gaining a badge? The job interview is the most misunderstood and least prepared for portion of testing. There are countless candidates with great credentials, that can't present their package at the interview. If you can't present the package, you don't get the job....period! Never! Ever! To quote Captain Bob, "Nothing counts 'til you have the badge...nothing!"

This book should be in every firefighter candidate's resource library, I highly recommend it! To find out more information about the book, including cost and how to order a copy, go to the following link: <http://www.eatstress.com/FirefighterBook.htm>

FIREFIGHTER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY – Denver (Colorado) Regional Council of Governments

The [Denver Regional Council of Governments' \(DRCOG\)](#) Firefighter Intraregional Recruitment and Employment (FIRE) Program is a cooperative testing program that allows an applicant to make a single application and take a single written entry-level exam to be eligible for hiring by 17 metro fire districts and departments. Those passing the written exam with an overall score of 70 percent or better are placed into a FIRE eligibility pool for one year that is used by the 17 fire districts and departments that employ over 1,000 firefighters. Participating jurisdictions review individual files from this list to fill vacancies.



The next Denver Regional Council of Governments FIRE test will be held on February 19, 20, and 23, 2004. The application period will open on Wednesday, October 1, 2003 and close on Monday, November 14, 2003. Applications may be picked up between those dates at our office or downloaded from their web site. Test date and location subject to change.

Applications will be available to be downloaded during the recruitment period from October 1 through November 14, 2003.

Testing Fee

The fee for testing is \$40, and must be paid when the completed application is mailed to [DRCOG](#). This fee is non-refundable. A study guide for this test is available. The cost is \$2.50 if it is picked up October 2003

up at our office or, upon receiving a check for \$3, one will be mailed to you. You can include this fee for the study guide when you mail in your check for the testing fee. Make checks payable to [DRCOG](#). Do not send cash in the mail!

Application Attachments

If applicants wish to be listed as having college education, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Paramedic, Firefighter, Hazardous Material certification, or CPAT, copies of certificates and transcripts must be attached to the application. No more than eight additional pages of information should be attached to the application. Glendale, North Metro, and Westminster require that applicants be at least 18 years of age; all other agencies require a minimum age of 21 by the application deadline. Many jurisdictions require EMT certification prior to being hired. All documents and applications become the property of the [DRCOG](#) FIRE Program and cannot be returned. We do not transfer certificates or any other part of an existing FIRE file to new files. You must submit a new application and attachments.

Notification of Test Time and Location

After the completed application and test fee (\$40) are turned in, applicants will receive a registration notice that includes an assigned identification number, test date/time, and a map to the test location. All notifications are mailed after the recruitment deadline, subsequent to information being entered into the computerized FIRE database. All applicants must bring their test notification and a picture ID to the testing session.

The [DRCOG](#) FIRE program administers the Selection Solutions Fire Service Entry Level Written Test developed by CWH Research, Inc. This award-winning exam covers a broad range of skills and abilities that have been found to be essential for the job of firefighter. These include self-awareness, emotional, interpersonal, practical, and cognitive skills. The test includes questions on basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills, judgment, reasoning, communications, and motivation skills.

Deferrals

Once applicants have been notified of the test date, a request for deferral to the next round of testing for the following year is allowed. A written request for a deferral must be submitted prior to the scheduled test to: Denver Regional Council of Governments, FIRE Program, 4500 Cherry Creek Drive South, Suite 800, Denver, CO 80246. The fee will be waived. Only ONE such deferral will be permitted.

Why use it?

FIRE allows applicants to make one application and take a one basic skills exam to become eligible for consideration for entry-level firefighter positions in 17 fire districts. This saves applicants the time and expense of applying and testing with each agency separately.

What are the employee requirements?

The following requirements are, in most cases, common to the agencies participating in the FIRE program. Individual agencies may have additional requirements.

- Citizenship: United States
- Age: Minimum 18 or 21 years by application deadline depending on department.
- Education: High school graduate or G.E.D. equivalent
- Physical requirements: Capable, with or without reasonable accommodation, of performing the essential functions of the position.
- Character: Criminal convictions considered on a case-by-case basis. Current use of illegal drugs may result in disqualification.
- Driver's license: Must be able to obtain valid Colorado license.
- Emergency Medical Technician: Many participating agencies require EMT certification prior to hire.
- Volunteer experience: May be useful in career preparation. Many agencies in this program use volunteers. Call individual departments for more information.

What are the employee benefits?

Employee benefits and salaries vary by fire districts and departments. The following fringe benefits apply to most of the participating Agencies:

- Vacation/personal leave: Amount determined by length of service.
- Holidays: Paid or compensatory time accrued.
- Health insurance: Paid all or in part by the employer, with some departments offering dental plans.
- Retirement: Pension plan contributions by the employee and the employer under provisions of the State Police and Fire Plan or through separate agency provisions.
- Sick leave: Amount accrued on a monthly or annual basis.
- Uniforms: Purchased all or in part by jurisdiction or allowance provided.
- Advancement: Most agencies offer career advancement or continuing education.

Questions?

For more information, call **303-480-6714**

[Click here for information on Participating Jurisdictions](#)

[Click here for information about the testing process and how to obtain an application](#)

15 TIPS TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE JOB APPLICATION!

You have been doing your research and looking for fire departments that are accepting applications for firefighter positions. You have found a department that is accepting applications.

Here is your chance to get that badge you've been working so hard for. Probably the first impression that fire department will have of you is when you pick up and / or complete that application. **Do not screw up a perfectly good chance (and easy way) at making a positive first impression!**

INTRODUCTION:

Obtaining and completing a job application for the position of firefighter should not be a situation that you take for granted or you do not take seriously. Unfortunately, some people do take it for granted and do not take it seriously. I've heard numerous candidates say "It's just another application," or "It's not that big of a deal," or "I've done numerous ones before, why should this be any different."

First of all, yes it is another application, but obviously something is going right on your end and you have to fill another one out since you haven't got the job yet. Second, yes it is a big deal – it is for the job of your dreams! Lastly, if you're wondering why this application should be any different from the other ones you've completed, go back to the answer for my first quote. It should be different because maybe you are not properly completing the application or are making a not so stellar first impression.

Why do you need to put everything you have into every hiring process you go through? **SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE ANOTHER TEST!**

MY BASIC JOB APPLICATION TIPS

You've done your research (either reactive or proactive) and you have found an opportunity to take a firefighter examination for a fire department. Pat yourself on the back (not too hard, you still need to make it through the entire process) for getting this far. Remember, this is an opportunity that might only come around once every three to five years (or longer depending on the department's situation). **DON'T WASTE A PERFECTLY GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO DO YOUR BEST!** Here are what I consider to be 15 tips to successfully complete the firefighter job application:

1. When you get an application, always try to get an extra one or two. Why? If you screw up the first one, you have a second one to save the day. I can't count the amount of applications that I started to complete and I made a major mistake in some form or fashion and I would have been dead in the water if I didn't have a spare. Think about this for a second. You are busting your butt, doing everything you can do to be a firefighter (I hope). When do you usually have time to complete the application? Probably late at night or some other non-opportunistic time where you are either tired or rushed for time. Some times, I know that getting a spare application is not feasible, since sometimes the department only hands out a limited number, or every candidate has to sign for each numbered application. You are really only able to get a spare if you are downloading it off of the internet or picking one up in person.

Also, you never know when a buddy might need one (don't make this a regular habit because people will come to expect you to always have one. Think of it as an insurance plan). You do someone else a favor (this is one of those major favors in life) and you never know when you might need them to do a favor such as this for you in the future. There are times when you can't pick up every application in person or you hear of a testing opportunity too late (all of your reactive and proactive methods obviously failed). Remember the old saying, "what you give is what you get."

2. Complete the application either on your computer (if you are able to complete one over the internet) or a typewriter if you have access to one. Only hand-write applications if you have neat handwriting. I know typewriters are getting hard to find, but they can look nicer than handwriting if you have poor handwriting. If using ballpoint pen, use a high quality pen of black ink. Red or blue colors are not good choices because it doesn't copy well (some departments make copies of your application for the oral panel members). Whatever you do, don't use pencil!

One of my first firefighter tests was for the City of Stockton. I remember going to City Hall to pick up an application (yes, I grabbed two) and I saw this man sitting at the table in the personnel office filling out his application. That is not a bad thing in itself. What did not seem appropriate was his using pencil to complete the application. Pencil does not come across as professional, and also allows items to be erased (which can lead to problems later). Also, if you look at many applications, it specifically says "please type or print your application in blue or black ink." He failed the first part of the test, which was properly following directions.

3. Have a copy of the job flyer in front of you. This is important because you want to insure that you are qualified to take the test and that you follow all of the directions they request. It is almost impossible (and impractical) to list every certificate you may have obtained, but if one of those certificates is required or highly desirable, you want to make sure that you list it.
4. Know all of your employment history that will be needed to complete the blanks in advance. How many of you know the exact details of every job you've ever held (salary, supervisors name, complete address, phone number, exact job titles, etc.)? If you don't, scrambling while you are filling out the application to get the information is not a good idea. Now is the time to find that information out.

Don't guess and just put anything or something close in there. That might get you disqualified during a background investigation or make you sound like an idiot when you're explaining to the background investigator "I wasn't sure, so I just estimated." That doesn't sound too professional or intelligent to me. Many job applications ask for information from either every employer you have ever had or for the last ten years.

For some of you, this isn't going to be easy. Planning in advance will save headaches and disappointment in the future. Even if they don't ask for it on the application, you can be assured they will during the background investigation. If you are not sure - don't estimate. Call that previous employer (hopefully you left on a good note) and someone in their personnel department might be able to help. The bottom line is that the information you provide better match up to what the employer will say about you - any discrepancy can lead to disqualification.

5. Know all of your educational history that will be needed to fill in the blanks. Many applications ask for information about **each** college you have ever attended (such as name and location, semester or quarter units completed, major, degrees received, and dates attended). Dust off those transcripts!
6. Do not leave any blanks! If the information requested does not apply to you, then put N/A on it (as opposed to leaving it blank). It shows you did not skip it.
7. Make sure that you check every box that is asking you information. Many times there are boxes with a yes or a no choice and it can be easy to skip over with out checking one or the other.
8. Make sure you put the exact job title you are competing for on the job application. If you read the job flyer, you will find the exact job title. I know it sounds basic, but I've seen a department test for Firefighter trainee, Firefighter (Lateral), and Firefighter/Paramedic all at the same time. Make sure you get considered for the appropriate position, and not disqualified because you don't meet the requirements of that "other" position.
9. Don't include copies of every certificate you have ever received. If they ask for it, then include it. If they don't ask for them, don't include them. Otherwise, don't waste their time having to dig through non-essential information, while also proving that you cannot follow directions. About the only copies I have ever seen a department ask for during the application phase are EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter 1 academy, and Firefighter 1 certificate. The reason they are asking for those is to weed out the people that have the required certificates from those who don't, and also to get a pool of the "most qualified" candidates. Trust me, if you're lucky enough to get to the background investigation phase, they'll ask you for copies of everything at that point.
10. Be honest. I know that should be an expected trait of every human being, but it is not. One lie or "stretching of the truth" can be enough to either eliminate you from the process or potentially terminate you from employment after you have received the job (most applications have that little clause in them just before you sign it that says something to that effect). Even if it is not an intentional lie or deception on your part, it can still backfire.

Say for that you list you were employed from June 2000 through July 2002, but it was actually May 2000 through June 2002. I realize you're only off by a month in each

direction, but put yourself in the shoes of the background investigator - what are they going to think? Even if you say, "It was a mistake," they are going to raise their eyebrows and wonder what else was just a mistake. Also, by saying it was a mistake; you're making yourself look less than competent. It is your past and your history, if you don't know it, who else should? Don't chance it - it is not worth it!

11. Stay away from using abbreviations except for accepted two-digit State abbreviations (like NY for New York), EMT, and maybe CPR. While you might know what they stand for, don't count on the person reviewing it to.
12. If you put down a pager number, make sure you actually answer it promptly. It amazes me when I page people and it takes them hours to return my page. I realize we're all very busy, but imagine you as the fire chief trying to page that candidate with a job offer. Do you think they are going to wait for you to return the page? How many others do they have to pick from on the list? While I'm on the subject, if you have a voice mail (home or cellular) recording, have you listened to it lately? Does it sound professional and mature?

I love it when I have students wanting fire information leave me a message with their cellular phone number to call them back on. When I return the call, it never fails. Sometimes I get the recording of "Yo, this is T's mobile phone (loud bass thumping in the background) and I'm not available....." Would you want to hire this individual? Another great recording is when you hear a little two year old voice saying that you've reached the home of the Johnson's, Timmy, Margaret, Lisa, Jimmy, Bobbie, Fido, Kittie, etc.

While it might show you are a family oriented person, it doesn't present you in a positive, professional way. I returned a phone call the other day and introduced myself, said that I was from the college fire technology program, and that I was returning their call. He seemed angry that I was bothering him since he replied, "who?" Then of course his tone changed when I repeated myself. Be consistent, polite, and courteous - you never know who is going to be on the other end offering you a job (or thanking you for applying, and advising you to have a nice life).

13. If you list an email address, make sure it is professional and appropriate. How are you going to convince an oral panel that you appreciate and understand diversity when you have an email address that is politically incorrect, sexually suggestive, or downright offensive? Remember who your audience is and that you are trying to convince the oral panel and fire department that you are mature, professional, and of the highest ethical standards. My suggestion is to have one with a first name (or initial) and last name. That is considered professional and appropriate.
14. Do not fax your application in. Most departments don't allow you to anyway (faxes usually do not come out looking that good). If at all possible, drive it down and turn it in personally. Why? It gives you a chance to talk with the personnel employees and obtain information relating to the process (remember to make a good first

impression, leave the Metallica shirt at home or under your jacket). It gives you the chance to see how long it takes to drive there (to make sure you properly plan your timetable for the testing process events. It gives you a chance to tour the city and perform some research, and the opportunity to stop by some fire stations and talk to some firefighters about the process.

15. Last, but not least, make a copy of your application prior to turning it in. It will go into a file for that specific department which should include a copy of the resume you also turned in, and any information that you obtained during your research of the department. Number one this helps when you get called in for that interview many months after you turned it in so you know what you actually put on there (and can show them "look what I have done since then"). Number two; you never know when you might have to take that test again. Since this is a very competitive process, it is not uncommon for someone to have to take the same fire department exam at least once or twice in the years to follow. I took San Jose's test four times over the course of four years. Welcome to reality. Now if you have a file, you can just do "updated research."

SUMMARY:

A properly completed application can be the key to success; an improperly completed application can be a recipe for disaster. Take the time to do it right so you don't have to fill out another firefighter application again!

NOTE: This article originally appeared in the firehouse.com (www.firehouse.com) members zone careers and jobs section in May of 2003.

CLOSING COMMENTS

I hope you have found this newsletter somewhat valuable. If you have learned one new thing, then I think I've done my job. I truly want to see everyone succeed, and I also really enjoy doing what I do. This program is your program. It can only get better with your assistance. There is an old saying, don't just give me problems – give me solutions! I can't read your minds, so please provide me with feedback. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or want me to clarify any rumors you might have heard. Thank you very much!

Steve Prziborowski, Fire Technology & EMS Coordinator - Chabot College

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***** PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PASS THIS ON TO YOUR FRIENDS OR CO-WORKERS*****

The Fine Print:

- If you would like to be added to our mailing list (no, I won't give your email address out to others), email me at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and I will add you to the list. Benefits of being on the mailing list include being notified when the latest Fire & EMS news is published, and being notified of firefighter testing opportunities, volunteer opportunities, or training opportunities.
- If you know of someone who wants to receive this newsletter (as well as other updates) email me at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and I will place them on the mailing list.
- If you want to take your name off of the mailing list, just send me an email at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and in the subject heading, and type in "unsubscribe from mailing list" and I will remove your name.