



FIRE & EMS NEWS

October 2002

Volume 1 – Issue 4

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Fire & EMS News! I hope you are finding this to be informative, educational, interesting, and worth your time. Remember, the views and opinions within this newsletter are that of the editor only. This should be one of the many resources you are using to assist you in reaching your goal of becoming a firefighter.

Congratulations!

...to the following Chabot College Fire Technology students and/or instructors.....

- **David McPartland** was hired as Firefighter/Paramedic with the *City of Berkeley Fire Department* (in addition to being a former fire technology student, David is also an instructor for the EMT program)
- **Paul Mahar** was hired as a Firefighter/Paramedic with the *City of Newark Fire Department* (in addition to being a former fire technology student, Paul was also an instructor for the EMT program)
- **Scott Watkins** was hired as a Firefighter with the *Stockton Fire Department* (Scott was a student this semester)
- **Carl McElvane** was hired as a Firefighter/Paramedic apprentice with the *City of Sacramento Fire Department* (Carl was a student)

Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment Information

The Alameda County Fire Department is recruiting Volunteer Firefighters!

The filing period is September 3, 2002 through October 15, 2002 at 5:00 pm. Requirements / qualifications include:

- **Age** – applicants must be at least 18 years old by 12/1/02
- **Licenses** – all candidates must possess a valid California Motor Vehicle Operator's license by time of appointment
- **Physical requirements** – applicants must be in excellent physical condition. Hearing must be normal in both ears. Visual acuity correctable to 20/30.
- **Residency** – candidates must live within Alameda County or 15 air miles from Alameda County Station 15, 5352 Broder Rd., Dublin, California upon appointment
- **Certificates** – current State of California Firefighter 1 and EMT -1. Candidates who don't currently possess Firefighter 1 and EMT certificates can compete in the process, and obtain a

position as a volunteer firefighter, but must complete both certifications within one year of completing the volunteer academy.

For more information, visit their web site at <http://www.co.alameda.ca.us/fire/volunteer.shtml>

Applications can be picked up from and delivered to:

Alameda County Fire Department

835 E. 14th St., Suite 200
San Leandro, CA 94577
510-618-3490

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering your time is a very important feature that many (if not all) fire departments look for in their candidates. There are many ways to volunteer your time, as opposed to just being a volunteer firefighter. Almost all candidates want to be a volunteer firefighter (which is great), but why be like everyone else? You want to be unique and stand out from the crowd (in a positive way!). For current volunteer opportunities that you can list on your resume, view the **Volunteer Opportunities** section on the Fire Technology web site. Besides the Alameda County listing above, you will find such current openings such as:

- The **Newark Fire Department** is looking for Volunteers to assist in the following capacities:
 - **Volunteer Office Aide**
 - **Haz Mat Bureau Aide**
 - Both of the above positions are open on a continuous basis, but don't hesitate, apply a.s.a.p.! These are two unique opportunities to learn the inside operations of a fire department from a non-traditional way that many of us think of, by working in the administrative side of things. Remember – you're trying to be unique. This is some excellent experience to sell during your oral interview.

Educational Corner

Last issue I spoke about preparing yourself to become a firefighter and the various things you could do to better market yourself and set yourself up for success. The only thing I 'm going to mention this time is the idea of getting a four-year degree.

Some people ask me where to get a Fire Technology four-year degree. I actually try to steer them away into another field. If you've already received your two-year degree in Fire Technology, why duplicate your higher education if you don't have to? I think it limits you if you get a four-year degree in the same subject. Here is another chance to be **UNIQUE!** (Remember that word from last issue?). Find something that you wouldn't mind doing if you could never be a firefighter, when you retire from the fire service, or if you ever get injured and cannot work as a firefighter.

Look at having a four-year degree as SOMETHING TO FALL BACK ON. Many things can happen in our careers. Firefighting is a very dangerous profession. I know of many firefighters that have had career-ending injuries in their 20's, 30's and 40's. What would you do in that situation? I'm not trying to paint a dark and gloomy picture or make you worry. I'm trying to make you plan ahead and cover all bases.

Personally, the four-year degree is not going to get you hired by itself. It can even go against you if you market it the wrong way. Do you think the people on the oral interview panel (that you're trying to convince to hire you) want a "college-kid" that is going to tell them what to do? Especially if some of them don't have higher than a two-year degree?

Don't get me wrong, I think it is a great level of education to aspire to, especially if you want to promote to Captain or Chief Officer Level. You just have to market it properly and not "oversell" it. Even if you don't complete your four-year degree before you get hired, I highly suggest completing it once you're off probation. Even if you just want to be a firefighter for your entire career (which there is no problem doing), you never know when it might come in handy. Once it's done, you can spend your time on other things, such as having fun, spending time with your family, etc.

I have a four-year degree and I am completing my Master's Degree. It will leave me with OPTIONS. I would rather have the education and not use it, than wish I had the education and then have to bust my butt trying to get it. Benjamin Lopes III, the Fire Chief (as well as the last Fire Chief Douglas Sporleder) of the Department I work for, the Santa Clara County Fire Department, has said that if you want to promote to Battalion Chief or higher, you need to have at least a four-year degree. I don't think it is asking too much, especially when you think of how much we get paid and how much the community is expecting from us. Now if I want to take the Battalion Chief's test, I can do so. If I don't want to, I don't have to. At least it leaves me with an option.

However, there are some Captains in the Santa Clara County Fire Department (as well as probably numerous Captains in other fire departments nation-wide) that are scrambling to get their four-year degrees (or Master's Degrees) completed. Think about it. They are trying to further their education when they are in their 30's and 40's (some in their 50's). At that point, many of them have children, outside commitments, and basically lives to lead and pay for. Do you think they have time to go to school working on a degree that will require a great deal of homework, research, and study time? If you ask me, I don't think so. I tip my hat to those folks that can do so, while still keeping their marriages, personal lives, and professional lives intact. Many of them can't juggle all of the balls, and something has to give. Do you really want to be in that spot, especially when you can predict the future, plan for the future, and prepare for the future? I don't think so! Don't you think a little bit of effort or work on your part now will go a long way towards your future career and personal development? Education is something that cannot be taken away from you! As I've heard before, any two-year degree is better than no degree. Any four-year degree is better than any two-year degree.

The bottom line.....don't be reactive, be PROACTIVE! ***ONLY YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR FUTURE!***

Fire Department Testing Information

FIREHIRE is going to be accepting applications for Firefighter / EMT and Firefighter / Paramedic positions now through October 31, 2002. For a list of departments that will be hiring off of this list, take a look at the list on the next page.

Benefits of taking this test include:

- You're only taking one test (as opposed to separate tests for each fire department)
- The hiring list will be in effect for one year
- There is a chance other fire departments will hire off of this list

To participate in the entry-level firefighter examination process, you must possess or meet the following minimum requirements:

- High school diploma or GED
- At least 18 years old
- California Drivers License – Class "C"
- Proof of citizenship or legal ability to work in the U.S.

Some of the fire departments might have other requirements (view the firehire web site at <http://www.firehire.com> for more specific information) such as:

- EMT
- Paramedic
- Firefighter – 1 Academy
- Firefighter – 1 Certificate

For application materials or more information, visit their website at <http://www.firehire.com> or if you do not have internet access, call them at 1-800-755-5891.

The examination process consists of the following:

- Completion of the application packet that is sent to you by FIREHIRE
- Written examination – 130 question test which you must pass with a score of at least 70%. There are 65 EMT questions from the AAOS Emergency Care and Transportation of the Sick and Injured, 7th Edition textbook, and 65 firefighter questions from the IFSTA Essentials of Firefighting, 4th Edition textbook. This portion of the exam is weighted 75% of your total score. **The Written examination is scheduled to be given on Saturday December 14, 2002 at The College of San Mateo South Cafeteria in San Mateo.**
- Physical Ability Test – this portion is pass / fail. It consists of the following events:
 - 35 Foot ladder extension / retraction exercise
 - Pike Pole exercise
 - Hose load/unload exercise
 - Ladder manipulation exercise
 - Hose manipulation exercise
 - Rescue exercise
 - Cardiovascular (step test) exercise

- Emergency Medical Assessment Center – this event consists of a patient involved in a trauma and/or medical setting. The treatment is commensurate with your level of training. There are critical care criteria points that must be addressed or it is an AUTOMATIC FAILURE. You are graded on the criteria established by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. This event is weighted 25% of your total score.

The following fire departments are participating in this recruitment and will be using the list that is established to hire for open positions:

Fire Department

Positions available

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Albany Fire Department – | Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Burlingame Fire Department – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • El Cerrito Fire Department – | Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Foster City Fire Department – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Fremont Fire Department – | Firefighter |
| • Half Moon Bay Fire District – | Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Millbrae Fire Department – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Novato Fire Protection District – | Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Oroville Fire Department – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Piedmont Fire Department – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Redwood City Fire Department – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Ross Valley Fire Authority – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • San Bruno Fire Department – | Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • San Mateo Fire Department – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • San Rafael Fire Department – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • San Ramon Fire Protection District – | Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • South County Fire Authority – | Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic |
| • Woodside Fire District – | Firefighter/Paramedic |

I believe that the **Fremont Fire Department** is the only Fire Department **NOT** requiring EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter 1 Academy, or Firefighter 1 Certification. So you have no excuse to NOT take the exam, even if you are just starting out!

Oakland Fire Department is accepting applications

The **Oakland Fire Department** is distributing applications for **Firefighter Trainee (EMT)**, **Firefighter Trainee (Paramedic)**, and **Firefighter / Paramedic (Lateral)** from Monday September 23 through October 11, 2002. They will be accepted back **ONE DAY ONLY**, on Saturday October 12, 2002, between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.

Minimum requirements include 18 years of age by 10/12/02, High School Diploma or GED equivalent, possess or be able to possess a California Class “C” drivers license, and have a good driving records, have no disqualifying criminal records, and be able to read and write the English language. To apply for the **Firefighter (EMT)** position, you must possess a current EMT certificate

OR be currently enrolled in a certified EMT program. To apply for **Firefighter Trainee (Paramedic)**, you must possess a current State License as a Paramedic at the time of application. To apply for the **Firefighter / Paramedic (Lateral)** position, you must be currently working as a firefighter in another jurisdiction with at least one year of experience as a firefighter plus one year of experience as a Paramedic at time of application **OR** currently working as a Firefighter / Paramedic in another jurisdiction for at least one year at time of application.

Desirable qualifications include: Paramedic accreditation in Alameda County, Bilingual Skills (Highly desirable), California State Paramedic License and PEPP or ACLS, and PHTLS or BTLS.

To apply or to obtain more information, stop by the City of Oakland Office of Personnel at 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 2nd Floor, in downtown Oakland or visit their web site at <http://www.oakland.net.com/government/jobs/ffighter.html>

Web Sites of the Month

Fire Department:	Alameda Fire Department - www.ci.alameda.ca.us/fire/index.html
City Web Site:	City of Alameda – www.ci.alameda.ca.us
Ambulance Company:	Bayshore Ambulance (Foster City) – www.bayshoreambulance.com
Fire / EMS Publication:	Journal of Emergency Services (JEMS) – www.jems.com
Fire Organization:	California Professional Firefighters – www.cpf.org
EMS Organization:	San Francisco Paramedic Association – www.sfparamedics.org

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!

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Chabot College Fire Technology & EMS web site:
<http://chabotde.clpccd.cc.ca.us/users/sprziborowski>

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