

# CHARLOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT ENTRY-LEVEL FIREFIGHTER PROCESS 2023



## Candidate Information for Structured Oral Interview

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Welcome to the Charlotte Fire Department Firefighter Structured Oral Interview (SOI) Preparation Guide. This brief guide has been provided to familiarize you with the format of this assessment and to offer some advice to help you perform at the best of your ability.

This preparation guide outlines all the steps of the SOI. These instructions will help you prepare, so please read them carefully.

### Key Insights for the SOI

- You will be providing your interview responses through an electronic format. The interview questions will be read aloud to you and will be displayed via a computer tablet system placed on a desk in front of you. Your responses will be recorded electronically on a video camera system. A proctor will be present at the start of your interview to answer last-minute questions, start the recording equipment, and launch the interview on the tablet.
- During the interview, you will be asked six (6) questions. You will be allowed two (2) minutes to answer each question.
- Your responses will be evaluated by a panel of trained assessors *after* the interview process. You will not be delivering your responses to a live panel.

### 1. Check-in and Confidentiality Agreement

During check-in, all candidates will be signed in using a current and valid driver's license. At check-in, you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. You will be required to turn in the confidentiality agreement before you participate in the interview process. The interview questions are highly confidential. ***Please do not discuss the interview questions with anyone before, during, or after your interview.*** Discussing the interview questions with other candidates (or even non-candidates) may give others an unfair advantage. Discussing the interview questions or the process itself may result in your disqualification from the oral interview selection process.

At check-in, all candidates will receive an orientation guide. This orientation guide will cover the same material as this preparation guide.

In the assessment room, you will be asked to provide your candidate ID number; this is the same number you have used throughout this process, which was provided to you by the Charlotte Fire Department. If you do not have your candidate ID number, you will need to ask for it at check-in.

Candidates who have a fever of 100 degrees or more, have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or have exhibited COVID-19 or FLU-like symptoms in the 5 days prior to testing, are asked to stay home and inform the Charlotte Fire Department. Please refer to the latest CDC guidelines if you have any questions related to COVID-19 exposure, isolation or quarantine:

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p0811-covid-guidance.html>

There are no scheduled make-up times for the SOI.

## 2. General Information about the SOI

The structured oral interview is made up of **six (6)** different questions designed to measure the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the challenging job of a firefighter in the city of Charlotte. Some questions will be situation-based, while others will be experience-based/behavior-based. Situation-based questions will present you with a situation or scenario and ask how you would react to or handle that particular situation or scenario. Experience-based/behavior-based questions give you the opportunity to discuss how your education, work, and life experiences have prepared you for the position of a firefighter. It is in your best interests to act naturally and be yourself. Remember, this process is designed to help us learn more about you.

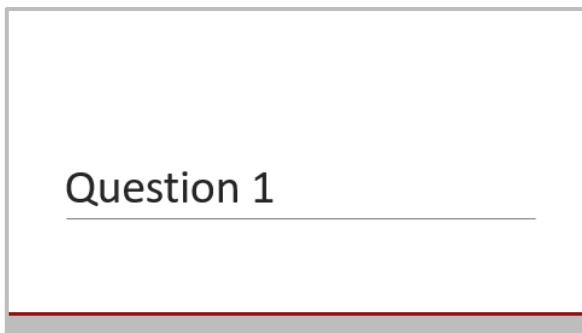
**None of the questions require you to have any prior fire-related knowledge or experience.** You will not be evaluated on any knowledge of firefighting procedures but rather on your judgment, common sense, and problem-solving ability. Your ability to effectively communicate and to deal with people will also be assessed. Some questions ask about a situation or scenario that would be likely to occur on-the-job as a firefighter. You **are not** expected to know specific policies, procedures, or firefighting tactics. Instead, you should answer in a way that best describes what you would do if you were placed in that situation. When appropriate, you should discuss your past job and relevant life experiences (including experiences outside the field of firefighting) when answering questions. For example, you should discuss any work and life experiences that you feel have prepared you for this position and which demonstrate the skills and abilities that you possess.

Respond to the question as it is given to you to the best of your ability. If you are unsure about some aspect of a question, state any assumptions that you are making and fully explain what you are thinking. You will be evaluated based on what you say and how you say it. When answering questions, it is in your best interest to be organized and concise, but you also need to provide adequate detail and fully explain your thinking and logic for the assessors to understand your responses. Don't take the time to introduce yourself. Only respond to the specific questions being asked of you.

## 3. SOI Format and Equipment Tutorial

You will be providing your interview responses through an electronic format. The interview questions will be read aloud to you and will be displayed via a computer tablet system placed on a desk in front of you. Every candidate will be asked the same questions. Your responses will be recorded electronically on a video camera system. A proctor will be present at the start of your interview to answer last minute questions, start the recording equipment, and to launch the interview on the tablet.

### Overview of SOI Format



One by one, you will be presented with six (6) interview questions. Before each question is read to you, you will be presented with an introductory statement indicating that the question is about to begin.

### Question 1

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You have two (2) minutes to provide your response. Please begin now.

The question will be presented on-screen for you to follow along as it is read aloud. After the question is read, the time limit will be stated and you will be prompted to begin your response.

### Question 1

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You have two (2) minutes to provide your response. Please begin now.

02 : 00

After the prompt, a timer will begin counting down. You will have two minutes to provide your response to the question. Be sure to manage your time appropriately. If you complete your response before the time expires, sit quietly until the alarm sounds.

STOP RESPONDING

Once your time expires, an alarm will sound. This alarm indicates that you should stop responding, if you have not already done so. Anything you say after the alarm sounds will not be considered by assessors when your response is evaluated.

### Question 2

After your time expires and the alarm sounds, the next question will be introduced and then will be read to you. This process will repeat until you have answered all six (6) questions.

Your recorded interview will be evaluated by a panel of assessors after the interview process. You will not be delivering your responses to a live panel. There will be no one in your assessment room with you while you deliver your responses to the interview questions.

## 4. Procedures for Before and After Your Interview

After check-in, you will wait to be escorted by a proctor to your assessment room. Please listen carefully to any proctor instructions. You will be asked to wait outside your room until a proctor gives you permission to enter the room. You will not be allowed to bring any materials into the room, other than your orientation guide sheet. If you have brought anything with you, you must turn it in to the proctor before beginning your interview. **Be sure to turn off your cell phone or any mobile device and keep it**

**stowed away. You must not take out your device at any time during the interview process – doing so will result in your disqualification from the process.**

At the start of the interview, the video instructions will ask that you remove your mask for the interview process. Please leave your mask on until prompted by the video. Once you have completed your responses, the video instructions will ask that you place your mask back on prior to leaving the room. We ask that you follow these instructions to ensure that we maintain a safe environment for all candidates, Charlotte Fire Department personnel, and IOS employees.

Once you have completed the interview and have put your mask back on, please exit the room quietly. A proctor will be waiting outside your room. Please make sure the proctor is aware of your presence when you exit the room. You may not, at any time, walk through the facility unescorted. Once all candidates in your sector have completed their interviews, you will be escorted to the check-out table. Once you have checked out, you will be dismissed. At that time, please be sure to quietly and quickly exit the facility so as to not disturb other candidates.

Reminder: ***Please do not discuss the interview questions with anyone before, during, or after your interview.*** Discussing the interview questions with other candidates (or even non-candidates) may give others an unfair advantage. Discussing the interview questions or the process itself may result in your disqualification from the oral interview selection process.

## **5. Time Limits**

When you enter the room, you will have approximately one (1) minute to get situated and receive final instructions from the video. **You will be asked for your candidate ID. Your ID is the number provided to you by the Charlotte Fire Department which you have used throughout this process.**

You will be given **2 minutes** to answer each question. The total duration of the interview response time will be no longer than 12 minutes to answer all of the **6 questions**. The maximum amount of time for each question is 2 minutes (you cannot use any unused time from a previous question). You will be responsible for monitoring your own time. A countdown timer is provided to you onscreen, as depicted in Section 3.

Your 2 minutes for each question will begin once the video finishes reading the question to you. Once the question has been read aloud, the timer will begin, and you should start your response. Each question (of six (6) questions) is timed separately. Once you have completed your response to a question, please sit patiently until the next question is asked. Once you move on to a new question, there is no going back to any of the previous questions.

## **6. Assessors**

You will be evaluated by a panel of assessors who have been thoroughly trained in the evaluation process. The assessors will evaluate your responses after all candidates have been tested. Again, there will be no live assessor panel in the room with you. You will be providing your responses to video recording devices.

## **6. Schedule**

The SOI will be held on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Sign-up for time slots will be on a first come, first served basis. Due to the number of candidates, we recommend scheduling your interview early to ensure you can find a time that best fits your availability. Once scheduled, you will not be able to alter your SOI time. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have availability during the time you select.

The written examination will be held on Monday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. You will be assigned a written exam start time on the day of your SOI. There are two planned sessions for the written exam. Session 1 has a sign-in time at 7:30 am, with a start time of 8:15 am; Session 2 has a sign-in time at 12:30 pm with a start time of 1:15 pm. There are no scheduled make-up times for the written examination. All candidates will be required to attend both the SOI and Written examination in order to proceed in the hiring process.