

FIREFIGHTER INTERVIEW PREP GUIDE



Overview

- Interview score = 60% of your composite score

You are here →



What to Expect

- Interviews will last 30 minutes.
- You will be asked 10 questions.
- Time management is very important!
- Some questions have more than one part.
- If you need something repeated, just ask.



Interview Format

- Questions will typically ask “Tell us about a time when...”
- We want to know what you actually did.
- There are no trick questions.



You Will Be Evaluated On:

- Communication Skills
- Motivation and Initiative
- Teamwork
- Adaptability, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking
- Professionalism
- Service Orientation
- Human Relations/Interpersonal Skills
- Commitment to the Profession



Common Interview Questions

- What interests you about this particular field?
- Give an example where you showed leadership and initiative.
- Give an example of when you were able to contribute to a team project.
- Tell us about a time when you made a mistake.



Structuring Your Answers

You may want to try the STAR technique for your answers.

Situation or Task

Start by explaining the situation, assignment or project.

Action you took

Next, what happened and what you did.

Results

Finish by describing the outcome.



STAR Technique

Situation/ Task

- Start with a relevant situation , task or project.
- Set up the scene: Give enough detail so the interviewers understand what was happening.
- You can use a current or past job, volunteer experience, school or any relevant event.



STAR Technique

Action you took

- Your role and what you did
- If it was a group project or effort: describe what you did –not the team
- Don't tell what you *might* do, tell what you actually did (even if it wasn't the best choice).



STAR Technique

Results

- What happened?
- How did the event end?
- What did you accomplish?
- What did you learn?
- If the outcome wasn't what you had hoped, that's okay. Tell what you would do differently if faced with the same situation again.



Example (actual answer):

- S/T: I worked very hard in high school to gain admission into a particular college program.

It was the only program I considered and I spent every minute preparing for it.

On the entrance exam, I missed the cutoff score by two points and wasn't accepted.



Example:

- **A**: For a couple of weeks, I didn't know what to do. I finally decided to attend a local community college instead and found a course of study that was similar to the program I wanted to attend.
- **R**: I earned a degree at significantly less cost and was able to help care for ill family member because I stayed close to home.



**The person who gave this
answer was hired as an Urbana
Firefighter.**



Answering the Questions

- Listen to the question.
- Don't ramble.
- Pace yourself and allow enough time to fully answer each question.
- Don't answer only yes or no—explain with details.



Answering the Questions

- Limit your use of verbal crutches such as “like”, “you know” and “um.”
- Practice with a friend or family member who will give you constructive feedback.
- Record yourself answering a question and play it back.



Answering the Questions

Non-verbal communication skills are important too!

- Give a good handshake—don't try to break anyone's hand.
- Sit up straight.
- Make eye contact.
- Nervous actions, like clicking a pen or tapping your fingers, will distract from what you are saying.



How To Prepare

- **Research**
 - Learn about the department, job, and community.
- **Dress Appropriately**
 - Business, smart casual or business casual attire is suggested.
- **Be Prepared**
 - Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early, know where you are going, and allow for unplanned delays.
- **Relax**
 - Treat the interview as a friendly conversation. Everyone on the interview panel has been on the other side of the table.



How To Prepare

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Identify past situations that demonstrate your leadership, communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills.



The Day of Your Interview

- **Where**
 - Review the location of your interview. Know if it's on the 1st floor or 2nd.
- **When**
 - Date and time of your interview.

Remember to turn your cell phone
OFF!



Resources

- UFD: urbanaininois.us/fire
- Recruiting Process www.urbanacareers.org
- Interview tips, resume samples, etc.:
 - pinterest.com/urbanajobs/boards/
 - www.urbanaininois.us/jobs/helpful-links



**Best Wishes On
Your Interview!**

