

STRATHROY-CARADOC FIRE DEPARTMENT



MUNICIPALITY OF
STRATHROY-CARADOC

Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment Guide

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LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer firefighter for the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc.

The Strathroy-Caradoc Fire Department maintains a proud tradition and is a highly respected emergency service organization in the community. Should you be accepted, you will be joining a long line of people who have demonstrated dedication, training commitment, compassion, and integrity in the protection of life and property in our municipality. Participation as a volunteer firefighter will bring personal rewards, satisfaction and give you a tremendous sense of accomplishment knowing that your efforts are in fact making a difference.

However, your service to the department requires a serious commitment to training, and your decision to join should not be made quickly. We ask that you take the time to review this manual and understand what is involved in being a member of the Strathroy-Caradoc Fire Department.

This manual contains information on the organization of the fire department and an indication of our expectations from you.

The Fire Service is not for everyone. You need more than just a desire to help people. You need courage, dedication, a willingness to train and learn new skills and be prepared to continue practicing those skills acquired throughout your career. You will be asked to respond at any time, night or day, 7 days a week 365 days a year in any weather and often under stressful and emotional circumstances.

Being a volunteer firefighter requires serious commitment. If after reviewing this manual and asking whatever questions you may have, if you believe you are ready to make the commitment, we welcome you to apply to join our team.

Sincerely,

Stephen Beasley
Director of Fire Services/Fire Chief



ABOUT US

First settled in 1832 by John Stewart Buchanan built a small house and grist mill and named the site Strathroy after his birthplace in Ireland. In 1860 Strathroy was incorporated as a village and in 1872 incorporated as a town. The first recorded fire in Strathroy was in 1857 as a log house.

In 1865 Fire Protection Company No. 1 originated with 40 members joining the company.

Since these humble beginnings, the Fire Service evolved in our community to what it is today, a modern well-equipped organization of dedicated men and women serving the community with pride and distinction.

In 2001 the Town of Strathroy and the Township of Caradoc amalgamated to form the new Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc. Prior to amalgamation the fire services consisted of two independent fire departments consisting of a total of three stations: one in Strathroy, one in Caradoc Township with stations in Mount Brydges and in Melbourne.

The department consists of a full-time Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Fire Prevention Officer, and an Administrative Assistant, as well as a part-time Fire Services Technician. The Administration office for the department is located at Station No. 1 in Strathroy (220 East Centre St.).

The operation of each station is managed by a Volunteer District Fire Chief, 4 Captains, 2 Lieutenants and a complement of approximately 20 firefighters at each of the three fire stations.

The Strathroy-Caradoc Fire Department provides fire prevention and fire protection to a population of approximately 25,000 citizens, 9,000 private dwellings and covers a land area of some 275 square kilometers. The fire department maintains a fleet of fire apparatus consisting of 3 Engines (pumper trucks), 4 Tankers, one 101ft. Aerial Platform Truck, and 3 Service Vehicles, and Command Vehicle.

Like the majority of other Ontario municipalities, Strathroy-Caradoc relies on a complement of dedicated and fully trained volunteer firefighters to provide fire protection services to the community. To provide an adequate level of service, we depend on the availability of an adequate number of volunteer firefighters at any time of the day to respond to emergencies. For this reason, we rely on the cooperation of the employers of our volunteers to allow their staff to get sufficient time off work to answer the call.

Therefore, you may be expected to talk to your employer to assure us that you will be available for emergency responses if you work in the municipality.



TRAINING

Training is the most important part of the operation of any fire department. The Strathroy-Caradoc Fire department is committed to provide a comprehensive certified training program within our fire department.

New Recruit Training:

A new recruit is expected to commit to an extensive probationary training program in order to achieve the required skills to respond in a safe, efficient and professional manner. All Recruits are required to complete Provincial Certification exams.

The Strathroy-Caradoc Fire Department will provide a Provincially Certified Training Program to meet the mandatory training requirements of the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office. This training will earn the student certification under the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) fire fighter standards. The student will earn NFPA 1001, Level 1 & 2. These are the key components of firefighting to master basic fire ground skills. This will be delivered by an approved provider of the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office. It will consist of a full weekend, Saturday and Sunday, once a month, and potentially 1 occasional evening during the week. Four weekends of training at the Regional Training Centre's facility will consist of live training, and flashover training.

At the end of the six months, each recruit will be required to pass the written and practical exams to achieve certification. This is now a Provincial Regulation that has been mandated for all fire fighters in Ontario, both in Career and Volunteer Departments. The Department will send the probationary fire fighters to the next available set of classes; these dates won't be determined until new recruits are hired as we coordinate these training classes for all departments throughout the County of Middlesex.

First Aid AED training and certification is required and will be provided. After completing the Certification programs, recruits will complete training on additional higher-level skills including attaining your DZ licensing for driving fire apparatus.

The probationary training program is 12 months. Throughout the entire probationary training period, the recruits will work with other firefighters on scenes at a restricted level under the direct supervision of a qualified individual while seeking certification.

Ongoing Training:

Training, however, does not end when you complete your probationary period. All regularly employed volunteer firefighters are expected to attend an acceptable number of training sessions throughout the year and successfully pass re-certification tests on key core components every year. Additional training is required to move through the rank structure identified below. Training for Captains and Chief Officers is ongoing and becoming more critical in the day and age that we live in. Expectations from the residents are high, and we must meet those standards to properly protect our municipality.



Regular training is typically held on Tuesday nights starting at 7pm. Attendance expectations are noted below.

In addition to committing to training obligations and emergency response duties, all personnel are expected to participate in maintenance duties for the extensive inventory of equipment and apparatus of your assigned fire station, once per month.

Firefighter Ranking Structure:

Firefighter will progress through ranks noted below based on completion of the necessary training, exams or other requirements of each rank.

Probationary Firefighter – Any person that accepts an offer of volunteer service by the corporation for the purpose of performing duties of the Fire Department shall be obligated to fulfill training requirements established by the Department within a period of 6 months. All exams, performance tests and other requirements established from the point of appointment to the Departments must be fulfilled within the probationary period. Failure to fulfill the probationary requirements may result in dismissal from the Department. Remuneration for Probationary Firefighter shall be 50% of First Class Firefighter.

Probationary Firefighter Second Class – Any Probationary Firefighter who fulfills the requirement of the probationary period shall be promoted to the rank of Probationary Firefighter Second Class. Probationary Firefighter Second Class is obligated to successfully pass all exams, performance tests and other requirements of the rank within an additional 6-month period. Failure to fulfilling the Probationary Firefighter Second Class training requirements may result in recommendation for dismissal from the Department.

Second Class Firefighter Rank - Second Class Firefighters shall not be allowed to perform interior structural firefighting duties including but not limited to fire suppression and ventilation operations. All other exterior firefighting duties are permitted. Any Second Class Firefighter may apply for First Class Firefighter status by successfully completing all First Class testing and training obligations during the course of the year's regularly scheduled First Class Performance testing schedule. Remuneration for Second Class Firefighter shall be 75% of the First Class Firefighter wages.

First Class Firefighter – Any Firefighter who successfully completes all requirement of the Probationary Firefighter Second Class training program, shall be promoted to the rank of First Class Firefighter. All First Class Firefighters are expected to successfully pass all exams, performance tests and other requirements of the rank. Remuneration for First Class Firefighter shall be full wages based on the payroll structure developed by the Strathroy-Caradoc Fire Department.



Maintenance of First Class Firefighter Rank - Failure to successfully pass all exams, performance tests and other requirements of the rank shall be demoted to the rank of Second Class Firefighter.

Any firefighter who knowingly performs duties outside of their current rank shall be in breach of regulations which may result in discipline.

HIRING PROCESS

Stage 1 – Application

Applicants are encouraged to check [Strathroy-Caradoc's Careers page](#) to confirm if there is an opening available. Only applications submitted through the Municipality's job board by the deadline noted on the Careers Page will be accepted. General applications are not accepted when active recruitment is not taking place.

When an opening is available, opportunities will be posted on [Strathroy-Caradoc's Careers page](#). Through your registration and use of the platform, you consent to the collection and processing of your personal information by the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc for recruitment purposes. In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, applicant information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001 (S.O. 2001, c.25) and will be used to determine qualifications for volunteering with the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc. Questions about this collection should be directed to Human Resources, Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, 52 Frank St., Strathroy, ON N7G 2R4.

Applicants must meet eligibility qualifications to be eligible for stage 2. Below are eligibility requirements:

- At least 18 years of age
- Legally eligible to work in Canada
- Must reside within the Strathroy-Caradoc response area (see Map below)
- A satisfactory Vulnerable Sector Check
- A valid Ontario Driver's License, with a class G License or higher for a minimum of 2 years
- Applications will be rejected if the applicant has 7 or more demerit points on their license in the past 3 years
 - Candidates will be required to provide an updated Driver's Abstract

All interested applicants who meet the above requirements shall proceed to apply online.



It is crucial that prospective volunteer firefighters complete all required information in their application. Before beginning, please ensure you have the following information available:

- Name
- Address of residence and length of residence
- Another other residence within the past 2 years
- Contact information (Email and Phone Number(s))
- Information regarding any conviction of a criminal offence
- Driver's License Information (including Number, Class and Expiry)
- Availability of calls
- Employment Experience (including name, position, address, duties and responsibilities, schedule, and supervisor contact information)
 - It is important that your employer is aware that you have applied to be a volunteer firefighter, as it may require you to be away from your employment at various times, depending on your schedule.
- Previous Work and Volunteer Experience (including name, position and start/end dates)
- Information related to a variety of skills

We thank all applicants for their interest but only those selected for Stage 2 will be contacted. Applicants who meet the eligibility requirements will be invited to advance to Stage 2. Applicants who are not accepted for the current recruitment may be kept on file.

The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc is an equal opportunity employer. Accommodations are available for all parts of the recruitment process. Applicants need to make their needs known in advance.

Stage 2 – Applicant Evaluation

Applicants invited to advance to the evaluation process will undergo the following appraisals. Both appraisals will be completed onsite.

1. **Written Aptitude Test** – This test is designed to confirm you have the necessary skills to perform as a Volunteer Firefighter. The skills tested are practical math, reading comprehension, written communication, spatial awareness, situation judgement and logical reasoning. Candidates are welcome to use a calculator during the test.
2. **Physical Performance Testing** – This is a series of physical endurance and motor skill tests intended to evaluate specific expectations of a firefighter. This appraisal is a series of moderate to heavy physical activities requiring intense and prolonged physical exertion. Candidates should wear appropriate clothing and footwear. It is strongly recommended that any applicant for the position of



firefighter consult with their physician to determine if they have any underlying physical restrictions that may impact their testing and job requirements before applying for the position. If successful in recruitment, you will require a note from your physician indicating that you can perform the duties of a firefighter.

The physical performance testing consists of the following physical activities:

- **Ladder Climb:** designed to assess fear of heights (acrophobia).
 - Must pass this test to proceed in the recruitment process.
- **Breathing Apparatus Evaluation:** designed to assess fear of being in confined areas (claustrophobia).
 - Must pass this test to proceed in the recruitment process.
- **Hose and Equipment Carry:** designed to assess muscular strength of the upper body and back.
- **Rope Pull:** designed to assess manual dexterity and upper body strength.
- **Ladder Lift:** designed to assess the upper body and back muscular strength and dexterity.
- **Hose Advance/Drag:** designed to assess leg power and lower body strength.

Details of each test can be found in Appendix A.

Both appraisals will be conducted in the evening. All applicants will be tested on the same date and must attend the scheduled evaluation date. Any applicant who is unavailable to attend will not continue in the recruitment process.

Note: *Applicants who are unable to successfully complete the above appraisals will not proceed in the recruitment process.*

Step 3 – In-Person Panel Interview

Interviews will take place with Human Resources, District Fire Chiefs, Captains or other senior members. The questions are situational and behavioral based and will probe your professional experiences in areas related to past experiences, the core competencies of a firefighter and our core values. If you are selected for an interview, you will be notified via email or phone to book your timeslot.

Step 4 – Applicant Selection

The recruitment team will make the final decision based on the above selection criteria as to who will receive an offer of volunteer service for the position of Probationary Volunteer Firefighter. We will contact the successful candidate(s) and confirm that the applicant still wishes to be considered for the position.



At this time, you will be required to apply for your **Vulnerable Sector Check** and provide a **Driver's Abstract**, available from the Ministry of Transportation as well as the **form signed by your physician** (on the Web Page) that you are fit to perform firefighting duties. Costs associated with these documents are **at your expense**. Failure to produce the required forms to the satisfaction of the municipality will result in the withdrawal of the offer.

Step 5 – Dates established to Report for Orientation

The start date for the Training Program will be established, and an Orientation meeting will be held at the Strathroy Fire Station - Station 1. All recruits will be required to attend NFPA 1001 Training Classes as scheduled. These classes will be on Saturday and Sunday from 8 am to 4:30 pm. Location will be determined during the recruitment process. All recruits will be required to pass Certification to the NFPA 1001 Standards during the Probationary period.

Schedule for training includes:

- Orientation
- 6 weekends
- Graduation
- Ontario Fire Marshal's Office Certification Testing

Firefighters with the SCFD are initially classified as Probationary Firefighters with limited duties and progress per the Ranking Structure noted above. These classifications are achieved after successfully gaining required qualifications and at the discretion of the Deputy Chief of Training.

Attendance Expectations

Availability for Training:

The Strathroy/Caradoc Fire Department has established that a minimum of twenty (20) regularly scheduled training sessions shall be conducted in each 12 months. All personnel are obligated to maintain a minimum of **70%** attendance for training during the previous 12 continuous month period.

- Failure to be available to attend **70%** of the required assigned training for any 12-month period may result in recommendation to the Fire Chief for termination of service.



Emergency Response Attendance:

The Strathroy-Caradoc Fire Department has established that to be an effective member of a cohesive emergency response team, a minimum attendance to emergency responses shall be a **50%** of the assigned Stations call volume for any 12-month period.

- Failure to be available to respond to 50% of the assigned stations paged calls for any 12-month period may result in recommendation to the Fire Chief for termination of service.

Compensation

Volunteer firefighters receive annual remuneration through a points system based on their attendance to fire calls and required training. More information will be provided throughout the recruitment process.



Appendix A

Sample Performance Test Outlines

STRATHROY /CARADOC FIRE DEPARTMENT *RECRUIT*

JOB-RELATED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION 1

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

TEST NO. 1

LADDER CLIMB

A firefighter must have the ability and confidence to climb all types and sizes of ladders while performing such tasks as rescue work and other firefighting operations. Firefighters must not suffer from acrophobia.

PPE Required

The applicant will wear PPE supplied at the time of the test. Turnout Coat and Work Gloves.

Performance Test Detail

Wearing supplied safety equipment, you are to proceed to the ladder area where you will be given instructions on how to ascend the 35' ladder.

When you reach a mark on the ladder you will be asked to uncouple and re-couple a hose connection. When completed, communicate to the instructor that you have completed, the instructor will ask you to descend.

A hose coupling is available at the bottom of the ladder to practice on.

- you will be disqualified if in the opinion of the testing officer you display signs of acrophobia

This is not a timed test; proceed in an orderly and safe manner.

This test may be stopped at any point when it is deemed that progress has stopped or the candidate has deviated from the test requirements.



JOB-RELATED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION 2

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

TEST NO. 2

BREATHING APPARATUS EVALUATION

A firefighter must have the ability and confidence to perform search and rescue and fire suppression operations while wearing self-contained breathing apparatus. Firefighters may be exposed to extremely toxic gases and dense smoke in the performance of their duties and cannot suffer from claustrophobia.

PPE Required

The applicant will wear PPE supplied at the time of the test. Turnout Coat and Work Gloves as well as SCBA and a blackened-out face piece.

Performance Test Detail

Candidates will be told by the testing officer the route to follow before the commencement of the test. Firefighters will monitor the movement of the candidate to prevent possible injury.

Wearing all gear and SCBA you will enter the test area and proceed to follow a designated route and perform simple tasks.

- a firefighter will assist you in the donning and doffing of the SCBA

This is not a timed test, proceed in an orderly and safe manner.

This test may be stopped at any point when it is deemed that progress has stopped or the candidate has deviated from the test requirements.



JOB-RELATED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION 3

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

TEST NO. 3

HOSE & EQUIPMENT CARRY

Picking up, carrying, and loading fire hose is a common activity of every firefighter and requires physical strength and stamina.

PPE Required

The applicant will wear PPE supplied at the time of the test. Turnout Coat and Work Gloves as well as SCBA. FACE MASK NOT TO BE WORN.

Performance Test Detail

You will pick up two (2) roles of 2 ½ inch (65mm) hose at the start position and carry them at arm's length through a designated course back to the start point. You will be given a 10-second break.

You will pick up a Chain Saw and Circular Saw at the start position and carry them at arm's length through the same designated course back to the start point. You will be given a 10-second break.

You will be given two (2) SCBA air cylinders and from the same starting position and carry them at arm's length through the same designated course back to the start point.

- Do not set the hose, saws, or air cylinders down except at the finish area as directed. Points will be deducted if you do.

This is not a timed test; proceed in an orderly and safe manner.

This test may be stopped at any point when it is deemed that progress has stopped or the candidate has deviated from the test requirements.



JOB-RELATED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION 4

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

TEST NO. 4

ROPE PULL

A firefighter is required to have coordinated arm-leg movement, back strength, manual dexterity, and endurance while performing many tasks. Extending ladder fly sections and hoisting equipment are examples.

PPE Required

The applicant will wear PPE supplied at the time of the test. Turnout Coat and Work Gloves.

Performance Test Detail

You will pull a rolled section of 2 ½ inches (65mm) hose to a designated mark hand over hand and lower it to the ground again hand over hand. This exercise will be conducted for a series of three (3) repetitions.

This **is** a timed test.

This is a strenuous test – pace yourself accordingly.

This test may be stopped at any point when it is deemed that progress has stopped or the candidate has deviated from the test requirements.



JOB-RELATED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION 5

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

TEST NO. 5

LADDER LIFT

In many fire and other emergencies, firefighters are required to remove ladders from the apparatus, put them into position and replace them on the apparatus. This evaluation is intended to assimilate the procedures for removing, transporting, and replacing a ladder.

PPE Required

The applicant will wear PPE supplied at the time of the test. Turnout Coat and Work Gloves.

Performance Test Detail

The candidate will remove a 24 ft. ladder from a wall hanger simulating the apparatus mount, locate the balance point and utilize a low shoulder carry to transport the ladder to a specified location and position it on the ground. On completion of this task, you will pick the ladder up, relocate the balance point and carry it back to the wall hangers and replace it on the hangers.

This is not a timed test; proceed in an orderly and safe manner.

This test may be stopped at any point when it is deemed that progress has stopped or the candidate has deviated from the test requirements.



JOB-RELATED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION 6

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

TEST NO. 6

HOSE ADVANCE/DRAW EVALUATION

This evaluation will test the applicant's ability to use energy and complete a physically demanding task of advancing a charged hose line.

PPE Required

The applicant will wear PPE supplied at the time of the test. Turnout Coat and Work Gloves.

Performance Test Detail

Position the nozzle connected to a charged 2 ½ inch (65mm) hose line over your shoulder and on command begin to advance the hose line forward for a distance of 75 feet. At the finish line place the nozzle on the ground.

There is a 60-second time limit for this exercise. The less time used for completion of the test will increase your score. Failing to complete this test will result in 0 marks given.

This is a timed test but proceed in an orderly and safe manner.

This test may be stopped at any point when it is deemed that progress has stopped or the candidate has deviated from the test requirements.



Appendix B

Strathroy-Caradoc Response/Service Area

Strathroy Response Area





Mount Brydges Response Area





Melbourne Response Area

