



The City of Niagara Falls Fire Department

# **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER**

**RECRUITMENT INFORMATION GUIDE  
2024**

## INTRODUCTION

Becoming a Volunteer Firefighter with the City of Niagara Falls is a challenging but very rewarding endeavour:

- **Comprehensive Training**

One of the most significant benefits to becoming a Volunteer Firefighter is the amount of training individuals receive – DZ licence, NFPA 1001 Firefighter I & II, First Aid/CPR, NFPA 1035 Public Fire and Life Safety Educator and auto extraction to name a few. There is no cost to our volunteers for any training and the courses allow progression through various operations, ranks and roles.

The training our volunteers receive extends beyond firefighting - the skills and experience gained can be leveraged in any career. In addition, training and working with other like-minded individuals in a team-orientated environment not only fosters friendship and camaraderie, it allows individuals to create professional networks.

- **Community Service**

Volunteer Firefighters serve our community and help our citizens in times of need. This service isn't simply limited to fire suppression and medical assistance but extends to community events too. Fire awareness, education and prevention, and charity fundraising are just a few of the activities in which volunteers participate.

- **Honorarium**

In recognition of the commitment, time and effort made to assist their community and the residents within it, our Volunteer Firefighters receive a small, annual stipend for training and attending calls.

More information about our Volunteer Firefighter position and the City's recruitment program may be found in the following pages.

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## POSITION INFORMATION

This description reflects the general details considered necessary to describe the primary functions of the position identified, and shall not be construed as a detailed description of all the work requirements that may be inherent in such classification.

### Summary

This is a skilled position entailing firefighting, rescue and other related emergency services. It requires active and frequent participation in programs for the prevention of fires and the saving of life and property.

A Volunteer Firefighter is responsible for rapidly, efficiently and safely performing various duties under emergency conditions frequently involving considerable hazard. The work includes routine duties in the maintenance of firefighting vehicles, equipment and fire department facilities.

While specific orders and directions are received from an officer in the normal course of maintenance duties and firefighting, considerable independence of judgment and action is allowed in circumstances of extreme urgency where referral to a superior for instructions is not possible.

A periodic review of the work is carried out by an officer in order to maintain and improve the efficiency of the Fire Department as a whole and to remain focused and in line with goals requested by the Fire chief.

### Volunteer Stations

Volunteer Firefighters operate out of three stations:

- **Station 4** - 8696 Banting Avenue - located in Chippawa  
<https://niagarafalls.ca/city-hall/fire/suppression/station-4.aspx>
- **Station 5** – 11208 Sodom Road - located in Willoughby  
<https://niagarafalls.ca/city-hall/fire/suppression/station-5.aspx>
- **Station 6** - 8037 Schisler Road - located in Crowland  
<https://niagarafalls.ca/city-hall/fire/suppression/station-6.aspx>

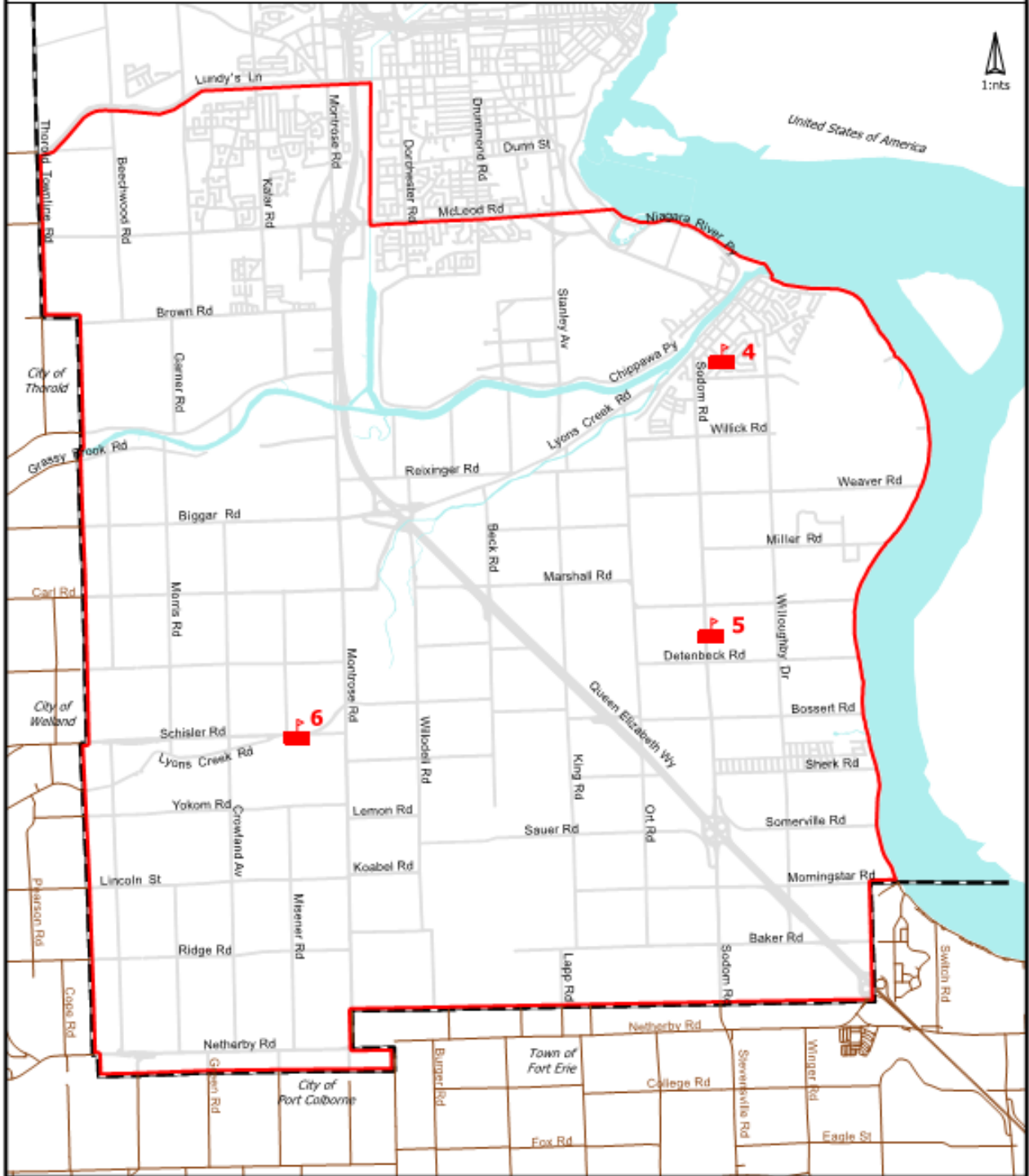
### Basic Volunteer Catchment Area

Volunteer Firefighters respond within specific designated areas and therefore must reside within the *Basic Volunteer Catchment Area*.

Please refer to the *Basic Volunteer Catchment Area* map on the next page for more information regarding acceptable residency boundaries.



# Basic Volunteer Catchment Area



## Responsibilities

- As a member of a station, responds to emergency calls, lays and connects hose, holds nozzles and directs streams, raises and climbs ladders, uses extinguishers and other equipment
- Provides rescue in various forms and first responder awareness level actions at hazmat calls
- Removes persons from danger and administers first aid to injured persons
- Ventilates buildings to release heat, smoke and gases and places salvage covers to prevent water damage
- Attends, at a minimum, training sessions (60 hours) and emergency calls (30%) annually
- When qualified, drives and operates firefighting apparatus
- Performs varied maintenance tasks on apparatus, equipment and facilities
- When assigned to fire prevention work, under direction of an officer, performs inspections and administrative duties as required
- As required, assists with the preparation and delivery of training materials, drills, etc.
- Performs related duties as assigned

## QUALIFICATIONS

### Mandatory Qualifications

- Must reside within the area of volunteer response (please refer to the *Basic Volunteer Catchment Area* map for more information)
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be legally entitled to work in Canada
- Possess a High School Diploma or equivalent
- Possess a valid Ontario Class “G” Driver’s Licence and willing to obtain a Class “DZ” Licence within the first two years as a volunteer
- Must have an acceptable driving record (submission of a three-year, uncertified driver’s abstract that is less than six months old is required)
- Possess or have access to own transportation
- Not have any criminal convictions for which a pardon has not been granted
- Have had or be willing to obtain the Hepatitis B vaccination, or provide proof of a bona fide medical or Human Rights Code exemption
- Be a proficient swimmer
- Able to respond to emergency calls in a safe and expedient manner

- Able to engage in work activities that are physical in nature
- Able to attend required training conducted on evenings and some weekends
- Able to maintain a high degree of trustworthiness, confidentiality; must exercise discretion and tact
- Possess good verbal and written communication skills
- Be customer service focused and team orientated

## Asset Qualifications

The following qualifications would be considered an asset but are not required:

- Valid First Aid / CPR certification
- Experience in firefighting principles, practices and equipment
- Post-secondary Fire Services and/or Medical education

## Message about City's COVID Vaccination Policy

The City of Niagara Falls has a COVID Vaccination Policy; however, that policy is currently paused. If pandemic circumstances and public health changes warrant it, this policy may be re-instated. In the interim, individuals are encouraged to follow all public health guidelines, monitor and self-screen for symptoms, use precautions including proper handwashing and sanitizing, and practice respiratory etiquette. In addition, individuals are encouraged to get their full vaccination and booster shots against COVID-19 as advised by public health authorities (for more information please visit <https://niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19>).

## PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

### Standard

Volunteer Firefighters must perform their duties in an uncontrolled environment under emergency conditions. The job involves the rapid change from relative inactivity to sudden strenuous activity under physically and psychologically stressful conditions.

With these factors in mind, candidates must be in the required physical and mental health and have no conditions which could interfere with their ability to perform the required duties safely.

The successful candidate will be expected to be a team player who understands the need to follow orders, procedures, guidelines, etc. in a cooperative and safe manner.

Successful candidates will present themselves in a professional manner at all times and be fully conscious of the public's expectations of a Volunteer Firefighter.

## Attendance

It is vital that successful candidates be aware that regular attendance at training and at emergency calls is critical to the safe and successful operation of the Department.

Successful candidates must be prepared for and committed to meeting annual (November to November) attendance requirements. The following constitutes regular attendance:

- 60 hours of training; and
- 30% participation rate in all emergency responses for the station to which they are assigned.

**Individuals unable to regularly meet these training and emergency response benchmarks will be removed from the Volunteer Firefighter program.**

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

### Recruitment Timetable

This is the general timeline for the City of Niagara Falls' 2024 Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment. Details regarding each action item may be found in the following pages.

**Please note, dates and times may be subject to change.**

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	DATE(S)
1	Public Information Session (optional but recommended)	August 19, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. at Station 5 <b>Registration is required to attend</b> ; email VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca by August 14 <sup>th</sup> to secure a seat.
2	Application Closing Date	September 5, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.
3	Physical Ability, Acrophobia and Written Aptitude Testing	September 21, 2024 The Physical Ability and Acrophobia testing is administered by Firefighter Services of Ontario and may take up to 2.5 hours to complete The Written Aptitude Test is administered by the Fire Department and may take up to 90 minutes to complete. Candidates may need to account for travel time between test sites. <b>Alternative dates for this testing are not available.</b>
4	Interview	September 24,25,26, 2024 at Station 6 (in the evening)
5	Police Check (PCRJMC)	October 3-7, 2024



STAGE	DESCRIPTION	DATE(S)
6	Medical Evaluation	October 19-20, 2024
7	Reference Checks	October 22-23, 2024
8	Appointment Offer	November 1, 2024
	Orientation	November 18, 2024 at Station 6 (in the evening)
	Fit Testing and Bunker Gear	December 2, 2024 at Station 6 (in the evening)
	First Training Session	January 6, 2025 at Station 6 (in the evening)
	Graduation	June 2025

**Stage 1: Public Information Session (Optional but Strongly Recommended)**

It is strongly recommended potential candidates attend the Public Information Session. To attend, registration is required.

- Date: **August 19, 2024**
- Time: **7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**
- Location: **Station 5** (Sodom Road, Niagara Falls)
- RSVP: [VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca](mailto:VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca) by **August 14, 2024**  
Include name, email address and telephone number when registering.

**Stage 2: Submission of Application Form and Required Documentation**

**Application Due Date**

September 5, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. - applications will not be accepted after this deadline.

**How to Apply**

To apply for the Volunteer Firefighter position, the following three documents must be submitted by the due date:

1. **Completed Application Form**  
The Application Form may be found on the City’s website under the job posting ([www.niagarafalls.ca/jobs](http://www.niagarafalls.ca/jobs)) or through request by emailing [VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca](mailto:VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca) during the recruitment phase.
2. **Current Driver’s Abstract** (less than six months old)  
A three-year, uncertified driver’s abstract may be obtained through Service Ontario at one of their offices or via their website (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/order-drivers-record>). Candidates are responsible for this expense.
3. **Photocopy of valid Ontario Driver’s licence**  
The address shown on the licence must be where candidates currently reside.

Candidates are welcome to include a resume and copies of any related certifications (i.e., fire and/or medical) with their application.

Applications, with the required documentation, are to be submitted:

- via the City website ([www.niagarafalls.ca/jobs](http://www.niagarafalls.ca/jobs)); or
- emailed to [resumes@niagarafalls.ca](mailto:resumes@niagarafalls.ca); or
- hand-delivered, using a sealed envelope marked “Attention: Human Resources”, to City Hall (4310 Queen Street) during business hours.

All applications will be held in strict confidence. Personal information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and will only be used to determine suitability for this position.

Please note, only those candidates advancing through the selection process will be contacted (by email).

### **Stage 3: Physical Ability, Acrophobia and Written Assessments**

The Physical Ability, Acrophobia and Written Assessments are conducted on the same day.

**Alternative testing dates are not available; therefore candidates will be withdrawn from the selection process if unable to attend.**

There is no cost to candidates for these assessments. Candidates are eligible for one test attempt per recruitment drive.

#### **Physical Ability and Acrophobia Assessments**

Once applications are reviewed, candidates selected to move forward will be required to complete the Firefighter Services of Ontario’s Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) and Acrophobia (fear of heights) assessment.

This testing will take place in St. Catharines and may take up to 2.5 hours to complete.

- For information on the CPAT, visit <https://www.fireontario.com/services/occupational-assessment-cpat/>.
  - Candidates who have a valid CPAT certificate upon applying may, at the recruitment committee’s discretion, be exempt from this assessment.
  - For the purpose of this volunteer recruitment only, the CPAT may be modified slightly (i.e., timed completion).
- For information on the Acrophobia testing, visit <https://www.fireontario.com/services/acrophobia-test/>.

#### **Written Assessment**

The Written Assessment is comprised of multiple choice, true/false and short-answer questions on the topics of mathematics, reading and mechanical/problem-solving.

Candidates have up to 90 minutes to complete the Written Assessment which will be administered by the Fire Department at Station 6 in Niagara Falls. Paper and pencils/pens will be supplied; calculators are not permitted.

## Stage 4: Interview

The selection for interview will be based on the Application, Physical Ability and Acrophobia testing and the Written Assessment. The top applicants will be interviewed by a panel consisting of Fire Department and Human Resources staff.

Candidates will be required to supply two supervisory, work-related references at time of interview (see *Stage 7* for more information regarding reference checks). References will not be contacted unless candidates have been selected to move forward after interview.

**If reference information is not provided at time of interview, the candidate will be withdrawn from the selection process and the interview will not proceed.**

## Stage 5: Police Check (PCRJMC)

Concurrently with the Medical Evaluation (see *Stage 6*), the City will require candidates obtain a Canadian Police Criminal Record and Judicial Matters Check (PCRJMC). A Vulnerable Sector Check is not required.

Please be aware that the Niagara Regional Police (NRP) has experienced delays in processing record checks when request volumes are high. For candidates selected to move forward, it is important to apply for the PCRJMC when instructed to do so. **Candidates unable to provide a police check by the deadline specified may be disqualified from the selection process.**

Candidates will be reimbursed for the cost of a new PCRJMC once the original document and purchase receipt have been submitted to the City.

If candidates are in possession of a PCRJMC that is three months old or less, it may be accepted. Candidates will not be reimbursed for a previously obtained police record check.

For further information about and to apply for the PCRJMC, please visit the NRP website at <https://www.niagarapolice.ca/en/what-we-do/policebackgroundchecks.aspx>.

## Stage 6: Medical Evaluation

The top applicants will be required to undergo a comprehensive medical examination coordinated by the City with local practitioners/agencies.

**Alternative medical assessment dates are not available; candidates will be withdrawn from the selection process if unable to attend on dates provided.**

Candidates will meet with a physician for a general physical assessment followed by several tests: basic urine screening, vision test\*, blood pressure check, pulmonary function test, hearing exam, electrocardiogram (ECG), blood work, and chest x-rays (*note: the ECG, bloodwork and x-rays will be conducted separately, during regular clinic hours, and could take up to 2.0 hours to complete*).

Test results are strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to the City - the only information the City will receive is whether an individual is “Fit”\* or “Unfit” for the duties of a Volunteer Firefighter.

There is no cost to candidates for the medical evaluation.

**\*Special Note Regarding the Vision Test**

To meet vision requirements, candidates must have 20/30 uncorrected or 20/40 corrected vision and satisfactorily complete a color vision test. More details are available if required.

**\*Special Note Regarding Hepatitis B and Tetanus Immunity**

“Fit” candidates selected to become Volunteer Firefighters but who are without Hepatitis B and/or Tetanus immunity will be advised to obtain the vaccines. The reasonable and customary costs associated with the obtaining one or both of these vaccinations will be covered by the City. More details are available if required.

## Stage 7: Reference Checks

Confidential reference checks for the top applicants will be conducted to assess work history, performance and attendance record.

At time of interview, candidates will be required to submit a completed *Reference Consent Form* (to be supplied). **Candidates who fail to provide this information at time of interview will be withdrawn from consideration.**

On the form, candidates are to provide the names and contact information of two individuals to whom they have directly reported in a professional (preferred), voluntary or school-related capacity. Candidates are encouraged to include day, evening or alternate (i.e., cell phone) numbers for each of their references.

Reference letters are not required. **Family, friend and character references will not be considered.**

It is strongly advised that candidates contact their references in advance to notify them that City of Niagara Falls’ personnel may reach out to them for the purpose of providing a reference.

## Stage 8: Terms of Eligibility for Appointment and Conditional Offer

To be eligible for appointment as a Volunteer Firefighter, candidates must have:

- a satisfactory Canadian Police Criminal Record and Judicial Matters Check;
- be medically deemed “Fit”;
- have acceptable references.

An appointment letter will be given to the successful applicants who meet the above terms.

## PROBATION PERIOD AND RECRUIT TRAINING

Upon acceptance into the Volunteer Firefighter training program, new recruits are subject to a one-year probation period.

During their first twelve months, Volunteer Firefighter recruits are required to complete a training and testing program that meets requirements for NFPA 1001 Firefighter I & II including Hazmat NFPA 1072. This program is conducted in-house.

Commitment of training hours are roughly as follows:

- 1-2 hours weekly online training;
- 3+ hours weekly practical training; and
- 1-2 Saturdays per month.

Volunteer firefighters attend their assigned station weekly for: on-going firefighter training; maintenance of equipment, trucks and the station; meetings; pre-planning; public education; and other fire department functions. Training may also take place on weekends.

**Individuals unprepared or unable to meet training commitments and deadlines, and/or unable to successfully meet lesson and testing benchmarks will be withdrawn from the program.**

## WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION

At any time during the recruitment process, a candidate may withdraw their application. A voluntary withdrawal from the recruitment process must be made in writing to [VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca](mailto:VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca)

## QUESTIONS?

Questions may be directed to the following from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.:

Phone: 905-356-7521 ext 4317 or 4279

Email: [VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca](mailto:VolunteerFire@niagarafalls.ca)

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