



EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE

GEAR UP

LEARN WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME A FIREFIGHTER WITH EPFR

April 25, 2026, | EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE STATION 111

Tanya Lynch (HR Director), Matt Gilbert (Deputy Chief Operations), & Colin Nash (Firefighter/Paramedic)





INTRODUCTIONS



TODAY'S PRESENTERS

TANYA LYNCH

HR Director

19 years

HR Division Leadership, Recruitment & Staffing

MATT GILBERT

- Deputy Chief - Operations
- 25 years – 17 with EPFR
- Firefighter – Lieutenant – Training Lieutenant – Training Battalion Chief – Assistant Chief

COLIN NASH

- Firefighter / Paramedic
- 10 years – 7 with EPFR
- Acting Company Officer
- Paramedic Program - CWU



Agenda

1

FIRE SERVICE CAREER & BENEFITS

4

PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROCESS

2

TESTING & APPLICATION PROCESS

5

ACADEMY – OVERVIEW & EXPECTATIONS

3

ADVICE – TIPS & PITFALLS (break)

6

Q&A



SECTION

FIRE SERVICE

CAREER, OPPORTUNITIES, BENEFITS

01



WHAT WE DO AND WHY IT MATTERS

Firefighters show up to help, solve problems, and offer support when it matters most. This is more than a career. It's a commitment to service, to community, and to each other. When you join the fire service, you become part of a mission-driven team that makes a real impact in the community every day.

PROTECT LIVES

Whether pulling someone from danger, providing medical care, or offering steady reassurance on a bad day (maybe their worst), we are there to offer calm in the chaos, strength in fear, and bring hope when it's needed most.

PROTECT PROPERTY

Every fire extinguished and every hazard mitigated, helps restore a sense of safety, stability, and normalcy. We are stewards of communities – protecting homes, schools, businesses, and the places that shape people's lives. We don't just fight fire - we fight for the things that matter to people.

PROTECT EACH OTHER

This job is rewarding, but it's not easy. It pushes us physically, mentally, and emotionally. We witness moments that stay with us, and face challenges that test our resilience. But we shoulder that weight together. In the fire service, you gain a family. Our strength isn't just in how we respond to calls—it's in how we care for one another.



WHAT MAKES A GOOD FF – WHAT DO WE LOOK FOR?

CORE CONCEPTS

Someone who shows up ready to learn, work hard, and support the team. Good FFs take their training seriously, understand their equipment, maintain their skills, and stay prepared to perform the job safely and effectively. Just as important are the qualities behind the skills – being dependable, humble, adaptable, and committed to doing the right thing even when it's not easy. Good FFs communicate well, take feedback, keep themselves physically and mentally ready, and put the mission and crew first. Above all, they care about the community and people they serve.





A DAY IN THE LIFE

NO DAY IS THE SAME

01

FIRST THINGS FIRST

- ARRIVE EARLY AND READY
- RIG CHECKS
- MORNING MEETINGS

02

TRAINING

- COMPANY LEVEL DRILLS
- EMS / OTEP
- SAFETY AND OSHA
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- ANNUAL/MANDATORY
- HANDS ON OR COMPUTER-BASED

03

RESPONSE

- MEDICAL ~70%
- GOOD INTENT ~10%
- ASSISTANCE ~8%
- FALSE ALARMS ~6%
- FIRE ~2.5%
- HAZMAT ~2.5%
- OTHER ~1%

04

EVENING

- DINNER
- AFTER DINNER



PROBATION



SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

- INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- “THE GAME”

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

- PROBATIONARY TASK BOOK
- DRESS AND GROOMING
- WHO WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO RESPOND?
YOU?






WORK SCHEDULE

2026 FIREFIGHTER & EMS SHIFT

JANUARY							FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31							

WORK SCHEDULE

MODIFIED DETROIT
 24 ON-24 OFF- 4 ON-
 24 OFF-24 ON- 96 OFF
 A - B - C SHIFT

-  KELLY DAYS
-  VACATION
-  HOLIDAYS



OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORT EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT FIRE AND EMS DELIVERY

PARAMEDIC SCHOOL

19 TO DATE
GOAL IS 2-4 PER YEAR

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

- HAZMAT
- TECHNICAL RESCUE
- WATER RESCUE
- WILDLAND

AD HOC COMMITTEES

SHORT-TERM & LONG-TERM

INSTRUCTOR

- CPR
- ALS/BLS CLASSES
- EXTRICATION
 - LIVE FIRE
- PUMP ACADEMY

DIVISION SPECIALIST

- EMS
- LOGISTICS
- TRAINING

PREVENTION

DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL

STANDARD PROMOTIONS

- LT – CPT
 - BC
- AC – DC- FC

DIVERSE RESPONSE AREA

- URBAN
- SUBURBAN
- RURAL
- WILDERNESS



BENEFITS

REPRESENTED BY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS (IAFF) LOCAL 3520

Recruit FF \$100,428

MEDICAL | DENTAL | VISION

DISTRICT PAID FOR
EMPLOYEE & DEPENDENTS

VEBA

DISTRICT PAID HEALTH
REIMBURSEMENT
ARRANGEMENT

DRS – LEOFF RETIREMENT

EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE
SPONSORED PENSION

DEFERRED COMPENSATION

DISTRICT CONTRIBUTES 6%
INTO A 457(b)

LIFE & DISABILITY INSURANCE

- DISTRICT PROVIDED LIFE INSURANCE OF \$50K
- DISTRICT PAID LONG-TERM DISABILITY

VACATION | SICK LEAVE | HOLIDAYS

GENEROUS LEAVE BANKS

LONGEVITY PAY

ADDITIONAL PAY
BEGINNING AT 5 YEARS

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT | EDUCATION INCENTIVE

- REIMBURSEMENT UP TO \$1000 PER YEAR
 - 2% ASSOCIATES
 - 4% BACHELORS



WHY EPFR?

Mission Driven – People First

- Service
- Community
- Supporting one another
- Character, humility, professionalism, and authentic care matter as much as technical skill
- Appropriate staffing levels

Organizational Commitment

- Consistently work towards building a supportive, inclusive, and accountable culture
- Committed to trust, integrity, and empathy
- Emphasize emotional intelligence, professionalism, and a community-focus

Forward-Looking

- New stations, apparatus, and growth opportunities
- Strong labor/management relationship
- Serious about selecting the right people who will move the district forward
- High standards of behavior and performance

WHERE COMPASSION AND ACTION MEET



SECTION

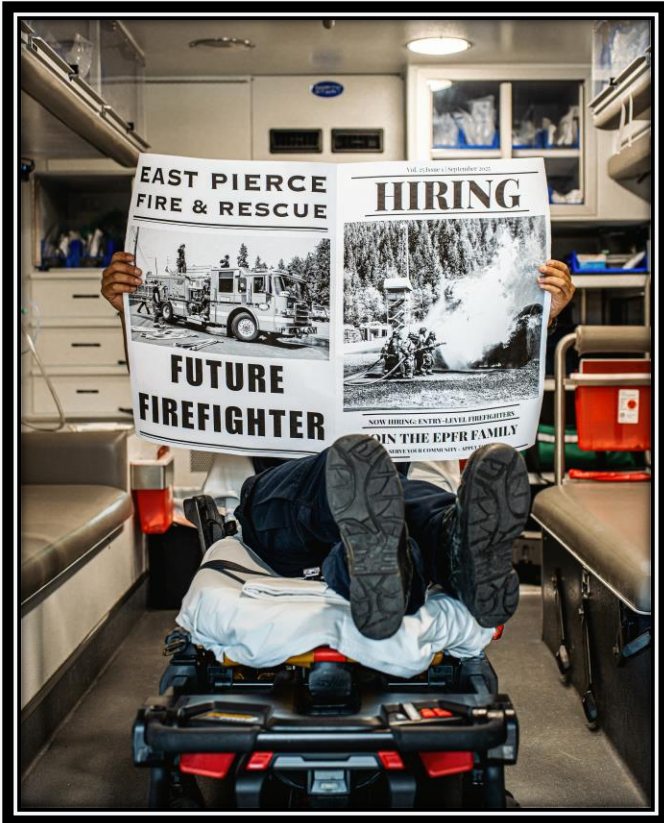
TESTING & APPLICATION

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

02



PROCESS INTRODUCTION & TIMELINE



PROCESS INTRODUCTION

- STRUCTURED – COMPETITIVE – MOVES QUICKLY
- MOST QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ANSWERED IN THE POST AND FAQS
- DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE, NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE PROCESS

TIMELINE

- JOB POSTING OPENS: JULY 1
- JOB POSTING CLOSES: AUGUST 31
- PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEWS: EARLY SEPTEMBER
- ORAL BOARDS: SEPTEMBER 28-30
- CHIEF INTERVIEWS: SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1
- CONDITIONAL OFFERS: OCTOBER 2
- PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROCESS: OCTOBER 5-NOVEMBER 15
- CONFIRMED OFFERS: ~NOVEMBER 16
- START DATE: ~JANUARY 4, 2027



TO APPLY

DETAILS MATTER!

1

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- 21 YEARS OF AGE BY START DATE
- VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE
- HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR EQUIVALENT
- LEGALLY AUTHORIZED TO WORK IN THE UNITED STATES
- ABILITY TO READ, WRITE, AND SPEAK THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- NO EMT OR CPAT REQUIRED

2

APPLY ONLINE WITH EPFR

- BY THE CLOSE DATE
- EASTPIERCFIRE.ORG/CAREERS OR GOVERNMENTJOBS.COM
- ONLINE APPLICATION, UPLOAD A RESUME, SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS
- UPLOAD DOCUMENTATION IF REQUESTING VETERANS' PREFERENCE

3

NATIONAL TESTING NETWORK (NTN)

- BY THE CLOSE DATE
- FIRETEAM WRITTEN EXAM
- PERSONAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE
- PUBLIC SAFETY SELF-ASSESSMENT
- PRE-RECORDED VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

4

SCORING

- SCORES ARE RECEIVED BY NTN
- NTN'S RECOMMENDED SCORING METHOD
- WE DO NOT SHARE SCORING INFORMATION
- SCORE THE PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEWS OF THE TOP 240 CANDIDATES



KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE MATERIALS AND FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS

02

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE TIMELINE OR PROCESS

03

ENSURE ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IS ACCURATE AND HONEST



SECTION

ADVICE

TIPS & PITFALLS

03



PRE-RECORDED VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

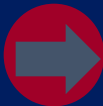
East Pierce Fire & Rescue | National Testing Network



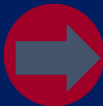
INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED IN THE JOB POSTING – PAY ATTENTION TO THE DETAILS



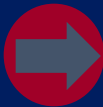
YOU WILL HAVE TIME TO PREPARE – USE IT. THIS IS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION.



USE YOUR ALLOTTED TIME WISELY. PROVIDE THOROUGH ANSWERS THAT SPECIFICALLY RELATE TO THE QUESTION.



DO NOT READ A SCRIPT OR PROVIDE CANNED ANSWERS.



PANELISTS WILL REVIEW HUNDREDS OF THESE – WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE & A STRONG CANDIDATE?



ORAL BOARD & CHIEF INTERVIEW

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Arrive on time – do not be late
- Business or business casual
- Clean and professional
- Each process is ~25-30 minutes and has ~5-8 questions
- You will have a copy of the questions available to you during the interview to reference
- Each phase of the hiring process is an opportunity to take a different look at the candidate

ORAL BOARD

- 3-5 uniformed personnel of various ranks (FF – Chief Officer)
- We ask the same structured, behavior-based, job-related questions of every candidate
- Goal is to get to know you – not to see if you can answer the question correctly
- Will you be a good fit for
 - The District
 - The culture
 - The long-term investment

CHIEF INTERVIEW

- Typically, 2 chiefs – the Fire Chief and a Deputy Chief
- We ask the same questions of all candidates however there are more follow-up questions and possible individualized discussion to get to know you better
- Final opportunity to determine if the whole person matches our needs
 - Character, attitude, communication, professionalism, & readiness for the job – will you make us better and move us forward?



QUESTION PREP

CORE CONCEPTS

- TEAMWORK (ROLE & DYNAMICS)
- LEADERSHIP
- FOLLOWERSHIP
- DISCIPLINE
- DIVERSITY
- CUSTOMER SERVICE
- CONFLICT
- STRESS / PRESSURE

BE PREPARED TO ANSWER

- TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF (ORAL RESUME)
- WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO PREPARE
- WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS / WEAKNESSES
- WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE JOB OF A FF
- WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT - AND WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN - EPFR (beyond stats)

BE PREPARED. ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS. KNOW YOUR EXPERIENCES.



TIPS



Gain an understanding of each concept – this allows you to provide an organic and thorough response



Understand the position you are applying for – you don't need experience but know what the job entails and why you want it



Know your experiences and think through possible scenarios that would provide examples for each core concept



Structure your answers so they are easy to follow and know that if you don't say it – we don't assume it



Be authentic and honest



PITFALLS



Not preparing – winging it



Not answering the question completely or answering the wrong question – canned answers can trip you up!



Rambling or getting off track – stop and recompose yourself



No depth to answers – little detail, no knowledge of concept or how your experience relates to it and how it is applicable to the fire service



Dishonesty, lack of self-awareness, overconfidence, or entitlement



ADVICE



Get help - reach out to friends or fire service acquaintances, watch videos, do your research



Film yourself – see how you present



Everyone in the process is pulling for you – we want candidates to do well – our goal is to pull the best out of you



A certain amount of nervousness is expected - the more you prepare and practice, the more comfortable you'll be



Throughout the process show respect and professionalism toward everyone



SECTION

PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROCESS

WHAT TO EXPECT

04



CONDITIONAL OFFER → PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROCESS (all costs covered)

CPAT

- 8 events developed to assess physical ability to perform essential tasks
- Required within 1 year of start date
- Accept current valid CPATs

BACKGROUND

- Contract with NTN
- Review RCW 43.43.830
- Includes criminal history & driving record review
- Very thorough – be honest & prepared with past employment information, previous addresses, references, have any court related material available

MEDICAL | PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Ensure candidates are medically, physically, and emotionally/mentally suited
- Full review of health history, baseline fitness measures, and required occupational screening
- Psychological testing includes a series of questioning, proctored tests conducted virtually, and an interview

Successful completion of all components = Confirmed Offer



SECTION

ACADEMY

OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS

05



DETAILS

Paid Normal Wage



RED KNIGHT ACADEMY

- IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE
- LAKEWOOD
- 22-25 WEEKS
- MONDAY-FRIDAY
- PLUS STUDY TIME

CERTIFICATIONS

- EMT-B
- FFI
- FFII
- HAZMAT AWARENESS
- HAZMAT OPERATIONS



WHAT IT TAKES

1

ACADEMICS

- EMT
- FIRE ACADEMY
- READING VS MEMORIZING
 - TAKE THE TEST BEFORE YOU TAKE THE TEST

2

PHYSICALITY

- PUSH-UP
- PULL-UPS
- SIT-UPS
- RUNNING
- CARDIO VS STRENGTH
- PREPARATION

3

ATTITUDE

- YOU WILL LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF
- GRIT | DETERMINATION
- POSITIVITY
- BEING A RECRUIT

4

TIME

- A WAY OF LIFE – NOT JUST A JOB
- YOU GET OUT WHAT YOU PUT IN
- YOU DON'T DO THIS ALONE – NEED A SUPPORT SYSTEM



SECTION

Q&A

OPEN FOR QUESTIONS

06

Thank You

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