

WOMEN IN FIREFIGHTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



The Application Form

Why can't I fax or email my Application Form?

The Application Form requires a photo; signatures and copies of supporting documentation therefore it cannot be submitted via fax or email. The Form and all supporting documentation must be submitted to CFA Firefighter Recruitment by the advertised date.

I do not seem to be able to provide a lot of experience or answers in the appropriate sections, is it still worth my while applying?

Yes. As long as you meet the basic criteria your information will be reviewed. Remember that a comprehensive 16-week course is provided to improve knowledge, skill and dexterity.

Fitness Requirements

Why the beep test?

The reason CFA conducts the "Beep test" is to ensure that applicants have sufficient cardiovascular fitness, strength and stamina to perform the many varied tasks involved in fire fighting and rescue. The level 9 - shuttle 6 benchmark of the test, represents the equivalent VO2Max lung capacity of 45ml/kg/min. This is the level that the Australian Fire Authorities Council has determined as the ideal for the performance of fire suppression duties in a safe and efficient manner. These physical and energy demands are the basic requirements to fight fires in a safe and effective manner.

What is the point of achieving this level of fitness if you do not get tested again once you are in the position?

The beep test is conducted on at least 3 other occasions during the Recruit Course. CFA have a duty of care to ensure that all new recruits have the physical, emotional and intellectual capacity to perform the basic functions of the role. The beep test is conducted under the same rationale as the aptitude tests, the interviews, the character checks and medical. Whilst fitness levels can vary, aptitude does not and therefore you will not have to undergo the aptitude tests again once you become a Firefighter. It is important in the first instance that we know you have the capacity to handle the physical, academic and general reasoning demands of the job.

I have never undergone the BEEP TEST before and I am not sure I will be able to pass the benchmark?

Have a go at it in your own time but preferably with someone else to push you along. Use a partner, friend or trainer to help you. If you are unable to obtain a copy of the beep test CD then simulate it as much as possible with your training. (e.g. Mark out a line 20 metres apart and train between those lines progressively getting faster each minute).

Take advantage of the trials. You can participate in trials during the Women in Fire-fighting information sessions without the pressure of a pass or fail benchmark.

I have never held a fire hose or climbed up a tall ladder is this a problem?

Information is available on the simulated fire challenge testing. This simulated course represents some of the basic skills of a fire-fighter. Although you do not have to be perfect, you will still need a reasonable level of competence in order to be successful. Call into a CFA station and ask if you can be shown some of the equipment used. Take advantage of the CFA "Mini Challenge" demonstration to measure where you fit in. Then use it to plan your development. If you have difficulties with the 20kg container haul or the hose drag or the ladder climb then these should form the focus of your training.

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I do not currently play any sport or train regularly, can I still apply?

This will make your preparation a little harder but should not deter you.

Time may be a consideration depending on what your base level is. Many local gyms can give you a basic fitness assessment and could also help you with establishing a training regime that will not only put you in good stead for the recruitment process but also carry over if you are successful in obtaining an ongoing position.

General Questions

I have never driven a truck before. Will this be a disadvantage?

Many of the men applying in the process have also never driven a truck. Although it is not a prerequisite it is an important element of the job. You can investigate what is involved with the test and lessons with a training provider. Details can be obtained from the VicRoads website.

What about risks of fire fighting and reproductive health?

FireFighters, male or female can face hazards to their health in the course of their work.

CFA is committed to meeting its obligations under the OH&S Act and supports best practice safety review mechanisms to ensure that the health and safety of our members is protected at all times.

There seems to be so many challenges I am not sure it is worth the effort.

Overcoming challenges is part of being a good fire fighter. In addition to personal challenges there will be many more challenges that form part of this emergency services role. The role of professional fire-fighter requires a high level of skill and commitment. This is a highly sought after role and only the best and most dedicated make it through.

When you talk to many of the current CFA Career Fire-fighters you will learn that many of them took between 2 and 4 application attempts before gaining entry to their chosen career. You may decide not to pursue the role or you may decide to have a go and in the end find that the rewards are just as great as the challenges. The answers to these questions can really only come from you.