



Firefighter Examination NJFFE

Administration Guide



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Introduction

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission (CSC) has prepared this guide for candidates who will participate in the New Jersey Firefighter Exam (NJFFE). The information in this guide is designed to help candidates better understand the testing process. This guide offers a systematic approach to assist candidates in preparing for the examination administration and explains what to expect post-examination. We encourage candidates to review this guide and the NJFFE Preparation Guide. The NJFFE Preparation Guide is designed to assist test-takers in preparing for the exam. Only candidates who have applied to take the NJFFE will be able to access the NJFFE Preparation Guide. The Preparation Guide will be available after the closing for the Firefighter announcement, in the fall of 2026. Candidates should take advantage of any and all opportunities to prepare for the examination.

The examination will be designed on the basis of information obtained from a job analysis (JA) of the Firefighter title. The JA provides a description of the duties performed by incumbents and identifies the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) that are required to effectively perform each of these duties that make up the job.

Please note that no study group has been involved in the development or review of CSC exams, and at no time has any exam material been provided to such groups. Additionally, the CSC is not responsible for any claims made by study groups or the manner in which they represent themselves for advertisement purposes.

Why do candidates have to take an examination?

The selection process in New Jersey's Civil Service System is designed to provide all applicants with an equal opportunity to compete for a position. The examination will serve as one objective tool in this process. Test scores will be used to identify qualified candidates and to generate ranked lists of eligibles to be considered for appointment by local appointing authorities (AAs).

How was the examination developed?

A JA was conducted to identify the KSAOs that are essential to perform the job of a Firefighter. A JA is the process of critically examining job components in order to provide a functional description of a job. As a part of this JA, information was gathered about the job through interviews, surveys, and/or observations of on-the-job activities of incumbents (permanent employees). Based on this JA, several KSAOs were identified and rated as to their importance for job success. Examination questions will relate to those KSAOs that were determined to be essential.

What will the examination look like and how will it be scored?

Please refer to the NJFFE Preparation Guide, once it becomes available, for more information.

Are there preparation strategies for taking the examination?

Please refer to the NJFFE Preparation Guide, once it becomes available, for more information.

When and where will the examination be held?

The timeframe to administer the Entry-Level Firefighter Examination is late fall/winter. However, in the event there are difficulties scheduling the examination, the timeframe may change. Because of the anticipated large volume of candidates, multiple test dates, times and locations will be used to administer the examination. Specific dates, times and locations will be determined at a later date. Applicants should monitor the CSC website <https://www.nj.gov/csc/> for the most up-to-date information regarding the Firefighter Exam.

Examination Notices will be mailed about two to three weeks prior to the test date. The Notice will list the candidate's specific test date, location and time. Candidates may be scheduled to take the examination at various sites (north, central, or south) throughout the state. Once candidates are notified of their scheduled examination center, directions can be obtained from our website at <https://www.nj.gov/csc/contact/testing/>. Be sure to map out a travel route well in advance of the examination date and plan to arrive at the test center early, since no one will be admitted late. Candidates will not be allowed to refer to this guide or the NJFFE Preparation Guide after they arrive at the test center.

What Candidates Should NOT Bring to the Exam

With the threat of high-tech cheating on the rise, it is the policy of the N.J. Civil Service Commission (CSC) that possession of electronic devices, such as cell phones, pagers, tablets, e-book readers, smart glasses, digital watches, fitness trackers, PDAs, or any device with recording/imaging, communication, or internet capabilities is strictly prohibited at the test center. **Candidates who are seen with these devices in the test center at ANY time (including before and after their individual examination has been completed), even in a power-off mode, will be disqualified.** The device may also be confiscated to ensure that an attempt was not made to compromise the testing process. In addition, note paper, any study or reference materials, briefcases, backpacks, and other personal items should not be brought inside the test center. For more information see: <https://www.nj.gov/csc/faq/cellphones.shtml>

Upon completion of the testing process, candidates must leave the test center so that other candidates (still involved in the testing) will not be distracted by outside conversations. In some cases where the testing of multiple sessions is being conducted, you may be held, as a group, and released when the next group arrives. This is done in order to prevent interaction between those who have been tested and those who have not been tested.

What will happen on the day of the examination?

On the day your examination is scheduled, plan to arrive at your designated test center early. Due to the nature of the examination administration, **NO ONE WILL BE ADMITTED LATE**. Bring the notification of examination card (Notice) that you received in the mail, two sharpened Number 2 pencils, and two forms of identification. One form of identification **MUST** include your photograph; failure to do so will result in you being excluded from taking the examination.

Valid forms of ID include: driver's license, passport, social security card, employee ID, county ID, bank- issued credit card with photo, and government-issued ID. Forms of ID that are **NOT** accepted include: library card, shopping club card, and retail or department store issued credit cards. If you are not certain if your ID is acceptable, call the CSC before your test date at (609) 292-4144 to find out what is or is not a valid form of ID.

Your Notice may not have an assigned room (a letter found in the bottom right hand corner) for you to report to; therefore, your room assignment will be made at the test center, and staff there will direct you to a test room. Pay attention to any **SPECIAL** messages that might appear on your notification card.

What should candidates do if they need special assistance?

Candidates who require special assistance for this exam must check the corresponding box on the "Preferences" tab of their on-line application, regardless of whether or not they have previously been approved for accommodations with CSC in the past. Candidates who are indicating a need for accommodations for the first time, as well as candidates who have previously been approved for accommodations, will subsequently be contacted with further instructions.

Can candidates request a make-up examination?

According to the New Jersey Administrative Code 4A:4-2.9(a), make-up examinations may only be authorized for the following reasons:

1. Error by the Civil Service Commission or appointing authority;
2. Serious illness or disability of the candidate on the test date, provided the candidate submits a doctor's certificate specifying that the candidate was not able to take the test on that day for medical reasons;
3. Documented serious illness or death in the candidate's immediate family;
4. Natural disaster;
5. Prior vacation or travel plans outside of New Jersey or any contiguous state, which cannot be reasonably changed, as evidenced by a sworn statement and relevant documentation;
6. When required for certain persons returning from military service (see N.J.A.C. 4A:4-4.6A); and
7. Other valid reasons, as determined by the CSC.

Make-up requests, with supporting documentation, must be submitted in writing within five days of receipt of the test notification. However, in situations involving an illness, death, or natural disaster that occurs on or immediately before the test date, a request for make-up must be made in writing no later than five days after the test date. Written requests for make-up examinations should be mailed to: NJCSC Make-Up Exam Unit, P.O. Box 310, Trenton, NJ 08625-0310 or emailed to ffmakeup@csc.nj.gov.

All make-up requests based on medical grounds must include a New Jersey Civil Service Commission Medical Authorization for Make-Up Examinations form (DPF-728), completed by the treating physician. This form can be obtained from our website at <https://www.nj.gov/csc/about/publications/forms/pdf/dpf-728.pdf> or by contacting the CSC's Information Center at (609) 292-4144.

Additionally, your treating physician must provide a separate detailed letter containing a diagnosis and statement clearly indicating why your physical condition will prevent you from taking the examination as scheduled. This letter should include the date the injury/illness began, the date of your last office visit, and the earliest date you can take the test. Information on your leave time from work because of your illness/injury should also be included. The documentation must be on official letterhead, written in layman's terms and legible. If insufficient, untimely, or illegible information is provided, your request will be denied.

What about security issues?

All candidates will be required to sign a pledge form at the test center stating that they will NOT discuss the content of the examination with any candidates, individuals, groups, or organizations whose interest in the test process, product, or material could conflict with the objectives of the CSC.

Will candidates get a chance to review their answers or test materials after the exam is held?

To protect the security of this examination, there will be no post-exam review of any test materials.

If candidates have a complaint, how can they appeal/comment?

If a problem occurs during the administration of the examination and causes a candidate to be placed in a position of disadvantage, an administrative appeal must be filed **PRIOR** to leaving the test center. Appropriate forms will be provided for these purposes on the day of the examination.

Candidates may file a content appeal if they believe the examination material is not appropriate for the Firefighter title or if they believe a test question is faulty. Content appeals must be filed within five (5) days of the candidate's test date.

If a candidate wishes to file an appeal, he/she should be as specific as possible. Appeals based solely on opinion or rumor will not be addressed. If a candidate disagrees with a question, he/she should give specific reasons or proof as to why he/she disagrees.

The CSC will not entertain any **UNSUBSTANTIATED** complaints regarding breaches of security. Investigation and action will be taken only on signed complaints that are fully documented, i.e., the names of individuals who discussed the materials, the names of any witnesses to the discussion, the nature of the discussion, and the date and place where the discussion occurred.

Is there a charge for submitting an appeal/comment?

All appeals are subject to a \$20 processing fee, paid by check or money order to CSC. Persons receiving public assistance, or who have veteran status, are exempt from this fee. Comments are free of charge.

What happens if the examination is postponed?

If circumstances force postponement of the examination, or in the case of inclement weather, the CSC will post a message on the CSC website: <https://nj.gov/csc>. Candidates may also call the CSC directly at (609) 292-4144 and listen to the pre-recorded message to find out the status of the examination.

Tips for test takers

The test you will take is designed to assess job-related KSAOs that have been deemed essential for job success. Based on standards contained in the Federal Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection, only those job-related KSAOs that are necessary upon entry to a job are suitable for employment testing. In other words, if a subject area or ability can be learned on the job, it will not be represented on a test used to hire or promote job candidates. The CSC relies on the expertise of Subject Matter Experts (i.e., incumbents with knowledge regarding the performance standards and requirements of the job) to make these determinations. For this reason, there may be some job areas not represented on this test.

In cases where generalized test questions are used, the important thing to remember is that the nature, context, or topic of the question is not as important as the underlying KSAO required to answer the question. For example, a group of test questions referencing a set of rules and regulations may be included on a test in order to assess a job candidate's ability to interpret and apply rules based on the circumstances presented within a given situation. In this example, the specific content of the rules or the agency from which the rules have been taken is not necessarily important. In fact, the rules themselves may come from a fictitious organization. What is important is the candidate's ability to consider all the information presented, and through the proper analysis of this information, select the best answer to each question.

Below are a few test-taking strategies that may help you successfully complete your examination:

- Listen to the instructions provided by the test monitor. Ask questions if you're not sure what is being said.
- Make sure you know how much time you have to complete the exam, and then check your time periodically to keep track of the amount of time remaining. You will be responsible for tracking your own time. NO warnings will be given about how much time is left. If you finish early, take some time to review your answer sheet to ensure that you have answered all of the questions and that your bubbles are darkened completely.
- You will be permitted to write in your test booklet. As you proceed through the test, you may wish to circle key words or concepts that may be important in answering test questions. However, all answers **MUST** be marked on your answer sheet before time expires, in order for them to be scored.
- Read each question carefully to ensure you fully understand what is being asked, and then try to answer the question without looking at the options.
- Review each answer option carefully and select the one that **BEST** answers the question.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, eliminate all options that are clearly wrong and place a mark next to the ones remaining. This will help you focus on the most viable options still to be considered.
- There is no penalty for guessing. So if you are still unsure of an answer, it's better to guess than to leave it blank.
- When you have completed the test, review your answer sheet to ensure each question has been answered and that all erasures are clean.

What to expect post-exam

- Your answer sheet will be scanned and scored. The number of questions you answered correctly will be calculated. This is your “Raw” score. Candidates will be ranked accordingly by their veteran’s status and raw score.
- On the day the lists issue, you will be mailed an eligibility/ineligibility notification card indicating whether you achieved a passing score or not. If you passed the exam, you will be given your score and rank for each jurisdiction that you qualify.
- Candidates who have been certified must respond, in writing, to the AA listed on their certification notice within the timeframe stated on the notice that they are interested in the position. If candidates do not respond within this timeframe, they may be removed from the list and **NOT** considered for future appointments.
- The AA may select from the top three ranked candidates for each position available. This is known as the “Rule of Three.” More information regarding veteran’s preference and the “rule of three” can be found on the NJ CSC website at: <https://nj.gov/csc/jobs/veterans/>.
- Once a certification has been exhausted or has expired, another certification may be issued as other job openings arise. Additional eligible candidates will appear on the new certification in rank order based on their scores and veterans status. This process will continue until the entire eligible list is exhausted or the list expires.

Conclusion

This guide was designed to help familiarize candidates with aspects of the administration of the FSAB. The suggestions provided here are not exhaustive; we encourage candidates to engage in whatever additional preparation strategies they believe will enhance their chances of performing effectively on the examination.

Best of Luck on the Exam!