

## 2024 Fire Alarm Operator Examination

FIRE DEPARTMENTS: Brockton, Boston, Holyoke, Lynn, and Somerville

This examination is being held to create an eligible list from which to fill vacancies in this job title for participating Massachusetts Fire Departments. Candidates must take and pass this examination in order to be placed on the eligible list.

**Written Examination Date:** December 7, 2024

**Application Period Begins:** September 9, 2024

**Application Deadline:** November 5, 2024

**Examination fee:** \$75

Written examination locations: TBD

### What is a Fire Alarm Operator?

Fire Alarm Operators (FAO's) are essential for maintaining coordination between different fire companies across the department. They evaluate service requests by factoring in available resources, agency jurisdictions, and boundaries, utilizing maps, charts, and resource lists so that an allocation of resources is determined. They also convey instructions, information, and directions to the service requester and then relay the information to telecommunications personnel or other entities. They also are responsible for receiving and maintaining equipment ranging from reading and adjusting fire alarm equipment to updating CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) systems.

**Specific Duties:** Under supervision from employees of a higher grade: processes requests for public safety services CAD (Computer-Aided Dispatch System); reads and adjusts fire alarm equipment; updates CAD system; evaluates service requests, given available resources, agency jurisdictions, and boundaries, utilizing maps, charts, and resource lists so that an allocation of resources is determined; conveys instructions, information, and directions to the service requester and then relays the information to telecommunications personnel or other entities.

For more information about what is involved in being a Fire Alarm Operator we recommend the following resources:

- National Fire Protection Association. *NFPA 1221 Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems.*
- International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA). *Fire and Emergency Services Orientation and Terminology*, (7th edition).

The exam will test reading comprehension, interpretation, and other related skills. All information necessary to answer any exam questions will be included in the preparation guide available on our website [Civil Service | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/civil-service). There is no required reading list for this examination and any information required to answer exam questions will be provided.

**Examination Subjects:** The written examination will be designed to test, where practicable, the following knowledge, abilities and skills that have been established as qualifications for the position: Ability to understand the methods and techniques used in filing and records retention; Ability to understand, interpret and apply written directions, street maps, and charts; Ability to extract pertinent information from charts, tables, and dispatch protocols system; and Ability to read, comprehend, and understand policies, procedures, guidelines, and protocols in order to generate records of public safety services requests.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Candidates must have graduated from high school or must possess an equivalency certificate.

**Credit for Employment/Experience:** Pursuant to the provisions of [M.G.L. Ch. 31, § 22](#), individuals may apply to receive credit for employment or experience in the position title of Fire Alarm Operator. You must claim this credit by completing the applicable section of the application. All claims must be verified by supporting documentation, which must provide specific details of any employment or experience you have in the examination title as a Fire Alarm Operator, including dates of service and number of hours worked per week. The supporting documentation must be on original letterhead with an original signature from the appointing authority where the employment or experience occurred. Credit for employment or experience is applicable only to individuals who achieve a passing score on the written examination and cannot be added to a failing written examination score. Claims must be submitted during the application period; supporting documentation must be scanned and attached to your application or sent to [civilservice@mass.gov](mailto:civilservice@mass.gov). Supporting documentation must be submitted within seven calendar days of the written examination.

**Application:** All applications must be received by the last filing date and accompanied by an examination processing fee. You will receive two confirmation emails when you have completed the process: one email confirming your application has been received, and one email confirming your payment has been received. Your application is not complete until you have received both confirmation emails. If you have not submitted payment of the examination processing fee on or before November 5, 2024, your application will not be accepted.

**Fee Waiver:** The examination processing fee may be waived for candidates who have received certain state or federal public assistance, or unemployment insurance during any portion of the twelve months leading up to the original examination date, *December 7, 2024*. Fee Waiver Forms are available on our website ([Fee Waiver Form](#)). This form should be completed and supporting documentation must be scanned and attached to the application. All fee waiver forms must be submitted on or before November 5, 2024.

Please note that preferences are only available to individuals who receive a passing score on the examination and cannot be applied to a failing examination score.

- **Veterans' Preference:** For information, visit [Veteran's Preference Information](#).
- **Disabled Veteran Status:** For information, visit [Disabled Veteran's Preference Information](#).
- **Preference For The Children Of Certain Police Officers/Firefighters:** The son or daughter of a Firefighter or Police Officer employed in Massachusetts who was killed or died of injuries received in the performance of duty, or who was permanently disabled as a result of injuries received in the performance of duty, is entitled to certification preference under the provisions of Chapter 402 of the Acts of 1985. If you believe you are eligible for this preference, you must claim this credit by completing the applicable section of the application.
- **Selective Certification for Bilingual Fire Alarm Operators:** If an appointing authority requires that a Fire Alarm Operator be fluent in a second language (e.g., Spanish, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, etc.), the appointing authority may request that competition for that vacancy be limited to persons who have such skills. You will have the opportunity on your application to indicate the foreign language(s) in which you are fluent. You will need to prove your language fluency at the time of appointment.

**Current Military Personnel:** All military personnel who, in connection with current service, have military orders that indicate their unavailability due to military service on the examination date, must file an application, examination processing fee and a written request for a makeup examination along with a copy of the military orders attached. Please include in your request your email address, daytime base phone number and/or name and phone number of a friend or family member with whom you have regular contact and entrust with your personal communication. Requests filed after the application deadline (November 5, 2024), must be accompanied by a DD214 showing discharge within six months of the request and dates of active service that include the entire application period. For more information refer to the [Military Information](#) section on our website.

**Makeup Examination:** With the exception of current military personnel as described above, no candidate has a right to a makeup examination due to personal or professional conflicts on the testing date. Candidates are advised to consider this before applying for the examination. If you file an examination application by the application deadline but are unable to appear for the examination on the examination date due to an emergency or unanticipated hardship, you may request a makeup examination by filing a written request with verifiable documentation to HRD no later than seven calendar days from the original examination date. HRD reserves the right to approve or deny your request and may require an additional examination processing fee upon approval of your request.

**Reasonable Accommodations:** If you need special testing accommodations due to a documented impairment or medical condition, you must submit a letter of support from a qualified professional detailing what type of accommodation you require at the examination site, and such letter must be scanned and attached to the application or emailed to [civilservice@mass.gov](mailto:civilservice@mass.gov) by November 5, 2024. Without such a letter, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to grant your accommodation. This information is requested only to provide reasonable accommodation for examinations and will not be used for any other purposes.

**Refunds:** There will be no refund of the examination processing fee unless the examination is cancelled by HRD.

**Notice to Appear:** Notices to Appear including time and location of examination will be emailed to candidates after the close of the application period, and prior to the examination date.

**Updating Information:** Candidates are responsible for maintaining accurate contact information. Failure to keep your records current may jeopardize opportunities for promotion. For information on how to update your information, visit [Update Your Account](#).

**Identification at the Examination Site:** At the examination site, candidates must present current and valid photo identification with signature (e.g., driver's license, passport, military ID).

**Private School or Service:** HRD does not recommend or endorse any private school, service, or publisher offering preparation and/or publications for examinations and is not responsible for their advertising claims.

Women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

For more information about this and other civil service examinations, visit

<http://www.mass.gov/civilservice> or email the Civil Service Unit at [civilservice@mass.gov](mailto:civilservice@mass.gov).

Inquiries may also be made to HRD, Monday through Friday, 8:45am – 5pm, at the following numbers:

Boston area: (617) 878-9895

Within Massachusetts: 1-800-392-6178

TTY Number: (617) 878-9762