

2027 Fire Alarm Operator

If you currently have a Civil Service Online Account DO NOT create a new account to apply for this exam.

Utilize the Government Jobs Help & Support to access your account. [Online Employment Application Guide | Massachusetts Civil Service Applications](#)

Test takers with two accounts may cause delays with properly recording your application and notifications from civil service such as notices to appear, or job opportunities. If you have questions, please email civilservice@mass.gov.

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

Participating Fire Departments: Brockton, Boston, Holyoke, Lynn, and Somerville

Written Examination Date: February 5, 2027

Application Period Begins: November 17, 2026

Application Deadline: January 5, 2027

Examination Processing Fee: \$75

Written examination locations: Various sites across the Commonwealth.

What is a Fire Alarm Operator?

Fire Alarm Operators (FAOs) play a critical role in coordinating emergency response operations across the fire department. They assess requests for service by considering available resources, agency jurisdictions, response boundaries, and other operational factors. Using maps, charts, and resource databases, they determine the appropriate allocation of emergency resources.

FAOs communicate instructions, information, and directions to callers and relay critical incident details to telecommunications personnel and other responding agencies. They are also responsible for monitoring, operating, and maintaining fire alarm and dispatch equipment,

including reading and adjusting fire alarm systems and updating Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems to ensure accurate and efficient emergency response.

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

Application: An examination processing fee must be received by the application deadline. 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 the application deadline, your application will not be accepted.

Note: Although the online application system allows candidates to elect to receive notification by email or regular mail, please be advised that HRD utilizes only email for all notices to candidates.

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 one year immediately preceding the examination date, February 5, 2027. 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 the application deadline.

Current Military Personnel: Any current military personnel requesting a makeup opportunity, please [click here](#) for more information.

Makeup Examination: With the exception of current military personnel, 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 submit an examination application by the application deadline but are unable to appear for the examination on the scheduled 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 examination date. HRD reserves the right to approve or deny your request. HRD may require an additional examination processing fee upon approval of your request.

Reasonable Accommodations: If you need reasonable accommodations due to a documented impairment, or medical condition, you must fill out the [Testing Accommodations Request Form](#) and submit supporting documentation as outlined on the form from a qualified professional detailing what type of accommodation you require at the examination site. The form and supporting documentation must be scanned and attached to the application or emailed to CS-ReasonableAccommodations@mass.gov no later than four weeks prior to the examination date. Without such a letter, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to grant your accommodation. This

information is requested only to provide reasonable accommodations for examinations and will not be used for any other purposes.

Credit for Employment/Experience: Pursuant to the provisions of MGL 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 of Fire Alarm Operator, including dates of service and, if part-time, the total number of hours worked. The supporting documentation must be on original letterhead with an original signature from the hiring authority where the employment or experience occurred. Credit for employment or experience is applicable only to individuals who achieve a passing score on the examination and cannot be added to a failing examination score. Claims must be submitted during the application period. Supporting documentation must be scanned and attached to the application or sent to civilservice@mass.gov no later than February 12, 2027.

Note: Resumes will not be accepted as sufficient supporting documentation.

Preference Claims for Fire Alarm Operator: Candidates can submit a claim for the following preferences.

- **Veterans' Preference:** Click on this link for further information- [Veterans' Preference Eligibility](#).
- **Disabled Veteran Status:** Click on this link for further information- [Disabled Veteran's Preference Eligibility](#).
- **Preference For the Children of Certain Police Officers/Firefighters:** The son or daughter of a Police Officer/Firefighter 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.

During the Human Resources Division (HRD) review process or during the life of the applicable eligible list(s), candidates must make original supporting documentation available should the issue of authenticity arise with any submitted document copies.

Specific Duties: Under the supervision of higher-level personnel, Fire Alarm Operators process requests for public safety services using a Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Duties include monitoring, reading, and adjusting fire alarm equipment; updating and maintaining CAD records; evaluating requests for service by considering available resources, agency jurisdictions, response boundaries, maps, charts, and resource lists to determine the appropriate allocation of emergency resources; communicating instructions, information, and directions to callers; and relaying critical information to telecommunications personnel and other appropriate agencies or entities.

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

- National Fire Protection Association. *NFPA 1225 Standard for Emergency Services Communications (2022 edition)*.
- 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](#).

Examination Subjects: The written examination will be designed to test, where practicable, the following 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.

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

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

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.

Salary: Inquiries concerning salary should be directed to the hiring department at the time of employment consideration.

Supplemental Information:

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

For more information or inquiries about this and other civil service examinations, visit www.mass.gov/civilservice or email the Civil Service Unit at civilservice@mass.gov.

The Civil Service Unit's office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:45am – 5:00pm, except holidays. Inquiries may also be made to the Civil Service Unit during these hours at the following numbers:

Boston area: (617) 878-9895 or (617)-878-9700
Toll-Free Within Massachusetts: 1-800-392-6178
TTY Number: (617) 878-9762