

Frequently Asked Questions for the Firefighter Exam

Q: When can I apply for the Firefighter exam?

A: Please check the Civil Service [Exam Schedule](#) **periodically**. The exam schedule is continuously being updated. The last Firefighters exam was held in 2020.

Q: I see the Firefighters exam is being offered in 2021. I took it in 2020, do I need to apply and take the exam again to remain on the eligible list?

A: No. Your score from the exam in 2020, will determine your ranking on the eligible list and will be good for two years (3/15/2021 through 3/15/2023).

Q: How many times can someone take the exam?

A: Candidates are eligible to participate each time the exam is offered, whether every two years or annually. If candidates participate in the annual cycle, the most recent test score will be used for ranking on the eligible list. A candidate could take the most recent exam, fail, and no longer appear on any eligible list.

Q: I participated in the 2020 Firefighters exam and choose not to take the exam in 2021, how does this impact my ranking on the eligible list?

A: All test takers that participate in the 2021 exam will be merged onto the eligible list based on scores and [statutory preferences](#), such as Veterans and residency.

Q: Am I qualified to take the Firefighter exam?

A: Any entrance qualifications and requirements for the position will be listed on the exam announcement. Please carefully review these qualifications and requirements to be sure you meet them before you apply.

Q: How do I apply for the Firefighter exam?

A: Read the Firefighter exam poster and apply [online](#) when it is available.

Q: What are components of the Firefighter exam?

A: The exam consists of two parts. The first part is the written test and the second is the Entry Level Physical Ability Test (ELPAT).

Q: What are components of the written test?

A: The written test has 3 parts, each measuring qualities that are important to succeed as an entry-level firefighter:

- **Written Ability Test (WAT)** — Evaluates cognitive abilities essential to performing a firefighter’s responsibilities, including verbal expression, verbal comprehension, problem sensitivity, deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, and information ordering
- **Work Styles Questionnaire (WSQ)** — Assesses certain motivational, value-related, and attitudinal characteristics that can help firefighter succeed
- **Life Experience Survey (LES)** — Consists of a series of multiple-choice questions related to candidates’ past history and experience that are relevant to the duties of a civil servant

You can use the [Firefighter Written Test Preparation Guide](#) to find out more about the exam process, learn test-taking techniques, and practice with sample questions.

Q: What are components of the ELPAT?

A: The ELPAT is a series of job simulated events a firefighter encounter on the job. Please see our website for the [Firefighter Physical Ability Test Preparation Guide](#) detailing each event.

Q: After I apply for the exam how will I know when and where to take the written test?

A: Two weeks before the written test date you will receive a notice to appear by email. The notice will tell you the location and the time to appear for your written test. Please check your junk or spam mail folder for the e-mail before contacting the Civil Service office.

Q: Is there an opportunity to preview the ELPAT?

A: Yes, information will be provided once an applicant has been scheduled for their ELPAT.

Q: What date will my ELPAT be scheduled for?

A: Your ELPAT date will be scheduled by the Civil Service Unit. You will receive a detailed Notice to Appear approximately 2 weeks before your scheduled ELPAT.

Q: I can't attend my scheduled ELPAT date, can I re-schedule?

A: With the exception of current military personnel who cannot be in Massachusetts on the scheduled date of the ELPAT, no applicant has a right to a makeup exam due to personal or professional conflicts on the testing date. If you are unable to appear for your scheduled ELPAT date due to an emergency or unanticipated hardship, contact Civil Service ASAP, and you may request a makeup date, by sending an email to elpat@mass.gov with verifiable documentation to the Civil Service Unit no later than seven (7) calendar days from the originally scheduled date. The Civil Service Unit reserves the right to approve OR deny your request and may require an additional exam processing fee upon approval of your request. Such requests will be processed on a first-come first served basis.

Q: What happens if I fail to attend my scheduled ELPAT?

A: You will automatically fail the Firefighter exam and will not be placed on an eligible list.

Q: When will I receive my exam results?

A: Results will be emailed to you as soon as they are available.