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# Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment

Orientation Guide

November 2024

severn.ca



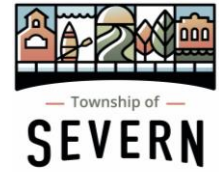


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# Section 1: Foreword

This orientation guide has been developed as a resource for those individuals who have indicated an interest in becoming a member of Severn Fire and Emergency Services (SFES). Participation as a member of a volunteer fire service can bring personal rewards, raise self-esteem, and give you a tremendous sense of accomplishment for a job well done. Volunteering to help your community in times of need is also a respected and valuable service, and contributes to the health, safety, and wellness of both residents and visitors to Severn.

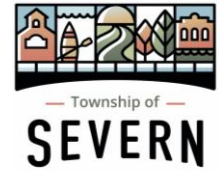
Making a commitment to serve as a Volunteer Firefighter is a serious decision. We ask that you take the time to read this orientation guide and get the facts regarding what is involved in being a member of SFES. Candidates often underestimate the amount of time and effort required to be a successful firefighter.

This orientation guide contains information about the nature of our business, training and participation, and answers the typical questions raised by those considering joining the service. While this orientation guide will not answer all possible questions about membership, it will provide you with information about the most important areas. It should be kept as a resource as you proceed through the recruitment process.

Once you understand what is involved in being a member of a volunteer Fire Service, we hope you will be able to make the commitment that our community needs.

Please read this guide thoroughly so that you clearly understand the steps in the recruitment process.

For more information contact the Fire Chief or Deputy Fire Chief directly at [fire@severn.ca](mailto:fire@severn.ca).



# Section 2: The Fire Service and the Role of Volunteer Firefighters

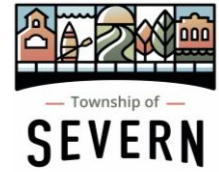
## Goals of the Fire Service

The goals of the Fire Service are to provide fire protection services through a range of programs designed to protect the lives and property of the inhabitants from the adverse effects of fires, sudden medical emergencies, or exposure to dangerous conditions whether naturally occurring or from human cause, first to the municipality; second to those municipalities requiring assistance through authorized emergency fire service plan and program (mutual aid) activities; and third, to those parties that are provided with fire protection services by the Fire Service via authorized agreement.

## The Nature of our Business

Firefighting is one of the most diverse and challenging professions known today. It is this diversity that inspires most individuals to enter the service, both as volunteers and career Firefighters. Imagine having to train to prepare yourself to cope with situations that range from structure fires to wildland fires, hazardous material incidents, medical emergencies, motor vehicle collisions and almost any imaginable emergency in between. This diversity coupled with the fact that your skills may be needed at any time of day, seven days a week, in any kind of weather, and very often under potentially stressful and emotional circumstances, makes your contribution to the profession very personally rewarding.

There are three basic purposes of the public Fire Service. First, to prevent fires or emergencies through fire safety education, second through fire prevention inspections and code enforcement programs and third through response. We are here to prepare ourselves to mitigate fires or other emergency and non-emergency incidents should education and prevention not prevail. Fire Service prepares you for response activities through education, training, pre-incident planning, response



protocols, and by providing our team with the proper equipment to complete these tasks as required.

This type of work is not for everyone. You need more than just a desire to help people. You also need courage, dedication, compassion, assertiveness, and a willingness to learn new skills and face new challenges. The Fire Service is not for the timid or for those who lose control of their emotions during times of crisis, an emergency for members of our community should not be an emergency for members of the Fire Service. Our service is one that calls on its members to perform hot, sweaty, dirty, and strenuous work, often in uncertain and hazardous environments.

The personal rewards and satisfaction received from being involved in a Volunteer Fire Service are often beyond description. There is a sense of accomplishment after controlling a building fire, compassion for accident victims, and fulfillment in teaching fire safety. The list could go on and on.

The bottom line in the Fire Service is measured by the prevention and reduction of loss of life, pain, and suffering, and limiting property damage in our municipality. We are here and prepared for one reason, which is to provide service to the residents and visitors of the Township of Severn.

If you feel you have what it takes to meet the challenges of our business, we welcome you to apply.

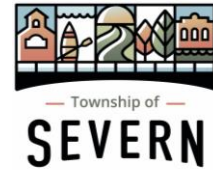
## **Primary Objectives of Severn Fire and Emergency Services**

To achieve the goals of the Fire Service, the following objectives have been established:

- complete ongoing risk assessments to identify trends in fire protection services and update fire programs accordingly
- provide an administrative process consistent with the needs of the service

- ensure that the firefighting equipment and operating personnel are available and trained to provide adequate response to a citizen's call within a reasonable length of time
- provide service training to an accepted standard which will ensure the continuous up-grading of all personnel in the latest techniques of fire prevention, firefighting, control of emergency situations and to co-operate with other municipal departments with respect to management training and other programs
- provide a maintenance program to ensure that all fire protection apparatus, including all equipment, is ready to respond to emergency calls
- provide an effective fire prevention and life safety program to:
  - a) ensure, through plan examination and inspection, compliance with applicable municipal codes, standards, by-laws, and regulations
  - b) reduce and or eliminate fire and life safety hazards with a focus on protecting vulnerable populations and historical or economically significant property
- develop and maintain effective public information systems and educational programs, to mitigate identified risks in the municipality
- ensure, in the event of a major catastrophe in the municipality, that assistance to cope with the situation is available from outside departments and other agencies
- develop and maintain a good working relationship with all federal, provincial, and municipal departments, utilities, and agencies, relating to the protection of life and property
- interact and cooperate with other departments of the corporation regarding the aspects of fire protection or any given program

## Training and Participation



Over the years, the Fire Service has evolved into a public safety agency providing highly technical and diverse services. The public has come to rely on the Fire Service as the “first responder” not only when life and property are threatened by human-made and natural disasters, but for seemingly smaller problems as well.

To ensure that all members of the Fire Service are prepared to deliver the best level of services required, training standards have been developed to provide each member with the needed skills, knowledge, and abilities to deliver fire and emergency services to the citizens of the municipality.

Though most volunteer fire services refer to their firefighters as volunteers, SFES firefighters are compensated for attending recruit training, incidents, training, station duties, as well as prevention and public education activities. SFES has attendance minimums that must be maintained throughout the year.

## **Training Requirements: Volunteer Orientation**

- A. All volunteers must complete a recruit training program taught by SFES instructors, regardless of whether the individual may have prior training or experience.

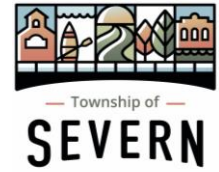
There are three basic training programs:

1. individuals with no fire training or experience
2. individuals with some training and/or certification but limited fire response experience
3. those individuals with certification and experience.

The Fire Chief and the Deputy Chief will choose the best recruitment process for each applicant.

- B. Any new volunteers who have successfully completed the SFES recruit training program and are offered a position are subject to a probationary period. They may begin responding to emergency calls during this time, however, they must wear a **probationary designation** which identifies them as a member in training. They may assist fully qualified firefighters only when proper supervision is provided.





## Note

Probationary firefighters may under the proper supervision and conditions:

- enter burning buildings
- participate in activities requiring advanced training
- be subjected to hazardous environments.

Length of probation and details of service shall be determined by current policies and or operating guidelines.

Training is provided in accordance with accredited standards, such as those of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

More details will be provided at the in-person Recruitment Information Session(s).

# Job Specification : Volunteer Firefighter

## General Statement of Duties

Members of SFES must be physically and mentally capable and able to respond to an emergency to perform firefighting duties and other related work as required, in the saving of life and property.

## Summary of Firefighter Duties, Responsibilities, and Working Conditions

This summary includes that members of the SFES:

- are covered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board
- are covered with On-Duty Accidental Death Insurance Policy
- are covered with a \$20,000 Life Insurance Policy 24/7 and covered by the Lumino Assistance Plan



- must maintain a reasonable level of health and fitness
- must carry a pager, as supplied by SFES
- must be able to obtain and maintain First Aid and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificates (training provided by SFES)
- must complete a Recruit Training Program before activation (responding to live events):
  - the duration of the full recruitment program will be approximately 150 to 200 hours
  - depending on an individual's previous training and experience, the 150 to 200-hour requirement would be reduced
  - the training program is a mixture of online and practical training and is held on weeknights and weekends
- must be committed to continuous training in fire suppression, prevention, public education, and emergency first aid procedures
- continuous training of skills is completed through regular training nights, training is approximately 8 to 10 hours per month, not including specialty courses
- for safety reasons, facial hair that may affect the integrity of the face piece seal of self-contained breathing apparatus or other respiratory protection (i.e., beards, bushy moustaches, and long sideburns) is not permitted
- are responsible for performing various duties, under emergency conditions, frequently involving considerable risk, in a safe and efficient manner
- tasks include routine duties in the maintenance of firefighting equipment and property, carrying out specific orders and directions as received from a superior officer in the normal course of maintenance duties, training, and firefighting
- must respond promptly, safely, and efficiently to alarms (pager activation), obey the orders of the officer in charge, share in the work that is required at emergency scenes, around the fire stations, and when otherwise on duty

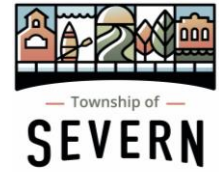


- must refrain from using offensive statements or language at the emergency scene, in and around the fire stations, and when on duty in public
- must be loyal to their fellow firefighters, officers, and the Fire Service and always conduct themselves in a professional, compassionate, and sensitive manner, remembering that they are in the eyes of the public while on duty or when wearing identifiable department clothing while not on duty
- must meet minimum attendance for calls, training, and station duties
- must maintain a high degree of confidentiality and always adhere to Township of Severn communication, social media, and records retention policies.
- have access to a PEER support team and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

## **Distinguishing Features of the Job**

Successful applicants will be required to:

- respond to fire, rescue, and other related emergencies as required by attending at their designated fire station
  - personal vehicle response directly to a scene is not allowed unless deemed required by the Fire Chief or designate in very limited circumstances
- report directly to duty/scene officers regarding activities at the fire ground or station
- report through proper channels to the Fire Prevention Division on all observed fire/life safety matters
- report equipment deficiencies to the Station Officer(s)
- complete documentation following an emergency as required
- complete regular inspection of assigned protective equipment and station wear



- demonstrate independence of judgement and action in circumstances of extreme emergency where referral to a superior for instruction is not possible
- demonstrates responsibility for rapidly and efficiently performing various duties under emergency conditions, frequently involving considerable hazards
- carry out specific orders and directions, as received from a Superior Officer, in the normal course of firefighting operations
- follow all Standard Operating Guidelines, directives, and department policies to enhance personal safety and comply with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act

## Examples of Work

Examples of work include:

- as assigned, conducts firefighting/rescue activities at emergency scenes
- as assigned, performs various maintenance and cleaning tasks on apparatus and equipment following an emergency
- assists with Fire Service pre-planning as required
- assists with providing first aid or CPR to the injured
- assists with salvage operations during and following an emergency
- attends assigned training sessions to ensure accuracy in firefighting and rescue methods
- ensures compliance with all health and safety matters in accordance with the Corporation's Health and Safety Manual and the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations
- ensures the safe operation of all department equipment
- inspects property at the scene of a fire to prevent re-ignition
- participates with in-service training as required
- performs such duties as required to further advance public information, public safety, smoke alarm programs, and public relations within the department



## Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Successful applicants will possess or demonstrate the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- must maintain a valid driver's licence with a safe driving record, and be capable of driving emergency vehicles in a safe manner, in both emergency and non-emergency situations
- ability to react quickly and remain calm under duress and strain
- agility and strength to do prolonged and demanding work under adverse conditions
- conscientious, dependable, cooperative, and able to follow directions given
- considerable knowledge of modern firefighting and rescue techniques (preferred but not mandatory)
- considerable mechanical aptitude (preferred but not mandatory)
- thorough knowledge of First Aid and CPR
- thorough knowledge of provincial legislation relative to the activities of the fire department (preferred but not mandatory)
- thorough knowledge of the municipality, including demographics, major industries, and hazardous occupancies (preferred but not mandatory)
- thorough knowledge of the operation of all equipment and methods used in combating, extinguishing, and preventing fires and rescue activities (preferred but not mandatory)
- thorough knowledge of the rules and regulations governing the fire department and the volunteer activities of the department

Applications will be reviewed with priority being given to those who demonstrate the following:

- current first aid and CPR certificates
- demonstrated commitment (i.e., volunteer service)
- employment or residence within the municipality or reasonable response time to the fire station – reasonable response time is 10

minutes or less, consideration to those with a longer response time will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis

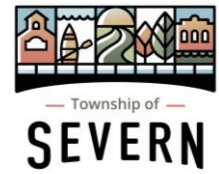
- local area shift workers
- permission to leave place of employment to respond to alarms
- previous Fire Service experience
- previous pertinent training (i.e., Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Ontario Health and Safety Act
- related experience (Nursing, Emergency Medical Services, Mechanical Trades)
- Valid class DZ driver's licence with a satisfactory abstract

## Minimum Requirements for Employment Eligibility

### Required to apply

To be considered for employment, in addition to a completed application, all applicants must meet and or provide the following items, which are required at various stages throughout the recruitment process:

- acceptable Vulnerable Sector Check
- applicants must be 18 years of age or older
- demonstrated comprehension and ability to communicate in English (verbal, written, and reading)
- proof of a valid Ontario driver's licence (minimum G class), with a current three-year driver's abstract
- signed Consent Waiver and Release Form
- successful completion of all required certifications and requirements



## Requirements for physical testing

Before commencing physical testing the applicant will need to submit a Medical Examination Report, completed and signed by the applicant's Physician.

Please note that applicants are responsible for all costs to acquire the required documentation. Applicants who complete the recruit training program and move into a probationary firefighter designation are eligible for a \$100.00 reimbursement toward their medical examination report.

## Conditions of Employment

Applicants who successfully complete all required training and are hired as a member of SFES must:

- acquire a DZ licence within a year of employment and maintain it during employment, in addition to a satisfactory driving record clear of criminal offences
- acquire and maintain First Aid/CPR level HCP certification within one year of employment
- adhere to all departmental rules, regulations, and operating guidelines
- maintain a satisfactory criminal record
- maintain attendance levels (emergency responses, training sessions, and hall duties/apparatus checks) in accordance with department requirements
- successfully complete all required training programs and demonstrate proficiency in all required activities

# Candidate Application Checklist

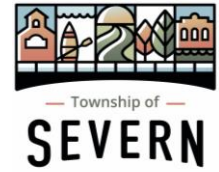
What	Details	Location
Application Form	Signed, dated, and fully completed	Online at: <a href="https://severn.ca/jobs">severn.ca/jobs</a>
Consent Waiver / Release Form	Signed, dated by applicant and witness	Online at: <a href="https://severn.ca/jobs">severn.ca/jobs</a>
Medical Examination Report (2 pages)	Completed, signed, and dated	Online at: <a href="https://severn.ca/jobs">severn.ca/jobs</a>

Note: The completed Medical Examination Report **MUST** be received before the applicant will be permitted to participate in the physical testing.

MTO 3-year Driver's Abstract	MTO Driver's Abstract fee is \$12	Online at: <a href="https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-driving-record">https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-driving-record</a>
Vulnerable Sector Search	Vulnerable Sector Check fee is \$41	Online at: <a href="https://www.opp.ca">https://www.opp.ca</a> or your local police service

Note: You will require a letter from the SFES to request a Vulnerable Sector Check. Please email [hr@severn.ca](mailto:hr@severn.ca) to request a copy of this letter.





# Recruitment Process and Important Dates

The recruitment selection process consists of three stages, each with important dates.

Description	Date and time	Location
Stage 1: Recruitment Information Session #1	Saturday, December 7, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.	Administration Office ( <b>1024 Hurlwood Lane, Severn</b> )
Recruitment Information Session #2	Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.	Administration Office ( <b>1024 Hurlwood Lane, Severn</b> )
Stage 2: Application deadline	Friday, January 10, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.	Not applicable (all applications are only accepted online using the online form at: <b>severn.ca/jobs</b> )
Stage 3: Agility testing (tentative)	Saturday, February 8, 2025, 8:30 a.m.	Severn Fire Station 2 ( <b>3958 Burnside Line, Severn</b> )
Interviews (tentative)	Saturday, February 8, 2025, 08:30 a.m.	Severn Fire Station 2 ( <b>3958 Burnside Line, Severn</b> )

## Stage 1: Recruitment Information Sessions

Two Recruitment Information Sessions will be held for potential applicants. All applicants should make every effort to attend one of the sessions, as important details on the recruitment process are provided, including expectations of volunteers, training information, and dates.

Please pre-register for the information session you wish to attend by contacting [fire@severn.ca](mailto:fire@severn.ca).



## Stage 2: Applications

All applicants are required to submit an Application for Volunteer Firefighter form. An application form is on the Township of Severn website at: [severn.ca/jobs](http://severn.ca/jobs).

Required application information to be submitted to SFES includes:

- completed application prior to the deadline of January 10, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.
  - late applications will not be accepted, and the candidate will have to apply when the next intake process opens
- completed Consent Waiver and Release Form (to be included in the application package)

### Other desirable skills/knowledge

If you have any of the items below, please provide this information (including a copy where applicable) with your application:

- First Aid and CPR certification/training
- previous Fire Service experience
- previous pertinent training (i.e., WHMIS, OHSA)
- related experience (Nursing, EMS, Mechanical Trades)
- demonstrated commitment to community service (i.e., other volunteer service)
- additional language skills (bilingualism and or other spoken or written languages)

A review of applications will be conducted, and selected applicants will have the opportunity to advance to Stage 3 of the selection process.

## Stage 3: Part 1, Aptitude Appraisal (written testing)

The aptitude appraisal is a short simple questionnaire designed to measure the applicant's:

- ability to understand written and or verbal information
- technical and mechanical skills
- reading, reasoning, and mathematical skills

## Stage 3: Part 2, Job-Specific Physical (Agility) Testing

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### ***Important reminder***

- *A Medical Examination Report, completed and signed by the applicant's Physician, and the Consent Waiver and Release Form must be provided before participating in the physical testing. All costs associated with this requirement are the responsibility of the applicant. There will be no exceptions.*
  - *Only selected applicants who provide a satisfactory Medical Examination Report and Consent Waiver and Release Form can participate in the job-specific physical testing.*
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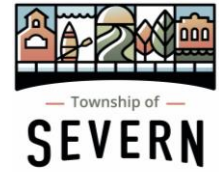
The tasks that make up the physical testing are designed to reflect job-specific tasks required in the performance of firefighting duties. The purpose of this analysis is to provide you with a realistic idea of the tasks you will be expected to perform and to provide the SFES with a valid assessment of the applicant's physical capabilities.

Examples of sample tasks include:

- climbing a 24-foot extension ladder
- coupling and uncoupling a hose fitting while on the ladder

All tasks below will be completed wearing full personal protective equipment (supplied):

- advancing a charged hose line
- climbing and descending stairs
- crawling through a confined space to search for and retrieve an object while wearing a self-contained breathing apparatus with a blacked-out face mask
- dragging a weighted dummy
- hoisting and lowering equipment
- lifting and carrying equipment
- simulating forcible entry



All components of the physical test must be completed within a prescribed time to successfully complete the test.

### **Stage 3: Part 3, Interviews**

Interviews will be conducted by the Fire Chief with assistance from other SFES or members of the Township of Severn team to perform a fair evaluation. Be prepared to bring additional documentation and or proof of your credentials.

A review of results of the aptitude appraisal will be conducted and selected applicants who qualify (achieve 70 percent or greater), meet the requirements of job-specific physical testing, and have a successful interview, may receive a conditional job offer for a Volunteer Firefighter position.

### **Selection and Acceptance**

Note: The recruitment program start date will be announced to successful candidates.

The selection of applicants is based on qualifications as well as the ability and availability to do the job as determined by the results of the recruitment process. The successful applicants will be contacted with an offer to undertake a training program in preparation for starting as a Volunteer Firefighter with SFES. Upon verbal acceptance, written confirmation will be forwarded providing a start date. The applicant will be required to sign and return the confirmation letter before undertaking the training program.

Successful applicants will be required to attend and successfully complete the recruit-training program. As noted, there are three recruitment pathways depending on an individual's experience. This program takes place on evenings and weekends. The duration of the full program will be approximately 150 to 200 hours. Depending on an individual's previous training and experience, the 150 to 200-hour requirement may be reduced.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. How do I submit my application?

Applications are **only accepted using the online form** at [severn.ca/jobs](http://severn.ca/jobs). If you have issues submitting your application and documents, please email [hr@severn.ca](mailto:hr@severn.ca) for assistance. Email or hard copies of application will not be accepted.

## 2. I did not attend the Recruitment Information Session. Can I still apply? Yes.

Attendance at the Recruitment Information Session is not mandatory however it is strongly encouraged as it provides important information on the recruitment process, as well as expectations of firefighters.

## 3. Does Severn Fire and Emergency Services cover the costs for any required documentation (Medical Examination, Driver's Abstract)?

Applicants are responsible for any costs incurred during the recruitment process.

## 4. I was invited to participate in the Agility Testing and Interview but I am unavailable on the scheduled date. Can I still proceed in the recruitment process?

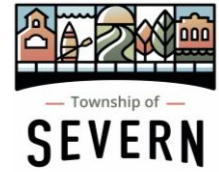
If you are unable to attend at the specified time, please contact the Fire Chief to determine if alternative arrangements can be made. Please note, that because a request has been made, it does not guarantee that the request will be granted.

## 5. How many training hours are required to become a volunteer firefighter?

All selected candidates are required to complete a recruit training program.

There are three basic training programs:

1. individuals with no fire training or experience
2. individuals with some training and/or certification but limited fire response experience
3. those individuals with certification and experience.



The Fire Chief and the Deputy Chief will choose the best recruitment process for an applicant based on this model.

**6. Am I required to submit my Driver's Abstract, Medical Examination Report, and Criminal Background Check with my application?**

Yes, your application must be submitted with these documents if possible. Drivers' abstracts are completed online and are readily available. We understand that medical reports and background checks can be challenging to get in short time frames. Applicants can extend the requirement for medical and criminal background reports to January 31, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. by requesting an exception to the Fire Chief at [firechief@severn.ca](mailto:firechief@severn.ca). Again, this request may not be granted just for asking.

**7. What compensation will I receive as a Volunteer Firefighter with SFES?**

Applicants who complete all required training and are offered a position will receive:

- \$1,000.00 upon successful completion of the Recruit Course
- reimbursement of the medical cost of \$100.00 upon successful completion of the Recruit Course
- ongoing training and yearly honorarium

*Thank you for your interest in becoming a Volunteer Fire Firefighter with SFES. We look forward to reviewing your application.*