



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TRAINEE PROGRAM

FAQ

HERNANDO COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Trainee Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What Is the Fire Rescue Trainee Program?

The Fire Rescue Trainee Program is an entry-level developmental program that prepares individuals for a career as a certified Firefighter EMT with Hernando County Fire Rescue. It provides paid training, hands-on experience, and support as you complete the required state certifications.

Who Is This Program For?

This program is designed for individuals who are interested in a fire service career but have not yet completed Firefighter I/II and/or EMT certification. It is ideal for:

- High school graduates interested in fire rescue
 - Career changers seeking a new profession
 - Candidates with some training but lacking full certification
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Do I Get Paid While in the Program?

Yes. Fire Rescue Trainees are hired as paid, full-time employees with benefits while enrolled in the program and completing required certifications.

What Certifications Will I Earn?

The program supports your completion of the following certifications. Some candidates may enter with one already completed and only need to finish the other.

- Florida Firefighter Compliance Certification (Minimum Standards)
 - Florida EMT Certification
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How Long Is the Program?

The full program typically lasts 6–12 months, depending on your current level of certification and performance.

- Emergency Medical Technician: 1 Semester
 - Fire Academy: 18 Weeks
 - Probationary Firefighter Period: 12 Months
 - Service Obligation: 3 Years upon transfer to the Operations Division
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What Does the Daily Schedule Look Like?

Trainees work a 40-hour work week, which may include a combination of classroom training and department-based assignments. When not attending Fire or EMT classes, trainees report to various divisions within HCFR to support ongoing projects, training preparation, and departmental operations. Class schedules (Firefighter or EMT) may include daytime, evening, or occasional weekend hours depending on the program provider. Trainee hours are adjusted accordingly to ensure all educational and departmental requirements are met.

What Are the Basic Qualifications to Apply?

No prior fire or EMT experience is required to apply. Candidates must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Must be at least 18 years of age
 - High school diploma or GED
 - Valid Florida driver's license
 - Ability to meet the physical demands of the job
 - Pass a background check, drug screening, and medical examination
 - Eligible to apply for both Firefighter Academy and EMT program
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What Benefits Do Trainees Receive?

As a full-time employee, trainees receive a comprehensive benefits package, including:

- Full-time employment with salary
 - Comprehensive benefits package
 - Paid leave and holidays
 - Florida Retirement System (FRS) participation
 - Paid tuition, fees, and associated costs
 - All required uniforms and protective gear provided
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What Happens After I Complete the Program?

Upon successful completion of training and certification, you will transition to the role of Firefighter EMT. You will undergo a field orientation with the HCFR Training Division and then be assigned to a regular shift. You will continue on probation until your one-year anniversary but will operate as a full member of the department.

How Do I Apply?

[Visit the department website](#) or the county job board and search for "Fire Rescue Trainee" openings.

Applications are only accepted during active recruitment periods, which typically occur once a year around the May/June timeframe.

Be sure to upload all required documents and monitor your email for next steps.

Applications portal: [governmentjobs.com/careers/hernandocofl](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/hernandocofl)

What Is the Application Process?

The Fire Rescue Trainee Program uses a multi-step selection process designed to identify motivated, well-rounded candidates who demonstrate the drive and potential to succeed in the fire service. Applicants must complete each step to advance to the next:

- Step 1 — Online Application: Submit your application during the open recruitment period.
- Step 2 — Essay Submission: Qualified applicants will be asked to complete a one-page written essay based on a given prompt.
- Step 3 — Physical Abilities Test: Upon successful completion of the essay, candidates will be invited to participate in a job-related physical abilities test.
- Step 4 — Oral Interview: Applicants who successfully complete the physical test will be scheduled for an in-person interview with the selection panel.

What Does the Physical Abilities Test Consist Of?

Candidates must successfully complete the following three components:

- 40 Push-Ups (2 minutes): Start in the plank position with arms locked out. Elbows must break 90 degrees at the bottom to count as a repetition. The only acceptable rest position is the up-plank position with arms locked out.
- 40 Sit-Ups (2 minutes): Start lying flat on the ground with knees bent. Arms must be crossed over the chest with each hand touching the opposite shoulder. At minimum, one elbow must touch the knee to count as a repetition. The only acceptable rest is in the up position. Hips must maintain contact with the ground. A spotter may be used to hold the feet.
- 1.5-Mile Run: Must be completed in 15:00 minutes or less.

Contact Information

For questions about the Trainee Program, please contact:

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Recruitment Inquiries & Mailing Notifications: HCFRrecruitment@hernandocounty.us

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