CAMBRIDGESHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

BE THE DIFFERENCE.

Pre-employment medical assessment

PREVENT
PROTECT
RESPOND

Introduction

Becoming a firefighter is a big commitment — not just to your community, but to your personal safety, wellbeing, and fitness. To ensure that everyone joining CFRS can perform the role safely and effectively, you'll need to complete a pre-employment medical assessment as part of the final stage of the recruitment process.

This guide explains what the medical involves, why it's important, and how you can prepare.

Why is the medical assessment important?

As a firefighter, you may be required to:

- Work at height or in confined spaces
- Wear breathing apparatus in low-visibility or hazardous environments
- Communicate clearly under pressure
- Make rapid physical movements under load
- Perform rescue tasks requiring sustained strength, stamina and coordination

Your medical assessment helps us confirm that:

- You're fit to perform these duties safely
- Any medical conditions or health risks are well understood
- Appropriate support or reasonable adjustments (where applicable) are identified early
- We meet legal obligations under health and safety law

> Please note: The decision made by our Occupational Health Department (OH), including doctors and occupational physicians is final. Their professional judgement will determine whether you meet the medical standards required to take on the role safely. This ensures safety for you, your future crew and the communities we serve.

When does the medical take place?

Once you've passed the other recruitment stages and been offered a conditional place on the training course, you'll be invited to a 90-minute face-to-face medical appointment with our OH team.
You'll also be asked to complete and return a confidential health questionnaire ahead of time. Both the questionnaire and the medical appointment form part of the final suitability checks and need to be completed before starting.

What does the medical include?

Health Questionnaire
Before your appointment, you must complete a detailed medical history form. This includes:

- Ongoing or previous health conditions
- Any prescribed medication or treatments
- Recent operations, injuries, or mental health concerns

Your answers will remain confidential and are only reviewed by qualified health professionals.

In-clinic Tests
During your appointment, you'll be guided through the following assessments by the OH team:

- Blood pressure
- Height, weight and BMI
- Urine analysis
- Baseline lung function
- Baseline hearing assessment

These tests provide a baseline understanding of your health and are conducted using recognised clinical standards.
You'll then have a job-specific medical examination with an Occupational Health Physician who will review your results and assess whether you meet the role's physical and safety requirements.

Hearing and Communication Standards

Hearing is essential for firefighter safety — especially when responding to radio communication or identifying calls for help in noisy, high-risk environments. Your hearing will be assessed to ensure:

- You can communicate clearly and safely on the fireground
- You are aware of warning sounds or distress calls
- Any hearing impairment (with or without aids) does not compromise safety

If hearing aids or previous conditions are relevant, these will be assessed in line with evidence-based standards and discussed with you during the appointment.

Vision and Eyesight Standards

You must provide a recent (within six months) optician-completed eyesight form. We'll provide the template. Your optician will need to confirm:

- Your distance vision (with or without glasses/contact lenses)
- Colour vision results (Ishihara 24/38 plates)
- Any visual conditions (past or present), such as laser surgery, cataracts, or retinal disease

Make sure your optician completes the form in full — incomplete or unclear forms may delay your application.

What Happens Next?

Following your medical:

- You may be cleared for fit for duty immediately
- You may be asked for additional information (e.g. from your GP or a specialist, with your consent)
- You may be invited for further assessment, such as a functional test
- You may be advised that you do not currently meet the required standard

Please remember: All medical decisions are made by qualified clinical professionals. Their decisions are final and based on nationally recognised guidance, ensuring fairness and consistency for all candidates.

To understand the full list of medical standards, you can refer to the Medical and Occupational Evidence for Recruitment and Retention in the Fire and Rescue Service (MOERRFRS) which is available here.

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We understand that medical assessments can feel like a significant step, and we hope this guide helps you feel more informed, prepared, and reassured about what to expect.

The medical assessment is a vital part of the firefighter recruitment journey - not to exclude people unfairly, but to make sure you're medically fit for the specific and sometimes challenging demands of the role. It's about keeping you, your future crew, and the communities we serve safe.

We also understand that for some, the outcome of the medical may not be what you hoped for. If that's the case, we want you to know that it doesn't mean you can't have fulfilling career in the fire and rescue service. CFRS has a wide range of roles — in prevention, protection, control, and support services — that are critical to our success and offer opportunities to make a real difference.

Every individual's medical assessment is considered on a case-by-case basis, with fairness, sensitivity and evidence at the heart of every decision. We're here to support you, answer your questions, and help you understand the process every step of the way.

Make a difference.

Be the difference.