



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# TRAINEE PROGRAM



# FAQ

## 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 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 changes
- Candidates with some training but lacking full certification

## DO I GET PAID WHILE I'M 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 THROUGH THE PROGRAM?

The program supports your completion of:

- **Florida Firefighter Compliance certification (Minimum Standards)**
- **Florida EMT certification**

Some candidates may enter with one of these already completed and only need to finish the other.

## 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.

## WHAT DOES THE DAILY SCHEDULE LOOK LIKE?

Trainees will 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 will report to various divisions within HCFR to support ongoing projects, training prep, 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 they fulfill a full 40-hour week while meeting all educational and departmental requirements.

## WHAT ARE THE BASIC QUALIFICATIONS TO APPLY?

- Must be at least 18 years old
- High school diploma or GED
- Valid Florida driver's license
- Ability to meet physical demands of the job
- Pass a background check, drug screening, and medical exam
- Eligible to apply for both Firefighter Academy and EMT program
- No prior fire or EMT experience required to apply.

## WHAT BENEFITS DO TRAINEES RECEIVE?

As a trainee, you'll receive:

- Full-time employment
- Comprehensive benefits package
- Paid leave and holidays
- Florida Retirement System (FRS) participation
- Paid tuition fees and costs
- All required uniforms and protective gear provided

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I COMPLETE THE PROGRAM?

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

## HOW DO I APPLY?

VISIT OUR DEPARTMENT WEBSITE or the county job board and search for Fire Rescue Trainee openings.

**Applications are only accepted during active recruitment periods.** (Typically, once a year around the May/June timeframe.)

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

[Governmentjobs.com/careers/hermandocofl](https://governmentjobs.com/careers/hermandocofl)

## 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:

1. Online Application – Submit your application during the open recruitment period.
2. Essay Submission – Qualified applicants will be asked to complete a one-page written essay based on a given prompt.
3. Physical Abilities Test – Upon successful completion of the essay, candidates will be invited to participate in a job-related physical abilities test.
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?

- **40 Pushups:** 2 minutes – Must start in the plank position with arms locked out and elbows must break 90 degrees at the bottom to count as a rep. Only acceptable rest will be in the up-plank position with arms locked out.
- **40 Sit-ups:** 2 Minutes – Must start laying flat on the ground with knees bent. Candidate must maintain arms crossed over the chest with each hand touching the opposite shoulder. At a minimum one elbow must touch the knee to count as a rep. 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:** 15:00 or less

## WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Email: [HCFRrecruitment@hernandocounty.us](mailto:HCFRrecruitment@hernandocounty.us)

Phone: (352) 540-4353

Social Media: Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for updates!

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