

Letter From Chief Dale Gilman to New Hires

1962

Source: Bureau Documents

As a prospective candidate for membership in the Portland Bureau of Fire, you are looking in on an opportunity for a career in an old and very proud organization. You are exploring the possibility of a lifetime service in an organization that is dedicated to the safety and welfare of people and property.

Membership in the Portland Bureau of Fire today consists of more than seven hundred men and women. We follow in the path of hundreds who have lived and worked in the best tradition of this fine service; and in the footsteps of many who have distinguished themselves in the field of fire prevention and fire protection. Indeed we stand in reverence of many who have given their lives in this service, and in admiration of many who have gained both local and national prominence through loyalty, diligence, and devotion.

As in all other professions, the fire service of today offers highly respected positions and opportunities in the self-disciplined young person of courage and determination. If you are this person, we welcome your interest in a career with the Portland Fire Bureau.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dale E. Gilman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the main body of the letter.

Dale E. Gilman, Chief Portland Fire Bureau

THE OATH

I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the State of Oregon, the Charter of the City of Portland, and its ordinances and that I will, to the best of my ability, faithfully perform the duties of the office of Firefighter during my continuance therein, so help me God.

FIRE DEPARTMENT WORK...

Offers a challenging career to people who have a desire to serve their fellow human, a cooperative spirit, and the willingness to work conscientiously and without thought of personal glory.

The work requires moral ability, initiative, and particularly moral integrity, as firefighters are often subject to temptation.

The exacting nature of firefighting is such that only people of keen intelligence who are willing to work long hours to prepare themselves to handle the job can succeed. The indifferent person,

regardless of mental and physical ability, cannot keep up with those who are interested, willing, and equally fit.

Although the job involves many hours of routine duties, firefighting has become increasingly complex. Firefighters are required to learn many regulations, laws and technical procedures to meet adequately the wide variety of situations which arise.

Firefighters must live under a higher standard of conduct, both on and off duty, than is required of the average citizen. The work is demanding and rigorous, but offers the personal satisfaction of service to the public.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

AGE: You must have passed your 21st birthday by the time you file your application and must not have passed your 26th birthday by the time you are appointed, except for Korean War Veterans who must not have passed their 31st birthday. You will be required to show your birth certificate before being placed on the eligible list.

HEIGHT: 5'7" without shoes is the absolute minimum.

WEIGHT: You must meet the standards printed on page 5.

HEALTH: See page 5 to 7 for specific medical standards. You will be given a complete medical examination to determine that you meet these standards.

EDUCATION: High School graduation or its equivalent. If you did not graduate from high school but believe you have the equivalent education, you may qualify on the basis of the General Education Development Test. Information about this test may be obtained at the office of the Civil Service Board. Proof of your education will be required.

CITIZENSHIP: You must be a United States citizen.

EXPERIENCE: No specific experience is required, but work that has kept you physically active and agile and that has required initiative, honesty, and a sense of responsibility is an asset. Previous firefighting experience is not required or expected.

CHARACTER: You must have good moral character and the highest personal integrity. Felony convictions and excessive misdemeanors, including juvenile and traffic offenses are disqualifying. All candidates are fingerprinted and checked through FBI records. Your background and character will be carefully investigated by the Fire Bureau before you are appointed.

Sometime during the examination process you will be required to show your discharge certificate and, if disabled, to furnish the Board with a letter from the Veterans Administration certifying your disability.

HOW TO BECOME A FIREFIGHTER

Positions in the Portland Fire Bureau are filled by competitive Civil Service examinations. These examinations are held periodically as necessary.

FILING APPLICATIONS: After an examination has been announced, applications may be obtained from the Civil Service Board, Room 400, 115 SW Fourth Avenue. They must be filled out and filed with the Board before the final filing date stated on the examination announcement.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION: The written examination measures the qualities and aptitudes essential for good firefighters. It is not the type of examination you can study for in advance. Sample test questions are not available.

AGILITY TEST: After you have qualified in the written test, you will be given a physical agility test. This test will measure your physical strength, endurance, and agility.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW: If you qualify on both the written examination and the physical agility test, you will be interviewed by a rating board to appraise your personal qualifications, background, and interest in the firefighting field.

VETERANS PREFERENCE: If you have served at least 90 consecutive days on active duty with the US Armed Forces during a period of war, or have been awarded or qualify for either the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal or the Vietnam Medal and have been honorably discharged, you are entitled to veterans preference. You must qualify in all parts of the examination before you can receive veterans preference credits.

Veterans receive five points credit. Veterans with a disability of 10% or more as determined by the Veterans Administration receive five additional points credit.

ELIGIBLE LIST: The names of competitors who qualify on all parts of the examination are placed on the eligible list in order of their scores, including veterans preference points. When a vacancy is to be filled, the names of the three men highest on the eligible list are given to the Fire Bureau. The Bureau has a free choice among the three and may appoint any one of them.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD: After you are appointed, you must serve a 12-month probationary period before you become a permanent employee. The probationary period is part of the examination process used for the effective adjustment of the employee and the elimination of any probationer whose performance fails to meet the required standard of work.

PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: Higher level positions in the Fire Bureau are filled by promotional examination. A firefighter is eligible to compete in the examination for Fire Lieutenant after three years of service.

UNIFORMS: A newly appointed firefighter will be provided with a complement of uniforms and the necessary replacement of uniform items.

TRAINING PROGRAM: The Fire Bureau has a comprehensive training program for new firefighters. This includes expert instruction in firefighting, equipment operation, and first aid. For the first 12

months, the new firefighter works with a probationary company. Then he is transferred to one of the houses where his training is continuous thereafter.

WORKING CONDITIONS

HOURS: Members of the firefighting division of the Fire Bureau work shifts of 24 hours on and 48 hours off. Firefighters are considered subject to call in an emergency at any time. In fact, they are required to provide a telephone for this purpose.

OFF DUTY WORK: Permanent, steady, outside employment is frowned on by the Bureau and should not be considered by Fire Bureau employees.

VACATION: You earn 16 hours of vacation credit for each complete month you work. This is equal to 24 calendar days per year. After 10 years service, you earn 30 calendar days per year. Your first vacation will be the number of days you have earned in the prior calendar year. Vacations are usually scheduled on the basis of seniority and at the discretion of the Bureau.

SICK LEAVE: You accumulate sick leave at a rate of 1.2 hours per shift worked or about 6 shifts per year. This may accumulate to a maximum of 56 shifts. Time taken on sick leave may only be used for bona-fide illness or non-service injury.

RETIREMENT SYSTEM: As a firefighter you automatically become a member of the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Fund. You will contribute 7% of your salary to the fund, and will be eligible for a maximum pension after 30 years service. The pension will amount to 60% of the maximum salary of a firefighter. The pension plan also provides protection for occupational diseases and for the widows and children of firefighters.

WITHHOLDING TAX: The City withholds your Federal and State Income Taxes from your pay check. The amount withheld depends upon your salary and the number of dependents.

GROUP INSURANCE: Group health insurance is available through OPS, Blue Cross, and Kaiser Foundation. Premiums are paid by the employee through payroll deduction. After on years' service the city provides group life insurance and pays \$8.00 per month of the ocost of the life insurance and health insurance on the plan you select.

CREDIT UNION: You may join the employees credit union. Deposits earn a good rate of interest and members can borrow money at favorable rates.

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS: The Portland Firefighters Union represents and promotes the interests of members of the Fire Bureau, provides a beneficiary association for its members and provides a loan fund.

FIREFIGHTER MEDICAL STANDARDS

Applicants for positions of firefighter must meet the physical requirements listed. The names of candidates rejected as a result of this examination will be removed from the eligible list. The causes of rejection are not limited by the enumeration below. The medical examiners may put any question,

make any examination, and reject any candidate for any cause or defect that in their opinion would impair the health or usefulness.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT: Measurements must conform to the following schedule:

HEIGHT	WEIGHT	MAXIMUM WEIGHT
5 feet 7 inches	130 lbs.	165 lbs.
5 feet 8 inches	135 lbs.	170 lbs.
5 feet 9 inches	140 lbs.	175 lbs.
5 feet 10 inches	145 lbs.	180 lbs.
5 feet 11 inches	150 lbs.	185 lbs.
6 feet 0 inches	155 lbs.	195 lbs.
6 feet 1 inch	160 lbs.	200 lbs.
6 feet 2 inches	165 lbs.	210 lbs.
6 feet 3 inches	170 lbs.	215 lbs.
6 feet 4 inches	175 lbs.	220 lbs.
6 feet 5 inches	180 lbs.	225 lbs.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: The applicant must be free from any marked deformity, from all parasitic or systemic skin disease, and from evidence of intemperance in the use of stimulants or drugs. The body must be well proportioned, of good muscular development, and show careful attention to personal cleanliness. Obesity, muscular weakness, or poor physique reject.

VISION: (Without glasses) Loss of either eye or permanent abnormality of either eye must reject. Firefighter must be able to read 20/30 in best eye and 20/40 in worst eye.

HEARING: Must be normal in each ear.

NOSE: Obstruction to free breathing in either nostril or chronic catarrh will reject.

MOUTH AND THROAT: Mouth must be free from deformities or conditions that interfere with speech or that predispose to disease. There must be a minimum of 20 teeth, well cared for and in good occlusion. Wearing of a well-fitting prosthesis is acceptable.

HEART AND BLOOD VESSELS: The action of the heart must be normal. Any indication of disease to the heart or blood vessels shall be cause for rejection.

BLOOD PRESSURE: There must be a blood pressure test. The normal should be considered as 120 mm for 20 years of age, and one mm added for every additional year. There may be a range of 1 mm from this normal standard; that is, there may be a variation of 20 points either way from normal. Diastolic pressure in excess of 90 mm will reject.

CHEST AND LUNGS: (a) Chest Mobility - There must be a chest expansion of at least 7.5 inches. Measurements may be made at the ninth rib or at the nipple, or both may be considered together. (b) Respiration - Must be full, easy, and regular; the respiratory murmur must be clear and distinct over both lungs, and no disease of the respiratory organs be present. Lungs will be X-Rayed. (c) Obesity -

If the least horizontal circumference of the abdomen at rest, measured at the umbilicus, nipple line, during the maximum inspiration, the applicant must be rejected.

HERNIA: Actual or potential hernia in any form must reject.

GENITALS: Must be free from deformities and from marked varicocele, hydrocele of the testicles, stricture or incontinence of urine. Retained testicles or atrophy reject. Any acute and all active venereal disease of these organs must reject.

ARMS AND LEGS, HANDS AND FEET: Use of legs, arms, hands, and feet must be complete except for fingers on either hand (not thumb) missing from left hand or left hand ankylosis that affects not more than one finger or thumb joint shall not reject unless both these defects are present. Any physical characteristics that might interfere with good service of seriously affect appearance, or hammer toes, or flat feet shall reject. (in left-handed persons, the term "left hand" shall mean "right hand"). Loss of great toe or loss of more than one toe from each or either foot shall reject.

BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM: Must be normal beyond question. Any history of mental illness will reject. Evidence of disease of the brain or of spinal cord, or of psychoneurosis, psychosis, or emotional instability shall be sufficient at least to hold the case under advisement, and may be cause for rejection.

SERIOUS INJURY OR ILLNESS: Complete recovery must be shown, and without appreciable loss of physical capacity or functions.

OTHER RESTRICTIONS: Piles (if severe), exophthalmic goiter, active tuberculosis, fissures, fistulas.

URINALYSIS: The presence of casts, blood, pus, bile, tubercle bacilli, sugar or albumen, shall reject unless a re-test shows the condition to be only slight or unimportant temporary disturbance. (No test to be made unless specific gravity is between 1.005 and 1.040).

OTHER: Applicants with decayed teeth, ingrowing toenails, deficient chest expansion, may be accepted conditionally subject to the correction of the deficiency within 60 days.

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