



MESQUITE FIRE DEPARTMENT



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: Lateral Entry Program

Number:

Replaces: New

Date of Issue: ??/??/2022

Effective Date: ??/??/2022

I. PURPOSE

The Mesquite Fire Department provides an expanded recruitment program for beginning positions through a Lateral Entry Program, increasing the City's ability to compete for and hire experienced firefighters who are already certified by the State of Texas. This program shall meet all requirements of the City of Mesquite Fire and Police Civil Service Rules and Regulations ("Local Rules"), and of the Texas Local Government Code.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES


- A. Lateral applicants must meet the requirements of Chapter 143 of the Texas Local Government Code.
- B. Lateral applicants shall successfully complete each step in the Fire Department Civil Service hiring process in the same manner as any other applicant, and have satisfactorily completed all entry-level testing, examination, background investigation, and reviews required for original appointment.
- C. Applicants must have a current Texas Commission on Fire Protection Basic "Structural Firefighter" certification and a Texas Department of State Health Services EMT-Paramedic certification/license.
- D. Lateral applicants must have at least one (1) year of service as a paid, full-time certified firefighter and paramedic.
- E. Lateral applicants must have been employed as a firefighter and paramedic within the past 12-months prior to the date of the application to the Mesquite Fire Department and must have left their agency in good standing.
- F. A lateral applicant must successfully complete a probationary period of twelve (12) months beginning on the date of employment as a Mesquite Fire Department Firefighter. The probationary period may be extended to eighteen (18) months if deemed necessary by the Fire Chief for the completion of additional training, education or experience required of similarly situated firefighters.

- G. Lateral applicants would stay at the step they are placed in until their prior service credit (maximum of six years), plus time as Mesquite firefighter, reaches the qualification to move to the next step. (Example: a 3-year veteran firefighter would begin at the 36-month step. Every 12 months that firefighter would be eligible to move to the next step until reaching the final 72-month step).
- H. A lateral applicant must not have been dismissed or absent from public service for any misconduct, including unauthorized absence from duty, during the 5-year period prior to the date of entry examination.
- I. A lateral applicant must be able to fully account for all periods of unemployment.
- J. A lateral applicant must have received an honorable discharge from military service, if applicable.
- K. Lateral applicant must be approved by the Fire Chief to participate in the Lateral Entry Program at his/her sole discretion and satisfy all other requirements and conditions of the program which may, from time to time, be established by the Department Head.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. The Fire Chief may reject any lateral applicant for purposes of the Lateral Entry Program if the lateral applicant does not meet the requirements set forth in this policy.
- B. The Lateral Entry Program is for pay purposes only, and actual work experience in another fire department shall not be considered for promotional eligibility requirements, departmental seniority, leave calculations, assignments, transfers, or other accrual or programs that utilize years of service or experience in the calculation. Departmental seniority for lateral firefighters shall begin on the date the applicant is hired as a firefighter with the Mesquite Fire Department.
- C. Applicants may be credited up to a maximum 6 years of service solely for the purposes of step pay. The credited years of service will be based on the number of full years of service as a firefighter.
- D. Seniority within the department will be based on the date of hire within the department. No credit for prior service outside the department will be granted for seniority purposes.

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- E. Longevity pay is calculated on the amount of service with the City of Mesquite. Service time with any entity prior to the date of lateral entry into the City of Mesquite shall not be included in the calculation of longevity pay.
 - F. Prior service will be calculated based upon service with any one entity. Partial years of service with different entities will not be added together to make a full year or years.
 - G. In calculating the number of prior years of experience an applicant is entitled to, his or her prior service shall be rounded down to the next full year.
 - H. No rank will transfer.

Approved by: 

Russell Wilson
Fire Chief