

## **Leading Firefighter test FAQs**

### **Q1. How does the new selection process work?**

Positions on the Leading Firefighter Program are now advertised as and when they arise in Commissioner's Orders, and remain open for four weeks. To be eligible to apply, Senior Firefighters need to have taken the relevant online operational and psychometric tests, and to have achieved at least 65% in the operational test.

These operational and psychometric test results determine the successful applicants for the position(s) advertised.

### **Q2. Who conducts the tests?**

All tests are conducted online by FRNSW, with support provided by external providers (Revelian) for the psychometric test components.

### **Q3. What do the tests involve?**

The tests consist of both an operational test and, for applicants who achieve at least 65% in this first test, a psychometric test. Applicants who achieve less than 65% in the operational test have no need to undertake the psychometric test and are not permitted to do so.

The psychometric test's cognitive component covers verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning and error checking. The test's behavioural component gauges the applicants' likely "fit" for the Leading Firefighter rank by measuring work strengths, work preferences and interpersonal skills.

The operational test and the psychometric test are equally weighted in order to arrive at a final test score.

### **Q4. How are the tests relevant?**

The operational test helps measure a Senior Firefighter's current firefighting knowledge and competence.

The psychometric test assesses and measures a Senior Firefighter's suitability for leadership because Leading Firefighters will be required to perform higher duties for absent Station Officers.

### **Q5. What is the format of the testing?**

The operational test is randomly generated from an established bank of questions that a Senior Firefighter (not Leading Firefighter) could reasonably be expected to answer. The test is conducted in one or more objective formats including: multiple choice, multiple response, true/false, matching, labelling images, rank ordering, gap filling, numerical and/or visual identification.

The psychometric test's cognitive and behavioural components consist of questions with multiple choice answers only.

There are no free-form answers in either test, nor any face-to-face interviews.

**Q6. How long do the tests take to complete?**

The operational test should take no longer than 1 hour and the entire testing process no longer than 2 hours, including breaks.

**Q7. Where are the tests held?**

The operational and psychometric tests are both conducted online and whenever practicable, at the Senior Firefighter's own station/workplace under the observation of an FRNSW assessor or senior officer.

**Q8. Are the tests held on the same day across all locations?**

No. Senior Firefighters with 24 or more months' service will individually request to take the tests when they are ready to do so. FRNSW will ordinarily schedule tests within four weeks of a request to take them.

**Q9. Can I request to take the tests after a Leading Firefighter Program position has been advertised?**

Yes, but whether or not the tests can then be arranged and taken within the four week period that applications are open will depend on numerous factors, including the amount of notice provided and the availability of an observer. While FRNSW will make every reasonable effort to accommodate requests within the preferred 4 week timeframe, the sooner the request is made, the better the chance of this occurring.

The tests can be requested any time and to avoid disappointment, should ideally be submitted before applications are called for, not afterwards.

**Q10. Is everybody who takes these tests asked the same questions?**

Tests conducted at different times or at different locations will ask different questions, however the questions will always be at the same standard or level.

**Q11. What happens if more than two applicants have an identical score?**

It is highly unlikely that two applicants will hold the same test marks and scores however if this does happen, and the successful applicant(s) cannot be determined, then both applicants will be accepted.

**Q12. If I am not successful can I apply again in future?**

Yes. There is no restriction on the ability of eligible Senior Firefighters to apply whenever applications for Leading Firefighter Program (LFP) positions are called for.

**Q13. Is there a limit to the number of times I can take the tests, or hold my test results?**

Yes. Psychometric test results are valid for at least twelve months from the date the tests are taken and may not be retaken within that time. The operational test may be retaken four months after the test was last taken except in the case of an operational test score of 50% or less (see Q17).

Applicants may elect in advance to take only the operational test component and to rely instead on their last psychometric test result (see Q21) or, if they achieved 65% or more in their last operational test, to take only the psychometric test component and to rely instead on that earlier operational test result however the score of any test that is retaken will then replace the previous test result, which will become invalid. In any case, all test results will become invalid three years after their testing date.

**Q14. Do I take the tests on or off shift?**

The tests are conducted on-duty. Senior Firefighters taking the tests will not ordinarily be required to respond, however the tests, which will be timed, may be suspended and resumed later if necessary (eg, in the event of an equipment/computer problem or a critical emergency incident). A suspension that cannot be avoided will be kept to a minimum, and testing will be resumed as soon as possible (including, if necessary, on overtime).

**Q15. Is there any study or practice I can do to prepare for the psychometric test?**

There is no preparation required for the psychometric test, however Senior Firefighters may like to research psychometric testing to better understand this type of assessment method, including by reviewing the information contained in the following link

<http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/employmentportal/resources/fact-sheets>

**Q16. Is there anything I need to bring with me to the test, or that might help me (eg, a pen, or a calculator)?**

You will need to bring photo identification, eg FRNSW employee card, motor vehicle license or passport. Everything else required will be provided by FRNSW.

**Q17. Is there a benchmark score/pass mark that must be reached to proceed successfully through the test?**

Senior Firefighters must achieve 65% or higher in the operational test in order to be eligible to apply for an LFP position. Senior Firefighters who achieve less than 65% in the operational test will not be eligible to apply for LFP positions, and those who achieve less than 50% in the operational test will be prevented from retaking the operational test for 12 months.

**Q18. Will the supporting external provider send my psychometric test results to the Department? What information will the external provider send to the Department? How confidential will my psychometric test results be?**

The testing provider will release the psychometric test scores (only) to the Department. Individual test results will remain confidential between the applicant and the external provider unless they are disclosed by the applicant.

**Q19. Will I receive feedback following the tests? Can I appeal my results?**

There is no appeal mechanism for the psychometric test component, however everyone who takes the operational test will be offered 15 minutes at the completion of the test to review their own answers and, where they were incorrect, the correct answers.

FRNSW will review and decide on any operational question that is challenged by email to [LFapplications@fire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:LFapplications@fire.nsw.gov.au). If a question or answer is found on review to be ambiguous and/or incorrect then FRNSW will inform every senior firefighter who was asked that question over the preceding three years of its decision and amend their operational test result accordingly. Under no circumstances will the review and amendment of applicants' test results cause a Senior Firefighter who is already undertaking the LFP to be removed from the Program, or an additional position to be offered on the Program.

**Q20. Senior Firefighters in Operational Support can only apply for Leading Firefighter Program positions within the GSA. Will these Operational Support staff be competing with all other Senior Firefighters within the GSA?**

The Senior Firefighter applicants in the GSA with the highest aggregate test results will be accepted. The aggregate result achieved by the lowest scoring applicant for the number of positions available will be the cut-off result for Operational Support applicants. Every Operational Support applicant who achieves a higher aggregate result than that will also be accepted, so that LFP positions advertised for Sydney are a minimum, not a maximum.

**Q21. Do my test results only apply to my application for Leading Firefighter Program positions? If I apply for an Operational Support position, will my test results be used or considered relevant?**

The testing conducted for LFP positions will not be used for any other FRNSW application process or purpose unless an applicant agrees. On the other hand, an applicant who has taken the relevant psychometric test (whether for the LFP or some other position) within the preceding three years may elect to take only the operational test and to rely instead on that earlier psychometric test result.

**Q22. When will I be told if my application for a position on the Leading Firefighter Program has been successful?**

LFP positions will be offered as soon as possible but generally this will be after two weeks, which allows scores to be collated and verified. It also allows time for any outstanding issues and reviews of the testing process (see Q.19) to be resolved prior to Program positions being finalised.