



SOUTH BEND FIRE DEPARTMENT

ORAL INTERVIEW PREPARATION

FIRE DEPARTMENT RECRUITMENT



TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- **The Interview Style**
 - Behavior Based Interview
- **Characteristics to be Evaluated**
- **Knowledge and Preparation**
- **Interview Format**
- **Strategies for Success**





THE INTERVIEW STYLE

- When answering questions, reference what you “have done” not “what you would do.” We are less interested in who you could be, and more interested in who you are.
- Use **real stories** to prove that you possess the qualifications to be a Firefighter for the SBFD





BEHAVIOR BASED INTERVIEWING

- Focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the eight main criteria.
- You may use work experience, activities, hobbies, volunteerism, school projects, and family life skills you feel relevant...to provide examples of your past behavior.

Why Behavior Based Interviewing?

Effective

- Past behavior indicates future performance

Objective

- What you did and how you did it

Transparent

- Openness about skills/ competencies sought

Legal

- Candidates are assessed on the same skills/ competencies



IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS

You will be evaluated based on 8 main criteria:

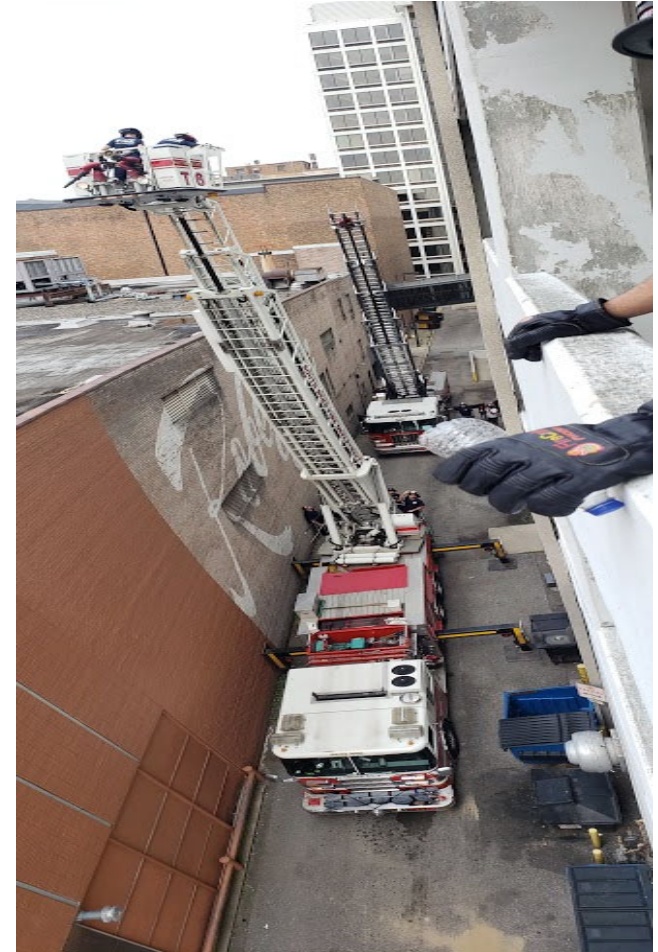
1. Initiative in Learning
2. Practical Orientation
3. Role Adaptability
4. Service Orientation
5. Oral Communication
6. Job Motivation
7. Teamwork
8. Respect for Diversity





EVALUATING YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

- Know yourself and what you have to offer
- Realistically appraise your strengths and weaknesses
- Inventory your assets, talents, interests, experiences and accomplishments
- Emphasize your strong points!





CONTENT SKILLS

Content skills, also known as technical, job-specific, or vocational skills, include those related specifically to your line of work.

Express these skills as nouns.

For example:

- “I have a current National EMT Certification.”
- “I am a certified Human Resources Trainer.”
- “I am a Licensed Vocational Nurse.”
- “I am a certified Forklift Operator.”





FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Skills such as organizing, managing, developing, communicating, etc.

These are expressed as verbs. For example:

- “On my current job, I manage three other employees. I am responsible for opening and closing the store, as well as responding to customer complaints.”
 - “In my current position, I prioritize and coordinate the patient schedule for five different doctors in our surgery center. I am also responsible for communicating this schedule for all employees at the beginning of each week.”
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ADAPTIVE SKILLS

Personal characteristics such as honest, dependable, trustworthy, loyal, hard-working, punctual, patient, etc.

**They are expressed as adjectives.
For example:**

- “Because my boss considers me to be responsible and trustworthy, I am the only employee allowed to approve the use of the petty cash fund.”





GET TO KNOW THE SBFD

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the SBFD
- Core Values
 - **Professionalism**
 - **Accountability**
 - **Integrity**
 - **Setting Standards**
 - **Outstanding Service**
- How many SBFD Fire Stations are there?
- FF duties, apparatus, tools and equipment, specialized resources





GET TO KNOW THE SBFD

- What is a typical day like for an SBFD Firefighter or a Probationary Firefighter?
- Learn as much as you can about the SBFD
- You can find a local SBFD Fire Station by visiting www.joinsbfd.org
- Call the business phone and ask to speak with a firefighter on duty
- Ask questions, take notes





GET TO KNOW THE SBFD



Luther J. Taylor
Fire Training Center

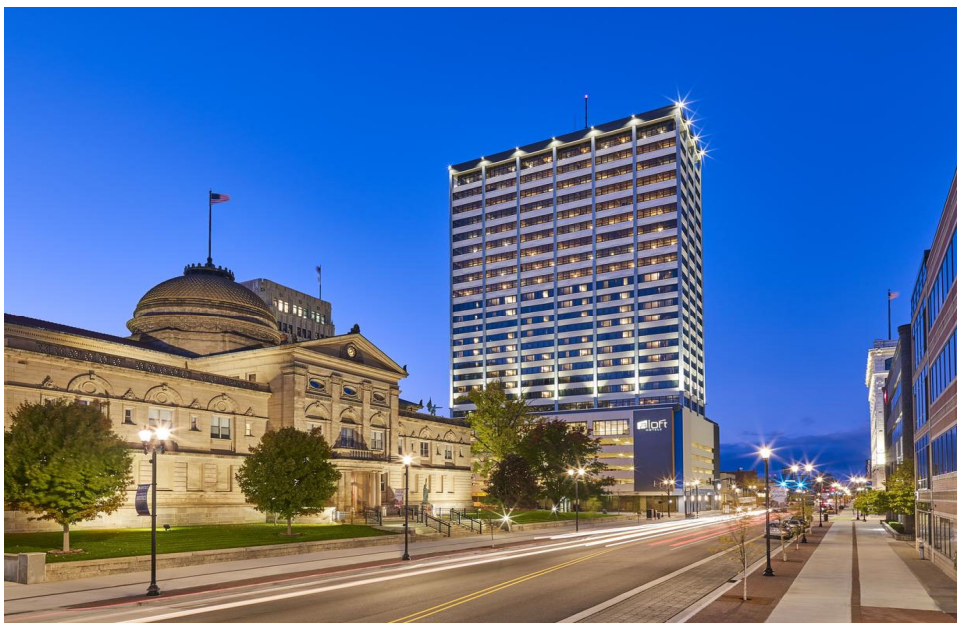


SBFD HART Training
East Race Waterway



GET TO KNOW THE CITY OF SOUTH BEND

- How big is the City? How many square miles?
- What is the population? Demographics?
- You should know what sets this City and the SBFD apart and why you want to work for this Department.





ORAL INTERVIEW FORMAT

The interview panel will be comprised of 2-3 representatives:

- One or Two SBFD Firefighters
- One SBFD Captain or Chief Officer





ORAL INTERVIEW FORMAT

There are 3 basic components of the interview:

1. Opening Statement
2. Body (Questions)
3. Closing Statement





OPENING STATEMENT

- You will be given an introductory question in your interview (usually the 1st question)
- This question will lead to your Opening
- Introduce yourself and highlight 4 or 5 of your strongest qualities that relate to the job of FF.
- Be concise and to the point, you will be able to elaborate more as you answer questions in the interview body.
- Opening statement should take less than one minute





BODY OF THE INTERVIEW

You may be evaluated on any of the following **8 criteria**:

1. **Initiative in Learning**
2. **Practical Orientation**
3. **Role Adaptability**
4. **Service Orientation**
5. **Oral Communication**
6. **Job Motivation**
7. **Teamwork**
8. **Respect for Diversity**





INITIATIVE IN LEARNING

Initiative defined:

- The power or ability to begin or follow through energetically with a plan or task. Enterprise and determination.
- A beginning or first step; an opening move: took the initiative to solve the problem.

Considerations:

- What learning opportunities have you been involved with, or participated in? What examples can you provide for how these experiences have helped you or benefitted others?





PRACTICAL ORIENTATION

Considerations:

- We may describe people as practical when they make sensible decisions and deal effectively with problems.
- Practical ideas and methods are likely to be useful or successful in a real situation.





ROLE ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability defined:

- The ability to change (or be changed) to fit a unique situation or circumstances.
- Synonyms: flexibility, versatility, adjustability

Considerations:

- Have you ever been in a position of responsibility, or in a role where you helped someone else in a position of responsibility?
 - Have you ever had to adapt to a new or different role to accomplish an important task?
-



SERVICE ORIENTATION

Considerations:

- Are you interested in a career that involves helping people, or serving your community?
- Have you ever helped someone in need?
- SBFD Core Values
 - Our success and failure as an Organization depend on the SERVICE we provide to the citizens of South Bend and Saint Joseph County.





ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Are you able to communicate well and resolve conflict when necessary?
 - This skill is demonstrated both in your communication skills throughout the course of the interview and in your examples, also.
- Firefighters communicate with the public in emergency and non-emergency settings every day and need to express themselves clearly and confidently.





JOB MOTIVATION

Considerations:

- Do you understand the role of the fire service in the community?
- Do you know what a career as a Firefighter with the SBFD entails?
- What things have you done to prepare for this position?





TEAMWORK

Considerations:

- Have you worked in a team environment?
- Has there ever been a time where you participated in a project or endeavor that required coordination with other people?
- You will need to demonstrate the ability to work effectively as a member of a team.





RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Considerations:

- How do you define “Diversity”?
- Do you know anybody with different opinions or beliefs than your own?
- Have you had any interaction with people from a diverse background than your own?
- Diversity in a service organization is what makes the service provided, excellent! We can better understand, communicate with, and connect with the community we serve.





BODY OF THE INTERVIEW

Consider using the “**STAR**” model to structure your answers.

Situation



Identify the **SITUATION** or problem you solved or encountered.

Task



What was the specific **TASK** or targets?
(who, what, when, where, what's required)

Action



Detail your specific **ACTION**.
What did you do? How did you do it?

Results



Explain the **RESULTS**. Quantify.
(savings, accomplishments, recognition, etc.)



ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- Let's practice using the **STAR** model!
- Sample Question:

"Tell me about a time you worked together as a member of a team to accomplish a common goal." (TEAMWORK)

S – Identity the **Situation**

T – **Tasks** you needed to accomplish

A – **Actions** you took to get the job done

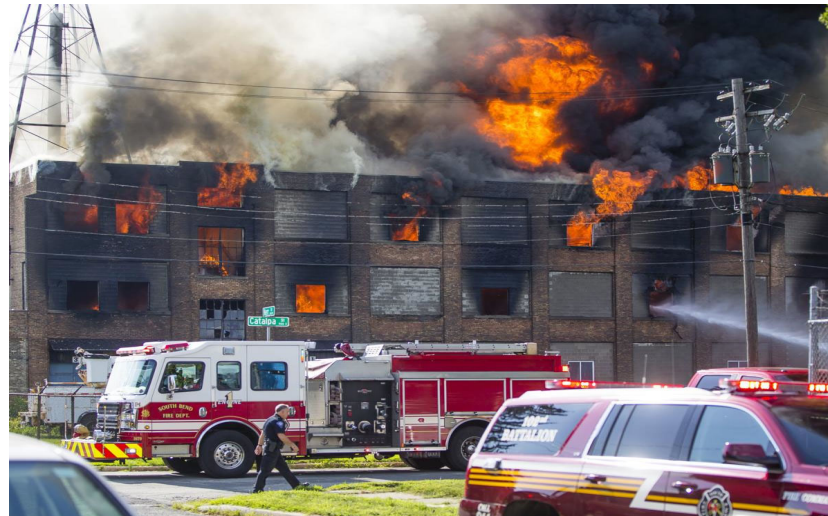
R – **Results**





ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- **Bridge** your answers directly over to the Fire Service, **specifically** to the **South Bend Fire Department**, as a **Firefighter** serving the people of the **City of South Bend and St. Joseph County**.
- “As a member of the South Bend Fire Department...”





CLOSING STATEMENT

- At the end of the interview, you will be asked if there is anything you would like to add.
- Mention any specific items in your background or personal qualifications you didn't already share
- Clarify earlier points, if necessary
- Briefly sum up what you believe makes you the right candidate for the job of Firefighter for the SBFD





INTERVIEW BASICS

Before the Interview...

- Make sure your clothes fit! Business attire is appropriate
 - Look the part!
 - Present a neat, businesslike appearance
 - Practice, Practice, Practice!
 - Practice your answers out loud and in front of others
 - Consider video recording yourself!
 - Be aware of body language, voice inflection, nervous habits
 - Force yourself out of your comfort zone to learn how to manage your anxiety
 - There are numerous online resources to help you prepare.
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INTERVIEW BASICS

During the Interview...

- Relax, we expect you to be nervous, but stress management is a skill important in the role of a firefighter.
- Think before responding
- Ask for clarification if you need it
- Be confident and enthusiastic
- Make good eye contact with the Board members
- Smile!





QUESTIONS?

Please type your questions into the chatbox on the right, and we will address them one at a time.
