

THE MUNICIPAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION



OF NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK

ANNOUNCES EXAMINATION FOR....

Room 14 -Ground Floor – City Hall

Phone 286-4430

<http://www.niagarafallsusa.org>

FIRE ALARM OPERATOR

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS

(ANTICIPATED VACANCY)

SALARY RANGE: \$47,674 – \$58,595 PER YEAR

EXAM: #66-675 OC

FILING FOR THE EXAM: Applications can be filed in person at Niagara Falls City Hall, 745 Main St., Room 14 or by mail. Tie scores are broken and ranked on the eligible list by a totally random method as recommended by the NYS Department of Civil Service. The method that will be used is the last four digits of social security number.

APPLICATION FEE: \$30.00 A **NON-REFUNDABLE** application fee must accompany your application and is required for each exam for which you apply. **DO NOT USE CASH.** Make check or money order payable to the City Controller and write the examination number on your check or money order. **AS NO REFUND WILL BE MADE,** you are urged to compare your qualifications carefully with the requirements for admission and file only for those examinations for which you are clearly qualified.

EXAMINATION DATE:
January 19, 2019

FIRST DAY FOR FILING
Mon., November 5, 2018–8:00 AM

LAST DAY FOR FILING
Wed., November 21, 2018 – 3:30 PM

CANDIDATES MUST HAVE BEEN LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST ONE (1) YEAR IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE DATE OF THE WRITTEN EXAM.

THIS EXAM IS ALSO BEING HELD ON A PROMOTIONAL BASIS. CIVIL SERVICE LAW REQUIRES THAT THE PROMOTIONAL LIST BE CERTIFIED BEFORE THE OPEN-COMPETITIVE LIST.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: This is important Public Safety Communications work involving the receiving of alarms over a fire alarm system, telephone, or by other modern electronic communications equipment, and dispatching firefighting personnel and equipment to the scene of the fire or emergency. The position also involves receiving and handling 911 emergency telephone calls. The work is performed on an assigned shift under the general supervision of an assigned superior with leeway allowed in emergency situations for exercising independent judgment in taking prompt and appropriate action. The Fire Alarm Operator performs related work as required.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- 1) **AN INCOMPLETE APPLICATION WILL BE DISAPPROVED.** List your current or most recent position first and then any experience that qualifies you for the minimum qualifications of the position sought. To receive credit for experience on a job, all information requested on the application including title, number of hours in the work week, final salary, duties performed by you in each position and percentage of time spent on each task, length of employment, etc., must be shown. Be very specific in explaining experience that qualifies you for the position sought. Ambiguity and vagueness will not be resolved in your favor.
- 2) **A RESUME DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR THE APPLICATION AND WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**
- 3) Unless otherwise specified, experience will be interpreted to mean "**PAID EXPERIENCE**" only. Part-time paid work experience will be accepted based on its full-time equivalent.
- 4) **If a degree or special license is required, a copy must be submitted with application.**

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GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

(Please read carefully)

1. RESIDENCY FOR EXAM - Unless otherwise specified in the exam announcement, candidates must have been legal residents of the City of Niagara Falls for one year immediately preceding date of written exam.
 2. RESIDENCY FOR APPOINTMENT: Local Law #7 of the City of Niagara Falls requires that persons commencing employment with the City of Niagara Falls after December 17, 1984, must continue to reside in the City for the duration of employment.
 3. COMPLETION OF APPLICATIONS - A regular application must be filed for each exam. The applicant should make sure that every question is answered and that the application is complete in all respects. An incomplete application may be disapproved.
 4. VETERAN AND DISABLED VETERAN CREDITS - Candidates must meet the requirements for Veterans Credits at the time of appointment or promotion. A candidate who is currently in active duty in the military may file for "conditional" credits but will be restricted from certification using the credits until appropriate documentary proof of honorable discharge and dates of service is provided to the Commission. The form necessary for filing for Veterans Credits, however, must be filed with the application. Evidence of military discharge (form DD-214) or proof of military status if claiming "conditional credits" must be presented with this form. You will be allowed the option of waiving these credits after the completion of the exam. For the purpose of claiming veterans credits on a Civil Service exam, an applicant must have served in the armed forces of the United States at any time during the following periods:
 - World War II - December 7, 1941 to and including December 31, 1946**
 - Korean War - June 27, 1950 to and including January 31, 1955**
 - Southeast Asia Hostilities - February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975 (Starting date changed per Chapter 179 of Laws of 2006)
 - Lebanon* - June 1, 1983 - December 1, 1987**
 - Grenada* - October 23, 1983 - November 21, 1983**
 - Panama* - December 20, 1989 - January 31, 1990**
 - Persian Gulf - August 2, 1990 to the end of such hostilities (not yet determined)**
 - U. S. Public Health Service - July 29, 1945 to September 2, 1945 or June 26, 1950 to July 3, 1952
- *Credit for Lebanon, Grenada, and Panama will be limited to those who received the armed forces expeditionary medal, the navy expeditionary medal, or the marine corps expeditionary medal.
- Disabled Veterans must have been disabled in the actual performance of duty in any war and have a disability rated at 10% or more that exists at the time of application or promotion. (See Veterans Form for additional information.)
5. MILITARY MAKE-UP - Special test arrangements are available for active military members.
 6. SPECIAL TEST ARRANGEMENTS - Most written tests are held on Saturdays. If you cannot take the test on this day due to a conflict with a religious observance or practice and/or need special accommodations due to a disability, indicate this on your application form.
 7. INVESTIGATION OF CANDIDATES - Inquiries may be made as to character and ability, and all statements made by candidates in their applications are subject to verification.
 8. BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION - Applicants may be required to undergo a criminal history background investigation to determine suitability for appointment. Failure to meet the standards for the background investigation may result in disqualification.
 9. ADMISSION NOTICES - The Commission will notify all candidates of the disposition of their applications. Approved candidates will be notified at least four days in advance of the place, date and hour of exam. **If you have not received notification of acceptance or rejection or information as to where to appear for the exam by the Wednesday before the exam date, contact this office at 286-4430.**
 10. PASSING MARK - The passing grade in each announced subject of an examination is 70.
 11. INTERVIEWS - As an aid in rating training and experience, interviews may be required at a later date.
 12. PHYSICAL EXAM - Prior to appointment, each candidate will be required to pass a physical exam and drug testing.
 13. RETIREMENT SYSTEM - Permanent, competitive appointments are required to join the NYS Retirement System.
 14. DEGREES AWARDED FROM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE OF US OR TERRITORIES: Your degree and/or college credit must have been awarded by a regionally accredited college or university or one recognized by the New York State Education Department as following acceptable educational practices and/or your high school diploma must be equivalent to one awarded in the U.S. If your high school diploma, degree and/or college credit was awarded by an educational institution outside of the U.S. and its territories, you must provide independent verification of equivalency. You can write to this Department for a list of acceptable companies providing this service; you must pay the required evaluation fee.
 15. APPLYING FOR CIVIL SERVICE EXAMS ON THE SAME DATE IN MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS:
 - A) If you have applied for both State and Local government exams, you must make arrangements to take all your exams at the State exam center by calling (518)474-6470 or toll-free at 1-877-697-5627 (press 2, then press 1) no later than two weeks before the test date and also notify the Niagara Falls Civil Service Commission in writing, preferably prior to the last date for filing for the exam, but in no case less than two weeks prior to the exam date.
 - B) If you have applied for other local government exams, you must contact each jurisdiction as instructed. The City of Niagara Falls requires a written request no later than two weeks before the date of the exams. You must notify all jurisdictions at which test site you wish to take your exam(s). For more information regarding this policy, call (716) 286-4430.
 16. In conformance with section 85-a of the Civil Service Law, children of firefighters and police officers killed in the line of duty shall be entitled to receive an additional ten points in a competitive exam for original appointment in the same municipality in which his/her parent has served. The parent is deemed to have served in a municipality if he/she was employed by or worked primarily in that municipality. If you are qualified to participate in this exam and are a child of a firefighter or police officer killed in the line of duty in this municipality, please inform this office when you submit your application for examination. A candidate claiming such credit has a minimum of two months from the application deadline to provide the necessary documentation to verify additional credit eligibility. However, no credit may be added after the eligible list has been established.
 17. The City of Niagara Falls does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, marital status or national origin.
 18. Applicants who have completed accredited military or industrial training can contact Excelsior College at www.excelsior.edu for information about the Full Service Credit Bank service which can issue a college transcript to be reviewed for compliance with the minimum education requirement for an exam.

FIRE ALARM OPERATOR
MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS (Continued)

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CANDIDATES MUST MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS ON OR BEFORE THE DATE OF THE WRITTEN EXAM:

- (A) Graduation from high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma and two (2) years' experience in a position involving giving or taking information such as dispatcher, telephone operator, telesales, telemarketing, help desk, customer service, eligibility or intake technician, etc., which must have included at least six (6) months computer keyboard and data entry experience. Completion of a course in computer keyboarding and/or data entry will also satisfy this requirement, but will not be counted as part of the two years of experience.

NOTES: Additional education beyond high school may substitute for experience on a year-for-year basis up to one (1) year only; except that the six (6) months computer keyboarding, data entry or completion of a course in computer keyboarding or computer data entry experience is required.

SUBJECT OF EXAM: First-time test takers may benefit from a publication entitled "How to Take a Written Test" which can be downloaded from the Web at <http://www.cs.state.ny.us/testing/localtestguides.cfm> or picked up in the Human Resource Office. Also available to be picked up in the Human Resource Office is "A Guide to Taking the Written Test for Entry-level Clerical Series" which is appropriate for this exam. **(These publications will not be mailed.)**

The Written test will cover knowledge, skills and/or abilities in such areas as:

SUBJECT OF EXAM: A written test designed to evaluate knowledge, skills and /or abilities in the following areas:

- 1. Coding/decoding information** - These questions test for the ability to follow a set of coding rules. Some questions will require you to code information by converting certain information into letters or numbers. Other questions will require you to decode information by determining if the information that has already been converted into letters or numbers is correct. Complete directions will be provided; no previous knowledge of or training in any coding system is required.
- 2. Following directions (maps)** - These questions test your ability to follow physical/geographic directions using street maps or building maps. You will have to read and understand a set of directions and then use them on a simple map.
- 3. Retaining and comprehending spoken information from calls for emergency services** - These questions test for your ability to retain specific information that is heard in calls for emergency service, such as a street address, or to comprehend spoken information from emergency service calls, such as determining the location of a site in relation to landmarks. Simulated 911 calls will be played on audio CD. Immediately following each call, candidates are given audio instructions identifying which questions they are to answer within the test booklet. The questions that candidates are directed to answer for each simulated call will not be in sequential order. Candidates will need to retain and comprehend the information and instruction provided in this portion of the test to respond appropriately to the questions asked and to determine which questions to answer. The time allotted to answer these questions will be limited. At the end of each answer period, the CD will automatically play the next call. Note paper will be provided. Candidates will be permitted to take notes and to refer to them when answering the questions.
- 4. Radio operations and dispatching procedures** - These questions test for knowledge of two-way radio systems and operations, and may cover dispatching procedures when appropriate.
- 5. Understanding and interpreting written material** - These questions test for the ability to understand and interpret written material. You will be presented with brief reading passages and will be asked questions about the passages. You should base your answers to the questions only on what is presented in the passages and not on what you may happen to know about the topic.

PERFORMANCE TEST: A 911 performance test will also be held at a later date, to be announced. The written test will be a ranking test and the 911 performance test will be a qualifying (pass/fail) test. You must pass both the written and performance tests to be considered for appointment. You will not be called to the performance test unless you have passed the written test. Since the performance test is qualifying (pass/fail), if you pass the performance test your final score for the examination will be the score that you achieve on the written test.

Candidates may be invited to the performance test in the order of the scores they achieve on the written test. The City of Niagara Falls reserves the right to give the performance test to only as many candidates as are needed to fill available vacancies.

The test will be administered on a conventional personal computer (PC). You will be using a conventional PC keyboard, but you will not be using a mouse.

Subject: The test consists of three parts, each preceded by a separate practice session. It will test your ability to enter the kinds of information that dispatchers and related personnel must process for fire, police, and emergency medical services. You will not need any specific information prior to the test; rather, complete on-screen instructions will tell you all that you need to know in order to take the test. In order to pass, you must enter the data at a rate of at least 6,000 keystrokes per hour (which is equal to typing approximately 20 words per minute), with an accuracy rate of at least 97.5%.

Retest Policy: Candidates who fail the 911 performance test will be permitted a retest which will be given on the same day as the original performance test.

Waivers: The candidate must hold or have held a permanent title for which passing of a 911 performance test was required at a speed equal to or greater than the speed required for the exam in which they are requesting a waiver. In the case where a candidate used a computerized type test, the actual rate of speed achieved will be used.

The candidate requesting a waiver should indicate the waiver request on their exam application.

The New York State Department of Civil Service has not prepared a test guide for this examination. However, candidates may find information in the publication "How to take a written test" helpful in preparing for this test. This publication is available on line at: <https://www.es.ny.gov/testing/testguides.cfm>

CALCULATOR STATEMENT: UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTIFIED, CANDIDATES ARE ALLOWED TO USE QUIET, HAND-HELD, SOLAR OR BATTERY POWERED CALCULATORS. CELLULAR PHONE CALCULATORS, DEVICES WITH TYPEWRITER KEYBOARDS, "SPELL CHECKERS," "PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANTS," "ADDRESS BOOKS," "LANGUAGE TRANSLATORS," "DICTIONARIES," OR ANY SIMILAR DEVICES ARE PROHIBITED. YOU MAY NOT BRING BOOKS OR OTHER REFERENCE MATERIALS.

RATING OF EXAMS: The written exam is being prepared and rated by the New York State Department of Civil Service in accordance with Section 23-2 of the Civil Service Law. The provisions of New York State Civil Service Rules and Regulations dealing with the rating of exam will be applicable to this written exam.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

DATED: November 3, 2018
