Preparation Guide

for the City of Los Angeles

Firefighter Candidate Assessment

This Firefighter Candidate Assessment (FCA) Preparation Guide includes information about the assessment content. The FCA is just one part of the City of Los Angeles Firefighter selection process. The cost of the FCA is $73.00. If you cannot afford the exam, there is a [fee waiver](#) available to those who qualify.

Candidates who are at least 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and have a valid California driver's license may register to take the FCA.

Candidates who achieve a passing score on the FCA <u>and</u> submit an application will be considered for further steps in the Firefighter selection process.

This Guide describes the various parts of the FCA, offers tips on how to prepare for and take the FCA, and provides example questions.

DO <u>NOT</u> BRING THIS PREP GUIDE TO THE WRITTEN TEST

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the FCA Preparation Guide

This Preparation Guide is intended to assist you in preparing for the City of Los Angeles Firefighter Candidate Assessment. You should read the entire FCA Preparation Guide to assist you in understanding what to expect during the assessment. No prior knowledge of firefighting or any other technical information is necessary to take any portion of the FCA. In other words, **the FCA does NOT measure technical knowledge**.

The FCA does measure your ability to demonstrate more general capabilities that are relevant to success in an entry-level Firefighter role within LAFD, such as:
- Learning Ability,
- Reasoning,
- Listening Comprehension,
- Reading Comprehension, and
- Basic Arithmetic.

It also measures the extent to which you are likely to demonstrate job relevant behaviors, such as:
- Self-Control,
- Safety Orientation,
- Team Orientation,
- Managing Work Pressure, and
- Conscientiousness.

The FCA is a computer-based assessment. This guide shows you the kinds of questions you will see in the assessment. It also introduces you to something called the Training Guide, which is a booklet you will work with while taking the assessment.

2. FCA Overview

The FCA includes **5 portions**. You will have up to **4 hours** to complete it.

The 5 FCA portions include a Practice portion and 4 scored portions of the assessment.

Three portions (the Practice portion + the first 2 scored portions of the assessment) require you to watch a video, and then answer questions about what you learned in the video. The information in the videos is not real; it was created for the assessment. Also, some of the words in the videos are not real; they were created specifically for the assessment. The videos present a fictitious piece of equipment and teach you the parts, function, and operational procedures for this piece of equipment.

The reason for presenting a piece of equipment that is not real is to make certain no applicants have prior knowledge of any of the information being taught. This puts all applicants on the same playing field. It also ensures that the FCA measures true learning ability, as any knowledge demonstrated about this fictitious piece of equipment must have just been learned during the assessment process. The exam questions associated with these portions of the assessment also measure your listening comprehension and ability to generally reason through the information presented.

The fourth portion requires you to read passages of information on the computer screen, and then answer questions about what you read. The reading passages also center around the operation of the fictitious piece of equipment and procedures regarding its use. These passages and the exam questions associated with them are designed to allow you to demonstrate your ability to comprehend written training materials. Some of the questions will also require you to perform some basic arithmetic (i.e., add, subtract, multiply, divide). Note that you may NOT use a calculator during the exam. You may, however, use scratch paper to complete any basic computations.

The fifth portion is a background information survey, where you will answer questions to describe your experiences and work preferences. These questions will ask about your experiences, behaviors, and preferences as they relate to characteristics such as self-control, safety orientation, team orientation, managing work pressure, and overall conscientiousness.

3. The Training Guide

When you take the FCA, you will be given a booklet called the Training Guide. It includes written materials, pictures, charts, and diagrams you will use during the assessment.

You can use the Training Guide to do several things.

- You will be able to review it before you watch each of the videos.

- You can use the Training Guide to take notes while you watch the videos. That way, you can refer to your notes as you answer the questions; and

- The Training Guide includes information that will help you find the correct answer for some questions.

An example Training Guide is presented below. The actual Training Guide is only available once you attend the FCA session. It is not available before you attend the session.
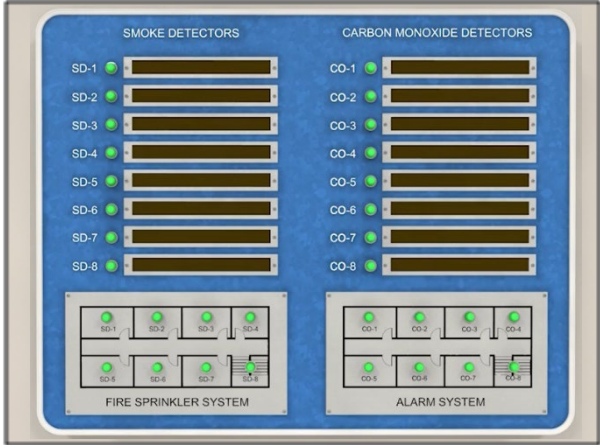
Training Guide Example

Below, you will see an example of what a page in the Training Guide might look like.

TRAINING LESSON EXAMPLE

Building Safety Systems Monitor

- Systems Monitor
  - o Monitors the building's security and fire safety systems

SMOKE DETECTORS   CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM   ALARM SYSTEM

- Smoke detector monitoring functions
  - o Top left area of Systems Monitor
  - o Eight displays (SD1 – SD8) to show indicator lights and status message displays
- Indicator lights, status messages, and action needed
  - o Normal operation – green light, no status
    - No action needed
  - o Smoke detected – flashing red light, Error Code = 808, beeping
    - Alert building security, supervisor
  - o Failed self-check – red light, Error Code = 801
    - Alert technician
  - o Power loss – red light, Error Code = 802
    - Alert electrician

To go along with the Training Guide example, you may view a video like the ones you will see in the actual assessment. The video teaches you about a fictional piece of equipment called the Systems Monitor. It is recommended that you follow along with the Training Guide above and also take notes while watching the example video. Tips for taking notes are presented below. Read these tips before watching the example video.

Taking Notes

Below is another look at the Training Guide example. The example shows, in blue, how a person might take notes on the Training Guide while they watch the video.

Some tips for taking good notes are as follows:

- **Write down key facts.** As you listen to the information presented in the videos, listen for key points or facts that you will need to remember. If those facts do not already appear in the Training Guide, write them in. An example of this appears on the left-hand side of the image presented below. While watching the video, the note-taker noted the fact that the building's security and fire safety systems include smoke detectors, CO detectors, alarm systems, and fire sprinkler systems. This information was not already included in the Training Guide.

- **Fill the gaps.** If information related to key points from the video *does* already appear in the Training Guide, but what's in the Training Guide is unclear to you or incomplete, write in notes that fill in those gaps for you and that will make the information clear to you when you review it while answering the exam questions. An example of this appears on the right-hand side of the image presented below. The note-taker noted that, when error codes 801 or 802 are present, the light will not flash, and no beeping sound will occur. The note-taker might have inferred this given that the Training Guide did not state that the light would flash or that a beeping sound would occur. But in order to ensure maximum clarity, the note-taker wrote those facts into the Training Guide.

- **Don't overdo it.** Do not try to capture every word that is said in the training videos. You will not have time for this, and it will distract you from actually listening and comprehending what is being said. You will notice in the image below that the note-taker only inserted a few key facts or clarifications.

- **Organize.** When taking notes regarding information presented in the videos, be sure to write those notes next to the related points in the Training Guide. The information presented in the Training Guide will follow the information presented in the videos in chronological order. So as you watch the video, follow along in your Training Guide, and take notes in the appropriate sections of the Training Guide to make sure you don't get confused when you look back at those notes later.

Click here to watch the video (4 minutes). After you have watched the video, continue on to the information below in this Preparation Guide.

Review the notes on the example image below. See whether any notes you took while watching the video match those on the example.

TRAINING LESSON EXAMPLE

Building Safety Systems Monitor

- Systems Monitor
  - Monitors the building's security and fire safety systems *Smoke detectors   CO detectors*
    Alarm systems   Fire sprinkler systems

SMOKE DETECTORS

SD-1, SD-2, SD-3, SD-4, SD-5, SD-6, SD-7, SD-8

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

CO-1, CO-2, CO-3, CO-4, CO-5, CO-6, CO-7, CO-8

FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM

ALARM SYSTEM

- Smoke detector monitoring functions
  - Top left area of Systems Monitor
  - Eight displays (SD1 – SD8) to show indicator lights and status message displays
- Indicator lights, status messages, and action needed
  - Normal operation – green light, no status
    - No action needed
  - Smoke detected – flashing red light, Error Code = 808, beeping *Contact local FD if necessary*
    - Alert building security, supervisor
  - Failed self-check – red light, Error Code = 801
    - Alert technician *Light will not flash / No beeping sound*
  - Power loss – red light, Error Code = 802
    - Alert electrician
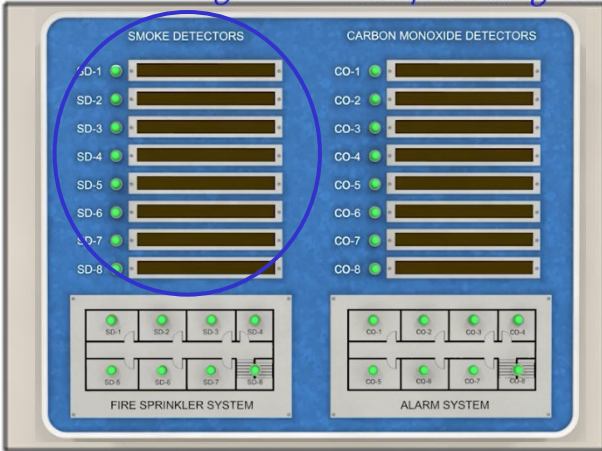
*[Note that during the actual assessment, the Training Guide will give you an overview of what is covered in each video before you watch it. You should also know that, during the actual assessment, you will be able to watch each video up to **2 times,** if you wish, before you begin answering the questions.]*

Next, we will look at the types of questions you will see on the actual Firefighter Candidate Assessment.

4. FCA Example Questions

Questions in the first three scored portions of the FCA will ask you about information you learned while watching a video or while reading a passage of information. The fourth scored portion asks questions about your experiences and work preferences. In addition to typical multiple-choice questions that ask you to select the single best response, the FCA contains numerous other types of questions. Examples of each type of question are presented below.

The questions below all relate to the Systems Monitor training video linked on page 7 of this guide. If you have not watched that video, be sure to do so now. You may use the questions below as practice questions to make sure you understand and can answer the types of questions that will appear on the FCA.

Example 1 – Hot Spot

Some of the exam questions require you to click on the correct area, or "hot spot", within an image to give your answer. The possible areas to choose from are outlined in yellow.

The screen shot below provides an example. Here, the question asks:

Which portion of the Systems Monitor shows the smoke detector monitoring displays? [Click the checkmark below the image and drag it to the correct area within the image; be sure to drag the checkmark inside an area outlined in yellow.]

Example 1 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer indicated by the checkmark in the top left portion of the Systems Monitor.
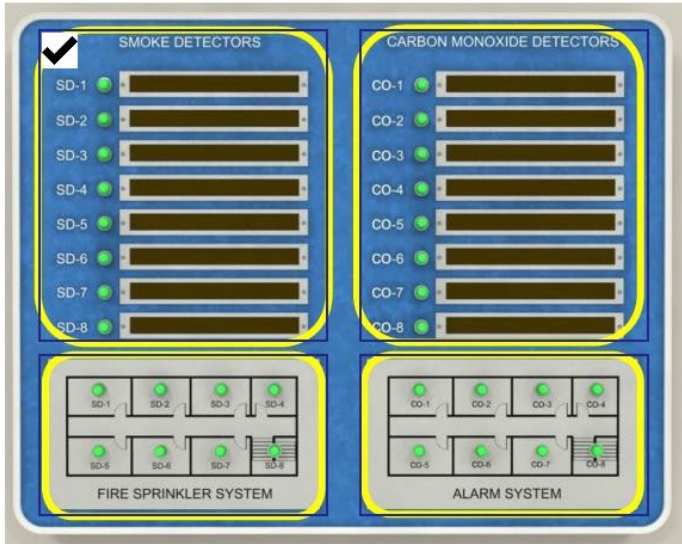
Recall that, in the video, the smoke detector monitoring displays were in the top left area of the wall-mounted panel. This is also noted in the Training Guide.

Example 2 – Drag-and-Drop

Some of the questions on the exam will require you to arrange information in the correct order by dragging boxes from one area to another on the computer screen.

The screen shot below provides an example of that type of "drag-and-drop" question. The question asks you to:

Drag the correct action to each of the shown status messages. [Arrange the action to the correct status message by dragging the actions from below to the correct status message above.]

Example 2 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see that the actions have been align in the correct order.

Notice that the correct responses are aligned with each status message based on the information that was presented in the video.

- For the status message 808 SMOKE DETECTED, the correct action is to Alert security.

- If the status message reads 801 FAILED SELF CHECK, the correct action is to Alert a technician.

- For the status message 802 POWER LOSS, the correct action is to Alert an electrician.

- If no status message is displayed, then no action is necessary.

Recall that this information was also noted in the Training Guide.

Firefighter Candidate Assessment
Portion: Introduction and Practice Questions

Practice Question 2

Drag the correct action to each of the shown status messages. [Arrange the action to the correct status message by dragging the actions from below to the correct status message above.]

Status Message	Correct Action
SD-3 🔴 808 SMOKE DETECTED	Alert security
SD-3 🔴 801 FAILED SELF CHECK	Alert technician
SD-3 🔴 802 POWER LOSS	Alert electrician
SD-3 🟢	No action necessary

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Example 3 – Multiple Choice Audio

The screen shot below provides an example of a third type of question you might see on the FCA.

This is a multiple-choice question that requires you to listen to an audio question spoken by the narrator, and then select the best answer. In this example, the candidate would click the PLAY button and then hear *"What does this sound indicate?"* [followed by the beeping sound from the Training Lesson video]

[Note that on the actual exam, you will be able to click the PLAY (←) button to replay the question as often as you like.]
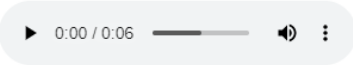
Example 3 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer indicated by the filled in circle.

Notice that the correct choice is the third option: "A smoke detector has detected smoke."; the circle is filled in next to this option indicating that answer was picked

Recall that in the Training Lesson Example Video, the beeping sound occurred when the status displayed as 808 SMOKE DETECTED, which indicates that a smoke detector has detected smoke.

Firefighter Candidate Assessment
Portion: Introduction and Practice Questions

Practice Question 3

Click the play (▶) button to listen to the audio question and then select the best answer from the options below.

Please click on the play (▶) button if you wish to replay the question.

▶ 0:00 / 0:06 ◀)) ⋮

○ A smoke detector self-check has failed.
○ A smoke detector has lost power.
◉ A smoke detector has detected smoke.
○ The local fire department is being alerted.

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Example 4 – Multiple Choice Pictorial

The screen shot below provides an example of another type of question you might see on the FCA.

This is a multiple-choice question that requires you to select the best answer from a set of pictorial response options. In this example, the question asks:

If power is cut to a smoke detector, what will you see displayed on the Systems Monitor for that detector? [Click one]

Example 4 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer indicated by the dark blue outline around it.

Recall that, in the video, the Instructor indicated that the status message 802 POWER LOSS would display in the event of a power loss to one or more smoke detectors. This was also noted in the Training Guide.

Example 5 – Multiple-Choice, Multiple Response

Some questions will require you to click on a box next to one or more statements to give your answer. The screen shot below provides an example. Note that it might take more than one choice to get full credit for your answer. The question asks:

What should you do if the Systems Monitor shows a smoke detector with the message 808 SMOKE DETECTED? [Click one or more]

You might want to check to see if you took any notes about this as you watched the video.

Firefighter Candidate Assessment
Portion: Introduction and Practice Questions

Practice Question 5

What should you do if the Systems Monitor shows a smoke detector with the message 808 SMOKE DETECTED? [Click one or more]

☐ Alert a technician.
☐ Alert security.
☐ Alert a supervisor.
☐ Reset the Systems Monitor.

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Example 5 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer where the 2 boxes are checked.

The correct choices are to "Alert security." *and* "Alert a supervisor."

Both answers were mentioned by the Instructor during the video lecture.

Firefighter Candidate Assessment
Portion: Introduction and Practice Questions

Practice Question 5

What should you do if the Systems Monitor shows a smoke detector with the message 808 SMOKE DETECTED? [Click one or more]

☐ Alert a technician.
☑ Alert security.
☑ Alert a supervisor.
☐ Reset the Systems Monitor.

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Example 6 – Fill in the Blank

Some of the exam questions require you to read written material and then select or fill in the best answer to a question about what you have read. The screen shot below shows an example that requires you to work with numbers, do some basic arithmetic, and then fill in an answer. During the exam, you can check the passage on the right side of the screen to make sure you choose the best answer. Note that you may NOT use a calculator during the exam. You may, however, use scratch paper to complete any basic computations.

First, read the passage on the right side of the screen. Then review the question shown on the left side of the screen, which reads:

A residential building worksite has four floor levels. The first floor is occupied by 25 people, the second floor is occupied by 13 people, the third floor is occupied by 19 people, and the fourth floor is occupied by 16 people. On the four floors, there are a total of 52 occupants that are age 16 or older. What number of occupants should be reported on Form F-322? [Enter number of occupants]

Firefighter Candidate Assessment
Portion: Introduction and Practice Questions

Practice Question 6   ☐ Review

Refer to the passage on the right titled "Operations Manual" to answer the following question.

A residential building worksite has four floor levels. The first floor is occupied by 25 people, the second floor is occupied by 13 people, the third floor is occupied by 19 people, and the fourth floor is occupied by 16 people. On the four floors, there are a total of 52 occupants that are age 16 or older. What number of occupants should be reported on Form F-322? [Enter number of occupants]

Operations Manual

1.0   Safety Procedures

1.1   Safety precautions must be followed when entering a building worksite for the first time. The safety precautions include four steps that must be performed in the following order:

1)   Put on protective goggles and gloves.
2)   Notify the team leader that you are entering the building.
3)   Identify emergency exits in the event that an evacuation is required.
4)   Visually inspect the walls for signs of chemical leaks.

1.2   A Safety Report Form F-322 must be completed to document any unsafe conditions that are discovered at the worksite. The following information must be recorded on the Form F-322: building address, year of construction, number of occupants under age 16, and the building type (commercial or residential). The unsafe condition should be noted on the form F-322 as follows:

Type 1 – low risk; no immediate safety concerns;
Type 2 – moderate risk; possible safety hazards;
Type 3 – high risk; confirmed safety hazard.

1.3   All Type 3 conditions must be reported immediately to the Safety Department. Type 2 conditions must be reported to the building owner within 24 hours. Type 1 conditions require that you note the conditions in your completed form F-322. The form F-322 must be submitted within 72 hours of the time that the unsafe conditions are discovered.

end of file

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Example 6 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer is 21.

Adding the number of occupants across the four floors (25 + 13 + 19 + 16) lets you know that the total number of people on all floors was 73.

52 of the 73 were age 16 or older. So, if you subtract 52 from 73, that means 21 were <u>under</u> the age of 16.

Recall that the passage noted that the number of occupants that are under age 16 must be included on Form F-322, so 21 is the correct answer.

Firefighter Candidate Assessment
Portion: Introduction and Practice Questions

Practice Question 6   ☐ Review

Refer to the passage on the right titled "Operations Manual" to answer the following question.

A residential building worksite has four floor levels. The first floor is occupied by 25 people, the second floor is occupied by 13 people, the third floor is occupied by 19 people, and the fourth floor is occupied by 16 people. On the four floors, there are a total of 52 occupants that are age 16 or older. What number of occupants should be reported on Form F-322? [Enter number of occupants]

21

Operations Manual

1.0   Safety Procedures

1.1   Safety precautions must be followed when entering a building worksite for the first time. The safety precautions include four steps that must be performed in the following order:

    1)   Put on protective goggles and gloves.
    2)   Notify the team leader that you are entering the building.
    3)   Identify emergency exits in the event that an evacuation is required.
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1.2   A Safety Report Form F-322 must be completed to document any unsafe conditions that are discovered at the worksite. The following information must be recorded on the Form F-322: building address, year of construction, number of occupants under age 16, and the building type (commercial or residential). The unsafe condition should be noted on the form F-322 as follows:

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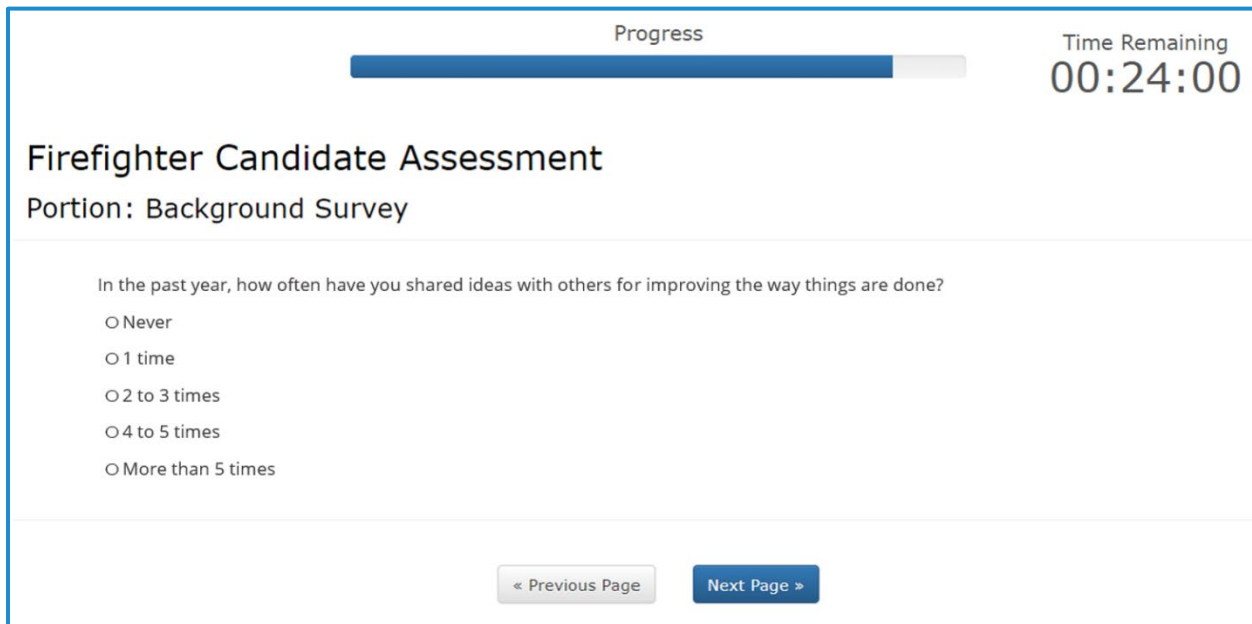
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Example 7 – Background Survey

Finally, the questions in the last (fifth) portion of the FCA asks you to describe your experiences, attitudes, or work preferences. The screen shot below provides an example of that type of question. The question asks:

In the past year, how often have you shared ideas with others for improving the way things are done?

There are no correct or incorrect answers to this type of question, and therefore no particular preparation is needed for this portion of the FCA. In general, however, the best advice is to simply select the response that best describes you, your preferences, your views, or your own experiences. Do not try to figure out which answer might be most desirable or expected. It is in your best interest to select the answer that most accurately describes you, to ensure that a career as a Firefighter is likely to be a good fit both for you and for the department.

Progress

Time Remaining
00:24:00

Firefighter Candidate Assessment
Portion: Background Survey

In the past year, how often have you shared ideas with others for improving the way things are done?

○ Never

○ 1 time

○ 2 to 3 times

○ 4 to 5 times

○ More than 5 times

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5. Important Notes about Testing Time

There will be a time limit on each of the 5 portions of the FCA.

- For each portion, you will be given time to listen to instructions, and where applicable, review the Training Guide and a Training Lesson video.

- A timer will appear at the top of the computer screen indicating how much time is remaining.

Time Remaining
00:04:51

- If you finish reviewing the Training Guide and video before the time ends, you can start the test portion by clicking on the **Next Page** button.

Next Page »

If you have not started the questions when the review time ends, a computer screen will appear telling you that you will be moving on to the questions.

- The questions will automatically start in 30 seconds if you do not click the **Next Page** button.

- Then, there will be a separate time limit to answer the questions.

6. Tips for Success

<u>Preparation for the Test</u>

To help with your test preparation, consider doing some or all of the following:

1. *Practice Taking Tests*

   ➢ Taking tests can be challenging, but the experience can provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate how prepared you are for the job. Become comfortable with the test-taking situation by finding practice tests online or in the library.

   ➢ The tests should involve reading information and answering multiple-choice questions. You may find numerous free practice tests online of a general nature that are designed to measure abilities similar to those measured in the FCA, such as Learning, Reasoning, Listening Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Basic Arithmetic. Practice answering test questions that measure these capabilities.

   ➢ Time yourself and practice budgeting your time so that you can effectively manage your testing time.

2. *Thoroughly review this Preparation Guide.*

   ➢ Remember, the FCA does NOT test your knowledge of firefighting or any other specific information. Therefore, no specific resource documents can be provided to help you prepare for the FCA. This FCA Preparation Guide and the example questions provided in it are your best resource for understanding what to expect on the FCA.

   ➢ Pay close attention to the example questions listed earlier in this document. They represent the types of questions that will appear on the FCA. Make sure you understand each question and the rationale behind the correct answer.

Quick Test-Taking Tips

➢ As best as you can, clear your schedule well before the test date to give you ample time to prepare.

➢ Get plenty of rest the night before the test.

➢ Eat a good, well-balanced meal before attending your testing session.

➢ During the exam, read all instructions carefully and follow them.

➢ Before choosing an answer, read ALL of the answer choices.

➢ The questions in the first four portions of the FCA are designed to measure job relevant capabilities, such as Learning Ability, Reasoning, Listening Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Basic Arithmetic. These questions each have an objectively correct answer (or answers). If you are not sure of the best answer, try to eliminate one or more choices as incorrect. Then provide your best answer from the options that remain.

Preparation for the Hiring Process

1. *Go to the Los Angeles Fire Department website:*

   ➢ Go to lafd.org

   ➢ Click on **About** and read **About LAFD** to familiarize yourself with the department.

   ➢ Click on **Join** and then on **Careers** to read about the general activities performed by LAFD Firefighters.

   ➢ These steps will help you understand more about the LAFD and about being a Firefighter in general, so you can better determine if you wish to pursue a career as a Firefighter by taking the FCA.

2. *Review the LAFD Firefighter selection process website for more information about the Firefighter job, the hiring process, and where the FCA fits into that process.*

   ➢ **Go to joinlafd.org**

> ➢ **To register for the FCA, please visit the PSI Services LLC (PSI) website at https://tara.vitapowered.com/LAFD/FCA / and create an account.**

> ➢ **For issues registering for the FCA you may email PSI at COLAOPS@psionline.com.**

THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES AND THE LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT WISH YOU SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING YOUR CAREER GOALS!