

Porterville College Firefighter I Academy

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How much is this going to cost?

In addition to your tuition, you can expect to pay at least \$400 for uniforms, \$150 for textbooks and supplies, \$1,000 to rent Personal Protective Equipment (firefighter turnouts), \$200 for certificates, an unknown amount for a medical examination (may or may not be covered by your personal insurance) and you will be paying for fuel, meals, etc. as you drive to various fire department training facilities throughout Tulare and Kings Counties. You must have good dependable transportation and cannot rely on others to get you to our fire training facility in Porterville or our off-site training facilities. Persons who are already employed by a fire department will have the benefit of not having to rent gear or pay for a medical evaluation, but in round numbers the cost of attending this Academy will likely exceed \$2500 for the average Cadet.

2. Do I have to be an EMT to attend the Academy?

Yes! You must complete Emergency Medical Technician 1 before you may enroll in this Academy. You do not, however, need National Registry certification.

You must also have completed the course "Fire Protection Organization" (Fire P101 at Porterville College), or the equivalent course at another California Community College. This course is known at "BS-1" at Bakersfield College and "Fire Tech 159" at College of the Sequoias.

3. How long is the Academy?

360+ hours over 20 weeks. Attending this Academy will require a substantial commitment of both time AND money. You will be in class three nights a week, (5:30 p.m. to about 10:00 p.m.) and all day Saturday (7:00 a.m. to about 5:00 p.m.), every week from early August through mid-December. You will have class on State or Federal holidays that fall on a regular class day. You must be on time and stay for the complete class EVERY day.

4. How strenuous is the training?

Very! Before you may participate in this Academy, you will be required to obtain a medical clearance from your Doctor, at your expense.

Detailed information on this issue is in the enclosed document "Medical Clearance".

You will be working hard, running, climbing, dragging, lifting, and... you will be expected to participate in group physical fitness training every day before the start of class.

5. Is there a lot of study involved?

Yes! You will need to study at home for several hours each week, and will have to make time to do so. To be successful, you must do a lot of reading and lecture note review, and you will be practicing hands-on skills outside of class hours as well.

You will have about 30 written exams, and hands-on skills evaluations throughout the Academy. To meet State Fire Marshal requirements you must score at least 80% on each exam. You will be allowed one retake of any exam you fail, up to five exams. If you fail any retake, or if you fail a sixth exam, you will be dropped from the Academy.

Testing/Grading criteria is in the Academy Cadet Manual. You may view the Cadet Manual online at our Porterville College Fire Technology website.

6. What textbooks and other basic supplies do I need?

The textbook for this Academy is the "FIREFIGHTER'S HANDBOOK: Essentials of Firefighting and Emergency Response", Third Edition, published by DELMAR. You will also need the related "Student Study Guide/Workbook" (same title, edition, publisher).

Books are available at the Porterville College bookstore, but they may be available on the Internet or elsewhere for less. You will also need:

- 25 “Green” Scantrons (Item# 882e) – Available at the College Bookstore
- One sturdy 3” three-ring binder and notepaper
- A #2 pencil and black or blue ink pens

The Scantrons are available at the College bookstore but may not be available at all department stores or office supply outlets.

7. Do I have to buy Uniforms?

You are required to purchase and wear a Fire Academy uniform. The cost will depend on which options you select but will probably exceed \$400. Detailed information about uniforms is in the **Academy Cadet Manual - “Appendix A - Uniforms”**.

8. Do I have to provide my own Turnouts and Wildland gear?

YES, you must provide your own Structural Personal Protective Equipment (“Turnouts”). “Wildland/Brush gear” is optional. We will provide you a Structural Firefighter helmet, you may NOT provide your own. Unless you are affiliated with a fire department and/or have gear (or know someone who will loan you the right size and type of gear) you will have to rent or purchase gear for use in this Academy. The rental price for gear could exceed \$1,000. Detailed information about gear is in the **Academy Cadet Manual - “Appendix B – PPE”**.

9. How soon do I need to the Uniforms, PPE, etc.?

You must have your Medical Clearance, Uniforms, Turnout gear and other supplies by the first day of class. Some of these items make take a few weeks to get, and that’s exactly why I’m sharing this information to you now. **Don’t wait! Start now.**

10. Is Financial Aid available?

The short answer is “Maybe”, but not before the Academy starts. However, read on... You may be suffering from “sticker shock” after reading above that, in addition to paying tuition, you are going to need to spend \$2,500 or more to buy books, uniforms and rent gear for this Academy. So I want to share some important information about financial aid.

The Porterville College Financial Aid Office has programs that may assist students who meet certain qualifications. Unfortunately, they do not have a program that will give anyone money in advance for this Academy. So even if you qualify, you will still have to pay up front for tuition, uniforms, gear rental and so forth. They may, however, be able to assist those who qualify by providing some reimbursement AFTER the fact.

If you would like more information regarding this, please call the Porterville College Financial Aid office at 559-791-2301.

11. What if I’m not sure I can, or want, to take the Academy right now?

If you should elect not to attend now, it is imperative that you go online right away and drop the class. This will automatically enroll a student from the waiting list, and allow them time to get uniforms, etc.

If you are uncertain that this Fire Academy is for you, or if you have already decided to drop for whatever reason, please read the document posted on our website titled **“Career Information”**. It offers insight and suggestions of other things that you can do to prepare for a fire service career while waiting to attend a future Fire Academy here or elsewhere.

More detailed information about the subjects discussed in these “Frequently Asked Questions” can be found in the Academy related documents on our website. In particular, you should read the document titled “Career Information”.

Our website address is: www.portervillecollege.edu/fire_tech