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The recruit newsletter of the South Euclid Fire Department

Climbing to a career as a firefighter in the South Euclid Fire Department, one rung at a time.

Issue Six

How is your driving record and your background?

At some point in the hiring process, the agency that may be hiring you will conduct background checks. These checks may include; interviews of current and previous employers, interviews of references and neighbors, a review of your driving record, your credit history, military records, school records and your criminal background. All of this information helps paint a picture of the person they are considering for employment. Here is some information about some of those areas:

Driving: Your driving record is very important. At some point in your career you will be given the opportunity to drive fire trucks and rescue squads. Driving these vehicles is very important with the safety of your crew, patients and the public at stake. A large number of violations are likely to make your selection unlikely. Driving under the influence can be a job killer as well. First, watch the way you drive. This may be a difference in getting hired. Second, if you have some significant history on your driving record, don't add to it. Time helps make those infractions of less importance. If you are able to show a history of good driving, it can offset a poor driving record that happened when you were younger.

Criminal Record: A criminal background will be conducted. If you have a significant criminal history or a felony, it is time to consider a different career. Although the investigating agency does not have access to your juvenile record, you will most likely be given some type of polygraph test where you may have to explain your past. Very few candidates have perfect backgrounds. It is important that negative items are in the distant past. When asked you should be able to explain the circumstances and how you have matured. Keep your record as clean as possible. We will discuss polygraph exams in a later newsletter.

Credit History: The checking of credit histories has become a topic of debate, but at this time can still be used in a public sector job. Employers are not that concerned about your actual credit score, but about the decisions you make regarding your finances. Someone with a pattern of collections and excessive debt is going to have an additional obstacle to overcome in getting hired. Keep track of your credit and be prepared to explain negative items.

References: Agencies are going to check your references and employment history. Your current employment usually provides a pretty good picture of the employee you will be hired. Be a good employee, neighbor and person in your community.

Getting hired is a long process that starts in your past. You can't change your past, but you control your future. Good luck, work hard and stay safe. - Chief Huston