

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

The Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT)

FCTC strives to ensure that all candidates have the information and resources needed to land the job. The FAQs below are based on common candidate questions and have been divided into categories to help you navigate through all the information on this page.

If you can't find an answer to your question, please contact the FCTC team directly:

Chat: [FCTCOnline.org](https://www.fctc.org)
Email: FCTC@cpf.org
Phone: (877) 648-2728

Quick Links:

- [Registering for the CPAT](#)
- [CPAT Details](#)
- [Preparing for the CPAT](#)
- [Taking the CPAT](#)
- [CPAT and the Statewide Eligibility List \(SEL\)](#)

Registering for the CPAT:

How do I register for the CPAT?

All candidates must first create a profile through [FCTCOnline.org](https://www.fctc.org) and complete all requirements. [CLICK HERE](#) and follow the prompts to create your FCTC profile.

How much does the CPAT cost?

Taking the CPAT costs \$150 and includes two (2) CPAT Orientations.

Does the test fee cover taking the CPAT again if I fail?

No. You must pay each time you take the CPAT.

Can I choose my testing date, time, and/or location?

Yes. You may choose any testing date, time, and location that is currently open for registration at [FCTCOnline.org](https://www.fctc.org). You can schedule a new event from your FCTC dashboard. [CLICK HERE](#) to view all currently available CPAT events.

Can I change my test date after registering?

Yes. In your FCTC profile, you can either reschedule your test OR place it into pending status. A \$50.00 fee will be assessed if you reschedule less than two (2) business days prior to your scheduled event. Your testing fee will be forfeited if you fail to reschedule, if you do not attend your scheduled event, or if you reschedule but do not take the test within twelve (12) months of your original payment date.

Can I get a refund if I decide not to take the test?

No. All FCTC fees are non-refundable.

How often can I retake the CPAT?

You may retake the CPAT as often as you like. Be sure to read the job announcements thoroughly for the fire department you are interested in to see what their CPAT date requirements are.

What if I cannot afford the testing fee?

If you demonstrate financial hardship, then you may be eligible for financial aid from the [California Fire Foundation](#), which covers all fees associated with both the FCTC Written Test and the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). [CLICK HERE](#) for more information about the grant program and to access the application.

CPAT Details:

How long is the CPAT?

You will have 10 minutes and 20 seconds to complete the CPAT.

What is the CPAT like?

To pass the CPAT, you must navigate eight (8) events on a closed course:

1. Stair Climb
2. Hose Drag
3. Equipment Carry
4. Ladder Raise and Extension
5. Forcible Entry
6. Search
7. Rescue Drag
8. Ceiling Breach and Pull

Each event must be completed exactly as prescribed by your lead proctor. [CLICK HERE](#) for more detailed information about the CPAT.

Preparing for the CPAT:

Am I required to participate in CPAT Orientations and Practices?

Yes. All candidates are required to participate in (2) CPAT Orientations and (2) CPAT Practices. You may, however, excuse yourself from this mandatory condition by signing a digital waiver acknowledging that FCTC made these programs available on an equal basis to all candidates and that you knowingly and voluntarily waive participation in the Orientation and Practice sessions.

What is a CPAT Orientation like?

The CPAT Orientation is a two-hour, instructional session that allows you to learn more about and become familiar with the CPAT rules, course, and equipment. At the Orientation, CPAT proctors will guide you through all eight (8) CPAT events, giving you hands-on experience with all the testing equipment. Proctors also give advice on specific conditioning regimens and techniques to help ensure that you are ready to pass on test day.

How much do CPAT Orientations cost?

Two (2) CPAT Orientations are included in the cost of a CPAT Test.

What is a CPAT Practice like?

A CPAT Practice is an hour-long, timed simulation of the actual test, giving you the opportunity to experience the CPAT almost exactly as you will on test day. CPAT Practices give you the opportunity to determine whether you are ready to pass the CPAT and, if not, to identify areas for improvement. After the Practice, FCTC proctors give advice on how to improve your performance and/or conditioning to be ready on test day.

How much does a CPAT Practice cost?

CPAT Practices cost \$25 each.

If I pass the CPAT Practice, can I use that as my CPAT Test result?

No. Practice tests are just that – practice. You must still pass the CPAT Test on your scheduled test day.

Taking the CPAT:

Do I have any responsibilities before test day?

Yes. Prior to your arrival at the testing site, you must complete and sign the electronic waivers sent in your confirmation email at the time of registration.

What kind of identification do I need to take to the CPAT?

You must bring at least one (1) form of valid government-issued identification to the testing facility, such as a driver's license, state identification card, or U.S. passport.

CPAT and the Statewide Eligibility List (SEL):

How soon will I get the results?

Immediately. Upon passage of the CPAT, you will receive the Card of Completion before leaving the testing center. Results will be automatically uploaded to your FCTC profile at the conclusion of the event day.

Do I have to pass the CPAT through FCTC to become a firefighter in California?

With limited exceptions, the large majority of California fire agencies require FCTC's CPAT Card of Completion as part of the application process. FCTC is the exclusive statewide provider of the CPAT in California and, while some fire agencies accept CPAT results from organizations outside of California, you must take the CPAT through FCTC to be placed on the FCTC Statewide Eligibility List (SEL). [CLICK HERE](#) for more information about the SEL.

What fire agencies utilize FCTC's Statewide Eligibility List (SEL)?

Currently, 147 California fire agencies use the SEL in their hiring process. [CLICK HERE](#) for a full list of participating agencies.

When will my CPAT results expire?

The expiration of the CPAT is determined by the requirements of the hiring fire department. If not specified by the fire department, CPAT results will expire after 12 months.