

Important 'Points' to Consider: LACoFD

Michael Archer | May 07, 2007

SHARE

When it comes to choosing a fire department with many different jobs and opportunities, competing departments seldom stack up to Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD). This massive department administers 58 cities in Southern California, along with large sections of unincorporated county land.

Established in 1920, LACoFD boasts nearly 5,000 members divided among 165 stations. It has its own fleet of 10 helicopters, almost 250 engines, and even has a contingent of nine bulldozers on call 24/7. Of course, you need a lot of coverage when you oversee more than 2,300 square miles of territory that includes mountains, deserts, coastland, and dense urban sprawl that is home to a total of about 4.6 million people.

Cultural Connection

The department has had an impact on American culture as well. Two popular TV series were based on activities at LACoFD: The paramedic series "Emergency!" and "Baywatch," which profiled the lives of LACoFD lifeguards. Randy Mantooth, who played one of the paramedics in "Emergency!" is creating a new project entitled "USAR," which may be launching in the near future.

Minorities and Women

As with their close cousin, the LAFD, LACoFD is intensely interested in increasing the number of applicants from two segments of society. "We're looking for more women to apply at Los Angeles County Fire Department," said Captain Anderson Mackey, head of LACoFD Recruiting. "We're also looking for more minorities that reflect the diversity of Los Angeles County."

Diverse Job Opportunities

For those who like variety in their employment choices, you really can't beat what LACoFD has to offer. "There are opportunities working as firefighters, but there are also opportunities working as civilians," Capt. Mackey stated. "Civilian positions include working as a secretary, as a staff assistant, in IT or accounting to name a few, there's a lot of choices and we want to expose people to those choices." Opportunities include such diverse careers as working with Hazardous Materials (HazMat), Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), Fire Prevention, and even as a county lifeguard down at the beach.

ABOUT MICHAEL ARCHER



Michael Archer is a wildfire consultant and writer. He has written articles for *Home and Fire Magazine*, *Wildland Firefighter Magazine*, and other publications, lectured to many groups about fire issues, been quoted by Associated Press and USA Today reporters, and also appeared on cable and network TV discussing wildfire issues. Currently, he is acting as webmaster and technical consultant to Wildfire Research Network (www.wildfireresearch.org), a Los Angeles-based citizens' action group that promotes firefighting issues involving the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI).

His "Firebombers Incorporated" series of novels gives readers an intriguing "what-if" scenario on how 21st century technology could modernize the wildland firefighting force. His novel "Firestorm," received excellent reviews from *Writers Digest*, *The Nashville News*, *The VVA Veteran* (Vietnam Veterans of America's magazine) and firefighting professionals across the United States. His company, Firebomber Publications, donates 50 percent of net profits to organizations that support the families of injured and fallen firefighters.



You can visit his website at: www.firebomberpublications.com

Firestorm can be purchased at Amazon.com

Comments can be sent to: marcher47@firebomberpublications.com

[Michael Archer Article Archives](#)
[Discussion Boards](#)

advertisement



Gear Up

Get the latest gear
at Military.com

1000s of Products

shop now

Training Requirements

You would think that the prerequisites to get into such a prestigious department would be pretty steep, but Capt. Mackey begs to differ. "All we require is that a candidate be at least 18 years of age, a high school graduate (or GED), and they have passed the CPAT," he affirmed. The CPAT, or the Candidate Physical Ability Test, is a physical fitness test that can be completed at a number of locations around Southern California and costs about \$150. But, if you're short on money, don't despair, the California Fire Fighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee administers a grants program that pays the bill for those who meet the program's qualifications.

As with many departments, LACoFD provides 10 veterans points for those who have served in declared wars. Since the written exam is now a pass/fail grade, your score is weighted 100 percent on the oral, and those points can come in handy. Unlike some smaller departments, candidates don't have to complete expensive training courses (like a \$50,000 paramedic certification course) to be competitive. "We don't require EMT qualifications for our candidates," Capt. Mackey explained. "We'll teach them over at the Training Tower." Fire Academy and paramedic training are also paid for by the department.

Benefits

Starting salaries at LACoFD are \$53,184. Add to that first-class medical and dental benefits, a superb pension plan, 144 hours of vacation, 132 hours of holidays and up to 120 hours of sick leave per year, and you have a benefits package that's hard to beat. All that and the respect that goes with working in one of the busiest fire departments in the county adds up to an unbeatable opportunity.

Sound Off...What do you think? [Join the discussion.](#)



Copyright 2011 Michael Archer. All opinions expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of Military.com.

[Become a Firefighter](#)
Online Fire Science Degree from American Public University. Apply.
Ads by Google

Get the latest gear at Military.com
1000s of Products
shop now

WHAT'S HOT >>

- [Court Won't Make Corpse Photos Public](#)
- [Mass Burial Planned for Unclaimed Vets](#)
- Buzz: [DoD Spending Plan Reactions on Hill](#)
- Kit Up!: [Don't Go Full Auto](#)
- [Outlook for Pay and TRICARE in 2012](#)
- Spouse: [When Civilians Try to Help](#)
- Fitness: [Full-body Dumbbell Blast](#)
- Movie Review: ['Country Strong'](#)

advertisement

Military.com
FRONTLINE NEWS
NATIONAL POLICY
EXPLAINED