



## **Basic Operations Firefighter Academy (Formerly Firefighter II) Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Is Basic Operations Firefighter (BOF) different than Firefighter II?** No, it is the exact same course and certification, as far as being an entry-level firefighting certification. The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), who governs firefighter training in the state, has recently updated the Firefighter II curriculum, and part of what goes with that is a name change. Put simply, BOF has replaced Firefighter II as the entry-level certification in Illinois.
2. **What is Basic Operations Firefighter?** B.O.F. is the basic firefighter certification in Illinois, and it is designed specifically for entry-level firefighters. Just about every paid fire department in Illinois requires their personnel to be certified as BOF / FFII either prior to being hired, or soon after during their probationary period. If you are exploring a career as a firefighter in Illinois, this certification is a must.
3. **How much is the class?** The student tuition for the course is \$ 2,850.00 per student. If two or more students enroll from the same fire department then there will be a discount of \$ 100.00 per student.
4. **What is the payment policy?** The course tuition must be paid in three installments. The first payment is due the first day of the course. The second payment is due 10 days later, and the third payment is due 10 days after that. A \$ 200.00 deposit is required during registration to secure your slot in the course, and this deposit is subtracted from what your first payment would be.
5. **Can I use my G.I. Bill benefits to help pay for the course?** Yes this course qualifies for reimbursement from the V.A. G.I. Bill, however it does not qualify for reimbursement from the Illinois Veterans Grant.
6. **Do I need to be on a fire department in order to attend the B.O.F. Academy?** No. You may attend the course as a “non-affiliated” student, however the OSFM will not certify you or allow you to take the state exam until you are a rostered member of a fire department.

7. **So if the OSFM will not allow me to get certified as a civilian, will I be wasting my time attending the course?** No. Your attendance in the course as a civilian and all the hands-on skills you perform will still count. After graduating the course, once you become a member of a fire department you can then take the state exam and get certified once you pass it. Many fire departments may consider you a more attractive recruit if they know you have completed a BOF academy and are simply awaiting to take the state exam. Your course work and hands-on skills you performed during the Academy will be valid for 5 years from the time you completed the program, OR until the current curriculum stays in place. If the 5 years has passed or an updated curriculum is released by the OSFM and you have not yet achieved certification then your coursework and hands-on skills will expire and you will have to repeat the program. There is no set timeline when curriculums are updated, but based on past updates, updates are generally have not been done less than 5 years from the previous update.

In addition, if a fire department is willing you take you on once you complete our program, the OSFM allows the decision on whether or not to accept or recognize your attendance in the academy as a non-affiliated student to rest with the fire chief of that department, even if it is less than 5 years since you completed the academy.

8. **Can I be sponsored by a fire department to attend the course? Will the Romeoville Fire Department sponsor me?** The only way for a department truly to sponsor you is if they have you on their department personnel roster. You can be sponsored by a department, however seeking a fire department sponsorship is your responsibility. Unfortunately the Romeoville Fire Dept. does not sponsor students at this time.
9. **If I successfully graduate the course will that get me a job with the Romeoville Fire Dept.?** No. This course is simply to give students the proper training and education in order to certify them to the level of B.O.F. While the Romeoville Fire Dept. has hired past BOF graduates, it in no way guarantees employment to graduating students.

However, because our goal is aid recruits in furthering their fire service careers even after they graduate, we provide all kinds of information to graduates on where they should go next after graduation to take the next step in their fire service careers. The RFA has an excellent track record of our past non-affiliated graduates landing on fire departments after completing our program

10. **What equipment is required for the course?** You will be required to produce your own self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and full firefighting gear (turnout gear), which consists of firefighting coat, firefighting pants, firefighting boots, firefighting gloves, firefighting protective hood, firefighting helmet, and protective eyewear, such as safety glasses.

11. **Where do I get this equipment?** Students who are members of a fire department or being sponsored by a department will most likely get this equipment from that department. Non-affiliated students will be responsible to acquire this equipment on their own. The Romeoville Fire Academy can provide students with this equipment for a \$ 300.00 equipment surcharge. This surcharge is due on the first day of class and is non-refundable.
12. **What else will I need for the course?** In addition to the above equipment, students will need:
- Certificate of Insurance from employer (for those attending through a fire department)
  - Letter from physician deeming you fit to perform firefighter training **AND** deeming you fit to wear a respirator
  - Proof of SCBA mask fit testing. Those students unable to provide proof of fit testing, we can provide fit testing at a \$ 25.00 cost to student. Students renting SCBA from the RFA will not have to pay the fit testing surcharge.
13. **Is the class physically demanding?** Yes. As you can imagine, firefighting is a very physically demanding occupation. The course is just as physically demanding, if not more so. In addition to the hands-on training and live-fire training, virtually each class day students will be performing PT and physical fitness such as jogging and calisthenics.
14. **How do I register for the course or who do I contact if I have questions?** You can register for the course right on our website at [www.romeoville.org/fireacademy.aspx](http://www.romeoville.org/fireacademy.aspx) or you call the Academy staff at 815-372-4042.