

City of Saint Paul Vision and Hearing Standards for Incoming Firefighters

Medical condition classifications

A **Category A** medical condition is one that would preclude a person from performing as a firefighter in a training or emergency operational environment by presenting a significant risk to the safety and health of the person or others.

A **Category B** medical condition is one that, based on its severity or degree, could preclude a person from performing as a firefighter in a training or emergency operational environment by presenting a significant risk to the safety and health of the person or others.

Eyes and Vision

Category A medical conditions shall include the following:

1. **Far visual acuity** less than 20/40 binocular, corrected with contact lenses or spectacles, or far visual acuity less than 20/100 binocular for wearers of hard contact lenses or spectacles, uncorrected.

Successful long-term soft contact lens wearers (typically six months without a problem) are not subject to the uncorrected standard.

2. **Color perception**-monochromatic vision; candidates should be able to reliably identify red, green and amber.
3. **Monocular vision** (vision from one eye only).
4. Any eye condition that results in the candidate not being able to safely perform one or more of the essential job tasks.

Category B medical conditions shall include the following:

1. Diseases of the eye such as retinal detachment, progressive retinopathy, or optic neuritis.
2. Ophthalmological procedures such as radial keratotomy, LASIK procedure, repair of a retinal detachment. Sufficient time (approximately two weeks for radial keratotomy and LASIK-type surgeries, and three months for retinal detachment treatment) must have passed to allow stabilization of visual acuity and to ensure that there are no post-surgical complications
3. **Peripheral vision** in the horizontal meridian of less than 110° in the better eye, or any condition that significantly affects peripheral vision in both eyes.

Ears and hearing

Category A medical conditions shall include the following:

1. Chronic **vertigo or impaired balance** as demonstrated by the inability to tandem gait walk.
2. **On audiometric testing**, average hearing loss in the unaided better ear greater than 40 dB at 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, and 3000 Hz when the audiometric device is calibrated to ANSI Z24.5.
3. Any ear condition (or hearing impairment) that results in the candidate not being able to safely perform one or more of the essential job tasks of a full duty firefighter.

Category B medical conditions shall include the following:

1. **Unequal hearing loss.** Unequal hearing can result in the inability to localize sounds, leading to failure in the ability to safely perform search and rescue and other localization tasks.
2. **Average uncorrected hearing deficit** at the test frequencies 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, and 3000 Hz greater than 40 dB in either ear.
3. **Atresia, stenosis, or tumor of the auditory canal.**
4. **External otitis** (inflammation of the external ear canal).
5. **Agensis or traumatic deformity of the auricle** (the externally visible ear).
6. **Mastoiditis or surgical deformity of the mastoid.**
7. **Ménière's syndrome, labyrinthitis** (inflammation of the inner ear structures) **or tinnitus.**
8. **Otitis media (chronic)** (infections of the middle ear).