



**INSPECT
POINT**

2021

HIRING GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The fire inspection industry is growing. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 9.7% increase in fire inspector jobs from 2016 to 2026. To grow successfully, businesses must hire new technicians. This can present a challenge to busy owners and management staff, who may have a lot on their plates and little hiring expertise.

Finding and choosing technicians can seem overwhelming, but this guide is built to simplify the process and alleviate some of the stress of the hiring process.

When it comes to hiring good technicians, most employers face **three major questions**:



Each of these questions is complex, and each has a variety of possible answers. The goal of this guide is to lay out your options and help you determine the strategy best suited for your fire inspection business. **Ultimately, it's up to you to decide what will work best for you and your company.**

HOW DO I FIND GOOD CANDIDATES?

Finding candidates can be one of the hardest parts of hiring, but it's the foundation of the hiring process. Without good candidates, no further steps will yield the ideal new employee. So what's the first step in attracting good candidates? **Writing a good job description.**

You may be inclined to just throw together a job description so you can quickly post your position. However, putting some thought into what you write will help you attract qualified candidates. Essential to hiring, a good job description establishes guidelines to help both parties understand what the position requires. In addition, you can use it later as a basis for performance reviews.

Putting in the work now will pay off in the long run, so get the most out of your job description.



There are two main approaches to writing a job description. Some companies prefer broad, general guidelines, while others prefer more specific descriptions. Both have advantages and disadvantages. The broad style will allow new employees room to perform more tasks, but it may end up too vague to be useful. The narrow style sets clear expectations, but it runs the risk of becoming overly precise and boxing employees in. Try to lean toward the narrow side without being restrictively specific. **Carefully detail the most important points, but allow for broad language – words such as “including.”**

THE JOB DESCRIPTION

There are four parts to a job description: identification information, the job summary, the job duties and responsibilities, and the job specifications and minimum qualifications. Each element contributes to ensuring your job description conveys all the information a potential employee may need.

- **Identification information** should include the basics, such as the job title, salary range, hours, reporting relationship, etc.
- **The job summary** should be a one- to three- paragraph explanation of what a candidate can expect in the position.
- **Job duties and responsibilities** are the tasks, listed in order of time or importance, that will comprise the majority of the employee's time.
- **Job specifications and minimum qualifications** should range from specific qualifications (such as a degree or certification) to more general skills (such as good communication). Consider technical, physical, and soft skills, denoting whether each is necessary or just preferred.

THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Now that you know the “what” and “why” of writing job a description, **you need to know the “how.”**

The first step is to consider your needs. Look into what your current employees do, then think about what else needs to be done.

What tasks would be part of your new employee’s day-to-day work?

What skills would he or she need to complete that work?

With these questions in mind, start a list of responsibilities and qualifications.

Next, do some research. See if your competitors are also posting jobs. This will help you gain an idea of their strategies. In addition, you might notice a requirement or duty that you forgot to include, and you will be able to determine if the salary you plan to offer is fair. **Research is a good way to ensure your job description encompasses everything necessary.**

WRITING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Now that you know what to include in the job description, consider how you will write it. Use action verbs to introduce each duty: words like “perform,” “report,” “maintain,” “prepare,” and “coordinate.” Write in the present tense using formal, industry-standard language, avoiding slang and anything too esoteric. Be sure your writing is clear and searchable. Use words that a candidate might type when searching for job postings. **Straightforward language and writing will make your job description stand out.**



On the following page is a sample job description for an inspection technician. This should give you an idea of how to set up your description and what to include. **Use it as a jumping-off point and customize it to meet the needs of your business, as well as state or local requirements.**

JOB DESCRIPTION SAMPLE

Fire Protection Inspection Technician

Reports To: Inspection Manager

Job Type: Full Time

Salary: \$25-\$35 per hour

Location: Troy, NY

Summary:

At our company, a fire protection inspection technician will be responsible for the inspection, testing, and servicing of fire protection equipment to NFPA standards. The technician will be required to travel to job sites within a three-hour radius. We perform inspections on a variety of fire protection systems. We prefer someone with knowledge of multiple systems, but we are willing to train the right candidate.

We offer a competitive salary, a 401k plan, and comprehensive benefits. We believe in continued training, so we provide and encourage many training opportunities. We typically operate within normal business hours, but employees must occasionally work at night or on weekends at the request of clients.

Duties:

- Perform inspections on fire alarms, sprinklers, extinguishers, and other fire protection equipment to NFPA standards
- Complete all documentation associated with inspection, testing, and maintenance
- Repair or replace damaged or expired equipment
- Communicate with clients to gather signatures and propose services
- Coordinate with administrative office staff regarding scheduling and the completion of work

Qualifications and Requirements:

- A high school diploma or an equivalent
- The ability to obtain and maintain NICET and local certifications - A current and valid driver's license
- A clean driving record
- The ability to meet the physical demands of the job, including lifting 50+ lbs., maneuvering on ladders, and bending in small places
- Knowledge of NFPA codes and different types and manufacturers of equipment - Good people skills; comfortable with in-the-field sales
- One year of experience with fire protection equipment inspection is preferred
- Experience with inspection software is preferred

POSTING JOB OPENINGS

Now that you have a job description, you need to post it where good candidates can find it. Advertising in just one place will limit the number of qualified candidates who will find you. Try posting in several locations, looking for the right mix for your business. **Use as wide a variety of resources as you can; the more qualified people you have to choose from, the better your chance of finding the right fit.**



Some of the best places to recruit from are fire protection training programs. These programs offer two- and four-year degrees, as well as shorter, more specific courses. The NFPA website has a list of colleges that offer programs relating to fire protection. You can also see if community colleges near you offer training programs related to your field. The career counseling offices at these schools will likely be willing to make your job description and application available to students looking for jobs. In addition, ask your current techs where they were trained. You already know the programs they attended produce qualified technicians.

POSTING JOB OPENINGS

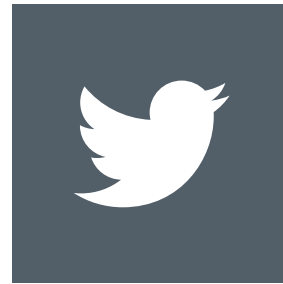


Online job boards are another major resource for job postings. Try [Indeed](#), [Glassdoor](#), [Monster](#), and [ZipRecruiter](#). Posting is free on Indeed and Glassdoor with the option to pay to promote your position, while Monster and ZipRecruiter both require payment for all postings. Depending on how much money you plan to invest in hiring, it may be worth it to try the paid sites or pay to promote your posting on the free sites. Consider starting with free postings, then moving toward paid if you don't find the right candidates.

Consider other online places, as well. Local job boards will provide a variety of candidates in your area. Posting on your company's website will let people searching for your business know that you are looking to hire. **This can help improve the quality of candidates you attract, as they will have a better idea of the specifics of your business.**

POSTING JOB OPENINGS

The next major option is social media. According to a 2013 Glassdoor survey, 79% of candidates will likely use social media in their job searches. This number increases to 86% regarding those in the first 10 years of their careers. The most-used social media for job searching is LinkedIn. You can post jobs on LinkedIn as you would on a job-posting site. LinkedIn uses pay-per-click, so you will pay whenever someone clicks on your posting. If you don't want to pay, simply sharing an outside link to your opening or explaining that you are looking to hire can help attract candidates.



Another useful social media site is Facebook. Not many companies utilize this platform, so you will stand out. If you are involved in any fire protection groups on social media, especially Facebook, reaching out in those groups may also be beneficial.

In addition to increasing the number of candidates you reach, social media will likely draw good-quality, technologically savvy candidates. This type of candidate can be a valuable asset to your company, especially because the inspection industry is moving away from pen and paper and toward digital inspections. **If your technicians can use technology, your company will have an advantage.**

POSTING JOB OPENINGS



Lastly, consider trade organizations. Knowledgeable, qualified workers from all branches of the industry are involved in local chapters of the NFPA, AFSA, and other fire protection organizations. If you are already involved in one or more of these organizations, reach out to see if anyone is looking for an inspection job. Even if no one is currently searching, these organizations may be able to spread the word that you're hiring.

Use a combination of these resources to attract a variety of applicants. To stay on top of your hiring process, be sure to check applicant responses relatively frequently. As applications begin to arrive, you'll have to make some decisions, which leads to the next major question... **How do I sort through applicants?**

HOW DO I SORT THROUGH APPLICANTS?

Now that you've written and posted your job description, you have a pool of candidates to choose from. On paper, most of them seem like good candidates. **How do you choose the right one?**

First, sort through the applications. Some will stand out as exceptionally good, others as exceptionally bad. It is important to figure out who you want to interview and who you don't.



Consider how an applicant's qualifications match your requirements. If a candidate meets the majority of the requirements, consider interviewing him or her. If not, let the candidate know he or she will not be considered for the position. A polite email thanking him or her for applying and explaining that you decided to meet with other candidates would be appropriate.

Next, move on to scheduling interviews with the remaining candidates. Try to contact candidates for interviews within two weeks after receiving their applications. Reach out via phone or email – whichever you prefer. If you choose a phone call, you can also do an early screening by asking some basic questions. When scheduling, develop a range of time during which you will be available for interviews, and try to be relatively flexible.

THE INTERVIEW



When hiring technicians, you will likely use one or more of the three main types of interviews — structured, unstructured, and behavioral. Each type has advantages, and each works best in different scenarios.

Structured interviews closely resemble traditional interviews, involving clear, job-related questions.

You will ask three types of questions: those relating to situations, job knowledge, and worker requirements. Situational questions, often hypothetical, assess how candidates will respond to work situations.

Finally, worker-requirement questions will help you decide if candidates are willing and able to perform under job conditions. These questions focus on whether the hours will be compatible, whether they feel the company culture fits, and whether they can meet the job's physical requirements. **Structured interviews are typically good predictors of job performance.**

THE INTERVIEW



Unstructured interviews are more like normal conversations. In this type of interview, you will prepare some questions in advance, but you will spend most of your time following up on candidate remarks. Open-ended questions with no set answers will dominate, offering you a more in-depth understanding of candidates. By not limiting the interview, you can probe deeper into important topics and gain a fuller picture. In addition, the relaxed nature of the interview will offer a clearer picture of the candidates. However, you may not receive all the information you need.

Behavioral interviews are founded on the idea that past behavior is a good predictor of future behavior. You will focus on asking candidates how they acted in previous situations. You might ask them to provide specific anecdotes about situations they handled in the past similar to ones they may face at your company. For example, you may ask how they handled stressful situations or showed leadership qualities.

THE INTERVIEW

Of these three types, structured interviews are usually best for hiring inspection technicians. They ensure that the most important questions are answered, and they offer the best comparison between candidates because you will ask the same questions of each. Because the inspection technician position does not require depth and probing during interviews, unstructured interviews are usually unnecessary. Adding some behavioral questions can be beneficial, but these questions deal little with job knowledge or the ability to meet requirements, so they will likely prevent you from gleaning all the necessary information. However, if you feel unstructured or behavioral interviews will work best for your company, certainly give them a try.



Once you decide on an interview style, you will need to choose questions. The questions you ask will control the quality of information you gather. On the next page is a list of questions to get you started.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

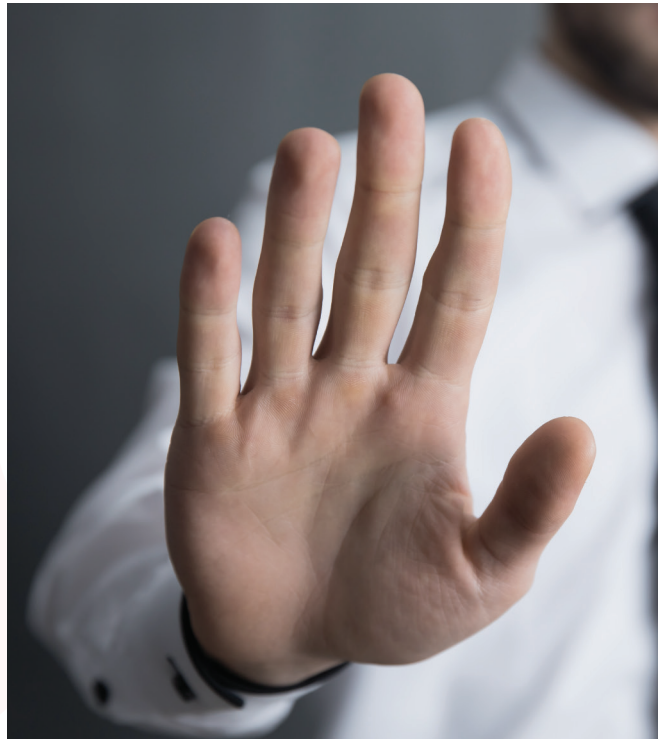
1. Some of our clients ask us to do inspections outside normal business hours. Would you be okay with working nights or weekends sometimes?
2. If you were offered this position, when would you be available to start?
3. What is your greatest strength?
4. What one skill would you like to improve, and what is your plan for doing so?
5. What is your definition of hard work?
6. Why are you leaving your current employer?
7. What kinds of direction and interaction would your ideal boss provide?
8. Tell me about a time you worked on a difficult team. What was your role and experience?
9. When have you failed? Describe what happened and what you learned.
10. What qualities in your co-workers bother you most? What qualities do you appreciate most?
11. If you are hired, you'll have to work directly with our customers on site. Describe a time you worked with a client or customer who was very different from you.
12. What questions do you have for me?

EEOC QUESTION GUIDELINES

While it is important to ask questions to gain a better understanding of your candidates, certain questions bring the risk of discrimination lawsuits. **EEOC has listed 12 types of discrimination that are illegal.** If you ask about these things, you will expose yourself to liability.

Here are some examples of questions NOT to ask:

1. How old are your children?
2. What does your wife do for a living?
3. Where did you grow up?
4. What language did you speak growing up?
5. How long do you plan to work before you retire?
6. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations?
7. Are you a U.S. citizen?
8. If you get pregnant, will you continue to work, and will you come back after maternity leave?
9. Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations?
10. How far will your commute?



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INTERVIEW TIPS

Be sure to frame your questions in a way that asks about specific requirements of the job. For example, your techs may need to do quite a bit of moving to perform their inspections. Rather than asking if they have any injuries or disabilities, ask if they are able to lift 50 or more pounds or work on ladders. This will keep you and your company protected and promote a positive relationship with potential employees. **If an interviewee volunteers information about a forbidden topic, try to re-direct the conversation. You will have plenty of time to talk about personal matters after the hire.**

Use interviews to determine whether candidates have the knowledge to complete the work, the drive to excel in the workplace, and personalities and preferences that will fit your company. **Considering all the facets of each candidate should help you narrow your options to a top candidate. From there, the challenge will be to make sure the candidate also chooses you.**



HOW DO I ATTRACT MY IDEAL CANDIDATE?



According to a survey by Glassdoor, job seekers' top five considerations before accepting offers are salary and compensation, career growth opportunities, work/life balance, location and commute, and company culture and values. **To attract your ideal candidate, it is important that your company is competitive in most of these categories.**

There are several aspects of salary and compensation to consider. **The main component is base pay.** You should have established a pay range while writing your job description. If you currently employ technicians, use their salaries as a benchmark. Also, if other companies in your area have posted positions, consider the rates they offer. If your rates are significantly higher or lower, you may want to make an adjustment.

The next component to consider is overtime. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires that U.S. companies pay overtime if an employee works more than 40 hours in a week. In certain circumstances, a company might be exempt from the FLSA, but the exemption does not usually apply to inspection technicians. The minimum requirement for overtime pay is 1.5 times the rate of pay. If your new employee may be working only a small amount of overtime, consider offering greater than 1.5 times to attract your top candidate.

HOW DO I ATTRACT MY IDEAL CANDIDATE?

Another component of compensation you can utilize is merit pay or bonuses.

Offer bonuses to current employees when goals such as a certain number of yearly on-site sales or inspections are reached. This will encourage your technicians to work efficiently and promote your business, and it may just put your company over the edge in securing the candidate of your choice.

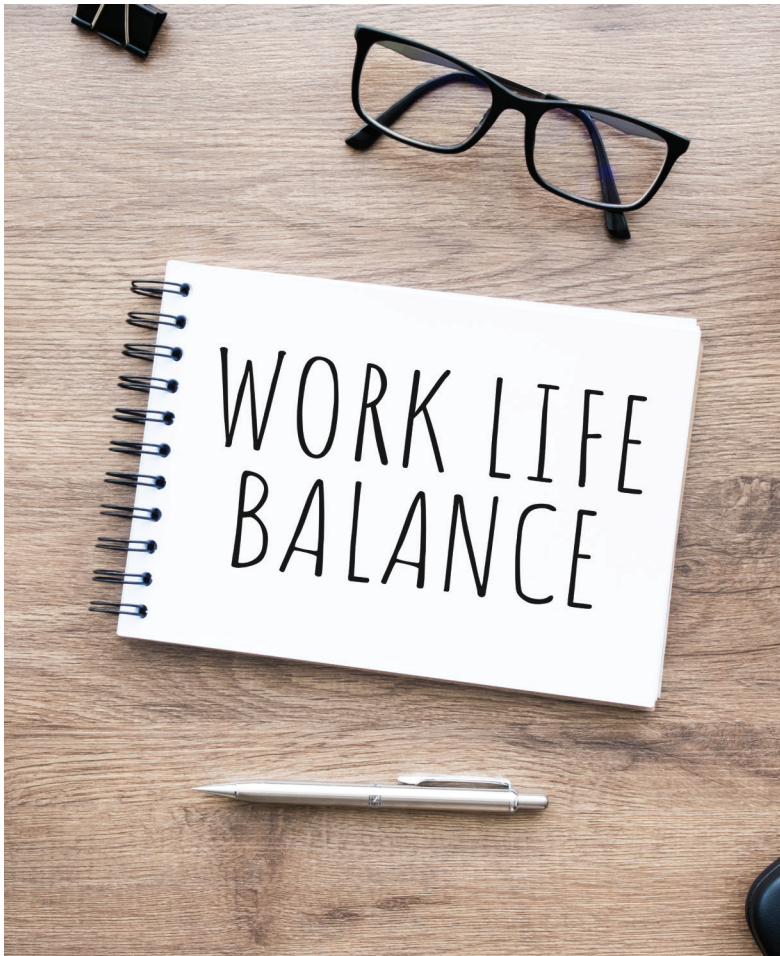


A travel allowance is another attractive compensation perk. If your new employee will travel to perform inspections, consider offering to cover the cost of food or other expenses.

Finally, evaluate your benefits offering. These can include dental insurance, health insurance, vacation time, leaves, or help with retirement saving. Some benefits may be required by law, so be sure to seek legal advice.

As with everything in this guide, only you can decide what compensation practice will work best for your company. Be sure to consider every facet and make a decision based on your resources, needs, and specific situation.

HOW DO I ATTRACT MY IDEAL CANDIDATE?



The third factor is work/life balance. Setting clear hours and offering an appropriate amount of vacation and sick days are good ways to provide flexibility. During the hiring process, be clear and upfront about how you will help promote a healthy balance.

The fourth factor is location and commute. You can't do much about this. You can offer help with relocation if necessary, but you have little control regarding commute. Recruiting locally and clearly including your location in your job description can help ensure your applicants are satisfied with your location.

The last factor is company culture. In the interviews, you should have developed an idea of whether or not candidates would be a good cultural fit for your company. Try to make as much of a cultural connection as you can. Be clear about the working environment and policies, as well as other aspects of the company candidates may want to know about. Communicate the work environment as much as you can before hiring.

CONCLUSION



Now that you have all the tools, it's time to put them into practice. Be sure to adapt the suggestions in this guide for your business. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to hiring. Many factors affect one another — from company size and culture to legal requirements. **Do what you think will be best, and if something doesn't work, don't be afraid to try something new.**

After the hire, you need to be sure to retain your new technician. A great way to prolong a positive relationship is to encourage and provide continued training. This is especially important as industry guidelines change, and it will show your employees that you value them enough to invest in them. **Consider offering both guideline training and training in industry technology.** If your employees are knowledgeable about new types of equipment, inspection software, barcode scanners, and other technology, they will appreciate the valuable skills and your inspection process will improve.

CONCLUSION

Another way to encourage employee satisfaction and better your business is to reward your employees. Performance reviews are a great tool to determine if and how individuals should be rewarded. If they have been productive, encourage similar behavior by offering bonuses, increased autonomy, and promotion (if available). Verbal praise goes a long way, as well.

New hires allow you to grow your business and keep up with the demands of the fire protection inspection industry. In this guide, you have learned how to find, select, and attract new employees, as well as some small tips for maintaining them. Now it's time to start applying what you've learned to your business.



Features & Benefits

Inspect Point is the perfect fire and life safety inspection software solution for you.



NFPA Inspections on an iPad

Ditch the pen and paper. Complete inspections, document deficiencies, and collect signatures electronically.



Generate Branded Inspection Reports

With the click of a button (yes, it's really only one button) you can generate professional inspection reports.



Centrally Manage Your Inspections

Schedule and dispatch inspections for specific dates/times or on a recurring basis.



Create Service Proposals in the Field

Technicians can prepare, and present, proposals right after they document the deficiencies.

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