# Preparation **Guide**for the City of Los Angeles Firefighter Candidate Assessment



This FCA Preparation Guide includes information about the Firefighter Candidate Assessment, or FCA. The FCA is just one part of the City of Los Angeles Firefighter selection process. The cost of the FCA is \$73.00. If you cannot afford the exam, there is a <u>fee waiver</u> available to those who qualify.

Candidates who are at least 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and have a valid California driver's license may register to take the FCA.

Candidates who achieve a passing score on the FCA <u>and</u> submit an application will be considered for further steps in the Firefighter selection process.

This Guide describes the various parts of the FCA, offers tips on how to prepare for and take the FCA, and provides example questions.

DO NOT BRING THIS PREP GUIDE TO THE WRITTEN TEST

# **Table of Contents**

1. Purpose of the FCA Preparation Guide	3
2. FCA Overview	3
3. The Training Guide	3
Training Guide Example	4
Taking Notes	5
4. FCA Example Questions	6
Example 1 – Hot Spot	6
Example 2 – Drag-and-Drop	8
Example 3 – Multiple Choice Audio	. 10
Example 4 – Multiple Choice Pictorial	. 12
Example 5 – Multiple Choice, Multiple Response	. 14
Example 6 – Fill in the Blank	. 16
Example 7 – Background Survey	. 18
5. Important Notes about Testing Time	. 19
6. Tips for Success	. 20
Preparation	. 20
Ouick Test-Taking Tips	. 20

# 1. Purpose of the FCA Preparation Guide

This Preparation Guide is intended to assist you in preparing for the City of Los Angeles Firefighter Candidate Assessment. You should read the entire FCA Preparation Guide to assist you in understanding what to expect during the assessment. No prior knowledge of firefighting or any other technical information is necessary to take any portion of the FCA.

The FCA is a computer-based assessment. This guide shows you the kinds of questions you will see in the assessment. It also introduces you to something called the Training Guide, which is a booklet you will work with while taking the assessment.

### 2. FCA Overview

The FCA includes **5 portions**. You will have up to **4 hours** to complete it.

<u>Three portions</u> require you to watch a video, and then answer questions about what you learned in the video. The information in the videos is not real; it was created for the assessment. Also, some of the words in the videos are not real; they were created specifically for the assessment.

<u>The fourth portion</u> requires you to read information on the computer screen, and then answer questions about what you read.

<u>The fifth portion</u> is a background information survey, where you will answer questions to describe your experiences and work preferences.

# 3. The Training Guide

When you take the FCA, you will be given a booklet called the Training Guide. It includes written materials, pictures, charts, and diagrams you will use during the assessment.

You can use the Training Guide to do several things.

- You will be able to review it before you watch each of the videos.
- You can use the Training Guide to take notes while you watch the videos. That way, you can refer to your notes as you answer the questions; and

• The Training Guide includes information that will help you find the correct answer for some questions.

An example Training Guide is presented below. The actual Training Guide is only available once you attend the FCA session. It is not available before you attend the session.

### **Training Guide Example**

Below, you will see an example of what a page in the Training Guide might look like.

### TRAINING LESSON EXAMPLE

### **Building Safety Systems Monitor**

- Systems Monitor
  - Monitors the building's security and fire safety systems



- · Smoke detector monitoring functions
  - Top left area of Systems Monitor
  - Eight displays (SD1 SD8) to show indicator lights and status message displays
- Indicator lights, status messages, and action needed
  - o Normal operation green light, no status
    - No action needed
  - Smoke detected flashing red light, Error Code = 808, beeping
    - Alert building security, supervisor
  - Failed self-check red light, Error Code = 801
    - Alert technician
  - Power loss red light, Error Code = 802
    - Alert electrician

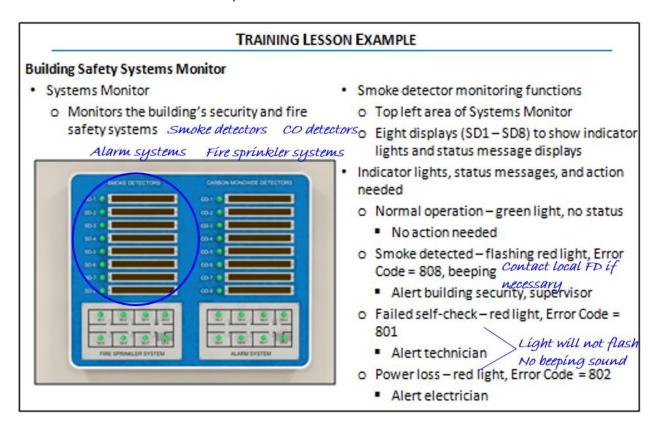
To go along with the Training Guide example, you may view a video like the ones you will see in the actual assessment. The video teaches you about a fictional piece of equipment called the Systems Monitor. It is recommended that you follow along with the Training Guide above and also take notes while watching the example video.

<u>Click here to watch the video</u> (4 minutes). After you have watched the video, continue on to the next page in this Preparation Guide.

### **Taking Notes**

Below is another look at the Training Guide example. The example shows, in blue, how a person might take notes on the Training Guide while they watch the video.

Review the notes on the example. See whether any notes you took while watching the video match those on the example.



[Note that during the actual assessment, the Training Guide will give you an overview of what is covered in each video before you watch it. You should also know that, during the actual assessment, you will be able to watch each video up to **2 times** if you wish before you begin answering the questions.]

Next, we will look at the types of questions you will see on the actual Firefighter Candidate Assessment.

# 4. FCA Example Questions

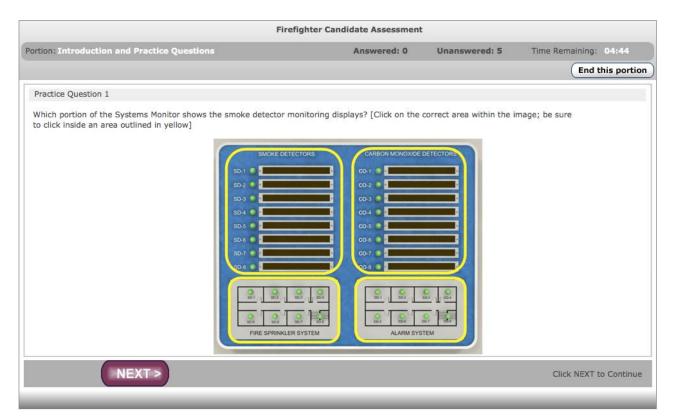
Questions in the first four portions of the FCA will ask you about information you learned while watching a video or while reading a passage of information. The fifth portion asks questions about your experiences and work preferences. In addition to typical multiple choice questions that ask you to select the single best response, the FCA contains numerous other types of questions. Examples of each type of question are presented below.

### **Example 1 - Hot Spot**

Some of the exam questions require you to click on the correct area, or "hot spot", within an image to give your answer. The possible areas to choose from are outlined in yellow.

The screen shot below provides an example. Here, the question asks...

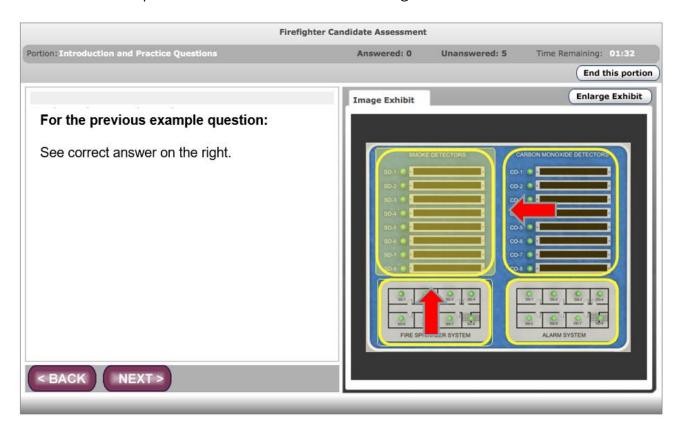
Which portion of the Systems Monitor shows the smoke detector monitoring displays? [Click on the correct area within the image; be sure to click inside an area outlined in yellow]



# Example 1 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer on the right side of the screen where the correct response is highlighted.

Recall that, in the video, the smoke detector monitoring displays were in the top left area of the wall-mounted panel. This is also noted in the Training Guide.

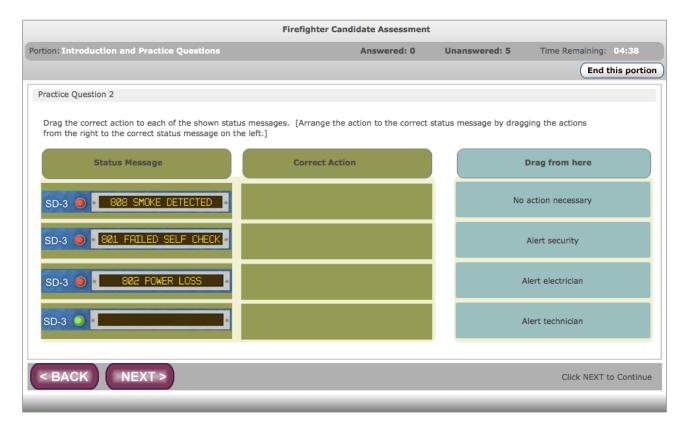


### **Example 2 - Drag-and-Drop**

Some of the questions on the exam will require you to arrange information in the correct order by dragging boxes from one column to another on the computer screen.

The screen shot below provides an example of that type of "drag-and-drop" question. The question asks you to ...

Drag the correct action to each of the shown status messages. [Arrange the action to the correct status message by dragging the actions from the right to the correct status message on the left.]



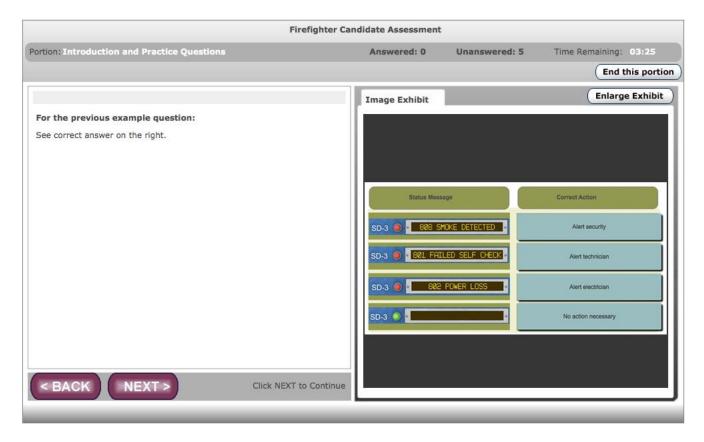
### Example 2 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answers on the right side of the screen.

Notice that the correct responses are aligned with each status message based on the information that was presented in the video.

- For the status message 808, Smoke Detected, the correct action is to Alert security.
- If the status message reads 801, Failed Self Check, the correct action is to Alert a technician.
- For the status message 802, Power Loss, the correct action is to Alert an electrician.
- If no status message is displayed, then no action is necessary.

Recall that this information was also noted in the Training Guide.

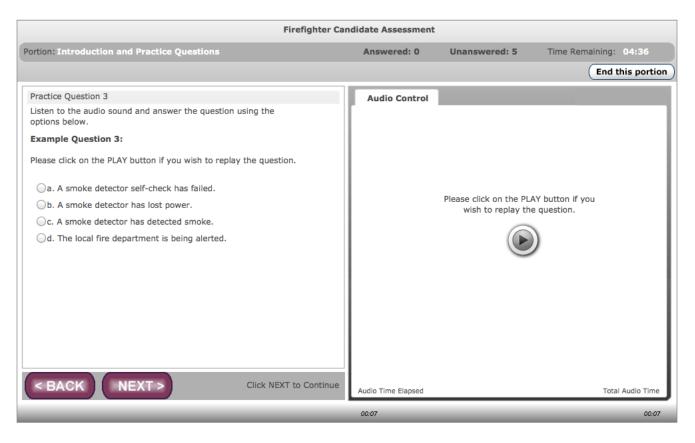


### **Example 3 - Multiple Choice Audio**

The screen shot below provides an example of a third that type of question you might see on the FCA.

This is a multiple choice question that requires you to listen to an audio question spoken by the narrator, and then select the best answer. In this example, the candidate would click the PLAY button and then hear "What does this sound indicate?" [followed by the beeping sound from the Training Lesson video]

[Note that on the actual exam, you will be able to click the PLAY button to replay the question as often as you like.]

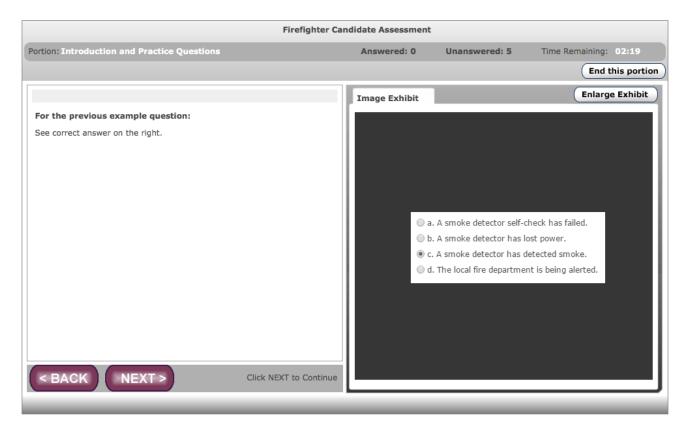


# Example 3 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer on the right side of the screen.

Notice that the correct choice is "c. A smoke detector has detected smoke"; the circle is filled in next to answer c indicating that answer was picked

Recall that in the Training Lesson Example Video, the beeping sound occurred when the status displayed as "808, Smoke Detected."

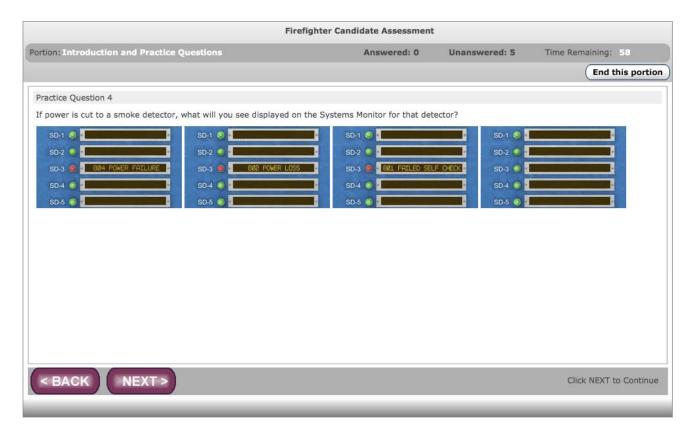


# **Example 4 - Multiple Choice Pictorial**

The screen shot below provides an example of another type of question you might see on the FCA.

This is a multiple choice question that requires you to select the best answer from a set of pictorial response options. In this example, the question asks ...

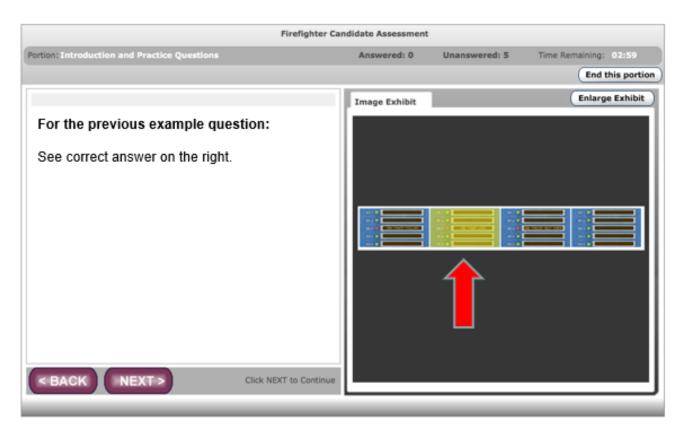
If power is cut to a smoke detector, what will you see displayed on the Systems Monitor for that detector?



# Example 4 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer on the right side of the screen where the image is highlighted.

Recall that, in the video, the Instructor indicated that the status message "802 Power Loss" would display in the event of a power loss to one or more smoke detectors. This was also noted in the Training Guide.

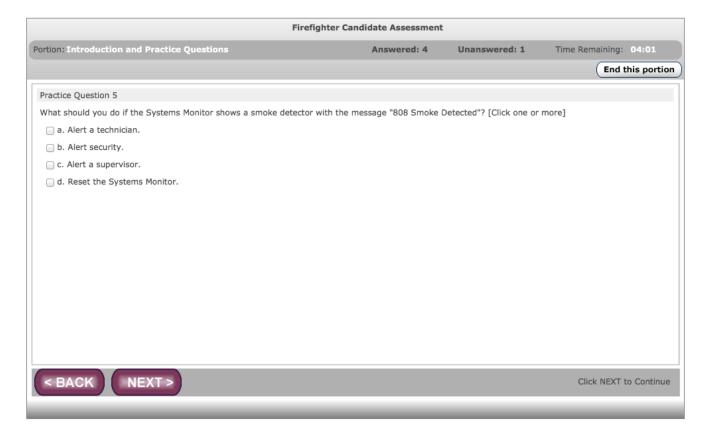


### **Example 5 - Multiple Choice, Multiple Response**

Some questions will require you to click on a box next to one or more statements to give your answer. The screen shot below provides an example. Note that it might take more than one choice to get full credit for your answer. The question asks ...

What should you do if the Systems Monitor shows a smoke detector with the message "808 Smoke Detected"? [Click one or more]

You might want to check to see if you took any notes about this as you watched the video.

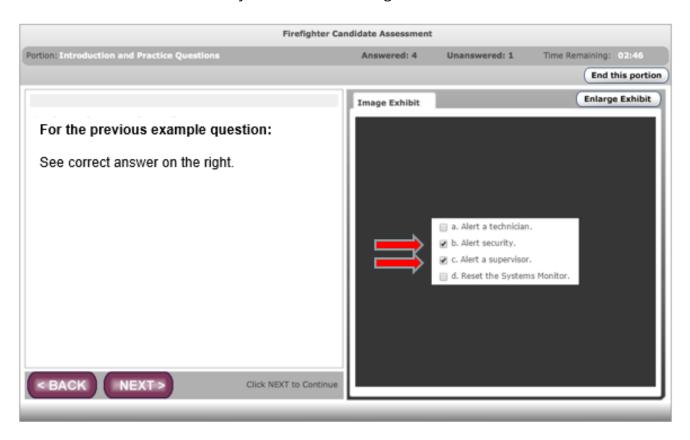


# Example 5 Answer:

In the screen shot below, you can see the correct answer on the right side of the screen where the 2 boxes are checked

The correct choices are to "Alert security" and "Alert a supervisor".

Both answers were mentioned by the Instructor during the video lecture.



### **Example 6 - Fill in the Blank**

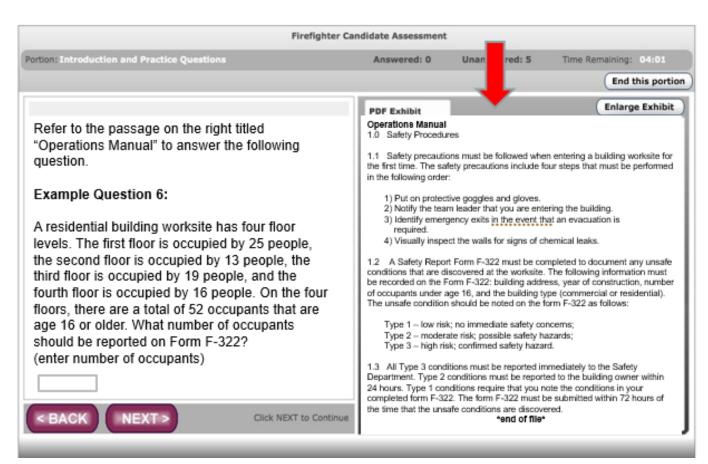
Some of the exam questions require you to read written material and then select or fill in the best answer to a question about what you have read.

The screen shot below shows an example that requires you to work with numbers, do some basic arithmetic, and then fill in an answer.

First, read the passage on the right side of the screen. Then review the question shown on the left side of the screen, which reads ...

A residential building worksite has four floor levels. The first floor is occupied by 25 people, the second floor is occupied by 13 people, the third floor is occupied by 19 people, and the fourth floor is occupied by 16 people. On the four floors, there are a total of 52 occupants that are age 16 or older. What number of occupants should be reported on Form F-322? (enter number of occupants) \_\_\_\_\_\_

During the exam, you can check the passage on the right side of the screen to make sure you choose the best answer.



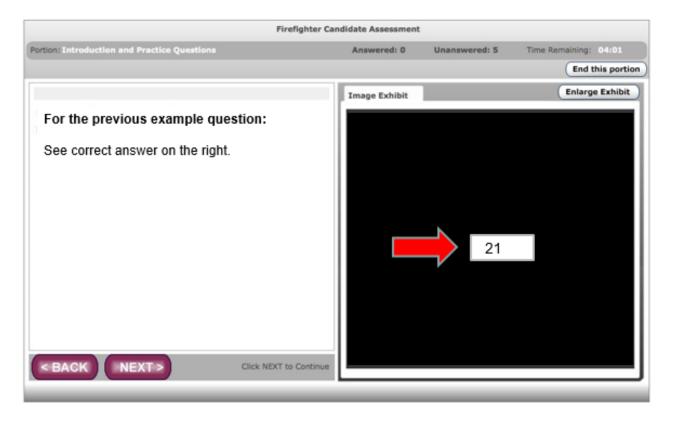
# Example 6 Answer:

In the screen shot below, You can see the correct answer is 21 on the right side of the screen.

According to the passage you read, the total number of people on all floors was 73.

52 of the 73 were age 16 or older. So, if you subtract 52 from 73, that means 21 were under the age of 16.

Recall that the passage noted that the number of occupants that are under age 16 must be included on Form F-322, so 21 is the correct answer.

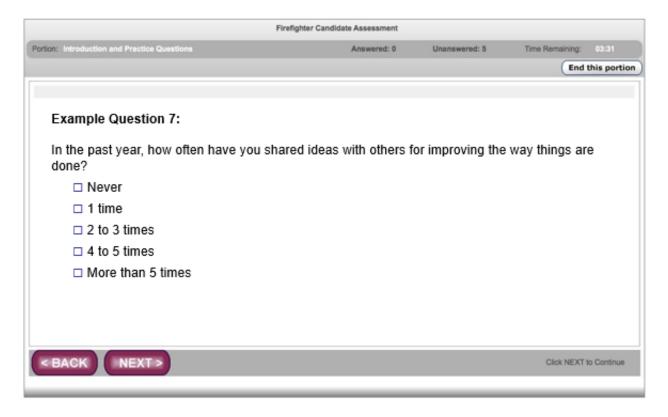


### **Example 7 - Background Survey**

Finally, the questions in the last (fifth) portion of the FCA ask you to describe your experiences, attitudes, or work preferences. The screen shot below provides an example of that type of question. The question asks ...

In the past year, how often have you shared ideas with others for improving the way things are done?

There are no correct or incorrect answers to this type of question, and therefore no particular preparation is needed for this portion of the FCA. In general, however, the best advice is to simply select the response that best describes you, your preferences, your views, or your own experiences. Do not try to figure out which answer might be most desirable or expected. It is in your best interest to select the answer that most accurately describes you, to ensure that a career as a Firefighter is likely to be a good fit both for you and for the department.



# 5. Important Notes about Testing Time

There will be a time limit on each of the 5 portions of the FCA.

- For each portion, you will be given time to listen to instructions, and where applicable, review the Training Guide and a Training Lesson video.
- A timer will appear at the top of the computer screen indicating how much time is remaining.



• If you finish reviewing the Training Guide and video before the time ends, you can start the test portion by clicking on the NEXT button.



If you have not started the questions when the review time ends, a computer screen will appear telling you to click the **"Continue"** button to proceed to the questions.



- The questions will automatically start in 30 seconds if you do not click the "**Continue**" button.
- Then, there will be a separate time limit to answer the questions.

# 6. Tips for Success

### **Preparation for the Test**

To help with your test preparation, consider doing some or all of the following:

### 1. *Practice Taking Tests*

- Taking tests can be challenging, but the experience can provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate how prepared you are for the job. Become comfortable with the test-taking situation by finding practice tests online or in the library. The tests should involve reading information and answering multiple-choice questions. Time yourself and practice budgeting your time so that you can effectively manage your testing time.
- 2. Thoroughly review this Preparation Guide.
  - Remember, the FCA does NOT test your knowledge of firefighting or any other specific information. Therefore, no specific resource documents can be provided to help you prepare for the FCA. This FCA Preparation Guide and the example questions provided in it are your best resource for understanding what to expect on the FCA.
  - ➤ Pay close attention to the example questions listed earlier in this document. They represent the types of questions that will appear on the FCA. Make sure you understand each question and the rationale behind the correct answer.

### **Quick Test-Taking Tips**

- As best as you can, clear your schedule well before the test date to give you ample time to prepare.
- Get plenty of rest the night before the test.
- > During the exam, read all instructions carefully and follow them.
- > Before choosing an answer, read ALL of the answer choices.

The questions in the first four portions of the FCA are designed to measure job relevant capabilities, such as Learning Ability, Listening Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Basic Arithmetic. These questions each have an objectively correct answer (or answers). If you are not sure of the best answer, try to eliminate one or more choices as incorrect. Then provide your best answer from the options that remain.

### **Preparation for the Hiring Process**

- 1. Go to the Los Angeles Fire Department website:
  - ➢ Go to <u>lafd.org</u>
  - Click on **About** and read **About LAFD** to familiarize yourself with the department.
  - Click on **Join** and then on **Careers** to read about the general activities performed by LAFD Firefighters.
  - These steps will help you understand more about the LAFD and about being a Firefighter in general, so you can better determine if you wish to pursue a career as a Firefighter by taking the FCA.
- 2. Review the LAFD Firefighter selection process website for more information about the Firefighter job, the hiring process, and where the FCA fits into that process.
  - Go to joinlafd.org

To register for the FCA, please visit the PSI Services LLC (PSI) website at <a href="https://lacityfirefighter.psiexams.com/">https://lacityfirefighter.psiexams.com/</a> and create an account.

For issues registering for the FCA or if you did not get your scores following testing, you may email PSI at <a href="mailto:COLAOPS@psionline.com">COLAOPS@psionline.com</a>.

THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES AND THE LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT WISH YOU SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING YOUR CAREER GOALS!