

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

CITY OF CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO



Why Apply?



The Cape Girardeau Fire Department is entering an important period of generational transition, creating a meaningful role for the next Deputy Fire Chief in helping shape its future. With a younger workforce, modern apparatus, strong benefits, specialized response capabilities, and an established community risk reduction program, the Department has a solid foundation for continued growth. The next Deputy Chief will serve as a key operational leader with significant influence over culture, accountability, training, safety, and professional development. This is an opportunity for an engaged leader to develop the next generation of officers, strengthen labor-management relationships, and work closely with the Fire Chief to advance the organization.



Welcome to CAPE GIRARDEAU

Cape Girardeau is a historic river city of approximately 40,000 residents, located along the Mississippi River in southeast Missouri. Situated along Interstate 55 about two hours south of St. Louis and 2.5 hours north of Memphis, Cape Girardeau is the largest city between the two metropolitan areas and serves as a regional hub for communities throughout southeast Missouri and southern Illinois. With approximately 60,000 additional people in Cape Girardeau each day, the city benefits from a vibrant regional presence while maintaining its strong sense of community.

The Mississippi River has shaped Cape Girardeau for more than two centuries. The community grew from an 18th-century trading post into a major river port, with steamboat traffic and later the railroad expanding its importance as a regional hub. Downtown sits beside the Mississippi, where historic buildings house locally owned restaurants, shops, and galleries. Along the riverfront, Riverfront Park offers terraced seating and a walking and biking trail overlooking the Mississippi, while the adjoining floodwall has become an attraction of its own with a 24-panel mural telling the story of Cape Girardeau and the surrounding area.

Healthcare and higher education are major anchors of the community. Southeast Missouri State University enrolls nearly 8,900 students, and its River Campus brings theater, music, dance, and visual arts to a striking setting overlooking the river. Saint Francis Healthcare System employs nearly 3,000 people and, along with Mercy Hospital Southeast, provides advanced medical care for patients from across the region.

Residents have ready access to an extensive park and recreation system, with 27 parks covering more than 662 acres, miles of trails, and multiple sports complexes. The paved Cape LaCroix Trail provides a popular route for walking, running, and cycling through the city. Nearby state parks offer opportunities for hiking wooded trails and exploring river bluffs, as well as boating, fishing, swimming, and camping. Trail of Tears State Park lies just 10 miles from the city, with dramatic views of the Mississippi River. Cape Girardeau Regional Airport provides direct commercial service to Chicago and Dallas/Fort Worth.

THE CITY OF CAPE GIRARDEAU

Incorporated in 1808, the City of Cape Girardeau is a full-service, home-rule municipality operating under a Council-Manager form of government. The City Council consists of the Mayor, elected at large to a four-year term, and six Council Members elected by ward to staggered four-year terms. The City Manager is appointed by the Mayor and City Council and oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization. The City provides a broad range of municipal services, including public safety, public works, parks and recreation, development services, and operation of the Cape Girardeau Regional Airport. The City has a workforce of approximately 490 FTEs.



THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Cape Girardeau Fire Department is an all-hazards emergency services agency providing fire suppression, technical rescue, emergency medical services, and ALS non-transport response throughout the city. Operating from four fire stations across approximately 29 square miles, personnel responded to 5,818 calls for service in 2025. The Department is staffed by 73 FTEs and has a 2026 budget of approximately \$9.1 million.

Personnel include 5 chief officers, 17 captains, 15 driver/operators, 30 firefighters, and 2 administrative positions. Its Community Risk Reduction (CRR) function includes the Fire Marshal, fire inspector/investigators, plan review, and other fire prevention responsibilities. The Department participates in specialized regional operations through the Region E Homeland Security Response Team, maintains a drone team, and provides a medic for the Police Department's SWAT team.

Cape Girardeau's role as a regional hub adds complexity to emergency service delivery. Southeast Missouri State University, two major hospitals—including a Level III trauma center—and significant commercial activity can increase the city's daytime population to approximately 100,000.





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THE DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

Under the general direction of the Fire Chief, the Deputy Fire Chief plans, supervises, and coordinates the activities of the Operations Division. This position provides highly responsible and technical staff assistance and leadership in accomplishing the Department's fire suppression, rescue, hazardous materials response, and safety goals. The Deputy Chief performs the role of incident commander and also serves as Acting Fire Chief in the absence of the Fire Chief.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

1) **Workforce Transition, Culture & Succession Planning**

Significant turnover among experienced personnel has resulted in a younger workforce and created an important opportunity to shape the Department's future culture. The next Deputy Chief will need to be visible and engaged while strengthening professional development, mentoring future officers, establishing clear expectations, and creating consistent accountability throughout the organization.

2) **Training, Safety & Operational Readiness**

The Deputy Chief has significant responsibility for operational readiness, including training, health and safety, staffing, apparatus, equipment, and incident performance. The Department has established positive firefighter cancer-prevention, decontamination, and peer-support practices, while stakeholders see opportunities to further strengthen the overall safety culture and professional development of personnel.

3) **Organizational Improvement & Leadership Partnership**

The next Deputy Chief will have considerable influence over operational policies, SOGs, service delivery, training, and strategic planning. Success will require a leader capable of independently managing operations while maintaining a strong partnership with the Fire Chief—supporting the Chief's direction while also being willing to provide candid advice, identify organizational gaps, and recommend improvements.



IDEAL CANDIDATE TRAITS

Operationally Credible Leader – Brings strong command experience and the ability to effectively lead complex fire, rescue, hazardous materials, and all-hazards operations.

Visible & Engaged Leader – Maintains a strong presence with shifts, officers, and line personnel and understands the importance of face-to-face communication and accessibility.

Accountable Leader – Establishes clear expectations, consistently holds personnel accountable, and addresses performance issues fairly and directly.

Coach & Mentor – Invests in professional development, officer training, succession planning, and preparing the Department's younger workforce for future leadership responsibilities.

Labor & Employee Relations Savvy – Understands collective bargaining and can build productive relationships with labor while appropriately representing management responsibilities.

Health & Safety Champion – Promotes firefighter health, safety, wellness, cancer prevention, behavioral health, and a culture in which safe practices are consistently reinforced.

Strategic & Process-Oriented Leader – Evaluates operations, policies, SOGs, and service delivery with an eye toward organizational improvement and long-term effectiveness.

Fire & EMS Leader – Understands fire-based ALS first response and can balance EMS demands with suppression, special operations, and overall operational readiness.

Strong Communicator & Trusted Advisor – Communicates directly and honestly and can support the Fire Chief while independently leading operations and respectfully offering differing perspectives when appropriate.

Financially & Administratively Competent – Understands operational budgeting, grants, resource allocation, apparatus, facilities, and the administrative responsibilities of executive fire leadership.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Internal Candidates

Must hold the rank of Battalion Chief/EMT-B or higher and meet all requirements of that rank. Must have 10 consecutive years of service with the City of Cape Girardeau Fire Department, including at least 3 years at the rank of Battalion Chief/EMT-B or higher.

External Candidates

Must have 10 years of experience with a similarly sized fire department, including at least 5 years as a chief officer.

Education

Associate's degree in fire science, public administration, or a related field, with completion of a bachelor's degree required within 3 years of hire. An associate's degree in one of these fields, combined with completion of the National Fire Academy Managing Officer Program, will satisfy the bachelor's degree completion requirement.

Licenses and Certifications

- Possess and maintain a Missouri EMT-Basic license and American Heart Association BLS Provider certification.
- Must hold Fire Officer I, II, III, and IV certifications, or equivalent certifications.
- Internal candidates must also have completed the CGFD Chief Officer Task Book and hold 9 or more certifications from the Department's List of Additional Certifications.

External Candidate Post-Hire Requirements

External candidates must complete the CGFD Chief Officer Task Book within 6 months of hire and must have the ability to transfer an active EMT-Basic to a Missouri EMT- Basic license within 180 days of hire.

Preferred Qualifications

Bachelor's degree or higher in a related field; State of Missouri EMT-Paramedic license; Fire Instructor II or higher; graduate of the National Fire Academy Managing Officer Program; graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program; National Fire Academy resident courses; nationally or state-recognized coursework in incident command, leadership, or training and development; and Chief Fire Officer (CFO) credential through the Center for Public Safety Excellence.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City of Cape Girardeau offers an annual salary of \$97,000 along with a comprehensive [benefits](#) package.

RESOURCES

[City of Cape Girardeau](#)

[Fire Department](#)

[Fire Org Chart](#)

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**TO
APPLY**

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: October 18, 2026

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