



Ohio Revised Code

Section 505.38 Appointment of firefighting personnel.

Effective: October 3, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 33

(A) In each township or fire district that has a fire department, the head of the department shall be a fire chief, appointed by the board of township trustees, except that, in a joint fire district, the fire chief shall be appointed by the board of fire district trustees. Neither this section nor any other section of the Revised Code requires, or shall be construed to require, that the fire chief be a resident of the township or fire district.

The board shall provide for the employment of firefighters as it considers best and shall fix their compensation. No person shall be appointed as a permanent full-time paid member, whose duties include fire fighting, of the fire department of any township or fire district unless that person has received a certificate issued under former section 3303.07 or section 4765.55 of the Revised Code evidencing satisfactory completion of a firefighter training program. Those appointees shall continue in office until removed from office as provided by sections 733.35 to 733.39 of the Revised Code. To initiate removal proceedings, and for that purpose, the board shall designate the fire chief or a private citizen to investigate the conduct and prepare the necessary charges in conformity with those sections.

In case of the removal of a fire chief or any member of the fire department of a township or fire district, an appeal may be had from the decision of the board to the court of common pleas of the county in which the township or fire district fire department is situated to determine the sufficiency of the cause of removal. The appeal from the findings of the board shall be taken within ten days.

No person who is appointed as a volunteer firefighter of the fire department of any township or fire district shall remain in that position unless either of the following applies:

(1) Within one year of the appointment, the person has received a certificate issued under former section 3303.07 of the Revised Code or section 4765.55 of the Revised Code evidencing satisfactory completion of a firefighter training program.



(2) The person began serving as a permanent full-time paid firefighter with the fire department of a city or village prior to July 2, 1970, or as a volunteer firefighter with the fire department of a city, village, or other township or fire district prior to July 2, 1979, and receives a certificate issued under section 4765.55 of the Revised Code.

No person shall receive an appointment under this section, in the case of a volunteer firefighter, unless the person has, not more than sixty days prior to receiving the appointment, passed a physical examination, given by a licensed physician, a physician assistant, a clinical nurse specialist, a certified nurse practitioner, or a certified nurse-midwife, showing that the person meets the physical requirements necessary to perform the duties of the position to which the person is appointed as established by the board of township trustees having jurisdiction over the appointment. The appointing authority, prior to making an appointment, shall file with the Ohio police and fire pension fund or the local volunteer fire fighters' dependents fund board a copy of the report or findings of that licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner, or certified nurse-midwife. The professional fee for the physical examination shall be paid for by the board of township trustees.

(B) In each township not having a fire department, the board of township trustees shall appoint a fire prevention officer who shall exercise all of the duties of a fire chief except those involving the maintenance and operation of fire apparatus. The board may appoint one or more deputy fire prevention officers who shall exercise the duties assigned by the fire prevention officer.

The board may fix the compensation for the fire prevention officer and the fire prevention officer's deputies as it considers best. The board shall appoint each fire prevention officer and deputy for a one-year term. An appointee may be reappointed at the end of a term to another one-year term. Any appointee may be removed from office during a term as provided by sections 733.35 to 733.39 of the Revised Code. Section 505.45 of the Revised Code extends to those officers.

(C)(1) Division (A) of this section does not apply to any township that has a population of ten thousand or more persons residing within the township and outside of any municipal corporation, that has its own fire department employing ten or more full-time paid employees, and that has a civil service commission established under division (B) of section 124.40 of the Revised Code. The township shall comply with the procedures for the employment, promotion, and discharge of



firefighters provided by Chapter 124. of the Revised Code, except as otherwise provided in divisions (C)(2) and (3) of this section.

(2) The board of township trustees of the township may appoint the fire chief, and any person so appointed shall be in the unclassified service under section 124.11 of the Revised Code and shall serve at the pleasure of the board. Neither this section nor any other section of the Revised Code requires, or shall be construed to require, that the fire chief be a resident of the township. A person who is appointed fire chief under these conditions and who is removed by the board or resigns from the position is entitled to return to the classified service in the township fire department in the position held just prior to the appointment as fire chief.

(3) The appointing authority of an urban township, as defined in section 504.01 of the Revised Code, may appoint to a vacant position any one of the three highest scorers on the eligible list for a promotional examination.

(4) The board of township trustees shall determine the number of personnel required and establish salary schedules and conditions of employment not in conflict with Chapter 124. of the Revised Code.

(5) No person shall receive an original appointment as a permanent full-time paid member of the fire department of the township described in this division unless the person has received a certificate issued under former section 3303.07 or section 4765.55 of the Revised Code evidencing the satisfactory completion of a firefighter training program.

(6) Persons employed as firefighters in the township described in this division on the date a civil service commission is appointed pursuant to division (B) of section 124.40 of the Revised Code, without being required to pass a competitive examination or a firefighter training program, shall retain their employment and any rank previously granted them by action of the board of township trustees or otherwise, but those persons are eligible for promotion only by compliance with Chapter 124. of the Revised Code.