

2nd March 2020 – Career of the Week

Fire Fighter

Help to protect people from fire and other dangers, and give advice on fire prevention.

National Careers Service

www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk



Entry Requirements

You can get into this job through a college course, an apprenticeship, applying directly, a fire service training course

College

You could take a Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Public Services before applying to the fire service, although this is not essential.

Entry requirements - You'll usually need:

- 2 or more GCSEs at grades 9 to 3 (A* to D), or equivalent, for a level 2 course
- 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent, for a level 3 course

Apprenticeship

You may be able to start training on an operational firefighter advanced apprenticeship. You'll need to be employed by a fire service to do this.

Entry requirements - You'll usually need:

- GCSEs grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent, in English and maths

Volunteering and experience

Volunteering or working in a support role, for example emergency call handling or fire safety, will give you an idea of what the job is like, as well as access to internal vacancies.

Direct application

You can apply directly to join the fire service. Each one sets its own entry requirements.

Many ask for GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C) in English and maths, or equivalent qualifications.

You'll need to pass:

- an online test to assess your judgement ability in a realistic work setting
- number and reading tests

If you're successful, you'll:

- do practical selection tests to find out whether you can do the physical tasks needed for the job
- be interviewed

Other routes

You could prepare to apply for a job by doing a Level 2 Certificate in Fire and Rescue Services in the Community. This course is usually run by local fire services and is aimed at people who have some responsibility for fire safety, like housing wardens and fire prevention officers.

What you'll do

Every day will be different, but you could be:

- inspecting and maintaining equipment
- carrying out practice drills and taking part in training
- rescuing people and animals from burning buildings and accident sites
- controlling and putting out fires
- dealing with bomb alerts and floods
- managing chemical or hazardous substance spills
- giving presentations to schools and community groups
- inspecting buildings to make sure they meet fire safety regulations

Career tips

Most fire services take on new recruits once every 12 months, so you'll need to find out when they are recruiting next.

Further information

You can ask your [local fire and rescue service](#) for a firefighter careers and recruitment pack.

Skills Required – You'll need:

- customer service skills
- knowledge of public safety and security
- the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure
- patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- sensitivity and understanding
- knowledge of teaching and the ability to design courses
- the ability to work well with others
- to be able to carry out basic tasks on a computer or hand-held device

Related Careers

- Building control officer
- Health and safety adviser
- Search and rescue worker
- Paramedic
- Police officer

Salary

These figures are a guide.

Starter: £ 22,000

Experienced: £ 42,000

Working Hours

Typical hours – 41 to 43 hours per week

Working Environment

You could work at a fire station, at a client's home or at a client's business.

Your working environment may be at height, physically and emotionally demanding and cramped.

You may need to wear safety clothing and use safety equipment and a uniform.

Career paths and progression

All fire services have a programme that lets you plan and track your career development.

You could work your way up to crew manager, watch manager or station manager. If you're prepared to move between services, you could also become an area manager, a brigade manager or a chief fire officer.

If you're involved in fire safety and prevention work, you can take professional qualifications leading to membership of the [Institution of Fire Engineers \(IFE\)](#).

You could also get a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) licence for driving fire engines.

What is labour market information?

Labour Market Information (LMI) is the name for facts and figures about jobs and employment.

The information is used to give an overall picture of the past, present and future of work.

The **labour market** is the term used to describe the amount of people working and looking for work, and the amount of jobs.

Labour Market Information

In **North West England** there are currently 3856 Fire service officers in employment.

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