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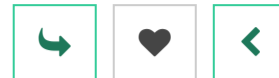
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Firefighter

Also called: Fireman, firewoman, forest firefighter

Firefighters rescue people and buildings from fires and other dangerous situations, and advise on preventing fires.



[Read Dan Coe's story](#) 🔍

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What you'll do

You'll work for a fire and rescue service run by your local area or county, overseen by a fire and rescue authority. Your work will be a mix of fire station duties, fire prevention and dealing with emergencies.

Every day will be different, but could include:

- 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

Record relevant activities you've already done on the [Activities tool](#) >

Working hours and environment

You can work full-time or as a part-time (retained) firefighter.

A full-time week usually involves 42 working hours, including two day shifts, two night shifts, and four days off-duty. If you're part-time (retained), you may not have set hours but will need to be available quickly in emergency situations.

You'll often work in uncomfortable, noisy, and dangerous environments, like high places or enclosed spaces. You'll spend most of your time with other people (like your team and members of the public) and you'll be responsible for their safety. You may be required to drive for work.

When not dealing with emergencies, you'll be expected to maintain your physical fitness and practise using emergency equipment as part of your daily work.

Career path and progression

All fire services have a clear progression structure which allows you to plan and track your career development, and have the opportunity to progress if you want to.

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 global body, Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE).

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

Skills required

You'll need:

- courage, as you'll be entering some dangerous situations
- physical skills, so you can move quickly in an emergency
- good teamwork skills - you'll need to know your role in an emergency and communicate well with your colleagues
- the practical skills to operate a range of tools and equipment, like hoses and breathing devices
- the ability to take initiative and think quickly in an emergency
- the confidence to work under pressure as you'll often be in stressful situations

Got evidence of these skills? Record your examples on the [Skills tool](#) >

Entry requirements

You'll usually need:

- high school qualifications, like Level 3 qualifications (e.g. GCSEs at grades 9 to 4/A* to C in English and maths) in the UK; or a high school diploma or GED certificate in the US
- to be at least 17.5 if you'll be 18 by the time you get the job. In the US, some departments state you must be 21 when you start the job
- to have the right to work in the country you are training in (e.g. as a citizen or permanent resident)
- to be able to speak the local language
- to pass a series of physical and written tests
- to pass a medical check and criminal records background check
- to have a full driving license
- to succeed at an interview

Volunteering in a support role will give you an idea of the job, as well as access to possible job opportunities.

In the US, training at a fire academy can help you get into this career.

Related Know-how guides

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These university subjects are related to this career; check out their profiles on the Subjects library:

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Related career profiles

You may also be interested in:

- [Bomb disposal technician >](#)
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- [Police officer >](#)
- [Fire-prevention engineer >](#)

Explore

Want to see what relevant education and training opportunities are available right now? Search here:

Sport science at uni:

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- [UK >](#)

Labour Market Information (LMI)

Current and predicted figures relating to the Firefighter profession. Median averages are shown, each with the specific career, or group of careers, that they apply to.

- UK
 USA

Jobs

Protective service occupations

352,522

 **2,308** in your local area of Liverpool

Top 5 local areas

1	Kent	14,690
2	Hampshire	13,219
3	Essex	12,342
4	Surrey	8,908
5	Wiltshire	8,282

Salaries

Fire service officers (watch manager and below)

£39,477

Protective service occupations

£43,032

📍 £40,861 in your region of North West

Top 3 regions

1	London	£46,096
2	Scotland	£45,600
3	North East	£43,079

Growth

2020-2035

Protective service occupations

-9.1%

↓ 36,040 jobs

📍 -15.7% in your region of North West, an decrease of 5,777 jobs

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Armed forces officer

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