



On-call firefighter information guide



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What is an on-call firefighter?

On call firefighters are a crucial part of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service as they provide an efficient and effective emergency service to the communities of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

On-call firefighters receive the same training as full-time firefighters as they attend the same incidents such as building fires, road traffic collisions, animal rescues and flooding. It is important that all our firefighters, both on-call and full-time receive the relevant training so they can confidently provide front-line response, protecting people and places, and making a difference in their community.

They also attend community initiatives in their local area.



On-call firefighters have to live, or work, close to their local fire station so they are able to respond in time. They don't wait at the station for an emergency so they will be notified by an alerter when their station has been deployed. These incidents can happen at any time of the day or night.

They are also asked to provide a number of hours to being on-call each week to ensure each fire appliance are available as much as possible.

The role of an on-call firefighter is flexible, paid and rewarding. They make a difference in our communities and you could too.

This guide will go into more detail about the recruitment process, training process and also includes some frequently asked questions.



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Becoming an on-call firefighter

On-call firefighters come from all areas of the community. They can also be in full-time or part-time employment, self-employed, studying at college or university, or a stay-at-home parent or carer, or unemployed.

An on-call firefighter needs to:

-  Be over 18-years-old
-  Want to make a valuable difference in their community
-  Have a positive attitude and willingness to learn
-  Live, or work, close to their local fire station

Age

On-call firefighters need to be 18-years-old or over. Applicants can be 17-years-old when they first apply, but need to be 18-years-old or over when they start the process. There is no upper age limit. All applicants will have to pass the recruitment process which includes a fitness test, medical test and job-related tests (JRTs).

Gender

Anyone of any gender or identity can become an on-call firefighter and our on-call firefighters vary in height and weight.

Disability

People who have a disability or impairment are still able to apply for the role as Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service welcome applicants of all abilities. The Service will consider reasonable adjustments should individuals require additional support.

Personality

Our on-call firefighters need to have a positive attitude, willingness to learn and drive to make a difference. They also need to be reliable, flexible, determined, motivated and enthusiastic.

Employment

For many on-call firefighters, this job is considered their secondary employment as they have other jobs, known as primary employment. This means that they have two employers (unless already employed by Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service). Some on-call firefighters have an agreement with their primary employer where they can be released from their workplace while on-call. Others, fit in their on-call hours around their other commitments.

Availability

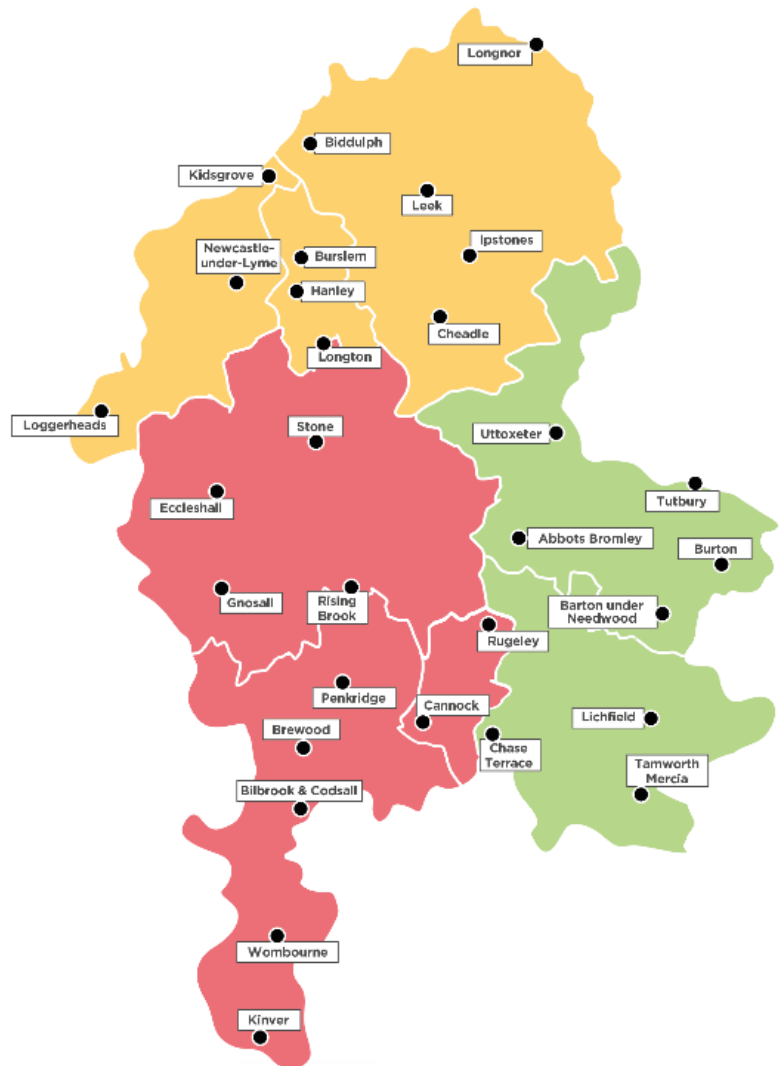
We ask that our on-call firefighters provide a certain number of hours to being on-call each week. This is a flexible job which means that on-call firefighters can choose which hours suit them and their circumstances best.

Our on-call fire stations

On-call firefighters need to live, or work, close to their local fire station so they can get there within the turn-out time. As we can't predict when an emergency will occur, on-call firefighters need to be flexible with their commitments because when their alerter goes off, they need to stop what they're doing and go to the fire station immediately.

Our on-call fire stations are located in:

- Abbots Bromley
- Barton-under-Needwood
- Biddulph
- Brewood
- Burslem
- Burton-on-Trent
- Cannock
- Chase Terrace
- Cheadle
- Codsall
- Eccleshall
- Gnosall
- Hanley
- Ipstones
- Kidsgrove
- Kinver
- Leek
- Lichfield
- Loggerheads
- Longnor
- Longton
- Newcastle
- Penkridge
- Rising Brook
- Rugeley
- Stone
- Tamworth Mercia
- Tutbury
- Uttoxeter
- Wombourne



Recruitment and training process

There are a number of different stages to the recruitment and training process to become an on-call firefighter.



Stage 1: Application

The application form is on our website. If you have any questions about the role or recruitment process, you can contact one of our On-Call Support Officers.



Stage 2: Declaration of availability

On-call firefighters are asked to provide a number of hours each week. These hours can be discussed between you, the Station Manager and On-Call Support Officer. It is important to ensure that your hours suit you, your commitments and the fire station.



Stage 3: Interview

You will have an interview with the Station Manager and the On-Call Support Officer for that fire station.



Stage 4: Fitness test

The fitness test will be carried out by the Service's Fitness Advisor and will involve a bleep test which consists of completing 20m shuttle runs to level 8.8.



Stage 5: Job-related tests (JRTs)

These are physical tests that imitate scenarios that on-call firefighters are likely to face in the role. There are six tests that aim to assess your level of cardiovascular and muscular strength as well as endurance with elements of manual dexterity.





Stage 6: Pre-employment checks (medical assessment, DBS check, reference check, kit measurements)

These checks include a health assessment with our Occupational Health Unit. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire covering your medical history before being completing a series of different tests which include:

Hearing test: You will sit in a sound-proof booth, wearing headphones and will be asked to press a button when you hear a range of sounds.

Lung function: You will be asked to blow hard and long down a hollow tube until a your lung capacity is fully exhaled when a reading is taken and assessed accordingly

General tests: You will see a doctor who will test your reflexes and discuss your medical questionnaire with you.

Vision test: Your standard of vision will be assessed. The minimum standard of corrected binocular vision required is visual acuity of at least 6/9. Also, any uncorrected visual acuity of 6/18 would be accepted providing you have full corrected vision 6/6. Near vision is also assessed and you should have the ability to be able to read N12 at 30 centimetre which is seen as the absolute minimal standard. If you have colour vision deficiency, the severity will be assessed with further testing.



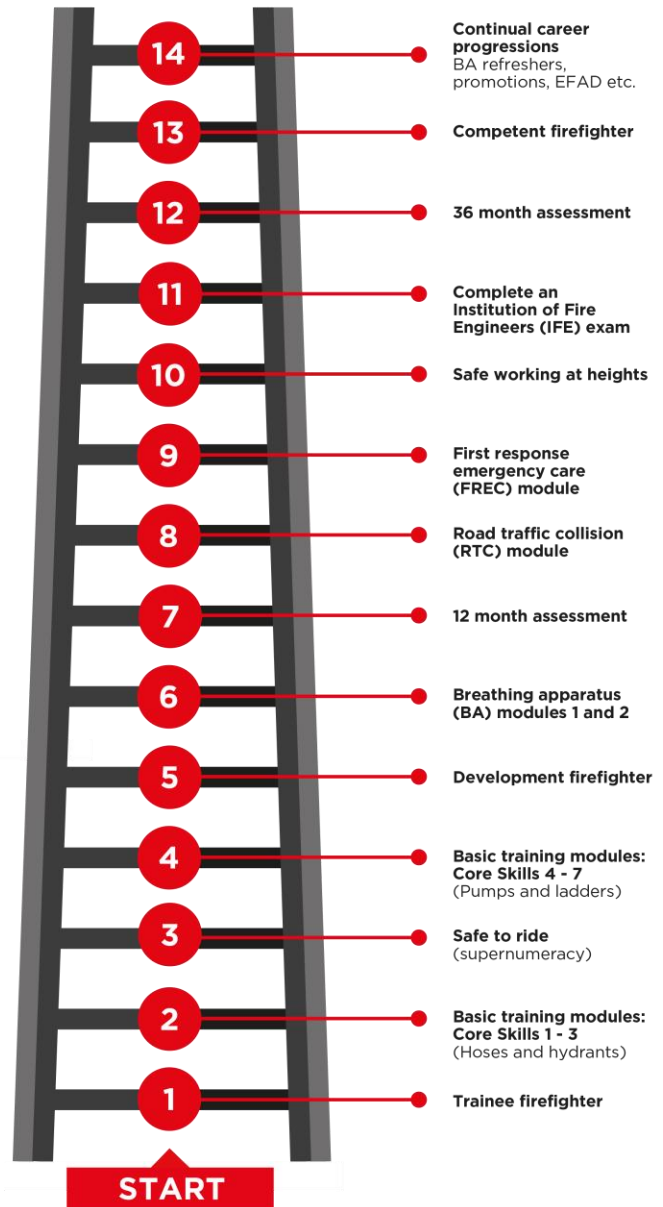
Training

On-call firefighters are trained to the same standards as full-time firefighters to ensure that the Service can deliver an effective, efficient and competent response to people and places across the county. A high level of mental and physical commitment is necessary in order to become a competent firefighter.

Following successful completion of the recruitment process, applicants will be invited to an Induction Day where they'll be provided with information on Health and Safety and what can be expected of them over the 36-month development programme (their journey to becoming a competent firefighter).

During the development programme, all on-call firefighters must successfully achieve set criteria through practical assessments and written course work. Some of the courses include Core Skills which includes learning how to use hoses and hydrants as well as pumps and ladders, breathing apparatus (BA), road traffic collisions (RTCs) and first response emergency care (FREC).

These courses are scheduled across weekends and weekdays over the three-year period to help with different circumstances and vary in duration from 1 day to 13 days.



Course training duration

Induction Day	1 day
Core Skills 1 – 3	5 days
Core Skills 4 – 7	12 days
Breathing apparatus (BA)	13 days
Road traffic collisions (RTC)	4 days
First response emergency care (FREC)	5 days
Safe working at heights	2 days
Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) exam	1 day

As each course is completed, you will be able to demonstrate your newly acquired skill(s) at incidents you attend and this evidence will count towards becoming a competent firefighter. A final assessment at 36 months will determine your overall competence in the role. You will then follow a programme to maintain your skills and pursue career progression if you wish.

In addition to the training on the development programme, you will also be expected to attend weekly training sessions (also known as drill sessions) for two to three hours at your local fire station. These training sessions allow you to practice the skills you have learnt alongside the rest of the crew. Whilst in your first three years, you will also have access to an additional four hours training per week.



Advantages and disadvantages

The role of an on-call firefighter is unique, exciting, rewarding and unpredictable. As an on-call firefighter, you will be a crucial part of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service as well as your local community.

Being part of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue service means you will meet a range of new people, be able to build relationships and work as a team. Together, you will be helping people in their time of need and making a difference. You will also be able to build relationships with partner agencies such as other emergency services as well as the local community.

Here are some advantages and disadvantages of being an on-call firefighter:

Advantages

- Protecting your local community
- Working as part of a team
- Learn and develop new skills
- Increased confidence
- Save lives and help others
- Ability to assess risks
- Additional income
- Transferable skills

Disadvantages

- Unable to make plans due to having to remain within the agreed turn-out time and the chance of receiving an emergency call
- Disrupted sleep
- Missed meals
- Unable to attend social occasions
- Childcare



Becoming an on-call firefighter is a significant commitment and can have an impact on different areas of your life.

Home life

As on-call firefighters are asked to give a number of hours each week to being on-call, it is important they have a supportive network as their lives can be affected too.

When you are on-call, you will have to respond to an incident immediately and get to the station within the agreed turn-out time when an emergency occurs. Being on-call doesn't stop you from continuing with your daily activities like going for a walk or shopping, as long as you remain within the turn-out time so you can respond if your alerter goes off.

On-call firefighters get holiday/annual leave entitlement based upon their on-call hours. There may also be times where on-call firefighters need to book off for appointments or personal emergencies.

Employers

Many of our on-call firefighters have existing jobs, known as primary employment and fit their on-call hours in around their current job. However some on-call firefighters have an have an agreement with their primary employer where they can be released from their workplace while on-call.

It is important to have conversations with your primary employer when considering applying to become an on-call firefighter to ensure neither employment is impacted by the other.

However, there are many transferable skills that on-call firefighters will learn and develop that can add value to organisations such as

- Personal skills
- Emergency skills
- Education and qualifications
- Improved fitness, health and wellbeing
- Risk assessment
- Large Goods Vehicles (LGV) training



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Frequently asked questions

Below are a list of different questions that often get asked about the role.

- ?** **How often will I be called out?**
Being on-call is unpredictable so it's hard to say exactly how many times a week you'd get called out. It varies depending on availability of other crew members, station location etc.
- ?** **Is there a height limit?**
There is no minimum or maximum height limit to being an on-call firefighter.
- ?** **How much will I get paid?**
Pay varies per on-call firefighter as it depends on a number of factors such as how many on-call hours they provide, how many incidents they attend, where they are in their development. All on-call firefighters get paid a salaries as pro-rata amount from a full-time firefighter's salary.
- ?** **How will I know when I'm needed?**
When an emergency occurs, on-call firefighters will be notified by an alerter and will need to make their way to the fire station immediately.
- ?** **Will I be able to drive a fire engine?**
You can apply for LGV license after passing your 12 month assessment and then take a Driving on Blue Light course after passing the 36 month assessment.

- ?** **Can I go out whilst on call?**
You can go out and go about while on-call, as long as you stay within the turn-out time and have your alerter with you. If you're alerter goes off, you will have to get to the station immediately. However, when you are on-call you must be fit for duty and cannot drink alcohol.
- ?** **Do I need any qualifications?**
No, but you will need to pass the tests during the recruitment process. Your Maths and English will be assessed as part of the application process although you won't be disadvantaged if you don't already hold the qualifications.

For more information visit our website:
www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/careers/on-call-firefighters



Additional information

On-Call Support Officers

Our On-Call Support Officers (OCSO) look after on-call firefighters for different stations. You can contact them if you have any questions about the role.

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