

Firefighters – college essay



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Firefighters put their life in danger every single day to help and save the public. Firefighters must be prepared for the dangers they encounter and be able to respond immediately to a fire or any other emergencies that arises. Because fighting fires is so complex, it requires organization and teamwork. At every emergency scene, firefighters perform specific duties assigned by a superior officer. At fires they connect hose lines to hydrants, operate a pump to high pressure hoses, and position ladders to deliver water to the fire. They also rescue victims and administer emergency medical aid as needed. Firefighters duties may change several times while the company is in action. Sometimes they remain at the site of a disaster for days at a time, rescuing trapped survivors and assisting with medical treatment. Firefighters have a very large range of responsibilities, including emergency medical services. In fact, most calls to which firefighters respond involve medical emergencies, and about half of all fire departments provide ambulance services for victims.

Firefighters receive training in the emergency medical procedures, and many fire departments require them to be certified as emergency medical technicians. Firefighters work in a variety of settings, including urban and suburban areas, airports, chemical plants, and other industrial sites. In addition, some firefighters work in hazardous materials units that are trained for the control, prevention and clean up of oil spills and other hazardous materials incidents. Workers in suburban areas, airports, and industrial sites usually use conventional fire fighting equipment and tactics, while forest fires and major spills call for different methods. In national forests and parks, rangers spot fires from watchtowers and report their findings to

headquarters by telephone and radio. Forest rangers patrol to ensure travelers and campers comply with fire regulations. When fires break out crews of firefighters in to suppress the blaze using heavy equipment, hand tools, water hoses, etc.

One of the most effective means of battling the fire is by creating fire lines through cutting down trees and digging out grass, creating bare land in the path of the fire that takes away the fuel. The best firefighters, called smoke jumpers, parachute from airplanes, to reach places that cannot be touched by foot and truck which is in the very base of the fire. This can be extremely hazardous because the crews have no way to escape if the wind shifts and causes fire to burn toward them. Between alarms, firefighters clean and maintain equipment, conduct practice drills and fire inspections, and participate in physical fitness activities. They also prepare written reports on fire incidents and review fire science literature to keep aware of technological developments and changing administrative practices and policies. Firefighters have very hard working conditions. They spend much of their time at fire stations, which usually have features common to a residential facility like a dorm.

When a alarm sounds, firefighters respond rapidly, regardless of the weather or hour. Fire fighting involves risk walls, traffic accidents when responding to calls, and exposure to flames and smoke. Firefighters may also come in contact with poisonous, flammable, or explosive gases and chemicals, as well as radioactive or other hazardous materials that may have immediate or long-term effects on their health. For these reasons, they must wear protective gear that can be very heavy and hot. Work hours for firefighters

are longer and vary more widely than hours of most other workers. Many work more than 50 hours a week, and sometimes they may work even longer. In some work sites, they are on duty for 24 hours, then off for 48 hours, then receive an extra day off for intervals. In others, they work a day shift of 10 hours for 3 to 4 days, a night shift of 14 hours for 3 to 4 nights, have 3 to 4 days off, and then repeat the cycle. In addition, firefighters often work extra hours at fires and other emergencies and are regularly assigned to work on holidays.

Fire lieutenants and fire captains often work the same hours as the fire fighters they supervise. Duty hours include time when firefighters study, train, and perform fire prevention duties. Volunteer firefighters are not paid, who perform the same duties and may comprise the majority of firefighters in a residential area. Paid career firefighters held about 314, 000 jobs in 1998. More than 9 of the everyday 10 worked in municipal or county fire departments. Some large cities have thousands of career firefighters, while many small towns just have a few. Most of the remainder worked in fire departments on Federal and State installations, including airports. Private fire fighting companies employ a small number of firefighters and usually operate on a subscription basis. Applicants for firefighting jobs generally must pass a written exam; tests of strength, physical stamina, coordination, and agility; and a medical examination that includes drug screening.

Workers may be monitored on a random basis for drug use after accepting employment. Examinations are generally to people who are at least 18 years of age and have a high school education. As a rule, entry-level workers in large fire departments are trained for several weeks at the departments

training center or academy. Through classroom instruction and practical training, the recruits study fire fighting techniques, fire prevention, hazardous materials control, local building codes, and emergency medical procedures. They also learn how to use axes, chainsaws, fire extinguishers, and other firefighting and rescue equipment. After completing this training, they are assigned to a fire company, where they undergo a period of probation