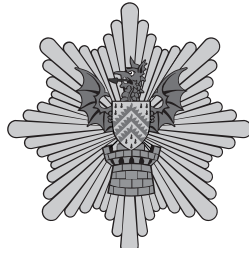


South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

Firefighter Retained Duty System

Information Pack

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Equal Opportunities

The South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is committed to the development and promotion of Equal Opportunities and Fairness at Work

This document is also available in Welsh

For more information visit

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk

For general recruitment information contact:

The Recruitment and Assessment Team

01443 232200

personnel@southwales-fire.gov.uk

The role of the Firefighter

The role of the Fire and Rescue Service has changed considerably in the last five years and the work undertaken by Firefighters in the community has had to change to reflect the new demands made on the Service. The 'new look' Firefighter is not an individual who is just focused on the traditionally perceived role of attending emergency incidents and the physical requirements to achieve that. The Firefighter is now required to be even more adaptable. Yes, the 'new look' Firefighter still fulfils the traditional role of dealing with fires in all types of premises and a variety of Special Service Calls which include incidents such as entrapment of persons at road traffic collisions, chemical emergencies, flooding and other natural disasters.

However, the 'new look' Firefighter is also able to switch from this reactive role to a more preventative role which involves the education of our communities about the hazards presented by fire. This requires the ability to communicate with all at risk groups within the community, especially the elderly and school children. It involves carry out presentations and talks, visiting dwellings and talking residents about how they can plan to avoid then survive a fire if it occurs. In many instances, this will involve the fitting of smoke detectors on behalf of those people to ensure their safety.

The 'new look' Firefighter needs to understand and represent the community in which he or she serves. Society is continually changing and becoming more diverse. The modern firefighting team has to represent all groups in order to fulfil its role of communicating with and engaging everyone it serves.

Job Description

Role - Firefighter

Location - As directed by the Chief Fire Officer

Principal Aim

To protect and save people and property from fire and other hazards in the most competent and effective manner to the highest possible standard of care and quality.

Duties and Responsibilities

Emergencies

- Respond immediately and safely to all emergency calls and requests for assistance.
- Deal with emergencies as directed and work effectively and efficiently as a member of a disciplined team.
- Minimise distress and suffering, including giving first aid care.

Dealing with People

- Establish and maintain the confidence of members of the public.
- Maintain links within the community.
- Be sensitive to the needs of others, particularly with regard to fairness and dignity issues.

Fire Safety

- Give general fire safety advice and guidance to people when requested.
- Work to help educate members of the community in the risks and hazards of fire.
- Assist in Service initiatives, programmes and strategies to reduce fire calls.

Health and Safety

- Recognise health and safety issues at work and deal with them to minimise or eliminate the degree of hazard or risk.
- Ensure personal safety and that of others at all times.

Personal Fitness and Hygiene

- Maintain a level of physical and medical fitness necessary to carry out the duties of a Firefighter.
- Maintain personal appearance, hygiene and cleanliness of uniform in keeping with a disciplined service.

Equipment

- Maintain all firefighting and emergency equipment in a state of readiness, including cleaning, repairing and testing as required to approved standards and procedures.
- Check firefighting resources provided for Fire and Service use, including hydrants and fixed installations.

Local Geography

- Know the local streets, roads and buildings situated within the Fire Station response area.
- Be aware of the risks, possible hazards and water supplies to be found within the Fire Station area.

Administration

- Complete basic paperwork and routine administration, including recording of information.
- Use information technology as required and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Keep personal records up to date.

Training

- Take part in a continuous training programme by attending lectures, exercises, practice drill sessions and other forms of training to maintain competence levels.
- Attend training courses as directed.
- Modern Apprenticeship.
- Level 3 NVQ Operations in the Community.
- BTEC Advanced Diploma in Fire and Rescue Operations Level 3.

Fire Authority

- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the level of responsibility and expertise as may be required by the Chief Fire Officer.
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Service.

Person specification

Job Criteria				
	Essential	Source of Evidence	Desirable	Source of Evidence
Skills	Effective communication skills; Practical/manual ability; Logical approach to problems; Ability to follow instructions.	WWI PA PA Whole Process	Previous practical work experience; Ability to work under pressure.	AF/INT PA/WWI/INT
Knowledge	Awareness of elements of job; Awareness of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the role of the Service in the community; Elements of teamwork.	INT INT INT		
Experience	Successful contribution to teamwork; Contact with members of the public through work or other capacity.	INT INT	Work related to community service; Team working within a disciplined environment.	AF/INT INT
Qualifications			Current first aid certificate; Life saving.	AF AF
Equal Opportunities	Commitment to equality/fairness at work	INT	Experience of paid or voluntary work in the community.	AF/INT
Other Requirements	Physically fit/good aerobic capacity; Satisfactory unaided eyesight and colour vision; Commitment to the Service and care to the community; Satisfactory hearing; Ability to work at heights; Ability to work in a confined space.	PA/M PA/M AF/INT PA/M PA PA		

Evidence Codes

AF Application Form

PA Physical Assessment

INT Interview

WWI Working with Information Tests

M Medical Examination

Rates of pay

Retained Duty System (RDS) Operational Personnel

Revised Rates of Pay for Operational RDS (Part Time) Firefighters from 1st July 2009.

Rates of Pay based on 100% Contract

Annual Retaining Fee	Annual £	Hourly Rate £
Firefighter		
Trainee	7,245.00*	9.66
Development	7,545.00*	10.06
Competent	9,660.00*	12.88
Crew Manager		
Development	12,321.00*	13.69
Competent	12,852.00*	14.28
Watch Manager		
Development	13,122.00*	14.58
Watch Manager A	13,491.00*	14.99
Watch Manager B	14,364.00	15.96

* For reduced availability contracts of 75% and 50% the salary is reduced pro rata.

Please note that contracts will be allocated specifically to address the Station needs

100% salary – average of 84 hours a week over a calendar month

75% salary – average of 63 hours a week over a calendar month

50% salary – average of 42 hours a week over a calendar month

Hours of Work

An RDS Firefighter provides cover of up to 84 hours a week in accordance with the requirements of the station rota. Personnel must be available during their specified hours of availability which will be identified in their contract of employment. Station rotas are flexible enough to allow for individuals to have time off when required or cases of emergency.

Do you really want to be a Firefighter?

Who needs Firefighters?

We all need the help of a Firefighter from time to time. Whether it is a fire in someone's house, a road accident or a warehouse up in flames, Firefighters are very much needed in every community. Have you ever thought about becoming a Firefighter on the Retained Duty System (RDS)? The hard fact is we need you every bit as you need us. There is currently a shortage of people who will 'turn out' and help us on an on-call basis. The problem is worse in the small towns and rural areas because there are fewer people who both live and work in small communities. This has put local services under threat. The RDS is an important part of local services.

On-Call Firefighters – Not Amateurs

We have builders, shop workers, administrators, farmers, plumbers and stay at home parents. They are doing everyday jobs until the call comes and then, quite literally, they put on their other hat and become professional Firefighters. It is not a back-up team, it is the front line service, saving lives.

Close at Hand

You must work or live near a retained Fire Station because you have to be able to get there within five minutes of a call. You have to be flexible in your work because we cannot predict when you will be called out. It may be that you are working for an employer who is community focused and able to release you from work to attend incidents and ongoing training when required. It may be you are self-employed and working in the local area.

Fit to Fight Fires?

Firefighters come in all shapes and sizes. There is no denying it can be a tough job. You will need to be fit and pass a set of physical tests. You will be expected to maintain your fitness throughout your time as a Firefighter and will have to undergo regular fitness assessments to check you are still fit enough to do the job. Most Firefighters exercise daily or weekly to keep themselves fit for their role. You have to be at least 18 years old and have good eyesight without contact lenses or glasses. Just as important are qualities like common sense, commitment and enthusiasm.

You are needed, but how often?

We are short of people around the clock, but especially during midweek daytime hours. On average, you will be called out only two or three times a week for a couple of hours and because we like to have more Firefighters available than are needed for each call, you will not have to attend each call-out. When you really cannot spare the time for some reason - for example, a holiday or deadline at work, you can 'sign off'.

What do I get out of it?

Firefighting is not like any other job, it can be unpredictable, exciting and rewarding. There is also the satisfaction and respect that comes with providing a crucial service to your community. You will also learn new skills along the way such as First Aid, Road Traffic Collision procedures and Fire Safety.

Join the Team

Joining the Fire and Rescue Service is a great way of meeting new people – both the people you work with and those in the community whom you help. There is a special kind of bond among Firefighters. It comes from working together as a team in conditions that are sometimes extremely dangerous which helps bind you together as few other jobs could.

So if you think you have what it takes to serve and protect the community you live and work in, take the next step and fill in the application form.

Do you really want to be a Firefighter?

The following list of questions has been designed to help you decide whether being a Firefighter is really for you. Simply tick YES or NO to each of the following questions.

	YES	NO
Are you genuinely interested in people?		
Can you get on with people from different backgrounds and cultures?		
Do you want to work as part of a close knit team?		
Can you work under pressure?		
Can you think on your feet and solve problems when you know a lot depends on the suggestion you come up with?		
Do you have the sensitivity to deal with members of the public when they are distressed, confused or being obstructive?		
Can you take responsibility for representing the Service when you are at work and when you are not?		
Are you committed to always maintaining and developing your skills?		
Are you prepared to study on top of your normal working day?		
Are you prepared for the demands of working in a disciplined uniformed service in which you will have to take orders from other people?		
Can you accept the need to keep to the rules that tell you what you can and cannot wear?		
Are you committed to maintaining your physical fitness?		
Is regular exercise part of your everyday life?		
Are you prepared to work day, night, evenings, weekends and Public Holidays?		
Are you a practical person who likes to work with your hands/equipments?		
Do you enjoy making things or finding out how things work?		
Are you someone who can always be relied on to be somewhere on time?		
Are you someone that others see as dependable?		
Are you prepared to work outside in all types of weather, when it is wet and cold and you do not know when a job may finish?		

If you gave a YES to ALL of the above, read the information provided carefully and then complete our application form.

The selection process

The following notes are designed to give you an indication of the recruitment process, what to expect and what will be required of you. The selection process spans a set period and is broken down into six stages.

Stage One - Application

The application form plays a vital role in the shortlisting process and it is important that Part 1 of the form is completed as fully and accurately as possible. Part 2 of the application form will be issued to you on completion of the written tests. Part 1 of the application form is enclosed and should be completed and returned to:

Recruitment and Assessment Team (HR)
South Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Forest View Business Park
Llantrisant
CF72 8LX

***Please read the guidance notes carefully before completing the application form.
All application forms will be acknowledged.***

We are fully committed to meeting our duties under Part II of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. We will implement reasonable adjustments to overcome any disadvantage you may face during the recruitment process and, if your application is successful, in employment with us. Some examples of reasonable adjustments are given below.

Modifications to the assessment process: If you feel you are able to meet the essential requirements of an operational Firefighter, as detailed in the Job Description and Person Specification, but the assessment process may prevent you from demonstrating your ability, adjustments to the process will be considered.

Please note that adjustments to the essential requirements identified in the Person Specification cannot be made. The Fire and Rescue Service nationally has reviewed the role of the Firefighter, taking into account our responsibilities under the DDA and other obligations including the need to ensure operational effectiveness. We consider the requirements in the Person Specification are essential for the role of a Firefighter.

The requirements of the eyesight test, and other tests detailed in this pack, may be subject to refinements in line with the National Recruitment process as well as taking into account decisions made locally in light of Best Practice.

Stage Two - Shortlisting

The decision as to which candidates proceed to the next stage of the selection process will be based on:

- Information within the application form;
- The availability offered by the candidate and if this is suited to the requirements of the Station.

Nearly all Retained Duty Stations within South Wales are looking for day cover. The ability to provide day cover will give candidates the best chance of proceeding.

The Fire Authority reserves the right to reject any application without inviting a candidate to take part in the selection process.

Stage Three - Working with Information Tests (WWI)

If you pass the shortlisting stage, you will be invited to attend the written assessments. You will be sent information booklets to assist you in your preparation for the tests.

This stage involves completing a series of four tests which are detailed below:

National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ)

The National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ) has been specially designed as part of the Firefighter selection process and is used as an objective, valid and fair test of some of the personal qualities and attributes needed by Firefighters to do their job effectively.

You will be presented with a series of statements and asked to indicate the extent to which you agree with each. For example, 'Everyone deserves to be treated fairly'. By looking at the responses you give, we can gain an understanding of your style in seven different areas. In order to be selected as trainee Firefighter, you will need to demonstrate you have the required personal qualities in each of these areas.

These areas include:

Commitment to Diversity and Integrity – the extent to which you understand and respect diversity and adopt a fair and ethical approach towards others.

Openness to Change – the extent to which you are open to change and actively seek to support change.

Confidence and Resilience – the extent to which you maintain a confident and resilient approach in highly challenging situations.

Working with Others – the extent to which you work effectively with other people.

Situational Awareness – the extent to which you maintain an active awareness of the environment to promote safe and effective working.

Commitment to Excellence – the extent to which you are conscientious and adopt a proactive approach to your work in order to achieve and maintain excellent standards.

Commitment to Development – the extent to which you are committed to developing yourself and others.

NFA Working with Numbers Test

This test assesses your ability to understand and work with numerical information of the type you are likely to experience as a Firefighter. You will be presented with a series of scenarios, using information from graphs, tables, dials and gauges and asked questions relating to each of these. Firefighters need to be able to undertake addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as well as estimations of numerical data.

NFA Understanding Information Test

This test assesses your ability to read and understand written information of the type you are likely to experience as a Firefighter. You will be presented with a series of scenarios and with information in a variety of formats (including fire safety information, memos, newsletters and training course manual extracts). You will be asked to answer several questions about each of these.

NFA Situational Awareness and Problem Solving Test

This test looks at your ability to ensure the safety of yourself and others as well as your ability to use information to solve problems. You will be presented with a series of scenarios similar to those you are likely to face in the role of a Firefighter. You will be asked to choose the answer that most closely describes what you would do in each situations – you will have four alternative answers to choose from.

Eye Sight Test

On the day you sit your WWI tests, you will undergo a preliminary eye examination. The visual requirement for Firefighters is of a high standard.

Operational Firefighters must have an appropriate level of colour perception. Individuals with either normal colour vision or slightly abnormal green colour vision are suitable for appointment to the Fire and Rescue Service.

The main requirements are:

- An uncorrected (unaided) visual acuity of, right eye 6.9, left eye 6.9, or better;
- Normal colour vision (Ishihara test – 2 errors maximum permissible).

If you are unsure whether you meet these requirements, you are advised to seek advice from a qualified optometrist. In addition to the preliminary tests, detailed eyesight tests are taken during the medical stage of the process. Please note, a satisfactory result during the preliminary test will not guarantee passing the tests at medical stage.

If you fail the Ishihara test, you may be able to demonstrate satisfactory colour vision in an alternative testing procedure. This is a two stage procedure. Firstly, you must pass the Farnsworth D15 test. A candidate who fails the Farnsworth D15 test will not have adequate colour vision to be a Firefighter.

Candidates who pass the Farnsworth D15 test must then pass the Nagel anomaloscope test.

The Farnsworth D15 test is available at
Cardiff University Optometrists,
Maindy Road,
Cathays

Tel: 02920 874357.

The test costs approximately £25.00.

Part Two Application Form

Part Two of the application form will be given after you complete the written tests. You will be given a briefing about how to complete the form. This briefing will explain how the Fire and Rescue Service's Personal Qualities and Attributes will be used to determine success at this stage of the process and also at the interview. Part Two of the application form must be returned to the Recruitment and Assessment Team prior to the Physical and Practical Assessment Tests.

Stage Four - physical and practical assessment

If successful at the written tests, you will be invited to attend the physical and practical assessment day. If you have not already returned your Part Two application form by this stage, you must bring it with you on this day.

These tests are designed to assess your level of physical fitness and ability to become a Firefighter. If successful, you will be invited to attend the interview.

The Physical and Practical Assessment comprises:

Height, Weight and Body Mass Index (BMI)

For record purposes, your height, weight and BMI will be measured. This information will be passed to the practitioner responsible for the Medical assessment.

Bleep Test

You will be required to undertake the Job Related Aerobic Fitness (Bleep) Test to a minimum level of 8.6.

Please note: the results of this test will NOT impact on your success or otherwise within this process. However, it is a good indicator of your current level of fitness and advice may be given to help you improve your fitness levels.

Enclosed Space Test

You will need to combine confidence, agility and strength while negotiating a crawl-way to pass the test successfully. There is only one way through the crawl-way, forward, right, left, up or down and there are no doors to open.

You will start the test wearing a face mask which allows clear vision. However, on completion of the run, your mask will be obscured and you will be required to return along the route.

You should complete these tests without jeopardising your safety and well-being.

Equipment Assembly Test

You will need to assemble and then disassemble a piece of equipment (a hydraulic tool which is used by the Fire and Rescue Service).

Before you commence the test, an instructor will demonstrate the correct assembly of the equipment. You will also have a diagram illustrating correct assembly.

Equipment Carry Test

You will need to combine endurance, upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. You will be carrying equipment over the length of a set course which covers 25 metres.

Ladder Climb

You will need to show confidence and apply the correct technique to climb the ladder.

You will be shown how to climb the ladder and how to apply a leg lock. You will then be allowed to practice the leg lock.

You will climb the ladder to the specified height. At that point, you will use the leg lock to secure yourself to the ladder, remove your hands from the ladder and lean back, looking over your shoulder to identify an object which is being held by the instructor at ground level.

When you have identified the object, you will be told to put your hands back on the ladder and release the leg lock.

You will then be instructed to descend the ladder.

Casualty Evacuation Test

You will need to combine upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. You will be required to drag a mannequin/dummy for a distance of 30 metres.

Ladder Lift Simulator Test

You will need to combine upper and lower body strength and co-ordination to lift a ladder to the required height and lower it safely and under control. The weight added to the lifting bar is 15kg.

There is a physical training programme available on our website which is designed to support applicants.

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk

If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Recruitment and Assessment Team on 01443 232200 and ask for a copy of the Preparatory Fitness Programme.

Stage Five - The Interview

If successful at the physical assessment and Part 2 of the application is completed to a satisfactory standard, you will be invited to attend an interview. During the interview you will be asked a series of questions which are designed to measure your personal qualities and attributes across four areas:

Commitment to Diversity and Integrity – to assess your approach to issues of diversity and how you adopt a fair and ethical approach to others.

Working with Others – to measure how you work effectively with others, both within the Fire and Rescue Service and in the community.

Commitment to Development – to measure your commitment to developing yourself and others.

Commitment to Excellence – to measure if you adopt a conscientious and proactive approach to work to achieve and maintain excellent standards.

You will also be asked questions regarding your knowledge and understanding of the RDS within South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

You will also be assessed throughout the interview on how effectively you communicate.

Stage Six - The Medical

Firefighters may be exposed to extreme physical and psychological demands in hostile and dangerous environments. In order to comply with relevant statutory provisions, the medical screening for Firefighters is rigorous. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Fire and Rescue Service must reduce risk so far as is reasonably practicable. This means a medical condition giving rise to reasonably foreseeable occupational risk would not be acceptable.

Medical suitability is determined by an individual assessment to avoid unnecessary discrimination. For practical reasons, this cannot be undertaken until the later stages of the recruitment process. The nature and effect of medical conditions may vary. It is therefore not possible to confirm medical conditions that would be unacceptable prior to an individual medical assessment. However, if you have a medical condition or a history of a medical condition which might present problems, the following general guidance should help you consider your medical suitability before applying.

A medical condition or functional limitation which, despite any reasonable adjustments (please see page), gives rise to significantly increased occupational risk of the following is unacceptable:

- Sudden collapse or sudden incapacitation;
- Impaired judgement;
- Altered awareness;
- Substantial physical or psychological injury/ill health;
- Any other effect which would pose a substantial health and safety risk to yourself and others.

The individual assessment will involve due consideration of any opinions or medical reports you may wish to submit. However, the decision on the significance of any risks identified will rest with the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Medical Assessment will include the following:

- A Health and Lifestyle Questionnaire;
- A Visual Acuity Test;
- An Audiometry Test (hearing);
- Blood pressure screening;
- Height and weight checks;
- Urinalysis;
- Lung function test.

Appointment

If successful at all stages of the recruitment process, an offer of employment will be made as and when a vacancy arises. This offer is subject to organisational needs and requirements. If the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service do not have a vacancy at your requested station, your details will be held on a reserve list and this will be looked at when a vacancy arises. The reserve list is only valid for 24 months from the date of passing the medical assessment.

Induction Course

Once an offer of appointment has been made, you will be invited to a two-day Induction Course held at Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre.

You will be measured for your firefighting kit during the Induction Course.

Pre-Course Learning

On completion of the Induction Course, you are required to undertake six week's pre-course learning. This consists of two hours per week on the station where you will be based.

RDS Training

On completion of the pre-course learning, you will be required to undertake a two week, non-residential (Monday to Friday) training course at Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre. During the training programme, you will be taught the basic skills of a Firefighter including the use of hose, ladders, firefighting and casualty extrication.

The RDS course will require you to absorb a considerable amount of learning of both theoretical and practical material. You will also be required to study and revise in your own time as well as in the classroom. Your progress will be continuously monitored and written, oral and practical examinations/tests will have to be passed. A set level of competence in various areas will have to be demonstrated to enable you to pass the course.

The period of training is very arduous and demands stamina on your part to enable you to cope successfully with the many strenuous and physically demanding aspects of initial training. You are advised to prepare yourself to a reasonable level of fitness prior to the course and also maintain this fitness during the course itself.

Training is an on-going process and continues throughout your career to ensure you are up to date with the ever changing problems and hazards handled by the Fire and Rescue Service. You will, for example, receive lectures on, and practical demonstrations of, safety procedures and usage of newly developed specialist equipment. There are many specialist skills required in the Fire and Rescue Service and thorough training is always given.

All trainees are required to complete a Modern Apprenticeship which consists of an NVQ Level 3 'Operations in the Community', a Level 3 BTEC 'Advanced Diploma in Fire and Rescue Operations' plus Key Skills Level 2.

Fire Stations

The Service comprises fifty Stations including Wholetime (WDS); Wholetime/Retained (WDS/RDS); Day Crewed and Retained (RDS).

Wholetime Duty System (WDS) Stations – these stations are crewed 24 hours a day by full time Firefighters. There are four Watches, each consisting of a minimum of 7 Firefighters.

Day Crewed Stations – these stations is crewed by a full time Firefighters. Firefighters are based on the station during the day and respond to fire calls at night from their homes when on standby duty. There are two Watches on each station consisting of a minimum of 7 Firefighters. Day Crewed station Firefighters carry an ‘alerter’ at all times they are on duty so they can respond to the station when required.

Retained Duty System (RDS) Stations – these stations are crewed only when an incident occur or during the weekly two-hour drill session. Each RDS station has an establishment of at least 14 Firefighters. Firefighters on the RDS system are available to respond to fire calls from their home during their leisure time, or in some cases, from their place of work if their employer permits. Each Firefighter carries an ‘alerter’ at all times while they are on duty so that he/she can respond to the station when required.

Day Crew and RDS Firefighters must live within five minutes of their nominated station.

