

# Career Profile

A weekly series devoted to providing information on career exploration

## Do You Like

- Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made and asking questions as appropriate?
- Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems?
- Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action?
- Actively looking for ways to help people?

*Then This Could Be The Career For You!*

## The Type of Work

- Rescue victims from burning buildings and accident sites.
- Search burning buildings to locate fire victims.
- Administer first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation to injured persons.
- Dress with equipment such as fire resistant clothing and breathing apparatus.
- Drive and operate fire fighting vehicles and equipment.
- Move toward the source of a fire using knowledge of types of fires, construction design, building materials, and physical layout of properties.
- Respond to fire alarms and other calls for assistance, such as automobile and industrial accidents.
- Assess fires and situations and report conditions to superiors to receive instructions, using two-way radios.
- Position and climb ladders to gain access to upper levels of buildings, or to rescue individuals from burning structures.
- Create openings in buildings for ventilation or entrance, using axes, chisels, crowbars, electric saws, or core cutters.

## Pathways to Success

**Most fire fighters have a high school diploma;** however, the completion of community college courses or, in some cases, an associate's degree, in fire science may improve an applicant's chances for a job. A number of colleges and universities offer courses leading to 2-year or 4-year degrees in fire engineering or fire science. In recent years, an increasing proportion of new fire fighters have had some education after high school.

As a rule, entry-level workers in large fire departments are trained for several weeks at the department's 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, including first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). They also learn how to use axes, chain saws, fire extinguishers, ladders, and other fire fighting and rescue equipment. After successfully completing training, the recruits are assigned to a fire company, where they undergo a period of probation.

Almost all departments require fire fighters to be certified as emergency medical technicians. Although most fire departments require the lowest level of certification, Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-Basic), larger departments in major metropolitan areas increasingly are requiring paramedic certification.

## Individuals who possess knowledge of:

- Public Safety and Security - relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.
- Customer and Personal Service - principles and processes for providing customer and personal services.
- Mechanical - machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- Building and Construction - materials, methods, and the tools involved in the construction or repair of houses, buildings, or other structures such as highways and roads.
- Law and Government - laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.
- Transportation - principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.
- Geography - principles and methods for describing the features of land, sea, and air masses, including their physical characteristics, locations, interrelationships, and distribution of plant, animal, and human life.

## What Employers Look For

**Fire fighters held roughly 310,500 jobs in 2008.** Overall employment of fire fighters is expected to increase by 19 percent between 2008 and 2018, with an expected growth of over 57,000 jobs.

Employment of fire fighters is expected to grow by 19 percent over the 2008-18 decade, which is faster than the average for all occupations. Most job growth will stem from volunteer fire fighting positions being converted to paid positions. In recent years, it has become more difficult for volunteer fire departments to recruit and retain volunteers, perhaps because of the considerable amount of training and time commitment required. Furthermore, a trend toward more people living in and around cities has increased the demand for fire fighters. When areas develop and become more densely populated, emergencies and fires affect more buildings and more people and, therefore, require more fire fighters.

## Job Outlook

**DEFINITION:** Control and extinguish municipal fires, protect life and property and conduct rescue efforts.

# MUNICIPAL FIRE FIGHTERS



**NAME:** Bill Brown

**JOB TITLE:** Lieutenant/Training Officer

**COMPANY:** Wellington Fire District

**LOCATION:** Wellington, Oh

### Q. How did you become interested in your particular field?

**A.** As a little boy, our neighbor and family friend was on the department. When he would go rushing off to a call, my brother and I would watch see him...sometimes even putting on our "fire boots and coats". As I grew older, being a firefighter really seemed like something I would enjoy and I've been fortunate enough to be able to make a career of it in my hometown.

### Q. What is your educational background?

**A.** I have a bachelors degree from Ohio Northern University in Sports Medicine and Sports Management. I spent the first thirteen years of my adult life as an athletic trainer. First with North Ridgeville High School, Kolczun & Kolczun, then the final ten years as the Coordinator of Sports Medicine at Fisher-Titus Medical Center in Norwalk.

### Q. How did you get to where you are today?

**A.** Starting out as a part-time/volunteer with the department, I interviewed in 2000 for the department's first full-time firefighter position and I have been here ever since.

### Q. What skills or certifications do you think are needed to be successful in this field?

**A.** Today's firefighter does so much more than just go to fires. You have to be skilled in EMS since those calls make up anywhere between 60-90% of a department's calls. In a small department, you have to be a "jack of all trades" to be successful. In addition to my duties as a firefighter, I also am a Fire Safety Inspector, Fire Instructor, as well as an arson investigator. The more hats you can wear, the more opportunities you will be afforded.

### Q. What is the best part of your job?

**A.** Hands down, the best part of my job is helping people. It sounds cliché, but it is true. Additionally, the camaraderie at the station is also a big plus. The friends that I have made here are by far the most loyal friends I have ever had. We go camping together; share birthdays; vacation together...we are each other's extended families.

### Q. Do you have any words of advice for someone considering a career in your field?

**A.** Don't be afraid of schooling. Today's firefighter has to be willing to learn new things and take on more diverse roles in their department. Our society demands more from us each year and as our customers, we have to make sure we give them what they deserve.



Lieutenant/Training Officer Bill Brown on the job and in the classroom teaching young children safety rules.



## Earnings Potential

Location	Year	Pay Period	Low	Median	High
United States	2009	Yearly	\$23,000	\$45,100	\$74,400
Ohio	2009	Yearly	\$20,200	\$40,200	\$64,400
Cleveland Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	2009	Yearly	\$25,800	\$47,200	\$70,500

O\*Net Online, <http://online.onetcenter.org>.

Sources: Occupational Information Network, O\*Net Online, <http://online.onetcenter.org>; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, <http://stats.bls.gov/oco>