



Employer's Information Pack

On-call firefighters



Jersey Fire & Rescue

..making Jersey a safer community



Contents

- 3 | Introduction
- 4 | What is an On-call Firefighter?
- 5 | Who can be an On-call Firefighter?
- 6 | Why are On-call Firefighters needed?
- 7 | Could you release an employee to become an On-call Firefighter?
- 8 | We need On-call Firefighters
- 9 | Training
- 10 | The impact on your business
- 11 | FAQ's

Introduction

This information pack is intended to give you an insight into the role of an On-call Firefighter and a realistic understanding of both the benefits and impacts that this could have on both the individual and your business.



What is an On-call firefighter?

On-call firefighters come from all areas of the community. For example, they could be men and women who are at home, in full or part-time employment, working for themselves, studying at college or university, or not currently employed. They are exceptional people who give their time to assist the fire and rescue service and help protect their communities.

On-call firefighters each carry a pager while they're 'on-call', which alerts them when a 999 call for the fire service is received in the local area. When this happens, they go to the fire station, change into their fire kit, and become a crew of professional firefighters, ready to handle any type of emergency.

The requirement for the States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service is to provide one period of 24 hours on call every 4 days if working from St Helier, or 12 hours on call on alternate nights if working from St Brelade 'Western Fire Station'.

Being an On-call firefighter is an excellent way to continue in your chosen career while making an immediate, positive difference to your community. Training for core skills, teamwork, leadership, medical and trauma first responder skills and driving heavy vehicles is rewarding for our firefighters and a valuable addition to any workforce.

The work may be called 'part-time', but On-call firefighters are trained and experienced people on the front line, saving lives and protecting people and community assets. On-call firefighters are paid for their services, they receive thorough training and learn all they need to know about emergency situations as well as additional personal skills.

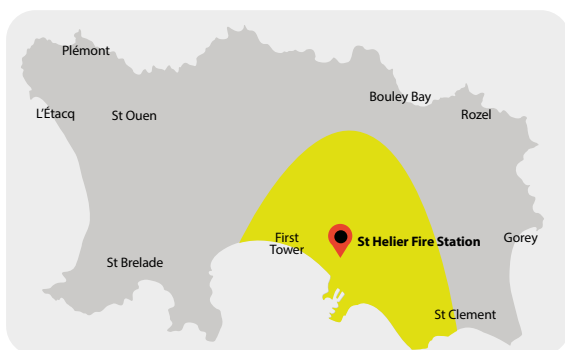


Who can be an On-call firefighter?

Firefighters must be at least 18 years of age with a good all-round level of fitness and there is no upper age limit. On-call firefighters need to work or live within an agreed distance of one of our two fire stations as they must be able to get there within a specified time of receiving a pager alert, driving at normal road speeds.

It is unpredictable when they will be called out, so On-call firefighters should have the ability to be flexible in their work or home-based activities. Many employers are prepared to release On-call firefighters from their workplace from time to time when their pager alerts them to attend an emergency incident. Other On-call firefighters work for themselves or simply have time available to help serve and protect their community. When firefighters are On-call and their pager sounds, they need to be able to stop whatever they are doing and report immediately to their community fire station.

On-call station locations: Is your business or home close to any of these On-call fire stations? You may rely on our On-call firefighters more than you think.



15 min response radius to St Helier Fire Station



10 min response radius to Western Fire Station

On-call firefighters need to have good communication skills together with personal skills such as courage, understanding, reliability, flexibility, determination, self-motivation, common sense, commitment, enthusiasm and the ability to work within a team. They also need to be able to reflect the current values set by the States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service, at all times. Above all, being an On-call firefighter requires a real desire to make a positive difference and to serve the local community.



Why are On-call firefighters needed?

On-call firefighters are a vital part of today's fire and rescue service. They provide an effective, efficient service that gives emergency cover to more than 90% of the United Kingdom and Jersey is no exception. Fire and rescue services actively recruit people from their communities who can respond on an on-call basis at certain locations. This can be challenging in smaller towns and rural areas, because nowadays there are fewer people who both live and work in small communities. On-call firefighters are a crucial and highly valued asset to the local community.

How often are they needed?

The number of incidents that an On-call firefighter attends varies between our two fire stations - they could be called out only two or three times a week for an hour at a time. They will be required to attend training sessions (commonly held on an evening) each week for two or three hours at your designated fire station for essential training and maintenance of fire and rescue equipment. There could also be times when they may need to attend additional training sessions and training courses to acquire new and essential knowledge, skills and understanding.

What do the individuals get out of it?

The job of being a firefighter is unique. It can be unpredictable, exciting and rewarding, coupled with the satisfaction and respect that comes with providing a crucial service to their local community as part of a closely knit, professional team. They will learn new skills along the way such as firefighting, wearing breathing apparatus, road traffic collision procedures and fire safety, and there are opportunities to learn other transferable skills, such as leadership management, large goods vehicle (LGV) driving, first aid and trauma care and health and safety qualifications that can provide their primary employment with additional skills at no cost to the employer.

Additionally, once they have successfully completed their initial training there may be further opportunities to gain specialist skills and qualifications such as specialist operations or appliances, training, coaching and mentoring, fire and rescue service strategic projects and promotion to a leadership role and incident commander.

They will be part of an organisation that is very visible to the public and as such upholds the highest standards of equality, diversity and inclusion. Joining a fire and rescue service is a great way of meeting new people – both the people they work with and those in the community who they help.



On-call firefighters were vital at this fire at Hotel De France.

Could you release an employee to become an On-call Firefighter?

We know that releasing an employee to become an On-call firefighter is an important decision. It could not happen without your agreement, and you need to know how it would work for you to make an informed decision and feel confident about supporting your community in this way.

It may be the case that, as an employer you have sufficient flexibility to enable staff to be released to attend emergency incidents at any time when someone is at work. However, we do realise that some employers do not have the capacity to commit to consistent hours for release of their staff.

This information guide aims to provide you with enough information to decide if this is something you could consider doing for your community. They are first and foremost your staff member, but are available on-call, to help and protect the local community when needed.

The States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service On-call firefighters are usually only called out two or three times a week at any time of the day or night, usually for about an hour, but this could be more, depending on the complexity of the incident.

On-call firefighters who are planning to respond to incidents while at their place of work may be required to have a signed agreement from their employers confirming that they can be released from work when called. Therefore, it is important that employers understand exactly what the role involves, and the commitment required as well as the added benefits to both the company and the community.

Community

How many businesses can point to something to show they REALLY are at the heart of the community?

On-call firefighters get world-class training in health and safety and medical response as well as developing situational awareness, leadership skills and the ability to work in high pressure situations.

Have you ever thought about what might happen if there was a fire at your business? If you had a fire today, and your local fire station didn't have enough firefighters, **the next available crew could take longer to arrive.**



We need On-call firefighters

Allowing your employees to become On-call firefighters can improve the reputation of your business and sets you apart from your competitors.

It can also increase the productivity of your staff and even save you money.

By allowing your employees to become On-call firefighters shows your business:

- is different from its rivals
- is involved in, and cares for, the needs of the community
- is fully compliant with health and safety, and fire regulations
- encourages the ambitions of its workforce
- shows sincere corporate social responsibility.

Training

On-call firefighters are highly trained professionals who can bring added value to your organisation at no cost to you. They gain many useful transferable skills which could be useful in any workplace.

These can include:

- Personal skills: such as leadership, teamwork, quick thinking, problem solving, taking responsibility, communication skills and keeping calm in difficult situations. Being a firefighter also requires commitment and self-discipline.
- Emergency skills: including incident command, first aid and trauma care, which will assist your business on health and safety, first aid and fire related matters. They are trained on an on-going basis to maintain and develop these skills.
- Educational qualifications and skill sets: On-call firefighters are encouraged to gain nationally recognised qualifications and to maintain up-to-date skills, appropriate to their role. These can benefit employers through better productivity levels and improved motivation.
- Improved fitness health and wellbeing: fire and rescue services are committed to supporting their staff in both physical and mental health, giving the employer of an On-call firefighter an employee who should be fitter and healthier in both workplaces.
- Motivated, committed employees: On-call firefighters tend to be committed to the community they serve, which means that they are more likely to be dedicated, caring and long serving members of staff.
- Employees able to fulfil their ambitions and potential are usually happier and more productive in the workplace. Firefighters must be highly motivated to take on the tasks and this motivation will help them in everything they do.
- Highly trained and skilled employees: On-call firefighters must be able to deal with a whole range of situations. They never quite know what they might find when they respond to an emergency, so they are more likely to be able to cope with the ups and downs of working life.
- Large Goods Vehicle Training: many On-call firefighters are trained to drive fire engines, which includes obtaining a Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) licence. They also receive Emergency Fire Engine Driver training this is like an advanced driving test in that it raises their awareness of road conditions.

Additionally...

Businesses have found that the benefits offered by allowing their staff to be on call have far outweighed any inconvenience caused by their employee responding to an emergency.

Because On-call firefighters aren't based at fire stations but operate on standby, they're only called out when needed. They are first and foremost your staff member but are available on-call for the fire and rescue service, to help and protect the local community when needed.



The impact on your business

On-call firefighters being called out to incidents during their primary business working hours is understandably concerning as its impactful to the business. The commitment and impact will vary dependant on which Station they will report to. Of course, we are unable to predict exactly how often an individual firefighter might get called out. Your employee might have to rush off to attend an emergency at very short notice and contractual arrangements may need to be recorded to reflect this in accordance with any handbook or terms of conditions of service you may have in place in your business.

The additional skills On-call firefighters bring to your workplace will make this worthwhile and what's more, as an employer you can feel proud that you have played a vital role in making the local community safer.

'Primary employment'

Becoming an employer of an On-call firefighter is a big step for any organisation - large or small. We greatly rely on the partnerships we build with local employers, and their commitment to allowing their staff to be released during their normal working day.

We appreciate the disruption this could cause, and so we aim to ensure everyone is fully aware of the commitment prior to agreeing for any staff to be released.

You will always be the 'primary employer' and as such, have priority over the working time of your staff.

We have endeavoured in this document, to explain to all potential and current On-call firefighters the impact being on-call can have on their primary employment, and that this should be taken into consideration when making themselves available for duties. For this reason, we want to make sure that you have a realistic understanding of the commitments and benefits that this may pose for your business.

Find out more

If you would like to find out more about becoming an employer of an On-call firefighter, contact Station Commander Craig Channing on 445981 or email c.channing@gov.je where will be able to discuss this further, and will be able to advise you on the members of staff in your organisation that would be most suitable for the role.

We can also put you in contact with existing employers of On-call firefighters so that you can be sure that this is the right step for your business.

FAQ's

Do I have to release staff to attend emergencies if it doesn't suit the company on that day?

Your employees on call commitment are 1 x 24-hour period in every four days for HQ cover or every other night for Western cover. This is planned and if there is any reason why they cannot be released that day / night, then the individual can swap out their designated duty with a colleague on a time for time basis. If they say they are available, they will be expected to respond to the call. Therefore, it is essential to agree when you have capacity to release staff before they log in as available. Your needs as the primary employer will always be a priority.

What will it cost me?

There are no direct costs to supporting an employee to be an On-call firefighter. However, there may be some indirect costs to your business. It's up to you how you deal with the On-call firefighter absence, some employers do not pay the employee when they are absent, others expect them to make their hours up later. For example, if you have to fill in while your employee responds to an emergency call out or attends training; but we hope the benefits will outweigh the inconvenience.

Will training take place in working hours?

Most training takes place on weekday evenings and at weekends. However, initial training as outlined above, may be a consolidated period encompassing weekday daytimes. Any training that must be completed during business hours is planned well in advance, to allow employees to make suitable arrangements with their employers.

What support is available should I have any questions?

The States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service has a management team who will be your point of contact and help support you through the early days of appointing your employee, as well as providing ongoing support and assistance as and when required.

What happens if my employee has been at an incident all night, will they still be in work the next day? If not, am I expected to give them paid leave?

We would not expect this to be a frequent issue, but this is something you would need to clarify with your employee before you agree to release them for On-call duty. If you don't want to pay them for any absence due to the Fire and Rescue Service, then that is your decision, but the Service will do its utmost to release them as soon as possible during an incident, knowing they have a primary employer as their primary business.

What sort of training and development will my staff undergo as part of their role as a firefighter?

As stated above, all firefighters go through a rigorous training and development programme which is provided by us. They will develop skills in risk management, communication, team working, leadership, self-discipline, first aid, trauma care, health and safety, and much more, and they will bring this training and experience back to their workplace.

How long will my employee be required to take time away from work for training?

Firefighters must be well trained if they are going to work safely and effectively in the wide range of operational incidents they have to tackle. The Service recognises that some On-call firefighters might need to take time off from their primary employment to undertake training. The States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service aim to keep the impact on the primary employer to a minimum by providing basic training on drill nights and during weekends, reducing the time required for training during weekdays.

However, during the first two years of employment On-call firefighters will have to attend essential training of which some will be during weekdays.

What if my employee gets injured while at an incident?

On-call firefighters are trained to a high standard before they become fully operational, so this is an extremely rare occurrence. However, if this does happen, the Service has policies in place for compensating On-call firefighters for any loss of earnings after Statutory Sick Pay.

In the event this does happen, the States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service offers support services to help firefighters get fit again if they do get injured, for example, local occupational health services and comprehensive physical and psychological rehabilitation arrangements with the Firefighters Charity. All firefighters undergo regular fitness and medical assessments to assure their continual health, safety and wellbeing.

What benefits do I get as an employer for releasing a member of staff to be an On-call firefighter?

The main benefits for employers are listed above. However, many find the biggest reward is the knowledge that their company is undertaking a vital role in protecting the local community. By allowing one of your employees to become an On-call firefighter you know you'll have made a difference every time they respond to an emergency, help save lives and protect people in your community.

