



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**



NIFRS CAREERS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Thank you for your interest in a role with Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS).

The information below is designed to provide you with an insight into the most frequently asked about careers with NIFRS.

Candidate Information Packs are provided for each vacancy when advertised and we would encourage you to read these before deciding whether to submit an application.

As criteria for each vacancy is reviewed prior to issue, it is not possible to provide detailed information in advance of a job advertisement.

We hope the following information will provide you with some guidance and also help you to decide if these roles are the right opportunity for you.

What Firefighter roles are available?

Wholetime Firefighter

Wholetime Firefighters work full-time and are based at Fire Stations in the larger towns and cities throughout Northern Ireland. The role is varied, challenging and fulfilling. It can include helping people involved in road traffic collisions, carrying out specialist rescues (e.g., due to flooding) or rescuing people trapped by fire.

Firefighters do not just respond to emergencies, they are also involved in community education as well as fire and accident prevention activities to protect the local community.

On-Call Firefighter

On-Call Firefighters work part time, going about their daily business in the normal way until they receive an emergency call. They are notified by their personal pager which they carry when they are on duty.

They will book themselves available for emergencies and if a call comes during the time they have stated they are available, they make their own way to the Fire Station within 5 minutes of being called and then respond to the incident from the Station. On-Call Firefighters play a critical role in protecting the local community.

Firefighter (Control)

A Firefighter (Control) answers the emergency call and mobilises fire service resources. They ask a number of questions to determine the location and nature of

the emergency, entering this information into a bespoke computer system in order to establish the location of the nearest fire appliances. They are trained in the use of specialised emergency call handling techniques in order to support and protect callers in potentially life threatening situations.

Please note that the role of Firefighter (Control) does not carry out Firefighting duties and does not provide a career path into the role of Wholetime or On-Call Firefighter.

For information in relation to the role of Volunteer Firefighter, please refer to the Volunteering section of our website at www.nifrs.org

What are the hours of work?

Wholetime Firefighters are assigned to a Watch on a variety of shift patterns, working 42 hours per week, as detailed below:

Day Crewing:	Monday to Friday, 8.00 am to 6.00 pm, with days off in lieu.
Variable Crewing:	7.30 am to 7.30 pm, consisting of 7 shifts in a 2 week cycle.
2-2-4 Crewing:	2 day shifts 8.00 am to 6.00 pm, 2 night shifts 6.00 pm to 8.00 am, followed by 4 days off.

Please note the shift systems are subject to change.

On-Call Firefighters work part time, providing minimum availability requirements to meet business needs. Details of the hours required are outlined in candidate information packs when a vacancy is advertised.

They go about their daily business in the normal way until they receive an emergency call which they respond to within 5 minutes of being alerted, at times when they have stated they are available.

Firefighters (Control) are assigned to a Watch and work an average of 42 hours per week as follows: 2 days of 10 hours and 2 nights of 14 hours, followed by 4 rest days over an 8 day cycle.

Please note the shift pattern is subject to change.

Why apply to become a Firefighter?

The role of a Firefighter offers a worthwhile and highly rewarding career, making a positive difference to the community.

It also provides an opportunity to work as part of a team, receive excellent training and gain a wide range of skills.

In addition to safety critical training, Firefighters receive specialist and general training opportunities to contribute to their personal development and career aspirations. While you may begin as a Firefighter, there are plenty of opportunities for career development.

How and when can I apply?

The Careers Section of our website contains a link to our online recruitment system and current vacancies within NIFRS.

We are unable to provide timeframes of when job vacancies will be advertised.

Applications must be submitted online in response to an advertised vacancy. Candidate information packs are available to download when a vacancy is advertised which provide information in relation to the criteria for the role.

To keep up to date with vacancies you may be interested in, you can follow us on NIFRS official Facebook and Twitter which will notify you of current vacancies.

You can also register and create a profile with the online recruitment system (Getgotjobs) to be notified of vacancies.

Use the following address to register, create a profile and set up alerts for job notifications: <https://nifrs.getgotjobs.co.uk/home>

Please select NIFRS from the drop down menu within the Organisation category, and choose your selected Job category.

What qualities and skills are required?

The role of Firefighter requires people who can think on their feet, quickly weigh up a situation and act accordingly. Remaining calm under pressure when others may not be able to control their emotions is essential.

Full details of the Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs), Job Description and Person Specification are provided in candidate information packs when a vacancy is advertised.

What age do I need to be to apply?

You will need to be 18 years old by the date NIFRS anticipates that training will commence. This date will be outlined in candidate information packs when a vacancy is advertised. There is no upper age limit in order to apply.

What qualifications do I need?

It is essential that you can demonstrate acceptable levels of numeracy and literacy. Details of the requirements will be outlined in candidate information packs.

Do I need a Driving Licence?

Wholetime and On-Call Firefighters may be required to undertake driving duties as part of the role; therefore, you must be prepared to work towards obtaining a driving licence for the categories of vehicles used by NIFRS.

A Firefighter (Control) must have access to a form of transport which enables you to fulfil the requirements of the post in full, including working at the standby Control room for scheduled tests and emergencies as required.

What fitness standards are required?

Firefighting can be intensely physically demanding and fitness is crucial to the role. Wholetime and On-Call Firefighters need to be able to meet required standards of fitness and this will be part of the selection process. You need to maintain fitness throughout your career as a Firefighter and will be required to undergo regular fitness assessments to ensure you are fit to do the job.

What are the medical requirements?

Medical suitability is determined by an individual pre-employment health assessment with NIFRS Medical Adviser. The nature and effect of medical conditions may vary and therefore it is not possible to confirm medical conditions that would be unacceptable prior to an individual medical assessment.

Please note pre-employment health assessments are conducted in the final stages of a selection process. It is not possible to determine medical suitability until this point.

Are there eyesight requirements?

Firefighters are required to meet specified standards of eyesight, including colour blindness, in order to perform the role and comply with health and safety requirements. The pre-employment health assessment will include an eyesight test with the following standards currently required:

- Uncorrected visual acuity of 6/18 in the better eye and 6/24 in the worse eye.
- Corrected visual acuity of 6/9 binocularly with a minimum of 6/12 in the worse eye.

- Have no history of night blindness or any ocular disease that is likely to progress and result in future failure of the visual standards for Firefighters.
- Have an appropriate level of colour perception.

Refractive Surgery

If you have had Radial Keratotomy you cannot be considered for operational firefighting duties due to the relatively high incidence of refractive instability.

If you have undergone the following types of refractive surgery, you can be considered one year after surgery provided that the limit of surgical correction has not exceeded 8D:

- Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK)
- Laser assisted in-situ keratomileusis (LASIK)
- Laser epithelial keratomileusis (LASEK).

You will be required to pass a LogMAR test to rule out poor visual performance in low contrast conditions.

What will the selection process include?

Full details of the stages included in the selection process will be outlined in Candidate Information Packs when a vacancy is advertised.

What training is provided?

As a Firefighter you are required to attend training sessions to develop and maintain the skills required for the job. You will also be required to undertake a development programme to demonstrate your competence in the role.

Wholetime Firefighters

On entry into NIFRS as a Trainee Firefighter, you will undertake an initial training programme which currently lasts 16 weeks (subject to ongoing review), after which you will be posted to a Station for operational duty.

Continuation training is carried out on all Stations, with specialist courses held at the Learning & Development Centre. You may also be required to attend residential courses locally and at various fire training establishments in the United Kingdom.

On-Call Firefighters

As a Trainee On-Call Firefighter, you will be required to complete a structured training programme which should be completed within a specified period after commencement. This will involve a regular weekly training commitment at the local Station (or District) and attendance at courses held at NIFRS Learning and Development Centre or other designated locations which will involve weekend training.

Firefighters (Control)

As a trainee Firefighter (Control) you will complete an initial training programme which currently lasts a minimum of 8 weeks (subject to ongoing review), after which you will be posted to a Watch within the Regional Control Centre.

Continuation training is carried out on the Watch, with specialist courses held at the Learning & Development Centre.

Please note Firefighter training is only provided upon commencement of employment. Firefighter training courses are not provided prior to application.

Where will I be based after training?

Wholetime Firefighters must be able to work in any NIFRS location. You will be advised of which Station you will be based at following successful completion of your initial training programme. Please note your location may result in travel.

On-Call Firefighters will respond from the station you have applied for.

Firefighters (Control) are based at NIFRS Headquarters, 1 Seymour Street, Lisburn, BT27 4SX.

What other roles are available?

In addition to Firefighter roles, NIFRS also has a wide variety of Support roles across the organisation.

This includes positions within each of our Area Commands and Directorates – Service Delivery, Service Support, Transformation, Planning & Governance, Finance and Human Resources, in support of service delivery.

For these roles criteria for each vacancy is outlined within Candidate Information Packs when posts are advertised, and will depend upon the area of work and skills required.

To keep up to date with vacancies you may be interested in you can register and set up alerts for job notifications with the online recruitment system (Getgotjobs) to be notified of vacancies at <https://nifrs.getgotjobs.co.uk/home>

Please select NIFRS from the drop down menu within the Organisation category, and choose your selected Job category.

The FAQs are correct as at December 2019.

All details are subject to change and ongoing review. For current information, please refer to the Careers section of our website www.nifrs.org and Candidate Information Packs when a vacancy is advertised.