

CAREER BRIEF

(Grades 6-8)

FIREFIGHTER



WHAT IS A FIREFIGHTER?

Firefighters put out and help control fires. They also respond to emergencies that include people's property, their health or threats to an environment. Wildland Firefighters help put out wildland fires, which are fires that occur out in forests and other land areas.

WHAT DO FIREFIGHTERS DO?

- Put out fires using water hoses, fire extinguishers and water pumps
- Find and rescue victims in fires or any emergency situation
- Operate emergency vehicles
- Treat sick/injured people or people having medical emergencies
- Maintain physical fitness and participate in physical exercises
- Clean and maintain firefighting equipment
- Wildland Firefighters use data and maps to predict when and where a wildfire may occur

Fun Fact: In 1736, Franklin Benjamin started the first fire company in Philadelphia

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- A high school diploma or equivalent (GED)
- Attend a fire academy for a few months (time varies by state)
- Pass a physical exam and written exam
- Additional medical training
- Leadership positions often require a Bachelor's Degree and/or Graduate Degree

SKILLS

- Communication Skills: must communicate effectively with other firefighters and victims during an emergency situation
- Compassion: be able to empathize and calm victims during emergency situations
- Courage: firefighters are often in dangerous or emergency situations, be able to push past their fear in a safe manner
- Problem-Solving Skills/Quick Decision Making: must make quick decisions during dangerous situations
- Physical Stamina and Strength: must be able to carry heavy equipment or injured victims

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it." -Nelson Mandela