

Frequently Asked Recruitment Questions

If my faith requires me to fast, can I still be a Firefighter?

Yes, you can still fast, but it is important that all members of the Service are able to perform their core role whilst on duty.

It is important to recognise that dehydration can affect a person very quickly. An individual may believe they are perfectly fine but very quickly succumb to the adverse effects of dehydration.

We encourage staff who choose to fast to discuss it with their line manager. Employees have a responsibility for being fit for duty and, where fasting has affected a member of staff adversely, they must tell their manager immediately.

As a practising Sikh, can I still be a Firefighter and wear a turban?

A new clause of the Deregulation Bill 2015 extends the existing exemption for Sikhs to have to wear a safety helmet under the Employment Act in all workplaces. However there are exclusions for emergency response services and the military, which apply only in hazardous operational situations when the wearing of a safety helmet is considered necessary. These include, for example, entering a burning building where protective clothing needs to be worn to enclose the whole body, situations such as bomb disposal, or when dealing with hazardous materials like chemical leaks, bio-hazards or radiation.

I have a beard for religious reasons. Will I have to shave it off to be a firefighter?

Yes, this will be necessary. We totally respect your religious needs, but for health and safety reasons facial hair below the top lip cannot be allowed. As a Firefighter you will need to wear a facemask when you're wearing breathing apparatus. Facial hair can



stop the mask from forming a seal around the face, which could let dangerous airborne chemicals in.

Do you have quotas for women and ethnic minority recruits?

No, we don't have such quotas, but we encourage and welcome applications from these groups because they're under-represented within our workforce. However, all applicants are assessed purely on merit.

I have a disability. Can I still apply?

The disability provisions of the Equality Act 2010 apply to Firefighters. This means anyone who considers themselves to have a disability can apply to join the Fire and Rescue Service. A disability is defined by the Act as:

Anyone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

You will be asked if you have a disability as part of the recruitment process and to give details of the type of adjustments you may require in order to take part in the selection process and to fulfil the role of a Firefighter should you be successful. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and, if reasonable adjustments can be made to enable you to take part in the selection process and fulfil the role of a Firefighter, then your application will be progressed.

I am dyslexic. Will I be able to cope with the online written tests?

Dyslexia is considered to be a disability and you will be asked if you have a disability as part of the recruitment process. Should you answer 'yes' we can make reasonable adjustments for you at the relevant stages of the selection process. We normally ask for a report to confirm the type and extent of your dyslexia which is sent to our Occupational Health Practitioner for review. They then use this information to decide if a reasonable adjustment can be made – for example, you may be given extra time to complete an online written test.

I wear glasses and have had corrective eye surgery. Can I apply?

Yes, but all applicants have to provide an optician's report at medical stage. Please refer to the Visual Entry Standards for further information.

Are you allowed to drink or smoke?

We have a policy which prohibits the use of drugs, alcohol and smoking in all of our premises.

Would somebody's size affect their application?

No – this is a popular misconception, because there used to be restrictions on height, weight and chest expansion. Candidates are expected to pass strength and fitness tests as part of the recruitment process. The tests are at a level that's achievable by men and women of all different sizes and builds.

Isn't being a Firefighter dangerous?

We adopt an assertive safe and effective approach to how we manage incidents. Whilst there have been some fatalities to firefighters around the country when attending incidents, and they can never be hazard-free, we've developed a very positive approach to health and safety. As an organisation, we set extremely high standards and expectations in this area. Our Firefighters work within a 'competency framework,' as well as effective personal protective equipment such as helmets and other fire kit. At incidents, safe systems of work are established with a high level of command and control. We also constantly stress the importance of personal safety to our staff.

Away from incidents, our commitment to health safety and well-being is maintained across all areas of activity.



Would a criminal record prevent me from applying?

Not necessarily. Please review our Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 guidance document for further information. We **will** undertake an Enhanced Disclosure check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as part of the pre-employment clearances stage. Therefore please be honest on your application and advise us of any convictions, fines, etc. that you have or have had in the past as some still appear on your DBS check even though they are spent. DBS fees will be incurred by the Fire and Rescue Service.

Do I need to be able to drive?

Yes, you need to hold a full UK driving licence with no pending issues at the point of application.

Would a driving offence prevent me from applying?

Not necessarily. Please review our Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 guidance document for further information. We **will** undertake a Driving Licence check from the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) as part of the pre-employment clearances stage. Therefore please be honest on your application and advise us of any driving convictions, fines, etc. that you have or have had in the past as some still appear even though they are spent. Fees for this check will be incurred by the Fire and Rescue Service.

Is there an age limit?

You have to be a minimum of 18 years old at the start of your employment
There is no upper age limit, as long as you are physically fit and can pass the fitness test you can become a Firefighter.

Would I have to work weekend and public holidays?

Firefighters whose shift/work pattern falls on a weekend or public holiday will be required to work. There is the option to take leave subject to a maximum number of people being on leave at any one time. This is to make sure our fire engines have enough people on duty to crew them. For firefighters who are required to work a public holiday (i.e. attend a fire call), the relevant enhancement would apply.

What qualifications do I need to apply?

To become an On-call Firefighter you do not need any specific qualifications.

How long does the recruitment process take?

For On-call the recruitment process can take anything from a week to up to 6 months. This depends on at what point you apply and how close the Service is to running the next training course. Normally you would work through the stages over a period of time so that any time off work is minimised.

The pre-employment checks including the medical and fitness test are completed closer to the course so that your fitness level is at the required standard and also due to this only having a 6 month validity so it will prevent you having to have tests redone e.g. eyesight.

Can I choose which fire station to work at?

Unfortunately not, being an On-call Firefighter requires you to live/work within a certain time of the station in order to respond promptly to your alerter going off.

