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# CAREER FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

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# PAC 202



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**DFES**  
Department of Fire &  
Emergency Services

FOR A SAFER STATE

***The following information is intended to provide a general overview of the firefighter recruitment process undertaken by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES). Applicants should be aware that the selection process is very competitive, thorough and time consuming.***

***DFES is committed to building a diverse workforce and strongly encourages women, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds to apply.***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) was established on 1 November 2012 and performs a critical role coordinating emergency services for a range of natural disasters and emergency incidents threatening life and property.

Our Department comprises of more than 1600 operational personnel and corporate staff members. We also have an extensive network of more than 27,000 volunteers engaged in the delivery of services to the community.

We work closely with other agencies such as Western Australia Police and St John Ambulance, helping to coordinate and carry out search and rescue missions on land and at sea, and assist at road and traffic emergencies. Additionally, DFES provides advice on emergency management issues to various local, state and national stakeholders.

Across DFES there is a wide range of experience and skills and our people play an important part in making Western Australia a safer place to live. Together with our emergency management partners, we are responsible for delivering emergency management services for the largest jurisdiction in Australia, with a population of more than 2.5 million.

We operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week, on land, in the air and by sea across the vast 2.5 million square kilometers of our great state.

## **OUR VISION, PURPOSE AND VALUES**

### **Vision**

All Western Australians working together for a safer state.

### **Purpose**

To achieve a safer Western Australia by enabling and protecting the community before, during and after emergencies.

### **Values**

- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Trust
- Commitment

## **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

DFES actively encourages people from diverse backgrounds to apply for the position of firefighter. This includes, but is not limited to women, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. The diversity of our workforce is essential for the growth of our organisation as well as ensuring DFES better reflect the community we serve.

DFES understands the importance of creating a safe and inclusive environment for all employees and with fire stations being a home away from home, privacy is necessary. All new DFES fire stations are built with individual sleeping quarters to provide firefighters with equal space and privacy. Existing fire stations with shared sleeping quarters have been modified with privacy screens and all stations are equipped with lockable, gender neutral, toilet and shower areas to ensure privacy for all individuals and to accommodate for future growth.

## THE ROLE OF A FIREFIGHTER

A firefighter works as a member of a cohesive and cooperative team, whether involved in emergency response or work associated with maintaining readiness or community safety activities.

A firefighter directly participates in emergency incidents to assist and safeguard people, property and/or the environment including responding to fires, vehicle accidents, rescues and other emergencies. A firefighter must always be physically fit and capable of responding to emergency calls and rescuing personnel from life threatening situations. They must be capable of a rapid physical response, which in the case of a property fire with life involvement would include donning personal protective clothing and breathing apparatus, dragging a line of hose and performing a search and rescue operation. They are required to work in awkward positions, often under pressure.

A firefighter must be able to operate vehicles and equipment in emergency and non-emergency situations. They are required to liaise with other agencies, including emergency service personnel, and communicate with members of the public and people under duress.

### A firefighter also;

- Participates in community education programs and community centred emergency management activities;
- Carries out or assists with inspection of properties for compliance with building codes and fire safety rules, including risk assessments;
- Contributes to environmental care through appropriate activities including bushfire mitigation strategies; and
- Participates in drills, physical training, servicing hydrants, domestic duties and vehicle checks.

Firefighters work a rotating shift work pattern, being two dayshifts 0800 – 1800, followed by two nightshifts 1800 - 0800, followed by a four-day rest period.

## ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES

To become a Firefighter, there are several essential prerequisites that must be met. Originals or certified copies of **ALL** these prerequisites **MUST** be provided to DFES at various stages of the recruitment process. If you have not obtained the pre-requisites within the outlined timeframe, you will be unable to continue through the process and will be deemed unsuitable.

Upon application, you must provide evidence of the following **four (4) prerequisites**:




1. Australian citizenship (birth certificate or current passport) or Permanent Residency for Australia as defined in the *Migration Act 1958* or a Special Category Visa Holder (New Zealand citizen)
2. Current Provide First Aid Certificate (Competency HLTAID003 or HLTAID011) \*
3. Current C Class unrestricted driver's licence
4. Response to Written Task (Two questions addressed strictly within a one-page document)

***These four (4) documents must be provided in your initial application or you will be ineligible to continue. Older competencies for the Provide First Aid Certificate will not be accepted. DFES do not provide Recognition of Prior Learning through this process so each applicant must provide evidence of the exact code above. Higher qualifications will not be accepted.***

When requested during the selection process, you must provide evidence of the following:

1. Current Western Australian or National Heavy Rigid (synchromesh gear box) driver's licence
2. Current Advanced First Aid Certificate (HLTAID006 or HLTAID014) \*
3. Current Advanced Resuscitation Certification (HLTAID007 or HLTAID015) \*
4. Current Australian National Police Certificate
5. Current Working with Children Check

\*As of the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the following HLT units were superseded and replaced by upgraded units:

Current Units (superseded)			New Units of Competency	
HLTAID003	Provide first aid		HLTAID011	Provide First Aid
HLTAID006	Provide advanced first aid		HLTAID014	Provide Advanced First Aid
HLTAID007	Provide advanced resuscitation		HLTAID015	Provide advanced resuscitation and oxygen therapy (new first aid pre-requisite)

All training completed on the superseded units will remain valid and recognisable for the following periods:

- HLTAID003 – 3 years from date of accreditation
- HLTAID006 – 3 years from date of accreditation
- HLTAID007 – 3 years from date of accreditation

## FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Stages for the Firefighter Recruitment Process are detailed below:

**STAGE ONE** Online Application

**STAGE TWO** Cognitive Assessment and Assessment of Written Task

**STAGE THREE** Physical Aptitude Tests, Working at Heights and Tunnel Crawl

**STAGE FOUR** Personality Assessment and Speed Interviews

**STAGE FIVE** Final Validations

**STAGE SIX** Offer of Employment

**STAGE SEVEN** Start Training

Details of dates, times and location for each assessment stage will be provided to applicants as they progress through the selection process.

***It is important to note that not all applicants who are successful in each stage will progress to the next stage of assessment. DFES reserves the right to change these stages, including throughout the selection process, with minimal notice.***

## STAGE ONE – ONLINE APPLICATION


When applications are open, this will be advertised on the DFES website, [www.dfes.wa.gov.au](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au), and the WA Government Jobs Board, [www.jobs.wa.gov.au](http://www.jobs.wa.gov.au).

It is important that you attach the following **four (4) documents** to your application:

1. **ESSENTIAL** – Australian citizenship (birth certificate or current passport) or Permanent Residency for Australia as defined in the *Migration Act 1958* or a Special Category Visa Holder (New Zealand citizen)
2. **ESSENTIAL** – Current Provide First Aid Certificate (Competency HLTAID003 or HLTAID011) \*
3. **ESSENTIAL** – Current C Class unrestricted driver's licence
4. **ESSENTIAL** – Response to Written Task (Two questions addressed strictly within a one-page document)

***Failure to attach the four (4) correct documents to your application will result in you being removed from the selection process.***

\*As of the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the following HLT units were superseded and replaced by upgraded units:

Current Units (superseded)			New Units of Competency	
HLTAID003	Provide first aid		HLTAID011	Provide First Aid

All training completed on the superseded units will remain valid and recognisable for the following periods:

- HLTAID003 – 3 years from date of accreditation

## STAGE TWO – COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN TASK

The cognitive assessment is designed to assess your suitability to undertake the academic content of the Trainee Firefighter School and may be comprised of a number of elements. The assessment of written tasks is to gauge your ability to review available information and subsequently present your response in a clear, concise and professional manner.

### Cognitive Assessment

The most common areas of the cognitive assessments include verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, error checking, spatial awareness, mechanical reasoning and diagrammatic reasoning.

### Assessment of Written Task

In the written assessment task, you are required to strictly adhere to a one-page response which addresses aspects of the firefighter success profile.



## **STAGE THREE – PHYSICAL APTITUDE TESTS: BEEP TEST, CIRCUIT, WORKING AT HEIGHTS AND TUNNEL CRAWL**

The following physical aptitude tests measure your ability to meet the physical standards required to undertake the role of Firefighter. Applicant assessment is not based on technique however, all assessments must be completed in a safe manner. The physical aptitude tests are based on physical tasks expected of Firefighters during the course of their duties.

### **Beep Test**

This is a pass or fail assessment.

The Beep Test (also known as Shuttle Run Test) is used to measure an applicant's level of cardiovascular fitness. The required level that applicants must meet is 9.6. Applicants will be stopped once they have reached this level. Applicants who fail to reach 9.6 will be removed from the process.

### **Circuit**

This is a pass or fail assessment.

Following the beep test, applicants will be provided with a minimum 30-minute rest time and then progress to a circuit style of physical assessment (continuous movement from one task to the next) which must be completed in an allocated time frame.

The tasks may include:

1. Simulated Rescue – the applicant, wearing breathing apparatus or weighted vest, will lift or drag an 80kg dummy around a 30m course. Applicants can use an under-arm grip or shoulder strap to complete the drag and must always maintain control of the dummy.
2. Equipment Handling Stage One – the applicant, with the assistance of a firefighter, removes a long extension ladder from the top of the appliance and places it onto the ground. The applicant then moves to another ladder attached to a base plate and underruns it to the vertical position, holds for five seconds before returning it to the ground.
3. Equipment Handling Stage Two – the applicant with the assistance of a firefighter rehouses the long extension ladder.
4. Hose Drag – the applicant must drag a fully charged 40mm hose a total of 180m. The hose length is 30m. The drag is completed in increments (30m, 60m, 60m and 30m) and water is shown for five seconds on three occasions.
5. Heavy Tool Lift – the applicant is required to hold the Lucas Cutters and Spreaders at three different positions at varied heights for 20 seconds each. The heavy tools weigh 19.3kgs and 19.7kgs respectively.

This stage may be conducted in smaller groups. The allocation to groups will be on a pre-determined basis and DFES is unable to consider individual requests.

### **Working at Heights**

This is a pass or fail assessment and is a stand-alone physical aptitude test (separate to from the circuit).

Applicants, dressed in breathing apparatus or weighted vest and harness, climb a long extension ladder to level 2 of a training tower (approximately 10m from ground level), then

continue to level 4 of the tower (approximately 20m from ground level) via the internal ladders. At Level 4, applicants will be required to perform a task before returning to level 2 via internal ladders then onto the long extension ladder and descend to ground level.

### **Tunnel Crawl**

This is a pass or fail assessment and is a stand-alone physical aptitude test (separate to from the circuit).

Applicants, wearing breathing apparatus and a frosted mask, must navigate a series of tunnels and obstacles. This assessment must be completed in 10 minutes and a task must be completed correctly.

***DFES reserves the right to modify any or all elements of the physical aptitude tests, including throughout the selection process, with minimal notice.***

## **STAGE FOUR – PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT AND SPEED INTERVIEWS**

The personality assessments are designed to assess your suitability to the competencies outlined in the firefighter success profile and your ability to deal with the subsequent demands of the job.

The speed interviews involve small groups of applicants being interviewed and assessed by panel members in a single session. The interview questions are designed to assess applicant's behaviours, competencies and experiences.

### **Personality Assessment**

The personality assessment is used to ascertain your suitability to the role of a Firefighter based on your personal traits and preferences, by exploring several different behavioural dimensions.

### **Speed Interviews**

The speed interviews require applicants to sit down one-on-one with an assessor and answer interview style questions. Applicants will rotate assessors every 10 minutes, a total of four times.

## **STAGE FIVE - VALIDATIONS**

In some of the assessments listed below, applicants will be required to meet with and be subject to assessment and interaction with external providers to DFES.

The final validations ensure applicants are suitable for employment as a Firefighter.

### **Panel Interview**

The panel interview is in front of a panel of four members, which may include operational DFES personnel, non-operational DFES personnel and external consultants. You must provide your CV prior to the panel interview.

### **Physical Workplace Capacity Assessment**

The Physical Workplace Capacity Assessment (PWCA) is designed to simulate tasks performed by Firefighters. Applicants are required to perform the tasks multiple times. It provides a realistic assessment of the applicants' functional mobility (e.g. stable shoulders under load, spine flexion etc.). Applicants will be rated on their ability to complete the test and any potential for increased risk of injury when undertaking firefighting tasks. The

outcome of the PWCA is provided to the medical practitioner and is considered part of your medical assessment.

### Driving Validation

The Driving Validation Assessment is overseen by Driving Instructors from the DFES Training Academy. The assessment will review each applicant's ability to safely handle a heavy rigid vehicle. This assessment is likely to occur at the same time as the Physical Workplace Capacity Assessment.

### Medical Assessment

These examinations, undertaken by a medical practitioner appointed by DFES, are designed to highlight any conditions that would prevent or hinder an applicant from effectively carrying out firefighting duties and which may put the individual, colleagues, or others at risk. The medical practitioner provides DFES with an applicants' suitability for the role of Firefighter based on all the information available to them.

Applicants who do not meet the required standards of any part of the medical examination will not be offered a position as a Firefighter. Where any increased risk of injury or other potential issues is identified, these will be considered - taking into account the nature of the concern and the likelihood of injury or other impact in the short term. While not an exhaustive list, the following points provide information on some questions that DFES receives on a regular basis in relation to medical requirements.

**General Assessment** - Applicants are required to fall within the category of being occupationally, physically and medically fit and free of any disease, disability or impairment that would prevent them from carrying out the duties of a Firefighter. Asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, hearing or eyesight disorders may disqualify applicants.

**Medical History** - Emphasis is placed on an applicant's medical history and the applicant may be questioned closely about specific aspects. Failure to disclose medical history or deliberately providing misleading information will result in applicants being removed from the selection process.

**Colour Vision** - Colour vision tests are performed using the "Ishihara Plate Test." In the event of failure, applicants may be referred for a further test with a specialist in that field.

**Hearing** - Hearing disorders or permanent hearing loss that affects safe performance as a Firefighter may exclude an applicant from selection.

**Drug and Alcohol Screening** - Applicants will be tested for alcohol, amphetamine type substances, benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, cocaine, methadone, and opiates. The tests also check for adulterants, creatine levels and specimen temperature in compliance with the current Australian/New Zealand Drug and Alcohol Testing Standards.

### Referee Checks

All applicants must undergo referee checks. Ensure you have provided contact details, including email addresses, for a minimum of two referees; one of your referees must be your current or immediate past employer (supervisor or manager, not peer). Please ensure you inform your referees that they may be contacted. DFES also reserves the right to seek alternative referees.

## National Police Certificate

Applicants recommended for appointment to the position of Trainee Firefighter will be required to provide a satisfactory National Police Certificate prior to being offered a position as a Trainee Firefighter. This may be asked for earlier in the process if decided by DFES.

## Criminal Records

A criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant from the selection process. Generally, single, non-recent, petty offences do not disqualify an applicant. Multiple offences, sex offences, violence, dishonesty and habitual theft may disqualify an applicant. If rejection of an applicant is considered purely because of a criminal record, they will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter before a final decision is made.

## Investigations, Suspensions from Employment and Pending Criminal Charges

Applicants will be required to provide information as to whether they are under investigation for any matter or are suspended from employment or volunteering organisations. Applicants will similarly be required to provide information as to whether they have had any legal proceedings against them or whether they are subject to any pending criminal charges, both nationally and internationally. It is important to note that if an applicant was subject to a disciplinary investigation with the WA public sector and either leaves the sector or is employed by another agency, the investigation may continue, and this may impact on future employment.

Declarations associated with the above will not automatically disqualify an applicant from the selection process. If rejection of an applicant is considered appropriate based on the information provided in a declaration, they will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter before a final decision is made.

## Working with Children Check

Applicants are required to obtain a Working with Children Check upon receiving a formal offer of employment as a Trainee Firefighter.

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment criteria below have been taken from the Firefighter job description form and this will be used, in conjunction with other criteria aligned to the DFES Values and Behaviours and the DFES Firefighter Profile, to determine which applicants will be selected for employment. Applicants will be assessed in a variety of formats throughout the recruitment process, including:

- High level of physical fitness with no medical conditions that may inhibit performance as a Firefighter.
- Ability to work effectively as a team member in workplace or community settings.
- Demonstrated problem solving ability, including the capacity to learn and follow instructions.
- Good written, oral and interpersonal communication skills.
- Demonstrated understanding of DFES and the role of a career firefighter within the WA community.
- Ability to cope with difficult and stressful circumstances.

Additionally, applicants will be assessed on the competencies below, taken from the Firefighter Success Profile:

- Adapts to the team
- Builds relationships and establishes rapport

- Achieves goals and work tasks
- Demonstrates integrity
- Copes with pressure and setbacks
- Adapts to change
- Follows directions and procedures
- Focus on personal and professional development
- Innovative

## **TRAINEE FIREFIGHTER SCHOOL**

Successful applicants may be offered a place as a Trainee Firefighter in a Trainee Firefighter School. The training school is a fixed-term, paid, intensive training program of 20 weeks duration (plus an induction week) at the WA Fire and Emergency Services Academy located at Forrestfield. This school is not a live-in program and trainees are required to arrange their own accommodation where necessary. The school is designed to train recruits in the following areas:

- Breathing Apparatus
- Fire Prevention and Fire Safety Awareness
- Communication and Teamwork
- Firefighting Skills
- Practices and Procedures
- Driving
- Specialist Equipment
- Rescue Awareness (Road, Confined Space, Urban)
- Hydrants and Extinguishers
- Radio Procedures and Signals
- Ropes and Knots and Hose Layouts
- Hazardous Materials

The majority of the training is conducted at the Academy, with excursions to other areas when required. The hours of duty at the school are generally Monday to Friday between 0700 and 1700; however, trainees may be required to work weekends and/or evenings, often with little notice. Therefore, it is advised that you clear your schedule over this period, including participation in team sports and other non-essential major commitments you may have.

Upon graduation from the school, a trainee firefighter has gained the necessary competencies to undertake the role of a Firefighter. It is at this stage that appointment to the position of Firefighter may be offered. Failure to complete the school and graduate will result in employment being terminated. Additionally, other circumstances may result in DFES not offering a position and therefore the employment contract would cease.

## **EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS**

### **Shift Work Pattern**

Firefighters work a cycle of four days on duty followed by four days of rest period. This amounts to an average of 42 hours per week and consists of two 10-hour dayshifts (0800 to 1800) followed by two 14-hour nightshifts (1800 to 0800). Firefighters are paid for 40 hours per week with the additional two (2) hours per week accruing as additional annual leave.

## Superannuation

Membership of the Fire and Emergency Services Superannuation Fund (FESSuper) is compulsory for Firefighters. FESSuper is a Defined Benefit Fund, designed to provide a lump sum benefit based on the member's period of service, final average salary, and accrual rate (currently 18%). Members are required to contribute 6.25% of their gross salary per week with DFES contributing 11.75%. Salary sacrificing of the employee contribution is available. For further information regarding the FESSuper Fund, please visit [www.fessuper.com.au](http://www.fessuper.com.au) or call them on (08) 9382 8444.

## Annual Leave

Shift staff accrue 56 calendar days of annual leave per annum taken on a roster of 32 calendar days every 208-day cycle. As the leave is rostered, there is minimal opportunity to change the leave a Firefighter is allocated.

## Long Service Leave

13 weeks accrued after the first 10 years of service and every seven years thereafter. This leave is also taken in accordance with a roster.

## Public Holidays and Weekends

Firefighters rostered on shift on public holidays and weekends do not receive time off in lieu or additional pay. The Firefighter rate of pay incorporates loadings for this work.

## Personal Leave (For Illness, Injury, Carers Leave etc.)

You will receive a total of 126 hours per annum (16.8 hours per annum non-cumulative) in Personal Leave. Cumulative credits not used during the year are carried forward into the next year. Evidence is required for more than five days in any calendar year or more than two consecutive days.

## Overtime

Overtime is payable for any time worked outside your ordinary rostered hours. Additional allowances for meals and travel may also apply in some instances.

## Firefighter Development Program

Once you have graduated from Trainee Firefighter School and have been promoted to the rank of 5<sup>th</sup> Class Firefighter, you will commence the compulsory five-year Firefighter Development Program (FDP). As you progress through the FDP and obtain the required practical experience and theoretical knowledge, you will be promoted through the ranks up to 1<sup>st</sup> Class Firefighter, then Senior Firefighter.

## Promotional Opportunities

DFES offers equal opportunities for all staff. Career progression is offered to all firefighters and all applicants are selected on merit.

Once firefighters have completed their mandatory five-year Firefighter Development Program, they have obtained all the necessary competencies to be considered for other opportunities. This includes promotion to Station Officer and higher, with further extensive training provided. There are also opportunities to work in more specialist areas including training, state operations, rescue, and many more. The rank structure is included below in the Rates of Pay.

## Current Firefighter Rates of Pay (Inclusive of Allowances)

Classification	Weekly	Yearly
Trainee	\$1,401.79	\$73,126.71
5 <sup>th</sup> Class Firefighter	\$1,526.79	\$79,647.55
4 <sup>th</sup> Class Firefighter	\$1,558.06	\$81,278.80
3 <sup>rd</sup> Class Firefighter	\$1,636.23	\$85,356.67
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Firefighter	\$1,683.11	\$87,802.24
1 <sup>st</sup> Class Firefighter	\$1,839.41	\$95,955.89
Senior Firefighter	\$1,917.57	\$100,033.24
Station Officer 1	\$2,152.03	\$112,264.23
Station Officer 2	\$2,230.16	\$116,340.01
Area Officer*	\$2,426.34	\$126,574.07
Instructor*	Various	
District Officer	\$2,622.48	\$136,806.04
Superintendent	\$2,807.42	\$146,453.74
Chief Superintendent	\$3,003.93	\$156,705.02

\*The Area Officer and Instructor classifications do not form part of the rank structure but are other opportunities available to FRS personnel under the WA Fire Service EBA.

There are higher ranks outside the EBA, including Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner.

Further information regarding rates of pay and other terms and conditions can be found in the Western Australian Fire Service Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2017, available on the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission website, [www.wairc.wa.gov.au](http://www.wairc.wa.gov.au).

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Applications must be made via the DFES website or [jobs.wa.gov.au](http://jobs.wa.gov.au). The recruitment process is open for a short period of time. Applications that proceed through the selection process will be assessed on an as needs basis and may be subject to departmental priorities.

Assessment occurs throughout all stages of the recruitment process. Any observation of discriminatory behaviour, harassment, racial bias, inappropriate language, or lack of respect, may result in you being removed from the process immediately.

### Communication During Recruitment

Communication to applicants will occur by email so please ensure you regularly check your email to give you the greatest opportunity to be available for each assessment stage. Further, you will be required to book in your own session times and dates. Therefore, the earlier you book, the greater opportunity you have to select your desired time.

Additionally, during an active recruitment process, it may be more difficult to contact Firefighter Recruitment, therefore, if you leave a telephone message or email, please allow at least 48 hours for a response, with additional time over weekends and public holidays.

### Exceptional Circumstances

Due to the large number of applicants undertaking the process, applicants must be able to attend each stage at specific dates and times. You must be available for all stages throughout the selection process and failure to arrive to a test session or a stage will result in you no longer be considered.

If you are scheduled for a test and cannot make it, you may be able to re-book for a later date depending if there is a place available for you. If there is not, no special considerations will be made, you will no longer be considered and will be removed from the process.