

Firefighters help protect the public against fire and danger by rapidly responding to a variety of emergency situations. They are frequently the first emergency personnel at the scene of an accident or medical emergency and may be called upon to put out a fire, treat injuries, or perform other vital functions. During duty hours, firefighters must be prepared to respond immediately to a fire or any other emergency that arises. Because fighting fires is dangerous and complex, it requires organization and teamwork. At every emergency scene, firefighters perform specific duties assigned by a superior officer. At fires, they connect hoses to hydrants, operate a pump, and position ladders to deliver water to the fire. They also rescue victims and administer emergency medical aid as needed, ventilate smoke-filled areas, and attempt to salvage the contents of buildings. Their duties may change several times while the company is in action. Sometimes they remain at the site of a disaster for days at a time, rescuing trapped survivors and assisting with medical treatment.

Firefighters responsibilities may include emergency medical services. In fact, most calls to which firefighters respond involve medical emergencies, and about half of all fire departments provide ambulance service for victims. Firefighters receive training in emergency medical procedures, and many fire departments require them to be certified as **emergency medical technicians**. In addition, some firefighters work in hazardous materials units that are trained for the control, prevention, and cleanup of oil spills, etc.

Most fire departments have a fire prevention division, usually headed by a **Fire Marshall** and staffed by **Fire Inspectors**. Workers in this division conduct inspections of structures to prevent fires and ensure fire code compliance. Some firefighters become **Fire Investigators**, who determine the origin and causes of fires. **Forest Fire Inspectors** and **Prevention Specialists** spot fires from watchtowers and report their findings to headquarters by telephone or radio. **Forest Rangers** patrol to ensure travelers and campers comply with fire regulations. Elite firefighters, called **Smoke Jumpers**, parachute from airplanes to reach otherwise inaccessible areas.

Salary Information:

- Fire Protection Technology, Associate in Applied Science
\$49,200 Median Salary (Follow-up Study, Monroe Community College Graduates, 2008)
- Fire Fighter:
\$45,700 Median Salary (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008)
- **Fire Fighters for the Rochester, NY area:**
\$56,300 Median Salary Range (Career One Stop, 2008)

[*Salary varies based on education/advanced degree, work-experience & setting/location]

Additional Information:

- International Association of Firefighters: www.iaff.org
- NYS Office of Fire and Prevention Control:
www.dos.state.ny.us/fire/firewww.html

