



On-Call Firefighter Candidate Information Pack



Updated Jan 2024

Making
**SOUTH
YORKSHIRE
SAFER &
STRONGER**



**South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE**

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INTRODUCTION

What is an On-Call Firefighter?

An 'On-Call' Firefighter with South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue (SYFR) responds to the same fire and emergency calls using the same fire engines and equipment as a full-time Firefighter. The only difference is that On-Call Firefighters are on-call at home or at work rather than permanently based at a fire station.

Also known as a Retained Firefighter or RDS Firefighter (Retained Duty System), the role offers flexible working hours and may suit people with childcare commitments and other responsibilities.

As an On-Call Firefighter you would be paid a retaining fee along with an additional payment for every incident you attend. You would also be required to attend for training each week for which a payment is also made.

How does it work?

When an emergency call comes into Control, a message is sent to you via an alerter. Once your alerter is activated you have to reach the Retained Duty System (RDS) station within five minutes. You can travel by foot, car or bike but you must travel safely and at normal road speeds.

Being an On-Call Firefighter is like having a part-time job; you commit to certain hours and you get paid for them.

Could I be an On-Call Firefighter?

We are committed to cultivating a diverse and inclusive workplace where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives and talents. We warmly welcome applications from individuals who identify with underrepresented groups within our workforce, including individuals from Minority Ethnic backgrounds, women, those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender (LGBT+), and individuals with disabilities. In addition, we will look to support anyone who requires Part Time/Job share working hours. We believe that a diverse workforce leads to innovation, creativity, and better decision-making, and we are dedicated to creating an environment where everyone can thrive.

SYFR currently has On-Call Firefighters from a wide range of backgrounds and employment situations, including self-employed people, people with jobs at local businesses and people who are on-call during daytime hours while their children are at school.

SYFR has On-Call Firefighters at the following stations:

- Askern (DN6 0JX)
- Birley (S20 5FA)
- Cudworth (S71 5SA)
- Dearne (S63 5DN)

- Penistone (S36 6HN)
- Rossington (DN11 0PQ)
- Stocksbridge (S36 1DH)

You should refer to our website <http://www.syfire.gov.uk/find-a-job/firefighter-recruitment/> for details about our current vacancies and availability requirements.

How do I know if I can apply to become an On-Call Firefighter?

To be considered for an On-Call Firefighter position, you must:

- be eligible to work in the United Kingdom
- be 18 years of age by the time your training course starts
- be able to attend one of the above Fire Stations within 5 minutes, travelling at normal road speeds (full postcodes are above)
- be physically fit to meet the requirements of the role and medical examination
- be comfortable working at height, in confined spaces and around water;
- be able to demonstrate reading, writing and numerical skills to meet the requirements of the role
- You must also be committed to maintaining and developing new skills, and studying on top of your normal working days.

What will be expected from me as an On-Call Firefighter?

- to provide an agreed level of availability (see 'what does availability mean')
- to respond to all emergency calls whilst on call within five minutes (see 'what is the response time')
- to attend the fire station for weekly drill nights
- to carry out maintenance of equipment and appliances
- to maintain an appropriate level of physical fitness
- to maintain competency through attending training sessions
- to undertake a development programme to demonstrate competence in the role of a Firefighter

What is the response time?

When you are on-call (available to respond to emergency calls) you must be able to reach the RDS fire station and be in a position to turn out on the appliance, in full fire kit, within five minutes of your alerter sounding. The five minute response time is applicable for responding from home, work or from any other location during the period that you are on-call for.

What does 'availability' mean?

You will be required to state the times around your current commitments that you would be 'available' to respond to emergency calls. When determining your hours of availability you need to think carefully about your individual situation and the hours that you are able to commit. This can include periods of time that you are at rest or times when you are out and about (within five minutes of the RDS fire station) not just when you are sat at home.

Your availability needs to be realistically based around your own commitments and you must ensure that you get sufficient rest periods under current legislation (Working Time Directive).

An example of how this might work is shown below:

You drop your children off at school and at 08:45 and pick them up again at 15:00 Monday to Friday, therefore your availability might be:

	00 01	01 02	02 03	03 04	04 05	05 06	06 07	07 08	08 09	09 10	10 11	11 12	12 13	13 14	14 15	15 16	16 17	17 18	18 19	19 20	20 21	21 22	22 23	23 24	Total
M										1	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1	11
T										1	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1	11
W										1	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1	11
T										1	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1	11
F										1	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1	11
S						1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19
S						1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19
																									93

What you can expect from us:

- a wide range of specialist and general training opportunities
- personal development including attending training and taking role specific qualifications
- payment for the hours of availability you give, for call outs and for other duties carried out on station
- the opportunity to join the Firefighters pension scheme

Career Opportunities

SYFR is committed to the continued development of all staff; career progression is dependent upon you demonstrating your competence with our development programme. In addition to the development opportunities on offer, prior learning and previous qualifications will be acknowledged, therefore, existing skills and experience will be evaluated and taken into consideration as part of your future career development.

Pension

On appointment to the Fire Service you will be automatically enrolled into the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015.

Annual Leave

You will get four weeks annual leave, rising to five weeks after five complete years of service.

What payments will I receive?

Retainer Fee

An On-Call Firefighter receives an Annual Retainer based on the number of hours of Availability provided'. If you provide cover for 120 hours or more per week you will receive 100% of the retainer fee.

Disturbance Fee

You are entitled to an attendance fee if you attend the fire station in response to your alerter but are not required to ride as a crew member.

Work activity

When you form part of the crew attending an emergency incident you will be paid in accordance with the relevant hourly rate. You will also receive payment at the appropriate hourly rate for:

- attending our trainee course
- when you attend for training
- when carrying out standard tests
- maintenance of equipment and station
- attending fetes and galas

The current levels of payment are shown below (correct as at July 2023):

	100% Retainer Fee (Per annum pro rata for hours provided)	Hourly rate	Disturbance fee
Trainee	£2,718	£12.41	£4.77
Development	£2,831	£12.93	£4.77
Competent	£3,623	£16.54	£4.77

You will be paid at trainee rate whilst completing your initial recruit training. Once you have completed the required training satisfactorily you will be paid at development rate. On completion of your development programme (when you have been deemed competent in role) you will be paid at the competent rate of pay.

RECRUITMENT STAGES

ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT PROCESS – OPENING FEBRUARY 2024			
ACTIVITY			DATES
Application	Stage 1	Realistic Job Preview and Eligibility Questions (online).	Opens 1 st February 2024 Closes 29th February 2024
		Station Visit & Initial Interest Form	
Online Tests	Stage 2	Phase 1 - Behavioural Styles Questionnaire	To be completed online during March & April 2024 - at home
		Phase 2 - Situational Judgement Test	
		Phase 3 – Verbal, Numerical & Mechanical Reasoning Tests	
Physical Tests	Stage 3	Fitness Test plus verification of reasoning tests	April 2024 – on station
	Stage 4	Practical Testing	Sat 18th May 2024 at Training Centre, Handsworth
Interview	Stage 5	Interview	Wed 5th June 2024 & Tues 11th June 2024
Course Experience Day	Stage 6	Course Experience Day	Sun 23rd June 2024
Medical & Pre-employment Checks	Stage 7	Medical, Employment Checks and Basic Disclosure	6th & 7th July 2024 – at Central Headquarters – Eyre Street, Sheffield
Employment	Additional dates relating to the start of employment & initial training will be circulated to the successful applicants. The intended start date for employment is 1st September 2024.		

Please note: You **MUST** be available for all of the above stages in order to be considered for this role.

More detail on each of the stages outlined above is available in the Candidate Information Pack on the website.

Unfortunately, if you are unavailable it may not be possible to progress your application. If you are unavailable on a particular date, please notify us by email as soon as possible to firefighterrecruitment@syfire.gov.uk and we will try to accommodate your needs where possible.

Application

To become an On-Call Firefighter you are required to undertake a series of tests designed to assess your suitability for the role.

The first step is to apply on the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue website (link below). Recruitment opens every February and September. You will be contacted during these months and invited to come to station for a station visit.

<https://www.syfire.gov.uk/find-a-job/register-your-interest/>

Station Visit and Initial Interest Form

You will be invited to attend your local station to meet the crew and discuss the role of an 'On-call Firefighter'. This is the opportunity for both the Watch Manager and yourself to discuss whether the role is suitable for you. This is an informal chat and will involve discussing your availability, your response time to station, what would be expected and also allowing you to ask any questions you may have.

If both you and the Watch Manager are happy, an initial interest form will be completed and forwarded to People Team to progress with the recruitment process. Along with your personal details, your initial interest form will detail what 'availability' you are able to provide. We will use this information to determine your suitability for the station you have applied for.

Realistic Job Preview and Eligibility Questions (online)

Being a firefighter is challenging and can involve a number of situations not commonly found in other jobs. These questions will help you decide whether you are likely to enjoy working as a firefighter.

The Eligibility Questions allow us to establish whether you are eligible to apply to become An On-call Firefighter with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue. If you leave the eligibility screens without submitting your details this information will not be saved.

As part of this stage you will be asked to declare any unspent criminal convictions. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 you are obliged to declare any unspent convictions or criminal proceedings pending as these may bar you from working as a Firefighter. This will be checked before an offer of employment is made. Failure to declare any unspent conviction(s) will result in your application being withdrawn.

An email link to the questions will be sent to your email address to be completed at home before you can move onto the stage.

Psychometric Tests (online)

The purpose of this stage is to examine key qualities you need to work in the role of a firefighter. These assessments are designed to give all candidates a fair chance to show that they have the skills, abilities and personal qualities important for success as a firefighter.

The psychometric tests include multiple choice ability tests. These tests relate to the role of a Firefighter and assess your ability to work with numbers, solve problems as well as verbal and mechanical questions. Please be aware that the below details are an indication of the type of psychometric tests undertaken but may be subject to change in future recruitment processes.

The psychometric tests will run in three phases and you will be required to pass each assessment before being invited by email to complete the next

Phase 1 and Phase 2 can be completed at home:

Phase 1	Behavioural Style Questionnaire	The Behavioural Styles Questionnaire is a questionnaire about a candidate's typical behaviours and the values they emphasise at work. Candidates must rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements about their working style.
Phase 2	Situational Judgment Test	In this test you will be presented with the type of situations you could face in the role of a Firefighter and will be asked how you think you should react to each situation. This is not a timed test but should take between 20 and 30 minutes.

The following 3 tests that make up Phase 3 can be completed at home, although you will be required to do shorter verification tests on station:

Phase 3	Verbal Reasoning	This test is designed to measure your ability to interpret and make sense of written information. This is a timed test and you will have 12 minutes to complete the questions.
	Numerical Reasoning	Firefighters need to be able to make basic mathematical calculations. You will be presented with a number of scenarios that will show numerical information in a variety of formats from tables to graphs. This is a timed test and you will have 15 minutes to complete the questions.
	Mechanical Reasoning	Questions will comprise images and contain very little text. Candidates will be required to apply cognitive reasoning to mechanical, physical and practical concepts in order to solve related problems. This is a timed test and you will have 17 minutes to complete the questions

You can prepare for the reasoning tests by following the links listed in the preparation section.

Reasonable Adjustments

Before undertaking the psychometric tests you will be asked if you require reasonable adjustments to complete the timed tests, for example if you are dyslexic. If the answer to this question is yes you will be prompted to contact us with information of the adjustments you require and if applicable, a copy of your dyslexia report.

Pre-fitness Test Questionnaire

Once you have successfully passed the initial sift you will be required to complete: A Pre-fitness Test Questionnaire

This will be kept confidential and reviewed by our Occupational Health team who will contact you, if required, to discuss any issues or concerns ahead of the Practical Testing.

Fitness Testing

You will be required to pass a fitness test on station. This will be either the Chester walk test or a bleep test to level 8.7. If you are unsuccessful you will be invited back to retake the test within 4 weeks from a failed test. More information on the tests and how to prepare are situated in the preparation section.

Practical Tests

These job-related assessments consist of six different tests which will assess your fitness and practical ability to handle fire service equipment. The tests are designed to simulate the tasks carried out in the training course and then in the role of Firefighter. Full instruction is given on the day and you will be given protective clothing to wear.

Fireground Fitness Test	<p>This is a test of aerobic fitness, stamina, upper and lower body strength (Including grip strength) and co-ordination. It includes an equipment carry, casualty evacuation with a Breathing Apparatus set on your back and a hose carry. Full details including an informational video will be provided on the day and verbal instruction will be provided throughout the test from the safety officer.</p> <p>The time limit on this test is 11 minutes, 11 seconds.</p> <p>The Fireground Fitness test will be the first test each candidate will take during their testing session.</p>
Ladder Extension	<p>This is a 2-part test of upper body and grip strength, carried out on a ladder simulator. The 1st test is to simulate fully extending a 10.5m ladder weighing approx. 28kg. The 2nd test is to simulate lowering a 13.5m ladder from full extension to ground level weighing approx. 42kg. Each test must be carried out in one continuous movement.</p>
Ladder Climb	<p>This is a physical test of confidence and the ability to follow instructions. You will ascend a 13.5 metre (45 foot) fire service ladder to a point two thirds of the full working height, take a leg lock and remove your hands from the ladder and look down to the assessor to identify a symbol placed flat on the ground at the foot of the ladder. You will be assisted if necessary by the safety officer.</p>
Enclosed Space	<p>This is a test of confidence, agility and identification of claustrophobic tendencies. Wearing a breathing apparatus facemask, you will negotiate a crawl and walkway with clear vision. You will then retrace your steps wearing a mask that obscures your vision. This is a timed exercise. You will be assisted if necessary by the safety officer.</p>
Equipment Assembly	<p>This is a test of manual dexterity. You must assemble and then disassemble a piece of equipment following a demonstration by the safety officer.</p>
Ladder Lift	<p>This is a test of upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. You will raise the bar of a ladder lift simulator to a height of 190cm (6 foot) with 15 kg of weight placed on the simulator cradle, giving a total lift load of 24 kg (approx. 3½ stone). You will be assisted if necessary by the safety officer.</p>

Interview

This will be your opportunity to show to the interview panel how your skills and attributes contribute to your suitability for the role of a Firefighter. As with any interview, you should expect to be asked about your knowledge of both the role and the organisation. This will be your opportunity to show the interview panel how your skills and attributes contribute to your suitability for the role of a Firefighter.

You will be asked questions relating to the NFCC Leadership Framework, there will be at least one scenario based question.

Course Experience Day

The purpose of the Course Experience Day is see how you perform in a simulated recruit course environment at our Training Centre. The day itself will include:

- Physical exercises e.g. hose running, ladder lifts, ladder carry, sewer crawl
- Practical exercises e.g team building tasks using Fire Service equipment.

The Course Experience Day is the final stage of the competitive selection process. It also provides you with the opportunity to experience life as a Trainee Firefighter and for you to see if it is the right fit for yourself

Medical, References, Employment Checks, DBS Check & Kit Measurements

After successfully completing all of the above, candidates will be selected for employment subject to the completion of satisfactory pre-employment checks.

The pre-employment checks are as below and in line with HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS):

- Identity Check.
- Right to Work in UK (Immigration Check).
- Employment History & References (including checks on any significant periods of 6 months or more spent outside of the UK within the last 3 years)
- Satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check (including spent and unspent convictions and cautions, relevant police intelligence and adult barred list information).
-

In addition to the requirements of the BPSS, SYFR also undertake the following additional pre-employment checks as part of our standard checks.

- Substance misuse test
- Pre-employment health questionnaire and medical assessment &/or health surveillance as required.
- Verification Fitness Test (within 6 weeks of start date).

Medical

The medical appointment at our headquarters will incorporate:

- A review of your medical questionnaire (signed by your GP and if relevant other organizations e.g. the Armed Forces and Sports Clubs)
- An examination with our medical officer who will assess your fitness for the role This will include further medical testing should any medical problems be detected
- A series of screening tests with our occupational health nurse including:
 - Hearing test
 - Lung function

- Blood pressure
 - Vision
 - Weight and height
 - Substance misuse and alcohol testing
-
- A comprehensive eyesight test carried out by a qualified optometrist

Further information on the medical specifics can be found in our Frequently Asked Questions on our website.

References

Reference requests will be sent for you, prior to your medical. You will need to supply details of your current and previous employer(s) for references to be obtained.

Employment Checks

Eligibility to work in UK – in line with section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 all employers in the UK have to make basic checks on everyone they employ. Therefore you will be required to bring to your medical relevant documents to confirm your eligibility to work in the UK, such as a passport.

DBS Check

As a condition of the employment contract you are required to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check (including spent and unspent convictions and cautions, relevant police intelligence and adult barred list information).

A DBS result which identifies a criminal conviction will be assessed on a case by case basis, but could lead to your offer of employment being withdrawn.

Please note, it is your responsibility to be sure of the status of any prior conviction(s). If your disclosure certificate highlights any conviction(s) that you have not declared to us on your application, your offer of employment may be withdrawn.

Kit Measurements

You will need to provide your measurements to enable us to order your uniform and fire kit.

Subject to selected candidates satisfactorily completing all of the above, formal offers of employment will be made.

Kitting out and Induction

An appointment will be made you to collect your uniform and Fire Kit and you will be invited to attend an induction at your On-call station.

TRAINING

Once a formal offer of employment has been offered and accepted, you will be invited to start your initial recruit training.

To fit around candidate's work commitments the majority of initial training will be done weekend training sessions. Initial training will consist of a seven day residential course and SYFRS training and development centre (TDC). This training will include; pumps, ladders, knots and lines and basic firefighting skills.

After the initial training you will be required to complete three safety critical courses of; Breathing Apparatus (Phase A, B & Fire Tactics), Working and Height and Road Traffic Collision (RTC). These are run throughout the year (dates for 2024 are listed below). During your probation period you will be expected to complete the additional following courses:

- Immediate Emergency Care (IEC)
- Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)
- IOSH Working Safely
- Community Safety (CS)
- Business Fire Safety (BFS)

Firefighter training is physically demanding and requires good levels of stamina and upper body strength. You must ensure you maintain the required fitness levels to safely participate in the training courses. Further guidance on maintaining firefighter fitness is available on website.

Initial Training Courses at TDC (2024)

See table on following page:

Course	Duration	Dates
IOSH	1 Day	1 st September 2024
Pumps and Ladders	7 Days	2 nd to 8 th September 2024
Immediate Emergency Care	4 Days	21 st , 22 nd , 28 th , 29 th September 2024
Road Traffic Collision	5 Days	5 th , 6 th , 12 th , 13 th , 14 th October 2024
Working at Height	3 Days	25 th to 27 th October 2024
Breathing Apparatus Phase A	5 Days	2 nd to 6 th November 2024
Breathing Apparatus Phase B	3 Days	14 th to 16 th November 2024
Breathing Apparatus Fire Tactics	5 Days	23 rd to 27 th November 2024
High Rise	1 Day	7 th December 2024
Hazardous Materials	1 Day	8 th December 2024
Business Fire Safety	1 Day	14 th December 2024
Community Safety	1 Day	15 th December 2024

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Employer Notification

Applicants should inform their primary employer of their intention to join the Service as an On-call Firefighter. Employers should be informed of the positive elements to their organisation that an On-Call Firefighter can offer such as:

- increased knowledge of fire and safety matters
- specialist qualifications, e.g. first aid, LGV, BA, etc
- good publicity for the company
- a good standard of physical fitness
- the ability to work together well in team environments
- the ability to communicate fast and accurately
- the ability to take decisions under stress, to follow instructions and to be reliable

It is important that the employer is also made aware of the following:

- The possibility of the On-call Firefighter being late for work due to being delayed on a call
- The time off required for the Initial Training Courses

Driving and the EC Drivers Hours and Tachograph Rules for Goods Vehicles

The EC Drivers Hours & Tachograph Rules for Goods Vehicles came into effect in April 2007 and exist to ensure the health and safety of mobile workers and drivers of in scope vehicles.

The purpose of the rules is to limit driving time and ensure proper breaks and rest periods are taken so that road traffic collisions are prevented.

The rules apply to certain categories of mobile workers, the most common being drivers of Large Goods Vehicles (LGV) and Passenger Service Vehicles (PSV). These are called in scope vehicles.

The rules particularly apply to On-Call Firefighters as it will impact on the ability of candidates who drive an in scope vehicle during their primary employment to get appropriate rest periods, thus affecting their availability to provide On-Call Firefighter cover.

If you are unsure as to whether you drive an in scope vehicle, you should seek advice from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA).

USEFUL RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

Below is a list of links to guidance, which can help you prepare for becoming a firefighter.

Frequently Asked Questions

https://www.syfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/HR_DM-131247-v4-Firefighter_Recruitment_-_Candidate_FAQs.docx

Fitness

http://www.syfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Firefighter_recruitment_exercise_fitness_and_nutrition_guidance.pdf

Fitness Video Links

[Firefighter Fitness - YouTube](#)

[Firefighter Selection Tests - YouTube](#)

[Firefighter recruitment: a trainee's story - YouTube](#)

[Firefighter recruitment: tips from an instructor - YouTube](#)

Psychometric Tests

https://www.syfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/HR_DM-170956-v4-Online_Recruitment_Stages_-_Information_including_Practice_Tests.docx

Interview

www.syfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/NFCC_Leadership_Framework_Final-1.pdf