

Bedfordshire and Luton Fire & Rescue Service's Retained Duty System has firefighters providing cover at 11 Fire stations throughout the county.

Retained firefighters are skilled men and women who do ordinary jobs and offer evening, daytime or weekend cover. They respond as part of a team to effectively undertake the full range of duties the Fire and Rescue Service respond to. These include property fires, road traffic collisions, chemical spills, animal rescues, floods and storm damage.

Retained Firefighters provide a key role within the community. They undertake home fire safety checks, offering free advice to occupiers on reducing the risk of fire. They also undertake inspections of local industry under the current fire safety legislation.

The role calls for determination, self motivation and above all a desire to serve the community in which they live and/or work.

### **How does it work?**

Firefighters agree to be available to respond for a certain number of hours per week. They carry a pager and must be able to get to the fire station within five minutes of a call during the times they have booked available to cover. Once alerted, they make their way to the station to respond to the incident.

### **Benefits to you, the employer.**

Many retained fire stations are well crewed during the weekends and evening, but not during the day. This can lead to the appliances being unavailable to attend an incident just down the road from the nearest Station. An appliance from another area will always respond but the delay in arriving at the emergency may allow an incident to escalate and may possibly mean the difference between life and death.

### **Allowing your employees to respond during the day will make the difference.**

Firefighters bring transferable skills back to the workplace through the training and experiences they receive. Their work is vital to the safety of people and properties in the area and your support plays a key role in achieving this.

### **Key benefits.**

● **The skills they bring** - Firefighters learn many skills, a lot of which can be useful in any workplace. Firefighters learn to work well in a team, to communicate, take responsibility and use their initiative and keep calm under pressure.

● **Continuous development** - firefighters must maintain and develop their skills.

Employees who are keen to learn and develop are valuable to any organisation.

● **Motivated staff** - Firefighters have to be highly motivated to take on the task and this motivation will help them in everything they do.

● **Committed employees** - being a firefighter takes commitment and responsibility. Committed firefighters are likely to be committed staff in their primary employment.

● **Good publicity** - Promoting your business as caring about its community and supporting its staff can increase the public's perception of your organisation. Equally potential employees will see your commitment to the development of employees.

● **Trained to deal with anything** - firefighters must be able to deal with a whole range of situations. They never quite know what they might find when they respond to an emergency, they are also more likely to be better placed to manage the unexpected in their primary employment.

Although an employee may have to respond at any moment, and may be away for a period of time, the benefits to your

organisation and the community make this worthwhile.

Additionally you will have the satisfaction of knowing that both they and you are supporting something that could really make a difference to people's lives and the local community.

### **Employers Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** What if my employee is out all night at an incident and is unfit for work the next day?

**A:** Firefighters no longer remain at incidents for long periods. It is recognised that extended periods of exertion can lead to accidents through tiredness, fatigue and lack of concentration. It is our policy that crews are relieved after a period of four hours at any incident.

**Q:** If my employee gets called out, how will I know how long he or she will be gone for?

**A:** Each of our vehicles has a mobile phone and your employer is encouraged to use this facility to estimate a return time as soon as they can. In the event of a false alarm, they may be back within 20 minutes

**Q:** If my employee is often on call for business, how would this work?

**A:** They would not be on call with Bedfordshire and Luton Fire & Rescue Service if they were on call with your

company. You, as the primary employer, will always have priority.

### **Employer support**

Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service recognises that on occasions employers may wish to contact us for information, support or reassurance. When appointed your employee will be given contact numbers you can use should you need to contact us.

### **Employers' consent**

If a firefighter is responding from work, they must have the permission of their employer before undertaking retained duties. If an employee is responding outside normal working hours the employer needs to be aware that their employee may, on occasions, be delayed due to operational commitments. They may therefore on rare occasions be late for work.

For further information please contact;  
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## Employers Guide for employees considering undertaking Retained Firefighter Duties

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