



Frequently Asked Questions

ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS

Working together to help
your community



HOW LONG WILL MY EMPLOYEE BE AWAY WHEN CALLED OUT ON DUTY?

Typically, this could be two to three hours per week. Your local Fire Station Manager will be able to give you specific advice. It's a flexible arrangement, depending on the needs of your business. On-Call Firefighters are given the option of choosing the cover they wish to provide.

They could opt for evening, daytime or weekend cover, with full-time cover being 120 hours per week, and in most instances your employee should be able to provide you with their On-Call rota on a weekly basis.

Firefighters working the On-Call system agree to be available for a certain number of hours. They carry

a pager and must be in a position to get to the fire station within five minutes of an emergency call-out during their available hours. Rest assured, however, that your needs and requirements as the primary employer will always have priority.

Fire and Rescue Services are committed to offering On-Call Firefighters flexible contracts and working hours to ensure a healthy work/life balance.

IF MY EMPLOYEE IS CALLED OUT TO ATTEND AN EMERGENCY AM I OBLIGED TO LET THEM GO REGARDLESS OF MY ORGANISATION'S NEEDS?

No. On-Call Firefighters let their Fire and Rescue Service know when they



are available so when an emergency call comes in, only those who have booked in as being available are expected to respond and attend.

WHAT SORT OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT WILL MY STAFF UNDERGO AS PART OF THEIR ROLE AS A FIREFIGHTER?

All firefighters go through a rigorous training and development programme which is provided by their Fire and Rescue Service. They will develop skills in risk management, communication, team working, leadership, self-discipline, first aid, trauma care, health and safety, and much more, and they will bring this training and experience back to their workplace.

HOW LONG WILL MY EMPLOYEE BE REQUIRED TO TAKE TIME AWAY FROM WORK FOR TRAINING?

Firefighters must be well trained if they are going to work safely and effectively in the wide range of operational incidents they have to tackle. Fire and Rescue Services recognise that some On-Call Firefighters might need to take time off from their primary employment to undertake training. Most Fire and Rescue Services will aim to reduce the impact on the primary employer by providing basic training at fire stations on drill nights and during weekends, reducing the time required for training during weekdays.

WHAT IF MY EMPLOYEE GETS INJURED WHILE AT AN INCIDENT?

On-Call Firefighters are trained to a high standard before they are fully operational so this is a rare occurrence. In the event this does happen, the Fire and Rescue Service should have a policy in place for compensating the employee for any loss of earnings after Statutory Sick Pay. Details can be obtained from your Fire and Rescue Service.

ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR ME OR MY BUSINESS OF EMPLOYING AN ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER?

Like all employers Fire and Rescue Services have to comply with current legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Working Time and Road Transport Regulations. Depending on the number of hours they are contracted to their primary employer, On-Call Firefighters may have to sign an Opt-Out agreement under the Working Time Regulations.

If you are a haulage company or your employee drives a truck for work, both you and your employee should be aware of the implications of the EC Drivers' Hours and Tachograph Rules for Goods Vehicles (Regulation 561/2006).

Details of any legislation and its impact can be obtained from your local Fire and Rescue Service.

WHAT BENEFITS DO I GET AS AN EMPLOYER FOR RELEASING A MEMBER OF STAFF TO BE AN ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER?

Many find the biggest reward is the knowledge that their company is undertaking a vital role in protecting the local community. By allowing one of your employees to become an On-Call Firefighter you know you have made a difference every time they respond to an emergency and help save lives.

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