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ACT Fire & Rescue

—
Applicant Information



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Contents

What does ACT Fire & Rescue do?	2
The firefighter role	3
More than fighting fires	3
What makes a successful firefighter?	5
Working for ACT Fire & Rescue	6
Our values and signature behaviours	6
Working arrangements	7
Rostered shiftwork	7
Education and training	8
Recruit training program	8
Ongoing training and development	8
Career development and opportunities	9
Leave arrangements	10
Personal leave	10
Annual leave	10
Paid primary care giver leave	10
Bonding leave	11
Compassionate leave	11
Long service leave	11
Rates of pay	11
Mandatory requirements	12
General requirements	12
Criminal record checks	12
Working with vulnerable people checks	12
Physical Aptitude Testing (PAT)	13
Multi-Stage Fitness (BEEP) Test	13
Recruitment process	14
Overview	14
Outline of selection criteria and duties	16
Selection criteria	16
Duties	16
General enquires	16

What does ACT Fire & Rescue do?

ACT Fire & Rescue (ACTF&R) works to protect life, property and the environment in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

ACTF&R has a long tradition of excellence in the protection of life, property and the environment of the ACT community and surrounding area. ACTF&R is made up of over 370 permanent firefighters, support staff, and over 500 community fire unit (CFU) volunteers.



ACTF&R firefighters demonstrate a commitment to excellence in job performance, including personal and professional development.

We manage and respond to emergencies including

- Structure Fires
- Bush and Grass Fires
- Vehicle Fires
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Automatic Fire Alarms
- Hazardous Material Incidents
- Confined Space Rescues
- Trench Rescues
- Urban Search and Rescue Operations
- Animal Rescues
- Vertical Rescues

We work with other emergency services to provide

- Medical Assist Responses
- Storm Damage Mitigation

The firefighter role

More than fighting fires

Being a firefighter is no ordinary job. The work is varied, challenging and rewarding. In addition to responding to emergencies, a firefighter's role entails a range of functions including:

- Fire prevention and investigation;
- Community education and activities related to safety and prevention, including fire education for children (conducted in pre-schools, kindergartens, primary schools); working with diverse communities to raise awareness, educate and help minimise the impact of fire; and, providing assistance to the elderly, e.g. installation of smoke alarms in homes;
- Ensuring compliance with fire safety regulations during building approvals;
- Carrying out building inspections to prepare risk assessments and pre-incident plans;
- Attendance at fetes and other community events;
- The provision of emergency safety information to specific neighbourhoods or areas;
- Inspecting and assessing potential fire hazards;
- Pre planning for incidents involving specific hazards, risks or events;
- Scrutinising plans for proposed suburban developments to ensure safety of residents from bush and grass fire;
- Undertaking ongoing development and maintenance of skills and knowledge through regular training and study; and
- Cleaning/maintenance of equipment, fire station and appliances. This includes core housekeeping duties such as cleaning the bathroom, kitchen, vacuuming etc.



Firefighters often operate in challenging situations, including when people are injured or deceased.

When attending incidents, firefighters will be required to comfort victims and provide first aid until the arrival of the ACT Ambulance Service (ACTAS). Firefighting is physically and psychologically demanding, especially during major emergencies. It also involves quick thinking, team work and physical and mental endurance.

Generally, career firefighters work in a fire station in a crew supervised by a Station Officer. Several stations are ESA shared facilities with other emergency services. ACTF&R have fire stations strategically located around the ACT to enable quick response to incidents. We also staff an emergency communications centre.

To provide our emergency services on a 24/7 basis ACTF&R has four shifts (known as A, B, C & D Platoons). You will be transferred to a Platoon at a fire station following satisfactory completion of recruit training with future rotation opportunities.

Firefighters are required to maintain good health and physical fitness.



What makes a successful firefighter?

To be a successful firefighter, you need a wide range of skills, knowledge and abilities. ACTF&R firefighters are ACT Public Sector (ACTPS) employees and we seek to employ people who reflect our professionalism and values, along with the diversity of our society.

ACTF&R seeks to employ fit, intelligent and motivated people with the following skills and attributes:

- Personal resilience and an ability to work effectively in challenging situations;
- Demonstrated diverse work/life experiences and transferrable skills;
- Appreciation of the need to critically evaluate risk and adhere to safe work practices in situations that at times can be inherently dangerous;
- Effective and appropriate written and verbal communication skills;
- A commitment to service and helping others, and an interest and ability to engage with members of the public;
- Understanding of, and willingness to undertake the full range of firefighter duties including follow directions;
- The ability to work shiftwork including nights, weekends and public holidays, flexibility in work locations within the ACT and a commitment to ongoing development;
- Demonstrate respect toward your fellow colleagues, the community and all others regardless of individual differences;



- Well developed interpersonal skills and the capacity to work within, and contribute positively to, a small team working in close proximity;
- The ability to exercise self-discipline and use sound judgement in ensuring assigned tasks are completed to the required standard and within tight timeframes;
- A capacity to acquire new skills and demonstrated problem solving ability; and
- Demonstrated commitment to teamwork, collaboration, professionalism and a strong work ethic.

Working for ACT Fire & Rescue

Our values and signature behaviours

Every aspect of the work we do at ACTF&R is guided by the values and general principles set out in Section 9 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct, Core Values and Signature Behaviours.



Core Values and Signature Behaviours

Respect

- We take pride in our work
- We value and acknowledge the contribution of others
- We relate to colleagues and clients in a fair, decent, caring and professional manner

Integrity

- We do what we say we'll do and respond appropriately, especially when the unexpected occurs
- We take responsibility and are accountable for our decisions and actions
- We engage genuinely with the community, and manage the resources entrusted to us honestly and responsibly

Collaboration

- We work openly and share appropriate information to reach shared goals
- We value feedback and actively seek out other views when solving problems, to ensure continuous improvement

Innovation

- We look for ways to continuously improve our services and skills
- We are open to change and new ideas from all sources

Working arrangements

Rostered shiftwork

ACTF&R is a 24-hour, 7 day a week emergency service. Firefighters work rostered shifts which include nights, weekends and public holidays. The roster system comprises the following:

A 10/14 roster with firefighters working two day shifts (8am to 6pm), followed by two night shifts (6pm to 8am). The majority of operational firefighters fall into this category.

Firefighters on the 10/14 roster will work an average of 42 hours per week over an eight week cycle.

The 42 hours are comprised of 38 ordinary hours plus two additional overtime hours and two accumulated as recreational leave.

Firefighters can also be recalled for duty in cases of an emergency and may also be required to work past the end of a shift if attending an incident.



'If you're looking for a career that gives you the ability to be active, to work in a team and to be flexible with work hours. A career as a firefighter is great.'

Julia

Education and training

Recruit training program

Applicants who accept an offer of employment are required to attend recruit training at the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) Hume Training Centre.

The program includes 20 weeks of intensive training as a Fourth Class Firefighter, covering (but not limited to) the following:

- Use of fire appliances and pumps, rescue equipment, radio networks, computer response systems;
- Management of hazardous materials;
- Administering of first aid;
- Wild fire behaviour and suppression management;
- Fire science and behaviour awareness;
- Basics of building construction;
- Varying methods of water and electricity supply; and
- Workplace health and safety.

You will receive nationally recognised qualifications under the Public Safety Training Package.

Following completion of the program, successful participants will graduate as a Third Class Firefighter on probation.

Ongoing training and development

As a firefighter you will be required to maintain and develop your skills through ongoing training. If you are considering firefighting as a career, you must be prepared to undertake the required continuous training and studies in order to maintain capabilities. There are also training/qualification requirements to progress in rank.

All firefighters must reach the rank of First Class Firefighter as a minimum requirement. To reach this rank takes approximately 24 months. To assist and support firefighters, training is provided to ensure that firefighters gain the necessary qualifications and develop the confidence and capabilities required to combat and manage increasingly complex emergency situations.

Continuing professional development throughout your career is greatly encouraged including taking different job opportunities, undertaking study and working on a variety of job projects.



Career development and opportunities

ACTF&R operates on a rank structure and each firefighter has the opportunity to progress through these ranks. Principally at officer level, opportunities to work in specialised areas may also be available. These specialty areas work both Monday to Friday, as well as shift work, and include:

Operations: This is the largest area within ACTF&R and manages operations and skills maintenance.

Community Resilience: This area focuses on regulatory compliance, planning, fire investigation, community engagement, peer support, post occupancy planning, and automatic fire alarm management.

The Community Safety area provides specialist advice on complex building designs and undertakes inspections to ensure compliance with regulatory fire safety measures. The unit also works with building codes and standards groups to research and develop appropriate fire safety systems.

Capability Support: This area focuses on operations improvement, exercise management, incident management systems, facilities and fleet management, technical and operational support, research and development, uniforms and business analysis.

Operational Communications: ACTF&R staff and maintain operational capability within the emergency communications centre (Fire Command) in conjunction with Emergency Communication Officers (ECO's). This centre manages all fire emergency calls for the ACT, with most from either Triple Zero phone calls, or from automatic or other fire alarms. ACTF&R also provides communication services for the ACT State Emergency Service (SES) and the ACT Rural Fire Service (RFS).

Firefighter Development: This area focuses on training development, training delivery, Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program (JFAIP) and manages the Community Fire Unit (CFU) program.

Leave arrangements

Employees of ACTF&R have access to leave entitlements, including, but not limited to the following:

Personal leave

Personal leave enables employees to be absent from duty for personal illness or injury, to provide care or support to a member of the employee's immediate family or for special circumstances. On commencement, employees are credited with 144 hours paid personal leave that can be utilised for personal illness or injury, caring for a member of the employee's immediate family or household. For each subsequent year of completed service, a further 144 hours paid personal leave is credited. Personal leave is cumulative.

Annual leave

For employees working the 10/14 roster, annual leave enables employees to be absent from duty for the purpose of rest and relaxation. Employees working rostered shift work are entitled to 392 hours of annual leave for each full year worked. Where less than a full year is worked, employees are entitled to leave on a pro-rata basis.

Of this leave 365 hours is to be taken when rostered to annual leave with the remaining 27 hours available as discretionary leave.

Maternity/birth leave (paid and unpaid)

An employee who has completed twelve months of continuous service will be entitled to 18 weeks maternity leave on full pay or 36 weeks leave on half pay. Employees who have not completed twelve months of continuous service will be entitled to a period of unpaid maternity leave.

Paid primary care giver leave

Where an employee (other than an employee entitled to paid maternity) who has 12 months continuous service, demonstrates that they are the primary care giver of a new born or adopted child, they are eligible to apply for 18 weeks paid primary care giver leave.

- Example 1:** The primary care giver may be the father of the child.
- Example 2:** The primary care giver may be the domestic partner of the mother.

Bonding leave

Bonding leave enables employees to be absent from duty to bond with a new born child, adopted child or a child for whom the employee's domestic partner has commenced a primary care giving role. An employee is entitled to apply for and take as many shifts as are required to provide 14 consecutive calendar days for bonding purposes.

Compassionate leave

Compassionate leave entitles employees to be absent for up to five shifts, on each occasion of a death of a member of the employee's immediate family or household.

Long service leave

All employees will be entitled to 2.1 calendar months long service leave at full pay after the completion of 7 years service. Accrued leave may be taken at double pay, full pay, half pay and as approved subject to operational requirements.

Rates of pay

The rate of pay for a firefighter will generally depend on classification (rank), completed years of service and having obtained sufficient knowledge, qualifications and experience of required duties.

- Further detail on leave entitlements and conditions of service for firefighters can be found in the current ACT Fire & Rescue Enterprise Agreement located at www.esa.act.gov.au/JACS-ACTFR-Agreement.

Alternatively, additional information can be obtained from the Directorate's People and Workplace Strategy (PWS) Unit via email at JACS.People-WorkplaceStrategy@act.gov.au.



Mandatory requirements

General requirements

Applicants must be Australian citizens or have permanent residence status, and possess the following mandatory requirements:

- Current Australian C Class Licence with no restrictions (no P plates) and confirmation of completion of a 'Heavy Vehicle Knowledge Assessment', (see <https://roadreadycentre.com.au/knowledge-tests/heavy-vehicle-knowledge-tests/>) or; current Australian MR Class driving licence with no restrictions (no P plates);
- Current Medical Consent to participate in physical abilities testing
- ACT Working with Vulnerable People check; and
- National Police check (NPC).

Police/Criminal History check

Firefighters are placed in a position of trust and have privileged access to property and vulnerable people when on official business or during emergency incidents. It is therefore imperative that ACTF&R conducts stringent assessments of applicants and enforces the need to have a professional, honest, reliable workforce that adheres to ethical principles and standards.

All successful applicants will need to undergo a NPC by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) prior to an offer of employment being made. Any positive checks will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

The link to the National Police Check is: <https://www.afp.gov.au/our-services/national-police-checks>

Applicants who have conviction/s may be asked to provide Police Fact Sheets and/or court transcripts prior to attending a panel interview. Applicants with any of the above offence history in the preceding 10 years from the date of submitting their NPC may be asked to attend an interview to specifically discuss the issue before being considered for further progression in the recruitment process. Each case is assessed on an individual basis.

Please note that ACTF&R have an exemption under section 19 of the Spent Convictions Act 2000 for offences related to arson, that is any past convictions (irrespective of age) that relate to arson will be reported in a criminal history check.

Working with vulnerable people checks

Successful applicants must have been successfully registered for an unrestricted Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) in the ACT.

Further information on WWVP registration is available from the Access Canberra website at <https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/business-and-work/working-with-vulnerable-people/apply-for-or-renew-a-wwvp-registration>

Note: The costs associated with the above mandatory requirements will be met by the applicant.

Physical Aptitude Testing (PAT)

Firefighting is an inherently physical occupation. Many tasks require high levels of physical endurance, strength and power. On a daily basis, and during emergency responses, firefighters with ACTF&R may be tasked to carry and use hydraulic rescue tools, drag hoses, lift ladders and rescue incapacitated casualties. To ensure that firefighters are able to safely and competently complete physical work tasks, ACTF&R conducts the Physical Aptitude Testing (PAT) of all potential recruits.

Firefighting requires that you can undertake many physical tasks, often in time-critical, high-stress environments. As a firefighter you will be asked to manipulate heavy equipment and rescue casualties, often on unstable terrain or in awkward positions. Thus, maximising your strength, power and aerobic fitness is critical to your safety and also to completing your work tasks.



Stages of the PAT

1. Balance Test
2. Ladder Climb
3. Tower Climb
4. Height Anxiety Test
5. Sensory Deprivation
6. Hose Drag (50m hose reel)
7. Container Lift
8. Hose Hold and Advance
9. Hydraulic Equipment Carry
10. Team Member Rescue

Potential recruits will complete all stages of the PAT in the above sequence. Participants are to attend the PAT wearing long sleeve, full length pants and suitable (closed in) footwear. Athletic attire is fine to be worn, so long as it covers the full length of the body. Hat, sunglasses, sleeveless shirts are not to be worn to the PAT.

Watch video examples of the PAT at www.esa.act.gov.au/ReadyWillingAble

Multi-Stage Fitness (BEEP) Test

The BEEP test involves running continuously between two points that are 20 metres apart. The runs are synchronised with a pre-recorded audio. Level 9.6 must be obtained for the applicant to progress past Stage 3 of the recruitment process.

It is recommended potential applicants practice this test before undertaking this part of the recruitment process. There are several practice BEEP tests apps and videos that can be found online/app store.

Recruitment process

Overview

ACTF&R conducts recruitment selection processes periodically. This process typically selects 16 to 20 applicants to commence training as Fourth Class Firefighters in training. Further applicants may also be identified and offered employment in the following 12 months if sufficient positions become available.

Stage 1

Applications are open individuals aspiring to be firefighters. Advertisements will be showcased in The Canberra Times, on the ACT Fire & Rescue website, and through Jobs ACT. After the closing date, all submissions will be evaluated based on general recruitment standards and responses to the selection criteria. Successful applicants will advance to the second stage.

Stage 2

Qualified applicants will be asked to attend an online aptitude test. This session encompasses tests assessing a variety of skills: verbal, numerical, abstract, and spatial reasoning. After competing the aptitude test, applicants are required to provide a written and video response to questions aligned with the selection criteria.

Note: Candidates may be required to attend an aptitude verification test at a subsequent stage.

Stage 3

Applicants who clear the aptitude test will be invited for a cardiovascular challenge known as the 'BEEP test'. This test involves shuttle runs spanning 20 meters, with candidates needing to achieve a level of 9.6 to progress. It's advisable for prospective candidates to familiarise themselves with this test beforehand.

Stage 4

Successful candidates from the previous stage will be invited to an assessment centre for teamwork exercises and an introductory interview.

Stage 5

Selected applicants will then be invited to undergo the Physical Aptitude Test (PAT). A demonstration of the ACTF&R Physical Aptitude Test can be viewed on the ACT Emergency Services Agency website.

Stage 6

At this phase, successful applicants will engage in formal interviews, and their referees will be contacted for verification.

Stage 7

The concluding stage will have shortlisted candidates attending medical and psychometric evaluation sessions.



Outline of selection criteria and duties

Selection criteria

- Demonstrated ability to work as an effective member of a highly trained team;
- Ability to safely and effectively perform in an environment that can be physically and emotionally challenging;
- Demonstrated interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to adapt to a variety of audiences;
- Demonstrated commitment to excellence in occupational performance, and personal and professional development;
- An understanding of the role, responsibilities and resilience required for employment as a firefighter; and
- Demonstrated knowledge of fair and safe workplace practices including Work Health and Safety, and the principles of respect, equity and diversity.

Duties

Firefighters work in teams under the supervision of a Station Officer. Depending on the shift being worked and the circumstances that emerge during the shift, a firefighter will:

- Whilst performing routine duties and attending emergencies, identify potential and existing hazards, take appropriate action and report the nature of those hazards in accordance with agency WHS requirements;
- Respond to fires, rescues and other emergencies and perform duties in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures, including those tasks as allocated by the Station Officer/ Senior Officer at the scene;
- Assist casualties at accidents/incidents and provide emergency care by the application of basic life support techniques and in accordance with agency Standard Operating Procedures;
- Undertake a range of community based activities in relation to fire education, safety and prevention; and
- Process information in accordance with agency procedures by;
 - logging details of emergency reports for action and future reference;
 - receiving, processing and transmitting information via radio, telephone and computer;
 - completing standard agency proformas;
 - perform routine station duties including the cleaning and maintenance of vehicles, equipment and facilities; and
 - undertake training and courses of study to ensure current competence.



For further information
esa.act.gov.au/readywillingable

