



LESSON PLAN

Teens: Career in the Fire Service



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As children move into adolescence, they are given added responsibilities in their home, school and community.

Lesson Overview

Lesson Objectives

- Identify reasons for choosing a career in the fire service.
- Learn about the three types of fire departments in British Columbia.
- Describe the staffing structure of fire departments.
- Identify the characteristics of fire.
- Assess personal suitability to a fire service career.

Resource List

Instructor Materials

- Fire Service Structure material
- Video: [WorkBC's Career Trek — Firefighter \(Episode 64\)](#)
- Video: [Government of Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services – DFES HOUSE FIRE VR EXPERIENCE](#)
 - Note: The web version of this video allows for virtual reality 360-degree viewing by clicking on the screen. The MP4 file does not provide this ability.

Fire Department Materials

- Your fire department's recruitment video (if one is available)
- Your fire department's youth/junior firefighter program information (if available)

Optional Materials

- Flip chart or whiteboard, pens

In-lesson Handouts

- Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting material
- Fire Service Recruitment and Education material

Take-home Handouts

- Our Home is Fire Safe package

Teaching Tips

- Reinforce that classroom rules continue to be in effect. If students are disruptive, stop the lesson. Do not talk over “side talking.” Resume the lesson when the room is quiet.
- Deliver your lesson in a professional, confident and controlled manner. Be firm and fair.
- Respond professionally to any responses or comments received. Be fair, considerate and calm. If you are unsure of an answer, tell students that you will find out and get back to them.
- Accommodate a variety of learning styles by using props, demonstrations and encouraging discussion. Not all students learn the same way.
- Encourage students to volunteer, rather than singling them out. Teens generally seek the approval of their peers.
- Use technical terms whenever appropriate. Teens’ vocabulary is more sophisticated.
- Follow the lesson plan. Defer questions not relevant to the lesson until the end of class.
- Share real life firefighter experiences to motivate learning. Teens are not always motivated to learn important life safety skills.
- Use students’ experiences whenever possible to connect the lesson to their lives.

Agenda

Total lesson time: 60 minutes

Lesson Topics	Time
Introduction	5 min
Topic 1: Why choose the fire service?	15 min
Topic 2: Fire service structure, recruitment and education	15 min
Topic 3: Realities of firefighting	20 min
Conclusion	5 min

Lesson Plan


Introduction

Time: 5 minutes

Outline	Time	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce yourself to the class.• Review the agenda and provide an overview of activities to follow. <p>SAY! “There are many career options available to you today. A career in the fire service can be an exciting and diverse one. Today we are going to talk about the different opportunities within the fire service.”</p>	5 min	

Topic 1: Why choose the fire service?


Time: 15 minutes

Outline	Time	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm various reasons for choosing a career in the fire service. Document responses on a flip chart or whiteboard. Responses may include: <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Why choose a fire service career?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community service Excitement Variety in job tasks Physically demanding "Teamwork" environment Varied hours of work Competitive salary Structured career path Well respected career Challenging </div>	7 min	Flip chart or whiteboard, pens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play the video WorkBC's Career Trek — Firefighter (Episode 64) to demonstrate what it means to have a career in the fire service. 	7 min	Video: WorkBC's Career Trek — Firefighter (Episode 64)
<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"></div> <div> <p>Topic Close Out</p> <p>Say these key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in the fire service provides opportunities for people of any gender or race. There are many reasons why you may find a career in the fire service interesting. It is good to self-reflect on what would motivate you to join the fire service. </div> </div>	30 sec	
<p>Lead into the next topic.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 5px;">SAY!</div> "Next we are going to learn more about the fire service structure, the types of roles there are, the recruitment process and potential pathways to enter the industry."	30 sec	

Topic 2: Fire service structure, recruitment and education

Time: 15 minutes


Outline	Time	Resources
<p>Fire Service Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute the Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting material to each student. Discuss the three types of fire departments – career, volunteer, composite. Composite is a blend of career and volunteer firefighters. In British Columbia, approximately 70% of fire departments are volunteer or composite. • Describe how the three types of fire departments (career, volunteer, composite) differ. Provide examples of each type. Whenever possible, use an example of which type is accurate within the community you're in. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Volunteer – Gibsons and District Volunteer Fire Department, Okanagan Falls Volunteer Fire Department, Cowichan Bay Fire Rescue, Penelakut Tribe Volunteer Fire Department, Penticton Indian Band – Composite – Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service, Penticton Fire Department, Fort Nelson Fire Department, Lower Nicola Fire Department – Career – Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, Kitimat Fire Department, Victoria Fire Department • Mention that BC is served by about 4,000 career firefighters and 10,000 volunteer firefighters. Also, that many fire departments are led by female Fire Chiefs. • Highlight key characteristics and required qualifications of each type of department. • Using the Fire Service Structure material, discuss the structure of a fire department, positions within the department and job responsibilities. 	<p>9 min</p>	<p>Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting material</p> <p>Fire Service Structure material</p>
<p>Recruitment and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the variety of opportunities within the fire service. Relate them to your own department and your personal experience. Examples of opportunities to speak about include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inspector – Fire investigator – Public education • Distribute the Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting material and discuss different types of firefighting, such as for structures, wildland, industrial facilities and on ships. 	<p>5 min</p>	<p>Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting material</p> <p>Fire Service Recruitment and Education material</p> <p>Your fire department's recruitment video (if one is available)</p>

Outline	Time	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that the recruitment process varies depending on the department and can depend on the position you're interested in. • If your fire department has a recruitment video, show the video during this part of the lesson. • Distribute the Fire Service Recruitment and Education material and discuss the importance of education. The amount of training required can vary, such as the completion of a pre-employment program. • Volunteering is also a great way to get experience. Some career and volunteer fire departments hire untrained candidates who are then trained "in house." 		
 <p>Topic Close Out</p> <p>Say these key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are three types of fire departments in B.C. – career, volunteer and composite. • Depending on the fire department type (career, volunteer or composite), there are different recruitment process requirements. • Formal education and volunteering are two ways you can start your journey to a career in the fire service. 	30 sec	
<p>Lead into the next topic.</p> <p>SAY! "Lastly, we are going to talk about the realities of working in the fire service and the characteristics of those suited to the various roles."</p>	30 sec	

Topic 3: Realities of firefighting

Time: 20 minutes

Outline	Time	Resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain to students that the depiction of fire and firefighters in movies and TV is often unrealistic and glorified. The reality is that fire is fast, dangerous and sometimes deadly. Brainstorm with the students what they already know about fire and firefighting, then challenge their assumptions. Play the video: Government of Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services – DFES HOUSE FIRE VR EXPERIENCE to illustrate the realities of fire. Ask students to imagine themselves as a firefighter to determine whether they would feel comfortable in that role. Brainstorm with the students the characteristics of fire seen in the video. Document responses on a flip chart or whiteboard. <table border="1" data-bbox="204 800 966 1100"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="204 800 966 852">Characteristics of Fire</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 852 966 1100"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire is fast Smoke is black Smoke contains toxic gases Fire is hot (exceeds 800°C) Little time to escape </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although firefighting can be extremely rewarding, it sometimes comes at a cost. Remind the class that fire and firefighting are not like in the movies. Explain to the students that the realities of fire can make firefighting a stressful job. Firefighters deal with loss of life and property regularly, and that loss can impact people in different ways. Share with the class that while firefighting can be stressful, there are a number of ways to help manage the demands of the job that include building healthy habits and attitudes around the importance of mental health. Examples of resources that firefighters can readily access while on the job include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer support teams that understand the complexities of working as a firefighter Physical consultations Access to mental health therapies and medications Spousal, marital and family supports Explain to the class that a career in the fire service is not for everyone. When choosing any career, it is important to honestly assess their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the demands of the job. 	Characteristics of Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire is fast Smoke is black Smoke contains toxic gases Fire is hot (exceeds 800°C) Little time to escape 	<p>18 min</p>	<p>Video: Government of Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services – DFES HOUSE FIRE VR EXPERIENCE</p> <p>Flip chart or whiteboard, pens</p>
Characteristics of Fire				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire is fast Smoke is black Smoke contains toxic gases Fire is hot (exceeds 800°C) Little time to escape 				

Outline	Time	Resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm characteristics that would be desirable to possess for a successful career in the fire service. Document responses on a flip chart or whiteboard. Responses may include: <table border="1" data-bbox="204 363 966 856"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="204 363 966 415">Characteristics of Firefighters</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="204 415 966 856"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical strength and agility Mentally alert Calm and level-headed Respect for authority Able to follow strict safety procedures Work well as part of a team Caring and compassionate Able to handle emotional stress Able to withstand unpleasant and/or gruesome situations </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Characteristics of Firefighters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical strength and agility Mentally alert Calm and level-headed Respect for authority Able to follow strict safety procedures Work well as part of a team Caring and compassionate Able to handle emotional stress Able to withstand unpleasant and/or gruesome situations 		
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 <p>Topic Close Out</p> <p>Say these key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hollywood's depiction of fire is not always realistic, it does contribute to the attitudes we form. Firefighting can be rewarding, but also very stressful. Firefighters have access to resources and tools to help manage work-related stress and promote positive mental health. A career in the fire service is not for everyone. There are some distinct physical, mental and emotional characteristics for fire service personnel. Consider your own physical, mental and emotional needs and abilities and what strengths you could bring to the role. 	2 min			

Conclusion

Time: 5 minutes

Outline	Time	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclude the lesson by discussing with the class that there are many things to consider when choosing a career. Explain that an important first step is to thoroughly research several career options to determine which one is most suitable for them. Firefighting can be a very exciting and rewarding career but is not for everyone.• Use this time to ask the class if they have any questions.• Thank the class for their participation, their attention and for having you visit.• Share the Our Home is Fire Safe package and explain to the group that it contains more valuable lessons on keeping their homes fire safe.• Leave handout materials related to your fire department's youth/junior firefighter program (if available).• If using Evaluation Form: Emphasize the importance of the teacher's feedback and ask that they complete the Evaluation Form.	5 min	Our Home is Fire Safe package Your fire department youth/junior firefighter program information (if available) Evaluation Form

Materials and Handouts

Instructor Materials

To be used during the lesson in support of the topics listed below.

- Fire Service Structure material (Topic 2)

In-lesson Handouts

To be distributed during the lesson in support of the topics listed below.

- Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting material (Topic 2)
- Fire Service Recruitment and Education material (Topic 2)

Take-home Handouts

To be provided to the classroom teacher after the lesson. Handouts can be assigned as homework or completed after the lesson.

- Home Handout Package



Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting

Volunteer Fire Department

- Some volunteer fire departments pay their firefighters to attend fire calls, however, many do not.
- Volunteer firefighters have a desire to help people and become involved with the community.
- In many cases, volunteer firefighters put in extra time to volunteer for community events, activities and public education.
- The hiring qualifications for a volunteer firefighter can be quite different from a career department. However, all working firefighters in BC must meet the same minimum standards, including having their National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Level I and II Certification.
- Hiring may be based on availability to respond to fire calls.
- General qualifications may include:
 - Must be 19 years of age or older.
 - Valid BC driver's licence.
 - No criminal record.
 - Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
 - Reside within the community.
 - Healthy and physically fit. A medical exam may be required.

Composite Fire Department

- This type of fire department has a combination of career firefighters and volunteer or paid on-call firefighters.
- The hiring qualifications are usually very similar to those of a career fire department.
- Composite fire departments often require firefighters to live within the community or city they will serve.



Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting

Career Fire Department

- Working in the fire service provides opportunities for people of any gender or race.
- Career Fire Departments have positions for suppression and non-suppression firefighters (dispatch, fire prevention, training, inspections and public education).
- Each fire department has their own hiring process and criteria.

Required Qualifications

- Canadian citizenship or a permanent resident (landed immigrant).
- Must be at least 19 years of age.
- Grade 12 education or equivalent with a minimum of 1 year post-secondary or a trade qualification as recommended.
- Must meet the vision and hearing requirements established by the fire department.
- BC Class 5 driver's licence without restrictions and a good driving record.
- No criminal offences or summary convictions such as theft, sexual offense, motor vehicle offenses, drug or alcohol misuse, addiction, violence or assault.
- Meet the physical and medical fitness requirements established by the fire department.
- Willing to undergo a thorough investigation and evaluation of character, including personal, work and criminal history.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Previous employment as a firefighter or in emergency services.
- BC Class 3 driver's licence or better.
- Air brake endorsement.
- 20/20 visual acuity.
- First aid certificate.
- Ability to swim (depends on the fire department).
- Non-smoker.
- NFPA 1001, Level I and II (firefighter qualifications standard).



Types of Fire Departments and Specialized Firefighting

Specialized Firefighting

- **Marine**

The qualifications for marine firefighting are similar to those for career firefighting. Marine firefighting involves responding to vessel fires. Several fire departments situated along populated areas of the BC coastline have fire boats with marine firefighters, such as North Vancouver City Fire and Rescue, North Vancouver District Fire and Rescue Services, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, and Port Moody Fire and Rescue. Specialized training in shipboard firefighting would need to be completed through the Justice Institute of BC or another accredited training facility.

- **Industrial**

Industrial firefighting involves responding to industrial plant fires, tanker fires, etc. Large oil refineries and industrial plants may have their own fire department consisting of specialized industrial firefighters. The hiring qualifications are similar to those of a career firefighter with additional industrial or refinery firefighter training available through the Justice Institute of BC or another accredited training facility. Small industrial plants may train their workers in refinery firefighting and rely on the community fire department to assist with fire suppression.

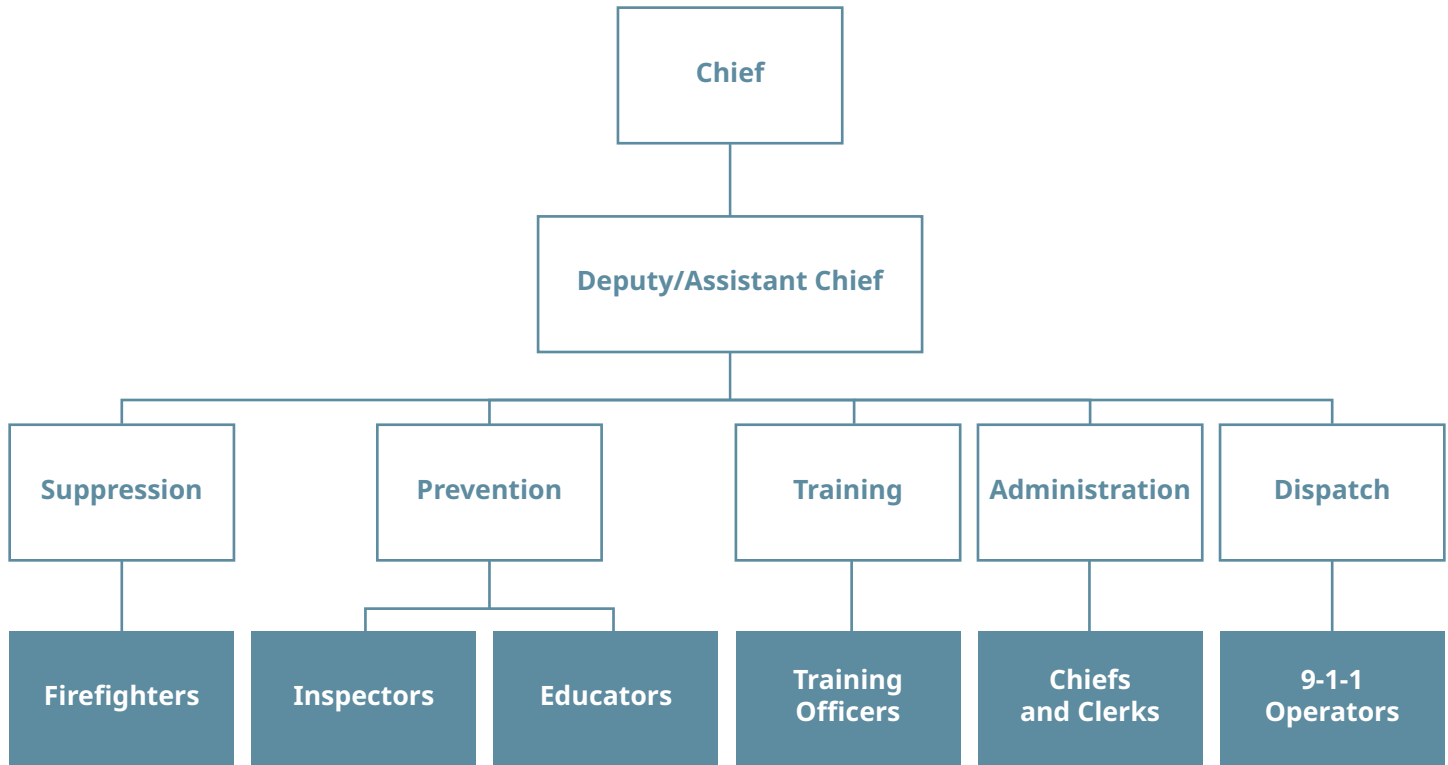
- **Wildland**

Wildland firefighting involves responding to forest and wildland fires. The BC Wildfire Services oversees the hiring and training of wildland firefighters. The hiring qualifications are similar to those of a career firefighter. As wildland firefighting tends to be seasonal, many wildland firefighters are hired on a contract basis by the BC Wildfire Services. For specific details pertaining to wildland firefighting, contact a local branch of the BC Wildfire Service.



Fire Service Structure

Positions within a fire department



Rank	Salary Range	Rank	Salary Range
Chief	\$72,000 – \$165,000	Captain	\$72,000 – \$99,000
Deputy Chief	\$72,000 – \$152,000	Lieutenant	\$72,000 – \$99,000
Fire Inspector	\$72,000 - \$134,000	Firefighter	\$69,000 – \$95,000
Assistant Chief	\$72,000 - \$116,000	9-1-1 Operator	\$70,000 - \$90,000
District Chief/ Battalion Chief	\$72,000 – \$100,000	Clerk	\$55,000 - \$69,000

* Salary range statistics sourced from WorkBC and Glassdoor, 2023



Fire Service Recruitment and Education

Firefighting is not just another job. It is a demanding career that offers challenge, excitement, rewards and the satisfaction of helping others. It is an employment opportunity for people ready to meet the demands of becoming skilled, competent professionals. Firefighters must be ready to meet any kind of emergency.

- There is a competitive process to become a firefighter. First you apply to a fire department for a city or municipality. You are then assessed as part of the recruitment selection process.
- Each fire department has slightly different selection criteria. The recruitment process usually includes reviewing if you have a safe driving history, first aid training, post-secondary requirements, a criminal history and general physical fitness, and testing vision and hearing.
- Many departments prefer applicants with additional qualifications, including previous experience in emergency services or other practical transferable to areas of firefighting.
- Several fire departments in British Columbia have women in the role of fire chief. Programming and camps are available that are dedicated to helping women explore and enter the fire service.

For more information visit online:

- WorkBC Career Profile for Firefighters
workbc.ca/career-profiles/firefighters
- Fire Fighting Technologies (FFTC), Justice Institute of British Columbia
jibc.ca/areas-of-study/firefighting/firefighting-technologies
- FireRecruitment.ca, free online firefighter jobs resource
firerecruitment.ca
- Camp Ignite, a youth firefighting mentorship program for Grade 11 and 12 girls
campignite.com



Fire Service Recruitment and Education

The BC Office of the Fire Commissioner has the legislated mandate and responsibility to set and issue structure firefighter training standards. All fire departments in British Columbia, whether volunteer, composite or career, must adhere to the BC Structure Firefighter Minimum Training Standards so that firefighters are effective and operating in a safe manner.

What topics do firefighting training courses typically cover?

- Safety and communications
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)
- Fire ground accountability
- Water supplies
- Ground ladders
- Fire streams and hose handling
- Tools and equipment review
- Forcible entry
- Search and rescue, firefighter survival
- Hose/fire streams
- Hoisting tools and equipment
- Extinguishers
- Exterior live fire extinguishing and/or control
- Extinguishing a vehicle fire operating as a team
- Extinguishing or controlling Class A fires
- Attacking an interior structure fire operating as a team
- Assembling a team and choosing attack techniques for various levels of fire
- Evaluating and forecasting fire growth and development
- Extinguishing or controlling flammable gas or liquid gas fires

Volunteering

Starting in a volunteer position can be a good way of helping you find what pathways you could take in the fire service and meeting people working as emergency responders or firefighters.

Volunteer BC
volunteerbc.bc.ca

GoVolunteer.ca
govolunteer.ca

Volunteer Firefighters Association of BC
firebc.org

BC Search and Rescue
bcsara.com/volunteer

Check to see if your municipality has a youth or junior firefighter program or any recruitment resources.