



Wildfire Careers

Fire Crew Member

What is it like to work as a fire crew member?



Firefighting is the perfect career for a physically fit, motivated, team-oriented individual!

The BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) employs over 1,000 wildfire fighters each year. In order to become a wildfire fighter with BCWS, applicants must show motivation, have a relevant skill set, complete the WFX-FIT fitness tests and attend the BCWS New Recruit Boot Camp.

The majority of fire crews begin work in late April or early May and work until the end of October. Some crews remain working into November depending on fire conditions, activity, and project work.



BCWS fire crews usually work regular hours during the hottest part of the day, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., when fires are most likely to start. The normal work shift is eight hours per day and 40 hours per week, unless deployed to an incident. A fire fighter is guaranteed a 5 to 8 month work term depending on location of employment and fire activity.

How to apply



Fill out our application form!

Applications must be completed and submitted online. The online application consists of a questionnaire with space for the applicant to paste a copy of their cover letter and resume. More information on the application package and firefighting with the BC Wildfire Service can be found [here](#).



Don't miss the deadline!

Applications to become a wildfire fighter with BCWS open in mid-November. The deadline for applications is Jan. 15, 2023. **All application packages must be received by 11 p.m. PST on the day of the application deadline.**

Required qualifications

First aid requirements

All applicants must possess a first aid certificate recognized by WorkSafe BC or be enrolled in a recognized first aid course at the time of application. The minimum requirement is an acceptable Occupational First Aid Level 1 or Level 2 certificate with a transportation endorsement, or an acceptable Occupational First Aid Level 3 certificate. First aid certificates must be valid until Oct. 31 of the fire season for which the applicant has applied. You will be asked at the interview to provide an acceptable first aid certificate, or proof of enrollment in a recognized first aid course. More information can be found [here](#). **Applications without appropriate first aid documentation will not be considered.**



Driver's License

A valid Canadian driver's license (BC Class 7, 5, or equivalent) is required for initial attack, rapattack, and parattack crews.

A valid driver's license is preferred for unit crews.

Preferred qualifications

Applicants don't have to meet all of the preferred qualifications; however it is important to clearly identify which are met. Generally, an applicant is required to show strong examples in two or three of the preferred qualifications to be considered for an interview. The following are preferred qualifications (not in order of importance):

- Previous experience on a BCWS fire crew
 - include dates, location and supervisor
- Previous wildland fire fighting experience with a government agency
 - include dates and locations
- Previous contract crew wildland fire fighting experience
 - include company names, dates, and number of days deployed
- Forestry work experience
 - e.g. logging, planting, fall and burn, silviculture surveys, layout and probing
 - include company names, dates, and locations
- Other resource based work and experience
 - e.g. oil and gas work, mining, and farming
 - include company names, locations, dates, and nature of work
- Outdoor or wilderness work experience
 - paid experience: e.g. guiding or ski patrol
 - unpaid experience: e.g. ranch work or traditional activities on the land, etc
- Mechanical aptitude or trades experience
 - e.g. experience or training with small engine repair
- Junior Fire Crew training or employment (taken in some BC high schools as part of an endorsed work experience program)
 - include dates and locations
- Post-secondary forestry or resource management education (in progress or completed), including university forestry program, diploma programs, and other resource management education recognised by the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP)
- e.g. "completed NVIT Environmental Resources Technology Diploma" or "in first year of University of British Columbia Forest Resource Management Degree"
- Faller Certification
- BC Forest Safety Council or Energy Safety Canada (formerly Enform - Oil & Gas sector)
- Volunteer Fire Department experience
 - include fire department names, dates, locations, and details on experience with wildfires
- High level of fitness or sports achievements
 - awards received for fitness or team sports
- Academic achievements, scholarships or awards

New Recruit Boot Camp

Based on the number of crew member vacancies, top-scoring applicants from the interview and preliminary fitness assessments will be invited to attend New Recruit Bootcamp (NRBC). Typically, three week-long boot camps are held in Merritt, starting in mid-April. Between 150 and 200 candidates are invited to boot camp depending on the number of vacancies on BCWS fire crews across the province.

During NRBC candidates must meet the pre-employment fitness standard which consists of the nationally recognised WFX-FIT test. This test is a pass or fail test and unsuccessful candidates will not be allowed to continue with the NRBC. In order to take the test candidates must bring a completed Physician's Release Form (see link at end of this document) and present it to the WFX-FIT test appraiser.

At NRBC the following courses are taught:

- Wildfire Service Overview
- Fundamentals of Fire fighting
- Portable Pumps and Water Delivery Systems
- Burning Off and Backfiring
- Heavy Equipment
- Chainsaw Operations
- Wilderness Survival
- Human Factors
- Fireline Communications
- Helicopter Safety
- Fire Weather
- Incident Command System
- Safety and Wildfire Entrapment
- Navigation

After NRBC, successful candidates will be offered a position on one of the fire crews in the province. A first-year fire fighter can expect to work until the end of October and may be offered an extension depending on fire activity.

Timeline

The recruiting process can be quite lengthy, running from the application deadline in January, to a possible boot camp invitation in April, and a job offer by mid-May. BCWS makes every effort to keep candidates informed on their status during this time, by email and phone, but it is your responsibility to ensure that your contact information is current throughout the process. If an applicant is no longer being considered, BCWS will advise the applicant directly, as soon as possible.

The general timeline for the recruiting process is:

- Mid-November – online applications open
- Mid-January – application deadline
- February – virtual interviews
- Mid-March – invitations to NRBC
- Mid-May – job offers

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the online application the only way to apply?

Yes. All applications are received on behalf of BCWS by the BC Public Service Agency. The application process consists of creating a profile, filling out a questionnaire and uploading text versions of your cover letter and resume. To apply, please look for the link posted in mid-November. Paper or faxed copies will not be accepted.

Do I attend the interview and fitness assessment in person?

No. Based on the current COVID-19 situation in our province the BC Wildfire Service will be using a virtual interview format to ensure the health and safety of all participants. There will be no fitness assessment at the time of the interview, but you will still need to pass the WFX-FIT test before employment.

How do I know if my first aid ticket is accepted in BC?

The list of recognised first aid tickets can be found on the [WorkSafe BC website](#).

What if I cannot find my first aid ticket on the WorkSafeBC site?

If your ticket is not listed, it is likely that your ticket is not recognised by WorkSafeBC. To be employed by BCWS you must have a valid first aid ticket and transportation endorsement (or Level 3 first aid) which are recognised by WorkSafeBC. BCWS cannot consider your employment without a valid first aid ticket. You will be asked to show proof of acceptable first aid certification or proof of enrollment in a recognised first aid course at the interview. You must successfully complete a recognised first aid course prior to boot camp.

How can I get feedback on my application or interview?

Due to the large volume of applications, we are unable to provide individual feedback for applications. You must clearly detail in your resume and cover letter any preferred qualifications you meet. The interview panel may be able to provide general feedback from your interview when it is conducted, but they will not be able to tell you how well you did in relation to other interviewees.

How can I update my contact information?

Please refer to the instructions on the application site to update your contact information.

How many applications do you receive and how many jobs are there?

On average BCWS receives 1,000-1,500 applications each year. The number of jobs changes from year to year, ranging from 100 for a slow year, to over 200 for a high-turnover year.

Do I get to choose where I want to work?

Recruitment and crew allocation is a provincial process and applicants should expect to be placed on a fire crew anywhere in the province when they apply. An applicant's preferred work location is considered but there are often limited openings. Individuals can be asked to go to another location or crew type that may not be their preference.

Will accommodations be provided for me?

In most cases people are responsible for finding their own accommodations near their work locations. Local and returning staff and crew members may be able to assist you in finding accommodations. In a few locations, staff housing is provided as an option either at no fee or at a nominal cost. These locations are Alexis Creek (Unit Crew), Chetwynd (Initial Attack), Fort Nelson (Initial Attack) and Salmon Arm (Rapattack).

What is the vaccination policy for BC Wildfire Service?

On Nov. 1, 2021, the BC Public Service announced the [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) that defines the conditions and expectations for BC Public Service employees regarding vaccination against COVID-19. Among other possible measures, proof of vaccination is required as of Nov. 22, 2021. It is a term of acceptance of employment that you agree to comply with all vaccination requirements that apply to the public service.

Links and Resources

Online application page:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/employment-and-contracts/employment/wildfire-fighters>

First Aid certificates recognised by WorkSafe BC:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/first-aid-requirements/certificates-accepted-in-bc>

First Aid Jurisprudence Process for out of Jurisdiction by WorkSafe BC:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/out-of-jurisdiction-ofa-jurisprudence-package?lang=en>

Education recognised by the ABCFP:

University forestry programs:



- <https://www.canadian-forests.com/universities-colleges.html>

Other resource management education:

- https://abcfp.ca/web/ABCFP/Become_a_Registrant/ABCFP/Become_a_Member/Become_a_Registrant_Overview.aspx?%5B%5BBecome_a_Registrant_Overview%5D%5D&hkey=20a15903-3ad3-4c83-b299-00893d28d559

BC Public Service Agency competencies for interviews:

- <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/all-employees/career-development/competencies-in-the-bc-public-service/interviews-hiring>

Type 1 WFX-FIT fitness test:

- <http://www.wfx-fit.ca/>