



## Is Firefighting for You?

You think it's a wild adventure; it's exciting and a big adrenaline rush. Maybe someone you know has been a firefighter. Maybe it's become your dream. While firefighting can be all of these things, it is also dangerous and must be taken seriously. It's not an easy task – it involves continuous training and experience. But most of all, it takes a great deal of perseverance, patience, persistence, dedication and good old-fashioned hard work to become a wildland firefighter.

## Duties and Rewards

Several state and federal agencies in Virginia hire part-time wildland firefighters to assist in fire suppression duties. These firefighters must be trained and qualified in a number of tasks, as well as be able to pass physical fitness guidelines. As an entry level firefighter, you will be part of a larger organization with various command staff personnel directing and supervising your work. Wildland firefighting is often long hours of hard, dirty work in extreme fire environments. But, saving our valuable natural resources; protecting homes and public safety, and working in a cohesive team effort is extremely rewarding.

# CONTACT INFORMATION

### Western Region Office, Salem:

(540) 387-5461

Alleghany, Bath, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe counties

### Central Region Office, Charlottesville:

(434) 977-5193

Albemarle, Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Arlington, Augusta, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Clarke, Culpeper, Cumberland, Fairfax, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Frederick, Goochland, Greene, Halifax, Loudoun, Louisa, Lunenburg, Madison, Mecklenburg, Nelson, Nottoway, Orange, Page, Pittsylvania, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince William, Rappahannock, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Stafford and Warren counties

### Eastern Region Office, Providence Forge:

(804) 966-2209

Accomack, Brunswick, Caroline, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Essex, Gloucester, Greensville, Hanover, Henrico, Isle of Wight, James City, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, New Kent, Northampton, Northumberland, Prince George, Richmond, Southampton, Surry, Sussex, Westmoreland and York counties

## For More Information

For more information about becoming a wildland firefighter, please contact your local Virginia Department of Forestry office or visit the agency website at [www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov).

For information about federal firefighting, contact:

George Washington & Jefferson National Forest,  
Roanoke, VA: 540-265-5220

Shenandoah National Park, Luray, VA:  
540-999-3500 #3442

US Fish & Wildlife Service, Suffolk, VA:  
757-986-3480



### Virginia Department of Forestry

900 Natural Resources Drive, Suite 800  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
Phone: (434) 977-6555

[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

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# BECOME A WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER

*What Does It Take To Become A  
Wildland Firefighter  
and Is It For You?*



Virginia Department of Forestry

[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)



## Deployments

In addition to working within the Commonwealth, there may be opportunities to travel to other states. In times of large natural disasters, other states request assistance. These disasters could include wildfires, hurricanes and winter snow/ice storms. Several years ago, many firefighters from Virginia assisted with the Columbia shuttle disaster recovery efforts. Sometimes, these deployments include staying in large fire camps of a few thousand people. They may have portable showers, medical facilities and dining halls with great food. Or, you might be “spiked-out” on the mountain for an extended stay with none of the fire camp amenities. Here in Virginia, personnel are provided motel rooms if away from home. More often, you are close enough to travel back to the comforts of your own home after a short deployment on the fireline. Typically, a firefighter is on the fireline for up to 16 hours in an operational period on larger fires, but smaller fires may require only a few hours of suppression work.

## “Tools” of the Firefighter

Firefighters use many “tools” to aid them in their firefighting efforts. These tools may include variations of familiar hand tools, such as a rake or shovel. Other tools have been developed over time, such as the Pulaski – a combination of an axe and a hoe. Various designs of portable water pumps have been utilized for years in wildland suppression. Larger equipment, such as bulldozers, helicopters and even airplanes for dropping water or chemical fire retardant, is also used in fighting wildland fires. Another “tool” is flame-retardant clothing that firefighters wear for their safety. Your basic training will include what these tools are used for and how to safely and properly use them. Support personnel often use computer models to predict the spread and intensity of the fire. There are many “tools,” whether large and complex or small and simple, that the Virginia firefighter is exposed to on a wildland fire.

## Requirements

The following are the current minimum requirements for becoming a wildland firefighter with the **Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)**:

### Level 1 (VFF1- Beginner Level)

- Complete “Ground Cover Fire Training” (8 hrs minimum)
- Complete Fire Shelter Training and Deployment
- Moderate Fitness Test (2-mile walk with 25 lb.-pack in 30 minutes or less)
- Recommendation of VDOF

### Level 2 (VFF2)

- Complete Firefighter Courses (S-130/S-190/I-100/L-180)
- Fire Shelter Training and Deployment
- Minimum 5 wildland fire responses

- Moderate Fitness Test
- Recommendation of VDOF

### Level 3 (VFF3)

- Qualified as VFF2
- Qualified as NWCG Crew Boss (same as Federal CRWB level below)
- Arduous Fitness Test (3-mile walk with 45 lb. pack in 45 minutes or less)
- Recommendation of VDOF

The following are the current minimum requirements for becoming a wildland firefighter with the **USDA Forest Service or any other federal agency**:

### Level 1 (FFT2 - Beginner Level)

- Complete Wildland Firefighter Courses(S-130/S-190/I-100/L-180)
- Complete Fire Shelter Training and Deployment
- Pass Arduous Fitness Test (3-mile walk with 45 lb. pack in 45 minutes or less)

### Level 2 (FFT1)

- Qualified as FFT2
- Complete Advanced Firefighter Courses (S-131 & S-133)
- Successful Completion of FFT1 Taskbook on Wildland Fires
- Arduous Fitness Test

### Level 3 (CRWB)

- Qualified as FFT1
- Complete S-230 & S-215 Courses
- Successful Completion of CRWB Taskbook on Wildland Fires
- Arduous Fitness Test