ACT Fire & Rescue

Applicant Information
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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 approximately 345 permanent firefighters, support staff, and over 700 community fire unit (CFU) volunteers.

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

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

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 may be required to comfort victims or 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, teamwork 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, well rounded adults with the following skills and attributes:

- Personal resilience and an ability to work effectively in challenging situations;
- 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; and
- A capacity to acquire new skills and demonstrated problem solving ability.
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
and conditions of service

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
Leaves 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.
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 Safety:** 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 maintains an emergency communication centre. 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.
Requirements of the position

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General requirements

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

- Current first aid certificate (‘Provide First Aid’ or equivalent);
- Current Australian C Class Licence with no restrictions (no P plates) and confirmation of completion of a ‘Heavy Vehicle Knowledge Assessment’, (see www.rego.act.gov.au/licensing/licenceheavy.htm) or; current Australian MR Class driving licence with no restrictions (no P plates);
- 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.

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 Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) in the ACT.


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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 possibly rescue people, 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. Vertigo Test
5. Claustrophobia Test
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 athletic attire and suitable (closed in) footwear. Hat, sunglasses, sleeveless shirts are not to be worn to the PAT.
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. Stages of the recruitment process are outlined below.

**Stage 1**
Applications are sought from individuals seeking employment as firefighters. Advertisements will be placed via social media, the ACTF&R website, www.jobs.act.gov.au and local media, with applications open for a period of two weeks.

Following the closing date, all applications will be assessed against the general recruitment requirements and response to selection criteria, with successful applicants proceeding to stage 2 of the process.

**Stage 2**
Applicants who progress to this stage will be invited to undertake aptitude testing. This will assess a range of skills including verbal, numerical, abstract, and spatial reasoning.

Applicants will also be required to prepare a written response to a question relating to the selection criterion on work health and safety and the principles of respect, equity and diversity.

**Stage 3**
Qualifying applicants will be invited to attend a cardiovascular challenge test known as a ‘BEEP test’. This test consists of a shuttle run, where a level of 9.6 must be obtained. For those applicants who do not reach 9.6 but reach a level from 7.6 to 9.5 will be offered an opportunity to re-sit the BEEP test at a later date.

Information about the ‘BEEP test’ can be found at www.esa.act.gov.au/readywillingable

**Stage 4**
Those applicants who obtain 9.6 in the BEEP test (and between 7.6 and 9.5) are then invited to undertake a teamwork activity, an initial interview and the Physical Aptitude Test (PAT). You must be found suitable after the teamwork activity to progress through to the initial interview and likewise for the initial interview to progress through to the PAT.

Applicants who do not pass any element of the PAT will be offered the opportunity to re-sit the entire PAT at a later date.

Detailed information on the PAT can be found at www.esa.act.gov.au/readywillingable

Please note: You will only be invited to re-sit the BEEP test and/or PAT if you are still suitable in the recruitment process at the time of the re-sits. You will have undertaken other stages of the process prior to the re-sits occurring.

**Stage 5**
Applicants invited to the PAT will also be required to undertake a supervised test to verify their aptitude test results.

**Stage 6**
Those applicants who qualify after the verification testing will proceed to final interview. At this stage, applicants will be required to provide evidence that they possess all mandatory requirements. Failure to provide this evidence will result in applicants not being eligible to participate in the final interview.

**Stage 7**
Applicants found suitable after the final interview will be reference checked and will be required to undertake psychological testing and a medical assessment.
Note: The field of applicants is likely to be reduced at each of these stages until the final assessment, after which, successful applicants will be offered employment. Further applicants, if considered suitable, may be offered employment within the following 12 months.

Please be advised that due to the current COVID environment ACTF&R may face restrictions on any stage of the recruitment process at any time. We will provide applicants as much notice as possible of any changes.
Outline of selection criteria and duties

Selection criteria

- Demonstrated ability to work as an effective member of a highly trained team;
- Ability to perform in a physically demanding environment;
- Demonstrated interpersonal and communication skills, both oral and written;
- Demonstrated commitment to excellence in job performance, including personal and professional development;
- An understanding of the role, responsibilities and nature of employment of 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.

General enquires

To find out more about ACTF&R recruitment, go to the ACTF&R website at www.esa.act.gov.au/actfr or email actfr_recruitment@act.gov.au.
ACTF&R firefighters need to work as effective members of a highly trained team.