

# Lesson Plan:

## Careers in the Fire Service

**Audience:** Early Adolescents

By the end of the lesson, the participants will be able to:

- articulate why the fire service is an attractive career option for many people.
- describe at least 3 different roles in the fire department.
- explain why fire prevention is an important role in the fire service.

### Teaching Tip:

Early adolescents thrive in interactive learning environments. Ask questions, take polls, use props, and conduct demonstrations to keep learners engaged in the lesson.

### Step 1: Introduction (5 Minutes)

- Introduce yourself, explain your connection to the community, and your role with the fire department.
- Establish the rules early to help connect with the young audience and maintain control. Let students know they should pay attention to the speaker at all time and be respectful during the lesson. Inform students that they can ask questions but they need to signal and be called on first.
- Let the classroom teacher know that you will need them to be present and assist as needed.

**HOOK:** When you finish school, you will have the chance to start a career. What kind of jobs have you thought about?

List students' responses on the board.

Tell the students that you think being a firefighter is the best job in the world. Firefighters rescue people from burning buildings, put out fires with big hoses, drive big rigs, face danger at every turn, and use cool tools! Tell them that you are going to show them firefighters in action.

Show video or photos of firefighters that is touching and humorous...such as rescuing ducklings like the one **found here**. This will likely get a laugh from the students and also show the human side of firefighters' everyday duties.

### Step 2: Body of the Presentation (20 minutes)

**Ask:** Aside from rescuing animals from storm drains, what do you think people who work at the fire department do when they go to work?

As students share responses, list them on the board.



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Here are some of the duties members of the fire department do every day:

- Put out fires
- Rescue people from burning buildings and vehicles
- Rescue people from vehicles using the jaws of life
- Teach children and adults how to stay safe from fire
- Inspect buildings to make sure they are safe
- Check and maintain vehicles, equipment, and the fire station
- Practice firefighting and rescue techniques
- Exercise to stay physically and mentally fit
- Look at plans of new buildings before construction starts
- Analyze data and information about why people need firefighters' help
- Complete incident reports to explain how firefighters respond to each emergency

Take some of the careers students listed, help them understand how these careers they listed are also roles that exist in the fire department.

For example, if you are thinking about

- a career that requires bravery, physical skill, and calm under pressure, think about being a line firefighter
- medical career, becoming a paramedic or EMT might interest you
- a career in architecture or engineering, Plans Reviewer might be a good choice
- a career where you get to work with the media, think about being a Public Information Officer
- being a teacher, maybe you would like to be a Fire and Life Safety Educator
- working with cars and trucks, maybe you would like to be a mechanical services technician.
- a career that requires good communication skills and a calm demeanor, think about being a dispatcher
- a job using new technology, you might look into becoming a fire department GIS coordinator
- a job that uses science and math to keep people safe, think about the fire protection engineer field
- a career that examines patterns in data and research, become a fire department data scientist
- working with business owners to make sure their properties are safe for people, think about being a fire marshal
- a career where you get to rescue people in the water, thinking about joining the search and rescue dive team
- a career where you get to encourage people to join the fire department, think about joining the recruitment team

Help students understand the connections between some of the jobs they are thinking about and some of the different fire department roles. Share a few sentences about each role as it is discussed.

Let the students know that there are many different roles in the fire department and it takes many people with varied backgrounds to run fire departments in large cities. While line firefighters have very important jobs, there are many other important positions in the fire department.

### Teaching Tip:

#### Customizing the Lesson

If your fire department has a video specific to your hiring process, include it in your lessons. Tell students about the hiring process in your community. Share information about junior firefighter programs in your city. Talk about the unique fire department roles in your city. This lesson includes descriptions of many fire department roles. Feel free to focus on the specific positions your department fills or discuss them all.



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**Ask:** What are some things that firefighters love about their jobs?

- Team-centered workplace
- Non-traditional work schedule
- Opportunities to continually train and learn
- Attractive salary and opportunities to advance

**Ask:** Do you think it is important for a fire department to have fire and life safety educators? Why?

Help students understand that while fire deaths and injuries have decreased year after year, it is still a substantial problem. We know that prevention efforts from fire departments are helping to reduce the amount of injuries and deaths from fires. This means the work of fire and life safety educators, fire marshals, plans reviewers, and many others coming together to help people stay safe.

**Ask:** Why do you think some fire departments have a recruitment unit?

It is important for fire departments to reflect the community members they are protecting. In some cities, there are not enough women or people of color in the fire department. Some fire departments work hard to increase diversity and support people who represent minority groups.

Let students know that working for the fire service is a very rewarding career. If they think they might want to join the department when they get older, they can start preparing now. In order to get a job at the fire department, they should continue to work hard in school and stay out of trouble.

### Step 3: Conclusion (3–5 minutes)

- REVIEW: Ask students to explain some roles in the fire service they didn't know about.
- REVIEW: Ask students why the fire service might be a good career choice.
- REMIND students that there are many factors to consider when choosing a career.
- REMIND the students that the qualities of a good firefighter are the same as being a good student and a healthy teenager: be a hard worker in class, be fit, don't get in trouble with the police, don't do drugs, etc.
- THANK the students for being attentive and respectful.
- THANK the teacher for allowing you to come in and address the students.

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