



TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE

BEING A FIREFIGHTER IN THE TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE

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Please disregard any earlier versions

THE CAREER OF A FIREFIGHTER

WHY BE A FIREFIGHTER?

Some of the reasons why our Firefighters enjoy their work

- "I'm someone who can be relied on to help anyone at anytime"
- "It's a job where I serve the community"
- "I'm part of a team of good workmates who look after each other"
- "We have the opportunity for promotion through training and career advancement"
- "It's a hands-on job where you can be working inside and outside"
- "The community really appreciates what we do"; and
- "There's hardly a dull moment. I love coming to work."

DUTIES OF A FIREFIGHTER

The Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) is a dynamic place to work. There is a broad range of work performed and we value the efforts and the role of our people in doing this work.

At the front line of our operations, firefighters perform a variety of challenging and rewarding tasks including:

- attending emergency incidents such as house fires, bush fires, road accidents and urban search and rescue;
- regular training to learn and maintain the skills you need in the job;
- educating the community in fire safety awareness;
- providing emergency care;
- maintaining appliances and equipment;
- maintaining health and fitness levels.

CAREER PATHS

Introduction

The TFS believes employees who are successful at gaining a job as a Trainee Firefighter are embarking on a career that should be personally rewarding. We invest a significant amount of time and effort providing opportunities to enable employees to further their careers.

A career in the firefighting industry is a career of learning. Movement between all positions in the career path requires the gaining and maintenance of competencies issued under a nationally recognised training package.

As part of your firefighting career, you will need to spend time undertaking study and assessments to complete and maintain these competencies. Whilst a significant amount of training occurs when on shift during allocated drill and work periods, you may need to make use of stand down time and when not at work to undertake personal study and revision.

The TFS actively encourages firefighters to move outside the brigade environment into areas such as training, community fire safety and volunteer management as part of their development. This exposure helps to create a greater understanding of the TFS, its role and the services we deliver to the community. It also helps firefighters to develop in the areas of leadership and strategic management.

Firefighter Career Path

The immediate career path for a Trainee Firefighter is to become a fully qualified firefighter. This is achieved when you reach the classification of Senior Firefighter. It will take at least 3 years of continually acquiring competencies and experience required by the TFS to reach this goal.

There are interim steps within this career path which are:

- Firefighter after 6 months – has gained the competencies required by the TFS and has 6 months experience;
- Firefighter after 12 months - has gained the competencies required by the TFS and has 12 months experience; and
- Firefighter after 24 months - has gained the competencies required by the TFS and has 24 months experience.
- First Class Firefighter - has gained the competencies required by the TFS and has 36 months experience.

The position of Senior Firefighter is the next position in the career path. The TFS requires all Firefighters to reach this classification. A Senior Firefighter is a First Class Firefighter who has gained a number of additional competencies required by the TFS.

Once you have become a Senior Firefighter, opportunities to develop a range of different career paths start to become available.

Leadership Career Path

Many firefighters choose the leadership career path. This career path provides greater responsibilities in the management of emergency incidents, people and resources within the Region.

The first step in this career path is to become a Leading Firefighter. A Senior Firefighter can achieve this position by completing a range of competencies and successfully participating in the Leading Firefighter Assessment Block which is usually held once a year.

A Leading Firefighter is qualified to Station Officer level, which is the first level of supervision in the TFS. A Station Officer is a crew leader and controls the response to an emergency incident. A Leading Firefighter becomes a Station Officer by successfully applying for a vacant position and being appointed on merit.

A Station Officer can gain further competencies to become a Senior Station Officer, who may manage a group of stations or a shift of Firefighters.

The leadership career path within the brigade continues with the position of District Officer. A District Officer may manage all the operations of a brigade, take on specialised management responsibilities within the brigade including district management and volunteer support, and learning and development. The career path culminates with the positions of Deputy Regional Chief and Regional Chief. The Regional Chief provides leadership and direction to all career and volunteer brigades within the geographical area of responsibility; North, South or North West. The Regional Chief is also the Brigade Chief, the head of the career brigade area and holds statutory responsibilities under the *Fire Service Act 1979*. The Deputy Regional Chief assists the Regional Chief with the strategic management of the Region.

There are opportunities to move into higher levels of management outside the region, including Deputy Chief Officer and Chief Officer, who is the head of the TFS.

Technical Specialist Career Path

Some Senior Firefighters and most Leading Firefighters and Station Officers develop their career into specialist areas within the brigade. These include:

- Breathing Apparatus
- Driver On & Off Road
- Emergency Care
- Various Rescue Disciplines (Rope, Confined Space, Trench, Urban Search and Rescue)

The role of the technical specialist is to train other firefighters, develop systems of work and training packages, and provide technical advice at emergency incidents.

Fire Investigation Career Path

All officers in career brigades are trained to investigate the causes of fires. There are times, however, when specialist fire investigators are required to do the investigation. This may be due to a fatality, a major industrial structural fire, a major risk to life or other special circumstances.

Specialist Fire Investigation Officers attend a fire scene soon after a fire, look for the source of the fire and search for evidence which will indicate the cause. Fire Investigation Officers prepare fire investigation reports and often appear as expert witnesses in court cases.

TFS has two specialist Fire Investigation Officers. You will need to have advanced to at least the position of Leading Firefighter to be able to apply for a position as a Fire Investigation Officer.

District Management and Volunteer Support Career Path

TFS has around 230 volunteer brigades throughout Tasmania. District management provides support and co-ordination to these brigades by helping with the managing of resources, assistance at emergency incidents, the co-ordination of training and the development of fire management plans.

Opportunities to move into this unit commence from Station Officer level.

Development and Learning Career Path

TFS role of providing emergency response and community safety services to the Tasmanian community requires our career and volunteer firefighters to be trained to undertake these activities. TFS is a Registered Training Organisation and provides and assesses nationally recognised competencies. Training Officers co-ordinate the delivery and assessment of training to both career and volunteer members. Except for some programs for volunteer members, the Training Officer does not undertake the actual delivery of training.

Opportunities to move into this unit commence from Station Officer level.

Community Fire Safety Career Path

The Community Fire Safety Division develops and implements strategies aimed at preventing fires in the first instance, and educating and training members of the community to respond appropriately to fires and other emergencies when they occur.

These services are provided to the community by Community Education, Building Safety, TasFire Training, TasFire Equipment and Bushfire Planning and Policy units.

TasFire Training

TasFire Training delivers a range of accredited training programs to the public and private sectors on a cost-recovery basis. This service improves safety in the workplace by training employees to handle emergencies effectively and safely.

Opportunities to move into this unit commence from Senior Firefighter level.

Community Education

Community Education improves fire safety in the community through education programs and publicity campaigns. Operational brigades are required to be active in community awareness and are supported by the Community Education Unit to deliver a range of fire safety education programs, predominantly through schools, community groups and charity organisations. Community Education also delivers some programs themselves, in particular the School Fire Education Program.

Opportunities to move into this unit commence from Senior Firefighter level.

Building Safety

The role of the Building Safety Unit is to improve fire safety in buildings. The primary focus is on reducing the incidence and impact of fire in health care facilities, licensed premises, schools, office buildings and factories. Fire safety in these buildings is achieved predominantly through the application and administration of building fire safety legislation, codes and standards.

Opportunities to move into this unit commence from Station Officer level.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Wage Rates

The wage rate paid to Firefighters is a composite rate. It includes all allowances, shift rates and penalties. The rate you will receive will depend on your classification.

The *Tasmanian Fire Fighting Industry Employees Award* and industrial agreement set the pay rates and conditions for firefighters. These can be found on the Tasmanian Industrial Commission website at www.tic.tas.gov.au by looking under public sector awards and public sector agreements. Current firefighter wage rates are shown below:

| Classification | From 1/12/2015 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Trainee Firefighter | \$55,577 |
| Firefighter after 6 months | \$59,282 |
| Firefighter after 12 months | \$62,988 |
| Firefighter after 24 months | \$66,693 |
| 1st Class Firefighter | \$74,103 |
| Senior Firefighter | \$77,808 |

Salary Sacrifice

You may salary sacrifice a portion of your salary to superannuation. Further details are available on the State Service Management Office web site:

http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/ssmo/employment_policy/salary_or_payroll_arrangements/salary_sacrifice

Superannuation

All Firefighters automatically become members of the Retirement Benefits Fund Tasmanian Accumulation Scheme (RBF-TAS), unless you elect to become a member of another complying superannuation scheme. As a member of RBF-TAS, the TFS will automatically deduct 5% superannuation contributions from your salary. You can elect, in writing to the TFS, to vary your contributions to a higher or lower rate, or not to contribute at all. The TFS also contributes to this scheme at a rate that varies from time to time. The minimum rate paid is currently 9.5%.

Hours of Duty

Firefighters are either rostered or non-rostered shift workers working a 38 hour week. The rostered shift cycle, however, requires an average of 42 hours per week to be worked over an eight-week cycle. Additional hours are compensated as part of salary or as leave days. The normal rostered shift cycle is as follows:

- Day 1 On Day Duty (8am to 6pm -10 hours)
- Day 2 On Day Duty (8am to 6pm -10 hours)
- Day 3 On Night Duty (6pm to 8am -14 hours)
- Day 4 On Night Duty (6pm to 8am -14 hours)
- Days 5, 6, 7 and 8 are Off Duty.

Firefighters may also be required to work periods of non-rostered shift work for up to 6 months. The hours during this period are to be worked over an 8 week cycle to average 320 hours. The usual pattern is to work 5 x 8 hour days or 4 x 10 hour days.

Overtime

Occasionally the TFS may require an employee to work reasonable overtime. Overtime is only to be worked with the prior approval of the TFS.

Recreation Leave

Rostered shift workers receive 52.25 consecutive days recreation leave each year. This leave is taken on a rotating leave roster. According to the current roster, you will have 32 days recreation leave every 7 months.

Non-rostered shift workers receive 28.25 working days recreation leave each year.

Personal Leave

An employee's leave entitlement is two weeks (10 occasions for non-rostered shift employees and rostered shift employees) full pay on appointment and an additional two weeks full pay credited on each subsequent anniversary of appointment. Personal leave can be taken for personal illness or injury or for the purposes of caring for an immediate family or household member. Medical certificates are required to be provided for all absences except for three separate single occasions per year or when personal leave is taken in excess of two consecutive days.

Parental Leave (Including maternity, paternity and adoption leave)

After twelve months continuous service, parents are entitled to a combined total of 52 weeks parental leave on a shared basis in relation to the birth or adoption of their child. For females, maternity leave may be taken and for males, paternity leave may be taken. Adoption leave may be taken in the case of adoption.

Parental leave can only be taken by one parent at a time, in a single unbroken period, however both parents can simultaneously take:

- maternity and paternity leave, an unbroken period of up to one week at the time of the birth of the child;
- adoption leave, an unbroken period of up to three weeks at the time of placement of the child.

Female Firefighters are also entitled to 12 weeks paid maternity leave and are able to access recreation and long service leave entitlements during the 52 week parental leave period.

Paternity leave for male firefighters is unpaid although employees may use recreation and long service leave (but not personal leave) as part of their paternity leave during the 52 week parental leave period. Paternity leave may not be taken if your partner has approved maternity leave from their employer.

Long Service Leave

You will be entitled to long service leave after 10 years service with the Tasmania State Service. Following the initial entitlement of 65 days, a further 6.5 days is credited annually. It is possible for long service leave accrued in some other jurisdictions, e.g. Commonwealth Government Departments to be transferred to your entitlement in the Tasmania Fire Service.

Smoke Free Workplace

The TFS does not allow smoking in any TFS motor vehicle or in or near any TFS building, except for designated smoking areas.

Uniforms and Protective Clothing

All Firefighters are issued with uniform and protective clothing at no cost to the individual. If any article is damaged in the course of work it will be replaced as soon as possible. Some clothing articles are issued annually. Others are issued on an "as and when required" basis.

Personal Presentation

The TFS has a standard for personal presentation that outlines the way firefighters need to present themselves when at work for safety and presentation reasons. In particular, there are limitations relating to hair, facial hair and jewellery to ensure they do not interfere with the safe wearing of personal protective equipment.

Transfers

Generally, Trainee Firefighters may be appointed permanently to the South, North or North West regions of the state at the conclusion of the 14-16 week Trainee Firefighter Development Program. In 2017, permanent roles will be available in the South, North and North West regions. It is unlikely TFS will facilitate permanent transfers to other regions.

TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE

The information in this section is intended to help introduce you to the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) by providing an overview of the organisation.

VISION & ROLE

The vision and role of an organisation sets out its long term aim and its purpose for existing.

In the TFS:

Our Vision is a Tasmanian community, safe from the impact of fire and other emergencies.

Our Role is to protect life, property and the environment from the impact of fire and other emergencies by:

- Providing an effective response to emergencies
- Promoting fire safety across the community.

TFS VALUES

At the core of the TFS is a set of basic values and behaviours that determines the way members work together. Typically, these values and behaviours are similar to what people uphold in everyday life, such as honesty, respect and trust.

TFS has developed a set of the core values that reflect the way in which we work. These values are:

Service

We value:

- Serving the Tasmanian community
- Being responsive to community needs
- Being progressive and delivering quality services

Professionalism

We value:

- Dedication and pride in our organisation
- Being skilled, efficient, committed and innovative
- Using our collective capabilities to deliver an excellent service
- Being accountable for our actions

Integrity

We value:

- Being trustworthy and ethical
- Treating each other fairly and honestly
- Having the courage to do the right thing

Consideration

We value:

- Each other
- Working together to achieve our goals
- Treating each other with respect and understanding
- Being supportive, compassionate and helping each other.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY

At the TFS we want a workforce where diversity in all areas is valued, particularly in the areas of gender and ethnicity. It is our view that the way we achieve our goals will be improved if we have people from a wide range of backgrounds and social groups that reflect the community and contribute to our organisation.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The TFS is committed to having a safe work place and safe systems of work.

The role of firefighter requires our employees to respond to emergencies and sometimes work in potentially hazardous situations. The TFS places great importance on ensuring its people are protected from injury by having:

- Effective occupational health and safety programs and practices;
- Continuous training to maintain competencies;
- Rigorous checking and maintenance of tools, equipment and appliances; and
- The best available personal protective equipment.

Each firefighter is responsible for looking after their own health and safety and the health and safety of the people with whom they work. No firefighter is expected to unreasonably risk their safety in performing the job.

Workers Compensation

Compensation is payable if you suffer personal injury by accident or are disabled as the result of an injury or disease arising out of your employment. You are covered by compensation while at work and while attending an approved TFS activity. You are not covered during your normal travel to and from work.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Any firefighter can seek confidential assistance from the EAP contract provider – Converge International (Phone: 1300 687 327 or email eap@convergeintl.com.au). Support is available for a wide range of issues including work-related, stress, financial or relationship issues.

Converge International is an organisation that specialises in assisting government and industry bodies by providing counselling services.

EAP services are normally limited to three visits free of charge. At the conclusion of three visits, referrals can be made to alternative providers, if necessary.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

The Tasmanian Emergency Services Critical Incident Stress Management Program was established in 1988 to support the State's emergency care providers, in the interest of staff health and wellbeing. Its purpose is to lessen the impact of "critical incidents", to minimise potential long term effects and to promote a healthy, supportive work environment. It provides a range of services to fulfil this purpose. All CISM Services are ***strictly confidential and no recording of the content of sessions is made.***

STATE SERVICE EMPLOYMENT

The TFS is part of the Tasmanian Government and the State Service. As a result, the TFS and its members are required to follow same State Service “rules” that cover other government agencies.

In particular, the TFS is covered by the *State Service Act 2000*, which includes a set of Principles and a Code of Conduct. As a part of the State Government, the way in which TFS members behave and work together needs to align with these State Service Principles and Code of Conduct.

State Service Principles

The State Service Principles provide a framework of how the State Service (e.g. TFS) operates and what people can expect from their dealings with the State Service.

For the TFS, basically the Principles say we should:

- have a workplace that is free from discrimination;
- give all members of the community an equal opportunity to join;
- select and promote people based on merit;
- develop leaders;
- encourage communication, consultation, co-operation and input from members;
- have a fair, safe and rewarding workplace;
- perform our tasks in an impartial, ethical and professional way;
- be accountable for our actions; and
- deliver our services to the community fairly.

Code of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct is adapted from the *State Service Act 2000* and sets reasonable and common sense standards for conduct and behaviour based on the Principles.

The following summarises how the Code of Conduct requires people to work:

- Behave honestly and with integrity;
- Act with care and diligence;
- Treat everyone with respect and without harassment, victimisation or discrimination;
- Comply with Australian Law;
- Uphold the Principles;
- Comply with TFS policies, procedures & instructions;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Avoid and disclose conflicts of interest;
- Use TFS resources in a proper manner;
- Not provide false or misleading information;
- Not improperly use information, status, power or authority; and
- Behave in a way that doesn't adversely affect the integrity and good reputation of the TFS.

WORKPLACE FEEDBACK SYSTEM

The TFS Workplace Feedback System is used to facilitate a discussion on an employee's performance and identify areas for development. The aims of the system include:

1. Letting people know how they are doing at work
2. Giving everyone recognition for what they are doing well
3. Set up development opportunities for each employee
4. Allow TFS to coordinate development activities for all employees

The Feedback System consists of normal daily feedback and 1-2 confidential meetings with your supervisor each year. The outcomes of the meeting will contribute towards your annual Personal Development Plan.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The TFS is an emergency service organisation represented by 234 brigades and support divisions. These brigades consist of 4 full-time career brigades and 230 volunteer and retained brigades strategically located in urban and rural population centres throughout the State.

Operations Division

The Operations Division is headed by the Deputy Chief Officer. The Division consists of three Regions with career and volunteer brigades, and State Operations. This division is responsible for ensuring the TFS delivers an effective and efficient emergency response service to the entire state.

Regions

The career brigades, volunteer brigades, officers and members are managed in each region by a team of career officers consisting of a Regional Chief, Deputy Regional Chief (South and North only), District Officers and Field Officers.

Districts & Regions

Brigades and Groups are formed into larger geographic areas referred to as Districts, and each District is part of a Region, which is the largest functional unit within the TFS. There are three regions and ten districts across the State.

Brigades

Each brigade is made up of a Brigade Chief, officers who lead the brigade, and members who may perform firefighting or other roles.

Career brigades are located in the cities of Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport and are represented by more than 285 full time firefighting personnel who are State Service employees in the TFS.

Operational Training

Each Region has an Operational Training Unit which has the role of planning, developing, supporting, and reviewing the implementation of learning and development strategies, including structured training programs, for both the career and volunteer members of the TFS.

State Operations

State Operations is responsible on a statewide basis for the development of policies and strategies, the review of fire management issues, and the co-ordination of emergency response activities through Firecomm (a 24 hour staffed communications facility). State Operations assists and supports Regional and District Officers in the implementation of fire management related functions and responsibilities, maintains and provides spatial and operational information, develops fire management tools and techniques, and assists in the co-ordination of activities in support of major incidents.

Planning and Capability

Planning and Capability has the responsibility to implement, monitor and improve operational systems of work, trial and implement new technology as it becomes available and increase the capability of the TFS through innovative thinking.

Fuel Reduction Unit (FRU)

The FRU is responsible for the regional coordination and implementation of the state-wide fuel reduction burning program to mitigate the impact of bushfire on Tasmanian fire management areas. This unit works closely with a variety of external stakeholders, including local land managers, Local Government, agency partners and the Regional Burn Coordination team.

OTHER DIVISIONS

In addition to the Operations Division, the two other major divisions within the TFS are Community Fire Safety and Business and Executive Services.

Community Fire Safety

The Community Fire Safety Division provides a range of services through the key business units: Community Education, Building Safety, TasFire Equipment, TasFire Training and Bushfire Planning and Policy.

Business and Executive Services

This division is based within the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management and provides a range of services and support including:

Information Services and Communications Technology

Finance and Physical Resources

Strategy and Support

People and Culture

TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE and DEPARTMENT OF POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

