

On-Call Firefighter

Employer Information guide



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service



join.essex-fire.gov.uk

Introduction

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has 51 fire stations. Of these 36 are on-call stations or are partly crewed by on-call firefighters.



Many of our on-call firefighters are in full time employment with local employers who are keen to support their community. They are just like any other employee, other than they may be on standby for some of their working hours. This means they could be called out at any time of the day or night to protect the community.

What are on-call firefighters?

On-call firefighters are ordinary men and woman from all walks of life, but they do an extraordinary job for the fire and rescue service and are integral to keeping their local fire station crewed and protecting the local community.

An on-call firefighter is 'on call' to respond to a range of emergencies. They are doing everyday jobs (for example, shop workers, office workers, mechanics, etc) until the pager goes off, then they become professional firefighters.

On-call firefighters are a vital part of today's fire and rescue service. They provide an effective, efficient service that gives emergency cover to more than 90% of the United Kingdom.

Could you release an employee to become an on-call firefighter?

We know that releasing an employee to become an on-call firefighter is a big decision. It could not happen without your agreement and you need to know how it would work for you to make an informed decision and feel confident about supporting your community in this way.

This information guide aims to provide you with information to decide whether or not this is something you could consider doing for your community, but of course we are available to discuss this further if you need more information.

Gain local recognition and raise business profile

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The benefits to you and your organisation

Employing a firefighter could improve the reputation of your business, set you apart from your competitors, increase the productivity of your staff and save money.

On-call firefighters are highly trained professionals who can bring added value to your business. They gain many transferable skills with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service which can be useful in any workplace.

Increased business publicity

We run regular articles on on-call firefighters and their supporting primary employers, which feature on our website and social media accounts. This can help gain greater publicity for your business.

We can also provide you with a graphic for your website to highlight the fact that you employ an on-call firefighter in your community.

Personal Skills

On-call firefighters learn many skills, which can be useful in any workplace. They learn how to work well in a team, take responsibility and use their initiative, be proactive, and keep calm in a crisis. Being a firefighter also requires commitment and self-discipline.

Motivated, committed employees

On-call firefighters tend to be committed to the community they serve, which means that they are more likely to be dedicated and long serving members of staff.

Employees able to fulfil their ambitions and potential are usually happier and more productive in the workplace. Firefighters must be highly motivated to take on the tasks and this motivation will help them in everything they do.

Highly trained and skilled employees

Firefighters must be able to deal with a whole range of situations. They never quite know what they might find when they respond to an emergency so they are more likely to be able to cope with the ups and downs of working life.

Emergency Skills

Firefighters are qualified in first aid and trauma care, clinically governed and accredited. This will help to keep other employees safe but also contribute to legal obligations for first aid cover, cutting the cost of your training.

Large Goods Vehicle Training

A large number of firefighters are trained to drive fire engines, which includes obtaining a Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) licence. They also receive Emergency Fire Appliance Driver training (EFAD); this is similar to an advanced driving test in that it raises their awareness of road conditions.

Manual Handling Training

Firefighters are trained by a recognised instructor in the correct procedures to be adopted when lifting or moving items. The training involves learning techniques that could prevent injuries occurring.

Health and Safety Training

Risk assessments and hazards are part of firefighter's training so they can support Health and Safety officers in meeting their obligations and improve the safety of staff.



How often are on-call firefighters called out?

Of course we are unable to predict exactly how often an individual firefighter might get called out and it also depends on their hours of availability, but the table overleaf provides you with a guide as to how many times a week each station attended an emergency incident over a 14 month period between 2015 and 2017. This includes the whole week - days, evenings and overnight.

Station	No. of calls per week	Station	No. of calls per week	Station	No. of calls per week
Billericay	5	Halstead	6	South Woodham Ferrers	4
Braintree	12	Hawkwell	3	Stansted	4
Brentwood	16	Ingatestone	1	Thaxted	1
Brightlingsea	1	Leaden Roding	1	Tillingham	1
Burnham	1	Maldon	7	Tiptree	3
Canvey	6	Manningtree	2	Tollesbury	1
Coggeshall	2	Newport	2	Waltham Abbey	5
Clacton	18	Old Harlow	2	Weeley	3
Dovercourt	4	Ongar	1	West Mersea	1
Dunmow	6	Rochford	4	Wethersfield	1
Epping	4	Saffron Walden	5	Wickford	3
Frinton	4	Shoeburyness	4	Witham	7
Great Baddow	6	Sible Hedingham	1	Wivenhoe	2

Take a look at the map to the right. Is your business close to any of the on-call stations? The chances are you rely on on-call firefighters much more than you might think.

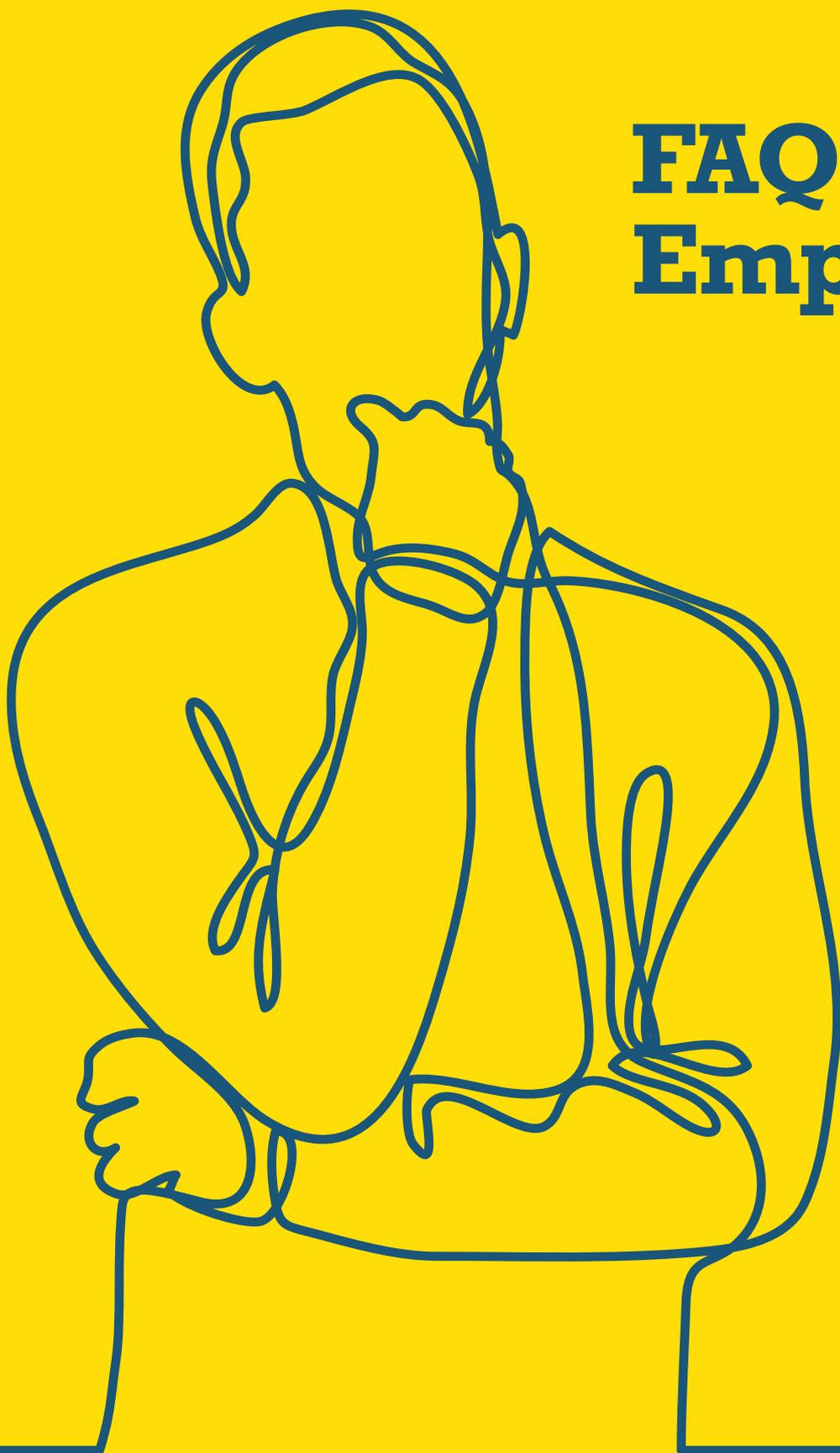


Great Baddow, Waltham Abbey and South Woodham Ferrers will convert to on-call stations by April 2020.

Clacton will convert one fire engine to on-call by April 2020.

- Wholetime duty system
- On-call duty system

FAQs for Employers





Do I have to release staff to attend emergencies if it doesn't suit the company on that day?

No. Employees are only available for duty when they book on-call as available. If they say they are available, they will be expected to respond to the call. This is why it is essential to agree when you have capacity to release staff before they log in as available. Your needs as the primary employer will always be a priority.

What will it cost me?

There are no direct costs to supporting an employee to be an on-call firefighter. However, there may be some indirect costs to your business. For example if you have to fill in while your employee responds to an emergency call out or attends training, but we hope the benefits will outweigh the inconvenience.

Will training take place in working hours?

Most training takes place on a drill night and at weekends. Any training that has to be completed during business hours is planned well in advance to allow employees to make arrangements with employers.

What support is available should I have any questions?

Each on-call station has a Watch Manager and a Station Manager. These managers will be your point of contact and help support you through the early days of appointing your employee, as well as providing ongoing support and assistance as and when required.

What happens if my employee has been at an incident all night, will they still be in work the next day? If not, am I expected give them paid leave?

We would not expect this to be a frequent issue, but this is something you would need to clarify with your employee before you agree to release them for on-call duty.



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