

Fire Science*

Law, Public Safety and Security Career Cluster

(AAS Non-Transfer Degree & Certificate)

SAN JUAN COLLEGE

NATURE OF WORK

Rapidly responding to a variety of emergencies is how firefighters protect the public against dangers. They are possibly the first emergency personnel at the scene of a traffic accident or medical emergency. Firefighters may be asked to put out a fire, treat injuries or perform other vital functions. Firefighters have the satisfaction of helping others in need and the frustration of responding to calls where people hurt themselves or others because of carelessness or a foolish act.

WORKING CONDITIONS

When on duty firefighters spend much of their time at fire stations, which usually have features common to a residential facility like a dormitory. Since firefighters spend a lot of time with their co-workers they usually develop a family feel to their relationship with them. At the station firefighters will spend time cleaning the rooms, the fire trucks and equipment; cook meals and eat as a family; go to training classes and work out to keep in top shape. Firefighters respond rapidly, when the alarm sounds, regardless of the weather or hour. Firefighters work longer and a wider variety of hours than most workers do. They also must wear protective gear that can be very heavy and hot.

TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS

To become a municipal firefighter an applicant generally must have a high school diploma, pass a written exam and a test of strength, have good physical stamina, coordination and agility. There is a medical examination that includes drug screening. The completion of college courses in fire science may improve an applicant's chance for appointment. In recent years an increasing proportion of entrants have had some postsecondary education. Most fire fighters work on getting their certification as an EMT. Many fire departments have tuition reimbursement plans for their employees to get advanced training in this field.

JOB OUTLOOK

People are attracted to firefighting because of the challenge and opportunity to perform an essential public service. Employment for firefighters is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2018 as fire departments continue to compete with other public safety providers for funding and because of a large number of retiring firefighters. Some rural areas have a difficult time attracting the firefighters they need for their communities safety.

CAREER OPTIONS

Fire Fighter, Engineer, Fire Lieutenant, Fire Captain, Battalion Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Fire Chief, and Fire Prevention and Code Inspectors

ESTIMATED SALARY RANGE

Farmington —\$31,500 - 38,360
New Mexico — \$24,620 - \$38,920
Nationally — \$53,280—\$86,330

RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Emergency medical technician, police, paramedic, detective.

SJC Basic Program Details

The Fire Science program is designed to give students the essential education and hands-on training needed for a career in firefighting. Students will receive the basic concepts of firefighting and will participate in actual hands-on evolutions that will give them real experience in the firefighting career field. The program is extremely physically demanding and requires participants to successfully complete evolutions where the students operate in one of the most aggressive atmospheres that a human being can survive.



For further information go to:

www.sanjuacollege.edu/pages/158.asp
www.bls.gov/oco/ocos329.htm



* Most of this information is from the Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-2011

Reviewed on March 2, 2010