

Employer's Information Pack

On-call firefighters



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together to improve community safety

www.cambsfire.gov.uk



Contents

- 3 | Introduction
- 4 | On-call station locations
- 5 | What are 'on-call firefighters'?
- 6 | How do on-call firefighters already help my business?
- 7 | We need on-call firefighters
- 8-9| Employer benefits
- 10 | 'Primary employment'
- 11 | Initial training
- 12 | FAQs
- 13 | Find out more

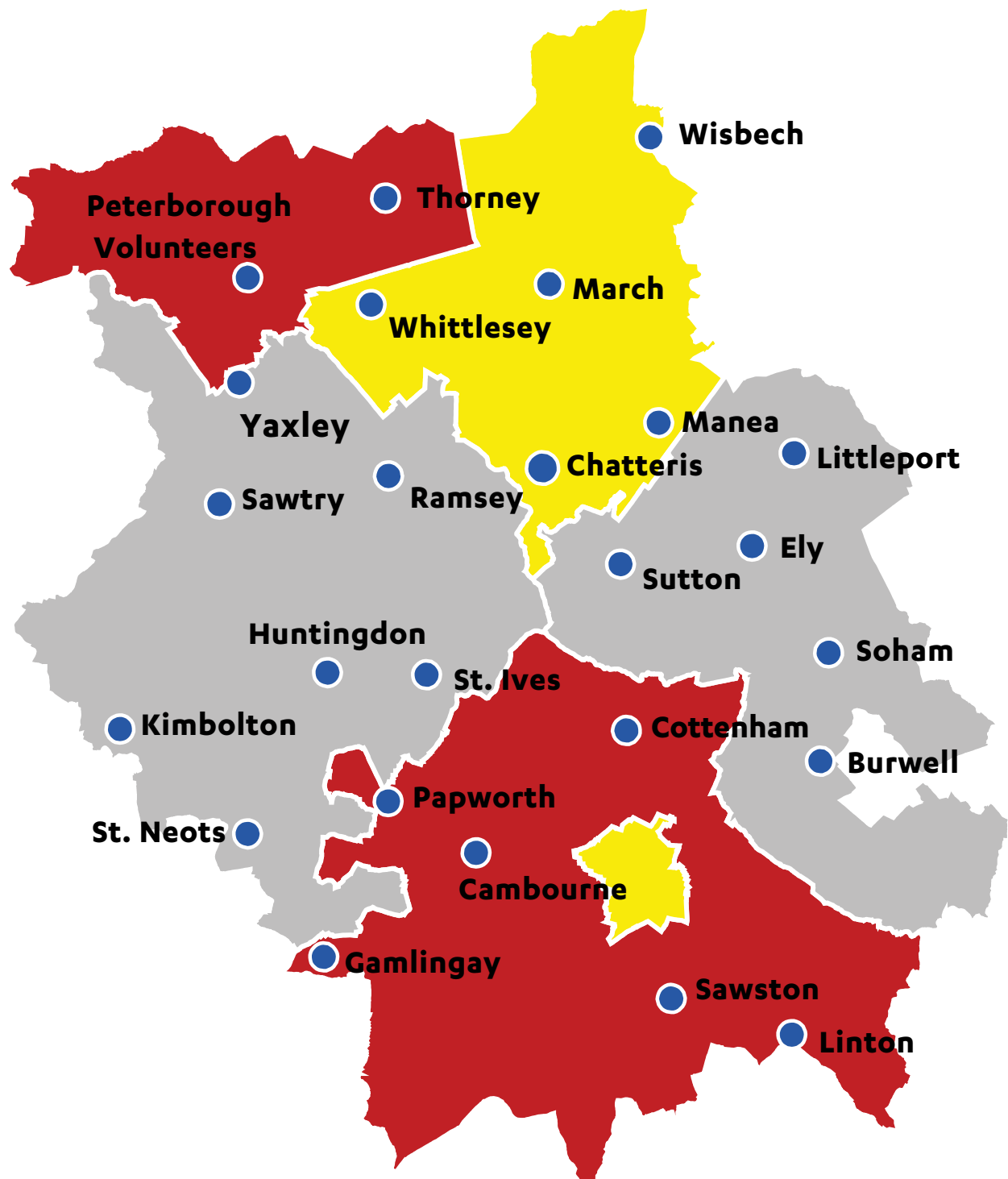


Introduction

This information pack is intended to give you an insight into the role of an on-call firefighter and a realistic understanding of both the benefits and impacts that this could have on your business.

On-call station **locations**

Is your business or home close to any of these on-call fire stations?
You may rely on our on-call firefighters more than you think.



What are 'on-call firefighters?'

In some parts of Cambridgeshire there are fewer emergency incidents – around two to three a week. Therefore, it doesn't make economic sense for taxpayers' money to be used for wholetime firefighters across the entire county. Instead, the fire service has 'on-call' fire stations, which are crewed by on-call firefighters. These firefighters are fully trained members of staff who carry out their day just like anyone else; some work in supermarkets, others as dentists, butchers, mechanics, factory operatives, teaching assistants, and carers. Others are retired or full time parents.

They each carry a pager while they're 'on-call', which alerts them when a 999 call for the fire service is received in the local area. When this happens, they go to the fire station, change into their fire kit, and become a crew of professional firefighters, ready to handle any type of emergency.



Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service has a total of 28 fire stations.

20 of these are staffed entirely by on-call firefighters.

How do on-call firefighters already help **my business?**

Have you ever thought about what might happen if there was a fire at your business?

If you had a fire today, and your local fire station didn't have enough firefighters, **the next available crew could take longer to arrive.**

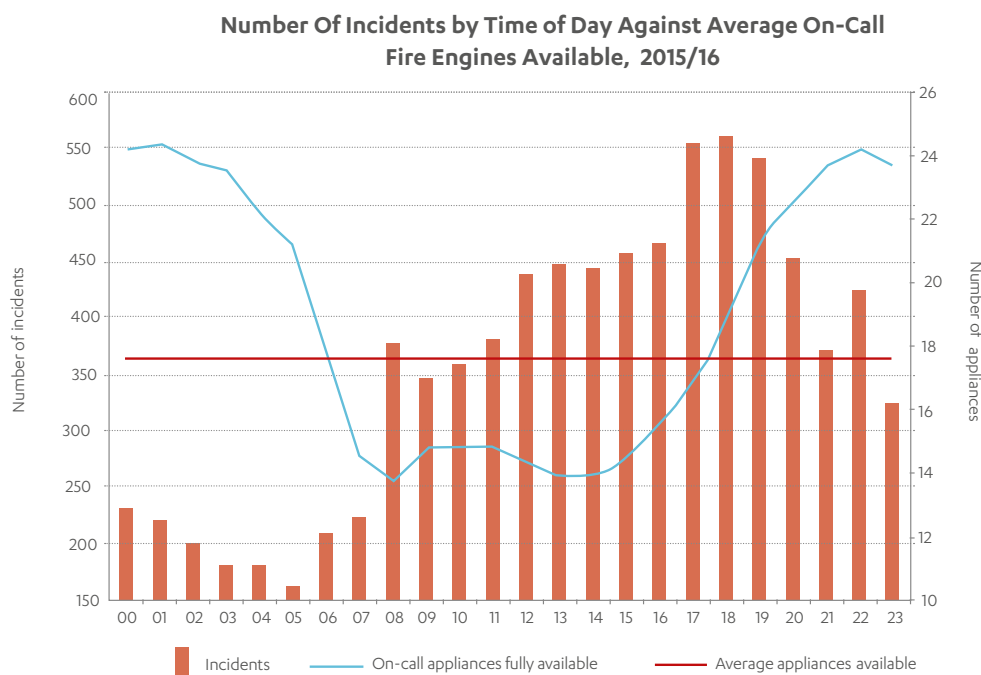


Industrial Estate Fire in St.Ives 2016

On-call firefighters were vital at this fire at an industrial estate in St Ives. Firefighters arrived to find a well-developed fire in a two-storey industrial unit that had spread to the roof, and was starting to spread to nearby buildings.

Crews from nine stations, eight of which were on-call, were able to stop the spread of the fire to a number of neighbouring businesses and industrial units that were in very close proximity. Without on-call firefighters, this fire could easily have been a lot worse.

We need **on-call firefighters**



As you can see from the graph above, our demand peaks from 8am-10pm. However, on-call availability falls significantly from the hours of 6am-6pm. **The Service is having particular difficulty in keeping on-call fire engines fully crewed during the day.** One of the main reasons for this is on-call firefighters being unable to provide cover during their primary working hours.

By allowing staff to be 'on-call' during daytime hours, you will be positively contributing to the safety of your local community by **helping us keep more of our fire engines available.**

So how does it work?

Just because your staff are 'on-call' during work, it doesn't mean they'll definitely be called out. They're just on standby to attend an incident should they be needed.

On-call firefighters agree to be available for a certain number of hours a week and carry a pager during these hours. When on-call, firefighters must remain within a five minute travel time of the fire station.

If they are on-call while at their primary employer, they leave work and travel to the fire station to attend the incident. On-call firefighters are encouraged to keep in contact with their employers during an incident (when it is safe to do so), so employers will know when it's likely to expect them back.

We are mindful of employers' needs and ensure our on-call firefighters consider their primary employment a priority - any on-call hours they can provide us are made in agreement with their managers.

Employer **benefits**

Allowing your employees to become on-call firefighters can **improve the reputation of your business and sets you apart from your competitors.**

It can also increase the productivity of your staff and even save you money.

Training

First Aid training

Firefighters learn first aid to a high standard. This can help keep other employees safe, but also contributes to legal obligations for first aid cover - cutting the cost of training.

Large Goods Vehicle training

A percentage of firefighters are trained to drive a fire engine via Large Goods Vehicle training.

They also receive Emergency Fire Appliance Driver training (EFAD), which is similar to an advanced driving test in that it raises their awareness of road conditions.

Typical LGV courses provided by the Driving Standards Agency (DVA) costs £850.

Manual Handling training

All firefighters are trained by a recognised instructor in the correct procedures to be adopted when lifting or moving items.

The training involves learning simple techniques that prevent injuries occurring. A typical Manual Handling course provided by the HSE Directive costs £400.

Health and Safety training

Risk assessments and hazards are all part of the training for firefighters. This enables them to support health and safety officers in meeting their obligations and improve the safety of all your staff.

A one day IOSH course (the chartered body for Health and Safety Professionals) costs £510.





Skills

Motivated staff

Staff that are able to fulfill their ambitions and their potential are happier, and more productive at work.

Firefighters are highly motivated to carry out their role, and this motivation will help them in everything that they do.

Committed employees

Being a firefighter takes commitment, no one takes the role lightly. Committed firefighters are committed people.

Trained to deal with anything

Firefighters are able to deal with a whole range of tough situations - they never know what they'll come across during an incident.

Publicity

Enhance the reputation of your business

Allowing your employees to become on-call firefighters shows your business:

- is different from its rivals
- is involved in, and cares for, the needs of the community
- is fully compliant with health and safety, and fire regulations
- encourages the ambitions of its workforce
- shows sincere corporate social responsibility.

On-call firefighters know a lot about the places they work, should the worst happen and a fire occur at your business, **a firefighter with working knowledge of the building is invaluable.**

'Primary **employment**'



We greatly rely on the partnerships we build with local employers, and their commitment to allowing their staff to be released during their normal working day.

We appreciate the disruption this could cause, and so we aim to ensure everyone is fully aware of the commitment prior to agreeing for any staff to be released.

You will always be the '**primary employer**' and as such, have priority over the working time of your staff.

We endeavour to explain to all potential and current on-call firefighters the impact being on-call can have on their primary employment, and that this should be taken into consideration when making themselves available for duties.

If, for example, you need your member of staff to work a Saturday morning due to low staff levels, that employee should **book off from on-call duties**.

Initial **training**

Firefighters must be well trained, skilled, and knowledgeable if they are to work safely and effectively in the wide range of operational incidents they are called upon to attend.

Each on-call firefighter attends a 10 week training course, which will be a mixture of days, weekends, and evenings. After this training, they become fully professional, operational firefighters.

You will be involved at every stage, ensuring that you have the dates for their training well in advance.

We encourage our on-call recruits to take this training from their holiday entitlement, or as unpaid leave from their primary employer, so as to **impact your business as little as possible.**



Frequently Asked Questions

What if an employee is out all night at an incident and is unfit for work the next day?

Firefighters no longer remain at incidents for long periods. It is recognised that extended periods of exertion can lead to accidents through tiredness and lack of concentration. At prolonged incidents, staff are relieved of their duties every three hours.

If my employee gets called out, will I know how long they will be gone for?

Every fire engine has a mobile phone on board, and our on-call firefighters are encouraged to use this facility to estimate a return time for their employer as soon as they can.

What if my employee gets injured while at an incident?

Thankfully, this is a rare occurrence. However, if this does happen, the Service has policies in place for compensating on-call firefighters for any loss of earnings after Statutory Sick Pay.

Our employees are on-call already for my business. How would this work?

If you need your employee to be on-call for business reasons, then they would not be able to give us any hours while they are on-call for you.

The average time an on-call crew are away at an incident is 59 minutes.

Find out **more**

Becoming an employer of an on-call firefighter is a big step for any organisation - large or small.

For this reason, we want to make sure that you have a realistic understanding of the commitments and benefits that this may pose for your business.

If you would like to find out more about becoming an employer of an on-call firefighter, contact the **Recruitment Team** on **01480 444500**.

Our Recruitment Team will be able to discuss this further with you, and will be able to advise you on the members of staff in your organisation that would be most suitable for the role.

We can also put you in contact with existing employers of on-call firefighters so that you can be sure that this is the right step for your business.



www.cambsfire.gov.uk

