



BC Wildfire Service-Junior Firefighter Program

Vernon Fire Zone

Every summer the Vernon Fire Zone hires 2-3 students to work with us for the summer. It is an opportunity for students to learn what it takes to be a wildfire fighter in BC. They will spend the summer working on the fire base, training with the crews, and gaining wildfire experience. We are accepting applications from all Grade 12 students in SD22. The timeline and information about the program are as follows:

Application Schedule:

- Application Deadline: Resume and Cover Letter Submitted to Career Coordinator by March 31st.
- Interviews: April 7th – 11th
- Training: April 28th – May 4th
 - Training will be every day after school this week plus 2 weekend days, 7 days total.
- Job Offers: By May 7th
- Start Date: June 30th

Application

The application requires a resume & cover letter submission. The successful candidates will be invited to an interview. The maximum length of the application is 2 pages for the resume and 1 page for the cover letter.

Some good points to highlight are in the cover letter/resume:

- Work experience
- Academic achievements
- Athletic achievements
- Any hobbies, interests, or other extra-curricular activities

Interview

The interview is based on the Provincial interview all new recruits go through and will consist of technical questions relating to BCWS firefighter programs, and behavioural competency questions. Interviews are typically 30-45 minutes.

Information on technical questions can be found at: bcwildfire.ca > Wildfire Response

It is recommended applicants study all the subpages found here as a wide variety of technical questions may be on the interview.

Information on behavioural competencies in the public service: [Behavioural Competencies in the Public Service](#)

Students should research the STAR method of answering behavioural questions as it is the preferred method.

Training

Successful applicants will be contacted mid-April and invited take part in 1 week of training consisting of basic firefighter skills and knowledge. This is mandatory training that all BC Wildfire Service firefighters must complete.

Training will consist of:

- Daily group fitness during the week of training. Being a wildfire fighter is a physically demanding job and requires a high level of fitness to be able to work safely and effectively.
- Jr. Firefighters need to perform the same fitness test as all wildland firefighters across Canada. The fit test, which is an employment requirement, is called the **WFX-FIT** and more information can be found at www.cifffc.ca/standards/wfx-fit/wfx-fit-test. There is an intensive 6-week training program that can be found on the website. Note: The fitness training program is a suggestion and has good material contained within it. Many other fitness regimes will satisfy the requirements of the WFX-FIT test.
- Course work which is a requirement for the position includes:
 - S-100 Basic Fire Suppression and Safety
 - S-185 Fire Entrapment Avoidance
 - S-232 Portable Pumps and Water Delivery Systems
 - S-270 Helicopter Use and Safety
 - S-212 Fire Line Communication
 - Wildfire Weather
 - Wilderness Survival Awareness
 - WHMIS and Transportation of Dangerous Goods

Cost:

There is **no cost** associated with the training program. Everything is provided by BC Wildfire Service. The only cost is for successful candidates who are required to have a minimum of OFA Level 1 and Transportation Endorsement, as well as a pair of suitable Vibram soled boots, the same as all firefighters in BC. The cost to obtain OFA Level 1 and Transportation Endorsement certification is approx. \$250. Successful applicants are required to have these certifications prior to their start date and should contact the Vernon Zone for recommendations on boots prior to purchasing any.

Work Term:

Successful applicants will receive a job offer the second week of May. Their start date is June 30th, that date will be confirmed when the employment offer is made. The work term for a junior firefighter is July-August. Depending on the fire load, there may be an opportunity to extend into September, but the employee can decline that offer without consequence.

Additional Information:

There are some restrictions to employment as a Jr firefighter due to safety, training, and supervision implications such as:

- If a fire advances to Rank 3 + the Incident Commander/Operations will have the Jr. disengage the area of Rank 3 (high intensity fire moving into the crown with organized flame front – fire is in the tree canopy) and relocate them to an area on the incident with lower fire behaviour.
- Helicopter Hover Exit Operations. This is an advanced operation and spring training will already be completed by the Junior's hire date. If a fire requires a hover exit, the certified members will conduct the exit and build a helipad to accommodate noncertified personal to access the incident.
- We are a regional, provincial, national, and at times international response agency. Juniors are authorized to work at the regional and provincial level but can **not** deploy out of province or country.
- The standard operating procedures state that a **Junior Firefighter must always be under the supervision and accompanied by a supervisor who has had a pre-screened criminal record check prior to supervising youth employees.** If a situation arises where the Jr's are under different supervision then the direct supervisor, the Zone staff may hold back the Jr. employee until that documentation is complete.
- Expectations are that Jr. staff work Mon-Fri 08:30-16:30 regardless of fire activity - same as other crew staff during the duration of their hire.
- Both the Initial Attack and Unit Crew programs have standby, evening, and weekend overtime requirements, depending on the fire hazard and current fire load.
- Unit Crew (UC) Deploy to expanded attack (large) fires and can work up to 14 consecutive days with a 3 day off as an operational "reset". Average days on a fire are 12hrs, but 14-16 hr days are not unheard of, and depending on fire activity and risk to values may work up to 24 hrs before getting 8 hrs free and clear of duties. Standby requirements are 6 hrs after shift known as MINS and the crew has **1 hr to arrive at the base.**
- Initial Attack (IA) – are the first responders to all new wildfires. They do deploy onto large, expanded attack fires as well. They can work up to a combination of 28 days of standby or 17 days of overtime, which ever is first. Rarely will IA be alerted for 28 consecutive days but its not unheard of. Standby may be MINS @ 6hr post shift, MODS @ 6hrs pre/post shift, MAXES @ 24 hr alert with a **30 min response time to arrive at base.** Some shifts can go beyond 24hrs until relief resources are in place.
- It is recommended that the juniors have a valid driver's licence and access to a vehicle to be able to respond. We have had juniors in the past depend on parents for transportation to the Zone office; however, this can be a large commitment for parents as they would need to be available (on the same standby schedule) to provide this transport. Also, there may instances where the crew is returning from a fire at any time within a twenty-four-hour cycle i.e. 3:00am.
- It is also recommended the Jr. Firefighter owns or has access to a cell phone for callouts and continual communication. BC Wildfire provides radios but not cell phones/work phones.

- If the junior applicant is invited to the training program but is not successful with obtaining one of the vacancies, BC Wildfire service provides them a letter of completion stating the training/certificates achieved. This may help the applicant if interested in applying for a Type 2 or 3 contract crew (non-Ministry fire crew) or any other type of employment.
- Our Junior Fire program is designed to challenge students, entering the work force. If the candidate is not successful in obtaining a position, the application process is remarkably similar too what a regular candidate experiences to become a regular staff member. Having gone through the Jr. application process will set the individual up for success if they choose to apply outside of the Jr. program.
- We work closely with the school's program coordinators to minimize impacts to students' studies during the training week.
- Once the season is complete and the Jr. would like to remain as an employee, they will need to re-apply as per the regular process and attend our full **New Recruit Boot Camp** the following year. They will have an advantage over the other candidates with the previous year's exposure to the job, understand the fit test requirements, and the Zone office staff can endorse the Jr. through the various stages; as there has already been significant investment into the development of the Jr. Firefighter already.
- **Compensation:** While employed with BC Public Service as a Jr. Firefighter, the classification is YEP 1 (Youth Employment Program) at a wage of \$20.19 /hr with overtime & standby opportunity. Standby is compensated at 1/3 the hourly wage per hour and overtime is 1.5x for the first 2 hours and 2x for all hours after.
- **Location:** the training program is located at **Vernon Fire Zone @ 235 Bailey Rd. Vernon BC.** Bottom of the road below Predator Ridge Golf course/Sparkling Hill Resort. This is where the term of employment will be as well. Parking is limited and will be busy at the time of arrival*

Contact Information:

Ambler Gregoire:

- Phone: (250) 540-3713
- Email: Ambler.Gregoire@gov.bc.ca

Wayne Price

- Phone: (778) 694-9780
- Email: Wayne.Price@gov.bc.ca



Or contact your Career Counsellor for more information.

Thank you for your interest in the BC Wildfire Service Junior Firefighter Program!