



Firefighters

Control and extinguish fires or respond to emergency situations where life, property, or the environment is at risk. Duties may include fire prevention, emergency medical service, hazardous material response, search and rescue, and disaster assistance.

For terms and definitions in this profile, see [definitions of major terms](#).

Cognitive and mental requirements

The qualifications that workers need to use judgement, make decisions, interact with others, and adapt to changes in jobs.

In 2025, more than basic people skills were required for 95.4 percent of firefighters. Basic people skills were required for 4.6 percent.

Table 1. Percentage of firefighters with cognitive and mental requirements, 2025

Requirement	Yes	No
Ability to pause work (and take brief unscheduled breaks)	<5	>95
Supervising others	10.6	89.4
Supervisor present in immediate work area	82.3	17.7
Telework routinely allowed	<0.5	>99.5
Work schedule varies	92.2	7.8
Working around crowds	52.6	47.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

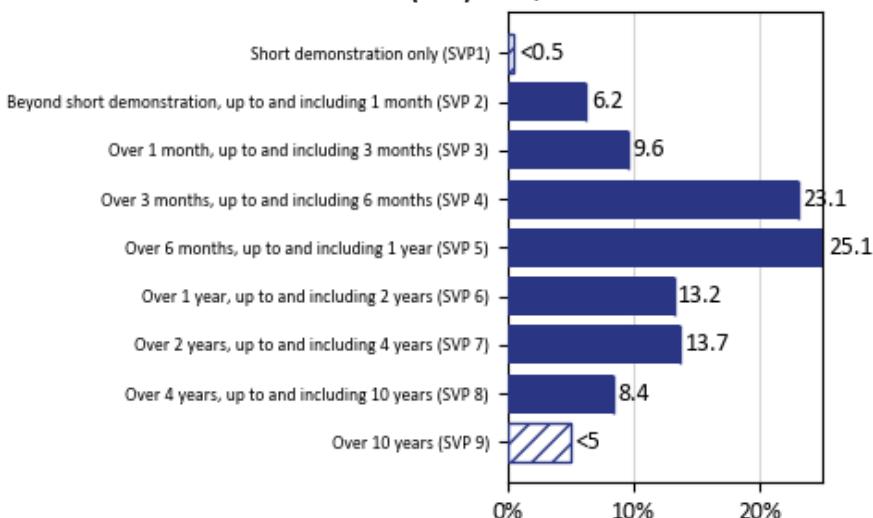
Education, training, and experience requirements

The minimum level of formal education required, credentials necessary, on-the-job training, and prior work experience necessary for average performance in jobs. The time associated with these requirements is combined to calculate the specific vocational preparation level needed for the job.

In 2025, an educational certificate was required for 46.2 percent of firefighters. Prior work experience was required for 26.2 percent and on-the-job training was required for 46.2 percent.

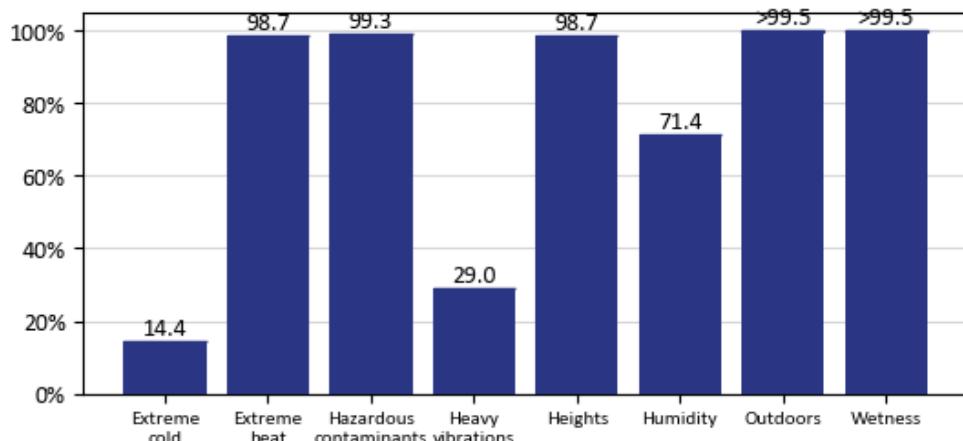
A high school diploma was required for 92.8 percent of firefighters.

Chart 1. Percentage of firefighters by specific vocational preparation (SVP) level, 2025



Note: Striped bars represent range estimates where precise value is unpublished.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

Chart 2. Percentage of firefighters with exposure to environmental conditions, 2025



Note: Striped bars represent range estimates where precise value is unpublished.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

Environmental conditions

The various hazards or difficulties that are in the area where workers perform their critical tasks.

In 2025, a quiet noise exposure was present for less than 0.5 percent of firefighters. Another 80.0 percent were exposed to moderate noise, 20.0 percent were exposed to loud noise, and less than 0.5 percent to very loud noise. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was used by 52.2 percent of workers to mitigate noise exposure and was not used by 47.8 percent.

Physical demands

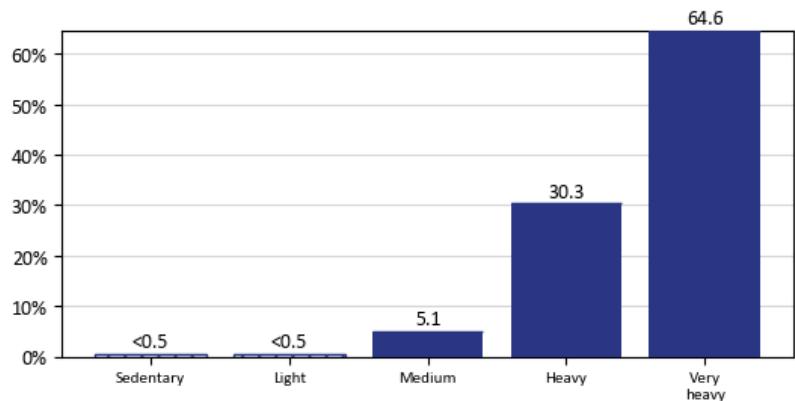
The physical activities required to perform tasks in jobs. The presence and, in some cases, duration of these activities are published.

In 2025, reaching at or below the shoulder was required for greater than 99.5 percent of firefighters and was not required for less than 0.5 percent. For 3.0 percent of workers, reaching at or below the shoulder was seldom required, for 71.7 percent reaching at or below the shoulder was occasionally required, for 25.3 percent reaching at or below the shoulder was frequently required, and for less than 0.5 percent reaching at or below the shoulder was required constantly.

Performing work in low postures was required for greater than 99.5 percent of firefighters and was not required for less than 0.5 percent. For 67.1 percent of workers crawling was required to perform low work, 63.3 percent were required to crouch, 64.2 percent required kneeling, and stooping was required for 55.7 percent.

On average, firefighters spent 43.3 percent of the workday sitting and 56.7 percent of the workday standing.

Chart 3. Percentage of firefighters by strength level requirements, 2025



Note: Striped bars represent range estimates where precise value is unpublished.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey

Table 2. Percentage of firefighters with physical demands, 2025

Requirement	Yes	No
Ability to choose to sit or stand for tasks	<0.5	>99.5
Climbing structure-related ramps or stairs	97.7	2.3
Driving	72.8	27.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Requirements Survey