

CIFC (Connecticut Interstate Fire Crew) Frequently Asked Questions

Important Dates (*please note that dates are approximate and subject to change year to year*)

November	Applications Open
December	Application Deadline
2 nd week of April	Work Capacity Test
May or June	4 Day Wildland Fire Training: 40 hours
May or June	RT-130 (Refresher Training): 8 hours

Who is qualified to apply?

The opportunity to become a member of the Connecticut Interstate Fire Crew (CIFC) is offered to Department of Energy and Environmental Protection **Contiguous Employees** and **Private Individuals** who are able to meet the following qualification standards:

- Be in excellent physical condition and able to pass the *Work Capacity Test* annually.
- As a first-time applicant, be able to take the 4 day overnight *Wildland Fire Training*.
- As a returning applicant, be able to take the 8 hour *Annual Refresher Training*.
- Available for firefighting assignments ranging in length from one day to 18 days, usually March through October but in the last few years the season has stretched into December. *There is generally short notice of these assignments.*
- Pay rate for out of state fires in 2019 was \$18.64/hour straight time.
- Applicants must submit a Medical Screening information (HSQ) and Informed Consent form with their application, and must receive medical clearance (if needed) prior to physical testing

What is an AD?

An **Administratively Determined** worker. All private individuals mobilized on a CIFC crew are assigned status as an Administratively Determined Federal Emergency Worker in accordance with the United States Department of the Interior.

What can I expect on the CIFC Application?

All applicants are required to submit the CT Interstate Fire Crew Application, which is a single page outlining the applicant's name, employer, home address, emergency contact information, a Health Screen Questionnaire (HSQ) and Informed Consent form prior to taking the Work Capacity Test.

Following the initial CT Interstate Fire Crew Application:

State employees are required to submit an Interstate Fire Crew Signature form specifying the division, bureau, work location, supervisor etc. as it applies to their position with the State. This must be signed and submitted with all other forms by the application deadline.

Private individuals are required to submit a full package of supplemental materials including but not limited to State and Federal W-4 tax forms, I-9 Form for verification of identity and

employment eligibility, a Direct Deposit sign-up form for payment and a Vendor Code Information Sheet.

What is a Work Capacity Test?

The **Work Capacity Test**, also known as the “Pack Test”, is a mandatory physical test consisting of a 3 mile hike over level terrain while carrying a 45 pound pack. To qualify for arduous fire line work, you must complete the pack test in 45 minutes or less. Jogging is not permitted, joggers will be disqualified. It is recommended to train for the Pack Test, beginning 4 to 6 weeks prior to the test, hiking with a 25 pound pack and gradually adding weight and greater distances for endurance.

What does the 4 day overnight **Wildland Fire Training** entail? Who is required to take it?

This 40 hour, 4 day overnight training meets **NWCG** (National Wildfire Coordinating Group) standards for courses S-130: Firefighter Training, S-190: Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior and L-180: Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service.

All **new applicants** and **returning applicants** who have been trained in S-130/S-190 **longer than 5 years ago** and have not had a fire assignment in the past five years must take the Wildland Fire Training.

Prerequisite courses ICS-100: Introduction to Incident Management Command System and IS-700: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System **must be completed before attending the Wildland Fire Training**. Both of these courses are available online via the NWCG official website.

The training will include both field and classroom exercises. A one-time nominal fee of \$50 is required for the training. Bunkhouse lodging and meals will be provided. Participants must bring sleeping bags and be dressed for outdoor activity.

What is RT-130?

RT-130, or **Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher**, is mandatory for all returning applicants. Content changes every year though always includes four core components:

- **Entrapment Avoidance** – Use training and reference materials to study the risk management process as identified in the *Incident Response Pocket Guide* (IRPG)
- **Current Issues** – Review and discuss current topics that could be based on the new modules or areas of concern identified by agency or geographic area. Review forecasts and assessments for the upcoming fire season and discuss implications for firefighter safety.
- **Fire Shelter** – Review and discuss last resort survival including escape and shelter deployment site-selection. Conduct “hands-on” fire shelter inspections. Practice shelter deployments in applicable crew/module configurations.

- **Other Hazards and Safety Issues** – Choose additional hazard and safety subjects, which may include SAFENET, current safety alerts, site/unit specific issues and hazards.

What qualifies an applicant to join a crew? What are types of crews are mobilized?



Successful completion of all classes, work capacity test and required paperwork will result in a minimum qualification of a **Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2)**.

An FFT2 certification qualifies a firefighter to fight wildfires, as well as work to prevent, suppress and mitigate wildfire situations. A firefighter must obtain an FFT2 certification, often called a **red card**, to be considered for any job related to fighting or preventing wildfires.

The three types of CIFIC crews that an FFT2 will most likely be mobilized on include: **Type 2-IA, Type 2 and Engine Assignments.**

Type 2-IA crews have “Initial Attack Capability” and can be broken up into squads, fireline construction and firing to include burnout. Type 2-IA crews feature one Crew Boss (CRWB), 3 Squad Bosses with ICT5 certification and at least 60% experienced FFT2s.

Type 2 crews are limited in capability to fireline construction and firing as directed. Type 2 crews feature one Crew Boss (CRWB), 3 Squad Bosses with FFT1 certification and only require 20% experienced FFT2s.

Both Type 2-IA and Type 2 crews are “handcrews” which usually consist of **18-20 firefighters** working side by side to construct “firelines” around wildfires to contain and control them by removing fuel that wildfires need to spread. To do this, handcrews use tools like Pulaski’s, shovels and chainsaws to clear flammable materials and scrape or dig to mineral soil. Hand crews also “burn-out” fire areas and “mop up” after fires.

Engine crews respond to reports of new wildfires and serve as initial attack forces. They serve as holding forces on prescribed fires and wildfires to keep the fire from crossing the established perimeter. Engine crews range in size from **two to ten firefighters** and work with specialized

wildland fire engines that carry equipment to spray water and foam. Engine crews also use hand tools, water and foam to put out fires and keep vegetation and structures from burning, patrol forests and grasslands to look for signs of wildfires.

If I qualify and complete all trainings, am I guaranteed an assignment?

You will be included on the Active Roster, however crews are formed based on member availability, type of crew being formed, positions needed, and an appropriate ratio of new to experienced members. For these reasons and other mitigating factors, **applicants are not guaranteed to be rostered on a crew or engine assignment any given season.** However, we strive to make selections a fair and equitable process, ensuring at least one offer of mobilization within the 5 year life span of a qualification.

What sort of equipment will I need?



The only equipment that applicants will be required to supply is a **pair of Fire Boots that meet the National Standards**, estimated cost of \$180-220, following training and preceding mobilization. Specifications will be discussed during training.

National Standards are outlined during the initial 4 day overnight Wildland Fire Training along with resources on where and how to purchase qualifying footwear.

All other equipment will be provided. Some individuals choose to bring their own items, however they elect to do so at their own risk as *we cannot guarantee protection of personal items from damage or theft.*

What are the chances of mobilization?

Chances of mobilization are difficult to determine, as they are based on national need, availability and positions needed on the crew. Though we typically send an average of 1 crew per year.

How long is my certification good for?

For applicants possessing a red card, status as a FFT2 is viable for **5 years** following initial completion. **However, each qualifying fire assignment resets the clock on certification for an additional 5 years.**

For instance: a FFT2 whom has initially completed training 4 years ago and has returned from mobilization will have a viable certification as FFT2 and be eligible for mobilization for an additional 5 years.