



## CIFC (Connecticut Interstate Fire Crew)

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Important Dates

Dates are approximate and subject to change year to year.

November: Applications Open

December: Application Deadline

2nd 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 qualifies for CIFC?

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 can meet the following qualification standards:

- Excellent physical condition and able to pass the Work Capacity Test annually.
- As a first-time applicant, be able to attend the 4-day overnight Wildland Fire Training.
- As a return applicant, attend the 8-hour Annual Refresher Training.
- Available for firefighting assignments ranging in length from one day to 18 days, primarily in March through October but occasionally into December. *There is generally short notice of these assignments.*
- Submit medical screening information (HSQ) and informed consent forms, and may need to receive medical clearance prior to physical testing.

#### What is the pay rate?

The pay rate for out-of-state fires in 2019 was \$18.64/hour straight time.

## **What is an AD?**

An **Administratively Determined** worker. All private individuals mobilized to 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 when I apply?**

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, along 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.

## **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 that applicants train for the pack test by hiking with a 25-pound pack 4 to 6 weeks prior to the test, gradually adding weight and distance to build 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 National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) 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 courses are available on the [NWCG official website](#).

The training will include both field and classroom exercises. A one-time 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 it 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 based on new areas of concern identified by the agency or geographic area. Review forecasts and assessments for the upcoming fire season and discuss implications for firefighter safety.
- Fire Shelter Training – 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 – Additional hazard and safety subjects, which may include SAFENET, current safety alerts, site/unit specific issues.

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

Successful completion of all classes, the 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 CIFC crews that will most likely mobilize an FFT2 include:

**Type 2-IA crews** have “Initial Attack Capability” and can be broken up into squads, fireline construction, and firing including 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 their capability to construct firelines and fire as directed. Type 2 crews feature one Crew Boss (CRWB), 3 Squad Bosses with FFT1 certification, and 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 Pulaskis, shovels, and chainsaws to clear flammable materials and scrape 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 **2-10 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 training, 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 during any given season.** We strive to make selections in a fair and equitable manner, ensuring at least one offer of mobilization within the 5-year life span of a qualification.

### **What equipment will I need?**

The only equipment applicants will be required to supply prior to mobilization is a pair of fire boots that meet the national standards, with an estimated cost of \$180-220. 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 equipment, 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?**

The chances of mobilization are difficult to determine, as they depend on national need, availability, and the positions required on the crew. 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 an FFT2 is viable for **5 years** following initial completion. **However, each qualifying fire assignment resets the certification clock for 5 years.**

For instance, an FFT2 who completed training 4 years ago and has returned from mobilization will retain their certification as FFT2 and be eligible for mobilization for an additional 5 years.