



BLM Fire Hiring Webinar

Questions and Answers

Updated October 02, 2023



- 1. Where and how do I apply for a BLM Fire job?** All announcements are posted on [USAJOBS](#). To learn how to apply, check out the [BLM Fire Jobs Portal](#).
- 2. What are the qualifications needed to become a wildland firefighter?** You are required to be 18 years of age by the start date of the job and will need to show 6 months of general work experience, in your application. More information can be located on the [BLM Fire Jobs Portal](#).
- 3. What are the fitness requirements to be an entry level wildland firefighter?** Wildland firefighters must be prepared for rigorous job duties to keep themselves and others safe and to reduce injury or fatigue. A [Work Capacity Test \(WCT\)](#) is administered to determine if persons are physically capable of performing the duties of wildland firefighting. The [Federal Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards](#) establish the minimum medical fitness for arduous duty. Wildland fire positions that fall under the arduous category will require the arduous WCT, which is a three-mile hike across level ground, carrying a 45-pound pack, in 45 minutes or less. Light or moderate duty firefighters may require a medical screening. For more information regarding medical standards, visit the [NIFC medical standards](#) website.
- 4. When can I expect seasonal and entry level fire crew jobs to be posted on USAJOBS?** Nationwide, initial vacancy announcements are planned to be advertised on USAJOBS beginning in October. Depending on the region and position, most entry level temporary positions are advertised between October and March of each year. Some positions may be re-advertised beyond March of each year to fill additional temporary vacancies.
- 5. What is the starting pay?** Starting pay is a minimum of \$15 per hour base salary for all BLM Fire employees. The vacancy announcement will list the starting base pay for the position. Refer to the [General Schedule pay table](#) on the Office of Personnel Management website for hourly salary levels. All jobs are based on a 40-hour work week and offer a 50% increase to the base pay for overtime hours. Additional premium pay is available while assigned to fires with a 25% increase per hour for hazard pay.
- 6. Is pay bi-weekly?** Yes. Employees also earn annual and sick leave with each pay period.
- 7. What types of appointments does BLM Fire offer?** Three main types of appointments: temporary seasonal, career seasonal and permanent. Descriptions of position types can be found on the [BLM Fire Jobs Portal](#).



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8. What is the difference between a temporary seasonal job and a career seasonal job?

Temporary seasonal positions are just that - temporary and seasonal. The work is full time (40 hours or more per week), but employees in these types of positions can only work 6 months in a calendar year. Employees must reapply to these types of positions every year. Career seasonal positions are similar to permanent full-time jobs in the federal government and carry the same benefits package with retirement, except employees may not work year-round, depending on the needs of the agency.

9. How much paid annual and sick leave do I get? Employees begin by earning 4 hours of annual leave and 4 hours of sick leave per pay period. After 3 years the employee will begin earning 6 hours of annual leave and 4 hours of sick leave per pay period. After 15 years an employee will earn 8 hours of annual leave and 4 hours of sick leave per pay period.

10. What other benefits are offered? Temporary seasonal jobs are offered health insurance that is partially paid for by the Department of Interior. This health insurance can be carried by the employee for up to 18 months from the last day worked, at a full cost to the employee. Career seasonal jobs also offer retirement benefits in the form of a pension plan and 401k. Refer to the [BLM Fire Benefits Handout](#) for more information. Additional information about retirement benefits can be found at doi.gov/flert/training/ or doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/information_on_special_retirement_for_ffleo.pdf.

11. How much time in service does one have to work to secure retirement payments in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)? For the firefighter special pay, FERS employees need to have 3 full years (36 months) in a primary firefighter career seasonal or career position. These do not need to be consecutive months. An employee can move to a secondary covered position after 3 full years have been obtained, but the employee must move directly to a secondary covered position from a primary covered position. An employee must then have either 20 years in a firefighter retirement covered position and work until the employee is 50 years of age, or the employee can have 25 years in a firefighter retirement covered position to be eligible for the firefighter special retirement.

12. What is the most common entry level job with BLM Fire? Engine crews and handcrews hire mostly temporary seasonal positions starting at a GS-3 or GS-4 level. There are a variety of entry level positions for folks interested in working in dispatch, a warehouse, incident business and other support positions. There is truly a job for everyone.

13. What positions are considered entry level, and which positions need more experience?

Entry level positions begin at the GS-03 level. Positions at the GS-04 and GS-05 level require specialized experience which may include wildland firefighting work or a substitution of education above the high school level. Please refer to the job requirements listed in each vacancy announcement.



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- 14. Is there an upper age limit?** For primary wildland firefighter career seasonal and career jobs, generally 37 (to account for 20-year retirement) but no max entry age for veterans. Other jobs do NOT have an upper age limit.
- 15. Does BLM Fire offer housing?** In some areas, yes, there is housing provided when employees are working, especially in some remote areas. This government-provided housing is rented to employees at a rate lower than comparable private sector rental housing.
- 16. What sort of degrees are important for those looking to join fire organizations? Do you look for undergrad/graduate degrees for certain positions?** At the entry level, no college degree is required. If you are interested in working in wildland fire, a natural science/science degree is very helpful, but there are other options as well. Visit the [DOI Fire Contacts](#) website to reach a human resources specialist near you.
- 17. If I am currently active duty, but retiring soon, with terminal leave; can I be hired while on terminal leave?** A service-member who is on terminal leave pending separation from active duty under honorable conditions may accept a civilian position in the Federal government. However, agencies typically will not adjudicate or apply veterans' preference unless the service-member has a DD-214 or "certification" that is a written document from the armed forces that certifies the service member is expected to be discharged or released from active duty service in the armed forces under honorable conditions not later than 120 days after the date the certification is signed.
- 18. How do we follow-up with you after this webinar?** For additional information, contact DOI FIRES Program Office at 800-364-6432 or blm_fa_fires@blm.gov. You can also directly contact supervisors from the [DOI Fire Contacts](#) website.

*Thank you for joining our first BLM Fire Hiring Webinar! We look forward to hearing from you.
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