



June 2020

# Fact Sheet

Fact Check  
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## What Does it Cost to Train a Firefighter?

### Firefighters in Florida

#### Facts & Figures

- The average cost of fire academy training is \$5,300, but in Florida most firefighters are also EMTs or Paramedics which comes with an additional price tag of about \$5,622. An associate degree in fire science is increasingly desirable, and a four-year degree is required for promotions above Battalion Chief. To fully equip a firefighter costs about \$12,500.
- The median salary for a firefighter in Florida in 2020 was \$44,667 according to [Glassdoor](#), a jobs pay ranking website. As with all first responder jobs, much of their required skills are learned or perfected on the job, so replacement of an experienced firefighter will cost at least \$175,000 and 3-years on-the-job training. The average annual pension in is \$23,400.
- According to [research](#) by the National Institute on Retirement Security, firefighters overwhelmingly agree their pension benefit is a major reason they chose their job and 99% of them reported they planned to stay in their job until retirement or until they are no longer able to work.



Wearing gear weighing up to 50-60 pounds, and working in intense heat with limited visibility, firefighters always answer the call.



Firefighters put their lives on the line every day. According to the United States Fire Administration, 96 firefighters died in the line of duty in 2020.

## The life of a firefighter...

### For love, not money!

Firefighters wear between 5-30 kilograms on their body while fighting a fire. Shifts can last for more than 24 hours and often, in emergency situations, longer.

If a house has a lot of free space and with limited doors and walls, it will burn as fast as a match - and nothing can be seen or heard inside a burning building. The melting point for gold is 1,945 °F, but firefighters work at up to 2,200 °F inside a burning building.

When the bells start ringing, firefighters must launch instantly into action. The stresses of the job take a toll on their health in more ways than one. They are more susceptible to hypertension and heart disease - not to mention on-the-job injuries. They also have higher rates of cancer, because of the toxins they are exposed to.

With an average salary (in Florida) of \$44,667 and an average pension of \$23,000 they're not doing the job for material or financial rewards.

Approximately 25% of firefighters do not receive Social Security benefits, so for these employees, their pension is all they will receive in their retirement.

While every firefighter isn't faced with the worst scenarios on every shift, every firefighter goes to work knowing he/she might face that scenario on every shift.

Firefighters contribute to their pensions with every paycheck - often as much as 10-12% - for the duration of their careers. The pension is part of their compensation package; it is deferred salary towards the retirement benefit.