My employee wants to become a Retained Firefighter

Benefits to employers

As an employer you’re often “firefighting” so you probably feel you need all hands to the pump. But there is a way to bring real-life firefighting skills into your business with a substantial benefit to your community.

The Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service need the help of local businesses to provide capable staff as Retained Firefighters. Their work is vital to the safety of the local community and your support in releasing your staff to carry out firefighting duties is crucial.

Bringing You Value

Retained Firefighters are highly trained professionals who can bring added value to your organisation. They gain many useful transferable skills with the Fire and Rescue Service which can be useful in any workplace.

These can include:

- Personal skills: such as team work, quick thinking, using initiative, taking responsibility, communication skills and keeping calm in difficult situations. Being a firefighter also requires commitment and self-discipline.

- Emergency skills: including first aid and trauma care, will assist your business on health and safety, first aid and fire related matters. They are trained on an on-going basis to maintain and develop these skills.

Retained Firefighters never quite know what they might find when they respond to ‘a call’. Not only does this mean they are trained to deal with a wide variety of situations, they are also more able to cope with unexpected events in other areas of working life. Businesses have found that the benefits offered by allowing their staff to be retained firefighters have far outweighed any inconvenience caused by their employee responding to an emergency.

Because Retained Firefighters aren’t based at fire stations but operate on standby, they’re only called out when needed.

They are first and foremost your staff member, but are available to help and protect the local community when needed.

Your Community Needs You

Retained Firefighters are women and men from all walks of life, from teachers and shopkeepers to company directors and builders. They provide a significant service to their community whilst delivering unparalleled knowledge and skills to their employer.
Not only do they bring Fire and Rescue Service skills into your workplace, but by offering one of your employees the flexibility to become a Retained Firefighter, you can make a really positive contribution to your local area.

**What to expect**

**Retained Firefighters - Community Champions**

If one of your employees is a Retained Firefighter it can have real benefits for your business, as well as your local community. Of course, this also requires a commitment from you as their employer, although the impact on your business should be manageable.

**How Much and How Often?**

Retained Firefighters are called out two or three times a week, usually for about an hour. This commitment will vary around dependent on the station they provide cover for. The system is flexible so should a busy week at work arise, or urgent deadlines loom, then your business takes priority.

Your employee might have to rush off to attend an emergency at very short notice, but the additional skills they will bring to your workplace will make this worthwhile. What’s more, as an employer you can feel proud that you have played a vital role in making the local community safer.

**Extra Training At No Extra Cost?**

So what else can you expect, as an employer of a Retained Firefighter?

**No Financial Cost**

On-Call Firefighters are paid an annual retainer fee plus payments for attending emergencies by the Fire and Rescue Service.

**Free Training**

At no charge, your employee will receive training from the Fire and Rescue Service worth hundreds of pounds in directly transferable skills.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**How long will my employee be away when called out on duty?**

Typically, this could be two to three hours per week. It’s a flexible arrangement, depending on the needs of your business.

Firefighters working the retained system agree to be available for a certain number of hours. They carry an alerter and must be in a position to get to the fire station within four minutes of an emergency call-out during their available hours. Rest assured, however, that your needs and requirements as the primary employer will always have priority.
If my employee is called out to attend an emergency am I obliged to let them go regardless of my organisation’s needs?

No. Retained Firefighters let their Fire and Rescue Service know when they are available so when an emergency call comes in, only those who have booked in as being available are expected to respond and attend.

What sort of training and development will my staff undergo as part of their role as a firefighter?

All firefighters go through a rigorous training and development programme which is provided by the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service. They will develop skills in risk management, communication, team working, leadership, self discipline, first aid, trauma care, health and safety, and much more, and they will bring this training and experience back to their workplace.

How long will my employee be required to take time away from work for training?

Firefighters must be well trained if they are going to work safely and effectively in the wide range of operational incidents they have to tackle. The Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Services recognise that some Retained Firefighters might need to take time off from their primary employment to undertake training. Most Fire and Rescue Services will aim to reduce the impact on the primary employer by providing basic training at fire stations on drill nights and during weekends, reducing the time required for training during weekdays.

What if my employee gets injured while at an incident?

Retained Firefighters are trained to a high standard before they are fully operational so this is a rare occurrence. In the event this does happen, The Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service has a policy in place for compensating the employee for any loss of earnings after Statutory Sick Pay. Details can be discussed with the Operational Divisional Manager.

What benefits do I get as an employer for releasing a member of staff to be a Retained Firefighter?

Many find the biggest reward is the knowledge that their company is undertaking a vital role in protecting the local community. By allowing one of your employees to become a Retained Firefighter you know you have made a difference every time they respond to an emergency and help save lives.
Employer Authorisation Form

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<th>Name of Employee:</th>
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<td>Company / Business Name:</td>
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<td>Name of Line Manager:</td>
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This is to certify that ________________________________ has advised me of their intention to apply for the position of Retained Firefighter based at _________________ Fire Station.

I have read the information provided for employers and am willing to allow my employee to be released to attend incidents as and when they are required to do so.

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<th>Signature of Employer:</th>
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Company Stamp: