

**THE HISTORY CHANNEL® PRESENTS:**  
**Into the Fire**  
**An original documentary**



*Firefighters battle this fully involved, 2-story wood-framed home in Fairfield County, Connecticut in January, 2006.*

Fire can be of great benefit to humanity, but when it rages out of control, everyone and everything in its path are at risk. The job of the millions of firefighters around the world, volunteer or career, is to control these flames and protect life and property from fire's devastation. As fire trucks roll to calls each and every day worldwide, the sight of these trucks pulling up to a scene lends a feeling of comfort, safety and reassurance to victims, as professionally trained and knowledgeable firefighters serve their communities. Whether it is a fire alarm, motor vehicle accident, medical call or a fire in a structure, the fire department is responding with only one goal in mind – helping those in distress. It is the men and women of the fire service who risk life and limb for strangers— and “brave” is the word most commonly used to describe the world's firefighters.

*Into the Fire* depicts the daily life of firefighters and the harrowing circumstances they face in their profession. From routine calls in big cities, to smaller rural volunteer departments, to massive catastrophes such as the San Francisco earthquake in 1989 and the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, this documentary reveals what life is like for before, during, and after emergency calls. Featuring interviews with volunteer and career firefighters, real emergency footage, and knowledgeable experts, the emotion, camaraderie, and reality of the fire service come to life in this uniquely enlightening documentary. This program brings informative and passionate insight into the scorching world of firefighting where ordinary men and women consistently accomplish extraordinary achievements.

**Curriculum Links**

*Into the Fire* would be useful for middle school and high school classes on United States History, Civics, Current Events, and Public Works. This documentary can supplement classroom material ranging from trade school skills, terrorism, current events and science and technology. Clips from this programming can also emphasize overarching themes in the classroom such as heroism, dedication, public service, patriotism and selflessness.

## **Vocabulary**

Using the dictionary at [www.merriamwebster.com](http://www.merriamwebster.com), an internet resource such as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms: \*Note that some of the following terms are fire service jargon and should be researched accordingly.

1¾' Hose  
Apparatus  
Backdraft  
Camaraderie  
Conflagration  
Floor joist

Halligan Bar  
Large Diameter Hose  
Rotary Saw  
SCBA  
Truck vs. Engine  
Wet vs. Dry Hydrant

## **Comprehension Questions**

1. What kinds of calls do firefighters do the firefighters in this program answer? Some might describe firefighters as “Renaissance” men and women. Why do you think they would receive this description?
2. Why are helmets a “badge of honor?” for firefighters? How does a helmet merit respect?
3. What are some of the ways firefighter’s cope with the intensity of their profession? What types of tragedies do firefighters see in their profession?
4. How did the Washington D.C. Fire Department respond to the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 attacks? Were you surprised by the attitude of the firefighters responding to the Pentagon? How did Firefighter Rucker and her crew respond?
5. What types of activities build camaraderie in the firehouse? Do you think it is necessary to have that camaraderie and cohesiveness in the fire service?
6. How does teamwork play a part in fighting a fire? Why do firefighters have the rule of 2, meaning that firefighters never go into a building alone? How does this teamwork translate to success in fighting fires?
7. What is a thermal imaging camera? Why are they so effective in firefighting operations?
8. What is a fire shelter? How does it save the life of firefighters battling blazes in forests? How is forest firefighting different from rural, suburban, and urban firefighting?
9. What happened to Firefighter Rick Smith in Ipswich, MA? How do you think he has dealt with the post-incident adversity he has faced? What does this situation tell you about the need for fire alarms, escape routes, and emergency planning?

10. Why was Ray Caballero hospitalized with burns over 40% of his body? Do you consider him a hero? Do you think he considers himself a hero?
11. What is the Phoenix and how did it help the San Francisco Fire Department in the famous earthquake of 1989? Why was its assistance crucial to controlling fires after the earthquake?
12. Why do firefighters consider their job a privilege and an honor? What do you think this says about the men and women nationwide who risk their lives to help strangers?

## **Fun Facts**

**DID YOU KNOW** the New York City Fire Department responded to 28,455 structure fires in 2005 with an average response time 4 minutes and 36 seconds?

**THE TERM USED** in the firehouse for fire is “job.” For example, a chief would say to the firefighters, “Get in the rig, we’ve got a working job.”

**WERE YOU AWARE** that most volunteer firefighters and career firefighters receive the exact same type of training and are responsible for the same duties in responding to emergencies? In fact, many career firefighters are volunteer firefighters in their free time.

**ACCORDING TO EXPERTS**, 73% of thermal protection in turnout gear (a firefighter’s personal protective equipment) comes from the inner lining, not the outer lining.

## **Extended Activities**

### **Tour of the Firehouse**

One way to learn more about how firefighters function in your community is to meet firefighters in your own community. Either as a class or individually, call your local firehouse and set up a tour with the on-duty career or volunteer firefighters. Be sure to find out what daily tasks are performed while not on emergency calls, what certain tools are used for, and what types of calls require special trucks. While in the firehouse, identify the purpose of the following tools: irons, truck vs. engine, back step, the stick, the Q, air horn, Hurst combination tool, TNT tool, airbags, pump panel, and ram. Present your findings in a Powerpoint presentation, poster-board, or in a conversation with younger students at your school.

### **Truly Amazing Machines**

Fire trucks are complicated, yet cutting edge pieces of equipment. They are versatile in their abilities to combat fire and provide assistance in emergency situations. The huge machines can cost upwards of \$1 million, as they provide priceless assistance to the residents they serve. In groups of 3-5, pick a type of fire truck – engines, ladder trucks, tillers, rescue trucks, hazmat trucks, brush trucks, command vehicles, quints, aerial pumps, airport trucks, and tankers – and research the niche in which they operate in the

fire service. After completion of your research, give a 10- 15 minute presentation to the class explaining everything you found out about your piece of apparatus. You may want to visit your local firehouse and interview your firefighters to garner information.

### **The Importance of Public Service**

Public service, whether it be military, municipal, or political, is an essential component of any town, city, or country. Without people to help secure, sacrifice and serve, many liberties certain people enjoy today would be nonexistent. In a well written 3-5 page paper, explain the importance of one type of public service and why it is important, or write a short biography of someone in your community who you think is a model of good public service. Be sure to include a sound thesis statement supported by strong evidence.

### **Interviews as Primary Sources**

Primary sources are vital means by which students, scholars, and interested researchers can glean accurate and mostly unbiased information. Interviews are often essential evidentiary components to many research papers, projects or presentations. On your own, make contact with someone who has worked in the fire service and has experience responding to emergency calls. In a meticulously planned interview, find out what it is like to be a firefighter. After your first interview, try to find another firefighter from a different firehouse and different geographic area that can offer you different perspectives on the fire service. Once complete, write a newspaper-style article of around 1,000 words that describes everything from the harrowing times in the fire department to the relaxed times while on duty in the firehouse. Be sure to give due credit to those firefighters who gave you information.

### **Additional Resources**

#### **Internet**

E-One Fire Apparatus: <http://www.e-one.com/>

Globe turnout gear – a leader in the field: <http://www.globefiresuits.com/>

Morning Pride – the official personal protective equipment outfitter of the New York City Fire Department: <http://www.morningpride.com/>

The National Fire Protection Agency's official website: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

The New York City Fire Department's official website: <http://nyc.gov/html/fdny>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration's official website: <http://www.osha.gov/>

September 11<sup>th</sup> New York City Fire Department tribute:  
<http://nyc.gov/html/fdny/media/tribute/tribute.html>

## **Books**

Fortney, Jeff et. al. *Fire Service Orientation and Terminology*. Fire Protection Publication, 2004.

The New York City Fire Department Museum and Andrew Coe. *FDNY: An Illustrated History of the Fire Department of New York City*. Odyssey Publications, 2003.

Salka, John and Barret Neville. *First In, Last Out: Leadership Lessons from the New York City Fire Department*. Penguin Books, 2004.