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Firefighter Research

Since I was a little boy, I've dreamed of being a firefighter. As I progressed through high school, I had a couple knee injuries that made me think I wouldn't be able to fulfill this dream. After researching this career opportunity further in various resources, I've found I may still be able to fulfill this dream after all.

I researched the firefighting occupation using a few different resources. I checked out two books at WKU libraries, using the Topcat online catalog to locate the books. I searched several journal articles using WKU's web-accessible databases. I used an article which I found on TDNet to reference. Google offered many resources for this occupation. And the Occupational Outlook Handbook was easy to use online.

My first resources came from the WKU libraries. Topcat is the catalog you use to search for items. It was quite easy to use and offered good information. You sign in with your WKU ID and last name. You enter a search term and you'll get a list of information, books, etc that are available in the WKU libraries. Your search can be by subject, author, title, etc. You can then filter your search to include a time period, such as last 5 years or last 10 years. You can filter on certain libraries. There is a sort feature that allows you to sort the resources by author, title, publication date, and relevance. Topcat gives you the location of the book, the call number and number of books available. Most importantly, it tells you if the item(s) are checked out or not. There were several books relating to firefighting. I retrieved and reviewed two books. The first book was Firefighting Principles & Practices by William E Clark. The second book Firefighter's

Handbook: Basic Essentials of Firefighting was over 900 pages. I skimmed through while in the library. It was everything from A-Z you would need to know about fire fighting from education and training to terrorism awareness. To read this book would take some time but it did contain every thing essential to be a fireman. The book I checked out, Firefighting Principles & Practices, is about half the size of the other book. This book, a quicker read, tells you how to fight a fire, any fire. However, it doesn't give much information about training and education.

The next resource I used to research the firefighter career was through the WKU Web accessible databases. I used the search TD Net, which is for a database of electronic journals. There were multiple ways to search for firefighting articles. You can limit your search to articles published in the past 12 months or you can go further back into Archives. By limiting your search to the past 12 months, you know you are getting the most up to date information. I searched on the word firefighter for the past 12 months, there were 51 results. The article that caught my attention was *Line of duty deaths among US firefighters; an analysis of fatality investigations*. This article points out how dangerous this career truly is. Over 100 firefighters die in the line of duty each year. And over 80,000 sustain on the job injuries each year. This career is considered a high risk job, but with proper training and putting safety first, I believe I could be successful and safe. I liked this database as it was full of information and the best part was it was current articles and data.

Next resource I used for research was Google. Type in any word(s) or phrases and you get a vast number of results. This search method can take you forever to narrow down. As you encounter anything with the word you typed in and the range of dates for the data is forever and ever. There were some good sites I found. Collegegrad.com gave good statistics regarding the firefighting career and how college can increase your chances of acquiring this job. The article I

chose from Google was Best Careers 2011; Firefighter. When you select the article, the link takes you to another website. This article was a US News.com article. This was a 2011 article so it was current. The article gave information like the stress level of a fireman, what education and training is required. The article also gave the 2009 earnings range and the number of hours required to work for a firefighter. This was a very informative article. I like Google because there is lots of information available, but it is so big it can be overwhelming as well.

The last resource I used to research the firefighting career was the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. I really liked this website. This website gives 2010-11 information so it is current. It gives an overview and expectation of the job. This site gives number of firefighter jobs in the US and projects future employment numbers. The range of earnings is current and gives earnings based on the various fire department positions. The site also offers a list of other related occupations to research. I started with firefighter as my search, but this site then led me to fire investigator and EMT from that same search. I really like this site as it not only give you the occupation information you are looking for but also other lists other jobs that might interest you. The information in this site is clear, concise and direct. You don't have to look much further to know what education, training, pay and job outlook will be for your occupation.

All the resources were fairly easy to use. My favorite resource to use looking up job information was the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. This site was clean, summarized and current information. The library requires a trip to the library and then books to read. The online database was okay, but took some time to get used to. Google is easy, but there are so many results, it takes a while to figure out what you want to use.

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