

Forester – Fire (GS-9)

Major Duties

A Forester – Fire (GS-9) is an assistant to the unit fire management officer. A person in this position works in fire prevention, suppression and fuels management. Specific duties of a Forester – Fire (GS-9) include;

- Evaluating information about the history of fires in a forest area, causes, frequency, previous control problems, damages incurred, and benefits gained
- Assessing fuels (e.g., type of timber, grass, brush, etc.), ignition probability, predicting rate a fire would spread and the estimated flame height
- Developing plans including various fire suppression strategies for different conditions and sites; recommends the work force, equipment, logistics, and communication needs if a fire were to occur in a specific area
- Studying conditions on-the-ground to determine quantity and types of fuels (e.g., type of timber, grass, brush, etc.), recommends whether fuels must be treated to reduce fire hazards, experiments with different methods to manage the various types of fuels in a area, and implements and monitors one method.

Foresters (Fire) work frequently in the field. Field work requires long periods of walking and climbing over steep terrain which is often covered with of debris.

This position may also supervise other employees. This can require monitoring employee performance, conducting performance appraisals, developing budgets, coordinating staff efforts. Etc.

Foresters often interact with other resource specialists and use the skills of others to help solve problems they encounter. Public relations skills are also helpful to most Foresters because they deal with the general public.

A Typical Day

Brian is just coming from a day of climbing in, over, around, and through about every imaginable obstacle-including trees, brush, boulders, hills, and streams. “It’s just another day in paradise.”

His day was spent surveying the variety of potential fuels a fire could engulf (trees, bush, grassland, etc.). Now, Brian needs to take his information (including the many photos and samples), back to the office and study them.

Brian will spend a couple days writing a report on the area that will assess what a fire would do, and include specific fire suppression strategies he recommends. His report will outline the chances for a fire occurring in the area and what needs to be done to eliminate some of the fuels (chipping or crushing, brush removal, etc.) he will also write up a set of specifications that could be used for a service contract to remove some of the fuels and reduce the potential for a devastating fire in the area.

Knowledge and Education

A college degree is recommended for those interested in becoming a Forester. Courses leading to a college degree in Forestry include;

- Mathematics (algebra, geometry, trigonometry, differential equations, etc.)
- Biology
- Social Science (psychology, sociology, history, etc.)
- Physical Science (Earth Science)
- Statistics
- Geology
- Hydrology

Career Path

Jobs that can lead to becoming a Forester – Fire (GS-9) include

- **Forestry Aid (GS-3)** - The person in this position is a member of a timber, recreation, fire, wildlife, or range crew performing duties specified by the Forester.
- **Forestry Technician (GS-5)** – this person’s duties may include
 - Selecting, marking, and measuring timber cut
 - Estimating timber defects and overall quality
 - Conducting timber cruises to determine the quantity of timber on an area by species, type, and quality
 - Collecting, summarizing and preparing requested timber reports and maps which give locations, inoperable areas, soils, and logging conditions
 - Monitoring contractor timber cutting operations
- **Supervisory Forestry Technician (GS-6)** – this person’s duties may include
 - Fire fighting and supervising 7 to 12 employees
 - Planning, assigning, directing the efforts of fire fighters
 - Supervising and performing fire suppression efforts