

Running into burning buildings and saving lives is all part of a days work for local firefighter Ibrahim Khamis Al-Meghaziwi



**How long have you been a firefighter?**

I have been doing this job for six and a half years now.

**What training did you undergo?**

I finished school when I was seventeen years of age and I got a job working with the civil defence. I trained on the job.

**Why did you decide to become a firefighter?**

I joined the civil defence in 2005 and I trained in rescue, fire safety and police work. At that time my manager told me that I should become a fireman. Initially I refused, I told him: 'No, I don't like this idea because I know that it's a very hard job.'

He agreed with me that it is indeed a difficult job, but he also outlined the positives. He explained that the job is very rewarding, the team become very close and I would make good

friends and laugh and joke with them. So I reconsidered and decided to try it.

**Obviously you need to be fit, what fitness training do you do?**

Yes of course, every fireman needs to be fit - if you are not fit what use are you in a fire situation?

I exercise daily; I train in my own free time and also at work, I go to the gym regularly.

**How do you stay safe on the job?**

Firefighting is a very dangerous job but I know that Allah will keep me safe.

First of all, I must ensure that I am safe before I attempt to save others. That is the most important thing.



**6.30am:** I wake up and get ready for work. I work for 24 hours and then I have 48 hours off. Every day is different depending on whether a fire breaks out or not.

**7.30am:** I start work in a fire station in Abu Dhabi city. My station has just changed so I will be moving to a new station soon.

**12pm:** It's time for a prayer break.

**3:30pm:** I have my lunch, after that I sleep for a few hours and then I wake up and do some training at the gym.

**6.30pm:** It's evening prayer time. The rest of the evening is spent playing football or the PlayStation if we don't get called out.

If a fire breaks out and someone phones for help, firstly the operator finds out the location of the fire or accident. The Civil Defence have 20 or 21 stations in Abu Dhabi so obviously the fire station nearest to the fire will be notified to deal with the situation.

Twenty-five to 35 guys work on the same shift. Usually a team of six or seven men will go out to deal with a fire. Two men belong to the attack unit, two men are in the water unit, two men are in the hose unit and one man drives the fire engine.

I'm a member of the attack unit. My job is to go into the burning building and search for the fire. Once I find the fire source I will report back to the hose unit and let them know where the fire is and the size of the fire. I also tell the water unit how many bars of water I need, water bars refers to water pressure.

We use hand gestures to communicate with each other, thumbs up means more water is needed and pointing under your chin means that the fire is out.

Once the fire has is quenched we fill in the paperwork and give this to the police. The police check the job; the want to know how much damage is caused, when the fire started and what caused the fire.

**6:30am:** My 24-hour shift has finished and I go home to bed.

***Catriona Doherty***