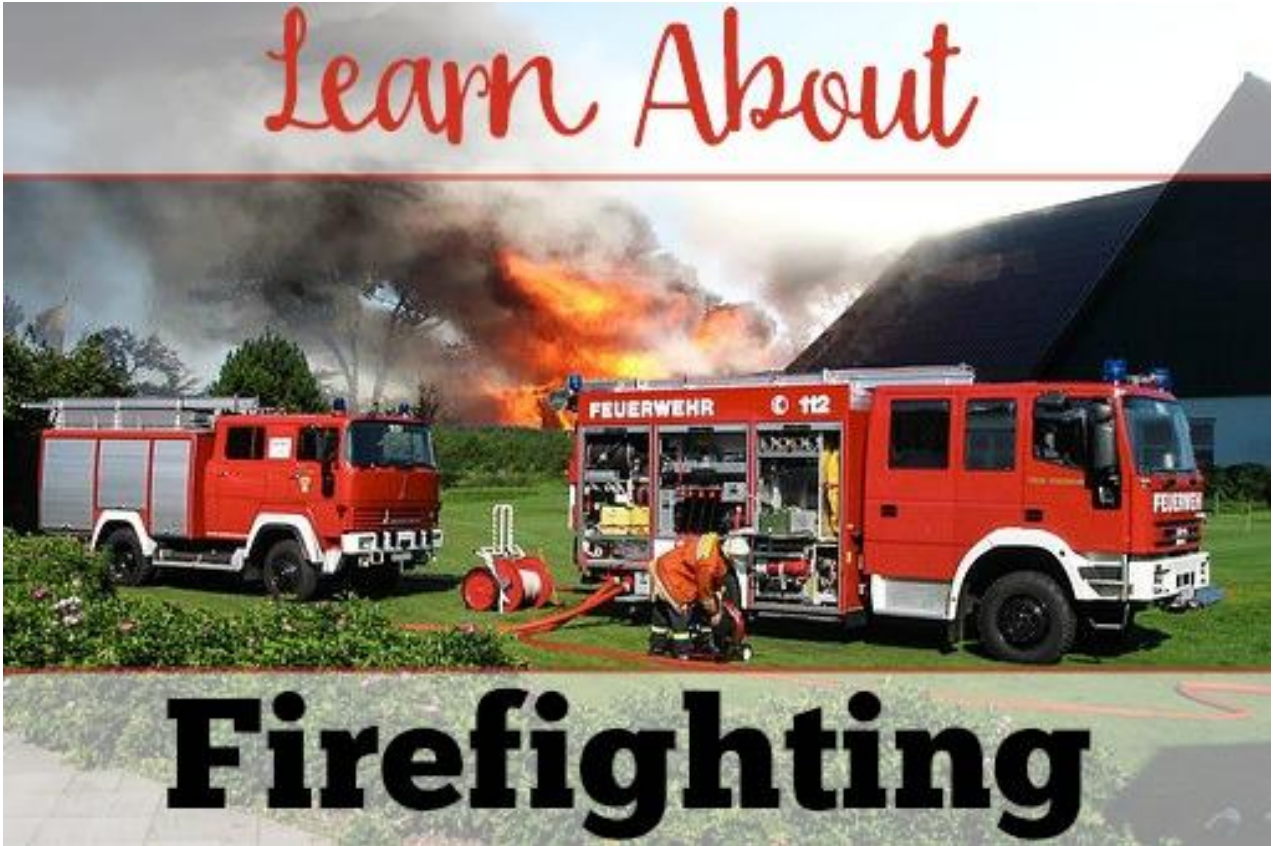


Learn About



A Short History of Firefighting

Firefighting wasn't always done with fire trucks, hoses, hydrants, and all the other amazing tools available to firefighters today. In fact, the use of all of those tools together has only been around since the mid 20th century.

What was used before that? In the earliest days, fires were fought with buckets. If a house or building caught fire, the nearby people would line up in an assembly line, passing buckets of water from the closest well to the site of the fire. A difficult and time-consuming task, this type of fire-fighting usually only worked to stop the flames from spreading to other buildings.



Back then, there weren't any fire departments. Although Emperor Augustus of Rome did set up a fire watch as early as 24 B.C., the idea didn't catch on in the rest of the world for more than 1,600 years.

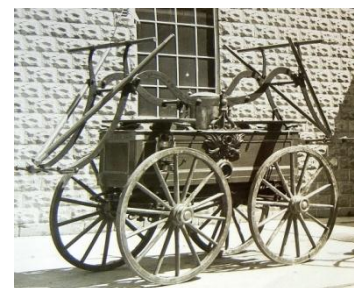
Following the Great Fire of London in 1666, fire brigades were formed in London, but not until 1830 were modern European standards set for fire departments. In 1648, a fire in New York City prompted the city to appoint fire wardens, and the first public fire department of the United States was born. Even then, the departments didn't have all the tools we have today.



The first fire trucks were actually horse-drawn wagons. In 1720, Little Newshan, the first fire truck, was built in London by Richard Newshan. Drawn by horses, it had wooden wheels, a water pump, hand pumps, and reservoirs. Its pump sprayed 60 gallons per minute, which is roughly equivalent to two water hoses.

There were no sirens back then, so firefighters used bells and whistles to warn people they were coming down the street in a hurry and to get out of the way.

The Hydraulion was built by a Philadelphia company called Sellers and Pennock in 1822. It had the first suction engine which could suck water from a water source. This invention completely did away with the use of buckets.

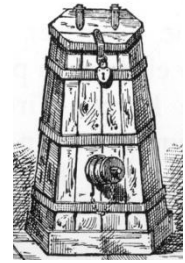


Advances in hoses also occurred around the same time. Sellers and Pennock also led the way for this firefighting tool. They developed a way to rivet leather strips together to create a strong, mostly waterproof hose 40 to 50 feet in length. The only place the hoses leaked were at the couplings. Now firefighters could use hoses connected to suction engines that drew water directly from a source.



That invention led to a string of others which eventually became the woven cotton fire hoses used by firefighters today. So what about those water sources?

The first post-type fire hydrant was invented in 1801 by Frederick Graff, Sr., in Philadelphia. It had a combination hose/faucet outlet and a valve in the top. A year later, the first cast iron hydrants were made. It wasn't until the 1860s that hydrants began to resemble those we see today. Though minor improvements have been made in materials and design, hydrants have remained mostly unchanged since the mid-1800s.



All these advances in firefighting were leading to one thing: the modern fire engine. Engine-powered fire trucks began with steam. Steam-powered fire trucks were used all over the world from the 1840s into the 20th century. By 1905, gas-powered fire trucks began gaining popularity. In the 1930s, ladders began to be installed on the trucks in reaction to the bigger buildings of the 20th century.

Fire trucks as we think of them today took shape in the 1960s. These days, fire engines carry a powerful pump, about 1,000 feet of hose, and a water tank for use where a supply of water is unavailable. Specialized auxiliary vehicles have been developed including water tank trucks for rural areas. Hook and ladder trucks have a mounted ladder that may be capable of rapid extension up to 150 feet, often with a large-capacity nozzle built into the top section. The ladder truck also carries 200 feet or more of ladders to be used from the ground. The snorkel truck is equipped with a hydraulically operated crane mounted on a turntable, for use in either firefighting or rescue work. The rescue truck carries specialized equipment specific to rescue work, including cutting and wrecking tools, gas masks and inhalators, portable lighting and smoke-ejection devices, chemical extinguishers, life nets, shortwave radios, and medical equipment.



Vocabulary

Assembly line: a series of workers who complete a complicate task one person at a time

Fire watch: a group of people assigned to watch for fires in a town

Warden: a person responsible for the supervision of a particular place or thing or for ensuring that regulations associated with it are obeyed.

Reservoir: a supply of water usually contained in a barrel or other large apparatus

Suction engine: an engine created to suck water from a water source

Rivet: join or fasten materials with a short metal pin or bolt

Waterproof: able to resist water

Coupling: a device for connecting parts

Fire Hydrant: a connection point by which firefighters can tap into a water supply

Steam-powered: powered by an engine that uses the expansion or rapid condensation of steam

Gas-Powered: powered by an internal combustion engine that uses petroleum for fuel

Auxiliary: a thing that provides extra support

Fire engine: fire truck that carries a powerful pump, about 1,000 feet of hose, and a water tank for use where a supply of water is unavailable

Water tank truck: fire truck for rural areas that has its own large water source

Hook and ladder truck: fire truck with a mounted ladder and several other ladders that can be used to reach fires in taller buildings

Snorkel truck: fire truck equipped with a hydraulically operated crane mounted on a turntable, for use in either firefighting or rescue work

Hydraulically: moved or operated by fluid

Turntable: a circular, revolving platform for turning a vehicle or crane bucket

Rescue truck: carries specialized equipment specific to rescue work

Vocabulary

Assembly line: _____

Fire watch: _____

Warden: _____

Reservoir: _____

Suction engine: _____

Rivet: _____

Waterproof: _____

Couplings: _____

Fire Hydrant: _____

Steam-powered: _____

Gas-Powered: _____

Auxiliary: _____

Fire engine: _____

Water tank truck: _____

Hook and ladder truck: _____

Snorkel truck: _____

Hydraulically: _____

Turntable: _____

Rescue truck: _____


Types of Fire Trucks




List the type of fire truck next to the picture of what it carries.

1.  _____

2.  _____


3.  _____


4.  _____


5.  _____


Answer Key

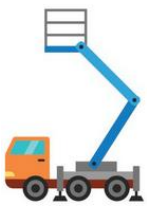
List the type of fire truck next to the picture of what it carries.

1.  _____ Fire Engine _____

2.  _____ Rescue Truck _____

3.  _____ Hook and Ladder Truck _____

4.  _____ Water Tank Truck _____

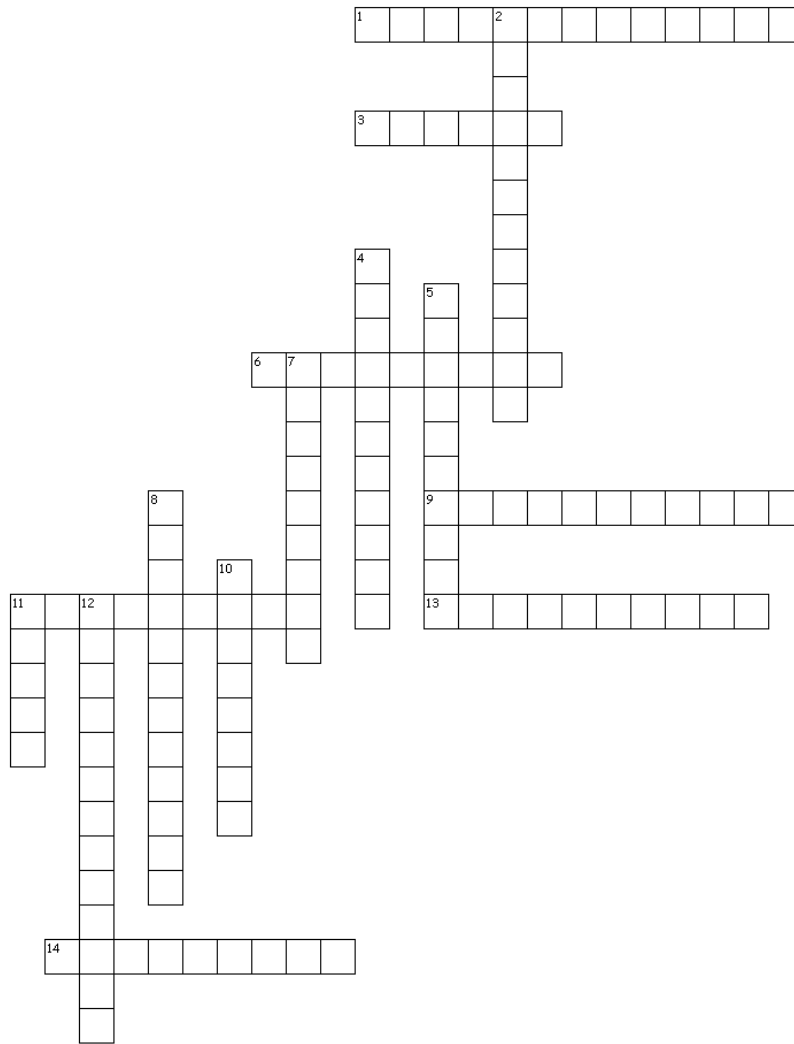
5.  _____ Snorkel Truck _____

Firefighter Word Search

T W X O D V K U J I P U C H N
L A D D E R J C S Q U Y F X E
H W J V F Z K S U F M U K W D
Y L L A C I L U A R D Y H R R
F Q E H S R R S F Y T E C I A
H O N K I S U E R K N R O O W
O X O V R C E A S I W I U V N
S Y E R T O I M G C A F P R W
E T N I P L N N B M U I L E A
D M O K I R E S B L U E I S T
L N N X P R E T A W Y S N E C
Y A U T U R N T A B L E G R H
T A H O O K T N A R D Y H Y O
Y J Q U P N C C R W P H I Y F
L G I Q K W G V E T E L P Y N

ASSEMBLY	AUXILIARY	COUPLING
ENGINE	FIRE	HOOK
HOSE	HYDRANT	HYDRAULICALLY
LADDER	RESCUE	RESERVOIR
RIVET	SNORKEL	SUCTION
TANK	TRUCK	TURNTABLE
WARDEN	WATCH	WATER
WATERPROOF		

Firefighter Crossword



Across

1. fire truck with a mounted ladder
3. person responsible for the supervision of a particular place or thing
6. fire truck for rural areas that has its own large water source
9. fire truck that carries specialized equipment specific to rescue work
11. a supply of water usually contained in a barrel or other large container
13. fire truck that carries a powerful pump, about 1,000 feet of hose, and a water tank for use where a supply of water is unavailable
14. a group of people assigned to watch for fires in a town

Down

2. a series of workers who complete a complicated task one person at a time
4. a connection point by which firefighters can tap into a water supply
5. able to resist water
7. a thing that provides extra support
8. fire truck equipped with a hydraulically operated crane mounted on a turntable
10. a device for connecting parts
11. join or fasten materials with a short metal pin or bolt
12. an engine created to suck water from a water source

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