



Steam Footplate Job Description

Volunteers aspiring to footplate duties will have the opportunity to fill vacancies in the cleaning roster and carry out cleaning duties under the supervision of the allocated fireman; if operational circumstances allow, they may be invited to join the crew on one of the journeys during the day in order to be introduced to fireman's duties.

Some of the responsibilities of footplate crew include:

- Cleaners - ashing out, cleaning & polishing, cutting firewood & rags, bringing coal forward.
- Firemen - duties also include lighting up, bringing into steam, operational duties include firing, signals, shunting etc.
- Driver - loco preparation i.e. oiling up, driving, signals and overall safety etc.

Responsibilities & Duties:

- Understand and work in accordance with the railways rulebooks and notices.
- Work in a manner that ensures safety of and minimises risk to, the public, fellow Staff & Volunteers, and yourself.
- Safe and efficient operation of the boiler and fire management.
- Attend periodic training as required, to maintain knowledge and competence.
- Attend punctually for rostered turns, signing on fit to work having read all the relevant notices and having all the relevant equipment with you.
- Efficiently manage the boiler to ensure supply of steam meets demand, and appropriate water level is maintained.
- Fire so as to minimise smoke and avoid wastage of steam by lifting safety valves.
- Couple and uncouple correctly.
- Shunting where required.
- Read and give hand, flag and lamp signals correctly.
- Preparing the loco at the start of the day.
- Disposing the loco safely at the end of the day.

Training:

All footplate crews start off as loco cleaners, getting to know the locos inside out before stepping anywhere near the footplate. Depending on experience and competence cleaners can seek promotion to Trainee Fireman.

Training as a Fireman can take at least a year, and will take a few turns per month. You'll also need to complete a Medical, Motive Power Rules exam, Fireman's Technical exam and a practical assessment before you can be passed out as a competent and qualified Fireman.



Once qualified you'll be expected to attend regular training days and courses as well as train new trainee Firemen.

Requirements:

- A good level of fitness is required, as the job is hands on and very active with lots of lifting and climbing. You'll need good eyesight and not be colour-blind and be able to pass a medical assessment.
- Good logical thinking is handy, especially when trying to control the fire and manage the boiler in difficult situations.
- Keep calm and level headed in an emergency.
- Understand the responsibility and safety-critical nature of the role.

Things to know:

- This is not a 9 to 5 job, it often involves early starts and late finishes.
- The usual sign on time is 06.45. You must stay for the duration of your rostered duty.
- The role often has long periods of being on your feet, shovelling coal and control the water level whilst on a moving loco.
- You are expected to carry out the role in all weathers.
- If something does go wrong you will be expected to stay late to aid sorting out the incident.