



video transcript

Day in the Life: Firefighter

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I remember telling my Dad: “Hey dad, I want you to know, I’m going to become a firefighter” and he said “Okay” and now he’s just really proud of me.

My name is Corena LeDonne, I am a firefighter. I work for Chevron refinery in Richmond California. So, when I grew up, I didn’t think I’d ever be a firefighter. Because back then, you know, you just don’t see very many women as firefighters. But while working over at the research center I took a bunch of classes and I was lucky enough to do ride alongs with Richmond fire department and learn about what the job was about.

So, in the Bay Area, we are the only full-time fire department in a refinery, so we are always here to help out not just as a firefighter but also to keep everybody safe. A typical day, um, I get here at 5 o’clock in the morning and then we get all our gear on our rigs, and we wait for the calls. Every day is never the same, you never know what you’re going to get. At times we can be out in the field and get medical calls; someone needs attention. We also do the hot work permits; hot work permits are when there’s a welder or any type of spark. We have all different types of gas testers that we use, and I’ll sniff the area and ensure that there’s no lower explosive limits.

Sometimes we get calls on the fireboat, and I’ve always loved boats and water. We had the boat behind the firehouse for a while out of the water and I decided to go ahead and take on the project and learn how to operate the boat myself, and then getting everyone trained in the department. We keep busy, all of us keep very busy. And then we always listen to each other on the radio to see if anyone’s backed up and if they need any help.

When I tell people that I work for Chevron, I’m very happy. I never get bored, there’s a lot of different jobs that I have

and, uh, if I notice on their face they're kind of concerned or they say "Wow that's kind of scary!" and I'm like well not really, because knowledge takes away the fear. The more you know about the refinery and how it operates, the less fear you will have.

Starting as a mail clerk I never even imagined becoming a firefighter and having such a great job and also a great family in the fire department. When I go out on the fireboat and we're going along the city, or Tiburon, or Angel Island, I'm just thinking "Oh my gosh, I get paid for this."

Like I'm always saying, I'm a lucky girl. This is a great job.