

Fachoberschule am Beruflichen Schulzentrum

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# Facharbeit

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im Fach Englisch

Thema: Das Feuerlöschwesen in Deutschland und Großbritannien

von

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

	Page
1 INTRODUCTION	3
2 FIRE PROTECTION IN GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY	4
2.1 History of fire brigades in Great Britain and Germany	4
2.2 Structure of fire services in Great Britain and Germany	4
2.3 Today's tasks of fire services in Great Britain and Germany	6
2.4 Recruitment and training of firefighters in Great Britain and Germany	7
2.4.1 Recruitment and training in Germany's professional and UK's fire brigades	7
2.4.2 Recruitment and training in Germany's voluntary fire brigades	8
2.5 Technology and equipment used in fire services	8
3 CONCLUSION PART	9
APPENDIX	11
TABLE OF SOURCES	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY	18
SELBSTÄNDIGKEITSERKLÄRUNG	

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Today fire brigades, also called fire services, or fire and rescue services, are very complex institutions and their tasks are very varied. Nowadays, especially for Germany's voluntary fire brigades, it is a big problem that most people are not particularly interested in fire brigades. People who are not interested in fire brigades often don't know much, or even nothing, about the importance of fire brigades and their tasks. The author will give an insight into the history of Germany's and Great Britain's fire services and how they are structured. The author will examine the differences between both systems, which tasks firefighters carry out today, how they get recruited and trained, and which equipment they use for fighting fire and for providing technical assistance. The author also will examine whether there are basic differences between both systems and if it is possible to say that one system is better than the other.

## **2 FIRE PROTECTION IN GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY**

### **2.1 History of fire brigades in Great Britain and Germany**

The roots of fighting fire in Great Britain go back to the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus. “The collapse of the Roman Empire put an end to the first organised fire brigades in the UK.”<sup>1</sup> Later, in 1666 after the 2nd Great Fire of London, London was divided into quarters and each quarter was equipped with fire fighting equipment. The first insurance fire brigades were born. In 1824, Edinburgh was the first authority to form a properly organized fire brigade. Like in the United Kingdom, in Germany there were no organised fire brigades in the early 17th century, only people who operated the fire fighting equipment (picture 1). At the beginning of the 19th century the first voluntary fire brigades were founded in Germany. Their main task at this time was to fight fire. They consisted of only a few volunteers with simple equipment. In this time firefighters often had pumps which were pulled by horses and had to be operated manually by the men (picture 2).

Over the years the tasks have been evolved and the equipment has become more effective. Today firefighters don't only fight fire, they also have to provide more and more technical assistance, for example at traffic accidents and natural disasters.

### **2.2 Structure of fire services in Great Britain and Germany**

The structure of fire services in Germany is divided into 2 parts: public and non public fire services. Public fire services are professional fire brigades, voluntary fire brigades and compulsory fire brigades. Non public are works fire brigades and operating fire brigades (table 3).

The base of Germany's fire protection are voluntary fire brigades, which can be found in nearly every larger village and town. Cities with a population of more than 80.000-100.000 people are forced to run a professional fire brigade. Germany has 101 professional fire brigades (table 2) and many voluntaries. Huge companies like BASF or Porsche have a works fire brigade, smaller companies an operating fire brigade. The main difference between works and operating fire brigades is that members of works fire brigades are employed as firefighters and members of operating fire brigades are normal employees with different jobs

whose can leave their work if there's an emergency within the company. There are also airport fire brigades (table 3) which you can find at every larger airport, such as Dresden, Berlin, Frankfurt and so on. These fire brigades belong to the category of works fire brigades. In the United Kingdom the fire protection system is not as the same as it is in Germany. It is based on 62 fire brigades (table 1) named as fire service, fire and rescue service or fire brigade. Each of them consists of a different number of fire stations and is led by a so called Chief Fire Officer. In Scotland the leaders of fire brigades are called Fire Master. For example the London Fire Brigade is divided into 112 fire stations. Britain's fire and rescue services are similar to Germany's professional fire brigades. The Berliner Feuerwehr consists of 40 professional and 59 voluntary fire stations. In the whole United Kingdom there are only a few voluntary fire brigades. Any of them are operated by some of the Scottish Local Authority Brigades. Two examples of a voluntary fire brigade in the UK are the fire brigades of Alderney, a small village on the island Guernsey in the English Channel and also Peterborough in England that still has a band of volunteers. In the United Kingdom you will only find a few works fire brigades, mainly at nuclear power stations and major chemical sites. All airports in the UK have their own fire brigade, exactly the same as in Germany.

Germany's public fire brigades and fire brigades in the United Kingdom are controlled and financed by the local government. The fire protection of both states is based on laws. In Germany every federal state has its own fire protection law (table 3) that describes the tasks and obligations of the fire brigades in this country. It regulates that the municipalities are obligated to provide for the fire protection.<sup>2</sup> Every municipality has the possibility to establish a voluntary or a professional fire brigade. Another possibility is to make a fire protection contract with a neighbouring municipality. In the United Kingdom the fire protection law is grouped under Fire and Safety Law. On October 1st 2004 the Fire and Rescue Service Act was came into force which is a modernised act. Also in Saxony a new fire protection law, called ‚Sächsisches Gesetz über den Brandschutz, Rettungsdienst und Katastrophenschutz (SächsBRKG)‘, was published on July 23rd 2004.<sup>3</sup> The decision to publish a new fire protection law and reorganise the fire protection, rescue service and disaster control (table 3) was made in 2002 after the great flood. These two examples shows that both fire protection systems have been modernised in the last years to become more effective.

### **2.3 Today's tasks of fire services in Great Britain and Germany**

In the past the only task of fire brigades was to fight fire, but nowadays, fire services in Germany and Great Britain have a multitude of other tasks. Of course, one of the main tasks is still fighting fire but the technical assistance aspect of the job has become increasingly important over the years. In Germany and in the United Kingdom fire crews are called to road, rail or air crashes, to rescue people out of damaged cars, clean the streets from petrol and oil pollutions and to rescue people trapped in lifts or other confined spaces. They can be called to fight chemical spills and the consequences of natural disasters, for example if there is a storm and trees collapse onto streets or houses or when there is a flood. These are only a few examples for technical assistance, there are even a lot more. Fire brigades in both countries are also responsible for fire prevention and safety at huge events.

In every bigger city in Germany the rescue service is included into the professional fire brigades. That means that firefighters on the one hand are firefighters and on the other hand they are paramedics. In some voluntary fire brigades there are so called first responders which will be called if the rescue service is not available. In Great Britain it is a little bit different. The British fire services are called Rescue and Fire Service but that doesn't mean that firefighters have to do paramedic tasks - firefighters are firefighters and paramedics are paramedics.

## **2.4 Recruitment and training of firefighters in Great Britain and Germany**

The recruitment and training of firefighters will be divided into two parts. The first part will compare the fire and rescue services of the United Kingdom and Germany's professional fire brigades. The second part will show recruitment and training of voluntary fire brigades in Germany.

### **2.4.1 Recruitment and training in Germany's professional and UK's fire brigades**

To join a fire service in Great Britain there are certain physical, medical and educational requirements the prospective firefighter have to satisfy, including statutory age limits. For example the prospective firefighter has to be aged over 18, he must have good eyesight without contact lenses or glasses, he has to have a good level of all-round fitness and he has to take both general written and practical tests.<sup>4</sup>

In Germany there are also several requirements to join a professional fire brigade. The prospective firefighters also have to be aged over 18, they have to be very fit and they also have to take a written and a practical test. It's nearly the same as in the United Kingdom but in Germany a firefighter should have a professional training in a skilled trade and he must have a clean driving license for lorries with a mass more than 7.5 t.

Entrants of fire brigades in Great Britain all receive the same basic training (table 3). The training carries out in training centres of each fire brigade. The basic training allows the entrants to start operational duties in the rank of firefighter. After the induction training every firefighter will receive further training as part of his operational duties. If he is promoted to officer rank / manager role he has to undertake courses on the Fire Service College in Gloucestershire, England. In Germany professional firefighters get their induction training within 24 month in two ways. One way is the theoretical part at the Landesfeuerweherschule which is 9 month long. Every federal state in Germany is forced to run such a school, where voluntary and professional firefighters get trained. The second part is the practical training which is 15 month long and takes place in the professional fire brigade. After this training the firefighter has the rank of a Brandmeister. The professional firefighters in Germany also receive further trainings at the Landesfeuerweherschule and within their fire brigades during the time of their employment as firefighter.

### **2.4.2 Recruitment and training in Germany's voluntary fire brigades**

The recruitment of voluntaries in Germany is very different to the recruitment of professional firefighters in Germany and Great Britain. The requirements are not as hard as for the professionals. If somebody wants to join a voluntary fire brigade in Germany and stay in action he has to be 16 years old or older. There are no special requirements, only that the firefighter must have a good level of all-round fitness. Some fire brigades demand a fitness and health certificate named as 'G26'. At the age of 16 years the prospective firefighter can get his basic training which takes place in a local course called Kreisausbildung. The majority of courses in which voluntary firefighters can take place are local courses. Examples for these courses include the squad leader course, the engineer course and the course for using breathing apparatus (table3). Special courses, e.g. the group commander course, the platoon leader course, the technical assistance course and ABC (atomic, biological, chemical) courses, take place at the Landesfeuerweherschule (table 3).

For younger men and women, under the age of 16 who are interested in fire brigades and later want to become a firefighter, there are similar institutions in Germany and in Great Britain.

In Germany they are named as Jugendfeuerwehren and in the United Kingdom they are called Young Firefighters. In both institutions boys and girls can have their first experiences with the equipment of fire brigades and they learn something about tactical basics and preventive fire protection.

## **2.5 Technology and equipment used in fire services**

The equipment and vehicles of fire brigades in Germany and in the United Kingdom are very similar and they have become more effective over the years. There are different types of vehicles in both systems, for example fire engines, water tenders, turntable ladders and also vehicles for instance multi vehicle accidents and water rescues (table 3). These vehicles are stocked with much more technological tools, for every type of emergency. E.g. the fire hose (table 3) that was invented in the 17th century first was made from sewn leather and not very reliable, today is an essential article for fighting fire. For fighting fire, fire crews in Germany and in the United Kingdom use fire pumps, fire hoses, ladders, extinguishers and so on. For self-preservation they wear special firefighter clothes which protect them against every kind of injuries and they use breathing apparatus to protect them against smoke and nuclear,



biological and chemical substances. To provide technical assistance fire crews use hydraulic rescue tools (hydraulic spreader and cutter), air bellows, chainsaws and much more other rescue tools. For communication in both countries they use radio equipment (table 3). Communication is one of the most important things if firefighters go into burning buildings to rescue people and to fight fire. They have to stay in contact with the group commander and other firefighters all the time.

### **3 CONCLUSION PART**

In some respects the fire protection systems of Germany and Great Britain are very similar to each other, but in some respects they are also very different.

A main difference is the structure of both systems. In Germany voluntary fire brigades are the foundation of fire protection and only in bigger cities can one find professional fire brigades. In contrast to the German structure Great Britain's fire protection system is based on professional fire services. That can be a benefit for the British system because fire stations in the whole United Kingdom, with the exception of only a few voluntary fire brigades, are staffed 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. That signifies that firefighters can reach the site of emergency very fast. This fact is confirmed by a huge number of small fire stations into which the fire and rescue services in Great Britain are divided into. A negative aspect of Britain's fire protection system is that it is very expensive to run only professional fire brigades. Voluntary fire brigades in Germany are less expensive than the British. That could be classed as an advantage for the German system. On the other hand voluntary fire brigades in Germany, especially in the east of Germany, will have problems with recruiting new volunteers in the future. Most of the people are not interested in voluntary work. Maybe in the future, Germany will be forced to run more professional or even compulsory fire brigades? The tasks which fire crews in both countries have to do are very similar to each other. The main difference is that professional firefighters in Germany also have to do paramedic tasks in the rescue service. Recruitment of professionals is also very similar to each other however recruitment of voluntaries in Germany is different to recruitment of professionals in both countries. Another similarity is that Germany and Great Britain both have an organization to encourage young people to adopt the values of fire services.

The way in which prospective firefighters get trained in Germany is not as the same as in the United Kingdom. On the one hand professional firefighters in Germany get their basic

training at the Landesfeuerweherschule and on the other hand the practical part takes place in the fire brigades. In Great Britain professional firefighters only get their basic training in the fire brigades. Volunteers in Germany get the most of their trainings in local courses. Only for some special courses they go to the Landesfeuerweherschule. The most similar factor shared by Germany's and Britain's fire brigades is the equipment they use for every kind of emergency.

The question of whether or not one system is better than the other can't really be answered. Both systems have their pros and cons and both systems work very effectively today. Obviously in the future many things could change because both fire protections systems will evolve and may evolve in such a way as to become more different or more similar. Only time will tell...

# Appendix

**TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

		Page
Table 1	List of official UK Fire Brigades	13
Table 2	List of Germany’s official professional fire brigades	14
Table 3	Dictionary	15
Picture 1	Copperplate engraving, Nürnberg 1661	16
Picture 2	Historical fire pump, late 19th century	16

Table 1: List of official UK Fire Brigades

Avon Fire Brigade	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service
Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service	Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service	Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue
Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service	London Fire Brigade
Central Scotland Fire & Rescue Service	Lothian & Borders Fire & Rescue Service
Cheshire Fire Brigade	Merseyside Fire Service
Cleveland Fire Brigade	Mid & West Wales Fire Brigade
Cornwall County Fire Brigade	Norfolk Fire and Rescue
Cumbria Fire Service	Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service
Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service	Northumberland Fire and Rescue
Devon Fire & Rescue Service	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Dorset Fire & Rescue Service	Northern Ireland Fire Brigade
Dumfries & Galloway Fire & Rescue Service	North Wales Fire Service
Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority	Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue
East Sussex Fire Brigade	Oxfordshire Fire Service
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service	Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Fife Fire and Rescue Service	Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service
Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service	Somerset Fire Brigade
Grampian Fire & Rescue Service	South Wales Fire Service
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service	South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Guernsey Fire and Rescue	Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Hampshire Fire & Rescue	Strathclyde Fire & Rescue
Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service	Suffolk County Fire Service
Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service	Surrey Fire & Rescue Service
Highland & Islands Fire & Rescue Service	Tayside Fire & Rescue Service.
Humberside Fire Brigade	Tyne & Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Isle of Man Fire & Rescue Service	Warwickshire Fire & Rescue
Isle of Scilly Fire Brigade	West Midlands Fire Service
Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service	West Sussex Fire Brigade
Jersey Fire and Rescue	West Yorkshire Fire Service
Kent Fire and Rescue	Wiltshire Fire Brigade

Source: UK Fire Service Resources: Official UK Brigades

<http://www.fireservice.co.uk/information/offcontacts.php> (18.02.2006)

Table 2: List of Germany's official professional fire brigades

Berufsfeuerwehr Aachen	Berufsfeuerwehr Karlsruhe
Berufsfeuerwehr Altenburg	Berufsfeuerwehr Kassel
Berufsfeuerwehr Augsburg	Berufsfeuerwehr Kiel
Berufsfeuerwehr Berlin	Berufsfeuerwehr Koblenz
Berufsfeuerwehr Bielefeld	Berufsfeuerwehr Köln
Berufsfeuerwehr Bochum	Berufsfeuerwehr Krefeld
Berufsfeuerwehr Bonn	Berufsfeuerwehr Leipzig
Berufsfeuerwehr Bottrop	Berufsfeuerwehr Leverkusen
Berufsfeuerwehr Brandenburg	Berufsfeuerwehr Ludwigshafen
Berufsfeuerwehr Braunschweig	Berufsfeuerwehr Lübeck
Berufsfeuerwehr Bremen	Berufsfeuerwehr Magdeburg
Berufsfeuerwehr Bremerhaven	Berufsfeuerwehr Mainz
Berufsfeuerwehr Chemnitz	Berufsfeuerwehr Mannheim
Berufsfeuerwehr Cottbus	Berufsfeuerwehr Minden
Berufsfeuerwehr Darmstadt	Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach
Berufsfeuerwehr Dessau	Berufsfeuerwehr Mülheim/Ruhr
Berufsfeuerwehr Dortmund	Berufsfeuerwehr München
Berufsfeuerwehr Dresden	Berufsfeuerwehr Münster
Berufsfeuerwehr Düsseldorf	Berufsfeuerwehr Neubrandenburg
Berufsfeuerwehr Duisburg	Berufsfeuerwehr Neumünster
Berufsfeuerwehr Eberswalde	Berufsfeuerwehr Nordhausen
Berufsfeuerwehr Eisenach	Berufsfeuerwehr Nürnberg
Berufsfeuerwehr Erfurt	Berufsfeuerwehr Oberhausen
Berufsfeuerwehr Erlangen	Berufsfeuerwehr Offenbach
Berufsfeuerwehr Essen	Berufsfeuerwehr Oldenburg
Berufsfeuerwehr Flensburg	Berufsfeuerwehr Osnabrück
Berufsfeuerwehr Frankfurt am Main	Berufsfeuerwehr Pforzheim
Berufsfeuerwehr Frankfurt/Oder	Berufsfeuerwehr Plauen
Berufsfeuerwehr Freiburg	Berufsfeuerwehr Potsdam
Berufsfeuerwehr Fürth	Berufsfeuerwehr Regensburg
Berufsfeuerwehr Gelsenkirchen	Berufsfeuerwehr Remscheid
Berufsfeuerwehr Gera	Berufsfeuerwehr Reutlingen
Berufsfeuerwehr Gießen	Berufsfeuerwehr Rostock
Berufsfeuerwehr Görlitz	Berufsfeuerwehr Saarbrücken
Berufsfeuerwehr Göttingen	Berufsfeuerwehr Salzgitter
Berufsfeuerwehr Gotha	Berufsfeuerwehr Schwerin
Berufsfeuerwehr Greifswald	Berufsfeuerwehr Solingen
Berufsfeuerwehr Hagen	Berufsfeuerwehr Stralsund
Berufsfeuerwehr Halle	Berufsfeuerwehr Stuttgart
Berufsfeuerwehr Hamburg	Berufsfeuerwehr Trier
Berufsfeuerwehr Hamm	Berufsfeuerwehr Weimar
Berufsfeuerwehr Hannover	Berufsfeuerwehr Wiesbaden
Berufsfeuerwehr Heidelberg	Berufsfeuerwehr Wilhelmshaven
Berufsfeuerwehr Heilbronn	Berufsfeuerwehr Wismar
Berufsfeuerwehr Herne	Berufsfeuerwehr Witten
Berufsfeuerwehr Hildesheim	Berufsfeuerwehr Wittenberg
Berufsfeuerwehr Hoyerswerda	Berufsfeuerwehr Wolfsburg
Berufsfeuerwehr Ingolstadt	Berufsfeuerwehr Würzburg
Berufsfeuerwehr Iserlohn	Berufsfeuerwehr Wuppertal
Berufsfeuerwehr Jena	Berufsfeuerwehr Zwickau
Berufsfeuerwehr Kaiserslautern	

Source: Landesfeuerwehrverband Nordrhein - Westfalen e.V.: Verzeichnis deutscher Berufsfeuerwehren. <http://www.feuerwehrmann.de/Informationen/BFAdressen/> (19.02.2006)

Table 3: Dictionary

<b>English</b>	<b>German</b>
airport fire brigade	Flughafenfeuerwehr
basic training	Grundausbildung
breathing apparatus	Atemschutzgerät
compulsory fire brigade	Pflichtfeuerwehr
disaster control	Katastrophenschutz
engineer	Maschinist
fire engine	Löschfahrzeug
fire equipment	Feuerwehrtechnische Ausrüstung
fire hose	Feuerwehrschauch
fire protection law	Brandschutzgesetz
group commander	Gruppenführer
historical fire pump	Historische Feuerlöschpumpe
operating fire brigade	Betriebsfeuerwehr
professional fire brigade	Berufsfeuerwehr
radio equipment	Funkausrüstung
squad leader	Truppführer
technical assistance	Technische Hilfeleistung
turntable ladder	Drehleiter
voluntary fire brigade	Freiwillige Feuerwehr
water tender	Tanklöschfahrzeug
works fire brigade	Werksfeuerwehr

Picture 1: Copperplate engraving, Nürnberg 1661

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Source: WIKIPEDIA: Geschichte der Feuerwehr.

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geschichte\\_der\\_Feuerwehr](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geschichte_der_Feuerwehr) (13.02.2006)

Picture 2: Historical fire pump, late 19th century

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Source: WIKIPEDIA: Geschichte der Feuerwehr.

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xxx, 9. März 2006

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