

# Smokejumpers

- 1 Every year, wildfires **destroy** millions of hectares of forest land. Homes are **damaged**, and thousands of people die. Smokejumpers are helping to stop this.

## 5 What is a smokejumper?

- Smokejumpers are a special type of firefighter. They jump from planes into areas that are difficult to reach by car or on foot, like the **middle** of a mountain forest. They **race** to put out fires as fast as they can.

## What do smokejumpers do?

- At a fire site, smokejumpers first examine the land and decide how to fight the fire. Their main goal is to stop a fire from spreading. Using basic **equipment** such as shovels and axes,<sup>1</sup> smokejumpers clear land of burnable<sup>2</sup> material like plants and other dry material. They carry water with them too, but only a limited amount.

## Who can be a smokejumper?

- 20 Although the **majority** of smokejumpers are men, more women are joining. Most important are your **height** and weight. Smokejumpers **employed** in the U.S., for example, must be 120 to 200 pounds (54 to 91 kilograms), so they don't get hurt when they land, or get blown by strong winds.

- 25 Smokejumpers must also be **capable** of surviving in the wilderness. In Russia, many smokejumpers know how to find food in the forest and even make simple furniture<sup>3</sup> from trees.

- The work is dangerous, and the hours are long. But for these firefighters, smokejumping isn't just an **occupation**. They love being able to jump out of planes, fight fires, and live in the forest. As 28-year-old Russian smokejumper Alexi Tishin says, "This is the best job for tough guys."



▲ "We face danger three times: one when we fly; two when we jump; three when we go to [the] fire."

— Valeriy Korotkov, smokejumper

### Did you Know?

Russia has the largest number of smokejumpers in the world.

<sup>1</sup> A **shovel** is a tool used for digging earth; an **ax** is a tool used for cutting wood.

<sup>2</sup> If something is **burnable**, it can start a fire easily. (The suffix **-able** means "able to" or "can.")

<sup>3</sup> Objects such as chairs, tables or beds are known as **furniture**.