

LEGAL ISSUES

# Care and Feeding of Volunteers

Montana Fire Trustees Association  
October 1, 2017  
Fairmont Hot Springs



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**Volunteer Conduct Policy**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Received By \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-Application  
RURAL FIRE DISTRICT**

We welcome you as a volunteer applicant. Your application will be considered with others in competition for the position in which you are interested. It is the policy and intent of the Rural Fire Department to provide equality in opportunity for all persons. This policy prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, disability, marital status, sex or age in all aspects of our personnel policies, programs, practices and operations. This policy applies to all phases of volunteers.

It is suggested that the applicant read the overview that follows before proceeding to fill out the application form.

**Overview**

The Rural Fire District provides Fire Protection, Public Education, Fire Prevention, and Emergency Medical Services to the citizens of \_\_\_\_\_ and approximately a \_\_\_\_\_ square mile area.

The department operates from three (3) fire stations with six (6) Class A Engines 3 Rural 3 City ), three(3) Water Tenders, three (3) Mini-pumpers, two (2) Utility vehicles, three (3) Quick Response Units and four (4) staff vehicles.

This Emergency Services System is provided by approximately fifty (50) volunteer firefighters and five (5) full-time staff.

You can develop technical skills in the use of complicated firefighting and rescue equipment as well as life-saving techniques. It is an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and provide a valuable community service through the protection of lives, property and the environment.

**Minimum Requirements for Application for  
Volunteer Membership in \_\_\_\_\_ Rural Fire District**

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Reside within the \_\_\_\_\_ Rural Fire District or close enough to the District's boundaries to respond to emergency calls within a reasonable time period.
3. Must have a valid Montana Drivers License of the Class required by state law.
4. Satisfactorily complete the performance assessment center.
5. Satisfactorily complete the Recruit Academy Firefighting Course and Montana First Responder course.
6. Agrees to attend a minimum of 30 hours of in-service fire training each year and 30 hours of in-service medical training for each year.
7. Agrees to keep their Montana First Responder training current.
8. Agrees to respond to at least 10% of all emergency calls.
9. Agrees to fulfill the job requirements of the volunteer firefighter job description.
10. Agrees to abide by all other policies, rules and regulations, and S.O.P.'s as set forth by the \_\_\_\_\_ Rural Fire District Board of Trustees.

## New Volunteer Application and Training Process

1. Applicant contacts or is recruited to apply for volunteer status in the Fire District.
2. Applicant completes application forms and submits application to Fire District.
3. Reference and criminal record check conducted by Fire District.
4. Applicant is evaluated in performance assessment center.
5. Applicant, after satisfactory completion of reference and criminal record check, performance center, recruit training academy and upon recommendation of the Fire Chief and approval by the Rural Fire District Board, attains a probationary firefighter status.
6. New probationary firefighters are issued personal protective gear and must serve a maximum one year probationary period and meet the pro-rated call and training requirements.
7. The probationary firefighter is evaluated during his/her probationary period. After he/she has performed satisfactorily and upon the recommendation of the Fire Chief and approval of the \_\_\_\_\_ Fire District Board of Trustees, he/she is accepted as a Volunteer Firefighter of the Fire District.

### New Volunteer Training Program

The applicant will begin a Recruit Training Academy of firefighter skills and field training under the supervision of the Fire Chief or his designated representative. The department members will assist in the field training and evaluation of this field training. After successful completion of the Recruit Academy, the top candidates will fill all vacant positions and other applicants will be put on a vacancy list according to their position within the applicant pool. This list will be used for a one (1) year period.

All personnel, who will be filling vacant positions, will then be required to successfully complete a Montana First Responder class within one (1) year of acceptance into the department.

The volunteer will have the opportunity to learn, practice and use the various fire department procedures below that all firefighters must perform efficiently and effectively.

- Emergency Scene Safety
- Equipment & Tools
- Hose Evolutions
- Breathing Apparatus
- CPR/EMS Procedures
- Fire Ground Tactics
- Incident Management
- Fire Apparatus
- Fire Pump Operations
- Water Supplies
- Fire Service Structure/Chain of Command and Authority
- Station Duties

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provided above is true and correct.

An incomplete application will not be considered.

**Please read carefully and initial each paragraph before signing.**

By my signature and initials placed below, I promise that the information provided in this application (and accompanying a resume, if any) is true and complete. I understand that any false information or significant omissions may disqualify me from further consideration, and may be justification for dismissal from the Fire District, if discovered at a later date. I agree to immediately notify the District if I should be convicted of a felony, or any crime involving dishonesty or a breach of trust. \_\_\_\_\_Initials

I authorize the investigation of all statements contained in this application (and accompanying a resume, if any). I understand that the District may request an investigative consumer report from a consumer-reporting agency that includes information as to my character. I understand that the investigative consumer report may involve personal interviews with my neighbors, friends, relatives, former employers, schools, and others. I also understand that under the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, I have the right to make a written request to the District, within a reasonable time, for the disclosure of the name and address of the consumer-reporting agency so that I am obtaining a complete disclosure of the nature and scope of the investigation. \_\_\_\_\_Initials

I authorize any person or school, to provide the District with relevant information and opinion that may be useful to the District in making a decision on this application, and release such persons and organizations from any legal liability in making such statements. \_\_\_\_\_Initials

I understand that if my volunteer status is terminated by the District for dishonesty, breach of trust, or any criminal acts the authorities may be notified and I may be criminally prosecuted. \_\_\_\_\_Initials

I understand that this application does not, by itself, create a contract of employment, and that MY MEMBERSHIP IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS NOT FOR A DEFINITE PERIOD OF TIME, and may, unless otherwise prohibited, BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME. I understand the NO PERSON IS AUTHORIZED TO CHANGE ANY OF THE TERMS MENTIONED IN THE APPLICATION FORM. \_\_\_\_\_Initials

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTHORIZATION FOR CONSUMER AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

You have requested consideration as a volunteer with the \_\_\_\_\_.

Your consumer and criminal histories contain important information for our bonding, insurance and auditing agencies. An adverse consumer or criminal history does not disqualify you from volunteering, but it is considered in the process.

The following information is necessary for the \_\_\_\_\_ to process your background history. This information is not used for any other purpose and is confidential.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Other Names/Alias \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security\* # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth\* \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License # \_\_\_\_\_ State of Driver's License\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

States or Countries in which you have resided: \_\_\_\_\_

I do hereby authorize the \_\_\_\_\_, and any and all agents or persons authorized by it, to conduct a full review and disclosure of all records concerning myself, including but not limited to criminal records, whether said records are public, private, or confidential in nature.

The intent of this authorization is to give my consent for full and complete disclosure of records of educational institutions, employment and pre-employment records, including background reports, efficiency ratings, complaints or grievances filed by or against me, and records of lawsuits, criminal or civil, in which I presently have, or have had, an interest

I also certify that any persons who may furnish such information concerning me shall not be held accountable for giving this information, and I do hereby release said persons from any and all liability which may be incurred as a result of furnishing such information. I further specifically release the Trustees and employees from any and all liability which might otherwise be incurred as a result of collecting or receiving such information.

***I understand that a credit history (is) (or is not) being requested.***

Dated this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print: Last name, First name, Middle name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**



## DISCLOSURE REGARDING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

The \_\_\_\_\_ may obtain information about you from a third party consumer reporting agency for employment purposes. Thus, you may be the subject of a "consumer report" which may include information about your character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and/or mode of living. These reports may contain information regarding your credit history, criminal history, social security verification, motor vehicle records ("driving records"), verification of your education or employment history, or other background checks. Credit history will only be requested where such information is substantially related to the duties and responsibilities of the position for which you are applying.

You have the right, upon written request made within a reasonable time, to request whether a consumer report has been run about you and to request a copy of your report. These searches will be conducted by Pinnacle Investigations Corporation, 1101 N Argonne Road, Suite A201, Spokane Valley, WA 99212, 800-955-5306, [www.pinnacleprof.com](http://www.pinnacleprof.com). The scope of this disclosure is all-encompassing, however, allowing the Company to obtain from any outside organization all manner of consumer reports throughout the course of your employment to the extent permitted by law.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT

The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) promotes the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of information in the files of consumer reporting agencies. There are many types of consumer reporting agencies, including credit bureaus and specialty agencies (such as agencies that sell information about check writing histories, medical records, and rental history records). Here is a summary of your major rights under the FCRA. **For more information, including information about additional rights, go to [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore) or write to: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1700 G Street N.W., Washington, DC 20006.**

- **You must be told if information in your file has been used against you.** Anyone who uses a credit report or another type of consumer report to deny your application for credit, insurance, or employment – or to take another adverse action against you – must tell you, and must give you the name, address, and phone number of the agency that provided the information.
- **You have the right to know what is in your file.** You may request and obtain all the information about you in the files of a consumer reporting agency (your "file disclosure"). You will be required to provide proper identification, which may include your Social Security number. In many cases, the disclosure will be free. You are entitled to a free file disclosure if:
  - a person has taken adverse action against you because of information in your credit report;
  - you are the victim of identify theft and place a fraud alert in your file;
  - your file contains inaccurate information as a result of fraud;
  - you are on public assistance;
  - you are unemployed but expect to apply for employment within 60 days.

In addition, all consumers are entitled to one free disclosure every 12 months upon request from each nationwide credit bureau and from nationwide specialty consumer reporting agencies. See [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore) for additional information.

- **You have the right to ask for a credit score.** Credit scores are numerical summaries of your credit-worthiness based on information from credit bureaus. You may request a credit score from consumer reporting agencies that create scores or distribute scores used in residential real property loans, but you will have to pay for it. In some mortgage transactions, you will receive credit score information for free from the mortgage lender.

- **You have the right to dispute incomplete or inaccurate information.** If you identify information in your file that is incomplete or inaccurate, and report it to the consumer reporting agency, the agency must investigate unless your dispute is frivolous. See [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore) for an explanation of dispute procedures.

- **Consumer reporting agencies must correct or delete inaccurate, incomplete, or unverifiable information.** Inaccurate, incomplete or unverifiable information must be removed or corrected, usually within 30 days. However, a consumer reporting agency may continue to report information it has verified as accurate.

- **Consumer reporting agencies may not report outdated negative information.** In most cases, a consumer reporting agency may not report negative information that is more than seven years old, or bankruptcies that are more than 10 years old.

- **Access to your file is limited.** A consumer reporting agency may provide information about you only to people with a valid need – usually to consider an application with a creditor, insurer, employer, landlord, or other business. The FCRA specifies those with a valid need for access.

- **You must give your consent for reports to be provided to employers.** A consumer reporting agency may not give out information about you to your employer, or a potential employer, without your written consent given to the employer. Written consent generally is not required in the trucking industry. For more information, go to [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore).

- **You may limit “prescreened” offers of credit and insurance you get based on information in your credit report.** Unsolicited “prescreened” offers for credit and insurance must include a toll-free phone number you can call if you choose to remove your name and address from the lists these offers are based on. You may opt-out with the nationwide credit bureaus at 1-888-5678688.

- **You may seek damages from violators.** If a consumer reporting agency, or, in some cases, a user of consumer reports or a furnisher of information to a consumer reporting agency violates the FCRA, you may be able to sue in state or federal court.

**Identity theft victims and active duty military personnel have additional rights.** For more information, visit [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore).

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AUTHORIZATION TO PARTIES**

The undersigned acknowledges receipt of the **A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT** and the **DISCLOSURE REGARDING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION**. I certify that I have read and understand these documents. I hereby authorize the obtaining of "consumer reports" and/or "investigative consumer reports" by the \_\_\_\_\_ at any time after receipt of this authorization and throughout my employment, if applicable.

To this end, I hereby authorize, without reservation, any law enforcement agency, administrator, state or federal agency, institution, school or university (public or private), information service bureau, employer, or insurance company to furnish any and all background information requested by Pinnacle Investigations Corporation, 1101 N Argonne Road, Suite A201, Spokane Valley, WA 99212, 800-955-5306, [www.pinnacleprof.com](http://www.pinnacleprof.com), and/or the \_\_\_\_\_. I agree that a facsimile ("fax"), electronic or photographic copy of this Authorization shall be as valid as the original.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST AND AGREEMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_ Fire District and the undersigned hereby agree as follows:

1. The following gear and equipment is hereby entrusted to the volunteer:
2. The undersigned receives such gear and equipment in useable condition after having inspected the same. Any exceptions to such condition or suitability will be noted on the reverse side of this agreement.
3. The undersigned acknowledges and understands that such gear and equipment is the property of the \_\_\_\_\_ Fire District. It is being entrusted to the undersigned volunteer. In the event that the undersigned shall leave his or her status as a volunteer, all such equipment and gear will be returned promptly upon request by the District, in as good a repair as when entrusted, less reasonable wear and tear. Any damage to the equipment resulting from the negligence of the volunteer will be paid for by the volunteer upon demand. In the event of loss within the control of the volunteer, the equipment will be paid for in full at new price.
4. In the event that the equipment and gear, in whole or in part, is not returned or sufficient reason is not given for its return, the undersigned understands that he or she may be prosecuted for theft under Montana State Law.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
VOLUNTEER

\_\_\_\_\_  
FIRE DISTRICT

## **JOB DESCRIPTION VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER**

### **DIVISION: SUPPRESSION**

### **NATURE OF WORK**

Volunteer firefighters serve the community by responding to a wide variety of situations, ranging from emergencies that immediately threaten life or property to routine citizen requests for information or assistance. They perform duties in the following general categories: fire suppression, emergency medical aid or rescue, hazardous material responses, training, and building inspection and public education.

Volunteer firefighters usually work under the supervision of a company officer and are expected to function effectively as part of a highly trained team. They are also expected to perform their duties under adverse conditions and physical conditions that may pose a high risk of personal injury or exposure to hazardous conditions or infectious diseases.

Volunteer firefighters are required to attend regularly scheduled training in order to maintain the high level of knowledge, skill and ability necessary to function safely and effectively as a firefighter and EMS provider in accordance with state law, county protocols, and standard operating procedures.

The work performance of a volunteer firefighter is continuously evaluated by company officers for general knowledge, skill proficiency, and ability to work as part of a team. Any deficiencies are corrected through remedial training.

### **EXAMPLES OF DUTIES**

#### **FIREFIGHTERS:**

- Perform hazardous tasks for long periods of time in emergency conditions of high stress, strenuous physical exertion and the risk of serious personal injury.
- Remove persons from danger and administer emergency medical aid as required.
- Participate in fire drills and attend classes on firefighting, emergency medical services, disaster control, and related fields.
- Maintain skill level through ongoing training to prevent degradation of skills.
- Receive emergency alarms; operate radio and other communications equipment under routine and emergency conditions.
- Perform and maintain physical conditioning.
- Drive or ride Fire Department apparatus to alarms, place equipment, lay and connect hoses and nozzles, raise and climb ladders, use high pressure water hoses, chemical extinguishing agents and other tools and equipment as required.
- Ventilate burning structures; perform salvage operations and other related tasks.
- Complete and maintain paper work, records and forms as directed by the Company Officer.
- Participate in the in-service company inspection program.
- Drive, operate and maintain fire department equipment and apparatus.
- Are responsible to be familiar with and adhere to department policy and procedures.

- Perform minor maintenance and inspection of fire hydrants, apparatus, and equipment.
- Test pumpers, hose, ladders and extinguishers.
- Participate in public education.
- Perform maintenance of quarters.
- Maintain personal appearance as directed by department policy and procedures.
- Perform other related work as assigned.

**DESIRABLE KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND SKILLS**

- Methods, principles, techniques and practices applied to firefighting, fire inspection, disasters and related fields.
- Principles and practices of first aid including EMT training.
- Hazardous materials: Recognition & Identification, and Operations Level.
- Topography of the fire protection area, street locations,
- Traffic laws, ordinances and regulations involving apparatus and equipment operation.
- Mechanical and operating principles involved in the operation and maintenance of firefighting apparatus and equipment.
- Wildland Firefighting operations
- Department policy and procedures.
- Analyzing dangerous situations rapidly and accurately and taking reasonable course of action.
- Performing hose and ladder evolutions and apparatus operations.
- Perform physically demanding firefighting skills and duties including, but not limited to, carrying and manipulating hose, ladders and rescue equipment.
- Deal with the public courteously and effectively.
- Maintain harmonious working relationships with coworkers.
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- Understand and execute specific orders or instructions.
- React quickly and calmly in a stressful and hazardous condition.
- Ensure that all work is performed in a safe manner, following all applicable safety guidelines.
- Work in real and potentially hazardous conditions to the extent of possible serious injury or loss of life.
- Recall facts and conditions observed while under severe physical and emotional stress.

**REQUIRED TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE**

- Graduation from a high school, GED or equivalent.
- Must possess a valid Montana State Drivers License and successfully complete the Department's defensive driving program.
- Must complete the volunteer firefighter training prior to emergency response.

## ANNUAL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER SKILLS CHECKLIST

Identify four hazardous atmospheres that threaten firefighters' respiratory systems

Identify the limitations of SCBA, including toxic atmospheres, oxygen deficient atmospheres, time and physical condition of personnel

Identify components of Interspiro

Demonstrate

- use of the Interspiro
- changing SCBA cylinder
- cleaning and sanitizing SCBA
- inspecting rope
- proper cleaning and storage of rope

Demonstrate tying:

- Clove hitch
- Figure 8
- Figure 8 follow-through Figure 8 bend
- Figure 8 on a bight Overhand bend
- Double overhand bend

Demonstrate

- hoisting tools and equipment aloft
- Salvage cover counter payoff (two person) Salvage cover crossover throw
- Salvage cover single edge snap throw
- Salvage cover balloon throw
- Palo Alto Fold for salvage covers
- Constructing a water chute
- Constructing a water catchall

Identify items to check when inspecting ladders

Demonstrate

- cleaning ladders
- removing, carrying, raising, lowering, and replacing folding attic ladders
- removing, carrying, raising, lowering, and replacing roof ladders
- removing, carrying, raising, lowering, and replacing 16' extension ladders
- removing, carrying, raising, lowering, and replacing 24' extension ladders
- locking in on ladders
- tying off halyard
- Moving ladder in vertical position (one person) Moving ladder in vertical position (two person)
- assisting a conscious person down a ladder
- assisting an unconscious person down a ladder
- carrying a roof ladder aloft

Define:

- Fire
- Fire triangle
- Fire tetrahedron
- Flash point
- Ignition temperature
- Flashover
- Incipient stage of fire
- Free burning stage of fire
- Smoldering stage of fire

Identify:

- Four (4) means of heat transfer
- Four (4) principles of fire extinguishment
- Four (4) classes of fire

Demonstrate use of Fire Tent Shelter

Identify contents of Wildland Waist Belts

Demonstrate use of:

- Round point shovel Pulaski
- McLeod
- Back pump

Demonstrate how to carry and maintain hand tools

Explain the components of the Command Staff

Explain the components of the General Staff

## VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER RECRUITING SELECTION POLICY

**References:** *Department*

### **1.0 PURPOSE:**

1.1 To outline the policy for recruitment and selection of volunteer firefighter candidates for the Fire District.

### **2.0 RESPONSIBILITY:**

- 2.1 The fire chief shall have overall authority to approve, implement, and modify the provisions of this policy.
- 2.2 The company officer on duty is responsible to insure the provisions of this policy are met.
- 2.3 The department member in charge of training shall schedule, coordinate, and maintain records of the acceptance tests.
- 2.4 The on duty company officer will carry out testing programs for volunteer firefighters and will provide evaluation input to the training division.

### **3.0 POLICY:**

- 3.1 In order to accept only those who are able to perform all of the duties as a firefighter, a screening process similar to that of a full-time career firefighter is necessary. This process evaluates a candidate's physical, intellectual, and emotional ability to handle the rigorous training and service. Justification for each portion of the acceptance test is outlined below:
  - 3.1.2 Physical Agility / Strength Test: Measures a candidate's ability to perform basic tasks common to firefighting as well as assesses a candidate's aerobic fitness level. Firefighters may have to perform emergency duties without assistance.
  - 3.1.3 Oral Board: Evaluates the "first impression" of a candidate and examines the candidate's motivation for applying and may detect any reservations the candidate may have about the position.
  - 3.1.4 Background Investigation: Evaluates presence of criminal history, job conflicts, or instability. Also screens those who may have demonstrated undesirable driving habits.
  - 3.1.5 Medical Evaluation: The candidate will be required to pass a basic medical exam conducted by the Department's Medical Physician.

### **Minimum Entrance Standards**

1. All volunteer firefighter candidates must be a minimum of 18 years of age.
2. All candidates must possess a High School diploma or equivalent.
3. U.S. Citizen.
4. Live within the District.

### **Qualification Tests**

1. Physical agility/strength test.
2. Oral board: Panel members will consist of five individuals selected by the fire chief.
3. Background investigation/reference check
4. Medical evaluation.



<b>Public Fire Safety Guidelines</b>	Subject Coding
Section <b>Fire Administration</b>	Date
Subject <b>Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention</b>	Page

**Purpose:** To identify considerations for recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

**Introduction:**

- Most fire departments employ volunteer firefighters, they provide a provincial resource estimated to save residents more than one billion dollars annually.
- Municipalities should anticipate that volunteer firefighter careers will be shorter than full-time personnel and as a result they need strong recruiting and retention programs in place.
- Recruiting is an investment in the future. Retention is the ability to maximize that investment.
- Successful organizations are those with a strong organizational philosophy about volunteers.
- It is vital that adequate and appropriate resources be committed to the recruitment and retention of suitable volunteer firefighters.

**Service Delivery Implications:**

- A key factor in the ability of some municipalities to organize and operate a fire department is the opportunity to utilize volunteers.
- Management and leadership are major considerations for fire departments employing volunteer firefighters.
- Satisfied volunteer firefighters enhance a community's impression of a fire department making recruitment and retention much easier.
- Volunteer recruitment and retention is a two-way street. You need to clearly explain your expectations, the volunteer's obligations and time commitment, how the department/municipality operates, and answer all questions. Fire department managers need to help volunteer firefighters achieve their goals with the organization, provide the things necessary to make volunteers feel like part of the organization, and help volunteers to impact and influence positively.

**Recruiting:**

Consider the following ideas used successfully by volunteer recruiters:

- Create a recruiting task force or committee and train them. Recruiting should be ongoing, not time-limited. Recruiting takes effort. Use a good recruitment process - seek, sell, screen, select.
- Conduct a needs assessment and know how to focus your recruiting efforts. How many volunteers are needed this year and for the next five? Should the thrust be for volunteers available during traditional low turn out times? Are any special skills required? What diversity goals need to be met?
- Market your fire department. You are competing with many community/individual interests. Make the volunteer nature of the fire department known to the community (e.g., new resident awareness kit, etc.). Let the community know their help is needed. Train the public - first aid, CPR, baby-sitter courses, safety seminars, etc. Make everyone on your department a recruiter, give them basic skills to do the job and reward them. Print and electronic media are always interested in public safety information, contact them for a piece about the organization and your need for volunteers. Arrange speaking engagements at

service clubs, schools and community groups. Create recruiting kits for prospective candidates with information about department expectations, benefits, activities and social activities.

- Advertise. Create recruiting partnerships - paper placemats in local restaurants; recruiting flyers attached to pizza boxes; local cable service announcements; posters; newspaper inserts; media pieces; community or municipal web page; e-mail contacts; souvenir booklets; community newsletters; etc.
- Create a portable display to support recruitment. Have it always ready to use with related videos, promotional materials, etc. The display should be in constant use by members of the department.
- Coordinate volunteer recruiting with other municipal departments, other fire departments or other organizations that recruit volunteers.
- Follow-up with interested individuals or community volunteers. If any member of your department has contact with someone interested in the fire service, forward their name and phone number to your recruiting task force or committee. If your community experiences an unusual event that brings volunteers out to assist, follow-up with those people to determine if they might be interested in a volunteer firefighters position.
- Do exit interviews with volunteer firefighters that are leaving the department to assist you in understanding motivation to join, reasons to stay and reasons to leave. Use this information to assist the recruitment/retention process.

#### **Retention:**

Hiring a volunteer firefighter is only the beginning. Over the first year or two excitement of training and emergency activity generates tremendous motivation to be a fire department member. To maintain continuing interest after the initial recruitment, there are several ways to motivate and retain your volunteer staff.

- Train members in volunteer management and leadership.
- Solve small problems to keep them from influencing members decisions to stay or even keep good word-of-mouth information flowing about the department.
- Create a waiting list of potential volunteer firefighters. It is an indication that an organization is a desirable place to be, which helps create morale and makes people want to stay. It is a not-so-subtle reminder that anyone can be replaced.
- Hire a volunteer and you must consider his/her family. Create a partners recruit program that allows those people living with your volunteer to learn about the department, the obligations, the risks and the benefits.
- Benefits. Essential programs should include life and accident insurance, and appropriate WSIB coverage.
- Recognition incentives. Many volunteers simply want to be appreciated and receive some form of recognition. Tangible awards might include pensions or length of service awards, retirement savings plans, discounts at local stores, education/tuition assistance, low- or no-interest loans, employee assistance programs, etc.
- New initiatives. Volunteers firefighters can go through cycles of activity/interest and reduced activity. Add a new program to keep firefighters interested. For example, special teams or rescue squads that require specific qualifications to participate. Follow this with special jacket or uniform patches.
- Employee of the month program, including their picture displayed in

all stations, short media piece, and a tangible reward.

- Annual awards dinner. Develop criteria for best rescue, best training attendance, best emergency call turnout, most significant community service, most fire prevention and/or public education activity, best station, etc.
- The "Fun" factor. Social activities that might include a ladies (partners) night; family barbecues, baseball or skating; children's Christmas party; supporting a charity; etc. Firefighter competitions and conferences.
- Conduct anonymous surveys of firefighters every year or two. This should probe about issues such as respect for leadership, competency of the organization, image of the fire department, respect for people's time, things the members would like to see the department do, things they don't like, etc.
- Assign projects to task groups of firefighters and officers. Common projects would include standard operational guideline committees, vehicle specifications, station design/redesign, equipment selection, burn house or residential sprinkler demonstration projects, training facility design and specification, special public education and fire prevention projects or initiatives.
- Day-time staffing, night bunkering or platooning programs can supplement peak demand periods and offer retention benefits in two ways. It allows fire departments to better meet their staffing needs and for members with personal or business demands it identifies scheduled times when they have fire department commitments.

### III. VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

#### VOLUNTEER ETHICS

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct which shall govern District volunteers in the performance of District business and the duties of their respective jobs. This policy is intended to provide positive direction to District volunteers in order to prevent potential conflicts of interest.

This policy is not all-encompassing in its definition of conflict of interest. The "prudent person" theory can and will be applied: action deemed inappropriate by a reasonable person, whether specifically cited in this policy or not, will be subject to inquiry.

#### **STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

1. **Conflicts of Interest.** No District volunteer shall engage in any act that is in conflict, or creates an appearance of unfairness or conflict with the performance of official duties. An volunteer shall be deemed to have a conflict if the volunteer:

a. Has any financial interest in any sale to the District of any goods or services when such financial interest was received with prior knowledge that the District intended to purchase the property, goods, or services.

b. Solicits, accepts, or seeks a gift, gratuity, or favor from any person, firm, or corporation involved in a contract or transaction which is or may be the subject of official action by the District.

1) Recognizing that personal friendships often precede and can evolve from official contact between volunteers and persons engaged in business with the District, reasonable exceptions to this section are permitted for those occasions which are social in nature and are not predicated on the volunteer's ability to influence, directly or indirectly, any matter before the District.

The volunteer will be guided in interpretation of this section by the distinction between a gift, gratuity, or favor given or received which has significant monetary value and is offered or accepted in expectation of preferential treatment, and an expression of courtesy. Examples of acceptable courtesies include: a meal or social event; exchanges of floral offerings or gifts of food to commemorate events such as illness, death, birth, holidays, promotions; a sample or promotional gift of nominal value (\$25 or less).

c. Participates in his/her capacity as a District volunteer in the issuing of a purchase order or contract in which he/she has a private interest, direct or indirect, or performs in regard to such contract some function requiring the exercise of discretion on behalf of the District.

d. Engages in, accepts employment from, or renders services for private interests for any compensation or consideration having monetary value when such employment or service is incompatible with the proper discharge of official duties or would tend to impair independence of judgment or action in performance of official duties, or give the appearance of the above.

An volunteer should not make a unilateral decision, if there is any doubt about his/her private employment. The Trustees should be consulted.

1) Except for courtesies as provided in item "b" above, no volunteer shall, directly or indirectly, give or receive, or agree to receive any compensation, gift, reward, commission or gratuity from any source except the District for any matter directly connected with or related to his/her official services as

such volunteer with this District.

f. Discloses or uses without authorization confidential information concerning property or affairs of the District to advance a private interest with respect to any contract or transaction which is or may be the subject of official action of the District.

g. Have a financial interest or personal interest in any matters coming before the Trustees and participates in discussion with or gives an official opinion to the Trustees unless the volunteer discloses on the record the nature and extent of such interest.

2. **Use of Public Property.** No volunteer of the District shall request, use, or permit the use of District-owned vehicles, clothing, equipment, materials, or other property for unauthorized personal convenience, for profit, for private use, or as part of secondary employment. Use of such District property is to be restricted to such services as are available to the District generally and for the conduct of official District business.

3. **Discipline.** Any volunteer who is found to be in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment. Depending upon the seriousness of the action, other appropriate civil or criminal sanctions may also be pursued.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

Volunteer. An volunteer is defined as any person, including elected officials, named to the firefighter roster.

Interest. Interest is any direct or indirect monetary or material benefit accruing to a District volunteer as a result of a contract or transaction which is or may be the subject of an official act or action by or with the District (except for such transactions which would confer similar benefits to all other persons and/or property similarly situated).

Interests include: (a) interests in an volunteer's family, (b) any business entity in which stock or legal beneficial ownership is in excess of one percent (1%) of the total stock, or legal ownership is controlled or owned directly or indirectly by the volunteer, (c) interest in any business entity in which the District volunteer is an officer, director, or volunteer, (d) interest in any person or business entity with whom a contractual relationship exists with the volunteer; provided that a contractual obligation of less than \$500 or a commercially reasonable loan or purchase made in the course of ordinary business shall not be deemed to create a conflict of interest.

Immediate Family. Family includes spouse, child, parent, parent-in-law, brother, sister, grandparent, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. Family also includes other persons residing in the volunteer's residence or are financially dependent upon the volunteer.

Contract. Contract shall include any contract or agreement, sale, lease, purchase, or purchase order.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Interpretation. Interpretations of this policy shall be referred to the District Attorney.

2. Investigation. The District Attorney shall investigate, or cause to be investigated, all suspicions, allegations, and written complaints of unethical conduct.

a. Complaints which are considered by the District Attorney to be serious may be referred to

an ethics panel, composed of District volunteers appointed by the Trustees.

b. An ethics panel, when constituted, shall investigate and hear the complaint, and recommend to the Trustees any action deemed appropriate.

c. Complaints or allegations that may be criminal in nature may be referred to an appropriate outside agency for investigation.

## **VOLUNTEER DISCIPLINE**

**PURPOSE:** To provide a policy for progressive discipline of volunteers

### **INTRODUCTION**

Volunteer performance and behavior is expected to contribute toward the achievement of the organization's goals and objectives. When an volunteer's performance or behavior is unsatisfactory, corrective action must be taken. Corrective action will follow the process of progressive discipline.

### **APPLICATION**

These guidelines and procedures apply to all District volunteers.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Verbal Reprimand** is a discussion between the volunteer and his/her supervisor about the volunteer's unsatisfactory performance or conduct, how it should improve and what may happen if it does not improve.

**Written Reprimand** is a written warning that performance or conduct is unsatisfactory. A copy of the written reprimand is placed in the volunteer's personnel file, becoming part of the volunteer's record.

**Disciplinary Suspension** is the temporary absence, without pay, of an volunteer from the duty station to stress upon the volunteer the seriousness of poor performance or misconduct.

**Demotion** is the transfer to a new position with a maximum rate of pay lower than the maximum rate of pay for the position held by the volunteer immediately prior to the transfer.

**Dismissal** is the termination, at the employer's discretion, of an individual's employment with Sanders District.

**Standards of General Conduct** are accepted forms of performance, activity and behavior that require no set rules to ensure compliance (e.g., coming in to work on time).

**Standards of Particular Conduct** are established work rules or orders set out by the employer in the Sanders District Personnel Policies and Procedures.

**Human Resources Department** is the Department responsible for the management of the Sanders District Personnel Policies and Procedures.

### **GUIDELINES**

The supervisor or Department head must inform an volunteer of the standards of particular conduct that apply in the workplace. Volunteers may be disciplined for breaching standards of general conduct or standards of particular conduct. When assessing misconduct, the manager should consider such factors

as the following:

- the volunteer's length of service;
- the volunteer's past record;
- the seriousness of the offense; and
- any other pertinent facts.

It is inappropriate to allow other volunteers to witness the discipline of one of their co-workers. Interviews involving discipline should be held in private. Discipline should not be viewed as punishment, but as a method of correcting a problem. Disciplinary action should not be delayed. An inordinate time gap between the breach of conduct and the supervisor's response tends to disassociate the offense from the corrective action. Disciplinary action should only be taken after the volunteer has an opportunity to present his or her case. A meeting should be held with the volunteer for this purpose. If suspension or dismissal is being considered, an volunteer who is a member of an volunteer union/association must be given 24 hours notice of the meeting and be advised of the right to have a representative present at the meeting.

Discipline should be applied progressively unless the misconduct is extremely serious (e.g., theft, physical assault, striking a supervisor or co-worker). The Board of District Trustees shall be the sole judge of what conduct will be considered extremely serious. "Extremely serious" conduct shall result, subject to due process rights afforded to the volunteer, in termination from employment with Sanders District. If the volunteer fails to correct the behavior, the discipline imposed becomes stronger with each incident. The progressive discipline process normally follows these steps:

#### **Step 1- Verbal Reprimand**

Verbal reprimands are administered by the volunteer's supervisor.

#### **Step 2 - Written Reprimand**

The supervisor also administers written reprimands. The manager may consult and involve the Department head or the Human Resources Department.

#### **Step 3 - Disciplinary Suspension or Demotion**

The Board of District Trustees administer disciplinary suspensions. The supervisor can recommend this action. Suspensions are applied progressively. The first suspension is normally for one day. If this does not correct the behavior, then the next incident will result in a three day suspension, then a five day, ten day and so on. Normally, after a 10 day suspension, dismissal will be considered.

The Board of District Trustees will not give a disciplinary suspension where they feel that an extensive investigation is required, the results of which may lead to dismissal. If the Trustees believe an volunteer must be removed from the work site to properly conduct an investigation, then a suspension pending investigation will be given.

The Board of District Trustees administers demotions. If the Trustees believe an volunteer is guilty of misconduct or incompetence, they may demote the volunteer temporarily or permanently. Demotion may be used as a "last resort" prior to dismissal .

An volunteer has the right to grieve a demotion or suspension. A grievance shall be made in accordance with the procedure set forth in the Sanders District Personnel Policies and Procedures.

#### **Step 4 - Dismissal**

The Board of District Trustees has the sole authority to dismiss an volunteer from employment with Sanders District.

For a part-time, on-call, as needed, volunteer, only Steps 1 and 2 of the progressive discipline process in #18 above are normally required prior to recommending dismissal.

If a meeting is held with an volunteer who is represented by organized labor to discuss the possibility of dismissal or suspension, the volunteer must receive 24 hours notice and must be advised of the right to have a representative present at the meetings.

Written reprimands, letters of suspension, letters of demotion and letters of dismissal are placed in the volunteer's personnel file.

#### **PROCEDURES**

When standards of conduct are breached, the supervisor shall initiate disciplinary action. The manager begins documenting this on a disciplinary action record sheet. If necessary, in order to determine the appropriate action to take, the supervisor may contact the Human Resources Department for assistance with progressive discipline; and consult with other managers and superiors.

The supervisor holds a private interview with the volunteer before disciplinary action is taken to do the following:

- (a) insure the volunteer is aware of the problem;
- (b) give the volunteer an opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding the unsatisfactory performance or the breach of conduct;
- (c) determine if the volunteer's actions were merely a result of misunderstanding directions, or if the volunteer willfully broke rules of conduct; and
- (d) explain to the volunteer how management will deal with the misconduct.

If the volunteer says the unsatisfactory behavior is due to physical, personal or domestic problems, the supervisor encourages the volunteer to seek professional advice or treatment. The supervisor makes notes of the interview. These notes are not placed in the volunteer's personnel file, but are kept for future reference should the behavior continue, as well as for reference when the supervisor prepares a performance review of the volunteer.

If appropriate, the supervisor imposes a verbal reprimand by informing the volunteer of the corrective action that will be taken. This always includes the following:

- (a) an explanation of the behavior for which the volunteer is being reprimanded;
- (b) an explanation of how to correct the behavior;
- (c) an explanation of the type of discipline that is being considered or that will be conducted;
- (d) a plan of action for correcting the problem, with time lines, if possible; and
- (e) an explanation of further action that will be taken if the volunteer fails to correct the behavior.

If a verbal reprimand does not achieve the desired results and the volunteer breaks the rules again, the supervisor meets again with the volunteer to obtain an explanation. If required, the supervisor advises the volunteer that a letter of reprimand is being considered.

The supervisor prepares a written reprimand. The supervisor gives this letter to the volunteer. A copy is placed in the volunteer's personnel file. More than one written reprimand may be given before proceeding to a suspension.



Where a disciplinary suspension or demotion is the next step in the progressive discipline procedure, the supervisor must do the following:

- (a) carry out a thorough investigation; and
- (b) if warranted by the investigation, prepare a report for the Board of District Trustees and recommend disciplinary suspension or demotion. (The report shall include the volunteer's explanation.)

If the Board of District Trustees accepts the recommendation for suspension, the Board of District Trustees prepares a letter of suspension. This letter is given to the volunteer. A copy is placed in the volunteer's personnel file. The Board of District Trustees may suspend the volunteer several times. Suspensions of one, three, five, and ten days are the normal progression.

If the Board of District Trustees accepts a recommendation for demotion, the Board of District Trustees shall advise the volunteer, in writing, of the demotion. This letter is given to the volunteer. A copy is placed in the volunteer's personnel file. The Board of District Trustees may reinstate the demoted volunteer if the volunteer's performance warrants it.

The Board of District Trustees shall consider dismissing an volunteer as the final step in progressive discipline on recommendation from the supervisor. As much information as possible should accompany this recommendation. The Board of District Trustees reviews the request for dismissal. In conducting the review, the Board of District Trustees shall look at the facts, check previous discipline, and examine case law. The following points are examined during this process:

- (a) Does the seriousness of this offense warrant dismissal?
- (b) Is there any State law dealing with the particular offense? Has the law been followed?
- (c) Is the volunteer's employment subject to a collective bargaining agreement?
- (d) Was it made clear to the volunteer that this offense may result in dismissal?
- (e) What is the length of the volunteer's service?
- (f) Was the volunteer given a chance to provide an explanation?

A meeting is held with the volunteer to advise of the possibility of dismissal (24 hours notice is given to represented volunteers). The Board of District Trustees shall prior to the pre-termination meeting advise the volunteer in writing of the recommendation and reasons for proposed dismissal and the volunteer's rights to representation. At the meeting, the volunteer shall have the right to make any written or oral statement that he/she may wish to make in response to the notice of possible dismissal. If after considering the recommendation for dismissal, the response of the volunteer and any statements made at the pre-termination meeting, the Board of District Trustees determines that dismissal is appropriate, the Board of District Trustees shall consult with the Human Resources Department and inform the volunteer in writing of dismissal from District service. The letter of dismissal shall clearly state the reasons for the dismissal, why further employment cannot continue and that dismissal is effective immediately. The letter of dismissal is copied and placed in the volunteer's personnel file.