



# Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

November 2009



**Recruitment and Retention  
A Message from Mr. Robert Cormier,  
Director of Building, Fire and Technical Safety and  
Fire Marshal of Nova Scotia**

Over the past year, the Office of the Fire Marshal in cooperation with the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia, has been developing a program to assist fire departments with the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire fighters. The committee consisted of Derwin Swinemar - Deputy Fire Marshal, Donald Parks - Fire Chief Lunenburg & District Fire Department, Wayne Thorburne - Fire Chief Bridgewater Fire Department, Paul Maynard - Fire Chief Hantsport Fire Department and Heather McKay, Human Resources Consultant, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency.

Not all fire departments are experiencing a decrease in the number of persons who wish to become fire fighters. In general, however, throughout North America there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of members involved in the fire service. This as you can see is not a new issue, nor is it confined to Nova Scotia. There are two major issues, a declining and aging population in rural area's and a movement to major centers. This equates to fire departments not having individuals to recruit and aging fire fighters. The third less obvious issue is a changing society, both partners working, the demand of children for time for sports and culture, and the increasing required level of physical and mental ability for the safety and productivity of volunteers.

There are no simple solutions. Many Nova Scotia Departments are moving to consolidate their fire departments similar to action taken by Guysborough and Shelburne municipalities. The response time is longer but, someone will respond. Departments and municipalities are also working closely to rationalize the delivery service. Colchester, Lunenburg, Guysborough have a good start and East Hants is working toward that goal. With the quality of the Nova Scotia radio system, it is possible to call out multiple departments to ensure an adequate response especially during the work day. This program was in place fifteen years ago in Halifax County.

The province has recognized this issue and has attempted to assist volunteer fire fighters by providing for free vehicle registration, a tax credit and grants for equipment to help relieve the stress of fund raising. A study revealed that these items were the most critical for recruitment along with college tuition. A survey of fire chiefs stated that while financial incentives of some kind are most helpful, they alone are not the reason volunteers come to or stay with a fire company. The sense of giving back to a community, the camaraderie, and the feeling that their work is appreciated, are all factors contributing to successful recruitment and retention of volunteer fire fighters.

We do not have all the answers. The committee wants to help and provide you with some tools to assist with the recruitment and retention of our most valuable resource, people. We need to look at who we are and how we respond to the needs of our communities. We, is not a department but a region, the community is not your village or town, it is your mutual aid district. Disasters large or small require resources and commitment that many communities can no longer provide on their own. Even the USA asked for help with Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. We cannot leave out any members of our communities if we are to continue to provide an organized response.

To book an information session for your region call the Office of the Fire Marshal at 424-5721 or toll free at 1-800-559-3473.

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## **Acknowledgments**

In 2008 Mr. Robert Cormier, Nova Scotia Fire Marshal launched a project to produce a document that would assist the Fire Chiefs in the recruitment and retention of volunteers for the Fire Service in Nova Scotia.

As a result, a committee was created to conduct a series of meetings across the Province to identify recruitment and retention issues, collect concerns, gather feedback and consider the many perspectives from the diverse Departments. These consultations were the foundation for the creation of this reference package.

The Office of the Fire Marshal acknowledges the support and input from the following organizations and individuals.

- Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia
- Volunteer Recruitment & Retention - Office of the Fire Marshal, Ontario
- The Canadian Fire Chief Magazine
- Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency
- Derwin Swinemar, Deputy Fire Marshal, Office of the Fire Marshal, 527-6935
- Donald Parks, Fire Chief Lunenburg & District Fire Department, 521-6734
- Wayne Thorburne, Fire Chief Bridgewater Fire Department, 521-5061
- Paul Maynard, Fire Chief Hantsport Fire Department, 678-4962
- Heather McKay, Human Resources Consultant, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency, 490-4391
- Yvonne Perry - Program Development Support
- Office of the Fire Marshal of Nova Scotia - 1-800-559-3473
- The Municipal Government Act - Addendum B
- The Men and Women of the Fire Service of Nova Scotia who helped contribute to this project

## **The Nature of Our Business**

The Fire Service in Nova Scotia has come along way since the early days of bucket brigades and horse drawn steam pumpers . It has become one of the most diverse and challenging professions known today. Imagine learning and developing skills to cope with situations ranging from structure fires, medical assist calls, ice rescues, high angle rescues, water rescues, hazardous chemical spills and more. Consider the challenge of helping people at all hours of the day and night, seven days a week, in any kind of weather and very often under highly stressful and emotional conditions. However, the personal rewards and self satisfaction that comes from being a part of this team is often beyond description.

For many Fire Departments that rely on volunteers to deliver fire protection , recruiting and retaining a sufficient number of capable and experienced volunteers has for a number of years been a challenge .

Communities across the Province have identified that it is increasingly more difficult to maintain the necessary number of volunteers needed to provide this service. This could be the result of an aging population, decline in industry and employment, geographic isolation or lack of affordable housing in the community .

Mr. Robert Cormier Director of Building, Fire and Technical Safety and Fire Marshal of Nova Scotia has dedicated resources to develop an information package that has recommendations for the Volunteer Fire Departments and Ground Search and Rescue Organizations, that can be utilized in Recruiting new members and Retaining the volunteer force already in place.

You may find some sections that would not work for you and some that will, please use any part that will assist you towards creating a strong and vibrant force for your community .

The Office of the Fire Marshal is grateful for all of the assistance from the Fire Service in Nova Scotia for sacrificing their free time in order to identify and discuss some of the issues and challenges they have faced in regards to their Recruitment & Retention efforts.

The Recruitment & Retention Committee



# Part 1

## Recruitment



## **Pre-Recruitment Strategies**

In order to be successful in recruiting the right people for the right job at the right time, there are two questions to ask before you begin to recruit. WHY are we recruiting? WHO are we recruiting? Asking yourself these questions will prepare you to focus your recruitment efforts and spend your time wisely.

### **WHY?**

Conduct an assessment to determine the needs of your fire department. This will help you answer the question “WHY”?

1. Take a look at the needs of your community, your municipality’s responsibilities and legislative responsibilities.
2. Then take a look at your department and its existing membership. What are its capabilities?
3. Does your department’s capabilities meet the needs identified?
4. Focus your recruitment efforts to address that need.

When conducting your assessment, look beyond the traditional “fire suppression” perspective. The following roles (and many others) not only contribute to a fire department’s broader mission through better administration and logistical support, they can also enhance response capabilities, inspection programs and public education activities. This approach puts to use the right resources that are available in your community

- ▶ Fire fighting and Rescue
- ▶ Emergency Medical Response
- ▶ Public Education, Teaching and Training
- ▶ Public and Media Relations
- ▶ Photography, Graphic Arts and Publishing
- ▶ Emergency Vehicle Drivers and Operators
- ▶ Fire Safety Inspections
- ▶ Office Duties and Administration
- ▶ Radio and Telephone Communications and Dispatch
- ▶ Mechanics and Maintenance
- ▶ Human Resource
- ▶ On Scene Rehabilitation and Support to Responders
- ▶ Information Technology
- ▶ Fund-raising and Events Coordination

In order to be clear regarding the roles and the skills and knowledge that you are recruiting for, develop a job description for each of them.

## **WHO?**

In order to answer this question, you may need to know and understand the availability and characteristics of potential volunteers in your community. You also need to know some facts about volunteers in general.

The following statistics garnered from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating provides the following profile of Canadian volunteers.

Completing a similar profile of your community will help you define the composition of your community and those most likely to volunteer . It can also provide insight regarding your fire department's success in attracting, using that potential and maintaining commitment from your volunteers.

For instance, over 55% of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years old volunteer. Look at your department. How many members fit into this category? Is there a role within your department for youth?

Consider as well the expectations of your department regarding hours. The average number of hours contributed annually range from 139 to 245. How many hours is the average volunteer expected to contribute to your department? If you do training once per week for 3 hours, that's 156 hours annually. This doesn't include expectations for emergency calls, public education events, Fund-raising or other requirements. Are there individuals in your community who can commit to those requirements? How can your fire department assist members to meet these expectations?

This information about the members of your community will assist you to successfully recruit for volunteers that will meet both the department needs for specific roles and the community's need to connect and collaborate for the common good.

You can also conduct a profile of the employers in the community to identify potential employers that may support volunteerism and assist members to be able to meet time commitments.

## **REFLECT YOUR COMMUNITY**

Involving employees that work in your community, youth, older adults, families, individuals with disabilities and various ethnic groups offers many mutual benefits. The individuals are provided with opportunities to develop skills, gain knowledge and contribute to their community in a meaningful way. The department benefits by having a diverse and vibrant fund of resources, knowledge, skills and perspectives that reflect the community, which in turn, further strengthens the department.

In order to reap the benefits of these diverse populations, fire departments may be required to adjust processes, accommodate the workplace or revise the manner in which people view different populations and work with them. In the big picture, the benefits of involving different populations far outweigh the costs and serve to enhance the culture, work climate and capabilities of the department.

## **MATCHING THE ROLE AND THE VOLUNTEER**

Once you have the above information, it will be easier for you to plan your recruitment. In order to effectively recruit volunteers, it may be necessary to identify your target group. Targeting your recruitment may increase your chances of success.

The following matching process illustrates how to do this.

1. Review your needs assessment and identify the role that needs to be filled
2. Identify the skills, attributes and knowledge that the role requires
3. Look at the profiles of community members and employers
4. Target those individuals most likely to have those skills
5. Develop marketing and communication strategies that would best attract the type of individual you are looking for
6. Begin your recruitment
7. If it doesn't draw the individuals you need, reassess, redevelop and try again.

## **Recruitment Strategies**

When you recruit for volunteers, you are competing with many other individual and community interests. Therefore market your fire department in a manner that draws the attention of potential volunteers and clearly communicates the department's role in bringing community members together and making the community stronger and safer.

Make the community aware of all the contributions that the fire department makes. Let the volunteer nature of the fire department be known to the community and let the community know their help is needed.

Current volunteers are a good source for marketing your department. If you welcome them, support them and train them well, they will tell others. They are the most likely to be able to explain the requirements and benefits of joining.

However, relying solely on word of mouth can limit the number and variety of individuals invited and involved in your department. To promote diversity and involve volunteers with different skill sets, knowledge and perspectives, rely on more than one method.

Communication strategies should be both attention-getting and informative. They may be the first impression that a potential volunteer has of your department. The strategy must demonstrate that the position is interesting, challenging and beneficial to both the individual and the community.

In order to effectively communicate and demonstrate the value of volunteering with your fire service, you may need to understand why people volunteer.

- ▶ to make a contribution to their community
- ▶ to use skills and experience
- ▶ personally affected by the cause the organization supports
- ▶ to explore one's own strengths
- ▶ to network with or meet people
- ▶ friends volunteer
- ▶ to improve job opportunities
- ▶ because they have always wanted to be a fire fighter
- ▶ obtain training to pursue a career

When you recruit, you will need to clearly communicate how volunteering with your fire services will address their reasons. If you are creative in your message, you will likely find a way to address all of the reasons listed.

There are many recruiting strategies that your fire department can choose from. When deciding on a strategy, ask yourself:

- ✓ Who is representing the department and how will they do this?
- ✓ Who is the intended audience? Is it the general public or a target population?
- ✓ What message is the department going to communicate?
- ✓ Is it within your means? Do you have the financial, time and human resources?
- ✓ Do you need other resources such as media, posters and ads?
- ✓ Does it talk about the benefits and rewards of joining/
- ✓ Does it identify hazards or potential stressors and how these are mitigated?
- ✓ Does it also relay expectations and potential stressors?

## **Promotional Strategies**

### **Interactive**

- Action displays
- Open Houses
- Public Venues
- Word of Mouth
- Membership Drives
- Media - TV & Radio Interviews
- Media - Printed Materials
- Person to Person
- Web pages and email
- Signs, brochures, flyers
- Bill boards

### **Networks & Other Sources**

- Province wide websites and networks such as FSANS or [WWW.gov.ns.ca.workforcedevelopment](http://WWW.gov.ns.ca.workforcedevelopment)
- Pre fire service classes
- Youth and School Volunteers
- Employer Supported Volunteerism

## **Benefits of Volunteering**

When asked, most people applying for a volunteer fire fighter will tell you they are joining to contribute to the safety and quality of life in their community, to help people and to give back to their community. Being a volunteer fire fighter is a respected position and as a result, there are many benefits that accompany this position. Such as:

- ▶ a sense of belonging
- ▶ achievement
- ▶ responsibility
- ▶ self respect
- ▶ personal growth, development and self satisfaction
- ▶ contribution to the department
- ▶ creation of friendships / camaraderie
- ▶ socialize
- ▶ feeling valued
- ▶ be a role model
- ▶ have fun and enjoy one's environment
- ▶ opportunity to help their community
- ▶ build on their resume
- ▶ license plates
- ▶ life insurance
- ▶ training
- ▶ leadership opportunities
- ▶ uniforms & clothing
- ▶ tax credit
- ▶ banquets
- ▶ medals

## **Records Management**

Once you receive information about an applicant, whether from the applicant, doctor, police or other individuals, the fire department becomes responsible for that information and is then subject to legal requirements in terms of confidentiality and access to information.

Therefore, it is very important for all membership records to be kept in a locked, secure location with limited access.

Privacy legislation protects individuals from the release or disclosure of personal information without their consent.



## **Volunteer Fire Fighter Intake Policy**

- Purpose:**
- To screen applicants in a fair, equitable and consistent manner
  - To evaluate the suitability of the applicant
  - To gather essential information about the applicant
- Process:**
1. All applicants shall complete a volunteer fire fighter application form.
  2. All applicants shall submit the completed application form along with a current Criminal Record Check and Drivers Abstract to the Fire Chief or appropriate committee (personnel/membership) for review.
  3. After receiving the completed application package, the Fire Chief or appropriate committee (personnel/membership) shall review the documents and decide whether the applicant will be accepted or rejected.
  4. If the applicant is rejected, the Fire Chief or appropriate committee (personnel/membership) will contact the applicant to discuss this.
  5. If the applicant is accepted, the Fire Chief or appropriate committee (personnel/membership) will then arrange a meeting with the applicant to review the pertinent policies, additional forms to be completed by the applicant, attendance commitments and the benefits of volunteering.
  6. The applicant may be given the additional forms to take away and complete.
  7. When all the forms are completed and have been received by the Fire Chief, or appropriate committee (personnel/membership) the applicant will be accepted as a volunteer and arrangements will be made to issue their clothing, and any tools and equipment that they may need. The Fire Chief or designate will give the Volunteer a station orientation which may include meeting and training schedules, probation period, tour of the station and equipment, etc.
  8. The new volunteer will be on probation for the period deemed appropriate for this particular station.

**- Volunteer Fire Fighter Intake Package -**

***The following documents should be part of a Fire Department Volunteer Intake Package.***

- Completed, signed application form
- Criminal Record Check
- Medical Form
- Driver's Abstract
- Code of Conduct
- Beneficiary Card

*These documents should be kept in the volunteer's personnel file in a secure location at the Fire Station, as well as their: Completed Interview Questions, Completed Reference Check Form, Line of Duty Death Form, Training Records and all completed Fire Fighter Annual Performance Evaluation Forms.*

***Orientation Meeting - items to be discussed with the candidate.***

- The fire fighter job description
- Volunteer Insurance Forms
- Station contact names and phone numbers
- Department meeting & training schedules
- Fundraising initiatives, & social activities update
- Level 1 requirements
- Honorarium information
- Line of Duty Death Form
- Fire Fighter Annual Performance Evaluation Form

Fire Fighter:

\_\_\_\_\_

Fire Chief:  
(Or designate)

\_\_\_\_\_

# Application for Volunteer Fire Fighter

**General Information:** This Application for volunteer fire fighter is to be used when seeking a position as a volunteer fire fighter with your local fire department . In order to be eligible , you must meet the minimum qualifications.

**Instructions:** Please provide the information requested on this form or attach a resume.

## Personal Information:

Email  
Address:

First Name	Initial	Last Name
Address: Street/PO Box/Rural Route		Apt. Number
City/Town	Province	Postal Code
Telephone: Home	Work	Other

**Coverage Area: (In order to qualify as a volunteer fire fighter you must live in the coverage area.)** Please indicate the fire department that you are applying for:

**Or** if you are interested in non-operational service, such as fire prevention, public education, or administration, please indicate:

- Fire Prevention     
  Public Education     
  Administration

## Education

Type of School	Name of School	Location (mailing address, phone #)	#of Years Completed	Major & Degree
High School				
Post Secondary				

<b>Qualifications:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Have you ever applied for a volunteer position with any Fire Service and have not been accepted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you 18 years of age or over?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have 20/30 corrected vision with colour and peripheral vision acceptable for the occupation of firefighter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have normal unaided hearing - hearing thresholds no greater than 30 decibels in each ear at 500Hz, 1000 Hz and 2000 Hz and no significant loss in higher frequencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you a legal resident of Canada?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you able to understand and communicate clearly in English?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Documentation to be submitted with the application form:</b>		
Have you attached a photocopy of your drivers license?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you attached a driver's abstract that demonstrates responsible and safe driving behaviour, with a record of no more than 4 points (Nova Scotia Department of Motor Vehicle standard)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you attached a clean criminal record check showing no criminal record exists or is pending?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Employment History:</b>		
Please list your work experience beginning with your most recent job held.		
<b><u>Name of Employer</u></b>	Name of last supervisor	Employment dates:
Address		From:
City/Province	Your job title:	To:
Phone Number		
Reason for leaving (be specific):		
List the jobs you held, duties performed, skills used or learned, advancements or promotions while you worked at this organization.		
<b><u>Name of Employer</u></b>	Name of last supervisor	Employment dates:
Address		From:
City/Province	Your job title:	To:
Phone Number		
Reason for leaving (be specific):		
List the jobs you held, duties performed, skills used or learned, advancements or promotions while you worked at this organization.		

## Work or Volunteer Related References:

	Name	Business Name	Phone No.
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

### Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire

Please complete to determine your physical condition .

Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only do physical activity recommended by your doctor?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. In the past month, have you had chest pain when you are not doing physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Do you have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Is your doctor currently prescribing drugs for your blood pressure or a heart condition?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Do you know of any other reason why you should not do physical activity?

**Employment Equity Program: (Equal Opportunity Employer)** Completion of this section is voluntary.

When recruiting volunteers, Fire Departments consider appropriate representation of aboriginal people, visible minorities, persons with disabilities and women. By voluntarily providing information about yourself in these areas you will assist us to improve opportunities for members of under represented groups. This process has been approved by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission under Section 25 of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

Please check the boxes which apply to you.

- Member of Aboriginal peoples of Canada (Inuit, Metis, Non-status or Status)
- Member of visible minority group (IE: Black, Chinese, South Asian, Korean, Japanese, etc.)
- Woman
- Disability

**Declaration:**

I hereby apply for volunteer membership in the Fire Department. I understand that any equipment, uniforms, protective clothing, training materials, identification cards or badges, or any other item which may be provided for my use, is the property of the fire service and must be promptly returned to the designated officer upon my leaving the organization, whether by resignation, expulsion or any other means.

I acknowledge that department rules, guidelines, policies and procedures establish requirements for specific levels of attendance at department activities; levels of training or other conditions which are necessary for membership.

I understand that participation in department activities may make me privy to information about citizens of the fire protection area, members of the department, department activities or other information of a personal or confidential nature and I will not reveal or discuss that information, except as required to carry out my duties as a fire fighter.

I *certify* that the information I have provided in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if any of this information is found to be untrue, this application may be rejected and if accepted as a volunteer fire fighter, false statements on this application shall be considered sufficient cause for dismissal.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian: (If Under 19) \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/GUARDIAN:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(IF UNDER 19)**

**Please submit completed applications to:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Delivery Address:**

## **Police Records Check**

Many Police/RCMP detachments charge a fee to process a Criminal Record Check. However, if they know it is for a volunteer position sometimes the fee will be reduced or waived. Therefore it is important to give your volunteer applicants a letter from your department indicating the purpose of the Record Check. This letter should be on your department letterhead - sample attached.

**Request for a Police Record Check  
(should be on Department Letter Head)**

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has applied to become a Volunteer Fire Fighter. As part of the application process, they are required to submit a current Police Record Check.

Sincerely,

Signature

Contact Name

Department Name

Contact Phone Number



## Volunteer Fire Fighter Intake Medical Assessment

*To be completed by a physician or other medical professional working as part of a physician lead team.*

This medical form references the National Fire Protection Association publication “NFPA 1582 - Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments, 2007 Edition” for the baseline medical requirements for volunteer fire fighters. **Section 6.2.2 of the standard states: “Candidates with Category A medical conditions shall not be certified as meeting the medical requirements of this standard.”** References from the standard dealing with specific areas of interest are included below for reference.

***The candidate shall provide the physician with a copy of the Fire Fighter Job Description at the time of examination.***

Please check appropriate box    YES    NO

1. 6.4 Eyes and Vision. :

**6.4.1 Category A medical conditions shall include the following:**

(1) Far visual acuity less than 20/40 binocular, corrected with contact lenses or spectacles, or far visual acuity less than 20/100 binocular for wearers of hard contacts or spectacles, uncorrected

(2) Colour perception - monochromatic vision resulting in inability to use imaging devices such as thermal imaging cameras

(3) Monocular vision

(4) Any eye condition that results in the candidate not being able to safely perform one or more of the essential job tasks

**In your opinion does the patient have 20/30 corrected vision with colour and peripheral vision acceptable for the occupation of fire fighter?**

2. 6.5 Ears and Hearing.

**6.5.1 Category A medical conditions shall include the following:**

(1) Chronic vertigo or impaired balance as demonstrated by the inability to tandem gait walk

(2) On audiometric testing, average hearing loss in the unaided better ear greater than 40 decibels (dB) at 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, and 3000 Hz when the audiometric device is calibrated to ANSI Z24.5, Audiometric Device Testing

(3) Any ear condition (or hearing impairment) that results in the candidate not being able to safely perform one or more of the essential job tasks

**In your opinion, does the patient have normal unaided hearing?**

**Does the patient have any ear condition (or hearing impairment) that results in a person not being able to safely perform essential fire fighter job tasks?**

4. Fire fighting involves periods of heavy physical exertion under conditions of physical and emotional stress, sometimes for prolonged periods.

**In your opinion does the patient have any cardiovascular diseases or conditions that would limit him/her from performing the role of fire fighter?**

5. As a fire fighter your patient will be required to wear protective clothing and a breathing apparatus weighting approximately 75 lbs, they will be required to perform various physical functions such as sitting, standing, walking, running, kneeling, crouching, stooping, squatting, twisting upper body, climbing, balancing, pushing, pulling and lifting.

**In your opinion does the patient have any current medical conditions that will prohibit them from safely doing any of these activities? (if yes, please indicate which activities in the comments section)**

**Physician Comments:**

**Based on my examination of this patient ( \_\_\_\_\_ ),**  
**I have found him/her to be:** Patient's Name

- fit for the position of fire fighter  
 unfit for the position of fire fighter

Physician's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Address & Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

## CODE OF CONDUCT

I \_\_\_\_\_ , agree to:

1. Be familiar with and obedient to the Values, Guiding Principles , Policies and Procedures of \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Dept.
2. Support and demonstrate the following values: \_\_\_\_\_:
  - Trust - as the foundation for growth and development.
  - Dedication - as our motivation to excel.
  - Integrity - as the standard of reliability to our commitments.
  - Caring - as a basis of what we do.
  - Diversity - as a strength of our service and community.
3. Support and demonstrate the following guiding principles:
  - Honesty - through our words and actions.
  - Accountability - accepting individual and collective responsibility.
  - Competency - ability and energy to achieve tasks in an efficient manner.
  - Dependability - the ability to rely on each other.
  - Fairness - maintaining open and impartial attitudes.
  - Acceptance - value diversity by drawing on each other.
  - Communication - speak openly, listen carefully, explain fully and strive to understand.
4. Maintain the confidential nature of the work.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Labour and  
Workforce Development

### Fire Fighters of Nova Scotia Beneficiary Designation Form

***Fire Fighter Information:***

- Mr.
- Mrs.
- Miss
- Ms.

\_\_\_\_\_

Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_

First Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Initial

***Beneficiary Information:***

(The Beneficiary Designation is Revocable Unless Otherwise Specified)

- Mr.
- Mrs.
- Miss
- Ms.

\_\_\_\_\_

Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_

First Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Initial

Relationship to Insured Person: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Insured Person's Signature



## **Volunteer Fire Fighter Interview Questions**

Prior to the interview beginning, the interview panel members should give the applicant a brief orientation about the department and discuss with the applicant the departments requirements for attendance at training, meetings, fund-raising events, emergency calls, etc. and ask the applicant exactly what they expect to gain from this volunteering experience. The interview panel must also clarify their expectations of a volunteer fire fighter. It is much easier to clarify everyone's expectations at the beginning of the recruitment process and ensure the applicant understands what their commitment will be, rather than deal with misunderstandings a few months later.

The interview is an opportunity for the interview panel to get to know the applicant through a series of predetermined interview questions. Most Fire Services are now using the National Fire Fighter Selection Process and the interview is used to assess the applicants experience in relation to their personal qualities and attributes through behavioural and competency based interview questions.

Attached is a sample of the type of interview questions that are applicable for the position of volunteer fire fighter. The bullet points under each question are some of the typical responses the applicants usually offer for that question.

When conducting the interview, the interview panel may write down notes on the lines supplied for each question or they may check off the bullet point boxes . It is important to have good notes to refer back to in the event an applicant is refused and you find yourself being challenged on your decision.

## Volunteer Fire Fighter Interview Questions

Candidate Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Panel Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Discussion with applicant prior to interview beginning:

Volunteer fire fighter job description

Officer explain expectations - attendance - meetings, calls, training

Officer explain remainder of recruitment process

1. Have you ever applied for a volunteer fire fighter position with any fire department and were refused?  
 Yes  
 No
  
2. You will be required to volunteer approximately 20-25 hours per month as a volunteer fire fighter - attending calls, training, meetings, fundraising etc. Are you prepared to make that commitment?  
 Yes  
 No
  
3. You are applying for a volunteer fire fighter position which will change your lifestyle and interrupt quality time with your family.  
  
Are you prepared for this change of lifestyle?  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not sure  
  
Is your family prepared for this change of lifestyle?  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

4. Sometimes in your role as fire fighter, you will be required to work in unusual and stressful situations.

A) Are you able to work in confined spaces?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

B) Are you able to work at heights (roofs, ladders, etc.)

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

C) Are you able to work with people who may be seriously injured (cuts, lacerations, serious burns, etc)

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

5. Why do you want to be a volunteer fire fighter?

- Serve community
- Help others
- Always wanted to do this
- Increase my knowledge
- Family members are volunteer fire fighters
- Obtain training
- Challenge
- To be a role model
- Great opportunity
- Rewarding

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6. What education and training do you bring to this volunteer position?

- Level 1 training
  - Level 2 training
  - CPR/First Aid/MFR
  - Hazmat
  - WHMIS
  - Safety Courses
  - Vehicle Extrication
  - High School
  - University Education
  - Community College Education
  - Paramedic
- 
- 
- 
- 

7. What would you describe as some of your personal strengths that would assist you in the role of volunteer fire fighter?

- Good people skills
  - Good communication skills
  - Good listener
  - Compassionate
  - Friendly
  - Enthusiastic
  - Empathetic
  - Hard Worker
  - Good work ethic
  - Cool head
  - Multi tasker
  - Problem Solver
  - Confident
  - Sociable
  - Team player
- 
-

8. The Fire Service is a paramilitary organization with a defined reporting structure often referred to as the “Chain of Command”. What is your understanding of the Chain of Command and how it works?

- For span of control
- So decisions can be made quickly
- For coordination of situations
- Enhances safety
- Experienced officers
- Structure
- Accountability
- Keeps order

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9. The Fire Department is a very diverse team. Please describe a time that you were on a team. What was your role?

- Sports Team
- Team at place of employment
- Committee
- Team lead
- To coordinate activities
- Team member

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10. Please describe a stressful situation you have experienced. How did you cope and what did you learn from it?

- Understanding the stress
- Brought family closer together
- Family and friends are very important
- Coped well
- Did not cope well, had counselling
- Learned a lot about myself
- Learned patience

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11. Please give an example of a time when you have encountered different groups of people and how you approached treating everyone as equals.

- Listened to them
- Respected others opinions
- Researched other cultures
- Travelled
- Asked questions

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## **Volunteer Fire Fighter Reference Check Form**

The purpose of checking references is to determine if the applicant has the personal suitability for the position of volunteer fire fighter.

The applicant usually gives personal and/or work related references. Every applicant comes to you with different skill sets and personal strengths, this is your opportunity to determine if the applicant will be a suitable fit for your department.

Please feel free to use the attached reference check form in its entirety or as a guideline.

## Volunteer Reference Check Form

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reference: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Reference Checker: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The applicant is being considered for a volunteer fire fighter position with \_\_\_\_\_ . Would you recommend this applicant for this position:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How long have you known the applicant: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. In what capacity have you known the applicant: (Relationship to Applicant: Family / Friend / Co-worker / Supervisor / Chief / Fire Fighter)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Please describe how the applicant gets along with people in general: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What would you describe as personal strengths of the applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. In your opinion can the applicant successfully work in a diverse team environment?

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7. Is the applicant reliable? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. In your opinion, does the applicant respect authority and would they be able to take and carry out orders given to him/her?

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9. Please describe the applicants customer service approach.

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10. How does he/she react to pressure or stress within their job?

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General Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Job Descriptions**

Fire Services has a defined rank structure often referred to as “The Chain of Command”. Volunteer job descriptions are a critical piece in defining duties and responsibilities for department members to understand and respect this structure, to keep order and assign accountability.

Job descriptions also serve two other major needs, first for recruitment purposes and secondly for succession planning. Job descriptions are a critical component of the recruitment process, applicants need to understand the position duties and understand the scope of their responsibilities before they make a commitment. For the purpose of succession planning, members cannot set their goals to better themselves or to step up to an officers position if they never know or understand the requirements, a job description will provide them with that information.

When creating a job description, explain the objective of the job and list any qualifications required by the job. Discuss any training requirements and any physical requirements. Give a realistic assessment of when and where the work needs to be done. Remember a good job description provides everyone in the department a clear understanding of what is expected for each position.

Sample job descriptions have been included to assist you in development of documents for your department. Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia also have job descriptions available to you, please refer to <http://www.fsans.ns.ca/>

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<b>JOB DESCRIPTION</b>	
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<b>POSITION TITLE: Volunteer Fire Fighter</b>	
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<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	
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<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>
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<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	<b>Volunteer Officers</b>
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<b>Approved:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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<b>Revision:</b> Oct 19, 2009
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### **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Volunteer fire fighter performs fire fighting duties and other related work as required. This is manual work of a hazardous nature involving the fighting of fires, salvage, rescue work, and first aid. Fire Fighters may be required to make decisions and work without supervision until an Officer arrives at the scene.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Responds to fire, rescue, hazardous materials emergencies and other emergencies as assigned.
- Handles fire hoses and directs fire streams.
- Operates a pressure pump as assigned.
- Operates elevating devices as assigned.
- Drives fire apparatus as assigned.
- Carries, puts up and climbs ladder.
- Operates rescue equipment.
- Performs salvage work at fire and emergency scenes.
- Performs ventilation by making openings in buildings, using exhaust fans or fog streams.
- Enters burning or contaminated buildings, structures, and other areas to perform rescues and/or fight fires while wearing required clothing and safety equipment.
- Provides first aid to the injured.
- Assists in cleaning and preparing fire fighting equipment to in-service status upon return to the station after an emergency call or a practice.
- Attends regular training sessions to practice procedures and to learn fire fighting and rescue methods.
- Cleans and maintains areas of the fire station used by the members as scheduled.
- Assists with the fire prevention program.
- Other duties as assigned.



## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Technical Competencies:**

#### *Technical Skills:*

- Must possess a valid driver's license, minimum Class 5.

### **Behavioural Competencies** (*Include but not limited to*):

- Communication
- Customer Service
- Flexibility
- Teamwork and Cooperation
- Valuing Diversity

### **Other:**

- Ability to get along well with others.
- Willingness to perform tasks as assigned.
- Conscientious and dependable.
- Ability to pass Department medical.

## **RELATIONSHIPS/CONTACTS**

### **Reports To:**

- Volunteer Officers

### **External Contacts:**

- Police Services, Ambulance Services and Emergency Health Services
- Fire Marshal
- Other Fire Services
- Political and Community groups

### **Internal Contacts:**

- All members of the Fire Department

### **Working Conditions:**

- Expected to respond to and work in all types of weather under less than ideal conditions.
- Monitors radio communications for response area and responds to emergency calls on a 24 hour basis.
- May involve entering hazardous atmospheres and areas at some personal risk.
- Expected to work in a safe manner - in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations, Policies.

- Must have the ability to endure mental and physical stress associated with emergency situations in difficult environments.
- Must be able to meet minimum physical demands required of this position.
- Extra time - evenings and weekends to attend volunteer, and community meetings/functions.

Approval:

Chief: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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<b>JOB DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>POSITION TITLE: Volunteer Lieutenant</b>	
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	
<b>REPORTS TO: Volunteer Captain</b>	
<b>Approved:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Revision: October 19, 2009</b>	

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Volunteer Lieutenant is responsible for the administrative and supervisory emergency service operations of the station(s) as assigned. This entails the command of fire stations, apparatus, equipment and assigned members. While subject to the requirements of written orders, policies procedures, regulations and the verbal directions of a superior officer, the Lieutenant exercises independence of judgement and action while in command at emergencies.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Responds to emergencies including, but not limited to, fires, rescues, public assistance, emergency medical and spills or leaks of hazardous materials assuming incident command when required.
- Projects a strong customer service attitude while dealing with external and internal customers.
- Supervises assigned members or subordinate officers. Responsible for all aspects of supervision, ie. leadership, team building and setting goals.
- Assists in the co-ordination of station activities.
- Assists in the training and development of assigned members.
- Keeps assigned members informed of written orders, directives, operational guidelines and policies.
- Compiles and files various records and reports as required
- Participates on committee work as required.
- Other assigned duties as required.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Technical Competencies:**

##### *Education and Experience:*

- Minimum of two (2) current consecutive years in fire service
- Supervisory experience at a progressively responsible level is an asset.
- Level 1 trained.
- MFR/Defib certified.
- Qualified driver/operator.

**Behavioural Competencies** (*Include but not limited to*):

- Analytical Thinking
- Communication
- Customer Service
- Developing Others
- Flexibility
- Listening and Responding
- Organization/Planning
- Team Leadership
- Teamwork and Cooperation
- Valuing Diversity

**RELATIONSHIPS/CONTACTS**

**Reports To:**

- Volunteer Captain

**Supervises:**

- Volunteer Fire fighters
- Junior Fire fighters

**External Contacts:**

- Police Services, Ambulance Services and Emergency Health Services
- Fire Marshal
- Fire Services in NS
- Political and Community groups

**Internal Contacts:**

- All members of Fire Dept

**Working Conditions:**

- 24 Hour emergency on call basis.
- Extra time - evenings and weekends to attend volunteer and community meetings/functions.

Approval:

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

<b>JOB DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>POSITION TITLE: Volunteer Captain</b>	
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	
<b>REPORTS TO: Volunteer Deputy Chief</b>	
<b>Approved:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Revision: October 19, 2009</b>	

**POSITION SUMMARY**

The Volunteer Captain is responsible for the administrative and supervisory emergency service operations of the station(s) as assigned. This entails the command of fire stations, apparatus, equipment and assigned members. While subject to the requirements of written orders, policies procedures, regulations and the verbal directions of a superior officer, the Captain exercises independence of judgement and action while in command at emergencies.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Responds to emergencies including, but not limited to, fires, rescues, public assistance, emergency medical and spills or leaks of hazardous materials assuming incident command when required.
- Projects a strong cu
- Supervises assigned members or subordinate officers. Responsible for all aspects of supervision, ie. leadership, team building and setting goals.
- Assists in the co-ordination of station activities.
- Assists in the training and development of assigned members.
- Keeps assigned members informed of written orders, directives, operational guidelines and policies.
- Compiles and files various records and reports as required
- Participates on committee work as required.
- Other assigned duties as required.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

**Technical Competencies:**

*Education and Experience:*

- Minimum of two (2) current consecutive years in fire service
- Supervisory experience at a progressively responsible level is an asset.
- Level 1 trained.
- MFR/Defib certified.
- Qualified driver/operator.

**Behavioural Competencies** (*Include but not limited to*):

- Analytical Thinking
- Communication
- Customer Service
- Developing Others
- Flexibility
- Listening and Responding
- Organization/Planning
- Team Leadership
- Teamwork and Cooperation
- Valuing Diversity

**RELATIONSHIPS/CONTACTS**

**Reports To:**

- Volunteer Deputy Chief

**Supervises:**

- Volunteer Lieutenants
- Volunteer Fire fighters
- Junior Fire fighters

**External Contacts:**

- Police Services, Ambulance Services and Emergency Health Services
- Fire Marshal
- Fire Services in NS
- Political and Community groups

**Internal Contacts:**

- All members of the Fire Dept

**Working Conditions:**

- 24 Hour emergency on call basis.
- Extra time - evenings and weekends to attend volunteer, staff and community meetings/functions.

Approval:

Chief : \_\_\_\_\_

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

<b>JOB DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>POSITION TITLE: Volunteer Deputy Fire Chief</b>	
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	
<b>REPORTS TO: Volunteer Fire Chief</b>	
<b>Approved:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Revision: October 19, 2009</b>	

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

This is a senior administrative, operational and supervisory position, reporting directly to the Volunteer Fire Chief. The Deputy is responsible for supporting the Fire Chief in planning, organizing, coordinating and directing all fire suppression related emergency services, related fire prevention/public education operations and programs in their service area.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** (*Under the Direction of the Volunteer Fire Chief*)

#### **Direct/Control:**

- Administers, coordinates and prepares financial and operational documents
- Responsible for continuous development and improvement of all administrative operational services.
- Supervises the overall administration of the department including assignments, requisitioning/control of materials, supplies/equipment and maintenance of records.
- Supervises the volunteer members in the service area.
- Directs the operation of fire fighting equipment, fire stations and other department property.
- Ensures the maintenance and repair of firefighting equipment, fire stations and other department property.
- Ensures appropriate training of volunteer members in fire suppression, fire prevention, other related emergency services and equipment is carried out.
- Ensures the rules, regulations and procedures for efficient operations are followed.
- Consults with appropriate management/groups regarding major policy determination.
- Maintains liaison with Federal, Provincial and Municipal regulatory authorities and directs the enforcement of By-laws, Acts and Regulations as authorized by law.
- Assesses volunteer personnel needs and makes recommendations for additional complement.
- Participates in the recruitment and promotional process as required.
- Responsible for volunteer personnel disciplinary action, suspensions, dismissal and recommendations.
- Prepares reports/makes recommendations, attends meetings as required, to ensure that the activities of the department are consistent with the goals and objectives

**Planning:**

- Participates in the preparation and implementation of Municipal and area emergency plans.
- Assists in the planning for the orderly addition or replacement of facilities, vehicles and equipment relating to use, age and community growth.
- Plans continuous development of all department services and programs.
- Participates in the continuing development of all departments services and programs

**Organizing/Staffing:**

- Directly supervises the volunteer officers and volunteer fire fighters.
- Staffs the stations in the service area with volunteers.
- Defines clear roles and responsibilities for volunteer members and is responsible for volunteer performance standards.
- Participates in officer selection and review processes.

**QUALIFICATIONS****Technical Competencies:***Education and Experience:*

- Minimum of five (5) current consecutive years of fire service experience.
- Graduate of a technical school/university in the areas of fire administration, fire sciences, fire engineering, etc. or the equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Extensive supervisory experience is required at a progressively responsible level with the fire service.

*Job Specific Knowledge:*

- Extensive knowledge of department rules, regulations, standing orders, procedures, policies and applicable Municipal and Provincial Codes, Acts and Bylaws.
- Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of effective supervision, training and discipline of members.

**Behavioural Competencies** *(include but not limited to):*

- Analytical Thinking
- Communication
- Conflict Management
- Customer Service
- Decision Making
- Developing Others
- Flexibility
- Initiative
- Managing Change
- Organization/Planning
- Stress Management
- Teamwork and Cooperation
- Valuing Diversity



## RELATIONSHIPS/CONTACTS

### Reports To:

- Volunteer Fire Chief

### Supervises:

- Volunteer Captains
- Volunteer Lieutenants
- Volunteer Fire fighters
- Junior Fire fighters

### External Contacts:

- Police Services, Ambulance Services and Emergency Health Services
- Fire Marshal
- Fire Services outside of HRM
- Political and Community groups

### Internal Contacts:

- All members of dept

### Working Conditions:

- 24 Hour emergency on call basis.
- Extra time - evenings and weekends to attend volunteer, staff and community meetings/functions.

Approval:

Municipal Officer : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

<b>JOB DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>POSITION TITLE: Volunteer Fire Chief</b>	
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	
<b>Approved:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Revision: October 19,2009</b>	

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

This is a senior administrative, operational and supervisory position, reporting directly to the \_\_\_\_\_ . The Volunteer Fire Chief is responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating and directing all fire suppression related emergency services, related fire prevention/public education, operations and programs in their service area . The Volunteer Fire Chief is responsible for supervising the volunteer members in their service area.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Direct/Control:**

- Administers, coordinates and prepares financial and operational documents
- Responsible for continuous development and improvement of all administrative operational services.
- Supervises the overall administration of the department including assignments, requisitioning/control of materials, supplies/equipment and maintenance of records.
- Supervises the volunteer members in the service area.
- Directs the operation of firefighting equipment, fire stations and other department property.
- Ensures the maintenance and repair of fire fighting equipment, fire stations and other department property.
- Ensures appropriate training of volunteer members in fire suppression, fire prevention, other related emergency services and equipment is carried out.
- Ensures the rules, regulations and procedures for efficient operations are followed.
- Consults with appropriate management/groups regarding major policy determination.
- Maintains liaison with Federal, Provincial and Municipal regulatory authorities and directs the enforcement of By-laws, Acts and Regulations as authorized by law.
- Assesses volunteer personnel needs and makes recommendations for additional complement.
- Participates in the recruitment and promotional process as required.
- Responsible for volunteer personnel disciplinary action, suspensions, dismissal and recommendations.
- Prepares reports/makes recommendations, attends meetings as required, to ensure that the activities of the department are consistent with the goals and objectives .

**Planning:**

- Participates in the preparation and implementation of Municipal and area emergency plans.
- Assists in the planning for the orderly addition or replacement of facilities, vehicles and equipment relating to use, age and community growth.
- Plans continuous development of all department services and programs.
- Participates in the continuing development of all departments services and programs

**Organizing/Staffing:**

- Directly supervises the volunteer officers and volunteer fire fighters.
- Staffs the stations in the service area with volunteers.
- Defines clear roles and responsibilities for volunteer members and is responsible for volunteer performance standards.
- Participates in officer selection and review processes.

**QUALIFICATIONS****Technical Competencies:***Education and Experience:*

- Minimum of five (5) current consecutive years of fire service experience.
- Graduate of a technical school/university in the areas of fire administration, fire sciences, fire engineering, etc. or the equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Extensive supervisory experience is required at a progressively responsible level with the fire service.

*Job Specific Knowledge:*

- Extensive knowledge of department rules, regulations, standing orders, procedures, policies and applicable Municipal and Provincial Codes, Acts and Bylaws.
- Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of effective supervision, training and discipline of personnel.

**Behavioural Competencies** *(include but not limited to):*

- Analytical Thinking
- Communication
- Conflict Management
- Customer Service
- Decision Making
- Developing Others
- Flexibility
- Initiative
- Managing Change
- Organization/Planning
- Risk Management
- Stress Management
- Teamwork and Cooperation
- Valuing Diversity

## RELATIONSHIPS/CONTACTS

### Reports To:

- 

### Supervises:

- Volunteer Deputy Fire Chief
- Volunteer Captains
- Volunteer Lieutenants
- Volunteer Fire fighters
- Junior Fire fighters

### External Contacts:

- Police Services, Ambulance Services and Emergency Health Services
- Fire Marshal
- Fire Services outside of HRM
- Political and Community groups

### Internal Contacts:

- All members of fire dept.

### Working Conditions:

- 24 Hour emergency on call basis.
- Extra time - evenings and weekends to attend volunteer, staff and community meetings/functions.

Approval:

Municipal Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## **07-01 NOVA SCOTIA FIRE SERVICE OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS**

### **1. PREAMBLE**

It is of the utmost importance that we, as members of fire and emergency services, make substantive efforts to manage the risk associated with fire and emergency ground operations. The lives and safety of our firefighters and those of our intended efforts come first. To this end, it is incumbent that we maintain a progressive program of advancement for all members of the fire and emergency services. This policy provides for a graduated increase of knowledge, skill and ability in the areas of Chief Officers, Captains, Lieutenants, Fire Safety Officer, Fire Training Officer and Fire Prevention Officer.

### **2. PURPOSE**

This policy provides a method of obtaining the appropriate level of knowledge, skill and ability to provide a professional, safe fire and emergency service.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

In this policy:

- a. "Fire Department" means a Volunteer Fire Department approved a Municipality.
- b. "Training Course" means a course meeting standards provided by, or approved by the Nova Scotia Fire Fighters School or other Accredited Fire Service Agency.

### **4. ESTABLISHMENT**

No fire department shall be organized or formed within the Province of Nova Scotia unless the local Municipal Council grants approval.

- a. All fire and emergency services must register with their local Municipality.
- b. Each fire department shall determine their own requirement (meaning) for Captains and Lieutenants in articles of incorporation, but in all cases shall include the office of Fire Chief who shall be the Chief Executive of the Department.
- c. Each fire department shall have a Fire Prevention Officer, Fire Training Officer and a Fire Safety Officer. (For smaller fire departments, an officer can hold more than one of these positions). If these positions are by committee, then the chair of the committee would assume the position of officer in charge or this area.

### **5. QUALIFICATIONS OF OPERATIONAL LIEUTENANTS**

Only those persons having the following qualifications shall be permitted to hold the rank of Fire Lieutenant: (There are exceptions to this rank/position, some departments use the rank of Lt within a fire department for responsibilities other than fire ground operations, and this could include the positions like Lt of Maintenance, Lt of Purchasing, etc. However, a person in this position should attend BFF training to achieve the knowledge of level one firefighter.)

- a. A minimum of 2 years experience.
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified.
- c. Incident Command
- d. Strategy & Tactics

- e. Fire Safety Officer, preferably before assuming the position, but no more than 12 months after promotion to Fire Lieutenant.

## **6. QUALIFICATIONS OF CAPTAINS**

Only those persons having the following qualifications shall be permitted to hold the rank of Fire Captain:

- a. A minimum of 4 years experience, with previous experience as a Lieutenant preferred.
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified
- c. Incident Command
- d. Strategy & Tactics
- e. Fire Safety Officer

## **7. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER**

Only those persons having the following qualifications may be appointed to the position of Fire Prevention Officer: (qualifications should be determined by each department due the different size of departments and demands of each department)

- a. A minimum of 3 years experience
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified
- c. Fire Prevention Educator (preferably before assuming the position, but no more than 12 months after assuming the position).

## **8. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRE TRAINING OFFICER**

Only those persons having the following qualifications may be appointed to the position of Fire Training Officer:

- a. A minimum of 5 years experience
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified
- c. Incident Command Course
- d. Fire Safety Officer
- e. Strategy & Tactics

It is recommended that Training Officers complete the Instructional Techniques 1. A pre-requisite for this course is that the firefighter is Level 1 Certified.

## **9. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRE SAFETY OFFICER**

Only those persons having the following qualifications may be appointed to the position of Fire Safety Officer:

- a. A minimum of 4 years experience
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified
- c. Fire Safety Officer
- d. Incident Command
- e. Strategy & Tactics

It is noted that this position is sometimes filled by a firefighter who is not 100% fit. This individual fills a very important and meaningful position albeit not operational front line attack. It is the strong recommendation of this committee that this individual attend the training listed, although they may not be able to fully partake in all the activities, they will have a better understanding of training and responsibilities for this position.

## **10. QUALIFICATIONS OF CHIEF OFFICERS**

Only those persons having the following qualifications shall be permitted to stand for election, or be appointed to the office of Chief, Deputy Chief or Assistant Deputy Chief of a fire service department:

- a. A minimum of 5 years experience
- b. Level One Firefighter trained/qualified (it is recommended that all Chief Officers become level one certified as soon a practical after assuming the position)
- c. Incident Command Course
- d. Strategy & Tactics Course
- e. Fire Safety Officer Course
- f. Fire Investigation basic NFPA 921 within 24 months of election/appointment

## **11. APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE - AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING**

No Chief Officer or Officer will be required to relinquish their appointment to an office if they have not been provided the opportunity through local, municipal, or provincial training courses, to gain the stated requisites within the assigned timeframe. There are a few courses listed within this document that are not currently offered. These courses do exist and will be added to the training made available by the NSFS and other training establishments.

## **12. INCUMBENTS**

All incumbent officers of any fire department within a Municipality at the time that this policy comes into force will be grandfathered into their present office. Incumbents are strongly encouraged to review the qualification requirements for their office and make a concerted effort to attain same. Grandfathering will cease to exist five (5) years after the approval and implementation of this policy. Officers who move into one of these positions will also be grandfathered for the 5 year period from the time this policy comes into force. 5 years after this policy comes into force, officers are expected to have the training required to fill the position. This is a doable time line; most of these courses only take a weekend or two to complete. The exception to this is the BFF level one training, which every firefighter should have, regardless of rank.

## **13. PERSONAL SKILLS**

In addition to all Fire Service qualifications, it is recommended that all fire officers complete recognized training courses in the following subjects:

- a. Individual communication skills course
- b. Recognized 'Respect in the Workplace' course
- c. Fire Service Personnel Leadership course

These courses should be completed within 5 years of accepting any officer position, and they only need to be taken once, regardless of the number of different positions held. These courses are to be made available around the province. They are also available at Dalhousie University (was Henson College). Workplace equivalent courses are an acceptable alternative.

14. **REVIEW**

This policy shall be reviewed every five years commencing on the date of approval.

September 30, 2007

*Footnote*

This policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of FSANS at the Director's meeting in Brookfield Fire Station on September 30, 2007. It was also moved that this policy be forwarded to the Fire Service Advisory Board.



## Human Rights & Diversity

The Human Rights Act does not allow a person or organization to treat someone in a different way because of a particular characteristic, whether intentional or not. No person shall discriminate against an individual or class of individuals on account of:

- ▶ age
- ▶ race
- ▶ color
- ▶ religion
- ▶ creed
- ▶ sex
- ▶ sexual orientation
- ▶ physical disability or mental disability
- ▶ an irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease
- ▶ ethnic, national or aboriginal origin
- ▶ family status
- ▶ marital status
- ▶ source of income
- ▶ political belief, affiliation or activity
- ▶ that individual's association with another individual or class of individuals having characteristics referred to in clauses above.

In your recruitment process it is important to not ask for information about characteristics among the prohibited ground of discrimination, as set out by federal and provincial statutes.

Example: you cannot ask for a person's age on your application. However, as it is a requirement for most fire departments that a member be a minimum of 18 years of age, you can ask if they are over the age of 18.

For more information on the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, please refer to:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/HUMANRIGHTS/humanrightsact.htm>

## Benefits of Volunteering

The benefits of being a member of your local Fire Department are many. Although they are not monetary, they are the type of benefits that will make you, your family and your neighbors sleep better at night, just knowing that you and the rest of the department are there whenever needed!

Plus:

- ▶ Increased opportunities to gain personal satisfaction by providing meaningful service to your community
- ▶ Opportunities to grow personally and professionally through gaining experience, learning new skills and developing new relationships within your community
- ▶ And much, much more....

## Fire Department Benefits

- ▶ An abundant, diverse pool of trained personnel to perform a variety of roles
- ▶ Adequate personnel to respond to emergency calls
- ▶ Enhanced fire prevention and public education activities
- ▶ Increased capacity to develop, deliver and participate in vital and emerging programs
- ▶ Enhanced performance in key logistical, administrative and support functions
- ▶ Opportunities to collaborate and develop partnerships with local businesses

## Community Benefits

- ▶ A more fire safe place to live and work
- ▶ A reduction in loss of life, injury and property damage as a result of increased public education initiatives, prevention activities and response capabilities
- ▶ A stronger community built on the relationships resulting from involvement in the program

## Statistics on Provincial Fire & Emergency

Population: 950,000  
Area: kilometers 55,000

### Personnel

7000 volunteer Fire Fighters

### Stations

311 Nova Scotia Departments

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact us at:

1-800-559-3473

or

visit our website at:

[www.gov.ns.ca](http://www.gov.ns.ca)



*I Serve My Community*



*How About You?*

**VOLUNTEERING in the  
NOVA SCOTIA FIRE SERVICE** - join one of the most well respected professions and make positive contributions to your community.



## Local Fire Departments Need Volunteers Join Our Team

If you like helping people, working as part of a team, being involved in continuous learning, and are physically fit, then you may be an ideal candidate for a volunteer Fire Fighter position.

*Would you like a challenging and rewarding volunteer activity?*



We offer opportunities to assist others, while performing as a member of a highly skilled team. The Fire Department is an organization dedicated to saving lives and protecting property through fire prevention, suppression and public education. We are committed to continuous learning and superior customer service.



## What Do Volunteer Fire Fighters Do?

- ▶ Fight fires
- ▶ Provide fire prevention education
- ▶ Provide technical rescue
- ▶ Respond to dangerous goods incidents
- ▶ Provide first-aid
- ▶ Operate and maintain vehicles
- ▶ Maintain equipment & facilities
- ▶ Participate in training
- ▶ Work in the extremes of temperatures and all weather conditions
- ▶ Drive and operate highly specialized equipment in emergency situations
- ▶ Perform manual labour and physically challenging tasks in diverse conditions

## What Do You Need To Be Successful As A Volunteer Fire Fighter?

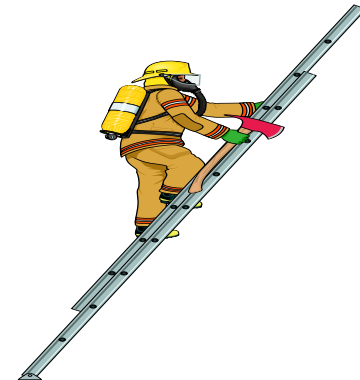
- ▶ Good reference checks, a clean criminal records check and good life style choices will make you a good representative of your fire department
  - ▶ A medical test will indicate that you have the physical fitness required to be a volunteer firefighter. Your personal safety is very important to us. Some departments may provide a physical fitness test.
  - ▶ A clean driver's abstract will indicate to us that you have respect for public safety.

## How Does It Work?

- ▶ You will participate in training  
Once you have successfully completed the Basic Fire Fighter training, you will be issued a pager and be permitted to enter burning buildings.
- ▶ You will be expected to attend training events and meetings and respond to emergency calls (within the time that you have indicated you are available)
- ▶ All of your uniforms, books and personal protective equipment are supplied at no cost to you. We also provide life insurance.

## Non-operational Volunteering Opportunities

If you are interested in non-operational service such as fire prevention, public education, radio operation, traffic direction, administration or fund raising, these opportunities are also available for you.





**SAVE LIVES. SAVE HOMES. SAVE MEMORIES.**

**PLACE YOUR CREST HERE**

Recruitment / Open House

Location:

Date & Time:

Activities:

IE: Face Painting, Coloring Contest, Fire Prevention Display, Equipment & Truck Displays, Volunteer Recruitment Information

This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about your local fire service. If you think you would like to contribute to the safety and quality of life in your community, we invite you to attend the open house to obtain more information on the commitment, challenges and rewards of becoming a volunteer fire fighter.

For more information call

## **The Junior Fire Fighter Program**

The Junior Fire Fighter Program is a wonderful succession planning tool. Since we see the National trend of declining volunteers, it is time we began to recruit the youth of our community to help us fill that void. The youth want to be involved and they can provide new fresh, innovating, creative ideas for your department.

An incentive that we can use as a recruitment tool for our youth is The Duke of Edinburgh's Award - a Young Canadians Challenge. High school students in Nova Scotia who receive the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh's Award are eligible to receive up to three elective credits toward graduation.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is presented to young people who have achieved a set standard in community service and self-improvement. It is a program of activities designed to challenge youth to become involved in worthwhile extracurricular activities, leading to personal growth, development and achievement.

Participation in the Award Program is on a volunteer basis, and builds character by developing such qualities as self-confidence, effort, responsibility, compassion and self-reliance. As a result, our young people become more responsible citizens in our society. The Award Program is a non-competitive, self-directed program open to any young person, ages 14 to 25 years of age.

The Goal - To encourage participants to realize that, as members of a community, they have a responsibility to others and that their help is needed.

The Objective - Service is commitment to the needs of others without pay. It is hoped that the participants will find pleasure and satisfaction in helping others, leading to a lifelong commitment to volunteer community service.

To find more information on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award go to [www.dukeofed.org](http://www.dukeofed.org).

# Junior Fire Fighter Program Terms of Reference

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**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Junior Fire Brigade program is to provide the youth of our communities with a positive experience in volunteer service to their community through exposure to the concepts of firefighting and public safety and to provide opportunities for them to develop life skills with the mentoring of the fire service.

**Our Vision**

Giving our community exemplary service while sharing the responsibility with our citizens to develop a safe environment.

### **Junior Fire Brigade Program Structure:**

1. Junior Fire Brigade Programs shall only be offered with authorization from the Department .
2. The Junior Fire Brigade Program shall consist of a Sponsoring Body, Advisory Committee and Assistant Program Advisors.
3. The Sponsoring body shall be the Station Officers.
4. The Advisory Committee shall be comprised of the following:
  - a) A Sponsors Liaison who will provide liaison between the Sponsoring body and the Advisory Committee.
  - b) A Senior Program Advisor who is an active firefighter from the local fire service with a minimum of Level 1 training and 2 yrs experience as an active FF.
  - c) Assistant Program Advisors assist the Senior Advisor in coordinating the brigade activities. There shall be sufficient Advisors in the program to ensure a 1:5 leader/junior ratio. At least two Advisors must be present for all program activities.
  - d) Programs will not be permitted to operate without sufficient Program Advisors as described above.

### **Junior Fire Brigade Program Content:**

The Junior Fire Brigade program will consist of the following:

1. Regular training sessions at a day and time determined by the local Advisory Committee.
2. Special tours or events as approved by the Advisory Committee.
3. Workshops or training courses as approved by the Advisory Committee.
4. Events may include but are not limited to, fire prevention duties, recruitment drives, or fund-raising initiatives.
5. In recognition of successful completion of the Junior Program, graduating Junior Members who have completed the prescribed training program and who meet the entrance criteria may be admitted to the department as volunteer members without a further probation period.

## **Program Position Descriptions:**

### ***Sponsors Liaison***

1. A member of, and reports to, the Station Officers on the operation of the Junior Program. This shall include, but is not limited to, budgetary issues, training program, authorization of special outings or training, etc.
2. The Sponsors Liaison will be a member of the Advisory Committee and assist in the coordination of the Program.

### ***The Senior Program Advisor***

1. The Senior Advisor shall be the chair of the Advisory Committee and report to the Chief.
2. He/she shall be an active firefighter from the local fire service with a minimum Level 1 qualification and 2 years experience.
3. He/she will be responsible for the coordination and maintenance of the program.

### ***Assistant Program Advisors***

1. Assistant Program Advisors will be firefighters from within the local fire service.
2. They shall assist the Senior Program Advisor to deliver training sessions and carry out program activities.

### ***Junior Chief***

1. The Junior Brigade Advisory Committee may annually select from the junior members in their last year of eligibility to function as Junior Chief. They shall be selected based on their participation within the program, maturity, displayed knowledge or mastery of skill, strengths in leadership, etc.
2. The Junior Chief shall report to the Senior Program Advisor or designate.
3. Roles of the Junior Chief include but may not be limited to leadership, coordination, communication with the Junior Brigade membership.

### **Junior Fire Brigade Membership:**

1. Junior members shall be a youth between the ages of 14 and 17 inclusively, be of good character from within the community(s) and must maintain such standing while active in the program. Any change in such good character, or action which may bring discredit upon the Brigade or the Fire Department as a whole, may be reviewed by the Junior Advisory Committee, and lead to discipline or expulsion from the Brigade.
2. A person desiring membership shall submit a Volunteer Firefighter application to the Senior Program Advisor. All applications for Junior Fire Brigade membership must be accompanied with a completed Parent/Guardian Consent Form.
3. The SPA or designate shall interview the applicant and at least one parents/guardians to ensure they are familiar with all details of the program and to obtain parental consent (signed consent by both if possible) for participation.
4. The SPA or designate will present the application with a recommendation for or against acceptance to the Advisory Committee, who shall determine acceptance of members.
5. New members will serve a probationary period of 3 months. At the end of the probationary period the SPA shall make a recommendation to the Advisory Board regarding the continuation of the member in the program.

### **Attendance and School Grades:**

Attendance in the Junior Fire Brigade is very important. Certain training, tours, or tasks require numerous people to ensure safety and quality of training for the Brigade as a whole.

If a Junior is unable to attend specific activities of the program, such as a regular training night, a tour, or special outing, etc., they must ensure that they contact a Junior Advisor to inform them of their absence for that session.

If at any time, attendance with the program conflicts with home, work, or school commitments, the Senior Program Advisor should be notified and they will make appropriate considerations for missed attendance.

Should a Junior Member's attendance in the program fall below required levels the Senior Program Advisor will address the concerns with the junior Member and their parents.

Brigade advisors will gladly meet with the parents of a junior to discuss special arrangements or assistance if needed.

## **Training and Education:**

To ensure that juniors receive training that is appropriate for their age and physical abilities, the program is offered in three stages.

*The program will develop skills in three stages:*

- Year 1: Introduction to firefighting skills from Fighter Level 1 curriculum – no emergency responses
- Year 2: Continuation of firefighting skills, first aid (standard or BLC-C), and introduction to station / Zone response protocols
- Year 3 & 4: BFF training\*\*, Medical First Responder training, and participation in support roles during emergency responses.

\*\* Junior Fire Fighters at and above the age of 16, may attend station BFF programs along with the volunteer firefighters. Attendance at such training shall be in conjunction with regular junior firefighter training if on an alternate day.

\*\* If a Junior Fire Fighter joins a program at or above the age of 16, they shall not participate in station BFF programs until they have completed their probationary period of 3 months.

Under the guidelines of the Junior Fire Brigade, Juniors may only operate in support roles and carry out tasks for which they have been trained. ***They are prohibited from participating in the following activities:***

1. Any emergency operations within the "inner perimeter" of a scene or interior firefighting operations.
2. Operating any automobile owned or operated by the Fire Department.
3. The wearing and use of self-contained breathing apparatus until they have successfully completed SCBA training.
4. Operation of any power tools (including gas, electric, pneumatic, or hydraulic) until successfully completing appropriate training for safe operation of those tools.

## **Junior Fire Fighter Curriculum:**

The training curriculum of the Junior Fire Brigade closely resembles that of the basic firefighting program for the regular fire department. Juniors will be able to gain theoretical and practical experience in most if not all areas of basic firefighting.

### **Topics may include but are not limited to:**

- Fire behavior
- Firefighter safety
- Introduction to Fire Prevention
- Protective equipment
- Ropes and knots
- Fire extinguishers
- Hose and fire streams
- Water supply and foam
- Ventilation
- Forcible entry
- Ladders
- Salvage, overhaul, and sprinklers
- SCBA
- Emergency medical training (first-aid, CPR, medical first response)
- Boat operations
- Principals of vehicle extrication
- WHMIS training

## **General Rules:**

### ***1 Department***

Junior Fire Fighters are expected to be courteous and respectful to fellow fire fighters, other emergency service personnel, and the citizens we serve. They are expected to act in a professional manner. The Fire Department will not tolerate vulgar, offensive, discriminatory or threatening language or gestures at any time. Violations will result in disciplinary action in accordance with disciplinary policies.

### ***2 Appearance***

Junior members are expected to present a neat, clean appearance. They are not permitted to wear clothing or jewelry that may pose a safety hazard while engaged in Brigade activities. Junior members may not wear any article of clothing during Brigade activities that could be deemed offensive by cut, style or graphics. Violations will result in disciplinary action in accordance with disciplinary policies.

### ***3 Drugs and Alcohol***

The Fire Department maintains a "zero tolerance" policy with respect to drug and alcohol use and violation of public laws. Any possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, on Fire Department premises or apparatus, emergency scenes, training drills, official functions, or while in Fire Department uniform will result in disciplinary action in accordance with disciplinary policies.

### ***4 Smoking***

The Fire Department has a no smoking policy that applies to all members. Members may not smoke on Fire Department premises or apparatus, emergency scenes, training drills, official functions, or while in uniform.

### ***5 Illegal Activity***

Any arrest or conviction for a crime will result in a review of the circumstances by the Advisory Committee and will result in disciplinary action in accordance with disciplinary policies.

### ***6 Public Identification***

Junior Fire Fighters are not entitled to firefighter license plates on their vehicles. It is illegal for anyone other than a Fire Chief or Deputy to use or display emergency lights on private vehicles. Junior members may not wear clothing identifying them as a Fire Fighter, except assigned protective clothing, uniforms or logo shirts/hats worn for official purposes only.

#### **7 *Fire Department Premises***

Junior members may not enter a fire station unless a senior member of the department is present, and then only for official business (emergency response, training drills, department meetings or work details). Junior members will not be given building keys or door lock combinations. Junior members may not bring visitors into a fire station without permission of an Advisor and will be responsible for the conduct of their guest.

#### **8 *Borrowing Equipment***

Junior members may not borrow Fire Department equipment for personal use.

#### **9 *Hours of Attendance***

Junior members are not permitted to attend overnight stand-by details and must leave the station by 9:30 p.m. on a school night and 10:00 p.m. any other night (unless during an official fire department function and with the parent's consent).

Junior members are not to participate in any Fire Department activity, including emergencies, during school hours. Junior members are not to leave school or a school sponsored activity, for an emergency response. Fire Department equipment or clothing which may be issued to a junior member is not to be taken to or worn at school unless authorized for a sanctioned fire department event or activity.

#### **10 *Attendance Requirements***

Junior members must attend a minimum of training activities and scheduled Junior Program activities conducted each year. Junior members are not required to respond to emergency alarms or department business meetings. Participation of Junior members shall be monitored annually in accordance with department policy.

#### **11 *Issued Equipment***



Junior members are responsible for the care of all gear issued to them, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) are financially responsible for loss or damage, from other than official use.

## ***12 Accident or Injury***

Any injury, illness, or accident must be reported to the Advisor, a Fire Officer, Safety Officer, or Fire Chief as soon as possible.

### **Insurance Coverage and Liability:**

In both training sessions and actual emergency situations, the safety of the Junior member is of paramount concern to the Department. The activities of the Junior members are limited in scope and the Advisors and other fire officers closely supervise them. Junior members can become a part of the firefighting team during emergencies in a support role. It should be understood, however, that despite the training and supervision provided, firefighting is a dangerous activity and serious injury is a possibility. The Advisors and fire officers will make every effort to minimize the Junior member's exposure to danger. Junior members will be trained to recognize and follow safe working practices and avoid hazardous situations.

Due to the inherent dangers of firefighting, strict rules of conduct and tight procedural standards have been established. In an actual emergency, it is essential that all firefighters, including Junior Members, act in a calm and efficient manner. The Junior members are expected to attend training drills to be prepared for the many challenges presented in an emergency situation. Each member is expected to read and understand these requirements and to adhere to the standards. Any Advisor, fire fighter, or Fire Officer is available to discuss any questions with a Junior.

All members of the Junior Fire Brigade are insured through the policies of the Fire Department. Should clarification or explanation of this in any part become necessary, contact any member of the Junior Fire Brigade Advisory Committee for details.

### **Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment:**

All members of the Junior Fire Brigade will be issued personal protective equipment deemed safe and appropriate for their training level. This equipment shall be kept at the fire station when not being used.

After completing 1 month of their probationary period, Junior Brigade members shall be issued a Fire Department ball cap, tee shirt and safety footwear. Additional protective clothing will be issued as required by their progression through the training program and / or once completed their 3 month probationary period. The equipment includes, but may not be limited to, complete set of work fatigues, "orange" helmet with visor, pass tag, flash hood, gloves, jacket, trousers, and boots.

Members of the Junior Fire Brigade will be responsible for the regular up-keep of the issued equipment.

Upon leaving the Junior Fire Brigade, all personal protective equipment and uniforms issued to the Junior, shall be returned to the Junior Fire Brigade Program.

**Completion of Intake Package:**

The intake package shall be used for enrollment of junior fire fighters.

All forms shall be completed *except* the following:

1. Criminal records check form.
2. Driver's abstract form.

Included in the mandatory list, each perspective candidate shall ensure a completed medical form is provided, along with a completed parental consent form (signed consent by both parents / guardians if possible).

**Junior FF membership dues:**

As the Fire Department shall incur all costs associated with training needs, and PPE and fatigues, occasional “non-operational” costs may occur associated with such functions as social functions, tours and group outings, etc. Though fund-raising may be recommended, such funds may not be available for a couple of years post respective program start-up.

Upon entry into the Junior FF program, the member is expected to pay dues to their respective program totaling \$20. Every subsequent year within the program, the member will be expected to pay \$10 toward their program.

It is expected that each junior FF program shall establish a bank account for such monies and any other monies collected by means such as fund-raising, donations, etc. Accountability of such accounts rests with the Station Chief .

**Training for Junior FF Advisors:**

Due to the challenges and circumstances facing our youth today, a mandatory training workshop is required for all fire fighters serving as advisors within a junior FF program.

This workshop should contain a variety of topics including but not limited to:

- \* Adolescent behavioural issues  
AP / CIS refresher
- \* Suicide Awareness
- \* Street Drugs
- \* Overview of instructional techniques
- \* Leadership skills

**All advisors will be expected to undergo a criminal record check every two years.**

It will be the responsibility of the Station Chief to ensure the criminal record checks are completed and filed accordingly.

**Personal Protective Equipment:**

Given the fact that a junior FF shall not be entering into the inner perimeter of an emergency scene, it is not necessary to provide turn-out coat and pants of a “front-line quality”.

However this gear must be in acceptable condition in order to allow the junior firefighter to participate in training and assist in supportive operations at an emergency scene.

Due to the size of the required PPE, items such as gloves and bunker boots should be sized appropriately for the member to address any safety concern.

When PPE such as turn-out jackets and trousers are removed from front-line service but still of a quality for training (non-frontline service), these should be assigned for consideration for use in the junior FF program. If such pieces of kit are not of an adequate size to ensure safety and functionality of the wearer, these items shall be tailored to a more acceptable size for the wearer.

**List of Acronyms within Document:**

BFF	Basic Fire Fighter
BLS-C	Basic Life Support (level C)
CIS	Critical Incident Stress
CPR	Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SCBA	Self Contained Breathing Apparatus
SPA	Senior Program Advisor
WHMIS	Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System



# Part 2

## Retention



## **Performance Management**

The intake orientation meeting with your new volunteer is to review the department policies, procedures and expectations you have of the volunteer. It is also an opportunity to discuss with them the benefits they will receive from volunteering for your department and their community. This is also a good time to review the volunteer fire fighter job description and relate their duties and responsibilities to the goals and objectives of the department.

If the volunteer is aware from day one of the departments expectations, you are more likely to retain them.

As part of your performance management of each volunteer, it is very important to do an annual performance review with them. This is an opportunity to discuss their performance, their future aspirations and to help them develop a plan to reach those goals.

This type of communication will only help to create an environment that will encourage and motivate the volunteer and give them the opportunity to learn and grow through relevant training, progressive responsibilities and challenges.

Retention is all about motivating them, challenging them and coaching them to be successful and assisting them in improving their performance and personal effectiveness.

Generally, the need for discipline is a result of an individual behaving in a manner that contravenes a department policy, guideline or direction. It is your responsibility as the leader to ensure that the individual behaves in the manner that your department has deemed to be acceptable. Therefore, prior to any formal discipline, you should spend some time coaching the volunteer.

### **A Coaching Checklist:**

- Listen - Let the member talk. Listen to their point of view.
- Ask Questions - Be sure you understand what they are saying.
- Explain the department expectations/policies
- Offer coaching to help improve behaviours
- Give time lines for improvement
- Set followup meeting times

## Progressive Discipline

Progressive Discipline is a method of imposing discipline in steps, where a first offense (minor) would result in a lesser punishment and a subsequent offense would receive a progressively harsher penalty (written warning or suspension/discharge). Of course the department may bypass certain steps as warranted by the nature of the severity of the offense, (i.e. violence, destruction of property, criminal acts, intoxication, etc.)

To ensure that all members are treated in a fair and equitable manner, before proceeding with the progressive discipline steps be sure you follow due process:

- ▶ Substantial Proof - ensure you have substantial proof to proceed with a form of discipline
- ▶ Equitable Treatment - ensure you do not treat this member any different than others that may have committed the same violation
- ▶ Reasonable Rules - ensure your rules are reasonable and are easy to read and understand
- ▶ Violation of the Rule - on intake, ensure your members know and understand the consequences of not following the policies and procedures
- ▶ Fair Investigation - ensure you conduct a fair investigation and if possible have an outside party conduct the investigation to ensure there is no bias and all facts are collected
- ▶ Adequate Warning - ensure all parties involved are
- ▶

Offense	Levels of Action to be Taken
Minor	Coach (pre-discipline) Informal Discussion (pre-discipline) Verbal Warning
Moderate or Repeated	Written Warning
Serious or Repeated more than once	Suspension or Discharge

### The four basic progressive discipline steps are:

- ▶ Verbal Warning - Although it is a 'verbal' warning, documentation of this discussion should be noted and placed in the member's file. The supervisor giving the warning should sign and date the documentation.
- ▶ Written Warning - This should include factual description of the behavior, when and where it occurred, who was involved, the specific rules and policies violated, what change is needed of the member and what consequences the member will face if the behavior continues. A written warning is generally signed by both the member and the supervisor and placed in the member's personnel file. By signing the document, the member is not admitting fault, but is acknowledging that a warning was received. The member has a right to respond in writing to the warning and have this included in their personnel file.

- ▶ Suspension - The length of suspension should match the severity of the wrongdoing or policy violation. To ensure fair and equitable treatment for all, each department written policy must also include in its content any consequences and or discipline that will be enforced if the policy is broken.
  
- ▶ Discharge - There are some offenses that could warrant bypassing lesser disciplinary steps and result in immediate termination. Those may include (but are not limited to) criminal acts, violence, destruction of property and intoxication.

**A checklist to help you determine if Suspension or Discharge is warranted:**

- Did your department follow its current progressive discipline policy?
- Was the policy explained to the member upon intake?
- Did the member sign a document acknowledging they understood the departments rules and corresponding penalties if violated?
- Have you given a verbal or written warning and are these documents in the member's personnel file?
- How were other members treated or disciplined for similar past actions?
- Has your department conducted an impartial review of the facts surrounding this potential suspension / discharge?
- Have you considered the members point of view?
- What impact did the member's conduct have on other members or the department as a whole?
- Was the member's conduct malicious, intentional or negligent?
- Was the member given adequate opportunity to improve their behaviour?
- Would a court of law conclude that the departments treatment of the dismissed member was unquestionably fair and reasonable?

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- ▶ Reasonable Rules - ensure your rules are reasonable and are easy to read and understand
- ▶ Violation of the Rule - on intake, ensure your members know and understand the consequences of not following the policies and procedures
- ▶ Fair Investigation - ensure you conduct a fair investigation and if possible have an outside party conduct the investigation to ensure there is no bias and all facts are collected
- ▶ Adequate Warning - ensure all parties involved are well informed

Offense	Levels of Action to be Taken
Minor	Coach (pre-discipline) Informal Discussion (pre-discipline) Verbal Warning
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- Would a court of law conclude that the departments treatment of the dismissed member was unquestionably fair and reasonable?

## Fire Fighter Annual Performance Evaluation Form

<b>Fire Fighter Name:</b>	
<b>Chief / Officer:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

The Fire Fighter's level of competency should be a rating agreed upon by both the Fire Fighter and the Chief/Officer. Should a Fire Fighter not meet the expected level, the Chief/Officer should positively encourage training/development in that area.

This evaluation process is meant to be a development tool only. All members can benefit from this evaluation to better select their training & development needs in the future.

### Performance Rating

	Competency	Fire Fighter's Level of Competency	Rating	Summary
1	Communication (verbal & written)		0 - 1 2 3 - 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
2	Working with Others		0 - 1 2 - 3 4 - 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
3	Problem Solving		0 - 3 4 5 - 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
4	Initiative		0 - 1 2 3-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
5	Effectiveness Under Stress		0 1 - 2 3 - 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
6	Applying Job Knowledge		0 - 1 2 - 4 5 - 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
7	Teamwork		0 - 1 2 - 3 4 - 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
8	Valuing Diversity		0 - 1 2 3 - 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
9	Accountability		0 - 1 2 3 - 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements
10	Reliability		0 - 1 2 3 - 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Meets requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Requirements

Dress & Department:                      Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Not Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Conduct on Duty:                      Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Not Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_

**Future Development**

**Technical areas** that development is required and / or desired:

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**Behavioural areas** that development is required and / or desired:

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**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Chief Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fire Fighter Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Succession Planning

In today's Fire Service there is a significant emphasis on preparing for future roles. Canada's population is aging. The first wave of baby boomers has turned 60 and entered retirement.

Let's take this one more step and think outside the box and mentor our youth for the future.

By involving youth, your fire service benefits by drawing from a vibrant, energetic, enthusiastic and motivated source of volunteers. The youth benefit by gaining valuable life skills such as problem solving, crisis management and communication, in addition to technical skills that are relevant to the particular volunteer roles.

Begin by assessing whether your fire service and your municipality are willing and prepared to involve young volunteers. Considerations for safety and understanding the developmental stages and maturity of youth volunteers would be necessary in order to establish a successful youth program. You may want to consider a minimum age requirement. Determine meaningful tasks within your department that can be safely accomplished by youth. Identify necessary training requirements. Assess risks for each role and set limits for exposures to those risks that are appropriate to the age, skills and knowledge of the youth. Ensure that adequate supervision is available. Keep in mind that there are other opportunities, beyond suppression and emergency response that may be considered for youth volunteers.

Ensure that your fire department offers an organized, efficient environment that is not too overwhelming to youth. Provide a setting where youth are welcomed, treated with respect and are provided with an opportunity to learn and grow.

During recruitment and retention efforts, you will need to demonstrate that the volunteer opportunity is:

- Flexible and offers a choice of short and long term opportunities
- Meaningful, in that the volunteer is making a significant difference
- Accessible and responsive to the youth's needs
- Educational, offering opportunities to gain valuable life skills and job related skills
- Rewarding, identifying the types of incentives, rewards, references and potential connections to future employers
- Enjoyable, offering a variety of training and experiences in which to learn new things and meet new people.

An example of the terms of reference for a Junior Fire Fighter Program is provided in section one of this document.



## **Rewards & Recognition**

Recognition, rewards and incentives range from a simple thank you, to certificates of appreciation, compensation for work and official recognition such as exemplary service medals and long service investitures.

The following principles will assist you in determining the nature of the recognition that best fits the needs of your department. Establish criteria for the performance or contribution that constitutes recognizable behaviour. Identify what behaviours or actions are being rewarded and recognized. Ensure that all volunteers are eligible and that anyone that performs at the level or standards stated in the criteria receives the reward.

### **Identify types of behaviour that you would like to reward. For example:**

- ▶ Duration of service
- ▶ Attendance for training, prevention, public education activities, incident response, administration
- ▶ Achieving milestones
- ▶ Exemplary service
- ▶ Team work and: a job well done or above and beyond the call of duty, or other behaviours

### **Determine the logistics**

- ▶ Cost? For consistency, you want to have enough time, support and finances to sustain the reward on an ongoing basis
- ▶ How are you going to budget for monetary compensation such as wages or honorarium?
- ▶ Timing? In some cases, recognition should occur as close to the performance as possible in order to reinforce the behaviour you want to encourage. In other cases, you may want to wait for an annual event.
- ▶ Longevity? Do you make it an annual event or presentation, or will it be a one-time event.

The following paragraphs provide examples of recognition efforts. The list is limitless. Use these examples to enhance your efforts, or as a starting point for your own ideas.

### **Meeting Personal Needs**

Many volunteers have a need to grow, develop, contribute in a meaningful way, achieve a sense of accomplishment and have a sense of belonging. In order to assist the individual to meet these personal needs, consider the following strategies. This list is not exhaustive. Be creative and you can find many ways to recognize the efforts of volunteers. Regardless of which you choose, ensure that you are enthusiastic and sincere in showing your appreciation.

**Foster a sense of fellowship, family and belonging in the following ways:**

- ▶ Send cards to celebrate personal milestones
- ▶ Send cards to celebrate personal or professional achievement
- ▶ Send get well or sympathy cards
- ▶ Lend a helping hand when they need it outside of the fire service (building decks, moving, etc.)
- ▶ Provide opportunity to get together, network and celebrate fellowship through events such as banquets, lunches, awards nights and sporting events
- ▶ Make the time to have lunch or coffee with a volunteer
- ▶ Take an interest in their personal lives
- ▶ If volunteers have been absent, let them know that they were missed
- ▶ Keep them informed
- ▶ Provide, caps, shirts and jackets to promote belonging and camaraderie
- ▶ Take pictures at scenes, during training, of fun times. Put them in to a slide show for banquets and special events, or put them on a wall or in an album
- ▶ Have reserved seating for them at special events
- ▶ Ensure they are having fun! Have competitions; encourage them to develop their skills through competitive teams (vehicle extrication, combat challenges, relays, mutual aid events, etc.)

**To foster and promote personal and professional growth, you can:**

- ▶ Cultivate special interests or strengths and find opportunities to use them
- ▶ Offer training opportunities and resources
- ▶ Offer leadership opportunities
- ▶ Provide constructive and positive feedback on performance
- ▶ Provide notes of encouragement
- ▶ Show that you are watching and paying attention to what they are doing
- ▶ Debrief with them after an event
- ▶ Provide them with a mentor
- ▶ Ask them to represent the fire department at a public event
- ▶ Continue to offer expanded, higher levels of responsibility

**To show that you recognize and celebrate their accomplishments, you can:**

- ▶ Say thank you sincerely and often, either verbally, in writing or by your actions
- ▶ Say thank you for not only those big jobs, but also for small tasks
- ▶ Share their success with others
- ▶ Create the “Wall of Fame”. Have a wall lined with portraits of volunteers, dressed in uniform. Below each volunteer, note years of service, title, accomplishments and copies of certificates.

**Provide them with opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways by:**

- ▶ Asking for their input
- ▶ Assigning them to act as leaders in orientation or education activities
- ▶ Assign them mentor roles
- ▶ Assigning them to research and recommend new apparatus, equipment, techniques or

operating guidelines

- ▶ Making a gift to a charitable cause in their name

### **Let everyone know**

- ▶ Post news articles in local newspapers or newsletters. Profile volunteers and highlight their contributions and achievements
- ▶ Post a “Volunteer of the Month”
- ▶ Create an Honor Roll
- ▶ Provide letters of reference
- ▶ Provide their employers with letters describing how they’ve contributed
- ▶ Plant a tree or flowerbed in a volunteer’s name

### **Provide Material Rewards**

These rewards are tangible ways to recognize volunteers for their efforts. Some may come at a cost, so you may have to budget for them, solicit support from your municipality, collaborate with local businesses to sponsor these through donations or partnerships.

- ▶ Reduced rates on food, beverages, admission or membership from local businesses
- ▶ Gift certificates
- ▶ Attendance draws
- ▶ T-shirts, ball caps, pins, pens, calendars, bumper stickers, licence plates, business cards
- ▶ Sending them to workshops or conferences

### **Monetary Rewards**

These types of incentives and rewards do have a cost involved. If you are interested in pursuing them, you will have to consider including them in your budget seeking support and endorsements from your Municipality, or collaborate with businesses to make them a reality.

- ▶ Scholarship finds
- ▶ Fair and generous insurance coverage
- ▶ Expenses for costs accrued through fire department business (mileage, equipment)
- ▶ Travel expenses
- ▶ Training and conference registration
- ▶ Childcare provided, or cost reimbursed

### **Honorarium or Pay**

It is the practice of some departments to provide an honorarium or pay for volunteer activities. The determination of pay or honorarium varies from department to department and could be based on a points system or an hourly rate.

If you wish to pursue this type of recognition program, it is imperative that you seek input and involvement from the volunteer compliment. Consider the economic means of your municipality, your budget, criteria for payment, taxation implications, how pay will be calculated and how records will be maintained. It is suggested that you consult with neighboring departments. Once you have the necessary information, develop a business case and present it to your municipality

### **Recognizing and Appreciating the Family and Significant Others**

How do you thank the person who is awoken at 2am to a pager tone, who watches his or her loved one rush out the door into potential danger, who sits all night waiting for the return, only to spend the remainder of the early hours listening to a recap of the emergency as the volunteer fire fighter tries to wind down?

How do you thank the youngster who had to wait patiently for a parent to return from a fire call, in order to finish building the new bike?

How do you thank the individual who was left behind to oversee a mob of six year olds at a birthday part, by a partner who was paged out to a car accident?

How do you thank the family who has listened to the same message for the tenth time in one week as the individual rehearses for a public education event?

How do you thank the family who's regular weekend outing seems to be yet another fire department fund-raising event?

The answer is simple. Thank them often, thank them with enthusiasm and thank them personally. Consider what families and friends of volunteers have actually contributed and offered to the fire service. Through their sacrifice, understanding and flexibility, they have enabled the volunteer to be available and capable of doing the work.

### **Turned missed birthdays into an opportunity to say thanks**

Many spouses, friends and children of fire service volunteers would be able to list when a birthday, anniversary or special event has been cut short or missed because of an emergency response call or other fire department event.

You can say sorry and thank you at the same time by sending out an annual birthday/anniversary card to families, just in case their family member gets called out during a special event. It sends two messages:

1. Sorry that your family member might miss a special event in your life
2. Thank you for accepting that this may happen. Your continued support and encouragement helps our volunteers contribute and make a difference in the community.

You could also take this a step further and make it an annual family event. Once a year you can host a birthday/anniversary party for the entire department and their families. It is a good reason to get together and it just may make up for all those missed occasions.

### **Spouses' Night Out**

How many times have the spouse or significant other had to worry about childcare so that the volunteer could respond to an emergency, or work at a fund-raising event, or do a public education session? Arrange a night for the spouses or significant others to get together without worrying about childcare, which would be the responsibility of the volunteers.

## **Childcare**

If the department is hosting an adult only event, arrange for childcare or reimburse for childcare expenses for that night.

### **Simple yet effective ideas:**

- ▶ Send a thank you note to volunteer's spouses, partners and families for sharing the time and talents of their loved ones. Note what kind of contribution the volunteer is making
- ▶ Send personal cards or letters during the holidays
- ▶ Ensure that there are flowers or other gifts available at social events to recognize the significant others.

## **Support and Assistance**

One of your jobs as a leader is to support and assist volunteers to cope with the many responsibilities and challenges that are inherent in the fire service.

Volunteer fire fighters can go through cycles of activity/interest and reduced activity. There are many factors that can determine where an individual is in this cycle.

Establishing programs and providing information to the volunteers and their families will assist them in balancing the many priorities in their life. Provide resources for volunteers and their families with regard to social, emotional challenges resulting from their volunteer work that may impact on their performance and their family life.

Involve the volunteers and family members in developing the programs and information. Elicit their thoughts to identify the barriers to involvement, brainstorming ideas to overcome those barriers and implementing the ideas.

# **Volunteer Fire Fighter Vehicle Registration Fee Exemption Regulations**

*made under subsection 302(1) of the  
Motor Vehicle Act  
R.S.N.S 1989, c. 293  
O.I.C. 1999-598 (Dec 1, 1999), N.S. Reg 130/99*

## **Active Volunteer Fire Fighter**

In these regulations, an “active volunteer fire fighter” means a volunteer fire fighter as defined by Section 2 of the Volunteer Services Act who

- (a) is an active member of a recognized volunteer fire department and has been an active member for at least 12 months prior to applying for exemption from payment of a vehicle registration pursuant to subsection 4 (1); and
- (b) has participated in at least 20% of all activities including fire calls and training conducted while that volunteer fire fighter has been an active member as required by clause (a); and
- (c) has written confirmation of active member status required by clause (a) in the form prescribed by the Department and signed by the Chief or Deputy Chief of the volunteer fire department.

## **Application for exemption**

- 4 (1) An active volunteer fire fighter may apply to the Department for exemption from the registration fee of a vehicle in the form prescribed by the Department.
- (2) When the Department is satisfied with the application made pursuant to subsection (1), there shall be no registration fee for one passenger or one commercial vehicle of a registered weight of 5000kg or less for which a number plate is issued in the name of the applicant

## **Exemption ceases**

When a person ceases to be an active volunteer fire fighter, the exemption from the registration fee issued under these regulations shall cease and the vehicle must be re-registered prior to being operated.

## **Volunteer Fire Fighter Tax Credit**

The Volunteer Firefighters Tax Credit reduces eligible applicants' personal income taxes by: \$500 for 2009 and subsequent years

**If your total personal income taxes are less than the value of the credit, the credit is refundable.**

**"Refundable" means that if you do not use the entire credit to pay Nova Scotia income taxes, you will receive a cheque for any unused portion (provided you have no other debts owing to the government)**

**Even if you have no income or taxes payable, it is to your benefit to file a return and claim this credit.**

**Eligibility**To receive the credit, you must meet the following requirements:

Be a resident of Nova Scotia on December 31st of the tax year

Have served as a volunteer firefighter for at least 6 months of the taxation year in a volunteer fire department recognized by the Fire Marshal

Not have received any payments (salary, wages, compensation or anything in lieu of salary) outside of reasonable reimbursements or allowances for expenses from the volunteer fire department for the services you performed for the fire department

Be identified as an eligible volunteer firefighter in accordance with the legislation and regulations in a report filed by your fire chief with the Department of Finance by March 31, 2009

Have participated in no less than 20 per cent of each of the following: the volunteer fire department's emergency calls, training sessions, and meetings.

Your fire chief report provides confirmation of eligible volunteer firefighter status according to the criteria under the legislation and regulations. It will be used by the Canada Revenue Agency to confirm whether an individual has met the criteria and is eligible to receive the credit.

### **How to Apply**

**Eligible volunteer firefighters claim the tax credit when they prepare their income tax returns.**

**Note:** To be considered an eligible volunteer firefighter, you must be identified as such by your fire chief on the Fire Chief Form submitted to the Nova Scotia Minister of Finance by March 31, 2009. Download the Fire Chief's Report in [pdf or Microsoft Word](#).

## **Training & Safety Standards**

Your volunteers have many commitments and must balance work schedules, family life and their volunteer opportunities. As a result, it is essential that you have well organized and scheduled training - make your training sessions a good use of their time. Offer a training program that:

- ▶ Identifies attendance expectations
- ▶ Is flexible to reasonably accommodate schedules and shift work
- ▶ Is stimulating and fun, capturing the competitive nature of some individuals
- ▶ Is relevant and real (such as scenarios and live fire training)
- ▶ Is diverse and offers a variety of relevant topics
- ▶ Is scheduled in advance throughout the year, and
- ▶ Is based on an accepted industry standard and curriculum.

In order to complete Basic Fire Fighter (BFF) Training your volunteers are required to successfully complete:

- ▶ Fire fighter orientation & safety
- ▶ Building construction
- ▶ Personal protective equipment / BA
- ▶ Portable fire extinguishers
- ▶ Ropes & knots
- ▶ Rescue
- ▶ Forcible Entry
- ▶ Ladders
- ▶ Water supply, foam
- ▶ Fire streams
- ▶ Sprinklers
- ▶ Loss Control (Salvage and Overhaul)
- ▶ Fire Control
- ▶ Ventilation
- ▶ Alarm
- ▶ Self controlled breathing apparatus
- ▶ Suppression systems
- ▶ Fire detection

In order to be considered Level I trained, your volunteers must also complete:

- ▶ Hazardous Material Awareness
- ▶ Introduction to Fire Prevention
- ▶ Standard First Aid, CPR BCLS -C
- ▶ Complete Level 1 Written and Practical Exams

According to NFPA 1500, it is the responsibility of all Department Officers (due diligence) to ensure all their members are fully trained and competent prior to assigning any tasks. The NFPA 1500 document should be the corner stone upon which each fire department attempts to meet the highest standard of safety. All training should be documented and filed in the members personnel file.



# Critical Incident Stress Management

## What is Critical Incident Stress (CIS)?

People who respond to emergencies often must deal with traumatic or very stressful events such as the death of a child, the loss of a fellow fire fighter or multiple casualties.

Sometimes the event is so overwhelming normal methods of coping do not work. When this happens, those involved in managing the crisis may experience strong or unusual physical and/or emotional reactions.

Stress reactions can appear immediately (at the scene), a few hours later or even a few days down the road. Critical incident stress reactions can affect the way a person thinks, feels or behaves. Such reactions can be worrisome but they are all **normal responses to an abnormal event**.

## If you are suffering from CIS:

- ▶ Don't be hard on yourself or others
- ▶ Talking to peers about the incident and stress reactions is very helpful
- ▶ Participate in a structured group process called a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) conducted by a trained team. During this session, participants are able to talk about what happened and their thoughts and feelings about the incident in a safe and confidential environment.
- ▶ Physical well-being is important following a traumatic event
- ▶ Exercise, rest and eat nutritious meals (low fat, salt and sugar)
- ▶ Limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol as these drugs can interfere with your body's natural recovery process.

## What are some of the symptoms of CIS?

### Physical Symptoms:

Fatigue, nausea, stomach upset, rapid heart rate, sweating, shaking and lack of coordination.

### Emotional Responses:

Feelings of guilt, frustration, fear, depression, grief, self-doubt and a general feeling of detachment or numbness

### Cognitive Responses:

Affects short term memory, concentration, decision making, problem solving or sense of time.

### Behavioral Symptoms:

Sleep disturbances, changes in eating habits, nightmares or recurring dreams, becoming withdrawn, changes in sexual drive, increased use of alcohol or tobacco and any out-of-character behaviour.

If things don't return to normal within a few weeks, you should seek help from a physician, pastor, CIS team member or a mental health professional.

**Signs of Critical Incident Stress - On Site:**

- ▶ nausea, headaches
- ▶ muscle tremors
- ▶ disoriented or poor concentration
- ▶ chest pain/hyperventilation
- ▶ increased heart rate or blood pressure
- ▶ muffled hearing
- ▶ profuse sweating
- ▶ fear, anxiety or frustration
- ▶ self-doubt or irritability
- ▶ anger and resentment
- ▶ emotional numbness

**Delayed reactions (may appear hours, days, weeks or even years later):**

- ▶ sleep disturbances/nightmares
- ▶ waking up in a cold sweat
- ▶ depression or sense of loss
- ▶ feeling of isolation/withdrawal
- ▶ fatigue
- ▶ changes in eating habits
- ▶ decreased sexual drive
- ▶ nausea
- ▶ anxiety or irritability
- ▶ guilt
- ▶ grief
- ▶ flashbacks

If you feel your department has experienced a critical incident and you think we can be of assistance to you in returning the department to its normal level of performance, a trained CISM team can be dispatched to your department simply by contacting the:

**Nova Scotia Provincial Fire Marshal's Office**

**Toll free: 1-800-559-3473**

This is a 24 hour, 7 day/week number.

## **Line of Duty Death Form**

Because of the hazardous nature of the fire service, it is always best to be prepared for the worse case scenario. The Line of Duty Death Form is just one of those preparations.

Each member of your department should complete a Line of Duty Death Form in consultation with their family members. That will ensure that in a tragedy the fire fighters family won't have to make the tough decisions. Those decisions were made together when everyone could think clearly.

Again, this is confidential information and should be stored in a secure location with limited access to be used only in the event of a members death.

Members should be reminded to annually update their forms as their personal information changes (ie: additional children, divorce, etc)

# LINE OF DUTY DEATH AND/OR SERIOUS INJURY

***“Confidential when Completed”***

PERSONAL INFORMATION			
Last:	First:	Middle:	
Address:	City:	Prov:	Postal Code:
Home Phone:	Cellular Phone:	Employee #	
EMERGENCY CONTACT 1			
Please identify family members you would like the department to contact. Please list them in order for contact. NOTE: If the contact is a minor child, please indicate the name of the adult contact.			
Last:	First:	Relationship:	
Address:	City:	Prov:	Postal Code:
Home Phone:	Cellular Phone:	Pager:	
Employer:	Address:	City:	Prov:
Work Phone:	Is this person your primary beneficiary?		
Special Circumstances (age, health, etc.) or instructions:			
ALTERNATE CONTACT			
Please identify family members you would like the department to contact. Please list them in order for contact. NOTE: If the contact is a minor child, please indicate the name of the adult contact.			
Last:	First:	Relationship:	
Address:	City:	Prov:	Postal Code:
Home Phone:	Cellular Phone:	Pager:	
Employer:	Address:	City:	Prov:
<i><b>“Confidential when Completed”</b></i>			
Work Phone:	Is this person a beneficiary?	Explain:	

Special Circumstances (age, health, etc.) or instructions:

**CHILDREN - NAMES AND D.O.B.**

Please provide the names and date of birth of your children:

	/ /		/ /
	/ /		/ /
	/ /		/ /
	/ /		/ /

**DEPARTMENT MEMBERS**

Department member(s), if any, that you would like to accompany the Notification Team to make notifications.

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**OTHER ASSISTANCE TO NOTIFICATION**

Last:	First:	Relationship:
Address:	Home Phone:	Cellular Phone:
Employer:	City:	
Work Phone:	Other Information:	

**FUNERAL / MEMORIAL SERVICES**

Do you wish to have a fire service funeral as established by Department Procedures? \_\_\_\_\_  
If no, may the District hold a public fire memorial service, if cause of death is L.O.D.D. related? \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you wish to receive your cap? \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you wish to receive your medals? \_\_\_\_\_

In the case of a Line of Duty Death who do you wish to receive your helmet? \_\_\_\_\_

Disposition: Burial \_\_\_\_\_ Cremation \_\_\_\_\_ Other Instructions:

***“Confidential when Completed”***

Preference of religious faith followed at funeral:

Funeral Home Choice:

Cemetery Choice:	Has cemetery plot been purchased?
Are flowers to be omitted in lieu of a charity or organization? _____ If Yes: Please identify charity or organization:	
Preference as to who will deliver the eulogy? Please identify:	
Favorite Songs:	
Favorite Poems:	
Favorite Readings:	
Favorite Scriptures / Verses:	
List preferences for Pallbearers:  _____	
_____	
_____	
<b>MILITARY SERVICE</b>	
Have you served in the military?	Please identify which branch?
Dates of Service:	
<b>OTHER CRITICAL INFORMATION</b>	
Do you have a Will?	Do you have a Living Will?
<b><i>“Confidential when Completed”</i></b>	
Other Life Insurance Policy:	Agent & Policy #:

Death & Disability Insurance:	Agent & Policy #:
Are you an organ donor?	Drivers License indicates you are an organ donor?
<b>SPECIAL REQUESTS</b>	
<p>List any special requests, wishes or directions that you would like to have carried out in the event of your death or serious injury:</p>          <p>Do you belong to a Masonic Lodge, Legion, or other service organization?</p>	

**CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:**

*The information provided will be maintained and kept in a secure location and will be utilized by the department in the event of your death to assist your family in preparing for your funeral and obtaining the benefits available to them. Please make sure that someone close to you knows this information.*

UPDATE INFORMATION

The information provided is accurate and requires no revisions / changes:

----- Name (PRINT)	----- Employee Signature	----- Date
----- Witness Name (PRINT)	----- Witness Signature	----- Date
----- Next of Kin Signature		----- Date

## **Exit Interviews**

An Exit Interview can be a very useful tool for a Fire Chief. The purpose of conducting an exit interview is to determine why the volunteer has left the department and to get feedback on how your department is functioning. The exit interview will also identify any problems in your department or with the membership.

The volunteer leaving the department has nothing to lose so they are usually honest and to the point. However, before conducting the interview ensure them that whatever is said will be kept strictly confidential and not shared with others in the department. It is imperative that the information given by them is be kept strictly confidential and only the person conducting the interview and/or the Chief should be privy to it. Otherwise, members exiting will not be willing to agree to an exit interview if their information is spread through the department and in many cases the community.

Attached is an extensive list of exit interview questions. You may prefer to review these and chose the ones that are applicable for your department.

This information should be used to improve your departments operations and correct any negative attitudes or behaviours that may be resulting in members leaving your department.



# Volunteer Fire Fighter Exit Interview Form

**Information you contribute through this process will be treated confidentially.**

<b>Volunteer Fire Fighter Exit Interview Form</b>	
Name:	Date:
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:
Station:	
Interview conducted by:	

## Membership

1	How long have you been a volunteer fire fighter?
2	Why did you decide to become a volunteer fire fighter
3	When you joined, did someone clearly explain the standards required for attendance at emergencies, training and meetings? If no, what was different?
4	When you joined, how were you made to feel welcome and part of the team?
5	Does the role of fire fighter as you know it, now match your expectations when you joined?
6	Do you feel you receive adequate recognition within the department for the work you do ? From whom?

7	<p>What sort of recognition is most important to you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Thanks from your peers and superiors?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dinners and social gathering for members</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Awards</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Plaques</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Department apparel (t-shirts, hats, pins, etc.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Small gifts</p> <p>Other:</p>
8	<p>a) Are you aware of the Provincial Critical Incident Stress Team?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>b) Do you know how to access it if the services are needed by you or your family?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
9	<p>Who do you go to for help if you have a problem in the department?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chief <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy <input type="checkbox"/> Captain Lieutenant <input type="checkbox"/> Fellow Fire fighter</p>
10	<p>a) When you have concerns with the operation of the department are your concerns dealt with appropriately? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>b) Promptly? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
11	<p>a) Are you level 1 trained? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>b) If not, what prevents you from getting the training?</p>

12	Who in your department is responsible to ensure training is organized and provided?
13	In your opinion, are the training sessions productive?
15	Do you feel you receive adequate training to be a volunteer fire fighter? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If no, please explain:
14	How can training be improved?
16	Do you have the adequate tools and equipment to do the job? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please explain:

## Meetings

17	What is the frequency of general membership meetings in your department?
18	Are these meetings formally structured and do they follow an agenda? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please explain:
19	Do these meeting provide an adequate opportunity for communications between the officers and members? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please explain:
20	Does the Chair of the meeting maintain control and ensure a productive atmosphere exists? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please explain:

## Communication

21	Communication is key to the success of a department. How do you feel about the ways that information is shared in your department?
22	Which of the following methods are used in your department to communicate with members?  <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin boards <input type="checkbox"/> Individual e-mails <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal briefings before training <input type="checkbox"/> Memos to members Other:
23	Policies, procedures and regulations are important to all fire fighters. How are they communicated to the fire fighters in your station?
24	Briefly describe how your department conducts operational debriefings after significant calls?

### Station Environment

25	Every workspace has an “atmosphere” or “feeling “ about it which makes us feel comfortable or uncomfortable being there. How would you describe the atmosphere in your station?
26	What features of your department do you like most?
27	What features of your department do you like least?
28	How would you describe the morale of the members of your department?
29	If you could do something to improve morale, what would it be?
30	Sometimes tension between individual members or groups of members (officers & members; males & females, for example) exist in departments and may affect the morale of all members. Are you aware of any such tensions within your station? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Between whom?

## Officers

31	Please briefly describe your understanding of the process used to select officers in your dept?
32	Do you feel that you understand the roles and responsibilities of the officers positions in your station?
33	How would you describe the job being done by your Chief?
34	How would you describe the job being done by your Deputy?



35	How would you describe the job being done by the Captains in your department?
36	As a group, do your officer's individual strengths and abilities complement each other as a team? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If not, please explain.
37	Is there any additional training which you feel would benefit the officers in your department?
38	Do you have any concerns with the capability of any of the officers in your department?

## Discipline

39	How would you describe the level of general discipline (ie comportment, respect, etc) in your station?
40	a) How is corrective discipline applied in your station? b) Is it applied consistently and fairly?
41	Is there one set of behavioural standards that everyone is held to?
42	Who is responsible for discipline in your station?

43	What is your primary reason for leaving the department?
44	Did anything trigger your decision to leave?
47	Do you have any additional comments or suggestions that haven't been addressed in this interview.
<b>Member Recommendations</b>	
48	What recommendations would you make to improve the operations and the working environment in your station?

## **Exit Process**

Volunteers leave for both good and bad reasons. They find new opportunities, go back to school, retire or land their dream job. Or their Volunteer position could be terminated for poor performance, poor attendance or because of conflict. In any case, when someone leaves your fire department, it is a good opportunity to reflect and evaluate. You want to know if the person is leaving for the right reasons and if not, you may want to find out what can the department do to improve. An exit interview is a voluntary process, in which you can obtain information about what your department is doing well and opportunities for improvement.

In order to provide a climate and environment that encourages the individual to speak freely and honestly, consider alternate interviewers, such as another volunteer or municipal official, rather than an officer or Chief.

The exit interview is also a good opportunity to collect any department property such as keys, pagers/radios, bunker gear, uniforms, etc.

An example of an exit interview form has been included for your reference.

### **Dismissal**

While not a pleasant experience from either side, a fair interview could occur if you remain objective and respectful when conducting the meeting in which a volunteer is being dismissed. Ensure that the discussion is documented and refer to existing municipal policies regarding discipline and dismissal.

Be objective by informing the volunteer that his or her role is terminated and the reason why in a compassionate, concise manner. Allowing the individual an opportunity to speak and responding to any questions will provide some dignity. If responding to anger, maintain your emotions.

You can also be proactive by informing all volunteers during orientation, reasons for immediate termination. These may include: threats, violence, conviction of criminal acts, or other similar offences.

### **Retirement**

If an individual is retiring, besides offering thanks for his or her tenure of service, consider involving your membership in organizing and hosting an event to celebrate the individual's remarkable contribution. You can also partner with your local newspaper to publicly acknowledge the individual's long-term commitment to public service.

**References**

When you give references, make sure that they are truthful and accurate. Choose your words carefully and describe the individual's behaviour (not personality) that you observed during the time the volunteer was with you.

**Connecting the individual to a Subsequent Fire Department**

Despite it being a loss to your department, if the person is leaving because of relocation, you can also view it as an opportunity to help out another volunteer department. No doubt, the Chief in the future community would appreciate adding a potential volunteer to the list. As with references, be prudent when making the decision to "pass the baton" to another Chief. Provide the individual with the contact information of potential departments.

## **Fund Raising**

For some fund raising is called 'a necessary evil', it consumes time that could be better spent training, providing public education and yes having another meeting. The perception on fund raising is that it taps into the amount of time the volunteer can spend at the station. People sign on to the fire service in order to help others in time of peril and not to call back numbers at the bingo night.

However there are some meaningful experiences and or personal growth opportunities to be gained through fund raising. There is a social aspect to fund raising - human beings thrive on being with others to communicate and share. It also provides opportunities to younger members to learn new skills, fund raising places your organization in the public eye showing the community that you are active and you never know you may just pick up another volunteer. It allows the organization to dress uniformly which promotes professionalism. Lets not forget the benefits of raising money to buy that piece of equipment.

The next time you look at a fund raising event consider some of the following

- ▶ Ask the volunteers for their input
- ▶ Consider the time investment
- ▶ Ask yourself do we need that money
- ▶ Is this a productive use of our time
- ▶ How many fund raisers have you had over the past few months