

Volunteer Firefighter Minimum Performance Standards and Incentives

To be in "good standing" in the fire department as determined by the fire chief or his designee, a volunteer firefighter must meet these criteria each month:

- Attend a reasonable number of emergency calls (40% or better).
- Attend 4 hours of approved training per month or be current on total training hours.
- Participate in a sleepover (12 hours) or stand-by time (8 hours).
- Perform all assignments outlined in their particular job description.

If a volunteer firefighter does not meet these minimum standards for any month, the volunteer firefighter automatically goes on probation. The volunteer firefighter stays on probation until their performance meets the cumulative totals required for the current calendar month of that year. Examples:

Once placed on probation, a volunteer firefighter must do all of the following to be removed from probationary status:

- ✓ For the most recent calendar month, the volunteer firefighter must have attended 40% of the emergency calls to which they were paged.
- ✓ The volunteer firefighter must have the total training hours to equal the current month times the 4 hours training time per month. July is the 7th month, so at the end of July the volunteer firefighter would need 28 hours ($7 \times 4 = 28$) of training time to be current.
- ✓ The volunteer firefighter must have the total cumulative hours of sleepover or stand-by time for the current month of the year.
- ✓ The volunteer firefighter must have performed all their job assignments for the particular rank or position that they hold during the past 30 days.

Once a volunteer is on probation, they have 90 days to become current in all performance requirements. If, at the end of this 90-day period, the firefighter has not become current in good standing, the volunteer firefighter shall be sent a certified letter placing them on termination notice at the end of 30 days. If the volunteer firefighter does not become in good standing with the department within this final 30-day period the volunteer firefighter will be removed from the department at the end of the 30 days and must turn in all gear and equipment belonging to the fire department. Should the volunteer firefighter resign at any time during this process, before the last day of the final 30-day period, they will be considered to have resigned in good standing with the department.

A volunteer firefighter in good standing with the fire department as certified by the fire chief or the volunteer coordinator as appointed by the fire chief will receive the following monthly incentives.

Monthly allowances for volunteer firefighters are not compensation for the work that they perform. The financial incentives provided to the volunteers encourage them to donate their time to the fire department and to compensate them for the out-of-pocket expenses that

they incur in responding to alarms, attending training, and other activities in which they may engage on behalf of the city and the fire department. The financial incentives provided to the volunteers are nominal in relation to the service that they provide and do not in any way to reflect the actual value of the time or service provided by these individuals. Monthly allowances to each volunteer are provided in the table below.

Make the disbursements semi-annually on June 1st and December 1st of each year. By making only two payments per year, there is less administrative work and the volunteer firefighter will realize more money at one time that could be used for personal or family purposes such as vacation or holiday expenses.

Volunteer Position	Number of Budgeted Positions	Monthly Incentive Pay (Paid Semi-annually)	Months Per Year	Annual Cost
Probationary Firefighter	*	\$50.00	12	0
Firefighter	*	\$50.00	12	0
Firefighter 1	5	\$75.00	12	\$4,500
Firefighter 2	5	\$85.00	12	\$5,100
Master Firefighter	4	\$100.00	12	\$4,800
Lieutenant	1	\$125.00	12	\$1,500
Total Positions	15	Total Volunteer Incentive Pay		\$15,900

* All positions budgeted as at least Firefighter 1.

Obviously, since there is a volunteer firefighter rank structure, there should be definitions of how to obtain each of these levels. The following structure is recommended.

Volunteer Rank Structure and qualifications for Promotion

Entry Level:

Probationary Firefighter (PF) – once the fire chief has approved an application, the applicant becomes a probationary firefighter. The applicant shall remain a probationary firefighter for no less than 12 months. During this time, the PF shall perform only those duties for which they have been trained and approved by their training officer or other authority. There should be a specific check-off list of training functions developed, and as the PF is trained in an area, they should be signed off on their specific sheet. The probationary firefighter will wear a helmet that clearly distinguishes them from any other member of the fire department.

Promotions:

1. Firefighter (FF) – When a probationary firefighter is approved by the fire chief to be removed from probationary status after serving their 12 months on probation **and**, completing all training required by the fire department, they automatically become a

Firefighter.

2. Firefighter 1 (F1) – Promotion to the level of Firefighter 1 within the department shall be automatic contingent upon the completion of serving no less than one year as a probationary firefighter and successfully passing the Firefighter 1 exam as given by the State of Tennessee – Firefighter Training and Standards Commission.

3. Firefighter 2 (F2) - Promotion to the level of Firefighter 2 within the department shall be automatic contingent upon the completion of serving no less than one year as a certified Firefighter 1 and successfully passing the Firefighter 2 exam as given by the State of Tennessee – Firefighter Training and Standards Commission.

4. Master Firefighter (MF) - Applicants for promotion in the fire service to the classification level of Master Firefighter must have all the entry-level requirements and have three (3) years of experience in the fire fighting service. Applicants must also possess a valid Tennessee Operator's License, which has not been revoked or suspended within the last 36 months. The applicant must possess the qualifications for certification as outlined in NFPA 1002 for Fire Department Vehicle Driver/Operators and have passed the test for Fire Instructor 1 as administered by the State of Tennessee – Firefighter Training and Standards Commission.

5. Fire Lieutenant (LT) - Applicants for promotion in the fire service to the classification level of Volunteer Fire Lieutenant must possess the entry-level requirements and have four (4) years of experience in the fire fighting service. Applicants must also have completed specialized course work in fire fighting principles, practices, and administration. Applicants must also possess a valid Tennessee Operator's License. Applicants must meet all qualifications for certification as outlined in NFPA 1021 for Fire Officer I as determined by the fire department.

Recruitment and Retention:

Having the rank and pay structure recommended above is a good start on recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Fire departments need several options to recruit and retain firefighters. Retaining trained firefighters is essential to have a skilled fire department. Retention pays dividends on the time and money invested in training. The following are some suggestions to complete the recruitment and retention program.

Fire Explorer Program – Many volunteer and career fire departments get a substantial number of their recruits directly from fire explorer posts. A fire explorer post is an excellent recruiting tool and a way to help keep the fire department visible to the community during non-emergency functions. It is not expensive to operate, but it does require a commitment of one or two hours per week on the part of the post advisor and assistants.

The Fire Explorer program is a component of the Boy Scouts of America. It is available to both boys and girls who are 14 to 18 years old and still in High School. The program is designed to introduce the Explorer to the fire service as a possible career through training and participation in actual situations. Explorers have the opportunity to work

with their fire department sponsors in their community, ride-along with engine or EMS companies, compete in explorer muster events, and attend other statewide or national Explorer functions. Post Advisors are members of the fire department and oversee the Explorers. Recruitment occurs in the spring and new explorers are invited to join the post as vacancies occur. The position of Explorer is a volunteer position, but can pay many dividends in experience and training for an individual interested in a career in the fire service.

As a member of the fire explorer post, they are engaged in creative community service projects and learn to respect the services that government provides. For most members of a fire explorer post who stay active for at least one year, one of three things happens:

1. they decide that they want to become a career firefighter, or
2. they decide that they want to be a volunteer firefighter, or
3. they learn a lot about the fire service and have a deep appreciation for it for the rest of their life.

Examples of Possible Volunteer Incentives

1. EDUCATION AND TRAINING REIMBURSEMENTS
2. FIREFIGHTER CERTIFICATION
3. FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AWARD
4. ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC
5. LEADERSHIP RETREATS
6. COLOR CODING ON HELMETS AND TURNOUTS
7. SERVICE AWARDS: 5, 10, 15 YEAR ETC.
8. JACKETS, T-SHIRTS ETC.
9. DISABILITY INSURANCE
10. INCOME REPLACEMENT INSURANCE
11. VOLUNTEER RETIREMENT PROGRAM
12. MONTHLY ALLOWANCE TIED TO RANK, PARTICIPATION, TRAINING
13. ESTABLISHED RANK SYSTEM NOT ELECTION
14. SMOKE EATER OF THE MONTH, YEAR
15. ESTABLISH FIRE EXPLORER POST
16. EXPLORER SCOUT POST SPONSOR
17. SLEEPOVER AND/OR STATION RESPONSIBILITIES
18. LIFE INSURANCE
19. RECRUITING DRIVE W/ GIFTS FOR MEMBER
20. MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATIONS
21. TRIPS TO NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY AND NATIONAL FIRE CONFERENCES AND EXPOS
22. MEMBERSHIPS PAID TO FIRE ORGANIZATIONS
23. PERSONNEL BOARD WITH PICTURES
24. PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSIGNMENTS: FAIRS, SCHOOLS, ETC.