



Category: Personnel – Series 2000

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Related Documents

N/A

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1.0 Scope and Application

- 1.1 The following policies and guidelines apply to all volunteer members.
- 1.2 This procedure serves to establish standard guidelines for recruiting and maintaining the District's volunteer members.

2.0 Standard Definitions

Active Status – Refers to members who meet minimum compliance standards for training, safety, activity, and membership requirements.

Inactive Status – Refers to members, who have resigned, are on an authorized leave of absence, or who are out of compliance with minimum training, safety, activity, or membership requirements. Members who are placed on inactive status shall not be allowed to serve as responders until they have been re-activated to active status.

Member – A member is an individual who is officially affiliated with and who is involved in performing the duties and responsibilities of the Fire District. Members may occupy any position or rank within the fire department, and may or may not engage in emergency operations.

Ride-Along – A pre-arranged period of time where members gain on-the-job experience by accompanying and working with on-duty crews as they perform their day-to-day activities.

Response Volunteer– A volunteer who has achieved a minimum level of training and is assigned to fill an emergency responder role. The District maintains a variety of emergency responder qualifications. Examples include, but are not limited to. EMS Only, Firefighter, Tender Operator, Rehab, Air Support, Support volunteer, Command Post Aide, etc.

Support Volunteer – A non-combat volunteer member assigned either to fill a role that supports the efforts of suppression forces, to provide an administrative support role, or to participate in a specific project or program. Examples include, but are not limited to, Chaplain, Administrative Volunteer, Radio Operator, Disaster Management Program Assistant, PIO, etc.

3.0 District Policy

- 3.1 The District shall not discriminate against any person regardless of their age, gender, race, creed, national origin, marital status, or non-job-related physical, sensory, or mental handicaps who may apply for a position as a Volunteer member.
- 3.2 The District shall establish minimum qualification standards for volunteer membership. These minimum qualification standards, listed in the individual position descriptions, shall be provided to the applicant at the time of application.
- 3.3 The District shall establish minimum activity requirements for maintaining an active membership status. Only members who maintain active status may be allowed to participate as emergency responders. The District's minimum activity requirements shall be provided to the applicant at the time of application.

4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 The District Fire Chief, or their designee operating under the Chief's authority, shall be responsible for making volunteer membership appointments.
- 4.2 The District's designated volunteer program manager, in conjunction with other District members, shall be responsible for:
 1. Administering the District's volunteer application process;
 2. Coordinating station and or program assignments;
 3. Monitoring training/activity records to ensure compliance with minimum membership requirements;
 4. Enforcing the District's attendance policies and activity improvement measures;
 5. Reviewing all requests for leaves of absence, excused absences, transfers, etc.
- 4.3 The District's Training Division shall be responsible for establishing the probationary training and performance requirements. Failure to meet the District's probationary requirements may serve as grounds for failing the probationary period.
- 4.4 The District's Administration shall be responsible for completing administrative on-boarding matters, supporting logistical needs, establishing and maintaining member records, etc.
- 4.5 Volunteer members shall be assigned to a station officer or a program manager to serve as their immediate supervisor, this person shall be responsible for:
 1. Mentoring and supporting for their members training and personal development;
 2. Overseeing their participation, coaching and intervening as needed;
 3. Monitoring compliance with minimum activity levels, intervening as needed;
 4. Fostering efficient use of the chain-of-command by being reasonably accessible, readily approachable, and timely in responding to their member's requests and communication needs.

5. Advocating for their members individual needs while operating within the District's SOP's, obligations, and best interests.
 6. Evaluating their member's requests (i.e., training, equipment, excused absence(s), leave(s), etc.); sanctioning those requests they deem valid and/or appropriate.
- 4.6 Individual members shall be responsible for:
1. Providing the District with any requested documents such as application forms, release forms, authorization forms, copies of certifications, etc.;
 2. Maintaining compliance with applicable training, safety, activity, and membership requirements;
 3. Reporting changes in personal status (i.e., name, address, emergency contact, etc.);
 4. Initiating requests for excused absence(s), leaves of absence(s), transfers, etc.;
 5. Reporting changes in their physical condition that may impair and/or limit their ability to safely perform normal job duties;
 6. Ensuring they participate in an exit interview along with returning each of their District issued items upon separation from the District. Separated members shall be financially liable for the replacement costs associated with any items they fail to return.

5.0 Standard Guidelines

- 5.1 The District reserves the right to maintain a philosophy that places individual opportunity secondary to public and member safety. Therefore, applicants with limitations that may prevent them from being able to safely perform job-related duties may be disqualified.
- 5.2 Individuals may apply for and upon approval, be assigned to a Support Volunteer program or special project. The District will establish specific activity requirements for each program or individual project. Examples include but are not limited to: PIO, Chaplain, Tender Operator, Air Support, Photographer, Home Inspections, Rehab, etc.
- 5.3 **Participation Limitation** – Applicants shall not be allowed to participate in any physical activities associated with the District that may subject them to the risk of potential injury until they have been enrolled with the District's volunteer insurance program.
- 5.4 **Minimum Qualifications** – All volunteer applications will be reviewed by the District's Training Chief or an appropriate designee to ensure that the applicant meets minimum qualifications.

As a minimum, applicants must:

- Be a U.S. citizen, or be lawfully admitted to the US for permanent residency;
- Be able to meet specified minimum activity levels;
- Be a minimum of 18 years old at the time of appointment;
- Possess a high school diploma or GED;
- Possess a level of physical ability commensurate to applicable job related duties;
- Possess a valid driver license (photocopy required);

- Comply with all provisions of the District’s Drug Free Workplace policy;
- Not be a current user nor become a user of tobacco or marijuana products;
- Not have any felony convictions;
- Comply with facial hair and body art standards.

At the direction of the Fire Chief, exceptions to minimum qualifications may be made for specified Support Service Programs or for individual projects on a case-by-case basis.

- 5.5 **Membership Process** – The District accepts membership inquiries throughout the year and conducts membership processing when doing so corresponds with position availability and the enrollment periods needed to support their initial training.

All volunteer applicants must complete each of the membership processing steps as prescribed for the desired program. Processing requires satisfactory completion of the following steps. The sequence may be altered to allow applicants to attend drills prior to recruit classes. (See Volunteer Membership Process flowchart.)

1. **Interest Applications** – Interested applicants submit a Volunteer Interest Card to the District’s Business Office so their contact information can be collected. Interest Applications are held until the next enrollment period.

Reference: Form 2800F, Volunteer Interest Application

2. **Volunteer Programs Orientation** – Applicant’s and their significant others are invited to attend an orientation session that overviews the Fire District and explains the requirements and expectations associated with each of the District’s volunteer program opportunities. Orientations can be conducted in a variety of ways; a one-on-one interview to ensure the candidate is a positive fit for the Organization or on a scheduled basis to correspond with structured entry periods.

Reference: Form 2800F5, Volunteer Orientation Checklist

3. **Applications Submitted** – Completed applications are submitted to the District’s Business Office along with all required forms. Applications are then forwarded for screening.

Reference: Form 2800F1, Volunteer Application Packet

4. **Application Screening** – Applications are screened to ensure that applicants meet all minimum eligibility requirements. Each applicant shall be given direction as to how they proceed in the process.
5. **Firefighter Physical Ability Assessment** – All firefighter applicants must demonstrate a minimum level of physical ability by satisfactorily completing a physical ability assessment. The assessment process validates the applicant’s minimum ability to successfully perform the physical requirements of probationary training and assigned duties.
6. **Program Placement Interviews** – An interview with an interview panel or the applicable program manager will be conducted to restate program requirements, ensure understanding of program expectations, and to determine the applicant’s suitability for process advancement. Interviews can be conducted in conjunction with a one-on-one interview or as follow-up to a scheduled orientation.

Conditional Membership: Applicants determined to be eligible for program placement will be granted conditional membership stipulating that formal membership acceptance will be contingent upon a successful background investigation, medical exam, and completion of all probationary requirements. At this point, members shall be assigned a personnel number and file.

7. **Background Investigation** – All members are subject to a background investigation to include references, a driving history, and criminal background.
8. **Medical Exam** – All emergency response members must complete a medical exam by the District’s physician prior to participating in any District-related physical activity. Upon successful completion, members shall be enrolled in the District’s volunteer insurance program.
9. **Firefighter (Recruit) Training** – All firefighter applicants must successfully complete an initial recruit training academy or equivalent.
10. **CDC Vaccinations** – All emergency responders must complete or decline communicable disease control vaccinations in accordance with District policy.

Reference: 5200, Infectious Disease Exposure Control Plan

11. **Program/Station Assignment** – Upon successful completion of all membership processing requirements, members shall, based on their place of residence and/or program assignment, be assigned to their respective Station Officer, or program manager.
12. **Program/Station Orientation** – The members respective Station Officer, or program manager shall conduct an orientation to address operational matters associated with the member’s assignment(s). The orientation shall include completion of the District’s Orientation Checklist.

Reference: 2800F5, Volunteer Orientation Checklist

- 5.6 **Lateral Transfer** – Individuals wishing to transfer into the District from other fire districts may do so, but may be subject to completing minimum training and safety program requirements. The District’s Training Chief shall be responsible for evaluating the member’s individual situation and prescribing any necessary training and/or safety compliance requirements. All prescribed requirements must be satisfied prior to being fully instated to active status.

Reference: 2800F6, Individual Training & Safety Objectives

- 5.7 **Probationary Period** – A twelve-month probationary period shall serve as an extension of the application process. The probationary period begins the first day of the member’s program/station assignment for a period of twelve months. There may be probationary training requirements that must be met. A member may be terminated at any time during the probationary period.
- 5.8 **Health & Safety Program Requirements** – The District’s Health & Safety Program establishes minimum compliance requirements for all members. Failure to reasonably comply with these requirements may be used as grounds for restricting an individual’s level of participation. Members who remain non-compliant may be re-classified to an inactive status or terminated.

- 5.9 **Ride-Along Requirements** – The District requires new members to participate in ride-alongs during their probationary period. Ride-alongs with on-duty career crews serve to provide applied learning opportunities and are intended to enhance the member’s initial training with hands-on experience. Ride-along shifts allow new members to develop an essential understanding of fire department operations and to become better integrated within the organization.

During the ride-along period, new members accompany and are expected to participate with on-duty crews as they perform their normal day-to-day activities. This includes active participation as a crew member in on-duty activities such as training, performing station duties, assisting with their projects, responding to calls, etc.

Ride-Along Guidelines:

1. Upon completing initial training, new members are required to complete one ride-along per month for the remainder of their twelve-month probationary period.
2. Ride-alongs should always be pre-arranged with the on-duty shift captain so they can plan accordingly.
3. Ride-alongs must be for a minimum period of four hours and shall be completed at Station 34.

Reference: SOP 2801, Ride-Along Guidelines

The District maintains a standing invitation encouraging non-probationary emergency response members to participate in ride-along activities as a means to maintain their skills, foster relationships, and to reap the benefits of continued on-the-job experience.

- 5.10 **EMT Certification** – District members who desire to become an EMT shall meet the following minimum requirements.
1. In addition to possessing the prerequisite qualifications for course enrollment, applicants must:
 - Have met the requirements for “active status” for a minimum of one year. This requirement may be waived if authorized by the District Training Chief;
 - Be recommended by their station officer;
 - Be interviewed and recommended by the District's Medical Services Officer.
 2. After successful course completion and having obtained certification, the District may elect to reimburse the member's out-of-pocket expenses for course tuition.
 3. If a member chooses to attend EMT school without having met the above requirements, they will **not** be reimbursed.
 4. In order to maintain District sponsorship for EMT certification, applicants must:
 - Meet the minimum certification continuing education requirements.
 - Complete a minimum of 4 hours per month of ride-along time assigned to a career staffed ALS/BLS unit or equivalent as approved by the District's Medical Services Officer.
 - Maintain minimum compliance for meeting “active status” standards.
 - Maintain active participation as an EMS provider.

- 5.11 **Minimum Activity Standards** – In an attempt to ensure that volunteer members maintain competent skills and remain proficient with fire department operations, the District shall establish minimum activity standards as the criteria for maintaining active status. Active status, defined as meeting minimum standards for complying with the District's safety, activity, and membership requirements. Maintaining active status is required in order to receive service credit for the Washington State Board of Volunteer Firefighters Volunteer Pension Plan.

Members who fail to meet the District's minimum activity standards, as reviewed annually; will be reported to the Washington State Board for Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Officers and will not receive credit for that calendar year. If a member fails to meet the minimum participation standards, as reviewed annually, they may be removed from membership with the District.

5.12 **Drill Attendance**

Support Volunteers – Specific continuing education, training, and activity requirements for support service volunteers shall be established on a program and/or individual case-by-case basis depending upon the operational needs of their assigned program or project. The respective program manager shall monitor compliance.

EMS Volunteers – EMS volunteers are ultimately responsible for maintaining their medical certifications. And they shall maintain a minimum level of continuing education and training, as defined for active participation in the District's training program.

Monthly drill attendance requires a:

- Minimum 50% drill attendance of the scheduled monthly EMS drills, to include completing 100% of the OTEP program's skill activities that are required for maintaining certification.
- EMS volunteers who are employed as active EMS providers with another agency:
 - Must maintain a minimum 33% drill attendance of the scheduled monthly EMS Drills.
 - May use the OTEP training they complete for their employer to substitute for the District's continuing education requirements.

Volunteer Firefighters – Firefighters shall maintain a minimum level of continuing education and training, as defined for active participation in the District's firefighter training program. Monthly drill attendance requires a:

- Minimum 50% drill attendance for volunteer officers.
- Minimum 50% drill attendance for volunteer firefighters.

Drill attendance that is tabulated on a quarterly basis will serve as the criteria for determining drill attendance rates. Participation in alternate training events may be considered on a case-by-case basis for drill substitution, but must be pre-approved by the Training Chief. Members who seek drill substitution must do so by submitting a written request to the Training Chief through their normal chain of command.

- 5.13 **Performance Improvement** – The District will address situations where a volunteer member’s performance is inadequate, fails to meet performance standards, or their lack of activity levels fail to meet expectations. Performance deficiencies will be addressed proactively in a respectful and supportive manner that seeks to strike a balance between District policy expectations and operational needs as they relate with the individual’s personal circumstances and ability. The District’s Training Chief shall be responsible for evaluating the member’s individual situation and prescribing applicable performance improvement plan requirements. All prescribed requirements must be successfully satisfied in order to support continued membership.

Reference: 2800F7, Performance Improvement Plan

5.14 **Absence Authorization**

Excused Absences (For periods ranging up to one month) – Excused absences may be pre-authorized by the member’s station officer or program manager on a case-by-case basis. An excused absence shall be for a period of up to one month, but shall not exceed a total of three months within a twelve month period. Members with an excused absence may continue as responders. Excused absences can include the following examples: attending an EMT course, a temporary change in work schedule, extended vacation, etc. Unless specifically authorized by the Fire Chief, excused absences will not be granted retroactively.

Leave of Absence (For periods ranging from one to three months) – Leave of absences may be authorized on a case-by-case basis. A leave of absence shall be for a minimum period of one month; up to a maximum period of three months. The combined total of excused absences and leave of absence shall not exceed a total of six months within a twelve month period. Leave of absences can include the following examples: extended illnesses or injuries, a work commitment that takes the individual out of the area, or maternity leave.

Absences may be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must be pre-approved by the Assistant Chief - Training & Operations. Members who seek a leave of absence must do so by submitting a written request using the District’s Leave Request form to the Fire Chief through their normal chain-of-command. Refresher training, determined on a case-by-case basis by the Training Chief, may be required prior to returning to active status. (*Reference: Form [2800F8, Volunteer Leave of Absence Request](#)*)

Limitations of Absences – During an approved leave of absence, members shall:

- Remain eligible for any minimum benefits to which they qualify for;
- Not participate in any emergency response activities;
- Return their personal protective clothing, pagers, etc. to their station officer or program manager;
- Be subject to completing refresher training, determined on a case-by-case basis by the Training Chief, prior to returning to active status.

Enforcement – The District shall enforce its minimum training and workplace safety program requirements in accordance with the following guidelines. The Training Chief and/or the Health & Safety Officer shall be responsible for providing station officers and program managers with drill attendance and workplace safety compliance reports on a quarterly basis. Reports shall be reviewed and corrective measures initiated as needed in accordance with the following sequence:

First Notice – Following the 1st quarter of non-compliance, the station officer or program manager will be tasked with contacting their member to inform them of the necessary compliance. They are to counsel with the individual regarding their compliance, providing a written status report to the Volunteer Program Manager. The individual's compliance will be reviewed again the next quarter.

Second Notice – If the member has not reached compliance during the quarter following the first notice, or when a relapse occurs within a one year period the first notice, a written warning letter will be initiated by the Volunteer Program Manager. The warning letter will serve to place the individual on a 90-day probationary period (for compliance only). The member's compliance will be reviewed again the next quarter.

Final Notice – If the member's compliance still has not been resolved during the quarter following the second notice they will automatically be placed on inactive status or terminated.

5.15 **Termination, Separation, or Retirement** – Members who wish to terminate or retire their membership with the District shall:

- Return all District-issued equipment upon separation to the District's Administrative Office.
- Participate in an exit interview.
- Complete a resignation form.

Reference: [Form 2800F9, Volunteer Resignation](#)

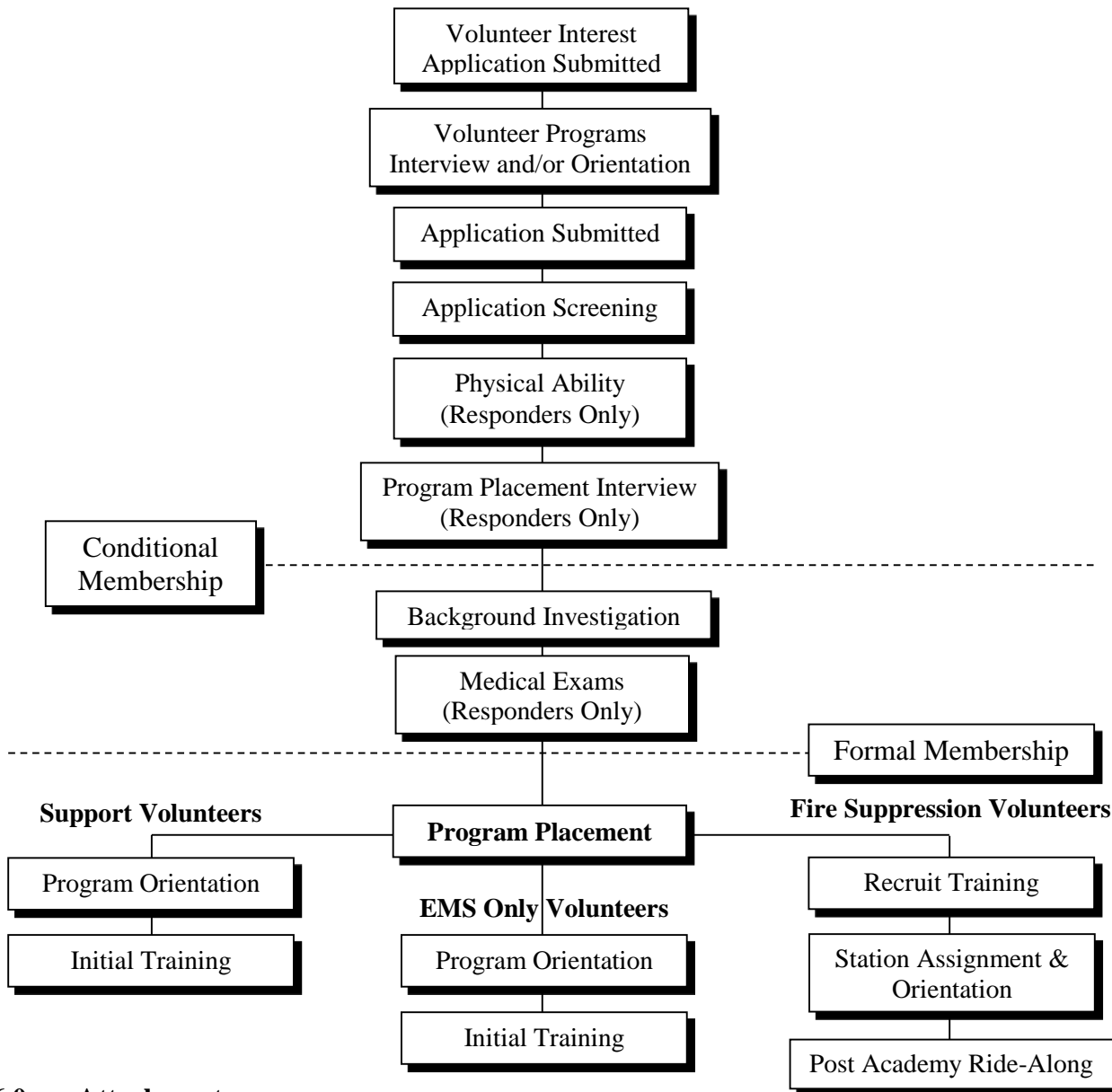
5.16 **Membership Reinstatement** – Members who have previously separated from the District are eligible to re-apply. To do so, they need to submit a complete membership application, along with the standard attachments and release forms. Because the circumstances and details surrounding an individual's separation may vary widely, the requirements for membership processing and reinstatement will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Returning to Active Status – Members wishing to be reinstated following an excused absence, a leave of absence, or a prolonged membership separation are encouraged to do so, but may be subject to completing minimum training and safety program requirements. The District's Training Chief shall be responsible for evaluating the member's individual situation and prescribing any necessary training and/or safety compliance requirements. All prescribed requirements must be satisfied prior to being re-instated to active status.

Reference: 2800F6, *Individual Training & Safety Objectives*

Volunteer Membership Process

Membership processing shall be completed in accordance with the following steps illustrated below.



6.0 Attachments

- Appendix: 2800A, Volunteer Handbook
- Form: 2800F, Volunteer Interest Application
- 2800F1, Volunteer Application Packet
- 2800F2, Volunteer On-Boarding Checklist
- 2800F3, Physical Ability Description of Events
- 2800F4, Physical Ability Waiver of Liability
- 2800F5, Volunteer Handbook Receipt Acknowledgment
- 2800F6, Individual Training & Safety Objectives
- 2800F7, Performance Improvement Plan
- 2800F8, Volunteer Leave of Absence Request
- 2800F9, Volunteer Resignation