



Junior Firefighter Program

HANDBOOK 2ND EDITION

A publication of the National Volunteer Fire Council's
National Junior Firefighter Program





Acknowledgements

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) would like to thank Tyco for making the second edition of this *Handbook* possible, and for their generous support of the National Junior Firefighter Program. Thanks also to Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin Robbins Community Foundation, Baskin-Robbins®, Spartan Motors, Inc., and for their support of the first edition of this resource.

The junior firefighter programs from the Rewey (WI) Fire Department and First Responders, the Elkridge (MD) Volunteer Fire Department, and the Cherryville (NC) Fire Department were very helpful in creating this *Handbook* and provided a majority of the sample documents. The NVFC extends special appreciation to these programs.

The National Junior Firefighter Program Advisory Group is instrumental in leading the program and providing guidance for publications such as this one. The NVFC thanks the members of the Advisory Group for their leadership and support.

The content of this handbook is for informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for any local laws or regulations.



Table of Contents

About the NVFC National Junior Firefighter Program	4
Frequently Asked Questions	6
Starting a Program	7
Department Support	7
Liability	8
Procedures	8
Documents	11
Recruitment	11
Activities	12
Maintaining a Program	14
Expanding Activities	14
Scholarships	15
Leadership Roles	15
Junior Firefighter Program Profiles	16
Appendix A: Sample Documents	18
Sample 1: Operating Guidelines For Junior Firefighter Programs	18
Sample 2: Junior Firefighter Program Application	19
Sample 3: Photo Release Form	21
Sample 4: Press Release	22
Sample 5: Press Release	23
Sample 7: Certificate of Recognition	24
Appendix B: Sample Parent Booklet	25
Appendix C: Sample New Member Booklet	28

About the NVFC's National Junior Firefighter Program

There are thousands of local junior firefighter programs nationwide. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) created one national program where both departments and youth can find the resources, tools, and information they need to help develop, grow, enhance, promote, and participate in these local programs.

The NVFC, with support from Spartan Motors, Inc., launched the National Junior Firefighter Program in 2007. The program supports fire and emergency service departments by fostering relationships and engaging youth in learning about, and ultimately becoming, members of the emergency services. Since then, the Program has partnered with organizations and departments nationwide to expand its offerings.

According to estimates from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), in 1984 there were 897,750 volunteer firefighters in the U.S. and total call volume for all fire departments was just over 11 million. In 2014, however, the number of volunteer firefighters had declined to 788,250 while the total call volume had skyrocketed to over 31 million¹.

While the number of volunteers is declining, the age of firefighters is increasing. Departments are finding it difficult to attract younger members due to a range of reasons, including increased demands on people's

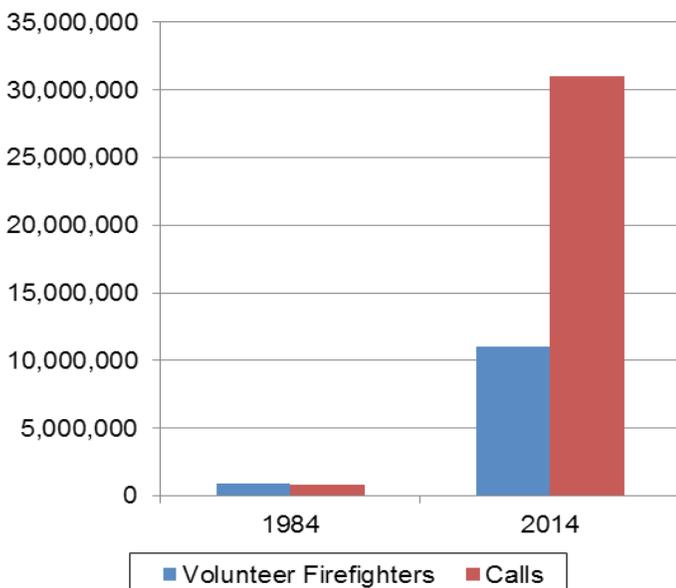
time, longer commuting distances to and from work, the prevalence of two-income households, migration out of smaller or rural communities, and increased training requirements.

In 2013 according to the NFPA², approximately 57 percent of firefighters (most of them volunteer) in departments protecting communities of 24,999 or fewer people were under the age of 40, compared with 65 percent in 1987. In these same communities, approximately 13 percent of firefighters were over the age of 50. In communities of 2,500 or fewer (which are almost exclusively protected by volunteer departments), approximately 54.6 percent of all firefighters were under the age of 40 in 2007, compared with 63.2 percent in 1987. In addition, 31 percent of volunteers in those communities were over age 50.

It is key to attract people into the emergency services while they are young so that they form a lifelong connection, whether as a first responder or as a community supporter. Junior firefighter programs give our nation's youth the chance to learn about local fire, rescue, and emergency medical services response organizations in a safe, controlled, educational, and fun way while providing departments with an excellent recruitment mechanism.

Reaching out to people when they are young has long-range effects, and encouraging youth to take part in the emergency services is extremely beneficial to local communities and departments. Benefits of junior firefighter programs include:

- ▶ Allowing youth to gain insight and interest in becoming long-term members of the emergency services
- ▶ Increasing awareness among youth about volunteering and supporting the fire and emergency services
- ▶ Providing departments with additional help in accomplishing non-firefighting or non-emergency tasks
- ▶ Instilling valuable life skills, such as teamwork, responsibility, and cooperation in our nation's youth
- ▶ Leadership development for America's youth, who are tomorrow's leaders
- ▶ Educating parents and mentors on the importance of encouraging volunteerism





The National Junior Firefighter Program offers resources and tools to departments and youth. Through this program, departments are able to register their local program in a searchable, online database as well as access resources and tools to help develop, expand, and recruit for a local program. Youth may use the National Junior Firefighter Program to find a local program, learn what it means to be a junior firefighter, and track their hours of service.

The contents of this *Handbook* and other resources from the National Junior Firefighter Program are intended to help departments support youth involvement in the fire and emergency services. The NVFC does not advocate youth participating in operational/emergency response activities. However, the National Junior Firefighter Program serves as an umbrella to local programs across the nation, and it is up to the individual department to determine the activities their youth can participate in and the associated liability with these activities. Departments should consider consulting with a legal advisor or state fire association regarding specific participation or liability regulations within their state or locality.

Safety is of utmost importance when working with a junior firefighter program. The National Junior Firefighter Program provides the following resources to assist with planning safe training for youth:

- ▶ *Core Competencies for the Junior Fire Service* (pdf) - Provides step-by-step training drill ideas and case studies from departments nationwide.

- ▶ Junior Firefighter Program Liability and Safety (webinar) - Reviews the five steps for managing the unknown and reducing liability while providing youth with a safe, fun, and educational experience.
- ▶ Training the Next Generation (webinar) - Information on promoting leadership among youth, junior member standards, and behavioral health.

Find out more about these resources at www.nvfc.org/juniors.

Fire Corps, a national program administered by the NVFC which utilizes community volunteers to assist with non-emergency tasks, also addresses liability issues facing these types of programs in its *Fire Corps Liability Guide: Managing the Unexpected in Fire Corps Activities*. Some of the examples in the *Liability Guide* may apply to junior firefighter programs. Find it at www.firecorps.org.

While these resources can help departments address safety and liability concerns, it is an informational document only and does not offer legal or other professional advice. It also does not offer any guarantees against being sued. Call the NVFC office at 1-888-ASK-NVFC (275-6852) or email NVFCoffice@nvfc.org for more information.

¹ U.S. Fire Department Profile Through 2014. National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA, January 2016.

² U.S. Fire Department Profile Through 2014. National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA, January 2016.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can my department/organization participate in the National Junior Firefighter Program?

The National Junior Firefighter Program is open to fire, rescue, and EMS departments/organizations who either have or want to start a youth participation program. The Program's web site at www.nvfc.org/juniors provides a searchable database of all local youth programs registered with the National Junior Firefighter Program. Registration allows potential junior firefighters to easily locate your department and learn about your program. Once your program is registered, your junior members can log their hours of service to track their participation and may be eligible to receive rewards and recognition as they reach certain milestones. Your department and junior members may also be eligible for special scholarship and grant opportunities. In addition, the National Junior Firefighter Program offers resources and tools to help your department start, market, and/or expand a youth participation program.

My department participates in the Boy Scouts/Learning for Life Explorer Program. Can we also participate in the National Junior Firefighter Program?

Yes. You can register for the National Junior Firefighter Program and enable your Explorer Post's youth members to participate in both programs simultaneously. Your program will be listed in the searchable online database of youth programs and your members will be able to register with the National Junior Firefighter Program to log their activity hours and access other Program benefits.

What are the age requirements to be a junior firefighter?

The National Junior Firefighter Program does not have an established age requirement. The ages of participation for your local program is up to your department and should take into consideration local and state guidelines and other factors. See the "Determine the Appropriate Age Range" under "Starting a Program" for more information.

How can we market a junior firefighter program in our area?

For information on marketing and recruiting for your program, please see the [Marketing Ideas](#) page on the National Junior Firefighter Program web site at www.nvfc.org/juniors as well as the "Recruitment" section in this *Handbook*.

What type of insurance or liability is needed for youth participants?

While the National Junior Firefighter Program does not advocate junior firefighters participating in operational activities, departments should check with their current insurance provider to learn what is required for youth who are present on your organization's property, regardless of how they are involved. Typically, a waiver that includes a full disclosure of risks will release you from liability should someone be injured. This form should be signed by the parent or legal guardian of the youth participant. An example waiver is downloadable on the National Junior Firefighter Program web site in the [Department Resources](#) section. It is always in your best interest to check with your insurance provider directly, as well as with the appropriate legal counsel, before you start a youth program or change any existing requirements. Some local insurance companies will be able to offer a rider to your current policy to cover your youth program. Please see the section "About the National Junior Firefighter Program" for more information regarding liability.

How do we join?

Simply go to www.nvfc.org/juniors and click on the Register Department button. Then complete and submit the registration form. As soon as your registration is accepted, your department will be listed in our searchable online database.

Starting a Program

Implementing a youth program can be a significant asset to your department. The program can be a valuable recruitment tool – helping you find a new stream of volunteers and community supporters that will be the backbone of your department for years to come.

The National Junior Firefighter Program's aim is to provide you with tools and resources to help you jumpstart the involvement of youth in your organization. This *Handbook* makes it easy for you by taking you through the steps of starting and maintaining a program, including providing sample documents from successful programs for your reference. In this section, you will find information and resources for implementing your program, including:

- ▶ Getting buy-in and support from department leadership and members
- ▶ Establishing a liability waiver that all youth members and their parent/guardian must sign
- ▶ Establishing the parameters of your program and developing a set of procedures for junior firefighters
- ▶ Determining and developing the necessary paperwork
- ▶ Recruiting youth members
- ▶ Organizing regular events and activities to keep youth members involved

DEPARTMENT SUPPORT

Whether you are a Chief Officer trying to determine what resources and personnel you need to start a program or a department member seeking approval to start a program, one thing is certain: support from your organization's leaders and members is crucial. Without solid program leadership and interest from department members, the program cannot be successful. Ensure you have full buy-in from your Chief, administrative leaders, and members before formally launching your program.

You will need to make the case as to why it is important for your department to get youth involved and the positive impact it will have on your department. A junior program is a great tool for recruiting potential future members and leaders of your organization. A youth pro-



gram will also help your department form stronger bonds within your community. In addition, junior programs provide youth with invaluable experience and education in the fire and emergency services, and members of these programs often become lifelong supporters of their department.

You may have to alleviate concerns within your department about having youth present at your facility and events. A successful program has solid leadership that

promotes safety first and ensures that there is no negative impact on the overall operation of your organization/department or its primary mission to protect and serve the community.

You will also need members of your department to help lead or serve as advisors to the program. To ensure adequate safety and supervision of the youth members, successful programs should have at least one adult advisor for every 6-7 youth participants (this may vary depending on age of youth members). You may need to limit program participation based on the number of department members who will commit to serving as advisors. You will also need several additional members who are interested in participating in the program as mentors, educators, and in support roles. If your organization encompasses both fire and EMS, you should ensure there are members within both services who are willing and able to assist with the program.

To protect your junior firefighters as well as your department, screen all adults who will be working with your junior firefighters. Also determine guidelines for interaction between adult advisors and junior firefighters. Refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guide *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures* (www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/PreventingChildAbuse.htm) to assist in this process. You should also consult with your legal representatives before putting these policies and procedures into action.

LIABILITY

It is important to research the liability laws and regulations within your state and locality prior to starting a junior firefighter program. It is in your best interest to consult with your insurance provider as well as with legal counsel before you start a program or change any existing requirements. Your state fire association may also be able to assist you in determining what laws exist in your state regarding youth firefighter programs.

The NVFC does not advocate junior firefighters participating in operational/emergency response activities. However, the decision for youth activities is ultimately up to

the individual department. Departments should check with their current insurance provider regarding requirements for youth who are present on their organization's property, regardless of how they are involved.

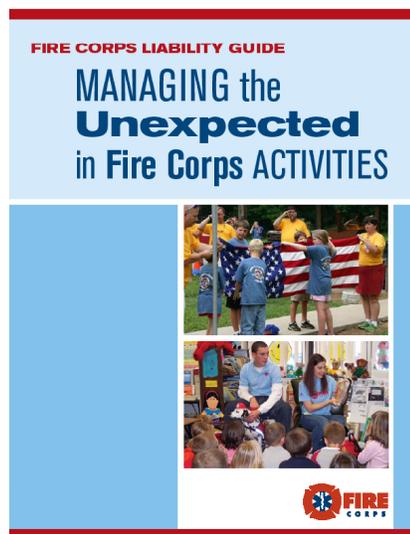
Typically, a signed waiver of liability that includes a full disclosure of risks will help protect you from liability should someone be injured. The parent or legal guardian of the youth participant must sign this form along with the youth participant. Language for consent forms and liability waivers will vary for each department depending on state, local, and insurance requirements. See Appendix A, Sample 2: Junior Firefighter Program Application for an example of a parental consent form and contract of understanding. The NVFC offers a webinar on Junior Firefighter Program Liability and Safety, accessible in the NVFC Virtual Classroom at www.nvfc.org/classroom. The *Fire Corps Liability Guide: Managing the Unexpected in Fire Corps Activities* provides liability information that can sometimes be applied to junior firefighter programs. Visit www.firecorps.org to access the *Liability Guide*.

PROCEDURES

Before launching a youth program in your department, determine the parameters of the program and establish the policies and procedures that will govern the program. The following four steps will help you through this process.

Step One: Determine the Appropriate Age Range

The NVFC recommends a minimum age requirement of at least 8th grade or 14 years old, going up to the age your department requires for full operational membership (usually 18 or 21). However, it is up to your department to determine the age range for your program. You should work with your organization/department leaders to



determine what this range will be. The age range should be based on factors such as the makeup of your community and any state or local age requirements, such as child labor laws, that may impact your program. If you choose to allow participants below age 14, you can help ensure adequate supervision by limiting the number of youth in the program based on the number of adult coordinators or managers of the program. Visit the U.S. Department of Labor web site at www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor/agerequirements.htm for more information on national child labor laws. Your state's Department of Labor is also a good resource for local information.

Step Two: Establish What Youth Members Can and Cannot Do

While departments may have individual requirements and special programs, depending on age and experience, the NVFC recommends only non-operational participation by youth members. The final decision lies with your own organization's requirements, local and state child labor laws, and other factors. Before finalizing your organization's program, you should meet with your leadership, insurance carrier, and legal representative to review which activities your participants will and will not be doing. Consider the following when developing your activity list:

- ▶ The NVFC does not advocate youth engaging in fire-ground/scene operations other than providing support or auxiliary work, such as supplying refreshments, well outside of the "hot zone" or operational area.
- ▶ The NVFC encourages training youth in the core areas of interest (fire, rescue, or EMS). Classroom-based learning is appropriate for most program participants. For example, classes on CPR, communications, fire safety and prevention, and general fire, rescue, and EMS education are all courses that can be taught to youth without putting them in situations where they may be injured. Depending on the age and abilities of participants, some programs also offer simulated, hands-on training in a non-emergency situation, such as staging EMS skills training with mock victims or practicing skills such as working with ladders or advancing the hoseline in a safe, controlled, non-fire environment. Find step-by-step ideas in the NVFC's *Core Competencies for the Junior Fire*



Service guide at www.nvfc.org/juniors.

- ▶ Youth participants should be supervised at all times and should not act without a supervisor's direction. An adult advisor of your organization's program should always provide direction to youth participants.
- ▶ Examples of youth activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - Parades or special events
 - Fundraising events and activities (check national and local laws regarding fundraisers that involve games of chance or gambling, such as raffles or Bingo)
 - Training
 - General standby
 - Fire prevention and life safety education programs
 - Meeting participation
 - Assisting at incidents in a non-operational capacity and outside the operational area

Find more activity ideas on the National Junior Firefighter Program web site.



Step Three: Set the Minimum Requirements for Youth Participants

Some things to consider when setting the requirements for youth participation are grades, parental permission and involvement, and hours of participation.

- ▶ **Grades:** The NVFC recommends that participants provide documentation proving the attainment of at least a “C” average in their school coursework. Organizations should monitor grades on a quarterly or bi-annual basis at a minimum. Parents may ask organizations to limit participation at higher averages, and their word should always be the last in these cases.
- ▶ **Parental/Guardian Permission and Involvement:** Full permission from the parent or legal guardian should always be obtained for participants who are under 18 years of age. Parents should be presented with an accurate overview of your program, what it entails, and what their children will learn. The more proactive you are with parents, the better. Encourage parents/guardians to attend department functions, host special monthly or quarterly social nights for parents, and host other special functions for the youth and their parents so the parent is confident in the department’s dedication to the program and its members. Consider additional ways to get the parents/guardians involved, such as through an auxiliary or support program like Fire Corps for those who may be interested in joining the department in a non-emergency capacity. Learn more at www.firecorps.org.

- ▶ **Hours of Participation:** Consider whether you want to require your program’s members to participate in a certain number of activities or for a certain number of hours each month in order to remain an active member. Take into consideration your state, local, and school requirements for when your youth members are allowed to participate. For instance, many schools will not allow their students to leave during the school day to participate in junior firefighter activities, but others will. There may also be certain laws or regulations concerning how late at night youth members are allowed to participate in program activities. Consider selecting certain week nights and/or a weekend afternoon so that juniors build the time into their schedule.

Step Four: Formalize the Program’s Operating Guidelines

Once you have determined the age range, activity list, and minimum requirements for youth participants, formalize the Operating Guidelines for your program, which should encompass all of these items. Make sure all potential youth participants and their parent/guardian receive a copy of these guidelines and are clear on their content. Refer to Appendix A, Sample 1: Operating Guidelines as a reference for your own program. As with all guidelines and samples within this *Handbook*, the actual content of your program’s Operating Guidelines should be based on the needs and requirements of your department/organization and community.



DOCUMENTS

Ultimately, your department is responsible for determining what documents are necessary for your junior firefighter program. Typical documents include a liability waiver and parental consent form (which have previously been discussed), junior firefighter application, photo release form, informational booklet for parents, and program handbook for juniors. See the Appendices at the end of this *Handbook* for examples of these documents.

RECRUITMENT

Once you have established the framework for your junior firefighter program, it is time to recruit youth members. For this, you can look to the community, department members, and the local media.

- ▶ **Community:** There are many ways to connect with your community in order to recruit youth members. Some ideas include the following:
 - Outreach to existing youth organizations, such as 4H, athletic teams, school service organizations, and other groups.
 - Form alliances and partnerships with schools and religious groups in your community.
 - Ask schools to host a fire prevention and safety event with your department and include promotion of your youth program.
 - Some schools have a community service program that requires students to volunteer

within the community. If this is the case in your community's schools, make sure your program is listed as an option.

- Provide handouts/brochures/flyers to schools, youth organizations, religious groups, libraries, etc.
 - Ask to have a table or to present at school events, church functions, or other youth-oriented events. If you already have youth members, bring them along (in the program's uniform, if possible) to create a positive impression of your youth program. Peers are the best recruiters for any program.
- ▶ **Department Members:** Your department's members can also be great recruiters. Remember to reach out to those within your organization when recruiting youth members and utilize their connections within your community.
 - Existing adult members may have children who are interested in getting involved in the organization in a more formal manner. These youth (and their friends) may also be an excellent source of word-of-mouth marketing.
 - Current members of your youth organization are also a great marketing resource. Consider creating internal rewards and recognition for youth who recruit new members to your program.
 - ▶ **Local Media:** There are many ways to utilize the local media to help recruit junior firefighters.

- Submit press releases to local media outlets including newspapers and television and radio stations announcing the launch of your program and how local youth can join. Submit subsequent press releases with program news and updates to continue promoting your program over time. Appendix A, Samples 4 and 5 are examples of press releases adapted from the Elkridge (MD) Volunteer Fire Department to alert the community of their program's activities.
- Ask your local newspaper or television news program to feature a profile of a junior firefighter each month or quarter. This offers another means of promoting your program and its participants.
- Mention your youth program in all of the department's fundraising, news, fire prevention, and recruitment materials, and on the department web site and social media pages.
- Create social media pages for your junior firefighter program (juniors can help manage the page) to promote the program and events in your community and beyond.
- Utilize the National Junior Firefighter Program recruitment video - find it at www.youtube.com/nvfccommunications.

Create a specific name and mission statement for your program that can be used for outreach purposes. Use something that is catchy and quickly relays what the program is about. Do not underestimate the excitement your community members have about the fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. An example of a mission statement can be found in Appendix B: New Member Booklet.

ACTIVITIES

The types of activities you may want to consider for your program's participants as well as related concerns to keep in mind were previously discussed in the Procedures section. Activities will vary from program to program and will be affected by things like participant age and skill level, liability concerns, and the department's needs. Regardless of the activity list you create for your youth members, you



should schedule regular events with your youth participants to keep them active and engaged in the program. While activities should take place throughout the month, you should also hold program meetings at least once a month as well as find ways to reward or recognize youth members for their participation in program activities.

Meetings and Introductory Program Events

Departments should schedule a regular monthly meeting for youth program participants. These meetings can be strictly informational or may include basic training coursework for participants, a fixed activity, or something that relates to your organization and its youth participants.

It is also a good idea to conduct monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly orientation events specifically for new or potential members of your program. These events should allow interested youth and their parents/guardian to tour your facility, learn about the program and the expectations for youth members, and complete all paperwork for joining the program.



Incentives and Rewards for Participants

Offering incentives and rewards to your youth members is a great way to keep them interested and motivated, as well as to recognize their hard work.

Encourage your youth members to track their hours of participation through the National Junior Firefighter Program's web site at www.nvfc.org/juniors. Your department must be a member of the National Junior Firefighter Program in order for your junior firefighters to use this on-line system. To register, go to www.nvfc.org/juniors, click on Register Department, and fill out the form. Juniors can then sign up by going to www.nvfc.org/juniors and clicking on the Register Junior option. To motivate members to participate and track their hours, departments can offer incentive rewards and awards as junior firefighters reach certain benchmarks. Below are example incentives that your department or organization can provide:

- ▶ Provide youth members with a basic uniform, such as a unique t-shirt or ID nametag.
- ▶ Create a points system based on hours of participation or projects completed, with special rewards for reaching certain benchmarks. These rewards could include donated gift certificates to a local restaurant, or simply recognition at the organization's monthly meeting. See Appendix A, Sample 6: Certificate of Recognition at the end of this *Handbook*.
- ▶ Create special awards such as Junior Firefighter of the Year or periodic achievement awards for more formal recognition at your organization's annual awards banquet, monthly meetings, or other special event. Search for opportunities to nominate them for regional and national awards and scholarships.
- ▶ For recruiting purposes, consider special recognition for participants who bring in the most new or potential members.
- ▶ Recognize the success of your participants' achievements outside of the department. If a member of your program has excelled academically or in athletics, the arts, or other efforts outside of the fire and emergency services, formally recognize the achievement.
- ▶ Treat the members of your youth program just as you would your full members. Make them feel like they are part of the department "family." Create this connection now and they may remain involved in the department for a long time to come.
- ▶ Create special incentives for parents to be involved in fundraising, recruiting, or other activities. The parents may not be formal members of your organization, but they may still want to be involved. Parents can be an invaluable asset in supporting your youth program in the same way they support their children's



Maintaining a Program

As your junior firefighter program continues to grow, it is important to keep your youth members active and interested in the program. This section looks at some ways you can maintain or expand your existing program through increased activity offerings, scholarship opportunities, and youth leadership roles within the program.

EXPANDING ACTIVITIES

Offering an increased number and variety of activities to your youth members will help to maintain their enthusiasm, ensure they feel connected to your organization, and allow them to learn valuable information that can assist them in preparing for a future in the fire and emergency services.

Camps and Academies

Every year, a number of fire departments and related organizations across the nation host junior firefighter and Explorer camps and academies. The activities at each event vary, but usually include a great deal of teamwork and learning what it takes to become a firefighter. Visit the National Junior Firefighter Program web site at www.nvfc.org/juniors for a listing of training events around the country. If you have a large group of junior firefighters in your program and enough experienced adults who are willing to assist, you may want to consider planning a local or regional camp of your own. Find tips for how to plan your own event at www.nvfc.org/juniors/resources/resources-for-departments.

Competitions

Junior firefighter competitions are held across the country each year. These events allow youth members from different departments to compete against each other for awards in specific training areas. If your department and junior firefighter program cannot afford to travel to one of these events, you can easily create your own competition by dividing your youth into teams to compete against each other in different categories. If other departments in your area have junior firefighter programs, they may be interested in joining the competition as well. Some ideas for competitive, timed events include the following:

- ▶ Dragging a hose a set distance
- ▶ Using a stream of water to knock down multiple objects placed at varying distances
- ▶ Blindfolding members of a team and requiring them to work together to “find” a strategically placed object and drag it to the starting point
- ▶ Tying specific knots

Conferences

There are many fire and emergency services conferences and trade shows held across the country each year. These may be good opportunities to send some of your junior firefighters with department members or other adult supervisors to learn more about the fire and emergency services. These conferences may be better suited to older members of your junior program, as they may be more able to understand the material and adequately relay the information back to the rest of your program's members. If a fire industry trade show or state fire conference happens to be close enough to your department for a day trip, consider taking all of your youth members on a field trip to the show. The equipment, trucks, and energy at the show may inspire many of the youth.

Fire Museum and Training Facility Tours

You may want to schedule a special trip for your junior firefighters once every year. Fire museums provide a close look at how firefighting techniques have evolved over the years, and many of these museums have hands-on exhibits for youth. Visit www.firemuseumnetwork.org for a listing of fire museums by state. You may also wish to contact your state fire academy or training facility to provide the junior firefighters with a glimpse of some of the newest training techniques and improvements in safety.

College Visits

If your department has youth members who are juniors or seniors in high school, consider scheduling a visit to nearby colleges that have degrees in fire science, fire engineering, or related fields. You can contact the admissions department of any college or university to schedule a tour

for the youth and possibly schedule a meeting for them with a professor in the field of their choice. Depending on the time of year, your junior firefighters may be able to sit in on a class that they would be interested in taking. You might find that many of the junior firefighters' parents would also like to accompany them on the visit, which would assist with supervision. You could also ask a local fire instructor or fire science program director to speak at a junior firefighter program meeting.

Fundraisers

If the suggested activities sound great but your department does not have the resources to support them, remember that your youth can help raise money for the program. Your junior firefighters may surprise you with the number of fundraising ideas that they can generate. Below are just a few suggestions as to how your junior firefighters can raise money to support their activities. Find more ideas, including how to apply for grants, in the National Junior Firefighter Program *Sponsorship Toolkit*, available at www.nvfc.org/juniors/resources/resources-for-departments.

- ▶ Host a dance for the youth in your community
- ▶ Garage sale (solicit donations to be sold)
- ▶ Car washes (some companies, have a money-matching policy that allows your group to double their profits)
- ▶ Pancake breakfast for the community
- ▶ Bake sale
- ▶ Raffles (check national and local laws regarding fundraisers that involve games of chance or gambling)

SCHOLARSHIPS

The National Junior Firefighter Program web site contains a list of dozens of scholarship opportunities specifically for junior firefighters. Although the requirements for the scholarships vary, many are intended for students who are pursuing or will pursue a college degree in fire engineering, fire protection, fire safety, or emergency medical services. There are also scholarships available for children of current, retired, or deceased firefighters regardless of



the students' major area of study.

You may also want to explore the feasibility of establishing a local scholarship program for junior firefighters. Many local businesses may be willing to donate funding to support a scholarship program that recognizes youth in your community who have supported the fire and emergency services. Alternatively, there may be existing local scholarship opportunities your members can apply for that recognize youth who participate in community service activities.

LEADERSHIP ROLES

In order to encourage your junior firefighters to remain active in the program, you can create leadership roles within the youth program. For instance, the junior firefighters can have a chief, assistant chief, captain, and lieutenant. These positions can be determined yearly by level of participation, experience, or by vote of their peers. Establish a list of duties for each position and, if possible, a badge or some special indicator of the position held.

Junior Firefighter Program Profiles

Below are overviews of a few junior firefighter programs to provide examples of the range of ages, parameters, and activities different programs offer. Find more program overviews on the National Junior Firefighter Program web site at www.nvfc.org/juniors.

DEPARTMENTS

Cherryville (NC) Fire Department

Program Founded: 1983

Age Range: 15-18

www.cityofcherryville.com

Cherryville has had a Junior Firefighter Program is designed to enhance department recruitment. Junior members are restricted to limited activities. Many of their juniors have gone on to careers in the fire service. Approximately half of the department's full-time firefighters started in junior firefighter programs.

East Norwich (NY) Volunteer Fire Company No. 1

Program Founded: 1993

Age Range: 12-17

www.enjuniors.com

The East Norwich Volunteer Fire Company junior firefighters focus on a mix of training and community service initiatives. They usually meet twice and have 1-2 special events per month. The program has grown from 6 juniors in its first year to nearly 40 juniors today.

Elkridge (MD) Volunteer Fire Department

Program Founded: 1998

Age Range: 9-15

www.elkridgevfd.org

The Junior Firefighter Program of the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department is designed to teach safety and basic skills required for firefighting. Youth learn firefighting skills and become familiar with the fire equipment. Many become firefighters with the department when they turn the required age of 16. Junior firefighters can help out during department events at the station and in the community,

such as the annual Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department Open House, Howard (MD) County Fire Expo, and parades. They also have their own training and fundraisers, such as dances, Bingo nights, and breakfasts, throughout the year. Many of the junior firefighters' parents have become volunteer firefighters and EMTs at the department to share an activity with their child. The Program offers new members and their parents guides to participating in the Program (see Appendices B and C)

Hedgesville (WV) 4-H Junior Volunteer Fire Company

Program Founded: 1990

Age Range: 12-21

hedgesvillejuniorfiredepartment.webs.com

The Hedgesville 4-H Junior Volunteer Fire Company gives back to their community by conducting public education at area schools, the fire station, and at other clubs' meetings. They are known for their Pet Safety and Emergency Awareness Day, an event that provides a rabies clinic and informs the public how to handle an emergency with their pets. Training is an important component of the program and members have attended state and regional academies. Juniors have taken courses ranging from CPR and First Aid to Infections Control and Water Rescue. They also participate in the county fair and a variety of other community service projects.





Northwest Fire Explorer Post 1854

Program Founded: 2011

Age Range: 14-18

www.nwfe1854.com

The mission of the Northwest Fire Explorer Post 1854 is to spearhead local initiatives and support like-minded organizations that develop both a public purpose (safety, education, prevention) and an internal purpose (teamwork, accountability, empowerment). Through real-world initiatives, these young leaders build upon existing strengths and overcome weaknesses well before many of their peers. Each year, the Explorers assist with Fire Truck Day at the Akron (OH) Children's Hospital Burn Center. In addition, the juniors co-host a citywide fishing camp each summer, in which Explorers teach water safety and first aid. The Explorers also assist with the annual Safety Town event held by the city, providing fire safety information to the community. Finally, they conduct an annual fire alarm drive, installing alarms in homes without them.

REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Individual departments can share ideas, training, and even form associations with other departments in their state. Two such programs are listed below. For questions regarding how to implement a similar strategy in your region/state, contact the NVFC at 1-888-ASK-NVFC (275-6832) or juniors@nvfc.org.

Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters' Association www.mcvfa.org

The Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters' Association, Inc. (MCVFA) has appointed a state junior firefighter program coordinator to streamline and develop junior firefighter programs and Explorer Posts statewide. The coordinator facilitates the creation of new programs, including helping departments overcome roadblocks to establishing a new program, program growth, and teamwork between programs at different departments.

Nassau County Junior Firefighter's Association www.ncjfa.org

Founded in 2006, the Nassau County Junior Firefighter's Association (NCJFA) has grown to include over 1,000 youth (ages 12-17) from 41 junior firefighter programs. Junior firefighters are elected by their peers to serve as Association officers, running meetings and setting the course for the organization. The group also hosts an annual summer training camp, conducts fire safety and fire prevention outreach, fundraises for their activities, and participates in community-wide events. Nassau County consists of the western half of Long Island, just outside of New York City. All of the county's 71 departments are volunteer.

Appendix A: Sample Documents

The contents of this Handbook and other resources from the National Junior Firefighter Program are intended to help departments support youth involvement in the fire and emergency services. These examples are intended for informational purposes only. They should be adapted to meet your program/department's needs.

Sample 1: Operating Guidelines For Junior Firefighter Programs

- ▶ Junior members must be in at least 8th grade or be 14 years of age to join and can participate until 21 years of age.
- ▶ Junior members must maintain at least a "C" average in their school coursework and produce documentation of the same at the time they join. Documentation of grades must subsequently be provided to the department on a quarterly basis. If a parent asks to limit participation for their child at a higher average, their word will always be the last. In the event a junior member has lower than a "C" average, he or she will be placed on probation until the grade returns to a "C."
- ▶ Junior members under 18 years of age must obtain full written permission from the parent or legal guardian to participate in the program.
- ▶ Junior members report directly to their advisor for all assignments and activities.
- ▶ Junior members will receive classroom training in core areas of interest, with classes focused on CPR, communications, fire prevention and life safety, and general fire, rescue, and EMS education.
- ▶ Junior members may participate in the following activities:
 - Parades or special events
 - Fundraising events (when allowed by law)
 - Training
 - General standby
 - Fire prevention and life safety education and activities
 - Meetings
- ▶ Junior members should regularly attend meetings or events for youth program participants. These may include basic training coursework, a fixed activity such as one of those listed above, or other activity with the department.
- ▶ Junior members may only perform support or auxiliary work at fireground operations, such as providing refreshments to the first responders, well outside of the "hot zone" or operational area.
- ▶ Junior members may not operate any fire department vehicle.
- ▶ Junior members and their parent or guardian must sign a waiver that includes full disclosure of risks and releases the department from liability should someone become injured.

Sample 2: Junior Firefighter Program Application

Courtesy of Rewey (WI) Fire Department (RFD) and First Responders

Please Print using Black or Blue Ink.

1) Name _____ Phone Number _____
Address _____ Birthdate _____
Email Address _____

1a) Do you have your parent's permission to apply to be a Junior Firefighter? Yes No

1b) Parent/Guardian Name _____ Phone Number _____

1c) Address _____

Emergency Contacts

2) Name _____ Phone Number _____
Relation _____

2a) Name _____ Phone Number _____
Relation _____

Medical Information

3) Doctor _____ Phone Number _____

3a) Hospital _____ Phone Number _____

3b) Medical Conditions _____

3c) Allergies _____

3d) Do you take any medication? Yes No

3e) If Yes, list the medication and what condition it is for: _____

Background Information (use another sheet of paper if more space is needed)

(A background check will be done as well; a felony will prevent anyone from becoming a member of the RFD)

4) Have you ever been arrested, ticketed, fined, etc.? (felonies, traffic tickets, misdemeanors, etc.) Yes No

4a) If Yes, please list the date(s) and what the charge(s) was/were:

Additional Information (use another sheet of paper if more space is needed)

5) What interests you the most about becoming involved with the Rewey Fire Department?

6) Please list other activities, in detail, that you are involved in (sports, volunteer work, church, etc): _____

Applicant Signature and Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature and Date

RFD Use:

Fire Chief Approval _____

Parental Consent

My son/daughter, _____, has my permission to be a Junior Firefighter with the Rewey Fire Department. I give my consent to allow _____ to be a Junior Firefighter and do not hold the Rewey Fire Department and First Responders or the Village of Rewey responsible for any actions caused by my son/daughter that is not under the direction of an Officer.

Junior Firefighter Signature and Date

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date

Contract of Understanding

I and my son/daughter have read ALL of the Junior Firefighter Guidelines and understand the guidelines set up to outline the purpose of the Junior Firefighters. I and my son/daughter understand that Junior Firefighters serve as supporters of the Rewey Firefighters to learn the basics of firefighting and to prepare to become a full member at the age of 18. I and my son/daughter understand that Junior Firefighters are to follow all instructions from members of the RFD and that the general standard of conduct is to act in the manner of a professional. I and my son/daughter understand that he/she is expected to be courteous and respectful of other members (Junior and Regular) and to all citizens as they are representing the Rewey Fire Department. I and my son/daughter understand there is a "zero tolerance" policy regarding drug and alcohol use. I and my son/daughter understand that by signing this Contract of Understanding we are declaring that any violation of the guidelines is grounds for immediate dismissal. I and my son/daughter understand that any acts that violate the guidelines and that are illegal by state law will be referred to the Iowa County Sheriff's Department.

Junior Firefighter Signature and Date

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date

Acknowledge Receipt of Guidelines

I acknowledge that I and my son/daughter have received a copy of the Rewey Fire Department Junior Firefighter Program Guidelines and have reviewed them prior to signing these documents.

Junior Firefighter Signature and Date

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date

RFD Use:

I acknowledge that the above received a copy of the Rewey Fire Department Junior Firefighter Program Guidelines.

Fire Chief Signature and Date

Sample 3: Photo Release Form

National Junior Firefighter Program Image and Materials Release & License

For good and valuable consideration herein acknowledged as received, I hereby grant to the National Junior Firefighter Program (NJFP), its legal representatives and assigns, and those acting with its authority and permission, the absolute right and permission to use, re-use, publish, and re-publish photographic portraits or pictures or videos of me and/or my child or in which I or my child may be included, in whole or in part, or composite or distorted in character or form, without restriction as to changes or alterations, made through any medium and in any and all media now or hereafter known. For purposes of illustration but not limitations in print materials, NJFP promotions and/or advertisements, public service announcements, public presentations, online, public displays, internal uses, art, trade, or any other purpose whatsoever. Additionally, if recorded my or my child's voice may be used in conjunction with any other permitted use set forth in this agreement. I understand that my child's name may be used in any publication; and my child's school name, grade level, and/or age may also be used.

I further grant NJFP an irrevocable, royalty free, world wide, all media license to use any material created by me or my child in conjunction with the activities of or in association with NJFP. For purposes of illustration but not limitations in artworks, essays, evaluations, etc.

I hereby waive any right that I may have to inspect or approve the finished product or products that may be used in connection therewith or the use to which it may be applied. I understand and agree that no further consideration is due me or my child from NJFP for the rights granted herein.

I hereby release, discharge, and agree to hold harmless NJFP, its legal representatives and assigns, and all persons acting under its permission or authority or those for whom it is acting, from any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form, whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking of said picture or in any subsequent processing thereof, as well as any publication thereof, including without limitation any claims for libel or invasion of privacy.

I hereby warrant that I am of legal age and have the right to contract in my own name and on behalf of my child. That no additional permissions are required. I have read the above authorization, release, and agreement, prior to its execution, and I am fully familiar with the contents thereof. This release shall be binding upon me and my heirs, spouse, my child's other parents or guardians, legal representatives, and assigns. The term "Child" as used in this agreement shall be my natural born children, adopted children, or children for which I am legal guardian or foster parent.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Child's school _____ Grade _____ Age _____

Sample 4: Press Release

Courtesy of the Elkridge (MD) Volunteer Fire Department

For Immediate Release

Contact:

[NAME]

[PHONE]

[EMAIL]

Junior Firefighter Ranks Growing

Even if you aren't related to someone at the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department, chances are very good that you know someone that is connected to the department in some way or another. That is probably why the department's Junior Firefighter Program is constantly growing.

Founded in 1998, the Junior Firefighter Program consists of youth aged 9 to 15 and was designed to teach safety and basic skills required for firefighting. The Program's mission is "To maintain a safe environment for youth to gather within the community, to learn about the many aspects of the fire service, and to provide avenues for positive social interaction for youth within the program, and for youth within the community."

This group of young Elkridge firefighters-in-training has been busy participating in parades and helping with fire prevention activities at local events. This year the juniors won first place as the Best Appearing Youth Group at the Savage Fest Parade. They were also awarded Best Appearing Community Group at the Glen Burnie Memorial Day Parade and the Third Best Youth Group at the Laurel Main Street Festival Parade.

It's not all work and no play for these youngsters. To balance out the intensive training they complete, the Elkridge junior firefighters plan social activities such as dances at the fire station. The dances are held one Saturday each month. The next dance is scheduled for July 16 and is open to children aged 9 to 15. The cost is \$7 per person.

The money raised from the monthly dances is used to purchase equipment and uniforms for the Junior Firefighter Program. Mike Barnett, an organizer for the dance, said the tickets usually sell out quickly.

The junior firefighters meet at Station 1 in Elkridge on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 2 p.m. For more information or to get an application, please contact the Program Coordinator at [PHONE].

###

Sample 5: Press Release

Courtesy of the Elkridge (MD) Volunteer Fire Department

For Immediate Release

Contact:

[NAME]

[PHONE]

[EMAIL]

Fire, Police, and Youth Respond to Disaster Drill

The Elkridge Junior Firefighters, Howard County Police Explorers, and Baltimore County Police Explorers conducted a mock mass casualty disaster training drill recently at the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Station. The training taught event participants about advanced first aid and patient care, mass casualty triage, scene control, and personnel management.

Steve Davis, the Assistant Fire Marshal, presented the following training situation: A rescue alarm with entrapment and injuries involving a mid-sized school bus and a small compact vehicle. Each station during the exercise was supervised by a firefighter or paramedic who has been trained in mass casualty incidents.

This event gave the junior firefighters and Police Explorers a look into the operations of a mass casualty incident. It was designed to help prepare them for their future roles in the fire and police departments.

The training was made possible under the direction of Elkridge Junior Firefighter Program Coordinator Mike Barnett, Directors Kellie Lehr and Keith Summers, and Advisers Paul Poligardo, Dan Casey, Steven Butler, John Dressel, Matt Lisle, Robbie Lisle, Jessica Csitar, Adam Cox, Steve Davis, Spence McIntyre, Brain Shipley, and Mike Courtemanch. Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department Chief Don Watson and President Tim Cugle also provided support.

Barnett is very committed to the youth of Elkridge and the activities for children at the firehouse. He plays a major role in organizing programs to keep the future firefighters and neighborhood kids educated and interested.

The Elkridge Junior Firefighter Program was founded in 1998. It's purpose is to build character and confidence in young adults, and give them a sense of commitment and responsibility to the community.

The program consists of youth between the ages of 9 and 15 and teaches safety and basic skills required for firefighting. Many of the youngsters become volunteer firefighters with the fire department when they turn 16. Some past members of the Junior Firefighter Program have gone on to become career firefighters.

For more information about the Elkridge Junior Firefighter Program or for a program application, call [xxx-xxx-xxxx], select Option 5, and leave a message.

###

Sample 7: Certificate of Recognition

Modify this certificate to honor junior firefighters who have reached goals at the department.



The National Volunteer Fire Council on behalf of
the National Junior Firefighter Program recognizes

John Smith

as a Junior Firefighter who has served over 25 hours with the
MAIN STREET VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Tom Jones

Date



Appendix B: Sample Parent Booklet

Courtesy of the Elkridge (MD) Volunteer Fire Department

Junior Firefighter Program

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

ELKRIDGE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

We hope the following will answer any of your questions that were not answered in your Junior's New Member Booklet.

SUPERVISION

Junior Firefighters interact with firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics and gain experience in a firehouse environment. The Program's advisors offer students advice on the skills, responsibilities and educational requirements for fire and emergency services careers. The Coordinator, Director, Co-Director and the advisors are all trained firefighters and/or EMTs.

DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP YOUR CHILD

Dropping off:

- Please make sure that an advisor is present before dropping off your child. The Juniors are not to be on firehouse property without an advisor present.
- Please let an advisor know if someone other than a parent is picking up your child.

Picking up:

- Please make sure to pick up your child on time! This goes for any function, whether it's training, fundraiser or public service activity.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Please update your emergency contact and medical information whenever changes occur.

PARENTAL HELP

Any time that you can help at a function is greatly appreciated, even if it is only for an hour or so. We would like to have as many parents involved as possible. It is a great way to interact with your child and their friends. As long as a parent stays, siblings are welcome to attend, except department bingos and breakfasts. You do not need to contact anyone or sign up to help at a function; just show up... the help is always needed and appreciated.

FUNDRAISERS

Fundraisers are an important part of the Junior Firefighter Program. Without them we would not be able to do all that we do. The money that the Program raises goes towards their annual banquet, summer picnic, holiday party

and special activity in December, purchasing gear and uniforms, costs associated with field trips, sleep-ins, parades, and the upkeep for Engine JR1 and the Junior bus. The following are some of our regular fundraisers:

Dances:

These are the Junior's biggest money makers. They make an average of over \$1,000 each month. Chaperones are always needed!

Junior Parent Contact: [Name] at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Breakfasts:

The Juniors have a bake sale table during the breakfast. Donations of baked goods are always needed. Parents are also welcome to help serve food at the Department's breakfasts. Breakfasts are usually held the first Sunday of the month from 7:30 a.m. till 11:00 a.m., between October and May. Breakfasts are not held during the summer months.

Junior Parent Contact: [Name] at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Bingos:

The Junior parents help in the kitchen at the Department Bingos. The Junior Program gets the profits from the sales at the kitchen. Juniors, age 12 or older, can also help in the kitchen at Bingo, as long as a parent stays to help out as well. Help is needed between 5:30 and 9:30 p.m. on Bingo nights.

Junior Parent Contact: [Name] at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

We occasionally also have fundraisers at a local restaurant.

PARENT MEETINGS

Parent meetings are held on a Monday evening during the month at 7:00 p.m. in the upstairs garage meeting area. The date for the parent meeting is announced in advance. This is a good way for the parents to ask questions and offer opinions about the Junior Firefighter Program and to find out what's coming up with the Juniors.

PARADES

Any parents who wish to participate in walking with the Juniors are welcome. Usually the parades are judged and the Juniors have any opportunity to win an award, so to maintain a uniform appearance we ask that parents marching with the Juniors wear a Juniors polo shirt, navy

blue pants and black footwear. We also need parents to help hand out water during the parades; doing so from the sidelines of the parade doesn't require a uniform.

JUNIORS CLOTHING

The following is supplied by the Junior Firefighter Program:

- t-shirt (for trainings/other functions)
- powder blue shirt (for parades/public functions)
- collar pins
- lanyards
- name bar (given at annual banquet)

The following will need to be purchased by the individual:

- navy blue pants (check Wal-Mart, Target, and Kohl's in the school uniform section)
- black closed-toe footwear (with laces)
- black belt
- black socks
- badge (see the Junior quartermaster to purchase)

The following are optional items that can be purchased from the Junior quartermaster:

- additional t-shirts
- sweatpants
- sweatshirts
- stickers for cars

See the New Members Booklet for more information on uniforms/clothing.

PUBLIC SERVICE PROJECTS

The Junior Firefighters help out at several community functions through the year:

- Howard County Fire Expo - in October
- Elkridge Volunteer Fire Dept. Open House - in October
- Superfresh Open House - in October
- Train Garden - in December at Station 2 in Ellicott City
- Parades

BECOME A MEMBER

Parents can also join the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department as an Associate, Active, or Ladies Auxiliary member.

Associate Member - member who is not trained in fire, rescue, or EMS; helps at fundraisers, committees, and other functions. For more information contact Juniors advisor.

Active Member - member who will be trained in fire, rescue, and/or EMS; helps at fundraisers, committees, and other functions. For more information contact Juniors advisor.

Ladies Auxiliary Member - member who is not trained in fire, rescue, or EMS; helps at fundraisers, committees, and other functions. For more information contact Name.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [Name] at XXX-XXX-XXXX or one of the advisors (names/numbers on platoon list).

Appendix C: Sample New Members Booklet

Courtesy of the Elkridge (MD) Volunteer Fire Department

Welcome to the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department Junior Firefighter Program



New Members Booklet

New Member,

As the Coordinator of the Junior Firefighter Program, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you as a Junior member of the ElkrIDGE Volunteer Fire Department! For many, this Program will be the first step to a career in the fire service, whether volunteer or paid. I honestly believe that you as an active participant in this Program are the future of this fire department, and a hero of tomorrow.

When people do not know where to turn for help, quite often their response is to call the local fire department. They expect us to fix their emergency, or to at least make things better for them. Therefore, the firefighter has traditionally performed many tasks other than just fighting actual fires, and is held in high esteem by many people. As a member of the Junior Program, people will look to you as a representative of this department. Therefore it is important to follow the code of conduct and to be courteous and respectful to all, especially when wearing your uniform.

As a new member of the Junior Program, you will be required to participate in trainings, meetings, drills, fundraising events, and station projects. There are also many other activities and opportunities available to you that I hope you will take advantage of.

As a member of this department I take a great deal of pride in it and the community that surrounds it. You will be expected to do the same. As a member: strive for excellence; be the best that you can; be proud of what you are doing it for; promote department pride by example; and most of all have fun and be safe. Again from myself, my staff, the Chief, and the entire department, we welcome you.

Sincerely,
The Coordinator of the ElkrIDGE Volunteer Fire
Department Junior Firefighter Program

HOW IT ALL BEGAN . . .

The Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department began in 1942, at which time America was at war with Germany and Japan. Stories of the war were provided by radio. At that time, the threat of enemy air raid attacks in an area such as Elkridge were very real because of Elkridge being so close to industrial Baltimore and the nation's capital. If an attack would occur, Elkridge would have to rely on the services of other area fire departments.

On April 8, 1942, a meeting was called by Dr. Charles Nitsch, Lewis C. Toomey, Sr., and John F. O'Malley. The meeting was attended by twenty-one (21) men from the areas of Elkridge, West Elkridge, Hanover, Harwood, and Lawyers Hill to consider the advisability of establishing a Volunteer Fire Department. A second meeting took place on April 29, 1942, with the guest speaker being Chief John H. O'Lexey, Chief from the Jessup Volunteer Fire Department. Chief O'Lexey spoke about the organization of the Jessup Fire Department and the financing of the equipment. It was noted that approximately \$7,000.00 would be needed to start the Fire Department. Before the meeting ended, the men founded the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department Association and committees were formed to see what money could be raised for a second-hand truck and other basic firefighting equipment. Through countless efforts of local and civil defense officials, the plans for construction for the first piece of equipment were put into action. This engine would become known as "Daisy." The Fire Department was in business.

The first call was an air raid alert on November 6, 1942. The first fire call was later that day. It was a woods fire caused by target shooting at 3:20 p.m. On January 14, 1943, the department went from operating under the guidelines of the civil defense to a permanent, independent organization. This idea was approved and the charter was drawn up by C. F. Sybert. A committee drew up the constitution and bylaws, and on February 25, 1943, the department was officially incorporated and Edward Falter took over the position of Chief.

Over the years since "Daisy" rolled out, there have been many changes in firefighting. The equipment used today is that of modern technology. What makes a good fire

fighter? What kind of people run into burning buildings when everyone else is running out? DEDICATED PEOPLE. Firefighters will leave their homes and families, comfort and security for any unknown situation. They do this with skill and courage, and they also do this to help others in dire need. Extreme devotion is what every good firefighter needs.

Some of the names if you research back in history are still involved in our department today. This is a family-based organization where the upcoming generations are following in the past generation's footsteps.

MISSION AND VALUES

The Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department and its Junior Firefighter Program work in cooperation to educate, protect, and serve the youth of Elkridge and surrounding communities.

The following statements are upheld by the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department:

MISSION STATEMENT

To maintain a safe environment for youth to gather within the community to learn about many aspects of the fire service and to provide avenues for positive social interaction for youth within the program, and for youth within the community.

VISION

We will be a model for fire departments with junior firefighter youth programs to introduce the young community to the fire service and to provide a safe environment for social activities for youth within our community.

CORE VALUES

Recognizing the dedication, skill, and value of all members, we will create and maintain an environment of individual safety, well-being and trust. We are guided by: Service to Others, Team Work, Compassion, Integrity, Safety, Honesty, Accountability, Professionalism, and Respect.

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

The members of the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department Junior Firefighter Program demonstrate commitment to our community through:

- Providing an opportunity for youth to serve the community.
- Respectful and courteous treatment of all people.
- Accountability for our actions.
- Open honest communications.
- Educating peers about fire safety and prevention.
- Providing a safe environment for youth activity within the community.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member of the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department Junior Firefighter Program, you are expected and required to:

- Abide by all of the Standard Operating Procedures and all other rules and regulations of the Active Department, as well as those of the Junior Firefighter Program.
- Conduct yourself in a professional and courteous manner that will reflect well upon you and the entire department, especially when in uniform.
- Demonstrate honesty, fairness, and integrity.
- Treat all people with courtesy and respect.
- Recognize the value and worth of each individual.
- Dress respectfully and modestly at department functions that you attend (i.e.: dances, Juniors' picnic, etc.)
- Refrain from cussing, cursing, or using otherwise foul language while in uniform, at the station, and while participating in department functions.
- Work as a team with others.
- Participate in training, meetings, and fundraisers.
- Obey the chain of command.
- Wear your uniform when coming to the station and any department functions that you help with.

- Not wear your uniform or any other department issued gear for general use outside of the station or department functions.
- Always bring required gear to trainings.
- Always bring your PAT tag with you to the station and department functions.
- Notify an advisor or parent in charge (if assigned) upon arrival and departure from the station and department functions.
- Immediately report any problems to an advisor or parent in charge (if assigned).

PLATOONS

Platoons are groupings of members for organizational purposes. Each new member of the Junior Firefighter Program will be assigned a platoon to be a part of by the membership committee. The platoon that you are placed in will be the group that you will train with. You will also work different Junior functions such as the spaghetti dinners, breakfasts, and other events with this group.

Generally, once you are assigned to a platoon, you remain a member of that platoon throughout your time as a Junior Firefighter. However, there are times when you may need to participate in training or some other activity as a member of another platoon. At times, the Director may also need to reorganize platoons, and you will be assigned to a new platoon by the Director should this become necessary.

Each platoon has a Junior Sergeant to lead them. If this officer is not present, then another officer or member will be assigned to lead the platoon for that event. The Sergeant in charge of your platoon is also your contact person should you have questions regarding dates, locations, times, or any other general information.

PAT TAGS

Personal Accountability Tags (PAT tags) are ID cards that are used in the fire service to keep track of people during an incident. These tags typically have an ID number, rank, and the department with which they are affiliated. These tags are given to the officer in charge of the crew, who in turn may hand them to an accountability officer, depending on the incident size. If a firefighter gets injured or lost, the information on the PAT tag can be used to identify the injured or missing firefighter, and to access other important information about the firefighter.

In the Junior Program, we have implemented the PAT tag system to keep track of members at any Junior event. The tags for the Junior members include a photo of the Junior, their Junior Program ID number, and their name.

The Junior is expected to bring their PAT tag with them ANY time they are coming to the station and also any other time that they are meeting for a Junior event. The Junior will hold on to these tags until they are collected by a platoon leader, an advisor or a parent in charge. At the end of each event, the Junior member is responsible for picking up their PAT tag before leaving.

MEETINGS AND TRAININGS

Trainings are held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m., unless otherwise stated. There will be a meeting of the Junior Fire Department before every training.

Meetings are generally conducted by the Junior Chief or a Director. They are generally informational and Junior Program business is discussed and may be voted on. New members may also be voted into the Junior Firefighter Program at these meetings.

The training program for the Junior Firefighters is structured to introduce Junior members to the fire service. Junior members that join the regular department are at an advantage since the Junior Program introduces them to the tools and skills that are used in firefighting and emergency medical services (EMS). During training, you will learn about firefighting, EMS, the use of tools, and related skills. You will also learn how to work as a team and HAVE FUN!

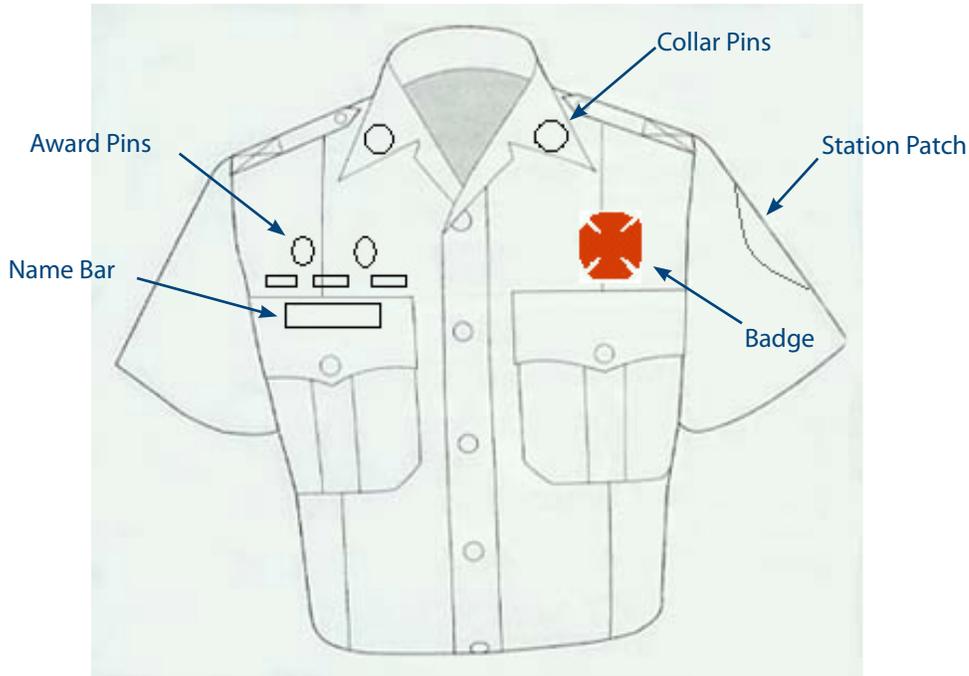
Quite often the training will include some physical or hands on activity and/or lesson. At times, an educational field trip may be substituted for the regularly scheduled training.

The following is the uniform that MUST be worn during Junior trainings:

- Navy blue uniform pants
- Junior Department t-shirt
- Black closed-toe footwear

In addition, your PAT Tags and any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that has been issued to you must be brought to each training.

UNIFORMS & PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT



Uniforms and protective equipment are issued to Junior members by the Junior Firefighter Program quartermaster. All issued items remain the property of the Elkrige Volunteer Fire Department., and must be surrendered upon termination of the membership.

A uniform will be issued. The uniform includes:

- White or powder blue shirt (for parades/public functions)
- Junior department patch (affixed to the above shirt)
- T-shirt (for trainings/other functions)
- Collar pins

(The badge may be purchased from the quartermaster and will be yours to keep upon purchase. Name bars are issued at the annual banquet.) Black closed toe footwear and navy blue pants must be purchased by each individual.

You are responsible for the care and maintenance of your uniforms. They are to be worn when participating in any departmental function or activity where you will have contact with members of the public. Uniforms are also

required to be worn during training, unless told otherwise by a Director. The uniform is NOT provided for your daily wear. **It is NOT to be worn while off duty except to travel to and from the station.**

Personal protective equipment (PPE) will also be provided for you. The PPE consists of the following:

- Safety glasses
- Hearing protection
- Protective gloves
- Short length of rope

and depending on availability:

- Fire helmet
- Turn-out pants
- Turn-out coat
- Boots

You are responsible for the care and upkeep of your safety equipment. All equipment **MUST** be brought to training events.

JUNIOR’S POINT SYSTEM

Points are used to monitor participation and interest in the program. Awards and privileges may also be given based upon the level of points earned. A lack of points may indicate that participation and interest in the program are not satisfactory.

Parades - 1 point per hour.

Meetings - 1 point per meeting.

Training - 1 point per training.

Officers - 2 points per month.

Committees - 2 points per month if the committee is active for that month; also 1 extra point for being a chair of that committee.

Sleep-Ins - 2 points per sleep-in or any other call monitoring training period.

Fundraisers - 1 point per hour and ½ point per ½ hour. Fundraisers are moneymaking events for the Fire Department or the Junior Program and include dances, dinners, breakfasts, car washes, etc.

Community Relations - 1 point per hour, ½ point per ½ hour. Will not be broken down any less than ½ hour increments. Points will be given for public relation details are such as the fire expo, open house, fire prevention details, Adopt-A-Road, helping the CERT team, or time spent doing things around the fire house.

Points will only be given if a Junior signs in and out on a sign-in sheet.

Juniors Attendance Sheet will be filled out as follows:

A Junior officer will fill out the date, then circle the event type. If this is a meeting, then put in the type of meeting. If the event is not listed, then circle “other” and fill in the type. Each Junior will find their name and EID number, sign the sheet under the signature column, put the time you start in the time in column, and the time you finish in the time out column. The gray hours section is to be filled out by the point’s committee. An advisor or parent in charge must then sign the sheet. Completed sign-in sheets are to

be placed in the points box.

Please sign in on the ½ hour and the hour. If signed for any other time increment time, it will be rounded off to the nearest ½ hour. All times should be written in military time.

Military Time Conversion

12:00 a.m.	–	0000 hrs
1:00 a.m.	–	0100 hrs
2:00 a.m.	–	0200 hrs
3:00 a.m.	–	0300 hrs
4:00 a.m.	–	0400 hrs
5:00 a.m.	–	0500 hrs
6:00 a.m.	–	0600 hrs
7:00 a.m.	–	0700 hrs
8:00 a.m.	–	0800 hrs
9:00 a.m.	–	0900 hrs
10:00 a.m.	–	1000 hrs
11:00 a.m.	–	1100 hrs
12:00 p.m.	–	1200 hrs
1:00 p.m.	–	1300 hrs
2:00 p.m.	–	1400 hrs
3:00 p.m.	–	1500 hrs
4:00 p.m.	–	1600 hrs
5:00 p.m.	–	1700 hrs
6:00 p.m.	–	1800 hrs
7:00 p.m.	–	1900 hrs
8:00 p.m.	–	2000 hrs
9:00 p.m.	–	2100 hrs
10:00 p.m.	–	2200 hrs
11:00 p.m.	–	2300 hrs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This is a list of the questions asked most often by new Junior Members:

Q: What activities do you have in this program?

A: We hold trainings, social activities such as dances, fundraising events, public service projects, and other things that a firefighter does except for fighting fires.

Q: Do we get to participate in parades?

A: Yes. Parades are usually held in the summer months. The Junior Department will typically march along with the advisors and any parents wishing to participate. Juniors **MUST** have a uniform issued to them before they are able to participate in a parade.

Q: How will I find out about different events taking place?

A: Events are announced at trainings, meetings, e-mails, and in newsletters. In addition, you may be contacted by the Sergeant in charge of your platoon. (Especially if there is a change or short notice.)

Q: What is the cost of the Program?

A: Dues are \$5.00 each year. In addition, you are responsible for the cost of any field trips and uniform items not provided by the department.

Q: How do I know how many points I have?

A: Points are posted on the Junior Program bulletin board. Point sheets are also available at trainings to check your points.

Q: When can I start fighting fires and perform emergency medical services?

A: On your 16th birthday you are eligible to apply to the Active Department (with parental consent). At that time, you may begin the required formal training to be certified as a firefighter and/or EMT. The Juniors have an advantage in that the program makes them familiar with many of the

tools, techniques, and safety issues required for firefighting and EMS.

Q: Can I participate in the Junior Program after my 16th birthday?

A: After your 16th birthday, you must apply to the Active Department as an Operational or Associate member in order to participate. Upon acceptance into the Active Department, you must resign as a Junior Member. However, former Junior members are strongly encouraged to continue to help with the Junior Firefighter Program.

Q: If I have questions or problems, who do I talk to?

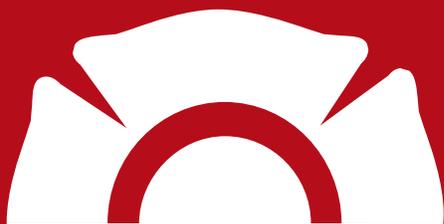
A: The Junior officers are available to answer questions and to assist you. In addition the advisors will help you with any questions, and any problems and conflicts must be addressed directly with an advisor.

Q: Do I have to participate in trainings and other events?

A: YES! The goals of the Junior Firefighter Program cannot be met for an individual who does not participate in the trainings or other events. A lack of participation may result in the loss of certain privileges and/or the ability to participate in certain activities. Individuals who regularly do not participate in the Junior Department activities without notifying an advisor may be dropped from the program.

Q: Can I ride the apparatus and fight fires as a Junior Firefighter?

A: Since firefighting is dangerous and requires specialized training, you must first join the Active Department in order to participate in these activities. Quite often, Juniors are permitted to ride the apparatus that is not in service while going to and coming from parades or other public service events.



NVFC NATIONAL JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER

National Junior Firefighter Program
7852 Walker Drive, Suite 375
Greenbelt, MD 20770
1-888-ASK-NVFC (275-6832)
juniors@nvfc.org
www.nvfc.org/juniors

National Volunteer Fire Council ©2016