FESA
Fire & Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL

Volunteer Firefighters

VTEC FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VTEC Induction

PROGRAMME

Introduction

Welcome to the Fire & Rescue Service of Western Australia (the 'FRS').

You have taken the first steps in becoming a member of an organisation dedicated to serving the Western Australian community in fire prevention, fire suppression, emergency rescue and hazardous materials response.

The Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia together with the Bush Service of Western Australia form Fire Services of Western Australia, a division of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia.

Your commitment to becoming a volunteer firefighter is greatly appreciated by the community and your fellow team members. During the next few months and, indeed, continually through your role as a volunteer, you will gain satisfaction and personal rewards through developing skills that will assist you in all facets of emergency operations and prevention risk management.

Volunteers within the FRS play a significant and vital role in ensuring that the communities in which they dwell are safe places to work, live and play. Whether it be carrying out risk management activities, fire prevention activities, fighting a fire, teaching fire safety education to school children, working with local residents to improve their own personal safety or responding to road accident rescue, the activities and learning skills required to manage these new directions can be extremely exciting and challenging.

The FRS offers you an opportunity to use and gain a wide variety of skills in your role as a volunteer firefighter. By further enhancing and developing expertise in such domains as business, interpersonal and organisational skills, it may improve your role in the workplace or stand you in good stead for future employment opportunities. You will face new challenges in the work you undertake within the FRS and will also further develop important skills such as teamwork and leadership in your role as a volunteer.

Initially, with the assistance of your team mates and brigade Captain, you should undertake an introductory course within your brigade. This course is designed to ensure that you have the basic skills required of a volunteer firefighter when either attending an incident or focusing upon community safety. Among these basic skills will be understandings of:

- personal protective clothing and equipment
- basic pump operation
- radio procedures
- safe methods of operation of equipment carried on the fire vehicles.

It is important, however, to remember that the FRS is a learning organisation and that, during your volunteer service, there will be many opportunities to gain skills across a wide range of competencies.

FIRE & RESCUE
SERVICE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

1899

The Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia (FRS) was established in 1899 and, since that time, has been involved with the community in making Western Australia a safer place to live. The FRS has achieved this by ensuring that the risks faced by the community are minimised by training and prevention education measures, undertaken by both its members and the community.

The FRS comprises a partnership between both career and volunteer personnel and currently within the FRS there are approximately 800 career firefighters as well as 2,500 volunteers.

The fire brigade that you have joined comes under the control and administration of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia. Its powers are based in the *Fire Brigades Act 1942* and its amendments and regulations.

The State of Western Australia is divided into five Fire Services directorates. Two of these directorates are situated in the Perth metropolitan area. Three areas are situated in regional Western Australia.

The FRS has a number of District Managers supporting volunteer brigades and they are based in the following locations:

- Albany
- Belmont
- Broome
- Bunbury
- Esperance
- Fremantle
- Geraldton
- Joondalup
- Kalgoorlie
- Karratha
- Mandurah
- Merredin
- Moora
- Narrogin
- Northam.

FRS Support Services

Because of the unpredictable nature of emergencies, the sometimes difficult nature of emergency management, and the stress that attendance at some incidents places on volunteers, the FRS has a significant number of support services for volunteers. These services cover the areas of:

- Occupational Safety and Welfare
- Compensation and Rehabilitation
- Critical Incident Stress
- Chaplaincy.

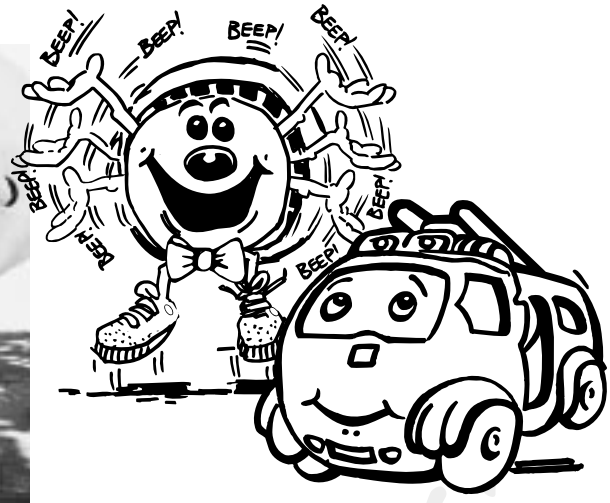
Volunteers are covered by insurance for all brigade activities. The FRS insures its volunteer firefighters via a personal accident policy that mirrors the workers' compensation policy for permanent staff. In addition, volunteers are further covered by a number of endorsements that have been added to the policy. These include travel coverage to and from authorised activities, and coverage for brigade activities such as fund raising and volunteer championships.

community education

Community Safety

With the increasing emphasis on community participation in fire safety, volunteer firefighters will now have a further opportunity in which to develop their skills and knowledge in this area.

A person entering the volunteer firefighter movement now has the option of either entering both fire suppression and community safety or to concentrate solely on community safety. This is designed for people in the community who feel that they may not be in a position to attend incidents and be available after hours, yet would still like to make a contribution to protecting their community.



fire & prevention risk management

Membership of the Brigade

New members shall be enrolled as Probationary Volunteer Firefighters and, after serving 3 months satisfactory service, may be recommended by the brigade Captain for transfer to the active volunteer grade. Once this occurs, the member will be transferred to active member status when a vacancy occurs.

Categories of Members

A volunteer fire brigade has the following categories of membership:

- Active Members (25 per brigade)
- Probationary Members (a maximum of 10 members over a 3 month period)
- Reserve Members (5 per brigade)
- Junior Members.

Criteria for Membership

To be a member of a volunteer fire brigade, you will need to be:

- in good health and of sound body and mind
- of good moral character and habits
- over the age of 17 years (except in the case of a junior member).

A junior member shall be over the age of 11 years but not over the age of 17 years and must have the written consent of a parent or guardian

Probationary Membership

Probationary volunteer firefighters are required to attend fires and other incidents when required and, through their 3 month probationary period, can attend brigade meetings. Whilst they are welcome at meetings and may take part in the discussions, probationary members are not entitled to vote at these meetings.

Active Membership

Active membership entitles the volunteer to attend all incidents when required and to assist other members to maintain brigade apparatus, plant and buildings. Active members must also make themselves effective by attending not less than two-thirds of the monthly practices and drills held by the brigade during each half year period.

Reserve Members

Reserve Members shall make themselves available for all required fire calls and emergency incidents and shall keep themselves proficient by attending periodic drills and lectures, to the satisfaction of the brigade Captain.

Junior Members

Junior Members may be involved by operating pumps and can hold separate meetings under the strict supervision of the brigade Captain.

Junior Members shall not, however, attend fires, travel on appliances or participate in brigade practices and drills held for other active brigade members.

Resignations

Members who wish to resign or retire from the membership of their brigade shall send in their resignation in writing to the brigade.

Struck off roll

Members may be struck off the roll if they fail to meet the required standards and position criteria detailed in the roles and responsibilities above.

Duties of Officers within Volunteer Brigades

Captain

The Captain is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the brigade. This includes operational leadership and incident management.

Foreman

The Foreman acts under, and with, the Captain and performs the Captain's role when that person is not available. This role includes incident management.

Apparatus Officer

The Apparatus Officer takes charge of all apparatus and plant and is responsible for its cleanliness and the good order of the fire station. The Apparatus Officer assists the Foreman in that role and performs the duties of Foreman when that person is not available.

Secretary

The Secretary is in charge of the administration of the brigade. The Secretary's duties include:

- maintaining the brigade's membership records
- maintaining records of the brigade's meetings
- handling all correspondence
- maintaining the brigade's financial records.

Duties of all Brigade Members

Being a member of a volunteer fire brigade is about belonging to a team. It is important that within that environment you maintain a high standard of personal behaviour that will enhance the reputation of both your local brigade and the FRS.

Your behaviour, even when performing in a private capacity, can be associated with your brigade and the FRS. Activities that may bring your brigade or the FRS into disrepute should be avoided.

You should ensure that you are properly dressed in authorised protective clothing when involved in brigade operational and training activities. When representing the brigade in the community, you should be suitably attired.

Part of recognising your responsibility to yourself, your fellow firefighters and the community, means you must be free from any influence of alcohol or other substances/medications whenever you are involved in any brigade activities, including operational duties.

You should not carry out any tasks for which you have not been adequately trained. To do so would compromise your safety and that of other brigade members. However, when involved with any work as a volunteer firefighter, it is important that you make an effort to carry out the work in a responsible and ethical manner.

Finally, you should view yourself as a valued team member in the brigade with a right to contribute to any decisions (after the probationary period and whilst an active member) that will affect your work.

Other Responsibilities

Members must notify the Brigade of any changes to their name, address or phone number.

Members must also advise the Captain of any illness or injury which could affect their ability to carry out their duties as a member of the brigade.

Any members who experience a problem as a result of their volunteer service should consult their brigade Captain as soon as possible.

Training

Probationary and active members of each brigade shall train in fire suppression methods or other drills and exercises at least once per calendar month.

Protective Clothing

Protective clothing is issued on a brigade basis and will include the following items:

- Overalls
- Boots
- Gloves
- Helmet
- Turnout Coat—Level 1 and 2
- Over Trousers
- Trousers.

The safety and health of its volunteers are a major concern within the FRS and volunteers attending incidents are expected to be correctly dressed. The minimum standard for any incident includes helmet, boots trousers, turnout coat and gloves.

Election of Office Bearers

All volunteer office bearers are nominated and elected by the eligible volunteer members of the brigade. The election is conducted in the first week of June on an annual basis.

Junior Firefighters

The FRS and brigades welcomes Junior Members. Membership is open to boys and girls over the age of 11 years and not over the age of 17 years.

Competitions

Competitions are held throughout the State every year, culminating with the Annual Championships held at North Fremantle every Easter. These competitions are conducted and coordinated by the Western Australian Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service Association in conjunction with the FRS.

Conclusion

Once again, welcome to the Fire & Rescue Service of WA. Your decision to become involved with such a community-based organisation as the FRS will make you a respected and valued member of your community. If you have some further inquiries about your role as a volunteer firefighter, contact your brigade Captain or one of the other officers.

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