

Member Policies

PURPOSE

In support of our mission to provide emergency services to the community the department maintains programs based on volunteer membership. The following standard operating procedures establish criteria for recruiting and maintaining members for these programs in a manner that upholds the Departments operating principles and protects the interests of public safety.

Standard Definitions

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

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

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

Volunteer Firefighter – A volunteer emergency responder who has achieved a minimum level of training and is assigned to fill a combat fire suppression role.

Volunteer Medical – A volunteer emergency responder who has achieved a minimum level of training and is assigned to fill a medical response role.

Support Service Volunteer/ Probationary Member – A non-combat volunteer member assigned either to fill a role that supports the efforts of suppression forces or to provide an administrative support role.

POLICY

Coldsprings-Excelsior Fire & Rescue Volunteer Department Station 6 shall not discriminate against any person from 18 to 70 years regardless of age, gender, regardless of race, creed, national origin, marital status, or non job-related physical, sensory, or mental handicaps who may apply for a position as Volunteer Firefighter.

Coldsprings-Excelsior Fire & Rescue Volunteer Department Station 6 reserves the right to maintain a philosophy that places individual opportunity secondary to public and employee safety. Therefore, applicants with limitations that may prevent them from being able to safely perform job-related duties may be disqualified.

Coldsprings-Excelsior Fire & Rescue Volunteer Department Station 6 shall establish minimum qualification standards for volunteer membership. These minimum qualification standards, listed in the individual job descriptions, shall be provided to the applicant at the time of application.

Coldsprings-Excelsior Fire & Rescue Volunteer Department Station 6 shall establish minimum activity requirements for maintaining active membership status. **Only personnel who maintain active status may be allowed to participate as an emergency responder.** The Departments minimum activity requirements shall be provided to the applicant at the time of application.

Individuals may apply for and upon approval, be assigned to a Support Service Volunteer program or projects. The Department shall establish specific activity requirements for each program or individual project. Examples include: Maintenance, Tender Operator, Support, Photographer, Rehab, and so on.

Responsibilities

The Department Fire Chief, or a designee operating under the Chief's authority, shall be responsible for making volunteer membership appointments.

The Department Training Officer, in conjunction with the Department Lieutenants, shall be responsible for:

- Administering the Department volunteer application process;
- Coordinating station and or program assignments;
- Monitoring training/activity records to ensure compliance with minimum membership requirements;

- Enforcement of Department attendance policies and corrective measures;
- Review of all requests for leave of absence, excused absence, etc.

The Training Officer shall be responsible for establishing the Departments probationary training and performance requirements. Failure to meet the Departments probationary requirements may serve as grounds for failing or extending the probationary period.

The Department Chiefs shall be responsible for completing administrative personnel matters, establishing, and maintaining personnel records.

Individual members shall be responsible for:

- Maintaining compliance with applicable training, safety, activity, and membership requirements;

- Reporting changes in personal status (i.e., address change, marital status, etc.);

- Initiating requests for excused absence, leaves of absence, transfers, etc;
- Reporting changes in their physical condition that may limit their ability to safely perform normal job duties;
- Ensuring that they participate in an exit interview and have returned all items issued by Department upon resignation.

Standard Guidelines

Participation Limitation - Applicants shall not be allowed to participate in any physical activities associated with the Department where subject to potential injury until they have been enrolled with the Departments volunteer insurance program.

Minimum Qualifications - All volunteer applications will be reviewed by the Departments Training Officer or a designee to ensure that the applicant meets minimum qualifications. As a minimum, applicants must:

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

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

Membership Process – All volunteer applicants must complete each of the in-processing steps as prescribed for the desired program. In processing requires satisfactory completion of the following steps in sequence:

- 1. Applications Submitted** – Completed applications are submitted to the Departments Office along with all required forms. Applications are then forwarded for screening.

Final approval for appointment submitted to the Department Fire board of Directors

1. **Application Screening** – Applications are screened to ensure that applicants meet all minimum eligibility requirements. Each applicant shall be given direction as to how they proceed in the process.
2. **Volunteer Programs Orientation** – Applicant's attend an orientation session that overviews the Fire Department and explains the requirements and expectations associated with each of the Department volunteer firefighter, Medical or support service volunteer programs.
3. **Physical Ability Exam** – All volunteer applicants must demonstrate a minimum level of physical ability by satisfactorily completing a physical ability exam. The exam process assesses the minimum ability to perform the physical requirements of probationary training and assigned duties.
4. **Program Interviews** – A One-on-one interview with the applicable program manager(s) to restate program requirements, ensure understanding of program expectations, and to determine applicant selection for process advancement.

Applicants selected for program placement shall be offered conditional membership contingent upon a successful background investigation, medical physical exam, Board approval and completion of all probationary requirements. Members shall be assigned a personnel number and file.

5. **Background Investigation** – All members are subject to a background investigation to include contact with references, a driving history, and criminal background.
6. **Wellness/Medical Physical** – All volunteer members must complete a wellness/medical physical, and a fitness exam in order to be satisfactorily cleared for duty by the Departments physician prior to participating in any Department related physical activity. Upon successful completion, members shall be enrolled in the Department volunteer insurance program.
7. **CDC Vaccinations** – All volunteer members must complete or decline the series of communicable disease control vaccinations in accordance with Department policy.
8. **Program/Station Assignment** – Upon successful completion of all membership in-processing requirements, members shall be assigned to their respective Station Officer, or Program Manager.
9. **Program/Station indoctrination** – The members respective Chief, Station Officer, or Program Manager shall conduct an indoctrination to address the operational issues associated with the member's assignment. The indoctrination shall include completion of the Departments Orientation Checklist.

Probationary Period - A six-month probationary period shall serve as an extension of the application process. The probationary period begins the first day of the member's

program/station assignment for a period of six months. A member may be terminated at any time during the probationary period.

Health & Safety Program Requirements – The Department's Health & Safety Program establishes minimum compliance requirements for all personnel. Failure to reasonably comply with these requirements may be used as grounds for restricting an individual's level of participation. Personnel who remain non-compliant may be re-classified to an inactive status or terminated.

Minimum Activity Requirements - In attempt to ensure that volunteer personnel maintain competent skills and remain proficient with fire department operations, the Department shall establish minimum activity levels.

Support Service Volunteers – Specific activity requirements for support service volunteers shall be established on a program or individual basis depending upon the operational needs of the program or project. The respective program manager shall monitor compliance.

Volunteer Firefighters/Medical Responders – Emergency Response personnel shall maintain a minimum level of drill attendance. Drill attendance is defined as active participation in the weekly volunteer drills scheduled by the Department Training officer. At the Training Officer's discretion, participation in alternate drills may be substituted to meet drill attendance requirements. Drill attendance will be tabulated on a quarterly basis. Attendance for members with excused absences may be prorated for the duration of the absence. Individuals failing to meet minimum activity levels are subject to automatic re-classification to inactive status. Drill attendance requires a:

- minimum 75% drill attendance for volunteer officers.
- Minimum 70 % drill attendance for volunteer firefighters, medical personal or active members.

Excused Absences - The Chief may authorize excused absences on a case-by-case basis. An excused absence shall be for a period of 1 to 3 months and shall not exceed a total of three months per calendar year. Members with an excused absence may continue as responders. Excused absences can include the following examples: attending an Continuing Education course, a temporary change in work schedule, extended vacation, and so on. Personnel applying for an excused absence shall do so by submitting a written request through their normal chain of command.

Leave of Absence - The Chief may authorize leave of absences on a case-by-case basis. A leave of absence shall be for a minimum period of 3 and a maximum period of 6 months. The combined total of excused absences and leave of absence shall not exceed a total of 6 months per calendar year. Leave of absences can include the following

examples: extended illnesses or injuries, a work commitment that takes the individual out of the area, maternity leave, and so on. Members requesting a leave of absence shall submit a written request through their normal chain of command.

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

- Remain eligible for any minimum benefits to which they qualify for;
- Not participate in any emergency response activities;
- Return their personal protective clothing, pagers, etc. to their station officer.

Enforcement – The Department shall enforce its minimum training and health & safety program requirements in accordance with the following guidelines. The Training Officer shall be responsible for providing Volunteer Chiefs, Station Officers, and Program Managers with drill attendance and health & safety compliance reports on a quarterly basis. Reports shall be reviewed and corrective measures initiated as needed.

Corrective measures shall be applied in the following sequence:

First Notice – Station Officers, via their Chief, will be tasked with contacting their member to inform them of the necessary compliance. The officer is to counsel with the individual regarding their compliance and report back to the Training Officer in writing. The individual's compliance will be reviewed again the next quarter.

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

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

Returning to Active Status – Members transferring into the Department from other fire districts, returning from an excused absence or a leave of absence are subject to completing minimum training and health & safety program requirements prior to being re-classified to active status. The Department's Training Officer shall be responsible for evaluating the member's individual situation and prescribing any necessary training and/or health & safety compliance requirements. All prescribed requirements must be satisfied prior to being re-classified to active status.

Termination or Retirement from Membership - Members who wish to terminate or retire their membership with the Department shall return all Department issued equipment upon termination to their respective Chief. And shall participate in an exit interview in accordance with Department Policy.