

A *Prospect's* *Guide to* *Joining the* North Syracuse Volunteer Fire Department



This document has been created to familiarize prospective members with the opportunities and benefits offered by joining the membership of the North Syracuse Volunteer Fire Department. This guide will briefly explain the minimum qualifications needed to become a member and serves to explain the interview and admission process. We welcome your feedback.

contents

- >from the chief
- >why volunteer?
- >about us
- >organization
- >response
- >our mission
- >our vision
- >opportunities
- >benefits
- >expectations
- >process
- >contact us

REVISED
PUBLICATION:
January, 2012

North Syracuse Fire Department

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Dear Citizen:

The Chiefs of the North Syracuse Volunteer Fire Department are committed to providing the most effective and efficient fire, rescue and emergency medical service delivery system to our community.

You will find that participation as a volunteer member of our organization will bring personal rewards and satisfaction, raise self-esteem, and provide you with a tremendous sense of accomplishment and pride for a job well done. It will also provide your community with a valuable service that has the potential to touch us all.

However, service as a member of our fire company requires a serious commitment. Your decision to join our organization should not be made hastily. This guide has been developed to provide the information you need to make an effective decision that is right for you and us.

Once you understand what's involved in being a North Syracuse volunteer, we hope that you are able to make the commitment we need. The service provided by our volunteers is truly valuable to the citizens, businesses and visitors of our community. We hope that you are able to contribute to our community's public safety.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

The NSFD Chiefs Office

>why volunteer?

Have you ever heard a siren or seen a fire engine – and wondered what was happening?

Have you ever witnessed or come upon a motor vehicle accident – and wished you could help?

Have you been there when someone was stricken with sudden illness – and wanted to assist?

Are you looking for new friendships, challenges and rewards?

Do you want to become involved in your community?

Are you looking to supplement your retirement?

“VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS.”

The fire and rescue service is one of the most diverse and challenging vocations today. It is this diversity that attracts most men and women to join our ranks.

Different people volunteer for different reasons. Action oriented people enjoy the excitement and adrenaline rush that emergency services has to offer.

Many like the feeling they get when they help people in their time of need and some feel it's their obligation to serve the community. Yet others just want to belong to the team. Whatever motivates you to volunteer – everyone gains the self-satisfaction of being at their best when others are dealing with what is often the worst that life has to offer.

Imagine having to prepare yourself to cope with situations that range from structure fires to childbirth to hazardous chemical spills to heart attacks to almost any imaginable emergency in between. This diversity is coupled with the fact that these skills may be needed at any time of the day or night, seven days a week, in any kind of weather, and very often under potentially stressful and emotional circumstances. Yet these same factors contribute to our profession being so personally rewarding.

The personal rewards and satisfaction received from what we do is often beyond description. There is the sense of accomplishment when you control a building fire, joy and elation when a child is born, compassion for accident victims, and fulfillment from teaching fire safety.

Volunteering in emergency services is one of the most important decisions you may make. We hope that you give this decision the time and serious consideration it deserves, and decide to join our ranks.

>about us

It's about people.

Fire engines don't put out fires - people do.

Defibrillators don't save lives - people do.

Our human resources are our greatest assets.

And we want you to be a part of our team.

The North Syracuse team of volunteers is comprised of your neighbors, your friends and maybe even your relatives. They're people just like you – with families, jobs and active lifestyles who still find time to give back to their community.

The North Syracuse Fire Department offers a friendly environment for you to discover your capabilities and make the most of your volunteering investment.

Established in 1913, the North Syracuse Volunteer Fire Department is a premier provider of emergency services in Central New York.

We provide comprehensive fire fighting, extrication, specialized rescue, fire police, fire prevention education and advanced life support emergency medical services to the Village of North Syracuse and parts of the Towns of Cicero and Clay from two stations.

Our Station 1 is located on Chestnut Street near the intersection of Route 11; and Station 2 is located on at 70 General Irwin Blvd off of east Taft road.

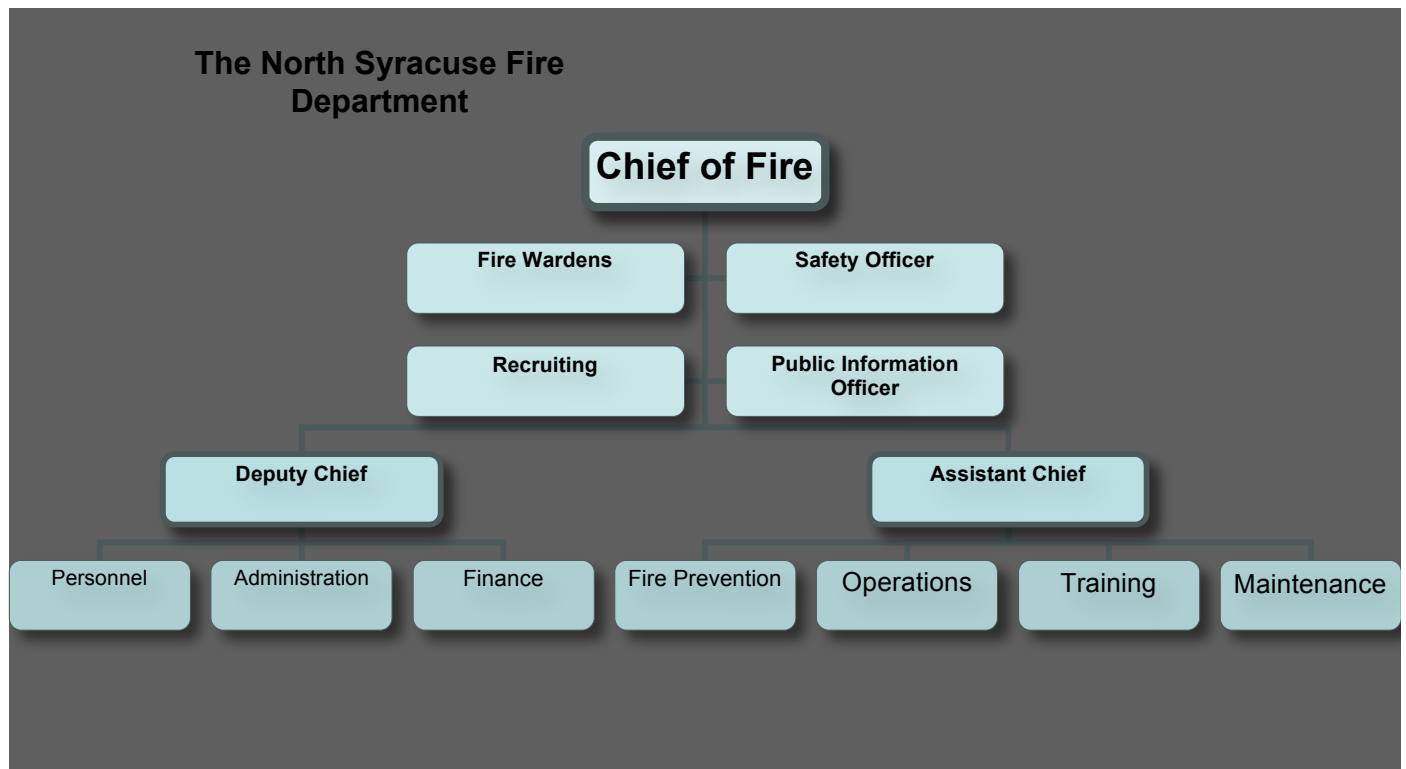
Despite being unpaid professionals we must be committed to providing our services 24 hours a day - every day.

The department currently maintains a fleet of four fire engines, two light rescues, an 85 foot ladder truck, a Heavy rescue, and 3 chiefs' vehicles.

Supported by a very active ladies auxiliary, the North Syracuse fire Department membership is made up of approximately 50 active firefighters and EMS personnel, typically 10-15 Firefighter Explorers.

We seek volunteers to bolster our ranks in a diverse range of services. We offer a long list of benefits including state-of-the-art training, LOSAP volunteer retirement program, use of a very modern work-out facility and a friendly, fun, professional atmosphere.





>how we're organized

The Chief oversees what is called the 'chain of command. This chain of command is very important in that it provides clear direction, lines of communications, and accountability for everyone involved in the chain.

On an incident scene, the chain of command provides for identifying areas of responsibility and accountability for the personal safety of every individual working within the incident command system.

Under this system, each level only reports to one supervisor. Firefighters report to a Lieutenant, who then reports to a Captain. The Captains report to the Assistant Chiefs, who are responsible to the Fire Chief.

Teamwork is the foundation of our success – during an emergency *and* back at the station. Before you can become a good leader, you need to learn to be a good follower. Knowing and understanding how you fit into the chain of command will be one of the most important lessons you can learn. Know your position and play it well.

You will receive a copy of our current organizational chart – or chain of command – during your new recruit orientation.



>how we respond

Unlike a career fire department, we have no scheduled duty shifts. To accommodate your busy and varying lifestyle, our volunteers are on-call at all times – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Volunteers respond only when they are available in the area of our protection district.

The North Syracuse Fire Department is dispatched through the Onondaga County 911 center. Utilizing an enhanced 911 system (E-911), dispatchers alert the volunteers via Motorola pagers with voice and tone capability.

Upon being dispatched, volunteers respond to one of two stations in our district, man the appropriate apparatus, and respond to the scene. Only chief officers respond directly to the scene. Fire Police members respond to the scene and help with the flow of traffic around the incident.



>our mission

To provide the highest level of fire protection, fire prevention, rescue and emergency medical services affordable to the residents and businesses.

>our vision

- ❑ To provide an exceptional level of emergency care and fire protection at the most affordable cost to our customers
- ❑ To be a community oriented service provider while maintaining focus on our core objectives
- ❑ To treat our customers with the consideration and compassion they deserve in their time of need
- ❑ To be good neighbors to the Village of North Syracuse community
- ❑ To partner with private businesses, local government and public organizations to develop and implement innovative life safety risk reduction programs
- ❑ To encourage, educate, develop and promote our youth as our community's most valuable resource and asset
- ❑ To treat our fellow members with respect, admiration and compassion for the challenges they face in volunteering
- ❑ To appreciate our members for their dedication, recognize them for their contributions and reward them for their achievements
- ❑ To conduct ourselves in a professional manner deserving of the pride and praise of our community
- ❑ To be fair and honest in our dealings with town government and outside agencies
- ❑ To be recognized as leaders in our industry and our community
- ❑ To continually monitor our operations, administration and service delivery, recognize our limitations ... and swiftly implement effective change when necessary



>our 24x7 pledge

As an Organization and as Individual Members of the North Syracuse Volunteer Fire Department,

We Pledge to:

Do the things we say we will...

Try our best to do them well...

And care about the people we serve, their property and each other...

24 hours each day – every day.

>opportunities

We offer opportunities for you to volunteer in areas that cover it all. Our members Do some or all of the following:

“Black Hat” Interior Firefighter- *If getting hot, dirty and physical is your game - this is for you. We offer virtually unlimited opportunities to explore the exciting world of firefighting and the training to do it safely. Whether you only assist on the outside - or run in to the fire as others are running out - there's plenty for everyone to do on the fireground.*

EMS - *If you enjoy helping people in medical emergencies - we'll provide the training absolutely free. In cooperation with the New York State and Onondaga County Departments of Health and Emergency Services, we'll train you to be a Certified First Responder (CFR), Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-B) or Emergency Medical Technician - Intermediate (EMT-I). If you already have your Paramedic certification (EMT-P), we'll cover the costs of your re-certification.*



Fire Police - *As a member of our Fire Police team, you'll assist in traffic control, crowd management and general assistance at emergency scenes and non-emergency events. We'll train you as a NYS certified Fire Police Officer. This is a great opportunity for those who want to actively contribute but cannot meet the extreme physical challenge that structural firefighting entails.*



>join today and enjoy these benefits

Quality Training - You provide the commitment and we provide all of the training for FREE. From local and county training, NYS certified courses, to regional and national seminars and conferences - we offer you the opportunity to explore every avenue of emergency services and train you to be the best at what you do.

Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) - This program rewards our volunteers' years of service with a financial benefit at age 65. This \$650/month stipend will come in handy upon reaching retirement age.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - We protect our firefighters with the latest technology in fire resistive coats, pants, boots, gloves, Nomex hood and helmets.

Duty Uniforms - Look professional and show your North Syracuse pride in your blue station uniform personalized with your name and rank. Uniforms are provided after a minimum length of service.

Social Events - Members and their guest enjoy our annual installation dinner held each April to recognize the past year's accomplishments of the department and our volunteers, and to celebrate the dedication of our newly elected administrative and Association officers. Throughout the year we offer a variety of opportunities for you and your family to get to know the other members of your department in a relaxing atmosphere. From parades to parties, family picnic and our clam bake!

Cool Web Site - Our site: www.northsyracusefire.com has seen thousands of visitors since it premiered just ten years ago. From events to photos of recent alarms to important information you need including our own internal e-mail.

Fitness Center - You'll have access to a state-of-the-art fitness facility that would rival any gym. From treadmills to free weights we have everything you need to get in shape or keep you in shape.

Peace of Mind - We recognize that firefighting and providing emergency services is an inherently dangerous business. That's why we take extra measures to protect our volunteers.

We care about your health, safety and well being. That's why we insist (and pay for) you to have a comprehensive medical physical examination completed every year of active duty.



>expectations

Although no previous experience or training is required, you need more than just a desire to help people. You also need courage and dedication, assertiveness, and a willingness to learn new skills and face new challenges. Our service is one that calls on its members to perform hot, sweaty, dirty, strenuous work, often in uncertain and hazardous environments.

Our volunteers need to be team players, respecting each other's role and contributions. You need to be able to work on-call and to deal with occasional interruptions to your lifestyle, dropping what you're doing at the 'sound of the bell' to respond to the emergency needs of your fellow citizen.

A new recruit can expect a 6 month probationary period including meetings, training, emergency responses and other miscellaneous activities. Drills are on Tuesday's however you may need to make time for classes on other days of the week and weekends during your probation.

We've listed a lot of the benefits you can expect from us, and in return there are certain objectives we expect you to meet:

TO APPLY:

- ❑ You must be at least 18 years of age to apply.
- ❑ Be a high school graduate (or GED).
- ❑ You must be physically, intellectually and emotionally capable of performing your duties.
- ❑ You must reside or work full time within the fire protection district.
- ❑ Gain approval of the fire department and village board.
- ❑ Respond to 10% of all emergency alarms per quarter
- ❑ Attend two monthly meetings per quarter.



UPON ACCEPTANCE:

- ❑ New members must complete a new recruit orientation program before responding to emergency incidents.
- ❑ New recruits must successfully pass an OSHA physical examination conducted by the fire department doctor. It will be paid for by the fire department.
- ❑ New members will be considered on probation for a period of one year. Their probationary activities will be reviewed within thirty days following one (1) year of active service and the probationary member will be recommended for continued service or termination at that time.
- ❑ Removal from probationary status requires that the aforementioned requirements be fulfilled along with the probationary requirements of their membership classification.
- ❑ Failure to complete the minimum requirements can result in termination of membership.

>the process

➤ **You completely fill out and return the application**

- Make sure to include a copy of your New York State drivers license
- Include a signed records release form
- Include all required references with exact names, addresses, and telephone numbers
- Make copies of any training classes and EMT and/or CPR card

➤ **We receive your application**

- Our recruitment officer will begin processing your application
- The application process can take between 4 and 6 weeks, we will do our best to keep you informed of its progress.

➤ **We send out a form (or call) your references**

- Depending on when they return them this could delay your application process, so please inform anyone you put down as a reference that they need to return this in a timely manner.

➤ **We request a background check from the Onondaga County Sheriffs Office and the Village of North Syracuse Police.**

- We are required by NYS law to check if you have any arson convictions.
- We MUST have a copy of your NYS ID and a signed records release to do this.

➤ **We invite you to come in and observe our Tuesday day or night drill for three weeks.**

- We hold our drills every Tuesday with our morning session starting at 9am and going until noon and our evening session starting at 7pm and going until 10pm.
- This will give you an opportunity to see what we do and meet the members of the department. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions of us.

➤ **We will send you to get our department physical**

- We require this so you and we know the state of your physical health.
- We will pay for the physical and assist you in setting up an appointment with the fire department doctor.

➤ **You are sworn in and receive your protective equipment**

- You will be sworn in as a member of the North Syracuse Fire Department and also as a member of the North Syracuse Volunteer Firemen's Association.
- You will be issued a pager, blue light card, key, and turnout gear.

>contact us

To obtain an application, or to ask any questions regarding this guide or the application process – contact us at 458-1920 or go to our web site:



www.northsyracusefire.com