### Sample Fire Department Annual Recruitment and Retention Plan

| **TIMELINE** | **TASKS** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Recruitment** | | |
| January to March | * Familiarize yourself with the annual recruit plan; * Complete needs assessment (see template) for your fire department; * Complete the community profile; * Review role descriptions to identify target population for recruitment; * Complete recruitment needs sheet; * Review preparation checklist; * Prepare or organize materials for advertising and marketing (i.e. web pages, newspaper ads, flyers, brochures); * Verify pre-recruit open house time, date and location; * Validate department personnel, officers, fire fighters and non-operational volunteers attendance and roles at pre-recruit open house; * Arrange handout package including applications for pre-recruit open house; and * Have application forms available. | Fire Chief with assistance from Officers and support and guidance from Senior Administration Officer (SAO).  If necessary, budget approval is acquired from Council. |
| **Selection** | | |
| April to May | * Screen applications and determine candidates to be interviewed; * Conduct screening tests as appropriate; * Work with candidates to schedule interviews (date, time, location, attendees); * Conduct interviews and select candidates; and * Collect all necessary paperwork and human resource information from candidates. | Fire Chief with assistance from community government human resources staff as necessary. |
| **Orientation** | | |
| June to August | * Organize and schedule recruit orientation session(s); * Introduce new volunteers to other department members or identify a contact “go to” person or mentor; * Introduce recruits to the vision, mission and values for the department; * Familiarize recruits with current policies and operating procedures; and * Ensure completion of human resources paperwork. | Fire Chief and Officers/members with assistance from community government human resources staff. |
| **Training** | | |
| September to  October | * Schedule initial training to help build human resource and role specific skills; * Ensure ongoing participation in regularly scheduled training; * Coordinate industry standard technical training for volunteers; and * Periodically engage volunteers on progress and challenges. | Fire Chief, Officers, and School of Community Government. |
| **Retention** | | |
| November to  December (***and ongoing***) | * Manage performance; * Evaluate individual progress; * Acknowledge and reward desired behaviors and accomplishments. | Fire Chief, Training Officer and Officers |

### Planning and Targeting Your Recruitment Efforts

#### Step 1 Identify the Needs

1. Identify position titles (use an existing one if it fits, or develop another one). See the Role Description Summary Tool for examples.
2. For each position, identify a more specific role description (use an existing one, or develop one). See template for Role Descriptions.
3. Review the Role Description to identify the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities (both mandatory and preferred).

#### Step 2 Create a Community Profile

1. Identify your community’s assets. What talents and resources relevant to the role exist in the community?
2. Foster collaboration and partnerships with community groups or employers where possible.
3. To truly reflect the community you serve, and cast the widest net possible, look beyond the obvious. Be creative in identifying “pockets” of the population. Seek to recruit members of diverse ethnicities, genders, ages, backgrounds, education levels and physical capabilities.

#### Step 3 Target Your Recruitment

1. Identify the number of recruits that you will need to fill the number of member positions. Is there a limit to the number of volunteers you can have?
2. Identify how the department can make the recruitment process accessible to audiences with different language and educational backgrounds.
3. Identify community partners that can help to recruit members.
4. Identify the most likely ways to provide the target population with information about the need for volunteers, community events and opportunities to contribute to not only the fire department, but the community as well. (Posters, brochures, internet, etc.).
5. Identify locations that you would encounter and or find the target member population.
6. Identify and communicate skills, experience, and/or benefits that a volunteer might gain as a result of volunteering? What about the department would interest and motivate them?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Step 1 – Identify Needs**  See Role Description Summary in this package or existing ones in your department. | | | | | | | |
| **Priority Need** | | **Position Title** | | **Key Duties** | | | **Qualities, Abilities, Skills, Knowledge and Availability Required** |
| 1 | |  | |  | | |  |
| 2 | |  | |  | | |  |
| 3 | |  | |  | | |  |
| 4 | |  | |  | | |  |
| 5 | |  | |  | | |  |
| **Steps 2-3 – Profile Your Community, Target Your Recruitment** | | | | | | | |
| **Role** | **Number** | | **Qualities, Availability, Skills, Ability and Knowledge Required** | | **Who is in the community that has these attributes?** | **Who to ask?**  **What to say to them?**  **Where to find them?** | |
| 1 |  | |  | |  |  | |
| 2 |  | |  | |  |  | |
| 3 |  | |  | |  |  | |
| 4 |  | |  | |  |  | |
| 5 |  | |  | |  |  | |

### Role Description Overviews

#### Firefighter

Reports To: Senior Firefighter or Fire Chief

Duties and Responsibilities

* Responds to emergency calls;
* Responds to non-emergency calls, as required;
* Provides search and rescue, as required;
* Drives and operates firefighting and emergency equipment, as assigned;
* Conducts fire prevention inspections and public education programs, as assigned;
* Attends on-duty training sessions and off-site training courses, as required;
* Participates in community fire prevention events;
* Maintains equipment and facilities; and
* Performs other duties as required.

Qualifications

* Comfortable around machinery;
* Ability to undertake manual labour;
* Drivers licence is desirable;
* Willingness to obtain First Aid training; and
* Willingness to obtain firefighting certification.

Time Required

* Usually one night per week; plus more in case of response to emergencies.

#### Senior Firefighter

Reports To: Fire Chief

Duties and Responsibilities

* Responds to emergency calls;
* Responds to non-emergency calls, as required;
* Provides search and rescue, as required;
* Supervises fire fighters during an emergency or other event;
* Drives and operates firefighting and emergency equipment, as assigned;
* Attends on-duty training sessions and off-site training courses;
* Conducts training for firefighters and other persons;
* Conducts fire prevention inspections;
* Prepares and delivers public education presentations;
* Participates in community fire prevention events;
* Oversees the maintenance of equipment and the Fire Hall; and
* Performs other duties as required.

Qualifications

* Basic reading and writing skills;
* Ability to keep simple records and prepare reports;
* Mechanical aptitude (i.e., good with hands or machines);
* Ability to do manual labour;
* Good understanding of Fire Departmental responsibilities; and
* Valid driver’s licence.

Time Required

Usually one night per week, plus more in case of emergencies.

#### Fire Prevention Officer

Reports To: Fire Chief

Duties and Responsibilities

* + Inspects buildings and new construction for fire risks;
  + Inspects and tests fire suppression and extinguishing systems;
  + Helps firefighters with fire prevention inspections;
  + Participates in fire prevention and educational programs and gives instruction in fire prevention;
  + Performs administrative duties (including budget preparation, maintenance of records, etc.); and
  + May help train other Fire Department staff.

Qualifications

* + Basic reading, writing and office skills;
  + Ability to deal with a wide range of people;
  + Reliable attendance at Fire Department activities;
* Practical experience with firefighting; and
* Valid driver’s license.

Time Required

* + Usually one night per week, plus more in case of emergencies or other events.

#### Fire Chief

Reports To: Senior Administrative Officer

Duties and Responsibilities

* Responds to emergency calls and assists in search-and-rescue, as required;
* Directs volunteer firefighters on scene and in training;
* Coordinates training and emergency planning with other agencies, as required;
* Investigates and reports on fires in the municipality, including incidence, injuries, and damage to property;
* Inspects businesses and other facilities for compliance with fire code and regulations;
* Manages firefighter recruitment and training;
* Inspects fire department equipment on a regular basis;
* Evaluates the needs for programs, facilities, personnel, and equipment, as required;
* Develops and presents budget requests and policy recommendations;
* Participates in fire prevention and educational programs, and gives instruction in fire prevention; and
* Performs administrative duties and other duties as required.

Qualifications

* Knowledge of firefighting techniques and methods (including training methods);
* Knowledge of management techniques (e.g., command-and-control, crowd control);
* Strong leadership and decision-making skills;
* Ability to deal effectively with people in difficult situations;
* Basic office skills including reading and writing;
* Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, with a wide range of people;
* Ability to maintain an effective working relationship with government, businesses, and the general public; and
* Possession of a valid driver’s licence.

Time Required

* Time commitment varies;
* A minimum of one night per week, plus more in case of emergencies; and
* Administrative duties may increase this amount.

**Other Roles**

Apparatus and Equipment Maintenance Personnel

These fire department members may be either operational or non-operational. It is the responsibility of these personnel to ensure that all fire apparatus and equipment is maintained in fully operational condition. Other duties can include and are not limited to developing and carrying out maintenance programs, reviewing and providing advice on specifications for new equipment, accident investigation and station maintenance.

Communication Personnel

Often the first contact with the fire department, communications personnel must have traits and characteristics demonstrating a high level of professionalism and empathy. Communication personnel must ensure that they have the correct information in order to send the appropriate response. They may provide logistical support, must maintain radio communications, be able to process incident documentation, keep current and have sound knowledge on the use of communication devices, perform public relations and public education duties along with technical and administrative duties.

Administrative/Clerical Personnel

The duties assigned to administrative / clerical personnel are extremely varied and encompassing. Record keeping, filing, research, note taking, accounting, budgeting, answering telephone inquiries are just some of the tasks that may be assigned. Organization and public relation skills are necessary for these positions as interaction with the public may be frequent. Consideration should be given to those with proficiency with computers and business equipment.

IT Support Personnel

Technological skills are essential for these support personnel. Creating and maintaining websites, inter and intra net sites, repairs, specifying and repairing computers, pagers, radio and telecommunications equipment are all areas that would be included in the duties assigned.

Emergency Medical Services/Emergency Patient Care Responders

EMS first responders play a vital role in the continuum of care at emergency scenes. This is a particularly important role in areas where there may be a delay in transfer to a medical facility. They would be expected to have the minimum level of training as deemed by applicable service standards.

### Brainstorming Worksheet: Who Do You Know?

Identify three friends, neighbours or coworkers who aren’t a member of the fire service.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Skills and Knowledge** | **What can they do for the Fire Service?** | **Recommend?** | **How will you approach them?**  **What will you say?** |
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### Open House Planning Sheet

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reason**  Identify reason for open house  General recruitment?  Role specific recruitment? |  | | |
| **Attendance**  Estimate who will be attending and numbers.  Potential recruits,  children, spouses,  Council |  | | |
| **Invitations**  Identify who will be invited and how. |  | | |
| **Date, time and location**  Identify date, time and location of event.  Determine best time for this, where you will get the most attendance. |  | | |
| **Program content or topic** | Speaker | Time | Supplies |
| Welcome and overview \* | Chief | 5 |  |
| Introduction to fire service \* | Chief | 10 |  |
| Fire department expectations \* | Chief, deputy, training officer | 15 |  |
| Fire fighter presentation \* | Front line fire fighters | 10 |  |
| Family/significant other presentation\* | Family member representative | 10 |  |
| Questions and answers\* | Chief | 10 |  |
| **Logistics Required** | | Person responsible | |
| ☐ Computers  ☐ Projector  ☐ Applications  ☐ Relevant literature  ☐ Photograph’s  ☐ Cameras for photos  ☐ Refreshments  ☐ Parking  ☐ Signage  ☐ Static displays | |  | |
| Personnel briefing Prior to open house, review agenda with speakers | | Person responsible | |

#### Program content and topic suggestions

**Welcome and overview**:

☐ Welcomes those present;

☐ Introduces special guests, i.e. deputy chief, members of council or committee;

☐ Notes the location of the fire exits and washrooms;

☐ Introduces master of ceremony if there is one and if so, turns program over to them;

☐ Explain the purpose of the presentation;

☐ Advise the recruitment process and any cut off dates for applications to be received;

☐ Explain format of evening presentation and the availability to speak to others after the program;

**Introduction to Fire Service:**

☐ Provide a brief biography of your service in the department and why you have stayed on as long as you have;

☐ Describe the history of the fire service in the community;

☐ Describe the department personnel complement;

☐ Describe the location of the fire stations and any history related to them;

☐ Describe the boundaries of the department and any service provided to other communities or received from other communities;

☐ Touch on council / board / committee involvement and where funding to operate the department comes from;

☐ Explain the different positions in the department and the importance of each and every one of them;

☐ Briefly explain any remuneration and benefits programs firefighters would be entitled to.

**Fire department expectations:**

☐ Elaborate on what the fire department expects from the recruit, i.e. commitment, sense of responsibility, willingness to respond when called upon, dedication to do a good job, teamwork;

☐ Explain training schedule and time commitments;

☐ Review post recruitment annual requirements relating to number of calls required to be in attendance at, minimal number of training sessions required and other duties or assignments.

***What can the recruit expect from the fire department?***

☐ Explain that the fire service is providing them with the opportunity to make a difference in the community;

☐ The potential to become a member of a group that can be counted upon in a time of need;

☐ The opportunity to demonstrate their personal capabilities;

☐ Respect;

☐ A fair and unbiased assessment;

☐ The opportunity to grow;

☐ Potential opportunity to use the skills and knowledge in other work environments;

☐ The opportunity to be a valuable member of the community that others will call upon in their time of need.

#### Fire fighter presentation:

☐ What is the presenter’s current employment;

☐ Why did the presenter join the fire service;

☐ How long did it take before being accepted into the recruitment process;

☐ What if any obstacles were overcome;

☐ What satisfaction is received when helping out someone;

☐ How is the time commitment handled;

☐ What opportunities presented themselves;

☐ What opportunities were missed including social and family engagements;

☐ Explain that the person you’re helping out may be a family member, neighbor or a friend.

#### Family/significant other presentation:

☐ Describe how family commitments are handled;

☐ What opportunities were realized when partner joined the fire service;

☐ What mechanisms are available to assist in coping with the stress often associated with being in the fire service;

☐ Describe how you assist the partner after a traumatic or troubling call;

☐ Describe the pride the family has with the member being a part of the fire service;

☐ Discuss the networking that takes place within the family members;

☐ Elaborate on any department activities that assist the family.

### Template for Recruitment Ads

#### Newsletter, Website, Radio Ad:

VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE PERSONNEL

*{Name of fire department}* is currently accepting applications for the position of *{name of position}.*

The primary responsibilities of this position include:

*{Provide a brief description of primary duties}.*

Applicants must meet the following minimum criteria:

*{List eligibility criteria}*

We will be hosting an information session on {date, time and location}.

For more information, or to pick up an application, please contact:

*{List contact information}.*

#### Slogans and Catch Phrases

Be creative. Have a slogan contest. Do a website search.

Here are a few phrases pulled of the Internet.

* Protect your dreams….Volunteer
* Members Needed! Stop in *{DATE}* or call *{XXX-XXXX}*
* Need Volunteers – Will Train
* Volunteers Needed! Apply Inside
* Open 24 hours – We never close!
* Our family helping yours – whatever it takes.
* Take action…Volunteer!
* What have you done for your community today?
* Making house calls since *{founding date of department}*
* Neighbours helping Neighbours…Volunteer Today.
* Volunteer…It’s the experience of a lifetime.
* Quality Training….Free; Equipment…Free; Membership Fee…Free; Saving a Life….Priceless