

Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District

Volunteer Guide



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Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer firefighter with the Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District (URFPD). We hope that the information contained in this guide is helpful to you and your family. Should you have further questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

As a department, we are committed to providing the most effective and proficient fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to our community. Likewise, we are committed to continuing the tradition and reputation for excellence that previous URFPD Volunteers have earned.

You will find that being a volunteer member of the URFPD 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 department requires a **serious** commitment. Your decision to join our department 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 volunteer, we hope that you can 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 can contribute to our community's public safety.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Again, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District

Our Mission

We are dedicated to protecting the health, life, and property of the community and the surrounding areas, through the highest quality fire, medical and emergency services.

District Goals

- Be progressive in the delivery of services, and wherever possible, meet or exceed accepted national, regional, and professional standards of service.
- Maintain and equip a fire suppression force capable of maintaining an insurance industry rating between ISO 5 and ISO 8!
- Provide an initial emergency response for medical, rescue, fire and hazmat within 10 minutes, 90% of the time, and no longer than 15 minutes 100% of the time.
- Maintain a fire suppression force and equipment that is capable of controlling a fire requiring a fire flow of 2000 gallons per minute, and able to flow 75% of that flow within 20 minutes, and 100% of that flow within 30 minutes.
- Equip, train, and maintain a force capable of providing automotive, truck, farm, and surface water extrication type rescues.
- Maintain and equip a force that can provide awareness and operations level emergency mitigation of hazardous materials incidents resulting from fixed sites of industry, military installations, or accidents on any transportation route.
- Maintain and equip a Quick Response Team (QRT) capable of providing emergency scene stabilization and initial medical care to the sick and injured.
- Maintain sufficient quantities of public education materials and instructors to meet the local demand of the various schools and civic groups.
- In coordination with the City of Umatilla and Umatilla County Planning Departments, ensure a logical and orderly system of development in the district in regard to fire suppression activities.

Why Volunteer?

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

Different people volunteer for different reasons. Action-oriented people enjoy the excitement and adrenaline rush that emergency services have to offer. Others see the volunteer fire service as an alternative to “boring work during the day” that allows them to “drive the fire truck at night”. Still others simply enjoy the reward of helping the citizens of the community. And there are some who simply just want to belong to a winning team.

If you were to ask any professional volunteer firefighter why they accept the challenges they do and they will tell you in their own words that they feel a need to help others and give back to their community. As firefighters work to fulfill their need to help others, they also meet the ever-growing needs of their community. When you join the fire service you are joining a profession steeped in tradition, a brotherhood dating back to the beginning of American History. Today you can walk into any firehouse in the country, tell them you are a firefighter and you instantly have this connection and shared sense of commitment to something greater than yourself.

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 or 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 weather, and very often under stressful and emotional circumstances. Yet these same factors contribute to our profession being so personally rewarding.

Firefighting is very demanding of an individual. Many hours of training are involved, requirements must be met and regulations and standards are to be upheld. Our volunteer firefighters are not compensated in the traditional way for their efforts. Compensation is only received for response to an incident. There is no monetary bonus, or financial incentive to work harder. However, there is a reward! It comes from the pride the volunteer receives both individually and as part of a team. It comes in the form of a friendly handshake from a grateful citizen or a smile of gratitude. The child’s awe as they see the inside of a fire truck, getting to blow the siren or seeing the flashing red lights while talking to one of the firefighters. The smile from a neighbor, friend, or family member in your community who thanks you for being a part of a thriving, valuable and irreplaceable community organization. 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 are often beyond description. There is the sense of accomplishment when you control a structure fire or extend compassion for automobile crash victims, and there is fulfillment from teaching fire safety to children.

The bottom line in our business is measured by the loss of life, pain and suffering, and the property damage we have successfully prevented or reduced. Protecting Life, Property and the Environment is always our priority.

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. Our human resources are our greatest assets and we want you to be a part of our team.

Emergency Incident Response

Unlike a paid career fire department, we have no scheduled duty shifts. Our Department is always on call – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To accommodate your busy and varying lifestyle, volunteers respond when they are available in our protection area.

The URFPD is dispatched through the Umatilla County Communications Division and Regional 911 Dispatch Center located in Pendleton. Utilizing the 911 system, dispatchers alert volunteers via mobile application (Active 911) and radios.

Once dispatched, firefighters respond to the fire station, put on their protective clothing, staff the appropriate apparatus and respond to the incident. Self-response or taking your personal vehicle to the scene of an emergency is not allowed in the URFPD.

We respond to structure fires in commercial and residential buildings providing valuable life saving techniques and property conservation. We respond to motor vehicle crashes providing disentanglement and patient extrication. We respond to hazardous materials spills, leaks and releases under a Hazardous Material Operations level of training and for extensive Haz-Mat incidents, we call qualified Haz-Mat Response Teams to perform the needed duties. We also respond to other classifications of incidents including service calls for downed trees and power lines, commercial and residential automatic fire alarms, assistance during severe weather

conditions, police assistance, search and rescue support, evacuations, and numerous other types of situations that require trained emergency responders. The list is endless and constantly evolving!

Demographics

Population of URFPD: Approximately 7500 people

Area of URFPD: 32 square miles – the City of Umatilla west to County Line Road, east to Sand Station Recreational Area (including the Hat Rock Area) and south to Bensel Rd (approximately).

Response Volume: 594 Calls in 2019	478 Calls in 2014
599 Calls in 2018	573 Calls in 2013
608 Calls in 2017	606 Calls in 2012
518 Calls in 2016	537 Calls in 2011
504 Calls in 2015	

Benefits

Quality Training. You provide the commitment and we provide all the training for free. From local and county training, to regional courses. We offer you the opportunity to explore every avenue of emergency services and train you to be the best at what you do.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We protect our firefighters with the latest technology in fire resistive protective clothing that meets or exceeds National Standards. All of these are provided at no charge to you. We only ask you to take care of the equipment as if it were your own.

Department Apparel. Look professional and show your department pride by wearing your department T-Shirt.

Social Events - Members and their guest enjoy our annual End of the Year banquet and awards held each December to recognize and appreciate the members family dedication. 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, to family picnics, and fund-raisers - we not only work hard – we play hard too!

Peace of Mind. We recognize that firefighting and providing emergency services in an inherently dangerous business. That's why we take extra measures to protect our volunteers. The URFPD provides workman's compensation coverage to members if they are injured on the job, training or other department events. We care about your health, safety and well-being.

Share the Load, a national support program for firefighters and ems, is even available to help our volunteers deal with the emotional impact of the tragedies we're unfortunately exposed to in our line of work. This service is provided free-of-charge. All new members are required to go through an OSHA compliant physical examination as part of the department's respiratory protection program.

Expectations

"Through these doors pass Umatilla's best firefighters..."

We believe this statement and work to make it true on a daily basis. We DO NOT expect you to have any experience, but we will work with you to provide you with the tools to become a great firefighter. You will need to start with a desire to help people and a desire 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 give time at the fire station and to deal with occasional interruptions in your daily routine, dropping what you are doing at the *sound of the bell* to respond to the emergency needs of the community.

To make that happen, we do ask for a few things from you.

Come Around. You will never gain experience without giving some time. We do not expect everyone to live at the firehouse, and we all need personal time. However, at a minimum we ask that you give one night a week from 7pm to 9:00pm every Tuesday night. You are certainly welcome to be at the station more than this, but this is the bare minimum. Each member, regardless of prior certification, will complete a probationary training program to acquaint you with the firefighting tactics, techniques and procedures we use at URFPD. For new members with no experience, this will be done in conjunction with the certification training. For members with firefighting experience, our officers will evaluate your prior certifications and determine what further training you may require.

Attend Trainings. Everyone who joins wants to be able to do everything and drive everything from day one. Unfortunately, that is not the way it works. It takes time and training to be able to safely and effectively handle emergency situations. After all, your safety comes first. By attending our weekly training, we will teach you the essential skills you need to perform basic firefighting and ems operations.

Further, training doesn't end after you earn your initial certification. We hope that you continue to take additional classes in areas that you are interested in (driver/operator, officer, instructor, technical rescue, wildland firefighting, emergency medical services, etc.).

Listen and Learn. We have several members who are true experts in many areas of firefighting. They are happy to share their knowledge with you, but we do not have time to deal with argumentative, uncaring, or “know it all” people. The other part of this expectation is that you need to ask for knowledge or help. We will not force you to sit down and review skills.

Study. The bare minimum time in class and at the station will not make you a good firefighter. You will have to put in additional time and effort. Most of this needs to be focused on the application of the basics. Specifically, how URFPD operates, the capabilities and maintenance of gear, and the storage of that gear on the apparatus are critical to our success on an emergency incident.

To Apply

1. You must meet the following requirements:
 - Be 18 years of age
 - High School Graduate (GED is acceptable)
 - Able to read and write the English language
 - Possess an Oregon driver’s license with an excellent driving record
 - Be in general good health
 - Commit to trainings, weekly meetings, and responding to calls
 - Help with department functions
2. Visit our website www.umatillafire.org and select “Volunteer” from the menu where you will find the application that must be completed.

Contact Us

We hope you’ve found this guide informative. If, after reading this guide, you have additional questions that can’t be answered by reviewing our website, then please feel free to contact us.

Questions about the application process can be directed to Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District at 541-922-3718 or by emailing them to craig.bensen@umatillafire.org

See you at the fire station!

www.umatillafire.org