



Division 11 Personnel Management

Chapter 23 - Volunteer Application Process

March 2009

POLICY

To establish a procedure for all persons who apply to become a new volunteer member or a volunteer member who is seeking reinstatement. A volunteer member requesting a transfer from one volunteer company to another volunteer company within the Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department, will not have to complete Volunteer Recruit School or a physical, unless requested by the Prince George's County Fire Commission as stipulated in Subtitle 11, Section 11-335.

DEFINITIONS

Background Investigation – Includes the Initial Background Investigation, Medical Physical Examination, and Full Background Investigation.

Initial Background Investigation – The volunteer member applicant is checked through Prince George's County, the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), and the Maryland criminal computer data base for disqualifying information.

Full Background Investigation – The volunteer member applicant's fingerprints are submitted to the Maryland Criminal Justice Information System and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) for further inquiries about criminal history in all other states.

Provisional – The volunteer member applicant does not have any local disqualifying criminal history that would preclude them from volunteering and is

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allowed to progress through the rest of the application process.

Not Cleared – Disqualifying information was obtained during the initial/full investigation preventing the volunteer member applicant from volunteering.

Cleared – The volunteer member applicant's submitted fingerprint cards were accepted by the FBI and Maryland and no disqualifying criminal information was obtained. The volunteer member applicant successfully completed all phases of the background investigation.

Expired File – The volunteer member applicant did not complete the process within the allotted time.

Appeal Process – The volunteer member applicant's right to have the Fire Investigations office reconsider a denial of the volunteer to proceed. The volunteer member applicant, if denied by the Major, may then appeal to the Fire Chief.

PROCEDURES

1. General Provisions

This procedure is designed to provide a concise description and breakdown of the steps required when applying for volunteer membership. All necessary forms, to allow for the most efficient means of processing a volunteer member applicant, are described herein. This procedure covers all aspects of the process.



The Fire/EMS Department's Fire Investigations office is responsible for ensuring a comprehensive background investigation for all Volunteer Member Applications (new and reinstatement).

Falsifying information on the application will result in immediate disapproval. Volunteer member applicants with criminal, civil, or traffic offenses may not be eligible for participation.

During the application process, it is the responsibility of the volunteer member applicant to provide the supporting documentation needed to conduct a thorough background investigation.

2. Forms and Applications for All Applicants

Volunteer member applicants must submit two (2) current photographs. Each application and form is to be completed in its entirety. Please print or type all information.

- Application for Membership in the Volunteer Fire/EMS Department - PGC Form #1475 (Revised 11/01).
- Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department Personnel Record - PGC Form #673 (Revised 11/01).
- Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services, Inc., Beneficiary Form - PGC Form #3710 (Revised 11/01). Original copy must be processed with the application folder.
- A 3x5 information card for Department background. PGC Form #4005 (Revised 11/01).
- Authorization for Release of Personal Information. PGC Form #4564 (12/99) must be notarized.
- FBI Department of Justice finger print card (Blue).

- State finger print card Form #CJIS-011 (Orange).

Rejected fingerprint cards will be resubmitted within 10 business days, no exceptions.

Completed applications will be forwarded to the Prince George's County Fire Commission.

3. Minor Volunteer Member Applicants

Volunteer member applicants under 18 years of age must also submit the forms listed below.

- A completed Petition for Leave to Inspect Records of the Juvenile Court – PGC Form #4341 (Revised 6/92), obtained from the Juvenile Court, indicating the applicant has no criminal record.
- State of Maryland, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Division of Labor and Industry – Work Permit for Minor.

The Petition for Leave to Inspect Records of the Juvenile Court form must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Upon completion, the volunteer member applicant must hand deliver the form to the Clerk of the Juvenile Court, located in the Courthouse in Upper Marlboro.

The Clerk of the Juvenile Court will have this form signed by a judge, authorizing the release of information. Typically, the process is completed while the volunteer member applicant waits. It is advisable to contact the Clerk of the Juvenile Court, 301-952-4330, to ensure availability of a judge to sign the necessary release.



After the Clerk of the Juvenile Court has signed the form, it is to be forwarded with the application package.

The volunteer member applicant shall provide a certified copy of his/her juvenile criminal history from his/her last place of residency. If no record exists, this is to be documented. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

Forward all completed applications, forms and cards to the Volunteer Chief or President.

4. Physical Standards and Scheduling

Volunteer member applicants must successfully complete and pass a medical physical examination, based on Departmental policy.

The Fire Commission will, in writing, notify the Volunteer Chief, President, or designee of volunteer member applicants who successfully complete the initial background investigation and are eligible to schedule a physical.

Once the volunteer member applicant has officially been notified, the Fire Commission will notify the contracted health care provider, in writing, that permission to perform a physical is granted.

Scheduling an appropriate date and time for the physical is the responsibility of the volunteer member applicant.

The volunteer member applicant has no more than 60 days from the date of the notification letter to schedule and complete the physical. If the volunteer member applicant fails to complete the physical exam within that time period, his/her name will be placed in the "expired file." If the volunteer member applicant's name has been placed in the "expired file," the volunteer member

applicant or volunteer company will be required to notify the Fire Commission of the volunteer member applicant's intent to continue in the process. The volunteer member applicant must again contact the Fire Commission for permission to schedule a physical.

5. Physical Examination Results

The contracted health care provider shall forward results from the physical examination process to the Fire Commission. If a volunteer member applicant successfully completes the physical examination, the station and volunteer member applicant will be notified by the Fire Commission.

The Risk Management office will be notified and will enter the volunteer member applicant's information into the Medical Questionnaire Database.

6. Issuing Personnel Identification Numbers

A personnel identification number and a personal accountability tag will be issued to the volunteer member applicant after the background investigation is complete and a "cleared" status is submitted by the Applicant Investigator to the Fire Commission.

The Fire Commission maintains the permanent records in the volunteer member applicant's personnel folder.

7. Issuance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Issuance of appropriate PPE will be done in the following manner:

The volunteer member applicant will complete an application to attend Volunteer Recruit School (VRS) and submit it to the



Fire Commission. The Fire Commission will approve the volunteer member applicant's application to attend VRS only if the applicant has successfully completed the initial investigation and the physical examination.

The volunteer member applicant will contact the Fire/EMS Training Academy (FETA) to enroll in VRS.

After enrolling in VRS, the volunteer member applicant will report to Apparatus Maintenance and Logistics to be fit tested and sized for gear.

Once the volunteer member applicant has successfully completed VRS and the background investigation, he/she will be issued the appropriate PPE.

8. Background, File Review, and Appeal

Once an "initial" background investigation is completed by the Applicant Investigator, provided there is no information obtained that precludes the volunteer member applicant from proceeding with a physical and volunteer recruit school training, only then a volunteer member applicant will be given a "provisional" status. This information will be forwarded from the Applicant Investigator to the Fire Commission.

When the "full" background investigation and medical physical examination is completed, provided there is no disqualifying information obtained that precludes the volunteer member applicant from membership, the volunteer member applicant will be given a "cleared" status.

The disposition of the volunteer member applicant's completed background investigation will be communicated to the

Fire Commission and the Fire/EMS Training Academy.

In the event a Volunteer member applicant is "not cleared," he or she may contact the Applicant Investigator to schedule a file review. This will give the volunteer member applicant an opportunity to obtain any appropriate documentation, should the Volunteer Chief or President wish to appeal the decision.

Only the Volunteer Chief or President is authorized to schedule an appeal. The Volunteer Chief or President shall contact the Major in the Fire Investigations office to schedule an appeal hearing.

The outcome of any appeal hearing will be based on Departmental Standards and information provided by the volunteer member applicant and/or the Applicant Investigator. The Major in the Fire Investigations office shall preside at the appeal hearing. The Fire Chief will be notified of the outcome of the hearing and will render the final decision. The Fire Commission, volunteer corporation, volunteer member applicant, and the Fire/EMS Training Academy will be notified, in writing, of the results of the appeal hearing.

9. Responsibilities

The Volunteer Member Application process identifies responsibilities for application preparation, background investigation, scheduling of physical, issuance of a personnel identification number, personal accountability tag, and personal protective equipment (PPE). Each volunteer member applicant shall establish compliance with the minimum qualifications in accordance with the Prince George's County Code, Fire Safety Law, Subtitle 11, Sec. 11-335. Volunteer



Fire Fighters and Volunteer EMS Care Providers.

Completed Volunteer Member Application folders shall be promptly submitted to the Fire Commission at the Cranford/Graves Fire Services Building, 6820 Webster Street, Landover Hills, Maryland 20784. The Fire Commission's telephone number is 301-583-1914.

The Fire Commission will review the Volunteer Member Application folder for completeness and accuracy. The folder will be returned to the appropriate volunteer member applicant for corrections, if necessary. Once the Volunteer Member Application folder is complete and accurate, a legible copy of the application, finger print cards, and two (2) photographs will be forwarded to the Applicant Investigator in the Fire Investigations office.

10. Suspension

It shall be the responsibility of the initiating authority (i.e., the Office of Professional Standards, Volunteer Chief, etc.) to make **immediate notification** on any operational change in status of a volunteer member (i.e., suspension/termination) to the Office of the Fire Chief, Emergency Operations Command, Prince George's County Fire Commission, Office of Professional Standards, Fire Investigations, Volunteer Fire Chief, and Volunteer President. This notification will be followed by a letter within five (5) business days.

11. Termination/Dismissal

As an operational member of the Department, termination/dismissal shall be taken only when the act or acts of the volunteer member which constitute the grounds for disciplinary action, are, in the judgment of the County Fire Chief, serious
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in nature. In deciding whether any act or acts of the volunteer member are sufficiently serious in nature to warrant a dismissal as an operational member of the Department, the County Fire Chief shall rely upon any one (1) of the following criteria as justification for the taking of this action against the volunteer member.

Where the volunteer member commits one of the following acts:

- Commission of a crime;
- Theft of County property;
- Falsification of County reports or documents;
- Intoxication while performing in operations;
- Using, possessing or selling narcotic drugs;
- Possessing unauthorized weapons or explosives; or
- Failure to report a crime.
- Violation of any Departmental General Order(s), Directive(s) and/or regulations.

It shall be the responsibility of the initiating authority to make **immediate notification** on any dismissals of a volunteer member to the Office of the Fire Chief, Emergency Operations Command, Prince George's County Fire Commission, Office of Professional Standards, Fire Investigations, Volunteer Fire Chief, and Volunteer President. This notification will be followed by a letter within five (5) business days.

REFERENCES

Subtitle 11, Section 11-335. (2, 4) of the Prince George's County Code.

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

PGC Form #1475 (Revised 11/01) – Application for Membership in the Volunteer Fire/EMS Department.

PGC Form #673 (Revised 11/01) – Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department Personnel Record.

PGC Form #3710 - (Revised 11/01), Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services, Inc., Beneficiary Form "original copy" must be processed with the application folder.

PGC Form #4005 (Revised 11/01) – A 3x5 information card for Department background.

The volunteer member applicant must provide two (2) current photographs.

PGC Form #4341 (Revised 6/92) – Petition for Leave to Inspect Records of the Juvenile Court.

PGC Form #4564 (12/99) Authorization for Release of Personal Information must be notarized.

FBI Department of Justice Finger Print Card (Blue).

State Finger Print Card Form #CJIS-011 (Orange).

State of Maryland, Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation, Division of Labor and Industry – Work Permit for Minor.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

