

**South West Oxford Fire and Emergency Services –**  
**Firefighter Recruitment**  
**Orientation Guide**



You may be an ideal candidate for a challenging career  
as a volunteer firefighter

**IF YOU .....**

**Want to help others and serve in your community**  
**Enjoy working as a team**  
**Enjoy continuous learning**

## **FOREWORD**

This handbook has been developed as a resource for those men and women who have indicated an interest in becoming a volunteer member of The South-West Oxford Fire and Emergency Services. Participation as a volunteer member of the fire service will bring personal rewards, satisfaction, raise self-esteem and give you a tremendous sense of accomplishment for a job well done. Your involvement will also provide your community with a valuable service that has the potential to touch us all.

However service as a member in our department requires a serious commitment. Your decision to join should not be made quickly. The recruitment handbook has been developed to provide the information needed to help you make that decision.

Making a commitment to serve as a volunteer firefighter is a serious decision, we ask that you take the time to read this booklet and get the facts of what is involved in being a member of the Fire Department.

This handbook contains information on the organization of the Fire Department, training, participation requirements, the nature of our business, and answers to typical questions raised by prospective members. While this booklet will not answer all possible questions about membership, it will provide you with information about the most important areas.

Once you understand what is involved in being a member of a Fire Department, we hope you will find you are able to make the commitment that the community requires. The service provided by Volunteer Firefighters is truly valuable to the citizens of our municipalities and we hope that you are able to contribute to our public safety.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Fire Chief via email at [firechief@swox.org](mailto:firechief@swox.org) or 519-485-7668.

## **GOALS OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The goal of the fire department is to provide fire protection services through a range of programs designed to protect the lives and property of the inhabitants from the adverse effects of fires, sudden medical emergencies or exposure to dangerous conditions created by man or nature; first to the municipality; second to those municipalities requiring assistance through authorized emergency fire service plan and program (mutual aid) activities; and third, to those parties which are provided fire protection by the fire department via authorized agreement.

## **THE NATURE OF OUR BUSINESS**

Firefighting is one of the most diverse and challenging professions known today. It is this diversity that inspires most men and women to enter the service, both as volunteers and career employees. Imagine having to train to prepare yourself to cope with situations, which range from structure fires, childbirth, hazardous chemical spills, heart attacks and almost any imaginable emergency situation in between. This diversity coupled with the fact that your skills may be needed at any time of day, seven days a week, in any kind of weather, and very often under potentially stressful and emotional circumstances makes our contribution to our profession very personally rewarding.

Two basic purposes of the public fire service are first to prevent fire or emergencies from occurring. This is done through fire prevention inspections, fire safety education, and code enforcement programs. Secondly, we are here to prepare ourselves to control fire or emergencies should prevention not prevail. This is done through education, training, pre-incident planning, more training, state of the art equipment and even more training.

This type of work or job is not for everyone. 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. The Fire Department is not for the meek or timid or for those who lose control of their emotions during times of crisis. Our service is one which calls on its member to perform hot, sweaty, dirty, strenuous work, often in uncertain and hazardous environments.

The personal rewards and satisfaction received from being involved in a Fire Department are often beyond description. There is a sense of accomplishment after controlling a building fire, compassion for accident victims, and fulfillment in teaching fire safety. The list could go on and on.

The bottom line in our business is measured by the prevention and reduction of loss of life, pain and suffering, and property damage that we have in our service. We are here and prepared for one reason and that is to provide service to the residents of our communities.

If you feel you have what it takes to meet the challenges of our business, we welcome you to apply to join us.

## **ORGANIZATION**

A typical Fire Department is composed of a variety of divisions and functions. Firefighters are often required to fulfill responsibilities from a number of the divisions and functions.

### ***Division of Administration:***

Budget, reports, records, planning and policy development.

### ***Division of Apparatus, Equipment and Communications:***

Purchase and maintenance of apparatus, equipment and communication services.

### ***Division of Fire Suppression Or Operations:***

- prevent, control and extinguishment of fires.
- investigate fires.
- perform rescue and salvage operations.
- respond and assist at such emergencies as may be required.

### ***Division of Fire Prevention:***

- conduct inspections.
- enforce prevention laws (federal, provincial, municipal).
- examination of plans.
- public education functions.

### ***Division of Training:***

- Administer training program. i.e. Ontario firefighter general level curriculum, specialty training subjects.
- Prepare and conduct examinations of members.

## **PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

In order to achieve the goals of the fire department the following objectives have been established.

1. Identify and review the fire services requirements of the municipality.
2. Provide an administrative process consistent with the needs of the department.
3. Ensure that the fire fighting equipment and operating personnel are available to provide adequate response to a citizen's call within a reasonable length of time.
4. Provide department training to an accepted standard which will ensure the continuous upgrading of all personnel in the latest techniques of fire prevention, fire fighting and control of emergency situations and to co-operate with other municipal departments with respect to management training and other programs.
5. Provide a maintenance program to ensure that all fire protection apparatus, including all equipment, is ready to respond to emergency calls.
6. Provide an effective fire prevention program to:
  - (a) Ensure, through plan examination and inspection, compliance with applicable municipal, provincial, and federal fire prevention statutes, codes and regulations.
  - (b) Reduce and/or eliminate fire hazards.
7. Develop and maintain effective public information systems and educational programs, with particular emphasis on school fire safety programs.
8. Ensure in the event of a major catastrophe in the municipality, assistance to cope with the situation is available from outside departments and other agencies.
9. Develop and maintain a good working relationship with all-federal, provincial and municipal departments, utilities and agencies, related to the protection of life and property.
10. Interact and co-operate with other departments of the corporation respecting the aspects of fire or any given program.

## **TRAINING AND PARTICIPATION**

Over the years, the fire service has evolved into a public safety agency providing highly technical and diverse services. The general public has come to rely on the Fire Department as the "first responder" not only when life and property are threatened by man made and natural disasters, but for seemingly smaller problems as well.

To ensure that all members of the Fire Department are prepared to deliver the best level of services required, training standards have been developed to provide each member with the needed skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to deliver fire and emergency services to the citizens of the municipality.

### **Training Requirements – Volunteer Orientation**

**A.** All volunteers entering the system complete a recruit training program taught by departmental instructors regardless of whether the individual may have prior training or experience. This course will

run over the course of several weekends and will require a commitment of approximately 125 hours of training time.

**B.** Volunteers successfully completing recruit training may begin responding to fire calls. However, they may wear some sort of **Auxiliary designation** and assist fully qualified firefighters only when proper supervision is provided. The **Auxiliary designation** identifies the person as a member in training. New members shall wear an Auxiliary **designation** during the auxiliary period. **Auxiliary designation** fire fighters may not enter burning buildings, participate in activities requiring advanced training, or be subjected to hazardous environments. Length of probation and details of service shall be determined by the Auxiliary Firefighter Job description.

### **Fire Fighter—General Level**

This is an ongoing provincially recognized training program from the Ontario Fire Marshal based on the NFPA Standards. As a new member of the SWOX Fire and Emergency Services you will be **required** to complete a list of required training programs.

### **Proficiency Requirements**

Once the training levels have been achieved, each member is required to attend a performance-based examination to demonstrate the skills required to perform the job safely and effectively.

## **JOB SPECIFICATION - VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER**

### **1. General Statement of Duties:**

Capable and able to respond to an emergency to perform fire fighting duties and other related work as required in the saving of life and property.

### **2. Summary of Firefighter Duties, Responsibilities and Working Conditions:**

- Covered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board coverage to maximum allowable
- Covered with On-duty Accidental Death Insurance Policy
- Must have a Current Hepatitis 'B' vaccination.
- Must maintain a reasonable level of Health and Fitness
- A pager will be Supplied by the Fire Department
- Must maintain a Current First Aid and CPR certificate.
- Must complete a Recruit Training Program at no cost to Municipality prior to activation.
- A firefighter must be committed to continuous training in fire suppression, prevention and emergency aid procedures.
- Due to reasons of safety, facial hair that may affect the integrity of the face piece seal of self-contained breathing apparatus, i.e. beards and sideburns, is not permitted.**
- A firefighter is responsible for performing various duties, under emergency conditions, frequently involving considerable risk, in a safe and efficient manner.
- A firefighter's tasks include routine duties in the maintenance of firefighting equipment and property, carrying out of specific orders and directions as received from a superior officer in the normal course of maintenance duties, training and firefighting.
- A firefighter must respond promptly, safely and efficiently to alarms, obey the orders of the officer in charge, share in the work that is required at emergency scenes, around the fire stations and when otherwise on duty.
- A firefighter must refrain from using offensive statements or language at the emergency scene, in and around the fire stations and when on duty in public.
- A firefighter will be loyal to their fellow firefighters, officers and the department, and at all times conduct themselves in a professional, compassionate and sensitive manner, remembering that he/she is in the eyes of the public while on duty.

**3. Distinguishing Features of the Job:**

- ❑ Responds to fire, rescue and other related emergencies as required.
- ❑ Reports directly to duty/scene officers regarding activities at the fire ground or station.
- ❑ Reports directly to the Fire Prevention Division on all observed fire/life safety matters.
- ❑ Reports equipment deficiencies to duty officer.
- ❑ Completes investigation reports following an emergency as required.
- ❑ Completes regular inspection of assigned protective equipment and station wear.
- ❑ Demonstrates independence of judgement and action in circumstances of extreme emergency where referral to a superior for instruction is not possible.
- ❑ Demonstrates responsibility for rapidly and efficiently performing various duties under emergency conditions frequently involving considerable hazard.
- ❑ Carries out specific orders and directions as received from a superior officer in the normal course of fire fighting operations.

**4. Examples of Work:**

- Ensures the safe operation of all department equipment.
- Assists with salvage operations during and following an emergency.
- Assists with giving first aid or CPR to the injured.
- Assists with Fire Department pre-planning as required.
- Performs such duties as required to further advance public information, public safety and public relations within the department.
- As assigned, performs various maintenance and cleaning tasks on apparatus and equipment following an emergency.
- As assigned, conducts fire fighting/rescue activities at emergency scenes.
- Inspects property at the scene of a fire to prevent re-ignition.
- Attends assigned training sessions to ensure accuracy in fire fighting and rescue methods.
- Participates with in-service training as required.
- Ensures compliance with all health and safety matters in accordance with the Corporations Health and Safety Manual and the Occupational Health and Safety Act Regulation.

**5. Required Knowledge, Skills And Ability**

- Considerable knowledge of modern fire fighting and rescue techniques.
- Considerable mechanical aptitude.
- Considerable knowledge of the rules and regulations governing the fire department and the volunteer activities of the department.
- Thorough knowledge of Provincial Acts relative to the activities of the fire department.
- Thorough knowledge of the Municipality including demographics, major industries, elements and hazardous occupancies.
- Thorough knowledge of the operation of all equipment and methods used in combating, extinguishing and preventing fires and rescue activities.
- Thorough knowledge of First Aid and CPR.
- Agility and strength to do prolonged and arduous work under adverse conditions.
- Ability to react quickly and remain calm under duress and strain.
- Conscientious and dependable and co-operative.
- Must be the holder of a valid drivers licence and capable of responding to an emergency.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**Minimum Requirements for Application:**

1. Valid Driver's License – (forward current abstract within 30 days of application closing date).
2. Medical Certificate – Completed by Applicant's Doctor. **All costs** associated with this requirement are the **sole responsibility of the applicant**.
3. Insurable – (under the Corporation's fleet policy).

4. Proficient in English.
5. No Criminal Record (with occupational relevance) for which a pardon has not been granted.
6. A means of transportation to respond to alarms.
7. Employer Waiver.
8. Provide a certificate of vulnerable sector screening and a check of the Pardoned Sexual Offender Database completed by the applicant's local police service. This isn't required until the end of Stage 5 Interview.

**Other Desirable Skills**

- First Aid Training.
- Class D-Z or higher drivers license
- C.P.R. Training.
- Previous Experience.
- Demonstrated Commitment. (i.e. volunteer service)
- Bilingual (French/Other).
- Related experience (Nursing, Carpentry, Mechanics).
- Previous Pertinent Training (i.e. WHMIS, O.H.S.A.).

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***We want to acknowledge the effort every applicant puts into the pursuit of being a firefighter and the desire each possess to assist in the protection of the Community.***

**THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING JOINING  
THE SWOX FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

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Other Related Experience:

- Do you have previous firefighting experience?  
 Yes  # of Yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ No   
 If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_
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- Do you have military or police service?  
 Yes  # of Yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ No   
 If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_
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- Do you have previous volunteer experience?  
 Yes  # of Yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ No   
 If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Related Skills**

Please complete this section even if a resume is attached. Please check the level of skill appropriate.

1. Some familiarity and competence.
2. Advanced amateur or pos-secondary courses.
3. Certificates or professional experience.

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Level</u>		
	1.	2.	3.
<input type="checkbox"/> Automotive Mechanic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Lineman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Radio Communications Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue Procedures – Canadian Red Cross OR St. John’s Ambulance, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Firefighting Practices and Terminology - Ontario Fire College OR - Community College, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Pumps, Valves, Sprinkler Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Building Trades or Inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Read Blueprints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletic or Sports Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Scuba Diving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Water/Rescue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Confined Space Rescue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> High Angle Rescue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Search and Rescue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Hazardous Materials Response
- WHMIS
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Coaching/Teaching/Facilitation Skills
- First Aid Course  Hold current certificate? Yes  No
- Driver's Licence  Identify Class: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you had any experience or training in driving heavy vehicles? Yes  No
- Have you any other special driving skills or training (e.g. accident avoidance, skid control, etc.)? Yes No

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have permission from your employer to leave your place of work immediately when the fire alarm sounds? Yes  No

Do you have a personal means of transportation to respond to fire alarms?  
Yes  No

Please provide any additional information or skills you feel may be pertinent to this position:

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I understand that any misrepresentation made by me in connection with this application will be sufficient cause for cancellation of the application, and if I have been employed, for termination from the Corporation. I authorize the Fire Chief to make such enquiries respecting the foregoing information as may be deemed necessary.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_