

# VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER

## Description

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Description Created: December 1, 2008

### **THIS IS AN UNPAID VOLUNTEER POSITION IN SOME INSTANCES A REIMBURSEMENT TYPE STIPEND MAY BE APPLICABLE**

#### **PURPOSE AND DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:**

Volunteer Firefighters assist the San Diego County Fire Authority (SDCFA) in firefighting activities and provision of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). They respond to alarms as members of fire crews to protect life and property using various fire apparatus, equipment, tools, and devices, while ensuring their proper use and maintenance. Teamwork, personal investment, and self-sacrifice are the basis of the social framework of a Volunteer Firefighter. Volunteer Firefighters also provide a variety of community services.

Firefighting requires each individual member to perform a variety of duties, be responsible for responding to calls within the community, and sometimes assist other neighboring communities during mutual aid responses. This can range from structural firefighting, wild land firefighting, removing severely injured people from auto accidents, treating people who have been victims of crimes, to delivering babies. Volunteer Firefighters will frequently participate in emergency medical service activity. Volunteer Firefighters are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians. Emergency Medical Technicians administer varying degrees of emergency medical aid to injured people under extreme conditions involving trauma, illness, and personal tragedy. In addition, Volunteer Firefighters may be required to perform other duties as assigned.

#### **EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:**

Volunteer Firefighters: carry and advance a charged hose line into a burning building or steep terrain for brushfires; enter buildings under adverse fire conditions; make forcible entry into buildings; ventilate buildings; search for fire victims, sometimes searching by touch only or crawling; remove victims dragging or carrying them to safety; work in high, open, and confined places; carry, raise, and extend ladders to assist victims down ladders and away from danger; carry heavy equipment and power tools up and down ladders or stairs; use a variety of tools to remove walls and ceilings; perform fire and emergency medical duties; operate power extrication equipment, to assist in patient removal from motor vehicles; carry patients over rough, or uneven terrain, for considerable distances; drive light duty vehicles and large fire apparatus, in congested traffic and unsafe road conditions; respond to alarms; may go from a sound sleep to full activity and exertion in a matter of minutes; identify and appropriately respond to sounds produced by structural collapses, back draft, flashover, breaking glass, other firefighters, sirens, traffic, and victims; identify hazardous materials and codes by color; interview people and gather information on their medical history or circumstances surrounding an incident; prepare incident reports, inspection reports, and medical reports either by hand or computer, using proper, detailed description and appropriate grammar; and perform general housekeeping duties in and around the fire station and kitchen duties.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

Each volunteer brings a unique combination of experience, skills, knowledge, and abilities to the team. Knowledge that is particularly applicable to this type of assignment includes: principles, practices, and procedures of modern firefighting and protection of life and property in multiple fire situations (i.e., structure, vehicle, brush, hazardous materials); fire apparatus, equipment, tools, devices, facilities, and their proper use and maintenance; and computers and computer programs that assist in the accomplishment of assigned tasks.

Individuals interested in applying to be an SDCFA Volunteer Firefighter should possess the skills or ability to: work effectively under the stress of emergency situations and calmly and effectively handle others in emergency situations; hold a charged hose line for long periods of time and shut off a flowing line, while maintaining control of the hose line; operate power tools in awkward positions, such as cutting on a sloping roof and cutting from a ladder; drive light duty vehicles and large fire apparatus during various times of the day; read, learn, and remember new and updated detailed complex information, such as hazardous materials information, medical information, or changes in policy or procedures, and the ability to apply information in a logical manner; maintain composure, confront stressful situations, and withstand the effects of repeated exposure to traumatic situations; engage in moderate to strenuous physical activity; learn and utilize appropriate radio protocol with other fire and

emergency medical services personnel; take and follow orders from supervisors; effectively communicate orally (shouting at times) and in writing in English; establish and maintain effective working relationships with community personnel, other fire agencies, outside agencies, and the general public; and use computers and computer programs that assist in the accomplishment of assigned tasks and proper documentation of incidents.

In order to be considered for an SDCFA Volunteer Firefighter position, an applicant must be a high school graduate or have passed the GED Requirements, be able to read and write English at a level required for successful job performance, and be at least 18 years of age. Graduates from CSA/Volunteer Firefighter Training Academies and those with certificates of completion of fire service education/training or previous experience as volunteers in firefighting are strongly encouraged to consider applying for this volunteer opportunity. Knowledge of emergency medical rescue methods and equipment and operation of paramedic apparatus is valuable.

### **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

Volunteer firefighters must possess the physical, mental, and emotional ability to successfully perform the essential and often arduous duties of such an assignment. The physical characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met: have the ability to frequently wear a firefighter turnout coat, helmet, self-contained breathing apparatus (backpack and cylinder weighing approximately 44 pounds) and gloves; climb a ladder of at least 35 feet; carry a ladder weighing approximately 75 pounds; smell, hear, and respond to emergencies within minutes; walk on uneven ground or walk for long periods of time; bend, strain, stretch, squat, contort, push, pull, twist, carry, crawl, climb, walk with weight (for considerable distances), or lift/remove a victim and place on a stretcher; assist victims down ladders; carry fire hose and other heavy equipment up and down ladders, stairs, or hills and steep topography; hold a flowing hose line for long periods of time and shut off a flowing line while maintaining control of the hose line; and use depth perception and peripheral vision in emergency situations. Must be able to continuously move the neck upward, downward and sideways.

### **Working Conditions**

Volunteer Firefighters will be called upon to respond and work in all types of weather and less than ideal conditions. They may be assigned to remote areas. They may work 24-hour shifts, sometimes on weekends and holidays and live in a fire station with others during shifts; Volunteers could be exposed to, and have to enter, hazardous atmospheres and areas and will be expected to work in a safe manner. They must be able to provide emergency medical response and remain calm. They may be exposed to various diseases. They will likely engage in strenuous physical activity during the course of firefighting and other emergency activities. Volunteers may be exposed to physical and emotional hazards associated with firefighting, emergency medical response and rescue.

### **License**

All applicants must possess a valid California Driver License, which must be maintained while volunteering. All applicants must be insurable. Those applicants interested in volunteer assignments as Driver Operators or Company Officers must have and maintain, at minimum, a valid restricted Class B Fire Fighter California Driver License. Volunteer Firefighter applicants must already possess, or have the ability to obtain CPR, EMT, Defibrillation/Combitube cards/certificates, and proof of current personal automobile insurance, prior to beginning any firefighting activities.

### **Additional Information**

SDCFA Volunteer Firefighters must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Successful completion of a background investigation conducted by the County of San Diego Department of Human Resources is required. Misdemeanor and/or felony convictions may be disqualifying depending on type, number, severity, and recency. In addition, personal references and employment information will be verified.

Appointment to this volunteer assignment will be contingent upon successful completion of a pre-assignment medical examination, which includes drug screening. All candidates must demonstrate the ability to perform the essential functions of a Volunteer Firefighter assignment. The physical characteristics described are representative of those that must be met to successfully perform the essential functions of a volunteer firefighter. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable an individual with qualified disabilities to perform the essential functions, on a case-by-case basis.

### **How to Apply**

Applications may be obtained at fire stations within the SDCFA. An online form will be available soon on the County of San Diego Department of Planning & Land Use website on the San Diego County Fire Authority's page. Completed applications may be submitted to the Fire Chief at the station to which the applicant is interested in serving or the Business Manager at CALFIRE Headquarters or the Julian/Cuyamaca Fire Protection District. All required documentation, must be submitted with the application.