



VICTOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

GUIDEBOOK FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS



Dear Prospective Member,

Volunteering with our organization will bring personal rewards and satisfaction, raise self-esteem, and provide you with a tremendous sense of accomplishment and pride in a job well done. It also provides your community with a valuable service that has the potential to touch us all.

Service as a member of the Victor Fire Department (VFD) requires a serious commitment. Your decision to join should be made carefully, with your family's support. This guide will provide the information you need to make a good decision that is right for you, us, and our community.

Once you understand what is involved, we truly hope you will make the necessary commitment with us. The service provided by our volunteers is valuable to the residents, businesses, and visitors of our community. We hope you are willing and able to contribute to Victor's public safety.

Our mission is to provide quick, definitive, and helpful service in all emergencies we are called to respond to, within and outside our protection district. We will continue to train our members to be as good or better at what they do than any other department, paid or volunteer.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please contact our recruiter at recruitment@victorfire.com with any questions, no matter how small.

We look forward to having you as a member,

The Officers and Members of the Victor Fire Department.

Table of Contents

Why volunteer?	2
About Us	3
How We Are Organized	4
How We Respond	5
Volunteering Opportunities.....	6
Join Today and Enjoy These Benefits.....	7
Expectations of VFD Volunteers	8
The Process.....	9
A Few Last Words	10

Why volunteer?

The fire service is a diverse and challenging vocation, one dedicated to helping those in need. This is the most common attraction for men and women to join our ranks.

Different people volunteer for different reasons. Action-oriented people enjoy the excitement and adrenaline rush of emergency services. Some see the volunteer fire service as an alternative to “driving a desk” all day by allowing them to drive a fire truck at night.

Many like the feeling they get when they help people in their time of need; some feel an obligation to serve the community. Others just want to belong to a team, the community insiders. Whatever motivates a volunteer, everyone gets the 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 raging structure fires to childbirth, from mangled car collisions to heart attacks, and almost every imaginable emergency in between. This diversity is coupled with the fact that these skills are needed at any time of the day or night, seven days a week, in any kind of weather, and often under stressful and emotional circumstances. This is also what makes our profession so rewarding.

We realize the fire service – which includes fire, rescue, and medical emergencies – is not for everyone, but believe that volunteering can be. There is plenty of work to be done on or behind the scenes, including running the business of the VFD.

The personal rewards and satisfaction gained from our actions is often beyond description. There is the sense of accomplishment when you stop fire in its tracks, compassion when you free accident victims, and fulfillment from teaching fire safety.

Volunteering is one of the most important decisions you might make. We hope you give this decision the time and serious consideration it deserves, and decide to join our ranks.

❖ *Have you ever seen or heard the trucks respond – and wondered what was happening?*

❖ *Have you ever witnessed or come upon a collision – and wished you could help?*

❖ *Have you been there when someone was stricken with sudden illness – and wanted to assist?*

❖ *Are you looking for lifelong friendships, challenges, and rewards?*

❖ *Do you want to become involved in your community?*

About Us

It's about people. Fire engines don't put out fires – people do. Defibrillators don't save lives – people do. The Jaws of Life never rescued anyone on their own – it takes people.

The Victor Fire Department team of volunteers is comprised of your neighbors, your friends, and maybe even your relatives. They're people just like you – with families, jobs, and active lifestyles. It's not that they necessarily have the time; rather, they have the heart to make the time.

Formed in 1904 after a series of fires in the Village of Victor destroyed three-fourths of Main Street over ten years, today Victor Fire Department is a premier fire department in the region. The community of Victor is in a remarkable state of change, and with it, the fire service needs are changing as well. In 2019, we went from a Village-owned department to a stand-alone Fire District. This did not change who we are; all it did was change the responsibility of who 'pays the bills.'

We take emergency services very seriously. While volunteer in nature, we realize that the services we provide are a critical component of the lifesaving



services available to the people of our community. This is a professional organization, committed to providing service 24/7/365.

Our fleet currently has a quint, rescue-engine, heavy duty rescue, urban interface engine, and several command and support vehicles. The funding for this equipment comes from the taxpayers of our community, and we take the pride in being outstanding stewards of the finances, buildings, and equipment we have been assigned.

Our membership historically ranges from 45 – 55 volunteers, who serve in a variety of specialties to support our mission. We offer a long list of benefits including in-house, local and national training, flexible duty assignments, and a friendly, fun, professional atmosphere where you'll find a second family.

How We Are Organized

We have three distinct yet tightly integrated units of our organization –the membership, the operations, and the District.

All volunteer firefighters are members of the Victor Fire Department, Inc., which we call the “Inc.” for short. This ‘leg of the stool’ is led by the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and the board of directors, all of whom are elected annually by the membership. Their responsibilities are to provide a benefit for the volunteers such as social events. They also own Firemans’ Field and the original firehouse at 5 West Main St, which are used for a variety of functions for the Inc.



The operations leg, which is what people picture when they think of a fire department, is led by the Chief. He oversees the chain of command of the line officers. This chain of command is vital in that it provides clear direction, lines of communications, and accountability for everybody involved in the chain. They report directly to the third leg of the stool, the Board of Fire Commissioners (the District), who are elected by the residents.

At incidents and drills, the chain of command provides for identifying areas of responsibility and accountability for the personal safety of every individual working within the incident command system. Under this system, each level reports to one supervisor.

Teamwork is the foundation of our success – during an emergency and back at the station. Before you can become a good leader, or even a good firefighter, you need to learn to be a good follower. Knowing and understanding how you fit into the chain of command will be one of the most important lessons you can learn with VFD.



How We Serve

Victor Fire protects a growing community, and adapts to meet the changing needs. We respond to over 500 calls annually.

Volunteers play the critical role in fulfilling the mission of the fire department.

Our primary role is to respond to emergencies as dispatched. We are dispatched through the Ontario County 911 communications center via a voice pager. Available personnel respond to the fire house to staff the pre-determined response plan, depending on the type of call. Additional crews often will remain in quarters to staff additional apparatus if needed or to cover simultaneous calls.

The emergencies we respond to include: fires of all types, vehicle collisions, hazardous conditions (gas leaks, wires down), medical incidents such as cardiac events, and weather-related events. Some calls we mitigate the problem, such as fire suppression. Others we make the scene safe until technicians can complete their work. We are a non-transporting, basic life support provider.

As our call volume has increased, we have added additional opportunities for staffing. We have a student bunk-in program. These college students are from fire departments outside our area that live rent-free in exchange for providing duty time. We anticipate adding limited career firefighters, focusing on augmenting our daytime needs.

Training is a large portion of our volunteer's available time. We hold department-wide weekly drills on Monday nights covering a variety of topics. Specialized recruit training is held on a separate night for the new members. There is also opportunity for members to train individually or in small groups, especially when working to qualify to operate trucks or to become cleared on certain tasks. Training is mostly hands-on, from practice on hitting hydrants and throwing ladders, cutting apart cars for extrication, or going into live fire evolutions.

We also play a role in our community, through hosting holding community events and fundraisers. We provide fire prevention classes for schools and other groups, and often will install smoke detectors for elderly residents. You likely have seen us participating in Parks & Rec events or maybe heard us escorting one of the Victor School's championship teams back into town.

Our members record their service with a point system. Members earn points by responding to emergency calls, drills, training classes, meetings, and fund-raising events. This system allows us to provide some small rewards to the members and ensure we are meeting minimum requirements to maintain membership.

Volunteering Opportunities

We offer a variety of opportunities to volunteer in the area you feel most comfortable with, where you feel you can contribute the most, and where you'll benefit the most from volunteering. All training is provided free of charge to the member – they just need to give their time. Our membership is organized into the following groupings:

Interior Firefighter

If getting dirty, hot, and physical is your game, this is for you. We offer virtually unlimited opportunities to explore the exciting world of firefighting and the training to do it safely. Interior firefighters are the highest skill set, trained in not only fire suppression, but automobile rescue, hazardous material operations, as well as all the other skills.

Exterior Firefighter

For every team of interior firefighters, there are a larger number of exterior firefighters supporting their mission. Exterior firefighters respond on the apparatus and are similarly prepared to do same tasks, but are not qualified to enter the burning buildings. They drive the vehicles, operate hydrants, throw ladders, set up scene lighting, and run on-scene support such as rehab.

Fire Police

As interior firefighters are focused on stabilizing the scene, a separate team of firefighters establish a safe perimeter and focuses their attention on keeping the public and traffic from entering the hazardous areas.

EMS

Some people want to utilize their skills by helping at medical emergencies. All firefighters are trained in First Aid, CPR, and AED usage. A few go on to become Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), often going on to use these skills as a part time job with ambulance providers.

Service Members

Beyond the front lines of emergency responses, we are a large not-for-profit organization with many moving parts. Record keeping, logistics, computer, public relations, maintenance, community education and administrative functions, there is plenty to do behind the scenes. Anyone who does not have the desire to participate directly in emergency services, or those who cannot meet the physical demands, can serve in this capacity. Service members do not participate in emergency responses and must only attend a limited number of mandatory training events a year.

All categories of membership require completion of our full membership process and are considered members of our organization, with the full benefits therein.

Join Today and Enjoy These Benefits

A second family & lifelong friendship

At Victor Fire, you'll find a second family waiting for you. The members share a common bond to serve their community. Lifelong friendships have been formed within our membership.

Quality Training

You provide the commitment and we provide all the training for FREE. Training ranges from in-house to state certified courses to even international training opportunities. We are committed to provide the best training in the areas of people's interest.

Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP)

This local and state supported program rewards volunteers' service with a financial benefit after 20 years of continuous active duty.

Equipment

We protect our firefighters with the latest technology in fire resistive coats, pants, boots, gloves, hoods and helmets. We provide all the necessary equipment for your assigned tasks.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

We see people on their worst day, and recognize that it can take an emotional toll on us individually. We provide an employee assistance program (EAP) which provides for members and their families free counseling on a variety of areas such as emotional, addiction, and financial needs.

Social Events

We have an annual banquet, recognizing the year's accomplishments; clam bake/ steak roast; installation dinner; and Christmas party. We often schedule a trip to baseball and hockey games, do turkey bowl football and paintball games. Parades, parties, picnics, fundraisers – we not only work hard, we play hard.

Memberships

While an active member of VFD, our members are offered a BJs membership card at a discounted rate, and are enrolled in the Fire Association of the State of NY (FASNY). Through FASNY, members receive disability and added life insurance policies.

Facilities

Members have unlimited access to the Firemans' Field, 5 West, and the fire house, including use of the kitchen and workout room.

State Tax Credit

Volunteer firefighters enjoy an annual tax credit on their State taxes.

Expectations of VFD Volunteers

Although no previous experience or training is required, desire to help people is not enough. You need courage, dedication, and a willingness to learn new skills and face new challenges. Our service is one that calls on its members to perform dirty, strenuous work, often in uncertain and hazardous environments.

Our volunteers must be team players, respecting each other's roles and contributions. You need to be able to deal with interruptions to your lifestyle, dropping what you're doing at the "sound of the bell" to respond to the emergency needs of your fellow citizens.

A recruit can expect to spend between 5-8 hours each week on fire department business. This entails meetings, training, emergency responses, and other miscellaneous activities. Some weeks will be more and others much less. The days of the week and the times may vary depending on the level of activity. Once trained, usually after a year, members typically spend 4-6 hours a week at the firehouse on department business.

We've listed a lot of the benefits you can expect from us, and in return there are certain objectives we expect you to meet:



You must be physically, intellectually, and emotionally capable of performing duties according to your area of assignment.

You must remember you always represent VFD and our community always, whether actively engaged on duty or not.

You must make the minimum number of required points to maintain membership. Moreover, we challenge active members to make 25% of the calls, 50% of the drills, and one duty night a month.

You must recognize the process of learning our craft is never-ending.

Successful firefighters are constantly taking classes, attending seminars, and improving their skills.

All personnel are responsible to participate with the Inc. functions, such as the monthly meetings, fundraisers, and related work details.

The Process

Potential members must complete a background check prior to completing these steps necessary to gain membership.

- ✓ Applicants must be at least 16 years of age.
- ✓ Your application needs to be filled out completely and accurately.
- ✓ After your application is submitted to the investigations committee, it will be sent to the Ontario County Sheriff Office for a criminal background check, as well as a sex offender and arson check.
- ✓ During the background investigation, you will be called for an interview and are expected to attend at least two Monday night drills. The interview is informal and gives the committee an opportunity to ask you a few questions, provide you with information about the department, and explain the commitment of being a Victor Volunteer Firefighter. You will be given the chance to ask any questions you may have about the department.
- ✓ After your interview, the committee will give its recommendation to the department, who makes the first vote to approve or disapprove your membership.
- ✓ If approved by the membership, the application is forwarded to the Board of Fire Commissioners for approval.
- ✓ Once approved for membership, new members must complete a physical, which is paid for by the department.
- ✓ New members are placed on a 6-month probationary period where they have a chance to attend drills and monthly meetings, and participate in the recruit training program. The recruit training is usually held separately from the regular Monday night drills, and is tailored for the areas you are interested in becoming qualified.
- ✓ Within the first two years of membership, firefighters are expected to attend one of the several different New York State courses, depending on which area they wish to participate in. These are generally held at the Ontario County Safety Training Facility.

Transfers

Active members transferring from other departments follow the same approval process. Once a member, any state or national training courses are accepted, and the transfer is given the opportunity to challenge through the recruit training at a faster rate.

A Few Last Words

We hope we have been able to answer your questions about our organization and what it means to become a volunteer firefighter. We appreciate your interest, and hope you consider joining.

Often, our members relate the hardest part is taking that first step in the door. We're here to help you to achieve your goals and learn valuable life skills. Not just in the fire department, but in life. Many of us are municipal or civil service employees and our experiences can help you on your career path.



Over the past ten years, from our ranks, we have seen: 6 volunteers become career firefighters, 5 enlist in the military, 2 hired as NYS Fire Instructors and 4 use their skills as EMTs in paid positions. We have also had members go on to be dispatchers, county fire instructors, law enforcement officers. Some have reported that their experiences have helped them to get private sector jobs in finance and fire protection. Several of our college aged volunteers have participated in ride along and bunk in programs all over the Northeast. We feel our system has played an important part in helping these volunteers become public servants.

When a man becomes a firefighter his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What he does after that is all in the line of work

- **Chief Ed Croker, FDNY**
- **1899-1911**

Contact us

If you have any questions regarding this guide or the application process, contact us by emailing recruitment@victorfire.com or calling us at 585-924-3321.

Ready to Join?

Just complete and return the application and our membership committee will get in touch with you.

Thank you for your interest in the Victor Fire Department.

