

	ARLINGTON COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	
	OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF	
	SUBJECT: Volunteer Applicant Process	SOP# VOL - 01
	APPROVED: Edward P. Plaughter Fire Chief	Initiated 11-01-02
	APPROVED: Paul Schomburg Volunteer Coordinator	Revised

A. PURPOSE

The health, wellness, and safety of all fire department personnel, including volunteers, are of utmost importance to the success of the Arlington County Fire Department (ACFD) and Arlington County Fire and Rescue Association (ACFRA) mission. To this end, a consistent process by which volunteer applicants are screened and approved for operational and administrative status must be established. This process must include appropriate criminal history research, motor vehicle records research, and personal data collection.

B. GENERAL

Volunteer applicants must complete the entire application process prior to engaging in practical evolutions during training or fireground situations. Volunteer applicants will not be issued personal protective equipment or uniforms until the application process is completed. The primary responsibility for administering the application process will reside with the ACFRA Volunteer Coordinator, or their designee.

C. DEFINITIONS

Volunteer Review Panel: A committee consisting of the Volunteer Coordinator, Chair of the ACFRA Volunteer Leadership Committee, and the ACFD Health and Wellness Officer.

Operational Status: Member is eligible to participate in fire and emergency medical services training and responses.

Administrative Status: Member is eligible to participate in administrative functions such as fund raising, public education, recordkeeping, canteen services, classroom training sessions, and other support functions not requiring work in hazardous environments. Administrative members must be designated into one of the following categories: Fire Service Instructor, Fire Safety Educator, Fire Safety Inspector, or General Administration.

D. POLICY

1. Application Documents

- a. All volunteer applicants must submit a complete ACFRA application packet to be considered for operational status. The original packet will be submitted to the ACFRA Volunteer Coordinator through the respective volunteer company chief once the applicant has been accepted into probationary membership with a member company of the ACFRA. Incomplete or photocopies of application packets will be returned to the company for completion before any evaluation of the member continues.
- b. The complete ACFRA application packet will consist of the following documents:
 - 1) ACFRA #1 – Application for Volunteer Membership
 - 2) ACFRA #2 – Medical Certification/Survey
 - 3) ACFRA #3 – Authorization for Motor Vehicle Record and Criminal History Check
 - 4) ACFRA #4 – Employee Data Form
 - 5) ACFRA #5 – Hepatitis B Vaccination Authorization
 - 6) ACFRA #6 – Insurance Beneficiary Designation
- c. Additionally, the following documents must be included with submitted applications:
 - 1) Local Criminal Check – Obtained through the Arlington County Courthouse
 - 2) Driving Record – Obtained through Motor Vehicle Department in which the applicant is licensed to drive
 - 3) Credit Report – Obtained through Equifax Credit Services
 - 4) Letter of Reference – Letter of reference from someone other than an immediate family member
- d. All applicants must report to the ACFD Fire Marshals Office to submit their fingerprints for FBI screening. The applicant will be responsible for paying the associated fee for this service.
- e. Applicants must indicate on their Application the status for which they are applying, Administrative or Operational.
- f. Administrative applicants do not need to submit their Driving Record or forms ACFRA #2 and ACFRA #5. Operational applicants must submit all forms in the application packet.
- g. The ACFRA Volunteer Coordinator will forward copies of the complete application packet to the Office of the Fire Marshal for completion of the appropriate background checks. A copy of the Employee Data Form will be forwarded to the Chief of Administrative Services for filing. The Volunteer Coordinator will maintain the original application documents in a confidential file.

- h. The Office of the Fire Marshal will make reasonable efforts to complete the necessary background checks in a timely fashion. The Volunteer Coordinator will be provided with a designated point of contact within the Office of the Fire Marshal to confirm the status of pending background investigations.

2. Hepatitis B Vaccinations

Upon successful completion of the appropriate background checks by the Office of the Fire Marshal, the applicant will be given the opportunity to receive the first shot in the series of Hepatitis B vaccinations. The Arlington County Department of Human Services will administer these vaccinations.

3. Applicant Approval

Upon receipt of an acceptable background investigation from the Office of the Fire Marshal, the Volunteer Coordinator will approve the probationary member for issuance of a fire department ID card. The issuance of ID cards and other equipment will be conducted per ACFD Standard Operating Procedure #VOL 02-03, Personal Protective Equipment and Uniform Management for Volunteers.

4. Applicant Denial

- a. If any portion of the application process determines that the volunteer applicant is not suitable for participation with the ACFD and ACFRA, the Volunteer Coordinator will notify the respective chief of the appropriate volunteer company in writing. The applicant may appeal the decision via their respective volunteer company chief to the ACFRA Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will provide any pertinent information to the Volunteer Review Panel for examination and final resolution of any disputes that exist.
- b. Denial of operational status does not necessarily prohibit personnel from participating in their respective volunteer company as an administrative member. The Volunteer Coordinator in cooperation with the Volunteer Review Panel will address approval for administrative status on a case-by-case basis.
- c. Applicants who are denied for operational status may reapply for operational status after 12 months.
- d. Ultimate authority to accept or decline a volunteer applicant for operational status will reside with the ACFD Fire Chief.