



A Prospect's Guide to Joining the

UNITED COMMUNITIES VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT





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Dear Prospective Member,

As the leadership of the United Communities Volunteer Fire Department (UCVFD), we are committed to providing the most effective and efficient fire, rescue and emergency medical services to our community. You will find that volunteering with the department 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 will also provide our community with a valuable service that has the potential to touch all of us. However, service as a member of our Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) organization requires a serious commitment. Your decision to join the department should not be made in haste.

This guide has been developed to provide the information you need to make an effective decision that is right for you and the department. Once you understand what's involved in being a UCVFD member, we hope you will make the commitment needed to be an asset of the organization. The services provided by our members is truly valuable to the citizens, businesses and visitors of our community. We hope you are able to contribute to our community's public safety. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact our recruiter at recruitment@ucvfd.org should you have any questions or require further information.

We look forward to having you as a member,

The Officers and Members of the
United Communities Volunteer Fire Department



Introduction

The United Communities Volunteer Fire Department (UCVFD) is a membership organization, 100% volunteer, served by over 85 individuals comprised of auxiliary, cadet and administrative members who function within the Queen Anne's County Fire, EMS and Rescue service delivery system.

Our first due response area encompasses in excess of 16 square miles with nearly 2,500 households and is surrounded by water on three sides. There is no public water supply anywhere in the primary response area. From time to time, we may be called upon to provide mutual aid to other jurisdictions throughout the region and we do so with professionalism and a commitment to serve.

The department operates with multiple divisions all reporting through a central structure to the Board of Directors. The President serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors and there are three members elected each year in an at-large capacity. The Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of the department also serve on the Board of Directors as voting members making up the Administration Division of the UCVFD.

The Fire Chief (Chief of Department) is responsible for the day to day emergency operations of the department and all duties and functions associated with emergency response. Their activities are provided through the Suppression Division and the EMS Division, which are both headed by the Assistant Chiefs. The Chief and Line officers are in place to provide leadership, command and control when emergency services are requested. They also carry out an array of station and departmental duties and responsibilities.

The Auxiliary President manages the support activities carried out by the UCVFD Auxiliary Division and works to provide resources that maintain and enhance the capabilities of the organization.

The UCVFD also operates a Cadet Program that is managed by several members of the department. The program allows young children to become familiar with fire, EMS and rescue operations and how the UCVFD functions.

This department takes great pride in the service we provide to the citizens of our community and the county. We welcome you to our family and we hope you will continue to provide this service with us for many years to come. As a member of this department, you represent us in everything that you do. Thus it is imperative to maintain a high level of integrity when dealing with your colleagues and to those we serve.



Our Mission

The Mission of the United Communities Volunteer Fire Department is:

“The preservation of life, property and the environment for the citizens of Southern Kent Island through incident response, public education and continuous training. It is our goal to provide fire, rescue and emergency medical services of the highest caliber to anyone that calls on us in their time of need.”

Vision

The Vision of the United Communities Volunteer Fire Department is:

- **To develop a series of supportive initiatives within the organizational framework of the department to ensure that an adequate level of resources are always available to the membership for the explicit purpose of delivering fire/rescue and Emergency Medical Services to the citizens of our response area.**
- **To develop a multi-faceted program approach to increasing the department's ability to reach out into the community for the purpose of ensuring that every expectation of our citizens is met.**
- **To develop a methodology by which our organization can properly plan for and address the ever-increasing demands being placed upon the department by the citizens we serve.**
- **To develop a process where the organization can ensure that a high level of quality is provided in all we do in the delivery of emergency and non-emergency services through efforts that address the needs of our customers to include safety, protection of property, preservation of life and overall security of our communities.**
- **To develop a service delivery system throughout the organization that is responsive and timely to the emergency needs of our community while addressing the emerging challenges of the world in which we live in to include disaster preparedness, terrorism response and adequate public facilities.**

Core Values

DOING THINGS THE R.I.G.H.T. W.A.Y.

RESPONSIBILITY

Taking responsibility for your actions.

INTEGRITY

Having the morals needed to do the job right.

GUIDANCE

For your peers and to our first due citizenry.

HONESTY

Telling the truth when it counts.

TEAMWORK

Looking out for our fellow brothers and sisters.

WORK ETHIC

Putting forth 100% on all of the projects.

AMBITION

The desire to get the job done.

YOU

It all starts with you.

What to expect from us:

- **An inclusive and supportive environment reinforced with fun family events throughout the year that foster camaraderie and a close working relationship.**
- **Annual family events to create a sense of inclusion.**
- **Benefits including but not limited to:**
 - **Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) annual tax deduction, empowered sense of belonging and commitment of support.**
 - **Free Training and Education.**
 - **Positive experience of providing service to our community.**
 - **Quality Emergency apparatus, tools and equipment.**



What we expect from you:

- **Acknowledgement and commitment to adhere to the Rules and Regulations of the UCVFD.**
- **Assist with bringing new members to the department when applicable.**
- **Commitment to attend training programs and complete certification processes.**
- **Dedicate time to assist your fellow community members.**
- **Unbiased Public service.**
- **Respect for your officers, peers and subordinates.**

Why Volunteer?

Different people volunteer for different reasons. Action-oriented people enjoy the excitement and commitment to provide emergency services. Some see the volunteer fire service as an alternative to 'driving a desk by 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 and some feel it's their obligation to serve the community. Others just want to belong to the team.



Whatever it is that motivates you to volunteer, everyone gets the satisfaction of being at their best when others are dealing with what is often the worst day in their life. Imagine having to prepare yourself to cope with situations that range from structure fires, to childbirth, to hazardous chemical spills, to heart attacks, to almost any imaginable emergency in between. This diversity is coupled with the fact that these skills may be needed at any time of the day or night, seven days a week, in any kind of weather, and very often under potentially stressful and emotional circumstances. These same factors are what make our profession so personally rewarding. We realize that firefighting and providing emergency medical services is not for everyone but we believe that volunteering can be. There is plenty of work to be done on or behind the scenes – including running the business of the UCVFD. The personal rewards and satisfaction gained from what we do is often beyond description. There is the sense of accomplishment when you assist with controlling a building fire, joy and elation when a child is born, compassion for accident victims, and fulfillment from supporting community risk reduction. The bottom line in our success as emergency service providers is measured by the loss of life, pain and suffering, and the property damage we have prevented and reduced. Volunteering in emergency services is one of the most important decisions you might make. We hope that you give this decision the time and serious consideration it deserves and decide to join our ranks.



Our Volunteer Opportunities

Fire & EMS

If getting hot, dirty and physical is your game, this is for you. We offer opportunities to explore the exciting world of firefighting and the training to do it safely. Whether you assist with providing emergency services or engage in the actual delivery of emergency services, there's plenty for everyone to do on the scene of emergency incidents. The training is free, but the rewards are priceless.

EMS Only

If you enjoy helping people in medical emergencies, we'll provide the training absolutely FREE. In cooperation with the State of Maryland and Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, we'll train you in CPR and to be an Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT). We'll also help you obtain Paramedic training if you decide to extend your certifications to that higher level. If you already have your EMT or Paramedic certification in another state or fire department, we'll help you with the logistics and costs of getting Maryland-certified. EMS Only members are not required to certify in firefighting courses, however, all Fire/EMS members are cross-trained in EMS and required to complete both Firefighter and at least EMR (Emergency Medical Responder) training within 24 months of joining.

Administrative & Support

Beyond the front lines of emergency responses, the UCVFD is a non-profit community corporation with many moving parts. From accounting, logistical, computer, public relations, maintenance, community risk reduction and administrative functions – there's 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 for active operational membership are encouraged to serve our department in this capacity. Administrative members do not participate directly in any emergency responses nor are they required to attend the required training under our operations divisions. However, they may be utilized in support services should a large incident occur.

All categories of membership require completion of our full membership process, including a departmental physical.



The UCVFD Operational Command Structure

The Operational aspects of the department is led by the Chief of Department who serves as Chief Operational Officer of the UCVFD. He/She oversees what is called the chain of command which provides clear direction, lines of communications and accountability for everyone involved in the chain. On an incident scene, 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 only to one supervisor.

Firefighters report to a Lieutenant, who then reports to a Captain, who then reports to the Deputy/Assistant Chiefs, who are responsible to the Chief of Department. This is the same structure for both the Suppression and EMS divisions. Teamwork is the foundation of our success, during an emergency and back at the station. Before you can become a good leader, you need to learn how 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.

The UCVFD is dispatched through the Queen Anne's County Public Safety 911 Center. Volunteers, who are available at the station or coming from home, respond when dispatched. The UCVFD consists of essential engine and tanker operations, marine support, and basic and advanced life support to our communities. Two basic life support ambulances are among our units, responding to just about every injury and illness imaginable. These units are also upgraded to Paramedic Ambulances for advanced life support (ALS) as qualified staffing permits. Our units are equipped with the latest fire and EMS technologies, including Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), Thermal Imagers and additional specialized equipment for extrication calls and ALS responses.

The UCVFD responds to many different kinds of incidents which include fires, vehicle collisions, and emergency medical calls. Our primary (first due) response area begins south of Batt's Neck Road and covers approximately sixteen square miles and services to over 2500 households including Romancoke on the Bay, Cove Creek, Kent Island Estates, Chesapeake Estates, Sunny Isle of Kent, Shipping Creek, Queen Anne's Colony, Kentmorr, Kent Point and Tower Gardens. When our units are in service, we are also called to incidents outside of our first due to assist our neighboring departments and from time to time are expected to respond to areas outside of Queen Anne's County.

Requirements

Our volunteers must be team players by respecting each other's roles and contributions. You need to be able to standby at the station during weather events, natural disasters, duty crews and to deal with occasional interruptions to your lifestyle, dropping what you're doing when alerted to an emergency call for assistance to respond to the emergency needs of your fellow citizens. A new recruit can expect to spend between 5-10 hours each week on fire department business. This entails meetings, training, emergency responses and other miscellaneous activities. Some weeks will be more and other weeks much less. The days of the week or times may vary depending on the level of activity. We've listed the benefits you can expect from us, and in return there are certain objectives we expect you to meet:

Minimum Requirements to Apply:

- **You must be at least 16 years of age to apply for full membership. For those under 18, a parent or legal guardian must sign your application and attend an interview process.**
- **You must complete the UCVFD application, which includes a physical and fingerprinting for a background check.**
- **You must have a valid social security number.**
- **You must be physically and emotionally capable of performing duties according to your area of assignment.**
- **You must have no record of felony convictions.**
- **Have a high school diploma or equivalent (or "C" average, if still in high school.)**

Expectations of UCVFD Volunteers:

Although no previous experience or training is required, 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. Our service is one that calls on its members to perform hot, dirty, strenuous work, often in uncertain and hazardous environments.

New members will be considered on probation for a period of 6 months. Their activities during this period will be reviewed periodically based on current approved requirements of training and participation. Probationary members may be removed from the process at any time if they are unable to fulfill those requirements or are otherwise found in violation of department rules or regulations.

All members must attend 50% of all regular monthly business meetings (6 per year) held on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m., and all special meetings and events unless excused. This includes annual events such as our Easter Egg Hunt, 4th of July parade, Halloween Open House and Santa Rides. All personnel are responsible for assisting in fundraising efforts of the organization.

Failure to complete the minimum requirements can result in termination of membership.

Fire/EMS Members

Probationary firefighters will need to enroll in the Firefighter I (120+ hours) or EMT (160+ hours) within 12 months of joining and the initial course must be completed successfully within 24 months of joining.

Courses are typically offered at the convenient location of the MFRI Upper Eastern Shore Regional Training Center in Centreville on weeknights and weekends. Intensive courses over 2-3 weeks may also be available during summer months. New Fire/EMS members must attend at least 3 regularly scheduled or special drills (training) during the six-month probation period. Firefighters must attend at least 50% of regularly scheduled or special drills each year following successful completion of the probation period.

EMS Only Members

New EMS Only members must be enrolled in the Maryland Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course (160+ hours) within 12 months of joining and successfully complete it within 18 months of joining. Courses are typically offered at the convenient location of the MFRI Upper Eastern Shore Regional Training Center in Centreville on weeknights and weekends.

New members with existing out of state EMT certification will be handled on a case-by-case basis, with reciprocity and other programs typically making an easy transition to be certified in Maryland.

Administrative & Auxiliary Members

Typically, must participate in at least one committee and at least 8 hours of service per month. This may vary based on role and capabilities. For auxiliary members, participation at fund raising and social events are required.

Our Goals

- **To be a community-oriented service provider while maintaining focus on our core objectives.**
- **To treat our citizens with the consideration and compassion they deserve in their time of need.**
- **To be good neighbors to the communities we serve.**
- **To partner with private businesses, local government and public organizations to develop and implement innovative life safety community risk reduction programs.**
- **To treat our fellow members with respect, admiration and compassion for the challenges they face in volunteering.**
- **To appreciate our members for their dedication, recognize them for their contributions, and reward them for their achievements.**
- **To conduct ourselves in a professional manner deserving of the pride and praise of our community.**
- **To be fair and honest in our dealings with local government and outside agencies.**
- **To be recognized as leaders in our industry and our community.**
- **To continually monitor our operations, administration and service delivery, recognize our limitations and swiftly implement effective change when necessary.**

What You Get Out of It...

Access to an Extensive Incentive Program

Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP), a county and state supported program, rewards our volunteers' years of service with a financial benefit after 25 years of continuous active duty. This monthly stipend will come in handy upon reaching retirement age.

A Second Family & Lifelong Friendships

At the UCVFD, you'll find a second family waiting for you. On and off duty, the members of the department share a common bond to serve their community. Lifelong friendships have been formed within our organization. If you are looking to serve in an organization where you feel rewarded in more ways than one, UCVFD offers this and so much more.

Quality Training

You provide the commitment and we provide all of the training needed for FREE. From in-house, local and county training, to state certified courses, and regional and national seminars and conferences – we offer you the opportunity to explore every avenue of emergency services and train you to be the best at what you do.

Flexible Memberships

You can join the UCVFD to perform only a specialized function or you can get involved in all of the volunteering opportunities we have to offer. Our members come from our community and throughout the region thanks to our robust offering of response services and family & friends' atmosphere.

Bunkroom Live-In Program

If you are interested in our live-in program, we will provide you an overview and requirements for the program.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

We protect our firefighters with the latest technology in fire resistive coats, pants, leather boots, gloves, hood, and helmet. We provide our EMS providers with gear as well, including jacket, pants, boots, gloves and helmet.

Duty Uniforms & Apparel

Look professional and show your United Communities pride in your navy blue station uniform. Uniforms and normal duty wear are provided after a minimum length of service. A reflective UCVFD parka is provided to all members when they are voted off of probation.

Involvement in Social Events

Members and their guests enjoy our annual awards and recognition banquet held in the early part of the new year to recognize the past year's accomplishments of the department and our volunteers and to celebrate the dedication of our newly elected administrative and operations officers. Throughout the year, we offer a variety of opportunities for you and your family to get to know the other members of your department in a relaxing atmosphere. From conventions to parades, parties to crab feasts— plus fund raisers, Santa Rides, team building events and beyond – we not only work hard, we play hard.

Peace of Mind

We recognize that firefighting and providing emergency services is an inherently dangerous business. That's why we take extra measures to protect our volunteers. Comprehensive insurance programs paid for by the fire company and offered through the county, state and federal government, provide financial security to you and your family should you be injured or fatally wounded in the line of duty. There are even free programs and services in place to ensure that your claim is handled properly and that you receive the benefits you deserve. We care about your health, safety and wellbeing. And, in times of need, programs are available to provide behavioral health support to help our members and their families to deal with the emotional impact of the tragedies we're unfortunately exposed to in our line of work.

New Member Check List:

- ☐ **Welcome letter and Key Card**
- ☐ **Pager**
- ☐ **Insurance, LOSAP, Tax information and Personal Information**
- ☐ **Uniform Information**
- ☐ **NIMS ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800**
- ☐ **Firefighter I**
- ☐ **Emergency Medical Technician or Emergency Medical Responder**
- ☐ **EMS Affiliation**
- ☐ **Bloodborne Pathogens**
- ☐ **HazMat Operations**
- ☐ **CPR**
- ☐ **Clearance on Engine**
- ☐ **Clearance on Ambulance**
- ☐ **Clearance for Driving**

Code Messaging

In order to receive alerts for calls, information from the station about events or important happenings, please sign up for “code messaging” by doing the following. Your request will be reviewed for approval.

- 1. Go to codemessaging.com**
- 2. Click to log in**
- 3. Click on request passport**
- 4. Enter keyword station1709**
- 5. Fill out their information and it will send request in to be added to the system**

New Member Advice

As a probie, or “probationary member”, there are several pieces of advice that will get you started on the right foot and assist you in remaining an active, effective member of the department throughout your entire involvement. This advice is in addition to the written rules and regulations for all members of the fire department as outlined in the department Membership Handbook and Departmental Standard Operational Guidelines (SOG).

The old phrase “you never have a second chance to make a first impression” is a very important phrase to live by. Watching others succeed or fail can be very educational if you are able to pick up on what worked well for them and did not work so well for them. Here are some suggestions to get you started off on the right foot once you get hired onto a new fire department as a probationary firefighter:

- 1. If you see something that you believe is unsafe, and are unable to make it safe, report it immediately. If you are asked to do something that you feel is unsafe, you do not understand, or you are not trained to perform, do not hesitate to inform the person giving you the task or an officer of the department.**
- 2. If you are asked to perform a task that you are uncomfortable with, be upfront with your concerns. While we will ask you to push your limits, we ultimately respect that you may not be comfortable performing some aspects of the required tasks and will help you to ensure you can do the provisions of the work of the department. If you need help, do not hesitate to ask for it.**
- 3. If your motivation to join the department is not rooted in a strong desire to assist your community in emergency situations, we strongly recommend that you find another organization to volunteer with.**



4. We expect you to take every opportunity to further your education and understanding throughout your involvement with emergency services.
5. If you see someone working, you need be working too. You should be the first to start working and the last to finish.
6. If it is dirty - clean it. If it is empty - fill it. If you dirty something at the firehouse (dishes, silverware, tools, apparatus, equipment, etc.), take the few minutes to clean it up then and there.
7. If there is a chance that a member of the public can observe your actions when you are representing the department, ensure that you are carrying yourself in a respectable manner.
8. If you are unable to complete the required training in a timely fashion, you need to ensure that your officer is aware of the circumstances and be prepared to establish a firm completion date.
9. Remember, the reputation you establish now will follow you forever... Remember that you never get the second chance to make that first impression.

