




**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND  
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER**

<b>General Order Number:</b> 01-27	<b>Effective Date:</b> May 29, 2020
<b>Division:</b> Administration and Organization	
<b>Chapter:</b> Joint Use of County Owned Fire Stations	
<b>By Order of the Fire Chief:</b> Tiffany D. Green 	<b>Issue Date:</b> May 29, 2020

**POLICY**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policies and procedures for the joint use of County-owned fire stations occupied by both career and volunteer personnel.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Live-In Member** – An operational member of a volunteer corporation that resides at the station more than three (3) consecutive nights.

**Volunteer Fire Company** – Organized and exists to protect the lives and property of the residents and visitors of Prince George’s County and the communities it serves.

**Volunteer Operational Member** – a volunteer firefighter/EMT/EMR/paramedic meeting Subtitle 11 minimum requirements and providing staffing for emergency responses.

**Volunteer-Owned Apparatus** – Fire suppression, special service, BLS/ALS ambulance, and/or various support vehicles owned by the volunteer corporation.

**PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES**

**I. General Information**

- A. The Volunteer Fire Company is under the authority of the County Fire Chief as it pertains to operational matters. Operational matters include fire suppression, rescue and emergency medical services activities, use and maintenance of apparatus, operational assignment of career personnel, health and safety issues, and associated administrative functions and tasks.
- B. The Volunteer Fire Company shall follow all rules, regulations, orders and administrative procedures as outlined in applicable General Orders and as directed by the County Fire Chief.
- C. The County Fire Chief and Department shall not participate in the corporate affairs of the Volunteer Fire Company, provided they do not negatively affect or disrupt operational matters of the Department.



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- D. If volunteer operational members drop to five (5), the volunteer leadership shall meet with the Fire Chief to discuss continued occupancy and use of volunteer-owned apparatus. The number of authorized volunteer chief officers is to be in accordance with *General Order #01-03, Chain-of-Command*.
- E. The Volunteer Fire Company shall provide a current roster of all operational, non-operational and administrative members to the Volunteer Services Command on a monthly basis.
- F. The ranking career station officer assigned and volunteer chief will co-manage the station and collaborate regularly on station SOP's, apparatus status, and staffing arrangements. Station SOP's will be reviewed and approved annually.
- G. The career station officer assigned will be in charge of the career personnel assigned to the station. The Department retains the authority to assign career personnel to station, including adding additional staffing.
  - 1. If the Volunteer Fire Company alleges that the assignment of specific Department personnel will have or is having a negative impact on the fire company, it may present substantive documentation of the negative impact and request that the battalion chief and the designated assistant fire chief for the station review the assignment.
- H. The volunteer chief, volunteer deputy chief, or volunteer assistant chief of record shall be in charge of all volunteer personnel assigned to the station. If no company volunteer chief, volunteer deputy chief, or volunteer assistant chief is present, the highest-ranking volunteer officer will be in charge of the volunteer personnel.
- I. Riding assignments shall be made by mutual agreement of the volunteer and career officers-in-charge (OICs) that are in the station. The OICs will focus staffing assignments on the best use of available personnel coupled with any/all in-service apparatus. If no volunteer line officer is present, the career OIC will make riding assignments as determined by qualifications.
  - 1. All personnel must receive a riding assignment prior to getting on any apparatus.
  - 2. Riding assignments are typically four (4) hour periods. Any assignment for less than four (4) hours must be coordinated/approved in advance by both the on-duty volunteer and career OICs.
  - 3. Final riding assignments must be completed by start of duty crew (1900 hours) and 2300 hours each evening for overnight coverage. No personnel movement should occur after that time unless agreed upon by volunteer and career OICs.
  - 4. When volunteers are not able to staff apparatus until 0700, they shall coordinate the end of their standby period with on-duty OICs prior to 2300.
  - 5. Volunteers and career personnel can exchange riding assignments only after coordination with on-duty volunteer and career OICs.



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6. All riding assignments should be written on a station staffing/apparatus board that is clearly visible in a centralized location.
7. In the event that volunteer and career OICs cannot mutually agree on riding assignments, they will immediately contact the battalion chief to resolve.

### **II. Use and Maintenance of the Fire Station**

- A. The Department and the Volunteer Fire Company shall cooperate in good faith and not interfere with each other's access and use of the fire station.
- B. The Department and the Volunteer Fire Company shall use the station exclusively for the purposes of fire and emergency medical services.
- C. The Volunteer Fire Company may use the fire station for the occasional, insubstantial and incidental fund raising and community uses that are normally associated with a non-profit, volunteer fire department.
- D. The Department and the Volunteer Fire Company may not use the fire station for private use that may result in the County bonds losing their tax-exempt status.
- E. Career and volunteer personnel shall maintain the station and property in a clean and sanitary condition at all times. This includes removing trash, mowing the lawn and shoveling ice and snow from walks and driveways, etc.
- F. The County shall pay for all utilities for the fire station, with the exception of cable television services above the County's cable franchise agreement. All additional cable television services are to be covered by the Volunteer Fire Company, as provided for in the Station Management Agreement.
- G. Career and volunteer personnel shall promptly report any maintenance and repair items to the Watch Office. The ranking career or volunteer officer shall promptly provide written notice to the Department, within 24 hours from discovery, of all water leaks, indoor air quality concerns, tripping hazards, environmental hazards or any other maintenance or structural items that could cause property damage or health concerns to those who use or visit the fire station or property.
- H. The County may enter into any and all areas of the station or property at any time to inspect or mitigate any maintenance or health and safety matter without notice. However, the County will endeavor to give notice whenever possible.
- I. The career station officer and the volunteer chief or volunteer president will collaborate on ordering all needed supplies and equipment.



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**III. Fund Raising or Community Events**

- A. The Volunteer Fire Company may use areas of the fire station and/or property during occasional fund raising or community events, provided there is no disruption to the operational capabilities of the personnel providing fire and emergency medical services out of the fire station.
- B. Under no circumstances should any Volunteer Fire Company event place the station out of service without written consent by the County Fire Chief or his/her designee.
- C. The Volunteer Fire Company shall not enter into any long-term lease agreement with any third parties for the use of any parts of the fire station or property without the approval of the County Fire Chief or his/her designee.
  - 1. Any current long-term lease agreements in place at the time of implementation of this General Order are deemed null and void.
- D. No fund raising or community activities will take place during the restricted time period of 2300 hours and 0800 hours each day.
- E. Any third party that hosts an event through the Volunteer Fire Company, whether held in the fire station or otherwise on the property, must provide proof of event liability insurance and shall be responsible for any damages to the property. The Volunteer Fire Company and the County shall be listed as additionally insured.

**IV. Volunteer Members Residing in the Fire Station (Live-Ins)**

- A. The first priority of all personnel in the fire station is to provide fire and emergency medical services. Non-operational or administrative members are not permitted to live-in or occupy beds in the station that are otherwise needed to provide operational personnel a place to sleep during their shift.
- B. If a Volunteer Fire Company desires to allow any member(s) to live in the fire station more than three (3) consecutive nights, all of the following criteria must be met:
  - 1. The number of beds available for such use must be approved by the County Fire Chief or his/her designee. The consent is solely within the discretion of the Department and can be withdrawn at any time after discussion with the Volunteer leadership.
  - 2. The member(s) residing at the fire station must be operational members in compliance with all training requirements.
  - 3. Any member(s) that reside in the fire station must be available to respond to calls for service (emergency/non-emergency) a minimum of four (4) nights per week. Members that are injured or otherwise sick will ensure the volunteer chief and career officer are aware of their status.



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4. When in the fire station, live-in members must make clear to the ranking officer (career or volunteer) of his or her availability to respond to calls for service. This will prevent the perception of picking and choosing when they will participate.
- C. Live-in members have a two (2) hour grace period before needing to leave the station to go to work or attend school. Live-in members must make clear to the ranking officer (career or volunteer) when they become unavailable to respond to calls for service.
- D. Members residing in the fire station have no rights as a tenant or any other rights associated with a private residence. No member or employee may use the fire station as their mailing address.

### **V. Minors in the Fire Station**

- A. Except for junior members who meet the qualifications to be junior firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMT), as described in Prince George's County Code §11-334 and may perform work under §3-203(4)(ix) of the Labor and Employment Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and any time that guest, or invitee of the Volunteer Fire Company under the age of eighteen (18) is present in the station, a member of the Volunteer Fire Company, age 18 or older, shall be present. At all times, guests and invitees of the Volunteer Fire Company under the age of 18 who are in the station and who are not junior firefighter/EMTs, shall be under the direction and supervision of a member(s) of the Volunteer Fire Company, age 18 years or older.
- B. Junior firefighter/EMT members may be present at the station when no other member, age 18 years or greater, are present.
- C. Career and/or volunteer family members can visit the fire station. However, they cannot be left alone if the firefighter is on duty.

### **VI. Station Improvements, Alterations, and Space Assignments**

- A. The Volunteer Fire Company shall not make any alteration, addition or improvements to the fire station and property without the written approval of the County Fire Chief or his/her designee. Minor repairs and painting for upkeep are acceptable with the prior approval of the Fire/EMS Department Facilities Manager.
- B. If the Department consents to any proposed alteration, addition or improvement to the fire station or property, the Volunteer Fire Company shall pay all related costs and expenses for completing in a satisfactory manner, unless otherwise covered by the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). All construction contractors must have a valid license and be approved by the Department. The Department will conduct a final inspection of all work for acceptance.



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- C. The Volunteer Fire Company will not permit any mechanic's lien to encumber the station or property. If a mechanic's lien is filed against the station or property, the Volunteer Fire Company shall discharge or bond such lien within ten (10) business days of the date an order is issued.
- D. Space re-assignments or changes in room use cannot be made without prior approval of the Fire Chief or his/her designee. Changes in space assignments or room use will be based on operational need. At a minimum, there will be a career office, a volunteer chief office, a volunteer president office, and at least one conference room for meetings (career or volunteer). The volunteer president and career station officer will collaborate on any desired changes to room assignments.

### **VII. Inventory, Audits and Equipment**

- A. The Volunteer Fire Company shall allow the County Fire Chief or his/her designee to inspect the fire company's property and equipment used by operational personnel, the station, and the County's property and equipment utilized by the fire company, at times and in a manner prescribed by the County Fire Chief.
- B. The Volunteer Fire Company shall also conduct an annual inventory of all non-expendable equipment, owned by the County, and provide a copy of the inventory to the County Fire Chief or his/her designee by January 1 of each year.

#### **REFERENCES**

General Order 01-03, Chain-of-Command

Station Management Agreement

#### **FORMS / ATTACHMENTS**

N/A