

EVFD FAQ's

Frequently Asked Questions about becoming an Ester Volunteer Fire Department member.

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How Do I Join EVFD?

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer firefighter or medic, come to the fire station during normal business hours or on Tuesday nights to learn more about who we are and what we do. Tuesday nights are our regular meeting nights where we discuss calls from the past week, talk about upcoming events, and train. After you fill out an application, attend three Tuesday night meetings, and attend an orientation, then you are a firefighter recruit. Set up a time with the station manager when you are ready for the 3-4 hour orientation after you have attended the three Tuesday meetings. You will need to come on your own time aside from the Tuesday night meetings for the orientation. After orientation, you will receive your "bunker gear," or firefighting uniform, communications equipment, and an Operating Procedures Manual (OPM). You will then be able to sign up for shifts and be ready to respond as a Support Firefighter. During your time as a support firefighter you will begin training in state certified Firefighter I skills. We will also get you certified in CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer. For medical training you will need a minimum of Basic First Aid but will have the opportunity to advance to Emergency Trauma Technician, (ETT) or Emergency Medical Technician, (EMT).

What is the minimum time commitment expected of me if I join EVFD?

In order to be a member you need to attend a minimum 75% of the monthly Tuesday night meetings from 7-10pm and be able available to respond to an emergency call a minimum of 5 shifts per month. A shift is from 6pm to 8am Monday thru Friday and from 6am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday. 36 hours of total training time is required each month, this includes Tuesday night meetings, cleaning, maintenance and other possibilities for training hours. There is no maximum limit to the amount of time you can

devote to EVFD. Volunteer by cleaning up at the station and learning to drive fire trucks is highly encouraged and rewarding!!

How often will I be called to duty?

EVFD responded to 146 calls last year. This means, on average, there are 3 calls per week. These are emergency calls, so we never know when they will occur. We may receive calls in clusters, 2-3 a night, or once in 2-3 months on the shift you are assigned. In short, you can expect that as a new member you won't be called to duty every night you are on call but rather, just every once in awhile. But, you need to be ready and sober to respond on your shift. If there are calls that require extra support, your response anytime is appreciated.

I am concerned about taking time off from the department for vacation, work, school or other purposes, is that a problem?

No. Since it is volunteer basis, EVFD tries to be flexible with everyone's schedule. If you will not be able to respond you simply need to let your Battalion Officer or the Station Manager know when you need to be off duty. Then write your name on the rig assignment board to indicate the dates you will not be able to respond.

I don't have any experience as a new member. In the beginning, what will my duties be when responding to a call?

After orientation, you will need to sign up for shifts as a Support Firefighter. The duties of a support firefighter can include a wide variety of jobs. When you are on duty and hear a "tone out," or alarm, from your pager or radio, you will respond to the station as soon as you can. While you are on your way to the station you will speak to "Battalion," (the person in charge of the EVFD response team), on the radio and tell him/her that you are "en route to station." Battalion will then let you know if you should stay at the station or come to the scene of the emergency. Once you arrive on scene, check in with the Battalion or Command Officer (usually a member wearing a red or white helmet). He/She will give you an assignment. An assignment for a support firefighter can be directing traffic, shoveling snow, assisting another firefighter with a hose, retrieving equipment for any firefighter on scene, or just standing by. Other duties will include clean up after returning to the station, this is where you will be a real asset to the team. Other firefighters or officers will guide and show you what to do. The important thing to remember is the limitations of your training and let someone in charge know if you do not know how to perform an assigned task.

Can I choose to be either a medic or a firefighter?

Yes. Some members don't like blood and some don't like fire. You can strive to become a medic, firefighter, or both. EVFD offers ETT and EMT I classes and Firefighter I & II classes free of charge to any interested members at any class offered in the interior. You may discover you enjoy both.

Do I get to drive the emergency vehicles?

Yes, but not right away. It takes commitment and an Alaska driver's license to become an emergency driver. You will need to watch a driving video and pass a written test then

you will receive a Driver's Manual and begin the training process. The trainee begins learning on the smallest emergency vehicle and will work their way up to the biggest emergency vehicle. Ask the station manager to set you up with a Driving Trainer and set a time for driving with him/her.

Does EVFD cover the cost of training classes, if so when are they offered?

Yes, we cover the cost of any classes offered within the borough and often times within the state. Sometimes classes will be offered at the EVFD station. Schedules can and will vary from class to class and it will require additional time commitment to attend special trainings like Emergency Medical Technician. Through the department, you will have direct access to classes offered in the medical field: CPR & First Aid, ETT, EMT I, II, Wildland Medic. Also, in the Firefighter field: Firefighter I & II, Hazardous Materials Operations, Wildland Emergency Firefighter (Red Card). Other classes the department may sponsor you to attend could include any subject at the National Fire Academy, Fire Science classes at the University of Alaska, or other accredited academy or university. In return for covering the cost, we ask that you remain an active member with EVFD for at least one year.

If I am not interested in responding to emergencies are there other ways to get involved and be apart of EVFD?

Yes. You can become an auxiliary member. The Ester Volunteer Firefighter's Auxiliary provides support to the members of the department during emergency and non-emergency operations. They will bring us warm food and cool drinks during a fire, host our annual awards banquet, and assist with fundraising events. The group is small but has a huge impact on our operating capabilities.

What are the benefits of becoming an EVFD member?

- Community involvement
- Pride in helping humankind
- Driving big red shiny fire trucks.
- Making new friends and becoming a part of a supporting team of people
- Learning practical skills for every day life
- Building self-confidence
- Can be the start of a new career
- Free EMT, Firefighter, and CPR classes
- Use of fire station amenities including the use of: washer/dryer, television, phone/computer, tools/garage/hose to wash the car, etc. However, it is essential that one cleans up after him/herself and always puts things away.
- \$10,000 property tax exemption!!