

Ontario Fire & Rescue Department

Junior Firefighter Program Guidelines

The Junior Firefighter Program was instituted by the City of Ontario Fire & Rescue Department (OF&R) as a training program for young men and women, aged 16-18, interested in serving their community and preparing to become active firefighters upon reaching the age of 18. At age 18, the Junior Firefighter is eligible to apply for membership with Ontario Fire & Rescue Department.

As a Junior Firefighter, members serve in a support role for the senior firefighters at actual emergencies, as a supplement to a formal training program. The Junior Firefighters attend weekly training drills with the full department. An OF&R Fire Officer or designee of the Fire Chief, serves as the Junior Firefighter Training Officer, and he/she is the primary contact person for the Junior Firefighter. Those selected are expected to act in a mature manner and commit to a demanding, long-term program.

In both, training sessions and actual emergency situations, the safety of the Junior Firefighter is of paramount concern to the department. As such, the activities of the Junior Firefighters are limited in scope, and the Fire Officers closely supervise them. The Junior Firefighters quickly become an integral part of the firefighting team during emergencies; serving in such important capacities such as establishing a water supply, supplying equipment for interior Firefighters, changing air packs, manning exterior hose lines, and assisting with interior overhaul once a fire has been extinguished. It should be understood, however, that despite the training and supervision provided, firefighting is a dangerous activity and serious injury is a possibility. The Fire Officers will make every effort to minimize the Junior Firefighters' exposure to danger. It is also the responsibility of the Junior Firefighter to avoid known hazardous situations.

Due to the inherent dangers of firefighting, strict rules of conduct and tight procedural standards have been established. In an actual emergency, it is essential that all Firefighters, including Junior Firefighters, act in a calm and efficient manner. The Junior Firefighters are expected to attend training drills to be prepared for the many challenges presented in an emergency situation. Each member is expected to read and understand these requirements and to adhere to the standards. The OF&R Fire and Administrative officers are available to answer any questions.

Eligibility

1. Any resident of the City of Ontario (or within the Ontario Rural Fire Jurisdiction), between the ages of 16-18, may apply for membership in the Ontario Fire & Rescue Department Junior Firefighter Program.
2. The applicant must be in good academic standing at his/her school at the time of application and during the period of membership as a Junior Firefighter. A minimum GPA of 2.0 (“C”) must be maintained.
3. The applicant must complete an application, including a medical authorization and police background check. Included with the application is a parental consent that must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. The application must be approved by the OF&R Chief, Officers, and OF&R Junior Firefighter Training Officer.

General Rules

1. The general standard of conduct is to act in the manner of a professional. This position must be taken seriously. Any horseplay and foolishness during training and/or while assisting OF&R is unacceptable. Junior Firefighters represent OF&R, and are expected to be courteous and respectful to fellow Firefighters, Emergency Service Personnel, and all Citizens served. OF&R will not tolerate vulgar, offensive, discriminatory or threatening language or gestures at any time. Junior Firefighters may not wear any article of clothing that, in the opinion of a Fire Officer, would be offensive to the public served. Violations will result in disciplinary action, and may include suspension.
2. OF&R maintains a “zero tolerance” policy with respect to drug and alcohol use and violation of public laws. Any possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, will result in immediate and permanent suspension from the OF&R Junior Firefighter Program. This includes that Junior Firefighters may not use any tobacco product. Any arrest or conviction for a crime will result in a review of the circumstances by the OF&R Chief and Officers, and may result in disciplinary action, including permanent suspension.
3. Junior Firefighters may not use or display emergency identification on their personal vehicle (e.g., red lights). Junior Firefighters may not wear clothing identifying them as an OF&R Firefighter, except assigned protective gear, uniforms or logo shirts/hats worn for official purposes only. Junior Firefighters will not be issued identification cards.
4. Junior Firefighters may not enter an OF&R fire station unless a senior member of the department is present, and then only for official business (emergency response, training drill,

department meeting or work detail). Junior Firefighters may not bring friends into a fire station or permit them to be aboard fire apparatus.

5. Junior Firefighters must leave the station no more than 30 minutes following completion of the emergency response, training drill, department meeting or work detail.
6. Junior Firefighters are not permitted to attend overnight stand-by details (will be released from a stand-by not later than 11:45 PM) or to accompany OF&R Firefighters covering the station of another fire department.
7. Junior Firefighters may not borrow OF&R equipment for personal use.
8. Junior Firefighters may not operate OF&R vehicles.
9. Power tools, hydraulic and pressurized air operated equipment, and cutting devices such as chainsaws, roof saws, air bags and Hurst tools are to be operated only under the direct supervision of a Fire Officer or his/her designee. Power tool use is for training purposes only. A Junior Firefighter may not operate any power tool, hydraulic or pressurized air operated equipment, or cutting device at an emergency scene. Full protective gear, including gloves and eye covering, must be worn by the Junior Firefighter when operating any power tool, hydraulic or pressurized air operated equipment, or cutting device.
10. Junior Firefighters may climb OF&R ground ladders or aerial ladder for training purposes only. Any ladder use must be under the direct supervision of an OF&R Fire Officer or his/her designee. A ladder belt or safety harness and full protective gear must be worn at all times. Ladders or aerial equipment of another fire department may not be used by the Junior Firefighter without the consent of a Fire Officer from the other department and an OF&R Fire Officer.
11. Junior Firefighters are not to participate in any OF&R activity, including emergencies, during school hours. Junior Firefighters are not to leave school, or a school sponsored activity, for an emergency response. Junior Firefighters are not to respond to any alarm dispatched after 10:00 PM on a school night (Sunday-Thursday). Junior Firefighters will be assigned pagers as available, and only if cleared with the school.
12. Junior Firefighters must attend a minimum of 50% of training drills, meetings and events conducted each year. Junior Firefighters are not required to respond to emergency calls.
13. Junior Firefighters are responsible for the care of all OF&R gear issued to them, and are financially responsible for loss or damage from other than official use as a Junior Firefighter.
14. No Firefighter is to ride on a truck step. All Firefighters are to be seated in the truck cab with seatbelt fastened, when the apparatus is in motion. Junior Firefighters may not repack hose from the hose bed if the apparatus is in motion.

15. Junior Firefighters are to report directly to the station at all times. Junior Firefighters are not to drive personal vehicles to any scene unless directed by an OF&R Officer.
16. Report any injury to an OF&R Fire Officer, Duty Staff or Safety Officer.
17. Firefighters may not accept monetary payment or gifts for services rendered as a Firefighter. Any citizen offering payment of any kind should be advised that payment for firefighting services is not expected. Never accept contributions at an emergency scene. Those individuals seeking to make a contribution should be advised to consider a voluntary contribution to OF&R as part of the annual fund drive.

Emergency Response

1. Junior Firefighters may respond to emergency alarms, except as outlined in (2) and (3) below. Junior Firefighters should respond to the firehouse or as directed by the OF&R Chief or Junior Firefighter Training Officer, via a standing assignment order. Junior Firefighters may respond on OF&R apparatus if seats are available (Junior Firefighters will relinquish seats to Senior Firefighters as needed). Junior Firefighters are under the command of OF&R Fire Officers from the time of their arrival at the station or emergency scene, until released from duty by an OF&R Fire Officer. If no Officer is aboard the apparatus, the Junior Firefighter will be under the command of the driver until reassigned to an OF&R Fire Officer. Firefighters are not to leave an emergency scene without the knowledge and consent of Incident Command.
2. Junior Firefighters may not respond to an emergency alarm relating to a hazardous material incident, biological or nuclear hazard, explosive device, terrorist incident, police jurisdiction/crime scene assistance, or an incident that is likely to have seriously injured and/or fatalities. Junior Firefighters are not to respond to a mutual aid alarm outside of Ontario Fire & Rescue Department jurisdiction, unless directed by Incident Command.
3. Prior to responding to alarms, the Junior Firefighter must be trained, and demonstrate proficiency in the use of SCBA equipment. Junior Firefighter use of SCBA equipment at an emergency will only be allowed when escorted by a Senior Firefighter.
4. Firefighters must wear all protective gear while riding on the apparatus and at an emergency scene.
5. Under no circumstances is a Junior Firefighter to enter a burning structure, confined space, or underground area.
6. Once a fire has been brought under control, and the building determined to be structurally sound and free of hazardous materials and toxic gas, the Junior Firefighter may enter the building under the direction of the Incident Commander, and must be accompanied by a Senior Firefighter. Junior Firefighters may operate exterior hose lines under the direction of a Fire Officer or his/her designee. Junior Firefighters must remain well clear of a motor vehicle

fire or other type fire presenting exposure to flammable liquids or hazardous materials. At an emergency scene, a Junior Firefighter may not climb a ladder or operate from a roof or other elevated position. At an emergency scene, a Junior Firefighter may not operate any power tool, hydraulic or pressurized air operated equipment, or cutting device.

7. Upon arrival at an emergency scene, a Junior Firefighter is not to enter a private dwelling or other structure, unless escorted by Senior Firefighters for investigation or emergency action of any type, and is instructed to do so by the Incident Command. Junior Firefighters are to remain with the apparatus or in staging area, and await specific orders. If the Junior Firefighter receives orders from an Officer (or request from a Firefighter) of another fire department, it is incumbent upon the Junior Firefighter to advise that Officer or Firefighter of his/her status as a Junior Firefighter and the limitations placed upon him/her.

8. All orders received from a Fire Officer are to be obeyed and executed completely. If, due to safety concerns or for any other reason, the Junior Firefighter is unable to complete an assigned task, the Officer issuing the order, or another Officer in his/her absence, should be immediately notified by the Junior Firefighter who received the order.

9. At an emergency alarm involving downed power lines or gas leak, the Junior Firefighter must remain aboard the apparatus until the area of operation for the Junior Firefighter is determined to be safe by an OF&R Fire Officer.

10. If assisting with directing traffic, the Junior Firefighter must wear a reflective vest and reflective striped turnout coat. In the evening hours, the Firefighter must make use of a flashlight. The Junior Firefighter must operate only in an area within sight of fire apparatus and/or a police vehicle displaying flashing warning lights. The Junior Firefighter is not to direct traffic on a divided highway or in adverse weather such as rain, snow or ice conditions that may impair motor vehicle control. When assisting with traffic control or crowd control, the instructions of a Police Officer are to take precedence. Firefighters are not to make any public comments or make statements to the media at the time of an emergency incident, or following the incident, concerning conditions relating to the emergency scene. Examples of comments to avoid are: the cause and origin of a fire, condition of fire victims, condition of a home interior, or firefighting technique. All public inquiries are to be referred to the incident commander or OF&R Chief. It should be understood by the Junior Firefighter that Fire Inspectors or Arson Investigators and other Governmental Officials are required to inspect certain types of damage. Their presence may in no way indicate suspicion of wrongdoing on the part of the property owner. Firefighters must also understand that individuals whose property has been damaged or destroyed and/or family members injured or killed, are extremely sensitive to the statements and actions of emergency personnel. OF&R Firefighters are expected to demonstrate the utmost of respect and compassion for these individuals in both their words and actions.

11. Valuables found at an emergency scene are to left in place untouched, and reported immediately to the Incident Commander, OF& R Officer or Police Officer. Theft by a Junior Firefighter will result in the immediate suspension from the Junior Firefighter program and proper authorities will be notified.

12. Junior Firefighters are not to have any direct contact with an injured or deceased person, unless properly certified (First Responder, EMT or Paramedic), and then only at the direction of an OF&R Fire Officer or EMS Crew Chief. Report any accidental contact with blood or other bodily fluid to an OF&R Fire Officer or Safety Officer immediately, so that medical treatment can be initiated promptly.

13. Must be familiar with department policies and guidelines.

14. Use of private cell phones on emergency scenes is strictly prohibited. Taking photos at emergency scenes or department activities with a cell phone or camera is strictly prohibited, unless approved by the Incident Commander or OF&R Fire Officer. Sharing photos outside of the department or posting on social media is prohibited unless approved in advance by the Fire Chief. Violation will result in disciplinary action, and may include suspension from the program.