

Middleton Rural Fire District



Reserve Firefighter Program

Guiding Document

and

Employee Handbook

The Middleton Fire District has established a reserve firefighter program to augment the current career staffing levels of the district and to increase the operational efficiency of our engine company by maintaining consistent 4 person staffing levels; and in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Fire Chiefs Association provide a pool of trained and vetted lateral hire candidates that are qualified and eligible to fill immediate vacancies for other Treasure Valley career fire departments.

Our reserve firefighters are dedicated professionals who assist the citizens and visitors of our community in the event of building fires, wildland fires, medical emergencies, natural and man-made disasters, as well as search and rescue operations. Although reserve firefighters serve on a part-time schedule, they require the same basic firefighter training as our full-time firefighters. To become a reserve firefighter, you must possess the appropriate background, certifications, training, and service requirements.

Reserve firefighters must have completed basic firefighter training. The firefighter training includes skills such as fire suppression, search and rescue techniques, building construction, hazardous materials emergencies, wildland firefighting, and emergency medical technician certification.

As a reserve firefighter, you will be assigned a part-time or intermittent service schedule. The reserve firefighter schedules may vary; but will require a minimum of 48 hours per month, typically assigned as the second firefighter on a 4-person engine company. Reserve firefighter positions offer a unique opportunity to gain relevant experience and perspective toward a possible full-time firefighting or EMS career.

Reserve Firefighter application requirements and hiring process:

To be eligible to apply for employment as a reserve firefighter, the applicant must meet the following requirements:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Have a high school diploma or GED.
3. Have valid Idaho driver's license.
4. Possess an Idaho, IFSAC, or Pro Board Firefighter I certificate.
5. Possess a valid Idaho EMT license. (higher licensure levels accepted)
6. Possess a valid AHA, ASHI, or American Red Cross CPR certificate.
7. Have completed an approved fire academy, or have 1 year of experience as a paid professional firefighter
8. Successfully pass a criminal background investigation.
9. Complete and submit a Reserve Firefighter online or paper application.

To be hired as a reserve firefighter; applicants must complete the following:

1. Pass an oral interview.
2. Pass a Firefighter Skills Assessment
3. Successfully complete the NWCG Arduous Work Capacity Test (Pack Test)
4. Have personal and professional references verified.
5. Pass pre-employment (NFPA 1582) physical exam completed by the District's contracted physician.
6. Pass a pre-employment drug and alcohol screening.

Once a reserve firefighter is hired, they will complete the following:

1. Candidates must successfully complete a 32-hour Mini Academy before they can start shift work.
2. Complete a 12-month probationary period as specified below.

Probationary Period Requirements:

All candidates hired as reserve firefighters, regardless of previous firefighting experience, shall serve a probationary period of not less than twelve (12) months. Candidates will be assigned to one of 3 shifts at either the Star or Middleton fire station and will work under the supervision of their assigned shift Captain during the probationary period.

No member shall be promoted from probationary status to active status without:

1. Successful completion of the firefighter task-book.
2. Successful demonstration of all individual performance standard tasks.
3. 100% compliance with fire district training requirements.
4. A 3.00 or greater performance score in the Tenzinga performance management system.
5. A positive recommendation from the assigned shift captain and final approval of the Fire Chief.

In the event the shift captain feels probation should be extended, or the member fails to successfully complete any part of the probationary process, an additional three (3) months may be added to their probation.

After one (1) year of probation, any candidate not completing the probationary requirements or receiving a performance score of less than 3.00 may be released from the Star and/or Middleton Fire Districts.

Work Requirements:

All probationary and active reserve members are required to work a minimum of two 24-hour shifts per month. Reserve firefighter shifts shall not be less than 24 consecutive hours, and they may not exceed 48 consecutive hours without the approval of the Deputy Chief of Operations. Reserve Firefighters total hours worked may not exceed 96 hours per month without the approval of the Deputy Chief of Operations. Failure to meet these requirements will result in corrective action including possible suspension and/or termination.

All reserve firefighters will be assigned to a shift and must work a minimum of 24 hours with their assigned crew each month. Active reserve members will be eligible to accept call-back requests on any shift or at any station.

Issued Uniforms and Equipment:

Reserve firefighters will be issued the following equipment items:

1. Structural turnout gear including helmet, coat, pants, boots, gloves and Nomex hood.
 - a. Probationary firefighters will wear a yellow helmet to identify them as such on the fireground. Once the firefighter is promoted to active status, they will be issued a black helmet.
2. [4] Velcro accountability tags with the employee's last name and employee number.
3. Nomex Wildland fire shirt, wildland helmet, wildland compliant boots, leather gloves, line pack, and fire shelter.
4. Safety glasses & hearing protection.
5. Duty uniforms (to include dual compliant uniform pants, class B uniform shirt, t shirts, sweatshirts, station boots, ball cap, stocking cap, and winter coat.)

All issued uniform items and personal protective equipment remain the property of the fire district and must be turned in upon separation from employment or approval of a leave of absence greater than 60 days.

Leave of Absence:

Members serving with any branch of the Armed Forces must notify the Training Officer if they require a **military leave of absence** and provide a copy of their orders.

Any reserve member may request a **leave of absence for personal reasons**. Personal leave of absence requests must be submitted in writing to the Deputy Chief of Operations.

The following conditions apply to all leave of absence requests:

1. A leave of absence for personal reasons may be granted for a maximum of 12 months.
2. A military leave of absence is subject to the members military commitment and does not have a maximum duration.
3. Any leave of absence that is greater than 6 months will require successful completion of a return to duty evaluation (described below) prior to the member going back to work.
4. Reserve employees that request a leave of absence that is greater than 60 days will be required to turn in all issued equipment and uniforms.
5. Any reserve member that fails to contact either the Deputy Chief of Operations or the Fire Chief at the end of their leave of absence will be dropped from the roster.

The return to duty evaluation is a process that verifies employees have maintained their eligibility, knowledge, and skills following an approved leave-of-absence greater than 6 months. The intent is to ensure the employee still meets the requirement of the reserve program, has maintained all relevant certifications and licenses, and is up to date with any operational changes.

The return to duty process includes the following 4 key phases:

- Employment eligibility verification
- Re-issue of equipment
- Administrative update
- Skills competency verification

The four (4) phases provide general guidelines that must be successfully demonstrated to successfully return to active status. It is recognized that the items listed below may not be conclusive and additional validations may be required as determined by the Deputy Chief of Operation or the Fire Chief. The following sections identify general components contained within each phase.

Employment eligibility verification includes:

1. Possess a valid Idaho driver's license
2. Possess a valid Idaho EMS license
3. Pass a drug and alcohol screening
4. Pass a fit for duty medical examination with the Fire District's contracted physician

Administrative update includes:

1. Update of login and password information for fire district software systems.
2. Re-issue of employee ID
3. Fire district procedural update
4. Training compliance review (including EMS continuing education)
5. CPR refresher course

Skills competency verification includes:

1. Successfully demonstrating competency with all Fire District individual performance standards.

Annual Training Requirements:

All reserve Firefighters will be required to meet all the annual training requirements for the position of Firefighter as outlined in Fire District's training plan. [Appendix B]

Members who do not meet the minimum work or training requirements will be subject to disciplinary action as follows:

- The first time in a calendar year a member fails to meet fire district requirements, that member will meet with the shift Captain. The shift Captain should ascertain if extenuating circumstances exist that resulted in the failure to meet fire district requirements, if no extenuating circumstances exist a below standard log will be entered in the employee's Tenzinga performance management record, documenting the circumstances surrounding the shortfall.
- If a member fails to meet fire district requirements twice in a calendar year, that member will meet with the Deputy Chief of Operations, and If no extenuating circumstances exist, a counseling form shall be completed, and a second below standard log shall be entered in the employee's Tenzinga performance management record.
 - The counseling form should indicate that the member has not met the requirements of the Fire District's reserve program following a verbal counseling and that a failure to meet the requirement for the third time in a calendar year may result in dismissal from the reserve firefighter program.
- If the member fails to meet fire district requirements three times in a calendar year, the Deputy Chief of Operations shall initiate a dismissal process. The Fire Chief shall be notified of the situation at this time. The Fire Chief will then review the member's file and ensure that all attempts have been made by the shift Captain to correct the member's shortfall.
- If the Fire Chief feels that further disciplinary action is necessary, he/she may order the Deputy Chief of Operations to place the member on probation and monitor the member's progress. If the Fire Chief is satisfied that all attempts have been made to correct the shortfall and the member is still not meeting the Fire District's minimum requirements, the Fire Chief shall have the power to order the dismissal of the member from the Star/Middleton Fire District reserve firefighter program.

General Discipline:

All employee disciplinary actions shall be in accordance with Title 16 - Chapter 17 [Employee/Volunteer Evaluation and Discipline] of the Middleton Rural Fire District Policy Code. [Appendix A]

Uniforms and Appearance:

Uniforms and appearance shall be in compliance with Title 16 – Chapter 6 [Uniform Requirements} of the Middleton Rural Fire District Policy Code. [Appendix A]

General Rules of conduct:

1. The assigned shift Captain will be the direct point of contact for all communications relevant to members of the reserve staff.
2. Members shall not publicly represent the fire districts in a negative or undesirable way.
3. While wearing clothing, uniforms, protective gear or any other item identifying them as an employee of the Star or Middleton Fire Districts, members shall not:
 - a. Purchase or consume alcohol
 - b. Violate any local, state or federal law
4. Reserve firefighters may not respond directly to an emergency incident in a personal vehicle. Reserve firefighters that are reporting for station coverage pages will go to the appropriate fire station and report to the officer or senior member of the career staff.
5. The Star and Middleton Fire Districts prohibit the use of emergency warning lights and/or other devices (including sirens) by members in their privately-owned vehicles for the purpose of responding to emergency incidents.
6. Grooming standards must be in accordance with Star and/or Middleton Fire Districts uniform procedure outlined in appendix A of this document.
7. No firearms shall be carried on any person at the fire station or the fire scene, other than by sworn law enforcement personnel.
8. All reserve members must report criminal charges to the Fire Chief within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the Fire Chief.
9. Any member arrested on felony charges shall be placed on administrative leave indefinitely pending the outcome of the charges.
10. Any member who pleads guilty to, or is convicted of, felony charges shall be immediately terminated.
11. The status of any member charged with a misdemeanor shall be at the discretion of the Fire Chief.

Employees' violating these rules of conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Appendix A

Copy of current Policy Code available by request

Appendix B

Copy of current Training Plan available by request