

Gaston Fire District



STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTERN PROGRAM

Program Overview
Rules & Guidelines

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Staff, maintain and operate several types of firefighting equipment for the express benefit of education for the student involved.
2. Teach and train members the principles of firefighting, fire prevention, fire control and emergency medical services.
3. Teach to operate and maintain apparatus and equipment.
4. Promote knowledge of the principles of physical fitness, and health education in fire and emergency medical services through day-to-day operations, hands-on experience, and classroom time.
5. Promote the social, intellectual, and physical welfare of members, and create better relationships among fire service members by mutual respect, cooperation and understanding.
6. Promote customer service within the response communities of Gaston, Laurelwood and Cherry Grove.

*** Basic and both types of Senior Student Volunteer Interns will be known as “students” in this document.

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ARTICLE 1

QUALIFICATIONS

Students must be at least 18 years of age and have documentation of a High School Diploma, G.E.D., or Certificate of Advanced Mastery.

Students must possess and maintain a valid Driver's License and be insurable by the Gaston Fire Districts insurance carrier.

Students will complete an application process, physical ability evaluation, and an oral interview to be accepted into the program.

Students accepted into the intern program will all start as a BASIC STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTERN but have the chance to promote to either a SENIOR STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTERN or PARAMEDIC CANDIDATE STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTERN.

BASIC STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTERNS:

Only assigned to firefighter duties.

Enrollment in an EMT class within the first 3 months of Basic Student Volunteer Intern appointment is expected. Preference will be given to applicants who have obtained their EMT Basic before or during the application process. Basic Student Volunteer Interns will only be allowed to apply for the Senior or Paramedic Candidate Student Volunteer Intern positions after holding the Basic Student Volunteer Intern position for a minimum of 9 months.

SENIOR STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTERNS:

Will be certified at a minimum as a Firefighter 1, EMT, Wildland Interface Firefighter, HazMat First Responder and Driver/Pumper Operator through DPSST. Senior Interns will be responsible for skills checkoffs of the Basic Interns. Senior Interns are eligible to work as temps for Gaston Fire staff outside of assigned shift work.

PARAMEDIC CANDIDATE STUDENT VOLUNTEER INTERNS

Will be accepted and enrolled in a recognized Paramedic school and be certified at a minimum as a Firefighter 1, EMT, Wildland Interface Firefighter and HazMat First Responder through DPSST. Senior Student Volunteer Interns will be responsible for skills check-offs of the Basic Student Volunteer Interns. Senior Student Volunteer Interns are eligible to work as temps for Gaston Fire staff outside of assigned shift work.

The goal of the Intern program is to provide both a beneficial learning environment for the Student Volunteer Intern and provide additional volunteer staffing where it is most needed. Ideal staffing levels at Gaston Fire include one career Officer, one Senior Intern and one Basic Intern. It is understood that these levels may fluctuate daily depending on schooling requirements of the Student Volunteer Interns and the staffing levels at Gaston Fire.

ARTICLE 2

REQUIREMENTS

Students will be enrolled in an approved Fire Science or EMS educational program. If the student is not enrolled in an emergency related field, exceptions will be considered and approved by the Fire Chief.

Students are strongly encouraged to respond to calls, when not on shift. And will receive a regular stipend per current volunteer reimb schedule.

ARTICLE 3

DUTIES

Students will participate in fire safety education classes and fire safety inspections performed by their respective shifts.

Students will actively participate in performing daily station maintenance and other work assignments as directed by their shift officer.

Students may provide EMS/first aid within the limits of their EMS certification, while following Washington County EMS protocols.

The level of participation by the student in emergency situations will be at the discretion of the shift officer.

The student must complete all entry-level skills checkoffs, as specified by Gaston Fire, no matter the student's prior experience. The student will not participate, but only act as an observer, at all fire/EMS incidents until skills checkoffs are satisfactorily completed.

ARTICLE 4

SHIFT ASSIGNMENT

Students will be assigned to one of three duty shifts, A, B or C, under the supervision of career personnel. Exceptions will be considered if career staffing is daytime only.

The student will be assigned a shift mentor.

The shift officer or their designee shall be in charge of day to day and emergency operations.

The student should understand that being assigned to a shift and performing activities with that shift, be it under emergency situations or just day to day activities, shall be for the student's benefit of learning the actual conditions encountered on the job.

ARTICLE 5

TRAINING

Students will be encouraged but not required to attend Volunteer drills that fall outside of their regular shift schedule.

Students will attend daily drills with their respective duty shifts. Training will consist of firefighting techniques and EMS & Rescue practices. The student should understand that any training he/she receives, be it under emergency situations or during day-to-day activities, shall be for the benefit of learning the actual conditions encountered in the job market.

Any student who plans on missing a training session will be required to plan with the training officer prior to that absence, how they intend to make up that drill. If any required training is missed, the student will be required to make it up within four weeks. It is the student's responsibility to see that the competencies are completed to the satisfaction of the training officer.

If students live in the first due response area of Gaston Fire, they are strongly encouraged to respond to calls anytime a volunteer response is requested. This is encouraged due to the hands-on experience that can be obtained during these situations.

Students who have not made-up drills or who have failed to pass task performances should be considered on Academic Probation until these items can be made up.

ARTICLE 6

CONDUCT

Students will conduct themselves in a manner acceptable to Gaston Fire standards (i.e., behavior, physical appearance, personal hygiene and overall cooperation with other Fire Department personnel and members of the public). The student must remember that his/her actions will reflect on the image of the Department.

Students of legal drinking age who consume alcoholic beverages off-site and off-duty will not respond to emergency calls for a minimum of eight hours.

Our department practices both internal and external customer service. It is the student's responsibility to maintain and uphold this philosophy in all dealings with everyone.

Students will be under the direction of a shift officer. Cooperation with department personnel in completing assigned tasks will be expected at all times.

Students will be subject to all policies, rules, and regulations. Students must also abide by all federal, state, and local laws. Failure to comply with them, or any of the criteria required for placement in this program may result in release from the program.

Students should notify the Intern Coordinator two weeks prior to discontinuing participation in this program. This notification should be in writing. All issued items, i.e., pagers, keys, and personal protective equipment, must be returned prior to departure. Gaston Fire reserves the right to recover expenses from any student should the student withdraw from the program, and steps may include recovery through local law enforcement and or claims made to a collection agency.

ARTICLE 7

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Intern Coordinator shall have the responsibility of student recruitment, retention of student educational records and monitoring student performance.

The Intern Coordinator shall have the responsibility of administration, monitoring and periodically evaluating the student program.

The shift officer shall have the responsibility of assigning, monitoring, and evaluating the student operations and performance on their respective shifts and report that activity to the Intern Coordinator.

ARTICLE 8

SCHOOL AND CLASS REQUIREMENTS

The Joint Department Student Volunteer Intern Program is designed to be a two-year program. All class schedules and training shall be in accordance with a timeline to graduate with an associate degree in Fire Science or fire-related degree (unless approved by the Fire Chief) at the end of two years of participation within the program. The student may also pursue a course track to achieve his or her Paramedic. All class schedules and training shall be in accordance with a timeline to graduate with an associate degree in Para Medicine at the end of two years of participation within the program. The student is strongly encouraged to utilize the college's advisors to help ensure that he/she is on track to graduate within the timeline.

Students will carry at least six (6) credit hours per academic term. Any exception must be pre-approved by the Intern Coordinator. Each student must have their class schedules approved by Intern Coordinator and the fire science advisor at their college.

Students must maintain a minimum passing grade in all classes with an acceptable attendance record. If the student's grade point average places them on academic probation, they must notify the Intern Coordinator and have until the end of the next term to bring the average back up. Failure to do so may result in the student's termination from the program. Students will provide the Intern Coordinator with a copy of their grade report after each academic term for placement in their files.

Students are excused from duty any time that they are involved in a school class or lab. Those who must attend classes during duty shifts are required to finish out their shift directly after class. If classes occur in the early part of the student's assigned 24hr shift, the student should report for shift duty if he or she will be on duty for a minimum of 2 hours before his/her scheduled class starts. The 2-hour minimum does not include the drive time to the scheduled class. The Intern's Duty Officer must be notified of these types of classes, or needed study times, before they occur and will make decisions at his/her discretion.

ARTICLE 9

UNIFORMS & CLOTHING

The student will be provided with uniform items to be worn while on duty. Uniforms may include the following:

Department T-shirt
Department sweatshirt
Uniform Shirt
Uniform pants
Belt , Hat, Jacket

The student will wear their department shirt, other approved uniform, or an observer vest while the student is an observer.

Uniforms shall not be worn at any time off duty except for travel to and from assigned shift work. These items are to be returned to the PPE/Uniform coordinator when replacements are needed and at the conclusion of program participation.

Protective clothing will be provided to the student at no cost. The PPE coordinator will supply the student with the appropriate items. These items will need to be returned prior to conclusion of the program.

ARTICLE 10

EVALUATION

Each Student Volunteer Intern mentor shall complete a student evaluation form quarterly to track his/her progress throughout the program. The completed form will be forwarded to the Intern Coordinator for record keeping. A copy of the form will be given to the Student Volunteer Intern, the Fire Chief, and the officer of the shift.

Students will be evaluated quarterly by the student's mentor in, but not limited to, the following areas:

1. Ability to comprehend and retain given information
2. Willingness to learn
3. Work habits
4. Work performance
5. Interpersonal skills
6. Equipment location on apparatus
7. Firefighter skills
8. Medical skills
9. Operation of power equipment
10. Roads, streets, and hydrants
11. Department SOG's
12. Apparatus operation (depending on certification level)
13. Station duties
14. Attendance

A standard Daily Observation Report (DOR) may be used.

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of these and take the necessary steps to assure a successful evaluation.

Comments on positive student achievement, special recognition, recommendations for disciplinary action, complaints or suggestions should also be included in the comment section.

ARTICLE 11

ABSENCE, LEAVE, AND TIME OFF

Students may be assigned to a specific shift (A, B, C or DAY). It will be the responsibility of the student to ensure that the student's assigned shift is covered in the event of his/her absence for reasons other than school classes or labs. Coverage of the shift may be done by another intern or volunteer.

Trade time with other interns is permitted when the student needs the shift off. Trades must be signed and approved by both shift officers prior to the shift trade. If no other intern is available to cover a shift the shift officer may approve the time off with Intern Coordinator notification.

Students will be granted leave in the amount of 288 hours (12 shifts) per fiscal year which is July 1 to June 30. The Intern Coordinator will maintain records on each student of his/her time and advise students of their accumulation.

Leave time will accrue at a rate of 24 hours per month for 24/48 shift or 13 hours per month for DAY. This leave is to be used at the intern's discretion. Examples for using time off are for testing purposes, vacation time, family emergencies, illness, doctor appointments, etc. Unused leave will accrue and be carried over into the next school year. Prudent use of leave is strongly advised.

After a vacation request form has been approved by the shift officer, the form will be forwarded to the Intern Coordinator for tracking and record keeping.

ARTICLE 12

REIMBURSEMENT

To help defray the cost of Insurance and expenses a monthly allowance will be given in the amount of \$600.00 a month for entry-level Interns. Senior and Paramedic Candidate Interns will receive an allowance of \$600 a month as well as a certification advancement stipend of \$600 a month for a total reimbursement of \$1200 a month. *** Veterans should refer to their benefit reimbursement guidelines.

All students should graduate at the end of two years with a Fire Science or other Associates degree. Students will be continually evaluated by the Intern Coordinator to see that they are on schedule to graduate. Termination from the program may result if academic advancement is not maintained.

Interns will also receive \$10.00 pay per call for calls made on their regularly scheduled shift.

ARTICLE 13

EQUIPMENT RETURN PROCEDURE

All assigned items shall be checked back in prior to a student leaving the program. This check in will be a formal procedure as set forth by the Intern Coordinator.

ARTICLE 14

FACILITIES USE AND VISITORS

Facilities are defined as the buildings, outbuildings, equipment, apparatus, and grounds of Gaston Fire District.

Interns will meet with the shift officer to discuss the day's school schedule at the beginning of each shift.

Students may do light maintenance work on their private vehicles providing there is no conflict with other department activities. On regular workdays, private vehicles are not allowed in the apparatus bay prior to 1700 hours. Authorization will be obtained from the duty officer before any procedures begin. Under no circumstances will any private vehicle be permitted to be parked in front of an in-service piece of apparatus. The work area will be cleaned, and all tools used will be stored in their appropriate place after completing the task.

Visitors will be allowed in the station on a limited basis. Except for department-sanctioned events, curfew for visitors will be 2200 hours. Non-fire department personnel will not be permitted in the dorm sleeping areas without the permission of the shift officer. All visitors must be accompanied by fire department personnel while in the station at all times.

Children under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult at all times when in the station.

Personnel will be responsible for maintaining the integrity of the security system. The combination to the outside door shall not be given to non-members.

No person shall damage or deface city property, equipment, or buildings. Every effort will be made to properly maintain the condition and appearance of the Fire Station and equipment.

Shop tools and equipment will be replaced immediately following their use.

ARTICLE 15

DORMS

Student Volunteer Intern's rooms will be assigned at the discretion of the Intern Coordinator and only as available.

Student Volunteer Interns are responsible for the upkeep of their individual living areas. This means all personal possessions shall be put away, dirty clothes shall be hampered, and floors shall be clean of debris. Beds shall be neatly made each morning. Interns may eat in their rooms, but dirty dishes must be removed immediately after use.

Student Volunteer Interns are responsible for the upkeep and cleanliness of their living areas. Clutter will be picked up, bathrooms maintained in a clean manner, floors vacuumed or mopped, and counters kept clean. The grounds will be monitored, litter picked up when needed, weeds pulled, etc.

ARTICLE 16

MISCELLANEOUS

Amendments to the student's rules and regulations will be posted on the station bulletin board and copies given to each student.

The Fire Department reserves the right to assign, discipline and discharge any student any time the need arises.

Students understand they are not entitled to wages or volunteer firefighter compensation for the time spent in training or fulfilling his/her duty shifts, nor is there a job or job offer at the end of the training period.

Shift and work assignments will be made at the discretion of the Fire Chief and or Intern Coordinator.