



Yorktown Heights Engine Company Number 1
1916 Commerce St Yorktown Heights, New York 10598
Website: www.yorktownfire.org
Email: membershipcommittee@yorktownfire.org
Firehouse 914.962.2148

Prospective Members Guide to Joining the Yorktown Heights Engine Company Number 1

This guide has been created to help prospective members better understand the operational aspects of the fire department, as well as provide a clear view of the admissions process to becoming a volunteer firefighter for the Yorktown Heights Engine Company Number 1. Any further questions are to be referred to in the contact sections. Feedback is always welcome.

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Dear Prospective Member,

As the leadership of the Yorktown Heights Engine Company Number 1, hereafter referred to as The Company, we are committed to providing effective and efficient fire suppression and rescue operations to the residents, businesses, patrons and visitors of the Yorktown Heights Fire District, and our surrounding communities who request our assistance. Without the help of dedicated volunteers who make up our ranks in its entirety, it would be impossible to provide our level of service at our current cost.

You will find that becoming a volunteer with The Company brings in enormous satisfaction, a raise in self-pride and a huge sense of accomplishment when your job is performed. Your service will also provide our community with a service that is valuable to all.

However, with all of the personal gains that the department has to offer, it requires a serious commitment on your part. Joining The Company should not be made without serious thought. This guide has been put together and developed to provide the information you need to make an informed decision that is right for you, your family, as well as The Company.

Once you have determined what it takes to become a volunteer firefighter with The Company, hopefully you are able to make the commitment that is required. The service provided to our community, which is 100% by our volunteers, is essential to our public safety.

We thank you in advance for your consideration, and truly hope that volunteering with The Company is right for you.

Sincerely,

Chet Swirski
Chet Swirski
Fire Chief

Bruce Zarzeski
Bruce Zarzeski
President

Why Volunteer?

The fire service is one of the most challenging, intensive, and diverse callings available today. Every day is different when it comes to the emergencies we are called to, and our requests for service numbers are up, and the types of emergencies that we are called to are constantly expanding. This expansive service attracts many people to our ranks.



Members after a first due structure fire

People volunteer for different reasons, and everyone has their own personal reason for doing so. There is no doubt about it, that action oriented people flock to the fire service, as the excitement and adrenaline rush are often found here, and happen in a moment's notice when it is least expected. Some want to remove themselves from the day to day routine of normal office desk work, for a more intensive, immediate satisfaction of helping those in need. Others want to be an integral part of a team that works together quickly to solve any problem that is called upon them. Whatever is driving

you to become a volunteer, being the one people turn to at their worst day, and providing a positive service that instantly mitigates a negative condition, is an unbelievable experience.

Imagine having to prepare yourself to deal and cope with situations that range from structure fires, to intensive extrications at car accidents, to hazardous materials spills, to aircraft accidents, and every emergency in between. This diversity is compounded by the notion that your service can be called to action at any time during the day or night, seven days a week, during the clearest of days, to the worst moments of the most intensive storms, and under stressful and sometimes extremely emotional circumstances. However, these same factors are what make the job so personally rewarding.



This satisfaction that is received is beyond description and extremely difficult to place into words on paper. The accomplishment that is perceived when a building fire is

placed under control or the compassion that is given for accident victims is enormous.

Volunteering in the fire service is one of the most important decisions you will make. It is a life changing ordeal, and a highly respected life course to take. We hope you give this decision the time and serious consideration it deserves, and eventually choose to join our ranks.

Our Mission

The mission of this company is to act as the Yorktown Heights Fire Department and to discharge the duties usually appertaining to a voluntary fire association, the prevention and extinguishment of fires, subject to the control of the authorities, who may now or hereafter have jurisdiction over said Fire Department, and to provide for the social and intellectual enjoyment of its members and friends.

About Us

The most important aspect of any fire department is the personnel themselves, regardless of how the department is structured. All the fire engines, and rescue trucks in the world don't mean anything, if the personnel are not there to operate them. Fire engines do not put out fires, people do. Everything that the fire department does requires people to do it.

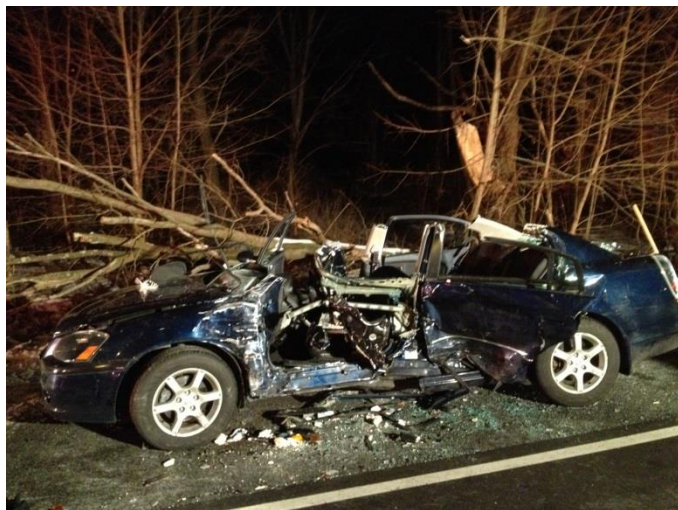
The Company is comprised 100% by volunteers. Everyone from the newest probationary firefighter, to the Chief of the Department, is a volunteer. There is no bi-weekly check for our duties. The volunteers are comprised of your neighbors, people who hold jobs in town, family members, your friends, and those who have a strong desire to help those in need. They are just like you, people who hold extremely active lives outside of work and outside of the fire department too. They still manage to find time to give back to the community that has offered so much for them.



First due House Fire

Established in 1909, The Company is a premier provider of volunteer emergency services in Westchester County. Starting as a department that consisted of 33 members whose primary equipment consisted of rakes and brushes for brush fires, to a fully functional fire department with state of the art equipment, the Company has evolved to

provide effective fire suppression and rescue operations to the residents, businesses and visitors of the Yorktown Heights Fire District.



The response area is an extremely diverse one, ranging from large research facilities and a commercial downtown, to densely populated residential areas, to the southern part of our town, which is extremely rural with multi-million dollar homes. We also cover a large stretch of the Taconic State Parkway which we frequent for major car accidents. Today, we annually respond to over 650 emergency fire calls. We provide comprehensive fire suppression,

extrication, specialized rescue, dive rescue and recovery, swift water rescue, and flood water rescue, as well as fire prevention education to our citizens. Our district has the distinction of typically being the busiest all volunteer fire department, which does not respond to EMS runs, in Westchester County.

We take our volunteer responsibilities very seriously and while our members are volunteering their time, they must remember that the citizens expect and require a certain level of protection. Their expectation must be met, 24/7/365, and our services must follow suit.

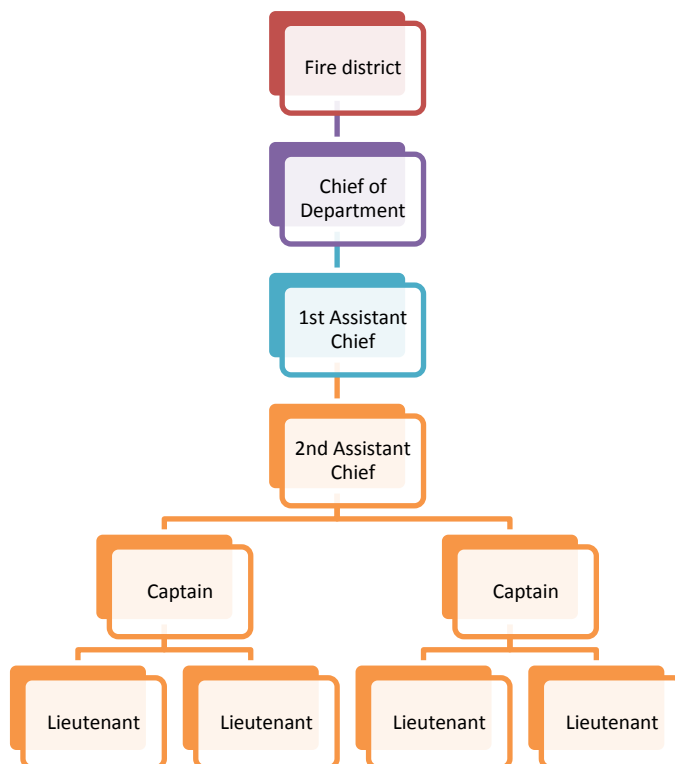
Organization

Like many other companies, there are two completely distinct and separate organizations that are tightly integrated to provide our service, the Yorktown Heights Fire District and the Yorktown Heights Engine Company 1. The Fire District is run by the board of Fire commissioners and the Engine Company is run by the Fire Chief.

The Fire District is in charge of the fire taxing authority. This is the organization of five publicly elected officials that control the tax money the citizens of Yorktown pay for fire protection. The district owns all of the fire apparatus and gear, and is responsible for all of the costs associated with purchasing, repairing and replacing any equipment. All training received by firefighters is paid for by the district.

The Engine Company's primary purpose is to provide the manpower to the fire district to respond to fire calls. The Company does not receive any tax money, and only receives money from donations. This is the organization you must belong to in order to be a firefighter in Yorktown. All Chiefs of the engine company are also certified Chief Officers of the Fire District.

The two organizations enjoy a great working relationship together, and their combined efforts are an integral part of providing efficient emergency services to those who require it.



On the scene of any emergency, the Fire Chief has sole responsibility for the personnel and the outcome of the incident. Using a chain of command, orders are issued out by the Chief Officer based on responsibilities designated to each unit. Based on this system, each unit reports to one supervisor. A group of firefighters report to their lieutenant, who reports to a captain. The captains report to the Assistant Chiefs, who are accountable to the Fire Chief.

The foundation of our department is based off a strong team oriented approach – both during an emergency *and* back at the firehouse. Before you can become a great firefighter and leader, you must be able to prove yourself as a fantastic follower. Members here have years of experience, and are willing to show new members many ways of completing tasks, but only if they are willing to listen. You'll be shown many different ways of completing a task, by many different people, and the best way to handle this is to simply let them show you their way, without offering your own insight or prior lessons. Knowing and understanding your position as a new probationary firefighter, and how you fit into the chain of command, is the single most important lesson you can learn while joining. Know your position and play it well.

How We Respond

Yorktown Firefighters respond to over 650 fire related emergency runs a year. These runs vary from structure fires, to car accidents, to hazardous material incidents, brush fires, car fires, aircraft accidents, and any other emergency that we are called to. Citizens are picking up the phone and dialing 911 for more and more reasons every day.

Our firefighters are alerted via our county dispatch (60-Control) to our voice pagers and our cell phones in text message format. Once an emergency run is dispatched, our volunteers call in (free of charge) via an internet based service. This service allows all responding members to see where other firefighters are responding to, either to a firehouse, or directly to the scene.



Our apparatus are stationed at two different houses:

- Headquarters is located in the center of town
- Station 2 is located at Locksley Rd and Route 132

Our fleet consists of 3 Fire engines, 1 Rescue-Engine, 1 Ladder, 1 Tanker, 1 Heavy Rescue, 1 Brush truck, and a dive/swift water rescue unit with 3 boats. The type of emergency that is dispatched determines what apparatus respond.



Yorktown also has a special operations division, which consists of 2 specialized teams. A Firefighter Assist and Search Team (FASTeam), which rescues downed and trapped firemen in hazardous situations, and the Dive and Swift Water Rescue Team.

You can learn more about what incidents we respond to, by visiting our website www.yorktownfire.org, or our Facebook page which is updated almost instantaneously by searching for "Yorktown Heights Volunteer FD."

Expectations

Although no previous experience or training is required to join, you need more than just a serious desire to help people. You need courage, dedication, commitment, a



willingness to learn and retain new skills, and the realization that people are counting on you to save their loved ones and belongings. A “type a personality,” where assertiveness, and a desire to never quit on a job are highly recommended. Indecisiveness cannot take place on the fire ground, as peoples’ lives depend on quick, correct decision making.

Many people think that volunteer firemen do not run into burning buildings. On the contrary. Yorktown alone responds to approximately 40 first due possible structure fires and 10 confirmed fires (where an interior attack is required) a year. Our service is one that calls on its members to work in extremely hot and dangerous situations, directly inside burning buildings, and in extremely stressful situations that require firemen to get dirty, sweaty and to place the lives of others above their own when the duty calls. During these times is not when you should be figuring out whether or not you can handle the stress of the job.

Our volunteers need to be team players, respecting each individual’s role and contributions to the department. You need to be able to deal with occasional interruptions to your lifestyle, dropping whatever you are doing, to respond to the emergency that has been called in.

As a probationary firefighter, you’ll be required to attend Monday night drills, company meetings, and in-house courses, partake in the New York State Firefighter 1 and New York State Firefighter Survival course, among other items on your probationary firefighter checklist. State courses total about 100 hours, and in house training is completed at your own pace.



Minimum Requirements

- You must be at least 18 to apply. Those ages 15-17 can apply for our Junior Corps program.
- You must complete The Company Application, schedule an interview with the recruitment board, be voted in, pass a department doctor's physical, and pass a background check
- You must be legally allowed to work in the United States
- You must reside in or up to 1 mile outside of the Fire Districts boundaries, or work full time in the fire district.
- You must be physically, intellectually and emotionally capable of performing the duties of a firefighter as assigned.
- You must not be convicted of arson of any degree.
- New members will be considered on probation for a period of one year. Their probationary activities will be reviewed within 30 days following one year of active service, and the member will be recommended for continued service, or terminated at that time.
- You must complete the in house probationary requirements prior to participating in emergency calls.
- Removal from probationary status requires that the aforementioned requirements be fulfilled along with their probationary requirements of their membership classification.
- Members must attend:
 - First 10 years of membership: 100% or 50 points
 - 48 points
 - Earned by 40% of all emergency calls.
 - Fire attendance points figured Pro-rata of 40% of all fires.
 - 36 points
 - For attending at least nine meetings.
 - Each meeting earns 4 points up to a total of 36 points.
 - 4 points
 - For attending at least 4 parades.
 - Points earned 1 point per parade up to 4 points.
 - 12 points
 - For working attendance at the Annual Carnival.



- Points earned at the rate of 3 per night, up to 12 points.
- 20 points
 - For working attendance at work nights, and/or drill nights.
 - Points earned at a rate of 1 point per night up to 20 points.
- 4 points
 - For working on Fund Raising Projects other than the Carnival.
- Failure to complete the minimum requirements can result in termination

The Admittance Process

1. Each prospective member must complete and submit a standard Yorktown Heights Engine Company Number 1 Application, found in the rear of this packet. The application includes personal information, lists of references and work experience, and information for background and arson checks. Along with the form, a \$25 fee is required to be paid.
2. After submitting the application, your application will be read off at the next company meeting (1st Tuesday of every month) and posted for a period of 20 days.
3. The membership committee will contact you to schedule an interview during the 30 day period.
4. At the next meeting, the membership committee will present their findings from your interview to the engine company, and you'll be voted on as a probationary member.
5. Pending a passing vote, you'll then be required to attend a Board of Fire Commissioners meeting (2nd Tuesday of every month).
6. Pending your department physical, and passing the background check, the District will conditionally approve your membership as a firefighter
7. Once you're approved, you are official a probationary firefighter.
8. Upon acceptance as a probationary firefighter, you will begin your one year probationary period.

First Steps as a new member

Once designated as a probationary firefighter, you'll be issued your probationary checklist, which includes gear issuance, standard operational guidelines, department orders, and other key information about our department. It is your responsibility to pick this binder up from an officer.

Weekly drill is held every Monday night from 6pm – 9pm. During this time, you'll meet the other firefighters of the company, and drill on skills that are required during your duties. During this time, you'll learn basic, exterior firefighting skills which you are required to master before responding to a call. Once your checklist is completed, you'll be able to respond to emergency runs.



Monthly meetings are held the 1st Tuesday of every month at Station 1. Here you'll learn about events and other activities that the fire department will be participating in aside from their emergency rolls.

Contact Us

If you have any further questions regarding this guide or any step of the application process, contact us by emailing us at membershipcommittee@yorktownfire.org, or by calling us at 914.962.2148 and asking for a membership committee member.