

A Prospect's Guide to Joining

WHITE MARSH VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY



ESCAPE
THE
ORDINARY

APPLY TODAY
www.wmvfc.org



Escape the Ordinary



Dear Prospective Member,

Are you ready to *Escape the Ordinary*?

On behalf of the leadership, we are excited that you are taking the time to review this guide to determine whether you will take the next step in becoming a member of the White Marsh Volunteer Fire Company (WMVFC), also known as White Marsh Volunteer Fire and EMS. Joining an emergency services organization, such as ours, is an exciting step and will provide you with lifelong accomplishments. The decision should be well thought out, as you will be required to dedicate a significant amount of time to training and to serving our community.

By becoming a member of our organization, you will join over 160 others who come from many different walks of life. You will be given the opportunity to network, learn valuable new skills, receive an education and give back to the community. Many members join with little knowledge or experience in the fire service, which is okay, since we will provide you with the training and resources in order to be successful.

Take some time to review this prospect guide so that you have an understanding of what is required of you as a candidate and eventually as a member. We hope you make the decision to *Escape the Ordinary*, to join our family, and to help carry out our mission to provide professional emergency services to our community.

Sincerely,

Kevin C. Palmer Jr.
President

Reynold A. Blubaugh III
Captain

Human Resources Division
White Marsh VFC



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Why Should I Volunteer?

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), there are an estimated 814,850 volunteer fire department personnel in the United States as of 2015, representing 70% of total fire service personnel across the nation.

Serving your local volunteer fire and emergency medical services (EMS) department is an exciting way to give back to your community, learn lifesaving skills, meet new people, develop lifelong friends, and receive career development. Our members are all at different stages of life when they decide to join. You can begin your new member training while still attending high school, later in life, or anywhere in between.

Each individual has a different motivation for joining.

Your motivation may be to:

- Help someone in need
- Be a part of the community
- Get a rush of excitement
- Supplement retirement
- Repay the fire service because of a personal experience



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About Us

White Marsh Volunteer Fire and EMS has been providing an essential service to the community for over 75 years!

White Marsh Volunteer Fire and EMS is composed of volunteers, who, just like yourself, are members of the community that want to give back. Members within our ranks work in a variety of different fields. We have firefighters, EMTs and paramedics who are also nurses, lawyers, doctors, police officers, career firefighters, construction workers, IT specialists, business owners, and much more.

It takes an army of personnel in order to meet the needs of the community. The company was founded in 1943 as a civil defense unit during War World II, and was officially incorporated in 1945 to provide fire protection for the community. Several prominent community members donated land to build a fire station. In 1945, the company converted a school bus into its first fire engine, and in 1950, the company received its first ambulance donated by the Bird River Improvement Association.

The company originally served what was mostly a rural farming community. Over the years, the community changed into a growth area, bringing major residential and commercial developments. The area turned into a more urban-like location, causing the company's call volume to dramatically increase from 300 calls per year to over 4,000 calls per year.

In addition to our developed residential and commercial area, the company is first due to respond to major roadways such as Interstate 95, Maryland Routes 43 and 7, and US Route 40, all of which produce a significant number of vehicle crashes. Our company provides fire suppression, rescue, basic hazmat, Basic Life Support

(BLS) / Advanced Life Support (ALS) EMS, and incident rehab services. In addition, the company conducts public fire and life safety education, and also participates in many community events.



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How Do We Operate?

WMVFC, a member of the Baltimore County Volunteer Firemen's Association (BCVFA), operates as an independent nonprofit organization, and responds to incidents under the direction the Baltimore County Fire Department. The company has three leadership components: the board of directors, the administrative staff, and the operations staff. All three groups work collaboratively in order to ensure the success of the organization.



The operations staff is considered the operations division, which is managed by the Vice President of Operations (Captain). The operations staff is responsible for everything related to emergency operations: training, apparatus maintenance, emergency responses, tools and equipment, etc. The operations staff is broken down into the following divisions: EMS, Fire, Support Services, and Training. The operations staff is composed of the: Captain, Senior Lieutenants, First Lieutenants, Directors, Second Lieutenants, and Sergeants.

The administrative staff is composed of the President, Vice Presidents, directors, and committee chairs. The administrative staff is responsible for human resources, fundraising, finances, public relations, community outreach, and much more. The staff is made up of a mix of people ranging from strictly administrative to partial operations personnel.

Lastly, the board of directors are responsible for overseeing the operations and administrative staff. The board, just like in any nonprofit, is charged with setting organizational goals, reviewing/approving budgets, accountability of elected officers, management of the Constitution and Bylaws, and much more. The board is led by the chairperson, and is made up of three elected members, the corporate officers, and three community members.

More than 2,000 citizens volunteer in the fire service. Though volunteer companies are independent, private corporations, Baltimore County has a true joint fire service, with dedicated career and volunteer responders working together at emergency scenes every day on behalf of our citizens.

During emergency responses, the company is expected to function as part of the Baltimore County Fire Department to include all applicable standard operating procedures.

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How Do We Staff our Apparatus?

Our company is situated in a very populated and busy portion of northeastern Baltimore County. During the day, we have a significant transient population because of commuting and work. As development and growth continues, our organization must continue to increase our personnel to respond to emergencies at all hours of the day.

The company's first due is approximately 15 square miles with an even larger second due response area. In the past, many rural departments depended on personnel to respond from home or work when the pager was alerted. This method is no longer feasible for our organization. On average we respond to 10-15 calls in a 24-hour period, and our community deserves a quick and efficient response of emergency personnel.

Our ambulance, which now responds to over 2,300 calls annually, has a calendar with shifts that EMS providers schedule in advance. Due to the increased demands on EMS providers, the company offers an incentive program for those who wish to participate. A financial stipend is provided 24 hours a day to EMS crews that can be used to pay for tuition, education materials, equipment, uniforms, and much more.



Overnight staffing is also scheduled ahead of time via an online calendar. In 2017 our crews responded to 715 calls between the hours of 11:00 PM and 7:00 AM. Our new fire station has four live-in bunk rooms, which is explained more in detail later in this guide. In addition to the live-in bunk rooms, we have several semi-private bunk spaces. This configuration accommodates those who have difficult schedules and may need to sleep during the day because of night work.

Daytime is busiest in terms of responses. We work to staff our apparatus via several methods to ensure adequate coverage of our district. People like you will continue to help our organization provide an essential service to our community. It takes many members to respond to over 4,400 calls in a given year.

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Our Facility



The company set out to construct a new fire station to better serve its members and the community. The initial station was located in a flood zone and could not be expanded. In addition, it could no longer accommodate the required personnel to serve our community. In 2017, construction began on an 18,000 square foot facility located one mile from the station we have been in for many years.

Our new facility was designed with the member in mind. The company depends on having a significant amount of personnel at the station in order to respond to high call volumes, therefore, we provide the following amenities:

- Full gym
- Four private showers
- Four live-in bunk rooms
- Six semi-private bunk rooms
- Private study with computer work stations
- Free wireless internet
- Large full-service kitchen
- Comfortable day room with large screen TVs
- Outdoor patio
- In-station training facility
- Company computers and laptops for teleworking
- Basketball court

We want the station to be a one-stop shop for our members in order to provide ample duty time. The station has areas for members to study or complete school work, enhance their physical fitness, prep/cook meals, lockers for operational members, and much more.

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Our Mission

White Marsh Volunteer Fire and EMS strives to safely respond to those in need of assistance with professionally trained personnel...every call...every hour...every day.

Our Vision

To be highly-reliable, well trained emergency responders answering the needs of our community and country with long-range sustainability achieved through dedicated members, solid leadership and effective planning.

Our Commitment to our Members

White Marsh Volunteer Fire and EMS and its leadership understands that our members are busy outside of our organization, and it requires a tremendous amount of time to maintain certifications, training, and skills proficiency. The leadership strives to provide a welcoming environment to all of our members without unnecessary burdens. For our operational members, we promise to not require excessive fundraising and administrative work, as we expect you to focus on training and emergency response. We promote an environment of teamwork and work to develop and mentor all of members.



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Membership Opportunities

We provide a variety of membership opportunities to fit your needs and to benefit our organization.

Operational

This membership category is for firefighters and EMS providers. You will be required to complete all necessary training in order to ride emergency apparatus. In addition, you are expected to provide 30 duty hours per quarter. Duty hours are defined as being at the station to staff the apparatus for response. Members can be EMS only or fire/EMS.



Limited Operational

This membership is provided to career members who actively work as a firefighter or EMT in a major municipality in Maryland. This membership requires members to provide 50 duty hours annually.

Support Services

This membership is for those who wish to support extended fire, police, and EMS incidents without being an active firefighter or EMS provider. This member responds on the canteen or rehab unit providing incident support. Members are required to complete a combination of 50 calls, duty hours, or detail hours.

Administrative

These members function behind the front lines in a support role. They actively work on human resource management, accounting, fundraising, information technology, marketing, public relations, grant writing, community outreach and much more. This can be a rewarding way to support the nonprofit and community without responding to emergency calls

**All riding personnel are required to complete a medical evaluation and physical.*

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Benefits of Joining White Marsh Volunteer Fire and EMS

Free Training

Members receiving free training through the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI), which can be applied for college credit through the University of Maryland. Other training agencies include: National Fire Academy, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and more.

Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP)

Through the state of Maryland, members are eligible for a \$5000 tax credit after three years of service and a pension after 25 years of service. Mileage is also tax deductible.

Live-In Program

The company has private bunkrooms and an associated live in program for experienced members. The selection process can be viewed at www.wmvfc.org/livein.

EMS Incentive Program

Qualified members who are cleared as essential BLS or ALS personnel on the medic are eligible for a financial incentive. More information can be obtained through one of our recruiters.

Awards/Recognition/Meals

Throughout the year the company provides various awards and recognition which could include free uniforms to members. The company also provides food to create meals, and or frequently provides catered meals for our crews. Each year we host an awards banquet recognizing the hard work of the previous year.

Scholarships

The company has an internal annual scholarship program of \$1500. In addition, members are eligible for several scholarships through the BCVFA and Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA). The state of Maryland also provides tuition reimbursement for select programs.

Personal Protective Equipment

All required personal protective equipment is provided for free to qualified members. In addition, we have a specialized turnout gear washer and dryer for our members.

And...

You develop a second family (a brotherhood/ sisterhood), and have a tremendous network. We will provide you with professional development, leadership growth, and career development-, all skills that can be used outside of the organization.

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Other Benefits

There are known risks in our profession, so we want to make sure you are covered with these additional benefits:

- **Worker's Compensation:** Provided by Baltimore County Government for work related injuries.
- **Vaccinations:** Free vaccines and inoculations are provided to members at their request to include: Influenza vaccine, Hepatitis B titers, and more.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Free, confidential service provided by Baltimore County for a variety of personal and organizational issues.
- **Critical Incident Stress Management:** Free service provided by the Baltimore County Fire Department. This resource is available to members who responded to a difficult or challenging emergency.
- **Death Benefits and Disability Insurance:** Dual programs offered through our insurance program and through Baltimore County Government.



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Expectations of Our Members

Our organization is successful, because of the dedicated membership. No previous training is required, so our organization invests a tremendous amount of time and training in each candidate who does not have prior experience. In return you are expected to follow some simple expectations. You are about to join the ranks of a dedicated membership, and listed below are the expectations of you and all of our members.

- A professional appearance, good work ethic, teamwork, and the ability to work well under stressful situations.
- Candidates are required to complete approximately 30-40 hours of initial training within 90 days of their entry date. After completing the initial training candidates are expected to enroll in a Firefighter I or EMT class.
- Be drug free. All new members will receive a drug test, and members may be randomly drug tested.
- Pass a background investigation. No one with a felony history will be accepted.
- Be at least 16 years of age and have a social security number. If between the ages of 16 and 18, a parent/guardian signature is required.
- If you are currently in high school, you are expected to provide the leadership with report cards to ensure you are maintaining adequate grades.
- Maintain all training certifications, participate in company training, complete all annual refresher training, and be proficient in your skills.
- Operational members are expected to maintain a physical fitness standard and complete an annual physical by a medical doctor.
- Meet the minimum standards of your membership category.
- Be engaged in the company, actively review your company email account, participate, and be professional towards everyone.
- Maintain and wear a company uniform when you are in station or responding on calls.

Some other organizations require additional items. WMVFC offers:

- No application fee
- No annual dues
- No requirement to attend company meetings

Furthermore, as a member of the WMVFC, you are only required to participate in limited fundraising events.

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What is Our Process?

You have already taken the first step to “Escape the Ordinary” by reviewing this guide. What is next?

1. Fill out our application at www.wmvfc.org. We only accept online applications. After completing the application, please monitor your email for further instructions. *All initial correspondence is conducted through email.*
2. After review of your application, you will be scheduled for an interview at our station. The interview is an important and required part of the process.
3. If you are successful in your interview, you will be required to complete a drug and alcohol test, and complete background paperwork.

After successfully completing steps 1-3, you will be accepted as a candidate. Please keep in mind members can be disqualified during steps 1-3. The White Marsh Volunteer Fire Company is an equal-opportunity organization. Operational personnel are required to pass a physical clearance.

4. You will attend New Member Orientation and receive a LOSAP number. During new member orientation you will complete additional paperwork, provide a copy of your driver's license (if applicable), and answer a medical questionnaire, which is reviewed by the BCFVA medical review board.
5. After the medical questionnaire is reviewed you will be required to obtain a physical by a medical doctor. Some members are required to complete this through the BCFVA medical contractor.
6. You will now have 90 days to complete the following training: CPR for Healthcare Providers, Baltimore County Bloodborne Pathogens, Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Awareness, Ambulance and Engine Orientation, and FEMA National Incident Management System (NIMS). Some of this training is conducted online.
7. You will also enroll for a Firefighter I or EMT class. If you already have training you will need to submit your certifications to the WMVFC Administrator in order to receive gear and clearance documents.
8. You will be turned over to the training staff to complete in- station competencies and testing before being cleared as essential personnel.

Our recruiters are available to assist you through the process. All certifications that are obtained may be emailed to administrator@wmvfc.org or dropped in the red box outside of the offices.

Pre-trained or experienced personnel will have a modified process. The process for administrative personnel is different than what is listed.

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What happens after Initial Training?

After you complete initial training and are cleared to function as essential personnel, you are able to advance through the ranks. Additional training is offered through www.mfri.org or through the Baltimore County Fire-Rescue Academy (FRA).

EMS advancement includes:

- IV Technician
- Emergency Vehicle Operator
- Paramedic
- EMS Officer

Suppression advancement includes:

- Firefighter II
- Hazmat Operations
- Emergency Vehicle Operator
- Pump Operator
- Fire Officer
- Safety Officer
- Rescue Specialties



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Rewards

You should now be knowledgeable of the process required. It requires a tremendous amount of effort from you upfront, although, you should find it very rewarding and challenging.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

