

Thurston County Fire Protection District 8

DISTRICT POLICY MANUAL



PROCEDURE TITLE:	Volunteer Member Benefits & Support Programs
PROCEDURE NUMBER:	3-13-PO-00
REVISION:	2
DATE ISSUED/REVISED:	DRAFT
BOARD APPROVAL:	

Policy: The District values the service and dedication of its volunteer members. This Policy outlines the benefits, protections, training opportunities, and support programs provided to eligible volunteers in recognition of their commitment to the community. All benefits are ultimately subject to Board and Fire Chief approval, applicable laws, and available District funding.

I. Initial & Ongoing Training and Mentoring: Upon acceptance into the District, Incident Readiness & Response (IR&R) volunteer members are enrolled in required initial training for Firefighter or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) which is paid for by the District. All initial and ongoing (skills maintenance) training is conducted under the direction of the Battalion Chief for Training & Education. IR&R volunteer members are strongly encouraged to obtain dual qualifications as both Firefighter and EMT to enhance operational effectiveness and service delivery.

Prior to beginning initial training, each volunteer shall be assigned a mentor. Mentors are senior members who provide guidance regarding District policies, procedures, training expectations, and general support. Refer to *District Policy 3-01 "Appointment of Incident Readiness & Response Members"*.

II. Uniforms & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): All IR&R volunteer members shall be issued standard District uniforms and personal protective equipment (PPE) at no cost to the member. The Battalion Chief for Facilities & Equipment or their designee is responsible for issuance, tracking, and replacement of uniforms, PPE and equipment in accordance with District policies and procedures. Refer to *District Policy 3-05 "Standards for Uniform & Personal Protective Equipment"*.

III. Volunteer Compensation: Volunteers are compensated on a quarterly basis for their services. IR&R volunteer members receive a nominal stipend for attending assigned shifts and other approved functions (e.g. additional training, community outreach events). Nominal stipend rates vary based on rank, qualifications, assigned duties, and longevity of service. IR&R volunteer member's time and participation shall be documented and reported by the member's supervisor and the platoon's Battalion Chief. Refer to *District Policy 1-01 "Compensation & Reimbursement"*.

V. Health & Wellness Programs: The District is committed to supporting the health and well-being of its members:

- **Medical & Fitness Monitoring:** Members are provided with entry-level fitness testing, medical evaluations and psychological evaluations; annual hearing evaluations; availability to voluntary annual physical evaluations; and other occupational health monitoring as deemed appropriate.
- **Vaccinations:** The District provides, at no cost to members, recommended immunizations including: Hepatitis B (Hep B); Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR); Influenza (Flu); and other seasonal or duty-related vaccinations as available.
- **Fitness Facilities:** Members are permitted complimentary use of District gym equipment located at District firestations, subject to applicable rules and safety guidelines.
- Refer to *District Policy 2-20 "District Safety & Health Program"*.

VI. Member Assistance & Support Services: Programs include:

- **Employee Assistance Program:** Members and their immediate families are eligible to participate in the Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a voluntary and confidential service providing assistance for personal or work-related concerns that may impact performance or well-being.
- **Chaplain Services:** Confidential non-denominational Chaplaincy services are available to members and their immediate families for emotional and spiritual support during times of crisis or personal need.

- **Peer Support Team:** The Peer Support Team (PST) provides voluntary, confidential support to members experiencing work-related or personal challenges, including but not limited to family concerns, financial stress, illness, grief, or critical incident exposure. Peer supporters provide assistance and support only and do not perform mental health evaluations or clinical services.
- Refer to *District Policy 3-14 "Member Assistance Program"*.

VII. Accident, Injury & Insurance Coverage: Programs include:

- **Duty-Related Injury Coverage** - Prior to initial training, IR&R volunteer members are enrolled in the State of Washington Volunteer Firefighters' & Reserve Officers' Relief & Pension (BVFF) compensation plan. The BVFF plan provides financial protection in the event of injury, disability, or illness arising out of volunteer service. (Volunteer firefighters and EMTs are not covered under Washington State Labor & Industries for career fire service duties.)
- **Reporting Requirements** – In accordance with *District Policy 2-20 "District Safety & Health Program"* any accident, injury, or exposure occurring while on duty must be reported immediately to the supervisor or platoon Battalion Chief. The reporting documentation shall be submitted through the District's reporting system on the required accident report form(s). The Battalion Chief of Health & Safety shall manage all claims processes.
- Refer to and *District Policy 3-16 "Members' Disability Compensation"*.

VIII. Term Life Insurance: Prior to initial training, IR&R volunteer members are enrolled in term life insurance through the BVFF pension/disability system and supplemental term life insurance coverage through the District's designated insurance provider (currently up to \$50,000). Required enrollment and beneficiary designation forms are included in the new member onboarding packet.

IX. Pension Plan: Following completion of initial training, IR&R volunteer members are enrolled in the BVFF pension plan. This program provides a modest retirement benefit for eligible volunteer members based on years of service. Premiums for active members listed on the District roster as of January 1 of each year are paid by the District, subject to continued eligibility and statutory requirements.

X. Officer Development Program: The District maintains an Officer Development Program (ODP) to promote leadership development and succession planning. The program provides advanced training opportunities; mentorship from shift officers; and coaching for members demonstrating leadership potential. Participation in ODP is required for members seeking promotion within the District.

XI. Tuition Reimbursement Program: The District offers an educational/training tuition reimbursement program to promote professional growth and continued service:

- **Eligibility:** To be eligible, members must have completed at least one (1) year of membership in good standing; have successfully completed probation; and be current with their Performance Development Plan (PDP). Refer to *District Policy 3-30 "Member Performance Evaluations"*.
- **Covered Expenses:** Reimbursement may include tuition, books, and other approved education-related expenses for successfully completed accredited college coursework. Program details, application procedures, and reimbursement limits are governed under *District Policy 3-40 "Tuition Reimbursement"*.

XII. South Bay Firefighters' Association Participation: Members and their families may participate in the South Bay Firefighters' Association (SBFFA), an independent non-profit organization that conducts community fundraising events; supports local schools and community programs; and hosts member social activities. Participation is voluntary. Members may be required to pay dues as determined by the SBFFA.

XIII. Recognition & Special Events: The District and SBFFA recognize the importance of camaraderie and service recognition. Members are invited to participate in annual and periodic events, including an annual awards and recognition celebration honoring service tenure and exceptional performance; seasonal family events; and additional social and recognition gatherings throughout the year.

XIV. Policy Administration: The Fire Chief or designee is responsible for the administration and interpretation of this Policy and all benefits described herein may be subject to change.