



*County of Sonoma*  
**FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

FIRE SERVICES \* EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT \* HAZARDOUS MATERIALS



MARK ASTON, DIRECTOR/FIRE CHIEF

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## VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RULES AND REGULATIONS

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### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of each Volunteer Fire Company (VFC) shall be to further the mission of the Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services Department (County Fire) in all respects, preserve life and property, prevent and suppress fires within their assigned initial attack areas, suppress other fires in Sonoma County in extreme emergencies and when requested by the mutual or automatic aid system. Foster and maintain harmonious association among the other Volunteer Fire Companies of Sonoma County Fire. Each organization will operate under the supervision of the County Fire Chief and/or his representatives. The following Rules and Regulations are intended to highlight specific policies, terms and conditions further explained in the County Fire SOP manuals. Volunteers are expected to read and adhere to all County Fire policies and procedures.

The County of Sonoma appoints the Director of the Fire and Emergency Services Department as per State of California statute to serve as the County Fire Chief with the responsibility to administer and supervise all operations of the County Fire Department.

Additional information including SOP's may be obtained at our Web Site: [www.sonoma-county.org/des](http://www.sonoma-county.org/des)

### ADMINISTRATION

1. County Fire – The term “County Fire” as used in these Rules and Regulations shall mean all of the fire and emergency services provided throughout County Fire Service Area No. 40, by the Fire Services Division of the County Fire and Emergency Services Department and all its Volunteer Fire Companies.
2. County Fire Chief -The term "County Fire Chief", as used in these Rules and Regulations, shall mean the Director of the Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services Department or his or her authorized representative, responsible and accountable for the supervision and management of County Fire.
3. Volunteer Fire Company Board of Directors (VFC Board) -The term "VFC Board", as used in these Rules and Regulations, shall mean the locally elected Board of Directors of the community-based Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation in support of the community based volunteer fire company.
4. Volunteer Fire Chief -The term "Volunteer Fire Chief", as used in these Rules and Regulations, shall mean the Fire Chief of a Volunteer Fire Company or his or her authorized representative, responsible and accountable for the supervision and management of a Volunteer Fire Company within County Fire.
5. Volunteer Fire Company – The term “Volunteer Fire Company (VFC)”, as used in these Rules and Regulations, shall mean those organizations authorized by the California Health and Safety Code 14825 – 14827, with a current Certificate of Organization on file with the Sonoma County Operational Area Coordinator to operate as a Volunteer Fire Company within the area defined as FSA #40.



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### **VOLUNTEER FIRE CHIEF**

1. Each VFC shall have a Volunteer Fire Chief Officer designated as the person responsible for the overall supervision of the operations and personnel assigned to the specific VFC. Further, this position will represent interests of the specific VFC at meetings, committees and assignments as deemed appropriate by County Fire.
2. The Volunteer Fire Chief or his/her designee, is accountable for the general condition and efficient operation of the VFC, training of assigned personnel, and performance of all other assigned duties and responsibilities.
3. The Volunteer Fire Chief and County Fire are accountable for accomplishing annual inspections of water supply systems within the VFC's initial response area such as, fire hydrants, cisterns, storage tanks and any other source of water supply.
4. The Volunteer Fire Chief will assist County Fire to determine the cause of fires. Any such evidence should be preserved.
5. The Volunteer Fire Chief shall make every effort to attend:
  - a. All fires or other emergency incidents to ensure the appropriate level of response.
  - b. Meetings called by the President of the Sonoma County Volunteer Fire Companies Association.
  - c. Meetings called by the Sonoma County Fire Chief.
  - d. Special committee meetings called by either the Sonoma County Volunteer Fire Companies Association or County Fire.

### **VOLUNTEER FIRE OFFICERS**

1. The Volunteer Fire Chief shall have the authority to appoint other Chief Officers in accordance with County Fire SOPs. The role and responsibility of the appointee shall include serving as the acting Volunteer Fire Chief during his/her absence.
2. The Volunteer Fire Chief shall have the authority to appoint Fire Officer(s) (Captain) in accordance with the County Fire SOP's.

### **FIRE COMPANY OPERATIONS**

1. The Volunteer Fire Chief shall recommend the number and classification of volunteers assigned to the specific VFC based upon the needs of the community for the provision of an acceptable level of fire protection. This recommended staffing level requires approval by County Fire prior to the candidate selection and background investigation process.
2. Each member of the VFC shall be under the direct supervision of a Fire Officer and responsible to the Volunteer Fire Chief for the efficient operations of the VFC.
3. The Volunteer Fire Chief shall designate appropriately trained and qualified volunteers to inspect all apparatus and equipment in accordance with County Fire SOP. Vehicle maintenance log books shall be maintained for each apparatus in accordance with the County Fire SOP.
4. The Volunteer Fire Chief shall keep or cause to be kept a VFC log, a chronological record of all activities of the VFC and a record of the fire and drill service of each member. This can be either electronic or hard bound document. Further, the Volunteer Fire Chief shall ensure that the National Fire Incident Reports (NFIRS) are completed within 24 hours of the incident in accordance with the County Fire SOP.
5. The Volunteer Fire Chief shall maintain or cause to be maintained, a pre-planned response document for their assigned service area. This preplan shall include identification of target hazards, site plans,



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water points, special considerations, and strategic and tactical preplans. Designated alarm assignments (quantity and type of resources) shall be predetermined and entered into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system at REDCOM, and shall be in accordance with the County Fire SOP.

### **APPARATUS AND VEHICLE OPERATION**

1. No volunteer shall operate a fire apparatus or a fire vehicle until his/her driving and mechanical abilities have been verified and approved in accordance with applicable County Fire SOP and State law. Drivers shall be recommended by the Volunteer Fire Chief as meeting all qualifications for certification. The Driver Operator Certification is issued and approved by the County Fire Chief.
2. Volunteer driver operators shall make pre and post trip inspection of the apparatus, vehicle, and equipment in accordance with the County Fire SOP to ensure operational readiness. The driver operator shall report to his/her officer of the vehicle or apparatus state of readiness and appropriately document any loss or damage to the vehicle, tools, and equipment.
3. Each volunteer authorized to drive, shall be thoroughly familiar with the area served by his/her VFC, including condition of routes during different seasons and location of water supplies.
4. Volunteers driving vehicles and apparatus shall observe speed limits and traffic laws, consistent with safety and considering traffic, weather and road conditions, Code 3 vehicle operation shall be consistent with the County Fire Code 3 Driving SOP.
5. Upon receipt of alarm, all members will report to the fire station and/or fire scene (as directed by VFC/County Fire SOP).
6. Before responding out of the initial response area, all apparatus shall be staffed with at least two (2) volunteer members. Water tenders shall be staffed with at least one (1) volunteer member. Volunteers shall not respond out of initial response area in private vehicles, unless directed to do so by a Fire Officer.

### **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. All volunteers shall make every attempt to respond to all fires and other emergencies, attend all meetings and drills of the VFC, except following consumption of alcohol, taking medication that may cause drowsiness, when feeling ill, or any other situation that would preclude the safe operation of a motor vehicle, in accordance with County Fire SOPs.
2. The Volunteer shall notify their Chief Officer or their assigned supervisor in case of their absence or not being available, event of any injury to themselves, or others; or the volunteer encounters any unsafe, hazardous, or dangerous condition in accordance with applicable County Fire SOPs.
3. All volunteers shall familiarize themselves with their fire station facilities, fire apparatus, fire fighting tools and equipment, storage locations, maintenance procedures, communications equipment, and adhere to all County Fire Operational SOPs.
4. All volunteers shall familiarize themselves with their response area identifying potential hazards, routes of travel, building construction, and wildland interface considerations. Volunteers shall preplan response to target hazards, commercial buildings, and any places of assemble such as churches and schools.
5. All volunteers shall maintain a valid CPR certification and First Responder Medical certification as required by the California Health and Safety Code and Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations.
6. All volunteers shall carefully preserve any and all evidence obtained at the scene of a fire or other emergency. The appropriate authorities shall be notified according to the County Fire SOP.



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7. All volunteers shall immediately report anything of a suspicious or dangerous nature to their supervisor or the Incident Commander.
8. Volunteers shall exercise proper precautionary safety measures at all times to avoid injury to themselves or others while engaged in firefighting, working around the station and apparatus or engaged in other activities in accordance with County Fire Personnel Code of Conduct and applicable County Fire SOPs.
9. All volunteer firefighters and paid firefighters must pass an annual fit test for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and be medically cleared through the Occupational Health provider as part of the County Fire Respiratory Protection Program mandated by 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1910.134 and Section 5144 of the California Code of Regulations. *Any member not completing a fit test and receiving a medical clearance will be prohibited from the use of an SCBA and from entering an IDLH atmosphere.* The Volunteer Fire Chief shall ensure that all members of the VFC are in compliance.
10. All volunteer firefighters and paid firefighters responding to wildland fires either as part of a strike team/task force, or as single increment mutual or automatic aid resource to other jurisdictions, shall comply with the minimum training requirements of National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) 310-1 as mandated by the California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) and the Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association. Firefighters shall carry in their possession a Firefighter Type 1 “red card” and Officers shall carry a Firefighter Type 2 with Engine or Crew Boss endorsement “red card” as proof of training compliance. “Red cards” are issued by County Fire after completion of the required training courses.

**The County Fire Chief will review the training compliance prior to each fire season and make recommendations to REDCOM dispatch as to each VFC’s ability to respond on strike teams and mutual or automatic aid.**

### **VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS**

1. 18 years of age or older.
2. Good physical condition and able to perform arduous work under stressful conditions. Candidate volunteers must completed a background examination and pre-employment medical evaluation based on Essential Work Functions.
3. Volunteers should normally live or work in the area protected by the VFC where assigned. Exceptions are subject to approval by the Volunteer Fire Chief.
4. Each vehicle operator must have a valid California Driver's License, with appropriate endorsements for operating the vehicle or apparatus. Each volunteer shall provide written authorization to the County in accordance with County Fire SOP.
5. No volunteer shall have been convicted of a felony of any form or manner, nor be under formal probation supervision.
6. All members shall complete a basic fire-training academy or equivalent prior to being able to respond to emergencies or non-emergency incidents.
7. Those members coming on as Support Volunteers will be required to meet only those requirements and attend only that training as indicated by the specific duty assignments given them in accordance with the Support Volunteer position description and in consultation between the Volunteer Fire Chief and the County Fire Chief.



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**GENERAL**

1. All members shall follow the orders of their appointed or elected officers, Chief or duly authorized representative(s).
2. All members shall assist in any and all work pertaining to the VFC and adhere to all policies and procedures of the VFC and County Fire.
3. Individuals who are not members of the VFC shall be allowed to handle or ride upon the apparatus only with prior approval of the Incident Commander and/or Volunteer Fire Chief.
4. Members shall practice safety measures while riding, driving or operating apparatus, vehicles, and equipment.
5. The Volunteer Fire Chief shall insure all apparatus, vehicles, and equipment are properly maintained in a state of operational readiness; shall maintain all maintenance records, vehicle logs, and related documentation in accordance with the County Fire SOP and applicable laws and regulations.
6. Volunteers shall at all times when driving their private vehicle obey all traffic laws, Rules and Regulations, even when responding to an emergency incident. Code 3 operation of a private vehicle is not recommended or supported by the County of Sonoma and such operation is not covered by the County insurance policies. The VFC Board accepts full liability and responsibility if they authorize and grant permission to any VFC staff to outfit and operate their private vehicle with emergency lighting. Such vehicle operation and all liabilities for authorizing said use will be the sole responsibility of the VFC Board.
7. Since the VFC relies on members to respond to the station in their private vehicles, all members must have personal auto insurance of adequate coverage and limits. The Volunteer Fire Chief is responsible for having a process that verifies such coverage if requested by County Fire or law enforcement officials.
8. Possession, drinking, consumption of, or being under the influence of intoxicating beverages or drugs while at/on a fire, rescue, emergency call, on standby or while at a Fire Station is prohibited. Intoxicating beverages may only be stored or consumed at Fire Station or Fire Facilities when directly part of a "special event" or "fundraising event" held at the Fire Station or Fire Facility. At no time shall volunteers that are subject to emergency response activities engage in the consumption of intoxicating beverages.
9. All COUNTY FIRE Volunteer Fire Company members shall comply with the foregoing Rules and Regulations. Non-compliance therewith may result in reprimand, suspension or removal from active roster.
10. All members shall not create or participate in hostile and discourteous treatment of the public, employee, or volunteer.



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**SONOMA COUNTY FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT –  
(COUNTY FIRE SERVICE AREA # 40)**

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**VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RULES AND REGULATIONS**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print Volunteer's name) received a copy of the Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services Department *Volunteer Fire Company Rules and Regulations*. I certify that I have read and understand the Rules and Regulations. I acknowledge that if I fail to follow the Departments policies, procedures and the aforementioned Rules and Regulations, I may be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal as a Volunteer.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire and Emergency Services Department Volunteer