
Fire Explorer Program

337.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of Fire Explorers that provides opportunities of leadership, influence and education among youth age groups within the community. The goal is to provide the opportunity for Fire Explorers to build desirable character attributes, experience the responsibilities of active citizenship, and develop mental sharpness and physical fitness. It is the mission of the Winters Fire Department to provide youth with insight into the fire and emergency services, to take an active role in the community, and create a better understanding between the fire department and the youth of the community. The department is committed to developing maximum potential and providing a high quality educational system in a safe, motivating environment.

337.2 DEFINITIONS

Fire Explorer: A youth aged individual between the ages of 14 to 18 years of age who participates in a curriculum and manipulative skills based training environment to gain knowledge about the fire service, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. This may include unpaid chaplains, interns, persons providing administrative support and youth involved in a fire Explorer Post, among others.

337.3 POLICY

Fire Explorer members must be at least 14 years of age to join and can participate until 18 years of age.

Fire Explorers shall be a current student in the Winters Joint Unified School District.

Fire Explorers must maintain at least a "C" average in their school coursework and produce documentation of the same at the time they join. Documentation of grades must be provided on a quarterly basis. In the event the Explorer has lower than a "C" average, he or she will be removed from participation until the grade returns to a "C".

Fire Explorer members under 18 years of age must obtain full written permission from the parent or legal guardian to participate in the program.

Fire Explorers may not operate any fire department vehicles.

Fire Explorers participating in Live Fire Training exercises will be required to meet Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), Respiratory Protection 1910.134 for use of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA's), and respirators covered under the standard.

Fire Explorers and their parent or legal guardian must sign a waiver that includes full disclosure of risks and releases the department from liability should someone become injured.

This is a non-safety position and is only intended for educational and training purposes

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337.4 PROCEDURE

Fire Explorer members report directly to their advisor for all assignments and activities.

Fire Explorers will receive classroom training in core areas of interest, with classes focused on CPR, communications, fire prevention and life safety, and general fire, rescue and EMS education.

Fire Explorer members may only perform support or auxiliary work at the fireground operations, such as providing refreshments to the first responders, well outside the "hot zone" or operational area established by the Incident Commander.

337.5 RECRUITMENT

Candidates interested in participating in the Winters Fire Department Fire Explorer Program will need to submit an application and consent to a City of Winters Fire Explorer Waiver form.

337.6 SCREENING

Fire Explorers will be subject to a background investigation, including, but not limited to, a juvenile and criminal history records check, drivers license history check from the Department of Motor Vehicles and contact with listed references.

337.7 SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

A limited number of candidates will be accepted into the Fire Explorer Program each year. This will be based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to; availability, candidates grades, candidates career path interests, background investigation and medical screening.

337.8 TRAINING & PARTICIPATION

Fire Explorers will be provided with an orientation program to acquaint them with the department, personnel and policies and procedures that have a direct impact on their work assignment. Fire Explorers should receive position-specific training to ensure they have adequate knowledge and skills to complete tasks required by the position and should receive periodic ongoing training as deemed appropriate by their supervisor or assigned Captains.

Training should reinforce to Fire Explorers that they may not intentionally represent themselves as, or by omission infer that they are firefighters or other full-time employee of the department. They shall always represent themselves as Fire Explorers.

Fire Explorers will participate through a variety of lecture based curriculum, manipulative skills and physical fitness programs.

Examples of youth activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Parades or special events
- Fundraising events and activities

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- Training, including Live Fire Training
- Fire prevention and life safety education programs
- Meeting participation
- Assisting at incidents in a non-operational capacity and outside the operational.

Participation: Fire Explorers attend scheduled training program that includes an educational curriculum, skills development, team building. Under the direction of a Fire Captain a Fire Explorer may participate in a Ride Along. with approval of Human Resources, parent or guardian and the Fire Chief.

337.9 DRESS CODE

As representatives of the department, Fire Explorers are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Fire Explorers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

Fire Explorers shall conform to department-approved dress consistent with their assignment. Uniforms authorized for Fire Explorers should be readily distinguishable from those worn by firefighters. The uniform or identifiable parts of the uniform shall not be worn while off-duty except may choose to wear the uniform while in transit to or from official department assignments or functions, provided an outer garment is worn over the uniform shirt to avoid bringing attention to the Fire Explorer while he/she is off-duty.

Fire Explorers will be supplied a Fire Explorer T-shirt and uniform shirt. The following will need to be purchased by the individual; navy blue pants (Dickies or like brand), black closed-toe boots with laces and black belt.

337.10 SUPERVISION OF FIRE EXPLORERS

Each Fire Explorer who is accepted to a position with the Department must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that Fire Explorer. This supervisor will be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and should be available to the Fire Explorer for consultation and assistance. Fire Explorer will be assigned to a designated Captain upon acceptance.

Functional supervision of the Fire Explorer is the responsibility of the supervisor in charge of the unit where the Fire Explorer is assigned. Supervisors of volunteers should consider the following:

- (a) Take the time to introduce Fire Explorers to employees on all levels.
- (b) Ensure Fire Explorer have work space and necessary office supplies.
- (c) Make sure the work is challenging. Do not hesitate to give them an assignment or task that will tap these valuable resources.

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337.11 CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, the duties of the position or department policy, all information a Fire Explorer encounters shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized personnel shall be released.

Each Fire Explorer will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement before being given an assignment with the Department. Unauthorized disclosure of any confidential information, verbally, in writing or by any other means, by the Fire Explorer is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

Fire Explorer shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or other periodical, release or divulge any information concerning the activities of the Department, or maintain that they represent the Department in such matters without permission from the proper department personnel.

337.12 PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Fire Explorers will be issued an identification card that must be worn and visible at all times while on-duty. Any fixed and portable equipment issued by the Department shall be for official and authorized use only. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the Department and shall be returned at the termination of service.