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# Community Fire Station Visitation Program

## 405.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the methods the District uses to interact with the community, share information about the workings of a fire station and demonstrate the capabilities of various apparatus and equipment through educational activities.

## 405.2 POLICY

The Blue Ridge Fire District will aggressively promote fire safety and public awareness through a variety of public information and education activities, including a fire station visit program.

## 405.3 PROCEDURE

- (a) The fire station visit program is an educational activity intended to allow school groups, service clubs, youth organizations, church groups and other civic-minded organizations to schedule and participate in a tour of a working fire station. The types of groups and organizations appropriate for inclusion in the fire station visit program include, but are not limited to:
1. Pre-school classes or groups (public or private).
  2. Kindergarten classes or groups (public or private).
  3. Primary and secondary school groups (public, church-based or private).
  4. Chaperoned, organized youth groups that generally include persons 17 years of age and under and are sponsored and accompanied by adult representatives of a formal organization (e.g., Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Brownies).
  5. Service clubs and organizations that are generally voluntary nonprofit organizations, where members meet regularly to perform charitable work either by direct hands-on efforts or by raising money for other organizations (e.g., Kiwanis, Rotary, Masons).
- (b) The fire station visit program is not intended, nor should it be used, as an entertainment opportunity or for a commercial or for-profit purpose. The following types of groups, entities and activities are not appropriate for inclusion in the fire station visit program:
1. Birthday party groups
  2. Social networking groups
  3. Business networking groups
  4. For-profit tour groups, including profit-based foreign student groups
  5. Any group, entity or activity that is part of a for-profit enterprise

Neither of the lists above is intended to be all-inclusive; rather, they are general representations of the types of groups that are either appropriate or inappropriate for inclusion in the fire station visit program.

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Groups or organizations can request a fire station visit by completing and submitting an application to the Fire Chief. Applications must be submitted at least 45 days prior to the date requested for the fire station visit. The Fire Chief will evaluate each application in accordance with this policy. Each evaluation will be considered uniformly and without discrimination as part of the application process. Approved applications will be forwarded to the appropriate crew for assignment.

### 405.3.1 SCHEDULING FIRE STATION VISITS

To limit the impact of fire station visits on other essential activities, each crew should be limited to conducting one station visit per calendar month. The Fire Chief may elect to further limit the number of station visits assigned to individual crews based on the operational or training activities of that crew. The Fire Chief should notify the Captain of the station and crew assigned to conduct each scheduled visit. The Captain should confirm the appointment for the station visit with the applicant and act as the point of contact for the applicant regarding any questions, issues or changes in the scheduled visit.

### 405.3.2 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The fire station visit program will operate within the following parameters:

- (a) Participating group size will generally be limited to 30 persons, including chaperones and drivers. Larger groups may apply but approval of the application will depend on the availability of a fire district representative to assist with managing the tour on the day of the visit.
- (b) Station visits should be scheduled for a maximum of two hours and generally during regular business hours.
- (c) The crew assigned to manage a station visit should remain in-service and available for emergency calls during the visit. Visiting groups should be notified in advance that the crew may be called away from the station at any time and the visit may then be canceled.
- (d) Station visit participants should not be allowed to enter the private crew sleeping or dressing areas of the station.
- (e) The fire crews managing each station visit should ensure that no confidential information or information protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is visible or accessible to the station visit participants. Specific areas of the station may be closed to the visiting groups as needed to protect confidential and/or protected materials.

### 405.4 RECORD KEEPING

The Fire Chief should maintain a record of all applications for the station visit program. The records should include:

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- (a) The name and contact information for the group or organization applying for a fire station visit.
- (b) The name of the group leader or person submitting the application.
- (c) Information regarding the approval or denial of the application. For denied applications, the reason for the denial should be listed (e.g., non-conforming group, scheduling conflict, no crew availability).
- (d) The scheduled date and time of each approved visit.
- (e) The Captain, station and crew assigned to manage the visit.
- (f) Confirmation that the group or organization completed the station visit or the reason it was not completed.

These records should be retained in accordance with the district's established records retention schedules.