



ARE YOU READY?

*Would you like to make a difference in Upper Kittitas County? Being a volunteer member is a great way to contribute!
As our county grows, so does our call volume and our need for more volunteers – Volunteers Just Like YOU!*

Volunteering with Kittitas County Fire District 7 can be one of the most challenging, rewarding, and valuable experiences of your life! We provide the training, equipment and support to help you to become a contributing member of a vital part of our county support structure. It is also a wonderful way to serve YOUR community.

You will be placed in emergency situations and will discover that you have the courage and drive to handle them both, calmly and rationally. You will be provided with training and opportunities to make a direct and positive impact on the lives of others.

No experience is needed. Training is FREE!

Kittitas County Fire District 7 Orientation Training Program (aka GEAR UP)

This course prepares new volunteers for a future in the fire and rescue service and includes an introduction to apparatus, CPR-AED, HIPAA, Safety Standards and several other compliance programs.

Fire

Firefighters are first responders who perform many brave duties. Before you can rescue a child locked in an automobile, fight a fire, or save a passenger trapped in an overturned vehicle, you must receive the proper training. Recruit Academy and live fire training must be completed before you can begin working on actual fire incidents.

EMS

Emergency medical responders play a critical role in providing supportive medical care to an injured or ill patient until that patient reaches a medical facility. EMT training must be completed in order for volunteers to have the basic life support skills necessary to respond as part of a two person ambulance crew.

How far you take your emergency response training is up to you!

You can choose to expand on the basic training for EMS and Firefighting with specialty courses in everything from shore based water rescue, to rope rescue, to wildland firefighting, to hazardous materials response, or enroll in leadership courses. If you are willing to put in the time and effort, we are ready to show you the ropes!



**Did you know that nearly 70 percent of all firefighters are volunteers?
Half of all Americans live in communities served by fire departments that are either all
volunteer or a combination of volunteer and career.**

Volunteer firefighters fill a much-needed role in their communities, protecting the lives and property of many people. As a volunteer first responder, you can expect to:

- Attend weekly meetings and training sessions
- Have the opportunity to participate in sleeper shifts for volunteers at fire station \$25 per shift - overnight
- Perform physically demanding work
- Spend extended periods of time outside in inclement weather
- Be called out at any time of the day or night
- Volunteer EMT's can work with Medic One paramedic on 12-hour \$60 stipend shift - overnight
- Participation in the Volunteer Pension Fund
- Receive CPR, First Aid, and EMT training
- Learn Structure and Wildland Firefighting
- Be a part of community protection
- Experience the excitement of the emergency scene/operations
- Participate in public relations opportunities, community - schools
- Participate in live fire training - learn from the best.
- Learn special operations, ropes, extrication tools, shore based water rescue, UTV rescue
- Use the experience as a career development opportunity for fire service or related career.
- Receive leadership training and development
- Experience the camaraderie of the fire service

Let's paint the picture of what this means for you a little more specifically.

The Pager

You will carry a pager or radio or receive phone text alerts that tell you when there is an emergency. This alert can go off at any hour of any day, on any day of the week, in any weather condition. During dinner. At 3 am. On the way to work. When leaving for vacation. While at the grocery store. During a blizzard. When it's 105 degrees. The pager knows only one thing — someone is in need.

The Gear

You can't fight fire in street clothes or even the toughest pair of overalls or hunting apparel. Special fire gear will be issued to protect you while in a fire or on the scene of an accident. These items can be big, dirty, and contain harmful contaminants, so you should never wash bunker gear in the family washing machine as the department provides washing machines specifically for this purpose, and avoid storing it in the home. Gear should be cleaned after every harmful exposure. Encourage your volunteer to keep cleaned gear in the vehicle or at the station; this way it can be easily accessed on an emergency call. Also, if you are (or become) an EMT, don't forget about medical gear and the safeguards they require. Firefighting has a lot of special accessories that many firefighters desire in addition to their standard gear. The department will provide you the best necessities.

The Time Commitment

As a firefighter, your calendar will now contain periodic meetings and/or training events that person has to attend with the fire department. For instance, there may be one every Tuesday, or an occasional Saturday for special training. Maybe a joint training with another neighboring department. You may even stop by the department at times when not on call or specifically needed, just to visit with their fellow firefighters. Eventually you may take on additional roles such as an officer with the department, which requires even more responsibilities and meetings. You can expect a minimum of a few hours each month to be dedicated to the fire department, but often it will be a lot more.

In some volunteer departments, there are "on call" hours when the volunteers stay all day or overnight at the firehouse for a duty shift. These schedules vary by department and by the needs of the community.

The Physical Demands

Returning from a fire, accident scene, or even department training is not like returning from a trip to volunteer at the library. Fighting fire and responding to emergencies are physically exhausting activities. Wearing heavy gear and dragging water lines while working in an emergency mode requires great physical exertion and mental stamina. Nights punctuated with emergency calls and interrupted sleep may mean you need an extra nap or head to bed early the next day. Aside from the time at the department and the time away for the calls, time to recover physically and mentally must be considered.

The Benefits

Now that we've covered the basics of the volunteer life, let's look at some of the rewards and benefits this lifestyle provides to the volunteer and their families. One of the most amazing benefits of the volunteer fire service is that you gain an extended family. Firefighters are well known for their "brotherhood" / "sisterhood" and taking care of their own even outside of the firehouse. Many first responder families have stories of helping each other move, building a deck, helping with childcare, bringing meals when someone is sick or injured, and of course, the camaraderie of cookouts, bonfires, and other fun activities together. Being around a group of people who understand the call of the fire and emergency services can be helpful, rewarding, and in many cases, has created a foundation for lifelong friendships.

Even though there is generally not a paycheck associated with being a volunteer responder, there are some tangible benefits (as described above) that may be available to your family such as the pension fund and opportunity to volunteer for sleeper shifts.