

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER
APPLICATION AND ORIENTATION GUIDE



HORNBY ISLAND FIRE RESCUE

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H O R N B Y I S L A N D F I R E R E S C U E

Box 28 Hornby Island BC V0R 1Z0 Tel: 250-335-2611 Fax:250-335-2699 hifr@telus.net

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in joining Hornby Island Fire Rescue. Volunteering on the fire department is an excellent way to contribute directly and meaningfully to our community. Firefighting is a challenging, demanding, yet highly rewarding trade that provides an immense service to our island.

Hornby, like many communities across Canada, relies on dedicated volunteers for its fire and rescue services and as first responders for medical emergencies. By joining our department, you are joining over 144 000 volunteer firefighters across the country. That is 85% of all firefighters in Canada.

As Fire Chief of Hornby Island Fire Rescue, I can say that our department is committed to providing the most effective and most efficient fire protection for our area. Our department is held in high esteem by our community. We strive to be a progressive organization that maintains a high level of professionalism and expertise. Our department is very proud of the men and women who are part of our team.

Participating as a volunteer member of our service will bring you personal reward and satisfaction, new knowledge and skill, raise self-esteem and give you a tremendous sense of accomplishment for a job well done. Nevertheless, service as a member of our department requires a serious commitment. Your decision to join us should not be made quickly. Careful consideration should be made of the many factors associated with becoming a member of the fire department.

Once you understand what is involved in being a member of our department, we hope you are inspired to join us and make the necessary commitment. The service provided by our fire department is truly valuable to the citizens of Hornby Island, and I hope you are able to contribute to our public safety.

Doug Chinnery
Fire Chief
Hornby Island Fire Rescue

THE NATURE OF OUR BUSINESS

The fire and rescue service is one of the most diverse and challenging professions known today. Firefighters must train to prepare themselves to cope with situations that range from structure fires to motor vehicle accidents to hazardous chemical spills to heart attacks, and almost any other possible emergency situation. This requisite range of skill and knowledge is coupled with the fact that these skills may be needed at any time of day, seven days a week, in any kind of weather, and very often under potentially stressful and emotional circumstances. Yet it is this challenge that makes our profession so personally rewarding.

Our primary goal is to protect the public. This is accomplished in two ways:

- a) The first is to prevent fire emergencies from occurring. This is done through fire prevention, inspections, fire safety education and code enforcement programs.
- B) Secondly, we are here to prepare ourselves to control fire emergencies and assist at medical emergencies. This is done through education, training, pre-incident planning, more training, state-of-the art equipment and more training.

This business is not for everyone and requires more than just a desire to help people. You also need courage, dedication, assertiveness and a willingness to learn new skills and face challenges. The fire and rescue service is not for the meek or timid or for those who lose control of their emotions during times of crisis. Our service is one which calls on its members to perform hot, sweaty, dirty, strenuous work, often in uncertain and hazardous environments.

The personal rewards and satisfaction received from the fire and rescue service are often beyond description. There is a sense of accomplishment after controlling a building fire, joy and elation when a child is rescued, compassion for accident victims, and fulfillment in teaching fire safety.

The bottom line in our business is measured by the loss of life, pain and suffering, and property damage we have prevented and reduced. We exist and are prepared for one reason only - to provide service to the community.

If you feel you have what it takes to meet the challenges of fire fighting, we welcome you to join us.

ABOUT HORNBY ISLAND FIRE RESCUE

Profile:

The Hornby Island fire department has been serving the island since 1968. It is a volunteer service comprised of dedicated men and women, your neighbours, friends and fellow island residents. We are people just like you – with families, jobs and active lifestyles who find time to give back to our community. Many past and present Hornby residents have served as volunteers on the Hornby Island fire department.

Mission Statement:

To provide the most effective and efficient fire protection and rescue service for the citizens of, and visitors to, our island.

Organization:

The fire department operates under the direction of the Fire Chief who is responsible to the Comox Valley Regional District, the Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association, and the residents of Hornby Island. There is an elected deputy chief who will stand in as head of the department if the chief is unavailable.

We also have a small group of fire fighters who serve as “duty officers”. They have committed to be available 24 hours a day for a week at a time to answer pages and to attempt to be first on scene to establish command.

Operations:

Hornby Island Fire Rescue responds to between 130 and 150 emergency calls per year, including structure fires, wildland fires, medical emergencies, cliff rescues, automobile incidents, and much more.

Firefighters:

Firefighters directly participate in fire and rescue operations. Men and women over the age of 16, who are in good physical condition, and have the desire to participate in emergency fire and rescue activities are eligible to apply.

Training and Participation:

Over the years, the Fire Service has evolved into a public safety agency providing highly technical and diverse services. The general public has come to rely on the fire department as the "first responder", not only when life and property are threatened by man-made and natural disasters, but for seemingly smaller problems as well.

In order to ensure that all members of the department are prepared to deliver the best level of services required, training standards have been developed to provide each member with the needed skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to deliver fire and emergency first aid service to the citizens of Hornby Island.

Training Requirements for New Recruits and Probationary Firefighters

All recruits entering the department must minimally complete the BC Office of the Fire Commissioner Exterior Firefighter training program. This may take 12-16 months to complete. The training is conducted primarily on Hornby Island by department members. The recruit then works with the department on probation until the completion of an in-house proficiency test, at which time the volunteer becomes a full member of the department.

Training for new recruits happens on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 -10:00 pm from October to June. Regular department training happens every Thursday evenings from 7:30-10:00pm. New recruits are expected to attend both Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Firefighter training is broad in scope and thorough in practice. Firefighters must develop sufficient knowledge and skill to be able to safely perform a wide range of tasks. Training consists of learning hands-on practical skills, as well as book learning for developing the theoretical knowledge base required for firefighting.

New recruits will be issued textbooks, and will be assigned readings in preparation of each weeks' practice. Written tests and practical evaluations will take place throughout the training program, which will culminate with Live Fire training in Comox.

Expectations:

All firefighters are expected to:

- be punctual to all meetings and practices
- attend promptly when the alarm is sounded
- abide by fire department procedures, rules and regulations
- attend a minimum of 60% of weekly practices each year
- work as a team within a paramilitary-style organization
- demonstrate professionalism and trustworthiness in and out of uniform

Firefighters can expect in return:

- transferrable training that meets the same standard as career and other volunteer departments across BC
- advanced/specialized training for interested members
- tight-knit, supportive and helpful community among membership
- WorkSafe coverage
- on and off-duty life insurance
- access to free counselling services
- income tax credits
- use of fire hall facilities including wifi, television, laundry and showers
- honorarium, once training and evaluations are complete

Important Dates for 2017

Thursday September 14th – BBQ, applicants invited
Thursday September 21st – Applications due
Tuesday September 26th – Interviews
Tuesday October 3rd – Rookie training begins
Thursday December 21 to Tuesday January 2 – No Practice
Tuesday January 9th – Rookie training resumes
Tuesday June TBA - Last Rookie training until fall 2018

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is the cost of the required training?

A. The required training for recruits and firefighters is provided by the department free of charge. Transportation to and from additional accredited training is funded by the department.

Q. How much will I have to pay for my protective clothing?

A. All required protective clothing is provided by the department, at no cost to the individual.

Q. What is the format of the recruit training schedule?

A. The Recruit Training program is spread over a 28 week period. Training will require two evenings each week and may include some full day weekends. Entry level CPR and first aid training are handled in a similar manner.

Q. Who provides insurance coverage for my activities as a firefighter?

A. Normal WorkSafe BC coverage is in effect whenever the individual is volunteering for the department. The Department also has insurance coverage for automobile liability when operating department vehicles. Members all have accidental death, disability, and life insurance

Q. Are firefighters directly paid in any way?

A. Upon successful completion of an in-house proficiency test, firefighters receive an honorarium based on the number of regular practices and approved training sessions attended in each semi-annual period.

Q. After my initial training, how much time will I be expected to give as an active member?

A. While the exact time requirements vary, the average training and call out time is about 18 hours per month. There is no ceiling on how much you can participate in optional duties such as tours and public education, as well as officer positions.

Q. How often will I be on call to respond to emergencies?

A. Our system depends on firefighters' availability to answer all emergencies. The department therefore expects that firefighters will be on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. This is a major commitment that needs careful consideration before you undertake it. The department realizes that no one can be available all of the time, but it relies on the commitment from members to respond whenever they are available. Potential members should be aware that this commitment cannot be taken lightly as their response to emergencies is a lifeline for the public that they serve.

Q. How quickly will I have to respond to emergencies?

A. The department would normally expect that all available members would respond immediately to a page out.

Q. How long do emergency call outs last?

A. The average call out lasts about an hour. A working structure fire may extend 6 or more hours.

Q. If I have prior fire/rescue training and experience, will it count towards the Department's training requirements?

A. Prior training will likely reduce the time necessary to develop the minimum skills that the department looks for in its firefighters, but participation in all programs is still required in order to demonstrate your proficiency.

Q. Is it possible for me to concentrate my participation and specialize in one area of fire department response?

A. Perhaps. Most department members are generalists, capable of doing any fire or rescue task that may occur at an emergency. Specialist training is provided, but generally not to the exclusion of other skills that allow participation in all department activities. Those interested in volunteering as a First Responder for medical calls only should discuss this option with the Fire Chief.

Q. Is there a medical examination prior to acceptance by the department?

A. Yes, a medical examination is required. Your doctor must complete a form provided by the department.

Q. Will there be written or physical tests prior to acceptance by the department?

A. Not as part of the Application process. All Recruits are required to successfully complete a written exam and practical evaluation prior to acceptance as a Firefighter upon completion of basic training.

Q. Can a woman be a firefighter with the department?

A. Absolutely! Hornby Island has a long history of female firefighters.

Q. Is there a social aspect to belonging to the fire department?

A. There is. In addition to the contribution to the community, firefighters often find a personal satisfaction in belonging to the fire department community. Members participate regularly in fire hall socials, as well as other department related activities.

APPLICATION FORM
PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION REQUESTED ON THIS APPLICATION

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Hornby Island Fire Rescue. Please ensure you have read all the information in this packet before completing this application form. By filling out this form you are committing to take part in an application screening process that includes interviews, reference checks, criminal record checks, driver's abstract and a medical exam. Please note: failure to agree to screening procedures may disqualify your application.

The information on this form will be seen by the Fire Chief, Training Officer and Interview committee only

NAME: _____
Surname Given names

TELEPHONE (home): _____ Cell Phone: _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS: _____

Are you 16 years of age or older? Yes/No

Do you have a valid class 5 or better BC Driver's License? Yes/No

Note: A satisfactory drivers abstract will be required prior to starting your training with Hornby Island Fire Rescue.

Do you have a vehicle for transportation? Yes/No

Employment Status:

____ Full Time ____ Student
____ Part Time ____ Unemployed
____ Self Employed ____ Other (please explain) _____

Present Employer: _____

Occupation: _____

May we contact your employer? Yes/No

Could you respond to emergency calls during work hours? Usually/Rarely/Never

What is your general availability to respond to calls?

Weekdays? ____ Weekends? ____ Night time? ____

If accepted by the Fire Department as a recruit, you would be required to attend weekly practices on Tuesday and Thursday from 7:30 pm to 10:00 pm. Could you meet that requirement? Yes/No

Education:

Last Secondary School grade completed (or equivalent): _____

Post Secondary, Vocational or Trade Training: Yes/No Date: _____

Subject, degree or qualification: _____

Any additional qualifications or courses? _____

Previous firefighting experience: Yes/No
(where and when) _____

Do you have any concerns with height, enclosed spaces or other situations which may affect your ability to function as a firefighter? Yes/No

If yes, please explain _____

List any skills that you have that might be applicable to the Fire Service:

Describe your main hobbies and interests outside of work:

Please indicate your level of skill in the following areas on this scale:

- 1 - A trade, licence, recognized certificate or extensive experience
- 2 - Advanced skill level and/or post-secondary courses or apprenticeship
- 3 - Familiarity acquired through personal experience, high school courses or related training
- 4 – No experience at all

Mechanics:	1	2	3	4
Breathing apparatus or SCUBA diving:	1	2	3	4
Building construction or design:	1	2	3	4
Firefighting tasks:	1	2	3	4
Rescue procedures:	1	2	3	4
Crisis management:	1	2	3	4
Public speaking:	1	2	3	4
Events coordination:	1	2	3	4
Radio communication:	1	2	3	4
Team building:	1	2	3	4

Why do you think you would be an asset to this department?

The personal information on this form is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act. The information will be used for the purpose of an operating program of the municipality. If you have any questions about the collection and use of this information, contact the Fire Chief.

I, the undersigned, apply to enroll as a recruit of Hornby Island Fire Rescue, and if accepted undertake to perform such duties as may be assigned to me by the Fire Chief, or his designated representative.

I verify that the information contained on this application form is true and accurate.

I hereby give consent to the Fire Department to conduct verification of the information given, as required.

Signed: _____ Date: _____