

# CORTEZ FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## Part-Time Firefighter

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### Program Outline



The following document is intended to provide clarification for augmenting the current staffing levels within the Cortez Fire Protection District while ensuring sufficient staffing for emergency response and providing efficient service to the community.

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## **Program**

This program is a redesign of the reserve firefighter program into a part-time firefighter program allowing for a clearly defined staffing program. This redesign will outline how part-time staffing will be utilized to augment daily staffing for the Cortez Fire Protection District.

## **Background**

The Cortez Fire Protection District has a long history of service to the community of Cortez. In 2009 the use of part-time firefighters was implemented to ensure emergency response due to the increasing number of emergency calls. The part-time firefighters were designated as “Reserves” at that time. The shift coverage was sporadic and undefined in the initial phases and was only during the day time hours Monday – Friday, after which the volunteers were to assume emergency response. As the call load increased it became difficult for the volunteer program to shoulder the entire call load and the reserve program progressed to having a minimum of three trained personnel on duty 24/7/365. Over the past several years we have seen a significant decline in the participation in the volunteer program as more personnel transitioned into the reserve program.

The reserve members will sign-up for shifts based on their availability, on a monthly basis for either 12 or 24 hours shifts. As they are non-benefited employees they are limited to 120 hours in a 28 day period.

In 2012 career firefighters were added to the staffing of emergency personnel. When the career firefighters were implemented, two per shift, one Reserve slot was eliminated which resulted in a daily staffing of four. This increased the safety level on emergency scenes by having one additional person immediately available and allowed for improved service to the community in the event of simultaneous emergency calls.

Staffing levels have continued to be a concern for the administration as the number of volunteer members within the organization and those coming back for calls have continued to decrease. Therefore an additional career position was added which increased the daily staffing levels to five. Unfortunately we continue to be plagued with staffing concerns as we have continuous open shifts that require career staff to fill and generate increase overtime costs.

## **Document Purpose**

Since the inception of the part-time firefighter program there has not been a formal document put in place. The purpose of this document is to provide a written outline of the program for the organization. It will clearly identify the various aspects of the part-time firefighter position from qualification to compensation, and will also serve as a guide to for those who are interested in participating in the part-time firefighter program.

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## **Part-time Firefighter Program Intent**

The intent of a part-time firefighter program is to augment career firefighters in the daily staffing levels of the organization, and to allow for the recruitment and evaluation of future career firefighters.

## **Program Benefit**

Being able to utilize trained emergency personnel to augment the daily staffing positions provides improved safety levels while saving the tax payer money. Part-time firefighters are trained and qualified providers that do not receive benefits such as health insurance, sick and/or vacation leave or participate in the firefighter pension fund.

Part-time firefighters will fill open shifts to meet daily staffing levels and therefore increase the safety factor on emergency scenes. This improves the effectiveness of the organization and improves the service to the community.

Having part-time firefighters will reduce the need to pay overtime to career firefighter to fill shift vacancies.

## **Program Drawbacks**

As this is a part-time position there is no guarantee of hours for the part-time employee. Individuals participating in the part-time firefighter program may have other part-time jobs which can lead to time commitment conflicts. Additionally, as this is a part-time position, a residency requirement is not included which can affect the vested community interest of some part-time firefighters.

## **Qualifications**

Part-time firefighters must maintain current certification to the Firefighter I level with a minimum of Emergency Medical Provider (formerly First Responder). Part-time firefighters must also have the hazardous materials operations certification, and current AHA Healthcare Provider CPR.<sup>(1)</sup>

Candidates must have a current and valid Driver's License and must pass a background check and drug/alcohol testing. As the Cortez Fire Protection District accepts Federal Funding we abide by the Federal Standards for drug/alcohol use.<sup>(1)</sup>

*(1) See Job Description for complete list of qualifications*

## **Benefits & Compensation**

Part-time firefighters will be compensated based on an hourly rate (Appendix A) and paid bi-weekly (every two weeks). Part-time firefighters will receive holiday pay for

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District approved holidays as outlined in the Policy and Procedures Manual. Part-time firefighters shall not accrue or utilized sick leave, vacation leave or comp time.

Part-time firefighters are not considered to be benefited employees but will be covered by Workers' Compensation while in the employment of the Cortez Fire Protection District.

Part-time firefighters and their spouses are eligible for all aspects of the District's Employee Assistance Program.

Part-time firefighters will be provided Death/Disability Insurance.

Part-time firefighters are eligible for an annual NFPA 1952 physical provided they are not already getting this type of physical from another agency.

### ***Taxes***

Part-time firefighters are not contract workers or independent contractors and therefore all wages earned will be subject to all taxes and deductions based on State and Federal guidelines.

### **Hours of Work**

Part-time firefighters will be scheduled on an as-needed basis to provide a daily staffing of five. Part-time firefighters shall not work more than 180 hours in a 28 day period, and will not be guaranteed a minimum number of work hours at any time.

Part-time firefighters will only be utilized to supplement the number of on-duty firefighters to a maximum of five per shift, and can be scheduled to cover-vacation, sick and/or training leave of career firefighters. Part-time firefighters may not at any time "trade" shifts with career firefighters.

### ***Scheduling of work hours***

A part-time firefighter availability, sign-up, schedule will be provided and will coincide with the next 28 day work period. Part-time firefighters must provide a minimum of 48 hours of work options per pay period (every two weeks). This can be done as either two twenty-four hour shifts or four twelve hour shifts. This will provide the best opportunity to the part-time firefighter to be scheduled sufficient work hours to be beneficial to the part-time firefighter and provides flexibility to the administration to ensure even distribution of work hours.

### **Covering Open Shifts**

When a shift position needs to be filled due to illness, vacation, training, etc., the shift Lieutenant shall take steps to place a part-time firefighter in the needed position.

**ALL** part-time firefighters must be contacted by the Lieutenant prior to assigning a career firefighter to the position for overtime. Efforts made by the Lieutenant to contact the part-time firefighters shall be documented in Daily Log.

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If a part-time firefighter is able to fill the open shift, but will be delayed due to their primary job, distance of travel or previous commitment such as a doctor's appointment, and no other part-time firefighter is available, the Lieutenant shall remand one career firefighter on overtime until the part-time firefighter arrives. If this is the second day of a tour and no career firefighter is leaving this shall be one of the few situations that a four person crew should be allowed.

## **Duties of the Part-time Firefighter**

The Part-Time Firefighter duties include but are not limited to the following:

Performs all fire suppression activities to combat and extinguish fires at a variety of fire scenes, including laying and/or connecting hose, directing water, raising and climbing ladders; utilizes a variety of fire suppression equipment including chain saws, axes, smoke ejectors, and forcible entry tools; enters, searches and extricates individuals from burning structures. Responds to a variety of medical emergencies and initiates Basic Life Support procedures. Performs general maintenance of Fire Stations, checks tools, equipment, supplies, and materials of each Fire District apparatus to ensure that all vehicles contain the required tools, equipment, supplies, and materials in proper operating condition; performs community preparedness functions such as pre-fire planning, fire inspections, and station tours, public education through the schools, etc.<sup>(2)</sup>

*(2) See job description for complete details on duties, skills and abilities.*

## **Uniforms**

The Cortez Fire Protection District shall provide all required uniform items to the part-time firefighter. The initial uniform items that will be issued will consist of:

- 2 – Navy Blue T-shirts
- 1 – Navy Blue Polo
- 2 – Navy Blue EMS Pants
- 1 – Black duty belt
- 1 – Pair Black Boots
- 1 – Navy Blue Ball cap
- 1 – Navy Blue beanie
- 1 – Navy Blue winter coat

No non-issued items shall be worn by the part-time firefighter while on-duty.

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

As Cortez Fire Protection District is an all hazards organization a wide variety of personal protective equipment (PPE) is utilized. All PPE required will be provided to the part-time firefighter based on their ability and certification level.



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## APPENDIX A

### Pay Scale

The following pay scale will be utilized for the part-time firefighter position. Members that are currently serving in the position of Reserve will be grandfathered at their current hourly rate.

Certification Level	1-3 Years of Service	3-6 Years of Service	6-10 Years of Service
Firefighter I & EMR	\$10.50/hour	\$11.50/hour	\$13.50/hour
Firefighter II & EMR	\$10.75/hour	\$11.75/hour	\$14.25/hour
Firefighter I & EMT	\$11.25/hour	\$12.25/hour	\$14.50/hour
Firefighter II & EMT	\$11.50/hour	\$12.50/hour	\$14.75/hour
Firefighter I & EMT-I	\$12.00/hour	\$13.00/hour	\$15.00/hour
Firefighter II & EMT-I	\$12.50/hour	\$13.50/hour	\$15.50/hour
Firefighter I & CEP	\$13.00/hour	\$14.00/hour	\$16.00/hour
Firefighter II & CEP	\$13.50/hour	\$14.50/hour	\$16.50/hour

Based on national statistics, part-time firefighters rarely reach the 10 year mark and therefore the pay scale does not reflect a pay increase beyond that. The Fire Chief may, at his/her discretion provide a higher rate of pay for those that do continue part-time employment beyond 10 years of service.