



Shuniah Fire & Emergency Services (SFES)



Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment Program

1. Purpose and Overview

This Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment Program has been prepared to clearly outline:

- The services provided by the fire department;
- The commitments made by the Municipality of Shuniah to its volunteer firefighters;
- The commitments and expectations placed on volunteer firefighters; and
- The standardized application, job description, training program, and supporting information that govern volunteer service.

2. Shuniah Fire & Emergency Services

Shuniah Fire & Emergency Services (SFES) is a volunteer fire department responsible for emergency response, fire suppression, rescue operations, and related emergency services within the Municipality of Shuniah including prevention and education. The Enabling and Regulating By-law (E&R By-law) passed by Council lays out the services that SFES provides and the services that are not provided. SFES operates under an Incident Command System and works collaboratively with neighbouring fire departments and emergency agencies through mutual and automatic aid arrangements.

Volunteer firefighters are essential to delivering these services safely, efficiently, and reliably.

3. Municipal Commitment to Volunteer Firefighters

The Municipality of Shuniah is committed to supporting volunteer firefighters by providing:

- Training required to safely perform firefighting and emergency response duties;
- Department-issued personal protective equipment and safety gear;
- Fire apparatus, tools, radios, and facilities required for operations;
- Compensation is paid for all training and emergency response in accordance with municipal policy; (*compensation currently under review CUPE Local 87*)
- Accident and injury coverage (insurance brochure available upon request)
- A respectful, professional, and safety-focused working environment.

4. Volunteer Firefighter Commitment

Volunteer firefighters with SFES are expected to:

- Participate in training and emergency response as availability permits;
- Work towards mandatory certification required by legislation;
- Maintain regular attendance at scheduled training sessions;
- Respond to emergencies and work within the Department Chain of Command and the Incident Command System;
- Comply with all municipal and departmental policies, procedures, and Standard Operating Guidelines;
- Maintain personal protective equipment and safely operate department equipment;
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner when interacting with the public, agencies and fellow firefighters

5. Recruitment and Selection Process

The recruitment process for SFES volunteer firefighters includes:

1. Submission of a completed Volunteer Firefighter Application Form;
2. Review of applicant qualifications and eligibility;
3. Interviews and reference checks;

4. Criminal record check (and vulnerable sector check where required);
5. Medical and physical capacity assessment;
6. Entry into the Recruit (Entry Level) training program on a probationary basis.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a cost to the required training?

No. There is no cost to the volunteer firefighter for required training. Training is generally provided in-house, and when external or specialized training is required, those costs are covered by the municipality or fire department.

How much do I have to pay for protective clothing?

Nothing. All required personal protective equipment, including bunker gear and safety equipment, is supplied by the fire department at no cost to the volunteer.

Am I covered by insurance?

Yes. Volunteer firefighters are typically covered under Workplace Safety and Insurance Board protection while performing authorized duties. In addition, the municipality maintains supplemental insurance coverage specific to volunteer firefighters.

Are Volunteer Firefighters paid?

Yes. Volunteer firefighters receive compensation or an honorarium for all training activities and emergency responses, in accordance with municipal policy and department procedures. Volunteer firefighters work under a CUPE collective agreement and compensation for the period starting January 1, 2026 is currently under review.

How much time is expected of me as a volunteer firefighter?

The time commitment varies depending on call volume, training schedules, and individual availability. On average, volunteers may expect to dedicate several hours per week to training, emergency response, and related duties. Some weeks may require more time, while others require less.

How often will I need to respond to calls?

Volunteer firefighters are encouraged to respond to calls whenever they are available. While it is understood that members cannot attend every call due to work and family commitments, the fire department will establish minimum response expectations to ensure operational readiness and expectation of responding to emergencies.

How quickly do I need to respond to a call?

When a call is received, volunteers are expected to respond immediately, while obeying all traffic laws and responding safely to the fire station or incident scene. Speed must never compromise safety.

How long do emergency calls usually last?

Call duration varies depending on the nature of the incident. Many calls may last approximately one hour, while more complex incidents such as structure fires or major rescues may take several hours to resolve.

What is the expectation of a firefighter when called to an emergency?

Volunteer fire departments recognize that volunteers bring different skills, experiences, and comfort levels to the role. Members are able to participate in duties in line with their training, confidence, and personal readiness. Some volunteers may choose to focus on support functions, while others may take part in medical response, vehicle extrication, or interior fire operations. Not every member is expected to perform every task.

What will I learn during training?

Training covers a wide range of firefighting and emergency response skills, including fire suppression and control, emergency medical response, rescue operations, equipment and apparatus operation, fire prevention and public education, and safety procedures and teamwork. Training is progressive and designed to ensure volunteers can perform their duties safely and effectively.

When will I be able to respond to calls?

New recruits will not attend emergency incidents until they have met the entry level requirements. Once recruits have moved through the minimum required training with regular attendance at training and duty hall nights, trainees may attend emergency incidents under direct supervision of an officer or senior firefighter and may only perform duties for which they have been trained.

Will the training meet minimum or standardized requirements?

Yes. All training provided meets or exceeds applicable Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) requirements and recognized fire service standards. Once certification is achieved (example, Firefighter I and II) it is portable, meaning it can be recognized by other fire departments and employers within the province.

Is a medical examination required before acceptance?

Yes. Applicants are required to complete a medical examination conducted by a qualified physician to ensure they are medically fit to perform firefighting duties. The cost of this examination is covered by the municipality.

Is physical fitness testing required?

Applicants may be required to complete physical fitness assessments to demonstrate they can safely perform the physical demands of firefighting. These assessments are designed to evaluate physical capability, not prior experience.

Is a criminal record check required?

Yes. A criminal record check, and where required a vulnerable sector check, must be completed as part of the recruitment process. Unless otherwise specified, the cost of this check is typically the responsibility of the applicant.

Is a driver's abstract required?

Yes. The Municipality will pull driver's abstracts as part of the recruitment process to confirm driving eligibility and suitability. The cost of obtaining a driver's abstract is the responsibility of the Municipality.

How are new recruits integrated into the department?

New recruits participate in regular training sessions alongside existing members. As recruits progress through training and receive required sign-offs, they are gradually integrated into emergency response activities under supervision.

Is there a community or social aspect to volunteering?

Yes. Volunteer firefighters often participate in community events, public education initiatives, and fundraising activities.

Can I balance volunteer firefighting with work and family life?

Yes. Volunteer firefighting is designed to complement work and family responsibilities. The department recognizes that availability will vary and works to maintain flexibility while ensuring adequate emergency response coverage.

Schedule A – Volunteer Firefighter Job Description

Title: Volunteer Firefighter

Department: Shuniah Fire and Emergency Services

Group: Volunteer

Supervisor: Captain

Position Summary

Reporting to a Captain, the Fire Fighter is responsible for direct firefighting activities under the supervision of a Captain or Senior Fire Fighter.

General Duties and Responsibilities

- Comply with all Fire Department and Municipal policies, procedures, and Standard Operating Guidelines;
- Conduct training, station duty, and emergency response tasks safely and efficiently;
- Respond to emergency calls and work within the Department Chain of Command and Incident Command System;
- Maintain availability for emergencies, training, station duties, and public education events;
- Participate in all training sessions and maintain a minimum attendance to ensure competency and safety on calls;
- Maintain and care for personal protective equipment;
- Report defective equipment through established procedures;
- Complete required documentation accurately and in a timely manner;
- Operate equipment and vehicles safely and only when authorized;
- Notify supervisors if physically or mentally unable to perform assigned tasks;
- Assist with training, public education, and fire prevention activities;
- Communicate professionally with members of the public;
- Perform related duties as assigned.