

# NEW TOOLS

for the volunteer firefighter





**Dear Fire Service Professional:**

This Kit has been designed to assist volunteer fire and emergency services agencies with the challenging task of media relations and the implementation of a media relations program.

The Kit contains the following elements:

- A New Tools Kit Media Guide.
- Information on using press releases (including sample press releases.)
- Information on using letters to the editor (including a sample letter to the editor.)
- A resource list for you to build your contacts and find information.
- A fact sheet on the volunteer fire and emergency services.
- Camera-ready artwork.

The New Tools Kit Media Guide provides you with some basic information about media relations. It also has lists of ideas for media relations activities in a variety of different subject areas, including recruitment, fundraising, special events and promoting the organization.

The folder contains two documents outlining the use of press releases and letters to the editor as media tools. There are also samples included that you can use as a foundation for your own press releases and letters to the editor.

The folder also contains a resource list for you to develop your list of local media contacts. The resources list also has contact information for a number of national and international organizations who can provide additional information and education on media relations as well as factual information you may need for articles, press releases and other associated media tools. In addition, a special fact sheet on the volunteer fire and emergency services is included in this kit to provide statistical information for your articles and interviews.

The last section of the folder includes camera-ready artwork you can use for producing ads or public service campaigns in your community. The camera-ready artwork can be used as it is, or as a foundation for developing your own customized advertisements and public service announcements. This information is also available online at [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org)

We wish you continued success in your recruitment efforts.

Sincerely,

**Philip C. Stittleburg**  
NVFC Chairman

**R. David Paulison**  
U.S. Fire Administrator

# introduction to media guide

**A recent advertisement campaign claims that “image is everything.” Image, while it might not be “everything” to your department, it is certainly a vital component in the relationship your department has with the community or population you serve, and a key factor in creating the image you portray as an organization.**

**Media relations can be a systematic approach with a long-term goal of improving the public perception of the organization, and can also be a short-term approach to tackle issues as they arise. Most departments use a combination of both in overall media relations activities.**

**Your department can only stand to gain from a good media relations program. Public perception is tied to customer satisfaction, public confidence in your services, and, often, the success of department fundraising activities. Media relations can help you celebrate your successes as an agency, and it can also be a vehicle to communicate with your customers when challenging issues arise.**

## **WHERE DO I BEGIN?**

Every department takes a different approach to a media relations program. Media relations are catered to the audience (i.e. the community) and the relevant issues and department goals.

A good first step to developing a media relations plan is to define the goals you wish to accomplish. Does your agency want to publicize an accomplishment? Do you want to target recruitment of volunteers with as much as your outreach as possible? Do you want an organized media campaign to accompany your annual fundraising initiative? The more you know about “what” you want to accomplish with your media relations program, the better you will be able to establish “how” to get it done.

When defining goals, consider going a step farther and establishing objectives for each goal. Make your objectives as concise as possible. For example, if your goal is to promote recruitment for the entire year, establish some objectives like running 3-4 advertisements in the local paper, 2 radio announcements and participation in 3 community events to promote the recruiting of volunteers. These objectives will help your agency stay on target to accomplish your stated goals.

It is also a great idea to decide up front who will be responsible for media relations, who will be a part of the

team, and who the media relations folks will report to when necessary. Many departments use a Public Information Officer (PIO) who is responsible for all media contacts and, often, the media and public relations programs in general. Since a media relations program is a lot of work, many volunteer agencies form a committee or team to accomplish their media relations program, which is headed by the PIO or a designated committee member. Serving on the media relations committee or team is a fantastic job for administrative members of the department who do not want to run emergency calls but still want to serve the department.

Once you have goals and a team of members to do the work, you are ready to begin. Talk to neighboring departments about their successes in their media relations campaign. Talk to the editors of the local newspapers and ask them what they are looking for in feature stories, news releases and public service announcements. Establish your media contact list (or if you already have one, check it thoroughly to be sure it has the correct contact information.) This kind of research will help you hit the ground running with your media relations program. Now you need to divvy up the work to the team or committee members, establish timelines, and GO.

## **INTERACTING WITH THE MEDIA**

Many fire and emergency medical service providers and leaders consider the media in their community, and “media” in general to be an adversary. This perception can dramatically affect the relationships departments build with local media representatives and organizations, and can damage their potential for positive media exposure and an improved public image. While some media organizations or reporters can be challenging to deal with, both on and off the emergency scene, this perception that the media is the enemy should be put aside. The better the relationship you build with your community’s local media, the better your chances of good media coverage are in the future.

There are a number of things volunteer departments can do to build positive media relationships, including:

- Get to know the local media representatives. Put a name with a face. Let them do the same.
- Establish and maintain a media contact list as described earlier. Make it as detailed as possible to help you know the most about your local media.
- Get the media involved in your department’s activities.

■ There are some ideas on how to accomplish this described later in this document.)

■ Be available when the media are asking for your input or comments. Don't hide from them or ignore their requests. Be up front and timely in your responses. You may need their help in the future.

■ Always express your appreciation when the media handles a situation well or publishes a great article about your organization.

One of the most difficult situations for volunteers is the management of the media on the scene of an emergency incident. In some cases, reporters will speak to anyone they can for information about what is happening at the incident scene. Volunteer department leaders should train their members to refer any media questions to the PIO or other designated media liaison. They should never try to answer the questions of the reporters on the scene or when they contact the station for information. This allows your department to be consistent in your responses to the media and it places the person with the most experience in media relations responsible for media interaction.

As the PIO or designated media liaison, there are a few key issues that need to be considered before interacting with the media on the emergency incident scene. The first is to think first, then talk. As simple as this may sound, it catches many people off guard. If you are flustered or overwhelmed on an incident scene, or you are unsure of what exactly is happening, don't answer the media inquiries immediately. It is okay to tell reporters that you need 15 minutes to complete your task and gather some facts and that you will meet with them in a designated area. Use that 15 minutes to plan out what you want to say. Use an outline if you need to. The bottom line is that you must be prepared.

When you meet with the media representatives, be clear and concise in your language and allow a few questions after your statement. If you are asked a question you do not know the answer to, do not just make up a response or state "no comment." Tell the reporter that you will do your best to find out the information and get back to them at a designated time. On a prolonged incident, it is a good idea to designate times for media briefings as the incident progresses. For example, after your first briefing with the on-scene reporters, let them know that you will meet with them five minutes before every hour until the end of the incident. This helps eliminate reporters asking questions of

other members on the scene and interfering with emergency operations.

At the conclusion of an incident, let reporters and media representatives know that they can contact you for questions after they leave the scene. Give them contact information and let them know if you plan to send out a post-incident press release or hold a press briefing or news conference concerning the event. For reporters the story may not end when the incident is over, and they may have important follow-up questions after they begin writing their stories.

Some volunteer departments have taken media relations tasks a step further by defining them in Standard Operations Procedures (SOPs) or Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs.) This type of document can outline the responsibilities of the members in media relations and the goals and objectives of the media relations plan.

Some key points in dealing with media representatives are:

■ Timely is newsworthy. Get media representatives information as soon as possible. They are working with tight deadlines.

■ Nothing is "off the record." Never say or print ANYTHING you do not want repeated in a news segment, articles, or other general release.

■ Honor your word to reporters. If you promise to find out information, find it out. If you promise to meet with them, meet with them. If you break these promises, they will go around you and find other ways to get the information they are looking for.

■ Never lie to or mislead the media. It will only come back to harm you.

■ Try to avoid saying "no comment" if at all possible. If you do not know the answer, say so, and let them know when they can follow-up with you for the information.

■ Some departments find it helpful to release written information with quotes from the department leadership or factual information to ensure that the information is not distorted throughout the development of the story.

On scene media relations can be challenging. If you can overcome the perception that the media are the enemy and learn to work with them, they can be a great resources, both on and off the emergency scene.



# media relations guide

The following section is a collection of ideas for media relations campaigns in all types of agencies and communities. The ideas are split into several sections based on the issues they represent, such as recruitment or fundraising. There are also some blank spaces at the guide for you to add in your own ideas that you collected in your research or thought of yourself.

## IDEAS FOR: RECRUITMENT

■ Help the editor of the local paper research and write a feature story on what is it like to be a volunteer member of your fire or emergency service department. Be sure to include information at the end about becoming a volunteer.

■ Work with the local television station or cable franchise to produce a short video about becoming a volunteer member of your department. You can use the video for special events and promotions, and the television station or cable franchise may be willing to run the video on selected local channels. Make sure you include information about the steps people must take to become a volunteer.

■ Develop classified ads advertising volunteer job openings. These can be used for recruiting both operational and administrative members.

■ Develop a dedicated phone line for recruitment of new members that gives potential members instant information about how to become a member. Publish the recruitment hotline in a variety of places. In some states, there are programs already established that your department can participate in, such as the 1-800-FIRELINE program. Check with the National Volunteer Fire Council for the availability of 1-800-FIRELINE in your state, [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org).

■ If your department is small or limited in resources, partner with other agencies around you on a collective recruitment campaign.

■ Place posters about your recruitment campaign in public gathering places, such as local government buildings, shopping centers and entertainment complexes.

■ Work with local hospitals and medical centers in your area to recruit members with medical experience. Your targeted campaign might include posters, information sessions about becoming a member and ride-alongs for potential members (if your department allows ride-alongs.)

■ Another idea for a targeted campaign is in local colleges and universities. Post your information in campus gathering places and work with the administration to provide information sessions for recruiting new members.

■ Participate in career development events for high school age children. If your department allows members to join while in high school, this will help your recruitment efforts in the short-term. If the department does not allow young or junior members, you will still improve your recruitment in the long-run by introducing the high school students to the volunteer opportunities early so they can join once they have completed high school.

■ Survey your own members on how they heard about your organization and why they joined as a volunteer. Use this information to decide what recruitment efforts are successful and where you can improve.

■ Create job descriptions for members. These can be used in your recruitment efforts to better explain what kind of volunteer members you are looking for and what is involved in the job.

■ Assign a member to be a recruitment coordinator to manage your recruitment programs and activities. Also, for larger departments with more in-depth programs, a recruitment committee may be necessary to manage the variety of program activities.

■ Set up a recruitment booth at local fairs, community events and festivals. Take your equipment and apparatus if you can to show potential members what being a volunteer is all about.

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### IDEAS FOR: RETENTION

- Publish articles in local community newspapers about volunteer members in your organization. Highlight members' accomplishments publicly to celebrate successes and promote a positive public image.
- Focus on the improvement of the overall public image of your organization through your media relations campaigns. Volunteer members want to be a part of a successful and respected community organization.
- Work with local government representatives to provide public recognition to members who have significant accomplishments.
- Invite the media to participate in awards banquets and ceremonies.
- Publish lists of new members in local newspapers to thank them for joining. Also, publish lists of graduates from training programs, such as Firefighter I, First Responder, EMT, Paramedic, etc.

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### IDEAS FOR: FUNDRAISING

- Put information about your department fundraising efforts in utility bills that go out to the community. (This can also be used for recruitment too.)
- Publish a list of donors in local community newspapers to provide recognition and thanks to citizens and local businesses for their financial support.
- Celebrate your department's receipt of local, state or federal government grants and any special financial awards you receive from local businesses, foundations or community organizations. Press releases are a good tool to get the word out.
- Direct mail campaigns for fundraising can be very successful in stimulating donations from the community members, and can have the added benefit of promoting a positive public image.
- Create targeted fundraising campaigns for special community groups, such as retirement communities. Use a specialized direct mail piece to announce your fundraising activities and follow with information sessions about your department and your need for financial support.
- Set up an information booth at local fairs, community events and festivals. Take your equipment and apparatus if you can to show potential donors what their financial support is purchasing for the community. You might even consider doing a small fundraiser at your booth, such as a dunking booth, a carnival game, etc.
- Place donation buckets or boxes at key community locations for year-round donations.
- Sponsor special fundraising events in the community such as carnivals, carwashes, yard sales, auctions, dinners and other fun activities. These events also allow your department to conduct other activities in addition to fundraising, like recruitment or providing general information about the agency.

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### IDEAS FOR: SPECIAL EVENTS

- Borrow ideas from the professionals for marketing your special events. How do concert promoters get the word out? Where does your local government promote their special events? How do sports teams announce special games? Take these ideas as a starting point and run with them.
- Think BIG. Experiment with banners and billboards to announce your special events. Don't forget the rolling attention-getters housed in your station (your emergency apparatus) as an eye-catcher at events.
- If your department is doing a parade in conjunction with a special event, like a community fair or gathering, consider adding a banner to your apparatus as a rolling advertisement for recruitment, fundraising, etc. Also, if the parade is going to move slow enough, have members walk along with flyers or pamphlets about membership, fundraising or whatever key issue you want to promote. And, of course, bribe everyone with candy. (Please check with parade organizers and local authorities to make sure tossing candy in the parade is an acceptable practice.)
- At open houses and special events, consider sending a little reminder of your department home with your visitors. There are thousands of companies that make marketing "give-aways" for companies as promotions. Anything from band-aids to briefcases can be personalized with your company's name and address, phone number, web site, or safety message. These give-aways are a great way to remind your community you are always there to protect and serve.
- Try hosting a demonstration or competition to rouse community interest in your organization. These types of events also have the added benefit of peaking the interest of your members as well. Host an EMS competition, firefighters' competition, an extrication demo or other type of service related activity and invite the public to join in and get involved.

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### IDEAS FOR: NEWS

- Equip your emergency apparatus with cameras and notepads for members to take photographs and make notes on significant emergency incidents.
- Recruit a photographer for your department who can respond to emergency incidents and document the incident for future media releases and internal use.
- Establish and maintain a Public Information Officer (PIO) program to bring consistency and professionalism to your media interaction.
- Issue press releases. There are so many missed opportunities that go by where departments can gain from positive publicity. Develop a plan for writing, editing, authorizing and distributing press releases after significant emergency or news worthy events.
- Work with the local newspapers to secure a regular column written by your members. This will allow you a regular outlet for bringing news and general interest items to your community.
- Recruit a media person as a member. Having media expertise within your own ranks can truly bolster your media relations program and your interaction with the media on a daily basis.
- Issue key players in local media pagers or scanners to monitor emergency activities. This will help them be aware of important events while they are occurring.

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## IDEAS FOR: PROMOTING YOUR ORGANIZATION

- Create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) or Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) to help your department institutionalize media relations and the roles and responsibilities of the members in media relations.
- Create job descriptions for PIOs, media liaisons, and media relations committee members to assist in accomplishing the goals of the media relations program.
- Train your members on media relations. Departments spend lots of time training members on fire and emergency medical service skills and issues. Spend a little effort training key people in media relations as well. Encourage them to find conferences and seminars related to media relations and media interaction. Just as training improves your department's ability to manage emergency incidents it can improve your department's success in media relations.
- Conduct training for your members in the public eye. Let the public see how hard you work and the great importance you place on training to improve the quality of the services you provide.
- Create a newsletter that is mailed out regularly to your community and your members. This can be a regular outlet for news and general interest topics, as well as a vehicle for announcing events and fundraising activities. It is also a way to keep your organization's name out in the forefront.
- Make public service announcements a part of your media relations program. This also keeps your name in the forefront and reminds people of important safety information (and that you care about the community you serve.)
- Let media professionals ride along with your members on emergency calls to see what a shift is like for your volunteers. It could be the beginnings of a great feature story in the newspaper or a flattering segment on the local news about what your department does for the community.
- If you have talented writers in your department, encourage them to write feature stories for local papers.
- Place a flyer about your department in kits or mailers designed for new community members. It's a great way to introduce yourself to new families in your community.
- Design your own web site about your organization and post it on the Internet. Advertise your web site's address so

interested community members can find out more information about your department.

- Don't forget about the schools in your area. Participate with schools in educational events, career information days and other special events.
- Retirement homes, churches and community/civic organizations are great contacts for promoting the public image of your agency. Partner with them, interact with them and let them know about your department and its activities.

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## SUMMARY

Media relations can be very challenging to many volunteer fire and emergency service departments, however, the rewards are great for a successful media relations program. It is well worth the effort and resources expended to plan and implement a media relations program.

Without a doubt, a fantastic resource for media relations can be found all around you in other fire and emergency service agencies. Benchmark with neighboring departments and network with volunteer agencies throughout the country. There is great wealth in the lessons learned and success stories of other agencies.

Likewise, if your department finds a new twist to media relations, don't keep it a secret. Share your success with other departments.

Media relations programs require some planning and elbow grease. Our communities have become complex and the perception of volunteer agencies is changing as our society evolves. A positive public image is no longer just handed to volunteer agencies. We have to earn it through competency, service delivery and interaction with our community. A media relations program can help your department earn that positive public image that you deserve.



# organizational resources

The following organizations implement a variety of programs in the fire and emergency services field. These organizations are a great resource when developing your media action plan, and you can contact them for more information about specific factual references, programs, publications and a host of other types of information.

## **AMERICAN BURN ASSOCIATION**

New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center  
525 East 68th Street, Room L-706  
New York, NY 10021  
(212) 746-5010  
(212) 746-8991 fax  
[www.ameriburn.org](http://www.ameriburn.org)

## **AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS**

PO Box 619911  
Dallas, TX 75261-9911  
(800) 798-1822  
(972) 580-2816 fax  
[www.acep.org](http://www.acep.org)

## **INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS FOUNDATION**

4785 Dorsey Hall Drive, Suite 102  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
(410) 730-4311  
(410) 730-4313 fax  
[www.icisf.org](http://www.icisf.org)

## **AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION**

1150 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 180  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 822-9380  
(202) 822-9883 fax  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

## **AMERICAN RED CROSS**

8111 Gatehouse Road  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
(703) 206-7738  
(703) 206-7754 fax  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

## **AMERICAN TRAUMA SOCIETY**

8903 Presidential Parkway, Suite 512  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2656  
(800) 556-7890  
(301) 420-0697 fax  
[www.amtrauma.org](http://www.amtrauma.org)

## **ASSOCIATED PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS**

**OFFICERS INTERNATIONAL, INC. (APCO)**  
2040 S. Ridgewood Avenue  
South Daytona, FL 32119  
(888) 272-6911  
(904) 322-2501 fax  
[www.apcointl.org](http://www.apcointl.org)

## **BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS**

**DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY**  
650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20226  
(202) 622-1502  
[www.atf.treas.gov](http://www.atf.treas.gov)

## **BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

810 Seventh Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 616-6500  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA)

## **CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION**

1600 Clifton Road, NE  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
(404) 639-3311  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

## **CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICE INSTITUTE (CFSI)**

900 Second Street, NE, Suite 303  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 371-1277  
(202) 682-3473 fax  
[www.cfsi.org](http://www.cfsi.org)

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

HFE-88  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857  
(800) 532-4440  
[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

**DISASTER RESEARCH CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE**

77 East Main Street  
Newark, DE 19716  
(302) 831-6618  
(302) 831-2091 fax  
[www.udel.edu/drc](http://www.udel.edu/drc)

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE  
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
AGENCY  
NATIONAL EMERGENCY TRAINING  
CENTER**

16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
(800) 238-3358  
(301) 447-1497 fax  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20535-0001  
(202) 324-3000  
[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
AGENCY**

500 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20472  
(202) 646-4600  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

**FIRE DEPARTMENT SAFETY OFFICERS'  
ASSOCIATION**

PO Box 149  
Ashland, MA 01721-0149  
(508) 881-3114  
(508) 881-1128 fax  
[www.fdsoa.org](http://www.fdsoa.org)

**HEALTH CARE FINANCING  
ADMINISTRATION  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN  
SERVICES**

7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244  
Phone (410) 786-3000  
[www.hcfa.gov](http://www.hcfa.gov)

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ARSON  
INVESTIGATORS**

300 S. Broadway, Suite 100  
St. Louis, MO 63102  
(314) 621-1966  
(314) 621-5125 fax  
[www.fire-investigators.org](http://www.fire-investigators.org)

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
EMERGENCY MANAGERS**

111 Park Place  
Falls Church, VA 22046-4513  
(703) 538-1795  
(703) 241-5603 fax  
[www.emassociation.org](http://www.emassociation.org)

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE  
CHIEFS**

4025 Fair Ridge Dr.  
Fairfax, VA 22033-2868  
(703) 273-0911  
(703) 273-9363 fax  
[www.ichiefs.org](http://www.ichiefs.org)

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE  
FIGHTERS**

1750 New York Avenue  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 737-8484  
(202) 783-4570 fax  
[www.iaff.org](http://www.iaff.org)

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF FIRE  
SERVICE INSTRUCTORS**

PO Box 2320  
Stafford, VA 22555  
(800) 435-0005  
(540) 657-0154 fax  
[www.isfsi.org](http://www.isfsi.org)

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
WILDLAND FIRE**

PO Box 328  
Fairfield, WA 99012  
(509) 283-2397  
[www.iawfonline.org](http://www.iawfonline.org)

**INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002-4201  
(202) 289-4262  
(202) 962-3500 fax  
[www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY  
MEDICAL SERVICE PHYSICIANS**

PO Box 15945-281  
Lenexa, KS 66285-5945  
(800) 228-3677  
(913) 541-0156 fax  
[www.naemsp.org](http://www.naemsp.org)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY  
MEDICAL TECHNICIANS**

408 Monroe Street  
Clinton, MS 39056-4210  
(800) 34-NAEMT  
[www.naemt.org](http://www.naemt.org)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SEARCH AND  
RESCUE**

4500 Southgate Place  
Suite 100  
Chantilly, VA 20151-1714  
(703) 222-6277  
(703) 222-6283 fax  
[www.nasar.org](http://www.nasar.org)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE EMS  
DIRECTORS**

111 Park Place  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
(703) 538-1799  
(703) 241-5603 fax  
[www.masemsd.org](http://www.masemsd.org)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FIRE  
MARSHALS**

721 S. Kirkman Road  
Orlando, FL 32811  
(407) 299-8743  
(407) 299-8458 fax  
[www.firemarshals.org](http://www.firemarshals.org)

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATION**

**COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS**

PO Box 11910  
Lexington, KY 40578  
(606) 244-8000  
(606) 244-8239 fax  
[www.nemaweb.org](http://www.nemaweb.org)

**NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS  
FOUNDATION**

PO Drawer 498  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
[www.usfa.fema.gov/usfa/ffmem/foundat.htm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/usfa/ffmem/foundat.htm)

**NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**

1 Batterymarch Park  
Quincy, MA 02269  
(617) 770-3000  
(617) 770-0700 fax  
[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

**NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION  
SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

Emergency Medical Services Division  
400 Seventh Street, SW, NTS-14  
Washington, DC 20590  
(202) 366-5440  
(202) 366-7731 fax  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/ems/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/ems/)

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR URBAN  
SEARCH AND RESCUE**

PO Box 90909  
Santa Barbara, CA 93190  
(805) 569-5066  
(805) 966-6178 fax  
[www.niusr.org](http://www.niusr.org)

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF OCCUPATIONAL  
SAFETY AND HEALTH**

200 Independence Avenue  
Washington, DC 20201  
(800) 35-NIOSH  
[www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS  
AND TECHNOLOGY  
FIRE RESEARCH INFORMATION SERVICES  
BUILDING AND FIRE RESEARCH  
LABORATORY**

100 Bureau Drive, Stop 3460,  
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-3460  
(301) 975-NIST  
[www.bfrl.nist.gov](http://www.bfrl.nist.gov)

**NATIONAL REGISTRY OF EMTS**

PO Box 29233  
Columbus, OH 43229  
(614) 888-4484  
(614) 888-8920 fax  
[www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org)

**NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL**

1121 Spring Lake Drive  
Itasca, IL 60143-3201  
(630) 285-1121  
(630) 285-1315 fax  
[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL**

1050 17th Street, NW  
Suite 490  
Washington, DC 20036  
(888) ASK-NVFC  
(202) 887-5291 fax  
[www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org)

**OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH  
ADMINISTRATION  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

200 Constitution Avenue  
Washington, DC 20210  
(202) 693-1999  
[www.osha.gov/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/index.html)

**UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION  
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
AGENCY**

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY TRAINING  
CENTER**

16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
(800) 238-3358  
(301) 447-1270 fax  
[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)

**WOMEN IN THE FIRE SERVICE**

PO Box 5446  
Madison, WI 53705  
(608) 233-4768  
(608) 233-4879 fax  
[www.wfsi.org](http://www.wfsi.org)

# media resource list

MEDIA RESOURCE LIST FOR \_\_\_\_\_

## Local Newspapers

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## Contact Information

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## Local Television Stations

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## Contact Information

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## Local Cable Franchise

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## Contact Information

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## Local Radio Stations

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## Contact Information

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## Photographers

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## Contact Information

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**Local Government Contacts**

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**Contact Information**

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**Other Emergency Department PIOs**

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**Contact Information**

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**Writers, Editors and Graphic Designers**

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**Contact Information**

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**Printers**

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**Contact Information**

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# fact sheet

The National Volunteer Fire Council is a non-profit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. Organized in 1976, the NVFC serves as the voice for the volunteer fire service. The NVFC is the volunteer fire service's representative in the national policy arena and on numerous national and international committees and organizations. Each state firefighter's association elects a representative to the NVFC.

We welcome you to browse our website at [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org) to learn more about the volunteer fire service and information regarding membership, training, legislation and meetings.

This Fact Sheet was produced in order to provide an overall picture of today's volunteer fire service.

■ **Volunteers comprise 73% of firefighters in the United States.**

Of the total estimated 1,064,150 volunteer and paid firefighters across the country, 777,350 are volunteer.<sup>1</sup>

■ **Communities served by Volunteer Firefighters depend on them to be their first line of defense for many types of emergencies.**

Volunteer Firefighters are summoned to a wide array of emergencies across the country every day including fires, emergency medical incidents, terrorist events, natural disasters, hazardous materials incidents, water rescue emergencies, high-angle and confined space emergencies, and other general public service calls. The public relies on Volunteers to be their first line of defense in these emergencies. Volunteers spend an enormous amount of time training to prepare for these emergencies.

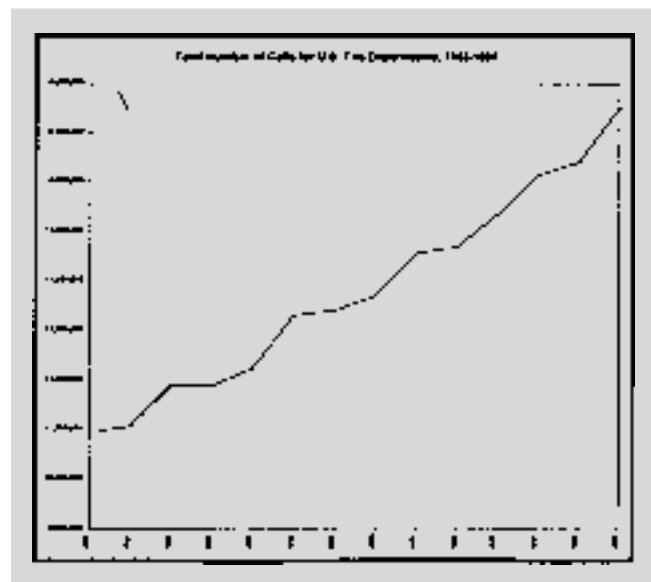
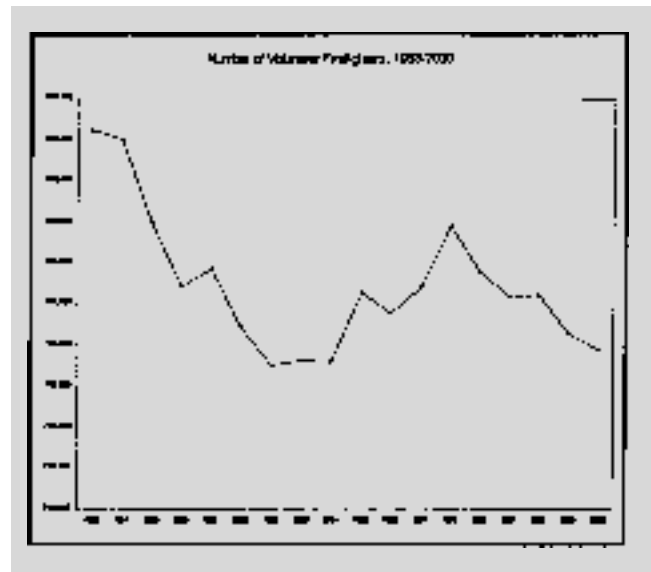
■ **The majority of fire departments in the United States are volunteer.**

Of the total 26,354 fire departments in the country, 19,224 are all volunteer; 3,845 are mostly volunteer; 1,407 are mostly career; and 1,878 are all career.<sup>2</sup>

■ **Services contributed by Volunteer Firefighters save localities across the country an estimated \$36.8 billion per year.<sup>3</sup>**

■ **The number of Volunteer Firefighters in the United States has declined 5-10% since 1983.**

Major factors contributing to the decline include increased time demands, more rigorous training standards, and the proliferation of two-income families



whose members do not have time to volunteer. The two greatest sources of increased time demands are increased emergency calls and increased training hours to comply with training standards.

■ **Recruitment and retention of Volunteer Firefighters** is one of the key issues being addressed jointly by the NVFC and U.S. Fire Administration. The NVFC and USFA have released a report entitled *Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service: Problems and Solutions*. The NVFC also has adopted the 1-800-FIRELINE recruitment campaign. Under this campaign, individual states connect to the toll free number which prospective volunteers can call for information about volunteer emergency service opportunities.

■ **Fire department call volumes continue to increase.**

Most fire departments across the country have experienced a steady increase in calls over the past decade.<sup>4</sup> This is a major source of the increased time demands on Volunteer Firefighters. The increase in calls, coupled with the decline in the number of Volunteer Firefighters, means that fire departments are having to do more with less. Most of the increase is attributed to a sharp increase in the number of emergency medical calls and false alarms. The number of fire calls has actually declined over the period.

■ **Small and mid-sized communities rely heavily on Volunteer Firefighters.**

Small communities (those with populations under 10,000) across the United States are typically protected by all volunteer departments. In some cases, however, these communities have hired a few paid firefighters to assist. Mid-sized communities (those with populations above 10,000) are typically served by combination volunteer and paid departments. Large communities (those with populations over 100,000) are most often protected by combination volunteer and paid departments that consist of primarily paid staff. There are very few purely paid fire departments in the United States, but those that exist are primarily found in very urban areas.

■ **64 of the 102 firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2000 were Volunteers.<sup>6</sup>**

The leading cause of death was heart attacks, followed by vehicle accidents.

■ **Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians across the country meet national and/or state training standards.**

Each state adopts its own training requirements that apply to Volunteer Firefighters. Many states require that volunteers meet the National Fire Protection Association's *Standard 1001: Firefighter Professional Qualifications*. This establishes a very rigorous course of classroom and practical evolutions for basic training. This same standard is commonly used to train paid firefighters.

Likewise, volunteer emergency medical responders are trained to the national training criteria established by the U.S. Department of Transportation and other standards setting bodies.

■ **Volunteers invest a large amount of time serving their communities.**

There is no national average of the amount of time a Volunteer Firefighter gives to his or her community. Volunteering in the fire and EMS service, however, is one of the most demanding volunteer activities today. Time commitments include operational responses (often at a moment's notice), training, fund raising, vehicle and station maintenance, and various administrative duties.

**VOLUNTEER AND PAID FIREFIGHTERS IN THE U.S. BY POPULATION PROTECTED, 2000<sup>5</sup>**

Population Protected	Volunteer	Paid	Total
Under 2,500	402,550	9,750	412,300
2,500 to 4,999	156,000	6,550	162,550
5,000 to 9,999	105,000	14,750	119,750
10,000 to 24,999	74,750	43,950	118,700
25,000 to 49,999	20,550	38,850	59,400
50,000 to 99,999	6,900	39,950	46,850
100,000 to 249,999	3,800	40,000	43,800
250,000 to 499,999	2,600	25,850	28,450
500,000 to 999,999	5,100	35,900	41,000
1,000,000 or more	100	31,250	31,350

■ **The cost to train and equip a firefighter is approximately \$4,500.**

Below are average expenses associated with firefighting:

<b>Equipment</b>	
Protective Clothing	\$ 1,000
Self-contained Breathing Apparatus	2,500
<b>Training</b>	
Firefighter I-II	\$500
Emergency Medical Technician - Basic	300
Hazardous Materials Awareness	75
Emergency Vehicle Operator	75
	<hr/>
	<b>\$ 4,450</b>

■ **Firefighting and emergency medical equipment is very expensive.**

The cost of firefighting equipment is listed below. Equipment can range in cost depending on features and specifications.

Fire pumper	\$150,000 - \$300,000
Ladder truck	\$350,000 - \$500,000
Ambulance	\$60,000 - \$110,000
Advanced life support medical equipment	\$15,000 - \$20,000

■ **There are more than 2 million fires reported each year in the United States.<sup>7</sup>**

Many others go unreported, causing additional injuries and property loss.

■ **Approximately 4,500 people die in fires in the U.S. annually.<sup>8</sup>**

An estimated 26,500 people are injured.

■ **Direct property loss due to fires is estimated at \$8.5 billion annually.<sup>9</sup>**

■ **Each year, fire kills more Americans than all natural disasters combined.**

■ **Fire is the third leading cause of accidental death in the home; at least 80 percent of all fire deaths occur in residences.**

■ **Volunteer Firefighters serve on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Urban Search and Rescue Teams.**

Several of the US&R Teams such as Fairfax County, Virginia and Montgomery County, Maryland include volunteer members. US&R Teams have been deployed to disaster scenes both nationally and internationally.

<sup>1</sup> *U.S. Fire Department Profile Through 2000*. National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, Massachusetts, December, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Fire Protection in Rural America: A Challenge for the Future*. National Association of State Foresters, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> *U.S. Fire Department Profile Through 2000*. National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, Massachusetts, December, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Firefighter Fatalities in the U.S. 2000*. U.S. Fire Administration, Emmitsburg, Maryland, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> *Fire Facts*. U.S. Fire Administration Web Page.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

# videos

Video public service announcements (PSAs) are another way to reach potential volunteers within your community. Local television stations are required to run a certain amount of psas which can help you in your efforts.

First, contact your local television station(s) or cable system and find out who is in charge of coordinating the broadcast of public service announcements. Get the correct spelling of the person's name, the mailing address, and his or her phone number. If you can, try to get through to that person, so you can establish personal contact.

Lead time for approval of the spot for broadcast may run from one week to more than a month. Ask what their time frame is. Also, if you want to personalize the spot, ask whether the station can insert your local information for you.

✉ Enclose a letter with the video regarding your recruitment efforts. Address it to the person whose name you received from the television station. Mail the letter with a copy of the videotape – or deliver them in person.

☎ Follow up by phone with this person after a week. Ask whether your package was received and, if so, whether broadcast times for the spot have been scheduled.

If you need to, follow up again in several weeks. You may want to suggest the station run the spots around sports programming, including coverage of related events, as well as during National Fire Prevention Week in October.

## VIDEO RESOURCES

Videos listed below are available by ordering through the National Volunteer Fire Council at [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org)

### REAL HEROES

*Recruitment PSA Features NASCAR Legend Richard Petty*  
NVFC and VFIS have teamed up to offer two 30-second PSAs aimed at support and recruitment of firefighters. One version includes the 1-800-FIRE-LINE number. The television spots, in beta format, are available at no cost to all fire, rescue and EMS organizations.

- The first spot encourages viewers to call the National Volunteer Fire Council's (NVFC) toll-free phone line (1-800-FIRE-LINE) to learn about volunteer opportunities in their community.
- The second spot is the same as the first – but without the NVFC toll-free number. Instead, it leaves a blank space for insertion of your organization's own local phone number. This spot was also designed for departments that are located in states where the Fire Line number is currently not operational.  
**Note:** Want to see the spot for yourself? Log on to [www.vfis.com](http://www.vfis.com)

### WHAT IF NO ONE ANSWERED THE CALL?

12 minutes, VHS. The video is geared toward high school students to spark their interest in becoming a member of a volunteer fire department.

### VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, THEY'RE PEOPLE YOU KNOW

This action-packed five minute video highlights the actions of volunteer firefighters. The video can be used as a retention and recruitment tool as well. Customize a copy of the video with your departments name at the end. 5 minutes, two 30-second psas.



# press releases

**Press releases are a great way to get the word out about your organization and what your department is doing. Press releases can be used to notify the community about events and issues that are coming up in the future or to let people know about something that has already happened.**

Press releases should be well thought-out and researched. Properly formatted and clearly written press releases are more likely to get the attention of the editors and media community. A press release should transmit some type of pertinent information in order to get the attention of the news media. Make sure your press release has key facts and relevant information so that you will get the media attention you deserve.

In general, press releases are short, one-to-two page information bulletins designed for other media outlets to use to get your word out to the audience or community. Make sure you put the most important information in the first paragraph or first few sentences of the press release. The rest of the press release can contain supporting information and quotes from key individuals to further emphasize points. If you are using a second page, be sure to note at the bottom of the first page that more information follows. Press releases should always be typed, preferably on department letterhead, and they should be adequately spaced.

Many departments find that adding “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” at the top of their press release helps the receiving media representatives know the timeliness of the press release. You can also use “FOR GENERAL RELEASE” or leave the reference off altogether if the issue is not time sensitive.

## **WHO IS THE EDITOR OF THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER?**

Once you craft a great press release, you have to make sure it gets into the right hands. Find out the key players in your community's media system and how you can get your information directly into their line of sight. A little research on this topic will go a long way in improving your

department's media relations. (You might try using the resource list tool in this media kit to help you organize media contacts.) Where are the local radio stations? Who manages the local cable television franchise? Get to know these people and how to contact them. Be sure that you keep this information in a place where the public relations team can use it, and update the contact information regularly.

## **IMPORTANT TIP**

When writing press releases contact the key media representatives in your community and ask them what they look for in a press release and what is most helpful for them when considering press releases for publication or announcement. Your media representatives may have certain formats or key information they look for in a press release, and if you have followed their guidelines or format, your press release will stand a much better chance of being used.

## **TOPIC EXAMPLES**

Press releases can be used for a number of different topics. Here are a few examples of when press releases can be used:

- For the recruitment of volunteers into the organization. (See attached sample.)
- To announce fundraising activities such as mail campaigns, door-to-door campaigns, dinners, events, and raffles.
- For the promotion of special events that the organization is participating in, like open houses, displays, public education seminars and parades or competitions.
- To tell the community about news within your organization, like a new station opening, a new ambulance or fire engine that you put in service, or a change in your provision of services.
- For providing general information about your organization to the community you serve. This is a great idea to do periodically to remind your community about the job you do and how important you are.

*continue* ➞

- To provide public service information about fire safety, injury prevention or healthy living.

## **INTERNAL NEWS**

Volunteer fire and emergency service agencies may even use a press release format for internal news about the organization, such as the announcement of a member's accomplishment or the achievement of an internal goal. Posting internal press releases in the stations and in newsletters can help keep the members informed about what the department is doing and where they are headed in the future.

## **CELEBRATE YOUR DEPARTMENT'S SUCCESSES**

Don't forget to celebrate your department's successes through press releases. If your department has a notable accomplishment, let the community know about it and help you celebrate. For example, if your department won an award, don't just put your trophy in the case. Write a press release and send it out so that everyone knows just how great your department is doing. The more your community knows about your success, the better your public perception will be with the citizens you serve.

## **TRANSMIT PRESS RELEASES**

There are several ways that volunteer fire and emergency service departments can transmit their press releases. E-mail is a fast and easy way to transmit press releases. Faxing can also work well and save time and money. If your group of media contacts is very large, you may consider broadcast faxing. Mailing press releases is also an option, and an especially attractive one if sending out a photograph or camera-ready art with your press release. (Don't discount these options. Photos and artwork that are in a useable format can increase your chances of publication.)

## **PRESS RELEASE SAMPLES**

Attached are two sample press releases that you can customize for your department's use. The first is a sample press release concerning a volunteer recruitment campaign, and the second is a sample press release regarding fundraising. You can also contact neighboring volunteer departments to get sample press releases they have used in the past that were successful.

For more information contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## What If No One Answered the Call?

*(Your City, Your State) A storm breaks out unexpectedly in \_\_\_\_\_ (your community). Lightning causes a home to catch fire. Cars crash in the blinding rain. People of all ages call for help. What would happen if no one answered the call? Who would respond to protect the lives and property of the community? Who would be there to help?*

Every day, in every community, emergency responders answer the call of our families, friends and neighbors who are in need of assistance. From car accidents to heart attacks, from house fires to technical rescues, emergency responders are there to protect lives and property.

Emergency responders are a special type of people, with many different reasons for answering the call of duty. Some like the challenges and the adrenaline rush, while others like to sharpen their emergency skills and techniques. Every one of them answers the call so that they can help someone in need.

Today's emergency responders do far more than put out fires or bandage wounds. Emergency responders are the first line of defense in natural and man-made disasters. They respond to vehicle accidents, hazardous materials incidents, specialized rescue situations and a vast array of emergency medical complaints.

In response to the growing need for new volunteer fire and emergency medical service providers, the \_\_\_\_\_ (your department) has initiated a recruitment campaign for interested citizens to learn how to "answer the call" and serve their community.

**(Insert section on how to contact the department about becoming a volunteer. Be sure to double check all phone numbers and addresses before taking your Press Release to the media.)**

Becoming a volunteer emergency responder can be the most rewarding experience of your life, and allows you to reach out to someone in need. Together with \_\_\_\_\_ (your department) you can ensure that there is always someone to "answer the call."

***(Note: You can personalize this press release by inserting your department's name throughout the text. For example, instead of "Every day, in every community, emergency responders answer the call..." you might try, "Every day, in our community, the Example Volunteer Fire and EMS Department answers the call..." You may also need to adjust the language to reflect the type of service you provide. For example, if you are an EMS only agency, you might want to remove some of the references about firefighting and concentrate on the EMS and rescue services you provide.)***

For more information contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Donations That Save Lives

(Your City, Your State) Did you know that it costs thousands of dollars to put fire hoses on fire engines? That fire and emergency departments everywhere pay anywhere from \$50,000 to \$500,000 to put ambulances and fire engines in service to answer calls for help in their communities? The machine that delivers electricity to patients with life-threatening heart rhythms can cost almost \$10,000! Providing the tools, training and equipment to save lives and protect property is an expensive task.

\_\_\_\_\_ (your department) wants to meet the challenge of providing the highest quality fire and emergency service apparatus and equipment to answer calls for help in our community. Your donations allow us to provide water to house fires, the “jaws-of-life” to victims trapped in automobiles and oxygen to children with asthma attacks.

***(Insert information about how citizens and community members can make donations. Will your agency be doing a mail or door-to-door fundraising campaign? When? How can they make donations if you don't have an organized campaign? Don't forget to mention if donations to your organization are tax-deductible. Also, if volunteer organizations help keep the taxes lower in your community, you might consider mentioning this as well.)***

Every dollar you donate helps the \_\_\_\_\_ (your department) reach out to a person in need. You and your donation play a critical role in helping us help our community.

*(Note: If you have a specific goal for your fundraising, like a new fire engine, ambulance or station, then insert some information about it in your press release. Use as many facts as you can to show your community how important their donation really is to your ability to provide fire and emergency services.)*

# Letters to the editor

There are a number of occasions when a “Letter to the Editor” is a valuable tool in a fire and emergency service department’s media relations game plan. A letter to the editor of a publication is a great way to get your department’s position out to the community.

Letters to the editor are certainly a viable tool in the media relations bag-of-tricks, however, opinion sections of newspapers and periodicals are typically not read as much as the other sections. Use letters to the editor in concert with other tools to get your message across. While they are can be an important part of a media campaign, it is probably not a good idea to use them alone to get your message across to the community.

## STATEMENTS

Letters to the editor can include more statements about opinions and feelings than a press release, which may make them better suited for certain situations. For example, if an agency wants to express its thanks to an organization or explain its position about a local government issue, a letter to the editor may be a good idea. If a department is planning a public education event or announcing the building of a new station, a press release is probably a better choice.

Letters to the editor, like press releases, should be written in clear and simple language and should include contact information if it is relevant. For instance, if you are writing a letter to the editor to thank a local civic group for its donation, you might want to include a brief statement about how to make donations and who to contact if interested.

## IMPORTANT MESSAGES

Don’t miss opportunities to get important messages across in a press release. For example, if your department writes a letter to the editor about the accomplishment of a member, take a few minutes to include a plug about your department’s need for volunteers (and, of course, information about how to become a volunteer.)

## WHAT TYPES OF INFORMATION CAN YOU TRANSMIT WITH LETTERS TO THE EDITOR?

- Issues involving recruitment of new volunteer members and retention of current volunteer members. This can include the celebration of members’ accomplishments or the announcement of recruitment campaigns.
- Fundraising, fundraising, fundraising. Letters to the editor provide a fantastic vehicle for departments to publicly thank businesses, groups or individuals who have made significant donations in a fundraising campaign. The better you treat your donors, the better your chances that they will donate again in the next fundraising campaign. Letters to the editor can also be used in concert with other tools to announce fundraising campaigns or alert citizens to the need for donations.
- Letters to the editor can provide departments with an additional method of announcing special events, such as open houses and public education events.
- Letters to the editor can support the announcement of news about the department. For example, if your department has won an award, you might use a press release to make the preliminary notification to the community and follow it with a letter to the editor further emphasizing the award’s significance and thanking those individuals or groups that helped the department win the award.
- Public service announcements can be done through letters to the editor and other media relations tools. For instance, during fire prevention week, departments can use a letter to the editor to explain important fire safety considerations and explain what the department is doing to promote fire safety in the community.

## SAMPLE LETTERS

This section contains two sample letters to the editor. The first is an example of a letter written about a department recruitment campaign. The second is an example of a letter to the editor thanking donors in a fundraising campaign. These examples can be used as a foundation for departments to craft customized letters to the editor.



**Sample Letter to the Editor 1 - Recruitment**  
**(Tip: Use your department letterhead for a professional touch.)**

---

(Your Name and Title)

---

(Organization or Department Name)

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(Address)

---

(Date)

Dear Editor:

The \_\_\_\_\_ (**your organization's name**) takes our responsibility seriously. Our community is protected by dedicated and committed emergency service responders who do their jobs when called upon, even at three o'clock in the morning. Saving lives and protecting property is not an easy task. We do it willingly and often without recognition.

Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical service providers are a special kind of people. We are looking for members to help answer the call of duty. The \_\_\_\_\_ (**your organization's name**) has started a new campaign to recruit volunteer members to respond to emergency calls for help and assist with fundraising and administrative duties.

As our community grows, our emergency calls for help increase. Today we respond to far more than fires and vehicle accidents. When someone is having a heart attack, we are there. We answer calls for anything from hazardous materials incidents to sports injuries to industrial accidents. We need volunteer members to help us help our community.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer member of \_\_\_\_\_ (**your organization's name**) can contact us at \_\_\_\_\_ (**insert contact information, such as daytime phone numbers and email addresses.**)

Sincerely,

---

(Your Name and Title)

***(Note: You can customize this letter to the editor by including information about your department's run statistics or demographics. Also, if you have a web site, direct prospective members to this as a starting point.)***

**Sample Letter to the Editor 2 - Fundraising Appreciation**  
**(Tip: Use your department letterhead for a professional touch.)**

---

((Your Name and Title)

---

(Organization or Department Name)

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(Address)

---

(Date)

Dear Editor:

The \_\_\_\_\_ (**your organization's name**) has just completed its annual fundraising campaign. We were very successful this year, and we have many people and businesses to thank!

Through the financial support of our community, the \_\_\_\_\_ (**your organization's name**) is able to purchase the supplies and equipment we need to answer emergency calls for assistance from our friends and neighbors.

The \_\_\_\_\_ (**your organization's name**) wishes to thank each and every community member who donated during our annual fundraising campaign. Your contribution is directly impacting the quality of public safety and emergency response in your community.

We would also like to send a special thank you to the following community members and businesses that donated \$1,000.00 or more during this year's fundraising campaign:

**(Insert list of names and businesses.)**

Again, the \_\_\_\_\_ (**your organization's name**) expresses our gratitude to all those who donated in our fundraising campaign. Your donation helps us help you!

Sincerely,

---

(Your Name and Title)

***(Note: You can customize this letter to the editor by including information about your department's run statistics or apparatus and equipment. For example, you might include how many calls you run in a year, or information on specialized equipment you purchased thanks to the donations from the community.)***

# camera-ready artwork

The advertising materials enclosed are “reproduction” quality materials-that is, the publication can use them directly for producing your ads. At the bottom, you will note that the signature refers to “your local fire department.” If you wish the publication can substitute an actual name, such as Smithville Volunteer Fire Department. Just specify the exact name you want and the publication will generally set the type for you free of charge.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE**

It usually costs money to run advertising. However, most newspapers and magazines have a policy of running some “public service” ads on a no-cost basis. The enclosed ads would qualify as public service ads, since they come from a worthy cause and come from a non-profit organization.

Please refer to the Press Release section of the Kit to learn how to have the artwork placed in a publication.

# Can you fill these boots?

**It takes a special person to fill the boots of a volunteer firefighter.**



It takes someone with a desire to do something important for the community;  
someone with courage and dedication, who isn't afraid of hard work,  
and is willing to accept the challenge of a difficult job.

If you're this kind of person, you're needed as a volunteer firefighter.  
We might be able to fit you with a pair of boots.

**Contact your local fire department or call 1-800-FIRE-LINE**

Brought to you by Your local fire department and the National Volunteer Fire Council, [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org)

# What if No One Answered the Call?



What if you called to report a fire or other emergency and no one answered the call?  
Did you know that nearly 80% of this country's fire service is volunteer?

It takes someone with a desire to do something important for the community;  
someone with courage and dedication, who isn't afraid of hard work,  
and is willing to accept the challenge of a difficult job.  
If you're this kind of person, you're needed as a volunteer firefighter.

**Contact your local fire department or call 1-800-FIRE-LINE**

Brought to you by Your local fire department and the National Volunteer Fire Council, [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org)



# What if No One Answered the Call?



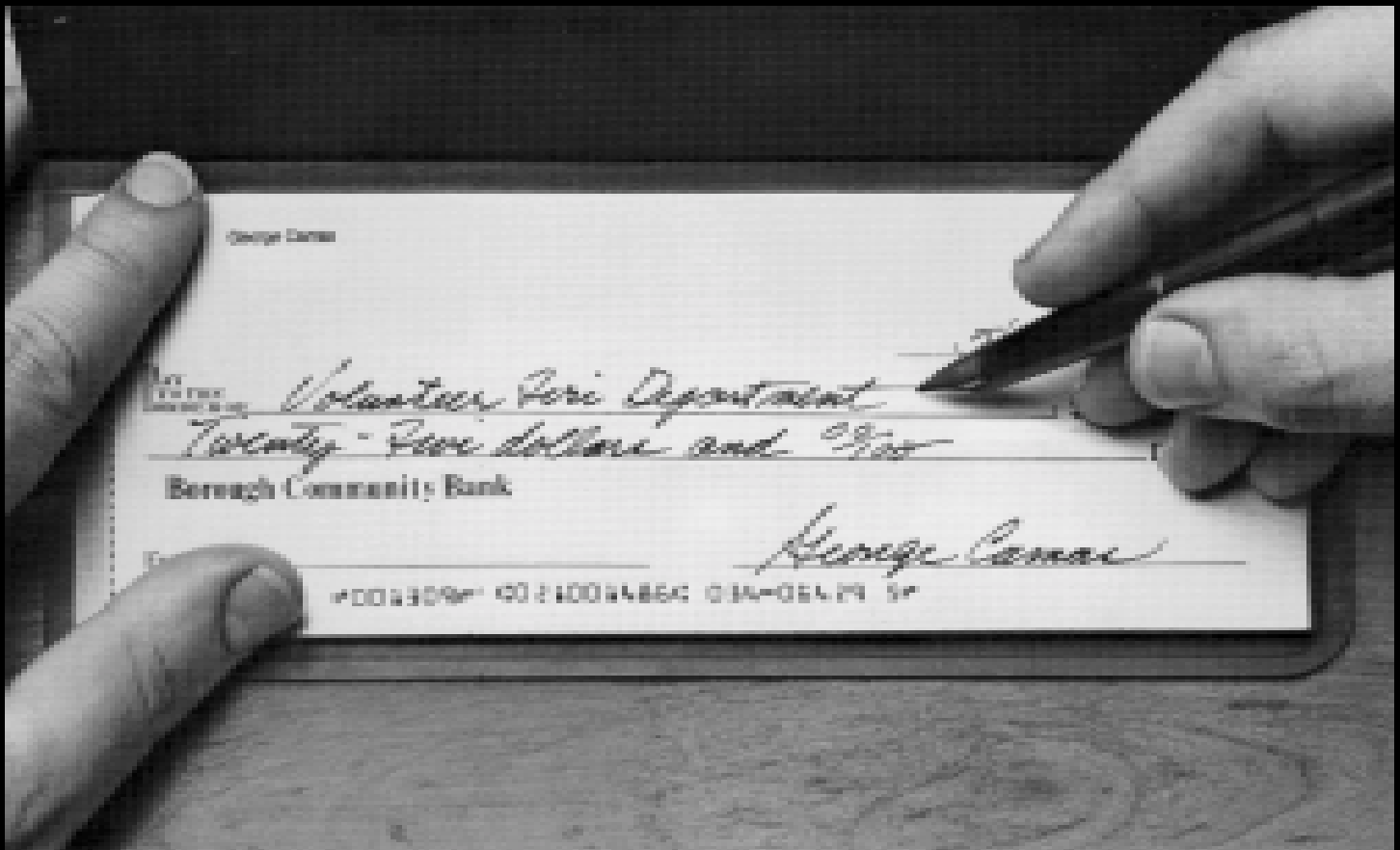
What if you called to report a fire or other emergency and no one answered the call?  
Did you know that nearly 80% of America's fire service is volunteer?

**Support your local emergency services - Become a Volunteer**

**Contact your local fire department or call 1-800-FIRE-LINE**

Brought to you by Your local fire department and the National Volunteer Fire Council, [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org)

# Paper can help put out fires.



**We, your local volunteer firefighters depend on your contributions.**

We depend on them every time we fight a fire. And that's because the tools of our trade don't and shouldn't come cheap. Like the \$200,000 it costs for a new ladder truck.

The \$100 we pay for a protective helmet. Or the \$25 it costs for an extra axe to help us reach a trapped victim a few seconds earlier.

Over the next several weeks, you're going to be asked to help us put out fires.

With paper. Give what you can. We do every time the fire alarm rings.

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