

**EAST COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE**  
Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

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**SUBJECT: Leave of Absence for Volunteer Members**

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**APPROVED BY:**

*George F. Hooper*  
Board Chair

**REVIEWED: \_\_\_\_\_**

**BY: \_\_\_\_\_**

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**POLICY:**

Service is all we have to offer to the Community. Service is delivered by personnel that are well trained and respond, on a regular basis, to citizen requests for assistance. When Volunteer members cannot meet drill attendance and/or call attendance standards, a leave of absence is a consideration.

**PROCEDURE:**

**AVAILABILITY OF LEAVE**

Volunteer Fire Fighters and EMS personnel with more than five (5) years of active service can request a leave of absence, in writing, from the Fire Chief.

Members with less than five full years (60 calendar months) of service will not be considered for a leave of absence unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- Significant personal illness or injury
- Significant family illness or injury

Members with less than five full years of service should consider termination of membership if they cannot fulfill the minimum requirements for call and/or drill attendance.

Members that terminate their membership must wait a minimum of 12 months to re-apply for membership with the Fire Department.

**LEAVE DURATION**

Members are eligible for a leave of absence based upon their most recent term of non-interrupted service (based upon full 12 month blocks) with the Fire Department:

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Maximum Available Leave</u>	<u>Maximum Extension</u>
5 yrs	6 months	50%
6 yrs	7 months	50%
7 yrs	8 months	50%
8 yrs	10 months	50%
9 yrs	11 months	50%
10 + yrs	12 months	50%

A leave of absence can be extended by a term not to exceed 50% of the requested leave duration. No combination of leaves shall exceed the combined total of “maximum available leave” and “maximum extension”—for the member’s time in service.

Extension will be considered for the following reasons:

- Significant personal illness or injury
- Significant family illness or injury
- Out-of-state work assignments extending beyond the “maximum available leave” requested.
- Extreme circumstances, presented in writing to the Chief, will be considered for authorization

No member shall be granted more than 18 months of leave(s) in ANY five year (60 month) period.

### **REQUESTING A LEAVE OR EXTENDING A LEAVE**

Leaves and Extensions of Leaves must be pre-authorized, in writing, by the Fire Chief. Request forms for such leaves shall be submitted to the Chief at least 10 days prior to the beginning of the requested leave.

Members requesting a Leave of Absence shall complete the Fire Department’s Request for a Leave of Absence Form and forward it to the Fire Chief for review.

Members requesting to extend a Leave of Absence shall complete the Fire Department’s Request for Extension of Leave Form and forward it to the Fire Chief for review.

A Leave of Absence or Extension of Leave can be denied by the Fire Chief for the following reasons:

- The member does not have enough non-interrupted service time to qualify for the requested length of leave.
- The member requests an extension of their leave, but does not meet the requirements.

The Fire Chief shall document the authorization and duration of leave—or –denial of leave, within 10 calendar days of receipt of the request.

The documentation shall be placed in the member’s mailbox at the Station unless the member requests the response be mailed to them.

### **DEPARTMENT ACTIONS**

Members shall return all of their Department-issued equipment, following authorization of leaves lasting 32 days or longer.

Equipment shall be returned to a Fire Department Officer during a meeting that occurs within 5 calendar days after the beginning of the leave.

The Fire Department Officer shall issue the member a receipt itemizing each piece of returned equipment and Department-issued supplies.

Members are financially responsible for equipment and supplies that are not returned.

Members are financially responsible for attorney's fees, court fees, collection fees, administrative fees, etc., incurred by the East County Fire & Rescue to obtain return of equipment & supplies and/or reimbursement for same.

The Fire Department will not make payments to the following, if they come due during a Leave of Absence:

- Board of Volunteer Fire Fighters Health Insurance
- Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters Retirement
- Spouse and Orphan's Fund

Payment of annual costs will be made, on behalf of the member, upon the member's return from the Leave of Absence

Officers taking a leave or leaves that extend beyond a four month duration (more than 18 consecutive weeks) shall forfeit their Officer rank.

## **RETURN TO SERVICE**

Members wishing to return to service from a Leave of Absence shall notify the Fire Chief, in writing, of their intent to do so at least 10 days prior to the Drill Night on which they wish to return.

The Fire Chief shall document the authorization to return to service—or—the denial to return, within 10 calendar days of receipt of request.

The documentation shall be mailed to the members last known address.

Members shall NOT participate in drills, nor respond to calls until notified by the Fire Chief, in writing, that Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters insurance is in effect.

Members shall not respond to calls until all training—required by the State,

Federal Government and the Fire Chief for emergency responders—are completed. The training Officer shall document completion of this requirement and forward it to the Fire Chief.

The Department is not responsible for covering the cost of instruction for “make-up” sessions.

Personal Protective Equipment shall be issued—as available—to the returning member.

**THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THE MEMBER'S ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THE RETURNING MEMBER.**

Members shall sign an equipment assignment form itemizing the PPE and supplies issued to the returning member.

**FORMS**

- Volunteer Request for Leave of Absence Form
- To be used by the Member to request a Leave of Absence
- Volunteer Request for Leave of Absence Form—Response to Member
- To be used by the Fire Chief to respond to the Member's request.
- Volunteer Request for Extension of Leave Form
- To be used by the Member to request an extension of a Leave of Absence
- Volunteer Request for Extension of Leave Form—Response to Member

To be used by the Fire Chief to respond to the Member's request for an extended Leave of Absence

Volunteer Request to Return to Service Form:

To be used by the Member to request a return service at the end of a Leave of absence.

Volunteer Request to Return to Service Form—Response to Member

To be used by the Fire Chief to respond to the Member's request to return to service at the end of a Leave of Absence.

**QUESTIONS**

Direct any questions about this PPG to the Fire Chief.