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Contact: Local Contact Name
Local Contact Title
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**Help Your Volunteer Fire Department Help You**

Most Americans pass by their volunteer fire department at least a few times per month as they travel back and forth within their communities. Often, a second thought is not given to the dedicated volunteers who operate out of that fire station. It is common that it is only when they are needed that volunteer firefighters come to mind.

If you appreciate everything your local volunteer fire department does for your community, you should consider giving back. There are several ways that you can assist your local volunteer fire department.

**Around Your Home**

Make sure to keep the outside of your home free of anything that would impede access. Not only is this imperative for successful firefighting operations, it is also a must-do for your family. Don’t store items in the entrances of your home. Teach the kids to put away their bicycles and sporting equipment after use. Seconds matter when it comes to a medical emergency or a home fire. Anything that stands in the way of exiting the home safely or firefighters gaining access can result in precious time being lost.

If your community is equipped with fire hydrants, keep a watchful eye that they are kept clear of obstructions or illegally parked cars. In wintertime, make sure the hydrants are free of snow in a three-foot radius. The few extra minutes you may take to shovel out a snowed-in hydrant may make the difference between life and death.

In warmer weather, remove any brush, leaves or weeds that may be piled up or growing around the foundation of your home. This excess organic matter can be a potential fire hazard when dry. Remember, *clean and green* is the way to go!

**Giving Back**

There are several ways to give back to your local volunteer fire department, and many are very enjoyable! Volunteer fire departments depend on the support of the community and do much to attract and interact with the citizens they serve.

Most departments host an annual carnival or open house. Make it a point to go! It’s a great way to not only give back to the department, but it’s a fun and affordable family day out. Weather often plays an all-important role in the success of the event. Rain or an unusual cold snap does much to affect attendance and revenue. Be bold! Take an umbrella and head out to show your support. There are usually some great activities under tents that are still accessible in wet or cold weather! Grab a bite to eat, take a spin on the wheel of fortune and have some healthy competition with the kids at the many carnival games. It’s a great way to give back to those that volunteer their time to ensure your safety.

When’s the last time you took the family to your local department’s pancake breakfast or spaghetti dinner? Serving up delicious, homecooked food to the community is a great way for volunteer firefighters to get to know the citizens they serve and to raise much needed funds to keep the fire house running efficiently. Next time you see signs popping up all over town advertising the event, grab the kids and go!

Does your fire department need a caller for Bingo Night? Are they looking for donations for their penny social? Do they need food servers or booth staff for a community event? Volunteering your time to those who volunteer their lives to keep you and your community safe is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have.

Don’t have the time to volunteer? Then, donate! When you receive the annual letter asking for support, don’t throw it away instead return it with a donation. Buy raffle tickets when offered. Remember your volunteers during holidays. Dropping off a plate of cookies and a donation check will do much to spread the cheer around the fire department.

Remember, these volunteers are your friends, your neighbors, some may even be your family. They depend on the support of the community to be able to provide the lifesaving services that are so sorely needed across the U.S. Stop to think, what would you do if your volunteer fire department no longer existed. It’s a scary thought, isn’t it?

With so many ways to give back to your local volunteer fire department, you can make a difference not only in the lives of your volunteer firefighters, but in the lives of your fellow citizens and family as well.

Insert your Department name relies on brave men and women to volunteer their time to serve as volunteer firefighters to ensure that every call for help is answered. Men and women with almost every skill set are needed. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Insert your Department name at Insert website or call Insert your Dept. phone number.

There are volunteer opportunities at your local volunteer fire department for citizens willing to work hard. To learn more about becoming a volunteer firefighter and joining your local volunteer fire department, please visit [www.VolunteerFireTN.org](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org).

*About the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. (TFCA)
The TFCA provides leadership to career and volunteer Fire Chiefs, Chief Fire Officers and managers of emergency service organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The TN Fire Chiefs Association (TFCA) also encourages the professional advancement of the fire service to ensure and maintain greater protection of life and property from fire and natural or man-made disasters. The TFCA’s mission is to provide leadership to career and volunteer chiefs, chief fire officers, and managers of Emergency Service Organizations throughout the State of Tennessee through vision, information, education, service and representation to enhance their professionalism and capabilities. More information about the TFCA is located at* [*www.tnfirechiefs.com*](http://www.tnfirechiefs.com) *.*

*About Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS)
The Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association was awarded a SAFER recruitment and retention grant in 2016 and partnered with the International Association of Fire Chiefs to identify recruitment and retention goals, strategies and marketing methodologies that would benefit not only participating departments, but all fire departments in the state. 19 departmental groups, consisting of 64 departments, were selected to participate in Phase I of the program. The VWS program is also operating in Virginia through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and Connecticut through the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association. There is also currently a National VWS effort focusing on diversity and new trainings. More information about the Tennessee VWS can be found at* [*www.VolunteerFireTN.org*](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org)*.*

*(Insert info about your department in similar format to above)*