

**Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department
New Member Orientation Packet**





PETERSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



P.O. Box 329, Petersburg, AK 99833
1200 Haugen Drive
907-772-3355

INTRODUCTION

Dear Recruit,

As Chief of the Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department (PVFD), I am committed to providing the most proficient fire, search, and emergency medical services to our community. I am also committed to continuing the tradition and reputation of excellence that the Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department has always earned.

You will find volunteering with our department brings personal rewards and satisfaction, raises self-esteem, and provides a tremendous sense of accomplishment and pride for a job well done. It also provides your community with a valuable service with the potential to touch all of us.

However, service as a member of our department requires serious commitment. Your decision to join our department should not be made hastily. PVFD developed this guide to provide the information needed to make an effective decision that is right for you and us.

Once you understand what's involved in being a volunteer, we hope you can make the commitment we need. Our volunteers provide a valuable service to the citizens, businesses, and visitors of our community. We hope once you understand what's involved in being a volunteer that you can make the commitment we need to contribute to our community's public safety.

Thank you in advance for your efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Dan Bird
Fire Chief



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Dear Prospective Member,

On behalf of the Petersburg Borough, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for expressing interest in becoming a volunteer with the Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department (PVFD). Volunteers, by virtue of selflessness, are the most valuable asset in our community.

People have opportunities to volunteer in many walks of life; however, not everyone has the desire or courage to volunteer in public safety. As a new member of PVFD you can pursue skills in firefighting, search and rescue, and/or emergency medical services. All we ask in return is a dedication to PVFD's mission goals and a can-do attitude.

As a new member of this department, you join a tradition of community service to your friends, family and neighbors that has lasted over a century, and with your help, centuries to come, because at it's base level, Helping friends, family and neighbors in their time of need, is a core factor of what makes communities great.

Again, thank you for your time and interest in joining the Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Aaron Hankins
Emergency Services Director

PVFD History and Department Structure

The Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department has been a volunteer department since its founding in 1911. It started as an all-volunteer organization sponsored by the (then) City of Petersburg. It grew and eventually a Fire Marshall and EMS coordinator were hired to assist the volunteers comply with local and state regulations. Later, the Department was moved to its current location at the top of Haugen Drive. This also happened around the same time as the City of Petersburg was recreated as the Borough of Petersburg. This led to the creation of the Director's position as the "Department Head" for the Fire Dept. The department currently averages approximately 70 volunteers and has two fire stations, Station 1 on Haugen drive, sometimes referred to as "The Fire Hall", and Station 2, located in the Scow Bay turnaround complex. PVFD offers Fire Response, Emergency Medical Services and Search and Rescue services. Volunteers can serve in one or more of these branches.

Currently, there are three employee positions: Department Director Aaron Hankins, EMS Coordinator (Vacant) and Fire Marshal Ryan Welde. They are responsible primarily for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the Fire Dept and its equipment. They also handle the administration and reporting of incidents to the state. The Fire Marshall and EMS coordinator are also the training officers for their respective branches. See below for further job descriptions and duties.

The Fire Chief is elected by the volunteer membership every 3 years, with a vote of confidence every year except for a re-election year. Officers are then appointed by the Chief, who will assign them roles within their respective branches, usually with an eye towards helping train and lead the rest of the volunteer members.

The PVFD has a somewhat unique personnel arrangement among Fire Departments.

The Department Director oversees the department, ensuring the department is able to serve the Borough to the best of its ability. This includes oversight of the Fire Marshal, EMS Coordinator, Fire Chief and all the volunteers. The Director works with the Fire Chief to draft and enforce Dept. policies and budgets and represents the Fire Department in Borough Meetings and when interfacing with other borough departments. The Director is also the Emergency Manager for the Petersburg Borough.

The Fire Chief is responsible for Incident Command on scene at emergencies. In addition, the Fire Chief is responsible for ensuring the volunteers are getting the training and equipment they need and directs the duties of the volunteers. Finally, the Fire Chief appoints officers in each branch to help with the Chief's duties and is the ceremonial head of the Department in events such as parades and other formal events.

An easy way to learn the split responsibilities of the Director and Chief is that in Day-to-Day non-emergency Dept. business, the Director takes the lead, things like handing out equipment and record keeping. But when the tones drop and the trucks roll out the door, the Chief becomes the de facto leader of the department.

The Fire Marshal's primary duties include ensuring properties within the Borough are up to fire code, investigating fires and reporting to the state serving as the training officer for the Fire branch and providing maintenance for the fire equipment.

The EMS Coordinator is the EMS Branch training officer, helps oversee EMS operations in conjunction with the Medical Director, and helps set EMS policy, reporting to the state and maintenance of EMS equipment.

The Medical Director is a licensed physician that is contracted with the dept, allowing the department to run EMS and other medical operations under their license. Along with the Chief, Director and EMS coordinator, He helps set policy and standing orders related to medical response.

As mentioned earlier, there is also a Volunteer Officer corps. These folks help the Chief provide Tactical leadership and training to the other volunteers. These folks are appointed by the Chief. Look to these leaders for additional mentorship and coaching as you progress through your volunteer career with the department. These members can help provide valuable insight into department operations and inner workings.

Department equipment and locations

Station 1 or “The Fire Hall” is located at 1200 Haugen Drive, which is where the paid staff operate out of, and where Engines 2, 4 and 8 are located, as well as the Squad (Mini Pumper), Medic 1 and 2, the Admin SUV and the SAR truck. Station 1 serves the majority of “Town” in the Petersburg Borough. The majority of PVFD’s response is from Station 1. Station 1 also serves as the venue for the Department and Association meetings.

Station 2 is located at 290 Mitkof Hwy, which is where Engine 6 and the Water Tender are stored. This is also where the Fire department’s training props are and where the antique vehicles are stored. These antique fire engines date back to the early 1900's that have long been out of service, but still run. They are mostly used in parades. Station 2 is unmanned but remains an important piece of department operations. Station 2 covers fire response from Scow Bay out to the old city limits (about 8.7 mile). Response past this point is limited to one Engine and the Water Tender due to service constraints imposed by the borough charter.

In addition, the Department also utilizes 4-wheelers and the Harbor Security boat (in Middle Harbor) in the harbors to help pack equipment on the floats during boat fires and for off island Fire, EMS and SAR response.

Engine 2 is the main structure fire engine, meaning it is “first due” for fire response to various structure fires, brush fires, etc. It carries specialty equipment for cutting into buildings for access, specialty nozzles for piercing walls and ceilings, and for conducting interior searches for fire victims. It is a 2023 Pierce pumper and is PVFD’s newest engine.

Engine 4 is the main vehicle fire / accident response engine. It carries special equipment for stabilizing and cutting into cars, putting out fuel fires and containing fuel spills. It also carries specialty struts that can be used to stabilize vehicles and lift patients out of confined spaces. E4 is a 2007 Pierce pumper, our second oldest engine.

Engine 8 is a second due engine, for both Vehicle and Structure Fires. It carries extra equipment and tools to assist in both roles, though it is capable of being first due if necessary. E8 is a 2001 Pierce Pumper.

Squad 1 is a Mini Pumper or “Brush Truck” that is capable of getting to places an engine cannot. It carries an auxiliary powered pump and 200 gallons of water. It also carries equipment to assist with vehicle fires and accidents. It responds for every MVA related incident and as a support vehicle for other calls.

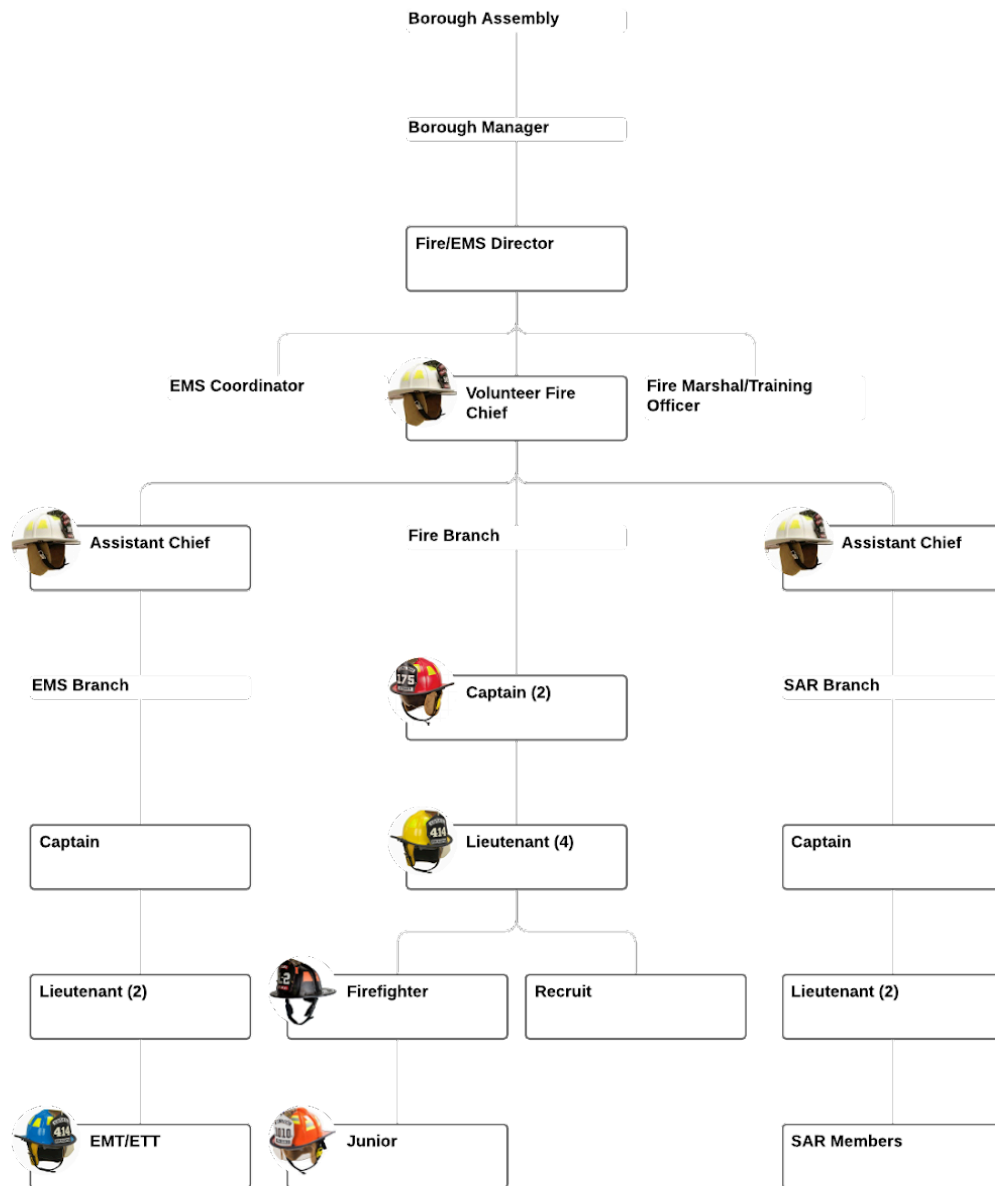
The Admin SUV and Search and Rescue truck can be used to bring extra volunteers and equipment to respond. During active fire calls, it is not uncommon for someone to be assigned to these vehicles to bring spare SCBA air bottles, extra hose and tools, and food and supplies for those who are fighting the fire. Search and Rescue also uses these vehicles for transport around the island, and as a forward operating post. During the Day to Day operations, Paid staff also use these vehicles in their daily duties.

Medic 1 and 2 are PVFD ambulances. It is not uncommon to have both ambulances out at once. These are the primary response vehicles for EMS. EMS also will standby for certain events including working structure and vehicle fires. They carry everything EMS needs during normal operations to include things for patient care and transport.

Engine 6 resides out of Station 2. It is the primary response engine from Scow Bay. Like Engine 8, it carries a myriad of tools and equipment for both Structure and Vehicle fires. It can also assist in town operations if needed. This engine is the oldest of PVFD’s fleet and is a 1994 Pierce pumper. Unlike the other engines, E6 only seats 5 responders.

The Water Tender, sometimes referred to as “the Tanker” is an apparatus that carries 4000 gallons of water in response to places that are not served by the borough’s hydrant system. It carries a portable tank that can be deployed to drop water into for the other engines to draft from. Like Engine 6, it resides in Station 2.

PVFD Organizational Chart



PVFD Officers

Chiefs			
Chief	Dan Bird	907.518.4488	dbird122@Gmail.com
Assistant Chief EMS	Dave Berg	907.518.1199	david@vikingtrvl.net
Assistant Chief SAR	Troy Thynes	907.518.0122	tsthynes@gmail.com
Assistant Chief	Jim Stolpe	907.518.9123	JDStolpe@hotmail.com

Fire Branch			
Captain	Vacant		
Captain	Devren Bennett	907.518.0899	devren@gmail.com
Lieutenant	Bjorn Stolpe	907.518.0223	StolpeBjorn@gmail.com
Lieutenant	Brock Martin	907-518-1196	tongassforester@gmail.com
Lieutenant	Nick Espeseth	907-650-7338	nickespeseth@gmail.com
Lieutenant	Vacant		

EMS Branch			
Lieutenant	Sarah Wright	309.716.9771	sajohnson92@gmail.com
Lieutenant	Matt Lichtenstein	907.518.0923	MattAKFish@gmail.com
Lieutenant	Vacant		

SAR Branch			
Captain	Bjorn stolpe	907.518.0223	StolpeBjorn@gmail.com
Lieutenant	Brent Uppencamp	907.650.7561	buppencamp@gmail.com
Lieutenant	Alex Rodriguez-Smith	540-336-5072	amrodri01@yahoo.com

Association Officers			
President	Bill Tremblay	907-772-4461	brtrembla@gmail.com
Vice President	Joe Bertagnoli	907-518-0494	jbtag@gmail.com
Secretary	Rexanne Stafford	907-518-1581	rexannestafford@gmail.com
Treasurer	Bev Siercks	907-518-0263	treasurer@petersburgfire.org

PVFD Association

Petersburg municipal code has allowed the members to form a 501(c)3 organization to assist the Department and to organize public functions. Members of the Department formed a club that has been in operation for at least 50 years. Recently, the club became an Association. The intent of the association is to allow the members to gather socially and to raise money for the primary purpose of providing additional training for department members. The Association is

also instrumental in providing fire education, awareness and safety for the community. It is also worth noting that the PVFD Association is a stand-alone entity, apart from the Borough. It has its own officers that run and manage the organization separate from the Fire Chief or the Director.

The Association and the Department meet the first Thursday of every month. Dinner is provided before the meeting. Department members do not have to be part of the Association, but Association membership is highly recommended. The Association also provides for members to assist the Department without being an active member of any one branch. There are many ways members can assist the Department and serve the community without having to respond to emergencies.

Working as a first responder will require hard physical labor and may expose you to a high level of physical and emotional stress, and even danger. Doing the job well requires a highly developed sense of personal dedication, a genuine desire to help people, and the ability to master a variety of skills and apply them in difficult situations. While being a first responder is very demanding, for those who are psychologically and physically up to the task, it can be the most rewarding job in the world.

In addition to the satisfaction of being a volunteer first responder and helping your community, there are other benefits of being a member of the PVFD. Once you become a member in good standing with the PVFD, there will be some fringe benefits available. Members can use the stations for your own use, so long as you are not violating any of the Department's Rules or Policies. Members get a free pass to the community gym for themselves and their spouse. Members and their families are provided free medevac insurance. Members receive a small discount in yearly property tax. PVFD members also become members of the Alaska State Firefighters Association (ASFSA). Being a member of the ASFA also provides benefits. ASFA benefits include scholarships for dependents; death and disability benefit of \$20,000; accidental death and dismemberment insurance of \$10,000; benevolent fund; National Fire Academy meal stipend; Hertz rental car discount; Captain Cook Hotel special rates; and an AT&T discount of 15%.

PVFD Volunteer Member Expectations

Every member of the Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department is expected to operate in a highly self-disciplined manner and is responsible for regulating their own conduct in a positive, productive and mature way. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action ranging from counseling to termination. Every recruit is expected to review and sign off that they have read and agree to follow the Department's Policies, Standard Operating Guidelines, and any pertinent Borough Ordinances. These documents can be found in the Station 1 communication room.

ALL MEMBERS SHALL:

1. Follow operations, policy manuals and written directives of both the PVFD and Borough of Petersburg
2. Use their training and capabilities to protect the public at all times both on and off duty.
3. Work competently in their positions to cause all department programs to operate effectively.
4. Always conduct themselves to reflect a good image of the department.

5. Follow instructions in a positive and cooperative manner, and expect that supervisors will manage the department in an effective and considerate manner.
6. Always conduct themselves in a manner that creates good order inside the department.
7. Keep themselves trained and educated to do their jobs effectively.
8. Be concerned and protective of each member's welfare.
9. Operate safely and use good judgment.
10. Obey the law.
11. Maintain personal physical fitness.

MEMBERS SHALL NOT:

1. Engage in any activity that is detrimental to the department.
2. Engage in a conflict of interest with the department or use their position with the department for personal gain or influence.
3. Engage in physical confrontations.

MEMBERS SHALL BE TERMINATED IMMEDIATELY IF THEY:

1. Commit theft from PVFD or any other member or patient/victim.
2. Use alcoholic beverages, debilitating drugs or any substance that could impair their physical or mental capacities while on duty or otherwise responding.
3. Engage in any sexual activity on PVFD property or equipment.
4. Egregiously violate the department rules

Training

The PVFD conducts training exercises several times a month. The type and frequency of the training is dependent on the branch. All new recruits, regardless of what branch they are joining, will be expected to complete the National Fire Academy's Incident Command System (ICS) courses 100 and 200. The courses are available online and can be found at:

<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.c>

<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-200.c>

The courses will introduce and give the recruit a basic understanding of the Incident Command System, a nationally recognized system for managing any type and size of incident. The ICS 100 and 200 courses will need to be completed within three months of joining the Department. The Department has several computers available for member use. Upon completion of each course, a certificate of completion must be printed and given to the appropriate training officer.

All Volunteers are also all required to go through a HIPAA, Basic Life Support (BLS) and Bloodborne Pathogen course. These can be taken online and are mandatory for participation. These courses must be completed within six months of joining.

Bloodborne Pathogens - <https://learn.dhss.alaska.gov/course/view.php?id=540>

HIPAA - <https://learn.dhss.alaska.gov/course/view.php?id=678>

BLS - PVFD provides regular training sessions for members

FIRE — The Fire Branch conducts training on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Thursdays of each month. In addition, the Fire Branch may have extra training that occurs on the weekend or for several

weeknights in a row. The Fire Branch will also conduct a Firefighter-1 training course (or equivalent) once a year depending on demand. The Firefighter-1 course is an intense class and requires a large commitment. Upon completion of the class and passing a written and practical test, the firefighter will become Firefighter-1 certified, a nationally recognized certification. The certification will allow the firefighter to respond to all fire related emergencies.

In addition, this certification is needed to attend some training outside of the community. The PVFD does not require a person to be Firefighter-I certified to respond to emergencies. In the event we cannot do a certified class we will put a recruit class together to get new firefighters up to PVFD standards to be able to respond to emergencies. The recruit class is approximately 60 hours. Upon completion of the recruit class, a firefighter will have enough knowledge to respond on the 2nd due apparatus, additional training will come from the Thursday night drills. After the skills checkoff and additional training, the mentor/officer corps will decide if the recruit is ready to respond on first due apparatus. Being approved for "First due status" also includes being allowed to make interior entry into working fires. The PVFD will bring in outside instructors periodically and will send firefighters to other communities for training. The Alaska State Firefighters Association annual conference is a great opportunity to receive specialized training. In addition, firefighters may attend the National Fire Academy in Maryland. Finally, there is a multitude of training available online. Certain online courses may be required.

EMS — To be a member of the EMS Branch, volunteers must have been through an ambulance introduction lesson. This allows members of this level to be an Ambulance Driver / Helper . In order to give Patient care, you will need to be certified as an Emergency Trauma Technician (ETT), an Emergency Medical Technician I or basic (EMT-I or EMT-basic) or an Emergency Medical Technician II or intermediate (EMT-II or EMT-intermediate). PVFD also accepts valid EMT-3, AEMT or Paramedic certifications, but cannot recertify those certifications and will need Medical Director approval to use those skills.

PVFD offers an ETT course and/or an EMT-I Bridge Course once a year and an EMT-II Course every few years depending on need. Volunteers must obtain 40 hours of Continuing Medical Education (CME) over a two-year period to maintain their certification if they are an ETT or EMT-1. An EMT2 requires 50 hours of CME's. PVFD provides an opportunity to obtain CME's throughout the year via training on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. Additional training may be offered throughout the year both in Petersburg and in other communities. Southeast Region Emergency Medical Services (SEREMS) holds a symposium every year. This is a great opportunity to network with other EMS providers and gain CME hours. The goal for EMS is for each member to be proficient in their knowledge, skills, and abilities and to provide quality care to all patients.

SAR — The mission of Search and Rescue (SAR) is to train and stand ready to search for and rescue any persons overdue, missing, or injured. SAR has been involved in search and rescue missions both on and off island. Whether it be a child who wanders away from a family outing, an injured hiker on a wilderness trail, or a hunter who is overdue, the SAR volunteers ready themselves to use the best search and rescue techniques to bring these persons back home to their loved ones and friends. Our pledge to our volunteers is to equip them with the strongest fundamentals of search and rescue techniques so that our missions will result in both the searchers and the lost coming home safely.

SAR meets twice a month for training. Whereas these training sessions are vital to successful search and rescue missions, we ask that our members make a commitment to attend as many training events as possible. SAR training includes search techniques, tracking, search

scenarios, orientation to field gear, ropes rescue for cliff and tower rescue, and periodically will bring in an instructor for a WFR (wilderness first responder) course. Whereas our responsibility lies in wilderness rescues, SAR values persons with wilderness skills and knowledge of the local road system and trails. Though wilderness experience is a plus, during a search there are many duties that do not involve being out in the woods. Base camp tasks involve radio operators and coordinators for other activities. If you believe you have a skill that we can use, then we invite you to become involved with Search and Rescue.

You have made the hardest step already just by joining our ranks, there is a lot to learn, and I hope you all stick with us. If you have any questions at all, please reach out to me, the Chief or any of the Paid Staff or Volunteers.

Thank you all for your commitment to the Borough of Petersburg, we look forward to working with you.

Member perks

Some of the perks of being a member include:

Borough Perks

10% off the assessed value of your home (about \$100 off of your property taxes) (registration due by 15 February each year)

Parks and Rec membership (for the Members and their spouse only)

Training with expenses paid, (With Per Diem)

PVFD ID Card (use this for discounts on websites like GovX or AT&T's "FirstNet", Hotels, rental cars etc.)

Alaska State Fire association membership, of which includes additional Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance.

Department Uniform

Monthly membership dinner, 2 family functions a year.

Station Locker if you need one.

Association Perks

Medevac Insurance

Department T shirt (and additional Swag available for purchase.

Windshield Cover for Ice and Snow (Association needs to order more)

Tourniquet for your First Aid Kit

Fitness room and other equipment at Station 1

And other benefits that the members decide on from time to time.

Fire Department condensed monthly schedule of activities:

First Thursday of the month at 7pm – Association/Department Monthly Business meeting

These meetings are mandatory and count toward your status as a member in good standing.

There is also a dinner at 6pm you are encouraged to attend.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays of the month at 6pm – SAR Drill

Training for the SAR Branch

Second and Fourth Wednesdays of the month at 6pm – EMS Drill

Training for the EMS Branch and where you can earn CME's.

Second, Third, and Fourth Thursdays of the month at 7pm – Fire Drill
Training for the Fire Branch - (Usually no drill on the 5th Thursday)

Monday (before the Monthly Meeting of the department)
Officers Meeting