



HEARST FIRE DEPARTMENT

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT & ORIENTATION GUIDE

MAY 2026

Foreword

This orientation guide has been developed as a resource for individuals interested in becoming volunteer firefighters with the Hearst Fire Department. It is also intended to help current members gain a better understanding of the role, responsibilities, and expectations associated with serving in the Department.

Serving as a member of a volunteer fire service offers many personal rewards, including a sense of accomplishment, increased self-confidence, personal growth, and the satisfaction of contributing to the safety and well-being of the community. Your involvement will provide an essential service that benefits all residents of the Hearst area.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that becoming a volunteer firefighter requires a serious commitment. The decision to join the Department should not be made lightly or hastily. This guide has been prepared to provide the information necessary to help prospective members make an informed decision about joining the fire service.

Becoming a volunteer firefighter demands dedication, discipline, and a significant investment of time and effort. We encourage all applicants to carefully review this guide to fully understand the responsibilities, training requirements, and expectations associated with membership within the Department. Many candidates underestimate the level of commitment required to become a successful and dependable firefighter.

This guide contains information regarding the Department's organization, training program, participation requirements, operational responsibilities, and the nature of the services we provide. It also addresses many of the common questions raised by prospective members. While it may not answer every possible question, it is intended to provide a clear overview of the most important aspects of volunteer firefighting.

Once you have a thorough understanding of what is involved in serving with a volunteer fire department, we hope you will feel inspired to make that commitment. The services provided by volunteer firefighters are invaluable to the community, and we sincerely hope you will consider joining our team and contributing to the protection and safety of our residents.

Please take the time to read this document thoroughly so that you clearly understand the commitment of joining the Hearst Fire Department and the steps in the recruitment process.

Note: In this document, words in one gender include all genders.

Minimum Requirements for Eligibility

To be considered, all applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years of age (or 16 years of age for a junior position);
- Have a Secondary School Diploma or equivalent as approved by the Ministry of Education;
- Have a valid Ontario's Driver's License (minimum G class) with current clear driver's license abstract;
- Be of good character; and
- Possess' a reliable means of transportation to respond to calls.

Conditions of Appointment

- Maintain attendance levels (emergency responses and training sessions) in accordance with Department requirements;
- Willingness to acquire a DZ driver's license and to maintain it during the duration of services, including a driving record clear of criminal offences;
- Ability to successfully complete all required training programs and demonstrate proficiency in all required activities;
- Maintain a clean criminal record; and
- Adhere to all Department rules, regulations and operating guidelines.

Other Useful Skills, Knowledge or Experience

- First Aid and CPR certifications;
- Class DZ driver's license, or higher;
- Previous firefighting experience;
- Demonstrated commitment (i.e. volunteer service);
- Bilingualism (French/English/other);
- Other experience (nursing, EMS, mechanical, etc.);
- Previous pertinent training (WHMIS, OHSA, etc.).

Goals of the Fire Department

The goal of the Hearst Fire Department is to provide fire protection services through a range of programs designed to protect the lives and property of its inhabitants and from the adverse effects of fires or exposure to dangerous conditions created by man or nature:

- to the municipality;
- to those municipalities requiring assistance through mutual aid; and
- to those parties that are provided with fire protection services by the Fire Department via an authorized agreement.

Nature of the Fire Services

Firefighting is a diverse and demanding service, and it is precisely this diversity that inspires many individuals to join. Firefighters must be prepared to respond to a wide range of emergencies, including structure fires, motor vehicle collisions requiring extrication, hazardous material incidents, and many other critical situations in between. These skills may be called upon at any hour of the day or night, seven days a week, in all weather conditions, and often under highly stressful and emotional circumstances. Despite these challenges, serving in the fire suppression service is an exceptionally rewarding experience.

The public fire suppression service has two fundamental objectives:

- a) Preventing fires and emergencies from occurring** – This is achieved through fire prevention inspections, public fire safety education, and enforcement of the Fire Code and regulations.
- b) Preparing to respond effectively when prevention is not enough** – This is accomplished through ongoing education, intensive training, pre-incident planning, advanced equipment, and continual skills development.

This type of work is not suited for everyone. A desire to help others is essential, but it must also be accompanied by courage, dedication, compassion, sound judgment, assertiveness, and a willingness to continually learn and adapt to new challenges. Firefighting requires individuals who can remain calm and focused during emergencies and who are prepared to perform physically demanding work in hazardous and unpredictable environments.

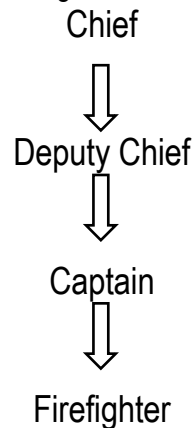
The personal rewards of serving in a volunteer fire department are difficult to fully describe. Firefighters experience a strong sense of accomplishment from protecting lives and property, assisting victims during emergencies, promoting fire safety within the community, and working as part of a dedicated and respected team.

Ultimately, the mission of the Fire Department is measured by its ability to prevent and reduce loss of life, injury, suffering, and property damage within the community. The Department exists for one purpose: to provide professional and dependable service to the residents and visitors of the community.

If you believe you have the commitment, character, and determination to meet the challenges of this service, we encourage you to apply to join the Town of Hearst Fire Department.

Chain of Command

A typical fire department follows a chain of command. This ensures that the structure is maintained within the fire department and gives a better idea to firefighters about who is in charge:



Among those roles, a member may also be appointed as Safety Officer, Training Officer or Lieutenant.

Primary Objectives of the Fire Department

To achieve the goals of the Fire Department, the following objectives have been established:

1. Identify and review the fire protection service requirements of the Municipality (Municipal Council).
2. Provide an administrative process consistent with the needs of the Department.
3. Ensure that the firefighting equipment and operating personnel are available and trained to provide adequate response to a call within a reasonable length of time.
4. Provide training to an accepted standard, to ensure the continuous upgrading of all the volunteers in the latest techniques of firefighting, fire prevention and control of emergency situations and co-operation with other municipal departments.
5. Provide a maintenance program to ensure that all fire protection apparatus, including all equipment, are ready for use during emergency calls.
6. Provide an effective fire prevention program to:
 - a. ensure, through planned examination and inspection, compliance with applicable municipal, provincial, and federal fire prevention statutes, codes and regulations; and
 - b. reduce and/or eliminate fire hazards.
7. Develop and maintain effective public information systems and educational programs, with a particular emphasis on school fire safety programs.

8. In the event of a major catastrophe, ensure that assistance to cope with the situation is available to other departments and agencies.
9. Develop and maintain a good working relationship with all provincial and municipal departments, utilities, and agencies, relating to the protection of life and property.
10. Interact and co-operate with other departments on the aspects of fire protection or any given program where cooperation is an asset.

Training and Participation

Over the years, the Fire Department has evolved into a public safety agency providing highly technical and diverse services. The general public has come to rely on the Fire Department as the “first responder” not only when life and property are threatened by man-made and natural disasters, but seemingly smaller problems as well.

To ensure that all members of the Fire Department are prepared to deliver the best level of service required, training standards have been developed to provide each member with the needed skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to deliver adequate fire and emergency services to the citizens of the town of Hearst.

Training Requirements – Volunteer Orientation

1. All new volunteers entering may be required to complete a recruit training program taught by Fire Department instructors, regardless of whether the individual may have prior training or experience.
2. Volunteers that have successfully completed the recruit training may begin responding to emergency calls. However, they must wear some sort of probationary designation and assist fully qualified firefighters only when proper supervision is provided. The probationary designations identify the person as a member in training. New volunteer members must wear the probationary designation for the duration of the 12-month probation period. Probationary firefighters may not enter burning buildings, participate in activities requiring advanced training, or be subjected to hazardous environments.

All training is provided in accordance with accredited standards, such as those of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Ontario Fire Marshall (OFM).

Volunteer Firefighter – Job Description

1. General Statement of Duties

- ✓ Physically and mentally capable and able to respond to an emergency to perform firefighting duties and other related work as required, in the saving of life and property.

2. Summary of Firefighter Responsibilities and Working Conditions

- ✓ Covered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board;
- ✓ Covered by an On-Duty Accidental Death Insurance Policy;
- ✓ May be required to obtain a Hepatitis “B” vaccination or other vaccinations as required or provide confirmation of current vaccinations;
- ✓ Must maintain a reasonable level of health and fitness;
- ✓ Must carry a pager, supplied by the Fire Department;
- ✓ Must be committed to continuous training in fire suppression, prevention, public education, and emergency first aid procedures;
- ✓ For reasons of safety, facial hair that may affect the integrity of the face-piece seal of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), i.e. beards, bushy mustaches or long sideburns, is not permitted;
- ✓ Responsible for performing various duties, under emergency conditions, frequently involving considerable risk, in a safe and efficient manner;
- ✓ Tasks include routine duties in the maintenance of firefighting equipment and property, carrying out specific orders and directions as received from a superior officer in the normal course of maintenance duties, training and firefighting;
- ✓ Must respond promptly, safely, and efficiently to alarms, obey the orders of the officer in charge, share in the work that is required at emergency scenes, around the fire hall and when otherwise on duty;
- ✓ Must refrain from using offensive statements or language at the emergency scene and when otherwise on duty;
- ✓ Must be loyal to his fellow firefighters, officers, and the Department and at all times conduct himself in a professional, compassionate, and sensitive manner, remembering that he is in the eyes of the public while on duty or when wearing identifiable Department clothing while not on duty; and
- ✓ Must meet minimum attendance for calls and training.

3. Distinctive Features of the Position

- ✓ Responds to fire, rescue, and other related emergencies, as required;
- ✓ Reports directly to duty/scene officers regarding activities at the fire hall or on scene;
- ✓ Reports directly to the Fire Chief on all observed fire/life safety matters;
- ✓ Reports equipment deficiencies to the officer in charge;
- ✓ Completes a witness report following an emergency, if required;
- ✓ Completes regular inspection of assigned protective equipment and station wear;
- ✓ Demonstrates independence of judgment and action in circumstances of extreme emergency where referral from an officer for instructions is not possible;
- ✓ Demonstrates responsibility for rapidly and efficiently performing various duties under emergency conditions, frequently involving considerable hazard;
- ✓ Carries out specific orders and directions, as received from a superior officer, in the normal course of firefighting operations; and
- ✓ Follows all Standard Operating Guidelines, directives, and department policies to enhance personal safety and comply with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

4. Examples of Duties

- ✓ Ensures the safe operation of all department equipment;
- ✓ Assists with salvage operations during and following an emergency;
- ✓ Assists with providing first aid or CPR to the injured;
- ✓ Assists with Fire Department pre-planning, as required;
- ✓ Performs such duties as required to further advance public information, public safety, and public relations within the Department;
- ✓ As assigned, performs various maintenance and cleaning tasks on apparatus and equipment following an emergency;
- ✓ As assigned, conducts firefighting/rescue activities at emergency scenes;
- ✓ Attends assigned training sessions to ensure accuracy in firefighting and rescue methods.

- ✓ Participates with in-service training, as required; and
- ✓ Ensures compliance with all health and safety matters in accordance with the Town of Hearst's Health and Safety Manual and the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations.

Application Process

All applicants are required to submit the Volunteer Firefighter Application form, a copy of which is in this package. It is encouraged, but not mandatory, for applicants to include a cover letter and resume with their application.

Once a review of the application is completed, selected applicants will be contacted for a brief interview with the Fire Chief, with assistance from other members, if needed, in order to discuss the position and perform a fair evaluation.

Successful applicants will be contacted and will join our training program on the path to certification. Completed applications can be dropped off at the following locations:

- **Hearst Town Hall**
925 Alexandra Street, Hearst
- **Hearst Fire Department**
1100 Front Street, Hearst, or
- by email to: fire@hearst.ca.

For any questions or inquiries, please contact Michel Blais, Interim Fire Chief, at (705) 362-4341.

Thank you for considering joining the Hearst Fire Department!

We truly want to acknowledge the effort and dedication that every applicant puts into the pursuit of being a volunteer firefighter and their desire to assist in the protection of the town of Hearst and its citizens.



Hearst Fire Department

925 Alexandra Street, Bag 5000

Hearst, ON, P0L1N0

(705) 362-4341

fire@hearst.ca

Volunteer Firefighter Application Form

Applicant Information:

Name (Last): _____ (First): _____

Address: _____ PO Box: _____

Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone #: _____ Business Phone #: _____

Cellphone #: _____ Cellphone Provider: _____

Email Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Driver's Licence Class: _____

Emergency Contacts:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____ Relation: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____ Relation: _____

Education:

Secondary School Diploma: Yes ☐ No ☐ Year Completed: _____

College / University Diploma: Yes ☐ No ☐ Year Completed: _____

Program Description:

Other Education or Specialized Training (i.e. First Aid, Working at Heights, etc.):

Employment Experience

Present Employer:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date Employed: From: _____ To: _____

Position Held: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Duties/Responsibilities:

May we contact the supervisor identified above? Yes ☐ No ☐

Permission from employer to attend fire calls during working hours? Yes ☐ No ☐

Previous Employer:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Employed From: _____ To: _____

Position Held: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Duties/Responsibilities:

May we contact the supervisor identified above? Yes ☐ No ☐

Other Related Experience:

Do you have previous firefighting experience?

No ☐ Yes ☐ Number of Years: _____ Position: _____

Department: _____

Do you have any community volunteer experience?

No ☐ Yes ☐ Events: _____

Roles/Responsibilities: _____

Related Skills:

Please complete this section to the best of your knowledge. Check the appropriate level of skill for any category, as follows:

1. Some familiarity and competence;
2. Advanced or post-secondary courses; or
3. Certificates or professional experiences.

Skill

Automotive Mechanic
Heavy Machinery
Millwrighting
Electrical Systems
Electronic Systems
Radio Communications Systems
Firefighting Practices and Terminology
Pumps, Valves, Sprinkler Systems
Plumbing Systems
Building Trades or Inspections
Reading Blueprints
Athletic or Sport Skills
WHMIS
Occupational Health and Safety
Coaching/Teaching/Facilitation/Leadership
Social Work

1	2	3

Have you had any experience or training in driving heavy vehicles?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, would you be willing to get your licence?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have a personal and reliable means of transportation to respond to fire alarms at any time?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Would you be willing to have a medical examination? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please provide any additional information, experiences or skills that you feel may be pertinent to this position in the Hearst Fire Department:

I understand that any misrepresentation made by me in connection with this application will be sufficient cause for cancellation of the application; and if I have been employed, for termination from the Municipality. I authorize the Fire Chief to make such enquiries respecting the foregoing information as may be deemed necessary.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____