

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

Volunteer Handbook



Welcome to the ECFRS Volunteer Handbook

This handbook has been developed to ensure you have a rewarding and enjoyable experience during your time as a volunteer with ECFRS. We are committed to supporting our volunteers and this handbook will help you to access the support we provide. Intended to be a guide – rather than a rule book – it provides useful information, including contact details and information about policies that might affect you. We hope it helps you get the most out of volunteering with the Service.

Our Vision

The Service promotes a vision of an environment in which volunteering is encouraged and supported to enhance the Service and improve outcomes for individuals and communities.

Our Values

Openness, Respect, Involvement, Accountability

The Purpose of the Volunteer Scheme

The scheme has been established to enhance service delivery, to act as advocates for the Service and build on relationships in the communities in which you live and work.

Not only does the scheme provide the chance to make a valuable contribution to the safety and security of your community, it also provides the Service with additional skills, knowledge and resources.

Volunteers are welcomed from all backgrounds to undertake a variety of roles to address the needs of the Service and the Community. As the programme progresses the roles will become more varied.

Volunteer Rights

Volunteers should:

- be treated fairly, with respect and without discrimination
- if not selected for a role be given an explanation as to why
- have a nominated person for support, supervision and feedback
- know how to report any problems or concerns
- have appropriate insurance cover for the roles being carried out
- receive adequate training and support
- be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- have their performance reviewed and feedback provided
- be asked only to undertake tasks appropriate and accessible
- be provided with a safe environment in which to volunteer

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are asked to:

- perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability
 - operate within our guidelines, procedures and standards
 - wear issued uniform in line with Uniform Policy
 - give the commitment you know best suits your availability
 - arrive as agreed and be punctual
 - be trustworthy and reliable
 - report any concerns or problems
 - respect confidentiality
 - be respectful to people you engage with
 - treat all people fairly and with respect
 - not use abusive or offensive language or behaviour
 - attend relevant training and performance meetings
 - if claiming benefits, be aware of your responsibilities to inform Job Centre Plus of voluntary involvement with the Service.
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Confidentiality

Volunteers may have access to confidential records and personally sensitive information. It is essential that you never share this information.

Confidentiality means not discussing personal or confidential information relating to individuals or the Service, outside of the organisation. If confidentiality is breached the volunteer arrangement will be ended. However, if you have concerns about something you have heard or seen, this should be discussed with the Volunteer Manager. This is not a breach of confidentiality.

Personal Details

All your details are kept securely either in a locked filing cabinet or in electronic format. If you want to look at any of the data we hold about you, please discuss this with the Volunteer Manager.

Expenses

The Service will reimburse travel to and from home to your place of volunteering and during your voluntary work where additional travel expenses are incurred in the course of your volunteering at the request of the Service. It is essential that any expenses likely to be incurred are agreed in advance with the nominated person.

To enable us to reimburse you, you must keep your receipts and records of your mileage and submit them along with form GC93 which will be provided by your nominated person.

Mileage will be paid at the Inland Revenue stipulated rate of 45pence per mile and expenses will be paid directly in to your bank account or by cheque if requested.

Insurance

The Service has insurance protection to cover its volunteers. Volunteer drivers using their own vehicles should inform their insurers of their voluntary activities.

Health and Safety

The Service has a duty of care towards volunteers and will do all it can to make sure you are in a safe and healthy environment, taking appropriate steps to reduce any risks that may be faced. Volunteers will be given information about health and safety relevant to individual roles as part of the induction.

For further information please see the Service Health & Safety Policy.

Fire Precautions

As a volunteer, you will be instructed and trained in your specific duties in the event of a fire. Please ensure you sign in on arrival and out on departure at all the Service premises and make yourself aware of the fire and emergency procedures.

Reporting an Accident

It is your responsibility to report all accidents and unsafe practices to your nominated person.

Smoking Policy

In line with Government legislation, smoking is not permitted at any of the the Service premises at any time.

Child and Adult Protection

The Service is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. As a volunteer, you have the responsibility to report any concerns to the Volunteer Manager, who will act in accordance with the Service's Safeguarding Procedures.

Equality and Diversity

We want to ensure that we provide equality of opportunity in all aspects of volunteering. Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is committed to promoting equality and diversity and firmly opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, including on the grounds of race, religion, gender, gender reassignment, sexuality, marital status, age or disability.

If you feel you are not being treated fairly, if you want to speak up for someone else please let the Volunteer Manager know.

For further information see the Service Equality & Diversity Policy.

Resolving Queries & Problems

We always welcome comments or suggestions you wish to make. The Service aims to achieve the highest standards in all its activities and as a volunteer you have the right to complain if you feel we are not meeting those standards.

Should you have any concerns or issues these should be raised in the first instance with your nominated person or the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteer procedures

The Volunteer Policy sets out the Service's approach and commitment to volunteering. It demonstrates how we support our volunteers and provides clear guidelines regarding roles and responsibilities.

The policy includes:

Equality & Diversity

Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteer Induction

Training & Development

Support, Supervision & Recognition

Expenses

Insurance

Confidentiality

Resolving Queries & Problems and Discipline Issues

Data Protection/Freedom of Information Act

Health & Safety

A copy of the Volunteer Policy will be provided as part of your Induction Information Pack. The induction pack will also include your role description, volunteer agreement and all other relevant documentation.

Ending volunteering role

When you do decide to stop volunteering with the Service, we hope you will take part in informal exit interview so that we can get some feedback about how you found your time with us.

We always welcome any suggestions you may have for how we might improve the volunteer scheme.



Contact Details:

**Lisa Hart, Volunteer Manager
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Essex, CM8 3HB**

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