



# LEON SPRINGS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



ALL THAT IS MISSING IS  
YOU



[www.leonspringsvfd.org](http://www.leonspringsvfd.org)





**LEON SPRINGS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC.**  
**24810 Ima Ruth Parkway**  
**San Antonio, Texas 78257**  
**(210) 698-1593**

Dear Volunteer:

I have the honor of serving as Chief of the Leon Springs Volunteer Fire Department. I am committed to protecting lives, property, and the environment against hazards, natural and manmade. Committed with me in this mission are exceptional men and women, your neighbors, who chose to answer the call to volunteer their time to serve their community in a challenging and highly rewarding manner. Together with our complement of paid, part-time firefighters/EMTs, we strive to continually enhance our ability to protect our community with all the honor and tradition that the men and women of the fire service have earned.

In addition to the critical service you provide to your community, you will find volunteering with the Leon Springs Volunteer Fire Department to be personally rewarding and satisfying. You will receive exceptional training and will find yourself ready, prepared, and confident to make an important contribution when duty calls.

Joining the fire department is a serious commitment that affects not only you, but your entire family. The information contained in this guide is provided for you to consider and to make the most informed decision possible. In addition to this guide, all department personnel are willing to speak with you and your family to address any questions or concerns that you may have.

When you learn how important of a role that **you** can play in your community and how critical the need is for volunteers, I hope that you are inspired to join our exceptional team. The citizens, visitors, and businesses in our community depend on our readiness and commitment to serve their needs. You can make a difference! Thank you for taking the first step in giving back to your community as a member of the Leon Springs Volunteer Fire Department.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Hardenstine", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Hardenstine

Chief Officer

## WHO SHOULD VOLUNTEER?

The fire and rescue service offers a wide range of exciting and challenging opportunities to make a difference as a volunteer. In fact, nearly 70% of the nation's firefighters are volunteers, not paid, career firefighters. Whether you are on the nozzle inside a burning building, extricating occupants of a badly damaged vehicle, coordinating the landing of a helicopter to transport a seriously injured citizen, assisting others during natural disasters, providing first responder medical treatment to a sick person,



providing support to firefighters at a major incident, preparing a fire apparatus for the next call, teaching fire safety to elementary students, participating in recruiting events, or countless other important duties, your mission is critical to the service of your community. Some volunteer for the excitement and adrenaline rush of being on the frontline of an incident, others volunteer because they always wanted to drive a fire truck, while still others volunteer to be part of an organization dedicated to the protection of



others. Regardless of the interest or desire, the fire and rescue service has many ways for you to answer the call to volunteer. Imagine being ready, prepared, and confident to be at your best when others are experiencing the biggest challenge of their lives. Imagine being ready, prepared, and confident for emergencies that occur day or night, every day of the week, and regardless of weather conditions. Imagine the satisfaction of knowing that you had a hand in resolving a complex, challenging, and sometimes life threatening situation.

We encourage you to contemplate volunteering carefully, incorporating the ideas and suggestions of others, but ultimately make an informed decision that you know is right for you. We hope that your choice is to join our exceptional team of men and women, who also happen to be your neighbors, in their dedication to providing efficient and effective emergency operations to our community.

## ABOUT US



Although we have four well equipped fire stations and sophisticated fire equipment and fire apparatus, it's the people that make the Leon Springs Volunteer Fire Department so exceptional. The men and women that protect our community all are just like you. They are busy, active neighbors who live and work in the area, shop at the same local businesses, send their kids to the same schools, and eat at the same restaurants as you, yet they still find time to serve their community in times of

emergencies. Our volunteer staff includes representatives from all walks of life including accountants, business professionals, construction managers, business owners, city employees, students, retired workers, and many more. What binds us together is our willingness to don the gear and answer a call for help.

The Leon Springs Volunteer Fire Department (LSVFD) provides first responder emergency and medical services, fire suppression, HAZMAT response, swift water and high angle rescue response, and fire prevention education and public emergency awareness instruction. LSVFD is funded primarily by the Bexar County Emergency Services District No. 4. The department covers a geographic area approximately 67 square miles, roughly from Babcock Road north to the Bexar County/Kendall County line and from Ralph Fair Road west to Toutaunt Beaugard Road and includes all of the city of Fair Oaks Ranch. The population in the service area is over 31,000 residents and the department responds annually to nearly 1,100 calls – both the population and number of calls are increasing steadily. The department is proud to be classified by the Insurance Services Organization, Inc. (ISO) as a very respectable *Public Protection Class 3/8B*, which results in a very favorable reduction to homeowner and business property insurance rates.



The department operates out of four fire stations strategically located throughout the coverage area to ensure that equipment and personnel are ready and available to respond anywhere services are required within the jurisdiction. In addition to the volunteer firefighters/EMTs/paramedics, a team of paid, part-time firefighters/EMTs staffs two of the stations 24/7. When emergency calls are received, the paid personnel and any volunteers present at a station respond in fire department apparatus. Volunteers not located at a fire station respond to the nearest fire station and acquire an available apparatus or join others who are departing in additional department vehicles.

Whether paid or volunteer staff, we take pride in the continuous training we are involved in that keeps us ready and prepared to respond immediately to emergency situations. Training is conducted regularly by department personnel and outside subject matter experts. When schedules permit, volunteers are encouraged to attend formal, outside training programs offered by the county, the state, or professional emergency services training providers and tuition generally is covered by the department.

## **OUR MISSION**

The mission of the Leon Springs Volunteer Fire Department is to protect lives, property, and the environment against hazards, natural and manmade. This is achieved by identifying and preparing for the needs of the community, cost-effective allocation of resources, and promoting cooperative relationships. Excellence in training and education is utilized to create a dedicated volunteer and professional workforce through prudent fiscal management. These attributes work together to provide a high level of fire prevention, fire suppression, rescue, emergency medical care, and related services to all the citizens, businesses and visitors of the LSVFD service area, and provide mutual aid as available to surrounding fire districts through continuous improvement, timely risk assessment, professional development, robust training and dedication to the community.

## EXPECTATIONS

There are no requirements for previous fire related or medical related training or experience. In fact, nearly all of our volunteers came to the department with little or no related training or experience, but they all were willing to learn and to get involved. The fire service can be very physically demanding. The personal protective equipment, tools, and equipment are heavy and require effort to operate effectively. The environments where we are needed are subject to extreme temperatures and can require long amounts of time on scene. However, when possible, we train in similar circumstances as a means of preparing for the physical challenges of the job.

### **Be Active, Be Seen**

To be part of the team, you must **be** part of the team. Two of the four fire stations are manned 24/7 and the personnel all are willing to speak with you, to get to know you, to teach you, and to practice with you. The more you become familiar with the stations, the apparatus, the equipment, the tools, and the personnel, the more you will become integrated into the department. It is critical to get to know the department personnel and other volunteers, because when you are with each other at an incident there is no room for introductions and the responders need to be able to depend on all those at the scene to play their part. You must make the effort to get involved.

### **Actively Train**



The key quality that a volunteer must possess is the intense desire to train and learn continuously. Ask any seasoned firefighter what they fear most – *a firefighter who knows everything or has seen it all*. Training is available through countless avenues and is paid for or reimbursed by the department. All department personnel are required to attend training on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of each month. The topics cover a wide range of knowledge and skills and generally consist

of both classroom instruction and hands-on practice. In addition to the regularly scheduled training, volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend additional training that is offered outside the normal schedule. At times, the department will arrange for special training on different weeknights or on weekends. In most cases, this training is specialized and is taught by an outside subject matter expert. Excellent courses are offered in the local San Antonio area as well as nearby locations. Some volunteers take time off from their regular job to attend formal firefighter training offered at professional training facilities like the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) in Bryan/College Station.

A primary way for you to enhance your value to the department is to train and certify as an operator of the wide variety of department apparatus. When you arrive on scene in a department vehicle, you not only bring your skill and knowledge, but you bring useful, life-saving equipment. The first step will be to apply for and take the written test for a Class B driver's license that allows for the operation of fire related vehicles. The department will provide an instructor and a vehicle for you to practice and become familiar with the unique characteristics of large, water carrying vehicles. When you feel comfortable, the instructor will accompany you to the driving portion of the application process at an area Department of Public Safety. Once licensed, you may begin training with department personnel on all vehicles.

With basic firefighting and first responder medical skills under your belt, you will be encouraged to expand your knowledge and training into a variety of specialized skills including EMT, swift water rescue, high angle rescue, HAZMAT, and many other areas that are sure to peak your interest.

### **Respond to Calls**

There is no better way to gain experience than responding to the variety of calls that come in all during the day, at nights, on weekends, and on holidays. Every call offers you the opportunity to get involved, to learn, to practice your skills, and to make a difference. You will be part of the only team that provides emergency services in our area, so your response is critical. Although there is a minimum requirement of responding to 10% of calls for which you are available, responding to calls is your duty and it is expected that you make every effort to respond to a number and variety of calls. You are encouraged to dedicate time manning a station and responding to calls with the paid staff and other volunteers. You can be an asset at every scene, regardless of the formal training and experience that you may possess: large scenes need traffic control, medical incidents require obtaining and documenting information, major car accidents need support for tools, fire scenes require tremendous support during and after the fire. The more skills and experience you obtain on scene, the more roles you can perform.



### **Learn from Others**

The department is filled with personnel that have extensive training, knowledge, and experience in all aspects of fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. Their knowledge is there for the sharing. It is very important to reach out frequently to experienced personnel and ask for advice, guidance, and instruction.

### **Ensure Family Support**

The number one critical factor in being a successful volunteer with the fire department is maintaining strong support for your commitment of your immediate family. Actively serving in the department requires you to be away from your family both regularly and unpredictably. Having the understanding, encouragement, and support of your family is absolutely necessary to allow you the required time to become trained, to obtain experience, and to serve your duty. It all starts with communicating about the expectations and demands and is nurtured by keeping them informed of training requirements and work schedules, discussing the new skills and knowledge your are obtaining, including them in department events, and overall keeping the lines of communication open.

## **HOW TO JOIN**

### **Minimum Requirements**

- Possess a strong desire to serve your community in a challenging and rewarding manner
- Ability to work as part of team in stressful situations
- Ability to spend at least 6 hours a month training
- Must be 18 years or older
- Must have an acceptable driving history
- Must pass a criminal history background check
- Must live in the Leon Springs or Fair Oaks Ranch area

### **Application Process**

- Complete an interview with a Chief Officer and obtain an application
- Submit the completed application to a Chief Officer
- Attend three scheduled training classes as an observer
- Check out required uniform, protective gear, and pager
- Serve for 6 months as a probationary member

### **What you receive**

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Pager for receiving emergency calls
- Training in Firefighting, Emergency Medical Services, Hazardous Materials and Rescue Operations

## **CONTACT US**

We hope that this information will be useful in guiding you to an informed decision. If you have questions or would like additional information not found in this guide or the department's website, please feel free to contact us.

Questions regarding the application process, department member duties, and other questions can be directed to John Leonard (281-217-9419).

