



Youth Firefighter Program – Cadet Firefighters

Introduction: This self-assessment addresses concerns related to the employment of, volunteering by, or use of minor children as firefighters. These individuals are referred to in a variety of ways across Oregon but most commonly as cadets or junior firefighters. For the purposes of this document, a minor firefighter is a child who has not reached the age of 18 and performs any tasks commonly associated with the fire service and EMS, including training related to those tasks. SDAO Risk Management can assist you in specific circumstances. Contact your agent for coverage details.

Board and Management Duties

- The district has implemented a board policy outlining the minor firefighter program.
- The policy addresses the following:
 - Responsible parties
 - Selection process for both adults and minors, including background checks and eligibility requirements.
 - Third party affiliation, if any (such as Boy Scouts of America), their contracts, and their insurance coverage

- Code of conduct
- Operational guidelines: including maximum total number of minors allowed in the program, ratio of adults to minors (minimum two adults), selection process, physical capability assessment, ride along procedures, appropriate times/situations when minors can be at the station
- The district has a current policy addressing mandatory reporting laws.
- The district has a current policy addressing harassment and hostile work environment.
- The district has a current policy addressing electronic communication/social media.
- The district has a current policy addressing HIPAA and confidentiality.
- SOP/SOGs follow all federal/state/local laws and rules (such as OROSHA, BOLI, DPSST, OHA/EMS).
- The district has discussed adequate insurance coverage levels with their agent.

Contracting

- The district has established procedures for entering into agreements with third-party vendors (licensed, insurance current, named additional insured, adequate limits for OTCA, etc.)
- The district monitors agreements to ensure obligations are met as required by the agreement.
- The district has a single point of contact for review and approval of these and all agreements - **The chief should have oversight of the agreements if they are not the point of contact for approvals.**

Program Management

- The district has assigned a named individual as the program manager.
- The district has implemented a selection procedure for all adults who will be supervising minor firefighters (including background checks, reference checks, etc.).
- The district reviews relevant policies annually with the supervisors (e.g., mandatory reporting, harassment, operational guidelines, etc.).
- The program manager has spoken in person with parent(s)/guardian(s) about what the minor firefighter will be doing, and the hazards associated with the tasks assigned.
- The district has a signed consent form with parent(s)/guardian(s) and minor firefighter's signatures.
- The district has implemented a process to address concerns from parent(s)/guardian(s) and minors, including an investigation protocol.
- The district has developed a list of approved activities for the minor firefighters based on federal and state law, **all other activities are prohibited.**

Eligibility

- The district has implemented eligibility requirements for minor firefighters, including age, minimum GPA, and physical capability.

- The district has implemented eligibility requirements for adult supervisors, including criminal convictions, driver record, training, and attendance.

Operations

- The district has current operational protocols for minor firefighters that conform to the list of approved activities.
- The district's use of minors conforms to current federal/state/local laws and rules.
- The district has established protocols addressing how minor firefighters will arrive at the station or on-scene for duty assignments.
- The district has established procedures to address violations of standards.
- The district has set a minimum number of supervising adults that are to be present before minors are allowed at the station and on-scene.
- The district has set limitations on when minors are at the station to prevent sexual abuse/hostile work environment.
- The district has a current ride-along procedure that addresses concerns about sexual abuse/hostile work environment.
- The district provides appropriate job training prior to assigning tasks on scene.
- The district provides **annual** training on the following topics:
 - HIPAA and confidentiality, including social media
 - Bloodborne pathogen exposures
 - Harassment/discrimination and mandatory reporting