

# A Prospect's Guide to Joining the

# 2011

## Wilton Fire Department



This document has been created to familiarize prospective members with the opportunities and benefits offered by joining the membership of the Wilton Volunteer Fire Department.

This guide will briefly explain the minimum qualifications needed to become a member and serves to explain the

# *Wilton Volunteer Fire Department*

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www.wiltonfiredept.org – 518-584-1511 – FAX/518-584-4070 – chief@wiltonfiredept.org

## **Dear Citizen:**

As Chief of the Wilton Volunteer Fire Department, I am committed to providing the most effective and efficient fire; rescue and emergency medical service delivery system to our community.

You will find that participation as a volunteer member of our organization will bring personal rewards and satisfaction, raise self-esteem, and provide you with a tremendous sense of accomplishment and pride for a job well done. It will also provide your community with a valuable service that has the potential to touch us all.

However, service as a member of our fire company requires a serious commitment. Your decision to join our organization should not be made hastily. This guide has been developed to provide the information you need to make an effective decision that is right for you and us.

Once you understand what's involved in being a Wilton Fire Department volunteer, we hope that you are able to make the commitment we need. The service provided by our volunteers is truly valuable to the citizens, businesses and visitors of our community. We hope that you are able to contribute to our community's public safety.

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



Sincerely,

**William F. Morgan**  
**Fire Chief**  
**Wilton Fire Department**

# >why volunteer?

*Would you like to become more involved in your community?*

*Is helping those in need a rewarding experience for you?*

*Leadership. Loyalty!*

*Tax Credits for NYS Emergency Service Volunteers*

*On the job training and development opportunities.*

*Neighbors make great teammates!*

## ***“Firefighting is not for everyone –but Volunteering can be.”***

The fire and rescue service is one of the most diverse and challenging vocations today. It is this diversity that attracts most men and women to join our ranks.

Different people volunteer for different reasons. Action oriented people enjoy the excitement and adrenaline rush that emergency services has to offer. Some see the volunteer fire service as an alternative to ‘driving a desk by day’ – by allowing them to ‘drive a fire truck at night!’

Many like the feeling they get when they help people in their time of need and some feel it’s their obligation to serve the community. Yet others just want to belong to the team. Whatever motivates you to volunteer – everyone gains the self-satisfaction of being at their best when others are dealing with what is often the worst that life has to offer.

Imagine having to prepare yourself to cope with situations that range from structure fires to childbirth to hazardous chemical spills to heart attacks to almost any imaginable emergency in between. This diversity is coupled with the fact that these skills may be needed at any time of the day or night, seven days a week, in any kind of weather, and very often under potentially stressful and emotional circumstances. Yet these same factors contribute to our profession being so personally rewarding.

We realize that firefighting is not for everyone, but we believe that volunteering can be. There is plenty of work to be done on or behind the scene – including running the business of delivering emergency services. The personal rewards and satisfaction received from what we do is often beyond description. There is the sense of accomplishment when you control a building fire, joy and elation when a child is born, compassion for accident victims, and fulfillment from teaching fire safety.

The bottom line in our business is measured by the loss of life, pain and suffering, and the property damage we have prevented and reduced.

Volunteering in emergency services is one of the most important decisions you may make. We hope that you give this decision the time and serious consideration it deserves, and decide to join our ranks

# >about us

It's about people. Fire engines don't put out fires – people do. Defibrillators don't save lives – people do. The Jaws-of-Life never rescued anyone on its own – it takes people.

Our human resources are our greatest assets. And we want you to be a part of our team. The Wilton Fire team of volunteers is comprised of your neighbors, your friends and maybe even your relatives. They're people just like you – with families, jobs and active lifestyles who still find time to give back to their community. Wilton Fire offers a friendly environment for you to discover your capabilities and make the most of your volunteering investment.

Established in 1947, THE WILTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT is a premier provider of emergency services in Saratoga County, New York – protecting residents and businesses along Route 9, Route 50 and travelers along I-87, the Northway.

We provide comprehensive fire fighting, extrication, specialized rescue, water/ice rescue, fire police, and fire prevention education to the Town of Wilton community..

Our headquarter station is located on Ballard Road near the Ballard Elementary School.

As a 100% volunteer non-profit organization – The Wilton Fire Department is governed by the Board of Commissioners of the Wilton Fire District.

Thus, we take emergency services very seriously. While individuals volunteer to serve their community, our volunteers must realize that the fire company provides emergency services to the Town of Wilton - a service paid for by the taxpayers of our community.

Despite being unpaid professionals, we are still bound to this service obligation just like our paid counterparts in other communities - and thus we must be committed to providing our services 24 hours a day - every day.

The department currently maintains a fleet of three engine tankers, two engine rescues, an engine ladder with a 75 foot stick, two utility pickup trucks, one which tows a trailer containing a rescue ATV, two brush trucks and a three chief's command vehicles.

Supported by a very active auxiliary, Wilton Fire's membership is made up of approximately 50 active firefighters, typically 5-10 Fire Explorers and numerous honorary members.

Wilton Fire seeks volunteers to bolster its ranks in a diverse range of services. We offer a long list of benefits including a state-of-the-art training center and a friendly, fun, professional atmosphere.

# >how we're organized

Like many corporations, we have two distinct yet tightly integrated units of our organization – an administrative arm and an operations arm. The administrative unit is lead by a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, financial secretary and three trustees.

The operations division of the fire company is lead by the fire chief. He oversees what is called the 'chain of command.' This chain of command is very important in that it provides clear direction, lines of communications, and accountability for everyone involved in the chain.

On an incident scene, the chain of command provides for identifying areas of responsibility and accountability for the personal safety of every individual working within the incident command system.

Under this system, each level only reports to one supervisor. Firefighters report to a Lieutenant, who then reports to a Captain. The Captains report to the Assistant Chiefs, who are responsible to the Fire Chief.

Teamwork is the foundation of our success – during an emergency *and* back at the station. Before you can become a good leader, you need to learn to be a good follower. Knowing and understanding how you fit into the chain of command will be one of the most important lessons you can learn. Know your position and play it well.

You will receive a copy of our current organizational chart – or chain of command – during your new recruit orientation.

## Wilton Fire Department Operations

**Chief**

**1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief**

**1<sup>st</sup> Captain**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Captain**

**1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Lieutenant**

**4<sup>th</sup> Lieutenant**

# >how we respond

Unlike a career fire department, we have no scheduled duty shifts. To accommodate your busy and varying lifestyle, our volunteers are on-call at all times – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Volunteers respond only when they are available in the area of our protection district.

Wilton Fire is dispatched through the Saratoga County Fire Control Dispatch Center, maintained by the Saratoga County Sheriff's Department at the county jail building in Ballston Spa. Utilizing an enhanced 911 system (E-911), dispatchers alert the volunteers via Motorola pagers with voice and tone capability.

Upon being dispatched, volunteers respond to the station, man the appropriate apparatus, and respond to the scene.

Only chief officers respond directly to the scene.

Fire Police members respond to the appropriate intersections to control traffic for responding apparatus.

Known for its expertise in auto extrication, the department utilizes an Amkus Hydraulic Rescue System. The department responds to many entanglements involving autos, on Routes. 9 & 50 and the New York State Northway (I-87).



# >our mission

To provide the highest level of fire protection, fire prevention, and rescue services to the residents, businesses and visitors of the Town of Wilton.

# >our vision

- ⌚ To provide an acceptable level of fire protection to our residents
- ⌚ To be a community oriented service provider while maintaining focus on our core objectives
- ⌚ To treat our residents with the consideration and compassion they deserve in their time of need
- ⌚ To be good neighbors to the Wilton Fire community
- ⌚ To partner with private businesses, local government and public organizations to develop and implement innovative life safety risk reduction programs
- ⌚ To encourage, educate, develop and promote our youth as our community's most valuable resource and asset
- ⌚ To treat our fellow members with respect, admiration and compassion for the challenges they face in volunteering
- ⌚ To appreciate our members for their dedication, recognize them for their contributions and reward them for their achievements
- ⌚ To conduct ourselves in a professional manner deserving of the pride and praise of our community
- ⌚ To be fair and honest in our dealings with town government and outside agencies
- ⌚ To be recognized as leaders in our industry and our community
- ⌚ To continually monitor our operations, administration and service delivery, recognize our limitations ... and swiftly implement effective change when necessary

# >our 24/7 pledge

As an Organization and as Individual Members of the Wilton Volunteer Fire Department,

We Pledge to:

Do the things we say we will...

Try our best to do them well...

And care about the people we serve, their property and each other...

# >opportunities

We offer the opportunity for you to volunteer in the area that you feel most comfortable with, where you feel you can contribute the most, and where you'll benefit the most from your volunteering experience. Our membership is split into the following divisions:

**Fire/Rescue** - If getting hot, dirty and physical is your game - this is for you. We offer virtually unlimited opportunities to explore the exciting world of firefighting and the training to do it safely. Whether you only assist on the outside - or run in to the fire as others are running out - there's plenty for everyone to do on the fireground. The training is free, but the rewards are priceless.

**Fire Police** - As a member of our Fire Police team, you'll assist in traffic management, crowd control and general assistance at emergency scenes and non-emergency events. We'll train you as a NYS certified Fire Police Officer. This is a great opportunity for those who want to actively contribute but cannot meet the extreme physical challenge that structural firefighting entails. Fire Police Only members are not required to certify in firefighting courses but are required to receive basic scene support operations training and then initial and refresher training in Fire Police duties.

**Fire Explorers** – Youth exposure to the fire service is critical for our future. The Explorer Post offers youth aged 14 who have completed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade an opportunity to learn and participate in firefighting education and training.

**Junior Firefighters** – Members aged 16 to 18 may join the department as Junior Members.. This designation allows for more advanced training and participation in New York State Certification courses. Upon their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Junior Members may apply for full membership.

**Fire Auxiliary** – The backbone of the Fire service, auxiliary members support the department during active calls by providing food and beverages to firefighters on the scene. They also provide support during non emergencies and also support the community with free annual events.



# >join today and enjoy these benefits

**Quality Training** - You provide the commitment and we provide all of the training for FREE. From local and county training, NYS certified courses, to regional and national seminars and conferences - we offer you the opportunity to explore every avenue of emergency services and train you to be the best at what you do.

**The HOT Zone** – Wilton Fire is proud to be the only volunteer fire department in Saratoga County to have its own Hands-On Training center on premise - The HOT Zone. This saves you valuable time and provides quality training experiences at your fingertips.

**Length Of Service Award Program (LOSAP)** - This program rewards our volunteers' years of service with a financial benefit after 25 years of continuous active duty. This monthly stipend will come in handy upon reaching retirement age.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** - We protect our firefighters with the latest technology in fire resistive coat, pants, leather boots, gloves, Nomex hood and traditional style fire helmets complete with a leather front proudly identifying your name, rank and department identification number.

**Duty Uniforms** - Look professional and show your Wilton Fire pride in your navy blue station uniform personalized with your name and rank. Uniforms are provided after completion of the probationary period.

**New Fire Station** – Dedicated in 2002, our new fire station stands as a hallmark to the dedication of our volunteers and as the centerpiece of our community. We are in the process of building Station #2 on Route 50 just north of Edie Road.

**Social Events** - Members and their guest enjoy our annual dinner held each year to recognize the past year's accomplishments of the department and our volunteers, and to celebrate the dedication of our newly elected administrative and operations officers. Throughout the year we offer a variety of opportunities for you and your family to get to know the other members of your department in a relaxing atmosphere. From conventions to parades, parties, family picnic and fun fund-raisers - we not only work hard - we play hard too!

**Cool Web Site** - Our site: [www.wiltonfiredept.org](http://www.wiltonfiredept.org) has seen almost 10,000 visitors since it premiered just two years ago.

**Peace of Mind** - We recognize that firefighting and providing emergency services is an inherently dangerous business. That's why we take extra measures to protect our volunteers.

A comprehensive Volunteer Firemen's Benefit Law program from New York State, Workmen's Compensation coverage from the Fire District provide financial security to you and your family should you be injured or fatally wounded in the line of duty. There are even free programs and services in place to ensure that your claim is handled properly and that you receive the benefits you deserve.

We care about your health, safety and well being. That's why we insist (and pay for) you to have a comprehensive medical physical examination completed every year of active duty. A firefighter fitness center is available to you and your family at our Station.

# >expectations

Although no previous experience or training is required, you need more than just a desire to help people. You also need courage and dedication, assertiveness, and a willingness to learn new skills and face new challenges. Our service is one that calls on its members to perform hot, sweaty, dirty, strenuous work, often in uncertain and hazardous environments.

Our volunteers need to be team players, respecting each other's role and contributions. You need to be able to work on-call and to deal with occasional interruptions to your lifestyle, dropping what you're doing at the 'sound of the bell' to respond to the emergency needs of your fellow citizen.

A new recruit can expect to spend varied amounts of time on fire company business. This entails meetings, training, emergency responses and other miscellaneous activities. Some weeks will be more and other weeks much less. The days of the week or times may vary depending on the level of activity. However, most regularly scheduled events occur on Tuesday evenings.

We've listed a lot of the benefits you can expect from us, and in return there are certain objectives we expect you to meet:

## **TO APPLY:**

- ⌚ You must be at least 18 years of age to apply. A statement of parental or guardian consent must accompany an application from anyone under the age of 21 years.
- ⌚ You must be a citizen of the United States.
- ⌚ You must be physically, intellectually and emotionally capable of performing the duties according to your area of assignment.
- ⌚ You must reside within the Wilton Fire District.
- ⌚ You must have no record of arson convictions.

## **UPON ACCEPTANCE:**

- ⌚ New members must complete a new recruit orientation program before responding to emergency incidents.
- ⌚ New recruits must successfully pass an OSHA physical examination conducted by our medical director and paid for by the fire district.
- ⌚ New members will be considered on probation for a period of six months. Their probationary activities will be reviewed after completion of active service and the probationary member will be recommended for continued service or termination at that time.
- ⌚ Removal from probationary status requires that the aforementioned requirements be fulfilled along with the probationary requirements of their membership classification.

# >the process

1. Each prospective member must complete and submit a standard fire department .

The application includes personal information, lists of personal references and fire department acquaintances; and authorizations for license, and arson background checks.

We are required by NYS Law to file a request for an arson background investigation with the Saratoga County Sheriff's Department. If you have been convicted of an arson related crime, you cannot be accepted as a member of any fire company.

2. The application for membership will be read for the first time at the next general business meeting after the application is received.

3. The applicant will be contacted to schedule an interview with the Membership Committee.

In the interview, you will be asked questions like:

- ⌚ What attracted you to our agency?
- ⌚ What work experience do you have?
- ⌚ What skills, experience or knowledge do you feel you have to contribute?
- ⌚ What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
- ⌚ Do you have previous volunteer experience?
- ⌚ What would you like to get out of volunteering here?
- ⌚ What do you like to do in your spare time?
- ⌚ Do you like to work on your own, with a group or with a partner? Why?

While we are not looking for 'canned answers,' we hope that you will give these questions some thought and be prepared with your responses.

Based on information from the interview and application process, reference investigations and the outcome of background checks, the Membership Committee will make its recommendation to the general membership at the next business meeting following the applicant interview.

4. A majority vote by the general membership will decide if the applicant is accepted or declined.

- ⌚ If accepted, the new member will be notified to report to the fire station to be sworn in and complete follow-up processing.
- ⌚ If declined, the applicant will be notified of such details.

5. Unless otherwise documented, new members must complete a satisfactory medical physical and new recruit orientation prior to responding to emergency incidents.

# >contact us

To obtain an application, or to ask any questions regarding this guide or the application process – contact a member of the Investigating Committee by clicking: [president@wiltonfiredept.org](mailto:president@wiltonfiredept.org). or calling: 518-451-6648.

THE WILTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, creed, religion, or marital status. If an applicant is approved for membership, such approval is conditional upon final receipt of references and background information consistent with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Wilton Fire Department.