



Arranging daily leave with local companies for emergency calls

WHO

Harmony Fire District

WHAT

Coordination with local companies to arrange daily leave for emergency calls

WHEN

2014

WHERE

Harmony, PA

HOW

Harmony Fire District has partnered with many of the local businesses in their community to ensure that volunteer firefighters can respond to emergency calls when needed. This culture began with firefighters advocating and changing their own company policies to allow volunteers to respond to calls. It has spread to other companies in the community adopting similar policies and the community becoming aware of the value and importance of allowing the volunteer firefighters to leave work to respond to an emergency. This relationship has led to one company, J.J. Kennedy Inc., creating a formal policy regarding leave for volunteer firefighters, to help streamline the process for their 3-5 volunteer firefighter employees to leave for an emergency call. The J.J. Kennedy supervisor, who is a captain with the Harmony Fire District, coordinates which employees go to calls on a rotational basis. The number of volunteers sent is dictated by the need of the emergency. When a call comes in, the supervisor will notify the chief or officer in charge who they are sending to the call. The policy allows volunteer firefighters to leave and remain paid during emergency calls. The Harmony Fire District has benefitted from this policy and the informal policies of the businesses in their community by having more firefighters and equipment operators to regularly respond to weekday calls.

WHY

By working to build a relationship with community businesses, the fire department has created a community culture that is favorable to volunteer firefighters, resulting in many businesses adopting policies that allow volunteer firefighters to respond to emergency calls. This removes a significant stressor for the volunteer firefighter by allowing them to focus on the emergency call when it occurs, without forcing them to choose between saving a life and providing for their family. Creating this type of community environment for volunteer firefighters can yield an increase in available volunteer firefighters during the hard to staff week day hours. Building a relationship between the fire department and community businesses is also a way to increase community awareness that they rely on volunteers to respond when they dial 911.

For more information or to submit a story from your own department, please contact Jenny Bragiel at jbragiel@iafc.org.



