**Fire Department Name**

**Address**

**City, State ZIP Code**

Your logo here

Dept. logo here

**Mentor Program**

**Date:**

Thank you for agreeing to become a mentor. The department seriously needs your assistance to improve and continue the special work we do. Mentoring can be one of the most effective tools in achieving a well-trained, productive team player and a longtime member of the department. The following suggestions and thoughts will help you get started.

**What It Means to Be a Mentor**

A mentor is a trusted advisor who can impart wisdom and provide guidance in a constructive manner. The major purpose of a mentor is to assist the recruit in finding success in the fire service and enhance his/her performance. The role of a mentor is to share expertise, give advice, provide friendship, and support.

**Why Every New Member Needs a Mentor**

As in most fire stations, the established members know and trust each other. Teams have developed where each member has been assigned specific responsibilities. Everyone in the station has a purpose and knows exactly what to do; the new member does not. Cultural bonds may have formed, sometimes with deep friendships. It may even have become a type of a brotherhood/sisterhood organization. Unlike you, the recruit does not have these close relationships and may feel like an outsider and uncomfortable. The firehouse may even seem impersonal and challenging. The new recruit needs to be invited and welcomed into the group - to become part of it. They want and need to fit-in; to be part of the team. This is where you, as a mentor, can be of assistance. As in any new job, the new recruit will need guidance from a seasoned member who knows the ropes; someone who can help them learn as much as possible about the fire service and the team’s procedures.

Importantly, the department needs to reduce the number of new members that drop out during their first few months. You can reduce that rate. You can assist the new member in learning how the department works; explain events, procedures, and why the recruit should not take misfortunes personally.

**Your Job as a Mentor**

* Present yourself as a friendly, reliable and experienced member who can break down barriers and challenges that may arise.
* Support and encourage the new member to feel successful.
* Assist the recruit to become a valued member of the team; one who is eager and happy to face the challenges of being a fire service member.
* The training officer is responsible for preparing the recruit for the fire service, whereas, the duty of the mentor is to reinforce the training and give advice.

**Mentor Standards**

* Be sure to have contact with the new member at least once every two weeks
(once a week during orientation sessions).
* Maintain a positive attitude at all times. Try to develop and maintain an “older sibling” relationship with the new member.
* Keep the new member advised about up-coming events (drills, company meetings, parades, social events, etc.). Personally invite the new member to all non-drill events. If you are unable to attend, contact someone who will be there to welcome and assist the new member.
* If you think or feel that a portion of the new member’s training has been overlooked or is incorrect, please **do not** **discuss** it with the new member, other than to ascertain their viewpoint of the situation. Contact the training officer as soon as feasible and discuss your findings, offering your assistance to resolve the issue or misunderstanding.

**Conversation Ideas**

**Ask:**

* How is the orientation (or other training) going?
* Was anything a surprise to learn?
* Are there any operational questions I can explain (i.e. why something was done a certain way)?
* What kind of experience(s) does the recruit hope to have?
* Is department involvement causing any undue relationship strain(s) with family or friends? (If so, offer to discuss this further.)
* Are there any questions about training or other jobs?

**Discussion Ideas**

* Explain why it is important to attend department/company meetings.
* If the recruit exhibits a lack of interest or talks about dropping out, try to understand the reason(s). Offer your assistance to clear up any misunderstandings. Relay your findings to the recruit’s officer immediately.
* Invite recruit to the station to wash the fire vehicles and if there is time, wash personal vehicles, if allowable. (This will give you time to do something together.)
* Discuss how a call can sometimes unexpectedly exceed the allotted time. The recruit should discuss this possibility with family or a significant other. Recruits should provide the family with the department’s phone number(s) but stress it should be used only

when necessary.

* Explain that after a significant event, clean up may take some extra time.
* Explain and endorse life’s priorities: 1. family 2. job and 3. fire department.
* Discuss duty schedule commitments; such as, middle of the night calls and how it can affect the family, or taking an EMS call even though the member is scheduled to leave in a few minutes.
* Ask questions pertaining to the SOPs, i.e., how to access them. (Note: the training officer’s role is to interpret the SOPs.)
* If a new member is having a problem with a department challenge, try to find a way to explain that the department is continually evolving in new and positive directions. Reassure her/him that departmental issues are not personal, and that the department is working to improve. Even mention some positive changes you have witnessed.