

# **White Mountain Apache Fire & Rescue Department**



## **Recruitment Handbook**

# FOREWORD

This handbook has been developed as a primer for those men and women who have indicated an interest in becoming a member of the White Mountain Apache Fire & Rescue Department. Making a commitment to serve with us is a serious decision and we ask that you take time to read this booklet, get some facts and find out what is involved with being a firefighter with this department.

This handbook contains information on the organization of our department, membership categories, training and participation requirements, the nature of our business, and answers to typical questions raised by prospective firefighters. While this booklet will not answer all possible questions about membership, it will provide you with information about the most important areas.

Further information can be obtained by contacting any of the chief officers or firefighters of the department.

**Question #1. Do you have what it takes to be a firefighter with the White Mountain Apache Fire & Rescue Department?**

It takes a special person to become one: someone with good moral character and a desire to do something important for the community, someone with courage and dedication, who isn't afraid of hard work and willing to accept the challenge of a difficult job. If you are this type of person, we need you. Your community needs you.

**Question #2. Are you eligible to be a firefighter?**

You are if you can answer yes to all of the following questions:

1. Are you able to be a dedicated, reliable, active person?
2. Are you at least 18 years of age?
3. Do you possess a high school diploma or GED certificate?
4. Do you possess a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Level, determined through a testing process (i.e. COMPASS) at a local community college?
5. Are you able to complete college classes including Firefighter I/II Certification?
6. Are you a person of good moral character?
7. Are you able to pass a criminal background check?
8. Are you in good physical condition, able to pass a forestry arduous duty pack-test and initial physical ability test?
9. Are you healthy and able to pass a medical physical examination?
10. Are you able to pass an alcohol/drug screen test?
11. Do you possess a valid Arizona Driver's License?
12. Are you free from any DUI convictions?

If you answered yes to all of the previous questions and are still interested in becoming a member, please ask for a "recruit application packet".

# THE NATURE OF OUR BUSINESS

The fire service is one of the most diverse and challenging professions known today. It is the diversity that inspires most men and women to enter the fire service – as paid on call, part-time and full-time members. Imagine having to train to prepare yourself to cope with situations ranging from structure fires to motor vehicle accidents to technical rescue to hazardous chemical spills and almost any other imaginable situation in between. This diversity is coupled with the fact that these skills may be needed at any time of day, seven days a week, in any kind of weather, and often under potentially stressful and emotional circumstances. These factors contribute to our profession being personally rewarding.

We are here for two basic reasons. The first is to prevent fires and accidents from occurring. This is done through fire and safety educational programs and code enforcement programs. Secondly, we are here to prepare ourselves to control fire and rescue emergencies should prevention fail. This is done through education, training, pre-incident planning and more training. We are a paramilitary profession working in a “hurry up and wait” environment.

This business is not for everyone. You need more than just a desire to help people. You need courage, dedication, assertiveness and a willingness to learn new skills and face new challenges. The fire service is not for the meek or timid or for those who lose control of their emotions during times of crisis. Our service is one that calls on its members to perform hot, sweaty, dirty, strenuous work, often in uncertain and hazardous environments.

The personal rewards and satisfaction received from the fire service are often beyond description. There is a sense of accomplishment after controlling a structure fire or rescuing someone from a vehicle accident. There is compassion for our victims. There is a sense of fulfillment in teaching fire and safety to both children and adults. This list goes on and on.

The bottom line in our business is measured by the loss of life, pain and suffering, and property damage we have prevented and reduced. We are here and prepared for one reason and that is to provide public safety to the people.

If you believe that you have what it takes to meet the challenges of our business, we welcome you to join us.

# THE NATURE OF OUR DEPARTMENT

**Our Mission Statement:** To provide the safest, most efficient and cost-effective fire protection and rescue services for the residents and visitors of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

**History of the Department:** Prior to September 31, 1988 fire protection was provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs-Facility Management and local volunteers. The Fort Apache Agency Superintendent terminated the use of local volunteers beginning Oct. 1, 1988. The next day a house burnt to the ground and the BIA firefighters did not respond to the incident. On Oct. 5, 1988 the Tribal Council agreed to assume the fire protection services and appointed a full-time fire chief to begin the process of building a fire department utilizing funds from the McNary Fire Department and any existing BIA equipment and fire station. The Tribal Council passed Resolution 05-89-142 on May 25, 1989 authorizing PL-93-638 Contract for Community Fire Protection Services. On Oct.11, 1990 the Tribal Council passed Resolution 10-90-325 designating the White Mountain Apache Fire & Rescue Department as the official Tribal fire department. The present Whiteriver Fire Station was completed in 1991, the Cibecue Fire Station in 1994 and the Public Safety Complex in Hon Dah in 2003.

**Type of Department:** We are a combination department, meaning we have both career and paid on call firefighters (POC). Our jurisdiction, or response area, is the entire Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

**Command Structure:** Our department is a program of the WMAT Division of Public Safety. Our department is paramilitary in nature and operates under the direction of the Tribal Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief with the assistance of the Office Manager and a secretary. The department headquarters is based at the Whiteriver Fire Station. We also have fire stations in Cibecue and Hon Dah. Eventually, we plan on opening a station in Cedar Creek. Deputy Fire Chiefs are responsible for the everyday operations of their respective stations.

**Staffing:** We presently have a total of thirty-three (33) fulltime firefighters. Nine are based in Cibecue, twelve in Whiteriver and Hon Dah. Our fulltime firefighters work on a platoon schedule of 48-hour shifts with 96 hours off. Each shift, consisting of three to four firefighters, is supervised by the shift captain or a duty officer. Our POC firefighters and off-duty fulltime firefighters are expected to respond to emergencies to assist our small full-time staff as needed. All of our firefighters are provided with two-

way, hand-held radio/pagers enabling them to be dispatched to emergencies by the 9-1-1 dispatchers located at the Whiteriver Police Station.

**Firefighter Classifications:** There are three classifications of our firefighters within our department:

1. Certified Firefighter (Blue Shirt)
  - a. These firefighters successfully completed the Firefighter I & II certification program through the State Fire Marshal's Office and are certified Emergency Medical Responder or higher (i.e. EMT or Paramedic).
2. Recruit Firefighter (Red Shirt)
  - a. These firefighters successfully completed the Firefighter I & II class and EMS training, but have not yet been certified through the State Fire Marshal's Office or National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians.
  - b. These firefighters may work as part-time firefighters, however preference will be given to those that are certified.
3. Firefighter Trainee (Gray Shirt)
  - a. These are new trainees that have not yet completed the Firefighter I & II training.
  - b. Recruit firefighters are not allowed to enter a burning structure.
  - c. Recruit firefighters are encouraged to spend as much time as possible at the station and to respond to calls for on the job training.

**Firefighter Employment Classifications:** There are also three classifications of our firefighters concerning employment status: Full-time, Part-time, Paid on Call (POC). All firefighters are considered Tribal employees and are covered under the Tribe's Workman's Compensation. A firefighter can be in more than one classification at the same time.

**Full-time Firefighters:** These are firefighters that are permanent Tribal employees on either administrative or shift duty. To be considered for full-time employment, position(s) must be open and advertised through the Personnel Department. Full-time firefighters must possess their Firefighter I & II Certification, Emergency Medical Responder or higher (i.e. EMT) Certification with required HCP CPR card, and Basic Wildland Firefighter (Red Card eligible) to be considered. Full-time firefighters are eligible for all the Tribal employee benefits per Tribal policies. They are also eligible for the Tribal Public Safety Pension once they are certified firefighters (mandatory).

**Part-time Firefighters:** These are trained firefighters that are qualified and capable of filling in shifts for the full-time firefighters. These firefighters must

have successfully completed the Firefighter I & II training. Although we strongly recommend that all firefighters become certified firefighters, this is not a requirement to become a part-time firefighter. However, certified firefighters have preference over non-certified firefighters. Part-time firefighters are not eligible for any of the Tribal employee benefits. Their wages are based upon the equivalent full-time position's wage. Part-time firefighters are not required to live within the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

**Paid on Call (POC) Firefighters:** POC firefighters can have other fulltime jobs, part-time jobs or be unemployed. Our firefighters are required to be "on call" and respond to calls as needed and they are paid for their response. POC firefighters must also complete the firefighter training and are encouraged to become State Certified Firefighters. They are not eligible for any of the Tribal employee benefits. They are presently compensated \$25 for every two hours on the call and for mandatory training. The calls and trainings attended by the POC firefighters are tabulated at the end of each month and entered on the following Tribal payroll. Our full-time firefighters are considered POC firefighters when they are off duty and are expected to respond to calls as needed and when available.

**Code of Ethics:** As stated above all of our members are employees of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Since we are in the eye of the public, on and off duty, we are expected to conduct ourselves at all times so as to bring credit to the White Mountain Apache Tribe, the fire service as a whole and to this department. As a basic condition of employment, all members have an obligation to conduct their official duties in a manner that serves the public interest, upholds the public trust, and protects the department's resources. Failure to abide by our Code of Ethics can result in termination.

**Eligibility requirements for our firefighters:** The person must be at least 18 years of age and possess a high school diploma or GED Certificate. Since we want firefighters to be of good character with good health they must undergo and pass a background check, a drug screen, a doctor's physical examination, and a physical agility test. Since there is a lot of training involved, our firefighters should be eligible to take and pass college classes. Our firefighters must also have a valid Arizona driver's license. A commercial driver's license is required to drive our fire apparatus.

**Training** is very important to our staff. In fact, we are always training. All of our firefighters are required to complete firefighting training, both structure and wildland firefighting. To become a full-time firefighter, the member must be a certified structure

firefighter and a certified EMS First Responder or higher (e.g. EMT). The fire department may pay for required training.

**Training.** The department conducts training as part of our responsibility to keep firefighters safe, informed, skilled, and to change undesired behaviors (i.e. missing documents for payroll). These training are workshop based and can last from 4 to 24 hours. Some these courses are approved by Northland Pioneer College and the Arizona State Fire Marshal's Office for college credit or "accreditation".

**Outside Training:** Training is offered throughout the year by various colleges, departments and agencies including the State Fire Marshal's Office, National Fire Academy, Arizona Division of Emergency Management, etc. We encourage all firefighters to attend a minimum of eight (80) hours of this type of training annually. A chief officer must approve the training. The department may pay for the cost of the training, travel, meals and lodging. Failure to complete the training will result in a reimbursement by the firefighter for all expenses associated with the training.

**Minimum Training:** All of our firefighters must complete the Structure Firefighter I & II Training (approximately 300 - 450 hrs.), basic wildfire training (40 hours), and EMS First Responder (48 hours), as soon as possible after being hired as a Part-Time or Paid On Call Firefighter, and before two years elapse. Those firefighters that have not yet completed the minimum training will wear helmets designating them as "Trainee" and will wear gray fire department t-shirts and sweatshirts.

**Advanced Training:** Firefighters who have the desire to increase their participation level are required to complete the prescribed training programs relative to their areas of interest – functions such as apparatus driver/operator, technical rescue, haz-mat, emergency medical technician (EMT), squad boss, crew boss, engine boss, etc. All require advanced training programs. These are available through our department, other departments, agencies and colleges. In fact, our department can assist the firefighters in obtaining their Fire Science Associate of Applied Science Degree through Northland Pioneer College.

**Participation Standards:** *It is the responsibility of this department to provide a safe, alcohol, tobacco and drug free, healthy work environment for its members. We have established and maintain a training and educational program and developed our standard operating procedures with the goal of preventing occupational accidents, injuries, illnesses and deaths.*

Since we are involved in a dangerous occupation, it is imperative that all members maintain their skill levels and physical fitness throughout the year. In order to maintain our skills, we must remain actively involved in not only our actual responses to emergency calls, but also in our training and physical fitness programs. All members are evaluated every three months. Those members not meeting the minimum standards will be put on a three-month probation period. If they do not meet the minimum standard during their probation period, disciplinary action may follow, including possible termination.

**Compensation:** Active POC firefighters are compensated for their response to calls. To receive credit for your emergency responses, the firefighters must:

- be officially dispatched or come by the incident prior to being dispatched;
- wear complete turnouts on all fire calls, motor vehicle accidents and all other calls when applicable until advised otherwise by the Incident Commander (IC);
- report to the IC and complete assigned tasks;
- return to the station, assist in refitting the apparatus and equipment, participate in any debriefings and be officially released from the incident;
- or
- when not needed at the incident itself, "standby" at the station until excused by the IC.

Those firefighters that meet these standards will be compensated for their time. Those firefighters who fail to meet these standards (less than 50% active without an excuse) may not be compensated for that period and may be put on probation.

*Again, this booklet is a short summary of our department. It has been assembled to assist you, a potential recruit, in making your decision whether to become one of our firefighters. Once you have become a member, you will be required to read, understand and follow the department's Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines Manual.*

*We hope that this booklet has answered many of the questions you may have about us. If you still have other questions, please do not hesitate to ask us.*

#### **Fire Administration**

##### **Mailing Address**

PO Box 1929  
Whiteriver, Arizona 85941  
Bus: (982) 338-1701  
Fax: (928) 338-1710

##### **Physical Address**

612 S. Chief Ave.  
Whiteriver, Arizona 85941  
[www.wmafirerescue.com](http://www.wmafirerescue.com)

#### **Fire Station 810 - Whiteriver**

##### **Mailing Address**

PO Box 1929  
Whiteriver, Arizona 85941  
Bus: (982) 338-4311  
Fax: (928) 338-4474

##### **Physical Address**

610 S. Chief Ave.  
Whiteriver, Arizona 85941  
[www.wmafirerescue.com](http://www.wmafirerescue.com)

#### **Fire Station 820 - Cibecue**

##### **Mailing Address**

PO Box 81322  
Cibecue, Arizona 85911  
Bus: (982) 332-2401  
Fax: (928) 332-2558

##### **Physical Address**

145 S. Cooley Rd.  
Cibecue, Arizona 85911  
[www.wmafirerescue.com](http://www.wmafirerescue.com)

#### **Fire Station 830 - Hon Dah**

##### **Mailing Address**

PO Box 568  
McNary, Arizona 85930  
Bus: (982) 334-2206  
Fax: (928) 334-2212

##### **Physical Address**

503 E. Hwy. 260  
McNary (HonDah), Arizona  
[www.wmafirerescue.com](http://www.wmafirerescue.com)

## THE NATURE OF OUR ENEMY

*I am more powerful than the combined armies of the world.*

*I have destroyed more men, women and children than all of the wars of all nations.*

*I massacre thousands of people every year.*

*I am more deadly than bullets.*

*I have wrecked more homes than the mightiest guns.*

*In the United States alone I steal over 500 million dollars each year.*

*I spare no one and I find my victims among the rich and poor alike, the young and old, the strong and the weak.*

*Widows know me to their everlasting sorrow.*

*I loom up in such proportions that I cast my shadow over every field of labor.*

*I lurk in unseen places and do most of my work silently.*

*You are warned against me, yet you heed me not.*

*I am relentless, merciless and cruel.*

*I am everywhere, in the home, the schools, in the offices, in the factories, on land, in the air and on the sea.*

*I bring sickness, degradation and death, yet few seek me out to destroy me.*

*I crush, I maim, I devastate.*

*I will give you nothing and rob you of all you have.*

*I am your worst enemy.*

*I am rampant fire.*

## NOTES:

# The Characteristics of a Good Firefighter

**Do you have good morals?**

**Do you have a good attitude?**

**Are you a team member?**

**Are you:**

Honest  
Trustworthy  
Dependable  
Physically and mentally fit  
Dedicated  
Loyal  
Friendly  
Motivated  
Hardworking  
Helpful  
Respectful  
Faithful  
Honorable  
Nice  
Outgoing  
Proud  
Fun  
Aggressive  
Forgiving  
Obedient  
Caring  
Outspoken  
Professional  
Safety minded  
Courageous  
Communicative

These are the characteristics that our firefighters want our staff to have.

