

Town of Suffield



Fire Department

Shift Program Policy

Policy Number: 0003

Effective Date: July 1, 2026

Authority: Fire Chief and Suffield Board of Fire Commissioners

1. Purpose

To provide a structured alternative for volunteer firefighters who are unable to meet the department's minimum annual alarm response requirements. This program ensures that members remain active, engaged, and contributory through assigned station shifts, thereby supporting consistent departmental staffing levels.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteer personnel within the Suffield Fire Department.

3. General Policy (The 20% Rule)

All volunteer firefighters are required to respond to a minimum of **20% of all alarms** annually.

Members who anticipate or demonstrate an inability to meet this percentage may apply for the **Shift Program**.

Admission into the Program is at the sole discretion of the Fire Chief.

4. Application and Notification

Proactive Notification: Any member anticipating a shortfall in response percentage must notify the Fire Chief and their Station Officer via email or phone.

Approval: Admission is not automatic. The Chief will review the member's standing and departmental needs before granting approval into the Program.

5. Program Requirements & Shift Assignments

Duration: Enrollment in the Program is a **one-year commitment**.

Monthly Obligation: Participants must complete **twelve (12) hours** of shift time per month.

Shift Increments: Hours may be served in blocks of four (4) or eight (8) hours.

Scheduling: Only **First Shift** is available for Program participants. Scheduling must be coordinated directly with and approved by the Fire Chief.

Location: Members must be physically present at **Station 1**. Qualified Driver/Operators may be assigned to other stations at the Chief's discretion.

Drill Attendance: Participants remain obligated to attend at least **25% of all scheduled department drills**.

6. Duties and Responsibilities

While on shift, members are expected to remain productive. Duties include, but are not limited to:

Standard apparatus and equipment checks.

Station maintenance and cleaning.

Participation in scheduled training or public education events.

Immediate response to any emergency calls received during the shift.

7. Documentation and Compensation

Logging: All shift hours must be recorded in the department's designated tracking system.

Review: The Fire Chief or their designee will conduct monthly reviews of shift logs to ensure compliance.

Off-Shift Response: Program participants are still encouraged and permitted to respond to calls while off-shift.

Compensation: Members will be compensated for call responses in accordance with current Town of Suffield and Department payroll policies.

8. Accountability and Discipline

Attendance: Failure to report for a scheduled shift without prior notification and without appropriate case will result in progressive discipline as provided in this policy.

Make-up Shifts: Missed shifts may be made up only with the express permission of the Fire Chief.

Disciplinary Action: Failure to fulfill the 12-hour monthly obligation or maintain drill attendance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the program or termination of membership.

9. Return to On-Call Status

A member may request to return to standard "On-Call" status at the end of their one-year commitment, provided they can demonstrate the ability to maintain the 20% response requirement moving forward.

10. Authority

The Fire Chief reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate the Shift Program at any time based on the operational needs of the Suffield Fire Department.

11. Approval

Title	Signature	Date
Fire Chief	_____	_____
Fire Commission Chair	_____	_____