



# County of Louisa

## *Department of Emergency Services*

### **Firefighter/EMT Core Competencies**

Outlined below are the Core Competencies to which a Firefighter/EMT aspires. These competencies have been divided into distinct skill-sets including physical/technical expertise, public service, communication, teamwork, and professionalism.

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#### **PHYSICAL/TECHNICAL EXPERTISE**

- **Responds efficiently to emergency calls and performs emergency medical service.** Use various equipment and gear to suppress and control fire, search for and rescue occupants, ventilate structure, salvage contents, apply water and chemicals to fire. Illuminate the emergency scene and turn off building utilities so that the assignment is safely completed. Ensure team integrity and safety including maintaining the integrity of respiratory protection.
- **Conducts inspections.** Participate in company inspections for fire code issues. Identify hazards and take steps to gain compliance.
- **Performs salvage operations.** Move and cover furnishings, remove smoke, and ensure proper protective equipment is used.
- **Performs fire suppression duties.** Use various equipment and gear to suppress and control fire, search for and rescue occupants, ventilate structures, pull hose lines, secure water supply, apply water and chemicals to fire, raise ladders, use forcible entry when necessary, move and cover furnishings, salvage contents, and ensure proper protective equipment is used.
- **Provides emergency medical services and rescue.** Safely gain access to patients, assess patient's situation, address critical needs, deliver medical care to sick and injured persons, and complete patient forms. Perform extrication when needed disentangling the victim without undue further injury and manage hazards. Provide support for patient families, and ensure proper protective equipment is used. Follow state and county protocol.
- **Performs special operations.** Respond to hazardous materials, identify products, establish hot zones, and secure safe perimeters in confined space and trench emergencies.
- **Responds appropriately to non-emergency calls.** Replace smoke detector batteries, assist invalids, and check hydrants.
- **Safely enters and exits hazardous areas.** Force entry into a structure using personal protective equipment, tools, and an assignment. Ensure the tools are used properly, the barrier is removed, and the opening is in a safe condition and ready for entry. Exit hazardous area as a team, maintain the team's integrity through ensuring a safe haven is found and others are not endangered.
- **Attacks a passenger vehicle fire operating as a member of a team.** Given personal protective equipment, an attack line, and hand tools ensure hazard is avoided and flammable liquids are identified and controlled. Maintain protection from flash fires. Overhaul vehicle compartments. Extinguish the fire.
- **Extinguishes an ignitable fire.** Use the proper type of foam concentrate given the fuel and conditions, apply a properly proportioned foam stream to create and

maintain a foam blanket, extinguish fire, prevent re-ignition, maintain team protection with a foam stream, and face the hazard until a safe haven is reached.

- **Coordinates an interior attack line in a structure fire.** Establish crew integrity, select attack techniques appropriate for the given fire, communicate attack techniques to the attack teams, maintain team coordination, evaluate fire growth and development, search, rescue, and communicate and manage ventilation requirements. Appraise incident command of changing conditions.
- **Controls a flammable gas cylinder fire.** Maintain the crew's integrity, identify contents, identify safe havens prior to advancing, close open valves, eliminate leaking gas, cool cylinder, and evaluate cylinder integrity. Recognize and act upon hazardous conditions. Face the cylinder during approach and retreat.
- **Performs horizontal and vertical ventilation.** Use personal protective equipment, ventilation tools, equipment, and ladders to ensure that the ventilation openings are free of obstructions. Ensure structural integrity is not compromised and combustion products are released.
- **Protects evidence of fire cause and origin.** Properly note and protect evidence from further disturbance until investigators can arrive on the scene.
- **Combats a ground cover fire operating as a member of a team.** Given protective clothing, SCBA (if required), hose lines, extinguishers or hand tools, and an assignment report property threats, recognize personal safety threats, and retreat quickly when warranted.
- **Connects fire department pumpers to water supplies.** Given supply or intake hose, hose tools, and a fire hydrant or static water source ensure connections are tight and water flow is unobstructed.
- **Performs fire safety surveys in private dwellings.** Identify fire and life safety hazards, make recommendations for their correction, and report unresolved issues to the proper authority.
- **Operates Fire Department apparatus properly.** Respond on apparatus to emergency scene. Drive Fire Department apparatus and equipment ensuring safety. Use personal and protective clothing and equipment, so the apparatus is safely mounted and dismounted. Use seat belts while the vehicle is in motion, and use any other needed protective equipment. Use radios, phones, PCs, and MDTs, generators, extrication tools and other equipment safely.
- **Operates ladders appropriately.** Assess hazards to ensure the ladder is stable and the angle is appropriate for climbing. Extend extension ladders to the proper height with the fly locked and the top placed against a reliable structural component.
- **Prepares pre-incident surveys.** Record required occupancy information, note items of concern, and prepare accurate sketches or diagrams.
- **Demonstrates ability to use protective gear effectively.** Demonstrate ability to don personal protective clothing within one minute and doff personal protective clothing and prepare for reuse. Hoist tools and equipment using ropes and the correct knot. Use appropriate rope and knot types to support response activities.
- **Uses SCBA during emergency operations.** Ensure SCBA is properly donned and activated within one minute, wear SCBA correctly, use controlled breathing techniques, enact emergency procedures if the SCBA fails, recognize all low-air warnings, and exit hazardous areas prior to air depletion.
- **Maintains the firehouse, grounds, and needed resources.** Clean and check ladders, ventilation equipment, SCBA, ropes, salvage equipment, and hand tools. Conduct annual service test on fire hose removing any damaged hose from service and recording test results.

- **Maintains power plants, power tools, and lighting equipment.** Clean and maintain equipment according to manufacturer and departmental guidelines. Record maintenance, place equipment in a ready state or report otherwise.
- **Tests the operability and flow of a fire hydrant.** Given a Pitot gauge, pressure gauge, and other tools assure the flow of water from the hydrant can be calculated and recorded.
- **Demonstrates proper lifting, carrying, and other physical requirements.** Efficiently lift people, equipment, and fire debris using safety requirements. Push gurneys, people, cars, and equipment. Handle fire hose, equipment, gear, and patients.
- **Performs station duties.** Mop, vacuum, dust, wash dishes, pick up trash, wash apparatus, assist in performing truck checks, and assist officer-in-charge in assigned project work.
- **Demonstrates knowledge of department services and resources.** Provide information about department-specific services and resources.
- **Follows County and department policies and procedures.** Correctly completes time sheets, overtime slips, etc.
- **Operates safely.** Stay Safe, Act Safe, Be Safe. Wear all appropriate personal protective equipment. Follow and model safety rules. Know your work environment by understanding hazards of all work-related equipment, chemicals, and operations and positively reinforce them.

### **PUBLIC SERVICE**

- **Educates the public.** Inspect buildings and property as part of a fire company, inspect smoke detectors, attend public gatherings to ensure public observance of fire safety, and conduct station tours. Explain medical procedures and fire ground operations to patients, families, and victims. Ensure all information is presented in a consistent, accurate manner. Address or refer all questions.
- **Researches solutions to issues.** Explore best method to address issues impeding efficiency or customer service by identifying and utilizing available resources. Provide recommendations to the officer-in-charge.
- **Identifies methods for improving customer service.** Proactively recommend techniques to improve customer service through suggestions that outline the change, describe the impact on department/customer, and outline the method for implementation. Identify methods to improve workflow throughout the Department, work with the officer-in-charge to coordinate implementation of an agreed upon solution. Search out challenging opportunities to grow, innovate, and improve.
- **Provides and demonstrates outstanding customer service.** Establish the example for peers to follow by using creativity, displaying compassion, being sincere, demonstrating Initiative, and going above and beyond.
- **Promotes and ensures internal customer service throughout the County.** Promote outstanding customer service to other County departments and within the Department by responding in a timely manner to requests and inquiries.

### **COMMUNICATION**

- **Initiates the response to a reported emergency.** Uses department operating procedures, and communications equipment, so that all necessary information is

obtained, communications equipment is operated properly, and the information is promptly and accurately relayed to the dispatch center.

- **Properly receives a business or personal telephone call.** Ensures proper procedures for answering the phone are used and the caller's information is relayed.
- **Transmits and receives messages via the fire department radio.** Given a department radio and operating procedures ensure that the information is promptly relayed and is accurate, complete, and clear.
- **Completes basic incident report.** Complete a basic incident report ensuring information is accurate and all components are recorded.
- **Communicates the need for team assistance.** Ensure supervisor is consistently informed of team needs, departmental SDPs are followed, and the assignment is accomplished safely.
- **Prepares and processes appropriate reports and paperwork.** Clearly and professionally write general correspondence, incident reports, EMS forms, request forms, memorandums, letters, e-mail, and log books.
- **Effectively reads and interprets written documents.** Demonstrate ability to read general correspondence, maps, medical terminology and abbreviations, policies, procedures, code books, and memorandums. Utilize communication tools that are provided.
- **Communicates consistently in the workplace.** Effectively share information on projects, purchases, and other organizational information in a clear, concise manner. Involve other work units and departments within the decision making process as appropriate. Ensure supervisor is aware of workplace issues and problems.
- **Effectively communicates with individuals outside the County.** Share ideas and learn from other's innovations and best practices. Work effectively and professionally with various local, state, and federal agencies. Call upon and utilize vendors and suppliers for information on supplies, products, and purchases, as appropriate.
- **Prepares for and actively participates in meetings.** Participate actively in meetings with customers, employees, and sales representatives. Attend meetings promptly, professionally represent Department, voice ideas and concerns, and follow up as appropriate.
- **Listens actively.** Listen actively by maintaining focus, paraphrasing, and using open body language.
- **Probes for needed information.** Access information by using open-ended, thoughtful, probing questions.
- **Uses effective verbal communication.** Demonstrate strong verbal communication skills by sharing information in a logical, clear, succinct manner.
- **Openly accepts feedback from others.** Solicit feedback from peers and supervisors to create and expand upon self-development plans.

### **TEAMWORK**

- **Participates as a member of a fire company.** Assist Fire Company in completion of station duties related to the professional, sanitary, and orderly condition of the fire station. Assist in performing assigned truck checks on vehicles and apparatus. Test station generator, update maps, and ensure well-stocked cleaning and other needed supplies.
- **Participates actively on teams.** Participate in team projects, contribute to team effort, and consider impact of individual actions on the team.

- **Participates in team development.** Contribute to building cohesiveness within department by supporting on-going communication, celebration of successes, and collaborative solutions to team issues.
- **Builds respect of peers.** Build respect from peers by contributing to the efforts of the department. Model expected behaviors to accomplish team goals.
- **Commits to the success of the County.** Participate actively in county-wide activities. Focus on the County's needs when making decisions and taking actions. Maintain confidentiality and act ethically.
- **Supports department's goals/strategies.** Use department/team goals and strategies to guide decisions and actions. Consider needs and impact of actions on other departments.
- **Works with volunteers to ensure an effective service to the community.** Assists volunteer members with projects, training and emergency responses thus assuring the service to the community is completed.
- **Demonstrates flexibility.** Remain flexible and open to considering suggestions from internal and external sources for new work approaches and handling of functions.
- **Does not participate in negativity towards other staff and departments.** Refrain from negative discussion or comments about other departments or staff.
- **Considers impact of actions on others within department.** Prior to implementing decision/taking actions, identify and discuss impact action will have on other department employees.

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

- **Acts professionally.** Serve the customers. Treat everyone with respect. Stay focused on the mission. Demonstrate, model, and incorporate the tenants of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Demonstrate self discipline.
- **Learns, embraces, and markets the Department's message.** Model the message by your actions. Reinforce the message with your words and written communication.
- **Demonstrates strong ethical standards.** Ensure decisions and actions are in the best interest of the County and are not in favor of any individual, group, or self. Is mindful of representing the County at all times.
- **Demonstrates initiative.** Self-directed. Show commitment through actions. Pursue personal growth in every endeavor.
- **Models a strong work ethic.** Demonstrate strong work ethic by remaining focused until the project is complete; assist staff members when needed, go beyond the scope of regular job duties. Understand impact on the team. Understand importance of professional conduct at all times while on duty.
- **Applies professional judgment.** Assess a situation, identify possible options, apply standard practices and procedures, and maintain accountability for decision.
- **Displays a positive attitude.** Display a positive attitude by focusing on opportunities and solutions and reducing negative discussion within department. Consistently look for how things can work, not why they won't. Focus on future improvements not past failures.
- **Takes responsibility for actions.** Readily accept responsibility for actions by recognizing issues, focusing on solutions, and avoiding blame.
- **Manages time.** Model time management by timely response to requests, prompt attendance to meetings, and consistent meeting of deadlines.

- **Builds trust and respect within department.** Maintain commitments, hold true to word, and work with other employees to strike a balance between personal goals/values and departmental goals.
- **Commits to self-development.** Accept responsibility for managing own self-development plan and commit to continuous improvement of skills and knowledge.
- **Demonstrates self control.** Maintains composure during stressful situation or during conflicts.