

**An Evaluation of the use of Juvenile Fire and Rescue Members in the
Prince William County Fire and Rescue Services System, VA**

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This research project focused upon the practices and uses of juvenile fire and rescue members within the volunteer companies of Prince William County (PWC) and the possible implications to the career staff of the PWC Department of Fire and Rescue (PWCDFR). The problem was a lack of clear or consistent policy in the use of juvenile fire and rescue member in emergency response activities. The purpose of this Applied Research Project was to assess current practices of the 12 independent volunteer companies and a select group of combination departments within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additionally, a position paper (see Appendix A) was produced and presented to the PWC Fire and Rescue Association (PWCFRA) for consideration in future policy development.

The descriptive and action research were used to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How are the 12 independent volunteer fire and rescue departments utilizing juvenile fire and rescue members?
- 2) What are the practices of other Virginia combination fire and rescue departments in the use of juvenile fire and rescue members?
- 3) What are the Federal, state, and local laws that govern the use of minors in firefighting and emergency medical service delivery?
- 4) Should the PWCFRA consider developing a policy statement on this issue?

The research procedures included group processes, literature search, surveys, and personal communications to determine current practice in using juvenile members in PWC and in select similar Virginia departments. Other researchers and journal articles provided information relevant to the pros and cons of these programs. Federal and state statutes were researched and legal opinions were sought from the PWC Attorney's Office. Psychological factors with teen brain development were found in two books publishing scientific studies by a host of researchers.

The results found PWC uses juveniles in both fire and EMS capacities but there was no consistent application of the programs. The Code of Virginia allows these practices by exempting the provisions found in the child labor laws. These exemptions have the stipulation that the municipality has adopted this provision of the law by ordinance, they are at least 16 years of age, they are a member of a volunteer fire company, the company has insurance on the juvenile member, and they are minimally trained to Firefighter Level 1 in accordance with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Rescue squads are not included in the exemptions from the child labor laws. The Virginia Office of EMS allows assistants and observers on ambulances by persons 16 years old or older however participation or limitations are not clearly stated. PWC volunteer companies do use juvenile members as part of primary staffing whereas the majority of other Virginia jurisdictions do not.

The practice of utilizing juvenile members in the PWC fire and rescue system remains a viable means to recruit both career and volunteer members. The Code of Virginia allows an exemption for volunteer fire companies but lacks the same provisions for volunteer rescue squads. The PWC Code should be amended to include the 1992

amendment to the Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1 to optimize the protection provided.

There are numerous juvenile programs currently being run by PWC volunteer companies. The designated coordinators of these programs should meet on a regular basis to share best practices that may influence the alignment of policies and procedures for consistent program delivery.

All career and volunteer officers should be made aware of the state and local laws regarding child labor. These officers should be given formal education in the psychological factors affecting juvenile members and their risk-taking tendencies. Supervision should be provided for all activities that these members are involved to ensure their safety.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	5
LIST OF TABLES	6
INTRODUCTION.....	7
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE.....	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
PROCEDURES.....	28
RESULTS	34
DISCUSSION.....	41
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	43
REFERENCE LIST	46
APPENDIX A (Juvenile Firefighter Research Postion Paper).....	49
APPENDIX B (Volunteer Company Junior Program Questionnaire).....	65
APPENDIX C (Junior Fire and Rescue Program Questionnaire).....	68
APPENDIX D (PWC Volunteer Company Survey Results).....	71
APPENDIX E (Virginia Fire and Rescue Department Survey Results).....	72
APPENDIX F (Research Group Meeting Minutes).....	73

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 PWC VOLUNTEER COMPANIES SURVEYED.....32
TABLE 2 VIRGINIA DEPARTMENTS SURVEYED.....33

INTRODUCTION

The Prince William County (PWC) fire and rescue system has evolved from an all-volunteer fire and rescue service to the model combination system it is today. The expansion of service demand prompted increase career staffing during traditionally volunteer hours and has created some transitional challenges.

The volunteer tradition of fathers taking their sons to the fire house and allowing them to begin participating at an early age in non-emergency and emergency activities have led to the formalization of various juvenile fire and rescue programs. This common practice of using juvenile family members and other youth from the community to augment staffing emergency response units raise questions to the legal, moral and ethical implications.

The problem is the lack of clear or consistent policy in the use of juvenile fire and rescue member in emergency response activities. What has been acceptable practice in a volunteer company since their inception is now being challenged by members of the career department who are being asked to accept them a part of their crew.

The purpose of this paper is to research the current practices of the 12 PWC independent volunteer companies' use of juvenile members. Federal, state and local laws will be researched and interpreted as they apply to the fire and rescue system. Additional psychological factors affecting decision making and risk-taking is an issue to be researched and considered. Finally, a position paper will be developed and provided to the policymaking body, the Prince William County Fire and Rescue Association (PWCFRA), for review and possible policy development. The descriptive method will be used to evaluate current practices by the volunteer companies in PWC and to assess

the practices of other like fire and rescue systems in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The action research methods will be used to develop a position paper on this issue.

These two methods of research will answer the following research questions:

1. How are the 12 independent volunteer fire and rescue departments utilizing juvenile fire and rescue members?
2. What are the practices of other Virginia combination fire and rescue departments in the use of juvenile fire and rescue members?
3. What are the Federal, state, and local laws that govern the use of minors in firefighting and emergency medical service delivery?
4. Should the PWCFRA consider developing a policy statement on this issue?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Prince William County, Virginia is a suburban community located 35 miles southwest of Washington, D.C. The county encompasses 348 square miles with two independent cities, a Marine Corps base, and two National Parks.

The current population is estimated at **317,009 (as of December 15, 2002)** which is approximately **938 persons per square mile** of land area. The County population has **grown by 47%** since 1990... with an average annual growth rate of **2.92%**. The County is projected to grow to over **416,700 persons by 2025** (PWC, 2003, p. 2)

The PWC fire and rescue system has evolved from an all-volunteer system to its current volunteer/career combination system. Increasing demand for service and the decrease in volunteer participation has seen the expansion of the career department.

The Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue (PWCDFR) provides career fire and rescue personnel from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. In addition, the career service provides five 24-hour medic units and 24-hour staffing of two stations providing fire suppression, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and/or specialty services.

For the past fourteen years of implementing 24-hour career staffing, the career and volunteer members have worked together to provide the best service to the community. Following the implementation of a 24-hour engine company in a volunteer station in December 2002, one of the career officers asked about the use of junior members with his crew.

On February 19, 2003, the author, who is the career battalion chief for the station, presented the question about policy in using juvenile members to the PWCFRA Executive Committee. Following discussion of current practice, many of those in attendance questioned the legalities of the use of juvenile members in emergency activities. Since the PWCFRA is not responsible for developing specific personnel and operational policy for the 12 member companies, no one was knowledgeable of the practice of the other companies. The author was tasked by the PWCFRA with developing a research group and analyzing the issues surrounding the use of juvenile fire and rescue members. The findings of the group could have significant impact on the fire and rescue system if policies are established modifying the use of juvenile members as a result of this research.

The research is related to the National Fire Academy Executive Leadership course, Unit 12: *Influencing Styles*. The group's task of developing a position paper rather than making policy recommendations involves *influence* to persuade the policymaker to do the right thing to prevent harm of the youth and protect their companies from liability.

All three influence styles identified in the student manual applied to the group's work.

1. Logical persuasion "focuses on getting the facts straight...and developing a logical argument" relates to the research of the applicable laws and the survey results.
2. The group itself shares the common vision that "appeals to the values and emotions of others." The research group members are stakeholders and want to do what is best for the PWC fire and rescue system.
3. "When using participation and trust as a style, we develop a dialogue with others and draw them into discussion to such a degree that, in the end, they want what we want because they helped to develop it." The members of the research group are affiliated with volunteer companies with juvenile programs. Their ownership to the research and development of the position paper provide credibility to the efforts and may influence the position of those in leadership positions. (National Fire Academy [NFA], 2000, p. 12-4)

The Influence Plan provided the framework for the group to make their factual points while leaving the final decision for policy change in the hands of the PWCFRA and the member company leadership. (NFA, 2000, p. 12-5)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review for this research paper focused on a mired of sources. Foremost, the Learning Resource Center at the NFA provided the access to numerous journal articles, Executive Fire Officer applied research projects and fire service books. In addition to the traditional research, the use of the World Wide Web, e-mail inquiries, verbal communications, surveys, and the PWC Library system were utilized.

Value of Youth Programs

The value of youth programs are boasted by numerous departments and authors. During the literature search process, the author found the work of another member of the PWCDFR, Battalion Chief Hadden Culp (2001), who *researched Components for a fire and rescue, high school cadet program* as an applied research project. Though his research did not address current use of juvenile members, he shares common ground with the end product as “an opportunity for recruitment of volunteer members” (p.6). Additionally he references the needs of the career service “to see if there are additional eligible applicants available locally that have not been tapped” (p.8).

Peacock (2003) summarized the benefits noted by the over 1,000 International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) members in a recent electronic survey. He noted that 58% of the respondents reported having a youth program (p.8). Some of the notable comments recognize the value of youth programs as, “a means to recruit young, well trained, motivated fire fighters who already have an insight into the concepts and traditions of the fire service” (p.8). Additionally, “these programs give veteran

firefighters a chance to pass on their knowledge and skills and allow today's youth to become integral part of health and safety of their community" (p.8).

Chris Eckert (1995) further discussed the expanding interest in recruiting young people between the ages of 16 and 18 to provide support functions for the regular department. He acknowledged some of the benefits as,

The ability to train the junior in order to allow almost immediate assignment in the regular department upon reaching the age of 18; many times an interest in the emergency services field is sparked before a career choice is made, allowing an individual to seek appropriate educational background that is ever increasingly required for a career in firefighting or a related field; and fire department services provides individuals with the opportunity to be involved in a para-military organization and may foster a disciplined and team oriented approach toward solving problems and accomplishment goals. (p.6)

Other researchers have challenged the actual use of juvenile members in emergency activities. Each state approaches the issues of juvenile fire and rescue members differently. While addressing the issues for training juniors in Maine, Marks (2000) recognized the dichotomy of the Maine Fire Training and Education advisory board.

The idea of training juniors in certain task such as – use of self-contained breathing apparatus, use of fire hose in training simulation, the raising and lowering of ground ladders – and then informing them that they are not allowed to perform such tasks at an emergency scene becomes an unreal expectation.

Several members of the Maine Fire Training Education advisory board stated

that even though they are proponents of allowing junior firefighters to participate in all aspects of firefighter training including fighting a “live” fire, they would not allow the juniors in their fire departments to fight a “real” fire. (p.13)

Federal Regulations

Federal regulations through the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provide limitations to protect young workers from certain hazardous employment. Youth 14 and 15 years old may not work in the manufacturing or mining industries or in any hazardous job. Youth 16 and 17 years old may perform any non-hazardous job as defined in the list of hazardous occupations below (DOL/elaws, 2003, ¶ 3):

- Communications or public utility jobs;
- Construction or repair jobs;
- Driving a motor vehicle or helping a driver;
- Manufacturing and mining occupations;
- Power-driven machinery or hoisting apparatus other than typical office machines;
- Processing occupations;
- Public messenger jobs;
- Transporting of persons or property;
- Workrooms where products are manufactured, mined or processed;
- Warehousing and storage.

In Federal Regulation 29 CFR 570.120, additional “particularly hazardous or detrimental to health or well-being for minors 16 and 17 years of age” occupation are identified as *hazardous occupation orders* that do not include fire and rescue specific activities. (USDOL, 2003, ¶ 1)

“The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has no specific regulations regarding minors since OSHA regulations apply to all employees regardless of age” according to Assistant Secretary Charles Jeffress in a letter to Senator Charles Grassley dated November 10, 1999. (OSHA, 2003, ¶ 2)

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (2003) published a special hazard review titled *Child Labor Research Needs* reporting occupational injury and illness data for youths. “The leading causes of death were incidents involving motor vehicles, machines, electrocutions, and homicides.” (p.3) There were no specific references in this report of fire and rescue related activities causing death. Two juvenile firefighter deaths were reported through the United States Fire Administration (FEMA) email distribution of Notice of Firefighter Fatality. (Personal communications, April 2, 2003 and May 29, 2003) Both of these cases were related to motor vehicle crashes.

Code of Virginia

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides several code sections related to child labor. The following sections were cited from the Code of Virginia §40.1-

100. *Certain employment prohibited or limited.* (Virginia, 2003, ¶¶ 2&7) Particular sub-sections of this section that applies to fire and rescue are,

2. At operating or assisting or assisting to operate any grinding, abrasive, polishing or buffing machine, any power driven metal forming, punching or shearing machine, power-driven bakery machine, power-driven paper products machine, any *circular saws* [emphasis added], band saw or guillotine shear, or any power-driven woodworking machine.

7. As a driver or a helper on a truck or commercial vehicle of *more than two axles* [emphasis added]. The provision of this paragraph shall not apply to the drivers of school buses.

Stricter language is found in § 40.1-100.1. *Employment where hazard capable of causing serious physical harm or death.* (Virginia, 2003, ¶1)

No person shall employ, suffer, or permit a child to work in any gainful occupation that exposes such child to a recognized hazard capable of causing serious physical harm or death to such child...

The most powerfully worded statute holding adults responsible and accountable with the welfare of children appears in § 40.1-103. *Cruelty and injuries to children.* (Virginia, 2003, ¶A)

It shall be unlawful for any person employing or having the custody of any child willfully or negligently to cause or permit the life of such child to be endangered or the health of such child to be injured, or willfully or negligently to cause or permit such child to be placed in

a situation that is life, health, or morals may be endangered, or to cause or permit such child to be overworked, tortured, tormented, mutilated, beaten, or cruelly treated. Any person violating this section shall be guilty of a Class 6 felony.

Exemptions are granted to volunteer fire companies in § 40.1-79.1.

Exemptions from chapter generally; local ordinance authorizing participation in volunteer fire company activities. (Virginia, 2003, ¶¶ 1-3)

- A. Any county, city, or town may authorize by ordinance any person sixteen years of age or older, with parental or guardian approval, to work with or participate fully in all activities of a volunteer fire company, provided such person has attained certification under National Fire Protection Association 1001, level one, fire fighter standards, as administered by the Department of Fire Programs.
- B. Any trainer or instructor of such persons mentioned in subsection A of this section and any member of a paid or volunteer fire company who supervises any such persons shall be exempt from the provisions of § 40.1-103 when engaged in activities of a volunteer fire company, provided that the volunteer fire company or the governing body of such county, city, or town has purchased insurance which provides coverage for injuries to or the death of such persons in their performance of activities under this section.

It should be noted that in this exemption, the identification of volunteer rescue squads and any reference to comparable EMS training is omitted from

this section but is addressed in § 40.1-79.01. *Exemptions from the chapter generally.* (Virginia, 2003, ¶¶ 76)

A. Nothing in this chapter, except the provisions of §§ 40.1-100 A, 40.1.100.1, 40.1-100.2 and 40.1-103, shall apply to:

5. A child participating in the activities of a *volunteer rescue squad* [emphasis added].

Virginia Department of Fire Programs

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VD FP) provided current adjunct instructors with a CD-ROM with the most current Administrative Policies and Guidelines. Section 7, *Junior firefighter programs*, begins with reference to the State Department of Labor and Industry, Rule No. 17 – *Firefighting (Revised June 30, 1981)* and cites the following prohibited activities.

- 7-1.1.1 The following activities involving firefighting are prohibited:
 - a. Minors, 16 and 17 years of age, shall not enter a burning structure.
 - b. The term “burning structure” as used in this restriction shall not include a noncombustible structure such as an approved burn building which contains burning materials.
 - c. Minors, 14 and 15 years of age, shall not participate in Firefighting or support activities at the fire scene, enter a burning structure, enter a structure, which contains

burning materials, or engage in any other acts prohibited in the Rules and Regulations.

- d. Minors under 14 years of age shall not participate in any practical training evolutions related to firefighting.

The VDFP cites § 40.1-79.1 that allows localities to adopt an ordinance allowing an exemption to the above administrative section as it pertains to 16 and 17 year olds only.

The VDFP established an official policy on the use of junior firefighters in Section 7-3.

7-3 Virginia Department of Fire Programs Rules for Junior Firefighters.

7-3.1.1 Live fire training evolutions involving Junior Firefighters (minors 16 & 17 years of age) are subjected to the following restrictions:

7-3.1.2 If the Junior Firefighter (minors 16 & 17 years of age) DOES NOT possess a current Virginia Firefighter I certification then burn evolutions are limited to approved burn buildings (no acquired structures). If the Junior Firefighter (minors 16 & 17 years of age) DOES possess a current Virginia Firefighter I certification BUT the local ordinance as referenced in Section 7-2 of the Fire Instructor

Manual is NOT in effect, burn evolutions are limited to approved burn buildings (no acquired structures).

- 7-3.1.3 If the Junior Firefighter (minors 16 & 17 years of age) DOES possess a current Virginia Firefighter I certification, AND the local ordinance as referenced in Section 7-2 of the Fire Instructor Manual IS in effect, the Junior Firefighter (minors 16 & 17 years of age) is permitted to participate in all approved live burn evolutions.

Virginia Office of EMS

The Virginia Emergency Medical Services Regulations, 12 VAC 5-31 provides for the use of minors in a limited capacity as described in the following sections:

12 VAC 5-31-900. General Requirements.

1. Be a minimum of 16 years of age. (An EMS agency may have associated personnel who are less than 16 years of age). This person is not allowed to participate in any EMS response, or any training program or other activity that may involve exposure to a communicable disease, hazardous chemical or other risk of serious injury.

12 VAC 5-31-1200. Minimum age of EMS vehicle personnel.

- A. EMS personnel serving in a required staffing position on an EMS vehicle shall be at a minimum 18 years of age.
- B. An EMS agency may allow assistants or observers in addition to the required personnel. An assistant or observer must be at a minimum 16 years of age. (Note: There is no guidelines published to the limitations of activities beyond those identified in the previous mentioned Code of Virginia).

12 VAC 5-31-1450. BLS student enrollment requirements.

1. Be a minimum of 16 years of age at the beginning date of the certification program. If less than 18 years of age, he shall provide the course coordinator with a completed parental permission form with the signature of a parent or guardian verifying approval for enrollment in the course.

PWC Ordinance

Prince William Board of County Supervisors adopted by ordinance, Chapter 9 of the County Code, *Fire and Rescue*... In § 9-10. Certain minors allowed to work with volunteer fire companies adopted the Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1 with the exception of a critical amendment since the adoption of the County Code in 1982. The additional provision of the exemption in subsection B

reads, “provided that the volunteer fire company or the governing body of such county, city, or town has purchased insurance which provides coverage for injuries to or the death of such persons in their performance of activities under this section” (Code of VA, §40.1-79.1, 2003). Those volunteer companies represented on the research group reported that all members are carried by the respective company’s insurance carrier.

PWC Attorney Opinion

Prince William County Attorney’s Office was asked by Division Chief Kevin McGee in April of 2000 to opine on the Restrictions on “junior” members of volunteer fire companies during career hours. Senior Assistant County Attorney Ross Horton provided a detail analysis of the applicable laws in his official response on April 13, 2000.

Upon review of this document by the group, it was felt that an updated opinion was needed to verify and update any laws previously opined on.

Assistant County Attorney Jeffrey Notz’s response dated May 29, 2003 and subsequent amendment response dated June 12, 2003 offered further clarification to the comprehensive response previously provided by Ross Horton. Highlights of the County Attorney opinion are,

- Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1 provides the use of 16 and 17 year olds in fire fighting activities if; the volunteer fire company requires parent or guardian permission for the minor to participate, if they are fully certified as a Virginia Fire Fighter

Level 1 as administered by the Department of Fire Programs, and if the volunteer company includes insurance coverage to these members. Each volunteer fire company needs to maintain proof of the aforementioned certifications and parent or guardian permission, with an expressed documentation of the assumed risk of the activities involved in the unfortunate event a significant incident occurred.

- Volunteer Rescue Squads are not included in the exemption provided in Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1. In fact, § 40.1-79.01 only allows a minor to participate in activities but still applies those sections dealing with hazardous environments or causing harm to a child. Members under the age of 18 should be restricted from participating in any hazardous activities. Code of Virginia § 40.1-103 may apply to a volunteer rescue squad if a minor is injured or killed while involved in emergency incidents.
- Currently Prince William County has only two departments that are exclusively fire or rescue, Dumfries-Triangle Volunteer Fire Department and Dumfries-Triangle Rescue Squad respectively. It is the opinion that the remaining companies that provide both services are held to the § 40.1-79.1. Those members allowed to function as observers or assistants on EMS units may not be exposed to hazards that could cause harm or death as identified in §§ 40.1-100(A), 40.100.1, and 40.1-103.

- The current County Code, Chapter Nine, § 9-10, adopted in 1982, does not include the amendments to Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1 to provide the full legal protection under the code to the volunteer fire company. Revision to this section is highly recommended.
- Sovereign immunity may protect the County and its employee from tort liability for simple negligence, however, it may not provide full protection from statutory civil penalties under § 40.1-113 or criminal prosecution under § 40.1-103.
- FLSA implications are triggered by the broad definition of “employment” within the Act. Interpretation of this definition may be determined based upon the six-part test as a “trainee” or a “volunteer.”

National Youth Model

The Fire and Rescue Service Exploring program offers an affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) through the Learning for Life Program. Mr. Don Reinhardt, Director of Learning for Life from the National Capital Area Council attended the group meeting on April 17, 2003. He reviewed the advantages of this program to fire and rescue departments and the process for starting a Post.

“Fire and Emergency Service Exploring is a worksite-based program” and is designed for an age group from 14 (and completed the eighth grade) or 15 to 21 years of age. These Explorer posts “help youth gain insight into a variety of

programs that offer hands-on-career activities.” The five areas of emphasis are career opportunities, service learning, leadership experience, life skills, and character education. (Learning for Life, 2003, ¶ 1)

Marks (2000) concluded “the Fire Explorer program seems to be one of the best ways in introduce *children* [emphasis added] to the opportunities and requirements of being a firefighter”. (p.21)

Earl Banks (1989) started Explorer Post 1 in Littleton, Massachusetts and noted the volunteer recruitment advantages. “In securing volunteers for the fire service, the best place to start is with the young people of the community.” (p.74). Williams (1989) who handled public relations for the BSA wrote of the success of a program in Orange County, CA and quoted Captain J. Patrick O’Keeffe, “the program provides them with great direction for a career and they come out as better young people.” (p.72)

Other public safety organizations have started Explorer Posts. The Fontana Police Department in CA organized an Emergency Services Explorers Post members are trained in search and rescue and teach earthquake preparedness classes to the public. Schmidt (1995), the emergency services coordinator and the post advisor, stated the program’s value this way.

Besides providing an excellent resource for emergency services, the Explorer Post provides an opportunity for the youth to challenge themselves to improve their skills, both mentally and physically. The post has an all-around positive influence in the community. (p.19)

The program recommends more stringent restrictions than currently practiced in PWC. The *Guide to Safe Learning for Life Activities* establishes the guidelines because of the real need to protect participants from potential hazards. These guidelines are based upon the idea that qualified supervision and discipline are the foundations that will make all Learning for Life activities safe. (Learning for Life, 2003 ¶¶ 1-2),

Issues relative to Fire and Emergency Services are specifically addressed however, they encourage investigating the state child labor laws for the legalities of participants under the age of 18.

Psychological Factors

NIOSH's (2003) reports "terms most often used to describe the psychological attributes of adolescence are poor judgement, sensation seeking, poor risk assessment, vulnerability to peer pressure, incomplete self-image, pressure to excel, need to prove independence and maturity, desire to conform, and (conversely) need to rebel." (p.19)

NIOSH (2003) further hypothesizes that the "general lack of work experience coupled with normal adolescent psychological development places adolescents at high risk of injury on the job." (p.20)

Finally, NIOSH (2003) recognized work organization issues such as the lack of training, supervision, and inappropriate work assignments as factors that led to fatal incidents involving young workers. "Safety violations were issued by OSHA in 70% of these incidents with 41% of the incidents in violation of the child labor laws." (p.3)

Wendel (2003) cited several books that link “baffling behavior to neurobiology, not hormones” (p.24). Specifically, psychological factors have been identified that may suggest using caution in allowing juvenile firefighters too much exposure to the risks of firefighting. These concerns are of no fault of the youth but are linked to their brain development phase. The chemical “dopamine” seems to be a factor along with the immature frontal lobe of their brain. (p.24)

Strauch (2003) references the work of many experts in the area of adolescent brain development and behavior. In Chapter Nine, *Risky Business*, she studied the risk-taking behavior commonly found in teenagers pointing to the work of Lynn Ponton, an adolescent psychiatrist in San Francisco who recognized, “the long-held belief that teenagers do dumb and dangerous things because they think they’ll never die or will live relatively safely, at least through their twenties. They think they’re invincible’ (p.90).

Susan Millstein, a psychologist at the University of San Francisco, found that they feel no more immortal than the rest of us. “Teenagers sometimes don’t recognize different options, and can often be forced into making poor decisions in situations that are both emotional and stressful” (Strauch, 2003, pp.90-91).

Some neuroscientists, like Chuck Nelson, think brain science has already given us some clues to risky behavior in adolescents,

After all, one primary tool teenagers use in figuring out whether to climb out a window, have sex, or pop a pill is the prefrontal cortex, that specialized brain part that acts like a policeman and says: “Stop!” If that region is still not fully developed in adolescents, as

new research indicates is the case, that means they just may not see the consequences of their action (Strauch, 2003, p.91).

Paul Grasby, a psychiatrist at Imperial College in London published his finding of his study on dopamine in the journal Nature in 1998. “There is now a common thread of evidence...that links dopamine and a ‘predisposition or a biasing’ toward certain risk-taking behavior” (Strauch, 2003, p.94).

Nora Volkow, a neuroscientist at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York notes though precise levels of dopamine in the teenagers brain is not measurable there is proof that dopamine levels decline from childhood to adulthood indicating teens have a higher level of dopamine than adults. She continued to say, “higher dopamine levels may leave adolescents much more susceptible to a range of stimulations—and may be one reason why drinking, drug taking, as well as novelty and risk-seeking begins a steep increase in the teen years” (Strauch, 2003, p.94).

Scott Lane, a neuropharmacologist at the University of Texas, reported clear evidence that “ adolescents in general are higher-risk-takers than adults and that something makes some teenagers take bigger risks than others...(Strauch, 2003, p.103)”

Peter Jensen, a child psychologist at Columbia University acknowledges,
One way teenagers push our buttons, of course is acting downright
brainless, taking what seems to us to be dumb and unnecessary
risks. But this, too, can be looked at in a different way. If, for

instance—as everyone from human brain scientists to those who deal with adolescents rats and monkeys tells us—teenagers are not only attracted to risky behavior, but such behavior is a natural and necessary evolution in their development, it’s time we understand that—and expect it (Strauch, 2003, p.208).

He continued to note that many states have made changes to driving laws that has increased ages or limited the number of teens that may ride in a vehicle with a teen driver.

Restak (2001) noted from Jay Giedd, of the National Institute of Health, “the impulsiveness, the disregard for consequences, and the rapid and unexpected emotional storms of adolescence may be in part related to the immaturity of the frontal lobes of the brain” (p.73).

The noted work of others during the literature search has supported the use of juveniles in the fire and rescue service similar to the current practices in PWC. Legal support for volunteerism beginning at an early age is present though science has indicated developmental concerns for teenager thought processes and risk taking behavior.

PROCEDURES

The researcher organized a research group comprised of various stakeholders in the fire and rescue system to collectively evaluate the issues associated with juvenile fire and rescue members in PWC. The group’s purpose was to survey county

companies and other Virginia departments to determine current practices, search for applicable laws, and identify the psychological factors inherent in teenagers. Upon gathering all the information, a position paper (Appendix A) was developed and presented to the PWCFRA.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used was descriptive and action research. Research conducted used literature search, personal communications, and two surveys. Information gathered would be used to develop a position paper (Appendix A).

A research group was assembled to conduct this study and comprised of the following members:

- Chief Joe Peters, Stonewall Jackson Volunteer Fire Department, Chairman
- President Debra Wood, Coles District Volunteer Fire Department
- Battalion Chief Steve Strawderman, Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue, Operations Division (Principle researcher)
- Lieutenant Steve Gilbert, Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue, Cadet Program Coordinator
- Assistant Chief Jerry Deem, Yorkshire Volunteer Fire Department
- Dave Williams, OWL Volunteer Fire Department, Junior Advisor

The group meetings established task assignments, reported findings of research conducted and established the framework and guidelines for the position paper for the PWCFRA. Minutes were kept in written form and shared

with the group. These document provide the most detailed account of the group research process (see Appendix F).

Definition of Terms

Fire Companies. Fire companies is a term used in the Code of Virginia sections and includes fire departments.

Juvenile firefighter. Juvenile firefighter is a term selected by the author to include programs such as, juniors, cadets, and Explorers.

Primary Staffing. Minimum staffing for suppression units is a crew of three and the minimum staffing for EMS units is a crew of two. Appropriate certifications are required by PWCFRA Uniform Rank policy.

Rescue Squads. Rescue Squads is a term used in Code of Virginia sections relating to EMS agencies that provide patient transport.

Literature Search

The author conducted a literature search at the Learning Resource Center at the National Fire Academy, in Emmitsburg, MD and at the Prince William County Library. The author and members of the research group utilized the World Wide Web for searching related information. The author and members corresponded with various persons in state and county offices on child labor issues by letter, telephone and e-mail. A personal visit and presentation from the Director of Learning for Life from the National Capital Area Council of the BSA provided program information at a research group meeting.

Survey Instruments

The author drafted a survey instrument to determine the current use of juvenile member in PWC. The research group reviewed and edited to produce a final survey form (see Appendix B) before sending to the 12 independent volunteer companies. A listing of PWC volunteer companies is provided in Table 1.

The author also drafted a survey instrument to determine the practices of other similar Virginia fire and rescue departments. The research group reviewed and edited to produce a final survey form (see Appendix C) before sending to 13 Virginia combination fire and rescue departments. These departments were identified using a population served criteria greater than 84,000 from the *National Directory of Fire Chiefs and EMS Administrators*. A cover letter and survey was sent to the chiefs of these respective departments. A listing of surveyed Virginia fire and rescue departments is provided in Table 2.

Table 1

PWC Volunteer Companies Surveyed

Company	Address	Chief
Occoquan-Woodbridge-Lorton Volunteer Fire Department Stations 2,12, and 14	1306 F Street Woodbridge, Virginia 22191	Chief Richard Arrington
Dumfries-Triangle Volunteer Fire Department Stations 3 Fire and 17 Fire	P. O. Box 340 Triangle, Virginia 22172 (18321 Jeff Davis Hwy)	Chief Miles Young
Dumfries-Triangle Rescue Squad Stations 3 Rescue and 17 Rescue	P. O. Box 460 Dumfries, Virginia 22026 (3800 Graham Park Road)	Chief Randy Baum
Gainesville District Volunteer Fire Department Station 4	P. O. Box 240 Gainesville, Virginia 20156 (14450 John Marshall Hwy., Gainesville, Virginia 20155)	Chief Richard Bird
Nokesville Volunteer Fire Department Station 5	12826 Marsteller Drive, Nokesville, Virginia 20182)	Chief Brian Hickerson
Coles District Volunteer Fire Department Station 6	13712 Dumfries Road Manassas, Virginia 20112	Chief Kevin Dickey
Lake Jackson Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department Station 7	11310 Coles Drive Manassas, VA 20112	Chief Jeff Harding
Yorkshire Volunteer Fire Department Station 8	7602 Centreville Road Manassas, Virginia 20111	Chief Craig Griffith
Dale City Volunteer Fire Department Stations 10, 13, 18, and 20	13511 Hillendale Drive Woodbridge, Virginia 22193	Chief Kenneth Gluffling
Stonewall Jackson Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad Station 11	7814 Garner Drive Manassas, VA 20109	Chief Joseph Peters
Evergreen Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad Station 15	3510 James Madison Hwy. Haymarket, Virginia 20169	Chief Thomas Pescitani
Buckhall Volunteer Fire Department Station 16	7190 Yates Ford Road Manassas, Virginia 20111	Chief Thomas Pitkin

Table 2

Virginia Jurisdictions Surveyed

Virginia Department	Address	Chief
Alexandria Fire Department	900 Second Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314	Acting Chief James Gower
Arlington County Fire Department	2100 Clarendon Boulevard Suite 400 Arlington, Virginia 22201	Chief Edward Plaughter
Chesapeake Fire Department	304 Albemarle Drive Chesapeake, Virginia 23322	Chief Stephen Best
Chesterfield Fire Department	10031 Ironbridge Road Chesterfield, Virginia	Chief Steve Elswick
Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department	4100 Chain Bridge Road 7 th Floor Fairfax, Virginia 22030	Chief Edward Stinette
Hampton Division of Fire and Rescue	22 Lincoln Street 6 th Floor	Chief Robert Green
Henrico County Division of Fire	P.O. Box 27032 Richmond, Virginia 23173	Chief Ronald Mastin
Loudoun County Fire and Rescue	16600 Courage Court Leesburg, Virginia 20175	Chief Robert Griffin
Roanoke County Department of Fire and Rescue	3568 Peters Creek Road Roanoke, Virginia 24019	Chief Richard Burch
Spotsylvania County Department of Fire and Rescue and Emergency Services	P.O. Box 818 Spotsylvania, Virginia	Director Christian Eudailey
Stafford County Department of Fire-Rescue and Emergency Services	1300 Courthouse Road Stafford, Virginia	Director Chuck Thompson
Virginia Beach Fire Department	2408 Courthouse Drive, #21 Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456	Chief Gregory Cade

Note: Combination fire and rescue departments in Virginia were selected based upon a > 84,000 population served from the *National Directory of Fire Chiefs and EMS Administrators, 12th Edition*, pp.809-829.

Limitations and Assumptions

The Applied Research Project was limited by the six-month time limit established as a program requirement. During this research period, the Department of Homeland Security issued a threat level “Orange” that prompted focused attention to community efforts rather than this applied research project.

Research processes were shared through an appointed research group by the PWCFRA. This tended to slow the research process down since most information was shared at scheduled meetings.

The author assumed that members of the group would be timely and successful in their takings. This was not always the case prompting the author to follow up on assignments or performing the assignment himself.

Surveys sent to the identified Virginia departments included a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope. A two-week deadline was established. Response was less than expected.

The American Psychological Association (APA), *Publications Manual, 4th edition* was used as the writing reference and format guidelines for this paper.

RESULTS

Following the descriptive research, the results of two surveys on current use of juvenile fire and rescue personnel and the practice of a selected group of Virginia fire and rescue department provide answers for two of the research questions.

All 12 volunteer companies responded to the internal survey, for a 100% return rate. Ten of the 12 advised they have a youth program and will be discussed in more

detail. Four of the Eight (50%) Virginia departments responding to the survey have juvenile programs. Roanoke (City) Fire-EMS Department responded as a career only department and was removed from the respondent profile.

Action research method developed a position paper (Appendix A) that was presented to the PWCFRA by the research group on June 18, 2003. Chief Joe Peters, research group chairman provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the group's findings.

Answers to Research Questions

1. How are the 12 independent volunteer fire and rescue departments utilizing juvenile fire and rescue members?

The survey developed by the author and approved by the research group of the county volunteer companies (see Appendix B) current juvenile programs provided insight to the varying use of these members and the policies and procedures that may or may not be in place. The table in Appendix D provides the results of the survey.

Ten of the 12 volunteer companies (83%) reported having a program for members between the age of 14 and 18 years of age. Since this survey, Chief Richard Bird of the Gainesville District Volunteer Fire Department reported they no longer accept members under the age of 16 (personal communications June 18, 2003). All of the companies required parental/guardian permission forms to participate in fire and rescue activities. Additionally all the companies required a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 to participate. Hours of participation varied and some overnight duties were allowed when there was no school the next day. Though all companies reported having adult

supervision, only 83% reported having a designated person in charge of the juvenile program. Four companies (33%) of the have bylaws specific to the juvenile program and five companies (41%) have written standard operating procedures (SOPs) that provides guidelines for their use and limitations. Only three (25%) of the companies require a physical to participate. One half of the companies reported restrictions but responses were vague in the specifics due to the wording of the question. Restriction examples in the question included, interior firefighting, confined space, emergency vehicle driver, and etc. Affirmative response without specific reference to their restriction assumed that one of more of these examples apply. Juvenile members are utilized as primary staffing in 25% of the companies however this accounts for eight stations.

2. What are the practices of other Virginia combination fire and rescue departments in the use of juvenile fire and rescue members?

The survey developed by the author and approved by the research group of the Virginia combination fire and rescue departments (see Appendix C) provided a comparison of their practices to that of PWC. The table in Appendix E provides the results of the survey.

The four Virginia departments that have juvenile programs reported participant ages of 16 and 17 years of age. All departments require parent /guardian permission forms and all require physicals. Roanoke County Department of Fire and Rescue stipulated that a physical was only required if the individual participates in firefighting activities. A minimum GPA of 2.0 or passing was required by 75% of the departments.

All reported they required adult supervision however Fairfax County Fire and Rescue was the only department reporting a designated person in charge of the program. Three of the four (75%) of the departments have SOPs governing juvenile participation and all reported having restricted activities.

Restrictions were addressed in their SOPs and were relevant to hazardous environments. Spotsylvania County Department of Fire-Rescue and Emergency Services does not allow juvenile member in immediate danger to life and health (IDLH) environments. Roanoke County Department of Fire and Rescue does not allow them to participate in interior firefighting. Chesterfield Fire Department does not allow them in burning structures or be exposed to toxic substances. Fairfax County Fire and Rescue reported that they do not allow them to participate in firefighting or EMS but defers to the individual volunteer fire and rescue department to adopt this standard in their policies. None of these departments accept juvenile members as primary staffing.

3. What are the Federal, state, and local laws that govern the use of minors in firefighting and emergency medical service delivery?

Marks (2000) concluded that the intent of Federal Child Labor Laws and Fair Labor Standard Act (29 United States Code 201-219) was to restrict minors from direct contact with hazardous machinery or circumstances (p. 10). However, in the United States Department of Labor “Hazardous-occupations order” found in 29 CFR 570. 120, firefighting activities are not identified (USDOL, 2003, p.1). One relevant hazardous-occupation order is No. 2 Occupations of motor-vehicle driver or helper. (USDOL, 2003, p.1). Further interpretation and clarification is offered in the discussion of state law.

Each state adopts corresponding laws to protect minors. Jeff Notz, Assistant County Attorney acknowledged that in Virginia, Chapter 5, §§ 40.1-100. *Certain employment prohibited or limited.*, 40.1-100.1. *Employment where hazard capable of causing serious physical harm or death.*, 40.100.2. *Employment involving sexually explicit visual material prohibited.*, and 40.1-103. *Cruelty and injuries to children.* are applicable (personal communications, June 12, 2003).

According to Notz, there are two exemptions that apply to fire and rescue companies.

Section 40.1-79.01(A)(5) VA Code Ann. exempts volunteer rescue squads from most of Chapter 5 except §§ 40.1-100(A), 40.1-100.1, 40.1-100.2 and 40.1-103. He sums up this interpretation as, “*a child of any age* [emphasis added] may participate in rescue squad activities, as long as those activities do not endanger the life or health of the child” (personal communications, June 12, 2003). The VOEMS defines the minimum age of 16 years to be an assistant or an observer (12 VAC 5-31-1200(B)).

Section 40.1-79.1 VA Code Ann. exempts volunteer fire companies from all the above previous codes but the following conditions must be met:

1. The governing body has authorized, by ordinance, the participation of persons 16 years or older in the activities of volunteer fire companies.
2. A parent or guardian approves the person’s participation
3. The person has obtained certification under National Fire Protection Association 1001, Level 1;

Notz concluded his opinion with “the expression terms of §40.1-79.1, if the aforementioned conditions are met, a person 16 years of older may participate in all

activities of a volunteer fire company.” He further opined that the companies that provide both fire and EMS services, the aforementioned code would apply.(personal communications, June 12, 2003).

Ellen Marie Hess, the Virginia Division of Labor and Employee Law offered her interpretation of juveniles in fire and rescue activities specific to § 40.1-100(A) in a phone conversation with Dave William, task group member on June 12, 2003. She confirmed that 16 or 17 year olds that are not certified as a Firefighter Level 1 may not be placed in a hazardous situation (personal communications, June 12, 2003). She expanded on specific sub-sections of this code as:

§ 40.1-100(A)2. The use of power equipment as it relates to the fire service until juvenile members are trained as Firefighter Level 1.

§ 40. 1-100(A)7. Juvenile members must be trained to Firefighter Level 1 before they may serve as a “helper” on a vehicle with more than two axles.

The Prince William Board of County Supervisors adopted Chapter 9 of the County Code in 1982. Section 9-10 adopted the provisions in §40.1-79.1 with the exception of the amendments adopted in 1992.

4. Should the PWCFRA consider developing a policy statement on this issue?

When this question was developed, the full implication of policymaking was not known to the author specific to the authority of the PWCFRA. The duties and responsibilities are addressed specifically in County Code, Chapter 9.

Section 9-85(a)(2). It shall establish uniform procedures and policies...provided however, that nothing contained herein shall be deemed to permit the board of directors of the association to ...*control any member related matters within a volunteer company* [emphasis added] (PWC, 1982). Issues relative to juvenile program administration are felt by members of the PWCFRA to fall within this exception to system wide policy adoption.

Thus, policy establishment system wide is limited to the adoption of the relevant Code of Virginia into PWC Code, Chapter Nine in this matter. The current County Code § 9-10 previously mentioned provides volunteer fire companies with exemptions from the Virginia child labor laws. This research further clarified the lack of exemption to the Code of Virginia for rescue squads that are not trained to Firefighter Level I.

Responses received and posted in Appendix B notes the wide range of activities and oversight for juvenile programs. The information provided in the position paper (see Appendix A) that was provided to the PWCFRA during the June 18, 2003 meeting was presented as information only. It was the intent to provide the facts on this issue to the member companies to influence the policy makers of each company to ensure their respective program using the NFA Influence Model (NFA, 2000, 12-5)

The legal opinion provided by Jeff Notz, Assistant County Attorney concluded by saying,

Importantly, although the Code of Virginia allows minors to participate in fire and rescue activities, volunteer companies and squads are not *required* to include children in those activities. As you well know, various fire and rescue activities involve extreme risks with potential deadly consequences. The decision to allow

children to participate in such dangerous activities is a policy question left to the volunteer companies and squads. This opinion does not reach that policy issue. (personal communication, June 12, 2003)

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper is to research the current practices of the 12 PWC volunteer companies' current practices using juvenile members. Additionally, a survey of similar fire and rescue systems in Virginia provided a comparison of their practices and those within PWC. Legal questions were answered for the PWC volunteer companies who provide both fire suppression and EMS (County Attorney referred to this as a mixed service) with the protection provided under the Code of Virginia, § 40.1-79.1. This exception is only in effect if the conditions are met. Conversely, the stand alone rescue squad has implications to its program since they are not exempt from the child labor laws that protect children from hazardous situations as noted in the Code of Virginia, § 40.1-79.01.

The author agrees with the value of the youth as the future of the fire and rescue service. "A vital purpose, particularly among programs affiliated with volunteer-dependent organizations, is to provide an ever-evolving supply of interested, involved, trained and experienced young people who might become adult emergency services providers when they outgrow the youth program." (IAFCA, 1998, p. 1) PWCDFR routinely recruits volunteer fire and rescue personnel as career firefighters. According to the Captain Tim Taylor, personnel officer, six PWC volunteers and seven outside volunteers made up the 20 recruits attending the last career recruit class equating to

68% having a volunteer fire and rescue background (personal communications, June 26, 2003).

The recent IAFC electronic survey, while identifying the advantages of juvenile programs, also recognized that increasing restrictions on youth programs and limitations on their firefighting activities deter would be firefighters from joining and/or making it difficult in keeping current members interested (Peacock, 2003, p.8). The loss of juvenile programs could affect the recruitment of future career and volunteer members. Fortunately, Virginia laws are still relatively liberal compared to other states.

The studies on the teen brain gave a better understanding of the special considerations that fire and rescue service leaders and policy makers should have when utilizing these high-energy resources. In *The Secret Life of the Brain*, Jay Giedd noted teen behavior as impulsive and has a disregard for consequences (Restak, 2001, p.73). In *The Primal Teen*, Lane also notes that “adolescents in general are higher-risk-takers than adults...”(Strauch, 2003, p.103). Volkow ‘s link to “higher level of dopamine may leave adolescents much more susceptible to a range of stimulations—and may be on reason why drinking, drug taking, as well as novelty and risk seeking begins a steep increase in the teen years.” (p. 94)

Given the fact of the risk taking tendencies of the teens and their attraction to driving fast, drugs, alcohol, crime, and sexual activities to meet this need for excitement. I surmise that satisfying these risk-taking needs, as a firefighter is the lesser of the evils previously mentioned. The safety of these personnel is the responsibility of the organization with which they are affiliated and the officers who are in charge. Clearly “sound policies must be in place to stipulate what youth members are permitted to do

and prohibited from doing in and around the fire station, en route to and from emergencies, and on the emergency scene. These policies must be consistent with fire department regulations and state law..." (IAFCA, 1998, p. 23).

Based upon the survey results in Appendix B, only 40% of the PWC volunteer companies have by-laws for their juvenile program and 50% have standard operating procedures that govern the use of juvenile members. The three departments that use juvenile members as primary staffing have written policies and procedures that require the minimum training as specified in the Code of Virginia and PWC Code.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to develop an informational position paper for the PWCFRA. It was the intention of the appointed research group to provide this information in a way to influence member companies to evaluate current practices, and to amend or develop policies and procedures that are compliant with the Code of Virginia and in the best interest of the juvenile and the responsible supervisor. Based upon the research findings, the following recommendations should be considered.

The PWCFRA should draft an amendment to the PWC Code §9-10 that includes the 1992 amendments to the Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1. Once the draft is approved by the Board of Directors of the PWCFRA, final adoption should be sought through the Board of County Supervisors.

The PWC volunteer companies who currently have a program or companies who are seeking to start a program should have their respective juvenile program coordinators meet regularly to share and discuss best practices with each other.

The Dumfries-Triangle Rescue Squad (DTRS) should reconsider having a juvenile program or ensure clear limitations are imposed to limit the juvenile member from hazardous situations. Additionally, the DTRS should consider lobbying for similar legislation to protect rescue squads from criminal repercussions. Since the VOEMS does not define ages for observers or assistants, language should limit participation to 16 years of age or older.

Career and volunteer officers should be made aware of the psychological factors inherent to teenagers and strictly supervise activities involving juvenile members. Officer training should include formal education on both the state and local laws for using juvenile members.

Member companies should have at a minimum, a designated coordinator for their program and the program should be formally adopted by the member company by-laws. In addition to the by-laws, operational guidelines or SOPs should be developed and strictly adhered to for training and emergency response activities.

Juvenile members should be incorporated into both career and volunteer programs. It is imperative however that supervision is provided through all activities to ensure their safety and success. The future of the fire and rescue service depends on juvenile programs for their own growth and system survival.

The success of any fire and rescue crew remains dependent on the leadership of the officer and the trust of the crew members. This relationship and teamwork is

developed over time through working and training together. This commitment is not age dependent but base more on the maturity and the willingness of the veteran members to share their knowledge and experience to develop new members whether they are 17 or 37 years old.

The fire and rescue profession is often referenced as a family and with any family, we expect that growth and nurturing takes place on continuous bases. A retiring captain I worked for said it best in a departing voice mail he left all the members of my department. He said, “we are here for two reasons, the first is to respond to these 9-1-1 calls and second to take care of each other” (personal communications, Captain Richard (Ace) Simpson, June 29, 2003). We should all strive to do the right thing and never lose sight of what is important. These young people will soon be in positions of authority in the fire and rescue system and reflect on their early fire and rescue involvement. Chief Ricky Arrington of the Occoquan Woodbridge Lorton (OWL) Volunteer Fire Department said, “I don’t know where I would be today if it were not for the fire department junior program” (personal communications, April 18, 2003).

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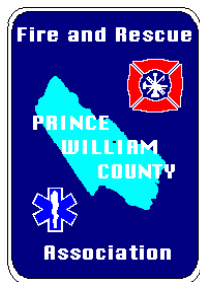
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Appendix A



COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM

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(703) 792-6800 Metro 631-1703 FAX (703) 792-7691

Chief Richard Arrington
Chief Miles Young
Chief Randy Baum
Chief Richard Bird
Chief Kevin Dickey

Chief Jeffery Hardesty
Chief Craig Griffith
Chief Kenneth Glufling
Chief Joseph Peters

FIRE AND RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Chief Thomas Pescitani
Chief Thomas Pitkin
Division Chief Thomas Hajduk
Technician II Frank Orifice

Chief Mary Beth Michos
Chairman

Chief Brian Hickerson
Vice Chairman

September 10, 2003

TO: Board of Directors
Fire and Rescue Association

FROM: Chief Joe Peters, Chairman
Juvenile Firefighter Research Group

SUBJECT: Juvenile Firefighter Research Position Paper

Background

Following the implementation of the 24-hour career staffing at the Coles District Volunteer Fire Department, questions were brought forward by a career shift lieutenant about the use of junior volunteer members. The officer was concerned about the lawful use of junior members in hazardous environments such as interior firefighting. Battalion Chief Strawderman brought this issue to the Fire and Rescue Association Executive Committee on February 19, 2003.

Members of the Executive Committee and other Board of Directors present at the meeting discussed their department's practices. Questions were raised from some members that were developing or re-organizing their junior programs. The Fire and Rescue Association has limited influence in establishing policy for member volunteer companies. The Executive Committee decided that a research group would gather facts about the legal use of junior members, survey member

companies to determine current practices, and to survey similar combination fire and rescue departments in the Commonwealth of Virginia for their practice. In addition to this research, Battalion Chief Strawderman has selected this topic to further research for his required Applied Research Project for the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program.

Research Method

A research group was assembled to conduct this study and comprised of the following members:

- Chief Joe Peters, Stonewall Jackson Volunteer Fire Department, Chairman
- President Debra Wood, Coles District Volunteer Fire Department
- Battalion Chief Steve Strawderman, Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue, Operations Division
- Lieutenant Steve Gilbert, Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue, Cadet Program Coordinator
- Assistant Chief Jerry Deem, Yorkshire Volunteer Fire Department
- Dave Williams, OWL Volunteer Fire Department, Junior Advisor

Federal, state, and local laws, standards and polices were researched by the group. These areas were further broken down to include, Labor Industry, Code of Virginia, Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Service, and Prince William County Code. Information was sought by searching the Internet, personal correspondence, and referencing available published materials.

The County Attorney's office was asked for a legal interpretation and opinion on the above documents to ensure the group was clear on the appropriate application for our system. Additionally, previously requested opinions in this matter were researched.

A survey instrument was developed for determining current practice of the 12 volunteer companies and similar combination fire and rescue departments in Virginia. The survey of outside departments was limited to Virginia due to the differences of state laws in this matter.

Published journal articles and applied research projects available from the National Fire Academy Learning Resource Center were obtained for evaluation and reference of other programs and practices.

The Fire and Emergency Services Exploring program was presented to the group by Mr. Don Reinhardt, Director of Learning for Life from the National Capital Area Council, Boy Scouts of America. Presentation materials provided an insightful look at a national program that could be utilized by volunteer companies with junior or cadet programs.

Scientific research on the teenage brain was gained from two books, *The Primal Teen* written by Barbara Strauch and *The Secret Life of the Brain* by Dr. Richard Restak. Both books provided insight to the teenage thought process and behavior.

Research Findings

Survey Results of Current Practices

The 12 Prince William County volunteer fire and rescue companies were sent a survey to ascertain the current use of juvenile fire and rescue members in the county. A spreadsheet was developed for reference of the results (Table 1). A summary of these results is provided.

- Ten of the 12 County volunteer companies have youth programs.
- Ages range from 14-18 years of age.
- Four companies have bylaws for their program.
- Ten companies have a designated person in charge of the program.
- All companies require a completed permission form.
- All companies have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0.
- Four companies require physicals for their members.
- Five companies have standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- All companies report they provide direct supervision.
- Three companies use juvenile members as primary staffing.
- Half of the companies report restrictions however were not clearly defined.

Thirteen Virginia combination fire and rescue department were identified using a population served criteria greater than 84,000 in the National Directory of Fire Chiefs and EMS Administrators. A cover letter and survey was sent to the chiefs of these respective departments with eight departments responding. A spreadsheet was developed for reference of the results (Table 2). A summary of these results is provided.

- Eight departments responded to the survey.
- Four currently have a juvenile program.
- The age for all these programs were 16 to 17 years of age.
- Half of the departments have bylaws.
- Only Fairfax County reported having a designated person in charge of the program.
- All the departments require a completed permission form.
- Three of the four reported a minimum GPA or passing.
- Three of the four require a physical. Roanoke County only included firefighting.
- Three of the four have SOPs.
- All departments require direct supervision.

- None of the departments use juvenile members as primary staffing.
- All reported having restrictions relative to hazardous activities.

Legal Precedence

Federal regulations through the U.S. Department of Labor and the Fair Labor Standards Act provide limitations to protect young workers from certain hazardous employment. Youth 14 and 15 years old may not work in the manufacturing or mining industries or in any hazardous job. Youth 16 and 17 years old may perform any non-hazardous job as defined in the list of hazardous occupations below:

- Communications or public utility jobs;
- Construction or repair jobs;
- Driving a motor vehicle or helping a driver;
- Manufacturing and mining occupations;
- Power-driven machinery or hoisting apparatus other than typical office machines;
- Processing occupations;
- Public messenger jobs;
- Transporting of persons or property;
- Workrooms where products are manufactured, mined or processed;
- Warehousing and storage.

Additional definitive language is referenced from the U.S. Department of Labor website at www.dol.gov/elaws in the Prohibited Occupations for Non-Agricultural Employees section.

In Federal Regulation 29 CFR 570.120, additional “particularly hazardous or detrimental to health or well-being for minors 16 and 17 years of age” occupation are identified as *hazardous occupation orders* that do not include fire and rescue specific activities.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has no specific regulations regarding minors since OSHA regulations apply to all employees regardless of age” according to Assistant Secretary Charles Jeffress in a letter to Senator Charles Grassley dated November 10, 1999 which is posted on OSHA’s web site as a standard interpretation reference at www.osha.gov.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) published a special hazard review titled Child Labor Research Needs and is accessible through the NIOSH web site at www.NIOSH/SHR/childlaborresearchneed.org reporting occupational injury and illness data for youths. The leading causes of death were incidents involving motor vehicles, machines, electrocutions, and homicides. There were no specific reference in this report of fire and rescue

related activities causing death. It should be noted that the study does however identify the psychological factors consistent with adolescence.

The terms most often used to describe the psychological attributes of adolescence are poor judgement, sensation seeking, poor risk assessment, vulnerability to peer pressure, incomplete self-image, pressure to excel, need to prove independence and maturity, desire to conform, and (conversely) need to rebel.

This report further hypothesizes that the “general lack of work experience coupled with normal adolescent psychological development places adolescents at high risk of injury on the job.” There will be additional discussion on this issue later in this paper.

Finally, NIOSH recognized work organization issues such as the lack of training, supervision, and inappropriate work assignments as factors that led to fatal incidents involving young workers. Safety violations were issued by OSHA in 70% of these incidents with 41% of the incidents in violation of the child labor laws.

The Code of Virginia §40.1-100 Certain employment prohibited or limited, adopts and expands upon the federal standards cited previously. Particular sections of this section that applies to fire and rescue are:

2. At operating or assisting or assisting to operate any grinding, abrasive, polishing or buffing machine, any power driven metal forming, punching or shearing machine, power-driven bakery machine, power-driven paper products machine, any *circular saws* [emphasis added], band saw or guillotine shear, or any power-driven woodworking machine;

7. As a driver or a helper on a truck or commercial vehicle of more than two axles. The provision of this paragraph shall not apply to the drivers of school buses;

More strict language is found in § 40.1-100.1 Employment where hazard capable of causing serious physical harm or death.

No person shall employ, suffer, or permit a child to work in any gainful occupation that exposes such child to a recognized hazard capable of causing serious physical harm or death to such child...

One of the most powerfully worded statues charging adults with the welfare of children appears in § 40.1-103. Cruelty and injuries to children.

It shall be unlawful for any person employing or having the custody of any child willfully or negligently to cause or permit the life of such child to be endangered or the heath of such child to be injured, or willfully or

negligently to cause or permit such child to be placed in a situation that is life, health, or morals may be endangered, or to cause or permit such child to be overworked, tortured, tormented, mutilated, beaten, or cruelly treated. Any person violating this section shall be guilty of a Class 6 felony.

Exemptions are granted to volunteer fire companies in § 40.1-79.1 Exemptions from chapter generally; local ordinance authorizing participation in volunteer fire company activities.

- C. Any county, city, or town may authorize by ordinance any person sixteen years of age or older, with parental or guardian approval, to work with or participate fully in all activities of a volunteer fire company, provided such person has attained certification under National Fire Protection Association 1001, level one, fire fighter standards, as administered by the Department of Fire Programs.
- D. Any trainer or instructor of such persons mentioned in subsection A of this section and any member of a paid or volunteer fire company who supervises any such persons shall be exempt from the provisions of § 40.1-103 when engaged in activities of a volunteer fire company, provided that the volunteer fire company or the governing body of such county, city, or town has purchased insurance which provides coverage for injuries to or the death of such persons in their performance of activities under this section.

It should be noted that in this exemption, the identification of volunteer rescue squads and any reference to comparable EMS training is omitted from this section but is addressed in § 40.1-79.01. Exemptions from the chapter generally.

- B. Nothing in this chapter, except the provisions of §§ 40.1-100 A, 40.1.100.1, 40.1-100.2 and 40.1-103, shall apply to:

4. A child participating in the activities of a volunteer rescue squad.

Though this exemption allows “a child” (not fully defined by age) to be involved with the rescue squad, the sections of the Code of Virginia identified as exceptions does not allow “a child” to be involved in activities that would or could harm them in any way. Thus, criminal charges could be placed on the person in charge of the child during activities causing harm.

Prince William Board of County Supervisors adopted by ordinance, Chapter 9 of the County Code, Fire and Rescue.... In § 9-10. Certain minors allowed to work with volunteer fire companies adopted the Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1 with the exception of a critical amendment since the adoption of the County Code in 1982. The additional provision of the exemption in subsection B reads, “provided that

the volunteer fire company or the governing body of such county, city, or town has purchased insurance which provides coverage for injuries to or the death of such persons in their performance of activities under this section.” Those volunteer companies represented on the research group reported that all members are carried by the respective company’s insurance carrier.

Prince William County Attorney’s Office was asked to opine on the *Restrictions on “Junior” Members of Volunteer Fire Companies during Career Hours* by Division Chief McGee in April 2000. Senior Assistant County Attorney Ross Horton provided a detail analysis of the applicable laws in his official response dated April 13, 2000.

Upon review of this document by the committee, it was felt that an updated opinion was needed to verify and update any laws previously opined on. Battalion Chief Strawderman developed a request through Chief Mary Beth Michos to clarify the adoption process of the County Code, Chapter 9, the statutes exempting “fire companies” were not available to a rescue squad, clarification of the Code of Virginia supercedes the Virginia Administrative Code and permission to share a hard copy of the April 13, 2000 opine from Ross Horton.

Assistant County Attorney Jeffrey Notz’s response dated May 29, 2003 and subsequent amendment dated June 12, 2003 offer further clarification to the comprehensive response previously provided by Ross Horton. A copy of these documents will be made available to Fire and Rescue Board of Directors upon request. Highlights of both documents follows;

- Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1 provides the statute to allow the use of 16 and 17 year olds in fire fighting activities if; the volunteer fire company requires parent or guardian permission for the minor to participate, if they are fully certified as a Virginia Fire Fighter Level 1 as administered by the Department of Fire Programs, and if the volunteer company includes insurance coverage to these members. Each volunteer fire company needs to maintain proof of the aforementioned certifications and parent or guardian permission, with an expressed documentation of the assumed risk of the activities involved in the unfortunate event a significant incident occurred.
- Volunteer Rescue Squads are not included in the exemption provided in Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1. In fact, § 40.1-79.01 only allows a minor to participate in activities but still applies those sections dealing with hazardous environments or causing harm to a child. Members under the age of 18 should be restricted from participating in any hazardous activities. Code of Virginia §40.1-103 may apply to a volunteer rescue squad if a minor is injured or killed while involved in emergency incidents.

- Currently Prince William County has only two departments that are exclusively fire or rescue, Dumfries-Triangle Volunteer Fire Department and Dumfries-Triangle Rescue Squad respectively. It is the opinion that the remaining companies that provide both services are held to the § 40.1-79.1. Those members allowed to function as observers or assistants on EMS units may not be exposed to hazards that could cause harm or death as identified in §§ 40.1-100(A), 40.100.1, and 40.1-103.
- The current County Code, Chapter 9, § 9-10, adopted in 1982, does not include the amendments to Code of Virginia § 40.1-79.1 to provide the full legal protection under the code to the volunteer fire company. Revision to this section is highly recommended.
- Sovereign immunity may protect the County and its employee from tort liability for simple negligence, however, it may not provide full protection from statutory civil penalties under § 40.1-113 or criminal prosecution under § 40.1-103.
- FLSA implications are triggered by the broad definition of “employment” within the Act. Interpretation of this definition may be determined based upon the six part test as a “trainee” or a “volunteer.”

State Training Standards

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs provided current adjunct instructors with a CD ROM with the most current Administrative Policies and Guidelines. Section 7, Junior Firefighter Programs, begins with reference to the State Department of Labor and Industry, Rule No. 17 – Firefighting (Revised June 30, 1981) and cites the following prohibited activities.

- 7-1.1.2 The following activities involving firefighting are prohibited:
- c. Minors, 16 and 17 years of age, shall not enter a burning structure.
 - d. The term “burning structure” as used in this restriction shall not include a noncombustible structure such as an approved burn building which contains burning materials.
 - e. Minors, 14 and 15 years of age, shall not participate in Firefighting or support activities at the fire scene, enter a burning structure, enter a structure which contains burning materials, or engage in any other acts prohibited in the Rules and Regulations.
 - f. Minors under 14 years of age shall not participate in any practical training evolutions related to firefighting.

The Department of Fire Programs cites § 40.1-79.1 that allows localities to adopt an ordinance allowing an exemption to the above section as it pertains to 16 and 17 year olds only.

The Department of Fire Programs established official policy on the use of junior firefighters in Section 7-3.

7-3 Virginia Department of Fire Programs Rules for Junior Firefighters.

- 7-3.1.4 Live fire training evolutions involving Junior Firefighters (minors 16 & 17 years of age) are subjected to the following restrictions:
- 7-3.1.5 If the Junior Firefighter (minors 16 & 17 years of age) DOES NOT possess a current Virginia Firefighter I certification then burn evolutions are limited to approved burn buildings (no acquired structures). If the Junior Firefighter (minors 16 & 17 years of age) DOES possess a current Virginia Firefighter I certification BUT the local ordinance as referenced in Section 7-2 of the Fire Instructor Manual is NOT in effect, burn evolutions are limited to approved burn buildings (no acquired structures).
- 7-3.1.6 If the Junior Firefighter (minors 16 & 17 years of age) DOES possess a current Virginia Firefighter I certification, AND the local ordinance as referenced in Section 7-2 of the Fire Instructor Manual IS in effect, the Junior Firefighter (minors 16 & 17 years of age) is permitted to participate in all approved live burn evolutions.

The intent of the County Code Section 9-10 complies in part with Section 7-3.3 above with the exceptions of the adoption of § 40.1-79.1 amendments added since the County Code adoption in 1982.

The Virginia Emergency Medical Services Regulations, 12 VAC 5-31 provides for the use of minors in a limited capacity as described in the following sections:

12 VAC 5-31-900. General Requirements.

1. Be a minimum of 16 years of age. (An EMS agency may have associated personnel who are less than 16 years of age). This person is not allowed to participate in any EMS response, or any training program or other activity that may involve

exposure to a communicable disease, hazardous chemical or other risk of serious injury.

12 VAC 5-31-1200. Minimum age of EMS vehicle personnel.

- C. EMS personnel serving in a required staffing position on an EMS vehicle shall be at a minimum 18 years of age.
- D. An EMS agency may allow assistants or observers in addition to the required personnel. An assistant or observer must be at a minimum 16 years of age. (Note: There is no guidelines published to the limitations of activities beyond those identified in the previous mentioned Code of Virginias.

12 VAC 5-31-1450. BLS student enrollment requirements.

- 1. Be a minimum of 16 years of age at the beginning date of the certification program. If less than 18 years of age, he shall provide the course coordinator with a completed parental permission form with the signature of a parent or guardian verifying approval for enrollment in the course.

National Youth Model

The Fire and Rescue Service Exploring program offers an affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America through the Learning for Life Program. Mr. Don Reinhardt, Director of Learning for Life from the National Capital Area Council attended a group meeting and reviewed the advantages of this program to fire and rescue departments. Additional information gained from their web site at www.learning-for-life.org/exploring/fire/main provided program description and guidelines.

“Fire and Emergency Service Exploring is a worksite-based program” and is designed for an age group from 14 (and completed the eighth grade) or 15 to 21 years of age. These Explorer posts “help youth gain insight into a variety of programs that offer hands-on-career activities.” The five areas of emphasis are career opportunities, service learning, leadership experience, life skills, and character education.

Much of the research at the Learning Research Center at the National Fire Academy led to journal articles and applied research projects written on the advantages of the Exploring program to the fire and rescue services. The fact that the program is organized through a national organization and provides additional insurance coverage in excess of the organization’s policy is appealing. Additionally, policies and guidelines are already established for the program making the implementation relatively simple without re-creating the wheel.

The *Guide to Safe Learning for Life Activities* establishes the guidelines because of the real need to protect participants from potential hazards. The bases of these guidelines are based upon the idea that qualified supervision and discipline are the foundations that will make all Learning for Life activities safe.

Issues relative to Fire and Emergency Services are specifically addressed. They encourage investigating the state child labor laws for the legalities of participants under the age of 18. Previously reviewed Code of Virginia provide language specific to “fire companies” and “rescue squads.” Learning for Life recommends that each department develop a solid policy defining what the Explorer may or may not do in all aspects of fire and rescue activities (to include emergency response).

Psychological Factors have been identified that stress caution in allowing the juvenile firefighter too much exposure to the risks of firefighting. These concerns are of no fault of the youth but is linked to the development phase their brains are undertaking. The chemical “dopamine” seems to be a factor along with the immature frontal lobe of their brain. The following are key citations from books that were referenced.

In her book, *The Primal Teen: What the New Discoveries about the Teenage Brain Tell Us about Our Kids*, Barbara Strauch references the work of many experts in the area of adolescent brain development and behavior. Chapter Nine titled “Risky Business” studied the risk-taking behavior commonly found in teenagers pointing to the “the long-held belief that teenagers do dumb and dangerous things because they think they’ll never die or will live relatively safely, at least through their twenties. They think they’re invincible.”

Susan Millstein, a psychologist at the University of San Francisco, found that they feel no more immortal than the rest of us. “Teenagers sometimes don’t recognize different options, and can often be forced into making poor decisions in situations that are both emotional and stressful.”

Some neuroscientists, like Chuck Nelson, think brain science has already given us some clues to risky behavior in adolescents.

After all, one primary tool teenagers use in figuring out whether to climb out a window, have sex, or pop a pill is the prefrontal cortex, that specialized brain part that acts like a policeman and says: “Stop!” If that region is still not fully developed in adolescents, as new research indicates is the case, “that means they just may not see the consequences of their action.

Paul Grasby, a psychiatrist at Imperial College in London published his finding of his study on dopamine in the journal *Nature* in 1998. “There is now a common

thread of evidence...that links dopamine and a ‘predisposition or a biasing’ toward certain risk-taking behavior.”

Nora Volkow, a neuroscientist at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York notes though precise levels of dopamine in the teenagers brain is not measurable there is proof that dopamine levels decline from childhood to adulthood indicating teens have a higher level of dopamine than adults. She continued to say, “higher dopamine levels may leave adolescents much more susceptible to a range of stimulations—and may be one reason why drinking, drug taking, as well as novelty and risk-seeking begins a steep increase in the teen years.”

Scott Lane, a neuropharmacologist at the University of Texas, reported clear evidence that “ adolescents in general are higher-risk-takers than adults and that something makes some teenagers take bigger risks than others...”

Peter Jensen, a child psychologist at Columbia University acknowledges:

One way teenagers push our buttons, of course is acting downright brainless, taking what seems to us to be dumb and unnecessary risks. But this, too, can be looked at in a different way. If, for instance—as everyone from human brain scientists to those who deal with adolescents rats and monkeys tells us—teenagers are not only attracted to risky behavior, but such behavior is a natural and necessary evolution in their development, it’s time we understand that—and expect it.

He continued to note that many states have made changes to driving laws that has increased ages or limited the number of teens that may ride in a vehicle with a teen driver.

In his book, *The Secret Life of the Brain*, Dr. Richard Restak noted from Jay Giedd, of the National Institute of Health that, “The impulsiveness, the disregard for consequences, and the rapid and unexpected emotional storms of adolescence may be in part related to the immaturity of the frontal lobes of the brain.”

Cultural Changes

Cultural shift from the practices necessary to ensure adequate response from volunteer companies have evolved from the days of sounding a fire alarm siren located atop the fire station to alert members of a call to the more current practice of assigning duty crews to provide relatively seamless coverage on nights, weekends, and holidays.

The reliance on juvenile members to make up minimum staffing is much less predominate today. While the Code of Virginia still provides exemption to the child labor laws, there remains the moral and ethical responsibility to keep these minors safe. Training is available to these members the same as adult members.

Checks and balances must be in place to ensure these high school students are successful in their required studies before taking on the burden of fire and rescue training.

Incident types have changed significantly in severity and magnitude. The increase in population, traffic, construction, housing density, and less stringent building construction standards have increase the number of complex and multi-alarm incidents.

Changing fireground strategies and tactics have led to more aggressive interior firefighting to reach the seat of the fire more quickly to limit the spread of fire. Advancements in firefighting gear and equipment have allowed the firefighter to remain in hotter environments for longer periods of time. The inherent risks associated with these tactics are building collapse or becoming separated or lost in the structure. Added consideration for firefighter safety and accountability has taxed the incident commander to ensure adequate and appropriate resources are available.

The concerns raised from the above factors have prompted the “two in two out” rule developed by OSHA in (29CFR1910.134) requirement and the fire service has embraced the rapid intervention team (RIT) concept to be ready to rescue our own in the case of collapse of other types of emergency while operating in a hazardous environment.

Crew Development and Dynamics are critical to the effectiveness of the tactical unit. Time, training, and experience working together develop the teamwork and camaraderie to work well as a crew. This is true whether the crewmember is 17 years old or 27 years old. Every individual member of the crew brings a unique aspect to the group. Officers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained over time and experience that is shared with the crew. New knowledge and skills are built upon with changes in equipment, techniques, and methods. This knowledge is synthesized in classroom and practical drill evolutions. Crewmembers become proven in the eyes of the other crewmembers, which instills trust and confidence in one’s ability. While working and living together during assigned duty periods, relationships are formed between these crews that are compared to “family.” Thus the care and nurturing of new members lead to a commitment to the welfare and competency of all.

The bottom line is until trust and crew cohesiveness is developed, performance is affected. The use of any new member regardless of age is guarded until they prove their ability and are accepted into the crew. This is beyond meeting minimum training standards and presenting a certificate. The relationship and rapport within the crew has to be mutual.

Safety should never be sacrificed. Assigning crews should ensure a degree of competence to ensure success and not lead to failure. The development of new

members regardless of age should be an individual process and not lumped into a “one size fits all” mentality. This is particularly true with the young inexperienced firefighter that lacks the maturity and life experience to comprehend the risks of this profession. Strong leadership and supervision is a requirement that must be accountable. Likewise the expectation of the supervisor and the young firefighter must be clearly established in operational guidelines and standard operating policies and procedures. The failure to follow these written rules must have consequences and enforced.

Maturity, competency, and confidence are developed with time, exposure, and exposure to a positive learning environment and quality leaders and mentors. This grooming during these early times through a safe involvement in fire and rescue will certainly pay back significant benefits by producing a very dedicated member of the fire and rescue system whether career or volunteer.

Table 1
PWC Volunteer Company
Survey Results

Department	OWL	DTVFD	DTRS	GDVFD	NVFD	CDVFD	LJVFD	YVFD	DCVFR	SJVFD	EVFD	BVFD
Program for Youth	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Name of Program	Junior Program		Juniors	Junior Members	Junior Program	Junior	Cadet Program	Junior	Cadet		No response	Junior Member
Bylaws	No		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		No	No
Designated person	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No
Age Requirement - min	15 yrs 6 mos		16 yrs	14 yrs	16 yrs	16 yrs	16 yrs	16 yrs	16 yrs		16 yrs	16 yrs
Age Requirement – max	17 yrs 9 mos		18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs		18 yrs	18
Written Permission	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Grade Point Average Requirement	Yes (2.5)		Yes (2.0)	Yes	Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)*		Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)
Physical Required	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		No	No
Training Requirement	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No response
SOPs	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		No	No response
Direct Supervision Required	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Supervision Provided By	Ops. Members		Ops Members	Ops Member	Ops. Member	Ops. Member	No Response	Ops Member	Ops Member		Ops. Member	Ops. Member
Primary Staffing	Yes		No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		No	No
Restrictions	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		Yes	No response
Type of Restrictions	Driving		Not provided	Not provided	Not provided			Red Hat			Red Hat	
Senior Member Age	17 yrs 9 mos		18	18	18	18	18	18	18		18	17

*Advanced Placement (AP) course grades are credited to the next grade

Table 2
Virginia Department
Survey Results

Department	Spotsylvania	Va. Beach	Roanoke Co.	Chesapeake	Hampton City	Chesterfield	Fairfax Co.	Loudoun Co.
Population	102,000	420,000	84,000	Not Reported	142,000	370,000	1,000,000	Not Reported
Type of System	Combination	Combination	Combination	Not Reported	Combination	Combination	Combination	Not Reported
# of Volunteer Companies	Four	Eleven	Eleven	Not Reported	Six	12	12	Not Reported
# of Volunteer Members	400	64	280	Not Reported	300	100	350	Not Reported
# of Career Members	75	413	115	Not Reported	237	365	1,250	Not Reported
Program for youth	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Bylaws	Yes		Yes			No	No	
Designated person	Not Reported		Not Reported			No	Yes	
Age Requirement	16 to 17		16 to 17			16 to 17	16 +	
Written Permission	Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Grade Point Ave.	2.0		Not Reported			Passing	2.0	
Physical Required	Not Reported		Yes (FF Only)			Yes	Yes	
Training Requirement	FF and EMT		Same as Sr.					
SOPs	Not Reported		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Direct Supervision Required	Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Supervision Provided By	Operational		Operational			Operational	Either	
Primary Staffing	No		No			No	No	
Restrictions	Yes		Varies			Yes	Yes	
Type of Restrictions	Not Allowed in I.D.L. H.		Interior Firefighting			Burning Structure or Exposure to Toxic Substances	Not allowed to participate in Firefighting or EMS	

Roanoke (City) Fire-EMS Department responded to the survey as a career only department and was excluded from this table.

Appendix B

VOLUNTEER COMPANY JUNIOR PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

VOLUNTEER COMPANY:

QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED BY:

Phone Number:

E-Mail Address:

1. Does your volunteer company have a program for youth under the age of 18?

Yes No

2. What is the name of your program?

3. Does the junior program have an adopted set of bylaws?

Yes No

If yes, the research group would appreciate a copy for reference.

4. Is there a designated person responsible for the program?

Yes No

If yes, is this person an operational member or administrative member?

5. What is the age criterion for your program?

6. Is written parental permission required?

Yes No

If yes, the research group would appreciate a copy for reference.

7. Is a minimum grade point average (GPA) required to participate in the junior program?

Yes No

If yes, what is the required GPA?

8. What hours may junior members be at the station during the week? (Sunday – Thursday)

9. What hours may junior members be at the station during the weekend? (Friday and Saturday)

10. Do these hours change when school is not in session during the holidays?

Yes No

If yes, what are the hours?

11. Do these hours change during the summer months?

Yes No

If yes, what are the hours?

12. Are junior members allowed to stay overnight at the station?

Yes No

If yes, is written parental permission required to stay overnight? Yes No

If yes, the research group would appreciate a copy for reference.

13. Is a physical required?

Yes No

14. Does your program follow FRA Policy 4.5.1 Uniform Rank Structure, 1995?

Yes No

15. What are your program's training requirements?

16. Are there written standard operating procedures for the program?

Yes No

If yes, the research group would appreciate a copy for reference.

17. Is there direct supervision during training and incidents?

Yes No

If yes, is the supervision provided by an:

Operational Member Administrative Member

18. Are junior members including as primary staffing?

Yes No

19. Do you restrict your members from certain types of activities such as interior firefighting, confined space, emergency vehicle driver, etc?

Yes No

Please use this space for additional information you would like to provide about the company's junior program.

Appendix C

JUNIOR FIRE AND RESCUE PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

(For purpose of this survey, the term junior refers to any fire and rescue member under the age of 18)

DEPARTMENT NAME:

QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED BY:

PHONE NUMBER:

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

POPULATION SERVED:

TYPE OF SYSTEM:

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER COMPANIES IN YOUR SYSTEM:

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER MEMBERS:

NUMBER OF CAREER MEMBERS:

7. Does your department have a program for youth under the age of 18? (if no, stop here and return this survey)

Yes No

8. What is the name of your program?

9. Does the junior program have an adopted set of bylaws?

Yes No

If yes, we would appreciate a copy for reference.

10. Is there a designated person responsible for the program?

Yes No

If yes, is this person an operational member or administrative member?

11. What is the age criterion for your program?

12. Is written parental permission required?

Yes No

If yes, we would appreciate a copy of the permission form for reference.

5. Is a minimum grade point average (GPA) required to participate in the junior program?

Yes No

If yes, what is the required GPA?

6. What hours may junior members be at the station during the week? (Sunday – Thursday)

7. What hours may junior members be at the station during the weekend? (Friday and Saturday)

8. Do these hours change when school is not in session during the holidays?

Yes No

If yes, what are the hours?

10. Do these hours change during the summer months?

Yes No

If yes, what are the hours?

11. Are junior members allowed to stay overnight at the station?

Yes No

If yes, is written parental permission required to stay overnight? Yes No

If yes, we would appreciate a copy of the permission form for reference.

12. Is a physical required?

Yes No

13. What are your program's training requirements?

14. Are there written standard operating procedures for the program?

Yes No

If yes, we would appreciate a copy for reference.

15. Is there direct supervision during training and incidents?

Yes No

If yes, is the supervision provided by an:

Operational Member Administrative Member

14. Are junior members including as primary staffing of tactical units?

Yes No

15. Do you restrict your members from certain types of activities such as interior firefighting, confined space, emergency vehicle driver, etc?

Yes No

If yes, please list said restrictions.

Please use this space for additional information you would like to provide about the department's junior program.

Thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire. The answers will assist Prince William County with evaluating current and future junior or cadet programs.

Appendix D

PWC Volunteer Company Survey Results

Department	OWL	DTVFD	DTRS	GDVFD	NVFD	CDVFD	LJVFD	YVFD	DCVFR	SJVFD	EVFD	BVFD
Program for Youth	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Name of Program	Junior Program		Juniors	Junior Members	Junior Program	Junior	Cadet Program	Junior	Cadet		No response	Junior Member
Bylaws	No		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		No	No
Designated person	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No
Age Requirement - min	15 yrs 6 mos		16 yrs	14 yrs	16 yrs	16 yrs	16 yrs	16 yrs	16 yrs		16 yrs	16 yrs
Age Requirement – max	17 yrs 9 mos		18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs	18 yrs		18 yrs	18
Written Permission	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Grade Point Average Requirement	Yes (2.5)		Yes (2.0)	Yes	Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)*		Yes (2.0)	Yes (2.0)
Physical Required	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		No	No
Training Requirement	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No response
SOPs	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		No	No response
Direct Supervision Required	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Supervision Provided By	Ops. Members		Ops Members	Ops Member	Ops. Member	Ops. Member	No Response	Ops Member	Ops Member		Ops. Member	Ops. Member
Primary Staffing	Yes		No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		No	No
Restrictions	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		Yes	No response
Type of Restrictions	Driving		Not provided	Not provided	Not provided			Red Hat			Red Hat	
Senior Member Age	17 yrs 9 mos		18	18	18	18	18	18	18		18	17

Appendix E

Virginia Fire and Rescue
Department Survey Results

Department	Spotsylvania	Va. Beach	Roanoke Co.	Chesapeake	Hampton City	Chesterfield	Fairfax Co.	Loudoun Co.
Population	102,000	420,000	84,000	Not Reported	142,000	370,000	1,000,000	Not Reported
Type of System	Combination	Combination	Combination	Not Reported	Combination	Combination	Combination	Not Reported
# of Volunteer Companies	Four	Eleven	Eleven	Not Reported	Six	12	12	Not Reported
# of Volunteer Members	400	64	280	Not Reported	300	100	350	Not Reported
# of Career Members	75	413	115	Not Reported	237	365	1,250	Not Reported
Program for youth	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Bylaws	Yes		Yes			No	No	
Designated person	Not Reported		Not Reported			No	Yes	
Age Requirement	16 to 17		16 to 17			16 to 17	16 +	
Written Permission	Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Grade Point Ave.	2.0		Not Reported			Passing	2.0	
Physical Required	Not Reported		Yes (FF Only)			Yes	Yes	
Training Requirement	FF and EMT		Same as Sr.					
SOPs	Not Reported		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Direct Supervision Required	Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Supervision Provided By	Operational		Operational			Operational	Either	
Primary Staffing	No		No			No	No	
Restrictions	Yes		Varies			Yes	Yes	
Type of Restrictions	Not Allowed in I.D.L..H.		Interior			Burning Structure or Exposure to Toxic Substances	Not allowed to participate in Firefighting or EMS	

Roanoke (City) Fire-EMS Department responded to the survey as a career only department and was excluded from this table.

Appendix F

Research Group Meeting Minutes

Junior Program Task Group
January 31, 2003
Organizational Meeting
Steve Strawderman & Debbie Eaton

Draft for review by the Chief and presentation to the Board of Directors of the Fire and Rescue Association scheduled for February 19, 2003

Purpose/Task: Evaluate the use of under age fire and rescue personnel and recommend a policy position to the Fire and Rescue Association.

Suggested Task Group Members:

Position	Name	Company Representing
Chairman	Miles Young – does not have a junior program at station; URS Cert Board chairman (link to training requirements)	Co. 3-F
	OR Joe Peters – his company is interested in developing a junior program	Co. 11
Staff Rep/Career Operations	Steve Strawderman	DFR
Current Volunteer Junior Program Coordinator	Art Jordon	Co. 16
	OR Dave Williams	OWL
Volunteer Company Administrator	Debra Wood	Co. 6
Volunteer - Operations		
Volunteer - Training		
DFR Cadet Program Coord/Training Division	Steve Gilbert	DFR
FRA Admin Coord	Debbie Eaton	DFR

Junior Program Research Resources:

Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA)
 Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP)
 Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) (rules and regs)
 Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads (VAVRS)
 Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH)
 National Institute Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
 National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) (rules and regs)
 National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)
 National Fire Academy (NFA)
 International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
 International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
 PWC Voluntary Action Center
 PWC Office on Youth
 Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Explorers
 Federal, state and local laws/statutes
 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
 PWC Library Management & Government Information Center (MAGIC)

In-house survey (Draft being developed)

Survey other jurisdictions (Jurisdiction to be identified; Draft to be developed)

Survey to include:

- Form of Fire/Rescue Mgmt: Director, Administrator, Association, Chief
- Who is policymaker of organization: Chief, Board, Association
- What type of system does organization have: combination, career, volunteer
- Demographics: location; jurisdiction's square miles; population served;
Should survey include: age/gender; race/ethnicity ???

Juvenile Firefighter Program Research

March 24, 2003

6:30 P.M.

Stonewall Jackson VFD & RS

Attendees: Steve Strawderman, Jerry Deem, Steve Gilbert, Debra Wood, Debbie Eaton
Excused: Joe Peters

Steve Strawderman opened the meeting by giving an overview of his presentation at the February 19, 2003 Executive Committee meeting. He explained that a situation at Company 6 involving the use of junior members and what duties they may perform on incidents with a career crew lead to the development of this group. Also, if there are different philosophies regarding junior members within our own system, research of the companies' junior programs would help identify those philosophies.

Steve reviewed concerns discussed during the Executive Committee meeting about this group not developing a policy for the Fire and Rescue Association. The goal of the group will be to research what is lawful and develop a position paper stating the group's findings. Steve explained he is using this research project as his final EFO paper.

Much of the research will involve review and interpretation of various local, state, and federal laws. Rules and regulations from associations and organizations will also be reviewed. Steve noted that laws across the states vary significantly.

Steve reviewed the membership of the research group and noted that a volunteer company junior program coordinator and a volunteer to represent training would be beneficial as members of the group. He asked for recommendations to fill those two positions.

Steve has already spent a couple of days doing research at the National Fire Academy and talked with representatives of the Boy Scouts and Explorer Post. He reviewed rules and regulations that he has researched and copied for the project. Information from the State of Virginia Safety and Health Code and the U.S. Department of Labor would be helpful in our research.

Steve stated that once we conclude our research, we will then need to determine how we interface the findings with our combination system.

Two draft surveys were distributed to the group for review and comment. A survey for PWC volunteer company junior programs will be sent to all County volunteer fire and/or rescue companies. Another survey was developed that will be sent to combination system departments within the state. Suggested revisions to the survey included:

- Is a parental permission slip required to sleep over at the station?

- Is a certain minimum grade or GPA required to participate in the program?
- Request a copy of the company's SOPs.

Steve questioned exemptions of volunteer organizations under federal law. He stated that we need to come up with guidance from the labor standards and need to determine current practices within the County.

There was a discussion about the upcoming Department of Fire and Rescue's cadet program. Steve Gilbert gave an overview of the EMT program for the fall 2003 school year and the firefighter program, which will begin in fall 2004.

Steve Strawderman mentioned that there are differences in the state statute between the firefighter side and rescue squad. He reviewed state law for fire companies and rescue squads and the County's code referencing a minor's participation with a volunteer fire company.

Steve Strawderman also mentioned that junior members under the age of 16 (14-16) needs to be addressed. There are state and federal laws specific to that age group along with allowances and restrictions by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

The following assignments were determined.

- Jerry Deem – contact Virginia Safety and Health Code Commission/Department of Labor and Industry for latest manual/update
- Steve Gilbert – contact Steve Small; gather information from VOSH, NIOSH, Virginia Department of Fire Programs (contact Tim Keen for safety and health regulations)
- Debra Wood – contact Mo Stokely for information from an insurance perspective; seek junior coordinator rep from OWL VFD and/or Dale City VFD
- Steve Strawderman – get copy of Emmitsburg paper/questionnaire to Jerry
- Debbie Eaton – finalize surveys for mail out

Note: Jerry suggested sending the survey to Greater Manassas Rescue Squad.

The next meeting date to be determined. (**NOTE:** The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 17, 2003 at Station 11, Stonewall Jackson VFD&RS, at 6:30 p.m.)

Materials Distributed:

- In-house survey
- Statewide survey
- PWC Code Chapter 9, Article VI, Section 9-10
- Junior program notes outlining purpose, members, research resources
- Steve's NFA EFO Project Proposal

Minutes Prepared By Debbie Eaton

Juvenile Firefighter Program Research

April 17, 2003

6:30 P.M.

Stonewall Jackson VFD & RS

Attendees: Joe Peters, Steve Strawderman, Debra Wood, Steve Gilbert, Debbie Eaton

Absent: Jerry Deem

Guest: Don Reinhardt (Director, Learning for Life; Boy Scouts of America)

Steve Strawderman noted that he had a copy of the EFO paper written by BC Hadden Culp on components of a high school cadet program. He had not completed review of the document.

Steve introduced Don Reinhardt, Director of Learning for Life with the Boy Scouts of America. For Mr. Reinhardt's benefit, Steve provided a brief explanation of the research group's history and purpose. An overview of the Fire and Rescue Association and organizational structure were given.

Mr. Reinhardt explained his role and responsibilities with the Learning for Life/Boy Scouts of America organization. He provided the Learning for Life mission statement and explained the program's purpose. Detailed information about the Exploring Program's five areas of emphasis were reviewed as well as the benefits an organization received when partnering with an Exploring Program. Mr. Reinhardt explained how to start an Exploring Program. Insurance coverage was discussed and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was distributed. Steve Strawderman reviewed safety regulations and restrictions, which are posted on the Exploring website. A packet of information was given to the group's members for future reference.

Following Mr. Reinhardt's presentation, there was a general discussion of the explorer program versus an organized volunteer department program. The general consensus of the group was that the objectives are the same in both organizations, i.e., teach fire/rescue skills, encourage formal education, and promote future aspirations in fire/EMS arena.

Dave Williams shared a copy of the Virginia Administrative Code, Chapter 30, Section 10 – Hazardous Occupations and Section 190 – Fire fighting. Dave questioned the code's application to the County's junior programs and asked its significance and relationship to Section 40.1-79.1 VA Code Ann. regarding an exemption from state child labor laws for volunteer fire company activities. The group agreed that an opinion from the County Attorney would be necessary to help understand the allowances and restrictions of the Administrative Code, its relationship to the Virginia State Code, and the affect of other federal regulations and state and local laws on junior programs.

Steve Gilbert reported that the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry is researching his questions concerning VOSH. It is uncertain when he will receive a response. He and Steve Small have missed each other's phone calls and have not talked.

Debra Wood reported that Coles District VFD's insurance company confirmed that their junior members are provided the same coverage as other department members. She reviewed restrictions within the policy. Debra reported that both the insurance representative and Bill Shelton (Virginia Department of Fire Programs) asked if the County sanctioned junior member programs by County ordinance. This question will be included in the opinion from the County Attorney.

Steve Strawderman provided a brief overview of the returned surveys, statewide and within our own organization.

A request from the County Attorney will be written and submitted. Questions will include:

- Clarification of volunteer fire company and volunteer rescue squad as it applies to Prince William County;
- clarification of the Virginia Administrative Code in relationship to the Virginia State Code;
- release of county attorney opinion dated April 2000; and
- sanction of junior member programs by County ordinance.

A request will be made to departments that have not returned the survey.

The next meeting date to be determined. (**NOTE:** The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2003 at Station 11, Stonewall Jackson VFD&RS, at 6:30 p.m.)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Materials Distributed:

- Learning for Life packet of information
- Virginia Administrative Code

Minutes prepared by Debbie Eaton

Juvenile Firefighter Program Research

May 8, 2003

6:30 P.M.

Stonewall Jackson VFD & RS

Attendees: Steve Strawderman, Debra Wood, and Dave Williams

Absent: Joe, Peters, Jerry Deem, Debbie Eaton, and Steve Gilbert

Steve Strawderman welcomed the small group and reported that the County Attorney opinion has not been received. He received approval and distributed the County Attorney opinion from Ross Horton, dated April 2000.

Though Jerry Deems was not in attendance, Dave Williams report that he has had some dialogue with the Virginia Labor and Industry. There is an expected update in the current standard.

Steve Gilbert had staff duty but reported that he has received no update on OSHA position and from the Virginia Labor Industry and Standards.

Dave Williams pointed to issues in Virginia law 40.1-100 that addresses “certain employment prohibited or limited” He has asked for additional information from Virginia Labor Industry Standards.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21, 2003 at Station 11, Stonewall Jackson VFD&RS, at 6:30 p.m.)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Materials Distributed:

County Attorney Opinion, dated April 2000

Minutes prepared by Steve Strawderman

Juvenile Firefighter Program Research

May 29, 2003

6:30 P.M.

Stonewall Jackson VFD & RS

Attendees: Steve Strawderman, Jerry Deem, Steve Gilbert, Debbie Eaton

Absent: Joe Peters, Debra Wood

Steve welcomed the group's members.

The first item distributed to the group was the County Attorney opinion regarding junior firefighter activity, which Steve reviewed with the group. Steve expressed disappointment in the opinion because it did not go into detail or depth. He also was disappointed in the use of the terminology, i.e. "fire squads" instead of "volunteer fire companies." Steve may contact the author of the opinion for follow-up.

Steve distributed a package of materials he compiled from research. (The items are listed at the end of the meeting minutes.) Steve reviewed each item in the package and provided time for the members to review. Included in the package, which was discussed, were the in-house and statewide survey/questionnaire results; research from The Primal Teen and The Secret Life of the Brain, Explorer Post safety issues, and an email from Steve Gilbert.

Steve noted that 14 and 15 year olds are the most difficult ages to work with and, because of this Gainesville District VFD is considering elimination of this age group in their junior program.

Steve developed an outline during the meeting and reviewed it with the members to ensure that all areas/topics were covered.

- I. Survey results
 - a. Local
 - b. State-wide
- II. Legal Precedence
 - a. Federal law
 - b. State law (before/after certification)
 - c. Local law
- III. State Training Regulations
 - a. Va. Dept. of Fire Programs
 - b. Office of Emergency Medical Services
- IV. Psychological
 - a. The Teen Brain
- V. Gut Feeling
- VI. Cultural Shift
 - a. Equipment

- b. Incidents (types)
 - c. Strategies/tactics
- VII. Valuable Resources for the Future
 - a. Junior members as future operational members
- VIII. The Bottom Line
 - a. Safety
 - b. Risk of failure
 - c. Maturity; competency; confidence

There was discussion about members' restrictions before and after certification as well as the changing work ethics with each new generation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 12, 2003 at Station 11, Stonewall Jackson VFD&RS, at 6:30 p.m.

Materials Distributed:

- May 6, 2003 Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Labor and Industry letter
- Code of Virginia §40.1-79.1
- Administrative Code of Virginia 16 VAC15-30-190
- Virginia Department of Fire Programs – Section 7: Junior Firefighter Programs
- Virginia Juvenile Firefighter Survey Spreadsheet
- PWC Juvenile Firefighter Survey Spreadsheet
- USA Today article, “The Teen Brain”
- Notes from psychological research
- Explorer Post safety issues
- Dale City VFD cadet membership information
- Email concerning State laws and regulations for volunteer firefighters under the age of 18
- March 24 and April 17 meeting minutes
- Beginning of the research position paper

Minutes Prepared By Debbie Eaton

Juvenile Firefighter Program Research

June 12, 2003

6:30 P.M.

Stonewall Jackson VFD & RS

Attendees: Joe Peters, Steve Strawderman, Debra Wood, Jerry Deem, Steve Gilbert, Debbie Eaton

Steve welcomed the group's members.

Steve reminded the group of the County Attorney opinion reviewed at the last meeting. Further clarification of the questions first asked to the County Attorney was provided in a memo from Jeffrey Notz, Assistant County Attorney. Steve distributed a copy of the opinion to the members and discussed the explanation. Copies of specific State Code cited in the opinion were also distributed.

Copies of several juvenile firefighter death notifications were distributed.

Dave Williams provided information given to him verbally from the Virginia Department of Labor regarding the Commonwealth's employee law/child labor law for 16 and 17 year olds. Department of Labor restrictions placed on 16 and 17 years olds until completion of Firefighter I was discussed. The Department said they need to get a legal opinion regarding juvenile members at rescue squads. Restrictions of power tool use and riding on three-axle vehicles were discussed.

Dave's information prompted the group to go back and again review the County Attorney's opinion on activities children may participate in as a junior member at a rescue squad, fire company, and fire and rescue company.

Steve noted that the June 12, 2003 County Attorney opinion and comments from the Virginia Department of Labor (provided to Dave) were not included in the paper that will be distributed to the Board of Directors.

A copy of the PWC Juvenile Firefighter Survey and Virginia Juvenile Firefighter Survey were distributed. Results from a recent electronic IAFC survey asking fire departments to describe their youth program were distributed. Full survey results are available at the IAFC website.

Steve distributed copies of his paper and asked everyone to review it and notify him anything that needed to be changed/corrected.

The meeting was concluded by Steve asking the group if we answered the questions and met the tasks given to the group. The members agreed we did.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Materials Distributed:

- Junior Firefighter Activity County Attorney Opinion
- Code of Virginia Sections 40.1-100; 40.1-100.1; 40.1-100.2; 40.1-103

- PWC Juvenile Firefighter Survey
- Virginia Juvenile Firefighter Survey
- *On Scene* Article
- Position Paper

Minutes Prepared By Debbie Eaton