

Union Center Fire Company Inc.



Orientation Packet

-It's All About Attitude-

Revised June 2011

Table of Contents:

Introduction	3
Who we are	4
Company Structure.....	5
Membership Classifications/Probation.....	6
Fire Operations & Types of Alarms.....	7
EMS Operations.....	8
Stations.....	9
Station Access.....	10
Apparatus.....	11
Crew Integrity.....	16
Radio Communications.....	17
Response to Alarms.....	18
Trainings/Service Hours.....	19
Safety.....	20
Meetings.....	21
Company Expectations.....	22
Conclusion.....	24



Welcome to the Union Center Fire Company!

As a new member, you will have many questions in the first few months. This booklet will explain many things that you need to understand. As a member of this Company, you are welcome to all it has to offer. Any of the Officers or fellow members will be glad to answer any questions you may have at any time.

In joining the Union Center Fire Company, you become among the latest in a long line of fellow citizens, from various walks of life, who have served our community through the Volunteer Fire Service. We hope that your affiliation with us is a long, rewarding, and satisfying one!

This booklet is designed as resource tool for new members and does NOT override any Standing Orders, Policies, Procedures, Operating Guidelines, or the By-Laws.



Who we are

Our Fire Company was founded in 1947 by a dedicated and determined group of citizens, many of whom had served our country during the Second World War, who saw the need to provide local fire protection in the Union Center area, which was then very rural and removed from “civilization”. These founders mortgaged their own homes and properties to pay for the building materials for our first fire station, located at 1805 Union Center-Maine Hwy (Route 26 Station), which they built with their own hands, by the light of their car headlights, after finishing a full day’s work at their regular jobs and/or farms! Over the years, this station was expanded to meet the needs of the community and the Company, and in early 2007 was replaced with a completely new building located at 1811 Union Center-Maine Hwy (the site of the original station is now a parking lot for the new one). As the population grew and shifted to the North Side area, a second station was needed. A two-bay station was built in 1977 at 1209 Taft Ave, which in the 1990s was upgraded to a four-bay station.

The Company started a First Aid Team in the mid 1960’s, and in 1987 a NYS-recognized EMS First Response Team was formed. The team is made up of personnel with CPR training, New York State Certified First Responders, Emergency Medical Technicians, and Paramedics.

During our Fire Company’s over 60 year history, countless members have carried on a tradition of community service, as our area has steadily grown into thriving suburban residential neighborhoods nestled amid the rolling hills. As our population has grown, and our neighborhoods have become more densely settled, the demand for fire and emergency medical services has also increased steadily. One thing that has not changed: now, as 60 years ago, each and every one of our Fire Company members is an unpaid volunteer!

The Union Center Fire Company is an independent not-for-profit corporation, governed by our own Board of Directors, which is elected by the Membership. We provide fire protection under contracts with the towns of Union and Maine, which in turn provide us with the majority of our operational funding through payments that are based on the assessed value of the property we protect.



Company Structure

The Board of Directors consists of a President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and a Director at Large. The Board is ultimately responsible for the financial and other business aspects of the Company, and for the enforcement of its bylaws.

The daily operations and services the Company provides are under the leadership of its Line Officers, which consist of the Chief (53), 1st Assistant Chief (53A), 2nd Assistant Chief (53B), Day Captain, Night Captain, 1st Lieutenant, 2nd Lieutenant, EMS Captain, Fire Police Captain, and Safety Officer. Each Officer has a leadership role on an incident scene, as well as administrative responsibilities such as purchasing, maintenance, equipment, training, etc.

All positions on the Board of Directors and Line Officers are elected by the membership, according to qualifications and procedures specified in the Company bylaws.



“Fifty Three” is the Company Identifier. All fire departments in Broome County have a Department Number. This number is used in Rig Numbers and Radio Identifiers.

Ex: Chief 53

Ex: Engine 53



Membership Classifications

Probationary: As a new member, you will be placed on a Probationary period for six months, at the end of which time your performance will undergo a review. Based on the results of this review, your probationary period will end, or be continued for a specified period. During this probationary period, you will undergo trainings here in Union Center, as well as, perhaps, New York State courses hosted by our or other local Fire Departments (depending on the role or roles in the Fire Company that you choose). Use this time to become the Member you wish to become. You may respond to calls as outlined in the Company By-Laws, but your participation may be limited.

Firefighter: Members interested and trained in Firefighting Operations.

- **Green Tag:** Trained for SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) and all Interior Firefighting.
- **Yellow Tag:** Trained for all Exterior Operations and/or Driver/Pumps.
- **Red Tag:** Probationary Firefighter or members with physical limitations.

You will be required to take at least a “Scene Support” course, and/or “Firefighter I” course, or equivalent as outlined in the By-Laws.

EMS: Members interested and trained in Medical Operations become members of the Company’s “Med Team” (EMS First Response Team).

EMS members will be required to take at least a CPR/AED course, and will also be required to take a NYS Certified First Responder course if you wish to function in a team leadership role.

Fire Police: Members interested and trained in Traffic/Crowd Control.

You will be required to take the NY State Fire Police Course.

Auxiliary: Non-Emergency Operations in Firefighter Rehabilitation and Special Events.

Business: Member active in Non-Emergency Business Operations only.



Fire Operations

The Company is responsible for leading all responses to Fire Emergencies in our protection district, and assisting other Agencies in their protection districts, as outlined in a Mutual Aid Policy set forth by the Broome County Fire Advisory Board. Below are some of the common alarm types you may hear us dispatched to, and a brief description.

<i>Alarm Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
House Fire	Fire in a Single or Two Family Residential Dwelling
Building Fire	Fire in a Commercial or Multiple Family Dwelling
MVA	Motor Vehicle Accident With Injuries or Fire Hazards
Brush Fire	Fire in a Field or Wooded area
Residential Alarm	Automatic Alarm in a Single or Two Family Residential Dwelling
Building Alarm	Automatic Alarm in a Commercial or Multiple Family Dwelling
Rescue	Person(s) needing rescue from dangerous situations
Standby	Crews to standby in the Firehouse for possible response to a call
Assist Police	Assisting Police with traffic or gaining entry to a structure
Mutual Aid	Assist to another Fire Dept with specific equipment or apparatus
CO Alarm	Actual or possible Carbon Monoxide problem in a structure
Tree/Wires Down	Tree and/or Power Lines down
Vehicle Fire	Car or other Motor Vehicle on Fire
Hazmat	Hazardous Materials Leak or Spill
Airport Alert	Actual or potential aircraft crash at the County Airport.



EMS Operations

The Med Team (Emergency Medical First Response Team) is dispatched to assist an Ambulance with medical emergencies in our fire protection district. Members of the Med Team will first respond to the emergency will provide medical care until the ambulance arrives, and then will assist the ambulance crew with the on-scene care and transfer of the patient to the ambulance for transport. In rare instances, members of the Med Team assist the Ambulance crew during transport to the Hospital.

Med Team members also assist in fire scene operations by providing medical monitoring of firefighters, and emergency medical treatment of any fire victims.

The Med Team is led by the EMS Captain, assisted by an appointed EMS Lieutenant.

If you're interested in the Emergency Medical Services, training programs are periodically offered to obtain New York State EMS certifications at the following levels:

- Certified First Responder – a 50-hour course encompassing Basic Life Support (BLS) skills needed to manage actual or potentially life-threatening illnesses and injuries until the ambulance arrives.
- Basic Emergency Medical Technician – a 136-hour course, which includes an additional 12 hours (minimum) of ambulance ride-along time. This course addresses comprehensive treatment at the BLS level, including skills needed for ambulance work.

In addition to State certification courses, in-house EMS training is offered periodically to address specific needs.



Stations

We operate out of two Stations. Your Company-issued firefighting gear will be housed at one of these stations, and this station will be the one you will respond to for all calls unless otherwise specified.



Station 1:

aka: "One". "Rt 26 Station", "The hole"

- 1811 Union Center-Maine Hwy (Rt. 26)
- Non Hydrant / Rural District
- Contains the Offices and Classroom
- Kitchen
- Day room with TV, Shower.

- Backup Generator
- Apparatus:
 - Pumper-Tanker 53
 - Tanker 53
 - Brush 53



Station 2:

aka: "Two", "Taft Ave Station", "The Hill"

- 1209 Taft Ave
- Hydrant / Suburban District
- Contains Maintenance Office, and SCBA Service Room
- Kitchen
- Rec Room; TV, Pool Table, Darts
- Backup Generator

- Apparatus:
 - Squad 53
 - Engine 53
 - Rescue 53
 - EMS 53
 - Utility 53



Station Access

All members are issued a Key Fob, which will allow access into the Stations and certain rooms. The Key Fob System records all activity associated with your Fob, and is monitored for Station Security. It is your responsibility not to lose your Fob.

A logbook is kept in the radio room of each station. Your purpose for being in the station (such as answering calls, washing vehicles, checking the station, training, etc.) should be recorded in the logbook.

We encourage members to be in the stations as much as they wish, for and in between company activities. Please keep in mind that your access to the stations is a privilege, and can be limited or revoked if it is abused in any way!

Please review Station rules outlined in the Company By-Laws.

Your part in station maintenance and cleanliness is expected. Please clean up after yourself, and help keep the stations in an acceptable condition. This is necessary for safe operations, and we all take great pride in having neat and well-maintained firehouses!

Apparatus



In the Fire Service, our emergency vehicles are generally referred to as “apparatus”. All of our apparatus is owned and maintained by the Company. Each piece of apparatus (“rig”) has a special set of purposes, carries equipment for those purposes, and is designed for its primary response area.

Part of your training includes learning each rig in its entirety, down to knowing its capabilities, capacities, equipment complement, and compartmentation.

Types:

Engine – Pumps water from a water supply to hose lines for fire extinguishment. Carries necessary equipment for structural firefighting. Our Engine has a 1000-gallon water tank, pumps with the capacity of 1500 gallons/minute, and seat up to (5) Five Firefighters.

Squad – An engine that also carries equipment used to free trapped persons from wrecked vehicles. Our Squad has a 1000-gallon water tank, pumps with the capacity of 1500 gallons/minute, seats up to (6) Six Firefighters, and carries hydraulic, pneumatic, and hand rescue tools as well as emergency medical equipment and meters to detect hazardous gases.

Tanker – Carries a larger volume of water, and is used for shuttling additional water to a fire scene in a non-hydrant area. Our Tanker has a 3000-gallon water tank, a pump with a capacity of 1250 gallons/minute, and seats no more than (3) Three Firefighters.

Rescue – Multi-purpose support vehicle, which carries spare self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) cylinders, SCBA fill station (Cascade System), additional cribbing, medical rehabilitation equipment, generator, and lighting equipment. Seats up to (6) six firefighters, and can also be used as a Command Post at an incident.

Pumper-Tanker – Similar to an Engine, but has a larger water tank for the initial fire attack in non-hydrant areas. Our Pumper-Tanker has 1800 Gallons of water, 70 Gallons of Foam Concentrate, and a pump with the capacity of 1500 Gallons/Minute. Seats up to (6) six.

Brush Truck– 4-Wheel Drive Vehicle equipped for Brush and Grass type fires, and is designed for off-road use. Our Brush Truck has 200 Gallons of water, and a pump with the capacity of 150 Gallons/Minute. Seats (3) three Firefighters.

Utility – 4-Wheel Drive Crew-Cab Pickup truck used for Fire Police activities, hauling manpower, and general “carry all”. Carries (5) Five Firefighters.

EMS – The primary response vehicle to Medical Emergencies. Carries much of the same Basic Life Support medical equipment found on an ambulance, including an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Seats up to (4) Four personnel.

Car – Duty Chief Vehicle used by the Chief Officers or Officer in Charge.



Apparatus (Continued)

Engine 53



1975 Ward LaFrance

Pumper Tanker 53



1991 Spartan/Saulsbury



Squad 53



2004 E-ONE

Utility 53



2003 Chevrolet 2500HD



Brush 53



1994 Dodge Ram 2500

Tanker 53



2000 International/Pierce



Rescue 53



1987 Mack/Saulsbury

EMS 53



1996 Chevrolet Suburban 2500/Oddessey Custom

Car 53



2009 Chevy Tahoe



Crew Integrity

Crew Integrity is emphasized during any event in which a crew is formed to carry out a task. A crew is identified as an Officer and a group of Firefighters. The Officer is ultimately responsible for the crew, directing the driver and leading the crew upon arrival at a scene. The Officer may be an elected Line Officer, or, if there is none available, the most senior firefighter in the crew, who then has the status of an acting Officer. Each firefighter on the crew reports to the Officer. The crew will remain together at all times, and each member will know what the others on the crew are doing. The Crew comes in together, works together, and goes back to the firehouse together. “Freelancing” is defined as working independently, apart from your crew, without the knowledge or permission of your Officer. Freelancing is strictly forbidden, as it can lead to firefighter injury or death.



Radio Communications

All calls are received and dispatched by the Broome County 911 Communications Center (“Broome” on the radio). Calls are dispatched with a Tone that will activate your pager. Following the tone is the Voice Dispatch that will announce the dept name, address of call, type of call, then repeated again followed by the cross streets, channel assignment, and time of dispatch.

Example:

“Union Center Fire, 999 Taft Ave for a Building Fire, Cross Streets are Buffalo Rd and Newell Rd. Operations on Channel 2. 14:25hrs”

It’s important to remember the Address of the incident, as this is often forgotten. Enhancement of the County’s dispatch system will soon also allow calls to be sent to cellular telephones and pagers that are capable of receiving text messages.

The company utilizes radios with various channels and frequency capabilities.

Types of Radios:

Portable Radio...Hand held
Mobile Radio.....Truck mounted
Base Radio.....Station Radio

Frequency Ranges:

Low Band.... Radio channels in the 33 MHz range, on which or primary dispatch and operations are conducted.
High Band... Radio channels in the 155 MHz range, on which operations are conducted, such as mutual aid calls in Western Broome, Fire Police operations and direct communication with ambulances.

TAC (Talk Around Channel) – A Company-licensed channel that is used only by the Union Center Fire Co. It allows us to talk among our own department without tying up common channels shared with other departments. Used during trainings, non-life threatening incidents, and company business.

Repeaters: Some apparatus and officer’s vehicles contain repeaters that allow us to operate between High and Low Band frequencies via two radios that are “patched” together.

It is very important to maintain proper radio etiquette and uniformed radio terminology. You will receive considerable training on these.



Response to Alarms

When dispatched for an alarm, respond to your respective station. Once at the station, put on your issued protective gear, wait for a crew to assemble, and follow orders from an Officer or Senior Firefighter who arrives at the station.

If you arrive at the station after apparatus has already responded, stand by in the station until released by Command. If enough other members arrive at the station to form an additional crew, you may notify Command via our TAC (Talk Around Channel) frequency, and inquire if more Apparatus and/or Personnel are needed at the scene.

Response safety is an important factor in each and every incident! If you never make it to the fire station or the scene, then you are no help at the incident! New York State Laws do not permit you to break any traffic rules when responding to the station!

Trainings



Training Types:

In-House: Trainings that are conducted by and/or held at Union Center Fire.

Outside: Trainings that are conducted by another Fire Dept, or by the State.

In-House trainings are held every Wednesday night starting at 6:30pm. Trainings begin with Apparatus Checks, and then lead into the instructional period. Trainings vary from classroom instruction to hands-on activities. Trainings rotate between Station 1 and Station 2. See the Training schedules posted to see Training Topics and Location.

Saturday Morning Trainings are held on most Saturday mornings, beginning at 10:00 AM, at Station #2.

Special Trainings may also be held on Saturdays, and will be posted at the stations, and/or announced via Company radio pagers.

Training is very important to your Membership. This is where we learn and maintain the knowledge we need to do what we do. Slacking off on training will make you more liable to get hurt or hurt someone else!

Training Hour Requirements:

As an Active Member, you are required to maintain at LEAST 10 Hours of Training during each 3 month period(quarterly) as outlined in the training BOG. Failure to maintain the minimum training requirements will affect your 6-month review as a probationary member, as well as your status as an member in good standing of the Fire Company.

At the conclusion of training, a sign up sheet will be passed available. You are responsible for signing the sheet to get credit for that training session.

Service Hours:

Service Hours are awarded when a member conducts service for the Company other than Emergency Operations or Training. (ie: Maintenance, Special Events, On-Duty Crews etc.)

Sign-in sheets are completed and service hours are tracked for recognition purposes. All hours are counted towards the incentive program which provides the members with the opportunity to purchase fire related items or clothing based on their total annual hours.



Safety

Safety is our #1 Priority. Regular attendance at trainings, rigorously following Company policies and procedures on calls, and looking out for your fellow crew members, will help insure that we all go back home safely after the call. Safety plays a role in every part of every operation, including responding to the station, safety in the stations, safety on the apparatus, safety on the roads, safety on the scene, and safety when returning from calls.

Keep this in mind: you are no help to anyone if you never make it to the emergency, or if you become a victim yourself!



Business Meetings

The Company holds both an annual and monthly business meetings.

The annual meeting is held on the 1st Saturday of February at 12:30pm, at Station 1.

Annual meetings feature the election of Board Of Directors, and Line Officers.

This is also when committees are formed. For example: the Social Committee, which organizes special events, and the Parade Committee, which organizes participation in parades. As a new member, you will not be allowed to vote until you complete your probationary period. However, you may and are encouraged to join one of the committees, in whose work you might be interested. Serving on a committee is an excellent way to get involved in Company events, and to learn to work with other members.

Monthly meetings are held on the 1st Monday of each month. During monthly meetings, you will hear reports from the Board, Officers, committees, and new and old business. Often, business is brought to the membership for a vote. Attending monthly meetings is important to remaining informed on Company activities thorough the year, and to giving your input on topics important to you as a member.



Company Expectations

This section establishes expectations, outlines commitment and dedication, and emphasizes the public image of the Company, in which we all take pride!

Expectations need to be understood up front, so you know what to expect from the Company, and what the Company expects from you. Obviously, there is no paycheck involved here. It is hoped that you feel rewarded for your service here by knowing that you helped someone, by having a sense of belonging, and by experiencing the fun and camaraderie we share as members of the Fire Service. The Company has a commitment to provide a 24/7/365 service to the Community, and we can't do it without you and your fellow members. It's very important to us that you experience satisfaction in being here, and that your commitment to the Company remains strong.

Your commitment shows in how often you attend calls and trainings, how frequently you assist at special events, how much time and effort you put in working on a committee and/or offering solutions to any dilemmas that may arise, or any other efforts that benefit the Company.

We want to help maintain your satisfaction by giving you the best training we can, by making events fun and enjoyable, by commending you on jobs well done, and by giving recognitions for going above and beyond the norm. As you advance through your membership, there are always bigger challenges and responsibilities that you can aspire to and achieve, such as becoming a Line Officer, or serving on the Board of Directors. The Company will do all that it can to keep the job here challenging and rewarding. A lot of the excitement comes from the tasks at hand, and the people you work with.

Dedication is measured by how much of yourself you put into the Company. It shows when you leave the dinner table or show up at the Firehouse at 2 o'clock in the morning for an alarm, when you attend as much training as you can, and show up for the mundane but important work details that have to be done by someone. Dedication makes this Company work, gives us fast response times to alarms, and impacts our effectiveness during incidents and trainings.

Our public image is who we are in the eyes of those we serve, and it's important that we protect it. We strive to be the best group of firefighters that we can be, which creates the image that we strive to maintain. This is seen by our community, by the victims of fire

and other emergencies that we deal with, and by the members of other emergency services agencies. It's portrayed in stories told that get passed on, photographs from incidents, and, of course, in the media.



Company Expectations (continued)

Your performance, and that of others, creates the Company's public image. Whether you're wearing Company Shirt, driving a company vehicle, or attending a joint training with other companies, you represent Union Center Fire Company in all that you do. What you do reflects on the Company in its entirety. Our public image took years to develop but can be destroyed in seconds.

Take pride in yourself, the Company, the work you do, and all the others here and dedicate yourself to becoming an active accomplished member. It will be appreciated by the Community and all who you work with.

Privacy: Company Business and Information should be kept within the company. Giving or leaking company information to any person or agency not affiliated with Union Center Fire is not appropriate nor tolerated, unless authorized. Disciplinary action may result.



Conclusion

In the upcoming months, there will be a lot of information and training available to you, so take advantage of all it! You will need to read and understand both the Company By-Laws and the Best Operating Guidelines (BOGs), which are available to you at both stations. These will orientate you to information beyond that provided in this booklet. You will be issued complete turnout gear and a pager. You will also be required to make an appointment for an occupational physical examination (at Company expense) within your 1st month of membership. We look forward to your participation here, and anticipate an enjoyable and rewarding experience working with you.

