

VCFD VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHER PROGRAM



INTENT

The purpose of the Volunteer Photographer program is to provide a consistent level of photo and video services to the Ventura County Fire Protection District.

Volunteer Photographer's photographs and videos will be used to enhance Fire Department training and public information materials, provide resource information for photographic cataloging and documentation and for other purposes as needed by the Fire Department.

VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHER PROGRAM

Members of the Volunteer Photographer Program (VPP), provide valuable services to the Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) and in conjunction with the **Department's Core Values**, their services prove to be beneficial to communities as well. **Caring** and **Teamwork**, along with **Integrity** and **Courage** of the Volunteers, are what makes the **commitment** to the Department and the **community** possible.

A. PHOTOS and VIDEOS

Photos and/or videos provided are used throughout the Department. Below are just a few examples:

1. Photos/videos from on-scene are used to inform and update the public of incidents occurring in our response area.
2. Photo/video segments are used for training exercises to enhance the professionalism of Department and its personnel.
3. Photos/video are also used for media events, such as press conferences hosted by the Department (photos may be of fire/rescue or public educational events).
4. There are countless photos displayed in Department facilities as recognition of the dedication of County Fire employees to the communities we serve.

B. FUNCTION

Volunteer Photographer:

1. All Volunteer Photographers will be pre-registered. There will be a limit of 15 participants in the program.
2. All Volunteer Photographers will be under the control of the Fire Department and the Incident Commander responsible for the incident.

3. Volunteer Photographers will be responsible for their own equipment, supplies and materials unless otherwise provided by the Department on a per use basis, as needed.
4. Volunteer Photographers will be responsible for providing their own transportation to functions and emergencies, (unless prior permission has been approved by the Department).

QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING and HOURS

A. QUALIFICATIONS

1. Possess a valid California Class C Driver's License
2. Complete a Ventura County Fire Department Volunteer Application packet and Waivers
3. Pass a County of Ventura Fire Department background check. Prior background checks may not be substituted.
4. Be in good physical and mental health.
5. Be law abiding and have strong moral character.
6. Agree to abide by Department standards as related to behavior, demeanor and appearance.
7. Agree to abide by rules and regulations found in Department Manuals as they relate.
8. Possession of operable equipment. Members must have knowledge and abilities to use photo and/or video equipment.
9. Have an understanding how to take pictures and/or video images that meet the level of service required by the Department.
10. Be at least 18 years of age.

B. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Once approved as a VCFD Volunteer Photographer, members must:

1. Attend a **mandatory** "Community Service Volunteers" orientation (new members).
2. Attend the **annual** re-certification training. The training will review current roster of members, review work records; issue updated identification cards and vehicle dash placards.
3. Attend an additional "Safety & Training" session, which will review and cover PPE's, risks, hazards, and personal safety responsibilities and expectations. We will offer this course a couple of times so everyone has an opportunity to participate. Course instructors will include PIOs, safety officers, and law officials. This training will cover examples of good/ bad photos, ones that should and should not be published, tips for working with on scene personnel and the incident commander (IC).
4. Review and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the following:
 - a. Incident Command System (ICS)
 - b. Situational Awareness
 - c. Department Rules and Regulations
 - d. Disaster preparedness and other pertinent training.
5. Plan with the Volunteer Coordinator to go on ride-a-longs to familiarize oneself with Department functions and operations.

C. SERVICE HOUR REQUIREMENTS

1. Volunteer photographers shall not work more than 20 hours a week. Hours may include normal business hours as well as nights and weekends.
2. A minimum of four (4) incident and/or event reports per year are required to participate in the program.
3. Volunteers are required to send an email within **two (2) days** following an incident or event with a brief description of attendance/ activity, a time report and a digital link to **HIGH RESOLUTION** downloadable images. All emails should be sent to piofire@ventura.org and vcfd.volunteers@ventura.org.
4. VCFD has created a "Volunteer Photographer- VCFD" folder on Dropbox. Each VPP should add photos to their designated folder. (SEE Appendix A for submission sizing and details).
 - a. All emailed materials will be done in the following manner.
 - b. Email subject: VCFD – VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHY SUBMISSION.
 - c. Email text: In the body of the email, please submit the name of the incident with a brief description of what you did and attach a link to the photos for downloading.
 - d. Volunteer hours on scene: (XX)
 - e. Photos: (insert digital download link)
5. Members are responsible for obeying ALL requirements listed concerning report and tracking of activities as VPP's. Time and incident tracking will be completed on the Volunteer Software. Training will be provided by Volunteer Coordinator. Contact Crystal Stratton, Volunteer Coordinator, call (805) 389-9745 or email crystal.stratton@ventura.org

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A. RESPONSIBILITY - FIRE DEPARTMENT

1. Allow Department VPP's who properly display valid Department issued ID cards, vehicle placards and Safety Vest when present at a scene, access to emergency incidents, when deemed safe and appropriate, and access Department sponsored events.
2. While engaged in volunteer activities, photographers shall wear the appropriate uniform. Each volunteer is responsible for the care and maintenance of all issued gear.
3. VCFD will provide the following materials needed to function as a VPP:
 - a. VCFD VPP hat and safety vest.
 - b. VPP Identification card, non-transferable and re-issued every year.
 - c. Vehicle Dash placard, non-transferable and re-issued every year.
4. Optional PPE that VPP's may purchase. PPE must be in good serviceable condition.
 - a. Black structure helmet
 - Half shield on front with photographer clearly written (no VCFD or FIRE)
 - Photographer rockers on each side
 - Photographer on the rear of the helmet

- b. Black brush helmet (Bullard, FH911HR – Black)
 - Photographer written on front of helmet (no VCFD)
 - Photographer rockers on each side
 - Photographer on the rear of the helmet
 - c. Yellow brush jacket (Workrite, FW81YL)
 - Plain jacket with no VCFD markings
 - Optional to have photographer on the back and on the left breast pocket
 - d. Yellow brush pants (PGI, 7500272)
 - Plain with no VCFD markings
 - e. No structure fire gear allowed
 - VPP's should never be in a place that structure firefighting gear is needed
5. Volunteer photographers shall not impersonate or resemble attire worn by safety personnel. All equipment should always appear neat and in a serviceable condition.

B. RESPONSIBILITY- VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS

PRIOR TO ARRIVAL ON SCENE

1. Volunteer Photographers will be issued annually a Ventura County Fire Department Volunteer Photographer Identification card and vehicle dash placard. The ID card is to be worn in a clearly visible fashion when at a department function or incident. The vehicle placard is to be used **ONLY** during official business for VCFD. It is NOT to be used on incidents under any other agencies jurisdiction.
2. Members will be responsible to provide their own transportation to and from incidents and functions unless other arrangements have been made by the Public Information Officer or Volunteer Coordinator.
3. It is the personal responsibility of VPP's to have proper safety gear (brush jacket, brush pants) when at the scene of a major incident.
4. When parking at an incident, members must follow directions from law enforcement or fire officials.
5. As VPP's, members are not compensated.
6. Unauthorized use of the vehicle dash placard or improper use of the program uniform when on scene/ in public **WILL** result in immediate dismissal from the program and all credentials will be revoked.

C. DURING/AFTER EVENT OR INCIDENT

1. Members will abide by ALL requests/ orders from the On-Duty Public Information Officer, Incident Commander or other agency authority figures such as CHP or VCSO.
2. When heading to an incident as an official VPP, volunteers must contact the On-Duty Public Information Officer. **To reach the On-Duty PIO, text or call (805) 377-4860.** Upon arrival, the VPP is required to check-in with the PIO. If one is not on scene, VPP's are required to check-in with an Incident Commander upon arrival at an incident or event. Upon departure, members should check out with the PIO or Incident Commander.
3. Initial unedited on-scene photos / videos shall be immediately forwarded to the Duty PIO for use on social media via text. This shall be done in a safe and timely manner.
4. Members must coordinate access at the incident and inquire about any special information or requests.
5. Volunteers can "self-dispatch" to an incident if they have knowledge of the occurrence, but they must contact the on-duty PIO outlined above.
6. Members agree **NOT** to take compromising pictures or video that would reflect adversely on the Fire Department. This includes but is not limited to, HIPPA, license plates, victim faces, facial images of VCFD investigators, children, blood, etc. VPP's are expected to show compassion, humility and respect for the public when on scene of a tragic accident/ incident.

D. PERSONAL DEMEANOR

1. Maintain the best possible appearance in conformance with Departmental standards in both on-duty status and visiting any Departmental facility.
2. Report for duty, on time, in proper uniform and at the work location designated.
3. Lights and sirens are not permitted for VPP participants. All vehicles must abide by the California Vehicle Code (CVC), which prohibits red lights and sirens.
4. Not lend, give away, nor secure for themselves any Departmental or other public property for personal use.
5. Not ingest any kind of alcoholic beverage while on duty; nor report for, or perform duty anywhere, or be unfit for duty because of its use.
6. Not cultivate, manufacture or use any controlled drugs, narcotics, or hallucinogens. A member shall not report for duty while under the influence of any such drugs even though prescribed by a physician.
7. Not smoke on duty when in front of the public.
8. Not furnish information, either directly or indirectly, on matters relative to, or affecting the affairs of the Department or any member thereof, except as when authorized by the Fire Chief or as prescribed by law or procedure.
9. Do not use their name as a member of this Department or use the uniform, badge, or prestige of the Department in any commercial or private enterprise for the purpose of personal gain.
10. Do not bring firearms into any departmental facility or carry on person, place on apparatus/equipment or carry or possess on-scene.
11. Identification cards and dash placard shall be surrendered upon separation of the program.
12. Any deviations from the stated terms **WILL** result in immediate dismissal from the program and all credentials will be revoked.