Introduction
The decision to be a volunteer firefighter is not something that should be taken lightly. This decision will touch you and your entire family, in both expected and unexpected ways. Volunteer firefighting goes beyond the average volunteer work. It becomes a lifestyle, and one that many take great pride in. It is very common to have several generations of the same family fighting fires together and responding to emergencies.

Being a volunteer firefighter means:
- Serving at a moment’s notice, not when it’s scheduled and convenient
- Spending extra hours training
- Putting oneself in dangerous situations to help those in need
- Making a contribution to the community
- Protecting the community

Volunteering for the emergency services is a big commitment to the community. Emergencies can happen at any time and often when it is inconvenient for responders. While trainings and meetings occur on a regular schedule, it is impossible to schedule emergencies, meaning that the interruption can occur at any time.

Families should be prepared for this event.
It is especially important for new members of the fire service to regularly participate in department training. This is where the volunteer will learn new skills, study department protocols and practice emergency responses with the goal of protecting the community and keeping themselves and their fellow firefighters safe. For those interested in becoming interior qualified firefighters (firefighters who fight a fire inside a structure), the Lincoln County Fire Academy hosts yearly basic fire training.

Basics of Volunteer Firefighting
Volunteer firefighters fill a much-needed role in their communities, protecting the lives and property of many people. Our volunteer firefighters must be ready to respond at any time as the fire departments in Lincoln County do not have full time firefighters ready to respond. A volunteer can expect to:
- Attend weekly and/or monthly trainings and meetings
- Perform physically demanding work
- Spend extended periods of time outside in inclement weather
- Be called out at any time of the day or night

http://lcfca.me/
Equipment
Pager
Volunteers typically carry a pager or radio to be alerted when their department is dispatched to an emergency. Additionally, some departments offer phone text alerts which indicate when there is a call. Pagers recognize a specific set of audible tones which are associated with each department and alert by either beeping loudly or, if put in silent mode, will vibrate to alert the firefighter.

Gear
Special firefighting clothing, called turnout or bunker gear, will be issued to protect the volunteer. A full complement of gear consists of pants with suspenders, coat, boots, protective hood, helmet and gloves. For members who become interior firefighters, they may also be issued their own mask for a SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus).

Time Commitment
Your calendar will now contain periodic meetings and training events that the volunteer has to attend with the fire department. Volunteers may even stop by the department at times when they are not specifically needed just to visit with their fellow firefighters. Eventually volunteers may take on additional roles, such as becoming an officer with the department, which requires even more responsibilities and meetings. Many members enjoy bringing their families by the station to see their trucks, equipment and be involved in the experience of being a firefighter.

Demands of Responding
Returning from a fire, accident scene, or even department training is not like returning from a trip to volunteer at the library. Fighting fire and responding to emergencies are physically and mentally exhausting activities. Interior firefighting especially is physically challenging. There are plenty of other roles on the fire ground which are less demanding. Directing traffic, driving and operating trucks, and manning the base radio are all very important roles which are less physically demanding. Wearing heavy gear and dragging hose lines while working in an emergency mode requires great physical exertion.

Benefits
One of the most amazing benefits of the volunteer fire service is gaining an extended family. Being around a group of people who understand the call of the fire and emergency services can be helpful, rewarding, and in many cases, has created a foundation for lifelong friendships. Volunteering gives many a great sense of pride and a greater sense of being part of the community. Many departments hold special events which include their families during the year, such as summer picnics or holiday gatherings.

Rewards of membership
While not every spouse or child of a firefighter chooses to get involved, there are plenty of activities and events for families that can bring everyone together at the firehouse. There are also plenty of volunteer opportunities for those who want to help without literally fighting fires, from helping around the station to organizing community activities. While there are many challenges in the volunteer firefighting world, there can also be many rewards for both volunteers and their families. Many firefighters follow in their parents footsteps, proudly carrying the torch of community service instilled in them by their parent(s).
Getting into the Firefighter Life with Family
It is exciting to know that you or your family member is willing to serve and care for your community in times of need. A great deal of pride comes with that privilege. Like any other group, club, or hobby, volunteer firefighting requires time in order to participate. However, spontaneously running out the door to a structure fire is different than planning to leave the house at 6 p.m. on a Tuesday evening for a meeting. In many cases, the time required is unplanned and immediate. Just when you sit down to dinner... there goes that pager or alarm. Due to the nature of the work, it can also generate worry and concern, both for the volunteer and his or her family.

Interruptions by the Pager
When you have a family member who volunteers with a fire department, you also inherit a new tagalong in your family—a pager. This is often the primary means by which a volunteer first responder is notified of a call. Learn to associate the pager with the fact that someone is in immediate need. When volunteer firefighters get a call, they must move quickly. There is really only time for a quick exchange before they jump into their vehicle and are on the way to the firehouse. It is important not to take this personally.

When Family Doesn’t Know the Volunteer Received a Call
There may be occasions when your volunteer first responder receives a call when he or she is not with you. Perhaps he or she is at work or on his or her way home or out at the store and the pager goes off. Today with text messaging being so quick and convenient, some volunteers will send a short text message to let their family know they are going to respond.

Understanding the Importance of Training
It can almost be easier to accept that a call for someone in need can come in at any time, any hour, any day, than to give up another weekend of family time because your volunteer firefighter has a training to attend. However, training is exactly what you want him or her to do so that he or she knows how to keep themselves, fellow first responders, and the community safe during an emergency.

Managing Your Worry and Fear
There is no doubt family members of volunteer firefighters are entitled to a little worry. Your loved one has volunteered to do some of the most dangerous tasks in your community. It is normal to experience worry and fear, but these concerns should not paralyze you or disrupt your lifestyle. Here are some simple techniques to help you manage your anxieties:
- Talk to your volunteer about your concerns.
- Trust in the training he or she has received AND in his or her ability.
- Focus on the facts.
- Call on friends or family members if you get anxious when your volunteer is at a scene.

Agreeing on Schedules and Planning
Firefighting and emergency response can become a serious passion for some people. Passions tend to weave into every aspect of one’s life. Being able to talk openly about schedules and plans and to balance volunteer time with family needs can minimize the impact. Balance your family schedule with the fire department activities, planned and unplanned.

Easing the Impact on Children
Firefighting can be such an exciting event for kids. On the other hand, sometimes it seems that Murphy’s Law comes into play for the volunteer first responder. On the night of the big game or that dance recital, the pager sounds and mom, dad, grandma, or grandpa responds, missing the event. It helps to involve children in the volunteer life. Here are some ideas:
- Take them on a tour of the station and trucks.
- Show them the pagers and explain what happens when someone calls 911 in an emergency.
- Assure them how safe you are, thanks to training and the equipment they use.
- Have a routine “goodbye” for when a call comes in and the volunteer must respond.
# Contact Numbers for the Fire Departments of Lincoln County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alna</td>
<td>(207) 687-7011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boothbay</td>
<td>(207) 380-7286</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boothbay Harbor</td>
<td>(207) 380-5635</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bremen</td>
<td>(207) 529-5104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>(207) 592-5531</td>
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<tr>
<td>Damariscotta</td>
<td>(207) 563-8286</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dresden</td>
<td>(207) 737-7151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edgecomb</td>
<td>(207) 882-9618</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>(207) 549-5394</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monhegan Island</td>
<td>(207) 975-1117</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>(207) 563-3888</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nobleboro</td>
<td>(207) 529-5301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somerville</td>
<td>(207) 549-7980</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Bristol</td>
<td>(207) 644-8389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southport</td>
<td>(207) 631-1547</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waldoboro</td>
<td>(207) 832-5369</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westport Island</td>
<td>(207) 460-0367</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whitefield</td>
<td>(207) 549-7945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wiscasset</td>
<td>(207) 882-8210</td>
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