

Ohio State Firefighters' Association **(OSFA)**

History

The Ohio State Firemen's Association (OSFA) was organized in 1938 in Mt. Vernon, Ohio by firefighters who had the interest and the welfare of all firefighters in the State of Ohio in mind. The OSFA has benefited more firefighters throughout the State of Ohio over the years than any other group. The association membership voted, in August of 1985, to change the name of the association to the Ohio State Firefighters' Association due to the ever-increasing number of women joining the fire service, EMS and our Association.

Mission Statement

The Ohio State Firefighters' Association was organized for:

- The general improvement of the fire service throughout the State of Ohio; in order to form a statewide organization, to establish harmony and to ensure prosperity and success.
- To provide group benefits, obtain and compile statistics to provide information to the fire service.
- To assist in affording protection to disabled firefighters, and those dependent upon them, through legislative enactment.
- To create and maintain brotherly and fraternal fellowship among firefighters of the State of Ohio, through educational seminars and programs.

Membership

The Ohio State Firefighters' Association presently has approximately 600 member departments and represents over 20,000 firefighters. There are three types of memberships available; Department, Individual and Associate. Advantages to becoming a member are listed throughout the rest of this brochure.

Legal Defense Trust Fund

The OSFA established a legal defense trust fund for the purpose of paying the approved legal expenses of firefighter/EMS personnel, who is a member in good standing of the fund, when such firefighter has been arrested for violation, charging him or her with vehicular homicide. To be covered by the fund, the person charged must be a member of a legally organized fire department or rescue unit in the State of Ohio. The department or unit must be one organized and maintained by a political subdivision or a private volunteer fire department or company, and must be a member in good standing of the OSFA as determined and defined by the Association rules and regulations. Membership to the fund is a one-time \$7.00 fee per person and is transferable within the department as your roster changes. Yearly roster updates are required.

Insurance Plan

The OSFA offers to its members an insurance plan designed exclusively for the Fire and EMS Service by Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services of Ohio (VFIS of Ohio). The OSFA/VFIS Group Insurance Program protects all department members including volunteers, part-time paid, paid on-call members, auxiliary and junior members, deputized bystanders, commissioners, directors, trustees and non-members asked to assist the auxiliary. Coverage for career members is also available.

- Members are covered during all normal duties associated with the fire service and travel to and from these duties including training activities, good Samaritan acts, meetings, conventions and fundraising for the organization or other non profits.
- Benefits are payable for accidental death or dismemberment and loss of sight or hearing.
- Medical expenses and disability income are payable for injury or illness as a result of participation in a covered activity.
- Additional coverage includes benefits for cosmetic disfigurement from burns, a plastic surgery benefit, an additional child dependent benefit for member's loss of life, an increased death benefit for death by motor vehicle accident while wearing a properly fastened seat belt, a lump sum benefit for permanent physical impairments as well as an additional lifetime weekly benefit for severe permanent physical impairments.
- VFIS coverage also includes an innovative HIV positive benefit for Post Exposure Prophylaxis treatment.

- Optional benefits are available for League Sports, Athletic games, contests or social events, hospital indemnity, 24 hour accidental death and an additional first weekly disability benefit.
- Various limits can be selected and tailored to meet the organizations needs.

This Insurance Plan is the approved and endorsed plan for the OSFA membership. OSFA members receive a 10% discount on all accident and sickness policies.

Legal Advisor

The OSFA retains an attorney as a legal advisor to the Executive Board and Officers of the Association. The Legal Advisor advises the Executive Board and Officers on legislation, contracts and other business of the Association. Upon approval of the Executive Board, the legal advisor may lead or assist in legal cases which have statewide ramifications.

Legislative Agent

The OSFA since 1987 has employed a legislative agent to provide assistance in the formation and review of all legislation which may have an impact upon the fire service. The agent provides for contact with legislators as to the position of the OSFA on proposed legislation, whether the association is for or against the bill. Also, the agent will present testimony and offers amendments, that would improve the conditions for Ohio's fire service. Legislative reports are provided to the Officers and Executive Board on a regular basis and they are available to the membership through the "Ohio Firefighter" magazine.

Chaplain

In addition to attending to the Association's spiritual needs, the Association Chaplain is available to assist local Chaplains and departments in their times of need. The chaplain also assists local departments in establishing a chaplain in their own departments.

Charles J. Getz Scholarship

Striving for the further education of our firefighters, the OSFA each year awards two qualified members of our Association, \$2,000 scholarships to attend a fire technology course at an approved college or university. Applications for the scholarship must be submitted no later than May 30th of each year, and all applications must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the chief

of the applicant's department. All applicants must belong to a member department of the Association or hold individual membership in the Association to be eligible for consideration.

Paramedic School Scholarships

Each year the OSFA awards two paramedic scholarships to cover expenses of qualified members who are attending a certified paramedic course. Applications for the scholarship must be submitted to the Scholarship Committee Chairman and accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the chief of the applicant's department. All applicants must belong to a member department or hold an individual membership in the OSFA to be qualified.

Firefighter of the Year Award

Since 1970, the OSFA has made available to at least one of their members an award for service above and beyond the call of duty. The firefighter has to be an active member of a member department and be recommended by the Chief or an officer of their department, or the President of the county association. The award is presented at the annual conference of the Association. All applications should be received by June 1st. Posthumous awards will be presented to the next of kin. The committee will select the recipient based upon the guidelines established for the award by the OSFA.

Statewide Radio Licensing

Communications is a vital part of any fire or emergency situation. Realizing this need, the Association has made available to all OSFA members, two viable auxiliary frequencies. These frequencies are 46.30 and 153.380 with call letters KB-31743 and 100 watts maximum power, provided F.C.C. guidelines are followed. These frequencies may be used on the fire ground as well as a separate communications link for fire training programs without disturbing your regular radio channels. This is made available by the OSFA without any cost to its members. The permit has been obtained from, and is duly authorized by, the Federal Communications Commission. All a member needs to do is fill out an application form and return it to the Secretary/Treasurer. The application form may be obtained from the Chairman of the Radio Frequency Committee or by contacting any OSFA Officer.

Ohio Firefighter Publication

The Ohio Firefighter magazine is the bi-monthly publication of the Ohio State Firefighters' Association. The "Ohio Firefighter" provides its members with national, statewide, and local news and information. The "Ohio Firefighter"

provides reports from the Association officers, educational information from the Ohio Fire Academy and the National Fire Academy, news from the Congressional Fire Service Institute, National Volunteer Fire Council, and the NFPA. A calendar of events and news from members departments are also highlighted throughout the magazine. The magazine is only as good as the input from the membership allows it to be. Contributions of any interest to the fire and EMS industry, in the form of articles, letters, photos, etc., and suggestions are always welcomed and encouraged. The contact address is located inside the front cover of each issue or available from any officer of the association.

Web Page

The OSFA provides a web site to provide the latest information to firefighters and EMS personnel across the nation with its web page. The address is: www.ohiofirefighters.org. As our fellow public safety personnel advance their communication capabilities, the OSFA is proud to be able to maintain a web site for not only its members, but all of the service we represent.

Representation on Boards and Committees

Recognized as one of the leaders of Ohio's Fire Service, the OSFA represents its membership by serving on several Boards and Committees, which has an impact on decisions which affect Ohio's fire service, they are:

- Three members on the Ohio EMS Board
- Three members on the Fire Sub-committee to the EMS Board
- Member of the Educational Task Force
- Member Trauma Advisory Group
- Co-founder and member of the Ohio Fire Alliance
- Member of the Ohio Rural Fire Council
- Member Ohio Rescue Task Force
- Member Emergency Response Commission
- Member Public-Safety Communications Task Force
- Member EMS Privatization Task Force
- Ohio's delegate to the National Volunteer Fire Council
- The Board of Visitors at the National Fire Academy
- The Joint Council of Fire Service Associations
- NFPA Committees
- The Federation of World Volunteer Firefighters Association
- Provides representation at the Ohio Fire Commission meetings
- Sends a delegation each year to the National Fire & Emergency Services Caucus in Washington, D.C.
- Legislation - over 275 laws have been enacted, changed, or revised with assistance of the OSFA.

Membership Dues

The dues in the Ohio State Firefighters' Association are payable to the Secretary/Treasurer. Beginning in 2006, dues are \$75.00 per year for each organized fire department or fire brigade. A five-year department membership is available for \$325. Individual memberships are available for \$25.00. The yearly rate for Dealer/Corporate/Equipment Sales Groups is \$75.00.

For more information contact the OSFA at our web site or fill out the membership application and mail it to the OSFA at:

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