



Inyo County Volunteer Emergency Medical Services, Firefighter, and Search and Rescue Leave Policy

1. Purpose

This policy supports and recognizes the critical role of emergency responders in protecting the residents, visitors, and infrastructure of Inyo County and surrounding area. It establishes a provision for paid leave for eligible personnel engaged in local emergency response/volunteer activity efforts and a structure for both local and mutual aid response. Participation in this policy is considered a privilege granted by Inyo County, not a guaranteed right. Eligibility and continued participation are subject to compliance with all policy provisions and County Personnel Rules and Regulations.

Inyo County appreciates and values employees who volunteer their time, skills, and personal commitment in service to our community. The County encourages this dedication, recognizing that employees' willingness to respond in times of need reflects exceptional public service and strengthens the safety and resilience of our county. This policy is one way the County expresses its gratitude and support for the vital contributions volunteer responders make, while also ensuring that volunteer service is balanced with maintaining the operational needs of County departments.

2. Scope

This policy applies to County employees who are actively serving as:

- Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel
- Volunteer Firefighters
- Volunteer Search and Rescue (SAR) team members

3. Definitions

Annual Certification Form: A document submitted annually by the employee to the Personnel Department verifying active affiliation with a recognized volunteer EMS, Firefighter, or SAR agency.

Compensation: Payment based on hours worked. For purposes of this policy, "compensation" does not include a nominal stipend that is less than \$200.00 per response.

Contiguous County: A county that shares a geographic border with Inyo County.

Emergency Response/Volunteer Activity: Participation in an emergency incident, training, or related assignment as a volunteer Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provider, Firefighter, or Search and Rescue (SAR) team member, affiliated with a recognized volunteer agency. Activities include responding to local emergencies, mutual

aid assignments, or official training, as authorized under this policy. All such activities must be approved in advance, documented, and must not conflict with County operational needs or primary job responsibilities.

Leave Without Pay (LWOP): Authorized absence from work without compensation, subject to County Personnel Rules and Regulations.

Mutual Aid: Assistance provided by one agency to another during emergencies or disasters, typically across jurisdictional boundaries.

Outside Employment Form: A document required when an employee receives a W-2 from a volunteer agency, ensuring compliance with County Personnel Rules and Regulations.

Response Request Form: A document completed by the employee prior to leaving for any volunteer assignment. The form must indicate the type of service (EMS, Firefighter, or SAR) and the type of leave requested (e.g., accrued vacation, compensatory, flexible leave, Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave, or Leave Without Pay). Written approval from the employee's Department Head or designee is required before departure for the assignment. ** The form outlines criteria that may permit delayed submission under specific circumstances.*

Verification Form: A document completed by an authorized representative of the volunteer agency confirming the employee's participation in an approved emergency response/volunteer activity.

Volunteer EMS: An individual who provides emergency medical services without compensation, affiliated with a recognized volunteer emergency medical agency.

Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave: Paid leave granted under this policy for eligible employees to participate in approved volunteer emergency activities.

Volunteer Firefighter: An individual who performs firefighting duties without compensation, affiliated with a recognized volunteer fire department.

Volunteer SAR (Search and Rescue): An individual who participates in search and rescue operations without compensation, affiliated with a recognized volunteer SAR organization.

Written Approval/Authorization/Notice: For purposes of this policy, "written approval/authorization/notice" includes email, digitally signed documents, text, or other electronic communications that clearly state authorization for the employee to depart for a volunteer assignment. All written approvals/notice must be retained by the employee and department for compliance review.

4. Eligibility Criteria

Employee must:

- Be a full-time employee who has completed their probationary period.
- Not have received discipline (letter of reprimand, suspension, demotion) in the prior 6-months.
- Submit a **Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Annual Certification Form** annually to the Personnel Department verifying they are:

1. Actively affiliated with a volunteer EMS, Firefighter, or SAR agency, and
2. In good standing with that agency.

Eligibility for Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave is a privilege extended to employees who meet all criteria. The County reserves the right to revoke this privilege at any time for non-compliance or operational needs – this decision is not subject to the grievance process.

5. Participation Guidelines

- **Assignment Requests:**

- Before leaving for any volunteer assignment, employees must:
 1. Obtain written approval from their Department Head or designee prior to leave use. Approval must occur before the employee departs for the assignment, and pending approval does not permit an employee to respond.
 - Approval decisions shall be based on staffing levels, operational needs, and employee eligibility.
 - If the Department Head or designee is unavailable, employees must follow the department's established chain of command to obtain written authorization.
 - Department Heads or their designee may set pre-approved guidelines that allow employees to receive written approval in advance for certain types of responses. When standing approval applies, the employee must still provide written notice to their supervisor at the time they leave work. Written notice is required for every departure, regardless of any predetermined approval.
 2. Complete and submit a **Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Response Request Form** to their Department Head or designee indicating the type of service (EMS/Firefighter/SAR) and the type of leave requested.
 - Accrued vacation, compensatory, or flexible leave
 - Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave
 - Leave Without Pay (LWOP)

**The form outlines criteria that may permit delayed submission under specific circumstances.*

Note: LWOP will not be approved when Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave is available. All Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave must be exhausted prior to a request to utilize LWOP. LWOP is not guaranteed and is subject to the provisions outlined in the Personnel Rules and Regulations. LWOP may not be granted if other accrued leave is available (vacation, comp, flex). Employees should be aware that LWOP may affect employee benefits.

- **Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave Allowance:**
 - Eligible employees may receive up to 40 (forty) hours of Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave annually.
 - Leave hours are granted on a fiscal year basis (granted on the first full payroll in July and expire June 30th of each fiscal year).
 - Leave hours do not roll over and are not eligible for payout upon separation.
 - Leave hours are only authorized for use during an employee's regular scheduled work hours. These hours cannot be used in a manner that would result in the accrual of overtime or extra pay for hours not regularly scheduled.
 - Employees may not receive duplicate compensation for the same hours from another agency if utilizing Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave. For purposes of this policy, nominal stipends that equate to less than \$200.00 per response are not considered compensation.
 - Employees that are granted any other form of Administrative Leave through an MOU or an employment agreement, are not eligible for the Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave Hours outlined in this section (employees not eligible for Leave Hours are still subject to the other provisions within this policy).

- **Use of Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave:**
 - Leave may be used for emergency responses within the boundaries of Inyo or Mono Counties (Emergency SAR response to contiguous Counties may be approved with written authorization from the County Administrative Officer or designee).
 - Leave may be used for official volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR training activities.
 - Leave must be pre-approved by the employee's department head or designee.
 - Leave is taken in hour increments unless otherwise arranged with Department Head.

- **Mutual Aid Response (outside of Inyo or Mono County):**
 - Mutual aid assignments occurring outside Inyo or Mono Counties are subject to all authorization requirements outlined in this policy, including the need for written approval from the appropriate authority.
 - Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave hours (the annual 40-hour leave allotment) are not eligible for use toward mutual aid assignments outside of Inyo or Mono Counties (except as provided above for SAR responses to contiguous counties) or assignments that are eligible for hourly compensation.
 - Employees requesting authorization for such assignments must utilize accrued vacation, compensatory time, flexible leave, or Leave Without Pay (LWOP) consistent with County Personnel Rules and Regulations.

All other provisions of this policy—including eligibility requirements, approval standards, required documentation, restrictions on the use of County resources, and

compliance expectations—remain fully applicable to mutual aid assignments outside the area.

- **Post-Assignment Verification:**

- After each emergency response/volunteer activity involving leave time, employees must provide a **Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Verification Form** completed and signed by an *authorized representative* of the volunteer agency confirming participation details (dates, hours served, and nature of response/activity).
- Verification forms must be submitted following the county pay period schedule. Leave assignments that cross multiple pay period will require multiple verification forms to be submitted.

- **Compliance and Restrictions**

- Emergency Response/Volunteer activity must not conflict with primary job responsibilities or interfere with operational needs.
- Employees receiving a W-2 from the volunteer agency must submit an **Outside Employment Form** annually.
- Employees shall maintain complete and accurate documentation of all activities conducted under this policy and shall provide such documentation upon request by authorized auditing personnel.
- Any violation of this policy including but not limited to unauthorized leave or activities not approved by the department head or designee and volunteer agency shall result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Personnel Rules and Regulations and shall include removal of eligibility for Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave.
- When an employee departs County duties to respond to a volunteer assignment under this policy—whether using Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave or any other approved accrued leave—the employee is acting in the capacity of their affiliated volunteer EMS, Firefighter, or SAR agency. During the period of volunteer service, the employee is not acting as an agent or employee of Inyo County. To the fullest extent permitted by law, the County shall not be responsible or liable for acts, omissions, injuries, or damages arising from the volunteer assignment. Liability, insurance, and workers' compensation coverage, if any, are the responsibility of the volunteer agency and/or the governing mutual-aid authority.

- **Use of County Resources**

Employees shall not use county resources or property for volunteer assignments except as follows:

- SAR equipment issued by the County for official SAR operations may be used when acting in their authorized SAR capacity.

- County vehicles, fuel, and non-SAR equipment may only be used when:
 - The employee is already operating a county vehicle for official duties and receives written authorization from the CAO or designee to respond to the volunteer agency location without returning to their primary work location.

** Under no circumstances may an employee drive a County vehicle or utilize any County resource to report directly to an emergency scene. If authorized the employee may report to the volunteer agency's designated location and respond to the emergency from there, without using a County vehicle, equipment, or any other County resource.*

Examples of county resources include but are not limited to vehicles, fuel, equipment, communication devices, and facilities. Unauthorized use shall result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Personnel Rules and Regulations.

- **Duplicate Compensation Notification and Repayment**

Employees shall not receive duplicate compensation for hours during which Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave is used. If an employee receives Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave and subsequently receives compensation (as defined in this policy) from a volunteer agency or any other source for the same hours, the employee must notify their Department and the Personnel Department within one (1) business day of discovery.

Upon notification, the County will correct the employee's time records. The employee shall repay the affected leave hours or make an equivalent payroll adjustment, consistent with applicable Personnel Rules and Regulations. Failure to notify may result in disciplinary action and removal of eligibility for Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave.

For clarity, nominal stipends that equate to less than \$200.00 per response are not considered compensation for purposes of this section.



Inyo County Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Annual Certification Form

Employees must submit this verification form to the Personnel Department within 30 days of hire or by January 15 each year. The form verifies active status with a volunteer EMS, Firefighter, or Search and Rescue (SAR) agency and confirms the volunteer/employee is in good standing. Failure to submit shall result in loss of eligibility for Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave. This requirement ensures accurate recordkeeping and compliance with county policies.

Section 1 – Employee Information

Employee Name: _____

Employee ID: _____ County Department: _____

Office Location: _____ Work Phone: _____

Section 2 – Volunteer Agency Information

Volunteer Agency Name: _____

Agency Phone: _____ Agency E-mail: _____

Agency Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): _____

Type of Service (check all that apply): ☐ EMS ☐ Firefighter ☐ Search and Rescue (SAR)

Section 3 – Service Status Verification (to be completed by an authorized representative of the volunteer agency)

By signing below, I confirm that the volunteer/employee:

☐ Is an active member of the above-named volunteer agency

☐ Is in good standing with the agency

Note: For administrative clarity, 'good standing' generally means the member is eligible to serve and has no current disciplinary actions. Agency standards apply.

Authorized Volunteer Agency Representative Name/Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section 4 – Employee Affirmation

By signing below, I affirm that I have read and understand the Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Policy, and all information provided in this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false or misleading information may result in disciplinary action and may disqualify me from eligibility for volunteer EMS, Firefighter, or Search and Rescue assignments during work hours.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____



INYO COUNTY

Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Response Request Form

This form is required for employees participating in volunteer EMS, Firefighter, or Search and Rescue (SAR) activities. It ensures all leave requests are properly documented, approved, and compliant with county policies. Employees must complete the form before any volunteer assignment that affects work hours, or by the next calendar day for short-notice emergency responses. Under no circumstances may an employee leave for a volunteer assignment without prior written approval from the Department Head or their designee.

Section 1 – Employee Information

Employee Name: _____

Employee ID: _____ County Department: _____

Office Location: _____ Work Phone: _____

Section 2 – Volunteer Agency & Assignment Details

Volunteer Agency Name: _____

Agency Phone: _____ Agency E-mail: _____

Agency Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): _____

Type of Service (check all that apply): ☐ EMS ☐ Firefighter ☐ Search and Rescue (SAR)

Nature of Assignment: _____

Date(s): _____ Time(s): _____

Location/Jurisdiction (City/County): _____

Assignment category (check one):

- ☐ Local response within Inyo/Mono Counties
- ☐ Emergency SAR response to contiguous County (requires CAO authorization)
- ☐ Mutual Aid response within Inyo/Mono Counties
- ☐ Mutual Aid response outside of Inyo/Mono Counties
- ☐ Other: _____

Note: *If the initial assignment category later changes (e.g., a local response becomes mutual aid that is compensated on an hourly basis), you must correct this information after the fact. Record the final category and compensation basis below and submit the corrected form by the next business day (or per pay-period submission timelines), attaching supporting documentation from the volunteer agency.*

Section 3 – Type of Leave Requested

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Vacation | ☐ Compensatory | ☐ Flexible leave |
| ☐ Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave | | ☐ Leave Without Pay (LWOP) |

Note: LWOP will not be approved when Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave is available. All Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave must be exhausted prior to any LWOP request. LWOP is not guaranteed and is subject to Personnel Rules and Regulations. LWOP may not be granted if other accrued leave is available (vacation, comp, flex). Employees should be aware that LWOP may affect benefits.

Section 4 – Pre-Approval & Documentation

Written approval from the Department Head or designee is required before departure. If unavailable, follow the department's chain of command to obtain written authorization as defined by the Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Policy.

Approval method: _____ Approval timestamp (Date/Time): _____

If short-notice emergency, reason for delayed submission (if applicable): _____

Section 5 – Employee Affirmation

By signing below, I affirm that I have read and understand the Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Policy, and all information provided in this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false or misleading information may result in disciplinary action and may disqualify me from eligibility for volunteer EMS, Firefighter, or Search and Rescue assignments during work hours.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section 6 – Department Approval

- ☐ Approved as requested
☐ Approved with the following change: _____
☐ Not approved

Department Head/Designee Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section 7 – Submission & Policy Notes

Submission: Completed forms must be submitted in accordance with your department's timecard and payroll submission procedures and must follow all county pay period deadlines.

Policy notes: Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave is authorized only during regularly scheduled work hours and may not be used in a manner that results in overtime. Employees may not receive duplicate compensation for the same hours from another agency when using Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave. Mutual aid assignments outside Inyo or Mono Counties are not eligible for Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave hours and require use of accrued leave or LWOP, subject to Personnel Rules and Regulations.

Use of County resources: Employees shall not use County vehicles, fuel, or equipment to report to an emergency assignment/scene.



Inyo County Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave Verification Form

This form must be completed and submitted within the pay period in which the leave was taken, following the current Inyo County pay period schedule. If the leave incident spans multiple pay periods, a separate form must be submitted for each pay period. This ensures accurate tracking and compliance with county payroll and personnel policies.

Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave hours are authorized only during an employee's regularly scheduled work hours and may not be used in a manner that results in overtime or other extra pay.

Section 1 – Employee Information

Employee Name: _____

Employee ID: _____ County Department: _____

Office Location: _____ Work Phone: _____

Section 2 – Volunteer Agency Information

Volunteer Agency Name: _____

Agency Phone: _____ Agency E-mail: _____

Agency Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): _____

Type of Service (check all that apply): ☐ EMS ☐ Firefighter ☐ Search and Rescue (SAR)

Section 3 – Service Details & Log

Nature of Assignment: _____

Location/Jurisdiction (City/County): _____

Date(s): _____ Time(s): _____

Assignment category (check one):

- ☐ Local response within Inyo/Mono Counties
- ☐ Emergency SAR response to contiguous County (requires CAO authorization)
- ☐ Mutual Aid response within Inyo/Mono Counties
- ☐ Mutual Aid response outside of Inyo/Mono Counties
- ☐ Other: _____

Compensation basis:

- ☐ Uncompensated volunteer (nominal stipend only)
- ☐ Hourly compensation

☐ Eligible for hourly compensation once submitted by Volunteer Agency to State or Federal Agency)

Date: _____ Total Hours Served: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Date: _____ Total Hours Served: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Date: _____ Total Hours Served: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Section 4 – Agency Representative Verification

Authorized Volunteer Agency Representative Name/Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____ Contact E-mail Address: _____

Section 5 – Submission & Policy Notes

Submission: Completed forms must be submitted in accordance with your department's timecard and payroll submission procedures, and must follow all county pay period deadlines.

Policy notes: Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave may only be used during regularly scheduled work hours and may not be used in a manner that results in overtime. Employees may not receive duplicate compensation for the same hours from another agency when using Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave. Mutual aid assignments outside Inyo or Mono Counties, or assignments eligible for hourly compensation, are not eligible for Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave hours and require use of accrued leave or LWOP, subject to Personnel Rules and Regulations.

Section 6 – Department Use Only

Based on the verified volunteer hours and the employee's schedule, the employee is eligible for a total of _____ hours of leave.

Breakdown of hours used by leave type:

_____ Volunteer EMS/Firefighter/SAR Leave Hours

_____ Vacation Leave Hours

_____ Compensatory Leave Hours

_____ Flex Leave Hours

_____ Leave Without Pay

_____ **Total Hours**

Total hours must match the total eligible hours above and match the type of leave indicated on Response Request Form.

Date Received: _____ Processed By: _____