

Lane Fire Authority Policy Manual

VOLUNTEER REIMBURSEMENT BENEFITS PROGRAM

POLICYA-4.6

Adopted 02/18/2014

VOLUNTEER REIMBURSEMENT BENEFITS PROGRAM

4.6.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Policy is to provide reimbursement information to volunteers for ~~out-of-pocket expenses~~ benefits available during the performance of their duty to the benefit of the Authority.

4.6.1 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Authority volunteers that participate in drills, alarms and activities approved by the Chief for the Authority.

4.6.2 GENERAL

Volunteers are members of the Lane Fire Authority who perform services without the expectation or prior agreement that any certain sums will be paid to them. All such sums received are not as a substitution for compensation. Any funds received by volunteers are nominal when compared to the normal expected pay scales and wages received by full-time paid firefighters within the area.

The volunteers of Lane Fire Authority provide immeasurable service to their community as volunteer firefighters. Volunteers may respond to emergency alarms twenty- four (24) hours each day, three hundred sixty five (365) days a year. ~~While providing these services to the community, the volunteers incur expenses that are eligible for reimbursement as listed below.~~

Part-time seasonal employees who are hired to perform maintenance-only duties for the Authority may continue to respond on emergency calls as volunteers, and be eligible for reimbursement benefits under these programs. If a call for emergency services occurs while they are performing paid maintenance duties, they shall go "off the clock" as employees for the time during which they are responding to the emergency call. This clause does not apply to personnel who are paid to respond as emergency responders.

Volunteers who are not in good standing with the Authority, or are on a leave of absence for any reason, shall not be eligible for these reimbursement programs benefits.

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4.6.3 CELL PHONE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

- A. As the Lane Fire Authority utilizes a cellular-based system as a backup to the VHF paging system, as well as messaging by text and email for non-emergency messages, the Authority considers it vital that all personnel carry a personal cell phone with a data plan at all times, provide the Authority with the phone number, and grant permission to the Authority to use this number to send emergency and non-emergency messages on behalf of the Authority.
- B. All career and volunteer personnel shall be eligible for reimbursement for maintaining a personal cell phone with a data plan. The Authority shall reimburse the volunteers for this in the amount of \$30.00 per month, payable semi-annually at times designated by the Fire Chief and the Business Manager. Career personnel shall be reimbursed the appropriate percentage during their regular pay cycle. ~~The personnel shall complete and sign the agreement form provided by the Authority, and attach a copy of one month's personal cell phone bill verifying that it has the required data plan. The personnel shall continue to abide by the terms of the agreement to maintain the phone and data plan as long as they are requesting this reimbursement.~~

4.6.4 VOLUNTEER EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT BENEFITS PROGRAM

- A. Volunteers shall earn one point for each emergency call they respond on, regardless of the length of the call. Non-emergency activities such as training or prevention shall not be eligible to earn points.
- B. The money budgeted for volunteer reimbursement benefits shall be set by Lane Fire Authority Board of Directors. The budget officer shall recommend a sum of money be placed in the appropriate line item for this purpose during the budget process, to be approved by the budget committee, and adopted by the board.
- C. Reimbursement Benefits shall be done semi-annually distributed annually, at a times time determined by the Fire Chief and Business Manager.
- D. The sum budgeted for the year ~~shall be divided in half, and then~~ shall be divided by the number of calls ~~and by the number of personnel responding~~, resulting in a value for each point earned.
- E. The resulting point value is then multiplied by the number of points earned by each volunteer during the half-year year immediately prior to the reimbursement distribution, and the resulting sum is then available as a maximum reimbursement fund amount for that

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volunteer. This sum cannot be carried forward past June 30th of each year, i.e. it must be spent in the current fiscal year.

F. Distribution of funds will be allocated as outlined below. Volunteers will need to choose one of the two options prior to the calculation of funds.

1. All funds will be distributed to the volunteer LOSAP account.
2. Funds up to \$600 will be distributed to the volunteer by check and any funds earned over the \$600 will be distributed to the volunteer LOSAP account.

~~F. Reimbursement shall be made for qualifying expenses after the approved request for reimbursement form is completed. Receipts must be attached to the form for all expenses submitted for reimbursement.~~

~~G. There shall be no direct cash reimbursement for points earned other than for qualifying expenses with appropriate documentation.~~

~~H. If the volunteer has submitted for reimbursement an amount greater than the amount they have earned based on their response points, they shall only be reimbursed up to the earned amount.~~

~~I. The following items are examples of expenses that are eligible for reimbursement:~~

- ~~1. Safety equipment such as firefighting or wildland fire boots, gloves, helmets, etc. not otherwise provided by the Authority.~~
- ~~2. Communications equipment such as scanners, smart phones, tablets with cellular capability, two-way radios, etc.~~
- ~~3. Training equipment such as laptop computers and related accessories.~~
- ~~4. Training expenses not otherwise paid by the Authority, such as college tuition and fees for education specific to a fire science or EMS major, including program prerequisites.~~

~~J. Funds for the Volunteer Program may vary from time to time based upon:~~

- ~~1. The degree and amount of participation by members.~~
- ~~2. Budgetary limitations.~~
- ~~3. Changes or modifications in policy of the Board of Directors.~~

4.6.5 LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM (LOSAP)

At the option of the volunteer, the funds earned may be used to participate in the Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) maintained by the Lane Fire Authority instead of being used for reimbursement for expenses as outlined above distribution as outlined

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above. The volunteer will complete the enrollment forms for this program and notify the Business Manager that they choose to participate in the LOSAP in lieu of the reimbursement of which option they choose as outlined above. The volunteer must make this choice once, and cannot move back and forth between the two programs If the volunteer does not set up a LOSAP account prior to the funds being calculated and distributed, the Authority will issue a check for up to \$600 and any excess will be forfeited.

If a volunteer separates from the Authority prior to being vested in the LOSAP program (2 years), the account will be closed and the monies redistributed between current participants in the program.

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