



Mendon Fire Department

Restricted Active Member (RAM) Program Guide

Program Overview

The Restricted Active Member (RAM) Program (a.k.a. **Program**) is designed to provide an opportunity for young community members (aged 16-18) to gain valuable experience, skills, and knowledge in the fire service while fostering a sense of responsibility, teamwork, and civic engagement. RAM members have the chance to actively participate in non-hazardous department activities under the guidance and supervision of experienced firefighters, preparing them for future roles in firefighting and emergency response.

The aim of this program is to provide a structured and rewarding experience for young individuals interested in the fire service. It is hopeful that the program can contribute to the department's growth and sustainability by nurturing a new generation of committed firefighters and community leaders.

Structure and Duration

The Program will follow the department's schedule for meetings, drills and other training opportunities to ensure meaningful participation and progression of skills. Regular meetings will be held to provide updates, and training, and address any questions or concerns. RAM members may participate in department social activities, and team-building exercises that may be scheduled.

An individual may remain in the Program until the age of 18. It is at this age that a Program participant is eligible to become a full-fledged department member.

Compliance and Code of Conduct

Participating individuals will be expected to adhere to all Mendon Fire District and Fire Department policies, rules and regulations, by-laws, standard operating guidelines, and code of conduct. Members are expected to maintain a level of professionalism while respecting department resources, following safety protocols, and demonstrating a commitment to learning and growth. Violation of, or non-compliance with, any of the aforementioned collection may result in appropriate disciplinary actions, including termination from the program.

RAM members are not to talk to the media unless directed to do so. They are to refer all questions regarding the fire department to the most senior officer on the scene (whether it be a call or department event). RAM members are expected to represent the fire department in a positive manner. They should understand that it is inappropriate to discuss internal matters of the fire department or talk negatively about other fire departments. RAM members shall abide by the District's Code of Ethics rules governing social media interactions.

Confidentiality and Data/Patient Protection

All RAM participants will be required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information encountered during their involvement in the program. This includes respecting the privacy of individuals involved in emergency incidents and maintaining the confidentiality of departmental documents and procedures. RAM members will receive guidance on handling confidential information and data protection to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards.



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RAM Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Be between the ages of 16 and 18 years of age.
- Reside within the jurisdiction of the Mendon Fire District or neighboring department, as approved by the department.
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in the fire service and commitment to learning and serving the community.
- Obtain parental or guardian consent to: (a) participate in the program, and (b) obtain the District-mandated annual physical. Both are part of the RAM application package.

Mentoring and Peer Support

The establishment of mentorship programs where experienced firefighters or senior RAM's can provide guidance, support, and advice to younger RAM's. Giving a sense of purpose to RAM's through regular meetings, social activities, and team-building exercises can enhance their experience in the program.

Recruitment and Selection:

The Mendon Fire Department will actively promote this Program to potential candidates within the eligible age range. Outreach efforts will include collaborations with the Honeoye Falls-Lima schools, community organizations, and social media campaigns. Interested individuals will be required to complete an application form that gives them the opportunity to express their motivation to join. The application will require some basic personal information as well as parental/guardian consent. The department's leadership and Board of Directors, in consultation with FASNY guidelines, will review the applications and select each RAM based on eligibility criteria.

Program Activities and Community Engagement

RAM's will be encouraged to actively participate in community events, public education initiatives, and department-sponsored activities like parades and carnivals. Community gatherings provide a chance to foster positive relationships with residents as well as to promote fire safety awareness. As such, RAM's are expected to be aware that their conduct will be viewed as a direct reflection of the Mendon Fire Department. RAM's will engage in a variety of non-hazardous activities that contribute to the overall functioning and support of the Mendon Fire Department. These activities may include but are not limited to:

- Assisting with equipment and apparatus checks, maintenance, cleaning, and organization.
- Participating in community fire prevention and safety programs, such as distributing educational material.
- Participating in organizational department events approved through the department.



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Program Activities and Community Engagement (cont.)

- Participating in training exercises and drills focused on building basic firefighting skills, such as hoseline operations, ladder operations, and vehicle extrication (under supervision and in compliance with safety regulations).
- Observing and assisting at emergency scenes, maintaining a safe distance from active firefighting operations, and learning from experienced firefighters.
- Graduating High School Scholarship: RAM's graduating high school while in the program will be awarded a \$750 scholarship to support their educational pursuits. This scholarship recognizes their dedication to both their academic and firefighting responsibilities, providing financial assistance as they transition to higher education or vocational training.
 - If an eligible student remains an explorer up through the age of 18, they will only be eligible for one \$750 scholarship, IE RAM or Explorer.

Based on the needs and resources of the Mendon Fire Department, a long term goal for the Program is to explore the possibility of supporting specialized tracks of expertise, such as the offering for EMT or technical rescue.

Program Support and Resources

The Mendon Fire Department will strive to provide the necessary resources and support. This includes access to training materials, educational resources, personal protective equipment (PPE), and mentoring opportunities. RAM's will be encouraged to actively engage with their mentors, ask questions, seek guidance, and take advantage of the available resources to enhance their learning and development.

Safety and Liability

The safety and well-being of Program participants is of paramount importance. The Mendon Fire Department will always consider risk minimization in program activities. Program members will receive safety training specific to their assigned tasks and will always be supervised by qualified firefighters during their participation. Liability insurance coverage will be in place to protect both Program members and the department in case of unforeseen circumstances.

Youth Protection - Two Deep Leadership

For all activities involving a RAM member, regardless of gender, there must be a minimum of two adult members, aged 21 years or older, present at all times. The adult members in question will have passed the appropriate department background checks as well as having satisfactorily completed the department's (or equivalent, e.g. BSA) youth protection training. This ensures a supportive and secure environment for all participants. In situations where a RAM member is female, one of the two adults present shall be a female. If no female is present, then the RAM(s) must stay on camera (if available) This requirement is in place to provide adequate supervision and support.



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Youth Protection - Two Deep Leadership (cont.)

In situations that are dynamic with respect to fire/EMS calls and adult member response, judgement shall err on the side of caution with respect to RAM and adult member ratios. The following example outlines the situational logic to be applied and taking into account department SOG/best practices.

An EMS call where only one member (EMT Firefighter) and one RAM respond: Two competing issues: (a) RAM vs adult member ratio is in violation of the two-deep rule, whereas (2) the department endeavors to require a minimum of two members to respond to a call. In this context, the EMT Firefighter may respond solo as long as an ambulance is in route to the call. The RAM member may stay at the station if more adult members are responding but must remain in range of active station security cameras until two or more adult members have arrived.

Fire call:: Although unlikely that less than one member responds, should a context develop where only one adult member is present, the RAM member must remain in range of active station security camera until a second (or more) adult member arrives.

Training and Supervision

RAM's will receive appropriate training and supervision to ensure their safety and promote their growth within the program. This includes:

- Orientation sessions to familiarize RAM's with department policies, procedures, and safety guidelines.
- Completion of mandatory annual training as required by the Mendon Fire Department/District
- Training sessions are conducted by experienced firefighters to develop basic firefighting skills, first aid, and CPR.
- Regular supervision and mentoring by qualified firefighters during all program activities.
- Ongoing educational opportunities, such as workshops and seminars, to enhance knowledge in fire service-related topics.

Call Responses and Restrictions:

Due to legal and safety considerations, individuals participating in the Program have restrictions on their activity when responding to emergency calls. **All call responses are at the discretion of the Officer In Charge.** A RAM is not authorized to actively engage in firefighting or hazardous materials emergency operations. However, they may have the opportunity to observe, operate, and learn from a safe distance under the supervision of experienced firefighters.

- **Allowed Primary Responses:**

- Motor Vehicle Accidents, no person(s) trapped or fatally injured.
- Automatic Alarms.
- Grass / Field / Brush / Wildland Fires.
- Hazardous Conditions such as wires down or water problems.
- Lockouts.
- Emergency Medical Calls.

*Discretionary responses from Officer in Charge.



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Call Responses and Restrictions (cont.)

- **Allowed Secondary Responses:**
 - Fires inside a building, not involving the structure, STRCB.
 - Vehicle Fires, no person(s) trapped or fatally injured.
 - Motor Vehicle Accidents, person(s) trapped.
 - Fires inside a building, involving the structure, STRCA.

- **Not Allowed to Respond**
 - Fatal Motor Vehicle Accident
 - Cardiac or Respiratory Arrests
 - Hazardous Material Operational Responses

RAM's play a crucial role in providing non-emergency support to the Mendon Fire Department. This may include assisting with logistics, equipment maintenance, community outreach, and other non-operational tasks. Through this, Program members can still make significant contributions to the department's overall mission and operation.

School-Year Training / Responding Hour Restrictions

To minimize the impact of department activities on the RAM fundamental education process, they are restricted from initializing call-responses and training opportunities that would interfere with traditional school hours. To that end, a RAM member is not permitted to leave school for: (a) a call response, or (b) for a department training event during school hours without written permission from their parent or guardian. The parental note should contain an effective date, their address and a contact phone number.

Additionally, a RAM member is not permitted to respond to calls or participate in department training activities if initiated from 22:00 (on a 'school day') until after school the following day. Note that these evening restrictions are only applicable on days of the week where there is standard school attendance expected the following day. For example, if the standard school week is Monday through Friday, the only evenings that do not fall under this evening-restriction are Friday and Saturday.

Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The Mendon Fire Department, in collaboration with the Mendon Fire District, will periodically evaluate the Program to assess its effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure its alignment with the department's goals and objectives. Feedback from Program members and mentors will be solicited and considered in shaping future iterations of the Program.



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Recognition and Advancement

The Mendon Fire Department and FASNY recognize the importance of acknowledging the dedication and contributions of RAM's. The program may include the following recognition and advancement components:

- Issuance of program identification badges or uniforms to distinguish RAM's within the department.
- Opportunities for RAM's to transition into full active membership in the fire department upon reaching the age of 18 and meeting the department's eligibility requirements.
- Mentoring and guidance to assist RAM's in pursuing further education, training, or careers in the fire service.
- Upon completion of their participation in the Program, RAM's will be recognized for their commitment and dedication.

Transition Opportunities

The Program will provide a pathway for transitioning RAM's to further involvement in the Mendon Fire Department. Upon aging-out, members who have completed the RAM Program and expressed interest in pursuing firefighting as a career or becoming active members of the department, will be guided through the necessary steps to join the department as fully active firefighters. This transition may include additional training, certifications, and fulfilling any additional requirements as set forth by the department.

Member Termination

The Mendon Fire Department reserves the right to terminate the participation of any Program member if they fail to meet the Program requirements, violate the code of conduct, or exhibit behavior that compromises the safety and integrity of the department. A RAM member will be given fair notice and an opportunity to address any concerns or issues before termination is considered.



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REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Author	Description
2023.09.1	T. Sellman	Add revision history. Added school-night hour-restriction based on topic introduction at BofD 9/18/23 meeting and agreed by majority consensus.
2023.10.1	T. Sellman	Added 'Youth Protection – Two Deep Leadership' section at BofD 10/10/23 meeting and agreed by majority consensus.
2023.10.2	T. Sellman	Further specified 'adult supervisor' requirements in Youth Protection section. Added section to Confidentiality section regarding RAM / Media/Social Media interaction. Addition of parent note content.
2023.11.1	T. Sellman	Minor tweek to Media interaction after District Review (at Nov 2 nd meeting).
2023.11.2	T. Sellman	Minor tweek to RAM Eligibility Criteria regarding parental consent for annual physical.