

San Antonio Fire Department Explorer Program



New Member,

As the Coordinator of the SAFD Explorer program, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you as an explorer member of the San Antonio Fire Department! For many, this program will be the first step in the career to the fire service, whether volunteer or paid. I honestly believe that you as an active participant in this program are the future of this fire department, and a hero of tomorrow.

When people do not know where to turn for help, quite often their response is to call the local fire department. They expect us to fix their emergency, or to at least make things better for them. Therefore, the firefighter has traditionally performed many tasks other than just fighting actual fires and is held in high esteem by many people. As a member of the Explorer Program, people will look to you as a representative of this department. Therefore, it is important to follow the code of conduct and to be courteous and respectful to all, especially when wearing your uniform.

As a new member of the Explorer Program, you will be required to participate in trainings, meetings, drills, fundraising events, and station projects. There are also many other activities and opportunities available to you, that I hope you will take advantage of.

As a member of this department, I take a great deal of pride in it and the community that surrounds it. You will be expected to do the same. As a member, strive for excellence; be the best that you can; be proud of what you are doing it for; promote department pride by example; and most of all have fun and be safe. Again, from myself, my staff, the Chief, and the entire department we welcome you.

Sincerely,

Training Coordinator,
SAFD explorer Program

How It All Began . . .

The San Antonio Fire Department had a very humble beginning. On June 6, 1854, a group of 20 young San Antonians met and organized the first volunteer fire department. They called it the Ben Milam Company. The company was comprised of only a bucket brigade, but with a lot of vim and vigor and determination to do something about protecting life and property against the demon "Fire."

In 1858, the Ben Milam Company purchased the first-hand operated fire engine which made the local fire department one of the best in the entire Southwest. However, around 1859, with the burning of Eckenroth's store, it became apparent that the city's firefighting facilities were still not enough to cope with conflagrations.

In 1891, San Antonio boasted a population of 37,363 people. In March of that year, a permanent, paid Fire Department was organized. Two 700 gallons-per-minute steam pumpers, 5 hose carriages, 2 hook-and-ladder trucks, and assorted wagons and carts were provided. Some 45 firefighters were hired. The Fire Chief was paid \$100 per month, double-team drivers were paid \$55, and privates earned \$45 per month.

Since our founding in 1891, the San Antonio Fire Department has built a strong reputation for serving the citizens of San Antonio. From that first-hand operated fire engine, the department has continued to be innovative and aggressive in keeping up with firefighting trends, using the best technology, and finding more efficient and effective ways to provide service to the community. SAFD has been a vital part of the city's past and will play an even greater role in addressing the changing issues facing San Antonio into the future.

Mission and Values

The *San Antonio Fire Department* and its *Explorer Program* work in cooperation to **Educate, Protect and Serve** the youth of San Antonio and surrounding communities.

The following statements are upheld by the San Antonio Fire Department:

MISSION STATEMENT

To maintain a safe environment for youth to gather within the community to learn about many aspects of the fire service and to provide avenues for positive social interaction for youth within the program, and for youth within the community.

VISION

We will be a model for fire departments with Explorer programs to introduce the young community to the fire service and to provide a safe environment for social activities for youth within our community.

CORE VALUES

Recognizing the dedication and skill and value of all members, we will create and maintain an environment of individual safety, well-being, and trust. We are guided by: ***Service to Others, Teamwork, Compassion, Integrity, Safety, Honesty, Accountability, Professionalism and Respect.***

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

The members of the San Antonio Fire Department Explorer Program demonstrate commitment to our community through:

- Providing an opportunity for youth to serve the community.
- Respectful and courteous treatment of all people.
- Accountability for our actions.
- Open honest communications.
- Educating peers about fire safety and prevention.
- Providing a safe environment for youth activity within the community.

Battalions

Battalions are groupings of members for organizational purposes. Each new member of the Explorer Program will be assigned a Battalion to be a part of by the membership committee. The Battalion that you are placed in will be the group that you will train with. You will also work different Explorer functions such as the spaghetti dinners, breakfasts, and other events with this group.

Generally, once you are assigned to a Battalion, you remain a member of that Battalion throughout your time as an Explorer. However, there are times when you may need to participate in training or some other activity as a member of another Battalion. At times, the Coordinator may also need to reorganize battalions, and you will be assigned to a new battalion by the coordinator should this become necessary.

Each battalion has an Explorer Lieutenant to lead them. If this officer is not present, then another officer or member will be assigned to lead the battalion for that event. The Lieutenant in charge of your battalion is also your contact person should you have questions regarding dates, locations, times, or any other general information.

The rank structure of our explorer group is as follows:

Chief – Person in charge of explorer battalions. Voted by the explorers and will answer questions regarding dates, locations, times, and any other general information.

Term limit in office is 1 year.

Person voted in office will also response to issues the explorer battalions are having but will NOT issue any disciplinary actions. ONLY the coordinator will have that ability.

Lieutenant – Person in charge of his/her battalion

Person is voted upon by the explorers to lead their battalion

Person voted upon will have a time limit of 6 months. May change depending upon situations

Firefighters – Person's who are assigned to battalions

Meetings and Trainings

Trainings are held every Wednesday of every month from 6:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise stated.

Meetings are generally conducted by the Training Coordinator. They are generally informational and Explorer Program business is discussed and may be voted on. New members may also be voted into the Explorer Program at these meetings.

The training program for the Explorer's is structured to introduce explorer members to the fire service. Explorer members that join the regular department are at an advantage since the Explorer Program introduces them to the tools and skills that are used in firefighting and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). During training, you will learn about firefighting, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the use of tools, and related skills. You will also learn how to work as a team and HAVE FUN!

Quite often the training will include some physical or hands on activity and/or lesson. At times, an educational field trip may be substituted for the regularly scheduled training.

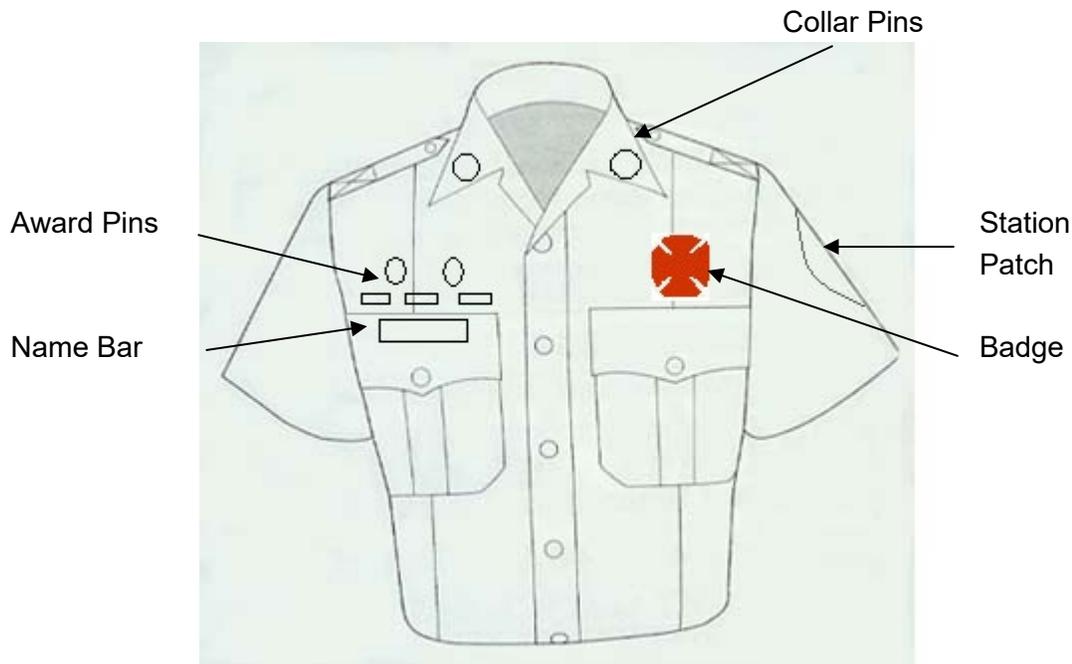
The following is the uniform that **MUST** be worn during Explorer Trainings:

- Navy blue uniform pants or shorts
- Explorer issued Tee Shirt
- Black closed toe footwear or tennis shoes

In addition, any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that has been issued to you must be brought to each training.

A Conex box is provided to store all gear for explorers.

Uniforms & Protective Equipment



Uniforms and Protective Equipment are issued to Explorer members by the Explorer quartermaster. All issued items remain the property of the San Antonio Fire Dept. and must be surrendered upon leaving our membership.

A uniform will be issued. The uniform includes:

- Grey shirt (for parades/public functions)
- Explorer Patch (affixed to the above shirt)
- T-Shirt (for trainings/other functions)
- Collar Pins

(The badge may be purchased from Galls and will be yours to keep upon purchase. Name bars are issued at the annual banquet.) Black closed toe footwear and navy-blue pants must be purchased by everyone.

You are responsible for the care and maintenance of your uniforms. They are to be worn when participating in any departmental function or activity where you will have contact with members of the public. Uniforms are also required to be worn during training, unless told otherwise by a Training Coordinator. The

uniform is not provided for your daily wear. It is not to be worn while off duty **except directed by the Training Coordinator.**

Personal Protective Equipment will also be provided for you. The Personal Protective Equipment consists of the following:

- Safety Glasses
- Hearing Protection
- Protective Gloves
- Short Length of Rope

and depending on availability:

- Fire Helmet
- Turn-Out Pants
- Turn-Out Coat
- Boots
- Gloves
- Hood

You are responsible for the care and upkeep of your safety equipment. All equipment **MUST** be brought to training events.

Junior's Point System

Parades - 1 point per hour.

Meetings - 1 point per meeting.

Training - 1 point per training.

Officers - 2 points per month.

Committees - 2 points per month if the committee is active for that month;
also 1 extra point for being a chair of that committee.

Fundraisers - 1 point per hour and ½ point per ½ hour. Fundraisers are moneymaking events for the Explorer Program and include dinners, breakfasts, car washes, etc.

Community

Relations - 1 point per hour, ½ point per ½ hour. Will not be broken down any less than ½ hour increments. Points will be given for public relation details are such as the fire expo, open house, fire prevention details, graduation night, smoke detectors installations.

Points will only be given if the Explorer signs in and out on a sign-in sheet.

Points can also be deducted due to:

Not having proper uniform – ½ point

Missing training – 1 Point

Failing school grades – 2 Points

Rank reduced by disciplinary issues – 2 Points

Not respecting officers, other explorers, and advisers – 3 Points

Coordinator and advisers may deduct other points that are deemed necessary due to infractions.

Points are used to monitor participation and interest in the program. Awards and privileges may also be given based upon the level of points earned. A lack of points may indicate that participation and interest in the program are not satisfactory.

The following awards will be given out to Explorer's based on points:

- 1. 10 points – Movie tickets***
- 2. 15 points – \$10 gift card***
- 3. 20 points – Tee shirt***
- 4. 25 Points – Explorer pin***
- 5. 30 Points – Ride outs at fire stations***

San Antonio Fire Explorer Disciplinary Point System

A Fire Explorer is considered a voluntary position but still works within the framework of the fire service and the San Antonio Fire Department. Explorers are reminded that the activities of any fire department personnel (voluntary or paid) are always subject to public scrutiny and review whether they are on or off duty. As such, Explorers should remember that these same high ethical standards likewise apply in their individual activities regardless of duty status. Honesty and integrity are basic traits required of all members of the fire service including explorers. Conduct is EXTREMELY important when representing the San Antonio Fire Department.

Explorers are expected to maintain a professional appearance and attitude. Explorers must always be in the designated uniform. Uniforms must always be clean and looking professional. Explorers are expected to maintain an exemplary attendance record. Dependability is a required trait of a public servant. Unexcused absences will not be tolerated. Explorers absence must be communicated with their chain of command prior to the meeting.

Explorers shall respect the rights of all individuals and will not engage in discrimination, oppression, or favoritism. No cadet shall engage in any form of speech or expression likely to be construed as a racial or religious slur or joke, whether in the presence of other cadets, staff, or other individuals. Discrimination of gender, gender expression, gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation is strictly prohibited.

The purpose of the point system is to hold Fire Explorers accountable for their actions. This program will establish an effective learning environment and instill the discipline required in the fire service. Explorers that are unable to uphold the standards will receive points in the disciplinary point system.

The advisors (SAFD personnel) and the Explorer Chief will be the deciding entity for disciplinary measures. Any time disciplinary points are handed out, the explorer will acknowledge where they are on the point system and a signature will be obtained from the explorer. A total of 15 points will constitute in the explorer's removal from the program. If the Explorer reaches 5 points: advisors, the Explorer Chief and the explorer will meet for a verbal discussion. If the explorer reaches 10 points: advisors, the Explorer Chief and the explorer will meet so that a written letter of warning will be issued to the explorer.

Any act, which brings discredit to any explorer, the SAFD, or the City of San Antonio, will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Explorer Program.

Point Assessment

1. Absence with notification = 1 points per offense
2. Unexcused Absence (absence without notification) = 2 points per offense
3. Lying, cheating, stealing – 3 points with possible immediate dismissal based on seriousness of offense
4. Disruptive behavior during class/drill ground instruction:
 - First offense = 1 point
 - Second offense = 2 points
 - Third offense = 3 points
 - Fourth offense = 4 points
 - Fifth and any subsequent offenses = 5 points
5. Uniform violations:
 - First offense = 1 point
 - Second offense = 2 points
 - Third offense = 3 points
 - Fourth offense = 4 points
 - Fifth and any subsequent offenses = 5 points
6. As it would be impossible to list a point value for all offenses minor or major, any other infraction(s) of Fire Explorer rules will be weighed on a case by case basis by the Fire Explorer advisors and Explorer Chief. At that point a determination will be made to assess a point value ranging from no points assessed to fifteen (15) points based on the infraction.

Frequently Asked Questions

This is a list of the questions asked most often by new Explorer Members:

Q: What activities do you have in this program?

A: We hold trainings, social activities such as fundraising events, public service projects, and other things that a firefighter does except for fighting fires.

Q: Do we get to participate in parades?

A: Yes. Parades are usually held in the summer months. The Explorer's will typically march along with the advisors and any parents wishing to participate. Explorer's MUST have a uniform issued to them before they are able to participate in a parade.

Q: How will I find out about different events taking place?

A: Events are announced at trainings, meetings, and e-mails. In addition, you may be contacted by the Lieutenant in charge of your platoon. (Especially if there is a change or short notice.)

Q: What is the cost of the program?

A: Cost of program is free and will be paid by SAFD explorer program. In addition, you are responsible for the cost of any field trips, and uniform items not provided by the department.

Q: How do I know how many points that I have?

A: Points are posted on the Explorer Program bulletin board. Point sheets are also available at trainings to check your points.

Q: If I have questions or problems, who do I talk to?

A: The Explorer officers are available to answer questions and to assist you. In addition, the advisors will help you with any questions, and any problems and conflicts must be addressed directly with an advisor.

Q: Do I have to participate in trainings and other events?

A: YES! The goals of the Explorer program cannot be met for an individual who does not participate in the trainings or other events. A lack of participation may result in the loss of certain privileges and/or the ability to participate in certain activities. Individuals who regularly do not participate in the Explorer activities without notifying an Advisor may be dropped from the program.

Q: Can I ride the apparatus?

A: Since firefighting is dangerous and requires specialized training, you must first sign a waiver to participate in these activities. Quite often, Explorer's are permitted to ride the apparatus that is not in service while going to and coming from parades, or other public service events.

Code of Conduct

As a member of the San Antonio Fire Explorer program, you are expected and required to:

- Conduct yourself in a professional and courteous manner that will reflect well upon you and the entire department, especially when in uniform.
- Demonstrate honesty, fairness, and integrity.
- Treat all people with courtesy and respect.
- Recognize the value and worth of everyone
- Dress respectfully and modestly at department functions that you attend (i.e.: Cadet graduation, volunteer assignment, etc.)
- Refrain from cussing, cursing, or using otherwise foul language while in uniform, at the station, and while participating in department functions.
- Work as a team with others.
- Participate in training, meetings, and fundraisers.
 - Obey the chain of command.
- Wear your uniform when coming to the station and any department functions that you help with.
- Not wear your uniform or any other department issued gear for general use outside of the station or department functions.
- Always bring required gear to trainings.
- Notify an advisor or parent in charge (if assigned) upon arrival and departure from the station and department functions.
- Immediately report any problems to an Advisor or parent in charge (if assigned).

Meeting of the Explorer's committee composing of coordinator and advisers to discuss any violations can lead up to dismissal of the explorer involved.

Explorer signature

Print explorer name

Parent or guardian signature

Print Parent or guardian name



Photograph and Publicity Release Form

I, _____
(participant or parent/guardian if under 17)

give the *San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD)*, its agents and assigns, permission to use my (or, minor child if applicable), name, likeness, image, voice, and/or appearance in any pictures, photos, video recordings, audiotapes, digital images and the like created by or in coordination with the SAFD and its related agents and activities.

I agree that the SAFD have complete ownership of such pictures, etc., including the entire copyright, and may use them for any purpose consistent with the SAFD's missions. These uses include, but are not limited to illustrations, bulletins, exhibitions, videos, reprints, reproductions, publications, advertisements, social media posts and any promotional or educational materials in any medium now known or later developed, on any platform now known or later developed including the Internet. I acknowledge that I will not receive any compensation, etc., for the use of such pictures, etc., and hereby release the SAFD, The City of San Antonio and its agents and assigns from any and all claims which arise out of or are in any way connected with such use.

I have read and understood this consent and release. ***I give my consent*** to the SAFD, its agents or assigns, to use my (or, my minor child), name, voice and likeness to promote programs, and/or their activities.

Name of participant (print) **If signing for a minor put the
minor's name here.*

date

signature (if 17 or older)

**if participant is 17 or younger:*

parent / legal guardian name (print)

date

parent / legal guardian signature