



**SPECIAL ISSUE
VOLUNTEER
FIRST
RESPONDERS**

theSteward

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors—Our Volunteer First Responders

"911 what's the address of your emergency?" Fire, car accident, medical emergency, chemical spill, flooded basement, lost hiker, stranded pet... If you call for emergency help in Northwest Connecticut, it's your neighbors who answer the call, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Northwest Connecticut firefighter and ambulance services depend heavily on well-trained volunteers. Many of our more than 40 local emergency service organizations are staffed by people who make a living doing something else. They include teachers, small business owners, trades people, contractors, town employees, delivery and retail workers, landscapers, artists, engineers, hairdressers, retirees, and students. These people donate their time, money and talents, and often risk their lives to keep our communities safe.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a documentary short by award winning writer, producer, Anne Makepeace that offers a unique look into the extraordinary skills and services our local first responders provide. The film highlights the hard work, training and dedication of these courageous local men and women.



Watch
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
at www.northwestcf.org or
scan this QR code with your QR
code reader or device app.

What Happens When You Call 911?

911 calls made in Northwest Connecticut are answered by Litchfield County Dispatch (LCD). Established in 1989, Litchfield County Dispatch, Inc., covers 40 fire, medical, and police services encompassing 945 square miles with 150,000 residents and averages 80,000 fire, medical, and police calls annually.

A dispatch operator asks questions to determine the location and nature of your emergency and decides which services you need—your local fire department, an ambulance and/or the police.

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*Volunteer emergency service providers use the jaws of life to rescue an accident victim.
See it in *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* at www.northwestcf.org*

Your Neighbors Need You

A recent report published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), based on data collected in a national survey of fire departments, revealed that the number of volunteer firefighters in the United States is at the lowest recorded levels since the NFPA began its survey in 1983.

Out of almost 30,000 fire departments nationwide, 82 percent are highly dependent on volunteers.

Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteers in emergency services often list the benefits of volunteering as:

- an opportunity to give back to their community and contribute to the safety and wellbeing of their neighbors
- a sense of pride in knowing they are making a difference in the lives of people in their community by protecting them and their loved ones
- the development of decision-making, problem-solving and analytical skills, as well as team building and interpersonal skills that nurture integrity and tolerance
- expanded and strengthened professional networks, working alongside people with varied professional experiences
- a stepping stone into a career as an EMT or firefighter

What it Takes to Protect Your Community

FIREFIGHTERS

Volunteer firefighters are called on day or night, during weekends and holidays, and in all types of weather.

Almost all volunteer firefighters are required to complete a minimum of 110 hours of training from a program accredited by the National Fire Protection Association.

The training program includes in-class instruction and practical applications that test volunteers physically and mentally.

During training, candidates learn to operate axes, fire extinguishers, and other rescue tools. They are trained to perform emergency medical procedures, handle hazardous material, and prevent fires. Trainees learn to help in various situations, including wildland fire, structural fire, fire attack, and emergency medical responses.

Most departments require volunteer firefighters to be 18 years of age or older, hold a high school diploma or the equivalent, and possess a valid driver's license.

Candidates are generally required to pass written and physical exams, drug screenings and background checks. Some locations require a volunteer to live within a department's service area or have EMT certification.



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Ways you can support your local First Responder Services:

Give.

Volunteer fire and ambulance departments are heavily self-funded. These departments need your support to pay for essential safety and medical equipment, station and vehicle maintenance and training.

Donate directly to your local fire or ambulance departments, or give more broadly through the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation **Local First Responder Fund for Mutual Aid**.

If you have a fund with the Community Foundation, recommend a grant to your local first responder organizations.

Join.

Joining a volunteer fire and ambulance service can be extremely rewarding. You are protecting and rescuing your friends and neighbors and safeguarding the emergency response capabilities of your community.

Help.

Many emergency service departments need help with non-emergency services:

- Building maintenance
- Fundraising
- Bookkeeping
- Website and social media efforts
- Distributing disaster preparedness materials, teaching fire safety, first aid and CPR
- Providing food and refreshments for on-duty staff

Be There.

A lot of time and effort goes into fundraising and community events, whether virtual or in-person. Attend local emergency service events and lend your support.

Contact your local emergency services departments to learn more about volunteering or making a donation.

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Recent Grants in Support of Emergency Service Providers in the Northwest Corner

Bethlehem Ambulance

in support of the purchase of a LUCAS Chest Compression System, supplies for community training for the Stop the Bleed program, and a Stryker Power Pro, awarded from the *Khurshed Bhumgarra Fund*



Bethlehem Ambulance crew members stand with a Stryker Pro Stretcher and manikin made possible by the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation Khurshed Bhumgarra Fund

Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department

in support of the organization and its mission, awarded from *The Buchanan Fund*

Falls Village Volunteer Fire Department

in support of the organization and its mission, awarded from *The Echo Valley Foundation Fund*

Harwinton Ambulance Association

to support the purchase of two scoop stretchers, awarded from the *Miriam Mason Cable Trust Fund*

Harwinton Westside Volunteer Fire Company

in support of operating expenses to offset the impact of lost revenue, and to purchase PPE in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, awarded from *Northwest Corner Gives: COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund*

Litchfield County Fire Chiefs Emergency Plan

in support of the purchase of a replacement command/first responder vehicle, awarded from the *Northwest Corner Gives: COVID-19 Rapid Response/COVID-19 Relief Grant Campaign*

New Hartford Volunteer Ambulance

in support of the purchase of a Lucas Chest Compression system, awarded from the *Khurshed Bhumgarra Fund*

in support of the purchase of three AEDs, awarded from the *Robert V. Carr Fund*

Salisbury Volunteer Ambulance Service

in support of the organization and its mission, awarded from *The Echo Valley Foundation Fund*

Sharon Fire Department

in support of the purchase of a LUCAS Chest Compression System, awarded from the *Khurshed Bhumgarra Fund*

Torrington Police Department in support of the purchase of NARCAN to be shared with the **Torrington Fire Department**, awarded from the *Marion Wm. & Alice Edwards Fund*

Washington Ambulance Association

in support of PPE and cleaning products in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, awarded from the *Northwest Corner Gives: COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund*

Grants listed above were awarded from 2017-2020. The Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation has awarded \$100,000 in grants to emergency service organizations over the last 10 years.

Local First Responder Fund for Mutual Aid

Established in 2020, the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation Local First Responder Fund for Mutual Aid supports the specific program and equipment needs of first responder organizations within Northwest Connecticut.

To give to the Local First Responder Fund for Mutual Aid, visit www.northwestcf.org/donate

■ From 1980 to 2019, local fire protection service expenditures (adjusted for inflation in 2017 dollars) increased 196 percent.

■ The national average value of a volunteer hour in 2018 was \$24.69.

■ Forty-one percent of volunteer firefighters nationally have more than 10 years of active service (tenure period).

■ In 2018, 78,500 of U.S. volunteer firefighters were female, which was 11 percent of the total number of volunteer firefighters.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors— Our Volunteer First Responders

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The dispatcher contacts your town's first responders. If first responders request additional resources, such as specific equipment, tools or expertise, dispatchers may reach out to another town's first responders for mutual-aid.

While handling multiple requests, the dispatcher remains in contact with emergency responders at every transition point along the way until the response team has completed the call and can return to service for another call.



Jacqueline Rice, math teacher and swim coach at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, is a volunteer firefighter pictured during training water rescue.

See it in *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* at www.northwestcf.org

Jacqueline Rice, Salisbury volunteer fire fighter, on being on the receiving end of a dispatch—

"The pager goes off and you're sound asleep, and then the pager will start talking. And as it starts talking you're thinking in your head—ok—what do I need to wear—what am I going to see when I get there—what are the possible injuries, and what do we need?"

The Cost of Keeping our Northwest Corner Safe

Firefighting Trucks	Cost
Basic Engine	\$100,000 to \$300,000
Mid-Range Structural Pumper	\$500,000+
Ladder Truck	\$650,000 to \$950,000
Crash Truck (often seen at airports)	\$750,000 to \$1.2 million
Bucket Truck	\$930,000
Other Hardware or Equipment For Truck (e.g., hoses, EMS supplies)	\$100,000 to \$200,000

Source 2

Firefighting Gear	Cost
Turnout Gear: helmet, jacket, bunker pants, boots, firefighting gloves, general purpose gloves, eye protection and a nomex hood. Must be replaced every 10 years per manufacturer's recommendations.	\$2,600 - \$3,000
Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Example: air cylinder, harness system, mask, and mask mounted regulator.	\$4,500 - \$7,000
Total Cost of Gear Per Firefighter	\$7,100 - \$10,000

Source 3

The Cost of Life-Saving Equipment	Cost
Ambulance	\$150,000
LUCAS compression device (for CPR)	\$ 15,000
Stretcher	\$ 20,000
Cardiac Monitor	\$ 40,000
One set of EpiPens	\$ 300
Other equipment and medications	\$ 30,000 / year
Fuel costs	\$ 2,500 / year

Source 4

What it Takes to Protect Your Community

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EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and/or paramedics are your town's first responders in the event of medical emergencies, and they provide efficient and immediate care to the critically ill and injured and transport them to a medical facility. All emergency medical technicians and paramedics are certified and approved by the Office of Emergency Medical Services.

To become a certified EMT or paramedic in Connecticut, you must pass an approved EMT course and practical skills examination. You will also need to earn certification by taking the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam.

Types of Certifications:

Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs) provide immediate lifesaving interventions while waiting for other first responders. EMRs also provide assistance to higher-level personnel at the scene of emergencies and during transport.

Training Hours: About 60 Age: 14 years and older

Emergency Medical Technicians provide out-of-hospital emergency medical care and transportation for critical and emergent patients. EMTs have the basic knowledge and skills necessary to stabilize and safely transport patients ranging from non-emergency and routine medical transports to life-threatening emergencies.

Training Hours: 150-190 Age: 16 years and older
(CT national certification age 18+)

Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians provide basic and limited advanced emergency medical care and transportation for critical and emergent patients.

Training Hours: EMT class (150-190 hours) plus an additional 250 hours
Age: 18 years and older

Paramedics are allied health professionals whose primary focus is to provide advanced emergency medical care and transportation for critical and emergent patients.

Training Hours: About 2 years for a paramedic degree
Age: 18 years and older

Source 1

Group Trainings/Classes

Contact your local emergency response organization for information about First Aid, CPR training, CERT (certification to volunteer during state of emergency), and youth programs.

Mutual Aid – There when it's Needed



North Canaan High Ladder Truck combating a fire at The White Hart Inn in Salisbury

See it in *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* at www.northwestcf.org

Throughout the United States, and in our own communities, volunteer emergency responders provide assistance across jurisdictional boundaries, called mutual aid. Mutual aid between communities helps make us safer while providing us with potential economic benefits.

For instance, sharing specialty equipment across town lines avoids costly duplication, while making certain that needed emergency services and equipment are available when needed.

By sharing resources across communities during emergencies involving multiple alarm fires or disasters with multiple casualties, mutual aid helps ensure that the appropriate number of volunteer responders arrive to help.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Contact your local emergency services departments to learn more about volunteering or making a donation.

Phone numbers are for non-emergency calls.

Barkhamsted

Barkhamsted East Volunteer Fire Company
T: 860-379-6598
W: barkhamstedfiredistrict.org/BEFD

Pleasant Valley Volunteer Fire Company
T: 860-379-0026
W: barkhamstedfiredistrict.org/PVFD

Riverton Volunteer Fire Company
T: 860-379-7473
W: barkhamstedfiredistrict.org/riverton

Bethlehem

Bethlehem Ambulance Association
T: 203-266-6666
W: bethlehemambulance.org

Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Department
T: 203-266-7696

Canaan/North Canaan

Canaan Fire Company
T: 860-824-7366
W: canaanfirecompany.org

Colebrook

Colebrook (Center) Fire Department
T: 860-379-5747

Colebrook (Forge) Fire Department
T: 860-379-1551
W: townofcolebrook.org/fire-departments

Cornwall

Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department & Emergency Medical Services
T: 860-672-6526
W: cornwallfire.org

Falls Village

Falls Village Volunteer Fire Department & Emergency Medical Services
T: 860-824-5298
Email: fvvfd@comcast.net

Goshen

Goshen Volunteer Fire Company & Emergency Medical Services
T: 860-491-2526
W: goshenct.gov/goshen-fire-company-inc

Hartland

East Hartland Fire House
T: 860-379-5536

West Hartland Fire House
T: 866-567-3877
W: hartlandct.org/emergency-services/west-hartland-volunteer-fire-department

Harwinton

Harwinton Ambulance Association
T: 860-485-0544
W: harwintonems.org

Harwinton Volunteer Fire Department
T: 860-485-9336
W: harwintonvfd.org

Harwinton Westside Volunteer Fire Department
T: 860-485-9234

Kent

Kent Volunteer Fire Department & Emergency Medical Services
T: 860-927-3151
W: kentfire.org

Lime Rock Park Ambulance
T: 860-435-5000
W: limerock.com
emergency services only available during events

Litchfield

Litchfield Volunteer Ambulance Association
T: 860-567-0127

Litchfield Fire Department
T: 860-567-0147
W: litchfieldfiredepartment.com

East Litchfield Fire Department
T: 860-482-1929

Bantam Fire Co. & Emergency Medical Services
T: 860-567-5198
W: bantamfirecompany.com

Northfield Fire Company
T: 860-283-9303

Morris

Morris Fire Company
T: 860-567-7441
W: townofmorrisct.com/morris-fire-company

New Hartford

New Hartford Volunteer Ambulance
T: 860-379-6060

New Hartford Fire and Rescue
T: 860-379-4936
W: newhartfordfire.com

Pine Meadow Volunteer Fire Company
T: 860-379-8014
W: newhartfordct.gov/fire-departments

South End/Nepaug Volunteer Fire Department
T: 860-482-7336
W: southendfire.net

Norfolk

Norfolk Lions Club Ambulance
T: 860-542-5077
W: norfolkambulance.com

Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department
T: 860-542-5021
W: norfolkfire.org/nvfd

North Canaan

North Canaan Fire Company
T: 860-824-7366
W: canaanfirecompany.org

North Canaan Volunteer Ambulance Corp.
T: 860-824-7219
W: northcanaanems.org

Salisbury/Lakeville

Salisbury Volunteer Ambulance Service
T: 860-435-0058
W: salisburyambulance.org

Lakeville Hose Company
T: 860-435-9981
W: lakevillehose.com

Sharon

Sharon Fire Department & Ambulance Squad
T: 860-364-5254
W: sharonfiredept.org

Torrington

Drakeville Volunteer Fire Department
T: 860-482-6694
W: drakevillevfd.com

Torringford Volunteer Fire Department
T: 860-482-5076

Warren

Warren Volunteer Fire Company & Ambulance
T: 860-868-2328
W: warrenfirecompany.org

Washington

Washington Ambulance Association
T: 860-868-7913
W: washingtonct.org/ambulance-association

Washington Volunteer Fire Department
T: 860-868-7403
W: washingtonfire.org

New Preston Fire Department
T: 860-868-7831

Winchester/Winsted

Winsted Area Ambulance Association
T: 860-379-6596
W: winstedambulance.org

Special Services

Rope Rescue Teams (Cornwall, Falls Village, Lakeville, Norfolk, Riverton, Sharon)
Dive Team (Goshen)
Fire/Water Rescue Boats (Bantam, Colebrook, Cornwall, Goshen, Lakeville, Morris, New Hartford, Torrington, Winchester)
Incident Management Teams
CERT
Animal Rescue

Every effort has been made to provide the most current information available.

Youth Volunteering

Many local volunteer fire departments offer a junior firefighter program. Junior members must be at least 14 years of age and have parental permission to participate. This nationally recognized program provides a safe and meaningful experience in a highly supervised environment for youth interested in the occupation of firefighting. While good academic performance is always a priority, junior members are provided the opportunity to work alongside the men and women of their fire department at emergency scenes, training sessions, fundraisers and other activities.

Contact your local emergency services department to find out if your community sponsors a junior firefighter program or junior EMT program.



Learn more about the junior firefighter program in Neighbors Helping Neighbors at www.northwestcf.org

SOURCES

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- 2 cost-finder.com/what-is-the-cost-of-fire-engine, accessed 08/22/2019; doverfire.org/faq.cfm, accessed 08/22/2019
- 3 doverfire.org/faq.cfm, accessed 08/22/2019; The Haddam Volunteer Fire Company, "What's It Weigh? Firefighter Gear Piece By Piece," patch.com/connecticut/thehaddams-killingworth/bp-whats-it-weigh-firefighter-gear-piece-by-piece, accessed 08/22/2019
- 4 <https://www.healthcare.com/blog/why-ambulances-expensive>, accessed 09/09/2019



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