

Advice for the Recruits?

03/04/07 87 W - + 16 - 13

What advice would you give to Raleigh's graduating class? Back when our 1989 academy was drawing to a close-- academy #13, gulp-- the chief of training advised us on "goats, banks, and politics." To paraphrase his sagely wisdom, at least as best as memory serves: "First, don't let firefighters get your goat. Second, the firehouse is not a bank. Don't lend money to firefighters. Third, what goes on between you and wife in the bedroom is politics. Don't talk politics at the firehouse." Smart words.

Don't forget where you came from.

FF - 03/05/07 - 10:27

There are the 4 UPS of the fire service. These words are from Pressler via Tom Klett of FDNY.

The first is, Listen up: When you are first starting in the Fire Service, there is a lot going on. You are entering a culture that is unlike any other one on this planet. You will hear stories, tales and just plain BS. But listen carefully. That is our past talking. All of the information has value; it is up to you to determine how much value it has to you. Listen to the older, over-the-hill, past-their-prime, malcontents, for the little "pearls of wisdom" that aren't in any textbooks. A lot of important information that will help keep you safe and alive on the fire ground is not written down. The fire service is very young. We are losing our experience. The F/F's that went to fires during the war years are slowly retiring. Talk to them before they leave. We are losing our history, we are losing our past. Don't let this happen.

The second up is, Clean up: The firehouse is your second home. Treat it as such. And if you are the junior F/F working, you are the lowest on the totem pole. You get the dirty work, you get to do the dishes, and you get to mop the floors, and you get to clean the toilets. This is not based on any prejudices of race, sex, or religion. It is based on the fact that all the junior people before you did it, or should have done it. You do it until the next probie is assigned to that company. It is part of belonging, it is doing what you should be doing. And it is always pretty funny, because in my experience, the ones that piss and moan about doing the chores usually end up doing them by themselves for a long time. But the ones that just do it, the ones that are the first to get up to head for the sink after a meal, usually find that they have help. They become accepted into the "family" a little quicker.

The third up is, Step up: this goes hand in hand with the previous "up" but there is more. Be involved in your company and in your department. Attend company functions, help run them if possible. In NYC every company I ever worked in would have a company picnic in the summer, a Christmas party in the fire house in December, and a dinner-dance sometime during the year. Become a productive member of your Company.

Above all, go to funerals and services, especially the line of duty ones. Pay your respects. Become a part of the fire service by deed and not by mouth.

The last up is my favorite; Shut up. This one goes well with listen up, but actually goes a little further. Spend more time listening and doing than talking about it. Show by your actions and your deeds what type of F/F and member of this great Brotherhood you are.

Mike - 03/05/07 - 13:10

You will always be the newboy at the station no matter where you go

Michael - 03/05/07 - 13:55

I think we should make a change to the term "new boy" and adjust it to "rook", "rookie", "newby" or "probie". I don't think the 3 women in the academy would appreciate being called a boy.

My advice; ladder companies do more than just "mops and fans".

Silver - 03/05/07 - 15:14

Remember that men and women have died wearing that maltoses cross. They were mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers...you name it. You need to not only be technically proficient but embrace and enforce those values that make firefighters the best of the bunch. I'm gonna use the

Army values as a reference. We had to learn and memorize these when I was in: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless service, Honor, Integrity and Personal courage. (L.D.R.S.H.I.P.) Remember and honor those who have come before us and the fallen. Stop any and all you see that would ever sully what we have come from, what we should be, what we stand for to our citizens, and what our brothers and sisters and those they left behind, have sacrificed for. Remember that it is our PRIVILEGE to serve, we are owed nothing, and we owe our service and possibly our lives. You're not a hero and no one else here is. Remember that our main purpose is to save life, everything else comes afterwards... always remember the purpose. This is the best job in the world and it's filled with some of the best people in it. And remember that there were 700 applicants and about 30 openings, you've all earned you're right to be here. You're probies, you earned it. Now earn "firefighter". Be safe and look after each other. PTB. EGH.

Flip ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 03/05/07 - 20:15

More words of advice for the Probies by the late great Ray Downey.

1. When ready for duty – check all the masks – full cylinders, clean facepieces, etc
2. When reporting for duty – ask if anyone wants to leave early
3. Make sure all your gear is ready to go. Check your pockets for gloves & light.
4. Make coffee-learn how the coffee machine works.
5. Lunch & Dinner – find out what has to be done, i.e., peel the potatoes, clean the fish, etc.,
6. Set the table, dishes, knives & forks, glasses, salt & pepper, etc.,
7. After lunch or dinner, jump into the sink, pots, pans, dishes, etc.,
8. When something has to be done, "Volunteer," don't wait for the Officer to tell you to do it
9. Find out what the "Company Policy Is!" watches, AFID, nozzle, back up, etc.,
10. Always say "SIR" to Chief's & Officers (they like it)
11. Always get off the rig with your mask when responding to a report of a "FIRE"
12. When at fire, listen for your Officers instructions
13. Always stay with your Company
14. At fires – STAY LOW
15. Keep your mouth shut and your eyes & ears open.
16. "NEVER GIVE UP," a famous quote from a D.I.

If you are a Probie and don't know who Ray Downey is, then look it up and read anything that he wrote that you can get your hands onto.

Mike - 03/06/07 - 22:13

1st off Silver I had 2 new ffs last year and called them "probie vs. new boy." They actually like being the probie. You all have covered a lot of stuff. I can only think of a handful things to pass on. #1 volunteer to go to the store before someone asks you to go. #2 don't get caught sitting on your a\$\$ in the watch room bull\$hitting with officers while others are cleaning up the station. #3 always wear your vest and helmet when backing the rig even if the lazy a\$\$ others don't! #4 Get to work at 7 a.m. not 7 minutes till 8 a.m. #5. smile when they tie your goat up! #6 always come off the rig for a fire-related call (alarms, odor investigations, fires) ready to go including hand tools as you never know when you'll need them! #7 don't get caught up in the rumor mill talking \$hit about others or how they do things. #8 never bitch about anything! (I was told that 11 years ago but sometimes forget). #9 Put your hands on everything on the rig. Last and most important, #10 Unless asked, never tell them how you did it somewhere else because most of the time we don't give a \$hit. This is RFD! Unless asked!!!!!! Good luck, keep your heads high, stay low!

Jason Lane - 03/07/07 - 02:12

Name: (real name
preferred)
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Heard on Scanner

03/05/07 13 W - + 22 - 13

...earlier today. "Traumatic Injury. Lip caught in coat zipper." Yee-ouch!

Promotion attempt gone wrong.

Flip ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 03/05/07 - 20:17

Rand Rd. Fire pics; will ladder companies ever be able to make it to the front (side A) of a dwelling fire? Poor L-1, all the way in the back. Just remember, you can add hose but you can't add ladder. Not to mention all the tools that need to be shuttled back and forth.

Guest - 03/06/07 - 16:57

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To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

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Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.