

# FIREHOUSE®

## Weekly Drill

### DRILL #116: FUTURE FIREFIGHTERS (EXPLORERS)

#### Introduction

Many fire departments have some affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America and the Fire & Emergency Service Career Exploring programs. The affiliations allow young men and women, ages 14 to 21 (and who have completed the 8th grade), an opportunity to learn more about having a career in the field of fire and emergency services by becoming “explorers.”

The main focus of these posts is to introduce these young “explorers” to firefighting. Advisors (generally firefighters) would instruct these explorers on basic firefighting skills, such as hose operation, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), ladder training and other essential knowledge/skills used at fire scenes. Additionally, explorers learn how to organize and run their own post by electing officers, running fund-raisers and purchasing some of their own equipment.

One local fire department has been involved with exploring for more than 35 years, training some 350 young people who have become members of that department. In addition, another 120 have gone on to become career firefighters.

New York State recently ran a huge campaign to recruit volunteer firefighters. Many young people have responded and including several from explorer programs. A nice feature with being able to obtain explorers is the fact that many come with a great deal of knowledge and training. They do lack some of the practical experience, but as we all know, experience can only be gained from actually performing tasks on an incident.

#### Getting Started

Is your department involved with exploring? If not, here are a few things to think about to help you get started.

#### How many firefighters are needed to run an explorer post?

A minimum of four must be registered with an exploring post: the advisor, a committee chairperson and two committee members. Associate advisors are optional, but encouraged.



#### How many youth are needed to start a post?

The recommended minimum is five youth. There is no maximum number unless the organization running the post sets one.

#### How do we recruit for the post?

A Learning for Life representative from your local Boy Scout office can assist you with recruitment.

#### How old must one be to join the Explorers?

Exploring is for young men and women who are at least 14 and have completed the eighth grade, *or* are at least 15 years of age. The maximum age, however, is 20.

#### How often do the Explorers meet?

This is up to the department running the post. As a general rule, explorers can meet twice a month: once for a business meeting and once for a training/activity meeting.

*—Prepared by Russell Merrick*