SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FIREHOUSE WORK EXPERIENCE INTERNSHIP

INTRODUCTION
This guide is created to help City College students who will be doing Work Experience Internships at fire stations around the Bay Area. For many students this internship will be the first time they are exposed to the firehouse culture. This guide will help students avoid some common pitfalls by learning from the experiences of other students and provide some information about expectations.

FIRST DAY
Your first day can be stressful. You want to make a good first impression and show them you are motivated but at the same time you don't want to overstep or be an inconvenience.

• Come early but not too early. If the shift change or roll call is at 8:00 am be there at 7:30 am. Arriving early also gives you a chance to briefly meet the prior day's crew.
• Don't come empty handed. Bring donuts, cookies, bagels, ice cream or something. Sometimes there is a lot of food floating around in the morning and you want the firefighters to be excited for whatever you brought. Make sure there is enough!
• Introduce yourself. Have a firm handshake and speak clearly. Be confident but humble.
• Hopefully one of the newer firefighters will be assigned to show you around. The expectations of interns within the firehouses can vary greatly so ask this firefighter for any tips or advice.
• Figure out which apparatus you will be riding on and the seating arrangements. Make sure you have disposable gloves in your pocket. If you have PPE from Fire Academy or another source, ask the officer if you should bring it or leave it in your car.
• In the morning find the driver and see if you can assist them with their daily checks.
• When you get a call don't be the last one on the apparatus. You don't want the crew to have to wait for you.
• On scene, try to stay calm and see if there is anything you can assist with. Your responsibilities will vary depending on your skills and the crew's knowledge of your abilities.
• On medical calls help carry the bags, offer to take vitals signs. Try and be an asset and not a
hindrance.

• Show the crew that you want to work. Offer to help no matter how major or minor the task.
• At the end of your shift thank the crew.

MEALS

• If you go shopping as a crew, push the cart. You can also help bag groceries and carry the food back to the apparatus. You shouldn't be the one empty handed.
• Help cook. Volunteer to peel garlic, chop onions, wash lettuce or whatever else is needed.
• After all the food is prepared help wash the dishes and set the table.
• Be the last one to get food and take the least amount.
• Make sure to pay for lunch!
  Think ahead, have some cash in smaller bills so if the cook tells you lunch was $7 you don't have to ask them to break a $20.
• Be careful eating leftover food in the morning from the night before. You didn't pay for it or help cook.
• Don't drink the last bit of coffee unless you just made a new pot. Even then you should still offer it to the firefighters first.

TAKE INITIATIVE / STAY BUSY

• You shouldn't be sitting while other people are working.
• Help with the station duties. Rinse the dishes in the sink and put them in the dishwasher, wipe down counter tops, gather the trashes and recycling, sweep or mop apparatus bay floors and the bathrooms.
• Be involved with whatever is going on. Even if you can't directly help it will show you are interested and motivated.
• Don't “be a tree.” Even if the crew is watching TV find something to do. You can always clean, review apparatus inventory and compartments or study your fire science textbook.
• If a firefighter tells you take a seat on the lazy boy, relax and watch TV, don't do it. Thank them for offering but decline.
REMEMBER YOUR ROLE

• It is ok to be comfortable but don't get too comfortable.
• Address people by their rank or rank and last name if you know it. In the SFFD Lieutenants wear a single bugle on their collar, two bugles are for Captains and gold bugles means Chief. If you don't know their rank, or are unsure, sir and ma'am always work.
• Be careful offering up your opinion on topics if you weren't specifically asked.

ITS BIGGER THAN YOURSELF

Remember that what you do represents the City College Fire Science Program. How you act and the opinions formed by firefighters reflect back on your instructors and the other students. Have fun, learn a lot and be respectful.