

Fire Station Tour Outlines by Age

Station Tour/Public Education Program

The information contained in this document has been compiled to standardize fire station tours and to take full advantage of the opportunity to teach the public about safety and health. There are several outlines, each written for a particular age group. Adjustments to any of the outlines can easily be made to accommodate special requests or specific needs of tour groups. These outlines can also be adapted and used for public relations or educational programs presented in the community. Activities such as demonstration of various types of equipment or setting up a water flow or ladder truck operation are at the discretion of the company officer. This document serves as a guideline yet allows for the flexibility necessary to fulfill time constraints and specific requests of each group.

Safety around the station is the leading concern. Make sure that all adults understand what to do should an alarm be dispatched. Children are to be supervised at all times and are the responsibility of the adult group leaders.

Things to consider:

- Greet the tour and start them in an appropriate place for the size of the group. Large groups may have to be split between two instructors and started in different areas of the station.
- Keep the tour moving, especially for younger children. They have short attention spans and are easily bored by technical explanations.
- Even though the tour group may consist mostly of children, don't forget the adults. They are just as curious about the fire service. This is an excellent opportunity to "sell" our department. We can educate them about the level of services provided (EMS, hazardous materials, water rescue, etc), training that we attend, and other activities conducted by the Department - Fire Play Intervention Program, smoke alarm give-away program, school fire drills, etc.
- Tell the group (especially the adult group leaders) that your crew could be dispatched to a call at any time. If the tour is interrupted by an emergency call, the group should not remain inside the fire station without fire personnel present. The adult group leader should use personal discretion whether or not to wait (outside) for the crews to return. If the group chooses to leave before the crew returns to the station, it is the adult group leader's responsibility to reschedule.

Ages 3-5 Outline
Preschool - Kindergarten

Goal:

Young children will be introduced to firefighters and the topic of fire safety. Personnel will introduce Stop, Drop, and Roll, smoke alarms, fire escape planning, 911, the dangers of fire play, and fire fighting equipment/duties. Materials needed: smoke alarm, handouts. (Get from public education staff.)

- A. Introduce yourself and any other personnel who may be assisting you.
- B. Start the tour at any area of the station. Because of the distracting nature of the apparatus, however, it is suggested that the apparatus floor be left until last.
- C. The following topics can be covered at any point in the station tour:
 - Stop, Drop, & Roll – Discuss why it is important not to run if their clothing catches fire. They should STOP, cover their face with their hands, DROP to the ground, and ROLL until the fire is out. Tell how rolling "smothers" fire and makes it go out. If practical, demonstrate the Stop, Drop, & Roll procedure and/or have children demonstrate for you. Stress the clothing catching on fire. Many students associate fire in general with "stop, drop, and roll."
 - Smoke alarms and fire escape planning – Use the alarm provided to show to the students. Briefly explain that a smoke alarm only "smells" the smoke; it does not put the fire out. If they hear a smoke alarm go off in their home, explain what they should do: stay low in smoke, get outside, and stay outside. Go to their family meeting place!
 - Fire play – Explain that matches and lighters are tools for adults, not toys for kids. Explain that matches and lighters can start bad fires, burn homes down, ruin possessions and cause serious burns that hurt and leave scars. Explain that children can be good fire department helpers by not playing with fire and telling an adult if they see matches or lighters. Children as young as two years old have been known to start fires when given access to lighters.
 - Fire escape planning – When the smoke detector sounds, the best place to go is outside to the family meeting place. Tell children that hiding will not protect them from smoke or fire. **Note that it is very common for young children to confuse what to do if their clothes catch on fire with what to do if their home catches on fire. Emphasize the difference.** Explain that if they can't exit their room, they should go to a window.
 - 911 – This is the emergency phone number for medical, fire, police and should be called if there is an emergency. Give some examples: Someone is not responding, having a heart attack, is not breathing; call if there is a fire, or if there is a police emergency. Children should know their addresses and telephone numbers. If there is a fire, do not call 911 from inside the building that is burning, get outside. Give some examples of why 911 is for emergencies only and that making prank 911 calls might prevent you from helping someone who really needs it. Here's a trick for helping them learn their address: We all have names using letters, houses have names using numbers and letters. Your house's first name is numbers and it wears a name tag all the time.

Tell them to look at their house when they go home to find out their house's first name? For example, my house's first name is 7586. And just like your last name is the same as the people in your family, your house's last name is the same as all the other houses on the street. If I lived on Elm Street, my house's whole name would be 7586 Elm Street. This technique has really helped some of the younger children learn their address faster and easier than if they were challenged to just memorize it.

- Apparatus tour – Discuss various items of fire fighting equipment, its use and importance. Keep in mind the age level that you are instructing, have another firefighter don each piece of a firefighter's protective equipment while you explain its use and how it protects. (Children are not to try on helmets.) Explain how fire fighters live in the station and what it's like to do the job. Be sure to use simple language. It is not recommended that sirens be sounded as they may scare some small children. If in doubt, ask the group leader.
- Other Information - When appropriate, include additional safety related information which may need to be geared to the adults in the group.

Bike Safety – Know the rules of the road and wear a bike helmet.

Motor Vehicle Safety – Motor vehicle accidents are the #1 cause of deaths to children and a leading cause of death to adults. Kids under 13 years old should ride in the back seat and should be in the appropriate car seat, booster seat, or seat belt. Newborns and infants to 1 year old and up to 20 pounds belong in a rear facing car seat. Children 1 – 4 years old belong in a forward-facing convertible or combination car seat with harness. Experts recommend that you keep infants rear facing for as long as the seat allows. Booster seats are recommended for children 4 – 8 years old and 40 – 80 pounds. Seat belts are for children over 8 years old and 57" (4'9") tall.

Pedestrian Safety – Know the rules of crosswalks, cross with an adult, look both ways.

- Conclude the tour by distributing materials – stickers, coloring sheets, brochures, etc.

Ages 6-8 Outline
Grade 1 – Grade 3

Goal:

Given examples, students shall identify the difference between good and bad fires, review Stop, Drop, & Roll, list the dangers of fire play, describe smoke alarms and what to do in case of fire, explain the proper use of 911, and observe a station tour/equipment demonstration. Materials needed: smoke alarm, handouts. (Get from public education staff.)

- A. Introduce yourself and any other personnel you may be assisting you.
- B. Start the tour at any area of the station. Because of the distracting nature of the apparatus, however, it is suggested that the apparatus floor be left until last.
- C. The following topics can be covered at any point in the station tour:
 - Good Fires, Bad Fires – Ensure that the students understand what fire is and how it helps us. Discuss how good fires can turn into bad fires.

Examples: Cooking food can turn into a kitchen fire. Campfires can turn into a forest fire. Burning candles can turn into a home fire. Matches and lighters are tools for adults but can also cause serious burns if used by kids.
 - Fire Play – Explain that matches and lighters are tools for adults, not toys for kids. Explain that matches and lighters can start bad fires, burn homes down, ruin possessions and cause serious burns that hurt and leave scars. Explain that children can be good fire department helpers by not playing with fire and telling an adult if they see matches or lighters.
 - Stop, Drop, & Roll - Review why it is important to remember Stop, Drop, & Roll if your clothing catches on fire. If practical, call on a child to demonstrate the technique.
 - Smoke alarms – Use the alarm provided to show to the students. Briefly explain that a smoke alarm only "smells" the smoke; it does not put the fire out. If they hear a smoke alarm go off in their home, explain that they should stay low in smoke, get outside, and stay outside. 911 should be called from a neighbor's house or from a cell phone outside.
 - Stay Low in Smoke – Discuss the physical effects of smoke and fire in a building.
 - It gets very hot.
 - It can melt things
 - Smoke and heat rises through the building
 - Smoke is poisonous (CO & CO₂)
 - Purpose of Crawling Low in Smoke
 - Hot air rises
 - Clean air and visibility are better near the floor
 - Standing will expose them to heat and smoke

- 911 – This is the emergency phone number for medical, fire, police and should be called if there is an emergency. Give some examples: Someone is not responding, having a heart attack, is not breathing; call if there is a fire, or if there is a police emergency. Children should know their addresses and telephone numbers. Dial "0" if the student forgets 9-1-1. If there is a fire, do not call 911 from inside the building that is burning, get outside. Give some examples of why 911 is for emergencies only and that making prank 911 calls might prevent you from helping someone who really needs it.
- Apparatus Tour – Discuss various items of fire fighting equipment, its use and importance. Keep in mind the age level that you are instructing, have another firefighters don each piece of a firefighter's protective equipment while you explain its use and how it protects. (Children are NOT to try on helmets.) Explain how fire fighters live in the station and what it's like to do the job. Be sure to use simple language. It is not recommended that sirens be sounded as they may scare some small children. If in doubt, ask the group leader.
- Other Information - When appropriate, include additional safety related information which may need to be geared to the adults in the group.

Bike Safety – Know the rules of the road and wear a bike helmet.

Motor Vehicle Safety – Kids ride in the back seat and should be in a car seat,

booster seat, or seat belt – depending on size/age:

Rear-facing seat: For infants only or convertible seats for newborns to at least 1 year old and 20 pounds.

Forward-facing seat (with harness): Convertible or combination seat for children 1 – 4 years old.

Booster Seat: For children 4 – 8 years old.

Seat belt: Over 8 years old and 57" (4'9") tall.

Pedestrian Safety – Know the rules of crosswalks, cross with an adult, look both ways.

- Conclude the tour by distributing materials – stickers, coloring sheets, brochures, etc.

Ages 9-11 Outline
Grades 4 – 6

Objective

Students will be introduced to the concept of fire prevention, exit drills in the home, smoke alarm testing and maintenance, common fire hazards, 911, and given a station tour/equipment demonstration.

- A. Introduce yourself and any other personnel you may be assisting you.
- B. Start the tour at any area of the station. Because of the distracting nature of the apparatus, however, it is suggested that the apparatus floor be left until last.
- C. The following topics can be covered at any point in the station tour:
 - Fire Prevention – Ask the students to identify the major causes of fire in homes.
 - Most are preventable (define “prevent” – it is keeping something bad from happening)
 - Human error can lead to fire.
 - Causes: Cooking, heating, playing with fire, smoking, etc)
 - All of these fires can be prevented.
 - Exit Drills In The Home (EDITH) – Explain the components of EDITH
 - Importance of smoke detectors
 - Drawing a floor plan
 - Identifying and planning a second exit
 - Staying below the smoke
 - Checking doors for heat
 - Arranging an outside meeting spot
 - Staying outside, once outside
 - Involving the entire family
 - Practicing the plan
 - Including all homes, apartments, duplexes, etc.
 - Smoke alarm installation and maintenance (Use provided smoke detector as a demo.)
 - Place on ceiling or wall within 4 to 6 inches of ceiling
 - Place within 15 feet of each sleeping area
 - Place on every level
 - Low battery warning, chirping sound
 - Test batteries once a month
 - Replace batteries twice a year
 - Replace smoke alarms every 10 years
 - Carbon Monoxide detectors are required in all occupancies and should be placed within 10 feet of where family members sleep. Test CO detectors regularly and replace every 5 yrs.

Fire Hazards – Ask the students for examples of common hazards in the following areas.

- Kitchen

- burns from hot water
- stoves
- small appliance hazards
- pot handles turned in
- children should not play in the kitchen
- no loose clothing while cooking

- Living Areas

- housekeeping
- cigarettes in cushion
- space heaters

- Basement / Garage

- hot water heater
- furnace
- washer/dryer
- hazard of pilot lights
- gasoline
- dangerous tools
- other small appliances

- 911 – This is the emergency phone number for medical, fire, police and should be called if there is an emergency. Give some examples: Someone is not responding, having a heart attack, is not breathing; call if there is a fire, or if there is a police emergency. Children should know their addresses and telephone numbers. If there is a fire, do not call 911 from inside the building that is burning, get outside. Give some examples of why 911 is for emergencies only and that making prank 911 calls might prevent you from helping someone who really needs it.
- Apparatus Tour – Discuss various items on the equipment, their use and importance. Keeping in mind the age level that you are instructing, have another firefighter put on each piece of a firefighter's protective equipment while you explain its use and how it protects the firefighters. (To prevent injury, children should NOT try on helmets.)

(continued)

- Other Information - When appropriate, include additional safety related information which may need to be geared to the adults in the group.

Bike Safety – Know the rules of the road and wear a bike helmet.

Motor Vehicle Safety – Kids ride in the back seat and should be in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt – depending on size/age:

Rear-facing seat: For infants only or convertible seats for newborns to at least 1 year old and 20 pounds.

Forward-facing seat (with harness): Convertible or combination seat for children 1 – 4 years old.

Booster Seat: For children 4 – 8 years old.

Adult safety belt: Over 8 years old and 57" (4'9") tall.

Pedestrian Safety – Know the rules of crosswalks, cross with an adult, look both ways.

- Conclude the tour by distributing materials – stickers, coloring sheets, brochures, etc.

Ages 12-15 Outline
Middle School, Junior High

Objective

Students will be introduced to responsibilities of baby-sitting, home fire safety, smoke alarm testing and maintenance, 911, and will experience a station tour/equipment demonstration.

- A. Introduce yourself and any other personnel you may be assisting you.
- B. Start the tour at any area of the station. Because of the distracting nature of the apparatus, however, it is suggested that the apparatus floor be left until last.
- C. The following topics can be covered at any point in the station tour:
 - Baby-Sitting Responsibilities
 - Phone numbers
 - Correct address
 - Directions on how to reach the home for emergency personnel
 - Sound of smoke alarms
 - Escape plan
 - Other Emergencies
 - STOP, DROP, ROLL, COOL, & CALL
 - Cool a burn
 - Swallowing poisons – poison control hotline: 1-800-222-1222
 - First aid
 - Water safety
 - Cooking
 - Check with parents beforehand
 - Always stay in or close to the kitchen while cooking. Never leave cooking unattended.
 - Supervise children – keep them away from stove
 - Wear tight sleeves
 - Turn pot handles in
 - Security
 - Doors locked
 - No information released
 - Home Fire Safety
 - Put matches and lighters away
 - No smoking
 - Use extra care with space heaters – leave 36" of free space around them.
Turn it off when leaving the room.
 - Be careful around hot water – it can burn like fire.

Ages 12 – 15 Outline, Continued

- Fire Setting –
 - playing with fire is dangerous
 - if other kids want to set fires, get away and tell an adult.
 - be a good example to younger kids and others your age by not playing with fire.
- Smoke Alarms
 - Required in all homes
 - Low battery - chirping sound
 - Test batteries once a month; replace twice a year
 - Only detects smoke; does not extinguish fire
- Test CO detectors regularly and replace every 5 yrs.
- Fire Escape Planning
 - Get outside, stay outside
 - Have a meeting place
 - Call the fire department from a neighbor's home or on a cell phone outside.
- 911 – This is the emergency phone number for medical, fire, police and should be called if there is an emergency. Give some examples: Someone is not responding, having a heart attack, is not breathing; call if there is a fire, or if there is a police emergency. Children should know their addresses and telephone numbers. If there is a fire, do not call 911 from inside the building that is burning, get outside. Give some examples of why 911 is for emergencies only and that making prank 911 calls might prevent you from helping someone who really needs it.
- Fire Service as a career – Share your personal stories about being a fire fighter, why you chose this as your career, what you needed to do to become one, the benefits, the challenges, what station life is like, etc. Explain what they need to do if interested in becoming a fire fighter.
- Apparatus Tour – Discuss various items carried on the equipment, their use and importance. Keeping in mind the age level that you are instructing, have another firefighter put on each piece of a firefighter's protective equipment while you explain its use and how it protects the firefighter.
- Conclude the tour by distributing materials –brochures, favors, etc.

Adult Outline

Objective

Adults will become familiar with fire hazards, fire prevention, smoke alarm use, EDITH, 911, Project Safe Haven and will experience a station tour/equipment demonstration.

- A. Introduce yourself and any other personnel you may be assisting you.
- B. Start the tour at any area of the station.
- C. The following topics can be covered at any point in the station tour:
 - General Fire Department Information
 - Number of personnel, stations, equipment
 - Firefighter work schedule
 - Training standards
 - Responsibilities
 - Hazardous materials, technical rescue, training, fire drills, public education etc.
 - Fire hazards, fire prevention
 - Most fires are preventable, resulting from human error
 - Fire Hazards (share professional experiences of extinguishing fires and their causes.
 - Kitchen – **Emphasize the importance of staying in the kitchen while cooking.**
 - Also: give information on additional kitchen hazards:
 - scalds
 - small appliances
 - pot handles not turned outward
 - children near stove
 - loose clothing that can catch on fire
 - Living areas and hazards to keep in mind:
 - matches and lighters left out where kids can see them
 - poor housekeeping – high fuel load
 - cigarettes in cushions
 - space heaters near combustibles
 - candle usage / put them out before leaving the room
 - Basement / Garage Hazards
 - hot water heaters
 - furnace washer/dryer
 - hazard of pilot lights
 - gasoline storage
 - dangerous tools

Adult Outline, Continued

- Smoke Alarm Use
 - Required by law, one hard-wired smoke alarms required – enforced at sale of home.
 - Place on ceiling (at least 4" from ceiling
 - or on wall (between 4" - 12" from ceiling)
 - too close to bathroom or kitchen may cause false alarms
 - Place near sleeping areas
 - Place on every level
 - Chirping sound is a warning that the battery is low
 - Test batteries once a month
 - Replace batteries twice a year
- Test CO detectors regularly and replace every 5 yrs.
- EDITH (Exit Drills In The Home)
 - Importance of smoke alarms
 - Draw a floor plan
 - Identify and plan a second exit
 - Stay below the smoke
 - Check doors for heat
 - Identify an outside meeting spot
 - Once outside, stay outside
 - Involve entire family
 - Practice the plan, it's especially important for children to practice
 - Those that live in apartment buildings should know their fire escape procedures.
- Other Emergencies
 - Stop, Drop, Roll, Cool and Call
 - Explain how Stop, Drop, and Roll extinguishes a fire by excluding oxygen.
 - Explain procedure: STOP, cover your face with your hands, DROP to the ground, and ROLL until the fire is out. COOL a burn with water, CALL if burn is serious.
 - For suspected poisoning call the National Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222
 - they can also refer callers to the Pet Poison Control Center.
- 911 – This is the emergency phone number for medical, fire, police and should be called if there is an emergency. Give some examples: Someone is not responding, having a heart attack, is not breathing; call if there is a fire, or if there is a police emergency. Children should know their addresses and telephone numbers. If there is a fire, do not call 911 from inside the building that is burning, get outside. Give some examples of why 911 is for emergencies only and that making prank 911 calls might prevent you from helping someone who really needs it. Ensure all children know their address and phone numbers.

Adult Outline, Continued

- Other Information - When appropriate, include additional safety related information.

Bike Safety – Know the rules of the road and wear a bike helmet.

Motor Vehicle Safety – Kids ride in the back seat and should be in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt – depending on size/age:

Rear-facing seat: For infants only or convertible seats for newborns to at least 1 year old and 20 pounds.

Forward-facing seat (with harness): Convertible or combination seat for children 1 – 4 years old.

Booster Seat: For children 4 – 8 years old.

Adult safety belt: Over 8 years old and 57" (4'9") tall.

Pedestrian Safety – Know the rules of crosswalks, cross with an adult, look both ways.

- Apparatus Tour – Show the various items carried on the equipment; discuss their uses and importance.
- Distribute handout materials.