



CODE FOR FIRE BUFFING

The International Fire Buff Associates, Inc. is an association of many Fire Buff and Fire Fan groups and individuals in the United States, Canada and throughout the World that have banded together to further their ideals on the common ground of promoting the general welfare of the Fire Service and allied emergency services.

The International Association is in no way to be considered or construed as being a regulatory agency. Its sole function is to further the cause of Fire Buffing by bringing together members of the various groups in annual conventions, regional meetings and in print by disbursing information, ideas and other data through the medium of our official magazine "TURN OUT", our official web site <http://www.ifba.org> and through e-mail, notification networks and discussion groups.

In order to assist interested parties in forming and organizing a group of Fire Buffs, Fire Fans, Sparks or whatever you wish to call our avocation, the International Fire Buff Associates, Inc. has prepared the following suggestions as an aid to persons wishing to establish a formal group or for those individuals interested in becoming an associate member.

FIRE BUFFS WHAT AND WHO THEY ARE

The term Fire Buff is not defined in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary; however, to the estimated more than 50,000 Buffs in the United States, most of whom are freelance and do not belong to an organized group or club, Mr. Karl Detzer came closest to explaining our avocation when he wrote in the *Baltimore Sun*.:

"Fires to us are not mere spectacles. They are demonstrations of strategy and tactics, for behind the apparent confusion at any "working fire", there is generalship. A real buff can tell at a glance just how the battle lines are drawn. The placement of hose lines and ladders, the use of high pressure turrets and water towers, the location of windows being smashed with axes - all these are clues to what kind of fire it is, where it is centered and how the job of extinguishing the blaze is progressing."

The above would indicate that today's Fire Buffs are basically students of the science of Fire Fighting together with an active interest in a host of other activities designed to aid and promote their local Fire Departments.

Contrary to general public perception that the average Fire Buff is a youngster who never grew up, we take great pride in numbering among our compatriots, the following whose motives or sanity has never been questioned.

George Washington
President of the United States
U. S. Grant
President of the United States and Civil War General
Justice and Mrs. Oliver Wendell Holmes
United States Supreme Court
Fiorello LaGuardia
Mayor of New York
Dr. Arthur Fiedler
Conductor, Boston Pops Orchestra
Dr. Harry Archer
Famous New York physician, who at 82 estimated he attended
some 20,000 fires;
John Patton Marshall
Boston University School of Music
Lester Watson
Boston Broker
The Honorable Sir Winston Churchill

PURPOSE

The purpose of a Fire Buff organization in any community should be the banding together of a group of individuals sincerely interested in one or more of the following activities:

1. To promote the general welfare of the Fire Service and allied emergency services in their particular area.
2. To advance and promote among members the exchange of ideas and experiences, the discussion of subjects and cultivation of friendly social relations among those interested in the science of Fire Fighting, Fire Prevention and related emergency functions.
3. To act as a citizens' public relations group for the Fire Department. An interested and enlightened citizenry becomes the strongest bulwark against unfair criticism of any emergency service agency, whether paid or volunteer.
4. To furnish, maintain and/or operate a Canteen/Rehab Service for the Fire Departments, Public Safety and allied emergency services at fires or other incidents.

5. To render such aid and assistance at fires or disasters, other than actual fire fighting if so desired, that may be required or requested by the Fire Department Officer in charge.
6. To preserve and maintain the history of the Fire Service by various means such as a museum or compiling a history or preserving visual records.

Watching your department control and extinguish a fire under a difficult situation certainly can only bring admiration and confidence that the Fire Department has again met the challenge of man's greatest enemy... and friend.

ORGANIZATION

It is a most fortunate Fire Buff Organization, that in its formative stage has the approval and sanction of the local Fire Department and its top officials. Most groups in existence today have had to earn, over a period of years, whatever measure of approval they now enjoy.

Generally, Fire Buff Groups are the result of the work of individuals who are sincerely interested in and respond to Fire Service activities on their own volition.

Individuals in rural areas with an interest in the Fire Service that are not in a community with an established I.F.B.A. group may be interested in becoming an associate member of the I.F.B.A..

The experience of most organized Fire Buff Groups is that it takes a number of informal meetings to determine if there is enough interest among prospective members to sustain a formal or working Fire Buff organization.

At this point, it may be advisable to determine which of the many fields of Buffing that the prospective organization is interested in pursuing.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

There is no set pattern or field of action for the operation of a Fire Buff Group. Much depends on the conditions in the locality in which the group plans to function. Fields of operation which are permitted in one city or locality may very well be forbidden to Fire Buffs in others.

It remains for each prospective or active group to determine which of the following activities it wishes, or will be permitted, to pursue. Generally, there are but two broad classifications of Fire Buff activities: Social and Service.

It is not the purpose of these guidelines to define what social activities a group could or should pursue. Service activities however, can be enumerated and all groups should endeavor to engage in one or more of the following, depending upon local conditions and departmental approval.:

- a. Operate a Canteen or Rehab Service

- b. Operate a First aid and/or Ambulance Service or Rescue Service
- c. Assist Fire Department in actual fire fighting operations
- d. Assist Fire Department in public relations or fire safety education
- e. Initiate or participate in fire prevention activities
- f. Collect items for and support a museum of Fire Department memorabilia
- g. Render aid and assistance to families and survivors of fire department members injured or killed in the line of duty
- h. Act as fire police in maintaining lines at an incident if approved by authorities
- i. Work with the Red Cross or other such agencies to account for occupants of buildings involved in the fire or other disaster and furnish temporary aid to any such victims
- j. Promote legislation for improving the Fire Service

MEMBERSHIP

The Organization should at all times be nonpolitical, nondiscriminatory and nonsectarian. The careful screening of individuals for active membership is imperative. Only those individuals who are genuinely interested in the principles and purposes for which the group is to be organized should be considered for membership.

Serious consideration should be given before granting membership in the group to any individual who might seek to use the organization or information available through it for personal gain.

Some Clubs and Organizations have found it advantageous to limit membership and active operation of a Fire Buff Group to individuals who are not members of the Fire Department.

The desirable number of members in any Fire Buff Group would depend entirely upon the individual group and upon the type of service in which the group wishes to engage. Member groups in the IFBA vary in membership from 15 to 250.

GENERAL

The routine conduct of business and operation of a Fire Buff Group should be similar to a well run social club or service organization. Officers should be elected and definite meeting dates and a meeting place should be arranged.

If it is at all possible and not contrary to Fire Department or community regulations, it might be advantageous and desirable to secure some unused space in a Fire Department building for use as a meeting place and storage whatever special equipment the group might accumulate. This is done in a number of locations, while other groups which are financially able, maintain their own private quarters.

As a general rule, Fire Buff Groups should not endeavor to operate Fire Department or community owned equipment such as, apparatus, ambulances, canteen/rehab rigs, light units, etc., unless such service and/or operation has been specifically granted to the Group by the Fire Department and approved by the appropriate community officials.

Also, those groups contemplating the operation of a canteen/rehab rig or service should upon arriving on the scene of the emergency, report to the Chief Officer in charge

and not provide service until approval is received from the authority in charge.

If the members of the group desire, or are expected to respond to multiple alarms or working fires, arrangements should be made to notify responsible members, i.e. pager or radio system.

Many Fire Buffs acquire radio receivers or scanners which are kept tuned to the Fire Department frequency and thereby are in contact with the Fire Department at all times. This does not obviate the need for a good system of notification.

The foregoing, we believe covers the most important factors in the organization and operation of a effective Fire Buff Group. The International Association will, upon request, furnish supportive information and assistance to individuals or Fire Department Officials interested in forming a Fire buff Group or becoming an Associate Member in their locality.

International Fire Buff Associates, Inc.

Executive Office

11017 N Redwood Tree Ct

Mequon WI 53092

E-Mail: Executiveoffice@ifba.org

Executive Vice President

William M. Mokros

E-mail addresses of all IFBA officers are available at <http://www.ifba.org>

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