

Welcome to the
Richmond Youth Academy



NEW CADET BOOKLET

New member,

As the Director of the Richmond Youth Academy, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you as a cadet of the Richmond Youth Academy. For many, this program will be the first step to a career in the fire service, whether volunteer or paid. I honestly believe that you as an active participant in this program are the future of this Fire Department, and a hero of tomorrow.

When people do not know where to turn for help, quite often their response is to call the local fire department. They expect us to fix their emergency, or to at least make things better for them. Therefore, the firefighter has traditionally performed many tasks other than just fighting actual fires, and is held in high esteem by many people. As a member of the Richmond Youth Academy, people will look at you as a representative of this Fire Department. Therefore it is important to follow the code of conduct and to be courteous and respectful to all, especially when wearing your uniform.

As a new cadet Richmond Youth Academy, you will be required to participate in trainings, meetings, drills, fund-raising events, and fire station projects. There are also many other activities and opportunities available to you that I hope you will take advantage of.

As a member of the Richmond Fire Department I take a great deal of pride in it and the community that surrounds it. You will be expected to do the same. As a member: strive for excellence; be the best that you can be; be proud of what you are doing it for; promote department pride by example; and most of all have fun and be safe. Again from my staff, the Chief, the entire department, and myself we welcome you.

Sincerely,

Rico Rincon

Rico Rincon
The Director of the Richmond to youth Academy

OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR THE RICHMOND YOUTH ACADEMY

- Cadets must be in at least 9th grade or be 14 years of age to join and can participate until 18 years of age.
- Cadets must maintain at least a “C” average in their school coursework and produce documentation of the same at the time they join. Documentation of grades must subsequently be provided to the department on a quarterly basis. If a parent asks to limit participation for their child at a higher average, their word will always be last. In the event a Cadet has lower than a “C” average, he or she will be placed on probation until the grade returns to a “C.”
- Cadets must obtain full written permission from the parent or legal guardian to participate in the program.
- Cadets report directly to their Lieutenant for all assignments and activities.
- Cadets will receive classroom training in core areas of interest, with classes focused on CPR, communications, fire prevention and life safety, and general fire, rescue and EMS education.
- Cadets may participate in the following activities:
 - Parades or special events
 - Fundraising events (when allowed by law)
 - Training
 - General standby
 - Fire prevention and life safety education and activities
 - Meetings
- Cadets should regularly attend meetings or events for youth program participants. These may include basic training coursework, a fixed activity such as one of those listed above, or other activity with the department.
- Cadets may only perform support and auxiliary work at fire ground operations, such as providing refreshments to the first responders, well outside of the “hot zone” or operational area.
- Cadets and their parent or guardian must sign a waiver that includes a full disclosure of risks and releases the department from liability should some one become injured.

PARENT INFORMATION

We hope the following will answer any of your questions that were not previously answered in your New Cadet Booklet.

SUPERVISION

Cadets interact with firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics and gain experience in a firehouse environment. The Program's staff offers students advice on the skills, responsibilities and education requirements for fire and emergency service careers. The Executive Director, Program Director, and staff are all volunteers who have undergone extensive background checks.

DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP YOUR CHILD

Dropping Off

- Please make sure that a staff member is present before dropping off your child. The cadets are not to be on fire department property without staff present.
- Please let a staff member know if someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up your child.

Picking Up:

- Please make sure to pick up your child on time! This goes for any function, whether it is training, fundraiser, or public service activity.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Please update your emergency contact and medical information whenever changes occur.

PARENTAL HELP

Any time that you can help at a function is greatly appreciated, even if it is only for an hour or so. We would like to have as many parents involved as possible. It is a great way to interact with your child and their friends. You need to contact the Parent Committee chairperson to help at a function; the help is always needed and appreciated.

FUNDRAISERS

Fundraisers are an important part of the RYA. Without them we would not be able to do all that we do. The money that the program raises goes towards their annual banquet, *purchasing uniforms, costs associated with fieldtrips and community events.* The following are some of our regular fundraisers:

DANCES

BREAKFASTS

BINGOS

We occasionally also have fundraisers at a local restaurant.

PARENT MEETINGS

Parent meetings are held on the last Saturday of the month at 8am at the RYA. This is a good way for the parents to ask questions and offer opinions about the RYA and to find out any changes to current calendar.

PARADES

Any parents who wish to participate in walking with the Cadets are welcome. Usually, the parades are judged and the cadets have an opportunity to win an award, so to maintain a uniform appearance, *we ask that parents marching with the Cadets wear a Cadets shirt, navy blue pants, and black footwear.* We also need parents to help hand out water during the parades; doing so from the sidelines of the parade does not require a uniform.

QUESTIONS

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact RYA staff at (510) 236-2222

CADET CLOTHING

The following is supplied by the RYA:

- T-shirt (for trainings/other functions)
- Powder blue shirt (for public events)
- Black pants
- Black Belt
- Name Badge

The following will need to be purchased by the individual:

- Black Socks
- Black Boots (spec provided)

The following are optional items that can be purchased from the RYA:

- Additional T-shirts
- Stickers for Cars

PUBLIC SERVICE PROJECTS

The Cadets help out at several community events throughout the year:

- *Cinco de Mayo*
- *Juneteenth*
- *Easter Egg Hunt*
- *Richmond Homefront Festival*

Richmond Youth Academy

Parent/Guardian Participation Rules and Expectations

1. Parents/Guardians must see that youth are at the RYA by 8:00 am and are picked up by 12:00 pm, unless otherwise stated.
2. If your cadet will be absent, please be sure that the RYA is called between 7:45 am and 8:00 am to let us know that your cadet will not be attending the program that day.
3. Cadets should be well rested and properly groomed when dropped off at the RYA.
4. Cadet's appearance is important therefore, while representing the RYA in public and on Saturday's male cadets are not allowed to wear earrings or sagging pants.
5. Female cadets are not allowed to wear make-up, rings, or bracelets. No eyebrow, nose or tongue rings are to be worn at the RYA or while representing the program in public. Earrings may be worn but they should not exceed ½" (loop) past the ear lobe.
6. No drugs, alcohol and weapons (guns, knives, etc.) will be allowed. If a cadet has any of these in their possession, they will be dropped from the program. Also, fighting will not be tolerated. Cadet(s) will be terminated from the program immediately.
7. If your cadet carries a cell phone, it is not to be worn or carried at the RYA. Cadets are assigned lockers to secure valuables during Saturday sessions. If a parent needs to reach a cadet, for any reason, they can do so by calling the RYA main number at (510) 236-2222.
8. Zero tolerance for touching will be strictly enforced at all times. At no time should a cadet of either gender lay a hand on the other.
9. Due to large enrollment, all cadets are expected to follow rules and directions given to them by RYA staff, mentors, adult volunteers and Lieutenants. Cadets will be asked to leave if rules and directions are not followed. Should a situation arise, the Program Coordinator and the Executive Director of the RYA will review it. It will be their decision to allow the cadet(s) to return to the program.
10. Parents/Guardians are responsible for the uniforms assigned to their youth. If any piece is missing or destroyed, they must be replaced. Parents must sign a form in agreement of this.
11. Parents/Guardians are expected to give their assistance and support for fundraising events sponsored by the RYA.
12. Each cadet should have a representative present at the Parent/Guardian monthly meeting so that we can share RYA information with you. If no one can attend, please call (510) 236-2222 and leave a message at the Academy.
13. All parents are expected to be courteous and helpful to each other. The RYA is a safe environment and our youth need to see us supporting each other. If a problem should arise that cannot be worked out, please contact a staff member.
14. If there is a change of address or phone number anytime during the Academy year, please complete a change of address form that is available in the RYA office or contact (510) 236-2222.
15. All parents/guardians must sign an Academic Release for your cadet. These forms will be used by the RYA staff when they visit the youths' school and/or to obtain school records.
16. Each quarter all cadets are responsible to bring a current copy of his/her progress report and report card to the Academy.
17. Parents are encouraged to write letters to our City Officials and the Mayor to let the City know how much the RYA is needed and that we need their support. You may also include whatever else you like to say that would encourage them to support our youth and the program.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

In 1992 there was a station that responded to the Iron triangle made up of three members of the RPBFFA. The calls that they responded to were mostly medicals that involved the tragic loss of young men from the community due to violence. They noticed that the age group caught up in this whirlwind of killings was getting younger, 14 – 17 years of age. The members of the crew realized that there must be something they could do to curb the violence to provide a chance for youth in the community. The only experience they had at that time being new to the fire service was it took discipline, academic achievement and community service to put them in the position that they were in. The idea came out of the academy they just completed and felt that is what the youth needed in the community. They could use exposure to the profession of firefighting and other careers. That is the reason that our young men and women need the program. Through volunteerism, donations, fundraisers and grants, the Richmond Youth Academy has been able to operate for the last 19 years.

MISSION AND VALUES

The Richmond Professional Black Firefighters Association (RPBFFA) and it's Richmond Youth Academy (RYA) work in cooperation to educate, protect, and serve the youth of Richmond and surrounding communities.

The following statements are upheld by Richmond Youth Academy:

MISSION STATEMENT

To maintain a safe environment for youth to gather within the community to learn about many aspects of the fire service and to provide avenues for positive social interaction for youth within

the program, and for youth within the community.

VISION

We will be a model for fire departments with youth programs to introduce youth in the community to the fire service and to provide a safe environment for social activities for youth within our community.

CORE VALUES

Recognizing the dedication, skill, and value of all Cadets, we will create and maintain an environment of individual safety, well-being and trust. We are guided by: Service to Others, Team Work, Compassion, Integrity, Safety, Honesty, Accountability, Professionalism, and Respect.

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

The members of the RYA demonstrate commitment to our community through:

- Providing an opportunity for youth to serve in the community.
- Respectful and courteous treatment of all people.
- Accountability for our actions.
- Open honest communication.
- Educating peers about fire safety and prevention.
- Providing a safe environment for youth activity within the community.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member of the RYA, you are expected and required to:

- Abide by all of the Standard Operating Procedures and all other rules and regulations of the RYA.
- Conduct yourself in a professional and courteous manner that will reflect well

upon you and the entire program especially when in uniform.

- Demonstrate honesty, fairness, and integrity.
- Treat all people with courtesy and respect.
- Recognize the value and worth of each individual.
- Dress respectfully and modestly at department functions you attend (any event not requiring uniform).
- Refrain from cussing, cursing, or using other foul language while in uniform, at the station, and while participating in department functions.
- Work as a team with others.
- Participate in training, meetings, and fundraisers.
- Obey the chain of command.
- Wear your uniform when coming to the station and any department functions that you help with.
- Not wear your uniform or any other department issued gear for general use outside of the station or department functions.
- Always bring required gear to trainings.
- Notify a staff member or parent in charge (if assigned) upon arrival and departure from the station and department functions.
- Immediately report any problems to staff member or parent in charge (if assigned).

SQUADS

Squads are groupings of Cadets for organizational purposes. Each new member of the RYA will be assigned to a squad to be a part of by the program staff. The squad that you are placed in will be the group that you will train with.

Generally, once you are assigned to a squad, you remain a member of that squad throughout your time as a RYA Cadet. However, there are times when you may need to participate in training or

some other activity as a member of another squad. At times, the Director may also need to reorganize squads and you will be assigned to a new squad by the Director should this become necessary.

Each squad has a Lieutenant to lead them. If this officer is not present, then another officer or Cadet will be assigned to lead the squad for that event. The Lieutenant in charge of your squad is also your contact person should you have any questions regarding dates, locations, times, or any other general information.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS

Personal Accountability Tags (PAT) are ID cards that are used in the fire service to keep track of people during an incident. These tags typically have an ID number, rank, and the department with which they are affiliated. These tags are given to the officer in charge of the crew, who in turn may hand them to an accountability officer, depending on the incident size. If a firefighter gets injured or lost, the information on the PAT can be used to identify the injured or missing firefighter, and to access other important information about the firefighter.

In the RYA, we have implemented the PAT system to keep track of members at any event. The tags for the Cadets include a photo of the Cadet, their Cadet ID number, and their name.

The Cadet is expected to bring their PAT with them ANY time they are coming to the station and also any other time that they are meeting for an event. The Cadet will hold on to these tags until they are collected by a Lieutenant, staff, or a parent in charge. At the end of each event, the Cadet is responsible for picking up their PAT before leaving.

MEETINGS AND TRAININGS

Trainings are held every Saturday from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm, unless otherwise stated. There will be a meeting of the Lieutenants after each training.

Meetings are generally conducted by the staff member or a Director. They are generally informational and program business is discussed and may be voted on.

The training program for the RYA structured to introduce Cadets to the fire service. Cadets that join the regular department are at an advantage since the RYA introduces them to the tools and skills that are used in firefighting and emergency medical services (EMS). During training, you will learn about firefighting, EMS, the use of tools, and related skills. You will also learn how to work as a team and HAVE FUN!

Quite often the training will include some physical or hands on activity and/or lesson. At times, an educational field trip may be substituted for the regularly scheduled training.

The following is the uniform that MUST be worn during Cadet trainings:

- Black uniform pants
- RYA t-shirt
- Black closed-toe footwear

In addition, your Personal Accountability Tags and any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that has been issued to you must be brought to every training.

UNIFORMS & PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Uniforms and protective equipment are issued to Cadets by the Lieutenants. All issued items remain the property of the RYA and Richmond Fire Department, and must be surrendered upon termination of the membership.

A uniform will be issued. The uniform includes:

- Powder blue shirt (for parades/public functions)
- RYA patch (affixed to above shirt)

- T-shirt (for trainings/other functions)
- Black pants
- Collar pins (for Lieutenants)
- Badge (for returning cadets)
- Black belt
- Black tie

Badges are issued at the annual banquet. Black closed toe footwear must be purchased by each individual.

You are responsible for the care and maintenance of your uniforms. They are to be worn when participating in any departmental function or activity where you will have contact with members of the public. Uniforms are also required to be worn during training, unless told otherwise by a Director. The uniform is NOT provided for your daily wear. It is NOT to be worn while off duty except to travel to and from the program.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will also be provided for you. The PPE consists of the following:

- Safety glasses
- Hearing protection
- Protection gloves
- Short length of rope and depending upon availability
 - > Fire helmet
 - > Turn-out coat
 - > Boots

You are responsible for the care and upkeep of your safety equipment. All equipment MUST be brought to training events

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This is a list of the questions asked most often by new Cadets:

Q: What activities do you have in this program?

A: We hold trainings, social activities such as fundraising events, public service projects, and other things that a firefighter does except for fighting fires.

Q: Do we get to participate in parades?

A: Yes. Parades are usually held in the summer months. The Cadets will typically march along with the staff and any parents wishing to participate. Cadets **MUST** have a uniform issued to them before they are able to participate in a parade.

Q: How will I find out about different events taking place?

A: Events are announced at trainings, meeting, through emails and in newsletters. In addition, you may be contacted by the Lieutenant in charge of your squad (especially if there is a change or short notice).

Q: What is the cost of the program?

A: There are no dues to participate. You are responsible for spending money for any field trips and uniform items not provided by the department.

Q: If I have questions or problems, who do I talk to?

A: The Lieutenants are available to answer questions and to assist you. In addition the staff will help you with any questions and any problems and conflicts must be addressed directly with a staff member.

Q: Do I have to participate in trainings and other events?

A: Yes! The goals of the RYA cannot be met for an individual who does not participate in the trainings or other events. A lack of participation may result in the loss of certain privileges and/or the ability to participate in certain activities. Individuals who regularly do not participate in the RYA activities without notifying an advisor may be dropped from the program.

Q: Can I ride the apparatus and fight fires as a Cadet?

A: Since firefighting is dangerous and requires specialized training, you must first join the Active Department in order to participate in these activities. Quite often, Cadets are permitted to ride the apparatus that is not in service while going to and coming from parades and other public service events.