



Station 61: 17061 Rolling Creek Dr., Houston, TX., 77090

Station 62: 4362 Louetta Rd., Spring, TX., 77388

Station 63: 21455 Imperial Valley, Houston, TX., 77073

YOU hear the siren...YOU look in your rearview mirror... the fire truck is moving fast toward YOU in YOUR lane...

What do YOU do? YOUR vehicle is in the way....

How many have faced this circumstance when driving or sitting in a lengthy line of traffic? Here is a quick saying to remember, *move right for sirens and lights*, allows fire department vehicles safe passage, and assists in reducing drive time to an emergency.



- DO NOT tailgate behind emergency vehicles after they have passed because you do not know when or where the emergency vehicles are going to stop.
- RED LIGHT and CROWDED INTERSECTION, the officer or fire truck at this point is instructing you to proceed with caution, if you must, make a right turn.
- MOVE OVER AND SLOW DOWN, applies to emergency vehicles. If they are stopped on the side of the roadway with their lights flashing, you must drop your speed to 20 mph below the posted speed limit. If, you cannot get over, drivers need to move out of the lane closest to the emergency vehicle on the side of the road. Turn on your hazard lights so individuals will know you are proceeding with caution and are driving slower than the posted speed limit.

Drivers who break the law by not moving over to allow emergency vehicles to pass-or who do not slow down when approaching stopped emergency vehicles-may receive a ticket.

The fine for failing to give right of way can be up to \$200.00. If a driver causes an accident or crash that leads to the injury of a first responder, those fines can reach \$2000.00 to \$10,000.00.

Station #63 Curtis J Cook Training Facility



This facility received the Volunteer/Combination Silver Award in Firehouse's 2017 Station Design Awards.

During the early 90's the Ponderosa FD absorbed the Northview Subdivision east of interstate highway 45. At that time there were about three hundred homes and nothing else in the immediate area. We were fortunate to have the land donated to our association and we began planning for a fire station and recruiting volunteers to staff the fire station.

Most fire stations during that era were of metal construction. We moved forward quickly, and the fire station was dedicated in 1993. In 1999 we expanded the building to have a meeting room on the second floor and an exercise room on the first floor. The area was growing at a fast pace; we had a plentiful number of volunteer firefighters.

Plans began to build a training facility on the property. A long-term loan was approved with construction in 2001.

The facility had a four-story tower with various burn rooms and other props for hands on firefighter training. A water tank was placed below ground to train pump operators, an outside pavilion was added to enhance the training opportunities.

The goal was to have a very comprehensive training facility. We dedicated the facility in 2004 to Curtis J. Cook long-time president who passed away that year. Curt had an uncanny vision with total commitment to being the best we could be.

We applied for a federal grant in 2005 and received the funds to purchase and install clean burn training props - a bedroom and kitchen using LPG to simulate real fire and flash overs.

Prior to that, we used pallets and other organics but that was a dirty way to train. The new system allowed us to do six burns a night versus two due to clean-up requirements. An added value was the personal protective gear and breathing air (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus - SCBA) did not have to be super cleaned after the training sessions.

2007 was another step forward by expanding the training tower and adding a SCBA training building with an exceedingly difficult maze that firefighters used to test their composure and capabilities under stress. It has loud sounds, strobes, non-toxic smoke, and teeter totter that dumps them into a plastic ball pit. Two of our incredibly talented members built the maze for just the cost of materials. There are other training props on the property including a roof simulator, vehicle fire and a fire extinguisher prop using LPG. The story tells the story - keeps getting better.

Then the big one! Build a new fire station to accommodate volunteers and paid personnel. Construction costs were increasing at a fast pace, so our boards of directors made the difficult decision. This five-million-dollar project in 2016-17 required us to continue using the training facility, rent a mobile home for staff, demolish the metal fire station, and build a large "garage" at the rear of the property. The fire engine was housed under the pavilion, the mini-pumper and grass truck were housed in the new garage. It was a tough time, but we prevailed.

Here we are today with 24/7 full-time staff and volunteers supporting our mission. Police agencies and other fire departments utilize the facility as well as civic association using the meeting room. Station 63 in 2024 is a beautiful, functional fire station and training facility.

Curt Cook would be so proud.

In honor and memory of Curtis Cook,
Fred Windisch.



Emergency Services District #28

Effective September 1, 2019

the Ponderosa Fire Department (Emergency Services District #28), achieved the Public Protection Class (PPC) rating of 2. This is the Insurance Services Office (ISO) nationwide community fire protection rating system that utilizes water supplies, communications and fire department capabilities that affects most insurance policy costs, and in our case will reduce most insurance rates. You should contact your insurance agent soon to obtain the savings.

The PPC rating places us in the top 4% of our nation's fire and rescue agencies.

Chief Fred Windisch state, "We have consistently built our response system with the citizen in mind as our priority: this rating demonstrates reliability, professionalism and capabilities that are truly the best of the best. Our volunteers, part time and full-time paid firefighters always work with the end in mine, service first."

The PPC system uses many components evaluating various aspects of the response system. A "10" rating is no fire department, and a "1" rating is the highest.

The community rating is just that, and our wonderful water districts are very dependable and capable, our system is second to none, and our fire department meets or exceeds national standards in most categories.

The result is dependable emergency services because when our citizens call 9-1-1, they are having the worst day of their lives.

The boards of directors of the Ponderosa Volunteer Fire Association and Emergency Services District #28 are totally focused on service provisions.

According to the Harris County Appraisal District website, the zip codes 77090, 77388, 77014, and 77073 are in ESD 28 and are governed by a board of five commissioners elected for a 4-year term and reside in their respective ESD.

ESD's can operate their own fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) agency, or they can contract with a service provider.

The ESD board of directors/citizens of the community is dedicated to making the right decisions within the resources available. The list of accomplishments is many; three award winning fire stations, top notch equipment and paid personnel who are the best individuals that understand our services mission.

This level of capability does not just occur, it is the result of careful long-range planning with an incredibly supportive board of directors, continuing education, and the unwavering support of the community we serve. ESD#28 has met the challenges of the past and has the commitment to do so in the future.

Visit our websites at:

www.ponderosavfd.org,

www.esd28.com

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/PonderosaFD/>.



Making your DOLLARS count for efficient
Fire Fighting tactics and techniques with
CAR FIRES.

Fire Blankets

<https://youtu.be/7e0qhhyz68c?si=527IOaKY7spN7O3K>

<https://bridgehill.com/fire-blankets/car/>



Photos courtesy of Bridgehill Car Fire Blanket



Any car fire is dangerous and toxic.

A car fire in a gas station, road tunnel, car park, or passenger ferry can be a disaster. The Bridgehill Car Fire Blanket enables you to contain the flames, smoke, and toxic fumes in a car fire in minutes. It's the only solution that can effectively handle fires in electric cars.

The Bridgehill Car Fire Blanket Pro is suitable for fire fighters and other organizations that may have to deal with multiple fires. After use, simply rise this reusable fire blanket with water, dry it and store it in its Smartbag.

Features:

- Controls fire in any car within seconds
- Isolate fire in electric cars
- Blocks fire in Lithium battery
- Eyelets around the edges
- Can be used in up to 30 car fires
- Suitable for all vehicles including SUV's
- Delivered in a Smartbag
- Can be used to Protect homes/buildings

Simply drag the Bridgehill Car Fire Blanket over the burning vehicle to immediately isolate the flames and fumes. The fire will soon be extinguished due to lack of oxygen. On electric cars, the lithium batteries will continue to burn even without oxygen or treatment with normal fire extinguishers; the Bridgehill Car Fire Blanket enables you to isolate the fire until trained fire fighters can flood it with water. We recommend that car fire blankets are removed from the vehicle by firefighters only.

There are thousands of car fires around the world every single day. Most of them are extinguished using foam or water. But these methods throw toxic fumes into the air and drain hazardous substances into the groundwater. The Bridgehill Car Fire Blanket isolates smoke immediately without spreading toxic fumes-making them safer for people and the environment. Ponderosa Fire Department is equipped for efficiency check us out at <https://www.facebook.com/PonderosaFD>.

Hurricane Preparedness



Natural disasters damage thousands of homes and devastate the lives of families every year. Still, you can take time now to prepare. Protect your documents, build your disaster emergency kit, buy flood insurance, floodproof your home, and develop a family evacuation plan.

<https://www.recovery.texas.gov/preparedness/hurricane>

Ponderosa Fire Department stands ready in the event of a hurricane. Water safety is priority when rescuing individuals during and in the aftermath of a hurricane.



BUILD YOUR DISASTER EVACUATION KIT

- Plan for your entire household including children, elderly, those with special needs, and pets.
- Medical supplies: ready a bag for all medicines, doctor phone numbers, and medical devices upon evacuation. A water event affects thousands of individuals and can overwhelm the medical system with its sudden demands.
- Tools and safety items: small items like matches, flashlights, a multi-purpose tool, and a whistle can make an enormous difference for your family while weathering the storm.
- Food and supplies: have at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and water for your family, remember to pack anything specific to your family's needs, such as infant formula, and special dietary needs.
- Gather food, water, medical supplies, and documentation for your pets along with house insurance documentation for reporting flooded home. You will need your flood insurance information which is separate from your homeowner's insurance policy.
- Notice: most homeowner insurance policies will not cover flood loss. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is "flood insurance" you will need this to activate your insurance filing.
<https://www.floodsmart.gov>

Don't Wait Out the Storm Evacuate when told!

Your hesitation causes First Responders to place their lives at risk for YOU.

We have all done it and are guilty of it...we think, we can wait out the storm, it won't flood here, we have not flooded in the past, we are good, plenty of food and water, tucked in safe and cozy in my house while the storm rages on...except that one time...

YOU got caught in the deluge of water from a hurricane and the adrenaline kicks in. What do you do, who do you call, where do you go, you can't call out because everyone involved is trying to call out and the lines are jammed. You can't leave in your vehicle now because if your do... your vehicle will drown out on the flooded streets.

Oh, if I had just left and moved to higher ground when they announced evacuations you silently reprimand yourself. You are also thinking in shock, I just didn't think it would get this bad so fast!

Hurricanes are a destructive force of nature and due to where we live in the Houston area we see our share of them. Before you evacuate your home there are a few steps to take. Since we know weeks ahead of time that the hurricane is headed for us before you leave, shut off the main circuit breaker to prevent appliances from short circuiting to eliminate the threat of electrocution or fire. Turn off your natural gas valve, it is easy, a quarter turn with an adjustable wrench.

Keep your gutters and drains free of debris. Install a water alarm and sump pumps with battery backup. Install a generator because your power will go out. Install "check valves" in sewer lines to prevent floodwater from backing up into your drains. Store important items that you cannot take with you up high in your home if one story, or in your second story.

Trim trees, shrubs, and any dead limbs close to home. Repair and replace any damaged fences. Secure loose items in your yard, on your property ahead of the storm.

During a flood evacuation follow the orders given from local officials. Be sure to take your emergency kit with you. Always view hurricane evacuation maps for up-to-date routes and leave earlier than later. Notify your immediate and extended family of your evacuation plans.

Take photographs of your home before you leave including kitchen drawers, tool chest, garage, and appliances. While you are waiting out the storm from a safe place. Start a spreadsheet of all your home inventory while you can remember because if your home does flood, you will be so overwhelmed with the damage and remediation it will be difficult to remember what you had and when you purchased it. Your insurance company will want an inventory of personal belongings.

Do not walk or drive around or through flood waters. TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN® has saved so many lives. Just six inches of moving water can knock you down, and two feet of water can sweep your vehicle away. Most flash food fatalities occur in vehicles. If you do get caught in your car while flood waters are rising, abandon the car immediately and move to higher ground and never drive around barricades.

After a flood return home only when authorities say it is safe. Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded and watch out for debris, snakes, fire ants, alligators, etc. Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways. Do not drive through areas that are still flooded. Avoid standing water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.

Photograph your damaged property for insurance purposes. The insurance company will appreciate your before and after pictures and so will you.

<https://texasready.gov>

Water Safety- Think. Don't Sink.

Water and YOUR Vehicle on the Roadway

Turn Around Don't Drown®

<https://www.weather.gov/tsa/hydro-TADD#>

According to the National Weather Service, more than 60 percent of people who perished in 2011 floods were due to driving into high water.

Flood water can roll boulders the size of cars, tear out trees, destroy buildings and bridges, and pose a significant threat to human lives.

Flash floods can be produced when slow moving or multiple thunderstorms occur over the same area. When storms move faster, flash flooding is less likely since the rain is distributed over a broader area. According to the national statistics, almost half of all flash flood fatalities occur in vehicles. Contrary to widespread belief, many people do not realize two feet of water on a bridge or highway can float most vehicles.

If water is moving rapidly, your car, truck, or SUV can be swept off a roadway or a bridge and into a bayou or creek and if the vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and move to higher ground. Rapidly rising water may engulf the vehicle and vehicles can be swept away by as little as 24 inches of water.

If you can, simply avoid flooded areas- especially those with rapid water flow. Keep things safe and simple by rescheduling your plans if you are aware of flooding in the area. If flooding occurs when you are on the road, stay on high ground and don't drive through any rapid flowing water.



Swift moving, rising water on roadways can be a formidable hazard to motorists. Each year, lives are needlessly lost, people are injured, and vehicles are damaged by drivers attempting to navigate flooded streets. Thinking clearly about safety for yourself and others is the best course of action.

Water and Pool Safety

<https://www.houstonhealth.org>

Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death for children ages 1-4. No child is “drown proof.” However, you can significantly reduce the risk by using the following layers of protection:

- **Designate a “water watcher.”**

This adult is responsible for keeping their eyes on all children in the water and should be free of all distraction, including cell phones and socializing. Switch the water watcher every 15 minutes to avoid fatigue.

- **Teach children to swim.**

Survival swimming lessons teach children self-rescue techniques to help prevent water accident deaths. Traditional swimming lessons teach children proper swimming strokes.

- **Learn CPR**

Become certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and update your skills annually. It could save the life of your child or another person.

- **Have proper barriers.**

Ensure the fence around your pool is at least five feet tall with a self-closing and self-latching gate. Make sure doors and windows to the pool are always locked and alarmed. Have a pool alarm installed to alert you when anyone goes into the water.



A cry of help, help, can quickly turn into a silent scream. Don't let this happen around you.

Water Safety while Boating on a Creek, Bayou, River, Lake, or Ocean

Texas has 1.7 million acres of freshwater lakes, 4 million acres of saltwater, 80,000 miles of river and roughly 590,000 recreational water vessels according to <https://tpwd.texas.gov>. Ponderosa Fire Department wants you to boat safely and enjoy your time on and around the water.

Here are some boating safety tips for your summer fun.

- Always wear a life jacket.
- Avoid alcohol. The probability of being killed in a boating accident doubles when alcohol is involved.
- Operating a boat under the influence is just as dangerous as driving a car after you've been drinking.
- Boating while intoxicated (BWI) is strictly enforced and carries penalties like driving while intoxicated penalties, including Driver's License suspension.
- Be especially careful on personal watercrafts (PWC). Obey the 50-foot rule! Maintain a 50-foot distance from other PWC's, vessels, persons, shore, or stationary platform or other object unless operating at headway (idle) speed.
- Children younger than age 13 must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal floatation device, (PFD) while underway.
- Enroll in a boater education class.
- Don't overload your boat.
- Operate at a safe speed.
- Always have a passenger serve as a lookout in addition to the operator.
- Watch out for low water areas or submerged objects.
- Always carry extra PFDs in both adult and child sizes.
- Although there are no numerical speed limits on the water, citations may be issued for excessive speed or reckless operation. Use common sense and always operate at a safe speed especially in crowded areas.
- Excessive speed is a rate of speed greater than is reasonable or prudent without regard for conditions and hazards or greater than will permit

a person to bring the boat to a stop within the assured clear distance speed.

Courtesy goes a long way to family and friends having fun on the waterways. Keep your noise levels down to respect other boaters and nearby residents. When passing a fishing boat, SLOW DOWN and give the fishing boat plenty of space. If you're in a group, allow others enough room to navigate and enjoy the water.

When approaching a boat from the opposite direction, stay to your right and as far apart as possible, port to port. When overtaking, you can pass a vessel on either the left or the right, but the lead boat always has the right-of-way. Power boats must also yield the right-of-way to sailboats and boats being rowed or paddled.

If you plan to travel more than nine nautical miles off the coast of Texas, make sure you have a fire extinguisher, flares, or horn on board. Vessels are also required to have a sound-producing device, like a whistle or horn, which can be heard from at least half a mile away.

Never anchor your boat at the stern. The stern is the back of the boat which sits lower into the water and can cause the boat to swamp. Always anchor the bow. When you see a red buoy keep to the starboard side when proceeding from the open sea into port. Likewise green buoys are kept to the port side.

When you see a single white light at night in the water, a vessel can be anchored or is traveling away from you. Beware a white light means there is something ahead of you at night and be prepared to take appropriate action.

According to <https://www.boat-ed.com> the number one cause of boating fatalities is caused by NOT wearing a LIFEJACKET or PFD whether falling overboard, capsizing, swamping, sinking, or running aground and alcohol consumption is the cause of roughly 40% of all recreational boating deaths. Alcohol intensifies the effect of fatigue, sun, wind, and boat motion to adversely affect balance, judgement, and reaction time.



Firefighter Skills and Education

Becoming a firefighter in Texas involves several steps and requirements.

1. Complete High School Education. Having a high school diploma or GED is essential. It helps employers understand your skills and enables you to pursue fire suppression programs, which are a crucial component of becoming a firefighter in Texas.
2. Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Certification. The requirement for EMT certification varies between areas. There are five levels of EMT certification, with the EMT-BASIC certification meeting the minimum requirements for aspiring firefighters.
3. Find an Entry-Level Position. Once you have your EMT certification, start looking for available entry-level positions at local fire stations.
4. Pass Written and Physical Fitness Test. To be considered for a spot at a fire academy you will need to pass written and physical fitness tests. These tests assess your readiness for the demanding role of a firefighter.
5. Undergo Training. If accepted, you will undergo approximately 600 hours of training over a 12-14-week period. This training combines classroom education with hands-on experience to prepare you for firefighting in controlled settings. Some fire departments will train you, others will require Texas certification prior to being hired.

Becoming a firefighter is no easy task. It requires demanding work, long hours of training, dedication, and a sincere desire to help others.

Becoming a firefighter requires a physical ability test involving stair climb, hose drag, equipment carry, ladder raise and extension, forcible entry, search, rescue, ceiling breach and pull to name a few.

Firefighters are placed in positions that require them to handle extraordinary amounts of responsibilities when they become a part of this career.

Primarily, they will be placing themselves in harm's way and taking risks to ensure the safety of others. While firefighters undergo extensive training as recruits, they need to develop or already have specific skills to perform their duties safely and effectively.

There are several essential skill sets needed to be a firefighter. The first on the list is effective communication skills. This skill is required to develop successful relationships with the people they will deal with when they are having the worst day of their lives.

Physical fitness is essential to being an effective firefighter. The job requires firefighters to have above-average strength and agility.

Adaptability in a changing environment is crucial to a successful firefighter and the shifting conditions and circumstances in which they will perform their First Responder duties.

Flexibility to "go with the flow" while sleeping in any area, eating anything, and do any job under any circumstance while functioning as a member of the team within a time frame of being on-call requires a magnitude of mental stability.

Mechanical aptitude is necessary in knowing how to turn a wrench, how a house is built, how to assist with problem solving and discovery to mitigate potential disasters. The more common sense a firefighter has the safer we all are when a disaster strikes.

Teamwork is breathing to a firefighter. Understanding how a team works together to overcome an obstacle is every day to a firefighter.

Visualization skills which is one you may not be expecting but a firefighter is required to identify figures, objects, and sources among the many distracting elements around them. They need to be able to swiftly compare patterns in their surrounding area. They must be capable of knowing their current location in a building that is on fire, and in relation to their teammates along with the potential dangers that exist.

At times, firefighters and paramedics will work together. There are times when a firefighter is called upon to assist a paramedic and police officers in dealing with emergency situations. Firefighters have the tools, equipment, and skills to tear down doors, walk into structurally unsafe buildings, and rescue auto-accident victims trapped in smashed vehicles. There will be times where firefighters reach the injured parties first, so expert knowledge on first aid techniques such as CPR and victim stabilization is critical.

Firefighters are required to have a well-rounded set of skills to survive through the intensity that comes from this career. Each day of their life is placed in grave danger and knowing the right skills can help them make it out alive.

This is especially true if they are escorting people out of a burning building and need to do so in a safe and orderly manner. Firefighters risk their lives for you out of respect, honor, and duty. Take the time to appreciate our Firefighters. They choose to make your worst day safer.



P O N D E R O S A

FIREFIGHTER

HARRIS COUNTY ESD #28

17061 Rolling Creek Dr.
Houston, TX 77090



This publication is intended for the residents within the Ponderosa Fire Department service area. If you received this newsletter in error, we hope you still read it and utilize the fire safety information.

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Fire fighters are more than just professionals who put out fires. They are your family, your brothers and sisters who risk their lives every day to protect you and your community. They are the ones who run towards danger when everyone else runs away. They are the ones who sacrifice their time, their health, and sometimes their lives for the greater good. They are the ones who show courage, compassion, and dedication in the face of adversity.

Why do we need fire fighters? Because they are the heroes we depend on in times of crisis. Because they are the ones who save lives, property, and the environment. Because they are attempting to help you while you are having the worst day of your life. Because they are the ones who make our world a safer and better place. And because they are the ones who inspire us to be brave, generous, and resilient.

Support your firefighters! They deserve our respect, our gratitude, and our help. They need our support and advocacy. They need us to stand with them, to cheer them on, and to thank them for their service. Support your firefighters because they are family.

