

## **Company Officer Academy Charge**

### **Why are you here?**

There are two ways this question can be asked. One is deeply personal and can only be answered by you. The other is as someone living through an experience led by someone else. You are in a unique position. One that not many people would choose to place themselves in. The price of admission is not only demanding of your time but also comes at a high cost to you physically and mentally. The process is grueling at times and requires every ounce of effort you can give. Let me assure you, this is worth the price of admission.

In our culture, leadership tends to be a buzzword. Within the fire service, leadership is often spoken as a position of rank or authority, something that is autonomous with a promotion. You have chosen and been selected to attend the Officer Academy. You are here because you believe leadership is something more. You believe it's more than a cliché and more than an insignia put on your collar. Just like you, we believe the weight of being a leader is more than the rank so often associated with it. Leadership and rank are fully independent of each other, one is a position and can be given at any given day to any individual, the other is formed by our character, our moral makeup, and is connected to our deepest beliefs.

So why this program? Why spend a week away from your career, your family, your interests? Why is this program different from any other? There is a saying in the fire service. When referring to years of experience, the question is asked, do they have years of experience or one year of experience repeated over and over. If we don't place ourselves in a position to learn new lessons, we live in danger of repeating the last year's experience. Gaining nothing. The experience you will gain through six intense days at the Fire Officer Academy, far exceeds the time you will dedicate to it. This one week will give you an experience equivalent to months, and for some even years of lessons in our trade. You will spend day and night, learning, honoring, and honing your craft. Our profession. Time spent that will exceed your expectations as you sharpen your skills.

### **This is a company officer class. Why am I doing drills and tactics?**

As a company officer, your job is to lead those under you. It is your responsibility to ensure each person under your charge is proficient at their level. This guidance is often taught far before the need to perform the required tactic. As a company officer, having the ability to effectively communicate, evaluate, and sometimes even demonstrate tactical level skills is an essential element of truly leading your crew. When the tones drop, it may not be your job to do tactics, but before the tones drop, it is your job to train your people. Experts train experts. You cannot train someone to be an expert if you are not proficient in your skill. Give them more than they can get from videos or articles. Pass on our sacred trade. We have been given trust we didn't earn, don't betray it.

### **Why is the Officer Academy so rushed?**

For many people and departments, being able to commit either personnel or personally to a six day class is a difficult task. The Fire Officer Academy is condensed, not decreased. We value the time you have committed to us, and we commit to give you everything you can handle in six days. We will not short you. You will be placed in front of subject matter experts in everything from Engine company work, Support company work, company Officer development, Executive level Officers, and more. It will be fast paced, demand excellent time management, and require perseverance. Trust the process. Every element of the Fire Officer Academy is built to grow you as an Officer.

### **Now we ask you, why are you here?**

Dig deep, and know why you're here, the deeply personal why. Know why you chose to sacrifice over 20 hours of pre-coursework, an extensive application process, the fiscal expense of this class, and the time and effort you will dedicate to the Fire Officer Academy. Once you have your why, hold onto it. On the first day when you walk into the Fire Officer Academy look around the room. You are surrounded with professionals, each with a compelling, driving force, that has brought them to the same path you are on today.

### **So, I'll ask again, why are you here?**

Our why is summed up in three words.

Three words that form our belief, our mantra, and inspires every decision we make that drives all our actions. These three words are our mission.

They Come First.