

Potential volunteers are attracted to personal testimonials that tell the story of why you serve. In the absence of having our full **First Arriving** video production crew at your disposal, and with a little help from our editing and marketing team, you can still be effective in getting your home-grown video messages out to your target audience. Here are a few tips to help you look and sound your best when recording your personal recruitment message using a cell phone:

AUDIO:

- ★ Keep the message positive and be inclusive. Avoid using gender-biased terms (firefighter vs. fireman, guys, etc.) and technical jargon that non-emergency personnel may not understand. Focus on the opportunities and benefits of volunteering. Avoid reasons people don't volunteer.
- ★ Don't start with "So, ..." Just start talking. Speak slowly, confidently and pause briefly between soundbites or main phrases where possible. Maintain your volume and finish strong, try not to trail off at the end. That helps our editing process tremendously.
- ★ What to say: Volunteering is personal. The purpose of the video you're creating is to recruit more volunteers just like you. People join for different reasons, so tell your story of what attracted you to the volunteer fire service and why you think someone else should join t. Was it family tradition, were you or a family member on the receiving end of emergency services, did you witness an emergency that inspired your desire to serve the community, to learn new skills that may lead to a career in the field, or do you just love the adrenaline rush and the opportunity to help others in their time of need? Sometimes it helps to write it out first and rehearse what you're going to say. Give it some thought. Tell your story to the camera.

Be sure to answer three or four of these questions:

- ★ "I volunteer because..."
 - ★ "What keeps me volunteering is..."
 - ★ "You should volunteer because..."
 - ★ "What makes our fire department special is..."
- ★ Hit the Reset Button. Sometimes our lips aren't in sync with our brain and words and phrases don't come out the way we wanted or intended. If you start to say something and you don't like the way it comes out, just stop, take a deep breath, pause for a second and start over. You get as many do-overs as you need to tell us your story in the way that you want the audience to see and hear it.



VISUAL:

- ★ Today's cell phones can take great video, but vertical shots don't work well on the web so be sure to hold or mount it horizontally (landscape mode). Use a tripod if possible or set the phone on something steady and flip the camera so you can see yourself. Make sure there's sufficient light to cut out shadows, shading or blur.
- ★ Be creative but choose your backdrop wisely. In front of or even sitting in or on apparatus often works well. Create some depth between you and your background, whether it's a gear rack, apparatus or other points around the fire station. Avoid distractions and excessive noise like strong winds, station radios, people walking or vehicles moving behind you. Walking and talking videos can be tricky but effective if done right.
- ★ Dress for success: Will you wear a uniform, fire department polo or t-shirt, or turnout gear? Helmet or hat on or off? The choice is yours, just make sure what you're wearing represents your department appropriately.
- ★ It may seem awkward or uncomfortable but maintain eye contact with the cell phone camera at all times. Try not to look down or shift your eyes away, especially at the end of a phrase, sentence or story. Give a strong message and hold your focus at the camera for an extra second after delivering your punchline.
- ★ Stand firmly with your feet spread far enough apart for you to be comfortable. Avoid rocking on your heels. Put your hands wherever is natural for you: by your side, in your pockets, or in motion animating your story.



Stick with us, kid. We'll make you a star! Relax, smile, have fun and let the excitement and enthusiasm you have for volunteering show through. Don't try to sound like an infomercial product endorsement spokesperson or a nightly news anchor (lol). Be natural and let your passion shine.

Send It! We'll send you instructions on emailing or uploading your cell phone video to our website. From there, our editors will cut and clip it to make you look and sound your best, and then we will add graphics and what we call "bumpers" on both ends of the video that tell the viewer how they can join you in volunteering. We'll then send it back for you to use in your own social media and web-based recruitment efforts.

Visit firstarriving.com to learn more.