

**FY 2021-2022 Virginia Beach Budget
Response to Council Questions**

Question Number: 47

Question: What is the actual capacity of the school (fire academy) versus the capacity being used to meet attrition and volunteers?

Date Requested: 4/13/21

Requested By: Councilmember Moss

Department: EMS and Fire

Response: Emergency Medical Services trains volunteers through the department's EMT Academy. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the capacity for each academy class was 50 individuals and the department conducted six academies per year. Due to current social distancing requirements, the number of individuals per academy has been reduced to 24; however, the department has been able to make up for some of the loss by conducting eight academies in 2020 and in 2021. This has resulted in 192 total seats across all academies and a 36% decrease in the number of students. Historically, the department has seen a 25% attrition rate for each academy. Once an individual has made it through the academy, the department has determined that each volunteer stays with the department for 2.8 years on average, while career paramedics stay with the department for 12.9 years on average.

According to the Fire Department, there is no standard number of recruits for each academy. The number of recruits in any given academy is determined by the number of vacancies within the department. This fiscal year, the department has conducted two academies. In the first academy, the department had 21 recruits, while the second academy had 11 recruits. The department also conducted a separate, shortened academy for seven certified recruits. These are recruits that are currently firefighters who are coming to the City from another fire department.