

THE NEW VOLUNTEER AT THE FIRE STATION

You have been part of the local volunteer fire company for the past 2 years. You are also studying fire science at your local community college. Being a firefighter is your dream job! You like the comradery with the other guys at the station, and you spend even your off hours there. You are big into fire safety, and one of the fun things you do is talking with 1st graders about safety.

This week a new volunteer joined the squad. She is the first female firefighter the department has had. You don't know her, but you do have friends in common. She is young, outgoing, and eager to learn. But the guys have not been supportive or even nice to her. Behind her back they joke about her weight (she is slightly overweight) and her sexual identity (she hasn't shared her identity directly, but you are aware that she identifies herself as a Lesbian). You think this is unprofessional, disrespectful, and is not the way she should be treated. You admire her spunkiness and want her to succeed. Her weight and/or sexual identity are irrelevant to her being a good fire safety professional.

She left the station yesterday very upset. You don't know what exactly transpired, but you assume that they guys went too far. You'd like to sit down with your fellow firefighters and encourage them to be more respectful. This is not a role that you normally take on, but feel it's the right thing to do.

How would you approach the situation?