



HOW THE AUSTIN FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION SIMPLIFIED THEIR PAYROLL PROCESS AND ENCOURAGED IMPROVED DONATION AND VOLUNTEER EFFORTS USING FOXIT ESIGN



CASE STUDY

In the past year, members of the Austin Firefighters Association (AFA) have repeatedly risen to enormous challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and an unprecedented winter snowstorm. While continuing to provide unwavering and heroic service to members of their community, the AFA has also sought to provide simplified paperwork, payroll, and donation process to its members.

In this case study, we will explore important improvements the AFA has made in its daily process and how Foxit eSign has played an integral part.

The Process Before Electronic Signatures

Prior to utilizing electronic signatures as part of the payroll and donation process, required documents were completed, printed, scanned, and sent in manually. While this process would generally get the job done, it could often prove problematic for those who did not have printers or scanners readily available, or delay AFA members who did not have the time amidst busy schedules. Furthermore, physical paperwork processes did not provide security or identity assurance.

Why Foxit eSign Was Approached by the Austin Firefighters Association

The Austin Firefighters Association (AFA) sought an easy-to-use, simple to learn, and secure electronic signature solution that would enable firefighters to easily approve changes to payroll and make donations straight from their paychecks in a safe, fast, and straightforward manner. There was also a need to improve and simplify donation processes for donation drives.

The need to simplify paperwork processes for firefighters and community volunteers primarily drove the decision of the AFA to approach Foxit eSign. With that being said, several integral objectives were relayed upon initial communication by the Local Union President and the President of the Relief Outreach fund:

- **Payroll Streamlining:** Allow firefighters to approve payroll changes and deductions faster in a method that can then be emailed directly to staff.
- **Improve Donation Efforts:** Provide an easy method for firefighters to donate straight from their paychecks.
- **More Secure Documentation:** Improvement of security and signing identity was essential to relay better confidence to AFA members and other involved organizations.

The Austin Firefighters Association (AFA) represents the local Austin, TX chapter of the International Association of firefighters, which is over 1,100 members strong.

As hard as Austin's firefighters work to protect and help their community, it is crucial that they have a dedicated advocate in place. As the AFA's LinkedIn page states, "The AFA provides a strong voice in the development and implementation of new training and equipment and has worked hard to ensure the proper staffing of fire and EMS departments. The AFA is a member-driven organization—for firefighters, by firefighters."

- **Ease-of-Use:** Electronic signature software with an easy to utilize user interface was identified as a key factor in better supporting donation drives and firefighter and employee usability.

Here's Why the AFA Chose Foxit eSign as Their Electronic Signature Solution

- **Top-Notch Security:** Seamless security features are a top priority with Foxit eSign. With things like certificates of authenticity, 2FA, SOC 2 Type 2, and detailed audit histories, Foxit eSign's software was designed to easily support the enhanced security and signer identity improvements the AFA sought.
- **Ease-of-Use:** Because providing a user-friendly signing solution that could easily support over a thousand firefighters and local volunteers was essential, the straightforward and easy-to-use design of Foxit eSign's electronic signature software proved important.
- **Support Flexibility:** The Austin Firefighters Association's (AFA) relationship with Foxit eSign began with a free trial and continued to grow through a catastrophic winter storm in Texas. During the storm, while firefighters were busy sheltering and rescuing misplaced individuals, AFA operations Tim Olson didn't have time to implement a new document signing process; so, Foxit eSign extended the free trial until the time was right.

Once the decision was made for the AFA to use Foxit eSign as its electronic signature solution, Tim Olson got everything up and running in no time while utilizing the extensive Knowledge Base, helpful walkthrough videos, and expert as-needed customer support.

How Foxit eSign Has Helped the AFA Successfully Meet Its Goals

While signing up for an electronic signature software solution was certainly a new process and a new expense for the AFA, it wasn't long before they began seeing impactful results in an important way. Tim Olson explains it well when he says, *"It's paid for in something that's hard to measure because members will be more apt to donate money and to make changes when they want to. It will make it easier on them and save them time from having to come to this institution or go into their local station to make changes. So, it's one of those things that would be hard to measure in dollar terms."*

- **Faster document completion:** Faster document completion from anywhere with the click of a button and through use of an easily learned user interface.
- **Accessible and Streamlined Document Process:** An accessible and streamlined document process that helped the AFA improve sign-up rates for donation drives; 20 people signed up in the first 3 days of a drive enrollment period, when previous years sometimes saw no sign ups at all.
- **Better supported identity confirmation:** Better supported identity confirmation with signing certificates and auditing that enabled better trust to be more effectively established in the process.

Through electronic signatures, the AFA has also been able to establish an easier and faster payroll management system for firefighters to make deduction alterations and improve payment changes. The straightforward process of clicking to sign and send a communication in a matter of minutes saves time for busy firefighters who previously had to come into the fire station or manually print everything, sign, scan, and then send.

When speaking of the paycheck donation process

In the past, complaints were made about the donation process not being easy for firefighters. After implementing Foxit eSign, Tim Olson with AFA operations states, *"I'm happy with the results and the feedback I've gotten is very positive with regards to how easy it is, and the fact that no one has called me to ask questions about how to do it; that in and of itself, I think, speaks a lot."*

Plans for the Future

Foxit eSign is excited to continue working and supporting the needs of the Austin Firefighters Association. As the AFA continues with its dedicated commitment to local firefighters and the community, it anticipates expansion of their digital signature use by:

- **Improving donation efforts:** Going forward, the AFA plans to simplify and continue to improve donation drive processes by allowing easier communication, volunteering, and donation completion with Foxit eSign.
- **Utilizing a continuously expanding Knowledge Base:** Utilizing a continuously expanding Knowledge Base and access to a growing and knowledgeable Foxit eSign customer support team to quickly fix problems and learn about new features.

