§ 204-b. Youth programs. 1. Volunteer fire departments and fire companies may establish, operate and maintain youth programs to provide participants with the opportunity to become familiar with the programs and operations of fire departments, to provide programs in community fire safety, fire prevention, and public fire prevention education, and to curtail false fire alarms by developing community wide respect for the fire service.

2. Volunteer fire departments and fire companies shall establish rules and regulations governing youth programs established pursuant to subdivision one hereof, which shall include the minimum and maximum age for participation, the procedure for participation, removal or expulsion, residence, and provision for adequate supervision of such programs.

3. It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for any volunteer fire department or fire company, any member or members thereof, officers, board of fire commissioners or other body or office having authority to determine eligibility for participation in such programs pursuant to this section, to exclude or expel from participation in such programs any individual because of race, creed, color, sex or national origin, or to discriminate against any participant because of race, creed, color or national origin.

4. No person shall participate in such program without the written consent of his or her parent or guardian. Such consent shall continue until withdrawn. If withdrawn, participation in such program shall automatically terminate.

5. All activities of participants in such program shall be approved in advance by the chief, or his designee. No activities may include emergency duties in connection with fire department or fire company operations or any other hazardous activity.

6. Participants in such programs shall not be eligible for any benefit provided by the volunteer firefighters' benefit law.

7. Volunteer fire departments and fire companies may purchase accident insurance to insure participants in such programs against injury or death resulting from bodily injuries sustained in performance of approved activities. In addition, they may purchase insurance to protect against liability arising from approved activities. The insurance purchased pursuant to this subdivision may include medical and hospital coverage.

8. No youth program shall be established pursuant to subdivision one of this section unless authorized as follows: in a city the youth program must be authorized by the board of fire commissioners or other body or officer having control of fire department; in a village the program must be approved by the board of fire commissioners or, if there is no board of fire commissioners, the village board of trustees; in a fire district the program must be authorized by the board of fire commissioners; in a town outside a village or a fire district the program must be authorized by the town board.