



## Locating Local Fire Hose For Donation



### Helpful (Somewhat Nerdy) General Information

- Federal law requires that fire hose be tested annually. The fire hose is pressure tested to ensure that it can withstand the pressure of water that will go through it during firefighting and that it has no obvious defects. Hose that fails the test is usually trashed.
- At the time of testing, fire departments generally conduct an inventory of their fire hose to ensure that fire hose is not older than allowed by Federal law. Hose that is older than allowed is usually trashed.
- Many fire departments purchase all new fire hose for each new apparatus that they purchase, resulting in excess fire hose that may be donated.
- Some fire departments are allowed to donate their fire hose, others are not. Fire departments that are not allowed to give away fire hose may sometimes sell it for minimal charge (i.e. \$1 for an entire truck load).
- Sending a photo of fire hose enrichment in use with animals often helps the fire department understand and appreciate why you are requesting the donation. (You can use photos from our FB page and website, of course.)
- Most fire departments appreciate positive social and other media, so offering to post about a donation (especially with photos of the donated hose in use with animals) is a good idea.



## **Locating Local Fire Hose For Donation**

- Knowing some simple fire hose terms can help...a lot. The canvas hose with two layers is called double jacketed hose. The measurement for how wide the hose when it's lying flat is called the "lay flat width" (how wide it is lying flat). Fire fighters will be telling you the interior diameter of the male coupling which is about half the lay flat width. The metal connectors are called the couplings (male and female). Most rolls of hose will be about 50'. Hose that can't be used for firefighting is called "Out-of-service hose".

### **What to say when you call.**

- So, if they say "We've got about 500' of inch and a half double jacketed with the couplings on it." You know they mean they have 10 rolls of the canvas hose that is about 3" wide. Easy for everyone. If you ask for hose with the proper terms, ("I'm with xyz zoo. Do you have any out-of-service hose you could donate? We'll take any double jacketed hose you have, with or without couplings and we can pick it up.") you make it easier for them to say yes.
- When you call, as for the "officer on duty". If that person isn't available, just ask the person who answered the phone, but know they are often a rookie. ☺
- If they say no, (1) ask when they do their "annual testing" and if you can call back then; and (2) ask if they have a "logistics division" that might have some and, if they do have a logistics department get the contact for logistics (unlike fire departments, logistics is usually open 9-5, Mon-Fri.
- If they say "I don't know.", ask for the contact for logistics and/or call back because you probably didn't reach the office in charge. The officer in charge would know or offer to get back to you.

### **A Step-by-Step Example of a Fire Hose Donation Request**

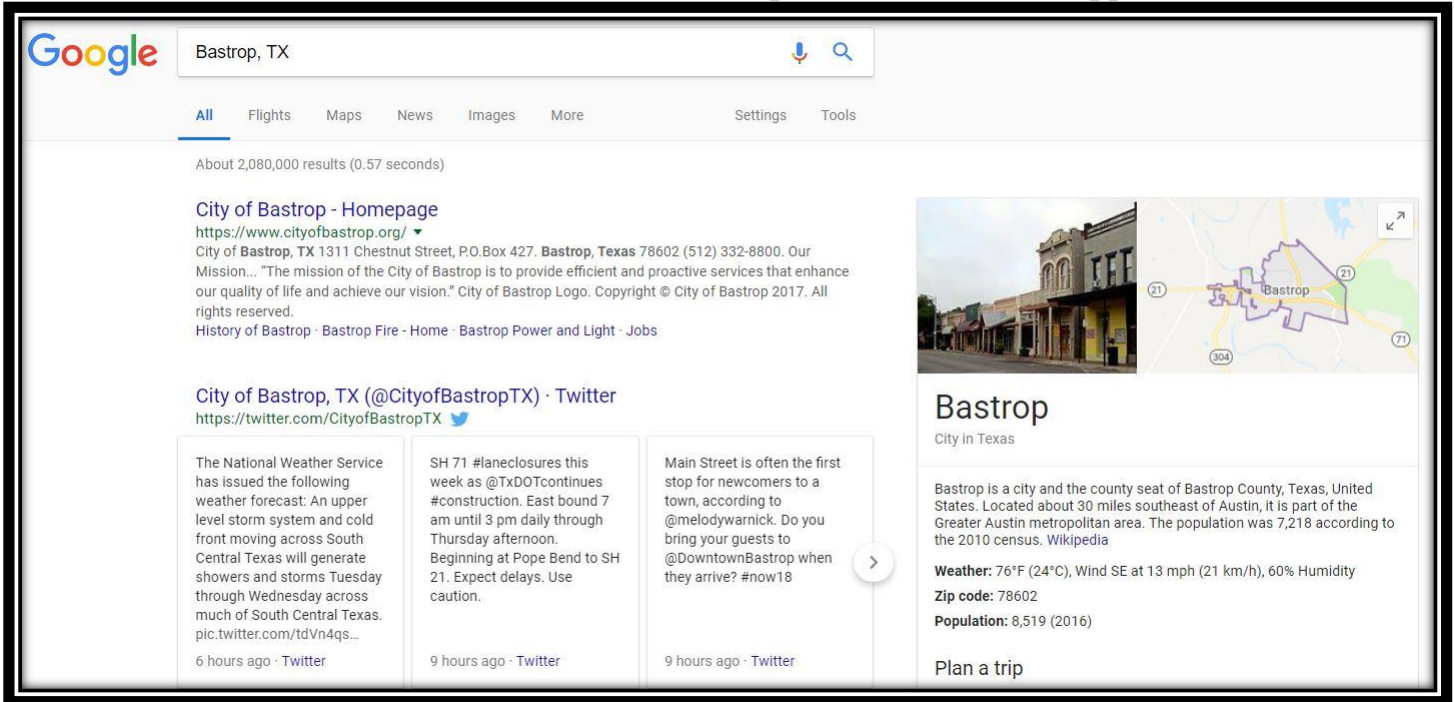
We were asked by a facility in Bastrop, Texas, if we had fire hose in their area for donation. (We don't store fire hose anywhere but Maryland, so no, we didn't.) The facility had been unable to locate fire hose for donation. We found available hose less than 5 miles from the facility in less than 10 minutes and they were able to pick it up that day. There are many ways to go about this.

Here are two ways we often use that are quick, easy, and often successful. One involves calling. The other involves messaging on Facebook.

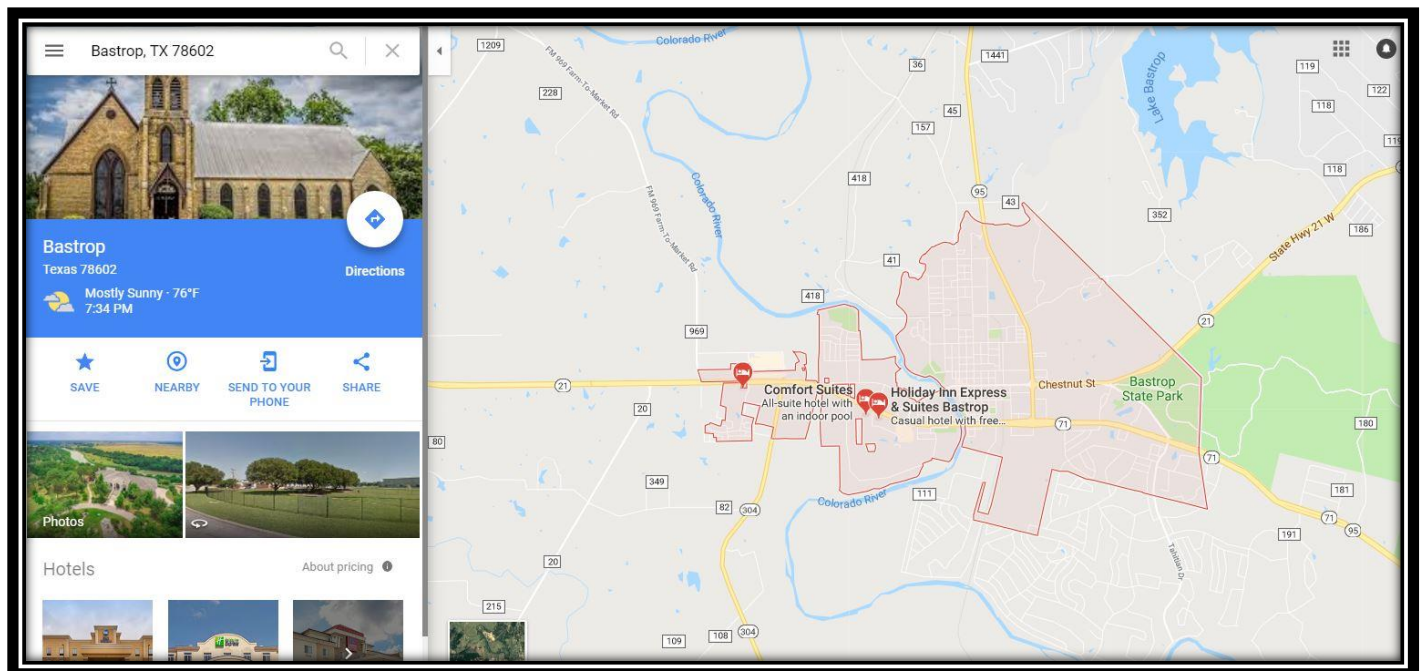


## Locating Local Fire Hose For Donation

**STEP 1.** To The Google! (Other search engines will likely work; we usually use Google because of the maps.) Search for the name of the city, town, village, etc. close to where you would like to donation to occur. In this case, Bastrop, TX. Here is what appeared.



**STEP 2.** Click on the map to open it. You'll usually get a map in the right side bar. Left click on that map to open it.

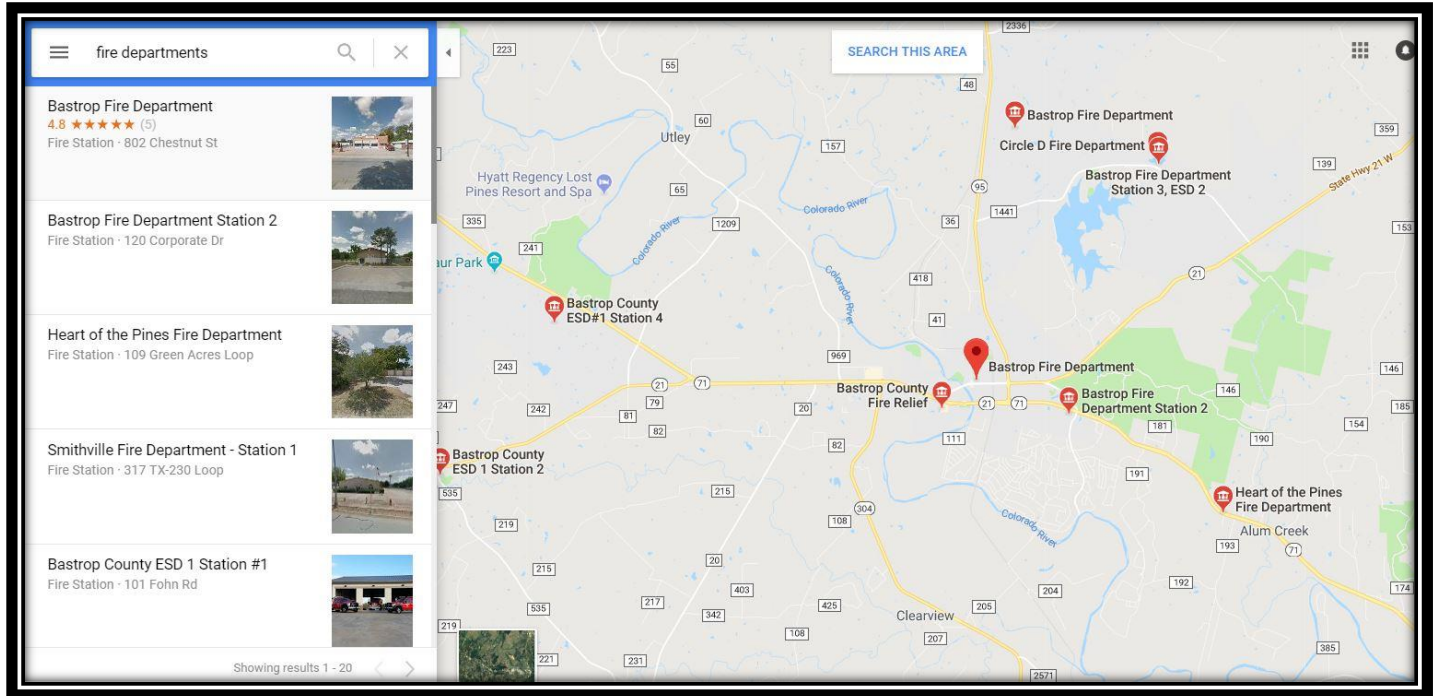




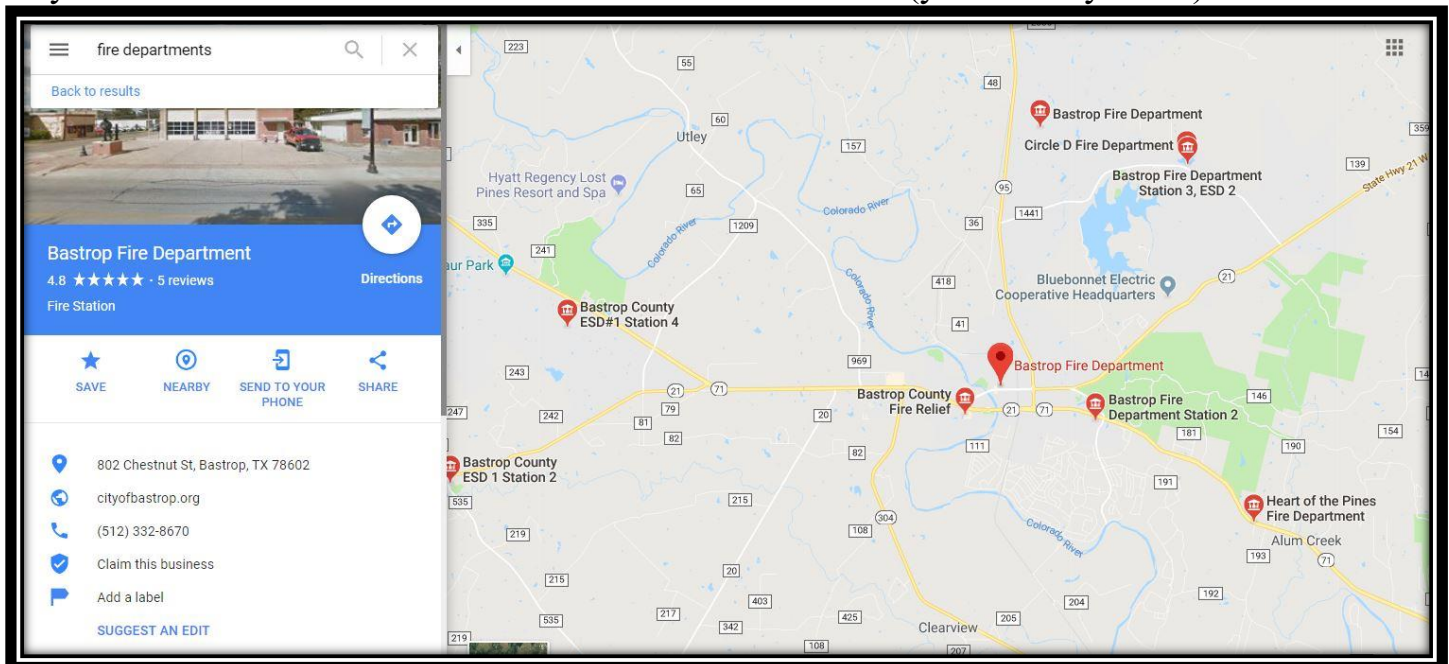


## Locating Local Fire Hose For Donation

**STEP 3.** In the search field in the top left corner (where the city name is now), type in “fire departments” and click the magnifying glass search icon. You will see the location of area fire departments.



**STEP 4.** Click on the red icon over the name of the fire department closest to you. The address, website (if there is one), phone number, and other information for the fire department will appear in the left side bar. Call that number and ask to speak with someone who would know if they have “out-of-service fire hose available for donation to (your facility name)”.





## Locating Local Fire Hose For Donation

Instead of calling, could can search for the fire department name on Facebook. This way you also know if they have a Facebook page for you to tag when you thank them.

The screenshot shows a Facebook search interface for 'bastrop fire department'. The search bar at the top contains the text 'bastrop fire department' and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'All', 'Posts', 'People', 'Photos', 'Videos', 'Pages', and 'Places'. The 'All' tab is selected.

On the left side, there is a 'Filter Results' section with three categories:

- POSTS FROM**
  - ☒ Anyone
  - ☐ You
  - ☐ Your Friends and Groups
  - [+ Choose a Source...](#)
- POSTED IN GROUP**
  - ☒ Any group
  - ☐ Your Groups
  - [+ Choose a Group...](#)
- TAGGED LOCATION**
  - ☒ Anywhere
  - ☐ Cuenca, Ecuador
  - [+ Choose a Location...](#)
- DATE POSTED**
  - ☒ Any date
  - ☐ 2018
  - ☐ 2017
  - ☐ 2016
  - [+ Choose a Date...](#)

The main content area displays search results under the 'Pages' tab. The first result is 'Bastrop Fire Department', which has a 5.0 star rating (2 reviews) and 1.1K likes. It is described as the 'Official page for the City of Bastrop Fire Department'. The second result is 'Bastrop County Emergency Services District No. 2', a government organization with 6.8K likes, described as a political subdivision of Bastrop County created to enhance fire protection.

Below the 'Pages' section, there is a 'Public Posts' section. The first post is from 'Bastrop Fire Department', posted 9 hours ago. The text of the post reads: 'EXPECT DELAYS: SH 71 TXDOT road work continues.... Lane closures along 71 for the purpose of placing concrete for the median cable barrier happening this week! The eastbound inside lane will be closed daily beginning today, Monday (3/26/18). The lane... See more'. The post has 1 like.

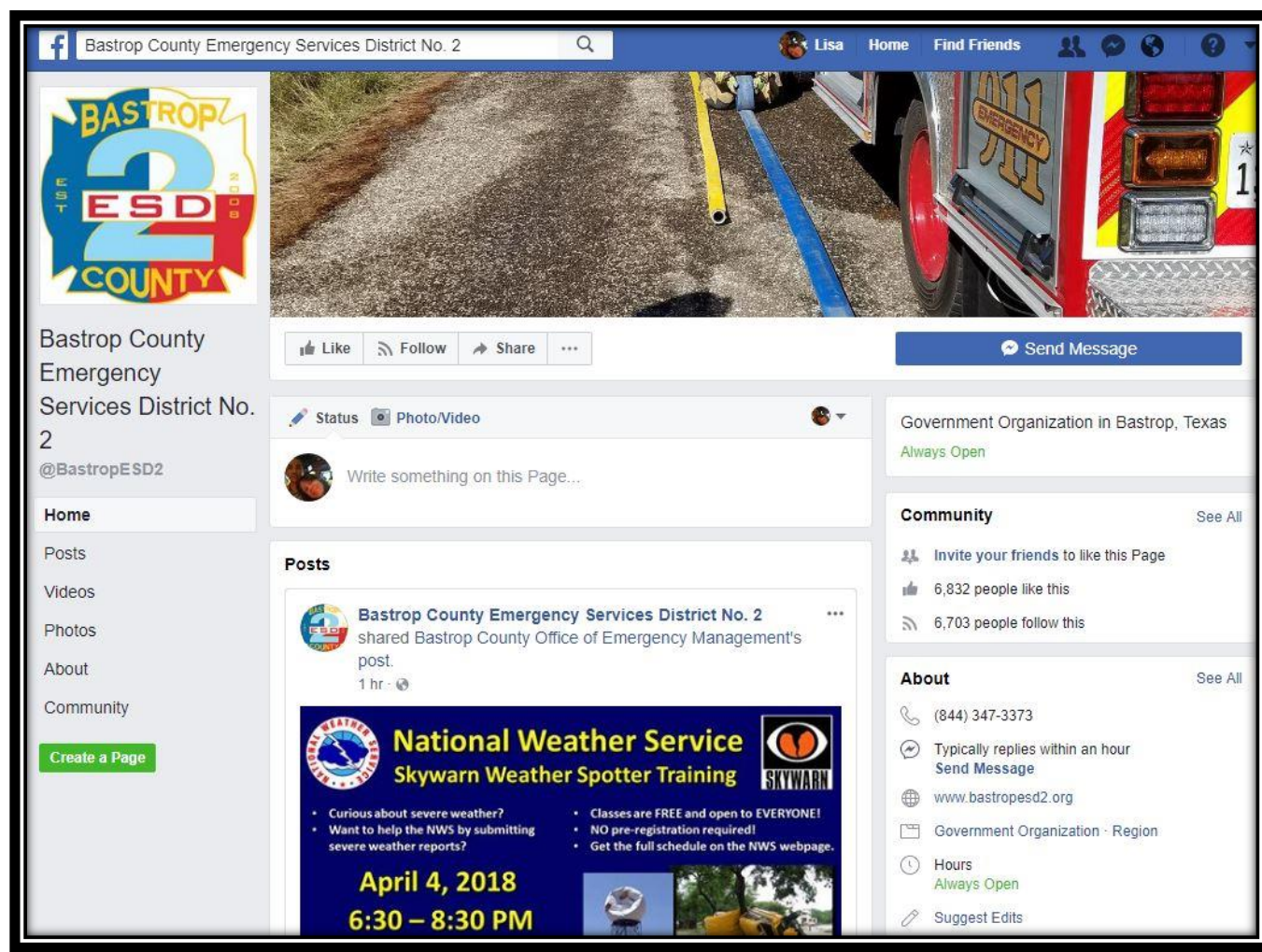
The second post is also from 'Bastrop Fire Department', dated March 24 at 9:47pm.





## Locating Local Fire Hose For Donation

This also gives you the phone number for the fire department, but more importantly for this method, it shows how quickly they reply to Facebook messages. In this case, it's "within an hour". So, send them a message telling them who you are and asking if they have out-of-service hose available for donation to your facility for animal enrichment. Including cute animal pictures is usually a plus.



**Many thanks to Michala Teetzen for adding these thoughts from her experience as a keeper:**

In my 13 years at Sedgwick County Zoo, the acquisition of firehose has been random, sporadic and a bit of a mystery. Sometimes we have none, other times a load appears but I have no idea where it came from, who they contacted within the zoo to deliver it or even if we requested it first. I have tried to solve the mystery by asking around but never seem to get any definitive answers. Once many years ago, I called stations and went and picked up some myself. Several



## Locating Local Fire Hose For Donation

weeks ago, I was tasked with tracking some down again by my boss, so I will share some of my experiences from our "end of the hose."

I started by emailing the fire chief of Sedgwick County. I explained how we use firehose and attached some cute photos of animals using the various firehose items. I chose to use email, instead of making a phone call, for several reasons: 1. It allows your message to be forwarded on to the appropriate person (some departments have a specific person in charge of the firehose). 2. It gives them time to check if hoses are available instead of putting whoever answers the phone on the spot. 3. And it prevents the inevitable phone tag. *(Note from Hose2Habitat nerds: Facebook messages have many of these advantages, too.)* Due to the nature of their job, firefighters have very odd schedules so it is hard to make contact with a specific person during their working hours (they may work one day, then be off for two days, then work for one day, etc. or may be away from the station fighting a fire for their entire shift). *(Note from the Hose2Habitat nerds: The officer in charge should always know the hose inventory at the station. Logistics should always know the entire inventory of the department.)*

Email solves all these problems, plus you can attach some photos of what you have made/will make with the firehose to capture their interest. In my follow up email, I also included a link to the Hose2Habitat website and asked him to take a look at it and encouraged him to share about the organization with others in his firefighter's network who may work in different areas of the country.

As zookeepers, it can feel intimidating to essentially solicit a business for donations. *(Note from the Hose2Habitat nerds: The fire department usually has to pay to get rid of the out-of-service hose. You're asking them for what they consider trash. If you are nice and – this is key – make it easy for them by using the correct terms and offering to pick it up with or without couplings, they'll probably be happy to get rid of it.)* It is not in our wheelhouse and many zoos may not allow their employees to solicit donations (generally speaking at least). In addition, there may be other red tape involved: getting approval up the chain of command, deciding who from the zoo should be the contact person and whether a donation form should be filled out, etc.

Some ideas to foster a relationship to encourage ongoing donations: post a shoutout to the fire station on social media for their donation and later post photos showing what you made with the firehose, offer behind-the-scenes tours or free zoo passes to the firemen and their families. *(Note from the Hose2Habitat nerds: Homemade brownies are magic in fire departments.)*

In addition to the obvious local fire stations to contact for firehose, many other entities also use firehose and may have some to donate. Try contacting airports, military bases, electric companies, hotels, or look on Craigslist. *(Note from the Hose2Habitat nerds: If you are a non-profit, let them know from the start, especially if it's easy for you to offer a donation letter. If they can only donate to a non-profit, contact [Lisa@Hose2Habitat.org](mailto:Lisa@Hose2Habitat.org). We will accept the donation and provide a donation letter and then donate the hose to you.)*