

Fire District #13, Inc.

Employee Handbook

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5.1 PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

All employees shall receive, at least once per year, a performance appraisal, which will objectively assess their performance and accomplishments relative to the job description. Appraisals will occur no later than July of each fiscal year.

Standardized forms will be used to record all formal performance appraisals, and all individuals supervising the employee being evaluated will contribute to the review. These records will be used to help determine salary reviews, advancements, transfers, layoffs, and other personnel actions, which are based on merit.

All employees must be given the opportunity to review and make copies of their performance appraisal. Employees are encouraged to include written comments on the review, if appropriate. Employees are also encouraged to submit to their supervisor any actions or achievements they deem pertinent to their job performance. Employees who disagree with appraisals are encouraged to discuss areas of disagreement with their supervisor. Employees must sign and date their appraisal after all comments have been noted.

Employees receiving a score of average or below will be re-evaluated after 3 months. Employees in this category who do not show significant improvement may be placed on probation or receive other necessary action.

Performance appraisals become a permanent part of the employee's personnel file. This information will be held in strict confidentiality, and may only be released to a third party with prior written approval from the employee.

5.2 DISCIPLINARY PHILOSOPHY

This department uses progressive discipline to ensure staff compliance with performance standards, ethics and conduct. Except in cases of repeated willful or flagrant violations of these standards, a supervisor will not resort to formal disciplinary measures until informal attempts to correct the problem have failed. If a supervisor finds it necessary to use formal disciplinary measures, it is intended that the discipline be administered fairly, without prejudice and only for cause.

Disciplinary actions are of several levels, including oral and written warnings, written reprimand, removal of service, suspension and dismissal. The frequency and/or severity of misconduct determines which level of disciplinary action is required.

Progressive discipline is not required for all offenses. This department reserves the right to terminate employees for commission of serious infractions, regardless of progressive discipline guidelines or counseling.

Except as where noted, all disciplinary action shall be in accordance with the specific “Disciplinary Policy” as approved by the Board of Directors.

5.3 SUSPENSION

The Fire Chief may suspend an employee for disciplinary reasons without pay. An employee who is suspended will be given written notice of the reasons for the action, and a copy will be made a part of the employee's personnel record.

Employees can be suspended for incidents that merit termination if the employee's participation is suspected, but unclear. Under these circumstances, the Fire Chief can suspend the employee with pay while an investigation is conducted.

Supervisors will meet formally with suspended employees upon their return to work, and define clearly and specifically the improvements in job-related behaviors required as a condition of the employee's continued employment. This meeting will be documented and records of it submitted to the Fire Chief. A copy of the suspension records will also be added to the employee's personnel file.

5.4 DISMISSAL

Dismissal occurs when other disciplinary action has failed to achieve improvement or when the employee commits a serious offense. Prior to dismissal, the Fire Chief should assure that the employee has been properly counseled in writing concerning any deficiencies in performance, given sufficient time to correct these deficiencies, and informed that failure to correct them may result in termination. Final determination of any dismissal shall require a majority approval of the Board of Directors.

However, some offenses warrant immediate dismissal. These include but are not limited to:

- 1) Theft-including, but not limited to, the removal of company property of the property of another employee from company premises without prior authorization.
- 2) Drugs/Alcohol-possession, use, sale, purchase or distribution on department property of alcohol or any illegal drugs or illegally possessed drugs. Also reporting to work after having ingested alcohol or illegal drugs or illegally possessed drugs, in a condition that adversely affects the employee's ability to safely and effectively perform his or her job functions, or which would imperil the safety of other employees.

- 3) Falsifying or altering company records.
- 4) Sabotaging or willfully damaging department equipment or the property of other employees.
- 5) Walking off the job without supervisor permission.
- 6) Insubordination involving, but not limited to, defaming, assaulting or threatening to assault a supervisor, and refusing to carry out the order of a supervisor where personal safety is not a problem.
- 7) Fighting or provoking a fight on company premises.
- 8) Absence for three consecutive working days without notice to the department, in which event the offending employee will be deemed to have quit voluntarily.
- 9) Carrying concealed weapons on department property.

Employees that are terminated or dismissed for disciplinary reasons shall receive pay only for the amount of time worked until the point of termination and any unused accrued vacation or holiday leave. No accrued sick leave will be paid redeemed or converted.

5.5 LAYOFFS

This department intends to minimize the negative impact on current employees if a reduction in the work force becomes necessary. However, from time to time, cutbacks or reductions may be unavoidable due to forces beyond its control. In some cases, a program may have to be reduced in size or terminated entirely if funds for its operation are no longer available. If this type of cutback must occur, this department will reduce staff progressively, using the following steps:

- Voluntary reductions in the work force. This includes employees who take early retirement, leaves of absence or reductions in hours.
- Attrition
- An attempt will be made to transfer employees from terminated positions to other vacant positions within the department if the employee can meet the qualifications of the position and has satisfactory performance evaluations.
- In determining which regular employees are laid off, the Fire Chief may implement a seniority system giving consideration to factors such as, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Special training
- b) Performance evaluations
- c) Job specialty and responsibilities
- d) Supervisor input

The Fire Chief will provide notice to employees affected and inform them of the beginning date of layoff. The employee shall be given written notice of at least two (2) weeks or a salary equal to a two week period. Any layoff or reduction in work force will require a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

5.6 RESIGNATION

Employees who voluntarily resign from their positions at the department must give at least two weeks notice in writing of their intent to resign. Once the resignation is accepted, the employee must work out the full and complete notice in order to collect any accrued vacation or holiday leave. No sick leave will be paid, redeemed or converted upon separation.

5.7 FINAL PAY

Employees who leave the service of the department for any reason shall receive all pay which may be due to them, with the following qualifications:

- a) Regular employees will be paid for all unused vacation days.
- b) Regular employees, who are dismissed after committing a criminal offense against the department, or for other gross violations of company policies as determined by the Fire Chief, will not receive notice pay.
- c) Regular employees who give less than the appropriate notice of resignation and completion of said notice shall forfeit their accrued vacation unless mutual agreement is reached between the Fire Chief and the employee.
- d) Separation date for all employees is the last day of actual work or approved leave. Final pay received by an employee will not be construed to extend his or her employment with the department beyond the separation date.
- e) Failure to return department-issued equipment, keys, uniforms, material, or other items will result in delay in payment of final pay until all department property is returned. If these items are damaged or missing, their value may be deducted from the employee's final check.
- f) Employees will be advised of their rights under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA). This act entitles employees and

their dependents to continue their coverage under your department's health insurance plan-at their own expense, but at group rates-for 18 months after they leave.

5.8 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any employee who has a complaint concerning disciplinary action, termination, demotion, denial of promotion or merit increase, layoff, or discrimination based on a category-ie, race, age, disability-recognized by federal and local civil rights laws has the right to file a grievance according to procedures outlined in this policy.

No employee will be discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, or suffer any reprisal as a result of filing a grievance or participating in the investigation of a grievance. If an employee feels that he or she is being subjected to any of the above, that employee has the right to appeal directly to the Fire Chief.

Employees should attempt to resolve the problem informally with their supervisor as soon as possible. If a solution cannot be reached, the employee or human resources representative may present a formal grievance, in writing, to the Fire Chief.

All complaints will be handled in a timely manner. Any grievance shall follow the "Grievance Policy" as approved by the Board of Directors.

Employees may not file grievance procedures challenging the substance of a performance appraisal.

5.9 ABANDONMENT OF JOB

Employees who miss work for three consecutively scheduled days without notifying their supervisor, or have three consecutive days of unexcused absences, are considered to have resigned their jobs.

5.10 MINIMUM CAREER STAFFING

Following are minimum career staffing levels. This policy and the leave calendar are to be used when approving leave time. Should there be emergencies where employees must utilize leave; supervisors are authorized to call back off-duty personnel. This policy is based on several factors and goals. It is our goal to provide the most effective coverage possible in order to save lives and property. Staffing at our central station (Station 13) is prioritized so that we can effectively respond to all areas of the district from a central location with a full company of personnel. The majority of our volunteer staff is assigned to Station 5 and 8. Therefore, volunteers are more able to respond from those areas during nights and weekends.

Weekdays

There should be a minimum of eight (8) career members on duty during normal working hours.

Station 5	3 shift personnel
Station 13	3 shift personnel
Station 8	2 8:00am – 5:00pm personnel

Weeknights, Weekends and Holidays

The minimum career staffing from 5:00pm to 7:30am is six (6) personnel.

Station 5	3 shift personnel
Station 13	3 shift personnel

Coverage

Off-duty personnel may be utilized to provide coverage in cases of emergencies. Qualified volunteer members may also be used to cover for career members for short periods other than regularly scheduled time off after receiving approval. If a callback member or qualified volunteer is not available the Deputy Chief or Assistant Chief will

provide coverage. Only one (1) shift personnel should be allowed planned leave at a time. When funds are available call-back may be authorized to allow to (2) shift personnel to be off three (3) times per month.

Station 8 houses our resident volunteers who provide nighttime coverage. When full staffing occurs the seventh (7th) career member should be assigned to Station 8 to assist with coverage.