



FIRE RESCUE

ALBEMARLE COUNTY

STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Subject: Standards of Conduct

Reference Number: SAP-DEP-033

Effective Date: 01 January, 2011

Last Revision Date: N/A

Signature of Approval:

J. Dan Eggleston, Chief

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for employee conduct for the Albemarle County Department of Fire Rescue, in support of Albemarle County Personnel Policy *P-25: Standards of Conduct*.

Scope:

The following standards of conduct apply to all Albemarle County Department of Fire Rescue personnel when they are on duty, when they are in uniform on or off-duty, and when they are on property owned or occupied by the Department or any other fire/rescue agency. Certain standards, as identified in this policy, apply to misconduct whether it is on or off-duty, due to its significant adverse impact on the operations of the department.

Policy:

Operational readiness, prompt emergency response, personnel safety and citizen service are our highest priorities and overriding concern. Department members must be committed to teamwork, personal integrity, ethical conduct, and personal accountability for their actions. They are also expected to demonstrate an attitude of respect for the value of life and the dignity of others, the worth of caring, and the importance of helping the citizens and visitors of our community.

The standards of conduct are not intended to limit any member in the exercise of his/her judgment in taking the action a reasonable person would take in extraordinary situations which are bound to arise in the fire and emergency medical services from time to time. Much, by necessity, must be left to the loyalty, integrity and discretion of each member.

In order to meet our professional expectations, all personnel shall present the best possible appearance in self, apparatus, equipment, and workplace. It is also expected that each member demonstrate professional knowledge, skills, and abilities consistent with their position. Actions taken should be deliberate and appropriate for the situation at hand, and be carried out with expedience, efficiency, courtesy, and respect for others.

Standards of Conduct

A. General Conduct

1. Personnel shall devote proper attention to the County, the department, and their division. They shall exert their full energy and ability in the performance of their duties. They shall not perform their duties in a careless or apathetic manner, or neglect or fail to perform any portion of their duties required by rule, regulation, order, protocol, common practice, or the necessities of the situation involved.
2. Personnel shall exercise proper judgment and efficiency in the performance of their duties. They shall refrain from conduct detrimental to the reputation, order or discipline of the County, the department, or their division.
3. Personnel shall conduct themselves in a professional and dignified manner and strive to be fair and impartial in their relations with other personnel and the public.
4. Personnel shall refrain from using language that violates any laws or County policies, or contains personal attacks, profanity, insults, threats, discriminatory statements based on race, nationality, sex, disability or other status, obscenity, or sexually suggestive content.
5. Personnel must apply themselves to their assigned duties during the full schedule for which they are compensated, except for reasonable periods of time provided for personal needs.
 - a. Personnel are expressly prohibited from other employment or giving personal attention to any other business while on-duty.
 - b. Station captains shall be responsible for structuring the work shift so that both the needs of the County and the employee, where possible, are met.
6. Personnel shall respect the authority and responsibility of other personnel when issuing or receiving orders and assignments.
7. Whether on or off-duty, personnel shall refrain from any violation of federal, state and local laws, and shall not publicly advocate for the violation of any law.
8. Personnel shall be truthful in all communications with other personnel and the public. Untruthfulness, particularly in the context of internal administrative investigations, shall subject personnel to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.
9. Personnel shall not be under the influence of any intoxicants while on-duty, permit the presence of intoxicants at any station, on any official-use vehicle (with the exception of EMS medication kits), or at any property used or occupied by the department, or use any drug on or off-duty which is likely to negatively affect their competence while on-duty.
10. Personnel shall avoid the use of County facilities or resources for the conduct of personal activities that are not job-related, except as authorized by County and/or Department policy. They shall not loan, sell, give away, or appropriate for their own use any County or public property.

B. Station Operations

11. The general guidelines for the priority of daily station operations are: (1) personnel and equipment readiness; (2) emergency operations; (3) public appointments and commitments; (4) review of internal communications; (5) training, both assigned and for personnel development; (6) station maintenance; and (7) other assigned duties and projects. Station personnel may utilize discretionary time only after the preceding priorities are reasonably met.
12. With regard to shift changes at fire rescue stations, a thorough and direct exchange of relevant information shall occur, position for position, between the personnel present. This information should include matters concerning the condition of the station, apparatus, equipment and grounds. Captains have primary responsibility to ensure this exchange of information occurs, and that related information is duly recorded in the station log.
13. Personal visitors for on or off-duty members may be permitted for short durations, so long as their visits do not disrupt or impede station operations. In no event may personnel engage in sexual conduct with visitors or other members at the station or otherwise engage with visitors in a manner that disrupts the professional work environment of the station.

C. Communications

14. Personnel shall familiarize themselves with the contents of all communications intended for them and distributed through official means, including the following:
 - a. Department Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), Standard Administrative Policies (SAPs) and General Orders
 - b. County of Albemarle Personnel Policies
 - c. Regional and Department EMS Patient Care Guidelines
15. Personnel shall be responsible for the completeness, accuracy, and timely dispatch of all reports with which they are concerned. They shall refrain from intercepting or unnecessarily delaying any reports or communications in transit. Fire and EMS incident reports shall be completed and appropriately secured (with regard to paper documents) as of the end of shift, unless otherwise authorized by a chief officer.
16. Department personnel are expected to review their work e-mail accounts on a daily basis.
17. Department personnel shall not divulge investigative, legally protected, or otherwise confidential information without proper authorization.
18. Whether on or off-duty, personnel shall not engage in any public speech or writing concerning County government, the department, any volunteer fire/rescue agency, or any of their respective members, which:
 - a. is defamatory, obscene, or unlawful;
 - b. undermines the effective operation of the organization; or
 - c. interferes with the maintenance of discipline.

D. Responsibilities of Officers

19. Officers are members of the management team of the Department and County government. As such, they are expected to model professional standards and integrity in their relations with subordinates. Respect, courtesy, and firm and uniform dealings encourage loyalty. Loyalty encourages obedience and teamwork, and teamwork ensures the promotion and maintenance of efficiency within the department.
20. Officers shall enforce the authorized policies, regulations, practices, and procedures of the Department and the County of Albemarle. They shall promptly resolve any questions from their subordinates relative to the interpretation of regulations or orders and prescribe the immediate action to be taken when needed.
21. Officers shall have full authority to discharge their duties as authorized by the chief. They shall not issue orders conflicting with other officers of equal or higher rank, or interfere with their operations, unless confronted by an immediate safety concern or otherwise instructed by a superior officer.
22. Officers shall promptly investigate and make oral reports to their commanding officers of any unusual occurrences concerning their assignment and when required, make written reports containing the facts of the case and forward them promptly through channels.