

	<p>FIRE RESCUE ALBEMARLE COUNTY STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY</p>	
	Subject:	Volunteer Exit Survey and Climate Survey
	Reference Number:	SAP-DEP-041
	Effective Date:	23 February 2012
	Last Revision Date:	N/A
Signature of Approval:	 J. Dan Eggleston, Chief	

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to support positive relationships and working environments by establishing the process for conducting exit interviews and surveys and climate surveys.

Background:

The Albemarle County Department of Fire Rescue recognizes its personnel as its most valuable resource. The exit interview, exit survey, and climate survey are important learning tools used to gather facts and information pertaining to service experience. Data from the interviews and surveys can be used to improve recruitment, retention, placement, training practices, and working conditions which, in turn, will help reduce turnover, enhance supervision, and identify issues that may have factored into an individual's decision to separate.

Exit interviews and surveys also provide the opportunity to verify the reasons for leaving, respond to questions the individual may have concerning the separation process, and give the individual the opportunity to discuss anything he/she feels significant to the experience.

Exit interviews and surveys are used as a means to find the causes of controllable turnover. Their aim is not to try to persuade the individual from leaving, but to supply useful management information which will be used to inform the decision making process within the organization, both at system and local level.

The data obtained from the exit interviews, exit surveys, and climate surveys shall be used to assist in developing strategies to reduce turnover and to improve recruitment and retention efforts as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and expectations.

Scope:

This policy applies to all volunteer fire rescue personnel leaving service in Albemarle County.

Definitions:

Exit Interview – an informal, subjective meeting between a station representative and an individual leaving service with the organization. It is used as a learning opportunity and seeks candid views on the individual's experience.

Exit Survey – a formal, objective instrument that attempts to learn why individuals leave and what, if anything, would help reduce turnover and improve retention rates. It is used as an opportunity to improve business practices and implement new initiatives.

Climate Survey – a formal, objective instrument that attempts to learn the opinions possess towards their current environment. This form acquiring feedback is intended to learn why volunteers enjoy or may not enjoy certain portions of the volunteer experience. Additionally, this feedback affords the opportunity to the FEMS Board to make changes in effort to retain volunteers and to make the volunteer experience as positive as possible.

Separation – Any individual that leaves the organization for voluntary resignation, transfer, retirement, termination, or any other reason is considered to have “separated.”

Policy:

A. Separation

1. Upon notification of separation, individuals will be invited to participate in both an exit interview (station-level) and an exit survey (soft- or hard-copy questionnaire).

B. Exit Interviews

1. Generally, exit interviews are conducted at the station-level and are informal in nature.
2. Exit interviews should be scheduled within two (2) weeks of separation.
3. All staff leaving the organization for voluntary resignation, transfer, retirement, or termination reasons may be invited to attend an exit interview with a representative from the station.
4. Approximately 15-30 minutes should normally be allowed to complete an exit interview.
5. Station representatives conducting exit interviews should keep an open mind and use open-ended questions to establish facts and feelings. Some optional questions may include:
 - a. What was your favorite part about being a volunteer here?
 - b. What was your least favorite part about being a volunteer here?
 - c. What could we do better?
 - d. What do we do well?
 - e. What, if anything, would convince you to stay?
6. The interview should focus on the job performed and station issues.
7. The station representative could focus on job difficulties, challenges, rewards, specific aspects which could be improved, and why the individual is leaving the organization.
8. The results of exit interviews will be treated with confidence, will not prejudice future references, and will only be used in general, informal, station-level analysis.
9. Optional records of exit interviews should not be held in personnel files, but if kept, should be under separate, confidential cover.

C. Exit Surveys

1. Exit surveys are conducted at a system-level, by the Human Resources Department, and are objective and formal methods of collecting data relating to an individual’s separation from service.
2. Departing individuals should be invited to complete an exit survey within one (1) month of separation.
3. All staff leaving the organization for voluntary resignation, transfer, retirement, or termination reasons will be invited to complete an exit survey.
4. The results of exit surveys are treated with confidence, do not prejudice future references, and will only be used in general system-wide analysis.
5. The Department of Human Resources will conduct the exit surveys.
6. The Department of Human Resources will compile and analyze data from the survey and present the data in a manner to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.
7. The purposes of the exit survey include:
 - a. Determine the reasons why individuals are leaving the system.
 - b. Utilize the information to inform changes in practice.
 - c. Monitor information and make improvements to the organization as necessary.
 - d. Analyze information in inform recruitment and retention and turnover initiatives.
 - e. To promote openness and integrity by providing all individuals leaving the organization the opportunity to provide feedback.
 - f. To reduce costs associated with the turnover of experienced and trained personnel.
8. The Human Resources Liaison will:
 - a. Receive a monthly report of individuals leaving service.
 - b. Send surveys to departing volunteers.
 - i. Individuals with e-mail addresses on file in FireRMS are sent electronic invitations with links to an online survey.
 - c. Prepare annual reports (see “Reporting”).
 - i. Analyze and interpret data;
 - ii. Identify significant trends;

- iii. Prepare a summary of findings; and
- iv. Prepare statistical reports and other reports as needed.

D. Climate Surveys

1. Climate surveys are conducted at a system-level, by the Human Resources Department, and are objective and formal methods of collecting data relating to an individual's current status as a volunteer.
2. All volunteers should complete a climate survey no less than on an annual basis.
3. The results of climate surveys are treated with confidence, do not prejudice references, and will only be used in general system-wide analysis.
4. The Department of Human Resources will conduct the climate surveys.
5. The Department of Human Resources will compile and analyze data from the survey and present the data in a manner to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.
6. The purposes of the exit survey include:
 - a. Determine how the system can collectively improve processes for retention efforts.
 - b. Utilize the information to inform changes in practice.
 - c. Monitor information and make improvements to the organization as necessary.
 - d. To promote openness and integrity by providing all individuals currently in the organization the opportunity to provide feedback.
 - e. To reduce costs associated with the turnover of experienced and trained personnel.
 - f. To positively impact every individual's volunteer experience.
7. The Human Resources Liaison will:
 - a. Communicate to all stations individually, reminding them of the survey process.
 - b. Will provide the relevant information to administer the survey within each station.
 - c. Prepare annual reports (see "Reporting").
 - i. Analyze and interpret data;
 - ii. Identify significant trends;
 - iii. Prepare a summary of findings; and
 - iv. Prepare statistical reports and other reports as needed.

E. Reporting

1. The Department of Human Resources will provide an annual report of findings and analysis to station chiefs and ACFR staff.
2. Raw data is not distributed. Data is prepared and presented in a manner that ensures confidentiality and anonymity.

F. Process Flowchart

