

Washington Township Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure

Division 100: Administration
Section 107: Rules and Regulations
Subject 107.01: Professional Conduct Rules
Supersedes: General Order 99-5 – Issued June 16, 1999



Approved By:

Date: December 01, 2002

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PURPOSE:

The Washington Township Fire Department's rules and regulations on professional conduct exist to ensure that employees are aware of the Department's expectations concerning employee conduct and to ensure the community's respect.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Employees must read, understand and abide by the rules and regulations established by the Township and Fire Department.

PROCEDURES:

Township and Fire Department rules and regulations are provided to all new employees during the hiring process and to all employees when updated. A copy of the Township and Fire Department rules and regulations is available for review in all Fire Department facilities.

Professional Conduct Rules

Rule 1 Violation of Rules

Employees must never commit any acts or omit any acts that are a violation of any of the rules, regulations, directives or orders of the Township or Fire Department, whether written in this procedure or elsewhere.

Rule 2 Compliance with Laws

Employees must obey all laws of the United States, the individual states, and local jurisdictions as applicable. A conviction for a violation of any law is prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

Rule 3 Reporting for Duty

Employees must report for duty at the time and place their assignment or orders require. When reporting, employees must be physically and mentally fit to perform their duties. Employees must report for duty with the proper equipment and be familiar with the information necessary for the proper performance of duty. Employees must remain at their assignment until its completion or until the employee receives proper relief.

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When the use of sick leave becomes necessary, the employee or some member of the employee's immediate family must notify his supervisor as soon as he knows he will be absent. However, in no case shall this notice be later than one (1) hour after the scheduled start of the shift. Failure to provide timely notice is cause for denying sick leave pay.

When an employee plans a medical treatment/procedure in advance that requires the use of leave, the employee must make notification of leave usage at the time the medical treatment/procedure is scheduled.

Ohio Revised Code Section 4113.41 requires employees who are volunteer firefighters and/or volunteer providers of emergency medical services with a department or agency other than WTFD to provide their employer (Washington Township Fire Department) with written notification from the Fire Chief as to their status as a volunteer with such fire department/agency.

The employee must make every effort to notify the Washington Township Fire Department, before their time to report for duty, that they will be late due to an emergency situation. The employee must submit a written statement, signed by the Fire Chief, explaining why the employee was absent or late for duty.

The employee must notify the Washington Township Fire Department of any change or termination of their status with the fire department.

Rule 4 Illness or Injury Reports

Employees must never feign illness or injury, falsely report themselves ill or injured, or otherwise deceive any official of the Fire Department or Township as to the condition of their health.

When employees suffer a work-related illness or injury, or recognize that a work-related illness or injury has occurred, employees must immediately report it to a supervisor and must complete all necessary forms. If immediate notification is not practical, such notification should occur within twenty-four (24) hours. If the illness or injury renders an employee incapable of making written notification, the employee's supervisor must complete all documentation on the employee's behalf and forward such, according to policy, before going off duty.

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Rule 5 Sleeping on Duty

Employees must remain awake while on duty. If unable to do so, they must report to their supervisor, who decides the proper course of action. The only exception to this rule is for employees working the 24 hours on and 48 hours off schedule.

Rule 6 Unsatisfactory Performance

Employees must maintain sufficient competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibilities of their position. Employees must perform their duties in a way that maintains the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out the functions and objectives of the Fire Department.

The Fire Department may consider an employee's performance unsatisfactory when the employee lacks knowledge of the application of fire fighting and/or emergency medical principles, displays the unwillingness or inability to perform a task, fails to conform to work standards set for his rank or position, fails to take swift and appropriate remedial action when a subordinate does not meet standards, fails to act appropriately regarding fire, emergency medical services or other conditions deserving of Fire Department attention, or is absent without leave. Additionally, the following is considered prima facie evidence of unsatisfactory performance: repeated poor evaluations or a written record of repeated infractions of rules, regulations, directives or orders of the Township or Fire Department.

Officers of the Fire Department by the nature of their duties have additional responsibilities and therefore must abide by the following:

- Officers must be responsible for the condition, efficiency, discipline, and management of employees under their command.
- Officers must be just, dignified, and firm with subordinates.
- Officers are responsible for the enforcement of policy and procedure, rules and regulations, orders and directives of the Township and Fire Department and are accountable for orders they may issue.
- Officers must take action and report any violation of policy and procedure, rules and regulations, orders, or directives.

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- Officers must provide equal and impartial treatment to subordinates without favoritism or injustice.
- Officers must not attempt to deprive merit of due recognition, nor shield incompetence or misconduct.
- Officers must be acquainted with the qualifications of the employees under their supervision and control and must instruct those employees in their duties and observe that they comply with policy and procedure, rules and regulations, orders and directives, and properly perform their assigned duties.
- Officers must not assign subordinates to special duty until the officer has assurance the employee is competent to handle the assignment.

Rule 7 Employment Outside Fire Department

Full time employees may engage in off-duty full time or part-time employment only after notification to the Chief. The notification must include the name and address of the company or employer, work schedule and telephone number where the employee can be reached in case of emergency.

Rule 8 Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs in Township Facility

Employees must never store, or bring into any Township facility or vehicle, alcoholic beverages (except for authorized township functions), controlled substances, narcotics, or hallucinogens except in instances where those items are encountered during the course of official business.

Rule 9 Possession and Use of Drugs

Employees must never possess (including trace amounts in urine) or use any controlled substances, narcotics, hallucinogens or any other substance that could alter the motor or sensory functions in a human being unless, in the treatment of the employee by a physician or dentist, the employee receives a prescription for the medication. Possession of prescription drugs is permissible only if the following conditions are met:

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- Employees must report to the Chief when they are under a physician's or dentist's care to take medication that warns as to the dangers of or against the operation of machinery/equipment, the possibility of producing drowsiness or any other immediate abnormal side affect;
- The drug was dispensed no more than twelve (12) months ago.

The Chief will then follow Township policy pertaining to the assignment of the involved employee.

Rule 10 Use of Alcohol On Duty or in Uniform

Employees must never purchase or consume intoxicating beverages while in uniform or in clothing that identifies them as a Washington Township Fire Department employee. Employees on duty must never consume intoxicating beverages. Employees must never appear for duty, or be on duty, while under the influence of intoxicants to any degree at all, or with an odor of intoxicants on their breath.

Rule 11 Use of Alcohol Off Duty

Employees, while off duty, must never consume intoxicating beverages to the extent that it results in impairment, intoxication, obnoxious, or offensive behavior that discredits them or the department, or renders the employee unfit to report for their next regular tour of duty.

Rule 12 Insubordination, Disrespect Toward Supervisors

Employees must promptly obey any lawful orders or directives of a supervisor. This includes orders or directives from a superior that an employee of the same or lesser rank relays. Employees must address any supervisor by their proper rank or title: Lieutenant Doe, Marshal Doe, Chief Doe, etc.

Rule 13 Conflicting or Illegal Orders

Employees that receive an otherwise legal order that conflicts with a previous order, rule, regulation, or directive must respectfully inform the supervisor issuing the order of the conflict. If the supervisor issuing the order does not alter or retract the conflicting order, the order stands. Under these circumstances, the responsibility for the conflict is upon the supervisor. The employee obeys the conflicting order and is not held responsible for disobedience of the order, rule, regulation, or directive previously issued. Employees must never obey an order that

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they know or should know would require them to commit any illegal act. If in doubt as to the legality of an order, employees must request the issuer to clarify the order or to confer with higher authority.

Rule 14 Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes, or Rewards

Employees must never solicit or accept from any person, business, or organization, any gift for the benefit of the employee, Township, or Fire Department, if it may be implied that the person, business, or organization may:

- Seek to influence action of any official nature or seek to affect the performance or nonperformance of an official duty.
- Have interests that may be affected directly or indirectly by the performance or nonperformance of an official duty.

A gift includes any money, tangible or intangible personal property, food, beverage, loan promise, service, or entertainment.

Rule 15 Abuse of Position

Employees must never use their official position, official identification cards, or badges

- For personal financial gain.
- For obtaining privileges not otherwise available to them except in the performance of duty, or for avoiding consequences of illegal acts.

Employees must never lend identification cards, badges, logos, or emblems to another person, nor allow photographs or reproductions of them, without the approval of the Chief. Employees must never authorize the use of their names, photographs, or official titles, which identify them as employees, in connection with testimonials or advertisements of any commodity or commercial enterprise, without the approval of the Chief.

Employees must never use official letterheads, envelopes, or other stationery except for the transaction of official fire department business.

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Rule 16 Endorsements and Referrals

Employees must never recommend or suggest in any manner, except in the transaction of personal business, the employment or procurement of a particular product, professional or commercial service (such as a private ambulance service, a towing service, a mortician, etc.). When an ambulance or towing service is necessary, and the person needing the service is unable, unwilling, or requests assistance to obtain it, employees must follow set policy and procedure.

Employees are prohibited from participating in political activities during work hours or while in or on township property. The following are examples of activities that are prohibited:

- Directly or indirectly soliciting or receiving any assessment, subscription, or contribution for any political party, political candidate, or any other political purpose.
- Circulating nominating petitions for candidates of political office.
- Managing, coordinating, planning or participating in the campaign of a person campaigning for political office.
- Wearing political signs, stickers, etc. on township property or equipment.
- Placing political signs, stickers, etc. on township property or equipment.

Nothing in these rules shall be construed to interfere with the right of any employee of the Township to become a member of a political club, to attend political meetings, to express privately his political opinions on all political subjects, and to enjoy freedom from all interference in casting his vote.

Rule 17 Identification

On duty employees, or employees representing themselves officially, must carry their employee identification card on their person and must present their identification card and/or furnish their name to any person requesting them unless withholding the information is necessary for safety purposes

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Rule 18 Citizen Complaints

Employees must courteously receive and promptly record any complaint made by a citizen against the Fire Department or any employee of the Fire Department. Employees may attempt to resolve the complaint, but must never attempt to dissuade any citizen from lodging such a complaint. Employees must follow set policy and procedure for processing complaints.

Rule 19 Courtesy

Employees must be courteous, respectful, and professional to the public and other employees. Employees must be tactful in the performance of their duties, control their tempers, and exercise the utmost patience and discretion. Employees must never engage in argumentative discussions, even in the face of extreme provocation. Employees, in the performance of their duties, must never use coarse, violent, or insolent language or gestures; express any prejudice concerning race, religion, politics, national origin, lifestyle, or similar personal characteristics; or use language or engage in conduct that is demeaning or derogatory.

Rule 20 Requests for Assistance

Employees must professionally and courteously obtain all pertinent information when any person requests assistance or advice or makes a complaint or is reporting an incident, either by telephone or in person. Employees must act upon the request properly and judiciously, according to policy.

Rule 21 Visiting Prohibited Establishments

Employees must not knowingly visit, enter, or frequent a house of prostitution, gambling house, or establishment in which the laws of the United States, the State, or the local jurisdiction are regularly violated, except in the performance of duty.

Rule 22 Gambling

Employees must never gamble on township property or while on duty. Employees must never engage or participate in any form of illegal gambling.

Rule 23 Payment of Debts

Employees must not undertake any financial obligations that they know, or should know, they are unable to meet and must pay all just debts when due. Isolated instances of financial irresponsibility are not grounds for discipline except in unusually severe cases. Repeated

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instances of financial difficulty may be cause for disciplinary action. Filing for a voluntary bankruptcy petition may not, by itself, be cause for discipline. Financial difficulties stemming from unforeseen medical expenses or personal disaster may not be cause for discipline, if the employee makes a good faith effort to settle all accounts. Employees must not co-sign a note for any supervisor.

Rule 24 Telephone, Residential, Emergency Contact and Employer Information

Employees must have a working telephone in their home and must immediately report any change of their telephone number, address, emergency contact, or employment information. Changes must be submitted in writing on an *Employee Information Sheet* (Form 117) and on a *Payroll Change Notice* (Form 100) and forwarded to the Chief through the chain of command.

Section 4113.41 of the Ohio Revised Code requires volunteer firefighters and/or providers of emergency medical services to inform their employers of their volunteer status through written notification by the chief of the department. It is therefore essential that employees provide the administration with current, complete and accurate information.

Rule 25 Dissemination of Information

Employees must treat the official business of the Fire Department as confidential. Employees must provide information regarding official business only to those persons for whom it is intended, according to policy and procedure. Employees may remove or copy official records or reports from the Fire Department only according to policy and procedure.

Rule 26 Official Reports, Information

Employees must submit all necessary reports before going off duty. All reports and information (whether contained in an official report or not) that employees submit must be truthful and complete. Employees must never knowingly report, enter, or cause the entry of any inaccurate, false, or improper information.

Rule 27 Use of Township Equipment

Employees must use Township equipment for its intended purpose, according to policy, and must not abuse, damage, or lose Township equipment. Employees must maintain Township equipment they receive in proper order. Employees must complete the equipment *Loan Agreement* (Form 44) when borrowing Township equipment. (Note: Some restrictions apply

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with respect to the type of equipment that is available for loan to employees.) Written approval of a supervisor is required on the loan approval form.

Rule 28 Operating Vehicles

Employees must operate Fire Department vehicles for official purposes only. Employees must drive carefully and prudently, obey all laws, and all Township or Fire Department orders and procedures concerning such operation. Employees must report the loss or suspension of any driving privileges to their supervisor immediately.

Rule 29 Firearms, Other Weapons or Explosives

Employees, unless during the course of an investigation, must never possess firearms, any object or device designed for use as a weapon, or explosives on Township premises or equipment.

Rule 30 Harassment and Workplace Violence

The Township and Fire Department prohibit their employees from discriminating against or harassing any person, including incidents of ethnic, racial, or religious harassment.

Employees must never use language or engage in conduct that demeans, harasses, intimidates, or causes harm or the fear of harm to another employee or his property.

The Township and Fire Department treat any harassment as serious misconduct subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Rule 31 Ethical Conduct

Employees must always conduct themselves, both on and off duty, in a way that reflects favorably on the Fire Department. Employees are forbidden from engaging in conduct that dishonors the Fire Department, discredits the individual as a Fire Department employee, or impairs the efficient operation of the employee or the Fire Department.

Rule 32 Computer Equipment, Software, and Network Systems

The Fire Department's use of computer software complies with software vendors' specific licensing agreements. The Fire Department does not allow or condone "Computer Software Piracy". Computer Software Piracy is the unlawful duplication of software without specific

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approval from the software vendor or is contrary to the licensing agreement. Employees committing Computer Software Piracy are subject to disciplinary action.

Internet connections are provided for business purposes and business related activities. Employees are expected to conduct themselves on the network in a professional manner. Acceptable activities include, but are not limited to, communications with other governmental agencies and private entities engaged in activities related to fire and emergency medical services and the retrieval of information from the Internet as it relates to professional pursuits.

Employees must never add, alter, copy, delete, install, or download data files, software applications, or programs on any township owned computer without proper authorization from the Information Systems Coordinator.

Rule 33 Safety Equipment

Employees must always utilize the required safety equipment as appropriate for the situation.

Rule 34 Personal Business for Profit

Employees must never conduct for profit, any personal business while on duty.

Rule 35 Disaster Response

If any great disaster occurs which would require the resources of the Fire Department to properly attend, all employees who are off duty must report as quickly as possible to their normal duty station. If the emergency prevents the employee from reaching his normal duty station, he should report to the closest Fire Department facility. The disruption or clogging of telephone communications and the failure of the Fire Department to notify each off duty employee does not excuse such employees from reporting. Such catastrophes are readily apparent to all, either by hearing, by word of mouth, or other means. All personnel, after caring for the needs of their immediate families, must report for duty as quickly as possible.

Rule 36 Residency

Generally, all part-paid volunteer employees of the Washington Township Fire Department must reside within Centerville/Washington Township. The Chief may authorize exceptions to the residency rule.