

Washington Township Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure

Division 100: Administration
Section 102: Organization of Written Procedures
Subject 102.01: Standard Operating Procedure Structure, Format, and Definitions
Supersedes: 102.01 Written Directive Methodology and Distribution Procedures (5/1/02)
General Order 92-3 (7/13/95)



Approved By: *[Signature]*

Date: February 5, 2009 **Date Last Reviewed:**

Page: 1 of 4

PURPOSE:

It is necessary to provide consistent and uniform job performance and behavior direction to members of the Department. This guidance and direction underscore the Department's commitment to invoke its vision and mission statements and core values through this form of communication. To that end, written procedures (see page 4 for definition) will be developed and implemented as Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)¹.

Department SOP will seek to establish a standard course of action that provide an indication or outline of conduct. They contain detailed processes and directions to put policy (see page 4 for definition) into practice. In many instances, a procedure will provide a series of steps to be followed in a regular definite order. To procedurally complete actions in a specific order is absolutely essential in rendering emergency services. Therefore, many Department procedures will be written and implemented. Where possible, when some measure of flexibility is allowed or necessary, conduct exceptions will be pointed out in the standard operating procedure.

Further, this standard operating procedure will assist those who formulate policy and procedure by (1) describing the responsibilities associated with writing policies and procedures, (2) explaining the Department's policies and procedures, (3) identifying the major components of Department policy and procedure documents, (4) defining policy and procedure terms, and (5) communicating the approval process.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all members to become familiar with the procedure writing process and the function of standard operating procedures in the Department.

PROCEDURES:

The Department follows a multi-step process in the development of SOP. This process provides for establishing an objective that will ultimately communicate a procedure to produce the greatest effectiveness and/or efficiency for the subject. These five steps are:

1. Identify the objective(s) or issue(s) the procedure covers. The standard operating procedure writing process starts with establishing an objective that will ultimately result in a procedure designed to produce the greatest effectiveness and/or efficiency for the subject. Knowing the expected outcome produces a focused communication that delineates the order, steps, direction or necessary guidance.

¹ See illustration on last page.
102.01 SOP FormatDefini

Subject 102.01: Standard Operating Procedure Structure, Format, and Definitions

Date: February 5, 2009

Page: 2 of 4

2. Collect information and data that is subject related. This step will enhance the accuracy, timeliness, completeness, technique and communication of the procedure. Nationally recognized standards, industry benchmarks, statutes, mandates, teams, view-points and brainstorming are potential sources of knowledge.
3. Distillation and organization of the data collected. Identify needs, ideas, concepts, critical steps and important points initiate (or modify) a procedure. Successful procedure creation requires having a person serve in the capacity of moving the procedure forward. This person may be an advocate or working to complete an assignment.
4. Review and re-evaluate existing procedures and the need for new procedures. Maintaining procedures in an accurate and up-to-date manner requires revisiting and reassessing the standard operating procedures in place. Times, people, customer needs and technology change. Hence, the organized review and revision step is critical to modify and add procedures as needed to fulfill departmental objectives.
5. Approval and implementation of the standard operating procedure by the Fire Chief.

Each procedure is presented in a format that contains the following elements:

Title Block:

- **Division, Section and Subject** - classify where the particular procedure is organized in the total procedural process.
- **Supersedes** - provides for identification of any previous procedure that is removed from use, if applicable.
- **Approved By** - followed by a signature, generally of the Fire Chief to indicate such procedure is now in force and being implemented.
- **Date** - indicates the effective date of the procedure.
- **Date Last Reviewed** - states when the procedure was last examined for accuracy, current standing, and applicability.
- **Page** - indicates the page number and total page count.

Purpose: Defines and states what the procedure encompasses or accomplishes.

Responsibility: Defines the persons impacted by and accountable for compliance with the procedure.

Procedures: Describes the actual steps, order, techniques, guidelines or procedures that are to be followed to efficiently and effectively accomplish the stated **Purpose**.

Secondary Title Block: An abbreviated version of the first page **Title Block** will appear at the top of the second and subsequent pages of a procedure. This includes a repeat of the **Subject, Date and Page Number**.

References: An optional part that lists sources of information.

Subject 102.01: Standard Operating Procedure Structure, Format, and Definitions

Date: February 5, 2009

Page: 3 of 4

Footer: Located in the bottom left corner of each page indicating the electronic file name of the procedure.

Font and Font Size: Unless directed otherwise or not available *Times New Roman* font will be used in the body of documents in the 12 point size.

Before the introduction of the current format in 2000, a different appearance and format included the use of Numbered/Indexed procedures (B1-B6), Orders (General and Special), and Bulletins (Training and Maintenance). Unless superseded by a currently formatted procedure, the documents using the previous formatting system carry the same weight, responsibility and authority as those written in the new format.

Numbering System

The Department's Standard Operating Procedures are organized into seven divisions. A *Table of Contents* and *Index* are included. The *Table of Contents* lists each Division, Section and Subject for all Standard Operating Procedures. The seven Divisions are:

100 Administration	200 Emergency Operations
300 Occupational Safety and Health	400 Training
500 Maintenance	600 Communications & Fire Alarms Office
700 Fire Prevention, Life Safety and Education	

Previous to 2000, the procedures numbering system used the effective dates and not an assigned number.

Distribution of Standard Operating Procedures

Printed SOP copies are distributed to:

Fire Chief	Township Administrator	Deputy Township Administrator
Deputy Fire Chiefs	Fire Marshal	Captains
Lieutenants	Fire Alarms Office	Each fire station
Accreditation Office	Maintenance Supervisor's Office	

Electronic copies are distributed to:

Department members not listed above	Fire Department Web site
Township Web site	

Supervisor's Role

When supervisors receive new or revised procedures, they review them and explain them to members they lead (either directly or through the evaluation process). Each member must acknowledge receipt of this information on a sign-off log, *Receipt of Written Procedure* form

Subject 102.01: Standard Operating Procedure Structure, Format, and Definitions

Date: February 5, 2009

Page: 4 of 4

(Form #116 rev.1/09). Supervisors also assist, as needed, in the distribution of printed or electronic copies.

DEFINITIONS

Procedure – A Department procedure is a written document that describes the step-by-step process necessary to implement Department policies. A procedure stipulates the specific methods employed to put policies into action in day-to-day operations.

Policy – A Department policy is a written statement that meets all four of the following conditions:

1. It applies to Department members in general or specific subdivisions of the Department.
2. It addresses the Department core values, or enables the Department to progress toward achieving its vision, or supports the mission of the Department, or promotes effective operations, or ensures compliance with laws or regulations.
3. It mandates or constrains certain behaviors and contains specific requirements for compliance.
4. It requires formal approval from the Fire Chief.

FACTORS IMPACTING DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

