

Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department

Aspinwall, Pennsylvania

Allegheny County Station 102



Standard Operating Guidelines

BINDER COVER

Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department

Aspinwall, Pennsylvania

Allegheny County Station 102



Standard Operating Guidelines

Effective: March 10, 2020

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1.0

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

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1.1 GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

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1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is the intent of the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department to establish a set of standard operating guidelines to promote safety, prevent injuries to, or fatalities of, its firefighters and provide insight on how to carry out the common operational tasks they may be called upon to perform.

The firefighter frequently encounters many different environments where potentially life-threatening situations occur. It is therefore necessary that these guidelines be followed in order to safely perform the duties of an Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department firefighter and prevent injuries, or at the very least, to reduce the severity of an injury.

While the incident commander is responsible for the safety of the firefighters on the fire ground, the incident commander no way releases the individual firefighter from his or her responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their fellow firefighters.

It would be impossible to establish a comprehensive list of safety guidelines, one that would cover every situation that is likely to occur. When situations arise, which are not covered by these safety guidelines, the best “rule of thumb” for the Aspinwall Fire Department firefighter is to use common sense.

These standard operations guidelines shall coincide with the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department By-laws and should be reviewed yearly before February's monthly business meeting.

1.1.2 CODE OF CONDUCT

- All members will know and understand the Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) as set forth by this department.
- No alcohol will be permitted on fire department property.
- No members will speak to television, radio, or newspaper reporters at the scene of an emergency, fire, or accident. All questions will be handled by the Chief or Officer in Charge (OIC), unless authorized by the OIC.
- The privacy of the citizens we serve will be respected at all times. No comments about any alarm we receive will be discussed outside of the fire department.
- No member shall respond to any call while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- All members are expected to conduct themselves as professionals on all calls and while at the station.
- All firefighters should always respond to an alarm by a safe and direct means to the fire station.
- While responding in any of Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department vehicles seat belts should be worn until the equipment comes to a complete stop.

1.1.3 ORGANIZATION

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1.1.3.1 MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department to serve and protect the life and property of the citizens of the Borough of Aspinwall, the surrounding communities, and those who visit our town. Our goal is to provide the highest level of emergency services through the extension of Public Education, Fire Prevention, Fire Suppression and Technical Rescue.

1.1.3.2 GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

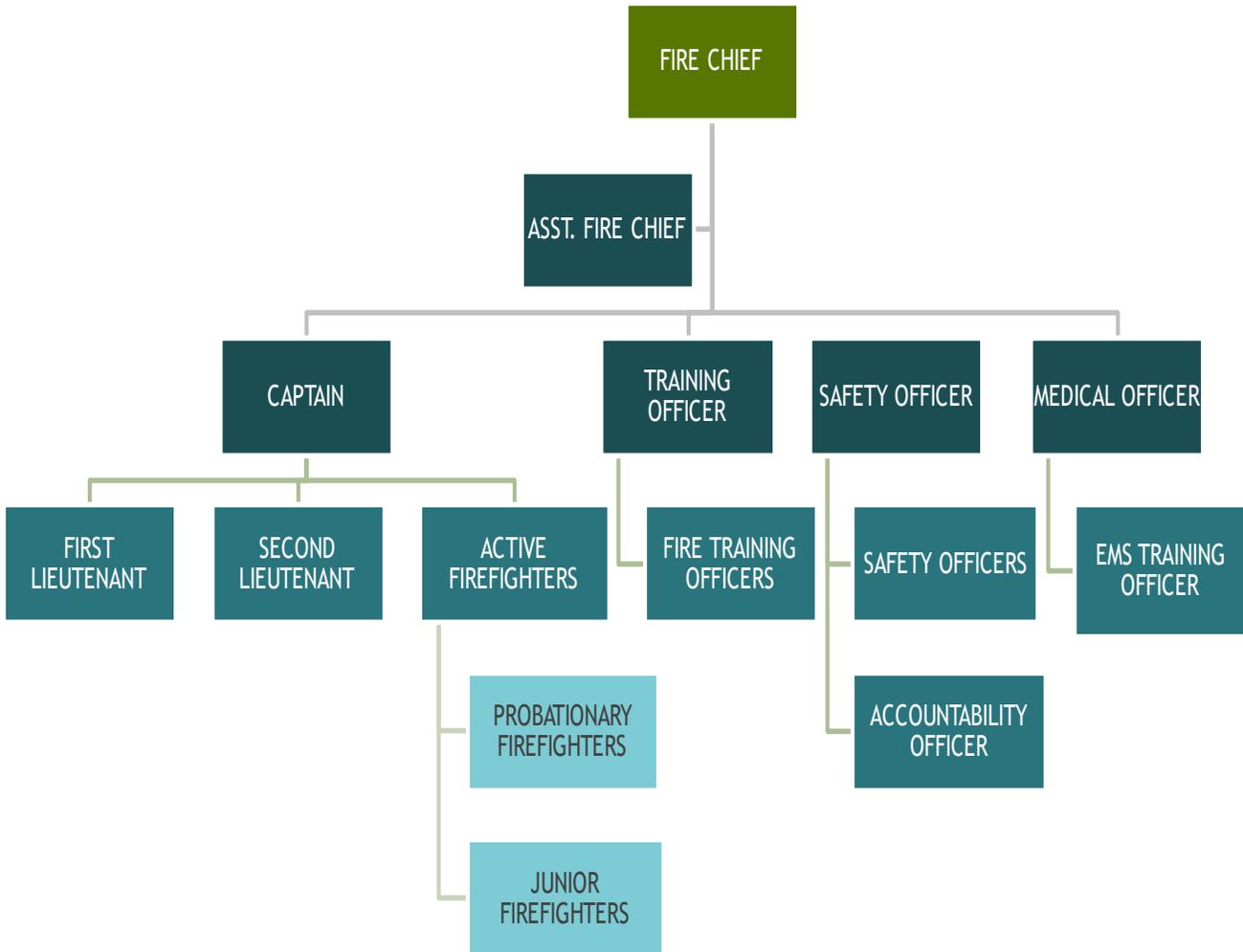
The following documents shall be known as the governing documents of the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department:

- By-Laws of the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department
- Chief's Rules of the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department
- Standard Operating Guidelines of the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department

1.1.3.3 ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

Operational Organization Chart

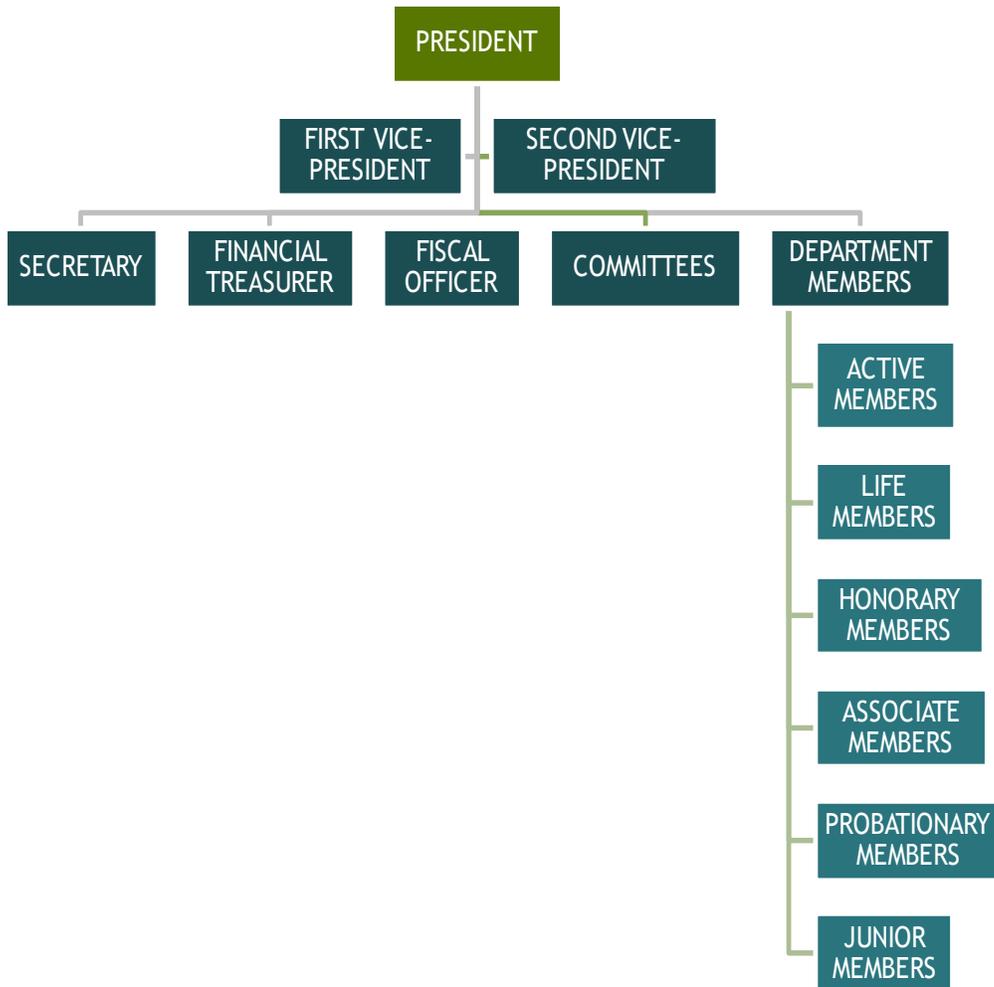
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1.1.3.3 ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

Business Organization Chart

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1.1.4 ROLES, QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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1.1.4.1 PROBATIONARY FIREFIGHTER

PURPOSE:

To identify the qualifications and expectations for Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department Probationary firefighter to see that they are trained to a proficient level in accordance with recognized standards.

SCOPE:

Any Aspinwall Fire Fighter Probationary Firefighter.

GUIDELINE:

QUALIFICATIONS:

Within one (1) year of being accepted into the fire department as a probationary firefighter, all probationary firefighters are expected to attend and successfully complete or be certified in the following:

- 1a. Four modules of Essentials of Firefighting, or a Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal, if they wish to become an active interior structural firefighter or,
- 1b. The first three, of four, modules of Essentials of Firefighting, or a Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal, if they wish to become an active non-interior firefighter.
2. Hazardous Materials, Awareness and Operations Levels.
3. American Heart Association, or equal, Heartsaver CPR AED.
4. Pass an S.C.B.A. competency test and be facepiece fit tested.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

It shall be the responsibility of all probationary fighters to attend a minimum of 12 hours of in-house training quarterly, during their probationary period, in order to familiarize themselves with the fire department operations. The fire department currently trains an average of twice a month, for three (3) hours, totaling approximately six (6) hours monthly. If for any reason a probationary firefighter cannot attend these training sessions, they must make alternate arrangements with a line officer for training times and options.

Probationary firefighters should attend a minimum of one (1) regular monthly meeting and twenty-five (25%) percent of scheduled work details and activities each quarter during their probationary period.

Probationary firefighters should turn out for a minimum of ten (10%) percent of the total fire incidents each quarter during their probationary period.

1.1.4.1 PROBATIONARY FIREFIGHTER

GUIDELINE: (Continued)

RESPONSIBILITIES: (Continued)

Any probationary firefighter who does not meet these minimum quarterly training and attendance requirements will, on the first instance, be asked to appear before the fire department Captain, Assistant Fire Chief and/or Fire Chief to clarify the department's expectations and create a plan to improve the probationary firefighter's performance. Failure to respond to the request for this meeting within 72 hours, or to attend this meeting once scheduled, will be grounds for dismissal from the department.

Any probationary firefighter who does not meet the minimum quarterly training and attendance requirements twice, will be grounds for dismissal from the department.

Probationary firefighters may be granted up to a twelve (12) month extension to their probation, to complete their training qualifications, at the discretion of the fire department.

Probationary firefighters with prior fire service experience, with documented training records confirming completion and certification for the required training qualifications, or equal approved by the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, and who have successfully met their minimum quarterly training and attendance requirements for two (2) consecutive quarters, may at the discretion of the fire department, have their probationary period reduced to no less than six (6) months.

Probationary firefighters are strongly encouraged to become ProBoard, or equal, Firefighter I certified.

Probationary firefighters should respond to the fire station for all fire incidents.

Probationary firefighters are discouraged from responding directly to the emergency scene in their privately owned vehicle (POV) unless all the fire department apparatus have responded, or there is no driver available.

Probationary firefighters are not authorized to drive or operate any fire department vehicle.

Probationary firefighters should refrain from riding the "first due" fire apparatus to an emergency scene unless ordered to do so by the officer of that apparatus or officer in charge.

Probationary firefighters should refrain from performing structural firefighting, hazardous materials or rescue tasks unless under direct observation of a fire officer or a senior firefighter designated by the officer in charge.

Any probationary firefighter that responds to an emergency incident will be tasked to a support role, by the officer in charge (OIC), that is suitable to their abilities and level of training.

1.1.4.2 ACTIVE INTERIOR STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTER

PURPOSE:

To ensure that all Aspinwall Fire Department Active Interior Structural Fire Fighters are trained to a proficient level in accordance with recognized standards.

SCOPE:

Any Aspinwall Fire Fighter who wishes to engage in interior structural firefighting activities.

GUIDELINE:

INITIAL QUALIFICATIONS:

All active interior structural firefighters are to have successfully completed all four modules of Essentials of Firefighting, or a Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal.

All active interior structural firefighters are to have successfully completed Hazardous Materials, Awareness and Operations Level certifications.

All active interior structural firefighters are to have successfully completed and been certified to the American Heart Association, or equal, Heartsaver CPR AED.

All active interior structural firefighters must pass an S.C.B.A. competency test and be facepiece fit tested.

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

All active interior structural firefighters are to recertify annually in Hazardous Materials, Operations Level, training, or a Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal.

All active interior structural firefighters are to maintain a current Heartsaver CPR AED certification as provided by the American Heart Association, or equal.

It shall be the responsibility of all active interior structural fire fighters to attend a minimum of 24 hours of in-house training annually. The fire department currently trains an average of twice a month, for three (3) hours, totaling approximately six (6) hours monthly. If for any reason a firefighter cannot attend these training sessions, they must make arrangements with a line officer for other training times and options.

In addition to the in-house training it is recommended that all interior fire fighters annually attend at least 16 hours of additional fire fighter training provided by an approved fire academy or by a certified state instructor.

All interior fire fighters must pass an annual S.C.B.A. competency test.

Active Interior structural firefighters are strongly encouraged to become ProBoard, or equal, Firefighter I certified.

1.1.4.2 ACTIVE INTERIOR STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTER

GUIDELINE: (Continued)

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

Any fire fighter who do not meet these minimum standards may have their membership status reduced to an active non-interior support role or have their turnout gear pulled and be placed in an inactive status.

A firefighter who has been moved to active non-interior or an inactive status wishing to regain their status as an active interior firefighter, he or she must, within two (2) months after being reduced in status:

1. Attend a minimum of 12 hours of training (in house),
2. Pass a S.C.B.A competency test,
3. Make a request, in writing, to the fire chief of the department for reinstatement back to active interior structural firefighter.

1.1.4.3 ACTIVE NON-INTERIOR FIREFIGHTER

PURPOSE:

To ensure that all Aspinwall Fire Department Active Non-Interior Firefighters are trained to a proficient manner in accordance with recognized standards.

SCOPE:

Any Aspinwall Fire Fighter who wishes to engage in exterior/support firefighting activities.

GUIDELINE:

INITIAL QUALIFICATIONS:

All active non-interior firefighters are to have successfully completed the first three, of four, modules of Essentials of Firefighting, or a Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal.

All active interior structural firefighters are to have successfully completed Hazardous Materials, Awareness and Operations Level certifications.

All active interior structural firefighters are to have successfully completed and been certified to the American Heart Association, or equal, Heartsaver CPR AED.

All active interior structural firefighters must pass an S.C.B.A. competency test and be facepiece fit tested.

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

All active non-interior firefighters are to recertify annually in Hazardous Materials, Operations Level, training, or a Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal.

All active non-interior firefighters are to maintain a current Heartsaver CPR AED certification as provided by the American Heart Association, or equal.

It shall be the responsibility of all active non-interior firefighters to attend a minimum of 12 hours of in-house training annually. The fire department currently trains an average of twice a month, for three (3) hours, totaling approximately six (6) hours monthly. If for any reason a fire fighter cannot attend these training sessions, they must make arrangements with a line officer for other training times and options.

In addition to the in-house training it is recommended that all interior fire fighters annually attend at least 8 hours of additional fire fighter training provided by an approved fire academy or by a certified state instructor.

All exterior support fire fighters must pass an S.C.B.A. competency test annually.

1.1.4.3 ACTIVE NON-INTERIOR FIREFIGHTER

GUIDELINE: (Continued)

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

Any fire fighter who do not meet these minimum standards may have their membership status reduced to an administrative support role, or risk having their turnout gear pulled and being placed in an inactive status.

A firefighter who has been moved to an administrative support role or placed in an inactive status, and they wish to be placed back on the roles as an active non-interior firefighter, they must, within two (2) months after being reduced in status:

1. Attend a minimum of 6 hours of training (in house),
2. Pass an S.C.B.A competency test,
3. Make a request, in writing, to the fire chief of the department for reinstatement back to active non-interior firefighter.

1.1.4.4 RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM FIREFIGHTER

PURPOSE:

To ensure that any Aspinwall Fire Fighter that wishes to engage in Rapid Intervention Team (R.I.T.) responses are trained to a proficient manner in accordance with recognized standards.

SCOPE:

Any Aspinwall Fire Fighter who wishes to engage in Section III.T. firefighting activities.

GUIDELINE:

INITIAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Firefighters wishing to be considered as a Rapid Intervention Team firefighter must first meet all of the requirements of an active interior structural fire fighter.

A firefighter wishing to be considered as a Rapid Intervention Team firefighter they must successfully complete the Rapid Intervention Crew Exercises, or Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal.

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

Rapid Intervention Team firefighters must comply with the Continuing Education requirements for active interior structural firefighters.

Rapid Intervention Team firefighters must also attend at minimum two (2) of the in-house Rapid Intervention Team training evolutions annually. These evolutions will be held once a quarter.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

Any fire fighter who does not meet these minimum standards will not be considered a Rapid Intervention Team firefighter at any incident the fire department may be dispatched to provide a Rapid Intervention Team.

A firefighter who has been removed from the Rapid Intervention Team wishing to regain their status as a rapid intervention team firefighter, he or she must, within six (6) months after being reduced in status:

1. Attend a minimum of two (2) in house R.I.T. training evolutions,
2. Make a request, in writing, to the fire chief of the department for reinstatement back to rapid intervention team firefighter.

Firefighters who are not qualified as a Rapid Intervention Team firefighter should not ride the first due apparatus to R.I.T. responses unless ordered to do so by the officer of that apparatus or officer in charge.

Any firefighter that responds to a Rapid Intervention Team incident who is not R.I.T. deployable, they will be placed into a R.I.T. support role suitable to their abilities and level of training.

1.1.4.5 MOTOR VEHICLE RESCUE TECHNICIAN

PURPOSE:

To ensure that any Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department firefighter that wishes to engage in motor vehicle rescue responses are trained to a proficient manner in accordance with recognized standards.

SCOPE:

Any firefighter who wishes to engage in motor vehicle rescue.

GUIDELINE:

INITIAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Firefighters wishing to be considered as a motor vehicle rescue technician must first meet all of the requirements of an active interior or active non-interior fire fighter.

A firefighter wishing to be considered as a Motor Vehicle Rescue Technician must successfully complete the following:

1. Basic Vehicle Rescue course, or Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal.
2. Highway Incident Safety course, or Pennsylvania State Fire Academy approved equal.
3. Be a Pennsylvania Department of Health certified Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or Paramedic.

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

Motor Vehicle Rescue Technicians must comply with the Continuing Education requirements for active interior structural firefighters.

Motor Vehicle Rescue Technicians must take appropriate CEU's to maintain their PA Department of Health certifications.

Motor Vehicle Rescue Technicians must also attend at minimum two (2) of the in-house Vehicle Rescue training evolutions annually. These evolutions will be held once a quarter.

1.1.4.5 MOTOR VEHICLE RESCUE TECHNICIAN

GUIDELINE: (Continued)

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

Any firefighter who does not meet these minimum standards will not be considered a Motor Vehicle Rescue Technician at any motor vehicle incident the fire department may be dispatched to.

A firefighter who has been removed from the Motor Vehicle Rescue Team wishing to regain their status as a technician, he or she must, within six (6) months after being reduced in status:

1. Attend a minimum of two (2) in house vehicle rescue training evolutions,
2. Make a request, in writing, to the fire chief of the department for reinstatement back to motor vehicle rescue technician.

Firefighters who are not qualified as Motor Vehicle Rescue Technicians should not ride the rescue apparatus to motor vehicle accidents unless ordered to do so by the officer of that apparatus or officer in charge.

Any firefighter that responds to a motor vehicle rescue incident who is not a rescue technician, will be placed into a support role suitable to their abilities and level of training.

1.1.4.6 APPARATUS OPERATOR

PURPOSE:

To ensure that any Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department firefighter that wishes to drive and operate the fire department emergency apparatus are trained to a proficient level in accordance with recognized laws and standards.

SCOPE:

Any firefighter who wishes to drive and operate department emergency apparatus.

GUIDELINE:

Only Active and Active Non-Interior firefighters are eligible to be Apparatus Operators.

Only qualified and approved firefighters will be permitted to operate any fire department apparatus.

The Apparatus Operator is responsible for ensuring the safety of fire department personnel and the apparatus at all times.

INITIAL QUALIFICATIONS:

All qualified apparatus operators will be, at minimum, 21 years of age.

All qualified apparatus operators must maintain a valid Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Driver's License.

All qualified apparatus operators must have completed at minimum:

1. Emergency Vehicle Driver's Training (EVDT), or PA State Fire Academy equal.

All qualified apparatus operators must be approved by the Fire Chief.

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

Qualified apparatus operators must complete the following every two years:

1. Emergency Vehicle Driver's Training (EVDT), or PA State Fire Academy equal.

1.1.5 INCIDENT REPORTING

PURPOSE:

The Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department will endeavor to conduct accurate record keeping of department activities and regularly submit documentation of fire department incidents in NIFRS format to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to comply with NFPA 1500 and 1710/1720, in a complete and timely manner, using the tools and software available.

SCOPE:

This guideline applies to all members of the fire department, but especially the fire officers who hold the responsibility to keep good records.

GUIDELINE:

The fire department will document all fire incidents utilizing the Emergency Reporting Software, a cloud-based software package as approved by the Pennsylvania Fire Commissioner's Office, to create current NIFRS complainant incident reporting and records management.

The report for each fire incident will be completed no later than seventy-two (72) hours after the incident, by the officer in charge of the incident, so that information relevant to the incident is not lost or forgotten. It is preferable that the fire incident report be completed immediately after the apparatus are returned to service at the station.

All incident reports should be clear, concise and correct.

1.1.6 SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY:

The purpose is to provide guidance to fire department members to clarify the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate use of social media by fire department personnel and to provide guidance on the management, administration and oversight.

SCOPE:

All members of the fire department.

GUIDELINE:

DEPARTMENT STRATEGY

Each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the department's presence on the website.

Social media page(s) should link to or reference the fire department's official website

Social media page(s) should be designed for the target audience(s) such as the community, civic leadership, membership or potential members.

Social media pages should clearly indicate that they are maintained by the fire department and shall be administered by the fire chief, president or their designee.

Social media content shall adhere to all applicable laws, regulations and policies of the department.

DEPARTMENT-SANCTIONED USE

The following guidelines apply to department personnel acting as a spokesperson for the department via social media outlets.

Members shall conduct themselves at all time as representatives of the department and shall adhere to all department standards of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.

Shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, relating to department training, responses, activities or work assignments without permission of the fire chief.

Shall never post photos of patients or victims of a fire incident.

Shall not conduct political activities or private business.

Shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.

1.1.6 SOCIAL MEDIA

GUIDELINE: (Continued)

POTENTIAL USES

Social media is a valuable tool when providing information about:

1. Road closures
2. Special Events
3. Weather Emergencies
4. Updates on fire department programs and activities
5. Major ongoing events in the jurisdiction that affects the entire community
6. Recruiting

PERSONAL USE, PRECAUTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS:

Fire department personnel should adhere to the following when using social media:

Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair or impede the performance of their duties, impair discipline and harmony among the membership, or negatively affect the public perception of the department. No member, while speaking as a private citizen on a matter of public concern, shall speak in such a way as to cause actual harm or disruption to the mission and functions of the department.

Members may speak on a matter of public concern as a spokesperson for the department only with permission through the chain of command.

Speech that violates this policy may form the basis for disciplinary action if deemed detrimental to the department.

Members shall assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their position within the department and of the department.

Shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, relating to department training, responses, activities or work assignments without permission of the fire chief.

Members shall use good judgement, moral conduct and adhere to the professional standards and code of conduct of the fire department if they elect to do the following on personal social media or outlets:

1. Identify themselves as a member of the department and/or display department logos, uniforms, or similar identifying items on personal web pages.
2. Post personal photographs or provide similar means of personal recognition that may cause them to be identified as a member of the department.
3. Understand that when using social media, anything they say, or post becomes a permanent part of the World Wide Web.

1.1.6 SOCIAL MEDIA

GUIDELINE: (Continued)

Department personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the department at any time without prior notice.

VIOLATIONS:

Any member becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or webpage in violation of the provision of these guidelines shall notify the president or fire chief immediately for follow-up action.

Violation of this Social Media guideline may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, termination in accordance with the fire department's disciplinary action policy in the By-Laws.

1.3 ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

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1.3.1 STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE (SOG) DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE:

To provide a guideline for the development and assessment of new and existing fire department Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG.s)

SCOPE:

All fire department members.

GUIDELINE:

All fire department personnel are encouraged to create/draft Standard Operating Guidelines for the department when they believe that a guide would be of assistance to the operations of the department.

Fire department personnel are encouraged to review existing Standard Operating Guidelines to ensure these procedures meet the current needs of the department.

INSTRUCTIONS / PROCEDURES:

The following steps should be followed in order for a new Standard Operating Guideline to be accepted and placed into use.

1. Standard Operating Guideline is drafted.
2. A Committee is formed of the department fire officers, president, vice-presidents and secretary to review the draft Standard Operating Guideline and make revisions as necessary.
3. The department secretary records any revisions into the final Standard Operating Guideline, assigns an Article, Title, Number, Replacement note, and Effective Date, and inserts it into the master Standard Operating Guideline document.
4. The new Standard Operating Guideline is distributed to all members and posted at the fire station.

In some cases, new or revised Standard Operating Guidelines may require departmental approval. When this is deemed necessary, the process will be handled as the department does for a change or addition to the By-Laws.

The effective date in most cases will be ten (10) days after final approval to allow for the membership to review the new guideline.

Some situations may require the Standard Operating Guideline to be placed into service immediately when the Fire Chief deems necessary.

1.3.2 INCIDENT PRE-PLANNING

PURPOSE:

Pre-incident planning can provide valuable information about an occupancy which can improve the ability of firefighters to respond effectively to a fire or other emergency at that location.

SCOPE:

All fire department members and mutual aid agencies.

GUIDELINE:

Each quarter, company officers will suggest a tactically significant occupancy to pre-plan for emergency incidents in the first due area to the Fire Chief.

When the fire chief has selected an appropriate site for a pre-plan from those suggested, they should meet with the owner/occupant at the selected site and get authorization to conduct the pre-plan and schedule a date to return and review the premises.

It is important to note that this is not a fire inspection, however if deficiencies are recorded, they should be shared with the owner / occupant as a sign of good will.

The fire chief is expected to make every pre-plan site visit a training opportunity so that all firefighters might have the chance to familiarize themselves with the building and site layout.

During the scheduled pre-plan the officers will fill out a Building Pre-Plan sheet. Officers are encouraged to make drawings or record other information which may be useful in developing the final pre-plan document.

After the scheduled pre-plan, the fire officers will meet to discuss their notes and observations and develop those into a final pre-plan document.

The final document will be approved by the fire chief.

The fire chief will see that a copy of the pre-plan is placed in a binder on each apparatus and that it is made available for review by the general membership.

If other agencies are involved in the pre-plan, it is the fire chief's responsibility to meet with representatives from those agencies, discuss the plan and get a "buy in" for it, and distribute copies of the pre-plan to those agencies.

A copy of the department incident pre-plan form is attached to this guideline.