

ROGUE VALLEY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Document:	Code of Ethics
Section & #:	Best Practices #2.03
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Developed / Updated By:	Chief Johnson
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Purpose

The purpose of this model policy is to establish a criterion that encourages members of the Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs Association to promote a culture of ethical integrity and high standards of professionalism within our respective departments.

It is up to the individual department to determine for itself the need for a code of ethics, the scope of the ethical behavior desired, and the format by which ethical behavior is communicated and promoted.

Nothing in this model policy requires a member department to adopt this policy in whole or part. The intent of this model policy is to act as a guide and help facilitate the development of ethical standards if a member department wishes to do so. A department should encourage involvement of all levels of membership in development of ethical standards and not feel compelled to limit the scope to the examples provided.

The broad scope of these recommended Codes of Ethics is intended to mitigate and negate situations that may result in embarrassment and waning of public support for what has historically been a highly respected profession.

Scope

The Fire Service is a noble calling, one which is founded on mutual respect and trust between firefighters and the citizens they serve. To ensure the continuing integrity of the Fire Service, the highest standards of ethical conduct must be maintained at all times.

Ethics comes from the Greek word Ethos, meaning character. Character is not necessarily defined by how a person behaves when conditions are optimal and life is good. It is easy to take the high road when the path is paved and obstacles are few or non-existent. Character is also defined by decisions made under pressure, when no one is looking, when the road contains land mines, and the way is obscured. As members of

the Fire Service, we share a responsibility to project an ethical character of professionalism, integrity, compassion, loyalty and honesty in all that we do, all of the time.

We need to accept this ethics challenge and be truly willing to maintain a culture that is consistent with the expectations outlined in this document. By doing so, we can create a legacy that validates and sustains the distinguished Fire Service institution, and at the same time ensure that we leave the Fire Service in better condition than when we arrived.

Each agency is encouraged to adopt these model statements of ethical behavior for Fire Chiefs and Firefighters as part of their department culture.

It is recommended that these ethical statements be part of any new hire or indoctrination process and then re-affirmed every year during the employee or volunteer's annual evaluation.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR FIRE CHIEFS

I understand that I have the responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of the fire service. Therefore, I pledge the following...

To recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that imposes responsibility to use publicly owned resources effectively and judiciously.

Not use a public position to obtain advantages or favors for friends, family, personal business ventures, or myself.

To use information gained from my position only for the benefit of those I am entrusted to serve.

Conduct my personal affairs in such a manner that I cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of my duties.

Avoid situations whereby my decisions or influence may have an impact on personal financial interests.

Seek no favor and accept no form of personal reward for influence or official action.

Engage in no outside employment or professional activities that may impair or appear to impair my primary responsibilities as a fire official.

Comply with local laws and campaign rules when supporting political candidates and engaging in political activities.

Handle all personnel matters on the basis of merit.

Carry out policies established by elected officials and policy makers to the best of my ability.

Refrain from financial investments or business that conflicts with, or is enhanced by my official position.

Refrain from endorsing commercial products through quotations, use of photographs, testimonials, for personal gain.

Develop job descriptions and guidelines at the local level to produce behaviors in accordance with the code of ethics.

Conduct training at the local level to inform and educate local personnel about ethical conduct and policies and procedures.

Have systems in place at the local level to resolve ethical issues.

Orient new employees to the organization's ethics program during new employee orientation.

Review the ethics management program in management training experiences.

Deliver accurate and timely information to the public and to elected policy makers to use when deciding critical issues.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS

I understand that I have the responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of the fire service. Therefore, I pledge the following...

Always conduct myself, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively on me, my department and the fire service in general.

Accept responsibility for my actions and for the consequences of my actions.

Support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.

Avoid situations that would adversely affect the credibility or public perception of the fire service profession.

Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.

Conduct my personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the performance of my duties, or bring discredit to my organization.

Be respectful and conscious of each member's safety and welfare.

Recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment and that these are protected from misuse and theft.

Exercise professionalism, competence, respect and loyalty in the performance of my duties and use information, confidential or otherwise, gained by virtue of my position, only to benefit those I am entrusted to serve.

Avoid financial investments, outside employment, outside business interests or activities that conflict with or are enhanced by my official position or have the potential to create the perception of impropriety.

Never propose or accept personal rewards, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honors or gifts that may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.

Never engage in activities involving alcohol or other substance use or abuse that can impair my mental state or the performance of my duties and compromise safety.

Never discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition or handicap.

Never harass, intimidate or threaten fellow members of the service or the public and stop or report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors.

Responsibly use social networking, electronic communications, or other media technology opportunities in a manner that does not discredit, dishonor or embarrass my organization, the fire service and the public. I also understand that failure to resolve or report inappropriate use of this media equates to condoning this behavior.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____