

# San Mateo County Fire Department Volunteer Firefighter Program Handbook



**San Mateo County Fire Department**

Updated: October 2020

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	5
Purpose .....	5
San Mateo County Fire Department .....	5
Description.....	5
Mission .....	6
Values.....	6
SMCFD Staffing .....	6
Organization & Authority .....	6
San Mateo County Fire Department Volunteer Firefighter Position Descriptions .....	7
Active Duty Member Minimum Requirements.....	7
Candidate Qualifications & Admission Process .....	8
Acceptance Process.....	8
Medical Standards .....	8
Medical Examinations .....	8
Respiratory Protection Program .....	8
Training Requirements.....	9
Basic Volunteer Firefighter Operations Training ("Fire Academy").....	9
Continuing Training.....	11
SMCFD Issued Personal Equipment.....	11
Weekly Training.....	12
Certifications/Licenses .....	12
Incidents Responses .....	12
Ride-Along Program.....	13
Standards of Conduct.....	13
Harassment Policy.....	13
Rules of Conduct.....	13
Public Representation .....	15
Performance Reviews.....	16
Competency Testing .....	16
Training.....	16
In-Service Training Plan.....	16
Computer Based Training.....	16

Special Training Opportunities .....	17
Accident/Injury Reporting .....	17
Job Related Personal Injury/Illness Reporting .....	17
Returning to active duty after an injury .....	18
Vehicle Accident/Incident Reporting Procedures .....	18
Department Equipment .....	18
Care and Maintenance.....	18
Apparatus Maintenance .....	20
Business Practices .....	20
Complaint and Disciplinary Procedures - Personnel.....	20
Complaint Procedures - Operational Concerns .....	20
Complaint Procedures – Informal .....	21
Complaint Procedures – Formal.....	21
SMCFD Operations Policy and Volunteer Disciplinary Process .....	21
Informal Discipline: Corrective Interview .....	21
Formal Discipline; Letter of Warning .....	22
“Serious” or Recurring Offenses.....	22
Purging of Files .....	24
Confidentiality of Files.....	24
SMCFD Provided Benefits .....	24
Worker’s Compensation Benefits .....	24
Uniforms / Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) .....	24
End of Service .....	25
Return of Equipment .....	26



## **Introduction**

### **Purpose**

To establish and maintain the necessary uniformity of action within the San Mateo County Fire Department, this handbook has been developed. It will be maintained and updated as needed. All proposed changes or updates will be processed as outlined in section 10. It will be the responsibility of the Fire Chief of the San Mateo County Fire Department (SMCFD) to prepare and issue any approved changes.

The intention of this Handbook is to provide a set of procedures, and operating guidelines for Volunteer Firefighters. It includes state and federal mandated requirements as well as additional requirements recommended by the attendees of the Company Officers' meetings. Mandated requirements will be clearly identified wherever mentioned and are also collected in an Appendix for ease of reference.

## **San Mateo County Fire Department**

### **Description**

The San Mateo County Fire Department grew out of the economic expansion, logging and population growth during the late 1800's. In 1887 the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors appointed a Fire Commission to protect the natural resources found throughout the County. This was followed by the establishment of an organized volunteer fire company in 1890. On June 28, 1921, Bert Werder was appointed as the first County Fire Warden for the newly created County Forestry Service. A series of large, devastating fires in the Butano-Pescadero creek drainage plagued San Mateo County in the fall of 1921.

The County Forestry Department would later be known as the County Fire Department and expanded rapidly. Thanks to several large fires and Fire Warden Werder's political influence, by 1936 several new fire stations were established. They included fire stations at La Honda Summit (Skylonda), Saratoga Gap (Saratoga Summit), Pescadero, Montara, Rockaway Beach, and Gazos (Sandy Point). The Redwood City station was moved from Bert Werder's house on Brewster Street to the old Juvenile Hall in Redwood City in 1936.

In 1962, the County began contracting with the California Division of Forestry. The San Mateo County Fire Department was placed under the authority of the Santa Cruz Ranger Unit, until 1970 when the San Mateo – Santa Cruz Unit was established. During this period the department evolved from primarily a "wildland" organization (California Department of Forestry) to the 3rd largest all-risk fire department in the United States, known today as CAL FIRE.

Today, the San Mateo County Fire Department (SMCFD) is a "full service all risk" agency, providing fire protection, medical response, hazardous materials response, fire safety inspections, fire marshal duties, community education, emergency preparedness and planning for most unincorporated areas (those not covered by a municipal fire department or local fire district) of San Mateo County. This includes the communities of San Mateo Highlands (CSA #1), Emerald Lake Hills, Palomar Park, Kings Mountain, Skylonda, La Honda, San Gregorio, Pescadero, Loma Mar, Middleton Tract, South San Mateo County Coast, and the

Highway 280 corridor between Farm Hill Boulevard and Black Mountain Road. Many of the areas are remote with limited access. Most of unincorporated San Mateo County is highly vulnerable to wildfires. In 2018 San Mateo Highlands (CSA #1) Fire Station 17 achieved an ISO Class 1 rating, one of only two fire departments in the county to achieve this classification.

SMCFD also supports the independent La Honda Fire Brigade and Kings Mountain Fire Department. SMCFD has one volunteer fire company, located in the community of Loma Mar.

### **Mission**

The mission of the San Mateo County Fire Department is to serve and safeguard life, property, and natural resources through effective and professional prevention and response.

### **Values**

- **Service:** We choose to always selflessly serve the community with integrity while also maintaining professionalism.
- **Trust:** Our commitment to our customers and each other is based on honesty and trust.
- **Cooperation:** We act with input and consideration for others, building strong meaningful relationships with the community, cooperators and each other.
- **Safety:** We commit to the health, welfare and safety of all those who serve others.
- **Teamwork:** At our foundation, we are a team. We work together because we value each other, the community and the organization we work for.

### **SMCFD Staffing**

Fire Station 17 (Highlands), Fire Station 18 (Cordilleras), Fire Station 58 (Skylonda) and Fire Station 59 (Pescadero) are all staffed 24/7 with a minimum of one Fire Captain (or equivalent) and two Fire Apparatus Engineers, including at least one qualified as a paramedic to provide advance life support (ALS) service. Shift staffing is complimented by a Battalion Chief. Some shifts utilize a Firefighter II in place of a Fire Apparatus Engineer. Additionally, Fire Station 17 staffs a ladder truck with four crew members.

### **Organization & Authority**

Through contractual agreement, CAL FIRE provides to the SMCFD the following services:

- Supervision and management of operations of all paid and volunteer firefighters
- Development and delivery of training programs for paid and volunteer personnel
- Fire suppression and emergency medical services through paid and volunteer companies
- Operations management at emergency incidents
- Fire safety and public education programs
- Assistance to County emergency medical service agencies to provide CPR and first aid training

- Automotive fleet management including preventive maintenance and repairs
- Provision of emergency dispatch services
- Planning and coordination of facilities maintenance

## **San Mateo County Fire Department Volunteer Firefighter Position Descriptions**

The County Fire Volunteers are comprised of individuals who fill the following operational positions:

- Volunteer Captain: In coordination with the CAL FIRE IC, performs duties of a company officer. Directs suppression/rescue activities assigned to Volunteer Companies while on scene. Acts as qualified apparatus operator. Maintains supervisory responsibilities of subordinate members assigned to him/her.
- Volunteer Apparatus Operator /Engineer: Drives and operates all pumping, aerial, and utility apparatus in the SMCFD inventory, as authorized. Has enough ability to pump basic attack and supply evolutions. Holds all necessary licenses to drive SMCFD apparatus. Is responsible for assuring operability and safety of a vehicle before operating. Assures that all occupants of their vehicle are seated and wearing a seat belt before moving said vehicle.
- Volunteer Firefighter: Performs basic firefighting, rescue, hazmat, and emergency medical service under direction from a company officer. Fully trained in SCBA use and structural and wildland firefighting operations. Direct supervision in accomplishing tasks is not required.
- for administrative purpose only. For operational functions, Roger will perform the duties of CV Captain.

## **Active Duty Member Minimum Requirements**

The following are qualifications for prospective and active duty members of the SMCFD Volunteers:

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Must be a high school graduate or have a G.E.D equivalency.
- Be of good moral character and maintain good physical condition.
- Have a legal right to live and work in the United States.
- Pass an initial Physical Ability Test and pass recurring "Fitness for Duty" medical examinations.
- Must not have a felony criminal record. (Will face dismissal upon conviction of a felony criminal action. May face possible dismissal for misdemeanor criminal conviction depending upon the nature of the offense as determined by the Fire Chief.
- Must reside within the San Mateo County Fire Department Loma Mar response area.
- Must possess a valid Class C California Driver License, in good standing.

- Have uninterrupted access to reliable transportation for responding to emergency incidents.
- Must maintain valid vehicle registration and at least minimum personal vehicle insurance coverage necessary to operate said vehicle on public roads.
- Must agree to abide by all policies, rules and regulations set forth by Policies and Procedures of the SMCFD.

## **Candidate Qualifications & Admission Process**

Individuals interested in joining the SMCFD Volunteers must complete a written application which may be obtained at the online or at the administrative office. Completed applications will be held on file until the recruitment process is initiated for an upcoming training academy class. At that time, all persons with applications on file shall be notified of the upcoming recruitment effort and the timeline for hiring.

### **Acceptance Process**

After completion of the application, medical review, and criminal background investigation all successful applicants will be contacted by telephone, electronic correspondence, or any other suitable means, and invited to attend the upcoming training academy.

## **Medical Standards**

### **Medical Examinations**

Firefighting, by its very nature, is a strenuous, demanding and dangerous task. The purpose of each medical examination (both pre-employment and during employment) is to detect pre-existing or evolving medical conditions within a SMCFD Volunteer member that may be exacerbated by training and/or activities within the scope of firefighting duties.

### **Respiratory Protection Program**

To comply with Cal-OSHA requirements regarding the use of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and to improve safety for all personnel, the SMCFD has implemented a Respiratory Protection Program (RPP). The RPP process ensures all active duty SMCFD Volunteer members are medically qualified to use an SCBA and to determine the proper size mask for everyone, (Fit Test).

1. An RPP Medical Questionnaire (EMQ) will be sent out to each SMCFD Volunteer member annually. The EMQ must be filled out completely and any responses requiring clarification should be explained as requested by the SMCFD's designated physician.
2. Each SMCFD Volunteer member is required to complete a health questionnaire annually. The reviewing physician will determine from the medical questionnaire if a further physical examination



is required. Some personnel may also have to complete a treadmill test as determined by the examining physician. If a physical exam and/or treadmill test is required, SMCFD administrative staff will decide for the test. The cost of any required tests will be borne by the SMCFD.

***\*\*Physical examinations will be required at least once every three years for volunteers under the age of thirty and once every two years for volunteers age thirty and over.***

3. During the initial training academy, trainees will be given their initial Fit Test which will be valid for twelve (12) months.
4. After initial Fit Testing volunteers are required to undergo annual Fit Testing, in accordance with CALFIRE employee policy.
5. Present SMCFD policy mirrors CALFIRE policy prohibiting beards or any facial hair which may interfere with SCBA mask seal.

The cost of all medical examinations required by the SMCFD to initiate or maintain membership in the SMCFD Volunteer program, or as deemed necessary due to participation in the SMCFD, shall be borne by the SMCFD.

## **Training Requirements**

Training for SMCFD members is provided by the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief CAL FIRE Training Officer, CAL FIRE career firefighters, outside training vendors, and SMCFD Volunteer company officers.

### **Basic Volunteer Firefighter Operations Training ("Fire Academy")**

The initial training program consists of a formal training academy comprising approximately 280 hours of classroom and field training. Subjects covered in the academy include:

- Safety and orientation
- Public Safety First Aid
- CPR training and certification
- SCBA operation
- Ropes and knots
- Hydrant operation
- Building construction

- Tool safety
- Wildland fire fighting
- Structure fire fighting
- Fire hose manipulation
- Ladders
- Hazardous Materials First Responder – Operational (HAZMAT-FRO)
- Property conservation and overhaul
- Firefighter survival
- Incident Command Systems (ICS 100/200)
- National Incident System (NIMS 700/800)
- S130 Firefighter training /Firefighter Behavior
- S190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior
- Firefighter Safety and Survival
- Confined Space Awareness
- L180 Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service

*\*Candidates already possessing of a valid and current Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certificate issued by San Mateo County may, at the discretion of the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief, omit the EMR portion of the SMCDF Volunteer training academy.*

The duration of the training academy is approximately 4 months with training sessions conducted primarily on Thursday nights in addition to two weekends per month. Candidates are required to attend all academy training sessions. In the event of unavoidable absence(s), make-up training sessions *may* be made available at the discretion of the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief.

Excessive or unexcused absences may result in disqualification from the SMCDF Volunteer training academy.

Two practical skill tests are administered during the training academy and a final written exam. The tests are essentially identical and designed to assess the trainee’s physical and cognitive abilities through practical application of subjects presented in the academy.

These exams are comprised of various skill “stations” that must be completed with speed and accuracy.

These stations include:

- SCBA donning
- Knot tying (while wearing PPE gloves)
- Establishing a hydrant connection with 5” supply hose
- Two-person 24-foot ladder operation
- Tying off tools aloft

- SCBA bottle replacement
- Fire hose cross lay deployment and operation

Each skill station must be performed in consecutive order with no breaks. Applicants are allotted a maximum time for each station, as well as an overall total time standard. Should a candidate fail to complete the task within the allotted time for that station, or fail to perform the task to required standards, then that station will be deemed a fail. A failed station may be re-attempted a maximum of once after the completion of the complete test evolution.

Successful completion of the training academy will be dependent upon the candidate's satisfactory performance on the mid-term and final exams, as well as the validation of the academy trainee's skill set by the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief or CAL FIRE Training Officer.

### **Continuing Training**

The typical annual training calendar revolves around subjects that are necessary to maintain competency in those subjects taught during the initial training academy. In addition, new skills will be taught, and updates to existing skill sets will be presented as changes/updates occur within the profession.

### **SMCFD Issued Personal Equipment**

After completion of the training academy, the SMCFD shall equip each SMCFD Volunteer member with NFPA compliant personal protective equipment (PPE) and all other items necessary for participation as SMCFD Volunteer.

These items include:

1. Structural firefighting helmet
2. Structural firefighting pants + suspenders
3. Structural firefighting coat
4. Nomex hood
5. Structural firefighting gloves
6. Wildland firefighting helmet
7. Wildland web gear + protective shelter
8. Wildland firefighting coat
9. Wildland firefighting gloves
10. Wildland firefighting boots
11. Pager + charger
12. Uniform shirt
13. Tactical Uniform pants

All SMCFD supplied equipment will be maintained/repaired/replaced at the expense of the issuing entity.

### **Weekly Training**

To maintain proficiency in necessary skills SMCFD Volunteer members are required to attend a minimum of 60% of all weekly training sessions per quarter. If a member's attendance falls below 60% for two consecutive quarters, their status as an active duty firefighter will be evaluated.

When a member cannot attend a scheduled weekly training meeting, he/she is required to personally notify their respective Volunteer Company officer at the earliest convenient opportunity. Should a member fail to notify their Volunteer Company officer, the member's absence shall be documented as an "unexcused absence." After a member accrues two consecutive *unexcused* absences within a quarter, they may be placed on suspension at the discretion of the SMCFD Fire Chief or his/her designee. This suspension will continue until the root cause of the absenteeism can be determined, and a plan for improved attendance can be implemented.

### **Certifications/Licenses**

SMCFD Volunteer members are required to maintain numerous certifications and licenses to maintain active status with the SMCFD. Among these are:

- CPR
- EMR or EMT or EMT-P
- CA Driver License
- Annual RPP fit testing
- Defensive Driving

Should a member fail to renew any of the required certifications and/or licenses within the prescribed limits as set forth by governing body issuing the certification/license, then that volunteer member will be immediately suspended from participating in SMCFD emergency response activities. The member shall not respond to any incidents, may not participate in the SMCFD ride-along program, and will not act in any official capacity providing service to the public until the member renews the required license/certification and provides formal documentation to the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief or CAL FIRE Training Officer.

### **Incidents Responses**

Volunteers are required to respond to a minimum of 25% of emergency incidents. Responses are monitored annually, and if a member's response report percentage falls below standard then the individual will be

interviewed to determine the causal factor(s) for their lack of attendance. Extenuating circumstances shall be considered. However, if an individual's below-average general alarm attendance continues for an extended period (as determined by the SMCFD Fire Chief or his/her designee), then the individual may be asked to request a leave of absence or resign from the SMCFD.

### **Ride-Along Program**

SMCFD Volunteer Members have the *privilege* to ride along for shifts of an indeterminate length at any station within the Department. SMCFD Volunteer members are highly encouraged to utilize this opportunity to reinforce skills, acquire actual on-scene experience, and to build team cohesion with the career firefighter staff.

Prior to reporting to a respective station for the ride along, SMCFD Volunteer members will coordinate with the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief or CAL FIRE Training Officer a minimum of 24 hours in advance. The CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief or designated CAL FIRE Training Officer will forward the SMCFD Volunteer member's ride along request to that shift's respective company officer who will then approve/deny the request.

Ride along shifts generally begin at 08:00 with early arrival necessary to check in with the CAL FIRE company officer. Other start times may be approved, but care should be taken to avoid interrupting the normal daily routine of the fire house. Upon check in, the SMCFD volunteer member will still request permission from the CAL FIRE Company Officer to ride along for that day and will only place their bunker gear on the engine/truck/rescue after receiving permission to ride along.

### **Standards of Conduct**

The SMCFD prides itself on cooperation and a team-oriented approach to all facets of its operations both during routine matters and emergency operations. Every SMCFD member must put aside all personal preferences and work toward the same common goal: to be of greatest benefit to the community we serve, to our department, and to our members in the public service community.

### **Harassment Policy**

The SMCFD policy as well as CA State, and Federal law with regards to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), nondiscrimination, and sexual harassment.

### **Rules of Conduct**

The following rules are designed to help promote a positive team attitude and an efficient, effective working environment. Compliance is mandatory, and necessary for continued employment by the SMCFD.

1. No SMCFD Volunteer member shall commit any act which might in any way bring discredit to the San Mateo County Fire Department, CAL FIRE, San Mateo County, or the State of California.
2. No SMCFD Volunteer member shall be present at an incident, nor may any SMCFD Volunteer member depart from an incident unless they have complied with the incident check in/check out policies and procedures as set forth in this manual.
3. No SMCFD Volunteer member shall use any language deemed offensive in the presence of the public at the scene of an incident, at the fire station, or while acting in an official capacity for the SMCFD.
4. No SMCFD Volunteer member shall use/consume/purchase any alcoholic beverage, recreational drug, or controlled substance nor be under the influence of any of the substances, while in uniform or acting on behalf of the SMCFD. This includes while responding to alarms on SMCFD apparatus or in a personal vehicle.
5. No member may be under the influence of a pharmacological agent which may interfere with their ability to drive a vehicle and/or operate machinery while acting on behalf of the SMCFD.
6. Only SMCFD Volunteer members and other persons authorized by the Fire Chief or his/her designee may ride on any SMCFD apparatus.
7. All SMCFD Volunteer member shall always be in physical possession of a valid California State Driver license while acting in an official capacity.
8. All SMCFD Volunteer members shall comply with all applicable State motor vehicle laws and regulations when operating Department vehicles **and personal vehicles** when in service as a member of the SMCFD.\*

\*Emergency Response: SMCFD Volunteers' private vehicles are prohibited by law from having emergency type warning lights and/or sirens. The flashing of vehicle headlights while in route to an incident is also prohibited. The use of four-way flashers is only permitted when parked. *No volunteer firefighter shall exceed the posted speed limit while in route to any call. Personal vehicles will be driven safely, and all California State Vehicle Code laws must be followed.*

9. All members shall always use good judgment and common sense while at incident scenes and while conducting official business.
10. All SMCFD Volunteer members, while acting in an official capacity for the SMCFD, shall do so in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner always.

11. Gambling, alcoholic beverages, recreational drugs, controlled substances, and firearms are not permitted in any fire station or on grounds of same, nor are they permitted in any SMCFD vehicle.
12. No SMCFD shall use CAL FIRE, San Mateo County, or the State of California for personal gain. No member shall use his/her badge, ID card, etc., in any commercial or private enterprise for any personal gain.
13. No SMCFD Volunteer member shall accept any reward, gift, gratuity, tip, fee, or personal compensation from any source for services rendered in the performance of duty, except as authorized by the SMCFD Fire Chief.
14. No SMCFD Volunteer member shall be discourteous, disrespectful, or insubordinate to any member of the public, any member of the SMCFD Volunteers any CAL FIRE employee, any SMCFD employee or any individual from a cooperating agency.
15. No SMCFD Volunteer member shall change, alter, add, remove, or modify any equipment from any station or apparatus without first receiving proper authorization from the SMCFD.
16. Every SMCFD Volunteer member shall always exercise proper precautionary safety measures to avoid injury to themselves and/or other.
17. Every Volunteer member shall comply with all SMCFD policies, rules, and regulations and all County, State and Federal laws. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the SMCFD.

### **Public Representation**

At no time is a member of the SMCFD allowed to speak in any official capacity with members of the media, unless specifically authorized by the Fire Chief.

All media and civilian inquiries regarding an incident must be directed to the IC or respective incident company officer. Inquiries pertaining specifically to the SMCFD shall be directed to the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

The above policy is designed to safeguard the privacy of individual SMCFD Volunteer members, maintain patient confidentiality, and protect the integrity of the citizens served by the SMCFD. This statement does not prohibit a SMCFD Volunteer member from providing *general* information about the SMCFD to their neighbors or other concerned citizens.

Furthermore, SMCFD Volunteer members are always obligated to maintain patient confidentiality. Patient information will only be divulged to relevant outside parties when required by law or for the continuity of medical care, as dictated by HIPPA law.

## **Performance Reviews**

### **Competency Testing**

Each volunteer is tested annually on the knowledge and skills required to demonstrate competency for the cumulative rank which that member holds (Firefighter/Apparatus Operator/Captain.) Each individual rank requires a separate competency test to maintain that respective rank. It is important to note that persons holding higher rank are required to successfully complete the required competency testing for all lower ranks in addition to the competency tests required for rank which they currently hold.

## **Training**

### **In-Service Training Plan**

The SMCFD In-Service Training Plan, in conjunction with the office of the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief, provides training to maintain minimum competency levels for all SMCFD Volunteer members. The target value is 144 hours per year but may be subject to change depending upon subject matter variability and realistic drill times.

The training blocks within a calendar year will follow a general theme. These themes shall be:

- EMS + CPR
- Wildland Fire Control
- Technical Rescue + HAZMAT
- Structure Fire Control
- Other topics as deemed necessary

The designated CALFIRE Training Battalion Chief or CAL FIRE Training Officer shall be responsible for coordinating and conducting the primary training drills with the SMCFD Volunteer companies. The Training Officer has the authority to change the topic of the weekly drill if necessary, as well as introduce new topics or remediate previous topics if deemed in the interest of the SMCFD.

### **Computer Based Training**

All members of the SMCFD are provided with personal accounts to access *TargetSolutions.com*. Target Solutions is an outside vendor used by the SMCFD to provide all firefighters with a portal to access on-line



training tools necessary for SMCDF operations. Web site content includes both mandatory and voluntary on-line training assignments, dissemination of SMCDF policies, SMCDF policy updates, training modules to maintain EMS certifications, SMCDF event calendars, tracking of job-based credentials, and numerous other functions. All SMCDF Volunteer members are required to log on to Target Solutions with sufficient frequency so that they may complete all computer-based training assignments prior to that assignment's due date. Repetitive failure to complete assignments within the prescribed time may be grounds for disciplinary action.

### **Special Training Opportunities**

SMCDF Volunteer members are encouraged to attend training on specialized topics offered within CAL FIRE or by outside agencies. These topics may include auto extrication, low- and high-angle rescue, EMT certification, water rescue...etc.

Full or partial reimbursement for outside training may be provided from a limited number of funds dedicated from within the SMCDF budget. In addition, special training courses for career progression within the SMCDF (Apparatus Driver/Operator, Company Officer, etc.) will be offered periodically and are arranged by the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief.

Any SMCDF Volunteer member wishing to self-fund a training event may enroll and attend without limitation. However, if a SMCDF Volunteer member wishing to receive reimbursement for a training event, then the member must submit a written request to the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief and receive authorization to attend prior to course enrollment.

For courses taken within the CAL FIRE training regime, a TR-7 form must be completed and submitted to the CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief for admission into the requested course.

### **Accident/Injury Reporting**

#### **Job Related Personal Injury/Illness Reporting**

All injuries/illnesses that a SMCDF Volunteer member believes to be job related shall be reported to a SMCDF Company Officer and CAL FIRE company officer as soon as possible.

In addition, the illness/injury shall be followed up with a Report of Injury form within 24 hours of the occurrence whenever possible.

All cases of possible exposure to a potential health threat will be recorded on an exposure report within 24 hours of the exposure or within 24 hours of the knowledge of possible exposure. The SMCDF will arrange medical treatment and file all necessary reports. Prompt reporting is crucial. The on-duty Battalion Chief will coordinate treatment and report processing.

For urgent conditions, the priority shall be to seek appropriate medical care. As soon as practicable, proper reporting shall be initiated. However, in non-urgent situations, any ill or injured SMCFD personnel shall notify their Company Officer and follow SMCFD policy before initiating medical treatment.

If non-emergency medical attention is required, it will be scheduled as necessary by the SMCFD's administrative staff. The Volunteer Firefighter may be sent to a SMCFD sanctioned physician who may be other than the SMCFD Volunteer member's primary care physician.

If a volunteer firefighter wishes to change to a different physician for any reason, he/she shall ask the SMCFD representative or health insurance agency claims representative. The SMCFD representative and the insurance company claims representative shall seek to comply with the injured fire fighter's request whenever practicable.

### **Returning to active duty after an injury**

A physician signed physical/mental fitness report acknowledging that the SMCFD Volunteer member can return to duty may be required prior to returning to active duty following a lost time injury (whether incurred on- or off-duty) if so, required by the Fire Chief.

The designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief shall notify the SMCFD Volunteer member of the need for this report, and the designated CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief will collect this report upon submission and will notify the SMCFD Volunteer member of their official RETURNED TO DUTY status.

### **Vehicle Accident/Incident Reporting Procedures**

When acting as a member of the SMCFD all vehicle accidents/incidents involving the SMCFD volunteer member shall be reported as soon as circumstances allow to the SMCFD on-duty Battalion Chief.

All necessary vehicle accident/incident forms will be completed on line as soon as practicable (not to exceed 24 hours from time of occurrence unless the involved individual is unable due to illness/injury.) The on-duty Battalion Chief will be responsible to investigate the incident and ensure that it is reported to County Risk Management within 48 hours of the initial report. The on-duty Battalion Chief will notify the Fire Chief of circumstances related to the incident.

## **Department Equipment**

### **Care and Maintenance**

To ensure that all SMCFD owned apparatus and equipment is in safe operating condition and ready to respond, a regular equipment inspection program shall be established and maintained by the SMCFD. This

equipment inspection shall be accomplished on a weekly basis (at minimum) in conjunction with the Volunteer weekly drill meetings.

These inspections shall include at minimum all the following:

- SCBA Inspections: Removal of each individual SCBA from the apparatus and inspected for proper bottle pressure ( $\geq 4000$  psi), condition of straps and harness, and a complete functionality check of the PASS device. Completion of the inspection, along with any defects noted, will be recorded in the SCBA log located in the passenger compartment of the apparatus.
- Spare SCBA Bottle Check: All spare bottles located on the apparatus will be inspected for proper pressure ( $\geq 4000$  psi) and replaced as necessary.
- Engine Driven Device Check: Each piece of equipment operated by a gasoline engine (Eg: smoke ejector, chain saw, portable hydraulic pump, etc.) shall be removed from the apparatus, tested for functionality and ease of starting, and filled with the proper fuel and any additional operating fluids.
- Defibrillator Check: The automated external defibrillator ("Lifepak") will be turned ON to check for battery status. Any battery indicating less than a full charge will be replaced. The defibrillator will be tested via the "USER TEST" function. Upon completion of the user test, the paper strip indicating the completion of the test will be printed and placed in a conspicuous and secure location on the unit. In addition, all packaged ECG and defibrillation adhesive electrodes will be checked to ensure that they have not exceeded their expiration date.
- Airway Bag and O<sub>2</sub> Bottle Check: The O<sub>2</sub> bottle in the Airway Management Bag will be inspected for adequate pressure and replaced if necessary. In addition, supplies within the bag will be inspected to ensure an adequate supply and that no contents have exceeded their expiration date.
- Medical Bag Inventory/Inspection: The medical bag shall be inventoried to assure appropriate quantities of all necessary supplies. In addition, all shelf-life limited supplies are to be inspected to assure that that no contents have exceeded their expiration date.
- Spare Fluids: The quantity of 1) spare gasoline, 2) spare fuel/oil mix and 3) spare chain bar oil shall be verified to be adequate and replenished as necessary.
- Portable Fire Extinguishers: the portable fire extinguishers on the apparatus shall be verified to be within their appropriate operating pressures and not past their date of inspection.

- All compartments are to be opened and checked to verify that they contain the appropriate equipment and that said equipment is secured in a proper fashion.
- Overall condition of the apparatus.
- Apparatus Operator ranked personnel shall conduct a *thorough* vehicle pre-trip inspection to include emergency lights, service lights, pump operation, and all necessary fluids (fuel, oil, transmission fluid, power steering fluid, pump lubricating fluid, pump primer fluid...etc.)

Any defects/deficiencies observed during the weekly inspection will be recorded in the vehicle log and verbal notification will be made to a Company Officer.

### **Apparatus Maintenance**

All scheduled maintenance and regulatorily required inspections of the firefighting apparatus shall be conducted by qualified technicians and coordinated through the SMCFD fleet maintenance coordinator. No unauthorized person may make modifications to the apparatus nor may they conduct maintenance, unless under the direct supervision of qualified personnel.

### **Business Practices**

#### **Complaint and Disciplinary Procedures - Personnel**

All complaints shall be handled and addressed in compliance with the California Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights.

#### **Complaint Procedures - Operational Concerns**

General concerns or complaints that pertain to an individual SMCFD volunteer or SMCFD Company must be brought to the attention of the responsible Company Officer (preservation of chain-of-command.)

Unresolved issues that affect the operation of the SMCFD Volunteers shall be brought before the Fire Chief of his/her designee. These concerns might include but are not limited to:

- Training issues
- Equipment/Apparatus maintenance
- Small tools
- Medical supplies
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Any matter prompting a complaint shall first be directed to the appropriate Company Officer. The volunteer Company Officer or their designee must then contact the Fire Chief or his /her designee with the details of the

matter. It is incumbent that the Fire Chief or his /her designee adequately research and address all legitimate concerns. Items for discussion will be brought to the Fire Chief for consideration and appropriate action.

### **Complaint Procedures – Informal**

Volunteer firefighters are encouraged to act promptly through an informal meeting with their Company Officer to attempt to resolve a disputed matter before it becomes the basis for a formal grievance. Should a complaint not be rectified at the informal level then it shall be upgraded to the status of a formal complaint.

### **Complaint Procedures – Formal**

If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the informal level, then within thirty (30) calendar days of the occurrence (or discovery of the occurrence) the event shall be *formally* presented to the respective offending SMCFD member's Company Officer.

The Company Officer shall then present the complaint to the Battalion Chief assuming responsibility for the investigation. This Battalion Chief shall then respond to the appropriate Company Officer within 10 calendar days to resolve the grievance. If the complaint is not resolved or the Battalion Chief fails to respond to the offending SMCFD Volunteer Member's Company Officer within the allotted time, the Company Officer may, on behalf of the complainant, appeal to Fire Chief or his/her designee.

The Fire Chief or his /her designee shall have 10 calendar days to resolve the issue with the Company Officer. The decision of the Fire Chief shall be final.

### **SMCFD Operations Policy and Volunteer Disciplinary Process**

SMCFD Volunteer members, other than probationary Volunteer Firefighters, shall not be removed from membership except for gross incompetence, misconduct, or failure to comply with the rules and regulations set forth by the SMCFD. The removal or suspension of a volunteer firefighter shall only be made after compliance with the following procedures.

(Note: For examples of misconduct, refer to the State Personnel Handbook – Section 1092.2. This document can be accessed from the Training Office website at [www.czutrain.org](http://www.czutrain.org))

### **Informal Discipline: Corrective Interview**

In the event of a minor infraction that requires a simple change in the volunteer's behavior, an informal consultation with the volunteer will be conducted by the supervisor who witnessed the infraction. Written notification will be made to SMCFD Volunteer Member's Company Officer and Battalion Chief in a timely manner.

If this informal consultation is not enough to remedy the situation, then a corrective interview will be held with the volunteer by the Battalion Chief and respective Company Officer.

The purpose of this interview will be to communicate standards of performance and behavior, point out deviations or errors, indicate remedies, and detail a plan for follow-up, including a review date to assess progress, if necessary.

A written summary of the interview will be prepared, and copies will be provided to the SMCFD Volunteer member, the SMCFD Volunteer Member's Company Officer, and the Battalion Chief. If, during the progress review, it is determined that the problem(s) identified during the Corrective Interview have been remedied, a note will be added to the written summary indicating that the issue(s) has/have been resolved. If the problems have not been corrected, then this will be documented, and further disciplinary action may be taken.

The Fire Chief or his/her designee will retain all documentation created during the disciplinary process and place it in the Volunteer's personnel file.

### **Formal Discipline; Letter of Warning**

For moderately serious misconduct, repeated minor infractions and/or failure to meet requirements for behavioral change detailed in a corrective interview, a letter of warning will be issued by the Fire Chief or his/her designee in consultation with the respective SMCFD Volunteer Member's Company Officer. This letter will be retained in a secure confidential file in the SMCFD Training Office.

The Letter of Warning shall contain the following information:

1. Nature of the misconduct, offense, or deficiency.
2. Date(s) and time(s) offense or misconduct occurred.
3. A statement of expected behavior.
4. A statement regarding future action should the misconduct or deficiency continue
5. Set a date and time to evaluate compliance
6. Advice on the process for submitting a letter of rebuttal.

### **"Serious" or Recurring Offenses**

For offenses deemed "Serious" (actions which endanger the life/health of the public or other persons on an emergency scene, actions committed with malintent, insubordination, gross incompetence, gross negligence, actions *willfully* committed in conflict with standards set forth in this document, or any other actions deemed to be "Serious" by CAL FIRE or SMCFD personnel at the level of Company Officer or above) or for multiple/repeated actions of misconduct, a suspension and/or dismissal from the SMCFD may be implemented.

SMCFD policy for serious/recurring offences is as follows:

1. The charges against a SMCFD Volunteer member shall be in writing and presented by the CAL FIRE Battalion Chief assuming responsibility for the investigation, in consultation with the respective SMCFD Company Officer of the accused volunteer firefighter. The burden of proof proving incompetence or misconduct shall be on the person or persons alleging the infraction.
2. A hearing on the charges shall be held by the Fire Chief or his/her designee having the power to remove the SMCFD Volunteer member.
3. In the case another officer is designated as stated in above 2., he/she shall, for purpose of the hearing, be vested with all the power of the Fire Chief and shall make a record of the hearing, which shall be referred to the Fire Chief for review with his/her recommendation.
4. The notice of the hearing shall specify the time and place of the hearing and state the person before whom the hearing will be held. The hearing will be closed, with only those involved and their representative(s) in attendance. The notice of hearing and a copy of the charges shall be served personally upon the volunteer at least 10 days, but not more than 30 days before the hearing.
5. The Fire Chief (or their duly appointed representative) shall have the power to remove the volunteer from duty and may place the concerned person on administrative leave pending disposition of the charges. Should the hearing result in a verdict removing the volunteer from duty, the administrative leave shall be converted to a suspension for a period not to exceed one year, or formal dismissal from the SMCFD.
6. Regulations governing the removal or suspension of a volunteer firefighter shall not be interpreted as creating a property right in the volunteer firefighter job or position.
7. After a formal hearing concludes resulting in a final decision rendered by the Fire Chief, a SMCFD Volunteer member may commence a proceeding in accordance with the provisions of Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure to set aside the decision of the Fire Chief, because the decision is not supported by substantial evidence. This process as outlined in the above-named civil procedure shall be commenced within 90 days from the date that the Fire Chief renders their final decision pertaining to the matter(s) involved. This remedy shall be the exclusive method for review of the decision rendered by the Fire Chief.

## **Purging of Files**

SMCFD personnel files will be purged of any adverse action three years after the date of issue upon request from the file's namesake. The exception to the section will be dismissal. Files pertaining to personnel dismissal shall be retained for a period of no less than 7 years. Dismissed SMCFD members may re-apply to the SMCFD after three years if approved by the Fire Chief.

## **Confidentiality of Files**

All personnel files shall be held in the strictest confidence as per Federal and State law. All requests for verification of membership from an outside entity will be answered "Yes" or "No." No further information will be provided unless expressly authorized by the concerned member. Inquiries regarding reference for employment will be through the SMCFD. In the case of a dismissed member, the detail that the individual was dismissed may be issued; however, the circumstances surrounding the dismissal will not be issued except through subpoena.

## **SMCFD Provided Benefits**

### **Worker's Compensation Benefits**

SMCFD Volunteer members are covered by CA State Worker's Compensation coverage whenever engaged in SMCFD business.

### **Uniforms / Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

During the initial phase of the training academy, each trainee shall be supplied the following uniform items:

- Two (1) pair tactical uniform/wildland pants (provided by SMCFD)
- One (1) short sleeve uniform shirt (provided by SMCFD)
- One (1) jacket (provided by SMCFD)
- One (1) pair station boots (provided by SMCFD)

During the initial phase of the training academy, each trainee shall be supplied the following PPE items:

- One (1) Firefighter helmet with leather shield
- One (1) Nomex hood
- One (1) Turnout coat
- One (1) Turnout pants
- One (1) Suspenders
- One (1) Bunker boots
- One set (1) Firefighting gloves
- One (1) SCBA mask
- One (1) Wildland fire helmet with attached goggles and Nomex shroud.
- One (1) Wildland firefighting jacket



- One (1) Wildland firefighting web gear with emergency fire shelter
- One (1) set Wildland firefighting gloves

After the successful completion of the training academy, each volunteer firefighter will be issued the following:

- One (1) pair of NFPA compliant wildland firefighting boots. (Supplied by SMCFD)
- One (1) Badge (Supplied by SMCFD)
- Radio Pager and Charger (Supplied by SMCFD)

## **End of Service**

Membership within the SMCFD is purely at will and may be terminated by the member at any time and for any reason.

For a member wishing to suspend their membership in the SMCFD for a finite amount of time, a written request for temporary suspension of membership must be submitted to the Fire Chief or his/her designee as soon as practicable. This request must include the reason for the request, the intended start date for the suspension of membership, the duration, and the approximate return date.

The Fire Chief will consider the request as to the approval /denial of said request. If it is determined by the Fire Chief that a temporary suspension cannot be granted, then the request must be converted into a request for permanent membership termination.

If a SMCFD member is granted a temporary suspension of membership, they may be allowed to retain possession of all issued PPE and equipment, or they may be required to return all issued gear. This decision will be made at the discretion of the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

Persons voluntarily permanently terminating their membership in the SMCFD may be granted the opportunity to rejoin later dependent upon evaluation by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

Former SMCFD Volunteer members wishing to rejoin should submit a written request to the Fire Chief for evaluation. These individuals may be required to attend individual training sessions over and above the weekly training drills to refresh previous skills and/or to be brought up to date on new skills. This supplementary training regimen will be at the discretion of the CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief, who will also be responsible for coordinating and documenting the training.

## **Return of Equipment**

When instructed to do so for reasons of voluntary/involuntary membership termination, temporary membership suspension, or any other reason deemed necessary by SMCFD Fire Chief or his/her designee, each SMCFD member will return **all** issued PPE, equipment, supplies, and miscellaneous items.

Items to be returned shall fall under the guide line of:

"If we gave it to you then you have to give it back."

*A member instructed to return their equipment shall do so within **fourteen days**.* The member returning their equipment must do so by personally returning it to their Company Officer, the CAL FIRE Training Battalion Chief, CAL FIRE Training Officer, CAL FIRE Battalion Chief or any other SMCFD member to whom authorization to receive the equipment was given by previous coordination with any of the above-mentioned individuals.