

## SECTION IV – MEMBERSHIP

### **4.1 General:**

This SOP amends Section IV of the Washington Township Fire Department SOP manual and shall supercede all previously written directives concerning Membership, Membership Applications, and the process for becoming a new member within the Washington Township Fire Department. Any training, orientation processes, references to physical exams, picture Ids and other items, not prohibited by contract or employee policies, shall apply to all full-time or part-time employees of the fire district as well. The fire fighter appointment process of this SOP shall be exclusive to volunteer fire fighters.

#### 4.1.1 New Member Applications:

Residents of Washington Township, Gloucester County, who are at least 18 years old, may obtain an application to become a Washington Township volunteer fire fighter from any of the volunteer fire companies, from the Fire District administrative offices, from any member of the fire department, or by printing out an on line application from the department web site.

The application, once completed, must be forwarded along with any accompanying documents to the Fire District office by the company, another member, or by the individual submitting the application. Once received by the district office, it shall be date stamped acknowledging receipt of the application.

Upon review of the application and completion of a background check (as necessary) the District Fire Chief shall assign the applicant to the appropriate fire company (usually to the closest fire station to the applicant's residence), and initial and date the assignment on the application. A copy of the applicant's valid New Jersey Driver's License must be attached to the application. The applicant shall also complete and I-9 IRS form and provide the district verification of their social security number. Before processing, a digital photo of the applicant must be taken and on file with the district office. The District Fire Chief shall forward the application to the Business Administrator or designee, to create a file and schedule a fire department physical exam.

*NOTE: If the applicant does not possess a valid New Jersey Driver's License, another government photo ID maybe utilized to process the application. The applicant, if accepted will be prohibited from operating any fire district vehicle or any vehicle under the supervision of the fire district until such time as a valid New Jersey Driver's License is provided and a copy place on file.*

Upon notification that the applicant has been cleared by the fire department medical review officer for duty as a fire fighter, the applicant will be contacted to report to be sworn in as a fire fighter with the Washington Township Fire Department. The District Fire Chief, or the Board of Fire Commissioners at a meeting, shall swear in any new fire fighter. An affidavit of the swearing in shall be a part of and remain as a permanent part of the fire fighters file.

#### 4.1.2 Junior Fire Fighter Applications:

A resident of Washington Township, Gloucester County, age 16 or 17, may apply to the fire district to become a junior fire fighter utilizing the process outlined in 4.1.1 above, however, a student ID may be substituted in lieu of a New Jersey Driver's License and all signatures on the application must be co-signed by the applicants parent or legal guardian in the presence of a representative of the fire district. Approval by the parent or legal guardian shall be obtained prior to taking a digital photo of the applicant. A junior fire fighter shall complete another updated application in accordance with 4.1.1 upon turning 18 years old and shall be sworn into office accordingly. The new application shall be noted as transferring status from a junior fire fighter to a fire fighter.

#### 4.1.2 Non-resident Applications:

Non-residents of Washington Township, Gloucester County may obtain an application for membership and submit a completed application in the same manner as resident applications. In addition, the non-resident shall attach to the application, a written statement explaining why the nonresident wishes to join the Washington Township Fire Department and to what advantage the non-resident would be to the Washington Township Fire Department. Non-resident applications shall be reviewed by the District Fire Chief and forwarded to the Board of Fire Commissioners for action on processing the application at a stated board meeting. The commission shall approve, deny, or table the application for further processing. Non-resident applications for volunteer membership, as a fire fighter will be accepted on a "case-by-case basis with unusual circumstances". An example of such circumstance would include a resident of a contiguous municipality, who may live closer to a Washington Township fire station than one in his/her own community.

#### 4.1.3 Medical Forms and Fire Department Physical:

No applicant shall perform any fire fighting duties, ride any fire apparatus, respond, or participate in any fire department drill (other than as an observer) without completing a fire department physical examination, being appointed as a fire fighters, and being duly sworn into service.

The district Business Administrator or designee shall issue the appropriate medical forms to be completed by the applicant when being scheduled for

a physical examination. The applicant must complete the forms prior to arriving for the physical examination.

#### 4.1.4 New Member Orientation:

All new members, including junior fire fighters transferring as an adult fire fighter, shall begin orientation sessions within the first 60 days of appointment as a fire fighter with the Washington Township Fire Department. The department training officer shall notify the new member in writing of the next scheduled orientation session. Orientation sessions will be conducted in phases and will primarily be scheduled during the evening on a regularly scheduled drill nights, but may also be offered occasionally on the weekend as needed. During the first orientation session, new members may bring their spouse or parent(s) as applicable. All new junior members shall be required to have a parent or guardian present during the orientation. New member orientation sessions are outlined in the attachment to this SOP.

#### 4.1.5 Probation:

All new members are placed on probation with the fire department for a period of at least 12 consecutive months. The period of probation begins upon being duly sworn into the fire department as a fire fighter. New members shall then be subject to such rules and regulations as indicated within these SOPs, the Fire Department Policies, and the individual fire company by-laws. New member's probationary terms may be extended as deemed necessary by supervisory personnel of the assigned company, however no new member may be released from probation for a lesser period. No member shall be subject to company probationary rules that may be inconsistent with the department's SOPs or Fire Department Policies. New members shall be released from probation as determined by company guidelines and internal procedures. Previous members of the department, who have left the organization in good standing and who have re-applied for membership, once all required training requirements have been completed, may have probation waived at the individual company's discretion.