

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 may be 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 placed 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 non-resident 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.

4.2 Membership Committees

Individual fire companies may establish membership committees in accordance with their respective by-laws. Membership committees should be in place to assist new members in completing their basic training and orientation into fire service. Membership committees may make recommendations to company officers and or company members on the progress of training and other issues relating to the acclimation to the fire department and whether the fire fighter can be removed from probation after the initial 12 month period.

4.3 Training

New members must complete a basic New Jersey Fire Fighter I training program within the first 12 months of becoming a fire fighter.

4.4 Equipment and Uniforms

Upon completion of the new member orientation program, probationary members shall be issued the following equipment items:

- Pager & Charger
- Helmet
- Safety glasses
- Turn out coat
- Turn out pants
- Suspenders
- Fire boots
- Fire gloves
- Rescue/Work gloves
- PBI Hood
- District Accountability Tags
- Picture ID card
- Key fob
- Copy of district SOPs & FD Policies
- FF I Training Manual (DELMAR)

Before attending basic fire fighter I training, probationary members shall be issued the following items:

- Class B uniform shirts
- Class B uniform pants
- Class B work belt
- Class B uniform jacket
- Class B work shoes

Upon completion of basic fire fighter I training, probationary members shall be issued the following equipment items:

- Uniform badge (at company discretion)
- County ID and Accountability Tags

Additionally, probationary members who have completed basic fire fighter I training may apply for a permit to utilize a blue light and may apply for fire fighter license plates through the fire district office. Class A uniforms and other equipment items maybe assigned to members in accordance with other procedures or policies after being released from probation.

4.5 Termination and Discipline

All members of the fire department organization are subject to disciplinary action for just cause and in accordance with Section VII of these SOPs or the Employee Policies as applicable. Chief officers have the authority and responsibility for maintaining department discipline within their respective commands and in accordance with district policies and procedures. Any member subject to disciplinary action and or termination shall be eligible for a final appeal before the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Upon separation from the Washington Township Fire Department, all department owned and issued equipment shall be surrendered back to the department. A department representative shall provide a receipt for all items returned to the member.

The fire district, at its discretion, may seek restitution for any items not returned.

4.6 Inter-Company Transfer

Members may transfer between fire companies of the district with approval from the District Fire Chief. An inter-company transfer application shall be completed prior to the actual transfer. The transfer application, when approved shall be considered a formal transfer order and all service time and other benefits provided by the district shall carry forward into the new company. A probation period not to exceed 3 months may be instituted by the new company to enable the transferring member to become familiar with the station and its apparatus. Typical company transfers are for members who move their primary residence and another company station is now closer for response purposes.

4.7 Membership Classifications

Members of the Washington Township Fire Department are classified in the following manner:

- Active
- Active Life
- Career
- Inactive Life
- Junior
- Probationary
- Social
- Retired

4.7.1 Active:

An active fire fighter is defined as a volunteer member who has completed basic fire fighter training, is currently SCBA qualified, is current on all mandatory training and is medically fit for duty. An active fire fighter is at least 18 years of age, is a sworn member of the department and is subject to internal and external regulations regarding fire fighting activities. An active fire fighter is assigned PPE and uniforms and is

assigned to ride fire apparatus. An active fire fighter meeting other policy or procedures of the fire district is eligible to participate in all benefit programs offered by the district, and is fully covered by the district's workers compensation program.

4.7.2 Active Life:

An active life fire fighter is defined as a volunteer member who in addition to all of the requirements established in 4.7.1, has completed at least 15 active years with the Washington Township Fire Department with good conduct and has been awarded life member status. An active life fire fighter may not be required to participate in certain duty and special duty assignments however must maintain mandatory training status and must continue to be medically fit for duty. All benefits afforded to active members are also afforded to active life members.

4.7.3 Career:

A career fire fighter is defined as a full time or part time sworn employee of the fire district hired to perform fire fighting duties in accordance with established job descriptions and in accordance with New Jersey regulations regarding the career fire service. Career fire fighters must maintain mandatory training requirements, must maintain SCBA qualifications, and must maintain medical clearance for duty.

4.7.4 Inactive Life:

An inactive life member is defined as a volunteer member who has previously met the definition described under 4.7.2 but has essentially become inactive from active fire fighting duties. Inactive life members may maintain class B and class A uniforms and may participate in special events with other members of the department. Inactive life members shall not ride apparatus, shall not be assigned turn out gear, and may be present but shall not participate in drills. Inactive life member's participation in department activities is limited to a social and civilian capacity only. The wearing of the department uniform represents the member's respectful years of dedicated service and duty on behalf of the Washington Township Fire Department. Inactive life members shall only be eligible for benefits provided by the district under other policies and procedures for which they are entitled such as LOSAP and NJSFA Relief. Inactive life members are not covered by workers compensation.

4.7.5 Junior:

A junior fire fighter, in addition to the description under 4.1.2 of this procedure is defined as a volunteer member who is sworn, 16 to 17 years of age, must be medically fit for fire fighting duties, must attend mandatory training sessions, is assigned PPE and uniforms and is assigned to ride fire apparatus when riding positions are available. Junior fire

fighters

must yield an apparatus riding position to a qualified active or active life fire fighter when necessary. Junior fire fighters shall NOT normally participate in out of town mutual aid assignments without express permission of a chief officer. Junior fire fighters must maintain a "C" or better average while attending high school. Junior fire fighters who drop out of high school before graduating or who do not maintain a "C" or better average for 2 or more marking periods will be dismissed from the fire department however they may reapply for membership after reaching age 18. Junior members are ineligible for LOSAP and NJSFA Relief benefits by New Jersey Statues but are covered under workers compensation and are eligible for all other district benefit programs in accordance with other district policies and procedures.

4.7.6 Probationary:

A probationary fire fighter, in addition to the description under 4.1.5 of this procedure, is defined as a volunteer member, who has completed a district application for membership, is at least 18 years of age, has been approved and assigned to a company and station, is sworn, but has not completed basic training and/or the minimum time requirements established in 4.1.5. Probationary members must be medically fit for fire fighting duties, must complete mandatory training requirements as established for new members, must attend new member orientation if they have not already completed it as a junior member, and must attend basic fire fighter 1 training within the first 12 months as a member.

Probationary members who have not completed basic training within the first 12 months as a member, shall not be removed from probationary status until such time basic training is completed. Probationary members exceeding 12 months to complete basic training must be reviewed on a case by case basis by the company officers and the district training officer to determine continued membership status within the organization.

Probationary members are issued PPE and uniforms, are assigned to ride fire apparatus however must yield a riding position to fire fighter trained and SCBA qualified probationary, active, active life, or career member of the department as necessary. Non SCBA qualified probationary fire fighters shall NOT normally participate on out of town mutual aid assignments without express permission of a chief officer. Probationary members when they become eligible are afforded all benefits of active members in accordance with existing policies and procedures.

Probationary members are covered by the district's workers compensation insurance.

4.7.7 Social:

A social member is defined as a resident of Washington Township, or a former resident who has an affiliation with fire fighters and supports the good will of the Washington Township Fire Department. A social member may have previously served in this department or another, does not aspire to continue or serve as a sworn fire fighter, but does support the mission, goals, objectives and other members of this organization. Social members are not sworn, are not assigned PPE or uniforms, and are not permitted to ride

apparatus or participate in drills. Social members may attend any social function of the department for which they are invited, may attend company functions to which they are invited, may have access to district facilities if approved, however social members are not eligible for district benefits and are not considered members eligible for workers compensation. Social members visit district facilities on their own accord. Social members do not receive a medical review nor are they required to be medically qualified.

4.7.8 Retired:

A retired member is defined as a sworn volunteer or career fire fighter who has served the department in the capacity as an active member, an active life member, inactive life or a career member. Retired members must be vested in their respective retirement systems (LOSAP for volunteer members and PFRS/PERS for career members) and may voluntarily enter this category of membership prior to reaching their 65th birthday. Retired members may attend all social functions of the Washington Township Fire Department and its respective companies, may attend all eligible meetings, may be present but shall not participate at drills, may attend other similar functions, and may wear class B or class A uniforms and as appropriate and IAW other district policies and procedures. Retired members are not excluded from providing classroom instruction based on their qualifications and experience in a particular area of expertise. Retired members may either begin collecting retirement benefits (LOSAP or PFRS/PERS) or it may be deferred depending upon eligibility requirements. Eligible volunteer and career members reaching their 65th birthday shall automatically be entered into this category of membership. Retired members shall essentially be "retired" from all fire fighting duties and shall not be required to attend training, drills, incidents, meetings, or other events mandated by this department for other membership categories. Retired members shall not ride "in service" fire apparatus, shall not respond to incidents, and shall not normally be covered by workers compensation insurance provided by the fire district. Retired members may continue to receive an annual medical examination provided by the fire district as a benefit for previous service. Retired members may continue to collect other benefits issued by the fire district or the state such as NJSFA Relief, SHB for volunteer members, and SHBP for career members.