

# **ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PONDEROSA VOL. FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **SECTION I Purposes**

The purposes for which the Ponderosa Volunteer Fire Department, hereinafter referred to as the Fire Department, is formed to implement the activities and operate the systems and facilities as established by the Ponderosa Volunteer Fire Association, Inc., hereinafter referred to as (the Association), as outlined in Article I, paragraphs A and B of the Association By-Laws.

## **SECTION II Membership**

- A. Firefighter Members - All such qualified persons who: are voting members of the Association, staff the equipment available, and pledge their service as firefighters to the Association shall be eligible for membership as Fire fighters.
1. Probationary Period - All prospective firefighter members shall be subject to a minimum probationary period of ninety (90) days. Subsequent probationary periods may be imposed at the discretion of the Departmental Officers, said extension to be verbally explained to the prospective member, with the total probationary period not to exceed one (1) year.
  2. Any prospective Firefighter member who, in the opinion of the Departmental Officers, does not qualify for and is denied membership in the Fire Department as described herein must be informed of the reasons for his/her denial.
  3. At the completion of the probationary period or nine (9) months, whichever comes last, said Firefighter shall become a full Firefighter member of the Department. The first day of acceptance as a member is the new individual's beginning of departmental training and will be recorded in the database.

4. A qualified prospective Firefighter member shall meet the requirements for acceptance into the Department as set forth below:
    - a. 18 years or older - Firefighter Applicant
    - b. 16-17 years old - Senior/Junior Firefighter Applicant
    - c. 12-15 years old - Junior Firefighter Applicant: This individual must have a direct family relationship with a firefighter member in good standing in the Department. (e.g. Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, etc.).
  5. The Command Staff shall determine the final eligibility status of the Junior Firefighter Applicant and have the power to act according to circumstances.
  6. Due to the physical requirements and the inherent dangers of the Firefighting and Rescue duties as a member of the Department, the Command Staff may require that the applicant receive a complete physical examination by a qualified physician. All costs incurred may be borne by the applicant, dependent upon the discretion of the Command Staff.
  7. The Command Staff may, at any time, limit the number of Firefighter Members.
- B. Honorary Membership - Such membership may be bestowed upon any individual as recommended by any Firefighter Member and approved by the Command Staff.

### **SECTION III Duties of Members**

It shall be the duty of all prospective Firefighter members and all Firefighter members to:

- A. At all times assist in the work of the Association and the Fire Department and be bound by the requirements outlined in the Association By-Laws and the Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines.
- B. Attend meetings, drills and training sessions as required by the Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines.
- C. Obey all the commands of assigned officers while on duty. Full cooperation at the scene of an emergency incident is required. Duty is not complete until the apparatus and equipment is cleaned and returned to service status at the station, or until excused by their assigned officer or released by the Senior Officer present.

## **SECTION IV Officers**

The Fire Chief is an appointed employee of the PVFA.

The officers of the Fire Department shall consist of those described below:

A. Command Staff

- Fire Chief
- Assistant Fire Chief
- Deputy Fire Chief
- Fire Marshal
- Captains of respective stations

B. Appointed – Lieutenants

C. The Command Staff positions are: Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Marshal and Captains. These positions are voting members of the Command Staff.

D. Optional – Jr. Captains, Safety Officers, Training Officer, Medical Officer, Chaplain, others to be determined by the Command Staff.

These tasks may be assigned to specific officers at the discretion of the Command Staff

E. The process of appointing the officers is to:

1. Have candidates announce the intended office(s) they wish to seek prior to appointment.
2. Provide an opportunity for as many as possible to have input into the appointment process.

F. The Fire Chief will appoint the Assistant Fire Chief during the first week of April each year. The Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief will appoint the Deputy Fire Chief within one week of the Assistant Fire Chief Appointment. The three chiefs will then appoint the Fire Marshal and respective fire station captains within the month of April of each year.

G. Other appointed officers shall be appointed by the Command Staff prior to May 1 of each year, or as necessary during the course of normal business.

- H. Terms of all officers, except the Fire Chief, shall not exceed one (1) year. Terms of replacement officers shall be for the unexpired term of the officer being replaced. The Command Staff may remove appointed officers at any time and appoint replacements within 30 days.
- I. All potential candidates for Command Staff positions must declare which office(s) he/she intends to compete for and notify the Fire Chief by February 15. A list of candidates will be prepared by the Chief and posted at each station on or about February 16.
- J. Each fire station membership will meet prior to March 28 of each year to review the potential Command Staff list and will select their preferences for Assistant Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief, fire marshal and their respective preferences for their station captain. The preference lists will be provided to the Fire Chief on or before April 1 of each year.

All candidates for Command Staff positions, except the Fire Chief, must participate in campaigning for each desired position following the PVFD adopted policy on campaigning. This process must be completed prior to each station's meeting that determines that station's proposed Command Staff appointees.

- K. Any member may be removed from the department in accordance with the following procedure:
  - 1. A written petition, signed by not fewer than one-third of the active, non-probationary members of the Fire Department stating the reason those signing the petition believe the member / officer should be removed from membership / office, may be presented to the membership at any regular meeting of the Department or at any special meeting of the Department called by the Fire Chief. In the case of the Fire Chief, this petition must be presented to the PVFA for their consideration of termination.
  - 2. The petition shall be voted upon by secret ballot by the active, non-probationary members of the Fire Department at the next regularly scheduled or specially called meeting of the Department occurring at least seven (7) days following the presentation of the removal petition of the membership. A quorum of 66% of the active, non-probationary members must be present and two-thirds of the votes cast at the meeting are to remove the member/officer from office, the petition shall be deemed to be accepted by the membership, the member/officer will be immediately removed from membership/office and the position declared vacant.

The remaining Command Staff will appoint a replacement for the remaining term of the vacated position.

## **SECTION V Qualifications and Duties of Officers**

The privilege to hold an office should be considered a matter of personal preference; however, the following qualification/traits should be paramount in the decision making process.

### **Training, Experience, Leadership, Decisiveness, Availability, Composure, Innovation, Dedication**

The departmental officers shall have the responsibility, and must be able to devote the time necessary in operating and conducting the Fire Department. All officers shall have demonstrated proficiency in fire department administration, fire suppression, and emergency management related to their position.

#### **A. Command Staff Qualifications**

The following minimum requirements pertain to Command Staff positions: (The Fire Chief is exempt from these requirements)

1. Chiefs positions –
  - A minimum of 4 years in good standing with the PVFD immediately preceding each respective appointment
  - SFFMA Intermediate and Instructor Level II, or TCFP Basic firefighter/Basic instructor
2. Captains/ Fire Marshal positions –
  - SFFMA Basic and Instructor Level 1, or TCFP Basic firefighter / Basic instructor
  - A minimum of 3 years in good standing with the PVFD immediately preceding each respective appointment
3. In the event that no qualified candidate is qualified for a specific position, the Command Staff shall select the respective individual for the position.

#### **B. Specific duties pertaining to each officer are as described below:**

- A. **The Fire Chief (FC)** is the chief officer of the Ponderosa Volunteer Fire Department. The FC is answerable to the PVFA, Inc., and is the focal point of the Command Staff. The FC is expected to represent all PVFD members, the community, and emergency services in general. The FC is expected to provide full cooperation, a positive spirit, and motivation to all members and boards of directors.

**The FC's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:**

- Achieving appropriate moral and ethical standards of performance.
- Assuring adequate training.
- Assuring all officers are meeting their requirements.
- Assuring staff personal development.
- Assuring adequate policies and procedures are in place.
- Delegating authority and the related responsibilities.
- Establishing achievable goals and verifying completions.
- Providing a safe, healthful, and environmentally sound organization.
- Providing leadership in all regards.
- Providing the process of continual improvement.
- Providing clear, open, and honest communications to all.
- Understanding and satisfying the community's needs of our services.
- Verifying compliance with all legal requirements.

**The FC's duties include, but are not limited to:**

- Assuring qualified command officers are in place at all responses.
- Assuring sufficient manpower is in place at all responses.
- Assuring assigned committees/task assignees are meeting requirements.
- Assigning staff work to the staff secretary and others as necessary.
- Being the PVFD focal point of mutual aid communication and agreements.
- Budget preparation, justification, and implementation
- Presiding at, or acting as chairman of, all meetings deemed as necessary.
- Responding to all structural fires and rescues in district when available.
- Representing the PVFD in the PVFA, Inc.
- Representing the PVFD in professional organizations.
- Verifying proper equipment is purchased and maintained.
- Verifying PVFD policies and procedures are enforced.

- B. **The Assistant Fire Chief (AFC)** is the second in-charge officer of the Ponderosa VFD. The AFC is answerable to the Fire Chief, PVFA, Inc. The AFC is expected to represent the members, boards and community. The AFC shall be responsible to fulfill the Fire Chief's duties in the absence of the Fire Chief.

**The AFC's responsibilities include but are not limited to:**

- Assuring and overseeing adequate training.
- Supervision of all lower ranking officers and members.
- Assisting the Fire Chief to carry out all activities to promote goals, policies and procedures, leadership, and continual improvement of PVFD.

**The AFC's duties include, but are not limited to:**

- Assuring safe and proper activities on all responses.
- Coordinate and oversee all training activities
- Assigning duties to all staff personnel.
- Assist with all budget activities.
- Coordinate all equipment purchasing.
- Maintain knowledge of all up to date fire service equipment and technology.
- Assuring proper maintenance of vehicles.
- Membership training records assurance.

- C. **Deputy Fire Chief (DC)** - There will be one DC. It shall be the duty of the DC to perform all the duties and responsibilities of the Fire Chief and/or the Assistant Fire Chief during the absence of either or both.

**The DC's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:**

- Supervision of lower ranking officers and members through the respective Station Captain.
- Assisting the Fire Chief and Asst. Fire Chief to carry out all the duties and responsibilities of their respective offices.

**The DC's duties include, but are not limited to:**

- Assuring departmental safety standards are maintained at all activities.
- Assuring an adequate suppression/support policy is maintained within the department.
- Coordinate Volunteer Incentive Program statistics and arrange the budgeting and payment of dues and payments.
- Coordinate all preplan activities for the department.

- D. **Captains** - There will be a Captain for each fire station in the district.

**Responsibilities:**

- To ensure the station is kept in good condition.
- To be notified of needed repairs to the station or apparatus.
- To be aware of all activities and training that goes on at or with the assigned station and equipment.
- To appoint qualified Lieutenant(s) to act in the position in the event of an extended absence with concurrence of the Command Staff.
- To ensure all equipment is recovered and properly cleaned after a response.

**Duties:**

To act in the command position until properly relieved by any other qualified officer.

To assist in the planning, directing and attacking all fires or emergencies.

To secure a scene until the Fire Marshal or other agencies requested arrive.

To lead or delegate projects deemed necessary.

To perform periodic station inspections

All other items not listed deemed necessary by the Fire Chief or agreed to by the Command Staff .

**E. Fire Marshal****Responsibilities:**

To insure all fire investigations are conducted properly.

To insure all incidents are recorded properly.

To insure scene preservation when appropriate.

To insure proper documentation to appropriate boards and agencies.

To insure proper preparation of monthly and special reports to the Harris County Fire & Emergency Services Department office.

To insure proper related training is performed as needed relating to fire cause determination.

**Duties:**

To gather all materials and preserve any evidence from suspicious fires.

To gather all information from major incidents or those incidents requiring special documentation.

To assure all technical data is entered into computer system.

To respond to all in district structure fires, when available.

To respond to all vehicle fires or situation of suspicious nature when the cause cannot be easily determined.

To prepare and submit all appropriate reports to the County Fire & Emergency Services Department office as required.

All other tasks as deemed necessary.

## **F. Junior Captain**

### **Responsibilities:**

- To assist the respective Station Captain as necessary
- To ensure the station is kept in good and clean condition
- To be notified of needed repairs to the station and/or apparatus and communicate through the chain of command
- To be aware of all activities and training that is conducted at or with the assigned station and or equipment
- To act in the position of Captain in the extended absence of the Captain
- To ensure all equipment is recovered and properly cleaned after a response
- To keep open communication(s) with the Lieutenants
- To keep open communication(s) with the Captains
- Direct and manage personnel within the assigned station

### **Duties:**

- To act in the command position until properly relieved (if necessary) by any other qualified officer
- To assist in the planning and directing of all PVFD incidents
- To secure a scene until the Fire Marshal and/or other outside agencies requested arrive on the scene
- To lead or delegate projects deemed necessary
- To perform periodic station inspections
- Any and/all other items deemed necessary by the Fire Chief or agreed upon by the Command Staff

## **G. Lieutenants** - The number of Lieutenants appointed and their specific assignments shall be decided by the Command Staff.

The Company Lts., herein referred to as Lt., report to the Captain of their respective station. The Command Staff appoints Lts.

Lts. are required to be knowledgeable in matters of active fire fighting, equipment operation and application, and apparatus operation and application.

The Lt. position is a "hands-on" position, the second highest level of operations following the captains, and the first level of administration.

The Lt. may be required to function as the incident commander, or any role within the command system as deemed necessary by the incident commander.

**Qualifications –**

Must be able to work with all levels of management and members. Should develop the ability and expertise to work with minimal supervision, gained through knowledge and experience, to become a Command Staff officer.

The Command Staff SHALL consider training courses to enhance Lts. leadership capabilities.

Lts are expected to lead by example, which includes the commitment to attend any and all staff and training meetings, when available.

**Duties and Responsibilities –**

Organize and operate periodic company training sessions

Lead training activities at regular training sessions

Communicate with other Lts. their availability for their company responses

Organize and operate their respective company station maintenance sessions. If the individual cannot attend, he/she must provide the leadership or replacement personnel to accomplish the task.

**Lts. are assigned to the following tasks:** Quarterly bunker gear inspections individual apparatus assignments, station maintenance sessions, company training, emergency scene safety and activities--leadership and actions, special projects as needed, and special committees as needed.

- H. **Training Officer** - It shall be the duty of the Training officer to work with Departmental Officers in the establishment of training sessions and drills that will provide the best possible training to Firefighters. Programs established for this training must demonstrate proper methods of using all Departmental apparatus and equipment as well as the proper methods of fire suppression, insuring personal safety and meeting State of Texas requirements for Firefighter Certifications.
- I. **Medical Officer** - This office shall not be a mandatory office, but may be filled.
- J. **Chaplain** - It shall not be a mandatory office. The Chaplain shall be responsible for the spiritual and divine requirements of the Fire Department, and shall, with other Departmental officers, console the family of any injured Firefighter.

**SECTION VI**  
**Amendment of Organizational Guidelines**

- A. These organizational guidelines may be amended by a majority vote of the Firefighter members present at any regular meeting of the Department or any special meeting of the Department called by the Fire Chief. A quorum is required of a minimum of 20 qualified members.
  
- B. The proposed amendment shall be submitted in writing and read at a special or regular meeting of the Department and shall be acted on at the next special (or) regular meeting of the Department at least seven calendar days following the reading of the proposed amendment provided for above.

**SECTION VIII**  
**Authorization**

The Fire Chief is authorized to execute these guidelines on behalf of the Department and to do all things proper and/or necessary to carry out the intent hereof.

Passed, adopted and approved the 27th day of September, 2004



F. C. Windisch  
Fire Chief, Ponderosa V.F.D

The first reading of these by-laws were read at the regular meeting on September 13, 2004. The motion to accept was made by Robert Logan and seconded by Daniel Vogel. There was no opposition.

The second reading of these by-laws were read at the regular meeting on September 27, 2004. The motion to accept was made by Tony Spitzenberger and David Perry seconded. There was no opposition.