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# Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District Policy

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**Number:** CE-4  
**Date Issued:** May 17, 2017  
**Revised:** August 23, 2021  
**Date Effective:** October 20, 2021  
**Subject:** CAREER EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

**Purpose:** The Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District (“District”) expects all of its employees to act in the best interests of the District and its constituents. The District further expects that each of its employees will behave with courtesy and respect toward other employees, volunteer members, recruits, and members of the public.

It is the responsibility of all employees to observe all rules, policies, operating procedures, and directives of the District. All employees must agree to uphold the information and policies listed herein. The failure to strictly abide by the information and policies herein may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Career employees are required to report allegations of suspected wrongdoing or misconduct within 24-hours in writing (email is satisfactory) to the Fire Chief. If the Fire Chief is the source of the alleged wrongdoing or misconduct, they need to report it directly to the Board President in writing (or email). Failure to report in accordance with this procedure may lead to disciplinary action.

The specific rules of conduct adopted by the District or described in these policies are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather address some common and serious potential problems. The District reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any or all of this Policy. Further, that this Policy supersedes any previous descriptions of these policies. Where doubts exist as to the specific meaning of the terms used above, employees should make judgments based on the overall spirit and intent of this policy.

## **Procedure:**

### **Section 1. Code of Ethics**

**1.1** Ethics are a set of standards used to determine right from wrong, and on which we base our decisions. It is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad; with moral duty and obligation; a set of principles or values; the principles of conduct governing an individual or group. As a career member of the District your ethics, your crew’s ethics and the District’s ethics affect how you deliver

quality service. The public demands that the ethics of its firefighters and support personnel be above reproach. The dishonesty of a single member may impair public confidence and cast suspicion upon the entire District.

- 1.2** The Code of Ethics subscribed to by the National Society of Executive Fire Officers and the Congressional Fire Service Institute, and adopted by the District, requires that all personnel be held accountable for their actions from the time they begin as a career employee and affects all work, training or any other activities affiliated with the District, or serving as a representative of the District. As a member of the District sworn to serve and protect the public, all personnel will subscribe to the Code of Ethics, and their integrity will be held to the highest standard possible.
- 1.3** Attached “Code of Ethics” and signature page will be signed by each District employee. The employee will receive a copy and a copy will be filed in the personnel file.

## **Section 2. Drugs and Alcohol**

- 2.1** The District is committed to providing a safe, healthful, and efficient working environment for our employees. It is our policy to create an environment which is free from alcohol and illegal drugs, or drugs taken for non-medical reasons. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the job may pose serious safety and health risks. This is especially true given the potentially dangerous nature of our work and the materials that we work with.
- 2.2** The District strictly prohibits the manufacture, distribution, sale, use or possession on the District premises, or at any time while conducting District activities, of alcoholic beverages of any kind and drugs other than those properly prescribed by a qualified healthcare provider or obtained over the counter. Except as prohibited by Section 2.3, Employees are permitted to use legitimately prescribed and legal over-the-counter drugs in an appropriate manner and dosage, consistent with the applicable prescription and/or over-the-counter instructions. Employees are expected to know whether the use of such drugs may affect their ability to perform their jobs safely and competently. If an employee is aware that any medication may affect, but not impair, the performance of his/her duties, the employee must inform his/her supervisor. The employee should not inform the supervisor concerning the identity of the medication or the condition for which it is being used.
- 2.3** No employee is permitted to report for duty while impaired by, or under the influence of, alcohol or drugs to the slightest degree. Employees are also prohibited from reporting for duty while taking any medications that impairs their ability to perform his/her duties competently and safely. Any employee who reports to work impaired by or under the influence of drugs or alcohol shall be relieved of his/her duties immediately with pay. Any employee who tests positive for the presence of illegal drugs, including medical or

recreational marijuana, or alcohol while on duty shall be presumed to be in violation of this Policy.

- 2.4** Any violation of this Policy will subject the employee to be disciplined, up to and including immediate termination of employment.
- 2.5** Any employee who is convicted, found in violation of, or pleads guilty or nolo contendere under any criminal drug statute or ordinance, shall notify the District of the conviction within five (5) days. Failure to so notify the District will result in termination of employment.

### **Section 3. Harassment**

- 3.1** The District intends to provide a work environment that is pleasant, healthful, comfortable, and free from hostility, intimidation, or other offenses that might interfere with the ability to perform work or interact with each other. All employees have a responsibility to keep our work environment free of sexual and other harassment.
- 3.2** The District prohibits any harassment of its employees on the basis of sex, or any other characteristic protected by law, including race, color, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or status as a qualified individual with a disability.
- 3.3** Harassment is not necessarily sexual in nature. Harassment includes unwelcomed slurs, jokes, signs, words, notes, pranks, intimidation, lewd comments, physical contact, or violence. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, ancestry, religion, disability, creed, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Harassment of any sort – verbal, written, physical – will not be tolerated.
- 3.4** Both Supervisors and managers are held accountable for the effective administration of this Policy.
- 3.5** Employees who believe they have been harassed based on any protected characteristic must promptly notify their supervisor or the Fire Chief. If the complaint is against the Chief, then the employee shall notify the Chairman of the Board of Directors.
  - (a) Upon notification of such harassment, the District shall designate a person to investigate the complaint.
  - (b) The District shall act to prevent any further harassment and take appropriate disciplinary action against anyone who has violated this Policy.
- 3.6** Investigations of reported harassment will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need for a complete and fair investigation.
- 3.7** Employees shall not be subject to retaliation for reporting harassment pursuant to this Policy.
- 3.8** Any violation of this Policy will result in discipline, up to and including discharge.

**3.9 Prohibited Behaviors include:**

- (a) Racial or ethnic jokes, slurs, epithets, cartoons, or graffiti.
  - (b) Sexual harassment, which is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other inappropriate oral, written, or physical conduct of a physical nature when submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, benefits, transfers, promotions, performance evaluations, work assignments, or compensation, either explicitly or implicitly; submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual; and/or such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Sexual harassment includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser.
  - (c) Sexually graphic comments, epithets, pictures, cartoons, gestures, and graffiti.
  - (d) Taunting on the basis of actual or perceived protected categories, including sexual orientation and disability.
  - (e) Use of demeaning or degrading comments based on individual characteristics.
  - (f) Use of profanity in speech, writings or actions towards employees, volunteers, recruits, visitors, and members of the public.
  - (g) Threats of harm, violence, or assault.
  - (h) Hazing any employees, volunteer members, or recruits.
- 3.10** All employees must report violations of the Policy that they observe, even if they are not the recipient of the prohibited behavior.

**Section 4. Use of District Property**

- 4.1** District property is to be used only for official District duties, in an appropriate manner, and in accordance with all applicable rules, operating procedures, or directives.
- 4.2** No employee shall remove District property or the property of any other employee, volunteer or recruit from the District premises or work sites without proper authorization. Any career employee who brings personal property for their own use; does so at their own risk. The District is not responsible or liable for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property.
- 4.3** Deliberately misusing, destroying, or damaging any District property or property of any employee, volunteer member/recruit or of the public will result in immediate disciplinary action by the Fire Chief or senior Officers up to and including suspension or termination.

## **Section 5. Conflict of Interest**

- 5.1** District employees shall not place their personal interests above the best interests of the District or it's Board's constituents. Employees must take all reasonable actions to avoid any conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof. Accordingly, Employee of the District shall not:
- (a) Engage in a substantial financial transaction for private business purposes with another employee he/she supervises.
  - (b) Take any official action on behalf of the District that directly and substantially benefits a business or other undertaking, in which the employee has a substantial direct or indirect financial interest.
  - (c) Disclose or use confidential information acquired during his/her official duties for the District to further substantially his/her financial interests; or
  - (d) Accept a gift of substantial value or a substantial economic benefit which might tend to influence him or her improperly in the discharge of his/her duties for the District, or which could be construed as a reward for action taken during official duties for the District.
  - (e) For purposes of this Section 5.1, "substantial" means having a value equaling or exceeding \$25.00.
- 5.2** Any employee who knows or reasonably should know he/she has a potential conflict of interest shall disclose such potential conflict to his/her supervisor.
- 5.3** Employees may only purchase goods or services using the District's account number or using the District's tax-exempt ID number or status for use by the District in furtherance of its official activities. Under no circumstances may an employee use the District's account number or tax-exempt ID number or status, even if the employee pays with his/her own funds.
- 5.4** No employee of the District shall represent to a vendor that such employee is purchasing items on behalf of the District unless the employee truly is purchasing items on behalf of the District.
- 5.5** No employee of the District shall mislead (either by direct statement or omission) any vendor to believe that the employee is purchasing items for the District when in fact the employee is purchasing goods or services for his/her own personal use.

## **Section 6. Off-Duty Conduct**

- 6.1** The District reserves the right to take appropriate action including dismissal from employment, in response to off-duty conduct of an employee which:
- (a) Relates to a bona fide occupational requirement of employment, or is reasonably and rationally related to the employee's employment activities, or the responsibilities of the employee; or
  - (b) Is necessary to avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of such a conflict with any of the employee's responsibilities to the District; or
  - (c) Is in violation of any law.

## **Section 7. Smoking and use of Tobacco**

**7.1** The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform guidance concerning all tobacco and vaping products in District vehicles and buildings. In keeping with our intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, tobacco, in any form, and electronic cigarettes are not permitted in any space and/or vehicle leased or owned by the District or while in any customer facilities, including offices, hallways, waiting rooms, restrooms, lunchrooms, meeting rooms, and all community areas.

- (a) The term “smoking” shall refer to the burning of all forms of tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, and pipes.
- (b) The term “smokeless tobacco” shall refer to non-burning forms of tobacco, including chewing tobacco, synthetic tobacco, and electronic cigarettes.
- (c) Smoking, vaping, or chewing tobacco products are not permitted in District vehicles and inside any building owned or occupied by the District.
- (d) Smoking, vaping, or chewing tobacco products outside the building on District property is limited to designated areas.

## **Section 8. Personal Relationships**

**8.1** The District strongly believes that a work environment where employees maintain clear boundaries between employee personal and business interactions is necessary for effective operations.

**8.2** Romantic or sexual relationships between employees and/or Volunteer members/recruits, especially when involving a supervisor, are strongly discouraged.

**8.3** During working time and in working areas, employees are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate workplace manner that does not interfere with others or with overall productivity. During nonworking time, such as before and after work periods, employees engaging in personal exchanges should observe an appropriate workplace manner to avoid offending other workers or putting others in an uncomfortable position.

**8.4** Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in physical contact that would in any way be deemed inappropriate in the workplace by a reasonable person while anywhere on District premises or while conducting District duties, whether during working hours or not.

**8.5** Employees must disclose to their supervisor or the Fire Chief the existence of a romantic or sexual relationship with another employee and/or Volunteer member/recruit. The District will review the circumstances to determine whether any conflict of interest exists.