

SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 8

Standard Operating Procedures

10.08.01 CORRECTIVE ACTION



Adopted: 12/20/16
Reviewed: 12/10/20
Revised: 12/10/20

Approved: *Jan J. Paul*

Purpose: To correct unsatisfactory behavior or performance and to elicit an appropriate behavior modification.

References: N/A

Procedure:

1. Corrective Action.

- a) Corrective action may be taken when:
 - i. A member has not adhered to District Standards of Conduct.
 - ii. Violated the Fire Districts Policies and Procedures.
 - iii. If performance otherwise is unsatisfactory.
- b) It is the District's general policy to initially apply the least severe corrective action, as appropriate.
- c) More severe measures will be applied if the problem persists or it involves serious misconduct.
- d) Corrective action taken may include:
 - i. Verbal corrective action.
 - ii. Written corrective action.
 - iii. Suspension with or without pay.
 - iv. Demotion.
 - v. Discharge.
- e) Unless the circumstances warrant otherwise, it is District policy to apply corrective action using the following methods, however the District shall have the right to determine the appropriate level of discipline (if any) in any particular situation in light of the seriousness of the offense and other considerations.

2. Verbal Corrective Action.

- a) This is generally used in cases of minor offenses.
- b) The supervisor should reach an understanding of the specific sources of dissatisfaction and the corrective action required.
- c) The supervisor shall document the corrective action in writing.
- d) This documentation shall be retained by the supervisor in case further action becomes necessary.

3. Written Corrective Action.

- a) This is generally used for intermediate offenses.
- b) Repetition of or failure to correct a minor offense.
- c) Commission of another type of minor offense within a reasonable time.

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- d) Persistent performance deficiencies.
 - e) A written corrective action usually will be issued after a personal discussion of the problem between the member and the issuing supervisor.
 - f) A written corrective action should:
 - i. Outline the problem and any improvement required.
 - ii. Refer to any previous corrective action or actions taken.
 - iii. Explain the consequences of repeated infractions or failure to correct performance.
 - g) The member should sign the corrective action and receive a copy.
 - h) The member's signature acknowledges receipt of the corrective action, not necessarily agreement with it.
 - i) The corrective action shall be reviewed by the supervisor and forwarded to the Assistant Chief or designee for inclusion in the member's personnel file.
4. Suspension/Paid Administrative Leave.
- a) This is generally used in cases of:
 - i. Intermediate offenses.
 - ii. Repeated or uncorrected minor offenses.
 - iii. Intermediate offenses after at least one written corrective action.
 - iv. Continued performance deficiencies (previously identified in a written performance evaluation or written corrective action).
 - v. Unacceptable responses to corrective action by the member.
 - b) A written recommendation for suspension shall be provided to the Fire Chief prior to any action, unless circumstances do not allow.
 - c) The suspension decision shall be documented by the Fire Chief in a memo to the member describing the reasons for:
 - i. The suspension.
 - ii. Any previous attempts to correct the situation.
 - iii. The terms of the suspension.
 - d) The member should sign the suspension notice and receive a copy.
 - e) The member's signature acknowledges receipt of the suspension notice, not agreement with it.
 - f) Any refusal to sign the suspension notice shall be noted on the suspension notice.
 - g) The suspension letter shall be forwarded to the Assistant Chief or designee to be included in the member's personnel file.
 - h) Suspension or paid administrative leave may be used either as a corrective measure, to permit an investigation, to allow the District to determine what

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corrective action will be applied, or to remove a member from the premises for a period of time.

5. Discharge.

- a) A recommendation for discharge shall be provided to the Fire Chief by the Assistant Chief.
- b) The discharge decision shall be decided and documented by the Fire Chief in a memo to the member describing:
 - i. The reasons for termination.
 - ii. The previous attempts to correct the situation.
 - iii. The terms of the termination.
- c) A copy of the termination letter shall be forwarded to the Assistant Chief and/or designee to be included in the member's personnel file.
- d) In the event that a situation necessitating alternate action arises, such as bypassing one or more steps, it will be dealt with at the discretion of management based on the circumstances of that specific situation.
- e) For senior management members, these corrective action procedures are only guidelines and do not guarantee any particular procedure will be followed or give the member a right to continued employment.
- f) A discharge could occur for reasons other than corrective action.
- g) Depending upon the situation, the Fire Chief reserves the right to discharge a member at any time, and without compensation except for time actually worked and annual leave accrued, if it is deemed necessary and in the best interest of the Fire District.
- h) Corrective action may also be taken for engaging in off-duty misconduct that interferes with a member's ability to do their job or reflects negatively on the District (i.e.; a traffic citation that results in the loss of the employee's driver's license which is needed to perform job duties or a well-publicized off-duty misconduct which would cause embarrassment to the District).
- i) This is generally used in cases of major offenses, repeated or uncorrected minor or intermediate offenses after at least one written corrective action, continued performance deficiencies (previously identified in a written performance evaluation or written corrective action) or unacceptable responses to corrective action by the member.

6. Examples of Minor, Intermediate and Major Offenses.

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Following are some examples of violations of District standards (for additional examples, see Standards of Conduct). These examples merely illustrate, and do not limit the types of conduct considered unacceptable.

a) Minor Offenses.

i. Are actions considered to be corrective by training, counseling, and guidance and not necessarily serious enough for formal corrective action unless repeated.

ii. Examples of minor offenses are first instances of:

1. Tardiness and excessive absenteeism.
2. Un-businesslike conduct such as violation of Teamwork Guidelines.
3. Inappropriate dress or poor grooming for the activities performed.
4. Performance that does not meet the requirements of the District.

b) Intermediate offenses.

i. Are actions considered to be severe enough to call for formal corrective action, usually short of discharge for the first violation.

ii. Examples of intermediate offenses are:

1. Repetition(s) of a minor offense.
2. Failure to report accidents, personal injury, or property damage.
3. Unexcused absence.
4. Abusive or unprofessional language toward another person.

c) Major offenses.

i. Are actions considered to be severe enough to call for prompt and severe corrective action up to and including immediate termination.

ii. Examples of major offenses are:

1. Repetition(s) of an intermediate offense.
2. Insubordination or deliberate failure to carry out instructions.
3. Unauthorized release of confidential information.
4. Misusing, destroying, or purposefully damaging any Spokane County Fire District 8 property or property of any member.
5. Taking Spokane County Fire District 8 property without authorization.
6. Falsifying records, including employment applications or time sheets.

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7. Harassment of any nature.
8. Abusive conduct or threats toward another person.

7. Problem Resolution.

- a) Honest differences of opinion regarding working conditions or other matters will arise from time to time.
- b) When problems arise, the District encourages members first to discuss the issue with the person with whom they are having difficulty, using respectful dialogue.
- c) If the member is unable to resolve this problem, he/she should bring it to the attention of one of the following:
 - i. His/her supervisor.
 - ii. His/her supervisor's supervisor.
 - iii.
 - iv. The Fire Chief (if the member's supervisor is part of the problem or is otherwise unable to assist him/her).
- d) Most work-related problems should be resolved at the lowest level and can and should be resolved informally by the supervisor or Fire Chief.
- e) The harassment reporting procedure is subject to its own policy.
- f) Nevertheless, the District recognizes that not all problems can be remedied through this informal process.
- g) The Assistant Chief or designee is available to answer any questions members may have about the process, and can assist them in putting their complaints in writing.
- h) The following formal procedure is available to address more difficult issues.
 - i. Step 1:
 1. Tell the member's immediate supervisor he/she would like to present a formal complaint.
 2. The immediate supervisor will discuss the issue with the member and will give him/her a definite answer, generally within three working days after the discussion.
 - ii. Step 2:
 1. If this discussion does not resolve the problem, the member can ask his/her supervisor to arrange a meeting, usually

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within three working days, with his or her immediate supervisor.

2. After that meeting, the member's complaint will be investigated and generally he/she will receive an answer within five working days after that.

iii. Step 3:

1. If the member is not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting, he/she may speak to the Fire Chief.
2. The member's supervisor will arrange for him/her to meet with the Fire Chief who will give him/her a final answer, generally within ten working days after discussing the problem with them.
 - i) Under normal circumstances these timelines will be adhered to.
 - j) Some investigations are more complex and may require additional time.
 - k) There may be times when a member feels he/she cannot take his/her complaint to their immediate supervisor.
 - l) If this is the case, the member may go directly to the second step in this procedure; however, these cases should be rare, since the member's supervisor is usually able to properly handle their questions and work-related problems.

8. Appeals.

- a) Any member who is demoted, suspended, or discharged or any member who is adversely affected by an alleged violation may appeal, within 30 days of such action or violation to the Fire Chief.