



Virginia Beach Department of Emergency Medical Services



## GENERAL DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION

# PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to outline the conduct that is expected of Department members so as to project a positive and professional image.

**APPLICABILITY:** This policy shall apply to all members of the Department of Emergency Medical Services

**POLICY STATEMENT:** Public safety members are expected to be above reproach. How one conducts himself/herself both on and off duty may have a direct reflection on the service. Members are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times and especially when representing the Department.

Members are required to read, understand, and comply with all rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the Department and City of Virginia Beach as well as the lawful written or verbal orders of a superior. It shall be considered to be neglect of duty to fail to ask a superior any questions as to the meaning or application of any law, rule, regulation, policy, procedure, or verbal/written order.

## ABUSE OF POSITION

No member shall use or attempt to use his/her official position, ID badge or credentials for personal gain. Where special privileges are extended to all members by a private organization, the use of Department identification is not considered a violation of this order.

## CONFLICTING OR ILLEGAL ORDERS

Personnel who are given an otherwise proper order that conflicts with a previous guideline, rule, regulation or directive, shall inform the supervisor issuing the order of the conflict. If the supervisor issuing the order does not alter or retract the conflicting order, the order shall stand. Under these circumstances, the responsibility for the conflict shall be upon the supervisor. Personnel shall obey the conflicting order and

shall not be held responsible for disobedience of the policy, guideline, rule, regulation or standard operating procedure previously issued. Should the issue come under scrutiny, the conflicting order, as issued, will be placed in writing explaining the circumstances and purpose and forwarded through the chain of command to the supervising Deputy Chief for final resolution as appropriate. (This correspondence will be completed by placing it in writing as soon as practical by the person receiving the conflicting order. Outlined in the correspondence will be all the facts involving the issue under review.)

## **CONFORMANCE TO LAWS AND REPORTING VIOLATIONS**

Members are required to notify their supervisor and EMS Headquarters of any criminal convictions, criminal detainment, driving conviction, and/or loss of driver's license as outlined in the Criminal Activity and Traffic Offense Reporting Policy.

Withholding information concerning criminal activities, which are job related, is prohibited.

Members are required to report another member's or their own violation of a law, rule, regulation, policy, or procedure. All such violations shall be reported in writing to a supervisor.

## **COURTESY**

Personnel shall be courteous to the public, ERS partners and other members of the department. Personnel shall be considerate in the performance of their duties, must control their temper and exercise the utmost patience and discretion and shall not engage in argumentative discussions in the face of provocation. In the performance of their duties, personnel shall not use abusive language or gestures and shall not express any prejudice concerning race, religion, politics, national origin, gender, lifestyle or any similar personal characteristics.

## **CRIMINAL, TRAFFIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGE REPORTING**

All members shall notify their supervisor and the Deputy Chief of Administration or his designee within 24 hours of being arrested, charged with, served, arrested, convicted or otherwise determined guilty for any criminal offense or administrative process action. Reportable incidents include all traffic violations. Members shall report any suspension or restriction of driving privileges by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

The Department shall hold all members accountable and take appropriate action upon notification. Specific procedural steps are outlined in the City of Virginia Beach Criminal and Administrative Charge and Conviction Policy (#6.02A).

Failure to report a criminal or traffic offense shall result in corrective action.

## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

Personnel shall submit all necessary reports on time and in accordance with established departmental procedures. Reports submitted by personnel shall be truthful and complete, and no personnel shall knowingly enter or cause to be entered any inaccurate, false or improper information.

## **DISOBEDIENCE OF ORDERS**

Members are required to obey and fully execute any lawful order, written or oral, given by a superior officer which shall include, but not be limited to: rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the Department and/or City. The term "lawful order" shall be construed as any order in keeping with the performance of any duty prescribed by law or by the rules, regulation, policies, or procedures, or for the preservation of good order, efficiency and proper discipline which is not in conflict with these rules, regulations, policies, or procedures.

Members shall refrain from public expressions of actions concerning the Department's policies and procedures that are:

- Defamatory
- Obscene
- Unlawful, or
- Which tend to subvert the good order, efficiency or discipline of the Department or any member thereof, or that are prejudicial to the efficiency and discipline of the Department.

## **ETHICS**

All members shall conform to the City of Virginia Beach Code of Ethics, established policies and procedures of the Department of EMS and the City of Virginia Beach and the Commonwealth of Virginia EMS Regulations. Electronic copies of these documents shall be available via the appropriate governmental websites.

## **FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY SECURE AND CARE FOR DEPARTMENTAL PROPERTY**

Personnel will not alter or repair departmental equipment, including vehicles, uniforms, appliances, tools, etc. unless specifically authorized or in accordance with departmental procedures.

Personnel shall utilize department or rescue squad equipment only for its intended purpose in accordance with established departmental procedures and shall not abuse, damage or lose departmental equipment. All department or rescue squad equipment

issued to personnel shall be maintained in proper condition. Personnel shall report damage to any department or rescue squad equipment according to departmental or city policy.

### **FICTITIOUS ILLNESS AND INJURY REPORTS**

Personnel shall not feign illness or injury, falsely report themselves or others ill or injured or otherwise deceive or attempt to deceive any official of the department concerning the condition of their health.

### **IDENTIFICATION**

Members shall wear their EMS ID badge at all times while providing patient care or acting in any official capacity as a member of the Department of EMS.

Members may be required to furnish information as is consistent with their duties. To this end, a member shall furnish their name, certification level and station affiliation in a respectful manner when requested.

### **IMMORAL CONDUCT**

Personnel shall maintain a level of moral conduct in their personal and business affairs in keeping with the highest standards of the EMS profession. They shall not participate in any incident involving moral turpitude or conduct which impairs their ability to perform as providers or cause the department to be brought into disrepute.

### **INSUBORDINATION**

Insubordination shall be prohibited and shall include, but not be necessarily limited to, any failure or deliberate refusal to obey a lawful order given by a superior; any disrespectful, mutinous or insolent action toward a superior, whether in or out of the presence of the superior; lying or giving misleading statements to a superior; or failure to answer a direct question asked by a superior.

Destroying or defacing any official written notice relating to Department business is prohibited. The posting or circulation of any notices of nonofficial, derogatory character relating to any person, group of public safety activity is prohibited.

### **NEGLECT OF DUTY**

Neglect of duty is prohibited. There shall be no failure to give appropriate attention to the performance of duty. Examples include but are not limited to failure to take appropriate action; absence without leave; failure to report for duty at the time and place designated; unauthorized absence during one's duty; failure to perform duties or comply

with any rule, regulation, policy, or procedure; failure to conform to the Department or City operating policies and/or procedures.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

The wearing of an improper uniform, failure to carry all necessary equipment including PPE, or failure to maintain one's uniform and/or equipment in good order as outlined in the Department's Rules, Regulations, and Policies Manual is prohibited.

## **PHYSICAL STABILITY**

Members are required to maintain mental and physical conditioning necessary to perform prescribed duties.

Members shall immediately report to their supervisor any accident, sickness or injury occurring to them while on duty. The supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that the member receives medical care if required and shall also ensure that all necessary paperwork is completed and forwarded to EMS Headquarters for processing.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Members are required to work diligently and with an image of professionalism. Examples of unprofessional conduct may include:

- Being late for duty
- Taking excessively long meal or refreshment breaks
- Failure to respond promptly to a call when dispatched
- Failure to clear promptly from a call
- Lack of courtesy to an individual either on the telephone or in person
- Gambling, fighting, and/or quarreling
- Scuffling and/or horse playing
- Lying or intentionally providing misleading statements

Members are required to answer questions, respond to lawful orders and render material and relevant statements in a Department investigation when such orders, questions and statements are directly related to job responsibilities. Nothing in this section is intended to violate a member's federal and/or state constitutional rights.

Stealing, altering, forging, or tampering with any kind of official record or report is prohibited. The removal of any record, report, letter, document, or any other official files from the Department, except as directed by a superior, is prohibited. Additionally, the obtaining or duplication of any information from the Department files, sources or reports other than that to which one is properly entitled to in accordance with one's duties is prohibited.

Members who handle employee files, records, and reports are responsible for keeping such information within the confines of his/her professional jurisdiction. Personnel matters and information are to be discussed only with the individual(s) it concerns and the person(s) to whom the report is being made.

Maintaining residence in an EMS station when not on duty is prohibited.

### **POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

While on duty, while acting as an official of the Department, or while in Department uniform, members shall not take any part in political management or in political campaigns other than to cast their vote and privately express their opinion. Members shall not, directly or indirectly, solicit or receive, or be in any manner concerned in soliciting or receiving, any assessment, subscription or contribution for any political party or political purpose, or for a testimonial for any official.

Members shall not, orally or in writing, solicit, or in any manner be concerned in soliciting any assessment, subscription or contribution for any political party or purpose from any City employee or volunteer.

Soliciting, making speeches, distributing, posting, or displaying of campaign literature for or against any candidate or public office shall not be permitted in or on Department property.

### **PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND APPEARANCE**

Personnel shall not publicly criticize or ridicule the Department, its policies or other personnel by speech, origin or other expression, where such speech, writing or other expression is defamatory, obscene, unlawful, interferes with maintenance of discipline or is made with reckless disregard for truth or is false.

Members shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare articles for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or a periodical or release or divulge investigative information or any other matters of the Department while holding themselves out as representing the Department in such matters without prior authorization.

### **REPORTING FOR DUTY OR COURT**

Giving a deposition, affidavit, or appearing as a witness in a criminal or civil matter stemming from official duties as a member of the service without prior knowledge and consent of the Department is prohibited.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

All members will be subject to the provisions of the City of Virginia Department of Human Resources Workplace Harassment Policy #6.13. Department members or applicants who feel they have been subjected to sexual harassment or who have questions regarding this policy should contact their supervisor or the Deputy Chief of Administration.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The Department of EMS has a zero tolerance for substance abuse as outlined in Section 4.2 of the City of Virginia Beach Human Resources Substance Abuse Policy. These prohibitions include:

- Using, purchasing, selling possessing, distributing or accepting illegal drugs or drug-related paraphernalia while on or off the job.
- Consuming, purchasing, selling, possessing, distributing or accepting alcohol while on the job or stand-by.
- Reporting for duty or being on the job while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Reporting for duty or remaining on duty any time there is quantifiable presence of a prohibited drug in the body above the minimum threshold defined in 49CFR Part 40, as amended.
- Reporting for duty or remaining on the job while having an alcohol concentration of 0.02 or greater, regardless of when the alcohol was consumed.
- Transporting illegal drugs, or drug-related paraphernalia in a City insured fleet asset
- When required to take a post-accident alcohol test, consuming alcohol within eight hours of the accident or prior to undergoing a post-accident test, whichever comes first.

## **TELEPHONE AND ADDRESS INFORMATION**

Members are required to notify their supervisor and EMS Headquarters of any change of address, telephone number, marital status, or emergency contact notification within one (1) week.

## **UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE**

Personnel shall maintain sufficient competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibility of their positions. Personnel shall perform their duties in a manner which will maintain the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out the functions and objectives of the department.

Unsatisfactory performance may be demonstrated by a lack of knowledge of the application of protocols to be practiced, and unwillingness or inability to perform assigned tasks, failure to take appropriate action on the occasion of an emergency incident or other conditions deserving EMS Department attention. In addition to other indications of unsatisfactory performance, repeated poor evaluation or a written record of repeated infraction of rules, regulations, directives, or orders of the department could constitute unsatisfactory performance.

## **VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT USE**

Unauthorized use of station, City or City-insured vehicles, property or equipment is prohibited.

Allowing an unauthorized person to ride in a Department vehicle is prohibited. Unauthorized persons are those who are not engaged in official, authorized business. Official visitors or guests of the Department or City may be conveyed in vehicles, but must not respond with the vehicle in the event of an emergency call without the proper approval of the EMS Chief or his/her designee.

No unauthorized alterations or modifications shall be made to any City-owned vehicle or equipment. Any such alterations or modifications will be considered tampering with City property and therefore willful misconduct.

Members are required to make available for inspection by a superior officer any and all assigned equipment and/or gear.

Members shall return all equipment owned or issued by the Department when they retire, resign, transfer, or otherwise leave the Department. Members shall return any equipment when ordered to do so because of suspension or other absence from work.

## **VEHICLE ACCIDENT/EQUIPMENT DAMAGE REPORTING**

Members are required to immediately report all damage to vehicles and equipment and to file the required reports, which shall contain all known facts surrounding the cause and nature of the damage. In the event that municipal or squad property bears evidence of damage which has not been reported, it shall be prima facie evidence that the last person using the property or vehicle was responsible.

The Department shall review all cases of damage and loss of equipment and injury to personnel. This review may include formal panel to investigate the incident and make recommendations for corrective action to the EMS Chief or his designee.



ORDERED:



1/11/2017

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EMS Chief

Date