

# German Valley Fire Protection District



## Rules and Regulations Handbook

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## **Introducing German Valley Fire Protection District**

Your rules and regulations handbook represents a major addition to our continuing effort to provide information on the many programs, benefits and opportunities available to you. It also discusses German Valley Protection District's (also referred to as the District or Department), basic philosophy and how it shapes the organization's character.

The intent of this guide is to give you specific information about the district's policies, procedures, and services and what the District expects of you while you are working here.

The information contained in this handbook is not intended to be a complete presentation of the District's policies and programs. The governing documents in all cases will be the Rules and Regulations Handbook, individual insurance contracts, and specific state and federal government regulations and laws.

Periodically, improvements, additions, and deletions will be made reflecting changing business conditions and the needs of staff.

If you have any questions about the districts policies or benefits that this handbook doesn't answer, be sure to check with your Officer or Chief.

For the purpose of this manual the definition of member is Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain, Lieutenant, and Paid on Call Personnel.

## **DISCLAIMER**

The contents of these policies are presented for employee's information. Unless otherwise indicated in a written contract between the employee and the district, or the Illinois Fire Protection District Act, all personnel are considered employees at-will.

Nothing in these policies is intended to, or shall, create any contractual obligations of any kind. No policy, benefit, or procedure implies or may be construed to imply an obligation of the district, an employee contract, or any terms or conditions of employment. No promise of employment or employment-related benefit(s) for any specific period of time is offered, established or to be implied in or from anything in these policies. The Trustees of the District reserve the right to clarify, amend, modify, interpret, revoke, or suspend any of the policies contained herein at any time, either prospectively or retrospectively.

## **GERMAN VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

The German Valley Fire Protection was organized as a fire protection district in 1948 for portions of Stephenson, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties. The District serves approximately 67 square miles of rural, residential and commercial properties.

The District is governed by a Board consisting of three (3) individuals appointed by the Stephenson, Ogle, and Winnebago County boards serving terms of three (3) years. The function of the Board is to:

- Approve the hiring of all employees
- Approve the appointment of positions
- Approve the allocation and distribution of funds
- Approve the discipline of employees
- Appoint the Chief
- Establish Policy and Regulations of the district

The Chief of the department is responsible for all activities and functions of the fire department under the direction of the Trustees.

As a public organization, our single purpose is to serve, maintain, improve, and protect the community of the German Valley Fire Protection District. We recognize the importance of a good community image and seek to improve the community in any way possible. We recognize that the community is the reason for our presence, not the reverse. WE need the faith and trust of our residents and must continually work to deserve that confidence through our positive attitudes, conduct and accomplishments.

## **OUR MISSION**

The German Valley Fire Protection District is committed to providing high quality, responsive service, which promotes the health, safety and welfare of all individuals, and entities who reside in, work in or visit our community.

Using safe and effective methods, our members will strive to reduce the loss of life and property through effective education, prevention, fire suppression, emergency medical services and special operations.

In order to fulfill this mission, we pledge to learn from our past, train for the present, and plan for the future.

## **Risk Management Statement**

Risk management is the process of reducing the potential for damage or harm to people, property and the environment through Risk Identification, Risk Evaluation, Risk Control, and Risk Management Monitoring.

Risk management will be incorporated into all fire department activities. The Department and each member shall help prevent accidents, injuries, and exposures, and reduce the severity or probability of occupational fatalities, illness', and disabilities affecting our personnel.

## **Our Core Values**

We place a high value in treating people with dignity. We continually seek effectiveness, efficiency, and economy in everything we do as a Fire District. WE place a lot of effort on assuring continuing coordination and cooperation with various other departments and the community.

We are committed to:

- Honesty and Integrity
- Excellent Customer Service
- High Performance
- Openness and Teamwork
- Respect for Diversity
- Forward Thinking

**Ethics:** We place a high value on honesty and integrity in our work. We do not solicit nor receive gifts from those with whom we do business. Fairness and equity are always sought. We do not deal in favors and influence. We legitimately attempt to obtain the best value for the tax dollars we spend. We are judged by the public's view of our ethical and administrative standards, but feel that the bottom line should be our own strict standards of professionalism.

**Excellence:** We strive for perfection and excellence in everything we do. As an organization we want to be innovative, giving serious attention and consideration to new suggestions, ideas, and public education.

**The Public:** All citizens will be guaranteed equal protection. We will strive to treat all persons equally and not exhibit partiality for or against a person because of race, creed, or influence.

**Our Members:** We appreciate our members and encourage their participation in decisions. We recognize the importance of the work place in our individual lives and want every department position to provide and offer a meaningful, productive experience. We are interested in everyone's concepts of how to do our work better. Members are encouraged to contribute to the quality of our work through their suggestions and interpersonal relations. Members are encouraged to seek training and new experiences in order to progress personally and professionally. Our goal is to treat those with whom we deal as we would prefer ourselves to be treated. We do not believe in adversarial member relation practices. We stress unity and adult like actions. Our members are expected to be self-motivated, physically fit, and professional.

## **Administrative Statement**

The regulations apply to all members within the organizations. There may be sections, however, that will apply to specific groups of personnel and will be so designated.

The Regulations may be expressed as Statements, Rules, Policies, Procedures, and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG). Regulations represent the conduct standards for all members of the German Valley Fire Protection District.

Each member of the department is expected to operate in an ethical highly self-disciplined manner and is responsible to regulate his or her conduct in a positive, productive, and mature way. Failure to do so will result in corrective actions ranging from counseling to dismissal.

Administrative Statement Definitions:

Statement: A declaration of organizational intent.

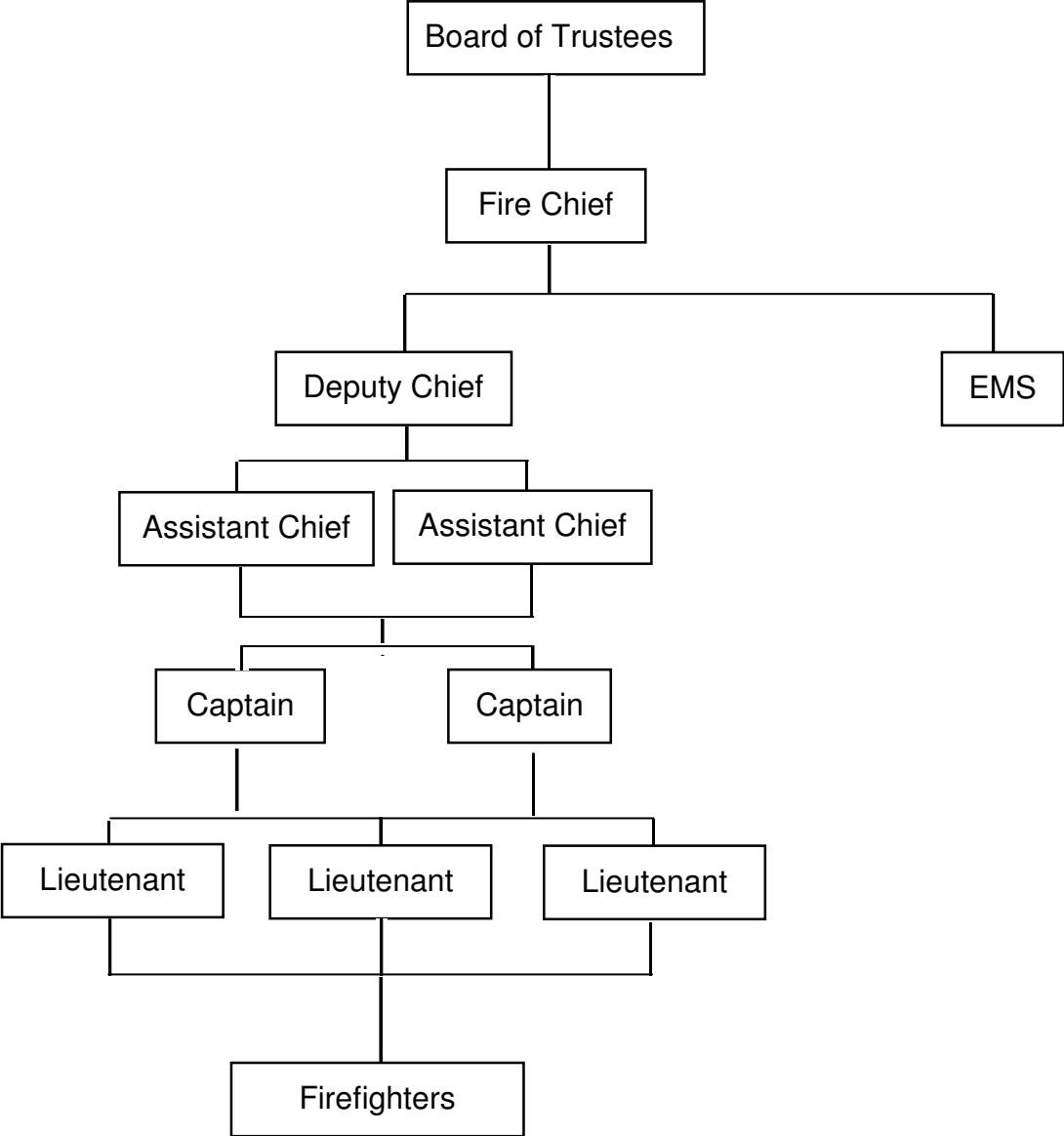
Rule: A specific course of action or conduct that must be followed; it is the simplest type of plan. When rules are violated, corrective action must be taken.

Regulation: A principle, rule, or law designed to govern behavior.

Policy: A principle or plan to follow when making decisions or taking action.

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG's): SOG's are policies and procedures for emergency scene operations. They provide a standard manner in approaching operations at emergencies, while allowing the Incident Commander the flexibility to deviate from step by step procedures, to SAFELY manage changing hazards or unpredictable emergency operations.

**German Valley Fire Protection District Organization Chart**



## **Getting Started**

This section deals with some of the fundamentals of starting employment with the German Valley Fire District.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The German Valley Fire Protection District is firmly committed to providing equal employment opportunity in all aspects of employment activity without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or any other factor of discrimination prohibited by state or federal law.

It is our policy that qualified persons are given employment consideration, and those already employed are given opportunities for advancement according to their abilities. German Valley Fire Protection District's policy and practices are based on the premise that character, loyalty, education, experience, and performance determine a person's value.

## **Residency Requirements**

All members must reside within the Fire District with exemption given by the Board of Trustees.

**Certifications/Licenses**

None required, but we recommend Fire Fighter II Certification as soon as possible.

## **Emergency Medical Technician**

Members must be certified as an EMT-B, EMT-I, EMT-P, or EMT-PHRN level or must be enrolled in the first class possible.

## **License**

All firefighters are required to have a valid Illinois class B driver's license. Any member, who for whatever reason has their license suspended and/or revoked, must immediately report that information to the Assistant Chief or Chief. Duties as a firefighter may be suspended and/or terminated until such time as the license is reinstated; however, reinstatement is contingent upon the nature of the violation, history of the individual, and past performances.

## **Hiring Procedures**

In order to be employed with the German Valley Fire Protection District, applicants must meet the aptitude and physical requirements set forth in the job description. Once employed, all members must adhere to the certification and residency requirements outlined within this handbook.

Background checks will be conducted in the hiring procedure.

Voting on new members will be done by paper ballot. To vote, a majority of active members must be present. To be elected, a simple majority is needed.

The Board of Trustees has final approval authority over any personnel hired.

## **Orientation Period - Paid on Call**

After a Paid-on-Call Personnel is accepted with the German Valley Fire Protection District, the member is regarded as being in an orientation period and will be on restricted duty for a period of one year. The primary purpose of the orientation period is to provide the individual an opportunity to experience the situations that a member encounters in day-to-day activities of the fire district.

During this orientation period, the officers and Chief will evaluate the performance of the new member.

Any member shall not drive any apparatus until passing a training given by a Training Officer and have obtained a proper license.

The firefighter is considered to have successfully completed the orientation period after one year of duty and positive reviews by the Training Officer and the Fire Chief.

After a Paid-on-Call employee completes his/her orientation period, the employee's continued employment will be subject to the Department's rules of conduct and performance standards. In no fashion does this handbook or anything else presented in verbal or written form serve as a guarantee of future employment. Members serve at will of the District and may be terminated at any time at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

## **Personnel Records**

Accurate personnel records are essential for the proper handling of many items of importance. Your Chief should be notified of any changes, such as:

- Address and telephone number
- Marital status
- Name
- Person to notify in case of emergency

The Department maintains a personnel file for each employee. The file contains the individual's employment, application, new employee documents, performance appraisals, any formal disciplinary documentation, and benefit information. The contents of employee files are strictly confidential and access is limited to authorized individuals.

An employee may ask to see his/her personnel file by contacting the Fire Chief. The employee may review his/her file in the presence of the Fire Chief/designee and may make copies of any of its contents.

## **Qualifications**

The German Valley Fire Protection District has established a base line of qualifications for all of its employees. These guidelines are to be adhered to at the time of hire and throughout the employment of the employee.

### **Driver's License**

All members shall have a valid Class B motor vehicle operator's license issued by the State of Illinois. No member shall operate emergency vehicles without an appropriate driver's license.

Members shall report any such condition affecting the status of this license to the Chief immediately. Failure to report such condition by the first working day following this condition, or failure to have the appropriate license shall be considered a violation of the Rules and Regulations of the Department and subject to investigation, with possible suspension and/or termination.

## **Physical Qualifications**

Members should notify the Chief in the event they are unable to carry out the physical requirements of the position.

## **American's with Disabilities Act**

The German Valley Fire District will fully comply with all the requirements the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) to the extent applicable.

Our policy is to not discriminate against any member because of physical or mental disability in regards to position(s) for which the employee is qualified and to treat them equally in all employment practices such as the following: rate of pay or other forms of compensation, benefits, training, promotion, transfer, or demotion and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

To the extent required by law the German Valley Fire Protection District will make reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants or employees with disabilities to enable them to perform essential job duties, unless such accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the department.

The Department will treat employee accommodation requests and related information as confidential to the maximum extent feasible.

## **Drug Testing**

Drug testing may occur if there is reasonable suspicion of an employee suspected of being under the influence of drugs or being impaired by alcohol at the workplace.

## **Reasonable Suspicion Testing**

If, at any time, there is a reasonable suspicion that a member is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, the member will be required to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. Reasonable suspicion will be determined by any two members and reporting to the highest-ranking officer available. Suspicion will be based upon observable actions, alone or in conjunction with, other factors including but not limited to:

1. Dangerous accident-prone conduct
2. Decreased job performance, which is unexplainable
3. Unexplained increased absenteeism
4. Complaints from co-workers and other problems with interpersonal relations
5. Drug related signs such as paraphernalia
6. Physical symptoms such as bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, etc.
7. Anxiety
8. Inability to concentrate

## **Drug Testing Procedure**

All members requested to take a test because of reasonable suspicion will proceed to the Department's contracted testing facility and will cooperate fully.

## **Reporting Results**

All test results will be reported to the Fire Chief. If the test is positive, the Chief will contact the applicant or member and the individual will have an opportunity to provide substantiation of legitimate use. If the Chief, in consultation with appropriate officials, deem the use as legitimate, the positive test will be reported as “negative.” If no legitimate reason for the positive is found, the positive will be provided to the Fire Chief and the Board of Trustees.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

Any member who tests positive as a result of a reasonable suspicion drug and/or alcohol test or refuses to be tested will be immediately removed from active duty until such time as the Chief is able to provide a final result. If the positive test is confirmed, the member will be subjected to discipline up to and including termination.

## **Prescription Medication**

Nothing in this policy prohibits the appropriate use of prescription medication legally prescribed by a licensed medical provider. It is the member's responsibility to discuss with the Chief any effects that a medication may have on their ability to safely perform the duties required of their position. Failure to do so may result in discipline up to and including termination.

## **Confidentiality**

Results of all drug/alcohol tests will be kept separate from personnel files and treated as confidential information and access to such results shall be limited.

## **Uniforms and Dress Code**

### **Dress Code**

Employees should wear appropriate attire when responding to calls. No pajamas or sandals are allowed.

## **Turnout Gear**

Members, when encouraged in actual fire service shall wear complete regulation “turn out” gear. The German Valley Fire District shall provide all members with the appropriate turnout. It is the responsibility of the member that all turnout gear be maintained in a clean and orderly fashion. Any needed repairs shall be reported in writing to the Assistant Chief or Fire Chief as soon as possible.

## **Facial and Head Hair - Respiratory Protection**

The NFPA and OSHA standards, as well as SCBA manufacturer's bulletins prohibit any facial hair, clothing, jewelry, or eye glasses that pass through, or may otherwise interfere with, the seal area between the SCBA face piece and the skin. The German Valley Fire District will adhere to all NFPA standards regarding facial hair.

"Beard" is defined as facial hair excluding mustache and sideburns. If you have a beard and wear an SCBA, you will assume all responsibility.

Mustaches are permitted, provided that they do not extend more than 1/2-inch beyond the corner of the mouth, and not more than 1/2-inch below the corner of the mouth. "Mustache" is defined as facial hair on the upper lip.

Sideburns are permitted, provided that they do not extend below the bottom of the outer ear opening, and not more than 1 inch in front of the ear. "Sideburns" are defined as facial hair directly in front of the ears.

## **Personal Appearance**

Maintaining a professional appearance is important for the Department. Members are expected to adhere the acceptable grooming standards, while at work and while representing the Department. The Fire Chief will have the responsibility of defining what is professional appearance.

This means that all members must have clean, combed, and well-groomed hair. Spiked, chopped-off, or hair dyed in unnatural colors is not permitted. Men's hair may be no longer than the bottom of their earlobes. Women's hair must not interfere with SCBA equipment and excessive makeup is prohibited.

Each individual is expected to be groomed in a manner that is consistent with the job performed and with community standards and in a manner that will not be offensive. Since dress is a matter of individual taste, we do not wish to set forth strict guidelines. However, all personnel will maintain a clean and neat appearance.

Finally, visible body piercing and tattoos are prohibited while on calls, when on duty, or when representing the fire department. Tattoos and body piercing will be covered while on calls or when representing the department.

Pierced ears are not considered body piercing.

## **Values and Responsibilities**

### **Code of Ethics**

The Department's reputation and the trust and confidence of those with whom we deal are among our most vital resource. Our Department is committed to conducting its affairs in a uniformly ethical manner and pursuant to a standard of fundamental honesty and fair dealing. This standard requires the adherence to all laws, regulations, and normal ethical practices that apply to the Department's activities.

**Department Loyalty:** Each member should always act in the best interests of the law and in accordance with the highest ethical standards. In doing so, each member will be acting in the Department's best interest. No member should be influenced by outside interests or relationships that jeopardize the Department's or the member's reputation and integrity.

**Preferential Treatment:** Members should avoid improper or questionable credits, rebates, discounts, or allowances on products or services of the community.

No member shall grant any special consideration, treatment, or advantage to any citizen beyond that which is available to every other citizen.

No official or member shall solicit nor accept from any person, directly or indirectly, anything of value if it could reasonably be expected to influence the official's or member's vote, action or judgement, action or inaction on the part of the member. No official or member shall grant, in the performance of his/her duties, any improper favor, service, or thing of value. Further members shall not receive any gifts in accordance with the Gift Ban Act.

**Conduct Toward the Public:** Members shall be courteous and orderly in their dealing with the public. They shall perform their duties quietly, avoiding harsh, violent, profane, or insolent language and always remain calm regardless of provocation to do otherwise.

**Use of Department Property:** No official or member shall request or permit the unauthorized use of Department-owned vehicles, equipment, materials or property for personal convenience or profit.

Citizens will be transported in Department vehicles only when necessary to accomplish a Fire Department purpose, except as approved by the Chief or Board of Trustees.

The fire department may provide service to not-for-profit groups or organizations at the

discretion of the Chief or the Board of Trustees.

Use of Fire Trucks and Equipment: No official or member shall use a truck or equipment for their own use. A 911 request must be made, or used for training, or Community Participation as parades, etc., and by order of the Chief.

Confidentiality: All members must maintain complete confidentiality in the performance of their duties. All information pertaining to emergency medical patients shall remain confidential according to applicable laws including but not limited to: HIPAA Protected Health Information Act.

Information that may be released would include the date, time, and address of the incident. The district will abide by the HIPPA regulations and personnel will consult with the HIPPA Compliance Officer when questions arise.

Information pertaining to the fires or other related emergencies could be released to the public after the report has been completed by the senior firefighter or officer in charge.

Debts, Incurring and Payment: Members shall pay all just debts and legal liabilities incurred by them. Nothing about this provision prohibits an employee from having his or her liability for debts determined by a court.

Representing Interests of the Department: No officer or member shall appear on behalf of the Department representing its interests other than those duly authorized by the Assistant Chief or Fire Chief.

Expense Accounts: All personnel ordering or picking up supplies in excess of \$100.00 shall have prior approval of trustees or Chief

## **General Duties and Responsibilities**

Every member's primary and most important responsibility is to take appropriate action to protect life and property and enforce all Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances within department jurisdiction. All members shall perform the duties assigned to them in a responsible, professional manner, adhering to all applicable laws, rules and regulations, practices, and procedures and ordinances.

Each member is responsible for acquiring the knowledge and proper operation of all the types of apparatus, tools and equipment in use in the Department and be able to operate them under the direction of their senior officer. Each member has the responsibility to maintain such apparatus, tools, and equipment (in their care or possession or as directed by their senior officer) in a clean condition and in readiness for operation at all times.

Each member is responsible for acquiring the knowledge of modern fire fighting, fire prevention, rescue work, emergency care and protocols, ventilation, and salvage operations. In carrying out these responsibilities, each member is responsible for carrying out the orders within the chain of command, and performing each duty promptly and to the best of their ability.

Each member is responsible for ensuring their knowledge as to the nature or detail of their assignment, and seeks input from their supervisor when in doubt. In addition, members have a responsibility to think for themselves, ask questions and make constructive suggestions.

Each member is responsible for maintaining good health and mental alertness, using good judgement, being prompt, and regular in attendance. Each member is responsible for treating senior officers, subordinates, and fellow members in a courteous, respectful and civil manner. Further, each member is responsible for cooperating with fellow workers and being loyal to the Department, Community, and the citizens we serve.

Finally, each member is responsible for ensuring the safety of his or her fellow employees and taking appropriate action toward aiding a fellow firefighter exposed to danger.

## Rules of Conduct

All members shall follow the regulations of the German Valley Fire District.

Fire Chief/designee: It is the responsibility of the Fire Chief/designee to develop and maintain the regulations upon approval by the Board of Trustees; ensure that all Officers know and follow the regulations; ensure that any violations are dealt with fairly, quickly, and impartially.

Officers: It is the responsibility of all Officers to supervise in an effective and considerate manner; ensure that their subordinates know the regulations; regularly check the workplace and environment to make sure that the regulations are being followed. When a deviation from the regulations is noted or reported, Officers shall take corrective action and bring that information to the Chief immediately. Additionally, Officers are required to provide guidance to their subordinates and to set the proper example.

Member: It is the responsibility of every member to establish and maintain a working knowledge of the law, ordinances in force, the rules and policies of the Department, and the orders of the Department. In the event of improper action or breach of discipline, it will be presumed that the member was familiar with the law, rule, or policy in question.

All members **SHALL**:

1. Operate in a safe and standard manner.
2. Act professionally at all times, to the public and to fellow firefighters.
3. Follow the Chain of Command.
4. Treat senior officers, subordinates, and associates with respect.
5. Be courteous and civil at all times in their relationships with one another.
6. Ensure cooperation between the ranks and units of the Department.
7. When in public, address individuals by rank.
8. Operate all Department owned vehicles safely at all times, including the wearing of safety belts.
9. Safeguard Department and personal property and valuables from theft or damage and report defective equipment or safety hazards to supervisors.
10. Use training and capabilities to protect the public at all times.
11. Observe the Sunday duty hours. EMS and Fire Sunday duty hours are Saturday 7:00 p.m. to Sunday 7:00 p.m. If unable to cover your duty, you need to find someone else to cover for you.
12. Obey the law.
13. Keep informed to do jobs effectively, and work competently in the positions to cause all Department programs to operate efficiently.
14. Follow instructions and/or orders in a positive, cooperative manner.
15. Report an injury or accident IMMEDIATELY. If you need to seek health

16. care, claim yourself an employee of German Valley Fire District.
17. While under the care of a medical provider for injury or illness, abide by all medical recommendations to facilitate recovery and keep the Chief notified of all developments.
18. Park personal vehicles in designated areas.
19. EMT's must maintain certification as required for EMT status for the time of service.

All members **SHALL NOT**:

1. Use derogatory, prejudicial, or sexually related language or behavior.
2. Engage in any activity that is detrimental to the Department to include immoral or indecent conduct.
3. Engage in a conflict of interest to the Department or use their positions with the Department for personal gain or influence.
4. Engage in fighting, threats, intimidation, horseplay, harassment, discourteous treatment, or use profanity with the public or fellow members.
5. Stealing Department or personal property of another employee.
6. Engage in insubordinate behavior such as failure or deliberate refusal to obey a lawful order or ridiculing a senior officer, his/her orders or a fellow member whether in or out of his/her presence.
7. Unauthorized disclosure or use of confidential information or records.
8. Possess, use, or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages, debilitating drugs, or any substance, which could impair physical or mental capabilities while engaged in Fire Department activities.
9. Engage in any sexual activity while on duty.
10. Violate any safety rule or practice, or engage in any conduct, which creates an unsafe work environment.
11. Violate any of the rules or regulations of the Department.
12. Bring firearms and/or weapons of any kind onto the Department property.
13. Restrict or interfere with others in the performance of their jobs, or engage or participate in any interruption of work.
14. Falsify any reports, records, statements, or information provided to, or for, the Department.
15. Falsification of employment applications or falsification of time sheets or similar internal records.
16. Falsifying or withholding information when accidents or other incidents in the Department are being investigated.
17. Disclose information or remove from the Department (without authority), Department property, records or other material, including the "pirating" of software.
18. Refuse to follow a direct order of a supervisor, unless the order violates the law or places the employee's life at extreme risk to injury or death.

19. DO maintenance on privately owned vehicles with the exception of washing said vehicles.
20. Leave the job without proper authorization from his or her supervisor.
21. Making unauthorized long distance calls.
22. Utilize the Department's computers for personal, pornographic, and/or illegal use.
23. Use Department issued cell phones for personal use while engaged in driving.

This is a representative list of rules. The District reserves the right to add, delete, and change rules as situations dictate.

## **Administrative Policies**

### **Communications/Correspondence**

It is imperative that communications within the department occur as expediently as possible; therefore, upon receiving any written, oral, or telephone message for transmission to another member, it shall be forwarded immediately.

Members are not allowed to utilize departmental letterhead or forms for private correspondence, or utilize the department address for private purposes. In addition, the department address shall not be used on any motor vehicle registration, operator's or chauffeur's license.

Unless authorized by a senior officer, members shall not send correspondence pertaining to department business.

## **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

An important part of being a firefighter for the German Valley Fire Protection District is to recognize the responsibility that each firefighter has to the German Valley Fire Protection Community to maintain high standards of personal behavior so as not to impair the excellent reputation the German Valley Fire District has achieved. The use of controlled substances is inconsistent with the behavior expected of our members. It subjects all members and citizens we protect to unacceptable safety risks, and it undermines the Department's ability to operate effectively and efficiently. For these reasons, a specific drug and alcohol policy has been established.

1. Possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs or illegal drug paraphernalia is prohibited. Any member who violates this rule shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. A person is also subject to discipline for using illegal drugs when not on duty and is also subject to discipline for using alcohol while on duty if such use impairs the person's ability to perform his/her work properly and efficiently.
2. The possession, use, sale, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty, or while on German Valley Fire Protection property is prohibited, and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
3. Members shall not bring into or keep any intoxicating liquor on departmental premises.
4. Any firefighter who violates these rules shall be subject to disciplinary action, including the requirement that the firefighter participate in an appropriate treatment program in order to remain a firefighter with the German Valley Fire Protection District.
5. Any firefighter who is charged with a drug- or alcohol-related crime must notify the Fire Chief immediately of the nature of the charges. The German Valley Fire District shall take such action as it deems appropriate after due consideration of the facts and circumstances involved. A person who is convicted of a drug- or alcohol-related crime will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.
6. Any firefighter who recognizes that he/she may have a drug or alcohol problem is encouraged to seek assistance in dealing with the problem. The disclosure of the existence of a chemical abuse problem by a firefighter seeking aid will not constitute a basis for action of a disciplinary nature. However, subsequent failure to abide by the above rules, or when required, to remain in an alcohol or drug treatment program until released by the person in charge of counseling, will not be excused or condoned and may become the subject of disciplinary action.

## **Non-Harassment**

The German Valley Fire District prohibits harassment of its members in any form. The German Valley Fire District's policy is to provide a workplace free of (1) verbal or physical harassment concerning a member's race, religion, age, handicap, and national origin and (2) unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other conduct or communication constituting sexual harassments that term is defined by state and federal law.

Verbal or physical conduct will constitute unlawful harassment when:

1. It has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
2. It has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
3. It otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to sexual conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. The submission to or rejection of sexual conduct by an individual is the basis for any employment decision affecting that individual; or
3. When sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

The German Valley Fire Protection District strongly disapproves of any form of harassment of its members by anyone either internal or external to the department. Further, harassment is strongly disapproved of regardless of whether it occurs within or outside of the department. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken promptly against any Department member engaging in unlawful harassment.

The Policy of the German Valley Fire District is to investigate thoroughly and remedy any known incidents of harassment. In order to accomplish this, all members have a responsibility to report any incident of harassment to the attention of their immediate supervisor. Members who feel aggrieved because of harassment are strongly encouraged to bring the matter to the immediate attention of a senior officer. A member who has a complaint of harassment should follow the following steps:

1. Members are encouraged, whenever appropriate, to directly inform the person engaged in harassing conduct that such conduct is offensive and must stop.
2. The member should verbally contact the Fire Chief to register a complaint of harassment.
3. In the event the Fire Chief is the person engaging in the harassing conduct, the member should verbally contact any Trustee.
4. Upon a thorough investigation, if it is determined that harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination will be taken.

To the extent possible, every reasonable attempt will be made to maintain confidentiality during the course of an investigation into a charge of harassment.

Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Fire Chief.

## **Notices / Bulletin Boards**

The German Valley Fire District maintains bulletin boards throughout its facilities to furnish you with up-to-date information on events and matters of interest to members. It is your responsibility to check the bulletin boards regularly so that you will be well informed on Department matters.

Members must obtain the permission of the Fire Chief prior to placing any notices or announcements on the bulletin board.

Bulletin boards may not be used by members or outside parties for the posting of commercial notes and advertisements, announcements and witticisms, sales of personal property, or any other matters work related or not. Members and outside parties are also prohibited from distributing literature and soliciting other members excepted as stated in the Departments solicitation and distribution of literature policy.

Members are prohibited from defacing any item found on the Department bulletin board, or the unauthorized removal of notices/information from the bulletin board.

## **No-Solicitation and Distribution of Literature**

In order to prevent disruptions in the operations of the Department and in order to protect members from harassment and interference with their work, the following rules regarding solicitation and distribution of literature on Department property must be observed. Violation of these rules will be cause for appropriate discipline.

### **Members:**

1. During work time, no member shall solicit or distribute literature to another member for any purpose unless authorized by the Fire Chief/designee for business related activities. "Working time" refers to that portion of any workday in which the member is supposed to be performing actual job duties; it does not include such times as lunch, break time, or time before or after a shift. Thus, no member who is on working time shall solicit or distribute literature to another member. No member who is on nonworking time shall solicit or distribute literature to a member who is on "working time."
2. No member shall distribute literature to another member for any purpose in working areas of the Department.
3. No member shall solicit or distribute literature to any visitor/citizen at any time for any purpose.

### **Nonmembers:**

Persons who are not employed by the Department shall not distribute literature or solicit members or visitors/citizens for any purpose on Department grounds or inside the Department facility unless approved by the Chief or Assistant Chief in advance.

## **Prohibited Activity on Duty**

Members are prohibited from engaging in the following activities while on duty:

1. No horseplay or unbecoming behavior in front of the station.
2. Conducting of private business.
3. Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (whether consensual or non-consensual) with another individual in, or on Fire Department property.

Members engaged in such activities will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Public Appearance Requests**

All requests for public speeches, demonstrations, etc., will be routed to the Fire Chief for approval and processing. Members directly approached for this purpose shall suggest that the party submit his/her request to the Fire Chief.

## **Smoking**

Because we are expected to maintain the highest possible safety conditions and because we are concerned for our member's health, you are encouraged not to smoke and are expected not to do so in restricted areas. Safe smoking habits must be observed at all times.

All members will refrain from smoking in the presence of our customers, visitors, and officials of the community.

When smoking in designated areas, please be sure to extinguish your cigarettes in the proper receptacles and not on the floor.

## **Telephone Usage / Courtesy**

All telephones in the Department have been installed for the purpose of conducting our business; thus, personal calls must be limited and should be restricted to emergency situations during production time. Personal telephone calls are to be used with discretion to leave one business line open for incoming calls. No member shall make unauthorized long distance phone calls.

## **Cell Phones**

Departmental issued cell phones are to be utilized for business reasons only. Any personal use will be subject to disciplinary action. When using a department issued cell phone and driving, the member is required to safely pull off the road while engaged in a conversation. Safe driving techniques must be adhered to ensure the safety of our members and the community.

## **Electronic Mail / Internet Policy**

Electronic Mailing and Internet use is strictly for Department use only.

## **Workplace Violence**

The German Valley Fire District is committed to providing a safe work environment free from threats or acts of violence. The German Valley Fire Protection District will not tolerate threats or acts of violence in the workplace and will make every effort to prevent such incidents from occurring.

## General Guidelines

To implement this commitment the Department is establishing a broad set of guidelines intended to aid members in addressing workplace violence, keeping in mind that each situation is different, often involving volatile, emotionally charged situations. When encountering a situation, several general principles should be kept in mind.

1. Department officers should familiarize their members with the policies of the Department that may be applicable and may assist in handling a particular situation.
2. Each member is expected to participate in maintaining as pleasant an environment for the public and other members as possible.
3. If at all possible, each member should take time to evaluate a situation before reacting. Ignoring a problem, hoping it will go away, will not make it go away, and on the contrary, may escalate past the point of positive resolution. In addition, ignoring or failing to take timely and appropriate action on a known or suspected problem could result in harm. If a member believes that he/she is in danger of immediate bodily harm, the member should attempt to leave the scene if this can be done safely. In such situations, the member or any other member observing the situation should contact the police department immediately.
4. Each member is expected to conduct himself/herself in a courteous respectful manner. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. When a member is confronted with disruptive behavior, the member should report the incident to a senior officer. When confronted with a confrontational or angry individual, the member should explain their position in clear and firm language. The member should remain in a calm and courteous manner at all times. If a member feels himself/herself becoming angry or upset or the member has difficulty resolving the matter, ask an officer for assistance.
5. Be supportive of co-workers. Develop teamwork. When any staff member becomes involved in a difficult situation, other members must report the incident to a senior officer immediately. Quick action is especially important if the member has any suspicion that the person may become violent.

## **Time Off**

### **Availability When Not On Duty**

All members are required to carry the necessary radio paging equipment on their person at all times. When "On Duty," members shall not leave the Fire District and be ready and available for all calls unless specified by the Department's code system.

## **Absences**

All members must notify the Chief or Assistant Chief as early as possible when unable to work due to illness or injury. The following information will be given to the shift officer:

- Employee's name
- Nature of illness/non-duty injury (describe)
- Expected length of time off
- Plans to see a doctor
- Telephone number where the member can be reached

## **Leave of Absence**

Members of the Department may request an unpaid leave of absence due to the member's own serious health condition for a maximum period of six (6) months. Requests must be submitted in writing with the reason for the leave and the approximate duration of the leave. All requested leaves of absence shall be subject to the approval of the Department and the Board of Trustees. Requests for leaves will be considered on the basis for the leave, the availability of substitute employees and any other relevant factors.

A serious health condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or a physical or mental condition. Examples include:

- Inpatient care - Any period of incapacity or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care.
- Absence plus treatment by a health care provider.
- Pregnancy - Any period due to pregnancy or for prenatal care.
- Permanent/long-term conditions requiring supervision. Any period of incapacity which is permanent or long-term for which treatment may be ineffective. Continuing supervision, but not active treatment, by a health care provider is required. Examples of these types of conditions include Alzheimer's, a severe stroke or the terminal stages of a disease.

The Department may require medical certification that a member is able to perform the functions of the job when a person has a serious health condition but wishes to remain on duty prior to the leave of absence. Examples of this may be pregnancy or time prior to a scheduled surgery or treatment.

When ending a leave of absence, a letter must be given to the Fire Chief or Trustees.

## **Medical Certification**

The Fire Chief and/or Board of Trustees may request certification of the illness/injury at the time of the initial request, during the course of the leave, or in the event an extension of the leave is requested. In the event of such request, medical certification not provided will terminate the leave of absence.

### **Leave of Absence Extension / Return to Work**

In the event the medical leave of absence needs to be extended, the member shall submit such request in writing to the Fire Chief for approval by the Chief and Board of Trustees. The member is expected to return to duty upon release from the medical provider. A release indicating the member is fit to perform the functions of the job, or any physical/mental restrictions is required prior to reporting back.

Reinstatement will be subject to the ability of the member to perform the duties required of the position.

### **Leaves Beyond Six (6) Months**

The Board of Fire Trustees may approve leaves extending beyond six (6) months on a case-by-case basis. The terms of the leave, length of leave, and reinstatement will be defined based of the reason for the leave and the operating requirements of the Department.

If the member is disabled beyond six (6) months the member may qualify for benefits under the Firefighters Pension plan.

## **Worker's Compensation**

To provide for payment of your medical expenses and for partial salary continuation in the event of a work-related accident or illness, you are covered by worker's compensation insurance. The amount of benefits payable and the duration of payment will depend upon the nature of your injury or illness.

## **Reporting Procedure**

If you are injured or become ill on the job, you must immediately report such injury or illness to your supervisor who will then notify the Fire Chief immediately. This ensures that the Department can assist you in obtaining appropriate medical treatment. Your failure to follow this procedure may result in the failure to file the appropriate worker's compensation report in accordance with the law, which may in turn jeopardize your right to benefits in connection with the injury or illness, **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU REPORT TO YOUR HIGHEST RANKING OFFICER ON SCENE PROMPTLY ANY INJURY, NO MATTER HOW MINOR IT MAY APPEAR AT THE TIME.**

The Chief and Assistant Chief will conduct an investigation of the work-related injury or illness. All information regarding the injury/illness, nature of illness/injury, when and where it occurred, conditions at the scene, witness statements, etc. will be gathered. The report will be reviewed by the Fire Chief and member involved in the incident for accuracy and completeness.

## **Medical Attention**

When seeking medical attention claim yourself as an employee of German Valley Fire Protection District. If immediate attention/treatment is required, the member shall notify the Fire Chief. In the mean time, the member is to proceed to either the nearest emergency care center as contracted by the District or if not applicable, the local ER. If, after receiving medical attention/treatment, the treating physician prohibits the member from returning to normal duty, the member must obtain from the physician such authorization in writing. The physician's statement must contain:

- the nature of the illness/injury
- prognosis
- type of continuing treatment
- anticipated duration and/or expected return to work, and
- next visit, (if any).

Under no circumstances will a member be released from normal duty without the authorization of a physician. The written physician authorization must be hand-delivered to the shift officer. Such authorizations may be faxed to the Department, but it will be the responsibility of the member to ensure that a senior officer has received such authorization and such absence is authorized.

The member must provide written authorization of time off after each treating physician appointment to remain away from work. Further, it is the member's responsibility to keep their assigned shift officer informed of the next physician visit, prognosis of treatment and anticipated return to duty. The assigned shift officer will then report the findings to the Fire Chief.

## **Return to Work**

No member will return to normal duty from a work-related injury or illness until authorization is received from the treating physician and a letter of return.

If the member is unable to return to normal duty, the member will obtain in writing a list of work restrictions imposed by the treating physician. The member will immediately contact the Deputy Fire Chief or Chief to see if there is work available within the listed restrictions. If there is work available, the member will be placed on light duty. The member will remain on light duty until authorization is received from the treating physician that the member may return to normal duty. During light duty, it is again the responsibility of the member to keep their assigned shift officer informed of the physician appointments, how treatment is progressing and anticipated return to normal duty.

## **False Claims**

The making of false worker's compensation claim is a violation of Illinois' criminal code, which can result in a fine and imprisonment and will result in a member's termination of employment.

## **Paid-on-Call Firefighters**

Paid-on-Call firefighters shall report to duty when responding to an alarm. Paid-on-Call firefighters shall receive a rate per hour, as determined by the Board of Trustees, for all hours worked during a call. Payment for hours worked will be made one (1) time per calendar year.

All members are to remain at their assignment and on duty until properly relieved by another member or until dismissed by a senior officer.

### **On Call - Sunday Duty**

All paid-on-call firefighters are required to be on call on a scheduled shift. During this time period, they are required to respond promptly to the Fire Station whenever the duty personnel have a call.

Fire fighters who are on-call shall not leave the Fire District and be within range of the pagers.

Sunday duty hours are 7:00 p.m. Saturday evening to 7:00 p.m. Sunday evening.

## **Time Trades**

An alternative method of satisfying members and maintaining minimum staffing is to allow time trades. If you need to trade a duty time it is your responsibility to do that.

## **Performance, Training, and Promotions**

### **Required Training**

Paid-on-Call firefighters are expected to participate in all fire training. Such participation in training is considered to be a part of your job responsibilities. Thus, all members of the Department shall attend Department drills.

EMS are required to attend a minimum of six (6) training sessions and six (6) meetings per year. Members who do not attend mandatory training sessions, or drop below the six (6) training sessions per year will be subject to discipline, including termination. It is essential for your safety, as well as the safety of coworkers and citizens, that members maintain and perfect their EMS skills.

Training attendance will be reviewed periodically throughout the year by the officers. It is essential for your safety, as well as the safety of coworkers and citizens, that members maintain and perfect their firefighting skills.

## **Training**

The Department, in addition to required training, urges all members to attend outside training events in order to maintain the required certifications - Firefighter II, CPR, Illinois Class B Driver's license, and either EMT-B, EMT-I, EMT-P, or in PHRN.

To request a training event, complete the Training request and Reimbursement form and submit it to the training officer for approval. The Department will pay for the cost of the class and hours of the class time at an hourly rate.

## **Promotions**

The Board of Trustees shall govern the promotional process within the German Valley Fire District in accordance with Illinois Law.

## **Employee Benefits**

### **Group Health Insurance**

All full-time members of the German Valley Fire District will be eligible to participate in the health insurance program for the member and his/her dependants as established by the Board of Trustees. Participation in benefits will begin in accordance with the plan.

The premium and the benefit plan will be the plan in effect at the time of employment. The Department has the right to change the benefit plan and member contributions at the renewal of the program.

## **Safety**

### **General Safety Rules**

The Department is vitally interested in your safety and health, both on and off the job. The basic Department safety policy is this: "No operating condition or urgency of service can justify endangering the life of anyone."

The safety program includes the following objectives:

- To completely integrate safety with all operations of the Department
- To provide safe working conditions
- To train members in practices for the safe conduct of their work
- To enforce safety measures

You have definite responsibilities that the Department expects you to fulfill with respect to (1) safety of yourself, (2) safety of your fellow members, (3) protection of the public, and (4) protection of Department equipment and property.

Accidents are preventable, and the Department takes every possible precaution to make your working conditions safe. Personal protective devices, gear, equipment, and special tools are provided to eliminate specific job hazards. But in the final analysis, the real safety job is up to you - you need to think, act, and work safely at all times. All of the Department's training, policies, and SOG's are designed with safety in mind. It is your responsibility to study and follow them in the performance of your duties.

## **Safety on the Apparatus Bay Floor**

Before a call, all employees should have a plan in place for childcare and for friends or family who may be with them in the event the employee is called to respond to the fire station. It is the nature of the fire service to have calls that are of extended duration.

Children may not be left unattended at the station even for short periods of time. It is expected that adults and teenagers are responsible enough to make arrangements to leave the fire station during calls.

Non-fire department employees will be allowed on the apparatus bay floor for guided tours or when accompanied by a firefighter. When apparatus are moving in or out of the fire station, during clean up process, hose loading or other times, as determined by the shift officer in charge, all non-fire department personnel will immediately leave the apparatus bay floor and go to the meeting room. This will prevent avoidable injuries to citizens or family when work is being performed on the apparatus bay floor.

## **Damaged or Misplaced Equipment**

Members shall immediately report to any officer any lost or damaged department property assigned to or used by you.

If, upon returning from an accident or scene, it is discovered that any piece of equipment belonging to another fire department is in their possession, the shift officer, shall, without delay, notify the department to which the equipment belongs.

## **Discipline and Termination**

### **Progressive Discipline**

The greatest asset the German Valley Fire Protection District has is an outstanding group of dedicated employees. Our members contribute significantly to the successful operation of this Fire Department. The German Valley Fire Protection District is constantly seeking to establish and utilize fair standards for evaluating work performance and to reward outstanding members for their achievements. The German Valley Fire Protection District also accepts the responsibility to help improve members whose work performance and efficiency have fallen below established standards. When management determines disciplinary action is appropriate, actions will be taken according to the German Valley Fire Protection District's Progressive Discipline Policy.

Normal steps in the disciplinary process are outlined here. However, based on the seriousness of the offense, the Board of Trustees may enter into any level of disciplinary action or termination.

1.           Oral Correction - The Chief will provide an oral correction to the member. A written record of this correction will be placed in the member's personnel file.
  
2.           Written Correction - If the member does not correct his/her behavior, the Chief will consult with higher management and prepare a written correction. The member will be asked to sign the correction indicating receipt of a copy, and a copy will be placed in the member's personnel file.
  
3.           Termination - When all means of discipline have been used, or when the offense justifies such action, the member may be terminated. The Chief and Board of Trustees must review all recommendations of termination. If the member is a full-time employee, the rules under the Fire District Act will be followed.

The Fire Chief and Board of Trustees reserves the right to enter any level of disciplinary action or termination based on the severity of the offense and the member's past work record.

## **Problem-Solving Procedure**

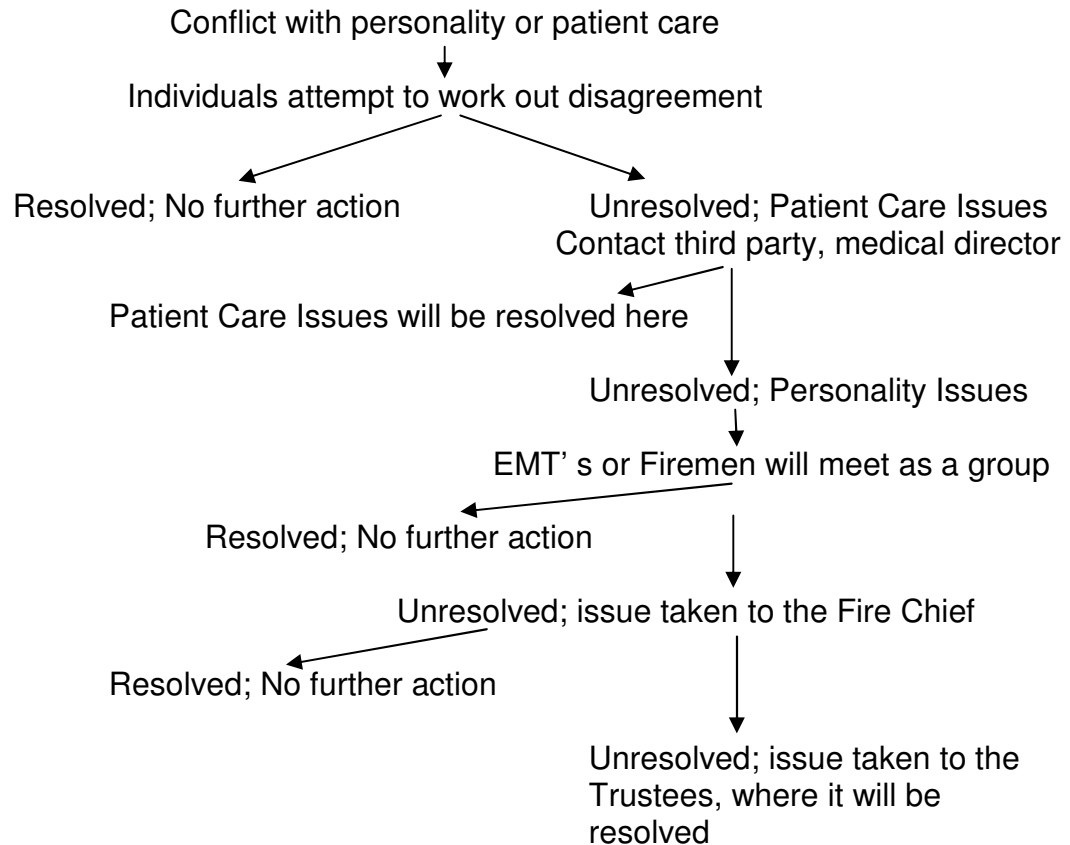
When you perceive things going wrong or when you have a question or a problem, you can expect to receive fair and objective consideration and answers without reprisal in an attempt to resolve your specific concern. This includes questions or problems concerning safety, compensation, fair treatment, supervision, discipline, policies, and practices or working conditions.

The formal procedure for seeking a solution to your complaint is as follows in the Conflict Tree:

- 1) First, the individuals should attempt to work out the disagreement on their own. If the disagreement is resolved, no further action is necessary.
- 2) If the disagreement is not resolved,
  - A. and the issue is about patient care; individuals should meet with a third party, medical director. The patient care issue will be resolved here.
  - B. and the issue is about personality conflicts; the EMT's or Firemen should meet as a group to discuss the conflict. If the issue is resolved, no further action should take place.
- 3) If the issue is still not resolved as a group, it should be brought to the Fire Chief to be discussed. Again, if the issue is resolved with the Fire Chief, no further action needs to take place.
- 4) If the issue is not resolved with the Fire Chief, the Board of Trustees will make an executive decision to resolve the issue.

## Conflict Tree

(as discussed on the previous page)



Please remember that the purpose of this complaint procedure is to give you and our Department an opportunity to clear up problems or misunderstandings of any kind. It is a formal way of ensuring that you receive proper treatment. In order for this procedure to work, you must want it to work and use it when an informal method has not worked. This complaint procedure is not intended for use by any employee after he/she has terminated employment. Members who are discharged for any reason may not use this procedure. Any member, who has resigned and later wants to rejoin, can fill out an application to join the department. See hiring procedures.

## **Termination**

Any member of the Department may resign for any or no reason.

A member who intends to resign his/her employment should send a written resignation notice to the Fire Chief.

Any member who voluntarily resigns or is terminated from employment, he/she is required to surrender all Department property in their possession upon separation from service. Any member who fails to surrender any item will be liable to reimburse the Department.

## **Exit Interviews**

Members, who voluntarily resign their employment with the Department, may be asked to either meet with the Fire Chief to discuss their experiences in the German Valley Fire Protection District.

This information will be useful in updating the Department's policies, procedures, compensation and benefit programs, and we ask for your cooperation. Your identity, with respect to your answers, will be kept confidential.

## **Responsibilities at a Scene**

The first responding officer or senior firefighter to arrive at the scene of a fire and/or incident is responsible for the following actions as they may apply to the situation: prevent injury or loss of life; protect exposures; containment of fire; and extinguish of fire.

## **Obedience to Orders**

Orders from a senior to a subordinate shall be reasonable and in clear and understandable language, civil tone, and issued in pursuit of departmental business.

Upon receipt of an order, if the order is not understandable, the member should advise the person issuing the order of this fact, and ask for clarification of the order to ensure that it is carried out as intended. Members shall not publicly criticize orders/instruction they have received.

In the event of conflicting orders, again, the member should advise the person issuing the second order of this fact. Responsibility for countermanding the original instructions then rests with the individual issuing the second order. If so directed, the latter command shall be obeyed first. Orders will be countermanded or conflicting orders will be issued only when reasonably necessary for the good of the Department.

## **Unlawful or Improper Orders**

No supervisory officer shall knowingly issue an order, which is in violation of any law, ordinance, or departmental rule.

Obedience to an unlawful order is never a defense for an unlawful action; therefore, no member is required to obey any order that is contrary to Federal or State law or local ordinance. Responsibility for refusal to obey rests with the member. He/she shall be strictly required to justify his/her action.

Members, who are given orders they feel to be unjust or contrary to the rules and regulations, must first obey the order to the best of their ability and then may proceed to appeal as provided below.

## **Appeals**

A member receiving an unlawful, unjust or improper order shall, at the first opportunity, report in writing to the Fire Chief through official channels. This report shall contain the facts of the incident and action taken. Appeals for relief from such orders may be made at the same time. Extra departmental action regarding such an appeal shall be conducted through the office of the Fire Chief