



**TAKE NOTICE THAT A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF PHARR, TEXAS
WILL BE HELD AT CITY HALL, COMMISSIONERS' ROOM,
118 S. CAGE BLVD., 2ND FLOOR, PHARR, TEXAS
COMMENCING AT 9:00 AM ON
TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024**

If during the course of the meeting, the Civil Service Commission should determine that a closed or executive session of the commission is required, then such closed or executive session or meeting is authorized by Section 551.071 to 551.084 of the Texas Government Code. Notice of closed or executive session will be given after the commencement of the meeting covered by this notice.

Should any final action, decision or vote be required in the opinion of the Civil Service Commission with regard to any item discussed during the closed meeting, then such final action, decision or vote shall be made during the open meeting covered by this notice upon the reconvening of the public meeting pursuant to Section 551.102 Government Code V.T.C.S.

In compliance with Section 551.041 et seq. of the Texas Government Code V.T.C.S. (Open Meetings Act), notice is hereby given that the Civil Service Commission will meet at the time and place indicated to consider and act upon the following:

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A) Roll call and possible action on the excusing of any absent member.

2. PUBLIC TESTIMONY: *(Ordinance No. O-2019-45). A person intending on addressing the governing body may speak at a scheduled meeting of the governing body following registration with the presiding clerk and prior to the scheduled meeting. A registered speaker may speak only on items on the agenda and may not exceed 1.5 minutes when addressing the board regarding an agenda item. A registered speaker may not donate time to another speaker. A sign-in form for public testimony shall be promulgated by the presiding clerk and be made available at the city clerk's office. A person may sign up for public testimony beginning at the time the agenda is posted for the meeting. A person may not sign up later than one hour before the posted meeting is scheduled to begin. No registered speaker may be allowed to speak regarding an item once the public testimony portion of the agenda has ended.*

3. REGULAR AGENDA - OPEN SESSION:

A) Approval of minutes for March 26, 2024 - Regular Called Meeting. **This item supports SG - Sound Governance and Fiscal Sustainability.**

AGENDA REGULAR MEETING
April 30, 2024

- B) Consideration and Action, if any, on approving and accepting the raw and final scores from the promotional exam for Lieutenant for the Police Department on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**
- C) Consideration and Action, if any, on approving and accepting the eligibility list created from the promotional exam for Lieutenant for the Police Department on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**
- D) Consideration and possible action to approve the source list for Promotional Examination for Engineer / Fire Inspector for the Fire Department. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**
- E) Consideration and possible action to approve the source list for Promotional Examination for Lieutenant for the Fire Department. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**
- F) Consideration and possible action to approve the source list for Promotional Examination for Battalion Chief for the Fire Department. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**
- G) Consideration and possible action to approve the source list for the Promotional Examination for Deputy Chief / Fire Marshall for the Fire Department. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**

4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS.

- A) Police Department and Fire Department Report
- B) Civil Service Director's Report
- C) Civil Service Board Comments

5. CLOSED SESSION: *In accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Gov't. Code, the Civil Service Board of Commissioners hereby gives notice that it may meet in closed session to discuss the items listed on the public portion of the meeting agenda, in accordance with the following below:*

AGENDA REGULAR MEETING
April 30, 2024

Pursuant to Section 551.071, the Commission may convene in a closed, non-public meeting with its attorney and discuss any matters related to **legal advice on pending or contemplated litigation, settlement offer, and/or on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with this chapter.** The City and its attorney may also discuss such issues with the appropriate staff so as to obtain necessary and relevant information so that such discussion is informative and developed.

Pursuant to Section 551.074, the Commission may convene in a closed, non-public meeting to discuss any matters related to **appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties and discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee and to hear any complaints or charges against an officer or employee.** The City and its attorney may also discuss such issues with the appropriate staff including members so as to obtain necessary and relevant information so that such discussion is informative and developed.

Pursuant to Section 551.076, the Commission may convene in a closed, non-public meeting to discuss any matters on the **deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel or devices.** The City and its attorney may also discuss such issues with the appropriate staff so as to obtain necessary and relevant information so that such discussion is informative and developed.

Pursuant to Section 551.084, the Commission may convene in a closed, non-public meeting to discuss any matters involving an **investigation and may exclude a witness from hearing during the examination of another witness in the investigation.** The City and its attorney may also discuss such issues with the appropriate staff so as to obtain necessary and relevant information so that such discussion is informative and developed.

6. RECONVENE into open session and consider action, if necessary, on any item(s) discussed in closed session.

7. ADJOURNMENT.

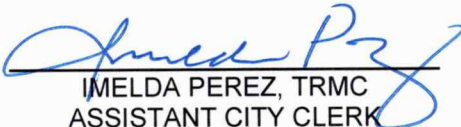
NOTICE OF ASSISTANCE AT THE PUBLIC MEETING

City Hall is wheelchair accessible and accessible parking spaces are available. Requests for accommodations or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at 956/402-4100 ext. 1016/1007 or FAX 956/702-5313 or E-mail hilda.pedraza@pharr-tx.gov or imelda.perez@pharr-tx.gov for further information. Braille is not available.

I, the undersigned authority, do hereby certify that the above notice of said Regular Meeting of the Civil Service Commission of the City of Pharr was posted on the bulletin board at City Hall and on the City's web page at www.pharr-tx.gov. This Notice was posted on the 26th day of April 2024 at 1:00 p.m. and will remain posted continuously for at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of said Meeting, in compliance with Chapter 551 of the Government Code, Vernon's Texas Codes, Annotated (Open Meetings Act).

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL, this 26th day of April 2024




IMELDA PEREZ, TRMC
ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

MINUTES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

The Civil Service Commission met in a Regular Called Meeting on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at the Commissioners' Room located at 118 South Cage Blvd., 2nd Floor, Pharr, Texas. The following is the record of attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson, Dolores Rodriguez
Vice-Chairperson, Mario Lizcano
Board Member, Vittorio Puente

STAFF PRESENT: Veronica Ramirez, HR/CS Director
Ashley Melendez, Asst. HR/CS Director
Bea Fuentes, HR Coordinator/CS assistant
Pilar Rodriguez, Fire Chief
Juan F. Gonzalez, Police Chief

ITEM 1 CALL TO ORDER

A) ROLL CALL AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE EXCUSING OF ANY ABSENT MEMBER

Chairperson Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and Roll call established a quorum.

ITEM 2 PUBLIC TESTIMONY

There were no comments from the public.

ITEM 3 REGULAR AGENDA – OPEN SESSION:

A) APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 27, 2024. THIS ITEM SUPPORTS SG- SOUND GOVERNANCE AND FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Vice-Chairperson, Mario Lizcano **moved** to approve minutes as submitted. Board Member Puente seconded the motion and when put to a vote, it was carried unanimously.

- B) CONSIDERATION AND ACTION, IF ANY, ON APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE RAW AND FINAL SCORES FROM THE ENTRY LEVEL EXAM FOR POLICE OFFICER FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT ON SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024.**

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Vice-Chairperson, Mario Lizcano **moved** to approve scores as submitted. Board Member Puente seconded the motion and when put to a vote, it was carried unanimously.

- C) CONSIDERATION AND ACTION, IF ANY, ON APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE ELIGIBILITY LIST CREATED FROM THE ENTRY LEVEL EXAM FOR POLICE OFFICER FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT ON SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024.**

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Vice-Chairperson, Mario Lizcano **moved** to approve the eligibility list as submitted. Board Member Puente seconded the motion and when put to a vote, it was carried unanimously.

- D) CONSIDERATION AND ACTION, IF ANY, ON APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE RAW AND FINAL SCORES FROM THE PROMOTIONAL EXAM FOR ENGINEER/FIRE INSPECTOR FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024.**

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Vice-Chairperson, Mario Lizcano **moved** to approve scores as submitted. Board Member Puente seconded the motion and when put to a vote, it was carried unanimously.

- E) CONSIDERATION AND ACTION, IF ANY, ON APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE ELIGIBILITY LIST CREATED FROM THE PROMOTIONAL EXAM FOR ENGINEER/FIRE INSPECTOR FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024.**

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Vice-Chairperson, Mario Lizcano **moved** to approve the eligibility list as submitted. Board Member Puente seconded the motion and when put to a vote, it was carried unanimously.

F) CONSIDERATION AND ACTION, IF ANY, ON APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE RAW AND FINAL SCORES FROM THE ENTRY LEVEL EXAM FOR FIREFIGHTER FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ON SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024.

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Vice-Chairperson, Mario Lizcano **moved** to approve scores as submitted. Board Member Puente seconded the motion and when put to a vote, it was carried unanimously.

G) CONSIDERATION AND ACTION, IF ANY, ON APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE ELIGIBILITY LIST CREATED FROM THE ENTRY LEVEL EXAM FOR FIREFIGHTER FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ON SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024.

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Vice-Chairperson, Mario Lizcano **moved** to approve the eligibility list as submitted. Board Member Puente seconded the motion and when put to a vote, it was carried unanimously.

ITEM 4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A) POLICE DEPARTMENT AND FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Pilar Rodriguez, Fire Chief, briefly reported there were three (3) vacancies, and the Fire Department would begin the hiring process for Firefighter from the eligibility list that was just approved. Chief Rodriguez also announced the 3rd annual “She’s My Hero Camp” that is scheduled for Saturday, April 27, 2024, and will not only include an introduction to the career of Firefighter, but to include PD and EMS.

Juan Gonzalez, Police Chief, reported that the department was in the process of reviewing applicants from the eligibility list created from the entry level exam for Police Officer. The Chief also added the promotional exams for Sergeant and Lieutenant that are scheduled for April 10, 2024. The Police Department is proud to announce the upcoming 10-week Community Police Academy course as well as the Badge of Youth academy for 13–17-year-olds.

B) CIVIL SERVICE DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Civil Service Director Veronica Ramirez introduced the Asst. HR / CS Director Ashley Melendez to the commission who would be the designee in Ms. Ramirez's absence and included that Jessica Ramirez from HR also frequently assists with civil service entry level testing when there are large groups.

C) CIVIL SERVICE BOARD COMMENTS

Chairperson Rodriguez introduced the item.

Civil Service members stated they had no comments at this time.

ITEM 5. CLOSED SESSION

None

ITEM 6. RECONVENE INTO REGULAR SESSION, AND CONSIDER ACTION, IF NECESSARY, ON ANY ITEM(S) DISCUSSED IN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

None

ITEM 7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before, Vice-Chairperson Mario Lizcano **moved** to adjourn. Board Member Vittorio Puente seconded the motion and when put to a vote, it was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m.

Chairperson Dolores Rodriguez

Vice-Chairperson Mario Lizcano

Board Member Vittorio Puente

APPROVED: _____



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 3.B.

DATE SUBMITTED: April 17, 2024

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT: HR

DIRECTOR: Veronica Ramirez

Agenda Item: Consideration and Action, if any, on approving and accepting the raw and final scores from the promotional exam for Lieutenant for the Police Department on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue: N/A

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation: Approval of scores from the promotional exam for Lieutenant for the Police Department as submitted.

Alternatives:

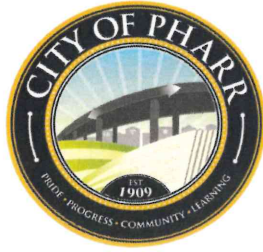
Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes
Veronica Ramirez

Created/Initiated - 4/17/2024
Final Approval - 4/24/2024



Pharr

Human Resources



OFFICE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE DIRECTOR
RESULTS PROMOTIONAL EXAM
POLICE DEPARTMENT
LIEUTENANT

		<u>Raw</u>	<u>Final</u>
1.	5679	76	84
2.	1019	71	81
3.	8958	71	81
4.	4924		67
5.	0454		65
6.	4607		54
7.	7426		46
8.	7915		42

This is a result of the promotional exam administered Wednesday, April 10, 2024, for the rank of Lieutenant in the Police Department.


Ashley Melendez, Asst. HR Director

POSTED: Wednesday, April 10, 2024



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 3.C.

DATE SUBMITTED: April 17, 2024

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT: HR

DIRECTOR:

Agenda Item: Consideration and Action, if any, on approving and accepting the eligibility list created from the promotional exam for Lieutenant for the Police Department on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue:

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation:

Alternatives:

Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes
Veronica Ramirez

Created/Initiated - 4/17/2024
Final Approval - 4/24/2024



Pharr

Human Resources



**POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROMOTIONAL EXAM
ELIGIBILITY LIST
LIEUTENANT
APRIL 10, 2024**

1. David Aranda
2. Juan Alvarez
3. Jorge Guerra

The eligibility list created for the rank of Lieutenant from the promotional exam held Wednesday, April 10, 2024 will remain in effect for a period of one year or until exhausted, Whichever date comes first.

Veronica Ramirez, Human Resources / Civil Service Director

APPROVED AND CERTIFIED BY THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024.
POSTED TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 3.D.

DATE SUBMITTED: April 25, 2024

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT: HR

DIRECTOR: Veronica Ramirez

Agenda Item: Consideration and possible action to approve the source list for Promotional Examination for Engineer / Fire Inspector for the Fire Department. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue: Replaced the current Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures with Policy Manual that was adopted on April 3, 2024.

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation: Approval of source list as presented.

Alternatives:

Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes
Ashley Melendez

Created/Initiated - 4/25/2024
Final Approval - 4/25/2024

POSTED: April 30, 2024
DO NOT REMOVE



**CITY OF PHARR FIRE DEPARTMENT
PROMOTIONAL READING LIST
ENGINEER / FIRE INSPECTOR**



THE FOLLOWING READING MATERIALS WILL BE USED TO ADMINISTER A PROMOTIONAL EXAM FOR THE RANK OF ENGINEER / FIRE INSPECTOR IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CHECK OUT, AT THE CITY OF PHARR PUBLIC LIBRARY.

City of Pharr Fire Department Rules, Regulations & Policy Manual

Effective Supervisory Practices, 5th ed., 2013, M.A. Flaherty, ed., ICMA. ISBN #978-0873267748

Pumping and Aerial Apparatus Driver/Operator Handbook, 3rd ed., 2015, IFSTA, ISBN#978-0-87939-571-1

Fire Inspection and Code Enforcement, 8th ed., IFSTA. ISBN#978-0-87939-605-3

**THE PROMOTIONAL EXAM IS OPEN TO ALL FIRE FIGHTER PERSONNEL WITH TWO OR MORE YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE, EXCLUDING PROBATIONARY PERIOD .
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT, THEY SHALL HOLD THE TCFP DRIVER OPERATOR PUMPER AND DRIVER OPERATOR AERIAL CERTIFICATIONS.**

Pharr Fire Department

Policy Manual

MISSION

To save lives, protect property and the environment while ensuring the safety and survival of its Firefighters. To provide the best possible emergency services through fire and rescue response. To promote fire safety, risk reduction, and enhance the lives of its residents and visitors through fire prevention and public education.

Pharr Fire Department

Policy Manual

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

To promptly and professionally serve the needs of our community with pride, dedication, and excellence never failing to deliver quality emergency life safety services with the highest level of integrity, commitment, teamwork, and community engagement.

Pharr Fire Department

Policy Manual

FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS

As a firefighter and member of the Pharr Fire Department, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard and preserve life and property against the elements of fire and disaster; and maintain a proficiency in the art and science of fire engineering.

I will uphold the standards of my profession, continually search for new and improved methods, and share my knowledge and skills with my contemporaries and successors.

I will not allow personal feelings, nor danger to self, deter me from my responsibilities as a firefighter.

I will at all times, respect the property and rights of all men and women, the laws of my community and my country, and the chosen way of life of my fellow citizens.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of the fire service. I will never use my official position to obtain advantages or favors for myself, my friends, or family.

I will constantly strive to achieve the objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession—saving of life, fire prevention, and fire suppression.

As a member of the Pharr Fire Department, I accept this self-imposed and self-enforced obligation as my responsibility.

Chapter 1 - Fire Service Role and Authority

Fire Service Authority

100.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to affirm the legal authority of the Pharr Fire Department and the individual members.

100.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to limit its members to only exercise the authority granted to them by law.

While the Pharr Fire Department recognizes the authority of members granted to them, members are encouraged to use sound discretion in the exercise of their authority, and this department does not tolerate abuse of authority.

100.3 ORGANIZATIONAL POWERS

This Department is authorized by Texas law and local ordinances, rules and regulations to perform fire suppression and related services including, but not limited to:

- (a) Fire risk reduction and fire code compliance/enforcement.
- (b) Fire suppression services.
- (c) Fire cause and origin investigation.
- (d) First responder for emergency medical services

100.4 FIREFIGHTER POWERS

Firefighters are sworn, appointed or elected members of this department and are authorized to exercise the following authority pursuant to applicable Texas law and local ordinances, rules and regulations:

- (a) Participate in a wide range of emergency and rescue activities, including EMS, extrication and heavy rescue
- (b) Perform fire suppression duties, including the suppression of structural, aircraft, marine, wildland and other types of fires
- (c) Investigate the cause and origin of fires
- (d) Collect and preserve evidence from the investigation of a fire
- (e) Possess peace officer status when serving as a fire investigator or Fire Marshal and duly commissioned by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, State Fire Marshal or other jurisdiction with similar authority
- (f) Perform specialty services, including hazardous materials response, technical rescue, water rescue and additional services as authorized by the Fire Chief
- (g) Provide fire code enforcement inspection and plan review services
- (h) Provide public education and fire prevention activities and services

Pharr Fire Department

Policy Manual

Policy Manual

Fire Service Authority

100.5 CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

When exercising their authority, members shall observe and comply with every person's clearly established rights under the United States and Texas Constitutions.

100.6 SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY

Any chief officer may relieve a member under his/her command from duty when, in his/her judgment, an offense committed is sufficiently serious to warrant immediate action. A report of such action shall be made immediately through the appropriate channels to the Fire Chief, followed by written documentation of the charges, in accordance with department procedures. All such processes shall comply with established rules, regulations and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Fire Chief

101.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy identifies the education, experience or certifications required and desired for the Fire Chief.

101.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to have a highly qualified Fire Chief.

101.3 FIRE CHIEF

The preferred requirements for the Fire Chief is a higher-level college degrees in public or business management, completion of the Texas Fire Chiefs Academy (TFCA), the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) Fire Service Chief Executive Officer (FSCEO), the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer (EFO) and the Center for Public Safety Excellence Chief Fire Officer (CFO) programs as well as experience in chief officer positions enhance the professional credibility of candidates for the rank of Fire Chief. The minimum requirements for the Fire Chief are as set forth by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection and Chapter 143 of Texas Local Government Code.

101.4 HEAD OF A FIRE DEPARTMENT

Head of a Fire Department status may be achieved through certification by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP). An individual must be eligible to be certified at the time of his/her appointment or become eligible within one year of the appointment, and must complete the application process described by the TCFP (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 449.1).

101.4.1 HEAD OF A SUPPRESSION FIRE DEPARTMENT

Those who have achieved Head of a Fire Department certification and will be involved in activities that include incident command, direction of firefighting activities or other emergency activities typically associated with firefighting duties, including rescue, confined space and hazardous materials response, must also complete the TCFP requirements for Head of a Suppression Fire Department (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 449.3).

Oath of Office

102.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that oaths, when required, are administered to department members.

102.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department that, when required, department members affirm the oath of their office as an expression of commitment to the constitutional rights of those served by the Department and the dedication of its members to their duties.

102.3 OATH OF OFFICE

Upon employment and when required, all sworn, appointed or elected personnel shall take and subscribe to the following oath or affirmation in addition to any other form of oath or affirmation required.

I, [employee name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Texas against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Texas; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties upon which I am about to enter.

When a person to be sworn has conscientious scruples against taking an oath, he/she shall be permitted to be affirmed. The words of the affirmation shall be the same as the words of the prescribed oath, except that the word "affirm" shall be substituted for the word "swear".

102.4 MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

The oath of office shall be filed in accordance with local and state requirements and the established records retention schedule.

Policy Manual

103.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Policy Manual of the Pharr Fire Department is hereby established and shall be referred to as the Policy Manual or the manual. The manual is a statement of the current policies, rules and guidelines of this department. All members are expected to conform to the provisions of this manual.

All prior and existing policies, manuals, orders and regulations that are in conflict with this manual are revoked, except to the extent that portions of the existing manuals, procedures, orders and other regulations that have not been included herein shall remain in effect where they do not conflict with the provisions of this manual.

103.2 POLICY

Except where otherwise expressly stated, the provisions of this manual shall be considered as guidelines. It is recognized that fire and rescue work is not always predictable and circumstances may arise that warrant departure from these guidelines. It is the intent of this manual to be viewed using an objective standard, taking into consideration the sound discretion entrusted to the members of this department under the circumstances reasonably available at the time of any incident.

103.2.1 DISCLAIMER

The provisions contained in the Policy Manual are not intended to create an employment contract nor any employment rights or entitlements. The policies contained within this manual are for the internal use of the Pharr Fire Department and shall not be construed to create a higher standard or duty of care for civil or criminal liability against the City, its officials or members. Violations of any provision of any policy contained within this manual shall only form the basis for department administrative action, training or discipline. The Pharr Fire Department reserves the right to revise any policy content, in whole or in part.

103.2.2 SEVERABILITY

In the event that any term or provision of this Policy Manual is declared illegal, invalid or unenforceable by any court or any federal or state government agency, the remaining terms and provisions that are not affected shall remain in full force and effect. If any provision of the Policy Manual is found to be in conflict with a local, state or federal law, City policy or collective bargaining agreement, such law, City policy or collective bargaining agreement shall take precedence over that provision of the Policy Manual.

In the event that any of the terms or provisions of the Policy Manual are determined to conflict with any portion of a collective bargaining agreement, the Department will seek to resolve the conflict.

103.3 AUTHORITY

The Fire Chief shall be considered the ultimate authority for the content and adoption of the provisions of this manual and shall ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state and local

Pharr Fire Department

Policy Manual

Policy Manual

Policy Manual

laws. The Fire Chief or the authorized designee is authorized to issue General Orders, which shall modify those provisions of the manual to which they pertain. General Orders shall remain in effect until such time as they may be permanently incorporated into the manual.

103.4 DEFINITIONS

The following words and terms shall have these assigned meanings throughout the Policy Manual, unless it is apparent from the content that they have a different meaning:

Adult - Any person 18 years of age or older.

City - The City of Pharr.

Civilian - Employees and volunteers who are not engaged in fire suppression as part of their primary duties.

Department/PFD - The Pharr Fire Department.

Employee - Any person employed by the Department.

Fire Code - The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code (NFPA 101), 2012 edition, which is also designated as the adopted inspection standard of the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office (Tex. Gov't Code § 417.008; Tex. Gov't Code § 417.0081; 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 34.301 et seq.; Tex. Local Gov't Code § 352.016(b)).

Firefighter/Sworn, Appointed or Elected - Those members, regardless of rank, who perform fire suppression duties as part of their primary duties as sworn, appointed or elected members of the Pharr Fire Department.

Health and Safety Officer - Members designated by the Fire Chief as responsible for the administration of health and safety-related programs and policies for the Pharr Fire Department. The Fire Chief shall assume responsibility for health and safety-related policy and program administration if there is no designee.

Manual - The Pharr Fire Department Policy Manual.

May - Indicates a permissive, discretionary or conditional action.

Member - Any person who is employed or appointed by the Pharr Fire Department, including:

- Full- and part-time employees
- Sworn, appointed or elected firefighters
- Reserve firefighters
- Civilian employees
- Volunteers

On-duty - Member status during the period when he/she is actually engaged in the performance of his/her assigned duties.

Order - A written or verbal instruction issued by a superior.

Pharr Fire Department

Policy Manual

Policy Manual

Policy Manual

Rank - The title of the classification held by a firefighter.

Shall or will - Indicates a mandatory action.

Should - Indicates a generally required or expected action, absent a rational basis for failing to conform.

Supervisor - A person in a position of authority regarding hiring, transfer, suspension, promotion, discharge, assignment, reward or discipline of other department members, directing the work of other members or having the authority to adjust grievances. The supervisory exercise of authority may not be merely routine or clerical in nature but requires the use of independent judgment.

The term "supervisor" may also include any person (e.g., firefighter-in-charge, lead or senior worker) given responsibility for the direction of the work of others without regard to a formal job title, rank or compensation.

103.5 DISTRIBUTION OF THE POLICY MANUAL

An electronic version of the Policy Manual will be made available to all members on the department network for viewing and printing. No changes shall be made to the manual without authorization from the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

Each member shall acknowledge that he/she has been provided access to, and has had the opportunity to review, the Policy Manual and General Orders. Members shall seek clarification as needed from an appropriate supervisor for any provisions that they do not fully understand.

103.6 PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE POLICY MANUAL

The Fire Chief will ensure that the Policy Manual is periodically reviewed and updated annually or as necessary.

103.7 REVISIONS TO POLICIES

All revisions to the Policy Manual will be provided to each member on or before the date the policy becomes effective. Each member will be required to acknowledge that he/she has reviewed the revisions and shall seek clarification from an appropriate supervisor as needed.

Members are responsible for keeping informed of all Policy Manual revisions.

Each Deputy Chief will ensure that members under his/her command are aware of any Policy Manual revision.

All department members suggesting revision of the contents of the Policy Manual shall forward their written suggestions to their supervisors, who will consider the recommendations and forward them to the command staff as appropriate.

Chapter 2 - Organization and Administration

Organizational Structure

200.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the organizational structure of the Pharr Fire Department. This policy also provides guidance regarding the department's reporting process through the chain of command.

200.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to organize its resources in a manner that allows for effective and efficient service delivery to the public. To ensure effective organizational communication, members should generally adhere to the established chain of command unless there is a good faith and reasonable basis for utilizing an alternate channel of communication.

200.3 DIVISIONS

The Fire Chief is responsible for managing the Pharr Fire Department. The following Divisions make up the Pharr Fire Department:

- Administration Division
- Fire Operations Division
- Fire Prevention Division
- Training and Compliance Division

200.3.1 ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

The Administration Division is directed by an Assistant Chief and provides administrative support to the Fire Chief; prepares and coordinates the department budget; acts as liaison with the Department of Human Resources regarding recruitment, promotion and performance appraisals; manages information technology systems and payroll functions; and reviews, prepares and presents staff reports to the Department, the City staff and City officials.

It is the responsibility of the Administration Assistant Chief to prepare and maintain a current organizational chart.

200.3.2 FIRE OPERATIONS DIVISION

The Fire Operations Division is directed by a Deputy Chief. The Fire Operations Division responds to all fire, rescue and medical aid calls for service; manages major disaster responses; and staffs various emergency response apparatus and support units.

200.3.3 FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION

The Fire Prevention Division is directed by a Fire Marshal with the rank of Deputy Chief. The Fire Prevention Division's mission is to engage in investigation, education, prevention and mitigation of fire incidents or accidents.

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The Fire Prevention Division performs inspections of businesses and occupancies as mandated by applicable law. In addition, the Division may be the lead agency or act as a support service in the investigation of all major fires occurring within the jurisdiction of the Pharr Fire Department.

200.4 UNITY OF COMMAND

The principles of unity of command ensure efficient supervision and control within the Department. Generally, each member is accountable to a single supervisor at any time for a given assignment or responsibility. Any supervisor may temporarily direct the subordinate of another supervisor where specifically delegated or if an operational need exists.

200.5 CHAIN OF COMMAND

Respect for rank is essential for administrative and operational efficiency. All members of the Pharr Fire Department shall adhere to the chain of command. All members shall be thoroughly familiar with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) and operate within their parameters throughout the duration of all emergency incidents.

A supervising or commanding officer will be identified for each department member. This supervisor/commanding officer is the first step in the organizational chain of command, followed by the next level of commanding officer as set forth in the department's organizational structure. In the event that no supervisory officer is available, rank will be determined by seniority in rank.

Members of the Pharr Fire Department shall generally conduct department business through the established chain of command. Members shall consult with and report to their commanding officer/supervisor when making recommendations for changes, alterations or improvements concerning department matters. Members shall forward all reports and recommendations through the chain of command. The submission should include written comments from the member's immediate supervisor to indicate whether he/she approves of the recommendation. No memo or recommendation should be stopped in the chain of command before it reaches its intended destination/officer.

Other than the exceptions set forth below, no member of the Pharr Fire Department shall initiate contact with any member of the governing board or with any other local, regional, state or federal official regarding any matter affecting the Pharr Fire Department without having first informed the Fire Chief through the chain of command.

[Organizational Chart 2023](#)

200.6 DIRECTIVES AND ORDERS

Members shall comply with lawful directives and orders from any department supervisor or person in a position of authority, absent a reasonable and bona fide justification.

A member who believes any written or verbal order to be unlawful or in conflict with another order shall:

- (a) Immediately inform the supervisor issuing the order, and also the member's immediate supervisor or the Fire Chief, of the conflict or error of the order.

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- (b) Provide details explaining the grounds for believing there is a conflict or error.
- (c) Request clarification, guidance, and direction regarding following the order.
- (d) Request the order in writing, absent exigent circumstances, should the conflict or perceived error be unresolved.
- (e) Respectfully inform the supervisor of the intention to disobey what is reasonably believed to be a conflicting or unlawful order.

A member's decision to disobey an order that is believed to be unlawful is not a bar to discipline should the order be determined as lawful.

200.7 ALTERNATE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

All members shall endeavor to keep their supervisors informed of any matters that may affect the safety, welfare, or operations of the Department.

As a general matter, any concern about a workplace situation should first be raised with the member's immediate supervisor. It is recognized, however, that there may be occasions where the use of the established chain of command may not be appropriate. If an issue is of a personal nature, involves a sensitive matter, is of significant importance to the Department, or involves other members or supervisors, the member may consult directly with the Deputy Chief, the Fire Chief, or a representative of the Department of Human Resources.

All members are free to make or prepare to make, in good faith, any complaint that identifies ethical or legal violations, including fraud, waste, abuse of authority, gross mismanagement, violations of the law, or practices that may pose a threat to the health, safety, and security of the public or members without fear of actual or threatened discrimination, retaliation, or reprisal. Such complaints are not subject to the chain of command and may be made to any supervisor or directly to the Department of Human Resources. Nothing in this policy shall diminish the rights or remedies of a member pursuant to any applicable federal law, provision of the U.S. Constitution, applicable state law, ordinance, or collective bargaining agreement.

Any form of reprisal or retaliation against any member for making or filing a complaint in good faith or for participating in the investigation of a complaint is prohibited. Any member engaging in any form or type of reprisal or retaliation is subject to discipline (see the Anti-Retaliation Policy).

Emergency Action Plan and Fire Prevention Plan

201.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide for member and visitor safety in the event of an emergency at any department facility.

201.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department is committed to preparing for natural or human-created emergency incidents and providing for the safety of its members and visitors.

201.3 EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN AND FIRE PREVENTION PLAN

The Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Marshall will develop and maintain an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and Fire Prevention Plan (FPP) to provide for the safety of department members and visitors in the event of an emergency. The EAP and FPP should address the specific elements that follow and should address all buildings, facilities and regular places of work or visitor access that are controlled by the Department. The plan also should address actions that members of the Department and visitors must take to ensure their safety from fire and other emergencies.

- (a) The EAP should be in writing and at a minimum shall include:
 - 1. Emergency escape procedures and emergency escape route assignments.
 - 2. Procedures to be followed by members who conduct critical facility operations before they evacuate.
 - 3. Procedures to account for all members and visitors after an emergency evacuation has been completed.
 - 4. Rescue and emergency medical duties.
 - 5. Means of reporting fires and other emergencies.
 - 6. Names or job titles of persons or departments that can be contacted for further information or an explanation of duties under the plan.
 - 7. The alarm system that will be used to notify members and visitors in the event of a fire or other emergency situation.
 - 8. The types of evacuations to be used in emergency circumstances.
- (b) The FPP should be in writing and at a minimum should include:
 - 1. A list of major fire hazards, including proper handling and storage procedures for hazardous materials, potential ignition sources and control procedures and the type of fire equipment necessary to control the hazard.
 - 2. Names and job titles of persons responsible for maintaining the equipment to prevent or control sources of ignition or fires.
 - 3. Names and job titles of persons responsible for control of fuel source hazards.
 - 4. Procedures to control the accumulation of flammable and combustible waste.

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Emergency Action Plan and Fire Prevention Plan

- 5. Maintenance procedures for heat-producing equipment to prevent accidental ignition of combustible materials.
- (c) The written EAP and FPP should be kept at each department workplace or facility and should be made available for member and visitor review.

201.4 TRAINING

The Department should provide training supporting the EAP and FPP to all members and also to those persons who become members at the time they are assigned to the facility, as described in the Emergency Action Plan and Fire Prevention Plan Training Policy.

General Orders

202.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process to make immediate changes to department policy. The Pharr Fire Department will, as necessary, issue General Orders that will immediately modify or change and supersede the sections of this manual to which they pertain.

202.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to make any immediate changes to policy and procedure in accordance with the current local ordinances, rules or regulations, or any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Generally, the establishment of General Orders is management's prerogative but employee participation may be sought in the development of those policies.

202.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee shall issue all General Orders.

All department officers and/or supervisors shall be responsible for communicating General Orders to all members under their command and/or direct supervision.

General Orders will be rescinded upon incorporation into this manual.

All General Orders shall be reviewed annually to authenticate or determine if they are currently applicable to the mission of the Department.

Training Policy

203.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the policy of this department to administer a training program that will provide for the professional growth and continued development of its members as well as comply with Texas law. By doing so, the Department will ensure its members possess the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a professional level of service that meets the needs of the community.

203.2 POLICY

The Department seeks to provide ongoing training and encourages all members to participate in advanced training and formal education on a continual basis. Training is provided within the confines of funding, the requirements of a given assignment, staffing levels and legal mandates.

Whenever possible, the Department will use courses certified by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or other accredited entities.

203.3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the training program are to:

- (a) Enhance the level of emergency services to the public.
- (b) Increase the technical expertise and overall effectiveness of department members.
- (c) Provide for continued professional development of department members.
- (d) Reduce risk and enhance safety.

203.4 TRAINING PLAN

A training plan will be developed and maintained by the Training Captain. It is the responsibility of the Training Captain to maintain, review and update the training plan on an annual basis, ensuring that all mandated training is achieved. All training records will be maintained in accordance with established records retention schedules.

203.5 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Training Captain will conduct an annual training needs assessment. The needs assessment will be reviewed by command staff. Upon approval by the Fire Chief, the needs assessment will form the basis of the training plan for the following year.

Liability Claims

204.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the management of all claims, including personal injury and property loss or damage, filed against the Department.

204.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to evaluate and resolve claims in a timely manner, as appropriate.

204.3 RESPONSIBILITY

The Fire Chief should designate a risk manager to receive, investigate and evaluate any claim for loss or damage received by the Department.

Any member of this department who becomes aware of any potential for a claim or lawsuit, or who receives a formal written claim against the Department, shall forward the information to the risk manager as soon as practicable.

204.4 RESPONSE TO CLAIMS

The risk manager will investigate all claims for money or damages received and will resolve claims as appropriate and within guidelines approved by the Fire Chief and the department's governing body.

The risk manager should ensure the claim is accepted or rejected. Notice of acceptance or rejection should be given to the claimant in writing and in compliance with state law. If a claim is rejected because it was filed late, the notice should state that the claim was returned as untimely.

Electronic Mail

205.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use and application of the electronic mail (email) system provided by the Department.

205.2 POLICY

Pharr Fire Department members shall use email in a professional manner in accordance with this policy and the Texas Public Information Act.

205.3 PRIVACY EXPECTATION

Members forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to emails or anything published, shared, transmitted or maintained through file-sharing software or any Internet site that is accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed on any department technology system.

The Department reserves the right to access, audit and disclose, for whatever reason, any message, including attachments, and any information accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed over any technology that is issued or maintained by the Department, including the department email system, computer network or any information placed into storage on any department system or device. This includes records of all key strokes or Web-browsing history made at any department computer or over any department network. The fact that access to a database, service or website requires a user name or password will not create an expectation of privacy if it is accessed through department computers, electronic devices or networks.

205.4 RESTRICTED USE

Messages transmitted over the email system are restricted to official business activities, or shall only contain information that is essential for the accomplishment of business-related tasks or for communications that are directly related to the business, administration or practices of the Department.

Sending derogatory, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, sexually suggestive, harassing or any other inappropriate messages on the email system is prohibited and may result in discipline.

Email messages addressed to the entire department are only to be used for official business-related items that are of particular interest to all users. In the event that a member has questions about sending a particular email communication, the member should seek prior approval from his/her supervisor.

It is a violation of this policy to transmit a message under another member's name or email address or to use the password of another to log into the system unless directed to do so by a supervisor. Members are required to log off the network or secure the workstation when the computer is unattended. This added security measure will minimize the potential misuse of a member's email, name or password.

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Electronic Mail

205.5 EMAIL RECORD MANAGEMENT

Email may, depending upon the individual content, be a public record under the Texas Public Information Act and must be managed in accordance with the established records retention schedule and in compliance with state law (Tex. Gov't Code § 552.002).

The Custodian of Records shall ensure that email messages are retained and recoverable as outlined in the Records Management Policy.

Administrative Communications

206.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines, format and authority levels for the various types of administrative communication documents in existence within the Department.

206.2 POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to control the use of the name of the Department and the use of letterhead, and to ensure that official administrative communications follow a specific format and are released only by persons with the authority to do so.

206.3 PERSONNEL ORDERS

Personnel orders may be issued periodically by the Fire Chief to announce and document promotions, transfers, hiring of new personnel, separations, personnel and group commendations, or other changes in status.

206.4 CORRESPONDENCE

In order to ensure that the letterhead and name of the Department are not misused, all external correspondence shall be on department letterhead.

All department letterhead shall bear the signature element of the Fire Chief in addition to the actual signature of an authorized signer. Members of the Department may use letterhead only for official business and with approval of their supervisor.

206.5 MEMORANDUMS

Memorandums are a necessary and important component of effective operations at all levels of the Department. For the purposes of clarity and to ensure appropriate distribution of written communications, all memorandums between department members shall utilize a standardized format.

Memorandums typically are used to memorialize and/or summarize communication and facts. Memorandums can be generated by a supervisor and sent to subordinates or a group of subordinates to give direction, clarify a policy decision or request an action by another division. A memorandum also may be written by line-level members to communicate information. If the recipient is of higher rank than the member's immediate supervisor or is outside the Department, the information should be approved by the proper chain of command before being forwarded to the recipient.

Recommendations for a standardized department memorandum format include:

- A standard heading, including the name of the Department.
- The date of the memorandum.
- The intended recipient of the memorandum.
- The name, rank and division of the department member creating the memorandum.

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Administrative Communications

- A brief statement of the subject of the memorandum.

206.6 FACSIMILE COVER SHEETS

All outgoing facsimile transmissions should include a standard department cover sheet as the first page of the transmission. The name of the member sending the facsimile should be clearly printed on the cover sheet along with all other pertinent information.

206.7 SURVEYS

All surveys made in the name of the Department shall be authorized by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

Minimum Staffing Levels

207.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for unit staffing levels based on daily operational needs, and unique local or regional circumstances, consistent with any collective bargaining agreement.

Staffing levels may be established through adopted Standards of Cover or at levels approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), the Fire Chief and any collective bargaining agreement.

207.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Qualified - Any member who has satisfactorily met the requirements for the position (e.g., engineer, Lieutenant), either through promotional examination or a training program approved by the Department.

Out of class assignment - Any situation in which a member of the Department functions in a supervisory rank above his/her normal position description and job duties.

207.2 POLICY

The Department balances the member's needs and wishes with the need to have flexibility and discretion in using personnel to meet operational needs. While balance is desirable, the principle concern is the need to meet the operational requirements of the Department and to specify an adequate number of personnel to safely conduct emergency scene operations (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.15).

207.3 OUT OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS AND SUPERVISION

In order to accommodate operational flexibility and other unforeseen circumstances, any firefighter if qualified, may be used as an engineer for a limited time consistent with any existing and applicable collective bargaining agreement or any engineer, if qualified, may be used as a Lieutenant for a limited time consistent with any existing and applicable collective bargaining agreement.

With prior authorization from the Deputy Chief or the authorized designee, a qualified Lieutenant may act as the Battalion Chief for a limited time.

Decisions regarding supervision should result in each firefighter and engineer being supervised by a single Lieutenant or acting Lieutenant. Each Lieutenant should be supervised by a Battalion Chief or an acting Battalion Chief.

207.4 MINIMUM STAFFING GUIDELINES

In order to meet operational needs, the following minimum staffing guidelines should be followed whenever practicable:

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Minimum Staffing Levels

- (a) Engine companies should be comprised of a minimum of one Lieutenant, one engineer and two firefighters.
- (b) Ladder trucks or aerial units should be comprised of a minimum of one Lieutenant, one engineer and two firefighters.
- (c) Rescue squads should be staffed with one engineer and one firefighter

If staffing falls below minimum guideline levels, the Battalion Chief shall have the authority to call back a sufficient number of personnel to fill vacancies. This includes holding over personnel from a previous shift.

The Lieutenant is responsible for promptly notifying the Battalion Chief in the event that the number of available on-duty personnel falls below the recommended minimum staffing guidelines.

Should a situation arise where an apparatus responds with less than the minimum number of qualified personnel, the officer in charge should notify Fire Com that the unit is understaffed and request that an additional unit respond, if necessary.

Post-Incident Analysis

208.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform Post-Incident Analysis (PIA) to identify strengths and weaknesses within the Department. This policy describes the various types of PIA that can be used in the evaluation of department performance. A PIA may also be used to identify equipment needs, staffing deficiencies and training needs. The information collected during the PIA process also may be useful in justifying future funding requests for equipment, personnel and/or training.

208.2 POLICY

The PIA is a valuable tool to improve the overall operations of the fire service. It is the policy of this department to use the PIA as a tool for Incident Commanders (ICs), Fire Marshals, Battalion Chiefs, Shift Commanders and command staff to identify areas of strength and weakness within the Department on an incident-by-incident basis, for the purpose of continuous improvement.

The PIA may additionally be utilized in department-wide training to communicate continuous improvement of emergency scene operations and fireground safety.

208.2.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

The ICs, Fire Marshals, Battalion Chiefs, and command staff have shared responsibility for the overall effectiveness of the PIA process.

The IC should informally analyze every incident to improve personnel, unit and system performance. After every major incident or special event, the IC should develop a PIA to determine strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned about the incident operation.

Anyone may request a PIA of a particular incident. Any PIA requests must be made through the chain of command.

Any significant safety issue that is identified in the PIA should be addressed immediately, if it was not already resolved prior to the PIA being completed. If appropriate, a report should be sent to the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Near-Miss Reporting System on any significant safety issues.

208.3 POST-INCIDENT ANALYSIS

A PIA should be completed within 30 days of an incident and may result in recommendations for changes to procedures, staffing, equipment use, policy and/or training to better enable the Department to serve the community.

A PIA should include lessons learned from the observation of effective and efficient methods of mitigating a major incident. These include all strategic decisions, operational issues, built-in fire protection devices and anything else that assisted in mitigating the incident.

(a) A PIA may include:

1. Evaluation of the overall operational effectiveness.

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Post-Incident Analysis

2. Evaluation of safety procedures.
 3. Evaluation of the success or failure of tactical objectives.
 4. Evaluation of the application and effectiveness of policies and/or procedures.
 5. Specific knowledge that might be beneficial.
- (b) The information gained from a PIA should be used by Lieutenants and staff teams to:
1. Reinforce the incident management system.
 2. Evaluate current training programs and/or identify training needs.
 3. Evaluate current policies and procedures.
 4. Identify and prioritize planning needs for the future.
 5. Identify equipment problems/concerns.
 6. Evaluate fire prevention inspection and public education effectiveness.

208.4 TYPES OF POST-INCIDENT ANALYSIS

208.4.1 HOT WASH

An incident "hot wash" should be performed at the incident scene prior to the release of equipment or personnel. A hot wash is a meeting of all involved personnel on-scene. It is an informal briefing of the incident, the actions taken and problems encountered. An IC may present an analysis with key companies or crews while they are on-scene. The advantage to this is that crews are present and all aspects of the call are still fresh. One disadvantage to a hot wash might occur at medical incidents, when some members may be caring for patients and are unable to participate.

If the analysis takes place while on-scene, it is the responsibility of the IC to:

- Meet in a safe area, even if it requires relocating to another area.
- Ensure that the meeting area is inaccessible by the public and media.
- Consider the impact of company downtime.
- Consider public perception.

208.4.2 INFORMAL PIA

An informal PIA is used following smaller multi-company incidents, such as structure fires, medical incidents or special operations incidents. The IC or a designated representative should arrange for and conduct the informal analysis.

208.4.3 COMPANY-LEVEL PIA

A company-level PIA is highly encouraged and should be a standard communication tool for all Lieutenants. It is appropriate for significant incidents involving single companies as well as multiple-company stations where more than one company participated in the incident.

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Post-Incident Analysis

Company-level analysis promotes unity and teamwork, enhances communication, improves company performance and is a useful tool for evaluating the health and welfare of crew members following certain traumatic incidents. A company-level PIA can take place while at the fire station or any location that provides privacy.

208.4.4 FORMAL PIA

- (a) A formal PIA should be conducted following all:
 - 1. Multiple-alarm structure fires.
 - 2. Multiple-alarm brush fires.
 - 3. Multiple-alarm mass casualty incidents.
 - 4. Multiple-alarm special operations incidents.
 - 5. Major disaster drills.
 - 6. Unusual incidents identified by the IC or other staff officers.
- (b) A formal PIA should be considered for:
 - 1. A building fire in which 30% or more of the structure is severely damaged by fire, or where unusual extinguishment problems existed.
 - 2. Any incident in which an unusual event occurs (e.g., explosion, collapse).
 - 3. Any fire resulting in a fatality.
 - 4. Any fire resulting in injury to firefighters that is serious enough to require transport to a medical facility.
 - 5. Any "close call" incident where firefighters could have been injured.
 - 6. Any hazardous materials incident with multi-company involvement.
 - 7. Any specialty rescue operation with multi-company involvement.
 - 8. Any incident, at the IC's discretion or at the request of a Lieutenant.
- (c) The Training and Compliance Division Deputy Chief is responsible for scheduling and facilitating the presentation of all formal PIAs. This will include:
 - 1. Setting a presentation date and location within three days (whenever possible) of the incident.
 - 2. Supervising the completion of an incident analysis packet that should include a summary of the incident, drawings and identification of any lessons learned.
 - 3. Developing a written After Action Report (AAR) summarizing the PIA and submitting it to the Fire Chief for approval and distribution.
 - 4. Notifying Shift Commanders.
 - 5. Coordinating/scheduling with other departments or outside agencies that worked the incident.
 - 6. Arranging move-up and/or cover companies from other departments.

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Post-Incident Analysis

The Shift Commander is responsible for notifications to all members of the shift who are scheduled to attend the PIA. All members should be notified within one week if a formal PIA is being arranged to allow them to prepare or gather any necessary documentation.

Copies of the AAR should be posted at each fire station for all personnel to review.

A copy of all PIAs and AARs shall be forwarded to the Fire Chief for approval prior to distribution, including any determinations or conclusions reached through the PIA presentations.

Annual Planning Master Calendar

209.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the development of a master schedule of annual activities that will assist with the overall planning and coordination of department resources, training and other activities.

209.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Target hazard - A building or occupancy that is unusually dangerous in terms of life loss, or that has a high potential for property damage. A target hazard is often the subject of a target hazard assessment and training by virtue of its potential to overload equipment and personnel resources; involve atypical hazards; require special technical advice; require a multi-agency response; involve complex firefighting operations; and have a significant impact on the community if the building or occupancy were destroyed.

209.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department will establish, update and maintain a master schedule of annual activities to facilitate the overall planning and coordination of activities and resources.

209.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assistant Fire Chief or his designee is responsible for creating and maintaining a calendar that includes a schedule of all training required in compliance with state and federal regulations, required inspections and other significant activities. The calendar should include at a minimum:

- (a) All necessary National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) certification training.
- (b) All required Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and EMT-Paramedic (EMT-P) recertification training as necessary to meet the local Emergency Medical Service (EMS) authority, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and National Registry requirements.
- (c) Training required for maintaining competencies in job-specific duties and functions, including emergency response roles, the Incident Command System (ICS) and other required TCFP specialty training, in addition to hazardous material training, wildland interface training and target hazard training as required by federal, state and local law or regulatory agency. Training may include manipulative exercises, didactic classroom work and simulations.
- (d) An annual vehicle inventory.
- (e) An inspection and review of all plot plans and pre-fire plans.
- (f) Protective clothing inspections.
- (g) Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) inspections and testing.
- (h) Hose and ladder inspection, including aerial inspections.

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Annual Planning Master Calendar

- (i) Vehicle and pump capacity inspection and testing.
- (j) Annual medical evaluation of personnel.
- (k) Annual quantitative and qualitative fit testing of respiratory protection devices.
- (l) Training for certain members pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act.
- (m) All other training and inspections required by any federal, state or local agency.

Solicitation of Funds

210.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that fundraising activities associated with the Department are consistent with its mission, values and legal status. This policy applies to all fundraising activities involving the Department or the use of the Department name, insignias, equipment or facilities.

210.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Fundraising - The collection of money through donations, sales or event programming for the purpose of charitable donation or organizational budget enhancement.

210.2 POLICY

It shall be the policy of this department that all fundraising activities involving on-duty members or use of department equipment for the financial benefit of the Department, must be authorized by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee prior to initiating solicitations.

Authorized fundraising activities should not indicate or imply that a donation will influence services provided by the Department. Members engaged in fundraising activities are expected to act ethically regarding the solicitation of funds, the interaction with donors or potential donors and the maintenance of fundraising records.

210.3 GUIDELINES

Fundraising activities or events involving the Department should incorporate:

- (a) Compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- (b) Compliance with department and governing-body policies.
- (c) A benefit to the Department that is consistent with the department mission.
- (d) An accurate description of the purpose for which funds are requested.
- (e) A limitation on the frequency of solicitations to avoid placing undue pressure on donors.
- (f) Identification of the individual soliciting funds as a volunteer, a member of this department or a hired solicitor.
- (g) An admonishment that encourages donors to seek independent advice if there is reason to believe that a proposed gift might significantly affect the donor's financial position, taxable income or relationship with other family members.
- (h) The assurance that donor requests to limit the frequency of contacts, to prohibit solicitation by telephone or other technology and to reduce or cease sending printed or electronically transmitted material concerning the Department will be honored.

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Solicitation of Funds

- (i) Respect of donors' privacy and a commitment that the Department will not sell donors' names and contact information.

Commercial or corporate sponsorship of fundraising activities or events may be allowed provided that it has been preapproved by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

210.4 DEPARTMENT-SPONSORED EVENTS

The following also apply to department-sponsored fundraising events:

- (a) Fundraising events should be clearly identified by a sign indicating the name, product, service, price and purpose of the event.
- (b) At least one member should be present during the entire event.
- (c) Individuals participating in the event should be briefed and supervised to ensure their activities are consistent with this policy.
- (d) Individuals participating in the event should not be compensated by a commission or a percentage of the amount collected.
- (e) Funds raised should be deposited no later than the next business day.
- (f) All donors should receive a receipt for the amount of their donation. In efforts involving a less formal "drop" collection, receipts need not be issued unless requested.
- (g) Fundraising activities should not delay emergency response or otherwise compromise the mission of the organization.
- (h) Fundraising that takes place on public-owned or private property will be done with the knowledge and approval of the property custodian or owner.
- (i) Fundraising that occurs on public ways or near roadways will be coordinated with the responsible law enforcement agency for the protection of pedestrians, motorists and event participants. Proper safety apparel shall be worn when in roadways or traffic areas.

210.5 FUNDRAISING ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Fundraising for the benefit of a nonprofit charitable third party (e.g., blood drive, burn victims, surviving families) having no direct affiliation with the Department is permissible provided that the fundraising standards and event prerequisites listed above are followed.

Any materials associated with a third-party fundraising activity shall be approved by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee prior to the activity. In addition, there should be a written agreement between the Department and the organizers of the activity that includes:

- (a) Written verification that the event is for a charitable purpose.
- (b) Assignment of responsibility to the organizers for all direct costs incurred for the event.
- (c) Assignment of responsibility to the organizers for the collection and reporting of any applicable taxes.

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- (d) Written instructions regarding the maintenance of funds raised on behalf of others. The funds shall be maintained in a separate fund and not commingled with other department funds.

The Department reserves the right to require additional conditions including, but not limited to, evidence of insurance coverage or appropriate indemnification.

Physical Asset Management

211.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for maintaining a system of inventory and accountability over the department's physical assets.

211.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Physical assets – Any tangible items of value, including but not limited to:

- Materials.
- Machinery.
- Tools and equipment.
- Apparatus, command and support vehicles.
- Office supplies.
- Furniture.
- Firefighting tools and appliances, including hose, power tools, and communications devices.

Physical asset management – The process of tracking and maintaining the department's physical assets.

211.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the department to accurately inventory, track, maintain, and dispose of its physical assets owned by the Department in a manner that controls costs, avoids waste, and promotes the department's mission.

211.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee should be responsible for the inventory, maintenance, and disposal of department physical assets, including:

- (a) Maintaining compliance with federal, state law, and local laws regarding physical asset management, inventory control, and reporting requirements.
- (b) Maintaining compliance with any grant requirements associated with physical asset purchases.
- (c) Developing procedures for the implementation of this policy, including:
 1. Procedures for disposal of all department-owned physical assets in accordance with federal, state, and local law.
 2. Procedures for safe disposal of hazardous waste.
 3. Procedures for handling surplus and obsolete physical assets.

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4. Procedures to inventory assets according to internal reporting deadlines (e.g., quarterly, annually).
- (d) Developing a physical asset management plan to track the department's physical assets and maintain accurate and complete records related to these assets. The plan should include:
 1. A minimum value of the physical assets that are subject to this policy, the plan, and the implementing procedures.
 2. An inventory control and recordkeeping system to account for the movement, storage, maintenance, use, loss, damage, destruction, and disposal of the department's physical assets.
 3. Routine internal and external audit practices.
 4. Procedures to access physical assets for reuse, transfer, recycling, or disposal.
- (e) Designating members as appropriate to assist with inventory under the physical asset management plan.
- (f) Annual physical asset acquisition planning.

211.4 IDENTIFICATION AND TAGGING

Physical assets should be tagged using a bar code or other system to identify and locate the items. Tags should be affixed in the same manner and location on each item, when feasible. The following information regarding the tagged item should be maintained using the inventory control system and method of recordkeeping established in the physical asset management plan:

- (a) A description of the item, including but not limited to:
 1. Make, model, and serial number
 2. Physical dimensions and weight
 3. Color, material, and other physically distinct qualities
 4. Warranty and/or recall information, if any
- (b) The specific location where the item can be found
- (c) The acquisition date of the item, as well as the amount and funding source for the acquisition
- (d) The intended and actual use of the item
- (e) The expiration of an item's lease or loan terms

211.5 SURPLUS OR OBSOLETE ASSETS

When the department no longer utilizes a physical asset, the asset should be identified as surplus or obsolete. If the physical asset retains value, the item should be stored as surplus or handled in accordance with the procedures established pursuant to this policy. If the physical asset is to be disposed of due to obsolescence or surplus, the item shall be disposed of in accordance with the policy of the department's governing body.

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211.5.1 STORAGE

When practicable, physical assets that retain value but are not being utilized should be stored in lieu of disposal. Physical assets in storage are subject to routine inventory and revaluation. If the physical asset's value is less than the cost of storage, the Department should pursue disposal of the item in accordance with this policy.

211.5.2 TRANSFERS

When a physical asset is transferred from one department to another, the value of the physical asset should transfer with the asset. Interdepartment transfers shall be documented through the inventory control and recordkeeping system implemented by the physical asset management plan.

211.6 LOSS, DAMAGE, OR DESTRUCTION

Loss, damage, or destruction of department physical assets shall be handled in accordance with the procedures established pursuant to this policy and the Use of Department-Owned and Personal Property Policy, as applicable.

211.7 USAGE MONITORING

Physical asset performance should be regularly monitored for functionality, utility, wear-and-tear, and cost-effectiveness. Usage monitoring of the department's physical assets should include the duration of use (e.g., daily use and number of hours in use), user satisfaction, costs of operating the asset, and the asset's contribution to employee performance and overall productivity.

211.8 MAINTENANCE

Routine maintenance of physical assets should be proactive to limit interruption of the department's daily operations. Employees should report any physical asset performance issues to a supervisor.

Maintenance requests and reports shall be recorded in the inventory control and recordkeeping system implemented by the physical asset management plan. The City Commission or the authorized designee shall routinely evaluate maintenance expenditures to determine whether continued maintenance is beneficial.

211.9 DISPOSAL

Physical assets slated for disposal should be evaluated for salvage value (e.g., items containing reusable materials like aluminum or copper) or transferred or disposed of in accordance with the procedures established pursuant to this policy.

211.10 INVENTORY AND REPORTS

Routine inventory of physical assets should be conducted for purposes of loss control, revaluation, retagging, documenting asset movement and condition, disposition and acquisition planning, and obtaining adequate insurance coverage.

All internal controls and inventories related to physical asset management shall be accurately documented and subject to both internal and external audit. Inventory reports should include an explanation of any discrepancies from the previous period.

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All inventory documentation shall be retained and stored in accordance with the records retention schedule.

211.11 TRAINING

Members and supervisors accountable for the proper care, use, transfer, maintenance, storage, loss, and disposition of all department physical assets should receive training regarding their responsibilities under the physical asset management plan.

Purchasing and Procurement

212.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the purchasing and procurement of goods and services.

212.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the department to conduct purchasing and procurement in an efficient and cost-effective manner consistent with federal, state, and local laws, rules, and requirements in order to protect the integrity of the department and maintain public trust.

212.3 PURCHASING COORDINATOR

The Fire Chief should designate a member to coordinate department purchases. The member's responsibilities should include:

- (a) Remaining familiar with and updating agency practices in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local purchasing and procurement laws, rules, and requirements.
- (b) Obtaining authorization from the Fire Chief or the authorized designee for each purchase.
- (c) Reviewing proposed purchases to determine the most appropriate method of procurement.
- (d) If the procurement method selected is one other than competitive bidding, documenting why another method was selected.
- (e) Assisting other members involved with the purchasing and procurement of goods or services in following purchasing requirements and rules applicable to the method of procurement.
- (f) Forwarding all contracts and purchase orders to the Fire Chief or the authorized designee for review, approval, and execution.

212.4 REVIEWS

The Fire Chief should ensure that a review of purchasing and procurement activities is conducted annually to determine compliance with any applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and requirements.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

213.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for equal access to Pharr Fire Department services, programs, and activities for persons with disabilities in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

This policy also includes guidelines to provide effective communication with persons with disabilities and to protect the rights of individuals who use service animals in accordance with the ADA.

213.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include (28 CFR 35.104):

ADA coordinator – The member designated by the Fire Chief to coordinate the Department's efforts to comply with the ADA (28 CFR 35.107).

Assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services - Tools used to communicate with people who have a disability or impairment. They include but are not limited to the use of gestures or visual aids to supplement oral communication; a notepad and pen or pencil to exchange written notes; a computer or typewriter; an assistive listening system or device to amplify sound; a teletypewriter (TTY) or videophones (video relay service, or VRS); taped text; qualified readers; or a qualified interpreter.

Disability or impairment - A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, including hearing or seeing, regardless of whether the person uses assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services. Individuals who wear ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses are not considered to have a disability (42 USC § 12102; 28 CFR 35.108).

Facility - All aspects of buildings, structures, sites, complexes, equipment, rolling stock or other conveyances, roads, walkways, parking areas, and other real or personal property (28 CFR 35.108).

Modification - Any change, adjustment, alteration, adaptation, or accommodation that renders a department service, program, or activity suitable for use, enjoyment, or participation by a person with a disability. This may include alteration of existing buildings and facilities.

A modification includes any change or exception to a policy, practice, or procedure that allows a person with a disability to have equal access to programs, services, and activities. It also includes the provision or use of assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services.

Power-driven mobility device - Any mobility device powered by batteries, fuel, or other engine type used by persons with disabilities for mobility assistance, regardless of whether the device was primarily designed for that purpose (e.g., golf carts, Segway® PT, mobility scooters). For purposes of this policy, it does not include wheelchairs.

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Qualified interpreter - A person who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. Qualified interpreters include oral interpreters, transliterators, sign language interpreters, and intermediary interpreters.

Service animal - A dog that is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Service animal also includes a miniature horse if the horse is trained to do work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities, provided the horse is housebroken, is under the handler's control, the building or facility can accommodate the horse's type, size, and weight, and the horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility (28 CFR 35.136(i)).

213.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Department that persons with disabilities have equal access to department services, programs, and activities.

The Department will not discriminate against or deny any individual access to services, programs, or activities based upon disabilities.

213.3 ADA COORDINATOR

The responsibilities of the ADA coordinator include but are not limited to (28 CFR 35.130):

- (a) Coordinating efforts within the Department and with the City ADA coordinator to provide equal access to services, programs, and activities including:
 - 1. Establishing procedures to provide for the performance of routine maintenance on buildings, facilities, or equipment that provide access to persons with disabilities (28 CFR 35.133).
- (b) Recommending amendments to this policy, as needed.
- (c) Coordinating a process of periodic self-evaluation. The process should include:
 - 1. Inspection of current department buildings and facilities to identify access issues.
 - 2. Review of current department services, activities, and programs for access issues.
 - 3. Assessment and update of current compliance measures.
 - 4. Identification of recurring areas of complaint for which new methods of modification should be considered.
 - 5. Review of the department's emergency programs, services, and activities as they apply to persons with disabilities.
 - 6. Recommendation of a schedule to implement needed improvements.
- (d) Acting as a liaison with local disability advocacy groups or other disability groups regarding access to department services, programs, and activities.

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- (e) Developing procedures for the review and processing of requests for assistance or modifications that will help members provide persons with disabilities access to department services, programs, and activities, as appropriate.
- (f) Providing notice to the public regarding the rights and protections afforded by the ADA (e.g., posters, published notices, handbooks, manuals, and pamphlets describing department services, programs, and activities and the availability of assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services, as well as modifications) (28 CFR 35.106).
- (g) Developing procedures for members to access assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services, including qualified interpreters, and making the procedures available, as appropriate.
 - 1. A list of qualified interpreter services with contact and availability information should be maintained and easily accessible to members.
- (h) Developing, implementing, and publishing appropriate procedures to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints and inquiries regarding discrimination in access to services, programs, and activities (28 CFR 35.107). The complaint procedures should include an appeal process.
- (i) Requiring third parties providing department services, programs, or activities through contract, outsourcing, licensing, or other arrangement to establish reasonable policies and procedures to prevent discrimination against and denial of access to persons with disabilities.
- (j) Developing and implementing procedures to provide that new construction and any alteration to an existing building or facility are undertaken in compliance with the ADA (28 CFR 35.151).
- (k) Coordinating with appropriate state and local agencies to address the needs of persons with disabilities in the department's emergency disaster preparedness planning, including consideration of communication methods (e.g., warning and emergency notification systems), evacuation and transportation, shelters and care facilities, emergency medical care, and post-disaster canvassing, transportation, and remediation.)
 - 1. The ADA coordinator or the authorized designee should serve as a liaison to Department members during an emergency or disaster to provide guidance on issues involving persons with disabilities that may arise.

213.4 REQUESTS

The goal of any modification should be to allow the person to participate in the service, program, or activity in the same way as a person who does not have a disability.

Upon receiving a request for a modification, members should make reasonable efforts to accommodate the request based on the preference of the person with the disability. Members should not ask about the nature and extent of a person's disability and should limit questions to information necessary to determine the need for a modification and the type of modification that is appropriate.

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If the requested modification or an alternative modification can reasonably be made at the time of the request, the member should make the modification. A member who is unable to accommodate a request or unsure about whether a request should be accommodated should contact a supervisor.

The supervisor should review and approve the request, if practicable and appropriate. Otherwise, the supervisor should document the requesting person's contact information and the modification being requested and forward the request to the ADA coordinator for processing as soon as reasonably practicable.

213.4.1 DENIAL OF REQUEST

The following should be considered before denying a request for modification:

- (a) Requests for modifications should be approved unless complying with the request would result in (28 CFR 35.150):
 - 1. A substantial alteration of the service, program, or activity.
 - 2. An undue financial or administrative burden on the Department.
 - 3. All resources available for use in the funding and operation of the service, program, or activity at issue should be considered in this determination.
 - 4. A threat to or the destruction of the historic significance of an historic property.
 - 5. A direct threat to the health or safety of others (28 CFR 35.139).

If any of the above circumstances are present, the ADA coordinator should work with department staff and the person requesting the modification to determine if an alternative modification is available.

- (a) Where physical modification of an existing building or facility, or new construction, would be unfeasible or unduly burdensome, the ADA coordinator should work with department staff to determine whether alternative modifications are available. Alternative methods that should be considered include (28 CFR 35.150):
 - 1. Reassigning services, programs, or activities to accessible buildings or facilities.
 - 2. Utilizing technology, equipment, rolling stock, or other conveyances.
 - 3. Delivering the services, programs, or activities directly to a person with a disability by way of home visits or meeting the person at an accessible location.
 - 4. Any other means or methods that would make services, programs, or activities readily accessible.
- (b) If no alternative modification is appropriate, the ADA coordinator shall issue a written statement explaining why a modification of the public service, program, or activity will not be made (28 CFR 35.150).

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213.4.2 PERSONAL DEVICES AND ASSISTANCE

Although members should make every effort to comply with requests, the provision of personal devices or assistance (e.g., wheelchairs, eyeglasses, hearing aids, personal assistance in eating or using the restroom) to persons with disabilities is not required (28 CFR 35.135).

213.4.3 SURCHARGES

Surcharges shall not be imposed upon persons with disabilities to cover the costs of providing modifications to public services, programs, and activities (28 CFR 35.130(f)).

213.5 MOBILITY DEVICES

Wheelchairs and manually powered mobility devices such as walkers, crutches, canes, and braces are permitted in any areas open to pedestrians.

Power-driven mobility devices other than wheelchairs may be restricted only if a legitimate safety interest is identified that warrants the restriction (28 CFR 35.130(h); 28 CFR 35.137).

A member should not ask a person using a power-driven mobility device to terminate the use of the device or leave the area unless an imminent and legitimate safety issue is present. If a member is concerned about the use of a power-driven mobility device by a person with a disability, the member should contact a supervisor.

The determination of whether a reasonable modification should be made for the use of a power-driven mobility device within a public building or facility should be based on whether the device, given its size and speed, can be safely used within the particular building or facility taking into account the layout and design of the building or facility, the amount of pedestrian traffic present in the building or facility, and whether there is any risk of damage to the building or facility or its immediate environment as set forth in 28 CFR 35.137.

213.5.1 INQUIRIES REGARDING MOBILITY DEVICES

If an individual is using a power-driven mobility device other than a wheelchair, the member may seek credible assurance from the individual that the device is needed because of a disability. Credible assurance of the device's necessity may be provided in one of the following ways (28 CFR 35.137):

- (a) Presentation of a valid, state-issued disability placard or card
- (b) Presentation of any other state-issued proof of disability
- (c) A verbal statement, not contradicted by observable fact, that use of the device is necessary for mobility purposes

213.6 COMMUNICATIONS WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Members should remain alert to the possibility of communication problems when engaging with persons with disabilities. When a member knows or suspects an individual requires assistance to effectively communicate, the member should identify the individual's choice of assistive device, auxiliary aid, and service.

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The individual's preferred communication method should be honored unless another effective method of communication exists under the circumstances (28 CFR 35.160).

Factors to consider when determining whether an alternative method is effective include:

- (a) The methods of communication usually used by the individual.
- (b) The nature, length, and complexity of the communication involved.
- (c) The context of the communication.

In emergency situations involving an imminent threat to the safety or welfare of any person, members may use whatever assistive device, auxiliary aid, or service reasonably appears effective under the circumstances. This may include, for example, exchanging written notes or using the services of a person who knows sign language but is not a qualified interpreter, even if the person who is deaf or hard of hearing would prefer a qualified sign language interpreter or another appropriate assistive device, auxiliary aid, and service. Once the emergency has ended, the continued method of communication should be reconsidered. The member should inquire as to the individual's preference and give primary consideration to that preference.

213.6.1 TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Members shall not refuse an available type of assistive device, auxiliary aid, or service to a person with a disability who is requesting assistance. The Department will not require persons with disabilities to furnish their own assistive device, auxiliary aid, or service as a condition for receiving assistance. The Department will make every reasonable effort to provide equal access and timely assistance to persons with disabilities through a variety of assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services.

Persons with disabilities may choose to accept City-provided assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services, or they may choose to provide their own.

Department-provided assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services may include but are not limited to the assistance methods described in this policy.

213.6.2 AUDIO RECORDINGS AND ENLARGED PRINT

The Department may develop audio recordings to assist people who are blind or have a visual impairment with accessing important information. If such a recording is not available, members may read aloud from the appropriate form or provide forms with enlarged print.

213.6.3 QUALIFIED INTERPRETERS

A qualified interpreter may be needed in lengthy or complex interactions (e.g., public meetings or hearings, special or emergency meetings, news conferences) for individuals who normally rely on sign language or speechreading (lip-reading) to understand what others are saying. The qualified interpreter should not be a person with an interest in the exchange. A person providing interpretation services may be required to establish the accuracy and trustworthiness of the interpretation in a local government or legal proceeding.

Qualified interpreters should be:

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- (a) Available within a reasonable amount of time.
- (b) Experienced in providing interpretation services.
- (c) Familiar with the use of VRS and/or video remote interpreting services.
- (d) Certified in either American Sign Language (ASL) or Signed English (SE).
- (e) Able to understand and adhere to the interpreter role without deviating into other roles, such as counselor or legal adviser.
- (f) Knowledgeable of the ethical issues involved when providing interpreter services.

Members should use department-approved procedures to request a qualified interpreter at the earliest reasonable opportunity or when it is reasonably apparent that an interpreter is needed. Persons with disabilities shall not be required to provide their own interpreters (28 CFR 35.160).

213.6.4 TTY AND RELAY SERVICES

The Department will accept all TTY or TDD calls placed by those who are deaf or hard of hearing and received via a telecommunications relay service.

Note that relay services translate verbatim, so the conversation must be conducted as if speaking directly to the caller.

213.6.5 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Interpreter services may be available from community volunteers who have demonstrated competence in communication services, such as ASL or SE, and have been approved by the Department to provide interpreter services.

When qualified interpreters are unavailable to assist, approved community volunteers who have demonstrated competence may be called upon when appropriate. However, Department members must carefully consider the nature of the interaction and the relationship between the person with the disability and the volunteer to be reasonably satisfied that the volunteer can provide neutral and unbiased assistance.

213.6.6 FAMILY AND FRIENDS

While family or friends may offer to assist with interpretation, members should carefully consider the circumstances before relying on such individuals. The nature of the interaction and relationship between the person with the disability and the person offering services must be carefully considered to determine whether the family member or friend can provide neutral and unbiased assistance.

Children shall not be relied upon except in emergency or critical situations when there is no qualified interpreter reasonably available.

Adults may be relied upon when (28 CFR 35.160):

- (a) There is an emergency or critical situation and there is no qualified interpreter reasonably available.

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- (b) The person with the disability requests that the adult interpret or facilitate communication and the adult agrees to provide such assistance, and reliance on that adult for such assistance is reasonable under the circumstances.

213.6.7 FIELD ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

It is important that members are able to effectively communicate with persons with disabilities even though the location of the communication may hinder the member's ability to provide assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and other services in a prompt manner.

Members involved in interactions with persons with disabilities that occur in the field and that could result in any type of civil or criminal enforcement action (e.g., issuing code enforcement citations, shutting off a utility service, fire investigations) should assess each situation to determine if communication assistance is necessary. The length, complexity, and importance of the communication, as well as the individual's preferred method of communication, should be considered when determining what, if any, resources should be used and whether a qualified interpreter or other service is needed.

213.7 SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals that are assisting persons with disabilities are permitted in all department buildings and facilities and other areas where the general public is allowed. Department members are expected to treat people with service animals with the same courtesy and respect that the Department affords to all members of the public (28 CFR 35.136).

213.7.1 IDENTIFICATION AND USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS

Some service animals may be readily identifiable. However, many do not have a distinctive symbol, harness, or collar.

Service animals may be used in a number of ways to provide assistance, including:

- (a) Guiding people who are blind or have low vision.
- (b) Alerting people who are blind or have low vision.
- (c) Retrieving or picking up items, opening doors, or flipping switches for people who have limited use of their hands, arms, or legs.
- (d) Pulling wheelchairs.
- (e) Providing physical support and assisting with stability and balance.
- (f) Doing work or performing tasks for people with traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities, such as reminding a person with depression to take medication.
- (g) Alerting a person with anxiety to the onset of panic attacks, providing tactile stimulation to calm a person with post-traumatic stress disorder, assisting people with schizophrenia to distinguish between hallucinations and reality, and helping people with traumatic brain injury to locate misplaced items or follow daily routines.

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213.7.2 INQUIRIES REGARDING SERVICE ANIMALS

If it is apparent or if a member is aware that an animal is a service animal, the individual generally should not be asked any questions as to the status of the animal. If it is unclear whether an animal meets the definition of a service animal, the member should ask the individual only the following questions (28 CFR 35.136(f)):

- (a) Is the animal required because of a disability?
- (b) What task or service has the service animal been trained to perform?

If the individual explains that the animal is required because of a disability and has been trained to work or perform at least one task, the animal meets the definition of a service animal and no further questions as to the animal's status should be asked. Members should not question individuals about their disabilities, nor should members ask any individual to provide a license, certification, or identification card for a service animal.

213.7.3 CONTACT WITH SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals are not pets. Department members should not interfere with the important work performed by a service animal by talking to, petting, or otherwise initiating contact with a service animal.

213.7.4 REMOVAL OF SERVICE ANIMALS

If a service animal is not housebroken or exhibits vicious behavior, poses a direct threat to the health of others, or unreasonably disrupts or interferes with normal business operations, a member should notify an appropriate supervisor who may direct the handler to remove the animal from the premises. Barking alone is not a threat, nor does a direct threat exist if the person takes prompt, effective action to control the service animal (28 CFR 35.136(b)).

Each incident must be considered individually, and past incidents alone are not cause for excluding a service animal. Removal of a service animal may not be used as a reason to refuse access to services, programs, or activities to a person with a disability. Members are expected to provide all services that are reasonably available to a person with a disability, with or without a service animal.

213.8 WEBSITE ACCESS

The ADA coordinator should work with appropriate Department members to develop online content that is readily accessible to persons with disabilities. Department web content should be developed in conformance with the most current guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Website content should also be made available to persons with disabilities in an alternative format upon request, if reasonably practicable.

213.9 DOCUMENTATION

Whenever any modification, assistive device, auxiliary aid, or service has been provided, the member involved should document:

- (a) The type of modification, aid, or service provided.

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- (b) Whether the individual elected to use an assistive device, auxiliary aid, and service provided by the Department or some other identified source, if applicable.
- (c) Whether the individual's express preference for the modification, assistive device, auxiliary aid, or service was not honored, and the reason why an alternative method was used.

The documentation and any written communications exchanged should be maintained consistent with the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

213.10 COMPLAINTS

A member who receives a complaint or becomes aware of potential disability discrimination, an ADA violation, or a person's inability to access a department program, service, or activity should document the complaint and refer the matter to the ADA coordinator (28 CFR 35.107).

213.11 TRAINING

Members who may have contact with persons with disabilities should receive periodic training on ADA compliance, to include:

- (a) Awareness and understanding of this policy and related procedures, related forms, and available resources.
- (b) Procedures for handling requests for modifications.
- (c) Accessing assistive devices, auxiliary aids, and services needed to communicate with persons with disabilities.
- (d) General requirements of the ADA, including modifying policies and practices, communicating with and assisting customers, accepting calls placed through alternative systems, and identifying alternate ways to provide access to programs, services, and activities as appropriate to the member's job duties.

Training records should be maintained in each member's personnel file in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

Chapter 3 - General Operations

Incident Management

300.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish operational guidelines for members of the Department to use in the management and mitigation of all-hazards emergency incidents.

300.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

All-hazards - An incident, natural or manmade, that warrants action to protect life, property, the environment, and public health or safety, and to minimize disruptions of government, social or economic activities.

300.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to utilize the Incident Command System (ICS) or other National Incident Management System (NIMS)-compliant incident management system for managing all emergency incidents. All incident-related activities should be managed in accordance with established ICS/NIMS methods and procedures.

300.3 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

The Assistant Chief should ensure the Department adopts written ICS/NIMS procedures that are compatible with neighboring jurisdictions. These procedures should be available to members.

Emergency incidents shall be managed utilizing trained and qualified personnel for the specific tactical, supervisory, or command level assignments pursuant to the standards of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.11).

Emergency Response

301.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe and appropriate response to emergencies while maintaining the safety of department members and the public by requiring operators of department vehicles to conform to applicable Texas laws and regulations during an emergency response (Tex. Transp. Code § 546.001).

301.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Emergency response - Any call for service or assistance involving fire, explosion or violent rupture; human rescue; human entrapment; illness or injury; hazardous materials release or threat of contamination; flooding; threatened or actual acts of violence; any explosive, bomb or threatened bombing; any act of terrorism; any natural disaster; or any other circumstance that presents a threat to life-safety or to property.

301.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to appropriately respond to all emergency calls.

301.3 EMERGENCY CALLS

Fire personnel dispatched to an emergency shall proceed immediately, shall continuously operate emergency lighting equipment and shall sound the siren as reasonably necessary (Tex. Transp. Code § 546.003).

In operating an authorized emergency vehicle while responding to, but not returning from, an emergency call or fire alarm, the operator may (Tex. Transp. Code § 546.001; Tex. Transp. Code § 546.002):

- (a) Park or stand.
- (b) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, after slowing as necessary for safe operation.
- (c) Exceed a maximum speed limit, except as provided by any local rule or ordinance specifically regulating that emergency vehicle, as long as the operator does not endanger life or property.
- (d) Disregard a regulation governing the direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

Responding with emergency lights and siren does not relieve personnel of the duty to continue to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons nor does it relieve the operator of the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others (Tex. Transp. Code § 546.005).

The use of any other warning equipment without a red light and siren does not provide any exemption from Texas law.

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Emergency Response

Personnel should only respond with emergency lights and siren when dispatched to an emergency or when circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is required.

Personnel not authorized to respond with emergency lights and siren shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

301.4 MULTIPLE EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSES

When more than one apparatus responds to an emergency, emergency vehicle operators should remain alert to the presence of other emergency vehicles and exercise due caution. Personnel must further exercise due caution in recognizing that traffic yielding to one emergency vehicle may not expect other emergency vehicles to follow.

301.5 INITIATING AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

If any officer believes an emergency response to any call is appropriate, the Officer shall ensure Fire Com is immediately notified.

301.6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING PERSONNEL

Emergency vehicle operators shall exercise sound judgment and care, with due regard for life and property, while operating a vehicle en route to an emergency response.

In addition, emergency vehicle operators should reduce speed at all intersections and should come to a complete stop at all blind street intersections or intersections whenever they reasonably believe they cannot account for traffic in approaching lanes or when vehicles have not yielded the right-of-way. After coming to a complete stop, emergency vehicle operators should only proceed when it is safe to do so.

The decision to continue an emergency response is at the discretion of the emergency vehicle operator or any Officer. If, in the judgment of either individual, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion do not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the response may be continued without the use of red lights and sirens at the legal speed limit. If such an action would cause a significant or impactful delay, the Officer should ensure Fire Com is promptly notified. Personnel shall also discontinue the emergency response when directed by any supervisor.

301.7 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the vehicle operator must terminate the emergency response and respond accordingly. In all cases, the Officer shall notify Fire Com of the equipment failure so that another apparatus may be assigned to the emergency response.

Fireground Accountability

302.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to increase firefighter safety by establishing accountability systems for keeping track of all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency incident. The accountability systems shall meet the provisions of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1561, Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety, and ensure compliance with regulations of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.13).

302.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) - A roll call of all operations members assigned to an incident at specified times; a PAR is designed to account for each member's location and activity and to verify his/her safety.

302.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department that supervisors periodically account for members working under their direction at emergency incidents and that all members participate in accountability systems.

302.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

A personnel accountability system shall be established and implemented using thorough training procedures. This system should constantly monitor the status of all emergency personnel, both of department members and personnel from assisting agencies, during emergency incidents from their arrival until their official release from the incident.

A personnel accountability system should be used primarily to track personnel, not resources. However, on small incidents one individual may be responsible for tracking both personnel and resources.

A written personnel accountability system, such as the Incident Command System (ICS) Form ICS-201 for Incident Commanders (ICs) or some similar process, should be used and a status board should be maintained. Individual crew names shall be posted in a conspicuous location in the cab of department vehicles.

Supervisors are responsible for participation in the accountability system by tracking all personnel under their direction on emergency incidents. Personnel should be accounted for from the time of dispatch to the time of demobilization.

Supervisors should implement sufficient tracking methods for personnel at the individual, company, division, group and unit levels to account for personnel during all phases and at all locations of an incident, including travel between locations and assignments.

The IC should designate an accountability officer to monitor who is in charge of each area, what crews are assigned to each area, where each area is located and the area assignment.

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Fireground Accountability

Division or group supervisors should be assigned to keep track of all crews under their supervision. Lieutenants should know the location and assignment of each firefighter in their crew.

All members are responsible for participating in the accountability system, including checking in at approved locations. This includes members who arrive on-scene individually or in privately owned vehicles.

302.4 REPORTING

Ongoing, routine strategic and tactical accountability at all emergency incidents, including wildland fires, should be accomplished through periodic reporting or visual observation. This can be accomplished through concise reports that include conditions, actions and needs, also called a CAN report. Members should also make the following reports:

- Emergency situations
- Inability to meet objective with revised timeline and/or resource requests
- Notification of completed actions
- Change in strategy
- Change in fire conditions, such as crossing planned control lines

302.4.1 PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT (PAR)

For structure fires, a PAR should be conducted within the first 10 minutes of an incident and every 20 minutes thereafter for personnel at the scene. In addition, PARs should be conducted after any change in conditions that may alter or affect firefighter safety, such as an increase in fire conditions, fire crossing planned control lines or trigger points or after ordering an emergency evacuation of an area.

A PAR should be conducted for each division, group and organizational element where operations personnel are working. If any person involved in the operation is unaccounted for, emergency procedures, including notification to the IC, should be initiated.

The IC may discontinue regular PARs when incident stabilization is achieved and hazards are sufficiently reduced.

Rapid Intervention/Two-In Two-Out

303.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to increase firefighter safety by implementing procedures for safeguarding and rescuing firefighters who are operating in environments that are immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH).

This policy applies to all members assigned to an incident and is designed to ensure immediate assistance for members who become lost, trapped, or injured by adhering to the two-in/two-out standard and designating rapid intervention teams (RITs) (29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4); 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.17).

303.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) - Any atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere. Interior atmospheric conditions at structure fires beyond the incipient stage are considered IDLH, as are a variety of rescue types.

Initial rapid intervention team (IRIT) - A group of at least two members located outside the IDLH atmosphere to initially monitor, and provide emergency rescue for responders until a larger, more formalized rapid intervention team (RIT) is created. One of the two members may be assigned to an additional role, as long as the individual is able to perform assistance or rescue activities without jeopardizing the safety or health of any firefighter at the incident. An IRIT is also known as two-in/two-out.

Mayday - The nationally adopted "call for help" term used to indicate that an emergency responder is in a situation of imminent peril and is in need of immediate help.

Rapid intervention team (RIT) - A formalized designated group of individuals or companies whose sole function is to prepare, monitor, and provide for effective emergency rescue of responders in IDLH atmospheres.

303.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to ensure that adequate personnel are on scene before interior operations begin in any IDLH environment. However, nothing in this policy is meant to preclude firefighters from performing emergency rescue activities before an entire team has assembled.

303.3 PRE-DEPLOYMENT

Prior to initiating any fire attack in any IDLH environment with no confirmed rescue in progress, members should ensure that there are sufficient resources on-scene to establish two-in/two-out procedures (29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4); 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.17).

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Rapid Intervention/Two-In Two-Out

- (a) Members should ensure that at least two firefighters using self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) enter the IDLH environment and remain in voice or visual contact with one another at all times.
 - 1. The firefighters entering the IDLH environment shall be equipped with a portable radio sufficient to maintain contact with those outside the IDLH environment.
- (b) At least two additional firefighters should be located outside the IDLH environment.
 - 1. One of the two outside firefighters may be assigned to an additional role so long as the individual is able to perform assistance or rescue activities without jeopardizing the safety or health of any firefighter working at the incident.

303.4 INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

During the initial phase of an incident, confirmed rescues should take priority. When a confirmed rescue is identified during the initial phase of an incident, emergency rescue activities may be performed before a designated IRIT has assembled.

All members operating in IDLH environments should be tracked and accounted for at all times, except when it would preclude firefighters from performing emergency rescue activities during the initial phase of the incident.

303.4.1 EMERGENCY RESCUE

For purposes of this policy, an emergency rescue is in one in which the firefighter has a reasonable belief that immediate action could prevent the loss of life or serious injury (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.17).

303.5 RIT DUTIES

The RIT should be assembled from resources at the scene, whose sole function is to prepare for, monitor and provide effective emergency rescue for responders.

- (a) To the extent possible, visual and voice communication should be maintained between those working in the IDLH environment and the RIT outside the IDLH environment.
- (b) RIT members should not be involved in any other duties that divert attention or resources away from their primary mission of responder rescue.
- (c) Additional companies may be assigned to the RIT as conditions warrant. For large incidents with multiple points of entry, multiple RITs should be considered.

303.6 EMERGENCY DEPLOYMENT OF A RIT

When a Mayday firefighter-down or firefighter-missing broadcast is transmitted, all non-emergency radio traffic should be cleared from the radio channels that the missing or trapped firefighter is using. Non-affected personnel should switch to other tactical frequencies. At least two individuals should be dedicated solely to monitoring the tactical channel. One person should be responsible for gathering information on the identity, location and condition of the trapped or missing firefighter, while the second person should communicate with the trapped or missing firefighter and offer support on the tactical channel.

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Rapid Intervention/Two-In Two-Out

For an emergency deployment of a RIT, a Rescue Group Supervisor position should be activated to coordinate the rescue as well as any fire activities in support of the rescue effort. Other divisions and groups may support the Rescue Group Supervisor's efforts by diverting fire spread through horizontal or vertical ventilation to draw fire away from the affected rescue areas and by placing hose streams to check fire spread and protect rescue efforts.

The RIT supervisor should notify the Rescue Group Supervisor before making entry for emergency rescue. The Rescue Group Supervisor should provide any assistance that is appropriate to the situation. Additional resources should be ordered as needed, including additional RITs, medical treatment and transportation groups or other organizational elements.

303.7 REPORTS TO THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON FIRE PROTECTION

The Pharr Fire Department shall submit a supplemental report to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection anytime there is a deviation from the procedures for IDLH environments set out in 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.17.

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

304.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to describe the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Response System and Texas Task Force 1 (TX-TF1) and Texas Task Force 2 (TX-TF2) as resources for disaster response.

304.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to utilize FEMA and Texas USAR resources in the event of an urban disaster, as appropriate.

304.3 RESOURCES

USAR is a multi-hazard discipline and may be used for a variety of disasters, including hurricanes, earthquakes, typhoons, storms, tornadoes, floods, dam failures, technological accidents, terrorist activities and hazardous material releases.

USAR task forces have four areas of specialization:

- (a) Searches - Finding victims who are trapped after a disaster
- (b) Rescues - Freeing victims, including safely digging victims out of collapsed concrete or metal
- (c) Technical - Applying specialized structural knowledge to help make rescues safe for the rescuers
- (d) Medical - Caring for victims before and after a rescue

If a disaster warrants national USAR support, FEMA may deploy task forces within six hours of notification and can provide additional teams as necessary to support the Pharr Fire Department's efforts to locate victims and manage recovery operations.

The following resources are generally available from the FEMA USAR Response System:

- Air Search Team (fixed-wing)
- Airborne Reconnaissance (fixed-wing)
- Canine - Avalanche/Snow
- Canine - Disaster Response
- Canine - Land/Cadaver
- Canine - Water
- Canine - Wilderness
- Canine - Wilderness Tracking and Trailing
- Cave Search and Rescue Team

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Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

- Collapse Search and Rescue Team
- Mine and Tunnel Search and Rescue Team
- Mountain Search and Rescue Team
- Radio Direction Finding Team
- Swiftwater and Flood Search, and Dive Rescue Teams
- USAR Incident Support Team
- USAR Task Force
- Wilderness Search and Rescue Team

More information about the specific capabilities and sustainability of USAR resources may be obtained on the FEMA, TX-TF1 and TX-TF2 websites.

Tactical Withdrawal

305.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for tactical withdrawals from any scene or location when confronted by violent individuals or threatening situations, circumstances or events. The violence or threat need not be specifically directed at department members to justify the application of this policy.

305.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department is committed to the safety of its members. It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to allow members to withdraw from the scene or general location of an emergency call for service when they are confronted by violent individuals, violent or potentially violent situations or any other circumstance presenting a real or perceived imminent threat to member safety.

305.3 THREAT ASSESSMENT

All members of the Department are expected to continually evaluate their surroundings while responding to incidents or participating in the mitigation of emergency or non-emergency events. The actions and conduct of persons at an event should be a primary element of the ongoing scene-safety evaluation. Certain types of events, certain actions taken by individuals involved in events and a variety of other circumstances should trigger a heightened awareness and consideration of personnel safety. Situations or circumstances that should initiate such consideration include:

- (a) Gang-related activity, particularly any event involving violent encounters, confrontations or conflicts between members of rival gangs.
- (b) Any situation involving shots fired, or on any scene where shooting occurs or is heard in the immediate vicinity.
- (c) Any time a subject challenges or threatens members of the Department with violence or harm.
- (d) Any scene where members of the Department are attacked in any way. Examples include: rocks, bottles or other projectiles thrown or launched at members or department vehicles or apparatus; individuals attempting to gain access to department vehicles or apparatus; or any direct act of violence committed against members of this department.
- (e) Any event involving civil disturbance, large-scale demonstrations or protests. This includes any event involving a large gathering of people where the nature of the activity appears to include violent confrontation or the perceived threat of violent confrontation between opposing groups, or between the protesters and law enforcement personnel or other government representatives.

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Tactical Withdrawal

Any member who believes that there is a threat of violence to personnel at any incident should promptly relay that information to the appropriate supervisor as quickly as possible.

The Incident Commander (IC), scene supervisor or senior ranking member has the authority to initiate a tactical withdrawal and the responsibility for ensuring that all members on-scene or at risk due to the threat are notified of the action. Authority for the decision resides primarily with on-scene personnel and should not be delayed while seeking approval or confirmation from a higher authority, who may not be at the incident scene.

In the event that a credible threat to personnel is discovered at a level of the incident command structure above an on-scene supervisor, a tactical withdrawal may be ordered and relayed down the chain of command to the on-scene supervisor. In that event, the supervisor has the responsibility for ensuring that all members on-scene or at risk due to the threat are notified of the initiation of a tactical withdrawal.

305.4 CONDUCTING TACTICAL WITHDRAWALS

305.4.1 WITHDRAWAL OPTIONS

The following guidelines should be applied when the decision has been made to initiate a tactical withdrawal:

- (a) During the response to an incident:
 - 1. If a tactical withdrawal occurs during the response phase of an incident, the department member responsible for initiating the withdrawal is responsible for notifying all responding units and Fire Com of the withdrawal action. The relay of the withdrawal decision to individual units may be conducted by the member, or he/she may choose to have Fire Com notify all responding units to cancel their response or to respond to a defined staging area.
- (b) After arrival at an incident:
 - 1. When units are on-scene at an incident and a decision is made to initiate a tactical withdrawal, the IC or ranking supervisor is responsible for notifying all involved units (including those assigned to the incident but that have not yet arrived) of the withdrawal action. The IC should also notify Fire Com of the tactical withdrawal, and if time and circumstances allow, the situation and reason for the withdrawal. Individual unit supervisors are responsible for notifying all of their assigned personnel of the withdrawal.

305.4.2 WITHDRAWAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines should be applied when the decision has been made to initiate a tactical withdrawal:

- (a) Whenever a tactical withdrawal is initiated, a defined staging area will be established at a safe location away from the incident scene and all involved units and personnel should withdraw to that staging area. Whenever practicable, all involved units should

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withdraw from the incident scene as a single group. If that is not practicable, individual units should attempt to congregate together, forming the fewest and largest groups practicable, and withdraw in those groups.

- (b) After all units have been initially notified of a tactical withdrawal, individual unit supervisors are responsible for personnel accountability, ensuring all members of their crew are accounted for and withdrawing as directed. The on-scene supervisor is responsible for accounting for all units assigned to the call and ensuring that all units are withdrawing as directed.
- (c) Whenever a tactical withdrawal is initiated, Fire Com should immediately notify and request an immediate response by the appropriate law enforcement agency to provide security for the withdrawing units.
- (d) Once the IC or scene supervisor believes that all units and personnel have withdrawn from an incident, he/she should conduct a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) of all units assigned to the incident to confirm they have safely withdrawn. Individual unit supervisors shall confirm that all members of their crew are accounted for and safe.
- (e) Once all involved units have gathered at the staging area, the IC or scene supervisor should again conduct a PAR to confirm that all personnel are safe. If any person involved in the operation is unaccounted for, emergency procedures should be initiated.

305.5 PATIENT CARE CONSIDERATIONS

Special consideration should be taken when a tactical withdrawal is initiated after members have begun providing medical assessment or medical care at an incident scene. If a tactical withdrawal is initiated at a time that members are providing medical services to sick or injured patients, those members should, whenever practicable, attempt to maintain their care of medical patients and evacuate those patients as part of the withdrawal process.

In the event that violence or the threat of violence forces members to abandon any patient under their care, the involved member should immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of the location of the patient and request immediate assistance in securing the scene to allow for safe and timely medical treatment and evacuation of the patient. The members should remain on the call and wait for law enforcement clearance or other information indicating that it is safe to enter the incident scene. Once it is safe to do so, the members should attempt to locate the patient and resume medical evaluation, treatment and transport per protocol. In the event that law enforcement personnel and department members are unable to relocate the patient, the patient may be deemed to have self-extracted and the appropriate documentation should be prepared.

305.6 NOTIFICATIONS

Whenever a tactical withdrawal is initiated, the circumstances of the incident, including the incident location, will be relayed up the chain of command to the on-duty Battalion Chief. The Battalion Chief will also notify the Department Chief. The Battalion Chief should ensure that all Fire

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Operations Division personnel are immediately notified of the location and circumstances of the incident.

The Battalion Chief should coordinate with Fire Com and law enforcement to ensure additional calls for service to the affected area are screened and determined safe for entry.

Response Time Standards

306.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish turnout, travel and response time goals and objectives for emergency incidents.

306.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Dispatch processing time - The time elapsed between receipt of the telephone call and the dispatch of emergency response units.

Response time - The time elapsed between the dispatch center receiving the first notification of the alarm and the arrival of the first emergency response unit. Response time combines dispatch processing, turnout and travel times.

Travel time - The time elapsed between the emergency response unit beginning travel to the emergency and when the emergency response unit arrives.

Turnout time - The time elapsed between Fire Com notifying firefighters of the emergency and when the emergency response unit begins travel.

306.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to document all department response times to emergency incidents and establish response time baselines and performance objectives.

306.3 PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Response times should be measured at 90 percent of fractal time and reported against an established department Standards of Cover document, if available.

Performance objectives may include:

- (a) One minute or less for dispatch processing time.
- (b) One minute or less for turnout time for Medical/EMS incidents.
- (c) One minute 20 seconds or less for turnout time for non-EMS incidents.
- (d) Six minutes or less for the arrival of the first engine company at a fire suppression incident.
- (e) Fifteen minutes or less for the arrival of a full first-alarm assignment at a fire suppression incident.
- (f) Six minutes or less for the arrival of a unit with first responder or higher level capability at an emergency medical incident.

306.4 EVALUATIONS AND ANNUAL REPORT

The Department shall annually evaluate its level of service, deployment delivery and response time objectives. The evaluation shall be based on data relating to level of service, deployment

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Response Time Standards

and the achievement of each response time performance objective in the geographic area of the jurisdiction.

Aircraft Operations

307.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes standards for the safe operation of firefighting and medical evacuation aircraft that may be working with ground personnel at any incident involving the tactical use of aircraft.

307.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department will follow Incident Command System (ICS) standards when firefighting or medical evacuation aircraft are in tactical use at any emergency incident.

307.3 ICS STANDARDS

Members should follow the department's ICS standards for managing firefighting aircraft operations, including the identification, establishment and management of aircraft landing zones any time that firefighting or medical evacuation aircraft are in tactical use at any emergency incident.

307.4 MEDICAL EVACUATION LANDING ZONE CONSIDERATIONS

The Pharr Fire Department should develop guidelines for its own medical evacuation (medivac) landings or enter into local operating agreements for the use of medivac aircraft as applicable. In creating those guidelines, the Department should identify:

- Responsibility and authority for selecting and designating a landing zone and determining the size of landing zone needed.
- Responsibility for securing the area and maintaining security once the landing zone is identified.
- Consideration of the helicopter provider's minimum standards for proximity to vertical obstructions and surface composition (e.g., dirt, gravel, pavement, concrete, grass).
- Consideration of the helicopter provider's minimum standards for horizontal clearance from structures, fences, power poles, antennas or roadways.
- Responsibility for notifying the appropriate law enforcement or transportation agencies (e.g., City public works department, the county roads department or the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)) if a roadway is selected as a landing site.
- Procedures for ground personnel to communicate with flight personnel during the operation.
- Procedures for determining whether an engine or other specific apparatus should be on standby at the landing zone.
- Procedures for ensuring qualified personnel are assigned to manage aircraft operations for the duration of the incident.
- Procedures for maintaining positive radio communications between the aircraft and landing zone coordinator.

Atmospheric Monitoring for Carbon Monoxide

308.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes procedures for measuring atmospheric concentrations of carbon monoxide (CO) at an incident for the safety of members working in potentially hazardous conditions.

308.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Calibration - The process of resetting the values for each sensor in the instrument.

Spanning - The process of using the calibration gasses to check the calibration of the instrument, also known as bump testing.

308.2 POLICY

Exposure to CO can be hazardous to the health of those exposed. It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to mitigate the health risks associated with exposure to CO by its members and the public.

308.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Battalion Chief should coordinate with the responsible company officer of Hazardous materials Response Team (HMRT) to ensure that atmospheric monitoring instruments are spanned or calibrated to manufacturer's specifications on a weekly basis, if they have not been used, and prior to use.

The instruments should be stored in operating condition.

The Incident Commander or the authorized designee is responsible for measuring atmospheric concentrations of CO at any location containing or suspected of containing elevated levels of CO.

308.4 PROCEDURES

Carbon monoxide may be present as a by-product of combustion, an emission from internal combustion engines, a chemical reaction or a leak from an industrial process. Carbon monoxide has approximately the same vapor density as air. When measuring for atmospheric concentrations of CO at an incident, instruments do not have to be placed near the floor or ceiling to obtain accurate readings.

Positive pressure ventilation may be used to reduce the CO concentration, as well as the presence of other toxic gases in the atmosphere.

All members shall use self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) in any atmosphere containing 35 parts per million or greater of CO (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)). An atmospheric concentration of CO that is below the threshold limit value (TLV) does not necessarily indicate an adequate level of oxygen or eliminate the possibility of other toxic gases or products of combustion being present.

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Atmospheric Monitoring for Carbon Monoxide

Members shall also use an SCBA in any atmospheric concentration of CO that is below the TLV where there is also the presence of visible smoke, and in any atmosphere containing less than 19.5 percent oxygen.

308.5 EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

A person with acute CO exposure may exhibit the signs and symptoms of headache, flushing, nausea, vertigo, weakness, irritability, unconsciousness, and in persons with pre-existing heart disease and atherosclerosis, chest pain and leg pain.

An affected or incapacitated person should be removed from further exposure and have appropriate emergency medical procedures implemented, including any listed on the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for CO.

All personnel with the potential for becoming exposed to CO or being present during an exposure should be familiar with emergency procedures, the location and proper use of emergency equipment, and the methods of protecting themselves during rescue operations.

308.6 DOCUMENTATION

Each time an atmospheric monitoring instrument is spanned or calibrated, the testing will be entered on a log. The log should be submitted to the officer responsible for maintaining the log as designated by the Fire Chief once a month and retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule. The log documents will be maintained by the Training and Compliance Captain for department records and will serve as a history of an instrument's performance.

Staging

309.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

An incident scene can quickly become congested with emergency equipment if the equipment is not managed effectively. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for staging at emergency incidents.

309.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to safely stage resources at emergency incidents.

309.3 RESOURCE STAGING

Staging areas are locations designated within the incident area to temporarily position resources that are available for assignment. Resource staging at emergency incidents will be conducted using the procedures, guidelines and positions consistent with the department's Incident Command System (ICS).

As incident resources grow, the Incident Commander (IC) should identify a staging area manager to maintain the staging area resources so they are ready for assignment. At the conclusion of the incident, the staging area manager should demobilize units with the approval of the IC.

309.3.1 LEVEL I, LEVEL II AND LEVEL III STAGING

When establishing a staging location and conducting staging activities Pharr Fire Department personnel should consider the following:

- (a) During initial attack operations or on smaller, short-term incidents, identifying and selecting a Level I staging location for incoming units should be based primarily on placing incoming resources in a safe location while providing for their rapid deployment when needed. Generally, resources will stage one block from the incident, near a hydrant, until assigned by the IC.
- (b) During extended attack or multiple-alarm incidents, the IC should establish a Level II staging area location early and assign a staging area manager. Apparatus and resources in Level II staging should be ready to deploy quickly and directly. Additional location factors should be considered when identifying and establishing staging areas:
 - 1. The Level II staging area should not affect incident operations and should be large enough for the incident resource needs. When possible, staging areas should be pre-planned and identified to cause minimal disruption to traffic flow, business activity and scheduled community activities.
 - 2. Public property should be utilized, if possible, as opposed to private property. Whenever private property, church property or commercial property is utilized, the IC or a designee should, when practicable, contact the owner, administrator or property manager for permission to use the property prior to establishing a staging area. If any of these properties are utilized, the staging area should

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be configured to create the least possible disruption, including traffic flow in and around the property. The same applies to school property; however, in addition, the Public Information Officer should notify local media. The notification should emphasize that the school property is being used to support an incident occurring away from the school and that the school is not involved in the emergency.

- (c) Level III staging is used when apparatus are assigned to an incident, but remain in quarters or at another assigned station.

309.4 STAGE-AWAY OPTION

The stage-away option should be used in any incident where there may be a violent encounter. A violent encounter should be anticipated in, but not limited to, the following categories of calls for service:

- Shootings or shots-fired calls
- Stabbings
- Civil disturbance calls
- Calls involving criminal gang activity
- Attempted suicide calls
- Domestic disputes, including family fights
- Unknown assault calls
- Bomb incidents

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to use a nonstandard and defensive response profile when responding to calls for service involving known or suspected violent subjects. When responding to calls involving known or suspected violent subjects, department members should take the following actions:

- (a) Whenever possible, Fire Com should determine if violent subjects are involved in any call for service, and if so, include that information in the initial dispatch. The responding units should be advised to stage away from the scene. Any time Fire Com or any of the responding crews receive additional information indicating that violent subjects are at the scene of a call, the response should be upgraded to a stage-away incident.
- (b) The officer of the first-in responding unit will normally identify a staging point for all responding units. The staging point should be located two or more blocks away from the incident scene, out of direct line of sight of the incident, and should not require that the responding units drive by the incident to reach the staging point. The officer should also confirm with Fire Com that law enforcement is responding to the incident.
- (c) All responding units should acknowledge the call to stage-away and confirm the staging location via radio while en route to the incident. All units should avoid driving

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by or through the line of sight of the incident until it is determined to be safe to enter the scene.

- (d) All units should report “on-scene staging” upon arrival at the staging point.
- (e) All units should remain staged away from the incident scene until notified that law enforcement has determined that the scene is safe to enter or until reliable information is received confirming that no violent subjects remain at the scene.

In the event that the first-in unit arrives at an incident scene and encounters unanticipated violence or violent subjects, the officer or senior member of that crew should immediately notify Fire Com of the circumstances and request law enforcement support. All other responding units should be directed to stage-away unless members of the first-in unit determine it is safe for additional personnel to respond directly to the scene.

High-Rise Incident Management

310.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to adapt normal operating procedures and systems to incidents occurring in a high-rise environment. Any incident in a high-rise environment is complicated by the difficulties of access, the construction of the building and the number of occupants potentially inside the structure.

310.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

High-rise - For the purposes of this policy a high-rise is any building more than 75 feet tall measured from the lowest point accessible by department vehicles to the floor of the highest story that is designed for occupancy. This shall be the threshold for the activation of the high-rise incident command structure.

310.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to utilize the Incident Command System (ICS) for high-rise incident management.

310.3 PROCEDURES

All incident-related activities should be performed in accordance with the established ICS methods and procedures as specified in the Incident Management Policy.

Upon the initial arrival of units and apparatus, the assumption of a concealed fire should be made by the Incident Commander unless an initial size-up indicates otherwise. Initial-arriving units should:

- Make all necessary efforts to provide for the safety and evacuation of any building occupants in immediate danger and for the continued safe exit of all other building occupants.
- Identify the fire floor or sector, and provide a size-up of the conditions on both the fire floor and also the floor above.
- Establish a water supply for the initial attack. If the building has multiple standpipes, the member on the fire floor must identify which riser requires water and advise incident command.
- Deploy an attack on the fire floor using at least two companies.
- Make reasonable efforts to provide for the safety of any person in immediate danger.
- Establish lobby, elevator, stairway and alarm system control and stairwell support if necessary for a sustained fire attack.

Elevator Entrapments

311.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safe and effective rescue of people who may become trapped in an elevator.

311.2 POLICY

People trapped in an elevator are typically not in danger unless there is a medical emergency or fire. It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to ensure the safe extrication of people trapped in an elevator while also providing for the safety of firefighters during the operation.

311.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee shall establish guidelines for personnel entering elevator shafts and for the use of commercial elevator technicians for emergency and nonemergency extrications.

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee shall identify department-approved rescue procedures and appropriate applications. Procedures that have the potential to cause damage to private property should be avoided if reasonably practicable.

Fire prevention personnel are responsible for tracking elevator entrapment responses, identifying problematic installations and working with building owners and vendors to resolve further responses.

311.4 PROCEDURE

On-scene personnel should consider the following:

- Is the elevator inoperative?
- If so, are people inside?
- What is the condition of the people inside?
- Has an elevator repair person been notified and what is the estimated time of arrival?
- What is the location of the inoperative elevator? Is it between floors or at a landing?
- What is the type of elevator? Is it hydraulic or cable?
- Where is the elevator equipment room? (Generally, above for a cable elevator and below for a hydraulic elevator.)
- Can necessary lock-out/tag-out actions be accomplished prior to rescue activities?

Various methods may be utilized to extricate people from an inoperative elevator. Use of a specific method should be based on the unique circumstances of each incident and the expertise of the fire personnel on scene. Elevator entrapment rescue procedures typically include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Lock-out/tag-out procedures to ensure continued stability of the elevator

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- Moving the elevator car
- Use of an adjacent elevator car
- Forcing the elevator doors open manually
- Breaching the elevator shafts
- Use of roof or side emergency exits

311.5 TRAINING

The Training Captain should ensure that written procedures with diagrams are available for each elevator entrapment rescue procedure, including hydraulic or cable elevators and elevators with multiple-door configurations. The Training Captain is responsible for ensuring that all personnel are properly trained in department-approved elevator entrapment rescue procedures.

Elevator Restrictions During Emergencies

312.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for elevator use during emergency incidents.

312.2 POLICY

Extreme caution shall be used when determining whether to use an elevator during a response to a fire emergency. Only elevators that have been determined to be uninvolved and equipped with fire service operation controls shall be used.

312.3 USE OF STAIRWELLS

The operation of elevators under fire conditions can be erratic and dangerous. Elevators are subject to serious malfunction from the effects of heat, smoke and water on drive machinery and/or control equipment.

At every emergency incident in a high-rise building five stories or less, when there is a potential for elevators and/or firefighters to be exposed to the effects of heat, smoke, flame, chemicals, explosion or water (e.g., reported fires, fire alarms, smoke investigations), stairwells will be used to gain access to above-ground locations.

The initial fire attack/investigation teams shall use stairwells to reach the reported emergency location and make a visual assessment of actual conditions that might affect elevator use.

These teams shall advise the Incident Commander (IC) which stairwell is being used and shall describe the stairwell by identification number and the geographical location in the building. Information regarding the safety of elevators and the floor conditions of the reported fire floor and all preceding floors shall be relayed immediately to the IC, who shall make the final determination of whether the elevators are safe to use.

312.4 USE OF ELEVATORS

Most high-rise building incidents will only require an investigation. Elevators may be used by the initial investigation team only when building personnel, such as engineering or security employees, are on the reported fire floors and the following conditions are met:

- They have checked the floor where the report or alarm originated, as well as the floors immediately above and below that floor.
- They are in contact with lobby personnel via radio or phone.
- They are able to provide information that conditions are safe.

Swiftwater Rescue and Flood Search and Rescue Responses

313.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidance for operating at a swiftwater or flood search and rescue incident.

313.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to utilize the Incident Command System (ICS) for managing swiftwater or flood search and rescue incidents.

313.3 PROCEDURE

Upon notification of a potential water rescue incident, department members and Fire Com personnel are authorized to order and should dispatch or request the appropriate specialized water rescue resources immediately. Ordering of resources should not be delayed pending the verification of a water rescue situation or the confirmation that a victim has been seen or located.

Rescuers conducting search and rescue operations around flood waters, and particularly around swiftly moving water, are confronted with a unique set of challenges and face risks not encountered in other types of rescue operations. Operating in a swiftwater environment requires specialized knowledge, training and equipment to ensure the safety of both rescuers and victims. Tools, equipment and procedures routinely used in other types of rescue situations may not be appropriate when confronting a swiftwater rescue and may even exacerbate the situation and increase risks to the safety of rescue personnel.

Responding personnel and specialized units should follow ICS methods and procedures upon arrival at the incident. This includes a safety briefing for all responders to ensure the development of situational awareness of the area, knowledge of potential hazards for rescuers and specific strategic objectives for the rescue, in addition to tactical objectives and assignments for each responder.

Department members should apply the following guidelines when responding to swiftwater or flood search and rescue incidents:

- (a) Members should not wear structural firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., turnouts, bunker gear, bunker boots) or wildland fire PPE when responding to, or participating in, a swiftwater or flood search and rescue incident.
- (b) Only properly trained members currently certified for in-water rescues should approach or enter any body of water, whether still or moving, and only when sufficient equipment and trained personnel are available to safely conduct the operation. All members actively involved in any swiftwater rescue event should don a personal flotation device and head protection before commencing any rescue efforts.

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- (c) Surface support personnel who are not properly trained, certified and equipped for water entry may utilize ropes, throw-bag ropes, rescue rings, floatation devices or other appropriate equipment to attempt water rescues, as long as the attempt does not require the member to enter the water in any way.
- (d) Department members should use extreme caution when parking or positioning fire apparatus alongside swiftly moving water and should remain vigilant for any signs of erosion or changing conditions that could threaten apparatus or personnel at the incident. Whenever practicable, vehicles should be backed into position and face away from any expanding incident in case egress becomes necessary.

Confined Space Rescue Response

314.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance on various confined space entries based on principles contained in 29 CFR 1910.146.

314.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Attendant - An individual stationed outside one or more permit spaces to monitor the authorized entrants and who performs all duties assigned.

Confined space - A space that:

- (a) Is large enough and so configured that a person can bodily enter and perform work.
- (b) Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit.
- (c) Is not designed for continuous human occupancy.

Entry - The action by which a person passes through an opening into a permit-required confined space. Entry includes ensuing work activities in that space and is considered to have occurred as soon as any part of the entrant's body breaks the plane of an opening into the space.

Entry permit - Written or printed document that is provided by the Department to allow and control entry into a permit-required confined space to perform work in the space.

Entry supervisor - The person responsible for determining if acceptable entry conditions are present at a permit space where entry is planned, for authorizing and overseeing entry operations, and for terminating entry as required.

Permit-required confined space - A confined space that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- (a) Contains or has a potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere.
- (b) Contains a material that has the potential for engulfing an entrant.
- (c) Has an internal configuration such that an entrant could be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross-section.
- (d) Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard.

314.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to establish permit-required confined space incident response guidelines in compliance with recognized best practices and recommended training and equipment to reasonably ensure members' safety while they are performing permit-required, confined space rescues.

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Confined Space Rescue Response

314.3 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Department procedures should meet the standards and requirements set forth in 29 CFR 1910.146 and this policy.

Department standards and procedures will include, but are not limited to:

- (a) The requirements of an entry permit.
- (b) Training requirements for members entering into confined spaces.
- (c) Equipment requirements.
- (d) Notification to members entering a confined space of any known or suspected hazards that the member may face during entry and any other information necessary to enable the attendant to monitor safe entry by the member.
- (e) Requirements for members entering confined spaces.
- (f) Requirements of the entry supervisor.
- (g) Requirements for members who are assisting others within the confined space.

314.4 PROCEDURES

Department members should be trained to identify and measure atmospheric hazards within confined spaces. Reasonably practicable attempts at self-rescue or non-entry rescue should be made prior to any entry.

Department members should adhere to National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) guidance when performing a confined space rescue.

Any time there is questionable action or lack of movement by the worker inside the confined space, a verbal check should be made. If there is no response, department rescue personnel should conduct a survivability profile and a risk analysis, based on the information documented on the entry permit.

314.4.1 PRECAUTIONS

No ignition sources should be introduced into the confined space when atmospheric hazards are attributable to flammable or explosive substances or to lighting and electrical equipment.

Members should perform continuous atmospheric monitoring during all confined space rescue operations. If atmospheric conditions change adversely, members should exit the confined space until appropriate precautions for any new hazards are developed and implemented.

Work time should be closely monitored because heat stress emergencies may be caused by a warm atmosphere inside a confined space.

314.4.2 HAZARD EVALUATION/PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

If members of the Department respond to an incident requiring permit-required confined space entry, a written hazard evaluation should be performed. The hazard evaluation should include, but is not limited to:

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- (a) Recognition, determination and declaration of the situation as a permit-required confined space incident, including the date, time and location.
- (b) Denial of entry to unprotected persons.
- (c) Assessment of all readily available confined space documentation (e.g., Safety Data Sheets), any existing permits, plans or blueprints of the space.
- (d) Assessment of the purpose of the entry, number of victims, locations and injury conditions.
- (e) Discussions with witnesses, a supervisor and other sources of information.
- (f) Assessment of any current or potential space hazards, in particular, any hazards that led to the necessary rescue.
- (g) Measures used to isolate the space and eliminate or control the hazards.
- (h) Communications procedures used by entrants and attendants.
- (i) Determination and declaration if a body is recovered or a victim is rescued.

314.5 TACTICAL GUIDELINES

314.5.1 PRIMARY ASSESSMENT

Upon arrival, the first-in company should:

- Establish command and provide a report of conditions.
- Assess immediate hazards to rescuers, contact witnesses or otherwise look for clues as to the cause of the confined space emergency.
- Conduct a survivability profile of the victims, including the number, location and condition of the victims and how long they have been trapped.
- Establish communication with the victims, if possible.
- If applicable, locate any confined space permit that has information about the space.
- Determine whether the operation will be a rescue or a recovery.

314.5.2 SECONDARY ASSESSMENT

After completing the primary assessment, the first-in company should:

- Determine the type of confined space and what type of products are used or stored in the space.
- Identify any known hazards (e.g., electrical, mechanical, stored energy).
- Determine the stability of the confined space and conduct a hazardous materials size-up.

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314.5.3 INCIDENT COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Determine if adequate technician-level trained personnel are on-scene to safely complete the rescue.
- Determine whether the proper equipment is at the scene to safely complete the rescue (e.g., atmospheric monitoring equipment, intrinsically safe lighting and communications, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), ventilation equipment, victim removal equipment).
- Establish a perimeter and ventilation, if needed.
- Assign resources, which should include a hazards officer.
- Ensure all utilities are locked-out, including electrical, gas and water.
- Evaluate the structural stability of the confined space and surrounding area.
- Remove or restrict the flow of any product in or flowing into the confined space.
- Ensure all entry and backup personnel are wearing the proper level of personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., helmet, gloves, proper footwear, eye protection, appropriate skin protection, a Class III harness and safety tag line, SCBA) and any additional equipment deemed necessary for the safety of personnel, given the totality of the circumstances.
- Ensure the appropriate method of extrication is determined and constructed.
- Ensure department-approved procedures are followed to perform the rescue.

314.5.4 VICTIM ASSISTANCE

- If possible, the entry team should bring a supply of breathable air for the victims.
- Rescuers shall not remove their SCBA and give them to the victims.
- If indicated and practicable, complete C-spine precautions should be taken.
- After treatment for immediate life-threatening injuries, the victims should be packaged appropriately for extrication (e.g., backboard, rescue basket).

314.5.5 VICTIM TRANSFER

- Immediately after reaching the point of egress, the victims should be transferred to awaiting medical personnel.

314.6 TERMINATION OF THE RESCUE

At the conclusion of the rescue, the Incident Commander should:

- Account for all personnel.

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- Ensure all tools and equipment used for the rescue/recovery are removed (unless there has been a fatality, then consideration may be given to leaving tools and equipment in place for investigative purposes).
- Ensure proper decontamination procedures are implemented if personnel or equipment have been contaminated during the operation.
- Determine if a formal critical incident stress debriefing or a routine debriefing and Post-Incident Analysis (PIA), in accordance with the Post-Incident Analysis Policy, is warranted and, if so, implement as appropriate.

Wildland Firefighting

315.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for wildland firefighting incidents.

315.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide wildland fire suppression services consistent with the availability of staffing resources and in compliance with state regulations. The Department will utilize the Incident Command System (ICS) methods and procedures for managing wildland firefighting operations.

315.3 INCIDENTS INVOLVING STATE OR FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY AREA

Whenever a wildland fire event occurs in the jurisdiction of the Pharr Fire Department, it is the responsibility of the Incident Commander (IC) to assess the potential for the fire to extend into either a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or Federal Responsibility Area (FRA). If the incident either involves or threatens to involve an SRA or FRA, the IC shall immediately notify the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the Texas A&M Forest Service or the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) of the incident. The IC shall also send notification up the chain of command to the on-duty Battalion Chief, the Fire Operations Deputy Chief and the Fire Chief.

Whenever a wildland fire event occurs in the jurisdiction of the Pharr Fire Department it is also the responsibility of the IC to assess the potential for the fire to involve areas in bordering jurisdictions. If the IC determines there is any potential for the incident to involve bordering jurisdictions, he/she should immediately direct Fire Com to notify the appropriate jurisdictions.

315.4 WILDLAND FIRE OPERATIONS

315.4.1 AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS

Members operating at wildland fires shall adhere to department guidelines when operating in coordination with aircraft.

Trench Rescues

316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Trench rescue operations involve a complex system of shoring, digging and special resources, and can be a critical danger to fire personnel. The purpose of this policy is to minimize member exposure to hazardous conditions during trench rescues through the safe and efficient management of operations that incorporate the principles of 29 CFR 1926 Subpart P as a best practice.

316.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Excavation - Any man-made cut, cavity, trench or depression in the ground.

Trench - A narrow (in relation to length) excavation made below the surface of the ground that is generally deeper than it is wide and is not wider than 15 feet.

316.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to adopt and maintain a written response program with standardized procedures and relevant training to minimize the exposure to hazardous conditions to rescue personnel during trench or excavation rescues.

316.3 PROCEDURES

Secondary collapse must always be considered as a potential hazard during trench rescues. Suffocation, extreme pressure and trauma can all occur due to the weight of a cave-in. There may be times when it is necessary to place the safety of the firefighter above the rescue of a victim who clearly has no chance of survival.

- (a) Using the Incident Command System (ICS), the first-in company shall attempt to determine the following:
 - (a) Who is in charge at the site and what happened?
 - (b) How many victims are trapped and where are they located?
 - (c) Is a rescue possible or is this a body recovery?
 - (d) What kind of material is covering the victims (e.g., dirt, sand, rock)?
- (b) An extrication and safety officer should be assigned to:
 - (a) Monitor the status of all personnel involved in the rescue.
 - (b) Monitor the site for any possible atmospheric hazard (e.g,O2, H2S, LEL)
 - (c) Monitor the site for signs of potential secondary collapse (e.g., surface cracks, shoring with signs of bending, falling debris).
- (c) A hazard zone should be established within a 50-foot perimeter around the incident site using ICS methods. Apparatus, equipment, traffic and staging distance should be set at a distance that will minimize vibrations at the site.

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- (d) Minimally, the equipment required to be available for rescue personnel to enter a trench or excavation should include:
 - 1. A self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).
 - 2. A safety harness or line, or a basket stretcher.
 - 3. A helmet.
- (e) When determining whether the trench or excavation is safe for emergency responders to enter, the following will be considered:
 - 1. Adequate ventilation has been established.
 - 2. When ventilation is in place, the air quality is being periodically tested.
 - 3. If water accumulation is a factor, protection from water hazards is in place.
 - 4. Adequate protection for people working in the trench or excavation, in the form of shields, supports or sloping, and benching systems have been established.
- (f) If the rescue effort is protracted, personnel may need to be rotated and/or additional alarms requested for appropriate relief.

Carbon Monoxide Detector Activations

317.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the safe and efficient handling of calls associated with carbon monoxide (CO) detector activations.

317.2 POLICY

Exposure to CO can be hazardous to health. It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to respond to all reports and alarms indicating the presence of CO and mitigate the health risks associated with exposure to CO by its members and the public.

317.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

317.3.1 FIRE COM RESPONSIBILITIES

Any dispatcher who determines that a call for service involves a CO detector activation should inform responding personnel of this information via voice over the radio and by a notation in the electronic event record (if the responding apparatus are equipped with Mobile Data Terminals). The dispatcher should attempt to ascertain if people at the scene are displaying symptoms of CO poisoning and consider whether a medical aid response should also be dispatched. The responding medical aid personnel should also be advised of the CO detector activation.

317.3.2 ARRIVING UNITS

Arriving units should establish National Incident Management System/Incident Command System (NIMS/ICS) practices according to the Incident Management Policy. In addition, arriving units shall:

- (a) Evaluate the situation through interviews prior to entering the building.
- (b) Assess airflow ventilation conditions and general building conditions.
- (c) Wear structural turnouts and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) to investigate the building using a CO detector, if available.
- (d) Have face pieces on and air flowing:
 - 1. If occupants are displaying symptoms of CO poisoning (and confirm medical aid response).
 - 2. Whenever information is inadequate to rule out toxic levels of CO.

317.3.3 INVESTIGATING PERSONNEL

Personnel investigating a reported CO detector activation should take the following actions:

- (a) Remove occupants and unnecessary personnel from the affected area.
- (b) Do not turn on or off light switches in the building (could be ignition source)
- (c) Examine the activated detector to ensure that it is a CO detector and is in good condition.

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- (d) Determine if the activated detector is low-oxygen or CO-detecting, if possible.
- (e) Interview the occupant and/or reporting party to obtain background information on the activation, the past history of the activated detector and activities in the building at the time of the activation.
- (f) Check the premises and adjoining areas for CO sources, such as vehicles, open flame devices or closed fireplace dampers.
- (g) Check appliances for improper use, poor maintenance or obvious faulty installation or operation.
- (h) If responding personnel carry a CO detector, it may be used to assist in determining a source of CO.
- (i) If the source of CO is identified, personnel should take the following actions:
 - 1. If the source is a vehicle, open flame device or other source not intended for interior use, remove the source from the building or shut off the device and ventilate the building thoroughly.
 - 2. If the source is an improperly operating appliance, shut off the appliance and the appliance's main line valve and ventilate the building thoroughly.
 - (a) Encourage the occupant to have the appliance serviced by a reputable service technician or a plumbing and heating contractor.
 - (b) Do not attempt to repair or alter an appliance or heating unit.
 - 3. Do not ventilate the building with gasoline-powered smoke ejectors.
 - 4. Do not shut off the building's main gas valve unless necessary to control the problem.
- (j) If the source of CO is not identified, personnel should take the following actions:
 - 1. Consider requesting a response by the gas company. If it is necessary to leave the scene prior to arrival of the gas company, the occupants should be advised to remain out of the building until a gas company representative arrives.
 - 2. Complete any required property notification and provide a copy to the property owner or tenant.

Safe Haven Law

318.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines to comply with the Texas Safe Haven law.

This policy addresses infants who are 60 days old or younger and are surrendered under the terms of the Safe Haven law (Tex. Fam. Code § 262.302). Abandonment of an infant not covered by this policy would be subject to the Child Abuse Policy.

318.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide an option to protect infants by allowing parents to safely and confidentially surrender an infant at any staffed fire station that has been designated as an emergency infant care provider.

318.3 GUIDELINES

The Fire Chief shall identify qualified personnel to take custody of surrendered infants and ensure that such qualified personnel are available to receive any surrendered infants.

The following guidelines will be used by personnel at all department stations:

- (a) Site preparation:
 - 1. All department stations shall clearly display in a conspicuous location notice that the station is a safe haven designation and will accept possession of an infant (Tex. Fam. Code § 262.306).
- (b) Accepting a surrendered infant:
 - 1. Qualified personnel shall accept a surrendered infant, even if the infant appears older than 60 days. If the infant appears to be older than 60 days, the receiving personnel should immediately notify law enforcement and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), as provided in the Child Abuse Policy.
 - 2. If it appears that the infant has been the victim of child abuse or neglect, law enforcement personnel should be requested as provided in the Child Abuse Policy.
 - 3. Qualified personnel shall perform any act necessary to protect the physical health or safety of the infant (Tex. Fam. Code § 262.302).
- (c) Following acceptance of an infant:
 - 1. Notification shall be made to DFPS as soon as practicable, but no later than the close of the first business day after accepting the infant (Tex. Fam. Code § 262.303).

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2. Receiving personnel shall make a good faith effort to obtain information from the parent regarding the infant's medical facts and history. A medical form may be provided to the parent for voluntary disclosure (Tex. Fam. Code § 262.302).
 3. If the infant is to be transferred to a hospital, the parent should be encouraged to accompany the infant to the hospital to give the medical history directly to the hospital staff and should be reassured that the same protection from prosecution and the ability to surrender the infant is available at the hospital.
 4. If the parent does not wish to accompany the infant to the hospital, the parent should be encouraged to complete the medical form and should be given assistance, if needed.
 5. If the parent is unwilling to complete the form and unwilling to accompany the infant to the hospital, personnel should make a good faith effort to provide the parent with the medical form to be filled out later and returned by mail.
- (d) Medical assessment and documentation:
1. A qualified health care professional shall assess the infant to identify any immediate treatment needs and complete a Patient Care Report (PCR) for the incident.
 2. If the parent is the birth mother, a qualified health care professional should attempt to assess and treat her as necessary and pursuant to established Emergency Medical Service (EMS) protocols. If treated, the mother should be listed as "Jane Doe" to protect her anonymity.
 - (a) Do not use the parent's name on the PCR.
- (e) Transportation to the hospital:
1. Paramedics shall accompany the infant and parent to the nearest emergency room with labor and delivery capabilities.
- (f) Additional notifications and media concerns:
1. The receiving personnel shall notify Fire Com and their appropriate supervisor as soon as practicable.
 2. The supervisor will notify the Battalion Chief, duty officer and the Department Public Information Officer.
 3. The Public Information Officer may, as circumstances dictate, provide the following limited facts to the media:
 - (a) Date, time and fire station where the infant was surrendered
 - (b) Local DFPS representative's name and telephone number

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- (c) Under no circumstances shall the parent's name be released to the public or media.
- (g) Individuals who return to claim an infant:
 - 1. If a parent who voluntarily surrendered an infant requests return of the infant, the parent should be referred to DFPS.
 - 2. The identity of the parent must still be kept anonymous and confidential.
 - 3. Department members should not make any judgments about time frames or the individual's ability to care for the infant. The local DFPS will determine whether the infant is released to the individual.
- (h) Community donations:
 - 1. Community groups, volunteers, foundations and individuals may express interest in helping with this program. Some may want to donate baby supplies, such as baby food, diapers or blankets, directly to the fire station. The following guidelines are established:
 - (a) Only new baby blankets in the original wrapper should be accepted.
 - (b) Donors who wish to donate any other baby-related items, such as clothes, baby food or diapers, should be directed to a local social service agency and/or reputable charities.

318.4 CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Any information, documents or reports prepared by department personnel regarding the person who voluntarily surrendered an infant are confidential and will only be released in accordance with the Release of Records Policy (Tex. Fam. Code § 262.308).

Hazardous Materials Response

319.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Hazardous materials (HAZMAT) may include toxic, flammable, corrosive, explosive, radioactive, or reactive materials; materials that can cause health hazards; or a combination of these materials. The purpose of this policy is to provide a general framework for handling a HAZMAT incident.

Training related to HAZMAT response is addressed in the Hazardous Materials Training Policy.

319.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to protect the safety of the public and responders to HAZMAT incidents and to comply with all applicable state and federal laws during the management and mitigation of all HAZMAT incidents.

319.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

All HAZMAT responses should be managed using the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) in accordance with regulations of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) for emergency response and applicable federal laws (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.11).

319.3.1 INITIAL ACTIONS

If available, information should be provided by Fire Com to the units responding to a HAZMAT incident, including the name and type of the material involved (e.g., hydrochloric acid, corrosive), the size and quantity of the containers involved, the nature of the problem (e.g., spill, leak), and any known dangerous properties of the materials.

The first-arriving unit approaching the incident should use caution, approach from upwind and upgrade of the incident, establish Incident Command, and begin a size-up of the situation. The purpose of the size-up by the first-in company is to determine the nature and severity of the HAZMAT incident and formulate an initial Incident Action Plan (IAP). While it may be necessary to take immediate action to make a rescue or evacuate an area, any action should be taken with an awareness of the risk to department personnel and making appropriate use of available protective equipment. It is important to avoid the premature commitment of personnel to potentially hazardous locations. In some cases, isolating the incident and denying entry until more resources arrive may be the safest approach.

In assessing the incident, all available references should be used to determine the hazards that are or potentially could be present. These references may include but are not limited to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Emergency Response Guidebook, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards, Safety Data Sheets (SDS), HAZMAT business plans, manifests, or bills of lading, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) placards, U.S. DOT placards, and United Nations substance identification numbers. Other sources of information may be available, such as the Chemical Transportation

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Emergency Center (CHEMTREC®), facility personnel, department specialists, or manufacturers of the materials involved.

The hazards presented by a HAZMAT incident may change significantly as the materials interact with other materials, the surrounding environment, and the actions taken by responders. Responders should consider site topography, surroundings, other potential hazards, and prevailing weather conditions. The initial perimeter established for the incident may need to be expanded to establish the appropriate control zones for the response (e.g., exclusion zone, contamination reduction zone, support zone).

319.4 INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

The primary goal of the IAP will be to protect the safety of the public and responders. The initial IAP should focus on identifying a safe approach for other arriving units, determining the type of hazard and the scope of the incident, isolating the area and denying entry to the public, determining incident-specific personal protective equipment (PPE), and initiating notifications. The initial IAP may be a written document or may be notes kept and controlled by the Incident Commander (IC). The initial IAP should include the following minimum information:

- (a) Incident name, agency or unified command, and command post location.
- (b) Information for responding units on the best route of travel, staging locations, and minimum isolation distances to maintain the safety of responding members.
- (c) The information available on the products involved or an indication that the products are not yet known.
- (d) The incident control objectives and goals.
- (e) An incident site safety plan and designation of an Incident Safety Officer.
- (f) A communications plan including radio frequencies and contact telephone numbers.

When a HAZMAT incident response will be prolonged and will extend beyond an initial operational period, a written IAP should be developed. The written IAP should utilize standard NIMS/ICS forms that may include but are not limited to:

- ICS-201 Incident Briefing.
- ICS-202 Incident Objectives.
- ICS-203 Organization Assignment List.
- ICS-204 Assignment List.
- ICS-205 Incident Radio Communications Plan.
- ICS-206 Medical Plan.
- ICS-207 Incident Organization Chart.
- ICS-208 Safety Message/Plan.

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319.5 RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Most HAZMAT incidents will require the IC to request additional resources in order to implement the IAP and safely mitigate the hazard.

The response to a HAZMAT incident may require a large amount of specialized resources to achieve incident stabilization and return to normal operations. The IC should consider involving:

- (a) Specialized HAZMAT teams at the technician and/or specialist levels for assistance with mitigating the release of material. Teams may be operated by local or regional fire agencies, military, or private industry.
- (b) Specialized operators or contractors to address post-response mitigation, removal, cleanup, and required disposal of material.
- (c) Local law enforcement for assistance with scene security and evacuation, if necessary.
- (d) Activation of local, regional or Texas HAZMAT emergency response teams for assistance.
- (e) United States Coast Guard assistance for spills affecting waterways.
- (f) City public works and road departments for diking, diversion, or other activities.

Resources shall be coordinated using NIMS/ICS as the response is reinforced. It is important that duties assigned to personnel are suitable for their level of training. It is also important to consider the limitations of available PPE and the limitations of chemical detection or monitoring equipment on hand when preparing to commit personnel to a potentially hazardous area.

319.6 NOTIFICATIONS

Managing the response to a HAZMAT incident may involve required notifications to various local, regional, state or federal agencies. ICs should consider notifying the following agencies when applicable or required:

- (a) The public, media and other affected entities, such as schools and businesses
- (b) Adjoining jurisdictions that may be impacted by incident activities
- (c) Local and regional elected officials and emergency management personnel
- (d) State of Texas Spill-Reporting Hotline
- (e) Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM)
- (f) Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
- (g) Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
- (h) Texas Department of State Transportation (TxDOT)
- (i) Texas Department of Public Safety
- (j) United States Coast Guard (USCG)
- (k) United States Environmental Protection Agency's National Response Center

News Media and Community Relations

320.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for communicating with representatives of the media, community leaders, residents, and businesses, and to establish procedures for interacting with media representatives at emergency scenes. Additionally, this policy establishes an operating framework for integration of the Public Information Officer into the incident management system.

320.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to establish and maintain a positive working relationship with the community and the media in order to effectively communicate timely and accurate information.

320.3 PRESS INFORMATION OFFICER DESIGNATION

As soon as practicable on incidents where news media are present and requesting information, the Incident Commander (IC) will designate a Public Information Officer if the Department does not have a full-time Public Information Officer. The Public Information Officer shall interface with and provide timely and relevant information to representatives of the community and media during critical command stages. A single Public Information Officer will typically be designated for each incident, including incidents operating under Unified Command and multijurisdictional incidents.

In multi-agency or multijurisdictional incidents, it may be necessary to establish multiple Public Information Officers and a Joint Information Center (JIC) with a Public Information Officer and Assistant Public Information Officer. In all cases, the Public Information Officer shall be responsible for coordinating the dissemination of information that has been approved by the IC for release to the media, the community, and other parties that may have been affected by the incident.

Upon arrival at the scene of the incident, the designated Public Information Officer will report to the IC, obtain an incident briefing, and be assigned the Public Information Officer radio designator for the incident.

320.4 DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

The Public Information Officer should gather and disseminate the following information as deemed appropriate:

- (a) Incident response information, including the number of units and personnel on-scene
- (b) Appropriate human interest or safety information
- (c) Nature of the incident and expertise of the fire personnel deployed (e.g., high-rise, technical rescue)
- (d) A description of any particular hazards present at the incident
- (e) Identification of life-saving or heroic acts that may have occurred, including any rescue scenarios
- (f) Projected duration of the incident

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- (g) Approved evacuation notices and restricted areas

320.5 RESTRICTED INFORMATION

The Public Information Officer shall ensure that legally protected information is not released to the media. The Public Information Officer should consult with the IC or the authorized designee about any issues or concerns regarding legally protected information.

Refer to the Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Notification Policy for additional considerations regarding communication with the media concerning a line-of-duty death or serious injury.

320.6 MEDIA INQUIRIES

All media inquiries received by incident personnel shall be forwarded to the Public Information Officer for response. The Public Information Officer will endeavor to provide accurate information that is available at the time, while clearly communicating that any such information is preliminary. The following communication strategies may be employed:

- (a) Reporters should be directed to assemble in a designated staging area to wait until additional information can be obtained.
- (b) If the Public Information Officer finds it necessary to remain with media representatives, the IC may be asked to assist in gathering information. Media representatives may be allowed to take photographs and video, provided they do not interfere with incident operations or create a safety hazard.
- (c) Prior to releasing the names or identifying information of persons seriously injured or deceased, the Public Information Officer shall confirm that the next-of-kin has been notified. Next-of-kin notifications are generally handled by law enforcement and/or hospital personnel. The Public Information Officer should contact Fire Com supervisor to confirm that notification has been made.
- (d) The names of deceased or seriously injured persons shall not be transmitted over the radio.

The Public Information Officer or the authorized designee should not speculate as to the cause of an incident.

320.7 MEDIA ACCESS AND SPECIAL TOURS OR BRIEFINGS

Authorized members of the media, local leaders, their representatives, and other visiting dignitaries may be provided access or tours of scenes of floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, explosions, or other emergency scenes when such access can be accomplished safely and when the IC has authorized such activities.

The Public Information Officer shall be responsible for scheduling and arranging special tours or briefings in accordance with established National Incident Management System (NIMS) procedures.

Access by the media is subject to the following conditions:

- (a) The media representative shall produce valid press credentials that shall be prominently displayed at all times while in areas otherwise closed to the public.

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- (b) Media representatives shall be prevented from interfering with emergency operations and criminal investigations.
 - 1. Reasonable effort should be made to provide a safe staging area for the media that is near the incident and that will not interfere with emergency or criminal investigation operations. All information released to the media should be coordinated through the Public Information Officer or other designated spokesperson.
- (c) In the case of a fire incident, the Public Information Officer may escort media representatives on a tour of a fire-damaged area following knockdown and after receiving authorization from the IC, in coordination with operations personnel. The Public Information Officer will be responsible for ensuring that all media personnel wear proper protective clothing as warranted.

320.7.1 TEMPORARY FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS

If the presence of media or other aircraft pose a threat to public or personnel safety or significantly hamper incident operations, the IC should consider requesting a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR). All requests for a TFR should be routed through Fire Com. The TFR request, either for a pre-planned operation or an unplanned incident, should include specific information regarding the perimeter and altitude necessary for the incident. The TFR should be requested through the appropriate control tower. If the control tower is not known, the Federal Aviation Administration should be contacted (14 CFR 91.137).

320.8 NEWS RELEASES

News releases are documents specifically prepared for release to the media. News releases should be authored by the Public Information Officer and approved by the Fire Chief, the IC, or the authorized designee prior to release. News releases should be structured to facilitate use by the print media, typically containing no more than two pages of concise information. News releases should be formatted in accordance with the approved department standard.

320.9 NEWS CONFERENCES

A news conference is a pre-scheduled event intended to highlight a newsworthy event, such as a promotion or the opening of a new fire station; news conferences can also be used when a representative of the Department desires to make a public appearance. The Fire Chief will determine the purpose and scope of the conference. Any accompanying news release will include details, such as the date, time, and location, and may reference other officials, dignitaries, or agencies that may be in attendance.

The Public Information Officer should prepare the news release and/or a prepared statement for the department spokesperson. The Public Information Officer shall make arrangements for the site, obtain required equipment, arrange for availability of the news release, identify photo locations, and provide escorts, as necessary. The conference may include a moderator or the Public Information Officer, who should make introductory remarks and introductions, assist with any question-and-answer period that may follow, and conclude the conference.

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Specific information should not be released prior to the conference. The Public Information Officer should notify appropriate department personnel of the date, time, and location of all news conferences. Department members attending the news conference should wear their dress uniforms as specified in the Uniform Regulations Policy. Attendance requirements will be determined by the Fire Chief.

Scene Preservation

321.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide department members with guidance on performing emergency mitigation tasks when working in and around scenes where evidence may be present. Members of the Department are often confronted with opposing priorities when performing duties at scenes containing potential evidence. They must balance the need to provide timely and effective life-saving and property-preserving services while minimizing the disturbance of any items of evidentiary value. In some instances department members must evaluate whether to enter a scene or to initiate mitigation activities.

321.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Evidence - Any item or arrangement of items that may provide relevant information to an investigation.

Scene - Any location where items of evidentiary value may be found. A scene need not be the location where a criminal act occurred; it need only be a location where items of evidentiary value are available for collection or documentation.

321.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to minimize the disturbance of conditions and evidentiary items when providing emergency mitigation services in and around scenes.

321.3 SCENE IDENTIFICATION

Department members must be mindful of encountering potential evidence at a scene whenever they respond to calls for service. The potential for evidence at a scene may be identified in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

- (a) The location of any incident that involves a physical assault or results from an act of violence. Such a location should be assumed to be a crime scene. Examples include shooting incidents, stabbing incidents, any incident involving a medical patient injured by the act of another person, suicides, bomb incidents or any act of terrorism.
- (b) Any incident that law enforcement personnel have identified as a crime scene and have notified department members of that determination.
- (c) Any unattended death scene.
- (d) All fire incidents.
- (e) Any incident where department members believe or have a reasonable suspicion that a crime has taken place. The type of suspected criminal activity may be severe, as in the case of a robbery or burglary, or less severe, as in the case of vandalism.

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- (f) Transportation incidents, including traffic collisions and rail, aircraft, shipping and boating incidents.
- (g) Industrial accidents.

321.4 ENTERING SCENES

When department members determine that a scene containing potential evidence is involved, they should promptly evaluate the need to enter the scene prior to approval of investigators. For the purposes of department members, scenes may be categorized into two distinct types: stable or unstable.

321.4.1 STABLE SCENE

A stable scene exists when there is no apparent immediate or ongoing threat to the safety, health or well-being of department members, the public or property. Examples of stable scenes include incidents where the victim or victims are obviously deceased, incidents involving obviously failed incendiary devices and fire incidents where the fire is clearly extinguished prior to the arrival of department members.

When department members encounter a stable scene and it is apparent that no threat to safety or property exists, they should remain outside the scene until cleared to enter by the appropriate investigator or law enforcement personnel. If there is a confirmed or suspected threat to life or public safety, department members should take whatever actions reasonably appear necessary to stabilize the scene and then withdraw pending approval from investigators or law enforcement personnel to re-enter.

321.4.2 UNSTABLE SCENE

An unstable scene exists whenever there appears to be an ongoing or imminent threat to the health, safety or well-being of department members, the public or property that necessitates immediate mitigation. Examples of unstable scenes include incidents involving injured or entrapped persons, active fire or a threat of imminent fire, imminent structural collapse endangering lives, the release or imminent threat of the release of hazardous materials or any incident where immediate mitigation is required to preserve life.

When department members encounter an unstable scene they are authorized to take appropriate corrective action to mitigate the threat.

321.5 PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE AT CRIME SCENES

Whenever practicable, department members should avoid touching, moving, manipulating or otherwise altering anything located at a scene where the potential for evidence exists. In some circumstances, the need to move items may be unavoidable. In those instances, department members should note what items were moved, who moved them and the location from which they were moved. Members should not attempt to move displaced items back to their original location; rather, the items should be left in the place to which they were moved. The appropriate investigator or law enforcement personnel should be informed of any items that were moved and the location where the items originally were found.

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In instances where an obvious item of evidence must be moved, an investigator or law enforcement representative should be consulted prior to moving the item, if practicable. For example, if a weapon is located beside or underneath a victim and an investigator is available, the investigator should be called to relocate the weapon. Life-preserving care should not be unreasonably delayed awaiting the arrival of an investigator or law enforcement personnel to move items of evidence.

321.6 MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND DEBRIS

When department members provide medical care in or around a scene where evidence may be located, any discarded medical material, wrapping material, used bandaging, containers or other debris should be left at the scene when the crews depart. Reusable tools, medical equipment and other durable supplies may be collected but care should be taken by department members to minimize any disturbance to other items or material at the scene. Hazardous items and other material, such as medical sharps, controlled substances or surplus medications, should be collected and handled appropriately. If investigators or law enforcement personnel direct that any hazardous materials be left in place, department members should clearly identify all such materials to the controlling authority at the scene.

Child Abuse

322.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the reporting of suspected child abuse.

322.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to ensure local law enforcement and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) are notified of suspected child abuse as required by law.

322.3 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

Members of the Pharr Fire Department shall notify local law enforcement and DFPS when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected and a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child is involved (Tex. Fam. Code § 261.101; Tex. Fam. Code § 261.103).

In addition, a member shall notify local law enforcement and DFPS when the member has reasonable cause to believe that a person was the victim of abuse or neglect as a child, and the member determines in good faith that disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child (Tex. Fam. Code § 261.101).

When the abuse or neglect occurs at a facility or by a person from a facility that requires a state license (e.g., foster homes, group homes, day care), notification shall also be made to the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred (Tex. Fam. Code § 261.103).

For purposes of notification, abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to acts or omissions related to impairment to the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning; physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child; sexual conduct involving the child; child trafficking or prostitution; use of controlled substances by the child or the use of controlled substances by a person that results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child; and any other act or omission as provided by Tex. Fam. Code § 261.001.

322.3.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Notification to law enforcement and DFPS shall be made immediately and include the following information, if known (Tex. Fam. Code § 261.104):

- (a) Name and address of the child
- (b) Name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child
- (c) The facts that caused the member to believe the child has been abused or neglected and the source of the information
- (d) The member's name and department identification number and the department's name, address, and telephone number
- (e) Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect

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The department EMS supervisor should be notified of the incident as soon as practical. A written report shall be prepared and, if requested, forwarded to law enforcement or DFPS.

If a child is being transported to a medical facility, the receiving center triage nurse or physician shall be notified of the situation upon the child's arrival.

Failure to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect by a mandated reporter is a misdemeanor and may also result in discipline (Tex. Fam. Code § 261.109).

322.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

Reports of child abuse are confidential and will only be released in accordance with the Release of Records Policy (Tex. Fam. Code § 261.201).

Disposition of Valuables

323.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process by which all valuables found at emergency incidents are inventoried and held securely by the Department until the items can be returned to the owner or otherwise legally released for disposition.

323.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department will take reasonable measures to safeguard valuables found at incident scenes. The Department does not have appropriate facilities for storing valuables for safekeeping. Therefore, alternatives to removing valuables from the scene of emergencies will be taken whenever practicable.

323.3 PROCEDURE

Any member encountering unsecured valuables, such as cash or jewelry, should immediately report it to the Incident Commander, or the member's commanding officer. When local law enforcement is available, valuable property should be transferred to legal custody.

If the valuables cannot be secured and they belong to a medical patient who is transported to a hospital, the member may deliver the valuables to the hospital, obtain a receipt from the receiving nurse and retain a copy of the receipt with the official report of the incident.

If the property or valuables cannot be secured at the location or with a responsible person at the scene, the member should request any on-site law enforcement officer to take the valuables for safekeeping. The member should document the disposition of such valuables, including the identity of any receiving individual, and obtain a receipt from the law enforcement officer and include it in the report of the call.

A member should take valuables into custody only in unusual cases and with the approval of a supervisor. The valuables should be inventoried and the inventory should list any obvious damage. A supervisor should witness the inventory.

Members should document in the incident report the disposition of any reasonably identifiable valuables. When applicable, notification to local law enforcement should be made.

Performance of Duties

324.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes daily performance expectations.

324.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide safe and appropriate responses to emergency calls and for its members to provide professional and competent services.

324.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

All members should be familiar with and in compliance with the policies, standard operating procedures, classification specifications, duties as assigned and any other lawful instruction or order from a superior officer.

324.4 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

All members, upon receipt of any emergency alarm, shall immediately cease all activities and without delay report to their assigned apparatus, respond immediately to the fire or other emergency dispatched, and exert reasonable effort to perform to the best of their ability, given the totality of circumstances.

324.5 COMPETENT PERFORMANCE

Members should 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 include, but is not limited to:

- Excessive or unauthorized leave
- Tardiness
- Demonstration of a lack of knowledge
- Failure to conform to the work standards established for the member's classification, grade or position
- Any other failure to demonstrate good conduct
- Insubordination
- Noncompliance with department policy, guidelines, rules, directives and orders

324.6 SAFETY

All members will exercise reasonable precautionary measures and good judgment to avoid injury to themselves or others while on-duty. Members who witness or are made aware of unsafe behavior should take appropriate steps to report or prevent such actions.

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324.7 DRIVER'S LICENSE

All members shall possess a valid state-issued driver's license of the class required for their assigned duties. Sworn personnel shall obtain prior to the end of their probationary period at minimum a class B exempt license.

All members should be familiar with the state vehicle code, any manuals specific to driving or operating department apparatus and all other applicable department policies and procedures.

All members shall report to their supervisor any change in their driver's license's status. Failure to maintain a valid driver's license in accordance with an employee's current classification specification may result in disciplinary action.

324.8 PROPER COMPLETION OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

All members shall complete and submit all necessary reports, forms and memos on time and in accordance with any other applicable department policy or procedure.

Reports, forms and memos submitted by members shall be truthful and complete. No member shall knowingly enter or cause to be entered any inaccurate, incomplete, false or improper information.

324.9 FIRE DEPARTMENT IDENTIFICATION

Members shall carry their badges and identification cards on their persons while on-duty and in accordance with the Badges Policy, except when impractical or dangerous to their safety or a risk to an investigation.

Members shall furnish their names and department identification numbers to any person requesting that information, other than in situations in which the member's personal safety is at risk.

324.10 LOSS OF EQUIPMENT

Members shall report to their supervisor the loss or recovery of any department badge, identification card, manual, key or equipment. In the case of an equipment loss, a police report should be filed in the jurisdiction where the loss occurred.

Adult Abuse

325.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides members of the Pharr Fire Department with guidance regarding when notification is to be made to Adult Protective Services (APS) or other state agencies of suspected abuse of certain adults.

325.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to assist victims of adult abuse by making the proper notifications to those responsible for investigating these matters.

325.3 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

Members of the Pharr Fire Department shall notify APS or another state agency when there is cause to believe that an elderly person or a person with a disability has been abused (Tex. Hum. Res. Code § 48.051).

For purposes of notification (Tex. Hum. Res. Code § 48.002):

- (a) Abuse includes the negligent or willful infliction of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or cruel punishment with resulting physical or emotional harm; sexual abuse; or exploitation, neglect, or self-neglect.
- (b) Elderly person means someone who is age 65 or older.
- (c) Person with a disability means someone age 18 or older who has a mental, physical, or intellectual or developmental disability that substantially impairs the person's ability to provide adequately for the person's care or protection.

Law enforcement shall be contacted immediately if the abuse involves an emergency or life-threatening situation.

325.3.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Notification shall occur immediately and be made by telephone to APS. The report shall include the following, if known (Tex. Hum. Res. Code § 48.051):

- (a) The basis of the member's knowledge of the alleged abuse
- (b) The name, age, and address of the adult victim
- (c) The name and address of the person responsible for the adult victim's care
- (d) The nature and extent of the adult victim's condition or injuries
- (e) Any other relevant information

The department Emergency Medical Services supervisor should be notified of the incident as soon as practical. A written report shall be prepared and, if requested, forwarded to law enforcement or APS.

If the person is being transported to a medical facility, the receiving center triage nurse or physician shall be notified of the situation upon the person's arrival.

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Failure to report an incident of adult abuse may result in criminal charges and may also result in discipline (Tex. Hum. Res. Code § 48.052).

325.3.2 ADDITIONAL NOTIFICATION

In addition, members shall notify APS within 48 hours when the member has reasonable cause to believe that a person was the victim of abuse or neglect as a child, and the disclosure of that information is necessary to protect the health and safety of an elderly person or a person with a disability (Tex. Fam. Code § 261.101).

325.4 RELEASE OF REPORTS

Information related to incidents of adult abuse or suspected adult abuse shall be confidential and may only be disclosed pursuant to state law and the Release of Records Policy (Tex. Hum. Res. Code § 48.101; Tex. Hum. Res. Code § 48.154).

Requests for information about an incident referred to law enforcement should be referred to the investigating agency.

Traffic Accidents

326.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the reporting and investigation of traffic accidents involving department vehicles and department personnel on official business. This policy applies to accidents involving any department-owned vehicle and to accidents any time department business is being conducted, regardless of who owns the vehicle involved.

326.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to investigate all department traffic accidents with the intent of learning the cause of the accident, identifying contributing factors and implementing corrective measures when appropriate.

326.3 REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

All department members involved in a traffic accident in a vehicle owned by the Department or while conducting department business, regardless of who owns the vehicle, shall immediately report the accident to the appropriate local law enforcement agency and notify an on-duty supervisor.

All department members involved in a traffic accident shall also complete and submit to the supervisor a report of the accident, in addition to any report taken by law enforcement. If the member is incapable, the immediate supervisor shall complete the form. Supervisors are responsible for notifying the Battalion Chief and Command Staff of traffic accidents.

Once notified of a traffic accident, the Battalion Chief is responsible for ensuring that the department investigation and review occurs in a timely manner. The Battalion Chief is also responsible to take the individual for a post-accident urine analysis if the member is not injured.

326.4 TYPES OF REVIEWS

Traffic accidents subject to this policy will be classified, investigated and reviewed as follows:

326.4.1 ACCIDENT LEVELS

- (a) A Level I accident is any traffic accident involving:
 - 1. Minor injury to any department member, a contract employee or an employee of another public agency when the injury does not result in treatment at an emergency treatment facility or in subsequent hospitalization.
 - 2. Minor damage to department property or vehicles.
 - 3. Minor damage to non-department property or vehicles while conducting department business.
- (b) A Level II accident is any traffic accident involving:

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1. Any injury to persons other than department members, except contract and other public agency employees noted in Level I.
 2. Any injury requiring immediate transport and treatment of any department member, contract employee or an employee of another public agency at an emergency treatment facility.
 3. Major damage to a vehicle owned or operated by the Department or major damage to department property.
 4. Major damage to a non-department vehicle or property while conducting department business.
- (c) A Level III accident is any traffic accident involving:
1. The death or anticipated disabling injury of a member of this department.
 2. The death or anticipated disabling injury of anyone other than a member of this department, a contract employee or other public agency employee when the traffic accident involves any department member, vehicle or property.

326.4.2 REVIEW TEAMS

Reviews shall be conducted by the on-duty Battalion Chief or respective manager for Level I accidents.

Level II and Level III accidents will be reviewed by a Battalion Chief or a Deputy Chief selected by the Fire Chief, a designated Health and Safety Officer or risk manager, and a labor representative of the involved member.

326.5 ACCIDENT REPORTS

The Battalion Chief is responsible for the preparation and completion of a written report that describes the traffic accident, any contributing factors, all persons and equipment involved and recommendations for preventing a recurrence.

Reports involving Level I accidents will be submitted through the chain of command to the Deputy Chief in charge of the involved member. Reports involving Level II and Level III accidents will be submitted through the chain of command to the Assistant Fire Chief and the Fire Chief.

Following review by the Fire Chief, the completed report and all related documentation from the investigation will be forwarded to the department's Custodian of Records for filing.

A completed report should include the following:

- (a) Investigation methods: Identify the members of the investigation team and the agencies involved in the investigation and describe the process of the investigation, including the names of any persons interviewed.
- (b) People, vehicles and equipment: List and identify all people, vehicles and equipment involved in the traffic accident.

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- (c) Accident scene and environmental conditions: Describe the location, roadways, vehicle positioning, weather conditions, road/ground surface condition and/or visibility. Include diagrams, drawings, photographs and reports from any investigating law enforcement agencies.
- (d) Accident description: Describe the accident based on the facts gathered. Provide time frame sequence, movements, relative positioning, performance of vehicles and equipment and the actions of persons involved.
- (e) Policies and procedures assessments and recommendations: Identify any department policies and procedures that are relevant to the accident. Assess the effectiveness of such policies and procedures as applied to the accident and, with the intent of preventing future injury, property loss or liability, make recommendations regarding changes.
- (f) If it is determined that an employee may have violated any department policies or procedures, the Battalion Chief should recommend that the matter be submitted for the initiation of possible administrative action.

Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Investigations

327.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for investigating a serious injury or line-of-duty death, documenting of the events leading to the injury or death and making recommendations directed toward preventing similar occurrences in the future.

327.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to identify the causal factors pertaining to any event involving a serious injury or line-of-duty death, and to document and secure evidence which may be a factor in any regulatory actions or litigation resulting from the event. An investigation into the circumstances of the serious injury or line-of-duty death is separate and distinct from any investigation being conducted regarding the cause of a fire.

327.3 LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH

The Texas State Fire Marshal shall investigate the circumstances surrounding the line-of-duty death of any firefighter, including any factors that may have contributed to the death of the firefighter. The State Fire Marshal shall coordinate the investigative efforts of local government officials and may enlist established fire service organizations and private entities to assist in the investigation (Tex. Gov't Code § 417.0075).

In line-of-duty deaths resulting from the malfunction of personal protective equipment (PPE), failure of PPE to protect the firefighter from injury, or injuries sustained from failure to comply with any provision of mandated department standard operating procedures, the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) may also participate in the investigation (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.23).

The Department shall ensure that a post-mortem examination is conducted on any member who dies as a result of the incident as well as on any other deceased person who may have been contributory to the event.

327.4 LINE-OF-DUTY SERIOUS INJURY

For serious line-of-duty injuries, the Department may utilize external resources to assist or lead the investigation. These resources include:

- Texas State Fire Marshal
- TCFP
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
- Local/State law enforcement
- Area fire department Fire Marshals
- Any other entity that might be required by state law

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Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Investigations

In the event an investigation utilizes multiple agencies, the Department will establish a Unified Incident Command program to facilitate the needs and activities of the investigation.

327.4.1 PROCEDURE FOR LINE-OF-DUTY SERIOUS INJURY

As soon as practicable after a serious injury has occurred, the Fire Chief or the authorized designee shall assign an investigation team to conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the event.

- (a) A Battalion Chief, Deputy Chief or Captain designated by the Fire Chief should function as the team leader and direct the investigation of the serious injury. The investigation team should report to the team leader, who is responsible for the management of the investigative process.
- (b) All members of the Pharr Fire Department shall give their full and complete cooperation to the investigation team.
- (c) The Pharr Fire Department should cooperate with all other government agencies that have a legal cause to be involved in the investigation of a serious injury and should voluntarily share relevant information with other organizations working in areas of fire service occupational safety and health education and training. Participation by these agencies shall be at their own discretion, depending on the circumstances of the incident. These agencies may or may not produce their own reports of the incident with recommendations for corrective actions. These reports do not supersede the investigation team report.
- (d) The investigation team report and all related documentation shall be an internal Pharr Fire Department administrative report.
- (e) Any public release of the report requires the approval of the Fire Chief or the authorized designee. Such release will generally be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Texas Public Information Act.

327.4.2 INVESTIGATION TEAM

The investigation team shall consist, at a minimum, of the following team members:

- (a) Team leader assigned by Fire Chief
- (b) Fire investigator
- (c) Department Health and Safety Officer
- (d) Risk manager
- (e) Employee labor representative

Additional personnel may be added as required by the specific circumstances of the incident, including an investigative representative from the appropriate law enforcement agency when there is reasonable cause to believe a crime may be connected with the investigation.

327.4.3 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The duties of the investigation team include, but are not limited to, the following:

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- (a) The Health and safety Officer shall secure any PPE involved in a firefighter injury and shall make it available to the TCFP for inspection (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.23).
- (b) Gather and analyze all physical evidence related to the incident.
- (c) Interview all witnesses with direct or indirect knowledge of the circumstances.
- (d) Collect and preserve recordings and copies of radio traffic, telephone conversations, photographs, film, videotape, incident histories and other related information. The pertinent aspects of the radio and telephone recordings should be transcribed.
- (e) Consult with persons having special knowledge of the factors involved in the incident, including private sector experts and consultants.
- (f) Connect with other agencies involved in the investigation of the incident.
- (g) Establish and maintain ongoing communication between the team leader and the legal counsel for the Department.
- (h) Develop a written report of the incident, including conclusions and recommendations.
- (i) Coordinate activities with Fire Prevention to avoid interference with any criminal investigation.
- (j) Ensure that a post-mortem examination is conducted on any deceased person who may have been contributory to the event.
- (k) Activate the Department or regional Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) team for any members adversely affected by the incident.

327.5 DOCUMENTATION

The investigation team should ensure that the scene where the line-of-duty death or serious injury occurred is documented, including diagrams, photographs and observations. When feasible, all witness interviews should be recorded or transcribed. When recording or transcription is not feasible, the investigator's notes of the interview should be preserved. In addition, the investigation team should:

- (a) Obtain, examine and secure all PPE, breathing apparatus and equipment used by the seriously injured or deceased employee.
 - 1. A complete physical description of the PPE, breathing apparatus and equipment shall be included in the report of the incident.
 - 2. A performance evaluation report conducted by a qualified professional on all safety equipment should be included in the report of the incident.
 - 3. For specific guidance on PPE involved in the incident, refer to the special incident procedure in the Personal Protective Equipment Policy.
- (b) Review and comment on the application of policies and procedures to the incident, the observance of policies and procedures and their effect on the situation. Recommend changes, additions or deletions to such policies and procedures.

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- (c) Attempt to obtain any photographs, videotape or other information relating to the incident from news media or other sources. Such evidence should be obtained with the agreement that it will only be used for investigative and educational purposes.

327.6 FINAL REPORT

For line-of-duty deaths, the final report will be prepared and released by the Texas State Fire Marshal pursuant to Texas law (Tex. Gov't Code § 417.0075(d)).

For line-of-duty serious injuries, the investigation team should present the final report to the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief should determine the schedule and method of presentation of the final report.

National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)

328.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-498) authorizes the National Fire Data Center in the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) to gather and analyze information on the magnitude of the nation's fire problem, as well as its detailed characteristics and trends. To do so, the National Fire Data Center has established the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding NFIRS reporting via the Texas Fire Incident Reporting System (TEXFIRS) to ensure department response information is properly reported to TEXFIRS and NFIRS.

328.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department is committed to improving fire reporting and analysis capability both locally and on the national level. Therefore, it is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to participate in TEXFIRS.

328.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assistant Chief should designate a TEXFIRS coordinator, who should develop and maintain familiarity with TEXFIRS and NFIRS resources and reporting requirements, ensure department information is compliant with the TEXFIRS and NFIRS reporting format, and ensure that the information is forwarded to the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office. The previous calendar year's data should be submitted no later than March 31 of the current year.

The USFA has developed a standard NFIRS package that includes incident and casualty forms, a coding structure for data processing, manuals, computer software and procedures, documentation and a National Fire Academy training course for utilizing the system.

The Texas State Fire Marshal's Office also offers a training course on TEXFIRS. This eight-hour training session gives attendees hands-on experience completing incident reports on paper forms using the TEXFIRS/NFIRS system.

Community Volunteer Program

329.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of volunteers in non-fire suppression or non-emergency roles to help improve service to the community, increase department responsiveness, enhance the delivery of services and information input, provide new program opportunities, bring new skills and expertise to the Department and prompt new enthusiasm.

329.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Volunteer - An individual who is not a member of the Pharr Fire Department but who performs a service for the Department without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. This may include Fire Corps and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) participants, unpaid chaplains, interns, persons providing administrative support and youth involved in a fire Explorer Post, among others.

329.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to utilize volunteers to the extent reasonably practicable to enhance public education opportunities, enforcement efforts and in any other capacity that is intended to support department personnel or provide a service to the community.

329.3 PROCEDURE

Volunteers may assist department personnel in conducting inspections and code enforcement of laws and regulations. Volunteers may also assist the Department in its public education efforts and/or in other areas within the Department, as needed. Volunteers are intended to supplement and support, rather than replace, firefighters and civilian personnel and are an important component of this organization.

All volunteers shall comply with all orders and directives, either oral or written, issued by the Department. A copy of the policies and procedures will be made available to each volunteer upon appointment and he/she shall become thoroughly familiar with these policies.

Whenever a rule, regulation or guideline in this manual relating to department operations refers to a regular full-time employee, it shall also apply to a volunteer, unless by its nature it is inapplicable.

Nothing in the manual shall confer rights upon the volunteer. Volunteers serve at-will and their volunteer status may be terminated at any time without cause or reason.

329.4 VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

329.4.1 VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

A Volunteer Coordinator shall be appointed by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee. The function of the Volunteer Coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management within the Department, and to direct and assist staff and volunteer

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efforts to jointly provide more productive services. The Volunteer Coordinator should work with other department staff on an ongoing basis to assist in the development and implementation of volunteer-staffed positions. Such tasks include:

- (a) Recruiting, selecting and training qualified volunteers for various positions.
- (b) Facilitating the implementation of new volunteer activities and assignments.
- (c) Maintaining records for each volunteer.
- (d) Tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers.
- (e) Maintaining a volunteer handbook and outlining expectations, policies and responsibilities for all volunteers.
- (f) Maintaining a record of volunteer schedules and work hours.
- (g) Completion and dissemination, as appropriate, of all necessary paperwork and information.
- (h) Planning periodic recognition events.
- (i) Maintaining a relationship with other community volunteer programs and assisting in community-wide efforts to recognize and promote volunteering.

329.4.2 RECRUITMENT

Volunteers should be recruited on a continuous and ongoing basis consistent with department policy on equal opportunity, nondiscriminatory employment. A primary qualification for participation in the application process should be an interest in the Department and an ability to assist the Department in serving the public. A volunteer with the Department should:

- (a) Be at least 18 years of age for all positions other than an Explorer.
- (b) Be at least 14 years of age for an Explorer position.
- (c) Possess a valid Texas driver's license if the position requires vehicle operation.
- (d) Be able to deal effectively and courteously with the public.
- (e) Be willing to commit to approximately 10 hours per week.
- (f) Complete mandatory training as determined appropriate by the Department.
- (g) Possess any other qualifications specific to the volunteer assignment.

Internal requests for volunteers should be submitted in writing by interested staff to the Volunteer Coordinator through the requester's immediate supervisor. A complete position description and a requested time frame should be included in the request. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting assignments. The Volunteer Coordinator may withhold assignment of any volunteer until such time as the requesting unit is prepared to make effective use of the volunteer.

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329.4.3 SCREENING

All prospective volunteers should complete the volunteer application form. The Volunteer Coordinator or the authorized designee should conduct a face-to-face interview with an applicant under consideration.

A documented background investigation shall be required on each volunteer applicant and should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- (a) Fingerprints
- (b) Traffic and criminal background check
- (c) Employment history
- (d) References
- (e) Credit check

329.4.4 SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

Service as a volunteer with the Department shall begin with an official notice of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer position. Notice may only be given by an authorized representative of the Department, who will normally be the Volunteer Coordinator. No volunteer should begin any assignment until he/she has been officially accepted for that position and completed all required screening and paperwork.

At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer should complete all required enrollment paperwork and will receive a copy of his/her position description and agreement of service with the Department. All volunteers shall receive a copy of the volunteer handbook and shall be required to sign a volunteer agreement.

Volunteers should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities and the needs of the Department.

329.4.5 TRAINING

Volunteers will be provided with an orientation program to acquaint them with the Department, personnel, and policies and procedures that have a direct impact on their work assignments.

Volunteers will be required to complete training on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and infectious diseases and exposures prior to performing their assignments.

Volunteers should receive position-specific training to ensure they have adequate knowledge and skills to complete tasks required by the position and should receive periodic ongoing training as deemed appropriate by their supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

329.4.6 DRESS CODE

As representatives of the Department, volunteers are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

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Volunteers shall conform to department-approved dress consistent with their assignments. Uniforms authorized for volunteers may be readily distinguishable from those worn by sworn members. The uniform or identifiable parts of the uniform shall not be worn while off-duty. Volunteers may choose to wear the uniform while in transit to or from official department assignments or functions, provided that an outer garment is worn over the uniform shirt to avoid bringing attention to the volunteer while he/she is off-duty.

Volunteers shall be required to return any issued uniform or department property at the termination of service.

329.5 SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the Department must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor will be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the volunteer's work and should be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

A volunteer may be assigned as, and act as, a supervisor of other volunteers provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid staff employee.

Functional supervision of volunteers is the responsibility of the supervisor in charge of the unit where the volunteer is assigned. Supervisors of volunteers should consider the following:

- (a) Take the time to introduce volunteers to employees on all levels.
- (b) Ensure volunteers have work space and necessary office supplies.
- (c) Make sure the work is challenging. Do not hesitate to give volunteers an assignment or task that will utilize these valuable resources.

Volunteers should have a performance appraisal completed by their supervisor annually, as outlined in the Performance Evaluations Policy.

329.6 CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, the duties of the position or department policy, all information a volunteer encounters shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized personnel shall be released.

Each volunteer will be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement before being given an assignment with the Department. Unauthorized disclosure of any confidential information, verbally, in writing or by any other means, by the volunteer is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

Volunteers shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or other periodical, release or divulge any information concerning the activities of the Department, or maintain that they represent the Department in such matters without permission from the proper department personnel.

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329.7 PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Volunteers will be issued an identification card that must be worn and visible at all times while on-duty. Any fixed and portable equipment issued by the Department shall be for official and authorized use only. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the Department and shall be returned at the termination of service.

Ride-Along Program

330.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for citizens to experience fire service functions first hand. This policy provides the requirements, approval process and hours of operation for the Ride-Along Program.

330.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide an opportunity for citizens to experience fire service functions when specific criteria are met.

330.3 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be reviewed and scheduled by the Fire Operations Deputy Chief or the authorized designee.

The Fire Operations Deputy Chief or the authorized designee will schedule a date, based on availability, generally at least one week after the date of application. If approved, a copy will be forwarded to the respective Battalion Chief as soon as possible for his/her scheduling considerations.

If the ride-along is denied, a representative of the Department will contact the applicant and advise him/her of the denial.

Once approved, civilian ride-alongs will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. An exception may be made for the following: students, Explorers, chaplains, reserves, applicants, and others with approval of the Fire Operations Deputy Chief.

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along will be allowed in the fire apparatus at a given time.

330.3.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Prior to participating in a ride-along, every participant who may come into contact with private health-related information will be required to complete and sign a nondisclosure agreement to keep all confidential information learned during the ride-along confidential.

Participants must be at least 16 years old. Prior to participating in a ride-along, every person must acknowledge the risks and sign a written waiver of claims and release of liability.

The participant must be in good health and must not be suffering from any illness or injury, including cold, flu or respiratory infection, on the day of the ride-along.

330.3.2 ELIGIBILITY

The Pharr Fire Department ride-along program is offered to residents, students and those employed within the City. Every attempt will be made to accommodate interested persons; however, any applicant may be disqualified without cause.

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Factors that may be considered in disqualifying an applicant include but are not limited to:

- Being under 16 years of age.
- Prior criminal history.
- Pending criminal action.
- Pending lawsuit against the Department.
- Denial by any supervisor.
- Poor health or other condition that cannot be reasonably accommodated.

330.3.3 AVAILABILITY

The ride-along program is available on most days of the week, with certain exceptions. The ride-along times are established by the Fire Operations Deputy Chief. Exceptions to this schedule may be made as approved by the Fire Chief, Fire Marshal or the Fire Operations Deputy Chief.

330.3.4 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride-along is required to be suitably dressed in a collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes. Sandals, t-shirts, tank tops, shorts and ripped or torn blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn in the fire apparatus. Jewelry and tattoos should comply with the Personal Appearance Standards Policy. The Fire Operations Deputy Chief, Battalion Chief or Lieutenant may refuse a ride-along to anyone not properly dressed.

330.4 FIREFIGHTER RIDE-ALONGS

Off-duty members of this department or any other fire service agency will not be permitted to ride-along with on-duty firefighters without the express consent of the Fire Operations Deputy Chief or the authorized designee. In the event that such a ride-along is permitted, the off-duty member shall not be considered on-duty and shall not represent him/herself as a firefighter or participate in any fire service activity except as emergency circumstances may require.

330.5 LIEUTENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Lieutenants shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times. Lieutenants should use discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation and, if necessary, require the participant to remain in the fire apparatus.

330.6 CONTROL OF RIDE-ALONG

The Lieutenant shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instruct him/her in the conditions that necessarily limit participation. These instructions should include:

- (a) The ride-along will follow the lawful directions of any department member.
- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, discussions with victims or handling any fire equipment.

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- (c) Either the ride-along or the Lieutenant, captain, or any chief officer may terminate the ride at any time. Reasonable effort will be made to return the observer to his/her home or to the fire station if the ride is terminated.
- (d) Lieutenants will not allow ride-alongs to be present in any residence or situation that would jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other citizen.
- (e) Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride-along be permitted to enter a private residence with the fire crew without the express consent of the resident or other authorized person.

Chaplain

331.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for Pharr Fire Department chaplains to provide counseling or emotional support to members of the Department, their families and members of the public.

331.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department shall ensure that department chaplains are properly appointed, trained and supervised to carry out their responsibilities without financial compensation. Reasonable efforts shall be made to incorporate chaplains from varying denominations reflective of the community to the best extent possible.

331.3 ELIGIBILITY

Requirements for participation as a chaplain for the Department may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Being above reproach, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, free from addiction to alcohol or other drugs, and free from excessive debt.
- (b) Managing his/her household, family and personal affairs well.
- (c) Having a good reputation in the community.
- (d) Successful completion of an appropriate-level background investigation.
- (e) A minimum of five years of successful counseling or ministry experience.
- (f) Being in good health.
- (g) Possessing a valid driver's license.

The Fire Chief may allow exceptions to these eligibility requirements based on organizational and community needs and the qualifications of the individual.

331.4 RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

The Pharr Fire Department shall endeavor to recruit and appoint only those applicants who meet the high ethical, moral and professional standards set forth by the Department.

All applicants shall be required to meet and pass the same pre-employment procedures as department members before appointment with the exception of any entry level Firefighter knowledge or physical agility tests.

331.4.1 RECRUITMENT

Chaplain should be recruited on a continuous and ongoing basis consistent with department policy on equal opportunity and non-discriminatory practices. A primary qualification for participation in the application process should be an interest in and an ability to assist the Department in serving the public. Chaplain candidates are encouraged to participate in ride-alongs with department members before and during the selection process.

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331.4.2 SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

Chaplain candidates shall successfully complete the following process prior to appointment as a chaplain:

- (a) Submit the appropriate written application.
- (b) Include a recommendation from employers or volunteer programs.
- (c) Interview with the Fire Chief and the chaplain coordinator.
- (d) Successfully complete an appropriate-level background investigation.
- (e) Complete an appropriate probationary period as designated by the Fire Chief.

Chaplains are volunteers and serve at the discretion of the Fire Chief. Chaplains shall have no property interest in continued appointment. However, if a chaplain is removed for alleged misconduct, the chaplain will be afforded an opportunity solely to clear his/her name through a liberty interest hearing, which shall be limited to a single appearance before the Pharr Fire Department or the authorized designee.

331.5 IDENTIFICATION AND UNIFORMS

As representatives of the Department, chaplains are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Chaplains shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Uniforms and necessary safety equipment or personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided for each chaplain. Identification symbols worn by chaplains shall be different and distinct from those worn by other members through the inclusion of "Chaplain" on the uniform and other identifying PPE. Chaplain uniforms and PPE shall not reflect any religious affiliation.

Chaplains shall conform to all uniform regulations and appearance standards of the Department.

331.6 CHAPLAIN COORDINATOR

The Fire Chief may delegate certain responsibilities to a chaplain coordinator. The coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

The chaplain coordinator shall serve as the liaison between the chaplains and the Fire Chief. The function of the coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective chaplain management within the Department, and to direct and assist efforts to jointly provide more productive chaplain services. Under the general direction of the Fire Chief or the authorized designee, chaplains shall report to the chaplain coordinator and/or Incident Commander (IC).

The chaplain coordinator may appoint a senior chaplain or other designee to assist in the coordination of chaplains and their activities.

The responsibilities of the coordinator or the authorized designee include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Recruiting, selecting and training qualified chaplains.
- (b) Conducting chaplain meetings.
- (c) Establishing and maintaining a chaplain callout roster.
- (d) Maintaining records for each chaplain.

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- (e) Tracking and evaluating the contribution of chaplains.
- (f) Maintaining a record of chaplain schedules and work hours.
- (g) Completing and disseminating, as appropriate, all necessary paperwork and information.
- (h) Planning periodic recognition events.
- (i) Maintaining a liaison with other agency chaplain coordinators.

An evaluation of the overall use of chaplains will be conducted on an annual basis by the coordinator and reported to the Fire Chief.

331.7 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chaplains assist the Department, its members and the community as needed. Assignments of chaplains will usually be to augment the Administration Division, but chaplains may be assigned to other areas within the Department as needed. Chaplains should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills and abilities and the needs of the Department.

All chaplains will be assigned duties by the chaplain coordinator or the authorized designee or an IC.

Chaplains may not proselytize or attempt to recruit members of the Department or the public into a religious affiliation while representing themselves as chaplains with this department. If there is any question as to the receiving person's intent, chaplains should verify that the person is desirous of spiritual counseling or guidance before engaging in such discussion.

Chaplains may not accept gratuities for any service, or any subsequent actions or follow-up contacts that were provided while functioning as a chaplain for the Pharr Fire Department.

331.7.1 COMPLIANCE

Chaplains are volunteer members of the Department and, except as otherwise specified within this policy, are required to comply with the Community Volunteer Program Policy and other applicable policies.

331.7.2 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

- (a) Chaplains will be asked to be available for call on an as-needed basis.
- (b) Chaplains operating at emergency incidents or large-scale department events shall operate within and as part of the Incident Command System (ICS) at all times, including participating in and replying to Personal Accountability Reports (PAR) conducted as part of the incident or event.
- (c) Each chaplain should serve with the Pharr Fire Department a minimum of four hours per month to maintain the necessary proficiencies and contacts necessary to be effective in their service.

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- (d) At the end of each period of service or response to an incident the chaplain will complete a chaplain's report and submit it to the Fire Chief and chaplain coordinator or the authorized designee.
- (e) Chaplains shall be permitted to ride with members during any shift and observe Pharr Fire Department operations or training sessions, provided the on-duty Battalion Chief has been notified and is aware of the activity.
- (f) Chaplains shall not be evaluators of members of the Pharr Fire Department.
- (g) In responding to incidents, a chaplain shall never function in a hazardous area or serve as an assistant other than the chaplain's role.
- (h) When responding to in-progress calls for service, chaplains will be required to stand-by in a secure area until the situation has been deemed safe.
- (i) Chaplains shall serve only within the jurisdiction of the Pharr Fire Department unless otherwise authorized by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.
- (j) Each chaplain shall have access to current member rosters, addresses, telephone numbers, duty assignments and other information that may assist in his/her duties. Such information will be considered confidential, and each chaplain will exercise appropriate security measures to prevent unauthorized access to the data.

331.7.3 ASSISTING DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

The responsibilities of a chaplain related to department members include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Assisting in making notification to families of members who have been seriously injured or killed and, after notification, responding to the hospital or home of the member.
- (b) Visiting sick or injured members in the hospital or at home.
- (c) Attending and participating in funerals of active or retired members, when requested.
- (d) Serving as a resource for members who are dealing with the public during significant incidents (e.g., accidental death, suicide, suicidal subjects, serious accident, drug and alcohol abuse or a mass casualty incident (MCI)).
- (e) Providing counseling and support for members and their families.
- (f) Being alert to the needs of members and their families.

331.7.4 ASSISTING THE DEPARTMENT

The responsibilities of a chaplain related to the Pharr Fire Department include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Assisting members in defusing a conflict or incident, when requested.
- (b) Responding to any significant incident (e.g., natural and accidental death, suicide and attempted suicide, family disturbance or MCI) in which the IC or supervisor believes the chaplain could assist in accomplishing the mission of the Department.
- (c) Responding to all major disasters, such as a natural disaster, bombing, MCI and similar critical incidents.

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- (d) Being available, or if possible, on-duty during major demonstrations or any public function that requires the presence of a large number of department members.
- (e) Attending department functions such as academy graduations, ceremonies and social events and offering invocations and benedictions, as requested.
- (f) Participating in in-service training classes.
- (g) Training others to enhance the effectiveness of the Department.

331.7.5 ASSISTING THE COMMUNITY

The duties of a chaplain related to the community include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Fostering familiarity with the role of fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) members in the community.
- (b) Providing an additional link between the community, other chaplain coordinators and the Department.
- (c) Providing a liaison with various civic, business and religious organizations.
- (d) Assisting the community when they request representatives or leaders of various denominations.
- (e) Assisting the community in any other function, as needed or requested.
- (f) Making referrals in cases where specialized attention is needed or in cases that are beyond the chaplain's ability to assist.

331.7.6 CHAPLAIN MEETINGS

Chaplains may be required to attend scheduled meetings. Absences from such meetings should be satisfactorily explained to the chaplain coordinator.

331.8 PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

Chaplains shall be familiar with state evidentiary laws and rules pertaining to the limits of the clergy-penitent, psychotherapist-patient and other potentially applicable privileges and shall inform members when it appears reasonably likely that the member is discussing matters that are not subject to privileged communications. In such cases, the chaplain should consider referring the member to an appropriate counseling resource or available program.

No chaplain shall provide counsel to or receive confidential communications from any Pharr Fire Department member concerning an incident personally witnessed by the chaplain or concerning an incident involving the chaplain.

331.9 TRAINING

The Department may establish a minimum number of training hours and standards for department chaplains. The training, as approved by the Training Captain, may include:

- Stress management
- Death notifications
- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress

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Chaplains

- Burnout for department members and chaplains
- Legal liability and confidentiality
- Ethics
- Responding to crisis situations
- The fire and EMS family
- Substance abuse
- Member injury or death
- Sensitivity and diversity

Grocery Shopping On-Duty

332.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines for grocery shopping on-duty.

332.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to encourage suppression personnel to bring an adequate supply of food to work to meet their nutrition needs for the hours to be worked. When circumstances allow, companies may be permitted to shop for groceries as well.

332.3 PROCEDURE

Company grocery shopping may be permitted under the following circumstances:

- (a) One person shall be assigned to shop while on duty for each station and utilize the utility vehicle provided for each station keeping the companies in service.
- (b) Grocery shop while on-duty should be a part of the daily routine to avoid making a separate trip.
- (c) Personnel shall shop within their initial response area or at the closest store approved by the Battalion Chief.
- (d) Members entering the store shall take a portable radio and if dispatched to a call shall leave the store immediately.
- (e) Use of a personal vehicle for grocery shopping while on-duty is not authorized.
- (f) If the entire company shops while on duty, the apparatus shall not be parked in red zones, along red curbs, in zones limited exclusively to the vehicles of disabled persons or any location that will restrict pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

Active Shooter and Other Violent Incidents

333.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Violence committed in schools, workplaces, and other locations by any individual or group of individuals who are determined to target or kill persons or to create mass casualties presents a difficult situation for fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The purpose of this policy is to identify guidelines and factors that will assist members in making decisions in these rapidly unfolding and tense situations.

333.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department will endeavor to plan for a rapid response to violent incidents involving an active shooter or other violent situations. The Pharr Fire Department is committed to preparing and planning for rapid responses to these incidents by coordinating with law enforcement and other EMS personnel, as well as with those responsible for operating sites that may be the potential target of a violent incident.

333.3 ACTIVE SHOOTER/VIOLENT INCIDENT PLAN

The Fire Chief should designate a member who is responsible for developing and managing an active shooter/violent incident (AS/VI) plan to assist in the Pharr Fire Department's response to an AS/VI.

The AS/VI plan should address:

- (a) Any applicable EMS Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) protocols.
- (b) Identification of state, local, and regional agencies that are likely to respond to an AS/VI.
- (c) Procedures to facilitate interagency sharing of information related to AS/VIs.
- (d) The joint development of protocols for responding to AS/VIs with fire, EMS, and law enforcement personnel, including but not limited to:
 - 1. Identification of likely critical incident target sites and the availability of plans or schematics of such locations and associated outcomes.
 - 2. Effects and outcomes of cascading or complex coordinated incidents.
 - 3. Rapid entry and evacuation routes.
 - 4. Equipment needs.
 - 5. Communication interoperability.
 - 6. Tactical EMS (TEMS) personnel or Rescue Task Forces (RTFs) deployment.
- (e) Any mutual aid agreements that may exist.
- (f) Integrated use of the National Incident Management System and Incident Command System approach by personnel likely to respond to an AS/VI. Emphasis should be placed on the establishment of a Unified Command.

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- (g) Any guidelines for an AS/VI that are established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Interagency Board, or the National Fire Protection Association.
- (h) Common communications and terminology to be utilized by responding personnel.
- (i) Use of readily identifiable and visible identification by responding personnel to make them easily discernible.
- (j) Procedures and agreements governing self-deployment of emergency response personnel.
- (k) Identification of which personnel will need additional personal protective equipment (PPE), including ballistic gear (e.g., vests, helmets) and what training will be needed for the use of such gear.
- (l) Coordination and planning with local hospitals regarding communication and patient distribution.
- (m) Procedures for dissemination of information to the public during and after an AS/VI.
- (n) Procedures for continuity of department operations during and after an AS/VI.
- (o) Establishing areas designated for victim reunification and recovery.
- (p) Procedures for completion of post-incident reviews of AS/VIs.

The AS/VI plan manager should, in conjunction with appropriate law enforcement and other EMS personnel, review the Pharr Fire Department's plan annually and make any necessary updates.

333.4 FIRST RESPONDERS

When responding to AS/VIs, members must decide, often during difficult and rapidly evolving circumstances, whether to enter the scene or to stage at a safe area. When deciding on a course of action members should:

- (a) Determine whether law enforcement has secured the scene or developed a plan for entry. If the scene has not been secured, members should work in teams with law enforcement and other EMS personnel on-scene to develop a plan for entry and contact with victims with life-threatening injuries.
 - 1. Members tasked with entry should wear PPE appropriate for the circumstances.
- (b) Coordinate with available law enforcement personnel to create a staging area for additional member resources.
- (c) Identify and prepare members for operations in areas of higher risk, if appropriate.
- (d) Decide whether individuals who are under imminent threat can be moved out of danger with reasonable safety.
- (e) Plan for rapid triage, treatment and extrication of any individuals with life-threatening injuries.
- (f) Consider the risk of fire hazards and secondary devices at any main or secondary scenes if there is a reasonable belief that improvised explosive devices have been or may be used.

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- (g) Utilize Tactical EMS Support personnel or Rescue Task Forces, if available.

333.5 TRAINING

The AS/VI plan manager should coordinate with the Training Captain so that members are provided with annual AS/VI training. The training should include:

- (a) Review of the AS/VI plan.
- (b) Review of any applicable EMS MCI protocols.
- (c) Review of trauma care guidelines in high-threat pre-hospital situations and the various treatment methods available during an AS/VI.
- (d) Interagency training with law enforcement and other EMS personnel.
- (e) Reality-based training at locations that may be a potential target of a critical incident.

The AS/VI plan manager should ensure that all training sessions and exercises are documented and that all training records are kept in accordance with the department Records Management Policy.

Duty Firearms and Use of Force

334.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the use of force, safe, and legal carrying of duty firearms, firearms maintenance, and firearms training by fire investigators and other authorized personnel with arrest authority.

This policy does not apply to fire investigators who do not have arrest authority or the authority to use force under state law.

Issues related to restrictions on members carrying personal firearms while on-duty who are not commissioned peace officers performing official duties are addressed in the Personal Firearms Policy.

334.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to accomplish the department's functions with minimal reliance on the use of force and generally as the last alternative.

334.3 AUTHORIZATION

Only commissioned Peace Officers with arrest authority under state law may be authorized, in writing, by the Fire Chief to make arrests and carry a firearm while on duty.

334.4 FIREARMS COORDINATOR

The Fire Chief should designate a member to serve as the firearms coordinator responsible for:

- (a) Working with a local law enforcement agency and the Training Captain to develop training and firearms qualification requirements for fire investigators or other personnel authorized by the fire chief as outlined in 334.3
- (b) Maintaining an inventory and maintenance record for all firearms issued by the Department.
- (c) Ensuring that a functioning lockbox in which to safely store and secure firearms is provided in any department vehicle or apparatus or fire department facility used by fire investigators or other personnel authorized by the fire chief as outlined in 334.3
- (d) Developing and maintaining procedures for the administrative investigation and review of any use of force by a fire investigator or other personnel authorized by the fire chief as outlined in 334.3

334.4.1 LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The firearms coordinator should coordinate with a local law enforcement agency to provide access to training, instructors, facilities, and any other resources needed for the training and qualification of armed personnel and the maintenance of department firearms.

334.5 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Fire investigators or other commissioned peace officers are responsible for:

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- (a) Obtaining written authorization from the Fire Chief before carrying any duty firearm.
- (b) Meeting the minimum standards for firearms training and qualification.
 - 1. If a member fails to meet minimum standards for any reason, including injury, illness, duty status, or scheduling conflict, that member shall submit written notice of his/her failure to meet the minimum standards in a memorandum to the firearms coordinator prior to the end of the required training or qualification period.
- (c) Maintaining all certifications required by law and the Department.

334.5.1 REPORTING

Except during training or recreational use, any armed personnel who discharges a firearm intentionally or unintentionally, on- or off-duty, shall make a verbal report to his/her supervisor and to the local law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction where the discharge occurred as soon as circumstances permit.

The following shall be documented promptly, completely, and accurately in an appropriate report, depending on the nature of the incident:

- (a) Any use of force
- (b) Any injuries or death resulting from a use of force
- (c) Any property damage that results from a use of force

334.6 FIREARMS, QUALIFICATION, AND SAFETY

Personnel authorized to carry a firearm in the course of their official duties shall carry only department-issued or personally purchased firearms and ammunition that are approved by the Department. Authorized personnel shall use a department-approved holster when carrying a duty firearm.

All personnel authorized to carry a firearm on-duty are required to:

- (a) Qualify with their firearms in accordance with the standards established by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE).
- (b) Successfully complete quarterly training with their firearms.

Training and qualification shall be at the department-approved range.

Personnel who fail to meet minimum standards for training and qualification are prohibited from carrying a firearm until they successfully meet the standards.

334.6.1 INSPECTION AND STORAGE

Authorized personnel shall ensure firearms in their possession are inspected regularly and upon access or possession by another person. Prior to carrying a firearm on-duty, authorized personnel shall ensure the firearm appears to be in good condition and loaded with approved ammunition.

Personally owned firearms may be safely stored in lockers at the end of a shift. Department-owned firearms shall be stored in the appropriate equipment storage room.

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Armed personnel shall ensure that all firearms and ammunition are locked and secured when not otherwise under the direct physical control of the member to whom it was issued and are secured in a manner that will keep them inaccessible to children and others who should not have access. Armed personnel shall not permit department-issued firearms to be handled by anyone not authorized by the Department to do so.

334.7 AUTHORIZED CARRY OF DUTY FIREARMS

Duty firearms should only be carried during activities that are directly associated with authorized investigations. The firearm shall be carried concealed at all times and in such a manner as to prevent unintentional cocking, discharge, or loss of physical control.

Armed personnel carrying a firearm who respond to a call during which the carry of a firearm is not authorized should secure the firearm in the lockbox located on the department vehicle or apparatus.

Firearms should not be carried during activities that may compromise the safety or security of the firearm, including the following:

- (a) Fighting fires
- (b) Conducting rescues
- (c) Treating patients
- (d) Entering burning vehicles or structures
- (e) Conducting drills and physical fitness training

Firearms should not be carried into any area where the carry of a firearm is restricted or prohibited.

334.8 USE OF FORCE

Personnel with arrest powers may use reasonable force to effect an arrest in compliance with Tex. Penal Code § 9.51 and consistent with this policy and department-approved training.

Prior to resorting to the use of force, personnel should, when practicable, attempt verbal persuasion, orders, or other tactics to avoid or mitigate the need for force.

Except for personally owned firearms that have been pre-approved by the Department, personnel are expected to use only the tools, weapons, and methods provided by this department. However, the Department recognizes that there may be times when personnel must reasonably improvise their response to rapidly unfolding conditions that they are confronting. In such circumstances, the use of any improvised device or method must nonetheless be reasonable and utilized only to the degree that reasonably appears necessary.

334.9 USE OF DEADLY FORCE

Personnel authorized to carry a firearm may use deadly force to protect him/herself from what he/she reasonably believes would be an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.

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Imminent does not mean immediate or instantaneous. An imminent danger may exist even if a person is not at that very moment pointing a weapon at someone. For example, an imminent danger may exist if a person reasonably believes any of the following:

- (a) The individual has a weapon or is attempting to access one and it is reasonable to believe the individual intends to use it against the officer or another person.
- (b) The individual is capable of causing serious bodily injury or death without a weapon and it is reasonable to believe the individual intends to do so.

334.10 RESTRICTIONS

Armed personnel are not permitted to:

- (a) Shoot at or from a moving vehicle, unless the personnel has a reasonable belief of imminent threat of death or serious injury to him/herself or others.
- (b) Pursue a fleeing suspect in a vehicle.
- (c) Pursue a fleeing suspect on foot.

Personnel should not negotiate or otherwise engage in any hostage situation, any barricaded suspect situation, or engage with a suspect who reasonably appears to be experiencing a mental health or other emotional crisis. If an officer faces any of these situations, the officer should notify local law enforcement of the situation and wait for assistance when reasonable to do so.

334.11 OFF-DUTY CONSIDERATIONS

Personnel are not authorized to carry department firearms while off-duty. Personnel shall ensure that personal firearms are secured while in their homes, vehicles, or any other area under their control, in a manner that will keep the device inaccessible to others. Nothing in this policy authorizes personnel to carry a concealed firearm while in an off-duty capacity, other than to and from work, unless he/she possesses a valid handgun license or is otherwise lawfully entitled to carry a concealed firearm.

334.12 USE OF FORCE REVIEW

The Fire Chief shall review all reports of use of force to determine whether the use of force was in compliance with policy, procedure, and applicable law, and to determine if follow-up action or investigation is necessary.

The Fire Chief should also ensure that a review packet containing a copy of all pertinent reports and materials is prepared and forwarded to a use of force review committee.

334.12.1 USE OF FORCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The review committee shall meet and review all use of force cases within 30 days of the incident.

It is the responsibility of the Administration Deputy Chief to ensure these meetings occur. The review committee should comprise the following:

- (a) One assistant/deputy chief
- (b) One supervisor assigned on a rotational basis

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- (c) The Training Captain
- (d) A law enforcement officer from a local law enforcement agency with advanced use of force training
- (e) Other staff as selected by the Fire Chief

The review committee should render a single finding as to whether the use of force was within policy. Any recommendations for areas identified as needing training, changes in policy, or further investigation into incidents that may lead to employee discipline shall be addressed in a separate memorandum to the Training Captain and/or the member's supervisor for investigation, as appropriate. See the Personnel Complaints Policy.

334.13 TRAINING

Personnel authorized to carry a duty firearm should receive periodic training on this policy and the legal and constitutional issues related to investigations, arrests, and the use of force.

At a minimum, training should include:

- (a) Constitutional and legal training regarding search and seizure and the use of force.
- (b) De-escalation techniques.
- (c) Force options such as pain compliance, defensive tactics, and use of issued restraints and control devices.
- (d) Firearm safety and storage.
- (e) Reporting procedures.

334.13.1 RESTRAINT AND CONTROL DEVICE TRAINING

The Training Captain shall ensure that all personnel who are issued and authorized to carry any restraint or control device have been properly trained and certified as necessary to carry the specific device and are retrained or recertified as necessary.

Unmanned Aircraft System

335.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of an unmanned aircraft system (UAS), and for the storage, retrieval, and dissemination of images and data captured by the UAS.

335.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Unmanned aircraft system (UAS) - An unmanned aircraft of any type that is capable of sustaining directed flight, whether preprogrammed or remotely controlled (commonly referred to as an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)), and all the supporting or attached systems designed for gathering information through imaging, recording or any other means.

Visual observer - A designated person who is not located with the UAS operator but is in communication with the pilot and can see the UAS in operation.

335.2 POLICY

A UAS may be utilized to enhance the department's mission of protecting lives and property when other means and resources are not available or are less effective. Any use of a UAS will be in strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

335.3 PRIVACY

The use of the UAS potentially involves privacy considerations. Absent an authorized reason, operators and visual observers shall not intentionally record or transmit images of any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy. Operators and visual observers shall take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images of areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Locations where a person may have a reasonable expectation of privacy include:

- (a) In a residence.
- (b) In the enclosed yard of a residence.
- (c) On private property where activity cannot be seen from the street or ground level.

Methods that may be used to avoid recording private activity include:

- (a) Deactivating a recorder or imaging device until the UAS is away from the potentially private activity.
- (b) Turning the recorder or imaging devices away from persons or locations during UAS operations.

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335.4 PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Fire Chief shall appoint a program coordinator who will be responsible for the management of the UAS program. The program coordinator will ensure that policies and procedures conform to current laws, regulations, and best practices and will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Coordinating the FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) application process and ensuring that the COA is current, and/or coordinating compliance with FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate, as appropriate for agency operations.
- Ensuring that all authorized UAS pilots and visual observers have completed all required FAA and department-approved training in the operation, applicable laws, policies, and procedures regarding use of the UAS.
- Developing uniform protocols for submission and evaluation of requests to deploy a UAS, including urgent requests made during ongoing or emerging events. Deployment of a UAS shall require written authorization of the Fire Chief or the on-scene IC, depending on the type of mission.
- Coordinating the completion of the FAA Emergency Operation Request Form in emergency situations, as applicable (e.g., natural disasters, search and rescue, emergency situations to safeguard human life).
- Developing protocols for conducting criminal fire investigations involving a UAS, including coordinating with local law enforcement.
- Implementing a system for public notification of UAS deployment.
- Developing operational protocols governing the deployment and operation of a UAS, including but not limited to:
 - Safety oversight.
 - Use of visual observers.
 - Establishment of lost link procedures and secure communication with air traffic control facilities.
- Developing a protocol for fully documenting all missions.
- Developing a UAS inspection, maintenance, and record-keeping protocol to ensure continued airworthiness of a UAS up to and including its overhaul or service life limitations.
- Developing protocols to ensure that all data intended to be used as evidence for fire investigations are accessed, maintained, stored, and retrieved in a manner that ensures its integrity as evidence, including chain-of-custody requirements. Electronic trails, including encryption, authenticity certificates, and date and time stamping, shall be used as appropriate to preserve individual rights and to ensure the authenticity and maintenance of a secure evidentiary chain of custody.
- Developing protocols that ensure retention and purge periods are maintained in accordance with established records retention schedules.
- Recommending program enhancements, particularly regarding safety and information security.

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- Ensuring that established protocols are followed by monitoring and providing periodic reports on the program to the Fire Chief.
- Maintaining familiarity with FAA regulatory standards, state laws and regulations, and local ordinances regarding the operations of a UAS.

335.5 USE OF UAS

Only authorized operators who have completed the required training shall be permitted to operate the UAS.

Use of vision enhancement technology (e.g., thermal and other imaging equipment not generally available to the public) is permissible in viewing areas only where there is no protectable privacy interest or when undertaken as part of a fire investigation in compliance with a search warrant or court order. In all other instances, legal counsel should be consulted.

UAS operations should only be conducted consistent with FAA regulations.

335.5.1 PERMISSIBLE USES

Situations where a UAS may be considered for use include:

- Hazardous materials incidents.
- Structure fires.
- Mass casualty incidents.
- Search and rescue.
- Wildland fires.
- High-rise incidents.
- Natural and manmade disaster response.
- Video/photographs for investigative support.
- During training activities.
- Anytime an aerial view of the emergency scene is appropriate.

335.5.2 PROHIBITED USES

Department UAS shall not be used:

- To conduct random surveillance activities.
- To target a person based solely on actual or perceived characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, or disability.
- To harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.
- To conduct personal business of any type.

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335.6 RETENTION OF DATA

Data collected by the UAS shall be retained as provided in the established records retention schedule.

335.7 OWNERSHIP AND USE OF DATA

The use of any photography or electronic imaging made by Department members while using a UAS shall comply with the requirements of the Photography and Electronic Imaging Policy and the Patient Medical Record Security and Privacy Policy.

335.8 REPORTING

The deployment of any UAS should be documented in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) report consistent with the requirements of NFIRS.

Volunteer Firefighters

336.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Volunteer firefighters shall be utilized as a support group to assist career firefighters and will not affect Pharr Fire Department as a mostly career organization. The number of career firefighters for the City of Pharr is determined by the Pharr City Commission who consider many factors in approving staffing requirements.

336.2 POLICY

Volunteer firefighters can respond to any and all alarms with Battalion Chief's authorization. They have been ordered to report to the Incident Commander for assignment and the Incident Commander may utilize the services of the volunteer firefighters at their discretion.

336.3 EMERGENCY CALLS AND FIRE GROUND OPERATIONS

Volunteer firefighters will not be allowed to operate emergency lights and/or sirens on their personal vehicles. When responding to a station for fire alarms and other emergencies in their personal vehicles, volunteer firefighters will travel with the normal traffic. All volunteer firefighters should report to assigned station and stand by until summoned by Incident Command.

Volunteer personnel must follow all safety practices whenever dispatched to the scene of an emergency. Upon arriving at the scene, and wearing full protective clothing, they will report to the staging officer for instructions. The Incident Commander has the option to assign the volunteer firefighters to work as a group or may disperse them to shift firefighter crews. Once the emergency is under control, the volunteer firefighter may not leave until permission is granted by the Incident Commander at the scene.

336.4 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER CLASSIFICATIONS

Battalion Chief - Appointed by Fire Chief after receiving a recommendation from the volunteer division as to who meets the requirements. The Battalion Chief will serve as a direct liaison between the Fire Chief and the Volunteer Division. The Battalion Chief shall have 5 years experience with the City of Pharr and have a thorough knowledge of Pharr Fire-Rescue Policies and Procedures; will attend mandatory staff meetings, and possess Instructor Certification; possess a Texas Commission on Fire Protection Intermediate Structure Firefighter Certification

Lieutenant - shall abide by the job description as outlined in the Pharr Fire-Rescue Policies and Procedures, Position Classification. Lieutenants will: have 3 years experience with the City of Pharr, at least 12 hours of supervisory training, and have a thorough knowledge of Pharr Fire-Rescue Policies and Procedures; possess Instructor Certification; possess a Texas Commission on Fire Protection Basic Structure Firefighter Certification.

Engineer - shall abide by the job description as outlined in the Pharr Fire-Rescue Policies and Procedures, Position Classification. Engineers will: have 2 years experience with the City of Pharr

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and have a thorough knowledge of Pharr Fire-Rescue Policies and Procedures; possess a Texas Commission on Fire Protection Basic Structure Firefighter Certification..

Firefighter - shall abide by the job description as outlined in Pharr Fire-Rescue Policies and Procedures, Position Classification. possess within two (2) years a Texas Commission on Fire Protection Basic Structure Firefighter Certification.

Daily Work Schedule

337.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Establish procedures and ensure that all fire apparatus are maintained and in a constant state of readiness. Additionally, all facilities are to be kept clean and orderly.

337.2 FIRST PRIORITY

Fire apparatus shall be maintained to the highest degree of readiness to provide immediate response to emergency incidents 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year.

337.3 SECOND PRIORITY

Fire Department facilities shall also be maintained to the highest degree of cleanliness and in an orderly fashion.

337.4 POLICY

A. Fire Apparatuses

- Thoroughly check all fire apparatus and equipment after 0900 hours or at the discretion of the on-duty supervisor. (Battalion Chief)
- All fire apparatuses shall always be maintained in a constant state of readiness, clean, maintained, and organized.

B. Fire Stations

- All Fire Department facilities shall be swept, mopped, dusted, and disinfected daily. Furniture, fixtures, appliances and equipment shall be kept clean, maintained, and organized.

Work Week Assignments:

Sunday

- Personnel will thoroughly check all fire apparatus and equipment daily.
- Thorough station cleaning and maintenance or any other assignments issued by Fire Administration.

Monday

- Personnel will thoroughly check all fire apparatus and equipment daily.
- Fire apparatus wash and maintenance or any other assignments issued by Fire Administration.

Tuesday

- Personnel will thoroughly check all fire apparatus and equipment daily.
- Fire hydrant testing and maintenance or any other assignments issued by Fire Administration.

Wednesday

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Daily Work Schedule

- Personnel will thoroughly check all fire apparatus and equipment daily.
- Pre-Fire Planning or any other assignments issued by Fire Administration.

Thursday

- Personnel will thoroughly check all fire apparatus and equipment daily.
- Training assigned by the Fire Training Division or any other assignments issued by Fire Administration.

Friday

- Personnel will thoroughly check all fire apparatus and equipment daily.
- Administrative tasks or any other assignments issued by Fire Administration.

Saturday

- Personnel will thoroughly check all fire apparatus and equipment daily.
- Thorough station ground maintenance or any other assignments issued by Fire Administration.

All the above items are to be completed on assigned days unless otherwise directed by station officer/administration. Routine station and apparatus clean-up for off-going shift shall start after 07:00 hours at station officer's discretion. Supervisors shall delegate the various duties until all the work is completed.

The off going shift shall leave all the station and fire apparatus in a clean condition prior to the end of shift tour at 09:00 hours.

Chapter 10 - Personnel

Recruitment and Selection

1000.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the recruiting, selection, training, and retention processes utilized by the Pharr Fire Department. This policy supplements any rules that govern employment practices for the Pharr Fire Department.

1000.2 POLICY

In accordance with applicable federal, state, and local law, the Pharr Fire Department provides equal opportunities for applicants and department members regardless of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and any other classification or status protected by law. The Department does not show partiality or grant any special status to any applicant, member, or group of members unless otherwise required by law.

1000.3 RECRUITMENT

The Administration Division should employ a comprehensive recruitment and selection strategy to recruit and select members from a qualified and diverse pool of candidates.

The strategy should include:

- (a) Processes that are not racially and culturally exclusive.
- (b) Expanded use of technology and maintenance of a strong internet presence. This may include an interactive department website and the use of department-managed social networking sites, if resources permit.
- (c) Expanded outreach through partnerships with media, community groups, citizen academies, local colleges, universities, and the military.

The Administration Division shall avoid advertising, recruiting, and screening practices that tend to stereotype, focus on homogeneous applicant pools, or screen applicants in a discriminatory manner.

The Department should strive to facilitate and expedite the screening and testing process, and should periodically inform each candidate of his/her status in the recruiting process.

1000.4 SELECTION PROCESS

The Department shall actively strive to identify a diverse group of candidates that have in some manner distinguished themselves as being outstanding prospects. Minimally, the Department should employ a comprehensive screening, background investigation, and selection process that assesses cognitive and physical abilities and includes review and verification of the following:

- A comprehensive application for employment (including previous employment, references, current and prior addresses, education, military record)
- Driving record
- Reference checks

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- Employment eligibility, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and acceptable identity and employment authorization documents (documentation may be requested upon hire)
- Information obtained from public internet sites
- Financial history consistent with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) (15 USC § 1681 et seq.)
- Local, state, and federal criminal history record checks
- Polygraph or voice stress analyzer examination (when legally permissible)
- Medical and psychological examination (may only be given after a conditional offer of employment)
- Review board or selection committee assessment

1000.4.1 ELIGIBILITY LIST

Before filling a beginning position for firefighter with the Department, the Administration Division should request the eligibility list from the department civil service commission (Tex. Local Gov't Code § 143.026).

1000.4.2 VETERAN PREFERENCE

Any applicant who has an honorable discharge from the United States Armed Forces and has passed the entrance examination will receive an additional five points added to the score (Tex. Local Gov't Code § 143.025).

1000.5 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

Every candidate shall undergo a thorough background investigation to verify his/her personal integrity and high ethical standards, and to identify any past behavior that may be indicative of the candidate's unsuitability to perform duties relevant to the operation of the Pharr Fire Department.

1000.5.1 NOTICES

The Administration Division shall ensure that investigations are conducted and notices provided in accordance with the requirements of the FCRA (15 USC § 1681d).

1000.5.2 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Criminal background information, whether directly from the Texas Department of Public Safety Computerized Criminal History System (CCH) or provided by a third party, may have restrictions on the access, use, security, and release of the information. The Administration Division shall establish procedures to ensure compliance with any applicable requirements and security limitations.

1000.5.3 REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Due to the potential for accessing unsubstantiated, private or protected information, the Administration Division should not require candidates to provide passwords, account information, or access to password-protected social media accounts.

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The Fire Chief or his designee should consider utilizing the services of an appropriately trained and experienced third party to conduct open source, internet-based searches, and/or review information from social media sites to ensure that:

- The legal rights of candidates are protected.
- Material and information to be considered are verified, accurate, and validated.
- The Department fully complies with applicable privacy protections and local, state, and federal law.

Regardless of whether a third party is used, the Administration Deputy Chief should ensure that potentially impermissible information is not available to any person involved in the candidate selection process.

1000.5.4 RECORDS RETENTION

The background report and all supporting documentation shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

1000.5.5 DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING

The background investigator shall summarize the results of the background investigation in a report that includes sufficient information to allow the reviewing authority to decide whether to extend a conditional offer of employment. The report shall not include any information that is prohibited from use, including that from social media sites, in making employment decisions. The report and all supporting documentation shall be included in the candidate's background investigation file.

1000.6 DISQUALIFICATION GUIDELINES

As a general rule, performance indicators and candidate information and records shall be evaluated by considering the candidate as a whole, and taking into consideration the following:

- Age at the time the behavior occurred
- Passage of time
- Patterns of past behavior
- Severity of behavior
- Probable consequences if past behavior is repeated or made public
- Likelihood of recurrence
- Relevance of past behavior to public safety employment
- Aggravating and mitigating factors
- Other relevant considerations

A candidate's qualifications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, using a totality-of-the-circumstances framework.

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1000.7 EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

All candidates shall meet the minimum standards required by state law. Candidates will be evaluated based on merit, ability, competence, and experience, in accordance with the high standards of integrity and ethics valued by the Department and the community.

Validated, job-related, and nondiscriminatory employment standards shall be established for each job classification and shall minimally identify the training, abilities, knowledge, and skills required to perform the position's essential duties in a satisfactory manner (see the Position Descriptions Policy). Each standard should include performance indicators for candidate evaluation. The Department of Human Resources should maintain validated standards for all positions.

Selection standards for promotional opportunities are detailed in the Promotions and Transfers Policy.

1000.7.1 STANDARDS FOR FIREFIGHTERS

Generally, the standards may include the following requirements. The candidate should:

- (a) Be at least 18 years of age by the closing date of the recruitment period.
- (b) Be in possession of a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).
- (c) Have good vision in both eyes, with the ability to distinguish Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) color codes for hazardous materials (e.g., blue, red, yellow, white), and have no depth or peripheral vision impairment.
- (d) Meet the objectives and minimum standards established in the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)/International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative or similar validated health screening process.
- (e) Meet the minimum standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- (f) Meet the standards of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) (Tex. Gov't Code § 419.032; 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 421.3).
- (g) Not have been charged or convicted of an offense that would preclude certification by the TCFP (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 403.1 et seq.).
- (h) Be in possession of, or have the ability to obtain, a valid state driver's license in the class required for the position sought.
- (i) Be a U.S. citizen or have proof of a legal right to work in the U.S.
- (j) Have the ability to obtain TCFP Basic Structure Fire Protection Personnel certification within one year of the date of appointment to structure fire protection duties, including completion of a TCFP-recognized emergency medical training program (Tex. Gov't Code § 419.032; 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 423.1).

1000.8 TRAINING

All entry-level firefighter candidates should complete training in an accredited fire training program established by the TCFP.

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1000.9 RETENTION

The primary focus should be on hiring those who are the best fit for a particular position. In order to retain quality members, the Department should:

- Seek member input on retention strategies.
- Facilitate training and career development opportunities.
- Develop and maintain quality supervisors.
- Provide regular and meaningful performance feedback.
- Promote an environment where members are able to speak freely.
- Treat members fairly, equitably, and consistently.
- Consider ways to reward excellent performance.
- Follow up on any feedback acquired during an exit interview process.

Retention incentives may include items from a collective bargaining agreement, employment benefits, seniority benefits, forms of recognition, etc.

Performance Evaluations

1001.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to detail the Pharr Fire Department performance evaluation system, which is used to record work performance for both the Department and the employee, giving recognition for good work and providing a guide for improvement where needed. The employee performance evaluation report is a gauge in measuring performance and is used for making personnel decisions relating to merit increase, promotion, reassignment, discipline, demotion and termination. The report also provides a guide for mutual work planning and review, and an opportunity to convert general impressions into a more objective history of work performance based on job standards.

1001.2 POLICY

The Department evaluates employees in a nondiscriminatory manner based upon job-related factors specific to the employee's position, without regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, pregnancy, veteran status, marital status, and any other classification or status protected by law.

1001.3 PROCEDURE

Within one year of appointment to a supervisory position, all supervisors should attend an approved supervisory course that includes training on the completion of performance evaluations.

Each evaluation will cover a specific time and should be based on the employee's performance during that period. Evaluations are based on observed or documented behavior. If a supervisor becomes aware of or witnesses either outstanding or unsatisfactory performance by an employee, the performance should be noted and a conversation between the employee and the supervisor should take place as soon as practicable after the performance is noted. This conversation is to immediately reinforce outstanding behavior, or correct and counsel unsatisfactory behavior. The supervisor should create a documentation of the performance and the follow-up conversation and use this documentation at the next evaluation period.

At the beginning of the rating period, each supervisor should discuss the tasks of the position, standards of performance expected and the evaluation rating criteria with each employee. When a non-probationary employee's job performance falls below the established standards of the job, the supervisor should, as soon as practicable but at least 90 days prior to the end of the annual evaluation period, advise the employee in writing in order to provide an opportunity for the employee to improve performance. The involved employee should be provided the opportunity to initial any such writing and respond in writing within 30 days, if desired. Failure to meet established performance standards is justification for an unsatisfactory rating. Rating factors that are not observed are assumed to be performed at a standard level.

The performance evaluation report will be completed by the employee's immediate supervisor. Other supervisors directly familiar with the employee's performance during the rating period should be consulted by the immediate supervisor for their input.

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1001.4 FULL-TIME PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES

All personnel will serve a 12-month probationary period (TCFP certified) or 18-month probationary period (non TCFP certified) upon hiring status before being eligible for classification as permanent employees. Probationary firefighters shall be evaluated daily, weekly and monthly during the probationary period.

Performance evaluation reports shall be completed as defined by the Department of Human Resources by specific job classification for all other full-time personnel during the probationary period.

1001.5 FULL-TIME PERMANENT STATUS EMPLOYEES

Permanent employees are subject to three types of performance evaluations:

Regular - A performance evaluation report shall be completed once each year by the employee's immediate supervisor on the anniversary of the employee's date of hire.

Transfer - If an employee is transferred from one assignment to another in the middle of an evaluation period and less than six months have transpired since the transfer, an evaluation shall be completed by the current supervisor with input from the previous supervisor.

Special - A special evaluation may be completed any time the rater and the rater's supervisor believe one is necessary due to employee performance deficiencies. Generally, the special evaluation will be used to document areas of performance deemed less than standard when follow-up action is planned (e.g., action plan, remedial training, retraining). The evaluation form and associated documentation shall be submitted as one package.

1001.5.1 RATINGS

Outstanding - Performance that is well beyond that expected or required in the standards for the position. It is exceptional performance, definitely superior or extraordinary.

Exceeds standards - Performance that is better than expected of a fully competent employee. It is superior to what is expected or required by the standards for the position but is not of such rare nature to warrant outstanding status.

Meets standards - Performance expected of a fully competent employee and meets the standards required of the position.

Needs improvement - Performance that is less than that expected of a fully competent employee and less than the standards required of the position. A needs improvement rating should be thoroughly discussed with the employee and include a structured plan intended to improve performance, with short-interval interim evaluations.

Unsatisfactory - Performance that is inadequate or undesirable, intolerable and inferior to the standards required of the position.

Written comments should be used by the rater to document the employee's strengths and weaknesses and make any suggestions for improvement. Any job dimension rating marked unsatisfactory or outstanding should be substantiated in the rater comments section.

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1001.6 EVALUATION INTERVIEW

When a supervisor has completed the preliminary evaluation, arrangements shall be made for a private discussion of the evaluation with the employee. The supervisor should discuss the results with the employee and answer any questions the employee may have. If the employee has valid and reasonable protests of any of the ratings, the supervisor may make appropriate changes to the evaluation. Areas needing improvement and goals for reaching the expected level of performance should be identified and discussed. The supervisor should also provide relevant counseling regarding advancement and training opportunities. The supervisor and employee will sign and date the evaluation. Permanent employees may also write comments in the employee comments section of the performance evaluation report.

1001.7 EVALUATION REVIEW

After the supervisor finishes the discussion with the employee, the signed performance evaluation report should be forwarded to the rater's supervisor for review.

The second-level supervisor should review the evaluation for fairness, impartiality, uniformity and consistency, and evaluate the first-level supervisor on the quality of the ratings provided to the employee.

1001.8 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The original performance evaluation report should be maintained in the employee's personnel file for the tenure of the employee's employment. A copy should be provided to the employee and a copy should be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources.

Performance evaluation reports will be permanently destroyed in accordance with established records retention schedules.

Promotions and Transfers

1002.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish required and desirable qualifications for promotion and transfer within the ranks of the Pharr Fire Department.

1002.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department determines promotions and transfers in a nondiscriminatory manner. It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to utilize the promotional testing criteria, study materials, and testing instruments available from authenticated and validated local, regional, and nationally recognized best practices in the fire service. This policy will establish the required and desirable qualifications for promotion and transfer within the ranks of the Department based on these criteria.

Nothing in this policy is intended to supersede any contract language related to promotional requirements that may exist in a collective bargaining agreement.

1002.3 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The following conditions will be used in evaluating members for promotion and transfer:

- (a) Presents a professional, neat appearance
- (b) Maintains a physical condition which aids in their performance
- (c) Demonstrates the following traits:
 - 1. Emotional stability and maturity
 - 2. Stress tolerance
 - 3. Sound judgment and decision-making ability
 - 4. Personal integrity and ethical conduct
 - 5. Leadership
 - 6. Initiative
 - 7. Adaptability and flexibility
 - 8. Ability to conform to organizational goals and objectives in a positive manner

1002.4 TRANSFERS

The following position is defined as a transfer and is not considered a promotion:

- Training Captain

1002.4.1 DESIRABLE TRANSFER QUALIFICATIONS

The following qualifications are considered for transfer:

- Three years of experience
- Completion of the probationary period with the Pharr Fire Department

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- Expressed interest in the transfer position
- Education, training, and demonstrated abilities in areas related to the transfer position
- Completion of any local, regional, or Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) certification or national training or certification for the transfer position

1002.4.2 TRANSFER CRITERIA

The following criteria apply to transfers:

- (a) Administrative evaluation as determined by the Fire Chief. This shall include a review of supervisor recommendations. Each supervisor who has supervised or otherwise been involved with the candidate should submit these recommendations.
- (b) The supervisor recommendations should be submitted to the Deputy Chief for whom the candidate will work. The Deputy Chief should schedule interviews with each candidate.
- (c) Based on supervisor recommendations and those of the Deputy Chief after the interview, the Deputy Chief should submit his/her recommendation to the Fire Chief.
- (d) Transfers will be made by the Fire Chief.

The policy and procedures for all positions may be waived for temporary assignments, for emergency situations or for training in accordance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

1002.5 PROMOTIONS

Specifications for promotional opportunities are on file with the Pharr Fire Department.

1002.6 TRAINING CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Training Captain to maintain a training file on each member of the Department. Any relevant training certificate or certification document submitted to the Department by a member should be permanently retained in the member's training file.

Position Descriptions

1003.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a comprehensive description of overall duties and responsibilities of each rank or job classification within the Department.

1003.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to develop unique position descriptions for each assignment within an established rank or classification.

1003.3 PROCEDURE

The Department of Human Resources along with the Fire Chief will generally develop and maintain classification specifications (e.g., firefighter, Lieutenant, Battalion Chief). Within the classification specifications there may be multiple assignments. The descriptions will detail the unique duties and responsibilities of each assignment.

Position descriptions may be included in collective bargaining agreements.

Position descriptions should be considered living documents and should be reviewed and evaluated for modification. This should occur at least annually and any time duties or expectations of a specific position substantially change.

Position descriptions should be reviewed prior to hiring to ensure the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities are consistent with the current performance expectations of the position.

Classification Specifications

1004.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the origin and maintenance processes of the job classifications applicable to the Pharr Fire Department.

1004.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to coordinate with the Department of Human Resources for the development of job classifications unique to the Department.

1004.3 PROCEDURE

The Fire Chief should appoint an officer from the Administration Division to work with the Department of Human Resources to develop, update and maintain the job classifications. These should include information from collective bargaining agreements with each employee group; should identify the duties and responsibilities, authority, reporting requirements and chain of command for the member; and should include expected working hours, attire and working location.

1004.3.1 POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Multiple position descriptions may be needed for each job specification (e.g., a Lieutenant assigned to the Training and Compliance Division will have the same job specification, but will have a considerably different position description than a Lieutenant assigned to the Fire Operations Division). Position descriptions may be addressed in the contracts with the various employee groups or in the Position Descriptions Policy.

Career Tracks

1005.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish specific career tracks for each classification specification within the Pharr Fire Department.

1005.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to ensure that each member is provided to the full extent, and without any limitation, the same access to advancement available to other members in each classification specification. To increase member job satisfaction and retain quality members, the Department shall ensure each member understands his/her career track and the opportunity for career advancement. A career track change may also be available, if the member obtains additional education, certification or licensing, which could open other opportunities.

1005.3 PROCEDURE

The Pharr Department of Human Resources shall maintain all information on classification specifications, promotional opportunities and career tracks.

Fire Officer Development

1006.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to define the required and recommended competencies in the Pharr Fire Department's fire officer development program.

1006.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to use professionally recognized programs and resources to train and develop members for supervisory roles.

1006.3 RESOURCES

To assist members in developing the needed competencies for supervisory roles, the Pharr Fire Department will utilize such resources as:

- The Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP).
- The International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).
- The Center for Public Safety Excellence's (CPSE) Fire Officer Designation (FO).
- The National Fire Academy's (NFA) Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP).
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications.
- The International Association of Fire Chiefs' (IAFC) *Officer Development Handbook*.
- Other department-approved certification programs for the professional development of fire officers.

Educational Incentives

1007.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to identify the educational incentives available to Pharr Fire Department members pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement or the established personnel agreement, and to establish a system of accessing the benefits.

1007.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department that the educational incentives established in the collective bargaining agreement or the established personnel agreement shall be available to all members who meet the defined requirements.

Tuition Reimbursement

1008.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Department appreciates and encourages members who are willing to devote their time to education and training. This tuition reimbursement policy is intended to encourage members to become better qualified for their present duties and to prepare for advancement within the Pharr Fire Department by taking courses from an accredited institution.

1008.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to establish a tuition reimbursement policy and to review requests for tuition reimbursement to ensure the following criteria are met.

1008.2.1 ELIGIBILITY

Tuition reimbursement eligibility will be limited to full-time employees who have completed at least one probationary period. To be approved, a course must have as its purpose the objective of improving the capacity of the member to perform the duties to which he/she is assigned or to increase his/her readiness to assume broader responsibilities within the realm of public safety. Where practical, members will be encouraged to attend local, accredited public education institutions.

1008.2.2 FUNDS AVAILABILITY

A portion of the employee's costs may be reimbursed in the amount specified by the City. This includes tuition, registration fees, laboratory or similar materials fees.. Specifically excluded are student body fees and fees levied for student services or social activities.

1008.2.3 MAXIMUM CREDIT HOURS PER YEAR

The maximum amount of credit hours that may be claimed for the purpose of tuition reimbursement is determined by the City. Programs with an accelerated course of study leading to a bachelor's may be eligible for reimbursement as determined by the Fire Chief but in no case should exceed the limits outlined elsewhere in this policy.

1008.2.4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Correspondence courses are not included in the scope or intent of this policy unless the training is of exceptional value to the Department and is not available from any educational institution located within reasonable distance of the Pharr Fire Department.

Pharr Fire Department vehicles may not be used for transportation to and from a class and no allowance will be given for mileage or transportation costs.

Class attendance and assignments should be completed on the employee's own time. No compensation in any form will be authorized for class attendance or the completion of class assignments.

In order to request a tuition reimbursement, a grade of satisfactory (e.g., C or better) must be achieved for undergraduate courses.

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1008.3 PROCEDURE

Approval of the Fire Chief or the authorized designee should be obtained in advance of enrollment. Employee must complete and submit a tuition reimbursement application to the HR Department, no later than 30 calendar days prior to the start of the course. A transcript and degree plan must accompany the application. These documents must be resubmitted if there are any changes in the degree program.

1008.4 RESPONSIBILITY

The Department of Human Resources is responsible for City-wide administration and coordination of this policy. The Department should use this policy for employee development in keeping with city goals and with the current and anticipated department needs. The Fire Chief should administer this policy for the employees within the limits of the funds that have been allocated for this purpose.

1008.5 RECORDS

The Training Captain should retain all records of training completed by employees in accordance with established records retention schedules.

1008.6 TAX CONSIDERATIONS

It is highly recommended that employees receiving a reimbursement consult with their tax adviser. Tuition reimbursement may be considered taxable income in some instances. The Department will report tuition reimbursement payments to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in accordance with state and federal tax codes.

Reporting for Duty

1009.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes the department's expectations of its employees when reporting for duty, to ensure that all members are fully capable of functioning in their capacity.

1009.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to identify the expectations required of its members when reporting for duty in order to provide efficient and quality services to the community and to provide for the safety of its members.

1009.3 PUNCTUALITY

All members should be punctual and be ready to immediately perform their duties at 09:00 hours for Suppression Division shift change and 08:00 hours for Administration, Prevention Division and Battalion Chiefs..

1009.4 RELIEF

Members are required to remain on-duty until relieved. Upon entering the station, it is the member's responsibility to contact the member being relieved and receive a briefing.

Lieutenants shall remain on-duty until relieved or otherwise directed by a Battalion Chief. Lieutenants may not be absent from their place of assignment without the specific permission of a Battalion Chief.

1009.5 READINESS FOR DUTY

Upon reporting for duty at 09:00 hours or 08:00 hours as applicable, all members should prepare themselves and their gear to be immediately available to respond to calls for service. This should include, but not be limited to, placing personal protective equipment (PPE) on the member's assigned apparatus.

1009.6 PERSONAL APPEARANCE

All members should don the appropriate uniform prior to the start of their work assignments and be properly attired at all times when representing the Department. Each member should wear the appropriate uniform or protective equipment that has been approved for the activity being performed.

1009.7 CLEANLINESS

All members should keep their persons, uniforms, desks, beds and lockers in a neat and clean condition. If a persistent problem is noticed, the member should be notified immediately.

1009.8 INABILITY TO REPORT FOR DUTY

Members should notify their supervisor and/or Battalion Chief as soon as practicable of any inability to report for duty at the time required.

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1009.9 EMERGENCY RECALL

Upon receipt of an emergency recall, without delay, members should secure and/or stabilize their home and family, and report for duty at the appropriate work location. Members shall recognize the potential for emergency recall such as a forecasted hazardous weather event and take measures in advance to properly prepare their families. Except when otherwise instructed, members should travel to their normal work assignment once they have received the notice of recall. Members shall not leave their duty assignments until properly relieved. Members shall follow the procedures detailed in the Emergency Recall Policy.

1009.10 RELIEVED FROM DUTY FOR VIOLATIONS

Any Lieutenant may relieve a member under his/her command from duty, when in the Lieutenant's judgment an alleged offense committed is sufficiently serious to warrant immediate action. A report of such action shall be immediately made to the appropriate Battalion Chief, followed by written charges and documentation in accordance with department procedures.

Emergency Recall

1010.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the right of the Pharr Fire Department to recall off-duty employees in the event of a large-scale or protracted emergency, natural disaster or other unusual situation that depletes on-duty resources. The policy also establishes the procedures to be used to recall off-duty employees, in accordance with state and federal laws and collective bargaining agreements.

1010.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Automatic aid - Apparatus and firefighters who are dispatched automatically by contractual agreement between two fire departments, communities or fire districts.

Mutual aid - Apparatus and firefighters who are dispatched, upon request, by the responding fire department. Mutual aid is defined by a signed contractual agreement between the Pharr Fire Department and neighboring jurisdictions.

1010.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide sufficient resources at the scene of an emergency to reasonably provide for the safety of the employees working at the scene, and to ensure adequate resources are available for additional emergency calls. In some instances, this may require the emergency recall of employees.

1010.3 PROCEDURES

The Fire Chief or any other chief officer, Battalion Chief or Incident Commander (IC) may initiate an emergency recall by providing Fire Com or other designated resource with brief information regarding the emergency, where members are to report for duty and the name or names of personnel required.

1010.3.1 TRIGGERING INCIDENTS

The types of incidents that may require the initiation of an emergency recall include, but are not limited to:

- One major incident affecting a localized or widespread area
- Two or more incidents causing a high demand for resources at different locations
- Numerous incidents causing a peak demand on the entire resource system
- Any time designated by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee

1010.3.2 FIRE COM RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee should be responsible for developing and implementing an emergency recall procedure that complies with state and federal laws and collective bargaining

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agreements. Dispatch or the other designated resource should follow the established procedure when implementing an emergency recall.

1010.3.3 FIREFIGHTER RESPONSIBILITIES

Firefighters should reply to an emergency recall immediately or provide notification within 20 minutes with their status and estimated time of arrival. If applicable, they should report for duty with their personal protective equipment.

1010.3.4 EXCEPTIONS

Members may not refuse an emergency recall notice. Firefighters who receive an emergency recall notification and are under the influence of any impairment, such as medications or alcohol, should advise the caller of the impairment and should not report for duty.

1010.4 OTHER RESOURCES

If sufficient resources cannot be assembled by an emergency recall, the Department may consider other options such as:

- Automatic aid
- Mutual aid
- Additional chief officers

Overtime

1011.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to identify the use and management of overtime by Pharr Fire Department employees and to establish an overtime compensation request process.

1011.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to maintain a degree of flexibility concerning the overtime policy due to the nature of fire service work and the needs of the Department.

1011.3 PROCEDURE

Overtime may be available due to unforeseen personnel absences, emergency incidents, special events, training or constant staffing requirements. The Fire Chief or the authorized designee should develop a plan for the fair distribution of both the workload and the income opportunity if a plan is not stipulated in the collective bargaining agreement. The plan should consider the City's interest in managing overtime costs.

Any instance of work that requires overtime compensation shall be approved in advance by a supervisor. If circumstances do not permit prior approval, then approval shall be sought as soon as practicable during the overtime shift and in no case later than the end of shift in which the overtime is worked.

Employees classified as non-exempt by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are not authorized to volunteer work time to the Department. Non-exempt employees who work authorized overtime and are compensated, either by payment of wages as agreed upon and in effect through the collective bargaining agreement or by the allowance of accrual of compensatory time off, should submit a request for overtime payment as soon as practicable after overtime is worked.

1011.4 ACCOUNTING FOR OVERTIME

Employees should record the actual time worked in an overtime status. In some cases, a collective bargaining agreement may stipulate that a minimum number of hours will be paid.

1011.4.1 ACCOUNTING FOR PORTIONS OF AN HOUR

Authorized overtime work shall be accounted in 15 minute increments to align with the cities time keeping system Kronos or as stipulated in the collective bargaining agreement:

A time clock interaction 7 minutes before or after the hour will be rounded and recorded as on the hour.

A time clock interaction from minutes :08 to minutes :22 will be rounded and recorded as :15 after the hour.

A time clock interaction from minutes :23 to minutes :37 will be rounded and recorded as :30 after the hour.

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A time clock interaction from minutes :38 to minutes :52 will be rounded and recorded as :45 after the hour.

1011.4.2 VARIATION IN TIME REPORTED

Where two or more employees are assigned to the same incident or activity, and the amount of time for which compensation is requested varies between the employees, the Battalion Chief or other approving division head may require each employee to include the reason for the variation on the overtime compensation request.

Discriminatory Harassment

1012.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to prevent department members from being subjected to discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment and retaliation. Nothing in this policy is intended to create a legal or employment right or duty that is not created by law.

1012.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment that is free of all forms of discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment and retaliation. The Department will not tolerate discrimination against a member in hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation, fringe benefits, and other privileges of employment. The Department will take preventive and corrective action to address any behavior that violates this policy or the rights and privileges it is designed to protect.

The nondiscrimination policies of the Department may be more comprehensive than state or federal law. Conduct that violates this policy may not violate state or federal law but still could subject a member to discipline.

1012.3 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

1012.3.1 DISCRIMINATION

The Department prohibits all forms of discrimination, including any employment-related action by a member that adversely affects an applicant or member and is based on actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and any other classification or status protected by law.

Discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, is verbal or physical conduct that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual based upon that individual's protected class. It has the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating a hostile or abusive work environment.

Conduct that may, under certain circumstances, constitute discriminatory harassment can include making derogatory comments; making crude and offensive statements or remarks; making slurs or off-color jokes; stereotyping; engaging in threatening acts; making indecent gestures, pictures, cartoons, posters, or material; making inappropriate physical contact; or using written material or department equipment and/or systems to transmit or receive offensive material, statements, or pictures. Such conduct is contrary to department policy and to a work environment that is free of discrimination.

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1012.3.2 RETALIATION

Retaliation is treating a person differently or engaging in acts of reprisal or intimidation against the person because the person has engaged in protected activity, filed a charge of discrimination, participated in an investigation, or opposed a discriminatory practice. Retaliation will not be tolerated.

1012.3.3 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Department prohibits all forms of discrimination and discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment. It is unlawful to harass an applicant or a member because of that person's sex.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of employment, position, or compensation.
- (b) Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for any employment decisions affecting the member.
- (c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a member's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

1012.3.4 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Discrimination and discriminatory harassment do not include actions that are in accordance with established rules, principles, or standards, including:

- (a) Acts or omission of acts based solely upon bona fide occupational qualifications under the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Texas Workforce Commission, Civil Rights Division guidelines.
- (b) Bona fide requests or demands by a supervisor that the member improve the member's work quality or output, that the member report to the job site on time, that the member comply with or City department rules or regulations, or any other appropriate work-related communication between supervisor and member.

1012.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to all department members, who shall follow the intent of these guidelines in a manner that reflects department policy, professional standards, and the best interest of the Pharr Fire Department and its mission.

Members are encouraged to promptly report any discriminatory, retaliatory, or harassing conduct or known violations of this policy to a supervisor. Any member who is not comfortable with reporting violations of this policy to the member's immediate supervisor may bypass the chain of command and make the report to a higher-ranking supervisor or manager. Complaints may also be filed with the Fire Chief, the Human Resources Director, or the City Manager.

Any member who believes, in good faith, that the member has been discriminated against, harassed, or subjected to retaliation, or who has observed harassment, discrimination, or

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retaliation, is encouraged to promptly report such conduct in accordance with the procedures set forth in this policy.

Supervisors and managers receiving information regarding alleged violations of this policy shall determine if there is any basis for the allegation and shall proceed with a resolution as stated below.

1012.4.1 QUESTIONS OR CLARIFICATION

Members with questions regarding what constitutes discrimination, sexual harassment, or retaliation are encouraged to contact a supervisor, a manager, the Fire Chief, the Human Resources Director, or the City Manager for further information, direction, or clarification.

1012.4.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of supervisors and managers shall include but are not limited to:

- (a) Continually monitoring the work environment and striving to ensure that it is free from all types of unlawful discrimination, including harassment or retaliation.
- (b) Taking prompt, appropriate action within their work units to avoid and minimize the incidence of any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
- (c) Ensuring that their subordinates understand their responsibilities under this policy.
- (d) Ensuring that members who make complaints or who oppose any unlawful employment practices are protected from retaliation and that such matters are kept confidential to the extent possible.
- (e) Making a timely determination regarding the substance of any allegation based upon all available facts.
- (f) Notifying the Fire Chief or the Human Resources Director in writing of the circumstances surrounding any reported allegations or observed acts of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation no later than the next business day.

1012.4.3 SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

Supervisors and managers shall be aware of the following:

- (a) Behavior of supervisors and managers should represent the values of the Department and professional standards.
- (b) False or mistaken accusations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation can have negative effects on the careers of innocent members.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent supervisors or managers from discharging supervisory or management responsibilities, such as determining duty assignments, evaluating or counseling members, or issuing discipline, in a manner that is consistent with established procedures.

1012.5 INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS

Various methods of resolution exist. During the pendency of any such investigation, the supervisor of the involved member should take prompt and reasonable steps to mitigate or eliminate any

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continuing abusive or hostile work environment. It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department that all complaints of discrimination, retaliation, or harassment shall be fully documented, and promptly and thoroughly investigated.

1012.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESOLUTION

Members who believe they are experiencing discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should be encouraged to inform the individual that the behavior is unwelcome, offensive, unprofessional, or inappropriate. However, if the member feels uncomfortable or threatened or has difficulty expressing the member's concern, or if this does not resolve the concern, assistance should be sought from a supervisor or manager who is a rank higher than the alleged transgressor.

1012.5.2 FORMAL INVESTIGATION

If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved through the supervisory resolution process, a formal investigation will be conducted.

The person assigned to investigate the complaint will have full authority to investigate all aspects of the complaint. Investigative authority includes access to records and the cooperation of any members involved. No influence will be used to suppress any complaint and no member will be subject to retaliation or reprisal for filing a complaint, encouraging others to file a complaint, or for offering testimony or evidence in an investigation.

Formal investigation of the complaint will be confidential to the extent possible and will include but is not limited to details of the specific incident, frequency and dates of occurrences, and names of any witnesses. Witnesses will be advised regarding the prohibition against retaliation, and that a disciplinary process, up to and including termination, may result if retaliation occurs.

Members who believe they have been discriminated against, harassed, or retaliated against because of their protected status are encouraged to follow the chain of command but may also file a complaint directly with the Fire Chief, the Human Resources Director, or the City Manager.

1012.5.3 ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCESS

No provision of this policy shall be construed to prevent any member from seeking legal redress outside the Department. Members who believe that they have been harassed, discriminated against, or retaliated against are entitled to bring complaints of employment discrimination to federal, state, and/or local agencies responsible for investigating such allegations. Specific time limitations apply to the filing of such charges. Members are advised that proceeding with complaints under the provisions of this policy does not in any way affect those filing requirements.

1012.6 DOCUMENTATION OF COMPLAINTS

All complaints or allegations shall be thoroughly documented on the appropriate forms and in a manner designated by the Fire Chief. The outcome of all reports shall be:

- (a) Approved by the Fire Chief, the City Manager, or the Human Resources Director, depending on the ranks of the involved parties.
- (b) Maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

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1012.6.1 NOTIFICATION OF DISPOSITION

The complainant and/or victim will be notified in writing of the disposition of the investigation and the actions taken to remedy or address the circumstances giving rise to the complaint.

1012.7 TRAINING

All new members shall be provided with a copy of this policy as part of their orientation. The policy shall be reviewed with each new member. The member shall certify by signing the prescribed form that the member has been advised of this policy, is aware of and understands its contents, and agrees to abide by its provisions during the member's term with the Department.

All members shall receive annual training on the requirements of this policy and shall certify by signing the prescribed form that they have reviewed the policy, understand its contents, and agree that they will continue to abide by its provisions.

Conduct and Behavior

1013.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to prevent activities or behaviors that may lead to disciplinary actions or dismissal.

1013.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department that its members strive to attain the highest professional standard of conduct and discharge their duties in a courteous and professional manner.

1013.3 PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

All members should be governed by the ordinary and reasonable rules of behavior observed by law-abiding and self-respecting citizens, and should conduct themselves at all times in such manner as to reflect favorably on the Department. Conduct unbecoming of a member shall include that which discredits the Department or the person as a member of the Department or which impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department or its members.

All members should conduct themselves in a manner that will not impair the good order and discipline of the Department. Members should not, while on-duty, indulge in hazing or bullying; offensive, obscene or uncivil language; verbal or physical altercations or threats thereof; or conduct which might cause injury to another person.

All members of the Department should be familiar with the expected standard of behavior, both on- and off-duty.

1013.4 INTERACTION WITH THE PUBLIC

In the performance of their duties, members should be courteous to the public and tactful. They should control their tempers, should exercise reasonable patience and discretion, and should not engage in any argumentative discussions even when provoked.

In the performance of their duties, members should not use coarse, violent, profane, or insolent language or gestures, and should not express prejudice or discrimination.

1013.5 COURTESY TO MEMBERS

Members should be courteous and respectful in their relations with all members of the Department. Members shall not use coarse, violent, profane, or insolent language or gestures, and shall not express prejudice or discrimination.

1013.6 DISCRIMINATION, OPPRESSION, OR FAVORITISM

Unless required by law or policy, discriminating against, oppressing, or providing favoritism to any person because of actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, economic status, cultural group, veteran status, marital status, and any other classification or status protected by law, or intentionally denying or impeding another in the exercise or enjoyment of any right, privilege, power or immunity, knowing the conduct is unlawful, is prohibited.

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1013.7 CONFORMANCE TO LAWS

Members shall obey all laws of the United States and of any state and local jurisdiction in which the member is present.

1013.8 DEROGATORY OR MALICIOUS STATEMENTS

Members should not be a party to any malicious gossip, report or activity which would tend to disrupt department morale or bring discredit to the Department or any member thereof. Member questions concerning department policy, activities, officers and/or safety issues shall be submitted by official written communication to the member's immediate supervisor.

1013.9 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Members should not engage in political activities of any kind while on-duty. Members are also prohibited from engaging in any political activity off-duty while wearing any uniform items or equipment that could identify them as members of the Department.

1013.10 SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Members should not engage in any sexual activity while on-duty. This includes use of any electronic device to communicate or receive messages, photos or any other content of a sexual or provocative nature.

1013.11 ILLEGAL GAMBLING

Members should not engage or participate in any form of illegal gambling at any time while on-duty. This includes accessing gaming websites from computers or any electronic device, whether department-issued or owned by the member.

1013.12 GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

Members should not solicit or accept any gift, including money, tangible or intangible personal property, or any service, gratuity, favor, entertainment, hospitality, loan, promise, or any other thing of value from any person, business, or organization that is doing business with, or seeking to do business with, the Department or the City.

If it may reasonably be inferred that the person, business, or organization seeks to influence the actions of a member or seeks to affect the performance of a member while on-duty, the incident should be immediately reported to the next level supervisor.

1013.13 OFFERS OF DONATIONS AND GIFTS OF THE HEART

Members who are approached with monetary donations following major disasters shall direct the person or entity to the Administration Division for instruction on proper ways to donate.

At no time should a member accept any monetary donation from the public. If a citizen offers a gift of a non-monetary nature, such as food or product, the gift shall be placed in an area of the station or office to be shared by all members.

At no time shall a member consider a gift of the heart as a personal present.

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1013.14 ABUSE OF POSITION

Members should not use their official positions, official identification cards, or badges to avoid the consequences of illegal acts or for other non-work-related personal gain. Members shall not lend to another person their identification cards or badges, or permit their identification cards or badges to be photographed or reproduced without the approval of the Fire Chief.

Members should not authorize the use of their names, photographs, or official titles that identify them as department members (e.g., in connection with testimonials or advertisements of any commodity or commercial enterprise) without the approval of the Fire Chief.

1013.15 PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND APPEARANCES

Members should not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any articles for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or periodical, or release or divulge investigative information or information on any other matter of the Department while presenting themselves or in any way identifying themselves as representing the Department, without the approval of the Fire Chief.

Personnel Complaints

1014.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the reporting, investigation, and disposition of complaints regarding the conduct of members of this department. This policy shall not apply to any questioning, counseling, instruction, informal verbal admonishment, or other routine or unplanned contact of a member in the normal course of duty, by a supervisor or any other member, nor shall this policy apply to a criminal investigation.

1014.2 POLICY

This department takes seriously all complaints regarding the service provided by the Department and the conduct of its members.

The Department will accept and address all complaints of misconduct in accordance with this policy and applicable federal, state, and local laws, municipal and county rules, and the requirements of any collective bargaining agreements.

It is also the policy of this department to ensure that the community can report misconduct without concern for reprisal or retaliation.

1014.3 PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS

Personnel complaints include any allegation of misconduct or improper job performance that, if true, would constitute a violation of department policy or federal, state, or local law, policy, or rule. Personnel complaints may be generated internally or by the public.

Inquiries about conduct or performance that, if true, would not violate department policy or federal, state, or local law, policy, or rule may be handled informally by a supervisor and shall not be considered a personnel complaint. Such inquiries generally include clarification regarding policy, procedures, or the response to specific incidents by the Department.

1014.4 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Administrative investigation procedures shall follow the current adopted Collective Bargaining Agreement between City of Pharr and the Pharr Professional Firefighters Association, IAFF Local #4213.

Outside Employment

1015.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to be followed by any Pharr Fire Department members considering outside employment.

1015.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to allow members to engage in employment other than with the Department if the Fire Chief determines that such outside employment is not in conflict with his/her duties and the duties, functions and responsibilities of the Department.

Members shall not represent the Department while performing employment outside the Department.

1015.3 PROCEDURE

No member shall be employed in any manner outside of City employment without prior written authorization from the Fire Chief.

Any member requesting authorization for outside employment must submit the request in writing and provide sufficient detail to enable the Fire Chief to determine whether to approve the request. At a minimum the request should include the number of hours, types of duties and the physical demands of the proposed employment.

1015.3.1 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RECORDS

Prior to providing written approval for outside employment, the Department may request that a member provide his/her personal financial records for review/audit if the Department has reason to believe a conflict of interest exists. Failure of the member to provide the requested personal financial records could result in denial of the outside employment approval.

If, after approving a request for outside employment, the Department has reason to believe that a conflict of interest exists based on a financial reason, the Department may request that the member provide his/her personal financial records for review/audit. If the member does not provide the requested records, his/her outside employment approval may be revoked.

1015.4 PROHIBITED OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

The Fire Chief, at his/her discretion, may deny any outside employment request submitted by a member seeking to engage in any activity which:

- (a) Involves the member's use of department time, facilities, equipment or supplies in such a manner that would identify the member as being associated with or representing the Pharr Fire Department or the use of the department badge, uniform, prestige or influence for private gain or advantage.
- (b) Involves the member's receipt or acceptance of any money or other consideration from anyone other than this department for the performance of an act which the member, if

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not performing such act, would be required or expected to render in the regular course of employment or as a part of the member's duties as a member of this department.

- (c) Involves the performance of an act in other than the member's capacity as a member of this department that may later be subject directly or indirectly to the control, inspection, review, audit or enforcement of any other member of this department.
- (d) Involves time demands that would render performance of the member's duties for the Department less efficient.
- (e) Involves time demands that would affect the member's regular work shift or ability to respond to emergencies or mandated overtime.
- (f) Involves employment with an individual or organization that does business with the Department.
- (g) Would otherwise compromise the ability of the Department to conduct its business in an efficient manner.
- (h) Would give the appearance of impropriety or otherwise appear inconsistent, incompatible or in conflict with the member's employment with the Department.

1015.5 WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL FOR OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

The following circumstances may affect existing approval of outside employment:

- (a) Should a member's performance at the Department decline to a point where it is evaluated by a supervisor as needing improvement to reach an overall level of competency, the Fire Chief may, at his/her discretion, withdraw approval for any outside employment.
- (b) Withdrawal of approval of outside employment may be included as a term or condition of sustained discipline.
- (c) If, at any time, a member's conduct or outside employment conflicts with the provisions of department policy, the approval for outside employment may be withdrawn.
- (d) When a member is unable to perform at a full-duty capacity due to an injury or other condition, approval of outside employment may be withdrawn until the member has returned to full-duty status for any of the following reasons:
 - 1. The outside employment is medically detrimental to the total recovery of the disabled member, as indicated by the department's medical advisers.
 - 2. The outside employment performed requires the same or similar physical ability as would be required of an on-duty member.
 - 3. The member fails to make timely notice of his/her intention to continue outside employment to his/her supervisor.

1015.6 APPEALS

If a member's outside employment request is denied or withdrawn, the member should be informed of the action and reason in writing.

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The member may file a written notice of appeal to the Fire Chief within 10 days of the date of the written denial or withdrawal.

If the member's appeal is denied, the member may file a grievance pursuant to the procedure set forth in the current collective bargaining agreement.

1015.7 CHANGES IN OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT STATUS

If a member terminates his/her outside employment, the member should promptly submit written notification of such termination to the Fire Chief. Any subsequent request for renewal or continued outside employment should be processed and approved through normal procedures set forth in this policy.

Members should also promptly submit in writing to the Fire Chief any material changes in outside employment, including any change in the number of hours, types of duties or demands of any approved outside employment. Members who are uncertain whether a change in outside employment is material should report the change.

Department members who are engaged in outside employment while on full duty and are placed on disability leave or temporary modified duty due to illness or injury should inform their immediate supervisor in writing as soon as practicable regarding whether they intend to continue to engage in outside employment while on leave or modified-duty status.

1015.8 PROHIBITED USE OF DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

Members are prohibited from using any department equipment or resources in the course of or for the benefit of any outside employment. This includes access to official records or databases of this department or other agencies through the member's position with this department.

Personal Projects On-Duty

1016.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the specific conditions in which privileges may be granted to conduct some personal projects while on-duty.

1016.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to consider granting privileges to members to conduct personal projects while on-duty in some circumstances. Firefighters assigned to a fire station may experience downtime during their shift and have an opportunity to engage in some personal projects. When this opportunity arises, permission may be granted, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) Personal projects shall not interfere with emergency response demands.
- (b) Personal projects shall not interfere with other assigned station duties.
- (c) At their discretion, the Lieutenant or Battalion Chief may deny or revoke permission for a personal project while on-duty.
- (d) Department equipment or resources shall not be used for personal projects.
- (e) Office supplies and office equipment (e.g., copiers, fax machines) shall not be used for personal projects.
- (f) All department policies must be followed while engaged in the personal project.

On-Duty Voting in Statewide Elections

1017.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Although members are encouraged to use alternative voting methods, such as absentee ballots or early voting, this policy provides guidelines to enable members to vote in all statewide elections.

1017.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide members a reasonable opportunity to vote in all statewide elections.

1017.3 PROCEDURES

Polls are generally open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. each election day for statewide elections. Members scheduled to be at work during that time may take up to two hours off to vote without losing any pay (Tex. Elec. Code § 276.004).

Employees who need time off to vote should notify their supervisor at least two working days prior to the election.

Supervisors shall allow members time off to vote according to the following:

- (a) Employees may take as much time as needed to vote but only two hours of that time will be paid.
- (b) Authorized time off for voting should be at the beginning or end of a regular work shift, whichever allows the most free time for voting and the least time off from the regular working shift.
- (c) Members working 24-hour shifts ending on the day of the election will not be relieved early to vote.

Personnel Records

1018.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the maintenance of, retention of and access to personnel files in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act.

1018.1.1 PERSONNEL RECORDS DEFINED

Personnel records shall include any record maintained under an individual member's name relating to:

- (a) Personal data, including marital status, family members, educational and employment history or similar information.
- (b) Medical history, including medical leave-of-absence forms, fitness-for-duty examinations, workers' compensation records, medical releases and all other records that reveal a member's past, current or future medical conditions.
- (c) Election of employee benefits.
- (d) Member advancement, appraisal or discipline.
- (e) Complaints or investigations of complaints concerning an event or transaction in which the member participated that pertain to the manner in which the member performed official duties.
- (f) Any information that if disclosed would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

1018.1.2 EMPLOYEE RECORD LOCATIONS

Personnel records will generally be maintained in one of the following files:

Department file - Any file maintained in the office of the Department or the Department of Human Resources as a permanent record of a member's employment with the Department.

Division file - Any file maintained internally by a member's supervisor in an assigned division for the purpose of collecting information to prepare performance evaluations.

Supervisor log entries - Any written comment, excluding actual performance evaluations, made by a supervisor, concerning the performance or conduct of a member of the Department.

Training file - Any file containing the training records of a member.

Investigations file - Any file containing written comments regarding harassment or discrimination claims, misconduct claims, background investigations or reference check responses.

Medical file - Any separately maintained file that exclusively contains material relating to a member's medical history.

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1018.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Department to maintain the confidentiality of its members' personnel records.

1018.3 REQUESTS FOR DISCLOSURE

All records kept by Texas public agencies are considered public unless they are covered by specific disclosure statutes pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act.

Private personnel records that are exempt from public disclosure include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Home addresses, home telephone numbers, emergency contact information, Social Security numbers or information that reveals the member has family members. This information is exempted if the member requested the information to be confidential by a signed writing upon employment (Tex. Gov't Code § 552.024; Tex. Gov't Code § 552.117).
- (b) Certain personnel records, medical records or similar records which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy (Tex. Gov't Code § 552.102).
- (c) Information considered confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory or by judicial decision (Tex. Gov't Code § 552.101).

Only written requests for the disclosure of any information contained in a member's personnel record will be considered. Since the format of such requests may be strictly governed by law, with specific responses required, all such requests shall be promptly brought to the attention of the designated department official charged with the responsibility of responding to such requests.

Upon receipt of a request for disclosure of personnel records, the member's supervisor shall be notified and shall be responsible for notifying the affected member as soon as practicable that such a request has been made.

The designated department official charged with the responsibility of responding to requests for disclosure of personnel records shall ensure that an appropriate response to the request is made in a timely manner, in accordance with applicable law. In many cases, this may require assistance of the department's legal counsel.

All requests for the disclosure of personnel records that result in access to a member's file shall be logged in the corresponding file.

Nothing in this section is intended to preclude review of personnel files by the City Manager, City Attorney or attorneys or representatives of the City in connection with official business.

1018.4 RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Except as provided by this policy or pursuant to lawful process, no information contained in any confidential personnel file shall be disclosed to any unauthorized person without the express prior consent of the involved member or the written authorization of the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

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1018.5 MEMBER ACCESS TO OWN FILE

Any member may request access to his/her own personnel file during the normal business hours of the individual responsible for maintaining such files.

Any member seeking the removal of any item from his/her personnel file shall submit a written request to the Fire Chief via the chain of command. The Department shall thereafter remove any such item, if appropriate, or as soon as practicable provide the member with a written explanation why the contested item will not be removed.

The request and the department's written response shall be retained, with the contested item, in the personnel file. Nothing herein shall require the removal of any item from the file.

Members may be restricted from accessing files containing any of the following information:

- Ongoing investigations, to the extent the Department, in its sole discretion, determines that disclosure could jeopardize or compromise the investigation, pending final disposition or notice to the member of the intent to discipline.
- Confidential portions of an investigation which have not been sustained against the member.

Commendations and Meritorious Service

1019.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for reporting and collecting reports of exceptional public service and for the evaluation and process for department awards.

1019.2 POLICY

It is the goal of the Pharr Fire Department to recognize members through an awards system for exceptional performance.

1019.3 PROCEDURES

Community and department members may report acts of exceptional public service through any department supervisor.

1019.3.1 TYPES OF AWARDS

The types of awards offered by the Pharr Fire Department include:

- (a) Letter of Appreciation from a citizen or coworker
- (b) Letter of Appreciation from the Fire Chief
- (c) Company Citation
- (d) Commendation
- (e) Meritorious Service Award
- (f) Life-Saving Award

1019.3.2 SUBMITTING AWARD NOMINATIONS

Any member may report, in writing, to any supervisor, the exemplary performance of another member.

Any member of the public may submit a nomination by completing an award nomination form, available at all fire stations during normal business hours, and submitting it to the Administration Division.

1019.3.3 AWARD CRITERIA, APPROVAL AND PRESENTATION

The Fire Chief should appoint a review committee to review each report of exemplary performance or award nomination. Each report and nomination should be reviewed for merit and further investigated, if necessary, for additional factual details. In determining factual details, resources that may be used include, but are not limited to, copies of audio or video recordings, copies of incidents, or interviews with additional members or witnesses.

Each report and nomination should be evaluated on its own merit, with the following criteria as a guideline:

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- (a) If a report or nomination is determined to be for individual performance expected during the normal course of a member's assigned job duties, the review committee may elect to present the member with a copy of the report and nomination and place a copy in the member's personnel file. A Battalion Chief should approve this presentation. A supervisor should present the letter to the member in the presence of the company or station members.
- (b) If a nomination is determined to be for individual performance beyond what is expected during the normal course of a member's assigned job duties, the review committee may choose to have a Letter of Appreciation drafted to the member, for the Fire Chief's signature, detailing the specifics of the incident and how the member excelled. A Battalion Chief should approve this award before sending the letter to the Fire Chief for signature. The Battalion Chief should present the Letter of Appreciation to the member in the presence of the company or station members.
- (c) If an award nomination is determined to be for team performance beyond what is expected during the normal course of a company's assigned job duties, the review committee may elect to have a Company Citation drafted to the company, for the Fire Chief's signature, detailing the specifics of the incident and how the company excelled. A Battalion Chief should approve this award before sending the letter to the Fire Chief for signature and should present the letter to the company in the presence of other members of the battalion, if practicable.
- (d) If an award nomination is determined to be for individual or team performance well beyond what is expected during the normal course of assigned job duties, the review committee may elect to have a Commendation drafted for the Fire Chief's signature, detailing the specifics of the incident and how the individual or team excelled. The Fire Chief should approve this award. The Fire Chief should present this award, at his/her discretion, in a manner befitting the circumstances.
- (e) If an award nomination is determined to be for individual or team performance extraordinarily beyond what is expected during the normal course of assigned job duties, such as life-saving at significant risk of injury or death to the member, the review committee may elect to have a Meritorious Service Award or Life-Saving Award conferred by the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief should approve this award. This award should typically be conferred publicly, at the discretion and direction of the Fire Chief.

1019.4 REVIEW DISPOSITIONS

The review committee should review award reports and nominations at least quarterly. Each nomination should be given a disposition of:

- (a) Copy of nomination placed in the member's file
- (b) Letter of Appreciation, approved/disapproved
- (c) Company Citation, approved/disapproved

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- (d) Commendation, approved/disapproved
- (e) Meritorious Service Award, approved/disapproved
- (f) Life-Saving Award, approved/disapproved

Grievance Procedure

1020.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes processes for resolving disputes or concerns regarding conditions of employment, unethical or wasteful conduct, or other inappropriate conduct.

This policy does not apply to complaints related to alleged acts of discrimination or harassment or complaints of discrimination on the basis of other protected categories subject to the Discriminatory Harassment Policy. This policy also does not apply to complaints consisting of any alleged misconduct or improper job performance by any member that, if true, would constitute a violation of federal, state or local law, or a violation of department policy or the standards established in the Personnel Complaints Policy.

This policy does not prohibit adverse administrative action taken for legitimate non-discriminatory or non-retaliatory reasons, including for-cause discipline.

The procedures set forth herein are intended to supplement and not limit a member's access to other applicable remedies. Nothing in this policy shall diminish the rights or remedies of a member pursuant to any applicable federal law, provision of the U.S. Constitution, state law, local ordinance or collective bargaining agreement.

1020.1.1 GRIEVANCE DEFINED

A grievance is any difference of opinion concerning terms or conditions of employment or a dispute involving the interpretation or application of any of the following documents:

- A collective bargaining agreement
- This Policy Manual
- Rules and regulations covering personnel practices or working conditions of members

A grievance includes any claim of waste, abuse of authority, or gross mismanagement and any practice within the Department which may pose a threat to health, safety or security.

Grievances may be brought by an individual member or by a group representative.

1020.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department that all grievances be handled quickly and fairly without retaliation against a member who files a grievance, whether or not there is a basis for the grievance. It is the philosophy of this department to promote free verbal communication between members and supervisors.

1020.3 RETALIATION PROHIBITED

No member may retaliate against any person for reporting or making a complaint under this policy or for opposing a practice believed to be improper, unethical, wasteful or retaliatory or participating in any investigation pursuant to this policy or any other policy in this Policy Manual (see the Anti-Retaliation Policy).

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Grievance Procedure

Employees found to be in violation of this policy are subject to discipline. Supervisors who condone or ignore violations of this policy or otherwise fail to take appropriate action to enforce this policy are also subject to discipline.

1020.4 PROCEDURE

The grievance procedure shall follow the current adopted Collective Bargaining Agreement between City of Pharr and the Pharr Professional Firefighters Association, IAFF Local #4213.

1020.5 MEMBER REPRESENTATION

Members are entitled to have representation during the grievance process and may seek advice, counsel or the assistance of other employees or representatives in their presentation of a grievance.

1020.6 GRIEVANCE RECORDS

At the conclusion of the grievance process, all documents pertaining to the process shall be forwarded to the Fire Chief.

Wellness Program

1021.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on establishing and maintaining a proactive wellness program for department members (37 Tex. Admin. Code § 435.21).

The wellness program is intended to be a holistic approach to a member's well-being and encompasses aspects such as mental health and overall wellness.

Additional information on member wellness is provided in the:

- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Policy.
- Chaplains Policy.
- Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.
- Physical Fitness Policy.

1021.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include (Tex. Health & Safety Code § 784.001):

Crisis response service – Consultation, risk assessment, referral, and on-site crisis intervention services provided by an emergency response team member to a firefighter affected by a crisis or disaster.

Critical incident stress management service – A service providing a process of crisis intervention designed to assist a firefighter in coping with critical incident stress. The term includes consultation, counseling, debriefing, defusing, intervention services, case management services, prevention, and referral.

Emergency response team member – A firefighter within the Department designated to provide critical incident stress management and crisis response services. Emergency response team members may also provide other mental and emotional wellness support for personal and professional problems.

Peer support – Mental and emotional wellness support provided by peers trained to help members cope with critical incidents and certain personal or professional problems.

1021.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to prioritize member wellness to foster fitness for duty and support a healthy quality of life for department members. The Department will maintain a wellness program that supports its members with proactive wellness resources, critical incident response, and follow-up support.

1021.3 WELLNESS COORDINATOR

The Health and Safety Officer (HSO) is the designated department wellness coordinator. The coordinator should report directly to the Fire Chief or the authorized designee and should

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collaborate with advisers (e.g., Department of Human Resources, legal counsel, licensed psychotherapist, qualified health professional) as appropriate to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including but not limited to:

- (a) Identifying wellness support providers (e.g., licensed psychotherapists, external peer support providers, physical therapists, dietitians, physical fitness trainers holding accredited certifications).
 - 1. As appropriate, selected providers should be trained and experienced in providing mental wellness support and counseling to public safety personnel.
 - 2. When practicable, the Department should not use the same licensed psychotherapist for both member wellness support and fitness-for-duty evaluations.
- (b) Developing management and operational procedures for department emergency response team members, such as:
 - 1. Emergency response team member selection and retention.
 - 2. Training and applicable certification requirements.
 - 3. Deployment.
 - 4. Managing potential conflicts between emergency response team members and those seeking service.
 - 5. Monitoring and mitigating emergency response team member emotional fatigue (i.e., compassion fatigue) associated with providing critical incident stress management or crisis response services.
 - 6. Using qualified emergency response team support personnel from other public safety agencies or outside organizations for department critical incident stress management or crisis response services as appropriate.
- (c) Verifying members have reasonable access to emergency response team members or licensed psychotherapist support.
- (d) Facilitating the delivery of wellness information, training, and support through various methods appropriate for the situation (e.g., phone hotlines, electronic applications).
- (e) Verifying a confidential, appropriate, and timely Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for members. This also includes:
 - 1. Obtaining a written description of the program services.
 - 2. Providing for the methods to obtain program services.
 - 3. Providing referrals to the EAP for appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up resources.
 - 4. Obtaining written procedures and guidelines for referrals to, or mandatory participation in, the program.
 - 5. Obtaining training for supervisors in their role and responsibilities, and identification of member behaviors that would indicate the existence of member concerns, problems, or issues that could impact member job performance.

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- (f) Making annual medical examinations available to members. Medical examination specifics should be established by a qualified health professional.
- (g) Coordinating with qualified health care professionals to develop a fitness assessment questionnaire to be administered to members annually. The questionnaire should evaluate both immunization and disease screening as well as physical fitness and conditioning.
- (h) Establishing an annual immunization and disease screening schedule for members. Specific vaccinations and diseases should be identified by a qualified health care professional.
- (i) Maintaining familiarity with the guidelines published by the following and incorporating procedures and practices, as appropriate, into the department wellness program:
 - 1. International Association of Fire Fighters
 - 2. International Association of Fire Chiefs
 - 3. Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative
 - 4. NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program (37 Tex. Admin. Code 435.5)
 - 5. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Initiative 13
 - 6. NFPA 1582, Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments

1021.4 DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM MEMBERS

1021.4.1 EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM MEMBER SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection of a department emergency response team member will be at the discretion of the coordinator. Selection should be based on the member's:

- Desire to be an emergency response team member.
- Experience or tenure.
- Demonstrated ability as a positive role model.
- Ability to communicate and interact effectively.
- Evaluation by supervisors and any current emergency response team members.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Ability to learn about the psycho-social process.

1021.4.2 EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of department emergency response team members include:

- (a) Providing pre- and post-critical incident support (see the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Policy).

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- (b) Presenting department members with periodic training on wellness topics including but not limited to:
 - 1. Stress management.
 - 2. Suicide prevention.
 - 3. How to access support resources.
- (c) Providing referrals to licensed psychotherapists and other resources, where appropriate.
 - 1. Referrals should be made to department-designated resources in situations that are beyond the scope of the emergency response team member's training.

1021.4.3 EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM MEMBER TRAINING

A department emergency response team member should complete department-approved training prior to being assigned. Training should include initial training and continuing education in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) principles and procedures.

1021.5 EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM COMMUNICATIONS

Communication made to an emergency response team member by a firefighter receiving critical incident stress management or crisis response services, and any record relating to such services, is confidential and may not be disclosed in a civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding except as provided by Tex. Health & Safety Code § 784.003.

Although the Department will honor the sensitivity and confidentiality of communications with and between emergency response team members, there is no legal privilege to such communications.

For additional policy guidance regarding the confidentiality of communications with emergency response team members during a CISD, see the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Policy.

1021.6 WELLNESS PROGRAM AUDIT

At least annually, the coordinator or the authorized designee should audit the effectiveness of the department's wellness program and prepare a report summarizing the findings. The report shall not contain the names of members participating in the wellness program and should include the following information:

- Data on the types of support services provided
- Wait times for support services
- Participant feedback, if available
- Program improvement recommendations
- Policy revision recommendations

The coordinator should present the completed audit to the Fire Chief for review and consideration of updates to improve program effectiveness.

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1021.7 TRAINING

The coordinator or the authorized designee should collaborate with the Training Captain to provide all members with regular education and training on topics related to member wellness, including but not limited to:

- The availability and range of department wellness support systems.
- Suicide prevention.
- Recognizing and managing mental distress, emotional fatigue, post-traumatic stress, and other possible reactions to trauma.
- Alcohol and substance use disorder awareness.
- Countering sleep deprivation and physical fatigue.
- Anger management.
- Marriage and family wellness.
- Benefits of exercise and proper nutrition.
- Effective time and personal financial management skills.

Training materials, curriculum, and attendance records should be forwarded to the Training Captain as appropriate for inclusion in training records.

Physical Fitness

1022.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide firefighters with on-duty physical fitness guidelines. The Department provides on-duty time for firefighter physical fitness to assist personnel in achieving and maintaining optimal health and physical fitness.

1022.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to establish guidelines for physical fitness activities that are designed to prevent injuries while maintaining fitness. The ultimate goals of this policy are to:

- Meet the physical demands required on emergency responses.
- Reduce the risk of member injury or illness.
- Enhance the overall health, fitness, and safety of members.

Physical fitness activities should not interfere with primary job duties (e.g., emergency responses, public education, training activities, other legal responsibilities), nor should physical fitness activities delay an emergency response in any way.

The Department retains the right to prohibit any physical fitness activity that, in its sole discretion, presents greater risks than benefits.

1022.3 PROCEDURE

The time, location, and duration of company physical fitness activities are at the discretion of the on-duty Battalion Chief and the Lieutenant. In all cases, the location for physical fitness must be within the company's first-in response area or approved arrangements for coverage, be consistent with this policy, and not result in a response delay.

All Fire Operations members should be allowed to participate in physical fitness activities during the course of their shift. Members who choose not to participate in physical fitness activities shall conduct duties as assigned by the Lieutenant during the designated physical fitness period. Members who have provided the Department with written physical restrictions from a qualified health care provider shall not participate in any physical activity that conflicts with the restriction.

At the discretion of the Department, one or more of the following may apply:

- (a) Station physical fitness equipment
 1. Physical fitness equipment is available for the use of members at fire stations with adequate space. Members assigned to these stations should utilize the fitness equipment for their on-duty physical fitness activities.

1022.4 PHYSICAL FITNESS GUIDELINES

Physical fitness and conditioning activities should be designed to maintain or improve flexibility, muscular strength, endurance, and anaerobic and aerobic capacity. They should also correspond to the physical movement patterns required in the performance of firefighter duties.

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The Health and Safety Officer (HSO) is the designated fitness coordinator and is responsible for establishing guidelines for any on-duty physical fitness program, including:

- (a) Voluntary participation by members.
- (b) Allowable physical fitness activities, including:
 - 1. Stretching.
 - 2. Running, jogging, walking, or rowing.
 - 3. Weight training (with spotter present).
 - 4. Stationary aerobic training (e.g., stair-climber, treadmill, stationary bicycle).
 - 5. Core strengthening.
 - 6. Firefighter-specific activities (e.g., hose drag, simulated ventilation, dummy drag).
- (c) Physical fitness activities as recommended by the Department peer fitness trainers (PFTs).
- (d) Acceptable use of department-approved physical fitness facilities and equipment.
- (e) Individual education (e.g., nutrition, sleep habits, proper exercise, injury prevention) and goal-setting.
- (f) Standards for fitness incentive programs. The fitness coordinator should collaborate with the appropriate entities (e.g., human resources, legal counsel) to verify that any standards are nondiscriminatory.
- (g) Maintenance of physical wellness logs (e.g., attendance, goals, standards, progress).
- (h) Ongoing support and evaluation.

The physical fitness program should be developed in coordination with a certified fitness and conditioning trainer and the department HSO and be consistent with the department's overall wellness program.

Member participation in competitive or contact sports is not recommended while on-duty.

1022.5 INJURY PREVENTION

- (a) When participating in approved on-duty physical fitness activities, reasonable precautions should be taken to avoid injury. Common reasons for injuries sustained during physical activity include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Insufficient warm-up.
 - 2. Poor core stabilization.
 - 3. Exceeding physical capabilities.
 - 4. Improper equipment use.
 - 5. Defective equipment.
 - 6. Lack of proper instruction.

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- (b) Members who are participating in physical fitness activities are expected to:
1. Allow sufficient time to warm up muscles prior to engaging in exercise for optimum performance and to reduce the risk of injury.
 2. Develop sufficient trunk muscle strength to keep the spine and body stable in order to remain strong and balanced.
 3. Maintain realistic goals and limits for physical fitness routines.
 4. Develop an understanding of how to use fitness equipment properly and safely.
 5. Check equipment prior to use to ensure safe operation, report defective or broken equipment to the safety officer as soon as practicable, and disable equipment to prevent others from using it, if necessary.
 6. Develop and maintain sufficient fitness training knowledge, accounting for fitness level, age, and previous injuries or limitations, to avoid fitness-related injuries.

1022.6 PEER FITNESS TRAINERS (PFTS)

Volunteers should be solicited to serve as PFTs. Selected PFTs shall receive specialized fitness and conditioning training and education sufficient to pass certification requirements determined by the Department. PFTs will assist in the promotion of the physical fitness program and be capable of assisting firefighters on a one-to-one basis to increase fitness levels.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

1023.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) program. The Pharr Fire Department recognizes that during the course of performing job duties, members may become involved in or be exposed to incidents that have the potential to cause various forms of short- or long-term emotional trauma.

1023.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Critical incident stress - The acute or cumulative psychological stress or trauma that a [firefighter] may experience in response to a critical incident, including a crisis, disaster, or emergency. The stress or trauma is an unusually strong emotional, cognitive, or physical reaction that has the potential to interfere with normal functioning, including physical and emotional illness, failure of usual coping mechanisms, loss of interest in the job, personality changes, and loss of ability to function (Tex. Health & Safety Code § 784.001).

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) - A standardized approach using a group format to provide education, an atmosphere and opportunity for emotional release through discussion, and support for members who are involved in emergency incidents under conditions of extreme stress. CISD is not a diagnostic or treatment process like that provided in counseling sessions by a mental health professional. Instead, it is a service that provides education and support.

Emergency response team member - A firefighter within the department designated to provide critical incident stress management or crisis response services (Tex. Health & Safety Code § 784.001).

1023.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to implement a CISD program to provide support and professional intervention to members of this department following exposure to situations that are likely to create unusually strong emotional reactions.

1023.3 CISD PROGRAM

The Department should establish a committee responsible for implementing and managing the CISD program. The Fire Chief or the authorized designee is responsible for appointing members to the committee who represent all levels of department personnel. The department's Health and Safety Officer serves as the committee chairperson.

Functions of the committee include but are not limited to:

- Providing input and assistance to the development and implementation of the CISD program.
- Recommending the type and content of critical incident-related programs, workshops, and seminars.

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- Distributing CISD-related information to members.
- Providing the administrative and technical support needed to implement CISD activities.
- Coordinating and following up on requests for CISD.
- Identifying state and local peer CISD organizations and teams.

1023.4 CISD COMPONENTS

The CISD program should include pre-incident, on-scene, and post-incident activities, including education, diffusion of emotional reactions, and debriefing. The purpose of the program is to minimize the impact of stress on members following major incidents.

Ideally, CISD should incorporate the services of both emergency response team members and trained professionals, such as physicians, psychologists, or counselors.

The program is intended to be consistent with the recommendations of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative developed by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

1023.4.1 ACTIVATION

The following are examples of incidents that may initiate a CISD response:

- Major disaster or mass casualty incidents
- Serious injury, death, or suicide of a firefighter, police officer, or other emergency service provider
- Serious injury or death of a civilian resulting from emergency service operations
- Death of a child or similar incident involving a profound emotional response
- Any incident that attracts significant media attention
- Loss of life following an unusual or extremely prolonged expenditure of emotional and physical energy by emergency services personnel
- Any unusual incident that produces an extreme, immediate, or delayed emotional response
- Cumulative trauma from multiple incidents

Any time it has been determined that a critical incident has occurred and intervention may be needed, a CISD should be requested. The request may be made either directly to emergency response team members or through the CISD committee. Depending on the type and magnitude of the incident and services that may be needed, the CISD may be activated either during or after a critical incident.

All members are responsible for recognizing incidents that may need a CISD. Once an incident has been identified as a critical incident, a CISD should be initiated as soon as practicable.

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Debriefing may be conducted anywhere there is ample space, privacy, and freedom from distractions. Consideration should be given to including responders from other agencies who were involved in the incident, including but not limited to communications personnel, law enforcement officers, and paramedics or ambulance personnel.

For additional guidance on members requesting peer support or professional help on an individual basis, see the Wellness Program Policy.

1023.4.2 CISD PROVIDERS

CISD providers should include mental health professionals and emergency response team members.

- (a) The duties and responsibilities of mental health professionals include the following:
 - 1. Supervise and advise on all clinical aspects of the program
 - 2. Ensure the quality of CISD services
 - 3. Offer clinical support and program guidance to the CISD committee and emergency response team members.
 - 4. Provide guidance to emergency response team members
 - 5. Assist in training emergency response team members and with continuing education
 - 6. Advise on the development of policy and written operational CISD protocols
- (b) Mental health professionals involved in the CISD program should have the following qualifications:
 - 1. Be a licensed mental health professional
 - 2. Be trained and experienced in a recognized CISD model
 - 3. Demonstrate experience in counseling emergency services personnel
- (c) The duties and responsibilities of emergency response team members related to CISD services include the following:
 - 1. Assist and support the CISD mental health professionals as necessary
 - 2. Provide referrals to mental health professionals, where appropriate
 - 3. Provide support and basic education to members and their families
 - 4. Serve as a CISD provider with mental health professionals

1023.5 DEBRIEFING

The CISD format used should depend on the nature of the incident and how early the intervention is activated. The use of one format does not preclude the use of others for the same critical incident.

Common CISD formats include:

- (a) On-scene debriefing: Emergency response team members or mental health professionals respond to the scene as observers and advisers to watch for the

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development of acute reactions. They may offer encouragement and support, check on the well-being of personnel, and allow for individual discussion of feelings and reactions.

- (b) Initial defusing: This usually takes place within a few hours of the incident and is generally facilitated by emergency response team members. It is an informal process encouraging open and free expression of feelings without a critique of the incident. The purpose is to stabilize involved members so they can go home or return to service.
- (c) Formal debriefing: Debriefing led by a CISD program mental health professional and emergency response team members that usually takes place 24 to 48 hours after the conclusion of the incident. Members involved in the critical incident are given the opportunity for free expression of feelings. This expression should be met with acceptance, support, and understanding.
- (d) Follow-up debriefing: If deemed necessary, follow-up may be facilitated by the CISD mental health professional and emergency response team members several weeks or months after a critical incident. The main purpose is to resolve any issues or problems that were not initially resolved. The follow-up debriefing may include the entire group or a portion of those originally involved.

Regardless of the type of debriefing, a CISD is not a critique of department operations at the incident. The CISD provides a setting in which members can discuss their feelings and reactions as a means to reduce the stress resulting from exposure to critical incidents. Performance issues should not be discussed during the debriefing.

No one has rank during the debriefing process. Everyone is equal.

Following any intervention, members who need additional assistance should contact emergency response team members or the wellness coordinator to obtain information.

1023.6 ATTENDANCE

Only those involved in the incident and CISD team members should be present. Members directly exposed to the traumatic aspects of an incident are strongly encouraged to participate in a CISD.

Under special circumstances, the supervising officer may make attendance mandatory. Even if attendance is mandatory, members should not be obligated to speak or express their feelings during the CISD.

During debriefings, involved members should be out of service with radios, personal communications devices, and other distractions turned off.

1023.7 ROTATION OF PERSONNEL

Incident Commanders should minimize members' exposure at critical incidents by rotating or removing initial responding personnel from the immediate scene and reassigning them to less stressful operations as soon as possible. Members directly involved in critical incidents should be considered a high priority for immediate reassignment or removal from the scene. Relief from duty may also be considered.

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Emergency response team members may make a request to their Lieutenant or Battalion Chief for relief or reassignment during a shift to participate in CISD activities. The emergency response team members should provide on-scene services, including on-site evaluation, encouragement, and consultation. They should also be considered an available resource for assignment to rehab, medical, or other areas as needed.

Circumstances of a critical incident may result in a recommendation that individuals or companies be taken out of service. The Battalion Chief is responsible for making the appropriate arrangements.

Under no circumstances is being taken out of service to be construed as critical or negative. Personnel taken out of service are to be viewed as deserving of the same consideration as an injured firefighter.

1023.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

All CISD, regardless of type, are strictly confidential. Notes, other than those specifically identified in this policy, are prohibited. No audio or video recording may be made without the express consent of all participants.

Communication made to an emergency response team member by a firefighter receiving critical incident stress management or crisis response services, and any record relating to such services, may not be disclosed in a civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding except when (Tex. Health & Safety Code § 784.003):

- (a) A court or administrative body finds that the benefit of allowing the disclosure outweighs the participant's privacy interest.
- (b) The emergency response team member needs to consult with or refer the participant to another member of the team or an appropriate professional associated with the team.
- (c) There is reasonable evidence to assume a risk of harm to the participant or to others.
- (d) The communication relates to a past, present, or future criminal act not directly related to the critical incident.
- (e) The participant or their legal representative agree the communication or record is not confidential.
- (f) The firefighter is deceased.

1023.9 RECORD-KEEPING

Following a CISD, the committee chairperson should prepare a summary report and forward it to the CISD program committee for statistical record-keeping. The report should be limited to the following information:

- (a) Incident date and time
- (b) Brief description of incident facts
- (c) Intervention date and location
- (d) Names of CISD team members conducting the intervention

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- (e) Numbers of participants from each agency involved

Names of participants should not be recorded.

Workplace Violence

1024.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to make clear that the Department does not tolerate any direct or implied threats of violence or violent behavior in the workplace or any act or behavior that is or can be perceived as threatening, hostile, and/or violent.

1024.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide and maintain a safe work environment for its employees, volunteers, and members of the public.

In responding to any violent behavior in the workplace, the Department is committed to providing protection to all involved parties, including protection from future physical and/or mental harm and the protection of the legal rights of victims, witnesses, and those instigating the harm.

1024.3 PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

No member shall engage in, encourage, or promote violent behavior toward any person while conducting department business or on department property.

No member engaged in department business shall carry or possess weapons or explosives unless either:

- (a) Permitted by department policy
- (b) State or local law prohibits the Department from restricting the possession of the weapon or explosive

1024.4 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING

1024.4.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITY

Department members who experience, observe, or have knowledge of prohibited behaviors and actions in the workplace have a responsibility to report the situation as soon as practicable to a supervisor, a manager, or a human resources representative and to the local police department, if a threat has been made or a crime has occurred.

Members should render aid to anyone who may be in need and be prepared to assist emergency responders, as requested, following any incident of violence in the workplace.

1024.4.2 SUPERVISOR, MANAGER, BATTALION CHIEF, AND DEPUTY CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon receipt of a report of potential or actual workplace violence, supervisors shall gather as much information as possible to assess and determine the severity and potential of the situation. If the report is found to be credible, the next immediate supervisor shall be notified as soon as practicable and appropriate action taken.

Local law enforcement personnel shall be notified immediately of all threatening or violent behavior.

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1024.4.3 INVESTIGATION

The Fire Chief or designee will promptly, impartially, and with as much confidentiality as practicable coordinate the investigation of all reports of violent behavior.

Department members are required to cooperate in any investigation. A timely resolution of each report should be reached and communicated to all parties involved as quickly as possible.

1024.4.4 REPORTING NON-WORK-RELATED THREATENING OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

Department members who are victims of domestic violence or other threatening behavior outside of the workplace, or who believe they are potential victims of such behavior and fear it may enter the workplace, are encouraged to report the situation as soon as possible to their supervisors.

Supervisors receiving any such report shall contact the Administration Division as soon as practicable so that any appropriate safety measures or plans may be developed.

1024.5 RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Any form of retaliation against a member for making a report concerning violent behavior in the workplace is prohibited.

Any member who becomes aware of any retaliation or threatened retaliation shall immediately notify their supervisor.

1024.6 RESTRAINING ORDERS

Members who obtain a restraining order listing their workplace, person, or the Department as a protected area must provide a copy of the restraining order to their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Director. The Department needs this information in order to provide a safe workplace.

1024.7 FOLLOW-UP ACTION

Any employee reported to have exhibited violent or potentially violent behavior will be afforded all rights provided by law and the applicable collective bargaining agreement before the Department takes any disciplinary action.

Actions that may be taken when an employee has been found to have violated this policy include but are not limited to the following:

- Mandatory participation in counseling
- Placing the employee on paid administrative leave pending investigation into an alleged threat or act
- Corrective/disciplinary action up to and including termination
- Criminal arrest and prosecution
- Special procedures, such as job relocation or initiation of a court order

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If, upon investigation, it is determined that an allegation is false or was made maliciously, the employee who provided the false information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as possible criminal arrest and prosecution.

1024.8 LEGAL ACTION

The department's legal counsel will determine if a temporary restraining order or injunction should be sought on behalf of the Department to reduce future or threatened violent behavior in the workplace.

1024.9 CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

At the completion of the investigation and a review of the incident, or in the case of a threat of violence, non-disciplinary corrective actions should be implemented or requested to ensure overall workplace safety. These actions may include but are not limited to:

- Placing the involved member on administrative leave pending further review and determination of permanent action. Administrative leave would be unpaid in the case of a volunteer.
- Reassigning the member to a different work location.
- Referring the member to conflict resolution training sessions.
- Referring the member to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Modifying workstation designs and office traffic flow patterns.
- Requiring the member to attend a fitness-for-duty evaluation.
- Developing specific workplace violence procedures for incident response, prevention, and corrective actions.

1024.10 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

All department members are responsible for assisting in the prevention of violence in the workplace.

The Department will provide appropriate training to members regarding workplace violence.

In the event a violent incident occurs in the workplace, the Fire Chief is responsible for ensuring that all responsibilities have been met and actions carried out, as detailed in this policy, and shall review the results of any investigation and ensure appropriate action is taken. Information gathered during an investigation should be used for the continuous improvement of policies and procedures to prevent workplace violence.

1024.11 NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

The Human Resources Director should ensure that the notice prescribed by the Texas Workforce Commission about reporting instances of workplace violence or suspicious activity to the Department of Public Safety is prominently posted in English and Spanish (as appropriate) in conspicuous places in the [Department_Agency] where it can be readily seen by all employees (Tex. Labor Code § 104A.002).

Lactation Breaks

1025.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide reasonable accommodations to any member desiring to express breast milk for an infant child (Tex. Gov't Code § 619.003).

1025.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide, in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), reasonable break time and appropriate facilities to accommodate any member desiring to express breast milk for a nursing child for up to one year after the child's birth (29 USC § 218d).

1025.3 LACTATION BREAK TIME

A rest period should be permitted each time the member needs to express breast milk (29 USC § 218d). In general, lactation breaks that cumulatively total 30 minutes or less during any four-hour work period or major portions of a four-hour work period would be considered reasonable. However, individual circumstances may require more or less time.

Lactation breaks, if feasible, should be taken at the same time as the member's regularly scheduled rest or meal periods. While a reasonable effort will be made to provide additional time beyond authorized breaks, any such time exceeding regularly scheduled and paid break time will be unpaid.

Members desiring to take a lactation break shall notify Fire Com or a supervisor prior to taking such a break. Such breaks may be reasonably delayed if they would seriously disrupt department operations.

Once a lactation break has been approved, the break should not be interrupted except for emergency or exigent circumstances.

1025.4 PRIVATE LOCATION

The Department will make reasonable efforts to accommodate members with the use of an appropriate room or other location to express milk in private. Such room or place should be in close proximity to the member's work area and shall be other than a bathroom or toilet stall. The location must be shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public (29 USC § 218d; Tex. Gov't Code § 619.004; Tex. Health & Safety Code § 165.003).

Members occupying such private areas shall either secure the door or otherwise make it clear to others that the area is occupied with a need for privacy. All other members should avoid interrupting a member during an authorized break, except to announce an emergency or other urgent circumstance.

Authorized lactation breaks for members assigned to the field may be taken at the nearest appropriate private area.

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1025.5 STORAGE OF EXPRESSED MILK

A member shall be provided with access to a hygienic storage area for her expressed milk (Tex. Health & Safety Code § 165.003). Any member storing expressed milk in any authorized refrigerated area within the Department shall clearly label it as such and shall remove it at the end of their shift.

Smoking and Tobacco Use

1026.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes limitations on smoking and the use of tobacco products by members and others while on-duty or while in Pharr Fire Department facilities or vehicles.

For the purposes of this policy, smoking and tobacco use includes, but is not limited to, any tobacco product, such as cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, tobacco pouches and chewing tobacco, as well as any device intended to simulate smoking, such as an electronic cigarette or personal vaporizer.

1026.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department recognizes that tobacco use is a health risk and can be offensive to others. Smoking and tobacco use also presents an unprofessional image for the Department and its members. Therefore smoking and tobacco use is prohibited by members and visitors in all department facilities, buildings and vehicles, and as further outlined in this policy.

1026.3 SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

Smoking and tobacco use by members is prohibited any time members are in public view representing the Pharr Fire Department.

It shall be the responsibility of each member to ensure that no person under his/her supervision smokes or uses any tobacco product inside City facilities and vehicles.

Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace

1027.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Pharr Fire Department prohibits the use of drugs and alcohol in the workplace in order to provide a safer work environment for members and to protect the public's safety and welfare. This policy applies to all members when they are on department property or when performing department-related business elsewhere (41 USC § 8103).

1027.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide a drug- and alcohol-free workplace for all members.

1027.3 GENERAL GUIDELINES

Alcohol and drug use in the workplace or on department time can endanger the health and safety of department members and the public.

Members who have consumed an amount of an alcoholic beverage or taken any medication, or a combination thereof, that would tend to adversely affect their mental or physical abilities shall not report for duty. Affected members shall notify the Fire Chief or the appropriate supervisor as soon as they are aware that they will not be able to report to work. If a member is unable to make the notification, every effort should be made to have a representative contact the supervisor in a timely manner. If the member is adversely affected while on-duty, the member shall be immediately removed and released from work (see the Work Restrictions section in this policy).

1027.3.1 USE OF MEDICATIONS

Members should not use any medications that will impair their ability to safely and completely perform their duties. Members who are medically required or need to take any such medication shall report that need to their immediate supervisor prior to commencing any on-duty status.

1027.3.2 MEDICAL CANNABIS

Possession, use, or being under the influence of medical cannabis on-duty is prohibited and may lead to disciplinary action.

1027.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members shall come to work in an appropriate mental and physical condition. Members are prohibited from purchasing, manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, or using controlled substances or alcohol on department premises or on department time (41 USC § 8103). The lawful possession or use of prescribed medications or over-the-counter remedies is excluded from this prohibition.

Members shall notify a supervisor immediately if they observe behavior or other evidence they believe demonstrates that a fellow member poses a risk to the health and safety of the member or others due to drug or alcohol use.

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Members are required to notify their immediate supervisors of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction (41 USC § 8103).

1027.5 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A voluntary employee assistance program may be available to assist those who wish to seek help for alcohol and drug problems (41 USC § 8103). Insurance coverage that provides treatment for drug and alcohol abuse also may be available. Employees should contact the Department of Human Resources, their insurance providers, or the employee assistance program for additional information. It is the responsibility of each employee to seek assistance before alcohol or drug problems lead to performance problems.

1027.6 WORK RESTRICTIONS

If a member informs a supervisor that the member has consumed any alcohol, drug, or medication that could interfere with a safe and efficient job performance, the member may be required to obtain clearance from a physician before continuing to work.

If the supervisor reasonably believes, based on objective facts, that a member is impaired by the consumption of alcohol or other drugs, the supervisor shall prevent the member from continuing work and request that a Battalion Chief respond to the location of the impaired member. The Battalion Chief shall ensure the member is transported to a safe location and that the continuity of department operations is maintained.

1027.7 REQUESTING SCREENING TESTS

A supervisor or Battalion Chief may request that an employee submit to a screening test under any of the following circumstances:

- (a) The supervisor or Battalion Chief reasonably believes, based upon objective facts, that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs that are impairing the employee's ability to perform duties safely and efficiently.
- (b) During the performance of duties, the employee drives a motor vehicle and becomes involved in an incident that results in bodily injury to the employee or another person or substantial damage to property.
- (c) The employee discharges a firearm in the performance of duties, excluding training.
- (d) The employee discharges a firearm issued by the Department while off-duty, resulting in injury, death, or substantial property damage.

1027.7.1 BATTALION CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY

The Battalion Chief shall ensure written records are prepared documenting the specific facts that led to the decision to request the test, and shall inform the employee in writing of the following:

- (a) The test will be given to detect either alcohol or drugs, or both.
- (b) The result of the test is not admissible in any criminal proceeding against the employee.

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- (c) The employee may refuse the test, but refusal may result in dismissal or other disciplinary action.

1027.7.2 SCREENING TEST DISPOSITION

Employees may be subject to disciplinary action if they:

- (a) Fail or refuse to submit to a screening test as requested.
- (b) After taking a screening test that indicates the presence of a controlled substance, fail to provide proof, within 72 hours after being requested, that they took the controlled substance as directed, pursuant to a current and lawful prescription issued in their name.
- (c) Violate any provisions of this policy.

1027.8 COMPLIANCE WITH THE DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ACT

No later than 30 days following notice of any drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace involving a member, the Department will take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and/or requiring the member to satisfactorily participate in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program (41 USC § 8104).

1027.9 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Department recognizes the confidentiality and privacy due to its members. Disclosure of any information relating to substance abuse treatment, except on a need-to-know basis, shall only be with the express written consent of the member involved or pursuant to lawful process.

The written results of any screening tests and all documents generated by the employee assistance program are considered confidential medical records and shall be maintained separately from the employee's other personnel files.

Personal Appearance Standards

1028.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In order to project uniformity and neutrality, members shall maintain their personal hygiene and appearance to ensure a professional image appropriate for this department and for their assignment.

The procedures contained herein are intended to promote uniformity of the members of the Department by addressing specific grooming items. However, nothing herein shall limit the department's ability to address any other grooming or personal appearance issues that may be deemed improper for members of the Department.

1028.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department that all members meet required personal hygiene and grooming standards while on-duty or conducting official business.

1028.3 GROOMING STANDARDS

The following appearance standards shall apply to all members except those whose current assignment would deem them not appropriate or where the Fire Chief or the authorized designee has granted an exception.

1028.3.1 PERSONAL HYGIENE

All members must maintain proper personal hygiene. Examples of improper personal hygiene include but are not limited to dirty fingernails, bad breath, body odor, and dirty or unkempt hair. Any member who has a condition due to a protected category (e.g., race, physical disability) which affects any aspect of personal hygiene covered by this policy may qualify for an accommodation and should report any need for an accommodation to a supervisor or the Department of Human Resources.

1028.3.2 HAIR

The hairstyle of all members shall be neat in appearance. Hair must be no longer than the horizontal level of the top of the uniform collar when the member is standing erect. Ponytails are prohibited. Female personnel may exceed length limit provided that the hairstyle is secured in a tightly wrapped braid or ponytail and does not compromise the personal protective equipment ensemble.

1028.3.3 MUSTACHES

A short and neatly trimmed mustache may be worn. Facial hair under the lower lip will be permitted as long as it does not interfere with the SCBA face piece seal.

1028.3.4 SIDEBURNS

Sideburns shall not extend below the bottom of the ear and shall be trimmed and neat.

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1028.3.5 BEARDS AND GOATEES

Beards, goatees, or any hair on the chin is prohibited. In addition, facial hair under the lower lip will be permitted as long as it does not interfere with the SCBA face piece seal. This shall be properly trimmed and not exceed 2" under the lower lip.

1028.3.6 FACIAL HAIR

Facial hair other than sideburns, mustaches, and eyebrows shall not be worn, unless authorized by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

1028.3.7 COSMETICS

Members are permitted to wear cosmetics of conservative color and amount.

1028.3.8 FINGERNAILS

Fingernails extending beyond the tip of the finger can pose a safety hazard to members working in the field. For this reason, fingernails shall be trimmed so that no point of the nail extends beyond the tip of the finger.

1028.3.9 JEWELRY AND ACCESSORIES

No jewelry or personal ornaments shall be worn by members on-duty on any part of the uniform or equipment.

- It is recommended that members refrain from wearing necklaces or jewelry around the neck.
- Members may not wear rings while assigned to suppression unless authorized by the Fire Chief or his designee.

1028.4 TATTOOS

Tattoos, brands, or mutilations that are inappropriate, as determined at the sole discretion of the Fire Chief, must be covered. Inappropriate marks may include but are not limited to marks that exhibit or advocate discrimination; marks that promote or express gang, supremacist, or extremist group affiliation; and marks that depict or promote drug use, sexually explicit acts, or other obscene material.

1028.5 BODY PIERCING OR ALTERATION

No body piercing shall be visible while any member is on-duty or representing the Department in any official capacity.

Alteration to any area of the body visible in any authorized uniform or attire that is a deviation from normal anatomical features and which is not medically required is prohibited. Such body alteration includes but is not limited to:

- (a) Tongue splitting or piercing.
- (b) The complete or trans-dermal implantation of any material other than hair replacement.
- (c) Abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose, or teeth.
- (d) Branding or scarification.

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1028.6 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

The religious beliefs and needs of department members should be reasonably accommodated. Requests for religious accommodation should generally be granted unless there is a compelling security or safety reason and denying the request is the least restrictive means available to ensure security or safety. The Fire Chief should be advised any time a request for religious accommodation is denied.

Those who request to wear headscarves, simple head coverings, certain hairstyles, or facial hair for religious reasons should generally be accommodated absent unusual circumstances.

1028.7 EXEMPTIONS

Members who seek an exemption to this policy and are protected by law (e.g., hair texture, culturally protective hairstyles) should generally be accommodated (Tex. Labor Code § 21.1095). A member with an exemption may be ineligible for an assignment if the individual accommodation presents a security or safety risk. The Fire Chief should be advised any time a request for such an accommodation is denied or when a member with an exemption is denied an assignment based on a safety or security risk.

Uniform Regulations

1029.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform regulations for members in order to enhance the department's overall professional and positive image.

1029.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department that members shall wear the proper uniform at all times when on-duty or engaged in department-related activities off-duty. Members shall maintain an adequate supply of uniforms to meet the needs of their assignment and maintain the uniforms in an acceptable condition. This policy does not supersede department regulations regarding the use of any personal protective equipment (PPE).

1029.3 STANDARD WORK UNIFORM

The standard work uniform for Lieutenants, engineers and firefighters shall consist of the navy blue short- or long-sleeve shirt, navy blue trousers, department-issued badge, standard belt with department buckle and black leather boots.

The standard work uniform shall be worn as directed. Members are not required to wear the standard work uniform underneath personal protective equipment (PPE) in order to complete the PPE ensemble.

Officers shall wear appropriate rank insignia on the standard work uniform.

1029.3.1 UNIFORM JACKETS

Uniform jackets may be worn as described in this subsection:

- At any time over the standard work uniform shirt
- For an emergency response, over an approved t-shirt
- In transit to and from a physical fitness location
- Uniform jackets are not fire resistive and shall not be worn underneath PPE
- Nomex® fatigue-type jackets may only be worn as modified to short sleeve, by hemming the sleeves to the same length as the standard work uniform shirt
- A long-sleeve jacket that is department-issued shall be worn.
- Officers shall wear appropriate rank insignia on any uniform jacket

1029.3.2 T-SHIRTS

Official department on-duty t-shirts :

- Under the standard work uniform shirt.
- Uncovered and tucked into the trousers, at the Lieutenant's discretion, while working at the fire station or while engaged in company level manipulative training that does not require PPE.

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- Long-sleeve t-shirts, either official, shall be worn as a layering component under wildland PPE.

1029.3.3 BASEBALL CAPS

Official department on-duty baseball caps may be worn, at the discretion of the Lieutenant, except:

- When a helmet is required.
- At formal or semi-formal events or occasions.
- Worn facing forward.

1029.4 PHYSICAL FITNESS UNIFORMS

The physical fitness uniform shall primarily be worn when engaged in physical fitness. It may also be worn in quarters but only as directed on weekdays or any time on holidays and weekends.

The fitness uniform shall be covered with an appropriate work uniform or combination of PPE and work uniform while in transit to and from a physical fitness location.

Nylon or other synthetic material shorts and other fitness uniform items should not be worn under PPE because those fabrics may melt.

1029.5 DRESS UNIFORMS

Dress uniforms shall be worn as directed by the Fire Chief and when attending the following types of events:

- Funerals and memorials
- Formal department functions, such as graduations and badge ceremonies
- Formal City functions

1029.6 UNIFORM MAINTENANCE

- Uniforms shall be clean, neat and in good condition and should fit well.
- Boots and belts shall be clean and polished with black polish.
- Metal badges shall be clean and free from excessive scratches.

Badges

1030.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The name of the Pharr Fire Department and the Department badge and uniform patches are property of the Department. This policy establishes the rules associated with Pharr Fire Department badges and any likeness of the badge.

1030.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department may issue members of the Department a curved uniform badge for use or display in compliance with this policy.

Only authorized badges issued or formally authorized by this department shall be displayed, carried or worn by members while on-duty or otherwise acting in an official or authorized capacity.

1030.3 BADGE TYPES

1030.3.1 SWORN, APPOINTED OR ELECTED MEMBER FLAT BADGES

Sworn, appointed or elected members may, at their own expense and with the written approval of the Fire Chief, purchase a flat badge that can be carried in a wallet.

1030.3.2 CIVILIAN MEMBER BADGES

Curved uniform badges issued to Civilian personnel shall be clearly marked to reflect the position of the assigned member (e.g., dispatcher, Public Information Officer, inspectors).

- (a) Civilian personnel shall not display the Department badge except as a part of the uniform and while on-duty, or otherwise acting in an official and authorized capacity.
- (b) Civilian personnel shall not display the Department badge or represent themselves, on- or off-duty, in such a manner which would cause a reasonable person to believe that they occupy the rank or position of any other member of the Department.
- (c) Civilian personnel may not purchase, carry or display a flat badge.

1030.3.3 RETIREE BADGES

Upon honorable retirement, a member may purchase his/her assigned curved uniform badge for memorabilia purposes. Other uses of the badge may be unlawful. The badge will remain the property of the Pharr Fire Department and may be revoked in the event of misuse or abuse.

An honorably retired sworn, appointed or elected member of the Department may keep his/her flat badge upon retirement.

1030.3.4 MOURNING BADGE

Uniformed members shall wear a black mourning band across the uniform badge whenever a firefighter is killed in the line of duty. The following mourning periods will be observed:

- (a) A firefighter of this department: From the time of death until midnight on the day of the funeral.

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- (b) A firefighter from this or an adjacent county: From the time of death until midnight on the day of the funeral.
- (c) Funeral attendee: While attending the funeral of an out-of-region firefighter.
- (d) As directed by the Fire Chief.

1030.4 LOSS OF BADGE

Any member who loses any badge must immediately report the loss to his/her supervisor. A badge should be considered lost whenever it is not in the direct control of the member.

1030.5 UNAUTHORIZED USE OF BADGES

No badge shall be issued to anyone other than a current or honorably retired member of the Department. Department badges are for official use only.

The department badge, uniform patch or any likeness thereof shall not be used for personal or private reasons including, but not limited to, letters, memoranda or electronic communications, such as email, websites or web pages.

Members may not use the department badge, uniform patch or department name in any material (printed matter, products or other items) without approval of the Fire Chief.

Members shall not loan their department badge to others and shall not permit the badge to be reproduced or duplicated.

1030.6 PERMITTED BADGE USE BY MEMBER GROUPS

The likeness of the department badge shall not be used by any member group without the express prior authorization of the Fire Chief and shall be subject to the following:

- (a) The member associations may use the likeness of the department badge for merchandise and official association business provided the merchandise is used in a clear representation of the association and not the Pharr Fire Department. The following modifications shall be included:
 - 1. Any text referring to the Pharr Fire Department shall be replaced with the name of the member association.
 - 2. The badge number portion of the image shall display the name or acronym of the member association.

Identification Cards

1031.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines for issuing and possessing Pharr Fire Department identification cards. Any image or likeness of the identification card and the name of the Pharr Fire Department are the property of the Department and their use shall be restricted as specified in this policy.

1031.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department that identification cards shall be issued to all department members. All members shall be in possession of their department-issued identification card at all times while on-duty or otherwise acting in an official or authorized capacity. The use and display of department identification cards shall be in compliance with this policy.

1031.3 IDENTIFICATION CARD CONTENT

Department-issued identification cards shall include the following information:

- The department name
- An image of the department badge
- The full name of the member
- The rank of the member
- The member's employee identification number

1031.4 RETIREE IDENTIFICATION CARD

Upon honorable retirement members may be issued a retiree identification card. The card shall clearly indicate that the holder is a "Retired" member of the Department.

1031.5 UNAUTHORIZED USE

Department identification cards may not be displayed for any purpose other than official use.

Members may not use an image or likeness of the department identification card in any material (printed matter, products or other items) without prior written approval from the Fire Chief.

Members shall not loan department identification cards to others and shall not permit the identification card to be reproduced or duplicated.

1031.6 LOSS OF DEPARTMENT IDENTIFICATION CARD

The loss of the department identification card must be immediately reported to the Department. An identification card should be considered lost whenever it is not in the direct control of the member.

1031.7 REPLACING IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Identification cards should be replaced whenever they become damaged, faded or otherwise difficult to read, whenever a member changes rank or when the member's photograph becomes outdated or no longer presents an accurate depiction of the member.

Occupational Disease, Work-Related Injury, and Death Reporting

1032.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding the timely reporting of work-related injuries, occupational diseases, and deaths pursuant to the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.

1032.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Occupational disease - A disease arising out of and in the course of employment that causes damage or harm to the physical structure of the body, including a repetitive trauma injury. The term includes a disease or an infection that naturally results from the work-related disease. The term does not include an ordinary disease of life to which the general public is exposed outside of employment, unless that disease is an incident to a compensable injury or occupational disease (Tex. Labor Code § 401.011).

Work-related injury - Damage or harm to the physical structure of the body and a disease or infection naturally resulting from the damage or harm. The term includes an occupational disease (Tex. Labor Code § 401.011).

1032.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department will address work-related injuries, occupational diseases, and deaths appropriately, and will comply with provisions of the Texas Workers' Compensation Act (Tex. Labor Code § 401.001 et seq.).

1032.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

1032.3.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

A member sustaining any work-related injury or occupational disease shall report such event as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours to a supervisor, and shall seek medical care when appropriate.

In cases of exposure to a communicable disease, the member shall complete a sworn affidavit that includes the date and circumstances of the exposure (28 Tex. Admin. Code § 122.3). The member should be tested in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Policy.

1032.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A supervisor learning of any work-related injury or occupational disease should ensure the member receives medical care as appropriate and should notify the Battalion Chief of the reported illness or injury.

Supervisors shall ensure that required Texas workers' compensation documents regarding the illness or injury are completed and forwarded to the Battalion Chief promptly. Any related City-wide illness- or injury-reporting protocol shall also be followed.

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1032.3.3 BATTALION CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Battalion Chief who receives a report of an occupational disease or work-related injury should review the report for accuracy and determine what additional action should be taken. The report shall then be forwarded to the Fire Chief, the City's risk management entity, and the Assistant Chief and (HSO) Health and Safety Officer to ensure any reporting is completed as required in the illness and injury prevention plan identified in the Illness and Injury Prevention Program Policy. Reporting to the insurance carrier should also be made as required by the Texas Division of Workers' Compensation.

1032.3.4 FIRE CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief shall review and forward copies of the report to the Department of Human Resources. Copies of the report and related documents retained by the Department shall be filed in the member's confidential medical file.

1032.4 OTHER DISEASE OR INJURY

Diseases and injuries caused or occurring on-duty that do not qualify for Texas workers' compensation reporting shall be documented on the designated report of injury form, which shall be signed by a supervisor. A copy of the completed form shall be forwarded to the appropriate Deputy Chief through the chain of command and a copy sent to the Administration Deputy Chief Health and Safety Officer (HSO).

Unless the injury is extremely minor, this report shall be signed by the affected member, indicating that he/she desired no medical attention at the time of the report. By signing, the member does not preclude his/her ability to later seek medical attention.

1032.5 SETTLEMENT OFFERS

When a member sustains an occupational disease or a work-related injury that is caused by another person and is subsequently contacted by that person, his/her agent, insurance company, or attorney and offered a settlement, the member shall take no action other than to submit a written report of this contact to his/her supervisor as soon as possible.

1032.5.1 NO SETTLEMENT WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL

No less than 10 days prior to accepting and finalizing the settlement of any third-party claim arising out of or related to an occupational disease or a work-related injury, the member shall provide the Fire Chief with written notice of the proposed terms of such settlement. In no case shall the member accept a settlement without first providing written notice to the Fire Chief. The purpose of such notice is to permit the City to determine whether the offered settlement will affect any claim the City may have regarding payment for damage to equipment or reimbursement for wages against the person who caused the disease or injury, and to protect the City's right of subrogation, while ensuring that the member's right to receive compensation is not affected.

1032.6 FIRST RESPONDER LIAISON ACCESS

Members shall have unrestricted access to contact a first responder liaison at any time regarding their worker's compensation claims (Tex. Labor Code § 404.1525; Tex. Labor Code § 404.153).

Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments

1033.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes procedures for providing temporary modified-duty assignments. This policy is not intended to affect the rights or benefits of employees under federal or state law, City rules, or current collective bargaining agreements. For example, nothing in this policy affects the obligation of the Department to engage in a good faith, interactive process to consider reasonable accommodations for any employee with a temporary or permanent disability that is protected under federal or state law.

1033.2 POLICY

Subject to operational considerations, the Pharr Fire Department may identify temporary modified-duty assignments for employees who have an injury or medical condition resulting in temporary work limitations or restrictions. A temporary assignment allows the employee to work, while providing the Department with a productive employee during the temporary period.

1033.3 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Priority consideration for temporary modified-duty assignments will be given to employees with work-related injuries or illnesses that are temporary in nature. Employees having disabilities covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Texas Commission on Human Rights Act shall be treated equally, without regard to any preference for a work-related injury (Tex. Labor Code § 21.001 et seq.). No position in the Pharr Fire Department shall be created or maintained as a temporary modified-duty assignment.

Temporary modified-duty assignments are a management prerogative and not an employee right. The availability of temporary modified-duty assignments will be determined on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the operational needs of the Department. Temporary modified-duty assignments are subject to continuous reassessment, with consideration given to operational needs and the employee's ability to perform in a modified-duty assignment.

Temporary modified-duty assignments shall generally not exceed a cumulative total of 2,080 hours in any one-year period.

1033.3.1 RETURN FROM LINE-OF-DUTY ILLNESS OR INJURY

A firefighter able to return to light duty while recovering from a temporary disability from a line-of-duty injury or illness should receive a modified-duty assignment while medically necessary, up to one year. Following recovery, the firefighter shall be reinstated at the rank and seniority held prior to taking leave for the temporary disability (Tex. Local Gov't Code § 177A.004).

1033.4 PROCEDURE

Employees may request a temporary modified-duty assignment for short-term injuries or illnesses.

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Employees seeking a temporary modified-duty assignment should submit a written request to their Deputy Chief or the authorized designee. The request should, as applicable, include a certification from the treating medical professional containing:

- (a) An assessment of the nature and probable duration of the illness or injury.
- (b) The prognosis for recovery.
- (c) The nature and scope of limitations and/or work restrictions.
- (d) A statement regarding any required workplace accommodations, mobility aids, or medical devices.
- (e) A statement that the employee can safely perform the duties of the temporary modified-duty assignment.

The Assistant Chief will make a recommendation through the chain of command to the Fire Chief regarding temporary modified-duty assignments that may be available based on the needs of the Department and the limitations of the employee. The Fire Chief or the authorized designee shall confer with the Department of Human Resources or the City Attorney as appropriate. City management reserves the right to make ultimate determinations about the level of accommodations required by law, taking into account the legitimate needs and interests of the city.

1033.5 ACCOUNTABILITY

Written notification of assignments, work schedules, and any restrictions should be provided to employees assigned to temporary modified-duty assignments and their supervisors. Those assignments and schedules may be adjusted to accommodate department operations and the employee's medical appointments, as mutually agreed upon with the Deputy Chief.

1033.5.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of employees assigned to temporary modified duty shall include but are not limited to:

- (a) Communicating and coordinating any required medical and physical therapy appointments in advance with their supervisors.
- (b) Promptly notifying their supervisors of any change in restrictions or limitations after each appointment with their treating medical professionals.
- (c) Communicating a status update to their supervisors no less than once every 30 days while assigned to temporary modified duty.
- (d) Submitting a written status report to the Deputy Chief that contains a status update and anticipated date of return to full duty when a temporary modified-duty assignment extends beyond 60 days.

1033.5.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The employee's immediate supervisor shall monitor and manage the work schedule of those assigned to temporary modified duty.

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The responsibilities of supervisors shall include but are not limited to:

- (a) Periodically apprising the Deputy Chief of the status and performance of employees assigned to temporary modified duty.
- (b) Notifying the Deputy Chief and ensuring that the required documentation facilitating a return to full duty is received from the employee.
- (c) Ensuring that employees returning to full duty have completed any required training and certification.

1033.6 MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

Prior to returning to full-duty status, employees shall be required to provide certification from their treating medical professionals stating that they are medically cleared to perform the essential functions of their jobs without restrictions or limitations.

The Department may require a fitness-for-duty examination prior to returning an employee to full-duty status.

1033.7 PREGNANCY

If an employee is temporarily unable to perform regular duties due to a pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition, the employee will be treated the same as any other temporarily disabled employee (42 USC § 2000e(k); Tex. Local Gov't Code § 180.004). A pregnant employee shall not be involuntarily transferred to a temporary modified-duty assignment.

1033.7.1 NOTIFICATION

Pregnant employees should notify their immediate supervisors as soon as practicable and provide a statement from their medical providers identifying any pregnancy-related job restrictions or limitations. If at any point during the pregnancy it becomes necessary for the employee to take a leave of absence, such leave shall be granted in accordance with the City's personnel rules and regulations regarding family and medical care leave.

1033.8 PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES

Probationary employees who are assigned to a temporary modified-duty assignment shall have their probation extended by a period of time equal to their assignment to temporary modified duty, however, the probationary period shall not exceed a total of 18 months.

1033.9 MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

Employees assigned to temporary modified duty shall maintain all certification, training, and qualifications appropriate to both their regular and temporary duties, provided that the certification, training, or qualifications are not in conflict with any medical limitations or restrictions. Employees who are assigned to temporary modified duty shall inform their supervisors of any inability to maintain any certification, training, or qualifications.

Release of HIPAA-Protected Information

1034.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a pre-authorization process for the release of a member's protected health information (PHI), which is protected by Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, in the event of an on-duty injury or illness.

1034.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to allow members to complete a pre-authorization for the release of their PHI to a family member or other specific individual in the event the member becomes injured or ill on-duty.

1034.3 GUIDELINES

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee should ensure procedures are in place to address:

- (a) The right of members to voluntarily complete a pre-authorization for the release of PHI to specific individuals.
- (b) Storage and security of completed pre-authorization forms.
- (c) Supervisor access to completed forms during both business and non-business hours.
- (d) Expiration and renewal requirements for the pre-authorization form.
- (e) Situations or circumstances in which members can expect the Department to release their PHI to the pre-authorized family member or other specific individual.

Return to Work

1035.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the process through which an employee who has been off work for an extended period of time due to an injury or illness may return to work.

1035.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Interactive process - An informal meeting between employer and employee, designed to identify the precise limitations resulting from a disability and any potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations and allow the employee to return to work, either in their usual and customary position or some other type of work.

1035.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to assist injured employees, to the extent reasonably practicable, in returning to work as soon as they are medically able to perform meaningful work for the Department.

1035.3 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the employee's responsibility to inform the Department of their absence and to immediately advise the Department when the employee believes that they will be medically released to return to work, with or without restrictions. If practicable, the employee shall provide advance notice of their potential return to work and shall provide written medical verification of the clearance and any restrictions.

If an employee has restrictions prescribed by a qualified health care professional, it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure they are not performing work that violates any restriction. If the employee believes they have been requested or directed to perform work that violates the restrictions, the employee should make a prompt report to the Department of Human Resources.

1035.4 DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Department will evaluate the employee's request to return to work and the written medical verification, and will consult with the Department of Human Resources in order to make a determination whether:

- (a) The employee may return to full duty based on the medical verification provided by the employee.
- (b) The employee may return to work to a temporary modified-duty assignment and whether the Department has a need that fits with the employee's restrictions. For additional information on firefighters returning to work following an on-duty illness or injury, refer to the Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments Policy.
- (c) The employee should have a fitness-for-duty evaluation.

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- (d) The employee has reached a permanent and stationary rating and it is necessary to engage in an interactive process to determine a reasonable accommodation.

The Department of Human Resources, in consultation with the department representative, should make a recommendation to the Fire Chief or the authorized designee regarding the status of the employee. The Department of Human Resources should communicate with the employee about plans for the employee to return to work, after consulting with the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

Line-of-Duty Death

1036.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the necessary guidelines and protocol for a line-of-duty death.

The death of any department member while on-duty, while traveling in connection with such duty, or while engaged in firefighting or other related activities on-duty is considered a line-of-duty death. The death of any department member while undergoing medical treatment for any injury or disease potentially resulting from a job duty may be medically determined to be a line-of-duty death and for purposes of this policy may be handled as a line-of-duty death.

This policy defines and describes the guidelines and responsibilities to be followed in the event of a line-of-duty death and can be escalated in the event of multiple deaths or when a number of department members are seriously injured.

1036.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to assist and support the family members and coworkers of fallen members to the extent reasonably practicable, while also investigating the cause of death, making appropriate notifications, and fielding press inquiries.

1036.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

1036.3.1 FIRE CHIEF

In the event of being notified of a line-of-duty death, the Fire Chief or the authorized designee should:

- (a) Conduct or coordinate notification of a dept member's family of a line-of-duty death in accordance with the Line-of-Duty Death or Serious Injury Policy.
- (b) Conduct briefings in order to communicate activities to the assigned officers.
- (c) Make an announcement to the Department at the appropriate time. Immediately after the announcement, all flags at fire stations and other department facilities should be lowered to half-staff and all badges should be shrouded. Flags should remain at half-staff and badges shrouded for a specified time, but in no event should that be for longer than 14 days.
- (d) Request that the Administration Division assemble personal data, such as date of birth, file photograph, marital status, dependents, and names of next of kin to facilitate the application for state and federal line-of-duty death benefits.
- (e) Assign a chief officer to act as the auditing officer to secure the personal effects of the deceased and deliver them to the Administration Division.
- (f) Assign a Family Support Liaison to facilitate communication between the deceased member's family and the Department.
- (g) Document all actions, contacts, requests, and other pertinent data.

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- (h) Provide briefing to labor representatives regarding the incident and the deceased member only as is necessary to initiate labor organization benefits and honors.
- (i) Preserve any equipment, turnouts, and breathing apparatus used by the deceased firefighter for the investigation as required by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP).
- (j) Provide immediate notification to the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office, which is charged with conducting investigations of line-of-duty deaths pursuant to Texas law.

The Fire Chief should determine if it is necessary to request outside resources to assist in any staffing issues that might arise.

1036.3.2 BATTALION CHIEF

In the event of a line-of-duty death, the Battalion Chief or the authorized designee shall:

- (a) Secure the scene of the incident with the assistance of the Incident Commander, fire prevention personnel, and local law enforcement.
- (b) Immediately notify the Deputy Chief, Asst. Chief and the Fire Chief.
- (c) Preserve any equipment, turnouts, and breathing apparatus used by the deceased firefighter for the investigation.
- (d) Preserve all tactical worksheets, video, and/or audiotapes for the investigation.
- (e) Gather all available information concerning the incident and circumstances leading to the death.
- (f) Consider the need for members at the incident to have access to Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) services.

1036.3.3 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

In the event of a line-of-duty death, the Public Information Officer shall:

- (a) Collect facts of the incident from the Battalion Chief or the authorized designee and keep in contact to maintain available current information and direction on what information should be released.
- (b) Withhold any release of personal information relating to the member's death pending notification of next of kin and until approval is given by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.
- (c) Instruct the involved incident crews that they shall not release any statements to the media or anyone else and should direct any inquiries to the Public Information Officer.
- (d) Prepare a written press release.
- (e) Ensure that the release of any member medical information complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Patient Medical Record Security and Privacy Policy in this manual.

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1036.3.4 AUDITING OFFICER

The auditing officer is responsible for ensuring the security and proper disposition of a member's personal effects in the event of a line-of-duty death. Personal effects include all property owned by the deceased member that is kept on department property, as well as personal items carried by the member once those items have been released by investigators, in accordance with the Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Investigations Policy.

In the event of a member's line-of-duty death, the following steps shall be followed in gathering and disposing of personal effects:

- (a) All personal effects at the station shall be taken to the Administration Division to be kept in a secure location.
- (b) The deceased member's vehicle will be secured at the work site and the keys forwarded to the Administration Division and secured.
- (c) A designee from the Administration Division should conduct an inventory of all personal items received and make a written report.
- (d) The next of kin will be given priority consideration to receive the member's property. Care should be exercised in selecting a tactful time for the delivery of personal effects to the next of kin. Documentation is required indicating the date, time, and location of the disposition of the property. The name and the relationship of the individual accepting the property will also be noted. The documentation will be forwarded to the Administration Division for placement in the deceased member's personnel file.

1036.3.5 ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

The Administration Division will have the following responsibilities:

- (a) Receive, inventory, and secure the deceased member's personal belongings and hold them until such time as the investigation team approves their release.
- (b) Establish the deceased member's survivor benefits (e.g., workers' compensation, life insurance, unused medical leave, retirement benefits, other salary pay, vacation pay).
- (c) Review the Public Safety Officer's Benefit Program to determine benefits and the process for securing benefits for surviving next of kin.
- (d) Assist and coordinate with the next of kin in the process of securing all the benefits to which the survivor is entitled.

1036.4 FAMILY SUPPORT LIAISON

The appointed Family Support Liaison should conduct all duties in accordance with the Family Support Liaison Policy.

1036.5 FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Funeral arrangements should be made in accordance with the Final Wishes Funerals Policy.

1036.6 LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH INVESTIGATIONS

For line-of-duty death investigation procedures, see the Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Investigations Policy.

Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Notification

1037.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to describe the communication activities that should occur in the event a member is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. The policy establishes a priority for notifications, outlines steps for conducting each set of notifications, and identifies roles and responsibilities.

1037.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to ensure, to the extent reasonably practicable, that immediate and compassionate notification is made to the family of members who are seriously injured, hospitalized, or killed in the line of duty. The Department shall make it a priority to offer assistance and support to the member's family.

1037.3 PROCEDURE

- (a) For the purposes of this policy, a serious injury or hospitalization is defined as a medical condition that is life-threatening or has the potential to disable the member for a substantial period of time.
- (b) The Incident Commander (IC) or Battalion Chief at the scene of the serious injury or death will immediately notify the Deputy Chief and provide the necessary information.
- (c) The Deputy Chief will be the point of contact for making assignments and will coordinate actions with the Fire Chief and others.
- (d) All inquiries related to the incident should be referred to the IC, the Public Information Officer, or the Battalion Chief, as appropriate.
- (e) In the event of the death of a member, the Battalion Chief must immediately initiate the procedures in the Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Investigations Policy.

1037.4 DEATH NOTIFICATIONS

The Deputy Chief, in coordination with the Fire Chief or the authorized designee, will assign a three-person notification team consisting of either the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief and department chaplain or two Deputy Chiefs and a chaplain to locate and inform the member's family. If more than one member has been seriously injured or killed in an incident, separate teams will be assigned to each affected family. The team should:

- (a) Contact the Administration Division to obtain information regarding the member's next of kin.
- (b) Call-back operations staff, if necessary.

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Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Notification

1037.4.1 NOTIFICATION TEAM RESPONSE

The notification team shall make the necessary family notification as quickly as practicable, with the goal of making the notification within two hours of the Battalion Chief learning of the serious injury or death. The notification team should:

- (a) Gather and validate as much information about the incident as possible.
- (b) Wear the dress uniform, if possible.
- (c) Plan the appropriate timing and schedule when it is necessary to make the notification to more than one person or family group (e.g., spouse and parent).
- (d) Meet prior to making the notification to establish roles of the team members and allow the exchange of known facts.
- (e) Determine if the Fire Chief or Command Staff is aware of a special relationship between the deceased member's family and another member. If so, it may be appropriate to have that member accompany the notification team. Prior to arrival, the team should clarify the member's role in the notification process.

1037.4.2 NOTIFYING THE FAMILY

The team members should adhere to the following notification guidelines:

- (a) The team should not park directly in front of the family's home or workplace. The person who will make the notification should make introductions at the door and ask to be invited in.
- (b) In most cases, if a chaplain is part of the notification team, the chaplain should make the notification.
- (c) Notification should be made briefly and directly.
- (d) Information regarding precipitating factors or information that is not verified should not be provided until an investigation has been completed.
- (e) Team members should communicate the support and sympathy of the Fire Chief and all members of the Department.
- (f) Team members should ask family members whether they would like the team to notify other parties, such as clergy or grief counselors.

1037.4.3 NOTIFICATION OF FAMILY OUT OF THE AREA

If the immediate next of kin of the deceased employee lives more than two hours away, the Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief may make arrangements to have someone in the family's area make the notification. The following should be considered:

- (a) Whether the notification should be made by the local clergy or another person in the area who has a relationship with the family or with the assistance of the local fire department/law enforcement.
- (b) Whether the fire department in the family's city of residence may be the most appropriate entity to make the notification or whether that department can assist in obtaining information about the family.

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- (c) Whoever is selected to make the notification should be provided with the information contained in this policy.
- (d) The notification plan must include a coordinated telephone call with the family and the Fire Chief.

1037.4.4 INTERNAL DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATIONS

The following internal notifications should be made in advance of any media release:

- (a) All on-duty Battalion Chiefs should be notified.
- (b) All employees should be notified as soon as possible after the family notification is made.

1037.4.5 GOVERNING BODY AND LABOR NOTIFICATIONS

The Fire Chief will ensure that additional notifications are made as required, after the next-of-kin notification. Notifications that are required as soon as practicable after a confirmed line-of-duty death or serious injury include the following:

- (a) Department Health and Safety Officer, who will make the necessary notifications in coordination with the Battalion Chief
- (b) Elected officials or board of directors
- (c) City Manager
- (d) Employee labor representatives
- (e) Other notifications as determined by the Fire Chief

1037.4.6 EXTERNAL NOTIFICATIONS

The following external notifications will be made:

- (a) Notification to the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office shall be made immediately for a line-of-duty death
- (b) Notification to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection
- (c) Notification to the Texas Division of Workers' Compensation
- (d) Notification to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- (e) Notification to the U.S. Department of Justice Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program
- (f) Notification to the United States Fire Administration (USFA)
- (g) Notification to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF)
- (h) Notification to other agencies as mandated by federal and state law and local ordinance

1037.5 FAMILY SUPPORT

The Fire Chief should appoint a Family Support Liaison, who should refer to the Family Support Liaison Policy for duties and responsibilities.

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Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Notification

In the event of a line-of-duty death, the Fire Chief or the authorized designee should appoint a funeral detail officer to administer the Funerals Policy.

1037.6 NEWS MEDIA AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to follow the News Media and Community Relations Policy when communicating with the media. In the case of a line-of-duty death, additional considerations include but are not limited to:

- (a) The employee's family must have received proper notification prior to any information regarding the identity of the deceased being released to the media.
- (b) All information must be validated prior to its release to the media.

The Public Information Officer or the authorized designee shall be the spokesperson on most aspects of these events. However, the announcement or confirmation of a line-of-duty death and/or the release of the employee's name should be made by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

Prior to confirmation that the employee's family has been notified, no details will be released concerning the death. If the news media are on-scene and aware of the death, the Public Information Officer will simply confirm that a death has occurred and communicate the department's compassion and concern for the employee's family and colleagues. The Public Information Officer will advise the media that the full details will be provided as soon as they are known and after proper notification of next of kin has been made.

If an employee death occurs in the midst of ongoing news coverage of a fire or other emergency, the Public Information Officer will focus on handling the details concerning the death. Another trained spokesperson will be assigned to handle the media relations for the incident.

1037.7 SERIOUSLY INJURED OR HOSPITALIZED EMPLOYEE

Some of the notification and support procedures described in this policy for a line-of-duty death may be applied to any instance of an employee who has been seriously injured in the line of duty, except as noted below:

- (a) If the seriously injured employee has been taken to a hospital, a Deputy Chief should assign a Battalion Chief who is not involved in the incident to go to the hospital and become the hospital liaison.
- (b) The Battalion Chief should establish communications with the hospital and report regularly to the Deputy Chief on the employee's condition.
- (c) A representative of the employee's labor organization will also be sent to the hospital, if possible.

The hospital liaison and labor representative should work cooperatively for the benefit of the employee and the employee's family. In addition, the Deputy Chief should ensure close coordination with the treating medical facility.

Funerals

1038.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the intent of this policy to ensure that every member of the Department, both active and retired, who passes away may be offered the option of a funeral or assistance from the Department. These guidelines will ensure proper support and care of the family and the posthumous honoring of a member of the Department.

1038.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Level I, Line-of-Duty Death - Considered for all firefighters (career, reserve and volunteer) of the Department who die as a direct result of injuries suffered at the scene of any emergency incident or while responding to or returning from the scene of an emergency incident. This includes medical conditions (e.g., heart attack) that result in the death at the scene of an emergency.

Level II, On-Duty Death - Pertains to all firefighters of the Department who die while on-duty, but not due to injuries sustained while performing emergency activities. This includes firefighters whose death is a direct result of medical treatment or complications arising from a previous on-duty injury.

Level III, Active Employee Off-Duty - The death of an active firefighter that occurs while the firefighter is off-duty and the death is not related to any emergency activity.

Level IV, Retired Employee or Staff Professional - The death of a retiree or professional staff employee of the Department. Level IV may also include a dignitary closely associated with the Department, as designated by the Fire Chief, and upon whom the Department wishes to bestow funeral honors. The death of a retired Fire Chief may be considered as a higher level, at the department's discretion.

Level V, Death of a Family Member - The death of a family member of an active firefighter, retiree or staff professional of the Department. Level V may also include a family member of a dignitary closely associated with the Department as designated by the Fire Chief, and upon whom the Department wishes to bestow funeral honors.

1038.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department for the Fire Chief or the authorized designee to make the necessary assignments and coordinate actions with other department representatives and, if required or requested, the Texas Line-of-Duty Response Team, any time the Department learns that an active or retired employee has passed away. Activities should be in accordance with the Line-of-Duty Death, Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Notification and Family Support Liaison policies.

If a responsible family member requests department assistance, the Fire Chief or authorized designee should appoint, with the approval of the family member, an employee to act as a

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funeral detail officer and oversee all of the arrangements. The Fire Chief may deny the option of department participation if the circumstances of the member's death may reasonably bring discredit to the Department.

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee should determine the highest level of participation the Department can provide, based on the cause of death.

1038.3 LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The desires of the family are paramount and shall be given fullest consideration; however, the Department's funeral participation will be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- (a) A Level I funeral may include Level II & Level III criteria and any of the following:
 - 1. Crossed ladders
 - 2. Supreme Sacrifice Medal
 - 3. Helicopter fly-over
- (b) A Level II funeral may include Level III criteria and any of the following:
 - 1. Fire engine or caisson with casket
 - 2. Cordon of fire apparatus of both the Department and visiting agencies
- (c) Level III funeral may include Level IV criteria and any of the following:
 - 1. Casket draped with the U.S. flag
 - 2. Honor Guard as pallbearers
 - 3. Procession with department apparatus from the firefighter's current battalion
 - 4. Bugler
 - 5. Bell ceremony
- (d) Level IV funeral may include:
 - 1. Hearse with casket
 - 2. Apparatus from last assignment (if appropriate)
 - 3. Honor Guard
 - 4. Pipe and drum band
 - 5. Administration and logistic support as needed
 - 6. Uniformed personnel
 - 7. Flag folding (if appropriate)
- (e) Level V funeral honors may include (with the approval of the Fire Chief):
 - 1. One piece of apparatus to be used as a static display (not to be included in a procession)
 - 2. Honor Guard (if appropriate)
 - 3. Uniformed personnel

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1038.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee may appoint one or more of the following positions to provide assistance with the funeral arrangements:

- **Family Support Liaison** - Any department member who is a close friend of the family and will make reasonable efforts to address the needs and desires of the family, communicate between the Department and the family and coordinate details with the Officer in Charge.
- **Funeral detail officer** - An employee who is appointed by the Fire Chief to oversee all arrangements for a funeral.
- **Head usher** - The head usher is responsible for seating and parking arrangements at the funeral services, both at the church and at the grave site.
- **Honor Guard Commander/Officer in Charge of the Honor Guard and pipe and drum band** - This position will be filled by a member of the Honor Guard and will be responsible for the coordination of the Honor Guard, Color Guard and the pipe and drum band.
- **Honorary pallbearers** - Honorary pallbearers are those selected by the family. They will follow the casket from the location of the services to the grave site.
- **Logistics officer** - The logistics officer is charged with preparing the apparatus, vehicles, equipment and facilities for the funeral services.
- **Officer in Charge/detail officer** - Selected by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee, the detail officer is the person in charge of the overall department participation and is responsible for the coordination between the funeral director, the chaplain and the Family Support Liaison.
- **Public agency liaison (as needed)** - The public agency liaison will coordinate any interaction with other public agencies that wish to participate in the services.
- **Public Information Officer (as needed)** - The Public Information Officer will coordinate all media and public relations issues.
- **Pallbearers** - The pallbearers will be members of the Honor Guard, unless otherwise requested by the family.
- **Protocol liaison** - Appointed by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee, the protocol liaison will provide direction, advice and clarification to the family regarding proper funeral procedures.
- **Transportation officer** - The transportation officer is responsible for all transportation of family members, pallbearers and escort detail from a pre-determined location to the location of the services, from the service to the grave site and back to a pre-determined location (e.g., the family home, place of worship).

Family and Medical Leave

1039.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidance for managing unpaid leave for eligible employees for qualified medical and family reasons, including (29 USC § 2612):

- The birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child.
- To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition.
- When an employee is unable to work because of his/her own serious health condition.
- To care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin who is a service member of the United States Armed Forces and who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty.

This policy does not address all possible situations and circumstances that may arise when an employee requests leave for family or medical reasons. As these leave situations arise, supervisors should consult with the Department of Human Resources or legal counsel to obtain specific guidance regarding leave rights and obligations.

Nothing in this policy supersedes any provision of any collective bargaining agreement, civil service or other local rule, or any law that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

1039.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Child - A child under 18 years of age, or 18 years of age or older who is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability (29 USC § 2611; 29 CFR 825.102; 29 CFR 825.122). An employee's child is one for whom the employee has actual day-to-day responsibility for care and includes a biological, adopted, or foster child; stepchild; or a child for whom the employee is standing in loco parentis (in place of a parent).

FMLA - The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (29 USC § 2601 et seq.).

Qualified health care professional - A physician, surgeon, doctor of osteopathy, podiatrist, dentist, psychologist, optometrist, nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, clinical social worker, or physician assistant duly licensed and authorized to practice medicine; chiropractors for some purposes; any health care provider from whom the department benefits plan will accept certification of the existence of a serious health condition to substantiate a claim for benefits (29 CFR 825.125).

Spouse - The person with whom an employee has entered into a marriage defined or recognized by the location in which the marriage was entered into (29 USC § 2611(13); 29 CFR 825.102; 29 CFR 825.122).

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Family and Medical Leave

1039.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to manage unpaid leave for eligible employees for qualified medical and family reasons in compliance with federal and state law and any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

1039.3 ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

Employees are eligible for FMLA after working for the Pharr Fire Department for at least one year and completing 1,250 hours over the 12 months prior to the commencement of the leave (29 USC § 2611; 29 CFR 825.110). Employees may not be eligible for leave if there are less than 50 other employees within 75 miles of the employee's work site.

1039.4 TYPE AND DURATION OF LEAVE

Generally, eligible employees are entitled under FMLA to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.100). Up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave during a single 12-month period may be available to care for certain injured military service members. The 12-month period is measured backward from the date leave is taken and continuously with each additional leave day taken.

1039.4.1 SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITIONS

Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of leave to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition or when the employee is unable to work because of his/her own serious health condition (29 USC § 2612(a)(1); 29 CFR 825.200).

If both spouses are employed by the Pharr Fire Department, the combined number of work weeks to care for a sick parent is limited to 12 work weeks during any 12-month period (29 USC § 2612(f); 29 CFR 825.201).

Generally, a serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves (29 USC § 2611; 29 CFR 825.113):

- An overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility (29 CFR 825.114).
- Continuing treatment by a qualified health care professional due to a serious health condition of more than three full consecutive calendar days (29 CFR 825.115(a)).
- Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy complications or prenatal care (29 CFR 825.115(b)).
- A chronic condition which requires treatment (29 CFR 825.115(c)).
- A permanent condition for which treatment may not be effective (such as Alzheimer's or the terminal stages of a disease) (29 CFR 825.115(d)).
- Any period of absence to receive multiple treatments, including any recovery period, either for restorative surgery after an accident or other injury, or for a condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days without medical intervention or treatment (such as cancer chemotherapy or physical therapy for arthritis) (29 CFR 825.115(e)).

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1039.4.2 BIRTH OR PLACEMENT OF A CHILD

Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of leave for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child of the employee (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.200). The leave must be concluded within one year of the birth or placement of the child (29 CFR 825.120; 29 CFR 825.121).

If both parents are employed by the Pharr Fire Department, the combined number of work weeks of leave is limited to 12 work weeks during any 12-month period (29 USC § 2612(f); 29 CFR 825.120; 29 CFR 825.121).

1039.4.3 MILITARY EXIGENCY LEAVE

Eligible employees may take service member leave of up to 12 weeks for qualifying exigencies occurring because a spouse, child, or parent is on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending order to active duty (29 USC § 2612(a)(1)(E); 29 CFR 825.200). This type of leave is available to a family member of a person in the National Guard, Reserves, or members of the regular Armed Forces deployed to a foreign country. Qualifying exigencies include (29 CFR 825.126):

- Addressing issues that arise from a short notice (seven or less days) deployment.
- Attending military events related to the active duty or call to duty.
- Attending family support or assistance programs.
- Making child care or educational arrangements or attending school activities arising from active duty or a call to active duty.
- Making financial and legal arrangements.
- Spending time with a military member who is on short-term rest-and-recuperation leave during a period of deployment.
- Attending post-deployment activities.
- Addressing issues that arise from the death of a military member, such as making funeral arrangements.
- Caring for a military employee's parent who is incapable of self-care, such as providing care on an immediate need basis or arranging for alternative care.

1039.4.4 MILITARY CAREGIVER LEAVE

Eligible employees may take up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin who has incurred an injury or illness in the line of duty while on active duty in the Armed Forces, provided that such injury or illness may render the family member medically unfit to perform work (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.200).

Military caregiver leave is also available to family members of covered veterans who were members of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves, at any point in the five years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.127).

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During the single 12-month period, employees are entitled to no more than a combined total of 26 weeks of FMLA leave. In any case in which both spouses are employed by the Pharr Fire Department, the combined number of work weeks of leave is limited to 26 work weeks during any 12-month period (29 USC § 2612(f); 29 CFR 825.127).

Service member FMLA leave runs concurrent with other leave entitlements provided under federal, state, and local law. Where FMLA leave qualifies as both military caregiver leave and care for a family member with a serious health condition, the leave will be designated as military caregiver leave first.

1039.4.5 INTERMITTENT LEAVE

An employee may take leave for the employee's own serious health condition, for the serious health condition of the employee's spouse, child, or parent, or to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, intermittently or on a reduced schedule if medically necessary, and if that medical need can best be accommodated by an intermittent schedule as defined in federal law (29 USC § 2612(b); 29 CFR 825.202; 29 CFR 825.124).

Leave due to a military exigency may be taken on an intermittent or reduced-leave schedule (29 CFR 825.202).

Intermittent leave for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child is only available if granted at the discretion of the Fire Chief, unless the employee has a serious health condition in connection with the birth or if the newborn child has a serious health condition (29 CFR 825.120; 29 CFR 825.121).

Intermittent leave for any employee shall be tracked and calculated.

1039.4.6 PREGNANCY DISABILITY LEAVE

Pregnant employees who are disabled by pregnancy may be entitled to a disability leave in addition to any FMLA leave. The duration of leave is dependent on the circumstances. The Department shall defer to a pregnant member's qualified health care professional in assessing the member's ability to work.

1039.5 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS WHILE ON LEAVE

While on leave, employees will continue to be covered by any group health insurance to the same extent that coverage is provided while the employee is on the job (29 USC § 2614(c); 29 CFR 825.209). However, employees will not continue to be covered under non-health benefit plans.

Employees are responsible for any health plan employee contributions while on leave (29 CFR 825.210). Employee contribution rates are subject to any change in rates that occurs while the employee is on leave. If an employee fails to return to work after his/her leave entitlement has been exhausted or expires, the Department may recover its share of health plan premiums for the entire leave period unless the employee does not return because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition of the employee or his/her family member that would entitle the employee to leave, or because of circumstances beyond the employee's control (29 CFR

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825.213). The Department may recover premiums through deduction from any sums (e.g., unpaid wages, vacation pay).

Employees may not earn additional time off while on unpaid leave.

1039.6 SUBSTITUTION OF PAID ACCRUED LEAVES

Subject to applicable collective bargaining agreements and civil service rules, employees are required to exhaust all applicable paid leave before taking unpaid leave. Paid accrued leave includes vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave, and compensatory time earned in lieu of overtime, pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act, during FMLA leave. Employees may not use paid accrued leave to extend FMLA leave beyond 12 work weeks per year.

1039.7 USE OF FMLA LEAVE

If an employee takes a leave of absence for any reason that is FMLA qualifying, the Department may designate that non-FMLA leave as running concurrently with the employee's 12-week FMLA leave entitlement.

1039.8 PROCEDURES

The following procedures will apply for all employees requesting leave under FMLA:

- (a) When a leave is requested for a medical or other FMLA-related treatment appointment, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule the appointment at a time that minimizes disruption to the department's operations (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.302).
- (b) An employee who wishes to take FMLA must provide his/her supervisor with 30 days' advanced notice when the leave is foreseeable or as soon as practicable if the need for leave is not foreseeable (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.302; 29 CFR 825.303).
- (c) At the time of the request, the employee must complete a FMLA request form.

Requests for medical leave shall be accompanied by a qualified health care professional statement, including the date on which the serious health condition began and the estimated date of return to work (29 USC § 2613; 29 CFR 825.302).

Once the leave is requested or designated by the Department, the supervisor should forward the request and any medical certifications to the Department of Human Resources and ensure the employee is provided the necessary forms and FMLA information within five days (29 CFR 825.300).

Employees are required to provide medical certification of a qualified health care professional or military documentation, if requested (29 CFR 825.305; 29 CFR 825.308; 29 CFR 825.309; 29 CFR 825.310).

Employees shall be required to periodically report on their status and intent to return to work (29 USC § 2614; 29 CFR 825.311). This may assist in avoiding a delay in reinstatement when the employee is ready to return to work.

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Employees returning from a medical leave from the employee's own serious health condition will be required to present medical verification from a qualified health care professional of the employee's ability to return to work and a list of any restrictions that need to be accommodated (29 USC § 2614; 29 CFR 825.100; 29 CFR 825.312).

1039.9 REINSTATEMENT FOLLOWING LEAVE

Generally, employees returning from FMLA leave within the qualified period will be restored to their original job or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay and benefits (but not seniority), unless the employee would not otherwise have been employed at the time reinstatement is requested (e.g., in the case of a layoff) (29 USC § 2614; 29 CFR 825.214; 29 CFR 825.216).

If the same position is no longer available, such as in a layoff, the employee will be entitled to a position that is comparable in pay, location, job content, and promotional opportunities and geographic location, if such a comparable position exists.

If upon return from leave an employee is unable to perform the essential functions of the job because of a physical or mental disability, the supervisor should work with the Department of Human Resources or legal counsel to engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify a potential reasonable accommodation.

After exhausting paid FMLA leave, non-paid leave will continue until the conclusion of the protected 12- or 26-week time limit. Following the protected leave, the Fire Chief, in consultation with the legal counsel or the Department of Human Resources, will determine whether non-FMLA leave should apply.

1039.10 RESPONSIBILITY

Supervisors should work with the Department of Human Resources or legal counsel regarding questions relating to leave or reinstatement from leave under this policy. The Department of Human Resources should advise the supervisor and inform members of their rights and responsibilities.

1039.11 RECORDS

The Department will maintain leave-related records as required by 29 CFR 825.500 for at least three years and in compliance with the department's established records retention schedule.

Records and documents related to doctor certifications and other medical information created for purposes of complying with FMLA and this policy shall be maintained as confidential medical records in separate files from employee personnel files.

1039.12 NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

The Human Resources Director should ensure that a notice explaining the FMLA's provisions and procedures is prominently posted in conspicuous places in the Department where it can be readily seen by all employees and applicants for employment. Electronic posting is sufficient as long as the other posting requirements have been met as provided by 29 CFR 825.300 (29 CFR 825.300).

Military Leave

1040.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides general guidance regarding leave to perform military service as a member of the Reserves or National Guard, or active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA); 38 USC § 4301 et seq.).

This policy does not address every situation or circumstance that may arise when an employee is performing military service or ordered to active duty. As military leave situations arise, supervisors should consult with the Department of Human Resources or legal counsel to obtain specific guidance regarding military leave rights.

1040.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department supports employees who may be called or who volunteer to serve in the military. The Department will comply with USERRA and state laws relating to military leave.

1040.3 MILITARY LEAVE

Generally, employees on military leave are entitled to the same rights and benefits that are provided to employees having similar seniority, status and pay who are on furlough or leave of absence (38 USC § 4316(b)(1)).

1040.3.1 LENGTH OF LEAVE

Employees are entitled to military leave of absence for up to a maximum of five years (38 USC § 4312(a)(2)). Military leave is available for both voluntary and mandatory service (38 USC § 4303(13); 38 USC § 4312(a)).

There are exceptions to the five-year cumulative total, including inactive duty training (drills), annual training, involuntary recall or retention in support of war, national emergency, certain operational missions, or training or retraining requirements (38 USC § 4312(c)).

1040.3.2 TEMPORARY MILITARY DUTY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

An eligible employee who is a member of the Texas military forces, a reserve component of the armed forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized urban search and rescue team is entitled to paid military leave when engaged in authorized training or duty ordered or authorized by proper authority for up to 15 workdays in a fiscal year and for an additional seven days when called to duty by the governor in response to a disaster (Tex. Gov't Code § 437.202).

1040.4 PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees requesting military leave shall:

- (a) Provide as much advance notice of the pending service as reasonably possible (38 USC § 4312(a); 38 USC § 4312(b)).
- (b) Provide copies of official orders or other official documentation.
- (c) Select the benefit options desired during absence, if applicable.

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- (d) Retain copies of all submitted documents.

Upon receipt of a request, the Pharr Fire Department will determine eligibility for military leave and notify the employee in writing of the determination.

1040.5 COORDINATION WITH CONTRACTS, PRACTICES AND OTHER RULES

Wherever USERRA has more generous protections and benefits than state or local law, any applicable collective bargaining agreement or local policy or practice, the Department will apply the more beneficial right or benefit (38 USC § 4302).

1040.6 LEAVE ACCRUALS

Employees on military leave are not required to use accrued leave while on military leave. However, employees may choose to use accrued annual leave or earned compensatory time, at their discretion (38 USC § 4316).

Employees will not accrue sick days or paid time-off days during any period of military leave without pay. However, upon return, military leave time will be included in determining leave accruals. For example, if vacation accrual increases from two weeks to three weeks upon completion of five years of service, then a person who works for two years, serves two years on active duty and then returns, would be entitled to three weeks of vacation one year after reemployment.

1040.7 HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

Employees on approved military leave may elect to purchase continuing health care coverage for a period of time that is the lesser of:

- (a) The 24-month period beginning on the first day of the employee's absence for military leave.
- (b) The period beginning on the first day of the employee's absence for military leave and ending on the date that he/she fails to return from service or apply for reemployment.

If the duration of an employee's approved military service is less than 31 days, the employee may purchase continuing health care coverage under the department's health plan for no more than the regular employee share. If the approved military service is 31 days or more, the Department will charge the employee for no more than 102 percent of the full premium of the health care plan (38 USC § 4317).

1040.8 RETURN FROM DUTY

Employees returning from approved military leave of absence must report to work as follows:

- (a) For periods of service less than 31 days, employees must report back to work no later than the beginning of the first shift that begins on the first full day that follows the end of the employee's service period, plus a reasonable time to travel to the employee's residence, plus eight hours. If reporting within this period is impossible or unreasonable through no fault of the employee, the employee must return as soon as possible after expiration of the eight-hour period (38 USC § 4312(e)(1)(A)).

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- (b) For periods of service of more than 30 days but less than 181 days, employees must submit an application for reemployment no later than 14 days after completing service, or, if impossible or unreasonable to do so through no fault of the employee, no later than the next first full calendar day when it is possible to do so (38 USC § 4312(e)(1)(C)).
- (c) For periods of service of more than 180 days, employees must submit an application for reemployment no later than 90 days after completion of service (38 USC § 4312(e)(1)(D)).

Employees who are recovering from an illness or injury incurred in or aggravated during military service must report to the Department or apply for reemployment as provided in this policy at the end of the period necessary to recover from such illness or injury. The recovery period may not exceed two years, except when circumstances beyond the employee's control exist (38 USC § 4312(e)(2)(A)).

An employee who fails to report or apply for reemployment in a timely manner will be subject to the department's rules of conduct and established policies covering absence from scheduled work.

1040.9 REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

An employee returning from an approved temporary military duty leave of absence is generally entitled to reinstatement to the position and benefits he/she would have attained if not absent for military duty or, in some cases, a comparable job.

1040.9.1 FORMER POSITION

An employee returning from approved regular active military leave is entitled to reinstatement in the position that he/she would have attained had the employee not taken leave. If the leave exceeded 90 days, the employee is also entitled to a position of like seniority, status and pay (38 USC § 4313(a)(1); 38 USC § 4313(a)(2)).

If an employee returning from approved military leave is not able to perform the essential duties of the position the employee would have attained, the Department will make reasonable efforts to help the employee become qualified (20 CFR 1002.198). If the employee remains unable to perform the essential duties of the position after the department's reasonable efforts, the employee is entitled to his/her previously held position at the time of departure or, in the case the leave exceeded 90 days, a position of like seniority, status and pay (38 USC § 4313(a)(2)). Where an employee remains unqualified for both of these positions after reasonable efforts by the Department, the employee is entitled to the nearest approximation to these positions (38 USC § 4313(a)(4)).

When a returning employee cannot become qualified because of a disability incurred in or aggravated during uniformed service, the Department, after making reasonable accommodations, must find a position of equivalent seniority, status and pay for which the employee is qualified, or the nearest equivalent (38 USC § 4313(a)(3); 20 CFR 1002.198).

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1040.9.2 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Upon return from regular active military duty, an employee is entitled to seniority and seniority-based rights and benefits, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Receiving credit for the time spent in uniformed service under honorable conditions for purposes of seniority, retirement, promotion and merit salary increases (20 CFR 1002.210).
- (b) Receiving credit for time spent on approved military leave for purposes of calculating eligibility for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (20 CFR 1002.210).
- (c) Returning to the level in the salary range that the employee would have attained had he/she not left on approved military leave (20 CFR 1002.236).
- (d) Receiving the same contribution to retirement benefits upon reemployment that the Department would have contributed had he/she not taken leave (20 CFR 1002.261).
- (e) Being treated as not having a break in service for purposes of participation, vesting and accrual of pension benefits (38 USC § 4316; 38 USC § 4318(a)).
- (f) Reenrolling in department health benefits without any waiting period.
- (g) Restoring benefits that were elected by the employee and his/her dependents at the time military service began, as well as to any other benefits that began during the leave for which the employee would reasonably have become eligible.

1040.9.3 EMPLOYEE REEMPLOYMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

An employee returning from approved regular active military leave is entitled to reinstatement rights only if he/she (38 USC § 4312):

- (a) Has given advance written or verbal notice of such service, unless precluded by military necessity.
- (b) Has served in the uniformed service for no more than five years cumulatively while employed at the Pharr Fire Department, except as provided in 38 USC § 4312(c).
- (c) Has been issued a discharge under honorable conditions.
- (d) Reports to the Pharr Fire Department or applies for reemployment in a timely manner as provided in this policy.
 - 1. In the case that the approved military leave exceeds 30 days, submits documentation showing:
 - (a) The application for reemployment is timely.
 - (b) The employee has not exceeded the cumulative five-year limit of service in the uniformed services, except as provided in 38 USC § 4312(c).

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1040.9.4 DEPARTMENT REEMPLOYMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Department shall promptly reinstate employees entitled to reinstatement but no later than 14 days after a request for reinstatement. In the case of unusual circumstances, the Department shall reinstate employees as soon as practicable (20 CFR 1002.181).

The Department is not required to reemploy a person after approved military leave if any of the following conditions exist (38 USC § 4312(d)):

- (a) The department's circumstances have so changed as to make such reemployment impossible or unreasonable.
- (b) Such reemployment would impose an undue hardship upon the Department.
- (c) The person held a non-recurrent job for a brief period of time and had no reasonable expectation that such employment would continue.

Supervisors should consult with the Department of Human Resources or legal counsel before determining whether any of these conditions exist.

1040.10 RETENTION

An employee who is reinstated after returning from approved military leave may not be discharged, except for cause (38 USC § 4316(c); 20 CFR 1002.247):

- (a) For 180 days after the date of reemployment if the most recent period of military service was more than 30 days and less than 181 days.
- (b) For one year after the date of reemployment if the most recent period of military service was more than 180 days.

1040.11 DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Discrimination or retaliation against any employee for participation in military service is prohibited, whether the employee volunteers or is ordered to active military service (38 USC § 4311).

Driver's License Requirements

1041.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to ensure that all Pharr Fire Department members who drive as a part of their duties have and maintain required driver's licenses.

1041.2 POLICY

In order to promote driver safety, it is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department that any member who is assigned duties that require him/her to drive department vehicles or equipment, or drive a privately owned vehicle while conducting department business, have and maintain driving privileges and a driver's license.

1041.3 REQUIREMENTS

Any member who is assigned duties that require him/her to drive department vehicles, equipment or private vehicles shall be required to obtain and maintain a valid driver's license.

1041.3.1 REVIEW OF RECORDS

The Fire Chief shall appoint an officer to monitor the driving records of all members who are assigned duties that require driving while conducting department business, to confirm each driver has a valid driver's license and to monitor driver records for potential problem behavior.

The officer appointed to monitor driving records shall be responsible for reviewing the driver's license reports as part of the hiring process and any time an incident occurs that affects a member's eligibility to drive.

Whenever the officer appointed to monitor driving records becomes aware of changes that could affect a member's eligibility to drive, the officer should notify the affected member, the member's immediate supervisor and the Health and Safety Officer.

1041.3.2 NEW EMPLOYEES

Prospective member driving records shall be evaluated to confirm that the applicant has a valid driver's license and to review the type and number of traffic violations and accidents on the record.

At the time of hire, a new member whose duties require driving a vehicle while conducting department business shall be required to present a valid driver's license.

1041.3.3 CURRENT EMPLOYEES

Driving records of existing members shall be evaluated to confirm that the member has a valid driver's license and to review any traffic violations and accidents.

Any member who drives a vehicle while conducting department business must immediately notify his/her supervisor of any suspension, revocation or other change in the status of his/her driver's license. Any violation of this procedure may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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Driver's License Requirements

Any member who does not possess a valid license shall not drive any vehicle while conducting department business.

If a member's driver's license is suspended, revoked or becomes invalid, the Department may, at its discretion, take any combination of the following actions:

- (a) Assign a member to duties which do not require driving, for up to 60 calendar days from the date of the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) report, to allow the member an opportunity to seek the reinstatement of his/her driver's license, provided:
 - 1. The member can still perform the majority of his/her job duties.
 - 2. There is minimal impact on the department work output.
- (b) Place a member on leave without pay for up to a maximum of six months from the date of the DPS report pending license reinstatement, or up to a maximum of four months if the member has already been assigned to non-driving duties for 60 calendar days.

Any member who is unable to obtain reinstatement of his/her driver's license may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships

1042.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure equal opportunity and effective employment practices by avoiding actual or perceived favoritism, discrimination or actual or potential conflicts of interest by or between members of this department. These employment practices include: recruiting, testing, hiring, compensation, assignment, promotion, use of facilities, access to training opportunities, supervision, performance appraisal, discipline and workplace safety and security.

1042.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Business relationship - Serving as an employee, independent contractor, compensated consultant, owner, board member, shareholder or investor in an outside business, company, partnership, corporation, venture or other transaction, where the employee's annual interest, compensation, investment or obligation is greater than \$250.

Conflict of interest - Any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest in which it reasonably appears that an employee's action, inaction or decisions are or may be influenced by the employee's personal or business relationship.

Nepotism - The practice of showing favoritism to relatives over others in appointment, employment, promotion or advancement by any public official in a position to influence these personnel decisions.

Personal relationship - Includes marriage, cohabitation, dating or any other intimate relationship beyond mere friendship.

Public official - A supervisor, officer or employee vested with authority by law, rule or regulation or to whom authority has been delegated.

Relative - An employee's parent, stepparent, spouse, domestic partner, significant other, child (natural, adopted or step), sibling or grandparent.

Subordinate - An employee who is subject to the temporary or ongoing direct or indirect authority of a supervisor.

Supervisor - An employee who has temporary or ongoing direct or indirect authority over the actions, decisions, evaluation and/or performance of a subordinate employee.

1042.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department is committed to fair and equitable treatment of all members and to creating a work atmosphere that is free of both actual and apparent conflicts of interest that could compromise this principle.

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Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships

1042.3 RESTRICTED DUTIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

The Department will not prohibit all personal or business relationships between employees. However, in order to avoid nepotism or other inappropriate conflicts, the following reasonable restrictions should apply:

- (a) Employees are prohibited from directly supervising, occupying a position in the line of supervision or being directly supervised by any other employee who is a relative or with whom they are involved in a personal or business relationship.
 - 1. If circumstances require that such a supervisor/subordinate relationship exist temporarily, the supervisor should make every reasonable effort to defer matters pertaining to the involved employee to an uninvolved supervisor.
 - 2. When personnel and circumstances permit, the Department will attempt to make every reasonable effort to avoid placing such employees in supervisor/subordinate situations. The Department, however, reserves the right to transfer or reassign any employee to another position within the same classification in order to avoid conflicts with any provision of this policy.
- (b) Employees are prohibited from participating in, contributing to or recommending promotions, assignments, performance evaluations, transfers or other personnel decisions affecting an employee who is a relative or with whom they are involved in a personal or business relationship.
- (c) Whenever possible, trainers should not be assigned to train relatives. Trainers are prohibited from entering into or maintaining personal or business relationships with any member they are assigned to train until such time as the training has been successfully completed and, if an employee, off probation.
- (d) To avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest, members of this department should refrain from developing or maintaining personal or financial relationships with victims, witnesses or other individuals during the course of or as a direct result of any official contact.
- (e) Except as required in the performance of official duties or, in the case of immediate relatives, employees should not develop or maintain personal or financial relationships with any individual they know or reasonably should know is under criminal investigation, is a convicted felon, parolee, fugitive, registered sex or arson offender, or who engages in serious violations of state or federal laws.

1042.3.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

Prior to entering into any personal or business relationship, or other circumstance which the employee knows or reasonably should know could create a conflict of interest or other violation of this policy, the employee should promptly notify his/her uninvolved, next highest level of supervisor.

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Whenever any employee is placed in circumstances that would require the employee to take enforcement action or provide official information or services to any relative or individual with whom the employee is involved in a personal or business relationship, the employee should promptly notify his/her uninvolved, immediate supervisor. In the event that no uninvolved supervisor is immediately available, the employee should promptly notify dispatch to have another uninvolved employee either relieve the involved employee or, minimally, remain present to witness the action.

1042.3.2 SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

Upon being notified of, or otherwise becoming aware of any circumstance that could result in or constitute an actual or potential violation of this policy, a supervisor should take all reasonable steps to promptly mitigate or avoid such violations whenever possible.

Supervisors should also promptly notify the Fire Chief or designee of such actual or potential violations through the chain of command.

Member Speech, Expression and Social Networking

1043.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy is intended to address issues associated with member use of social networking sites and to provide guidelines for the regulation and balancing of member speech and expression with the needs of the Department.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit or infringe upon any communication, speech or expression that is protected or privileged under law. This includes speech and expression protected under state or federal constitutions as well as labor or other applicable laws. For example, this policy does not limit an employee from speaking as a private citizen, including acting as an authorized member of a recognized bargaining unit, about matters of public concern, such as misconduct or corruption.

Members are encouraged to consult with their supervisor regarding any questions arising from the application or potential application of this policy.

1043.1.1 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all forms of communication including, but not limited to, film, video, print media, public or private speech, and use of all Internet services, including the Web, email, file transfer, remote computer access, news services, social networking, social media, instant messaging, blogs, forums, video and other file-sharing sites.

1043.2 POLICY

Public employees occupy a trusted position in the community, and thus, their statements have the potential to contravene the policies and performance of this department. Due to the nature of the work and influence associated with the fire profession, it is necessary that members of this department be subject to certain reasonable limitations on their speech and expression. To achieve its mission and efficiently provide service to the public, the Pharr Fire Department will carefully balance the individual member's rights against the department's needs and interests when exercising a reasonable degree of control over its members' speech and expression.

1043.3 SAFETY

Members should consider carefully the implications of their speech or any other form of expression when using the Internet. Speech and expression that may negatively affect the safety of the Pharr Fire Department members, such as posting personal information in a public forum, can result in compromising a member's home address or family ties. Members therefore shall not disseminate or post any information on any forum or medium that could reasonably be anticipated to compromise the safety of any member, a member's family or associates. Examples of the type of information that could reasonably be expected to compromise safety include:

- Disclosing the address of a fellow firefighter.

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- Otherwise disclosing where another firefighter can be located off-duty.

1043.4 PROHIBITED SPEECH, EXPRESSION AND CONDUCT

To meet the department's safety, performance and public-trust needs, the following is prohibited unless the speech is otherwise protected (for example, an employee speaking as a private citizen, including acting as an authorized member of a recognized bargaining unit, on a matter of public concern):

- (a) Speech or expression made pursuant to an official duty that tends to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Pharr Fire Department or its members.
- (b) Speech or expression that, while not made pursuant to an official duty, is significantly linked to, or related to, the Pharr Fire Department and tends to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Pharr Fire Department or its members. Examples may include:
 1. Statements that indicate disregard for the law of the state or U.S. Constitution.
 2. Expression that demonstrates support for criminal activity.
 3. Participating in sexually explicit photographs or videos for compensation or distribution.
- (c) Speech or expression that could reasonably be foreseen as having a negative impact on the credibility of the member as a witness. For example, posting statements or expressions to a website that glorify or endorse dishonesty, unlawful discrimination or illegal behavior.
- (d) Speech or expression of any form that could reasonably be foreseen as having a negative impact on the safety of the members of the Department.
- (e) Speech or expression that is contrary to the canons of the Firefighters' Code of Ethics as adopted by the Pharr Fire Department.
- (f) Use or disclosure, through whatever means, of any information, photograph, video or other recording obtained or accessible as a result of employment with the Department for financial or personal gain, or any disclosure of such materials without the express authorization of the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.
- (g) Posting, transmitting or disseminating any photographs, video or audio recordings, likenesses or images of department logos, emblems, uniforms, badges, patches, marked vehicles, equipment or other material that specifically identifies the Pharr Fire Department on any personal or social networking or other website or web page, without the express authorization of the Fire Chief.
- (h) Accessing websites for non-authorized purposes, or use of any personal communication device, game device or media device, whether personally or department-owned, for personal purposes while on-duty, except in the following circumstances:
 1. When brief personal communication may be warranted by the circumstances (e.g., inform family of extended hours).

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2. During authorized breaks; however, such usage should be limited as much as practicable to areas out of sight and sound of the public and shall not be disruptive to the work environment.
3. Personal devices after 18:00 or time recognized as the end of the "normal workday" provided that:
 - (a) Prevailing station duties are complete
 - (b) Station supervisor approves
 - (c) The activity is not disruptive to the station environment
 - (d) The activity is not in conflict with any of the policies written above.

Members must take reasonable and prompt action to remove any content, including content posted by others, that is in violation of this policy from any web page or website maintained by the member (e.g., social or personal website).

1043.4.1 UNAUTHORIZED ENDORSEMENTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

Although members are not restricted from engaging in the following activities as private citizens or as authorized members of a recognized bargaining unit, members may not represent the Pharr Fire Department or identify themselves in any way that could be reasonably perceived as representing the Pharr Fire Department in order to do any of the following, unless specifically authorized by the Fire Chief:

- (a) Endorse, support, oppose or contradict any political campaign or initiative
- (b) Endorse, support, oppose or contradict any social issue, cause or religion
- (c) Endorse, support or oppose any product, service, company or other commercial entity
- (d) Appear in any commercial, social or nonprofit publication or any motion picture, film, video, public broadcast or on any website

Additionally, when it can reasonably be construed that a member, acting in his/her individual capacity or through an outside group or organization (e.g., bargaining group), is affiliated with this department, the member shall give a specific disclaiming statement that any such speech or expression is not representative of the Pharr Fire Department.

Members retain their right to vote as they choose, to support candidates of their choice and to express their opinions as private citizens, including as authorized members of a recognized bargaining unit, on political subjects and candidates at all times while off-duty. However, members may not use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election or a nomination for office. Members are also prohibited from directly or indirectly using their official authority to coerce, command or advise another member to pay, lend or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purposes (5 USC § 1502).

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Member Speech, Expression and Social Networking

1043.4.2 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

No member shall be prohibited from engaging in political activity, unless otherwise prohibited by law, in violation of department policy or any time a member is on-duty or in uniform.

Members shall not be coerced or required to engage in political activity.

1043.5 PRIVACY EXPECTATION

Members forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to emails, texts or anything published, shared, transmitted or maintained through file-sharing software or any Internet site that is accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed on any department technology system.

The Department reserves the right to access, audit and disclose for whatever reason, any message, including attachments, and any information accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed over any technology that is issued or maintained by the Department, including the department email system, computer network or any information placed into storage on any department system or device. This includes records of all keystrokes or Web-browsing history made at any department computer or over any department network. The fact that access to a database, service or website requires a username or password will not create an expectation of privacy if it is accessed through department computers, electronic devices or networks.

1043.6 CONSIDERATIONS

In determining whether to grant authorization of any speech or conduct that is prohibited under this policy, the factors that the Fire Chief or the authorized designee should consider include:

- (a) Whether the speech or conduct would negatively affect the efficiency of delivering public services.
- (b) Whether the speech or conduct would be contrary to the good order of the Department or the efficiency or morale of its members.
- (c) Whether the speech or conduct would reflect unfavorably upon the Department.
- (d) Whether the speech or conduct would negatively affect the member's appearance of impartiality in the performance of his/her duties.
- (e) Whether similar speech or conduct has been previously authorized.
- (f) Whether the speech or conduct may be protected and outweighs any interest of the Department.

1043.7 TRAINING

Subject to available resources, the Department should provide training regarding member speech and the use of social networking to firefighters and supervisors.

Anti-Retaliation

1044.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy prohibits retaliation against members who identify workplace issues, such as fraud, waste, abuse of authority, gross mismanagement or any inappropriate conduct or practices, including violations that may pose a threat to the health, safety or well-being of members.

This policy does not prohibit actions taken for nondiscriminatory or non-retaliatory reasons, such as discipline for cause.

These guidelines are intended to supplement and not limit members' access to other applicable remedies. Nothing in this policy shall diminish the rights or remedies of a member pursuant to any applicable federal law, provision of the U.S. Constitution, law, ordinance or collective bargaining agreement.

1044.2 POLICY

The Pharr Fire Department has a zero tolerance for retaliation and is committed to taking reasonable steps to protect from retaliation members who, in good faith, engage in permitted behavior or who report or participate in the reporting or investigation of workplace issues. All complaints of retaliation will be taken seriously and will be promptly and appropriately investigated.

1044.3 RETALIATION PROHIBITED

No member may retaliate against any person for engaging in lawful or otherwise permitted behavior; for opposing a practice believed to be unlawful, unethical, discriminatory or retaliatory; for reporting or making a complaint under this policy; or for participating in any investigation related to a complaint under this or any other policy.

Retaliation includes any adverse action or conduct, including, but not limited to:

- Refusing to hire or denying a promotion.
- Extending the probationary period.
- Unjustified reassignment of duties or change of work schedule.
- Real or implied threats or other forms of intimidation to dissuade the reporting of wrongdoing or filing of a complaint, or as a consequence of having reported or participated in protected activity.
- Taking unwarranted disciplinary action.
- Spreading rumors about the person filing the complaint or about the alleged wrongdoing.
- Shunning or unreasonably avoiding a person because he/she has engaged in protected activity.

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Anti-Retaliation

1044.4 COMPLAINTS OF RETALIATION

Any member who feels he/she has been retaliated against in violation of this policy should promptly report the matter to any supervisor, a command staff member, the Fire Chief or the City Human Resources Director.

Members shall act in good faith, not engage in unwarranted reporting of trivial or minor deviations or transgressions, and make reasonable efforts to verify facts before making any complaint in order to avoid baseless allegations. Members shall not report or state an intention to report information or an allegation knowing it to be false or with willful or reckless disregard for the truth or falsity of the information, or otherwise act in bad faith.

Investigations are generally more effective when the identity of the reporting member is known, thereby allowing investigators to obtain additional information from the reporting member. However, complaints may be made anonymously. All reasonable efforts shall be made to protect the reporting member's identity. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the extent required by law or to the degree necessary to conduct an adequate investigation and make a determination regarding a complaint. In some situations, the investigative process may not be complete unless the source of the information and a statement by the member is part of the investigative process.

1044.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors are expected to remain familiar with this policy and ensure that members under their command are aware of its provisions.

The responsibilities of supervisors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring complaints of retaliation are investigated as provided in the Personnel Complaints Policy.
- (b) Receiving all complaints in a fair and impartial manner.
- (c) Documenting the complaint and any steps taken to resolve the problem.
- (d) Acknowledging receipt of the complaint, notifying the Fire Chief via the chain of command and explaining to the member how the complaint will be handled.
- (e) Taking appropriate and reasonable steps to mitigate any further violations of this policy.
- (f) Monitoring the work environment to ensure that any member making a complaint is not subjected to further retaliation.
- (g) Periodically following up with the complainant to ensure that retaliation is not continuing.
- (h) Not interfering with or denying the right of a member to make any complaint.
- (i) Taking reasonable steps to accommodate requests for assignment or schedule changes made by a member who may be the target of retaliation if it would likely mitigate the potential for further violations of this policy.

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Anti-Retaliation

1044.6 COMMAND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief should communicate to all supervisors the prohibition against retaliation.

Command staff shall treat all complaints as serious matters and shall ensure that prompt actions take place, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Communicating to all members the prohibition against retaliation.
- (b) Reviewing complaint investigations in a timely manner.
- (c) Taking steps toward remediation of any inappropriate conduct or condition and instituting measures to eliminate or minimize the likelihood of recurrence.
- (d) Communicating the outcome to the complainant in a timely manner.

1044.7 WHISTLE-BLOWING

Texas law protects employees who make a good faith report of a violation of law by the Department or another employee to the appropriate law enforcement authority (Tex. Gov't Code § 554.002).

Members who believe they have been the subject of retaliation for engaging in such protected behaviors should promptly report it to a supervisor. Supervisors should refer the complaint to the Fire Chief or authorized designee through the appropriate supervisory chain of command for investigation pursuant to the Personnel Complaints Policy.

1044.8 RECORDS RETENTION AND RELEASE

The Custodian of Records shall ensure that documentation of investigations is maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedules.

1044.9 TRAINING

This policy should be reviewed with each new member.

All members should receive periodic refresher training on the requirements of this policy.

Sick Leave

1045.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides general guidance regarding the use and processing of sick leave. Additional terms for the use of sick leave for eligible employees may be covered in the City personnel manual, employee handbook, or applicable collective bargaining agreement.

This policy is not intended to cover all types of sick or other leaves. For example, employees may be entitled to additional paid or unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons as addressed in the Family and Medical Leave Policy or line-of-duty-related illness or injury as addressed in the Temporary Modified-Duty Assignment Policy.

1045.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Pharr Fire Department to provide eligible employees with a sick-leave benefit.

1045.3 USE OF SICK LEAVE

Sick leave is intended to be used for qualified absences. Sick leave is not considered vacation. Abuse of sick leave may result in discipline, denial of sick-leave benefits, or both.

Employees on sick leave shall not engage in other employment or self-employment or participate in any sport, hobby, recreational activity, or other activity that may impede recovery from the injury or illness (see the Outside Employment Policy).

Qualified appointments should be scheduled during a member's non-working hours when it is reasonable to do so.

1045.3.1 NOTIFICATION

All members should notify the Battalion Chief or appropriate supervisor via Department approved software or other approved Department method as soon as they are aware that they will not be able to report to work and no less than one hour before the start of their scheduled shifts. If, due to an emergency, a member is unable to contact the supervisor, every effort should be made to have a representative for the member contact the supervisor.

When the necessity to be absent from work is foreseeable, such as planned medical appointments or treatments, the member shall, whenever possible and practicable, provide the Department with no less than 30 days' notice of the impending absence.

Upon return to work, members are responsible for ensuring their time off was appropriately accounted for, and for completing and submitting the required documentation describing the type of time off used and the specific amount of time taken.

1045.4 EXTENDED ABSENCE

Members absent from duty for more than two consecutive days may be required to furnish a statement from a health care provider supporting the need to be absent and/or the ability to return to work. Members on an extended absence shall, if possible, contact their supervisor at specified intervals to provide an update on their absence and expected date of return.

Pharr Fire Department

Policy Manual

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Sick Leave

Nothing in this section precludes a supervisor from requiring, with cause, a health care provider's statement for an absence of three or fewer days.

1045.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of supervisors include but are not limited to:

- (a) Monitoring and regularly reviewing the attendance of those under their command to ensure that the use of sick leave and absences is consistent with this policy.
- (b) Attempting to determine whether an absence of four or more days may qualify as family medical leave and consulting with legal counsel or the Department of Human Resources as appropriate.
- (c) Addressing absences and sick leave use in the member's performance evaluation when excessive or unusual use has:
 - 1. Negatively affected the member's performance or ability to complete assigned duties.
 - 2. Negatively affected department operations.
- (d) When appropriate, counseling members regarding excessive absences and/or inappropriate use of sick leave.
- (e) Referring eligible members to an available employee assistance program when appropriate.

1045.6 PAID SICK LEAVE ACCRUAL

Eligible employees shall accrue sick leave time in accordance with the minimum requirements (Tex. Local Gov't Code § 143.045) of fifteen working days every twelve months, pro-rata as per the statute. There is no limit to the amount of sick leave an eligible employee may accrue (Tex. Local Gov't Code § 143.045).

Accrued unused paid sick leave will be paid to an eligible employee upon separation from the Department in accordance with Tex. Local Gov't Code § 143.045.



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 3.E.

DATE SUBMITTED: April 25, 2024

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT: HR

DIRECTOR: Veronica Ramirez

Agenda Item: Consideration and possible action to approve the source list for Promotional Examination for Lieutenant for the Fire Department. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue: Replaced the current Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures with Policy Manual that was adopted on April 3, 2024.

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation: Approval of source list as presented.

Alternatives:

Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes
Ashley Melendez

Created/Initiated - 4/25/2024
Final Approval - 4/25/2024



POSTED: April 30, 2024
DO NOT REMOVE

**CITY OF PHARR FIRE DEPARTMENT
PROMOTIONAL READING LIST
LIEUTENANT**



THE FOLLOWING READING MATERIAL WILL BE USED TO ADMINISTER A PROMOTIONAL EXAM FOR THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CHECK OUT, AT THE CITY OF PHARR PUBLIC LIBRARY.

City of Pharr Fire Department Rules, Regulations & Policy Manual

Incident Management for the Street-Smart Fire Officer, 2nd ed., 2008, John (Skip) Coleman, Fire Engineering.

Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer, 6th ed., 2019, F. M. Stowell, Fire Protection Publications. ISBN #978-0879395643

Structure Firefighting: Initial Response Strategy and Tactics, 2nd ed. 2017, IFSTA
ISBN #978-0-87939-23-7

THE PROMOTIONAL EXAM IS OPEN TO ALL PERSONNEL IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF ENGINEER WITH 2 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE IN THE RANK OF ENGINEER.



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 3.F.

DATE SUBMITTED: April 25, 2024

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT: HR

DIRECTOR: Veronica Ramirez

Agenda Item: Consideration and possible action to approve the source list for Promotional Examination for Battalion Chief for the Fire Department. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue: Replaced the current Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures with Policy Manual that was adopted on April 3, 2024.

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation: Approval of source list as presented

Alternatives:

Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes
Ashley Melendez

Created/Initiated - 4/25/2024
Final Approval - 4/25/2024



POSTED: April 30, 2024
DO NOT REMOVE

**CITY OF PHARR FIRE DEPARTMENT
PROMOTIONAL READING LIST
BATTALION CHIEF**



THE FOLLOWING READING MATERIAL WILL BE USED TO ADMINISTER A PROMOTIONAL EXAM FOR THE RANK OF BATTALION CHIEF IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CHECK OUT, AT THE CITY OF PHARR PUBLIC LIBRARY.

City of Pharr Fire Department Rules, Regulations & Policy Manual

Chief Officer, 4th ed., 2019, International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA)

Fire and Emergency Service Safety Officer, 2nd ed., (IFSTA)

Fire Officer Coaching, 2nd ed., 2013, J. M. Gaston and R. Harvill, Fire Protection Publications. ISBN #978-1468178371

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Principles & Practices, 2nd ed., D. Walsh, C. Callsen Jr., N. Dolan, H. Christian Jr., G. Lord, G. Miller & P. Maniscalco

THE PROMOTIONAL EXAM IS OPEN TO ALL LIEUTENANT AND CAPTAIN PERSONNEL WITH TWO OR MORE YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE IN THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT AND CAPTAIN.



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 3.G.

DATE SUBMITTED: April 25, 2024

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT: HR

DIRECTOR: Veronica Ramirez

Agenda Item: Consideration and possible action to approve the source list for the Promotional Examination for Deputy Chief / Fire Marshall for the Fire Department. **This item supports SSC - Safe and Secure Community.**

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue: Replaced the current Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures with Policy Manual that was adopted on April 3, 2024.

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation: Approval of source list as presented

Alternatives:

Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes
Ashley Melendez

Created/Initiated - 4/25/2024
Final Approval - 4/25/2024

POSTED: April 30, 2024

DO NOT REMOVE



CITY OF PHARR FIRE DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONAL READING LIST DEPUTY CHIEF/FIRE MARSHALL



THE FOLLOWING READING MATERIAL WILL BE USED TO ADMINISTER A PROMOTIONAL EXAM FOR THE RANK OF DEPUTY CHIEF/ FIRE MARSHALL IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CHECK OUT, AT THE CITY OF PHARR PUBLIC LIBRARY.

City of Pharr Fire Department Rules, Regulations & Policy Manual

The Effective Public Manager: Achieving Success in a Changing Government, 5th ed, 2013, S. Cohen, W. Eimicke, and T. Heikkila, Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers ISBN #978-1118555934

Fire Chief' Handbook: 7TH ed., 2015, R.A. Marinucci and R. Marinucci, eds., Fire Engineering, #978-1593702625

Management in the Fire Service, 5th ed., 2015, H. R. Carter & E. Rausch, Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Inc. #978-1449690786

THE PROMOTIONAL EXAM IS OPEN TO ALL PERSONNEL IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF BATTALION CHIEF WITH 2 OR MORE YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE RANK OF BATTALION CHIEF.



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 4.A.

DATE SUBMITTED:

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT:

DIRECTOR:

Agenda Item: Police Department and Fire Department Report

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue:

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation:

Alternatives:

Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes

Created -

Ricardo Rodriguez

Jamison Merrick

City Management Office



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 4.B.

DATE SUBMITTED:

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT:

DIRECTOR:

Agenda Item: Civil Service Director's Report

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue:

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation:

Alternatives:

Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes

Created -

Ricardo Rodriguez

Jamison Merrick

City Management Office



AGENDA MEMORANDUM



BOARD: Civil Service Commission

AGENDA ITEM #: 4.C.

DATE SUBMITTED:

MEETING DATE: April 30, 2024

FROM: Beatriz Fuentes, HR Coordinator

DEPARTMENT:

DIRECTOR:

Agenda Item: Civil Service Board Comments

Classification: Regular

(* If closed session, City Attorney must review and approve.)

Issue:

Fiscal Consideration:

Staff Recommendation:

Alternatives:

Exclude Material from Public Packet? No

Reason:

ROUTING:

Beatriz Fuentes

Created -

Ricardo Rodriguez

Jamison Merrick

City Management Office