

EAST COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE
Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

SUBJECT: Code of Ethics

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The success of East County Fire & Rescue is dependent on the trust and confidence we earn from our customers, volunteers, and employees. We gain credibility by adhering to our commitments, displaying honesty and integrity, and reaching our goals solely through honorable conduct (see section 402 of Rules and Regs).

Respect

All members deserve to work in an environment where we are treated with dignity and respect. East County Fire & Rescue is committed to creating such an environment because it brings out the full potential in each of us, which, in turn, contributes directly to our success.

East County Fire & Rescue is an equal employment/affirmative action employer and is committed to providing a workplace that is free of discrimination and all types of abusive, and offensive or harassing behavior. (Policy 10.7 Discrimination and Harassment)

Open and Honest Communication

At East County Fire & Rescue everyone shall feel comfortable to respectfully speak his or her mind, particularly with respect to ethics concerns. Supervisors have a responsibility to create an open and supportive environment where members feel comfortable raising such questions. We all benefit tremendously when members exercise their power to prevent mistakes or wrongdoing by asking the right questions at the right times.

East County Fire & Rescue will investigate all reported instances of questionable or unethical behavior. In every instance where improper behavior is found to have occurred, East County Fire & Rescue will take appropriate action. Retaliation against members who raise genuine ethics concerns in good faith will not be tolerated.

Members are encouraged, in the first instance, to address such issues with their Supervisor, as most problems can be resolved swiftly. If for any reason that is not possible or if a member is not comfortable raising the issue with his or her Supervisor members shall report issues to a Chief Officer

Management

Management staff is expected to serve as appropriate role models for proper compliance with the provisions of this policy and are encouraged to remind employees of their responsibilities in complying with this policy.

Supervisors must be responsible for promptly addressing ethical questions or concerns raised by members and for taking the appropriate steps to deal with such issues. Supervisors shall not consider member's ethics concerns as threats or challenges to their authority, but rather as another encouraged form of communication. At East County Fire & Rescue, we want the ethics dialogue

to become a natural part of daily work.

The Law

East County Fire & Rescue members shall comply with applicable department policy, laws, rules and regulations where we do business. If unsure of whether a contemplated action is permitted members shall seek the advice of their supervisor. Individually, members are responsible for preventing violations of law and for speaking up about possible violations.

Avoid Conflicts of Interest

No member of East County Fire & Rescue shall use his or her position for personal gain and shall avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest.

Conflict of interest may occur, but may not be a violation of this policy. If full disclosure is made public and the Board of Commissioners deem the conflict to be De Minimus, there would be no violation of policy. While not every instance of a violation of this policy can be anticipated, listed below are specific examples of possible conflicts of interest:

1. Being employed (employee or close family member) by, or acting as a consultant to, a supplier or contractor that the District contracts with, while a member of East County Fire & Rescue.
2. Hiring or supervising family members or closely related persons.
3. Owning or having a substantial interest in a supplier or contractor that East County Fire & Rescue may use for product or services.
4. Having a personal interest, financial interest or potential gain in any East County Fire & Rescue transaction.
6. No member shall accept for his or her own benefit any services, benefits, rewards, or concessions from any person or company offered as an inducement to perform his or her duties in a manner sought by the grantor. Acceptance of gifts, discounts, favors or services shall comply with RCW 42.52.150. Some items may be deemed "exempt" from the definition of gift per RCW 42.52.010. Campaign contributions may also be exempt if they are reported under RCW 42.17. Members with questions about accepting gifts or favors shall talk to their Supervisor .

Before engaging in any activity, transaction or relationship that might give rise to a conflict of interest, members shall seek review from their supervisor.

Honesty and Integrity

Members are expected to be mindful of the public expectations placed on the District and its members. Members are expected to act with good judgement, discretion, honesty, and integrity at all times.

Accepting Business Courtesies

Members who award contracts or who can influence the allocation of resources, or who participate in negotiation of contracts must be particularly careful to avoid actions that create the appearance of favoritism or that may adversely affect the agencies reputation for impartiality and fair dealing. The prudent course is to refuse a courtesy from a supplier when East County Fire & Rescue is involved in choosing or reconfirming a supplier, or under circumstances that would create an

impression that offering courtesies is the way to obtain East County Fire & Rescue business.

Accurate Public Disclosures

Disclosures made in financial reports and public documents shall be complete, fair, accurate, timely and understandable. This obligation applies to all members. No member shall misrepresent facts or falsify records for any reason.

No member shall improperly influence, manipulate or mislead any authorized audit, nor interfere with any auditor engaged to perform an internal independent audit of East County Fire & Rescue books, records, processes or internal controls.

Accountability

Each member is responsible for knowing and adhering to the values and standards set forth in this policy and for raising questions if they are uncertain about District policy. If members are concerned whether the standards are being met, or are aware of violations of the policy, they must report it to their supervisor or a Chief officer.

Confidential and Proprietary Information

Integral to East County Fire & Rescue's success is the protection of confidential agency information, as well as nonpublic information entrusted to us by members, customers and other business partners. Confidential information includes such things as member data, customer names/addresses, information protected by privacy laws, or other nonpublic information about partnering agencies. Confidential and nonpublic information shall not be disclosed without a valid business purpose *and* proper authorization.

The misuse, unauthorized access to, or mishandling of confidential information, particularly personnel information, is strictly prohibited and will be subject to discipline up to and including immediate discharge.

Use of Agency Resources

Agency resources, including time, material, equipment and information, are provided for agency business use. Nonetheless, occasional personal use is permissible as long as it does not affect job performance, cause a disruption to the workplace, or create additional cost to the tax payers (see section 702 of Rules and Regulations).

Members and those who represent East County Fire & Rescue are trusted to behave responsibly and use good judgment to conserve agency resources. Supervisors are responsible for the resources assigned to them and are empowered to resolve issues concerning their proper use.

Members shall not use agency equipment such as computers, copiers and fax machines in the conduct of an outside business or in support of any religious, political or other outside daily activity, except for agency-requested support to nonprofit organizations. Members shall not solicit contributions nor distribute non-work related materials during work hours.

In order to protect the interests of the East County Fire & Rescue computer network and our fellow employees, East County Fire & Rescue reserves the right to monitor or review all data and information contained on an employee's agency-issued computer or electronic device, the use of the internet or East County Fire & Rescue's intranet. The use of agency resources to create, access, store, print, solicit or send any materials that are harassing, threatening, abusive, sexually

explicit or otherwise offensive or inappropriate shall not be tolerated.

Questions about the proper use of agency resources shall be directed to your supervisor .

Media Inquiries

East County Fire & Rescue is a high-profile agency in our community, and from time to time, members may be approached by reporters and other members of the media. In order to ensure that we speak with one voice and provide accurate information about the agency, all media inquiries shall be directed to the Fire Chief or their designee. Only a Chief Officer or Board Chair, with Board approval may issue a press release.

Reporting Procedure

1. Contact your immediate Supervisor. If you are uncomfortable making such a report, have a trusted District member make the report for you. You will be contacted by a Superior to obtain information in writing to substantiate this allegation.
2. If you or your designee are uncomfortable contacting your immediate Supervisor, or if your immediate Supervisor is the person engaged in this wrongdoing, contact the next higher ranking Officer.
3. If you or your designees are uncomfortable contacting the next higher ranking Officer, or if the next higher ranking Officer is the person engaged in this wrongdoing, contact any higher ranking Officer, up to and including the Fire Chief or a member of the Board of Commissioners.

Violations of the Policy

- A. Violations of this Policy may be grounds for discharge or other disciplinary action.
- B. Disciplinary action will be taken, not only against individuals who authorize or participate directly in a violation of the Policy, but also against:
 - (1) any employee who may have deliberately failed to report a violation of the Policy;
 - (2) any employee who may have deliberately withheld relevant and material information concerning a violation of this Policy and
 - (3) the violator's managerial superiors, to the extent that the circumstances of the violation reflect inadequate leadership and lack of diligence.

A member's actions under this Policy are significant indicators of the individual's judgment and competence. Accordingly, those actions constitute an important element in the evaluation of the member for position assignments and promotion. Correspondingly, insensitivity to or disregard of the principles of this policy will be grounds for appropriate disciplinary action.

Conclusion

Although East County Fire & Rescue's guiding principles cannot address every issue or provide answers to every dilemma, this policy defines the spirit in which we intend to do business and shall guide members in their daily conduct.