

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAM

As stated in NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, "Firefighting has been recognized as the most hazardous occupation in North America in terms of occupational death and injury statistics." Firefighting is an inherently dangerous activity occurring in an environment over which the participants have no engineering control. NFPA 1500 was developed to provide a "consensus standard for an occupational safety and health program for the fire service." NFPA 1500 is intended to be an umbrella document, establishing the basic framework for a comprehensive safety and health program, and providing for its implementation and management. NFPA 1500 "is meant to be appropriate for voluntary compliance, as a state of the art document." The PFD will endeavor to adopt NFPA 1500 to the best of its abilities while utilizing available resources.

A. Purpose:

It is the purpose of the Ponderosa Fire Department (PFD) Occupational Safety and Health Program to establish occupational safety and health objectives for all department activities and to develop and implement guidelines designed to attain the occupational safety and health objectives of the department.

B. Scope:

The Ponderosa Fire Department is not legally mandated to comply with any occupational safety and health standards or regulations. This program is being voluntarily developed and adopted by the Department to manage, to the extent that is reasonably possible consistent with the factual circumstances and resources of a fire department, the inherent occupational safety and health risks to its members in the performance of fire department activities.

This program is intended to establish objectives for the Department to attain, not minimum standards of compliance. All guidelines developed in conjunction with this program to attain the Department's occupational and health objectives are also adopted on a voluntary basis and are not legally mandated. The failure to attain any objective of this program or to adhere to guideline should not be construed as giving rise to any liability whatsoever by the Department or any member thereof.

By the development and adoption of this occupational safety and health program the Ponderosa Fire Department does not assume and specifically denies the assumption of any liability whatsoever beyond that which existed prior to its development and adoption. The Department further disclaims that the development and adoption of this program constitutes a waiver of any legal defenses, immunities or privileges available to the Department or its members prior to the development and adoption of the program.

C. Organization

a) Fire Department Organizational Statement

The Ponderosa Fire Department has prepared and shall maintain "Organizational Guidelines for the Ponderosa Volunteer Fire Department", including the By-Laws of the Department, and associated guidelines, in its Operations Manual, a copy of which shall be available to each member of the department. Within the Operations Manual will be Standard Operating Guidelines that identifies task descriptions and safe operating procedures to be followed by all members.

b) Risk Management Plan

The Ponderosa Fire Department has prepared and maintains a risk management plan that is a stand alone document within the Operations Manual.

c) Occupational Safety and Health Statement

It is the policy of the fire department to provide and to operate with the highest possible levels of safety and health for all members. The prevention and reduction of accidents, injuries and occupational illnesses are goals of the PFD and shall be primary considerations at all times. This concern for safety and health applies to all members of the PFD and to any other persons who could be involved in fire department activities.

d) Roles and Responsibilities

a. Departmental

It shall be the objective of the PFD to provide a safe, healthy environment for its members when performing fire department activities. The Department shall establish and enforce rules, regulations and guidelines to assist in attaining its occupational safety and health objectives. The Department shall be responsible for compliance with all applicable laws and legal requirements with respect to member safety and health.

b. Member

Each individual member of the PFD shall cooperate, participate and be responsible for compliance with the provisions of this Occupational Safety and Health program and all guidelines implemented pursuant thereto, to assist in the attainment of the Department's occupational safety and health objectives. Each member shall be afforded the opportunity to have input into the department's Occupational Safety and Health Program.

c. Other

1. The PFD shall be responsible for developing and implementing an accident investigation procedure
2. All accidents involving PFD vehicles, equipment or facilities shall be investigated
3. The PFD shall take the corrective action necessary to avoid repetitive occurrences of accidents and exposure to communicable diseases

e) Occupational Safety and Health Committee

1. An occupational safety and health committee shall be established and shall serve the fire chief in an advisory capacity.
2. The committee shall include the following members:
 - a) Health and Safety Officer
 - b) PFD Command Staff
 - c) One member per fire station
 - d) Outside individual if desired
3. The purpose of the committee shall be to conduct research, develop recommendations, and study and review matters pertaining to occupational safety and health within the PFD
 - a) Hold regular meetings at least every six months
 - b) Record meeting notes
 - c) Hold special meetings as necessary

f) Records

The PFD shall establish a data collection system and maintain permanent records of all accidents, injuries, illnesses, exposures to infectious agents and communicable diseases, or deaths that are job related.

- a) The PFD shall maintain training records for each member indicating dates, subjects covered, satisfactory completion and any certifications achieved.
- b) The PFD shall ensure that inspection, maintenance, repair, and service records are maintained for all vehicles and equipment used for emergency operations and training. Privately owned vehicles used for emergency response shall conform to all applicable departmental standards and state laws.

g) Health and Safety Officer

Assignment:

1. The Command Staff shall have the ultimate responsibility for the fire department's Occupational Safety and Health program.

2. The Command Staff may appoint a Departmental Safety Officer. The Safety Officer shall be responsible for the development and management of the department's Occupational Safety and Health program and report directly to the Command Staff.
3. In the absence of the Safety Officer, alternate personnel may be assigned to perform the duties and responsibilities of that position which requires immediate attention.

Qualifications:

The Safety Officer shall be a fire department member and shall meet the requirements established for the position by the Command Staff. NFPA 1521 Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer will be used as a guidance document for the PFD Safety Officer.

Responsibility and Authority:

The Safety Officer shall have the responsibility to identify and cause correction of health and safety hazards.

Functions and Duties:

- a) The Safety Officer shall have and maintain knowledge of the current potential occupational safety and health hazards involved in firefighting and other department activities.
- b) The Safety Officer shall have and maintain knowledge of the current principles and techniques of managing the department's Occupational Safety and Health program.
- c) The Safety Officer shall have and maintain knowledge of the current occupational health and physical fitness factors applicable to the department's activities and operation.

D. Training and Education

1. General Requirements

As part of its Occupational Safety and Health Program the PFD will conduct safety education and training for its members commensurate with the duties and functions that they are expected to perform. Safety awareness will be an integral part of all departmental training to enable members to perform their assigned duties in a safe manner.

All training and education shall be provided by individuals deemed qualified by the Command Staff to provide instruction in the subject covered.

2. Training Frequency

Training shall be provided as necessary to assist in obtaining the fire department's Occupational Safety and Health goals and objectives.

Appropriate training and education shall be provided for all affected members whenever a new hazard is identified, new equipment is introduced, or there is a change in operating guideline.

3. Basic Training and Education Objectives

All members shall be provided with the training and education deemed appropriate by the Command Staff for their duties and responsibilities before being permitted to engage in emergency operations.

- a. The Command Staff shall establish the training and education requirements for structural firefighting, fire apparatus operation, rescue operations, emergency medical services, and hazardous materials awareness and operations.
- b. All members shall be trained in the Department's incident command system that complies with the National Incident Management System.
- c. A guideline for emergency evacuation with required training for all members engaged in fireground operations shall include procedures to be followed to provide for their safe exit from the danger area in the event of equipment failure or sudden changes in conditions.

4. Training for Structural Fire Fighting

- a. Training in structural firefighting and fireground operations shall be based upon Fire Department guidelines. These guidelines shall be maintained in written form and shall address emergency scene operations.
- b. All training exercises shall be conducted in accordance with established operational guidelines and shall be supervised by qualified instructors.
- c. Live firefighting training exercises shall be conducted based upon guidelines developed from NFPA 1403, Standard of Live Fire Training Evolutions in Structures.
- d. Smoke generating devices that produce a hazardous atmosphere shall not be used in training exercises, except for live fire burn training.

e. Special Hazards

Specialized training shall be provided to members regarding special hazards to which they may be exposed during fire department operations and activities. The PFD shall develop guidelines that describe the actions to be taken in situations involving special hazards and shall include these in the training and education programs.

E. Vehicles and Equipment

1. General

The PFD shall consider health and safety as primary concerns in the specifications, design, construction, acquisition, operation, maintenance, inspection and repair of all vehicles and equipment.

2. Drivers of Fire Department Vehicles/POV's Utilized for Emergency Response

- a. Fire Department vehicles and privately owned vehicles utilized for emergency response shall be operated only by members who meet the training and certification requirements established by the PFD for operation of that vehicle.
- b. Drivers of PFD vehicles and privately owned vehicles utilized for emergency response shall have a valid driver's license for the type of vehicle operated. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with all applicable traffic laws, including sections pertaining to emergency vehicles and Fire Department response guidelines.
- c. Drivers of Fire Department vehicles and privately owned vehicles utilized for emergency response shall be directly responsible for safe and prudent vehicle operations under all conditions.
- d. Drivers shall not move Fire Department vehicles until all persons on the vehicle are seated and secured with seat belts in approved riding positions. When the driver is under the direct supervision of an officer or senior member, that officer/senior member shall also assume responsibility for the proper seating of all persons on the vehicle.

3. Persons Riding on Fire Apparatus

- a. All persons riding on PFD vehicles shall be seated and secured to the vehicle by seat belts at any time the vehicle is in motion. Riding on the tailboard or in any other exposed position and standing while riding shall be specifically prohibited.

- b. All new fire apparatus shall be specified and ordered with a sufficient number of seats in an enclosed area as specified by the current NFPA 1901, Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus, for the maximum number of persons who may ride on the vehicle at any time.

4. Inspection, Maintenance and Repair of Vehicles

- a. All Fire Department vehicles shall be inspected at least weekly and after repair to identify and correct unsafe conditions. A preventative maintenance program shall be established and maintained. Maintenance, inspections and repairs shall be performed in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.
- b. Any Fire Department vehicle found to be unsafe shall be placed out of service until repaired. After being repaired, the vehicle shall be inspected prior to being placed back in service.
- c. Fire pumps on apparatus shall be service tested in accordance with Fire Department guidelines utilizing NFPA 1911 Standard on Acceptance and Service Tests of Fire Department Pumping Apparatus for guidance.
- d. Aerial devices shall be inspected and service tested in accordance with Fire Department guidelines utilizing NFPA 1904 Standard for Testing Fire Department Aerial Ladder and Elevating Platforms for guidance.

The PFD via a qualified contractor will perform non-destructive testing of aerial devices every two years, or if excessive conditions warrant an immediate inspection by a qualified contractor.

5. Inspection of Portable Equipment

- a. All equipment carried on fire apparatus shall be inspected at least weekly. Inventory records shall be maintained for the equipment carried on each vehicle.
- b. All equipment carried on fire apparatus shall be used and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and fire department guidelines.
- c. Firefighting equipment found to be defective or in unserviceable condition shall be removed from service or replaced.
- d. All ground ladders shall be inspected and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and fire department guidelines. The PFD has opted to perform regular visual inspections versus non-

destructive testing. Any ground ladders that may be subjected to significant adverse conditions will require immediate inspection with the potential for removing from service.

- e. All fire hose shall be inspected and service tested, in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and fire department guidelines utilizing NFPA 1962, Standard on Care, Maintenance, and Use of Fire Hose Including Connections and Nozzles for guidance.
- f. All fire extinguishers shall be inspected and tested in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and fire department standard operating procedures utilizing NFPA 10, Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers for guidance.

F. Protective Clothing and Protective Equipment

1. General

- a. The PFD shall provide each member with the appropriate protective clothing and protective equipment to provide protection from the hazards of the work environment to which the member is or may be exposed. Such protective clothing and protective equipment shall be suitable for the tasks that the member is expected to perform in that environment.
- b. Protective clothing and protective equipment shall be used in accordance with fire department guidelines whenever the member is exposed or potentially exposed to the hazards for which it is provided.
- c. Members shall be fully trained in and responsible for the care, use, inspection, maintenance and limitations of the protective clothing and protective equipment assigned to them or available for their use.
- d. Protective clothing and protective equipment shall be used and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and fire department guidelines; a maintenance and inspection program shall be established for protective clothing and protective equipment. Specific responsibilities shall be assigned for inspection and maintenance.

2. Protective Clothing for Structural Firefighting

- a. All members who may be engaged in or exposed to the hazards of structural firefighting shall be provided with both protective coats and protective trousers that meet the requirements of the current NFPA 1971, Standard on Protective Clothing for Structural Firefighting at the time of purchase.

- b. All members who may be engaged in or exposed to the hazards of structural firefighting shall be provided with helmets that meet the requirements of NFPA 1972, Standard on Helmets for Structure Firefighting at the time of purchase.
- c. All members who may be engaged in or exposed to the hazards of structural firefighting shall be provided with gloves that meet the requirements of NFPA 1973, Standard on Gloves for Structural Firefighters at the time of purchase.
- d. All members who may be engaged in or exposed to the hazards of structural firefighting shall be provided with footwear that meets the requirements of NFPA 1974, Standard on Protective Footwear for Structural Firefighting at the time of purchase.
- e. All members who may be engaged in or exposed to the hazards of structural firefighting shall be provided with current NFPA standards (at the time of purchase) approved protective hoods, earflaps, hoods, and collars that provide protection for the ears and neck and interface with the SCBA face piece, protective coat and helmet.

3. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

- a. SCBA shall be provided for and shall be used by all personnel working in areas where:
 - the atmosphere is hazardous
 - the atmosphere is suspected of being hazardous
 - the atmosphere may rapidly become hazardous
- b. In addition to the above, all personnel working below ground level or inside any confined space shall be provided with SCBA and shall use that SCBA unless the safety of the atmosphere can be established by testing and continuous monitoring.
- c. SCBA of the open-circuit design shall be positive pressure and shall meet the requirements contained in NFPA 1981, Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for Firefighters at the time of purchase.
- d. Compressed gaseous breathing air in the SCBA cylinder shall meet the requirements of the NFPA 1989, Standard on Breathing Air Quality for Fire and Emergency Services Respiratory Protection.
- e. Sources of a compressed gaseous breathing air used for filling SCBA cylinders shall be tested at least every three (3) months to assure their

compliance with the requirements stated above. The PFD shall engage a qualified contractor to provide compressor and air testing services.

- f. SCBA cylinders shall be hydrostatically tested with the periods specified by the manufacturers and the applicable government agencies.
- g. All SCBA shall be inspected, used and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and fire department guidelines.
- h. All members utilizing SCBA shall be regularly trained in the safe and proper use of this equipment.
- i. Members using SCBA shall operate in teams of two (2) or more who are in communication with each other through visual, audible, physical, safety guide rope, electronic or other means to coordinate their activities, and are in close proximity to each other to provide assistance in case of an emergency.
- j. Beards or facial hair that interferes with the face piece seal shall be prohibited for members requiring an SCBA. If eyeglasses are worn, the member shall use frames that do not pass through the seal area of the face piece.
- k. The PFD shall perform annual fit testing on all personnel who may be expected to wear any type of breathing apparatus via qualified equipment and trained personnel.

4. Personal Alert Safety System (PASS)

- a. Each member involved in an activity that requires the use of a SCBA shall be provided with and shall use a PASS device. Each PASS device shall be tested at least weekly and prior to each use, and shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.
- b. All new PASS devices used by the PVFD shall meet the current requirements of NFPA 1982, Standard on Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS) for Firefighters at time of purchase.

5. Eye and Face Shielding

Face and eye shielding shall be provided for and used by members engaged in fire suppression, rescue and other operations or activities involving hazards to the eyes and face at all times when the face is not protected by the full face piece of self-contained breathing apparatus.

6. Hearing Protection

- a. Hearing protection shall be provided for and used by all members when exposed to noise in excess of 90 dba from power tools or equipment, except in situations where the use of such protective equipment would create an additional hazard to the user.
- b. The PFD shall engage in a hearing conservation program to identify and reduce or eliminate potentially harmful sources of noise in the work environment.
- c. All windows in all apparatus shall be in the closed position while operating lights and sirens.

G. Emergency Operations

1. Emergency operations and other situations that present similar hazards, including training exercises, shall be conducted in a manner to recognize hazards and to prevent accidents and injuries.
2. The National Incident Management System will be utilized with written guidelines applying to all members involved in emergency operations. All members involved in emergency operations shall be familiar with the system.

All members shall successfully complete NIMS training courses as directed by the Command Staff.

3. The incident commander of an emergency incident shall be responsible for the overall safety of all members and all activities occurring at the scene.
4. The incident commander of an emergency incident shall establish an organization with sufficient supervisory personnel to control the position and function of all members operating at the scene and to ensure that safety requirements are satisfied.
5. A Personnel Accountability System shall be used to identify and account for the assignment of each member working within the "Hazard Zone" of an incident. The PFD has adopted the use of a Passport system.
6. Incident Safety Requirements
 - a. The PVFD shall provide an adequate number of personnel to safely conduct emergency scene operations. Operations shall be limited to those that can be safely performed by the personnel available at the scene.

- b. When inexperienced members are working at an incident, direct supervision shall be provided by more experienced officers or members.
- c. When members are operating at an emergency incident and their assignment places them in potential conflict with motor vehicle traffic, they shall wear the minimum PPE required by department guidelines, and a garment with retro-reflective material. Apparatus are to be placed appropriately to act as a shield protecting the incident scene and operating personnel.

7. Members Operating at Emergency Incidents

- a. When members are operating in hazardous areas, they shall work in teams of two (2) or more. In the initial stages of an incident where only one crew is operating in the hazardous area at a working structural fire, a minimum of four individuals shall be required, consisting of two individuals working as a crew in the hazardous area and two individuals present outside this hazardous area available for assistance or rescue at emergency operations where entry into the danger area is required.
- b. When members are operating in positions or performing functions that involve an immediate risk of injury, qualified basic life support personnel shall be standing by with medical equipment.
- c. The PFD shall establish and maintain a RIT and emergency evacuation guideline.
- d. PFD personnel shall not become involved in any activities at the scene of domestic disturbance, civil unrest, or similar situation where there is ongoing violence, without the confirmed presence of law enforcement that has deemed a secure scene.

H. Facility Safety

- 1. All PFD facilities shall be inspected to identify and cause correction of any health or safety hazards.
- 2. The PFD shall maintain all facilities and cause the correction or repair of identified health or safety hazards.

I. Rehab During Emergency Operations

- 1. The PFD maintains a Rehab Team that has been educated in basic firefighter rehabilitation processes.

2. The PFD provides the necessary supplies to maintain specific commercial products that assists in rehabbing emergency responders.

J. Member Assistance Program

The PFD supports and will make available access to critical incident stress debriefing via the Bluebonnet Critical Incident Stress Team as deemed necessary.

K. Insurance Coverage

The PVFA, Inc. will provide and maintain insurance coverage as deemed necessary by the PVFA, Inc.