

Thinking and Acting like a Member of the PFD

February 28, 2010

Always be prepared for an emergency response:

1. Carry your pager - Number 1 on your list should be "how will I know there is a run" via the PAGER. Wear it at all times you are awake. Pagers are NEVER to be worn during firefighting activities. Pagers are expensive and the member's lifeline to the PFD, treat them with care. Don't turn it down; put it on alert if you are somewhere it might be a distraction. You can't do your job on the Fire Department if your PAGER is at home while you are away, or in your car while you are in the store, or when it is turned off. Don't be complacent – emergencies occur at ANY time.
2. Park your car in such a manner that you can immediately respond – When responding to runs from home you must PARK so that at any time day or night with family and friends vehicles around, you can always get out of your parked area without having to move other vehicles. It is recommended that you back in so that in a time of rush you do not have your vision blocked by the back of your vehicle when you try to exit. This means possibly backing over someone, or something, or backing out onto a busy roadway, plus turning a vehicle can be time consuming.
3. Keep your gear with you at all times - Should you change vehicles take your gear along with you. Carry your GEAR at all times. GEAR means EMS equipment, radios, pager, backup clothing, full fire fighting protective clothing (boots, pants, coat, gloves, hood, and helmet). You can't do your job without having the proper GEAR; your GEAR means the difference of being a doer or being a watcher.
4. Lay your clothes in the same location at night for quick and easy access - Basically LAYING YOUR CLOTHES OUT means having clothing ready to put on before leaving your home to go on a "run" after being awakened by your pager for the nighttime incident. After the alert you do not need to bathe, brush your teeth, comb or brush your hair. The only things you must do are to dress appropriately for the "run", take your gear, and respond to the call. The caller really doesn't care what you look like for the 3:00am call, just that you are trained and PREPARED to handle there crisis. Learn to leave your keys in the same spot all the time. Preloading your wallet, ID's etc. is important.
5. WINTERTIME - be PREPARED for cold weather - you might add your winter coat somewhere along the path from your bedroom to your vehicle and dress before you go outside. Practice putting on your clothes in the dark so you don't disturb your spouse by turning on and off the bedroom lights. If you wear eyeglasses have those near by if you need them to drive, or if you wear contacts put them in for the run.

6. Respond to as many calls you are dispatched to as possible - Making yourself AVAILABLE to make the runs, doing your duties and responsibilities to remain an active member is very IMPORTANT in being a member of this Fire Department. Yes, it does mean you might have to leave your family and friends during a meal.
7. Yes, it does mean you have to go on a "run" while having a Birthday party, or during the time you are opening your Christmas gifts or having a Thanksgiving feast with your family. Yes, it also means getting out of your cozy bed in the middle of the night during inclement weather. It is your duty (remember the oath you signed in your application?) to make yourself AVAILABLE to help those in need of your/our services. In short, this is what it means you pledged- "you will be there for others no matter what circumstances in their time of need".
8. RESPONDING ON RUNS - Simple rules when RESPONDING ON RUNS; leave from home go to scene if you are close, or go to closest station to staff the appropriate apparatus or for standby. Listen to dispatch, take the apparatus that is dispatched or told otherwise by a Command officer. If on station take the equipment that is dispatched or like equipment for run; think, use your head.
9. GETTING CREDIT FOR THE RUN - After all runs where apparatus has responded go to the station designated as the cleanup station to clean equipment and apparatus or if the Officer In Charge states otherwise. You will only get credit for attending runs if you participate in clean up duties.

H. How to think when a call comes in:

1. No matter what type of emergency it is, always try to visualize the scene - It will allow you to prepare for tasks that may be assigned to you once you arrive
2. Prepare yourself for the worst, this enables you to learn something new
3. Always respond to the address dispatched first
4. Know where you are going: - Know major streets and subdivision names
5. At night when you are close to the address observe for the building or house with outside lights on especially on EMS calls.
6. The first truck dispatched is usually the closest to the scene. This gives you some idea on the general area.

I. Treat the customer and the customer's property with respect.

1. Wipe your feet when entering their homes especially on EMS calls.
2. Take your shoes off if necessary.
3. Protect their personal property as if it was your own.
4. What you see and your opinion of what you see in someone's home or business should be kept to yourself.
5. No horseplay, smoking, etc. on emergency scenes.

6. Our essential mission and #1 Priority is to deliver the best possible service to our customers.
7. Listen carefully to understand the customer's position, perspective and needs.
8. Give the customer your exclusive attention.
9. Be careful of what you say and how you say it – practice verbal etiquette.
10. Say Thank You.
11. Use a positive, friendly tone of voice and body language.
12. Use supportive and encouraging language that the customer understands.
13. Indicate you understand and care.
14. Reflect professional concern and guide the customer through the problem-solving process.
15. Be courteous and polite - be a sweetheart.
16. Be gentle with the customer.
17. Ask the customer about their needs.
18. Try to make the customer as comfortable as possible.
19. Take whatever time is required to establish positive interpersonal contact.
20. Explain what happened, what you are doing, and what you think the outcome will be in clear, plain language.
21. Spend extra time with the customer/family.
22. Don't use excessively technical language.
23. Avoid value judgments that reflect your personal perspective/opinion.
24. Whenever possible, ask the customer how you can construct a response to fit their needs.
25. Ask them where it hurts.
26. Ask them what is important to them.
27. Ask them what will make them feel better.
28. Design and extend the service in your professional terms.

J. Meetings - There are two types of meetings;

1. Board meetings are where policy and personnel decisions are made.
2. Officers meetings are for the general membership; to have input into the budget, by-laws, policy, projects and personnel issues.
3. It is important that members attend meetings. Your input is considered in the decision making process because you are part of an important team.
4. Meetings are a place where team members communicate among each other, so the team can improve itself for the future.
5. Work detail is a great training device.
6. You are able to perform tasks that aren't usually done on a regular basis.
7. On occasion you are asked to report to the station to help with a special detail.
8. Work details are usually not planned.
9. The more that show up, the sooner the task can be completed.

K. What does customer service do for us?

1. Secures and maintains adequate resources and benefits.
2. Happy customers, bosses, voters and workers
3. Brings out the best in us
4. Provides positive job satisfaction
5. It's the right thing to do
6. Places us in the best position to compete
7. Completes our basic customer promise
8. It's fun to be good and to do good
9. Doing it right the first time eliminates bad press, liability, lawyers, lots of meetings, and extra paperwork.
10. It saves lives and lots of stuff that is really important to our customers

L. Protect Our Image And Reputation

**IMAGE IS EVERYTHING – WE ARE WHAT WE ARE PERCEIVED-
PERCEPTION IS REALITY!**

1. When you display our identification on your vehicle you are on duty.
2. When you display our identification you are a representative of this fire department and all of its members.
3. When you wear any part of our fire department uniform you are on duty.
4. When you wear any part of our fire department uniform you are a representative of this fire department and all of its members.
5. When you are away from home you may wear Ponderosa Fire Department clothing that is clean, free of holes, and approved by the officers.
6. Regardless of what you think, the public is watching – you are always “on stage”. Make sure you do not represent Ponderosa Fire Department in any form if you are going out drinking, partying, or some form of adult entertainment. Don't be doing something that embarrasses the fire department while wearing Ponderosa identification.
7. Your personal appearance reflects on the fire department. Sloppy looks and poor personal hygiene gives the public a poor impression of the fire department. Clean clothes, clean-shaven and a neat appearance give the public a good impression of the fire department.
8. Drive respectfully in your personal vehicle if it in any way symbolizes the fire department (i.e. lights, stickers, license plate, etc.) Speeding, honking, reckless driving, and destruction of property, (i.e. yards, ditches, driveways, etc.) is not tolerated.
9. At all times be aware of how your image and actions in the public is not only closely watched by the public, but also a direct reflection of the fire department.
10. Know what to do on a emergency response, how to do it, and where equipment is on apparatus.
11. Training sessions are not usually conducted on an emergency scene.

12. Become familiar with and competent in operating equipment.
13. USE YOUR COMMON SENSE!
14. THINK BEFORE YOU ACT!
15. If you see a problem, a mess, or something broken and you pass it by without acting, you are just as responsible as the person who did it and left it there.
16. Full trashcans, dirty dishes, messy or dirty floors, or trash in the parking lot is EVERYONE's responsibility. Every member of the fire department should take care of the taxpayer's property.
17. Trucks should be washed when they are dirty. The officer in charge of the run may elect to not wash trucks.
18. Don't assume that "it's someone else's job" or "someone else will do it". Everyone is responsible for the upkeep and appearance of the fire department.
19. Don't wait to tell someone. If you see anything wrong, act immediately. Correct the situation if you are able or contact someone who can. Big problems usually started as small ones nobody took the time to mention to someone.

M. How to use PFD Buildings

During your stay at a fire station:

1. Turn off unnecessary lights/equipment
2. Leave the radios set the way they are...or return them to such after using them.
3. Sit on chairs instead of the tables, countertops or windowsills.
4. Keep food and drinks away from computers.
5. If there are people working in the computer, be courteous and take your conversation to another room.
6. If you use the last of something or notice supplies getting low, tell someone.
7. Flush the toilet after use.
8. Clean up after yourself (wash your dishes, throw away your trash, etc. unfortunately we can't afford a maid service).
9. Even if you didn't make the mess.... take pride in the building and clean it up.

When leaving a fire station:

1. Turn off the lights.
2. Turn the thermostat up or down (according to the season)- auto thermostats are not to be adjusted
3. Make sure the door shuts completely behind you

N. Proper use of PFD Phones:

It is sometimes hard to remember that we are a business that provides service to customers, so we need to be professional when answering the phone. Even if you think you know who may be calling, answer each phone call professionally. An example would be "Ponderosa Fire Department, (name) speaking" or even include your rank with your name (Chief, Asst. Chief, Captain, Firefighter). Be proud of yourself and the department that you represent! The phone calls that we answer are our links to the public... we do not want a bad public image!

1. If you take a message, be thorough. Get their name, their phone number, what they want and make sure the message is relayed to the proper person. Print legibly.
2. Do not use the telephone for excessive use for personal reasons.
3. Do not make long distance calls.
4. Always use a phone directory or the internet versus 4-1-1.