

PONDEROSA FIRE DEPARTMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. Organization:

Fire departments are organized under a paramilitary type organization. There is a hierarchy of rank using the paramilitary style of organization. This department is organized similarly. A new member starts out as a Probationary Firefighter candidate, and then can progress through the ranks to Fire fighter, Lieutenant, Jr. Captain, Captain, Deputy Chief, Asst. Chief and the Fire Chief. With each succeeding rank additional responsibility and authority are advanced. If a fire department is to be successful a system of ranking along with the proper authority and responsibility delegated to those with rank must be established and maintained.

Disciplined fire fighters and officers are important to the success of our organization. Discipline is a system of standards and rules that set parameters for operations.

B. Rules:

Rules are established to determine acceptable actions, and provide guidance and direction to all members. Rules are not established to punish, restrict or stop someone from doing something that is a benefit to the department or to the entire membership but are general guidelines for behavior.

When confronted with a situation or action that you must take where you believe the rules provide no guidance the member should ask "what if everybody did it?" If the answer to the question gives the member an uneasy feeling, then don't do it. When supervision is not available and a member is confronted with a situation where no supervisor can be confronted ask the question to yourself. When all else fails, common sense prevails.

ALL PERSONNEL - These rules and regulations apply to all members unless otherwise stated.

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

1. DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT - No member shall remove any apparatus or equipment from the facilities, nor use the facilities for any outside activity without the permission of the Fire Chief, or senior officer present.
2. DEPARTMENT NAME - A member of the Department shall not utilize any portion of the District, Association, or Department's property, equipment, name, or good will for personal gain. Any utilization of the District, Association, or Department's property, name, or good will must be for the sake of fire prevention and/or firefighting activities.
3. DEPARTMENT OUTERWEAR - Any use of the District, Association, or Department's property, equipment or name for outerwear or uniforms shall be approved by the Fire Chief.
4. STANDARD OF CONDUCT - Members and officers shall conduct their personal and professional lives in such a manner as to avoid bringing discredit to the department or its members. Any lewd/lascivious behavior is not acceptable
5. DISCIPLINE - The Fire Chief, or member of the Command Staff, shall be empowered to relieve or suspend from active status any firefighter for disobedience, insubordination, violation of any rules, regulations, guidelines, by-laws of the Association or Organizational Guidelines of the department, or if the firefighter is deemed incapable of performing the required duties. The suspension will be reviewed by the Command Staff. The Command Staff will then determine the length of suspension or renewing of membership status.
6. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES - At all times, fire fighters shall take appropriate action to protect the life and property of our citizens and seek compliance with laws and ordinances within the jurisdiction of the department.
7. DUTY RESPONSIBILITIES - Officers and fire fighters shall perform all duties delegated to them in the manner prescribed by their superiors. Officers and fire fighters under the direction of their superior officer shall maintain apparatus, tools, and equipment (in their care or possession) in a clean condition and in readiness for operation at all times. Officers and fire fighters shall observe and study the principles of modern fire fighting, fire prevention, emergency medical, fire, rescue, ventilation and salvage operations.
8. PERFORMANCE OF DUTY - All officers and fire fighters shall perform their duties as required or directed by law, department rules, policy or order, or by order of a superior officer. All duties required by competent authority shall be performed promptly as directed.

9. HAIRSTYLES - Hairstyles shall be of a nature, which can be readily protected by standard issue protective equipment. The hairstyle shall not interfere with the equipment's function. No suppression firefighter of the Ponderosa Fire Department shall participate in emergency operations when the presence of facial hair and/or the length of hair may impair the effectiveness of protective equipment. The hairstyle shall not interfere with the equipment's function. The presence of excess facial hair (beard or sideburns) is considered by the Ponderosa Fire Department as having the potential to preclude the possibility of an adequate face-mask seal during emergency operations where use of SCBA is deemed mandatory.
10. OBEDIENCE TO LAWS AND REGULATIONS - Officers and fire fighters shall observe and obey all laws, standard operating procedures, rules and regulations and general or special order of the department.
11. ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS - Immediately upon being accepted by the department fire fighters shall inform the department of their correct address and telephone number. Changes in address or telephone number shall be reported within seven (7) days to the Administrative Assistant.
12. COOPERATION - Cooperation between officers and fire fighters is essential for effective fire department organization and operations. Therefore, every member is expected to cooperate with officers and fellow fire fighters in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the organization.
13. ASSISTANCE - All members are required to aid a fellow fire fighter exposed to danger.
14. INSUBORDINATION - Failure or deliberate refusal of any officer, fire fighter or member to obey a reasonable request/order given by a superior shall be grounds for insubordination.
15. QUESTIONS REGARDING ASSIGNMENTS - Members in doubt as to the nature or detail of their assignment shall seek such information from their superior officers by going through the chain of command.
16. COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT - All department members issued personal radio receivers shall maintain the radio in operating condition. Any problem with the operation of the radio shall be reported immediately to the communications coordinator.
17. KNOWLEDGE OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS - Every officer and member is required to establish and maintain a working knowledge of laws and ordinances in force within the State and County, the rules, regulations and guidelines of the department. In the event of improper action or breach of discipline, it will be presumed that the officer or member was familiar with the law, rule, regulation or guideline in question.
18. CONDUCT TOWARD SUPERIOR AND SUBORDINATE OFFICERS AND ASSOCIATES - Officers and fire fighters shall treat superior officers and subordinates and associates with respect. They shall be courteous and civil at all times in their relationship with one another.

19. CRITICISM OF ORDERS - Officers and fire fighters shall not publicly criticize instructions or orders they have received.
20. MANNER OF ISSUING ORDERS - Orders from a superior to a subordinate shall be in clear and understandable language civil in tone, and issued in pursuit of departmental business.
21. CHAIN OF COMMAND - If a fire department is to operate effectively a method of determining responsibility is established. The Chain of Command for this department starts with the Board of Directors to the Fire Chief, Command Staff, Appointed Officers and ends with the fire fighter. Each member has a responsibility to insure that as situations arise the proper person responsible for the situation is informed immediately upon notification.
22. OBEDIENCE TO UNJUST OR IMPROPER ORDERS - Officers and fire fighters who are given orders they feel to be unjust or contrary to rules and regulations, must first obey the order to the best of their ability and then may proceed to appeal through the proper channels.
23. REPORTS AND APPEALS - An officer or member receiving an order he/she feels unjust or improper, shall at first opportunity, report in writing to the Fire Chief. This report shall contain the facts of the incident and the action taken. Appeals for relief from the Fire Chief's decision shall be made to the Command Staff.
24. EMERGENCY RESPONSE CONDUCT - all members when performing emergency response work must realize that the department provides a service and that the customer is the person who receives that service. The customer has the right to expect prompt, courteous and professional service. All fire fighters shall conduct themselves in such a manner that instills public confidence in the fire fighter and the fire department.
25. SEATBELTS - All passengers must be seated and belted whenever the vehicle is in motion. The only exception to this rule is during slow speeds (less than 10mph) such as parades and the annual Santa Claus events. Seat belts may be removed after setting the parking brake or by direct order of the right seat officer upon arrival of an emergency scene. This specifically refers to arrival at an emergency where one or more personnel are ordered to depart the vehicle for a specific assignment and the vehicle is being positioned elsewhere. **Failure to adhere to this rule** will result in the senior officer and/or right seat officer's suspension from active duty for a minimum of seven (7) days, or increased by the Fire Chief. In addition, the non-complying individual will receive the same reprimand as the right seat officer. The Fire Chief reserves the right to provide one (1) written reprimand that will be placed in the respective personal file.

26. SECURITY - Members of the PFD are to maintain strict control over entrance to the premises; access to work locations and records; computer information; and cash or other items of monetary value. Members who are assigned keys, given special access, or assigned job responsibilities in connection with the safety, security, or confidentiality of records, material, equipment, or items of monetary or business value, shall use sound judgment and discretion in carrying out their duties. Members will be held accountable for any wrongdoing or acts of indiscretion.
27. CONFIDENTIALITY - Of particular concern is the subject of personal right to privacy. Documentation of incident reports and computer system access must be of a confidential nature to prevent invasion of privacy. We also consider the personal privacy of members. Information about the PFD, its victims/patients, suppliers, or members must not be divulged to anyone other than persons who have a right to know, or are authorized to receive information. If you are in doubt as to whether certain information is or is not confidential, you should not disclose any information without clearing through the Fire Chief, or designate.
28. MEDIA RELEASE - There shall be no news releases made, nor letters written, concerning any aspects of Departmental activities without prior notification to the Fire Chief. A member of the Command Staff or senior officer present shall be the only person to discuss the events leading to, possible causes of, or any other matters regarding a fire or other emergency situation with members of the news media or any other person not a member of the PFD the only exception to this shall be a person designated by the Fire Chief.
29. INCIDENT INFORMATION - While at the scene of an emergency, or in the company of non-Ponderosa firefighters, PFD personnel are not to discuss the events leading to, possible causes of, or any other matters regarding the fire or other emergency. It is highly recommended that NO discussions occur between members regarding an emergency until return to the respective stations.
30. FIRE REPORTS – Anyone requesting an “NFIRS” fire report can obtain a copy from the Harris County Fire and Emergency Services Department or the PFD. The PFD "Truck Report" is considered confidential information of the department is not to be released to the public under most conditions. Items of a confidential nature recorded on a truck report, other forms or records may be forwarded to the Harris County Fire and Emergency Services Department with the understanding this information is the confidential information of PFD and is not to be released without the consent of the Fire Chief, or designate.
31. USE OF COMPUTERS - Personal software is not to be added to PFD computers. The Fire Chief must approve all computer system individual access and/or modifications. PFD computer use for illicit and/or illegal purposes is strictly prohibited.

32. GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE - A Grievance Committee consisting of a member of the Command Staff and four firefighter members shall be appointed by the Fire Chief to hear the grievance of any member, who feels unjustly relieved, suspended, reprimanded, or has any complaint regarding the Department or its guidelines. This shall not be a standing committee, but shall be appointed at such time as a grievance is brought to the attention of a member of the Command Staff in writing by the member concerned or an intermediary. If the grievance involves a disciplinary matter, the officer issuing such action, shall submit a report of the detail of the offense to the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee has the power to modify the discipline as it so deems appropriate. In addition, the Association has established an OMBUDSMAN procedure that may be activated in the event any member still feels treated unjustly.
33. JUNIOR MEMBERS - It is the intent of this department to sponsor junior members between the ages of 12 and 17 (inclusive) in a Junior Membership Program. These junior personnel shall be governed by these and all other regularly established guidelines and any others as may be established from time to time to regulate this specific activity.
1. Subject to written parental approval, Juniors (16-17) will be allowed to fight structure fires on the recommendation of their Station Captain to the Command Staff.
 2. Junior members who meet the requirements of the Department shall be eligible to vote for the PVFA 3rd Vice President.
 3. Student Firefighter Participation:
 - a) A student firefighter shall carry passing grades in all academic subjects.
 - b) If a student firefighter receives an "F" in an academic subject as a six-week grade, he/she will begin a restricted activity level as determined by their Lt. and Captain.
 - c) He/She may resume normal activities when no "F" grades are issued on his/her next grade period.
 - d) A student firefighter not adhering to this policy shall be suspended for not less than three months for each occurrence.

C. Uniform Regulations:

1. Class A or Dress Uniform
 - a. Non issued long-sleeve dress shirt (Neatly pressed)
 - b. Blue pants, preferably "Dickies" (not blue jeans)
 - c. Non issued black tie
 - d. Black belt

- e. Black polishable shoes or patent leather
- f. Collar brass, determined by your rank
- g. PFD provided name tag
- h. PFD provided badge (worn above the left breast pocket)
- i. Blue PFD T-shirt under dress shirt
- j. The three chief officer positions use white shirts with optional dress coats and hats to be determined.

2. Class B Uniform:

- a. PFD provided short-sleeve dress shirt (Neatly pressed)
- b. Blue pants, preferably “Dickies” (not blue jeans)
- c. Black belt
- d. Black polishable shoes
- e. Collar brass, determined by your rank
- f. PFD provided name tag
- g. PFD provided badge (worn above the left breast pocket)
- h. Blue PFD T-shirt under dress shirt

Ties are optional on the Class B uniform. It will be at the discretion of the senior officer of the event to determine if ties are needed. If at that time it is deemed necessary a black tie will be loaned to the member for the event and returned upon completion.

3. Class C Uniform:

- a. Blue PFD T-shirt (2 issued per year)
- b. Blue pants, preferably “Dickies” (not blue jeans)
- c. Black belt
- d. Black polishable shoes

4. The following items are to be provided by the PFD to the member upon completion of their probationary period:

- a. One short-sleeve dress shirt, color depending on rank
- b. Badge
- c. Name tag
- d. Set of “FD” collar brass

Note: Uniform items may be purchased by the individual upon approval from the Command Staff.

5. PFD provided collar brass & provided shirts:

- a. Chief – Gold – 5 crossed bugles. White shirt
- b. Asst. Chief – Gold – 4 crossed bugles. White shirt
- c. Deputy Chief – Gold – 3 crossed bugles. White shirt
- d. Captains – Gold – 2 parallel bugles. Blue shirt
- e. Fire Marshal – Gold – 2 crossed bugles. Blue shirt
- f. Lieutenants – Silver – 1 bugle. Blue shirt
- g. Firefighters – Silver – “FD” insignia. Blue shirt

6. Other Uniform Guidelines:

- a. Uniforms will always be neatly pressed and clean.
- b. Additional objects such as, cell phones, wallets, keys, knives, jewelry shall not interfere with the uniform, be attached, or be exposed.
- c. In addition to the above mentioned, when in a quiet setting or when directed by the senior officer, all electronic devices shall be placed in the vibrate position or turned off. (ie. Funerals, special ceremonies, etc.)
- d. The cuffs will be buttoned when wearing the long sleeve department shirt.
- e. Only the department patch is to be worn on the left sleeve of the shirt.
- f. A medical certification patch can be worn on the right sleeve if so desired.

7. Uniform Accessories:

- a. Nametag: The nametag shall be centered on the right shirt pocket. The bottom of the nametag shall be even with the top of the shirt pocket.
- b. Collar Brass: The Department collar brass will be divided into two classifications:
- c. Rank Insignia: Rank insignia is gold or silver in color, and is issued to the department officers only. When wearing the rank insignia on the shirt collar, the widest part of the bugle(s) shall be centered to the point of the collar ¼” from the edge.
- d. FD Insignia: The FD insignia will be issued to all members and will be silver in color. The insignia shall be worn with the top of the letters parallel to the top of the collar so the insignia is ¼” from both the front edge and bottom of the collar.
- e. Service Pin: The department provided service award may also be worn on the left breast pocket.

8. Probationary members:

Members attending events prior to the end of their probationary period will have the needed items loaned to them during the event. The items will be returned to the senior officer at the end of the event to be returned to stock.

9. Determining what uniform to wear:

It is the responsibility of the senior officer in charge of the event to determine what uniform is needed. The officer shall contact all members that are attending prior to the date of the event and advise them of what uniform will be needed. It is the responsibility of the member to acquire all of the items needed for that uniform.

10. Resignation or termination from PFD:

All issued items must be returned if the member decides to resign or is terminated from the PFD, immediately. It is the responsibility of the member's Lieutenant to ensure that all issued items are returned to the PFD.

11. Promotion to a rank or demotion from a rank:

All issued items must be returned if the member obtains a new rank or is removed from their current rank. At the time items are returned, new items will be issued to the member. If the member wishes to keep their items at that time, they can be purchased for the amount the department paid for the items.

D. Jumpsuit Regulations:

1. Left shoulder - departmental patch.
2. Right Shoulder (optional) - State Firemen's Patch and Level of Certification (optional), or
3. Left Breast above Pocket or right shoulder (optional) – Texas EMS certification patch.

E. Helmet Regulations

1. Each Firefighter will have his/her name on the rear of their helmet utilizing vinyl adhesive style letters provided by the department (traditional style helmets have the option of this name requirement):
 - a) Black helmet – white letters
 - b) Yellow helmet – red letters
 - c) Orange helmet – white letters
 - d) Red helmet – white letters
 - e) White helmet – black letters
2. Traditional style helmets require the front panel to signify department and rank.
3. EMS certified personnel may have one (1) decal on the rear lower left portion of the bonnet of the helmet.
4. Helmet manufacturer provided reflective patches are to be used. They may have to be relocated slightly.
5. All helmets shall be kept clean to prevent a build-up of tar and smoke stains.
6. No other decals of any type will be allowed except Chief's eagles.

7. Members may purchase their won helmet providing they meet the following criteria:
 - a) Must meet current NFPA standards (latest revision)
 - b) Color shall be that of rank in the department (eg. Chief: white, Capt: Red, Lt.: yellow, FF: black)
 - c) Front pieces on Traditional Style helmets are to be the same color as the helmet with panels as follows:
 1. White front – red panels – white letters
 2. Black front – red panels – white letters
 3. Yellow front – red panels – white letters
 4. Red front – red panels – white letters
 5. Orange front – white panels – black letters
8. Department Officer panel – shall have rank on the top panel, “Ponderosa” on the bottom panel, the center will be in accordance to rank in number of bugles.
9. Captain and Firefighter panel – shall have rank on the top panel, “Ponderosa” on the bottom panel, the center will be a number representing the respective station.

G. What is Going On?

There are several methods the department uses to keep members informed. The first priority is your department issued Motorola pager. This pager will inform you of emergency calls and other department information. All members with Email accounts will have pertinent information sent to them via email. The alphanumeric pagers that are available for purchase are another method of being informed. Talking with other members is another method of keeping abreast of activities. Attending weekly training sessions is a regular method of explaining activities about the department.

All communications is relative and is usually given and received through filters. Each of us has biases that may not really allow us to hear what is actually being said. In any case members should ASK questions about activities or actions.

H. Department Membership Privileges

All members are allowed to:

1. Wash your vehicle at your fire station - members shall clean up after using the outside driveway apron.
2. View videotapes - video tapes may be taken home for viewing as long as they are signed out by the training officer or the designee.

3. Use computers - courtesy shall be extended to other members who are at HQ's to accomplish FD business. Personal software is not to be added to FD computers.
4. Attend any Board of Directors, general membership and/or officer's meetings- an exception is when an executive session is called.
5. Respond to emergency calls within their level of training or certification.
6. Fire fighters who are not EMS certified respond to auto accidents and all other fire related types of incidents.

Members are not allowed to:

1. Remove any property owned by the fire department for personal use.
2. Use fire department gasoline or diesel fuel for personal use.
3. Use fire department tax-exempt number for personal purchases.
4. Take apparatus or equipment home with the intention of using for personal use.
5. Bring items on fire department property for fire department use without prior approval of a Chief Officer.
6. Discuss with the news media fire department business without prior discussion with the senior officer present.
7. Take something that does not belong to them.
8. Gossip, berate or bring discredit to the fire department or its members.
9. Bring X-rated videos, movies or pornographic paraphernalia on fire department property, including Internet related issues.