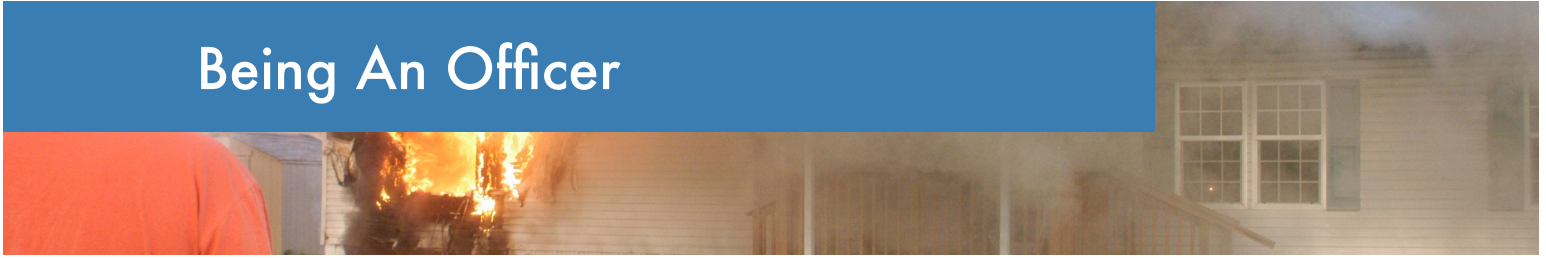


Being An Officer



Being An Officer – Briefing Document

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The change in the sphere of responsibility requires an person to change some on-duty behaviors or practices. This change creates an expectation that the individual will behave in a way that is appropriate for a first line supervisor. Behavior that was acceptable as a firefighter may be unacceptable as a fire officer. The fire officer must consider how to respond to pranks and verbal jabs from firefighters. What may have been appropriate response from another firefighter may no longer be the best response from an officer.

Functions of Management

Planning – developing a scheme, program, or method that is worked out beforehand to accomplish an objective. Planning includes establishing goals and objectives and then developing a plan to meet and evaluate those goals and objectives.

Organizing – putting together into an orderly, functional, structured whole.

Leading – guiding or directing in a course of action. The act of leadership is a complex process of influencing others to accomplish a task. Leading is the human side of managing. It includes motivation, training, guiding and directing staff.

Controlling – restraining, regulating, governing, counteracting, or overpowering. Officers are in the controlling function when they consider the impact on the budget before making purchases, when they conduct staff performance appraisals, or when they ensure compliance with department policies.

Officers use the functions of management to get work accomplished by and through others. The four functions are a continuous cycle. Each officer level may use each function to a different degree.

Supervisor – functions as the official representative of the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief expects every fire officer to issue orders and directives that conduct business in a way that meets the chief's objectives. Fire Officer will supervise situations and staff in a way that is consistent with the rules and regulations of the fire department.

Unpopular orders and directives – even if the officer disagrees this is an expectation for all officers – the organization expects the officer to carry out that directive to the best of their ability. Improve your ability to handle an unpopular order by determining the story or history behind the order. The story behind the order assists the fire officer in putting the issue in perspective. Telling the firefighters that an officer disagrees with an order undermines their authority and ability to be effective. Enforcing unpopular orders is part of the job.

Commander – the fire officer is expected to demonstrate a special type of supervisory technique. A fire officer has to function as a commander and exercise strong direct supervision over the staff. Developing a command presence is a key part of mastering the art of command. Command presence is the ability of an officer to project an image of being in control of the situation. In order to be a successful leader, the officer must convince others to follow by **demonstrating the ability to take charge and make the right things happen.**

Trainer – responsibility of making sure the firefighters are trained, confident and competent.

Vital importance of integrity and ethical behavior – the fire officer position provides a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate ethical behavior. Demonstrating ethical behavior makes decisions and models behavior that are consistent with the department's core values, mission statement, and value statements. Integrity refers to the complex system of inherent attributes that determines person moral and ethical actions and reactions, that include the quality of being honest. The fire officer should "walk the talk" and demonstrate behaviors that are important. Integrity can be demonstrated by a steadfast adherence to a moral code.

Code of Ethics – 1 portion / recognize that we serve in a position of public trust that imposes responsibility to use publicly owned resources effectively and judiciously.

Managerial Style

Indifferent – evade and elude / represents the lowest level of concern for both results and people. The key word for this style is neutral.

Controlling – direct and dominate / demonstrates a high concern for results, along with a low concern for others. The high concern for results brings determination, focus and drive for success.

Accommodating – yield and comply / demonstrates a low concern for results with a high concern for other people. Maintains a heightened awareness of the personal feelings, goals, and ambitions of others, and always considers how proposed actions will affect them. Usually is approachable, fun, friendly and always ready to listen with sympathy and encouragement.

Controlling and accommodating styles are opposites in their perspectives. Each of these orientations lead in a narrow and singularly focused manner by ignoring the other primary concern in the workplace.

“Follow the rule of the five ‘F’s’.”

Fair – treat everyone fairly regardless of perspective, status or past.

Family – respect the family needs as a high priority.

Friendly - this is not personal discipline is about the behavior

Firm – maintain your principles and values. Do not succumb to political pressure.

Fun – laugh and enjoy our time together whenever possible.