

< Date >

Lt. Chris Sterricker

< Shift >

< Station >

Welcome to < > shift! I am very excited to be working with you in the very near future. I hope that our time together as a crew will be rewarding and educational for all of us.

The purpose of this packet is to give each member a look into how our shift will operate and my expectations. Historically a new Lieutenant gathers the shift for a meeting and the "New Lieutenant Talk." This will still happen but I want everyone to hit the ground running on our first day together. I hope that this packet will give everyone an understanding and basis for some of the things we will address in that talk. Please read this packet, make notes and jot questions prior to our first shift together. At some point we will gather to discuss the things contained in this packet as well as other things. I do not want this to be a one-sided discussion, so please take some time to really read this and think about the things contained in it. Please also have the packet available, I would like us all to go over it together and be able to read and see the same things if questions arise.

Again, I am looking forward to becoming a part of the crew and working together. Stay safe.

< Signature >

Chris

Shift Hot Sheet

My Philosophy

A philosophy is defined as, “*a theory or attitude held by a person or organization that acts as a guiding principle for behavior.*” So here is mine that I will use to guide our crew:

Show up, follow the basic rules, do good work and try to improve this place a little. I also believe that what happens on the street is what really matters and that which we will strive to excel at.

That’s it in a nutshell.

-Show up > Be here *at least* on time. I understand bad traffic, mis-set alarm clocks, the time-change etc. But if it becomes a habit there will be an issue. There is nothing I can do to force anyone to be here early. However, I do believe it is a good idea not to be rushing to beat the clock right off the bat in the morning. Scientific truth or not, I just think that if you start your day that way it sets the tone for your whole day and it usually is not a positive tone.

-Follow the basic rules > ‘Nuff said. I am not a militaristic type who looks for every little infraction or enforces every nuance of every rule but things like seat belts, SCBA’s, traffic safety vests and a few other things are non-negotiable and will not have a blind eye turned. Anything that is written in the Rules and Regs, SOG’s or General Directives is cut and dried. If there is a violation *and there is no truthful, defensible reason why it was violated* then I have no choice. Capiche? If something happens and there was a semi-decent reason, even if it was wrong, I will go to bat for you. Be honest with me and I will defend you as far as I possibly can.

-Do good work > Just like traffic and alarm clocks I completely understand sick kids, late nights and just plain old being in a bad mood. Every day I show up I don’t want to do everything we need to around here. But, just like the be on time thing, if I constantly have to come looking for you, notice things aren’t getting done or are being ignored or that every day you work you just don’t want to do anything there will be an issue. Hiding somewhere to be on your computer or phone will not be tolerated. Hiding somewhere to run your part-time

business or to do part-time work **really** won't be tolerated. This is your primary job and one in which people can be seriously hurt or killed, act like it.

-Try to improve this place a little > If everyone did just one thing a shift that they didn't necessarily have to do or took on a little project here or there maybe we could improve certain things for everyone. Will you be paid extra? No. Will you get more time off? No. Will operations be improved or a great idea instituted or will you just simply feel some satisfaction at doing something? Hopefully. What do I mean? When it was my shift as the Engineer I would pick a compartment and either clean it, straighten it up or something to make it a little better and user-friendly. Or I'd clean the lenses on the emergency lights and maybe throw some wax or polish on them because maybe it'll help prevent someone from hitting us, just maybe. Or clean up the shop, or the fitness room or the library or something. Do you have to? Not necessarily. Will it improve our operations or our comfort of living here for 24 hours at a time? Probably. It doesn't have to be huge, just something.

-What happens on the street is what really matters and that which we will strive to excel at > This is the big one and that which I truly believe and take to heart. If a day comes when I am more concerned over whether or not the bunk room was dusted or the perimeter patrol was done over if we can pull lines, make a hydrant, throw ladders or deliver quality EMS care you all have permission to close the door on the office and ask me what the f**k happened to me without any fear of repercussions. Promise, honest injun. We all know we drill from 9 'till Noon just about every day. I think we can all agree that some training is lacking or is simply required by OSHA, IDOL or other agencies and really doesn't help or prepare us for our primary missions of fire suppression and life-safety. Therefore, expect additional training sessions. I just pictured the eye-rolls and heard the big sighs. Before you get all twisted out of shape, I'm not talking hours-long drills or drills after-hours or anything. I'm talking about returning from an ambulance call and stopping at the new house or business being built and looking around. Or after we reset the AFA throwing a couple ladders on the business and taking a look at the roof. Or just talking about the building and what our tactics and strategies would be. I truly believe that we need to train as our regular

crew with me as the Lieutenant so that you know what to expect from me and how I operate and what I can expect from you and how you operate. Will I put on some extra search or ladder or hose advancement drills at the station? Sure. Especially if I notice deficiencies in our performance at regular drills or actual incidents. But they don't have to be big deals and last for hours on end unless we really suck at something. And since we are on that subject, I want to say something about me here:

Just because I have been promoted and am now “the boss”, I DO NOT believe I am the end-all be-all of the fire service! I WILL make mistakes as a new Lieutenant or may not know fully how to handle a situation. EVERYONE has the right and the responsibility to point something out to me on the scene, ask me about a decision (respectfully and at the appropriate time) or offer a different perspective or information on something I may not be well versed on (again, respectfully and at the appropriate time).

I know we have had officers in the past that are the exact opposite of everything I have just said. I hope to not be another one. Again, if I am, you all have permission to close the door and ask me what the f**k is wrong with me. This does not mean that this crew will be an open Democracy on every decision, but I will take constructive criticism and seek your input on certain things. Since I am now the boss, however, sometimes I will not seek your input and will simply make a decision no matter how unpopular or unilateral it may be at the time.

My Belief

A belief is defined as, *“something one accepts as true or real; a firmly held opinion or conviction.”* So here is my belief about this job and what I want to see in my crew.

I believe that being a firefighter (ok, and a paramedic too) really is a calling and that God does not call just anyone to be one. Unfortunately, God does not hire every firefighter and we sometimes have people who are on the job that may not necessarily have been

called to be firefighters when they picked up the application packet. It doesn't mean that they *can't* be firefighters, it just means that those people who are truly called to be firefighters may have more of a passion and drive for the job than those who just happened to pass the test and get hired. Having said that, I do not hold someone whom I believe has been called to be a firefighter to a different standard than someone who is on the job because they passed all the tests. Regardless of how many or few fires we fight, how many or few pin-ins we go to, how many or few victims we rescue from fires, or any of the other multitudes of things we do, we need to do them well and with as few mistakes as humanly possible. I don't care if you believe that God had a mold for a firefighter and poured you into it or you got this job because you thought it was good money, had lots of days off and was relatively secure, both firefighters need to perform equally. What I am trying to say is this, you will be judged on your performance at drills and actual incidents. You will be judged on your knowledge of this job and your desire to put forth effort. The standard by which you will be judged is mine. Period. Not the NFPA's (we all know what that acronym really stands for), not the Training Officer's, not the Battalion Chief's but by me. While all those other people or entities will also be judging you it will be me who will be doing your yearly evaluation and will hopefully one day be judging you for advancement. If I *believe* that you have weak skills in some area expect extra practice. If I *believe* you do the absolute bare minimum to get by, or less, expect counseling sessions until you improve or until discipline is required. If I *believe* that you have little to no interest in becoming a better firefighter (and all that encompasses that general title i.e. paramedic) expect to be unhappy until I get transferred to another station or shift or until you do. Do I sound like an a**hole? Do I sound like I've changed since getting promoted? Good. I have changed. **My job and my responsibilities to myself, the District, our citizens and MOST IMPORTANTLY to you and your families has changed!** I am no longer simply responsible for myself and maybe my partner. I am now responsible for everyone on my crew. I am no longer responsible only to the patient I am treating at that moment but to all the potential patients that we as a crew can and will encounter. If I think you are weak in a certain area and blow it off because we just don't get many fires and then something happens

when we do get a fire I am responsible for any injury, or worse, that happens to you.

I cannot make you *want* to be a better trained, more knowledgeable, more proficient firefighter. I can, however, ensure that you are one.

How we get to that point and what attitude both of us will display during that process is up to no one else but you. If you think that drill is a waste of time, that we never will have to do a window-bail or a RIT operation or stabilize a car past regular step-chocks then you will most likely be miserable, bored or both with me as your Lieutenant. I **NEVER** want to have to look at your wife/husband/girlfriend/boyfriend/parents/children at your funeral and tell them that I knew you didn't know how to get out of a window, or how to force your way through a wall or that I saw an article on hybrid vehicles I thought you needed to read but that I just ignored it or let you off easy during training. I won't put myself through that and you shouldn't even want to consider the possibility of putting your family or loved ones through that. The very fact that we do not get very many low-frequency, high-risk incidents demands that we train frequently on them. Very few things will upset me more than complete apathy towards training or improvement. But there are some. So, in the spirit of fairness, here are the top ones so you are aware of them beforehand and can prepare yourself prior to us beginning to work together.

Hot Buttons

1) Radios

-Everyone has one, carry it and have it on and in a fashion to be able to hear traffic. In other words, not shoved in your back pocket with the mic hanging off the antenna facing behind you.

-Numerous times on ambulance calls one guy stays with the pt and another goes to the rig for equipment, the computer or something else. What if plans change, equipment needs change or the guy that is left alone is attacked?

-If we are all in one place I **still** want all radios with you and turned on but **turn them down!** There is no need to have the volume full-blast

with 2 - 5 radios in the immediate vicinity. I want them on to eliminate forgetting to turn them on if you leave the area for something.
-Listen to the radio. I hate when double transmissions are made.

Medic 1 Driver - "Dispatch, Medic 1 is en route to the hospital."

Dispatch - "Medic 1 ok."

*Engine 1-A - "Dispatch, Medic1 is en route to the hospital,
Engine 1 is returning."*

It makes us sound like idiots and it is clear to everyone that you are not paying attention.

-When ever we are on scene we should be alert and ready to respond to a request made via radio. I do not want to have to call someone on the radio multiple times because you weren't listening.

-I am not about being extremely formal. Just say what you have to say and then get off the radio. Even if we need to use first or last names I don't care. I don't want a lot of unnecessary traffic or overly slow communications.

2) Apparatus Placement

Accidents

-I do not enjoy working in an active roadway. I truly believe it is one of the most dangerous things we do on a day-to-day basis. Especially on I-290 or I-355. I am a huge believer in making a cocoon around us to work in. ***In general*** the ambulance should be positioned forward of the accident scene and parked at an angle so that the rear patient compartment doors are as far away as possible from any active traffic. This is to offer the crew and the patient some protection when unloading and loading. The Engine should be parked behind the scene **or** in the best position to protect the area we will be operating in (depending on the position of police, IDOT or other vehicles). The Engine will be parked at an angle to divert the flow of traffic away from the scene. There is debate about parking the rig with the tailboard in and the nose poking into traffic or vice versa. I want the rig placed as mentioned, with the tailboard toward the barrier wall or curb and the nose angled into traffic. If we are parked against traffic

then I want the opposite; nose to the curb or barrier wall and tailboard into traffic. What I don't want is to have to tell the engineer where to position the rig on every call. Think!

-Also, I want the Engineer's first action after parking the apparatus to be placing the safety cones, unless of course we need lines pulled and charged first. It may sound really small and unimportant but people will go further out of their way to avoid hitting a stupid cone than they will one of us. Cones should extend as far back as possible and run at an angle to the back of the apparatus or in a straight line along the area we are operating in. These are general placements. Every situation will dictate something different. Think for yourself!

Fire Alarms or Investigations (Gas, Electric etc.)

-On every run I want both rigs positioned to go to work. I do not want the Engine to just pull up in front of the address and park so it is convenient to the front door if that is not the best place. The Engineer needs to visually locate the closest hydrant and think about how he/she will lead-out or secure water if needed. When I call for a line because the AFA is actually a fire is not the time to begin formulating a plan. Engineers also need to be my eyes outside the building. Look at the building. Maybe you'll notice the smoke from the roof line before I even know something is going on from the inside. Be alert and engage your brain, just don't sit in the driver's seat and think that you are not a part of this run. The Ambulance needs to think about a place to park where it will lessen the possibility of being blocked in by later responding rigs in the event the crew needs to transport a victim. ***In general*** in front of and on the opposite side of the street from the Engine is a good spot, unless of course that is where the hydrant is located. If we are in the industrial area or a dead-end street, back into an adjacent driveway so you're ready to go if you have to transport. I'd rather you take the extra minute to do this on arrival than if you are taking me to the burn unit after something goes wrong and you have to do six three-point turns to turn around just to leave the scene.

3) Tools

As a firefighter I couldn't stand coming in after another shift had a fire, going to my rig to check it out and finding low air packs, filthy or missing tools or sloppily packed hose. It shows zero pride, zero

attention and zero caring. Consider it a standing station order that if we use tools, equipment or hose it will be cleaned, filled, replaced and repacked correctly on the rig before we turn it over to the next shift. I cannot stress this enough. Filthy or broken/empty tools and equipment that is left on the rig pisses me off.

The only thing that pisses me off more is tools or equipment that was missing and wasn't caught. When I was a blueshirt I got a pass-on from the previous back-step guy that they had chased the ambulance a few times and hadn't used anything off the Engine. Ok, great. When I got to the rig to start my check there was no Halligan. I looked in the customary places; the bracket was obviously empty so I looked on the floor, the transverse, the slop-line tray. No Halligan. I caught the other shift guy before he left and asked him about it. He was stunned. Whaddyamean there's no Halligan? It was very clear he had no idea he had been missing it for his entire shift. If I were his Lieutenant and we had caught a fire and I'd been looking to force a door or something and THAT was when he discovered he had no idea where his Halligan was, there'd have been paper. That is how serious I am about something like that.