City of Milwaukee

Fire Department

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May 19, 2015

To the Honorable
The Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
City Hall, Room 706A
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Dear Commissioners:

Enclosed for your review is the **final version** of the MFD Code of Conduct publication for which I am asking for the Honorable Board's approval to publish and distribute.

Expectations for MFD employees can be found in varying publications, including but not limited to numbered notices, standard operating guidelines, officer guidebooks, and the MFD Rule Book. The aforementioned publications typically outline rules and expectations essential to a specific function. The MFD Code of Conduct embraces general expectations such as morals, ethics, leadership, accountability, and core values rather than expectations specific to a particular job duty. We modeled it after the Milwaukee Police Department's Code of Conduct.

The updated MFD Code of Conduct has been reviewed by Assistant City Attorneys for language and content; we incorporated their suggestions. As a professional courtesy I have met with Local 215 representatives to show them the MFD Code of Conduct. We are seeking the Honorable Board's approval to publish and distribute.

Respectfully,

Mark Rohlfing

MARK ROHLFING
Chief

MR/cf
Enclosure
F&P\Final Code of Conduct Presented for Approval

Milwaukee Fire Department

Courage . Integrity . Honor

Code of Conduct

Established May 1 , 2015

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Preamble

The Milwaukee Fire Department hereby establishes a Code of Conduct (also referred to as "Code"), comprised of its Mission Statement, Core Values, Diversity Statement, and Guiding Principles. This Code establishes fundamental standards of conduct and performance consistent with the highest professional standards.

The Mission Statement describes how department members will achieve the department's vision. The Core Values and Guiding Principles shape the conduct and performance of members both on and off duty. The Diversity Statement describes what the department seeks to achieve.

Department members shall at all times conduct themselves, to the extent their position requires, in accordance with the provisions of this Code. Any conduct whether on- or off-duty, which brings or is likely to bring discredit upon the Milwaukee Fire Department, may be investigated in order to establish whether or not a breach of the Code has occurred. A breach of the Code may result, in appropriate circumstances, as a disciplinary investigation directed by the Fire Chief.

When department members are investigated for a breach of this Code, the investigation will be conducted promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. The Code shall be applied in any investigation, hearing, or decision relating to misconduct in a reasonable and objective manner. Due regard shall be given to the degree of negligence or deliberate fault of members and the nature and circumstances of members' misconduct. The Fire Chief reserves the right to impose discipline/corrective action up to and including discharge from the department, if after a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation has been conducted, it is determined that a breach of the Code has occurred.

The following is the Code of Conduct for the Milwaukee Fire Department. It will serve as a reminder and guide in daily life as members uphold the tremendous responsibility of serving their fellow citizens in administrative, emergency, and educational situations. Wherein this document "members" is stated, it refers to employees of the Milwaukee Fire Department.

Mission Statement

Code of Conduct

The Milwaukee Fire Department is committed to protecting the people and property within our city. We will be responsive to the needs of our citizens by providing rapid, professional, humanitarian services essential to the health, safety, and well-being of the city.

We will achieve our mission through prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical, and other emergency services.

We will actively participate in our community, serve as role models, and strive to effectively and efficiently utilize all of the necessary resources at our command to provide a quality of service deemed excellent by our citizens with “Courage, Integrity, and Honor.”

The term "City" is to be broadly interpreted to incorporate any jurisdiction in which we respond.

Core Values

Courage *"Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty."*

1. Members accept their moral responsibility to take action to protect and remove from harm those who are trapped, injured, in need of medical assistance, or in any other situation in which fire department intervention is needed. Members are expected to take prudent risks on behalf of the public.

2. Members will discharge their duties with composure and determination and in time of danger or adversity, will act together to mitigate and resolve the situation.

3. Members will actively oppose, and if possible prevent, any violation of the Code of Conduct, reporting violations to their immediate supervisor. Unless the report is shown to be malicious or ill-founded, members will not be punished, but will be protected and supported for reporting a violation of the Code of Conduct.

Integrity *"Firm adherence to a code of especially moral values; incorruptibility."*

1. Members understand that honesty is a fundamental element of integrity.
2. Members are duty-bound to earn public trust through consistently appropriate words and actions.
3. Members' behavior will inspire and sustain the confidence of our community. Whether on- or off-duty, members *will not behave* in such a way that a reasonable person would deem discredits the department or would create the appearance of impropriety or corruptive behavior.
4. Members will avoid regular or continuous associations with persons or groups they reasonably believe, know, or should know, are planning to, or are engaged in, criminal behavior, or who advocate the overthrow of government.
5. Members will treat the official business of the department as confidential, not imparting it to anyone, either orally, electronically, or in writing, except those for whom it is intended or under due process of law.
6. Members will obey department rules, local ordinances, and state and federal laws, whether on- or off-duty. Members in violation of same in any jurisdiction are to report the violation to their supervisor as soon as practicable.

Core Values

7. Members will not use their official position or membership in the Milwaukee Fire Department to unnecessarily interfere with the personal affairs or professional responsibilities of any person or agency.

8. Members will not accept nor solicit, either directly or indirectly, anything of value, including a gratuity, money, reward, gift, fee, loan, or special consideration as consequence of their position. Solicitations for benevolent purposes with prior approval from the Fire Chief are the only exceptions. Members are not precluded from receiving very minor courtesies and gratuities (i.e., small amounts of food or non-alcoholic drink, or discounts on same) provided that it is not sought, or in exchange for, expectation of official favor.

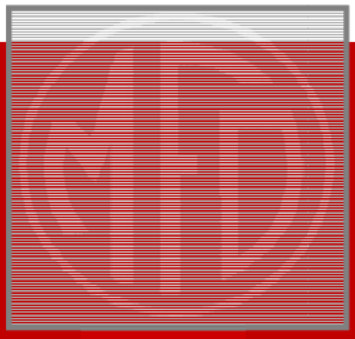
9. Members will be forthright and candid, orally and in writing, in connection with any administrative inquiry or report.

10. Members will be complete, honest, and accurate with respect to all relevant facts and information pertaining to any investigation, report, or inquiry. Members will not knowingly, or with reckless disregard for the truth, sign or make any false statement, whether by act of omission or act of commission. Failure to report full and complete details that any reasonable person would find vital to the overall situation is considered an act (lie) of omission.

Honor *"Good quality or character as judged by other people; high moral standards or behavior; merited respect."*

1. Members will hold life in the highest regard, treating all citizens and colleagues with respect, dignity, and tolerance, while performing duties in a fair, impartial manner.

2. Members will treat the public and each other with courtesy and professionalism; maintaining a professional workplace at all times. Civility, patience, and self-control are valued attributes, while profane or insolent language or actions undermine the public's and fellow members' confidence.



Diversity Statement

Code of Conduct

Diversity, as it is understood in the workplace today, implies differences in people based on their identifications with various groups, but it is more. Diversity involves the process of acknowledging differences through action. In organizations, this means developing a variety of initiatives at the management and organizational levels, as well as at the interpersonal levels.

Vision - The continued excellence of the Milwaukee Fire Department is largely dependent upon the ability to attract, develop, and retain highly skilled, talented, and motivated members. An essential element in maintaining this quality of service is the recognition of the value of a diverse work force. Characteristics such as: age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, religious preference, sexual orientation, gender expression, and the expression of unique philosophies and ideas provide the opportunity to better understand each other. This understanding will strengthen the efficiency and productivity of the work force, whose primary objective is to provide excellent service to the community.

Mission - The mission of the Milwaukee Fire Department is to maintain its high standard of excellence by attaining and fostering a diverse work force. This will be accomplished by reaching the following goals.

Goals –

Uphold the federal, state, and local laws, and the Milwaukee Fire Department's rules and regulations regarding employment.

Attract and retain qualified individuals from diverse backgrounds who are committed to the continued excellence of the Milwaukee Fire Department.

Achieve and accept a diverse work force in terms of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, religious preference, sexual orientation, gender expression, and the expression of unique philosophies and ideas.

Provide all employees the opportunity for development and growth at every rank on the Milwaukee Fire Department.

Expect that all employees will treat each other with dignity and respect, regardless of perceived differences.

Guiding Principles

Code of Conduct

Competence *"Having the necessary ability or skills to perform well enough to meet a standard."*

1. Members are prudent stewards of the public's grant of authority and resources. Members are accountable for the quality of their performance and the standards of their conduct. Members are exemplary leaders and exemplary followers.
2. Members cooperate with colleagues, agencies, and citizens to ensure fire safety and appropriate medical care. Members work to improve the quality of urban life.
3. Members will render service to the community promptly and efficiently. When not answering calls for service, members will use their time to accomplish the mission of the department.
4. Members will be familiar with department policies/procedures and conduct themselves accordingly.
5. Members will report for duty on time, as designated by their work schedule.
6. Members will report fit-for-duty, and not be impaired as a result of drinking alcohol, using a drug for non-medical purposes, or intentionally misusing a prescription drug.
7. Members will not consume, purchase, or possess any liquor or fermented beverage while on duty or in uniform, except with the approval of the Chief or designee.
8. Members are responsible for the condition and safeguarding of their personal and department-issued equipment. Members will not deface, damage, destroy, modify, or carelessly or inappropriately use any department property.

Accountability *"Willingness to accept responsibility (or to account) for one's actions."*

1. Members will be accountable in the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibility for actions, decisions, and policies including administration, governance, and implementation within the scope of their positions, and encompassing the obligation to report, explain, and be answerable for resulting consequences.
2. Members will accomplish work and assignments given to them from verbal or any form of written orders, in a complete, timely, and professional manner.

Guiding Principles

3. Members will be masterful in the proper implementation of any facet relating to their position, such as Fire Response and EMS Standard Operating Guidelines, the Incident Command System, strategy and tactics, building construction knowledge, various training including but not limited to battalion, company, department-wide, paramedic refresher, including that which is electronically distributed, meeting turnout and response times, logging in to various programs as required each shift, reviewing temporary and numbered notices, and accurately and promptly completing all reporting requirements for fire and medical responses and member "leave" requests.

Leadership *"The power or ability to guide/direct others on a course to advance."*

1. Members seek to influence human behavior to achieve organizational goals that serve the public while developing individuals, teams, and the organization for future service. Members accept responsibility to be leaders, both within the community and among peers, and for the actions of colleagues and themselves. All members are responsible for the performance, reputation, and morale of the department.
2. Members will work together and set an example that embodies respect, compassion, integrity, and efficiency.
3. Members understand that leadership is not solely positional and no rank has unique privileges. The only privilege of rank is increased responsibility.
4. Members understand that personal failure to intervene to prevent or stop misconduct, when there is an opportunity to do so, demonstrates not only a lack of courage, but also a failure of leadership.
5. Members will be role models for delivering truly professional, impartial, and effective service. Members must put the department's mission first, in both word and action, and do nothing to interfere with its accomplishment.
6. Officers will ensure that members for whom they are responsible carry out their professional duties correctly. Officers will ensure the individuals for whom they are responsible are supported, guided on the professional performance of their duties, and encouraged to further their professional development. Officers have a particular responsibility to secure, promote, improve, and maintain professional standards and integrity through the provision of advice and guidance. Officers have an obligation to commend exemplary behavior, a responsibility to correct substandard behavior, and a requirement to discipline when needed.

Disciplinary/Corrective Action

Purpose

It is critical that a system of discipline be established that contributes to and promotes the department's reputation for professionalism. All members must understand and be guided by the standards that have been established in this Code. It is understood that certain factors will be considered in the disciplinary/corrective action decision process for alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

It is recognized and understood that members will make judgmental errors from time to time in carrying out their responsibilities. While each error in judgment offers an opportunity for the department and the members to learn, it is also understood some errors will have greater consequences than others for the public, the department, and the affected members.

The department has an obligation to make its expectations as clear as possible to its members. The department has an equal obligation to help members meet those expectations. There are often circumstances that may have contributed to errors of judgment or poor decisions that need to be considered when determining the appropriate consequences for improper conduct.

Disciplinary/corrective action must be imposed in a consistent and fair manner. Consistency is defined as holding everyone equally accountable for equally unacceptable conduct. Fairness is defined as understanding the circumstances that contributed to the conduct while applying the consequences in a way that reflects this understanding. In order to ensure that members are treated in a consistent and fair manner, the application of consequences for conduct that is not in keeping with the department's expectations will be based upon a balanced consideration of factors. Following the careful consideration of all applicable factors in any disciplinary/corrective action review, every effort will be made to determine the consequences that consistently and fairly fit each specific incident.

Disciplinary/Corrective Action

Factors to be Considered

***Motivation*:** The department exists to serve the public. One factor in examining members' conduct will be whether or not members were acting in the public's interest. Members who violate a policy or

procedure in an effort to accomplish a legitimate purpose, determining the action is in the best interest of the broader public interest inherent in the situation, will be given more positive consideration in the determination of consequences than those who were motivated by personal interest.

***Degree of Harm*:** The degree of harm that an error causes is also an important aspect in deciding the consequences of members' conduct. Harm can be measured in a variety of ways. It can be measured in terms of the monetary cost to the department and community such as an error that causes significant damage to a vehicle. Harm can also be measured in terms of the personal injury the error causes. Another way in which harm can be measured is the impact of the error on public confidence, such as members who engage in criminal or deleterious conduct affecting public confidence in the department.

***Intentional and Unintentional Errors*:** Errors can be classified as intentional or unintentional. An unintentional error is an action or decision that turns out to be wrong, but based upon the information available at the time it was taken, seemed to be in compliance with policy and the most appropriate course. Unintentional errors also include those momentary lapses of judgment or acts of carelessness that result in minimal harm. Members will be held accountable for these errors, but the consequences will be more corrective than punitive unless the same errors persist.

An intentional error is an action or a decision that members make that is known (or should be known) to be in conflict with law, established training or procedures, or this Code of Conduct. Generally, intentional errors will be treated more seriously and carry greater consequences than unintentional errors. Failure to intervene when a violation of the Code of Conduct occurs, or is about to occur, will be treated the same as if the members committed the violation. Within the framework of intentional errors there are certain behaviors that are entirely inconsistent with the responsibilities of the fire service. These include

Disciplinary/Corrective Action

lying, theft, physical, mental, or emotional abuse, and other equally serious breaches of trust. The nature of the fire service requires that firefighters be truthful; however, it is recognized that it is sometimes difficult to determine if one is being untruthful. Members will face discharge from the department when it is clear that they have intentionally engaged in an effort to be untruthful.

***Past Record*:** To the extent allowed by law and policy, members' past records will be taken into consideration in determining the consequences of a failure to meet the department's expectations. Members who repeatedly make errors can expect the consequences of their behavior to become progressively more punitive. Members whose past record reflects hard work and dedication to the community and department will be given every consideration in the determination of any disciplinary/corrective action. Members within their probationary period whose conduct or performance of duties is not satisfactory for continued service to the department will be discharged, with no right of appeal to the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners.

Responsibility

The Milwaukee Fire Department has a well-established tradition of serving the community with integrity and professionalism; it is among the finest fire departments in the country. To maintain its proud tradition and continue improving the quality of service the department provides to the community, all department members must accept responsibility for maintaining the high professional standards of this Code of Conduct.