

## **NEW MEMBER INFORMATION**

### **PURPOSE**

It is the intent of this operating procedure to provide guidance to persons interested in membership in this department and to guide new members through their probationary period.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Karnes City Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. We are pleased that you have expressed a desire to volunteer your time to the cause of saving lives and protecting property in our community. You are entering a public service organization which can be very demanding while at the same time be personally rewarding. The following section contains information and rules that pertain to your induction into the department as well as your probationary period following your induction into the department. These rules are not intended to discourage your participation; instead they are designed to promote safety, education and comradery. Training is the key to a safe and effective operation, and this can only be accomplished by your dedicated participation. In the following rules, a member on their probationary period will be referred to as a new member or a student member. The following rules for new and student members are intended to be a supplement to the requirements set out by the Constitution of this department.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

No person under 18 years of age may be elected as a member of this Department, except for persons between the ages of 16 and 18 who are sponsored by an active member in good standing in this Department. Members between the ages of 16 and 18 must be enrolled in and remain enrolled in Karnes City High School, or have a High School diploma or GED, or be home schooled in the Karnes City area, and shall in this Constitution be referred to as student members. Student members in this department shall follow the same rules, and have the same duties, responsibilities, and attendance requirements as any other new member on probation.

Applicants age 18 or older shall complete a Department issued application. The application must be signed by the applicant and one recommending active member in good standing in the Department. Any applicant under the age of 18, shall complete a Department issued application with a signature of one parent, or legal guardian, and the sponsoring member. The parent, or guardian, and the sponsoring member must both be present at the meeting at which the voting on the student member takes place in order for the student member to be eligible to be voted on.

An Application Review Committee consisting of the Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain and Lieutenant shall review all applications prior to the applicant's first attendance and determine if the applicant is of good moral character, fitting a member of the Department, and has the physical ability to fulfill the duties required of a member of the Department. Any applicant rejected by the Application Review Committee shall wait a minimum of 90 days before submitting a new application for membership.

Persons wishing to join the Department shall, after completing an application, attend at least one meeting and two practices before being eligible for membership in the Department. An applicant having attended two practices will be eligible for election into the Department at the end of the first meeting they attend, just prior to adjourning the meeting.

Voting on the admission of new members shall be done by secret ballot and it shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the eligible voting members present at a meeting to accept an applicant into the Department as a new member on probation. Any applicant rejected by the membership shall wait a minimum of 90 days before submitting a new application for membership. Each new members voted in must complete the Courage to be Safe training and shall read the Constitution, the By-Laws, and the Standard Operating Procedures and Rules and Regulations Manual and they must sign a form stating that they understand the requirements of each and agree to abide by them, before being issued any department property. Each new member must complete the following training within 90 days of being voted in on probation: ICS-100 (Introduction to the Incident Command System), ICS-200 (ISC for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents), ICS-700 (Introduction to the National Incident Management System), and ICS-800 (National Response Framework). Each new member must complete the SFFMA Firefighter I Certification training; including passing all test requirements, before being removed from probation.

New members and/or Student members, ages 17 and over, who are voted into the Department will be placed on probation for a period of not less than one year or more than three years. Student members between the ages of 16 and 17 who are voted into the Department will be placed on probation until, at a minimum, they reach the age of 18, and until they fulfill all the probationary requirements as that of any other member of the department, and must do so in a time frame not to exceed 2 years after they turn 18 years of age. Any extenuating circumstances that prevent a member on probation from fulfilling the probationary requirements within the time frame requirements stated in this section shall address the issue with the Probation Committee.

All new members on probation shall be evaluated at least quarterly by a Probation Committee consisting of the Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain, and Lieutenant. New members may be evaluated on any action or lack thereof that the committee determines may be cause for notice, including but not limited to the rules of Article 9, Section 1. It is the responsibility of each member of the department to notify the Probation Committee of any action, or lack there of, that may be used for the purpose of a fair evaluation of a probationary member. The Probation Committee shall report to each new member, the committee's findings, and inform them of their progress in the department whether good or bad.

The Probation Committee shall give reports of unsatisfactory evaluations to new members in the following manner:

1. Verbal warnings will be given as a first notice and may also be given as a subsequent notice on minor issues determined to be unsatisfactory.
2. Written warnings will be given as a more serious form of notification or for a repeated notice of the same unsatisfactory issue that is not resolved.
3. If verbal or written warnings do not resolve issues of unsatisfactory evaluations or in the case of very serious infractions, the Probation Committee may recommend the expulsion of the new member from the department during any meeting of the department.
4. In case of serious infractions, the Probation Committee may bypass the verbal and written warnings and immediately recommend expulsion from the department.

A vote to remove a new member from the Department may be called for by the Probation Committee, or by any active member in good standing, during any meeting of the department. The member making the request shall present reasonable and just cause to the membership as to why the new member should be removed. Voting on the expulsion of new members shall be done by secret ballot and it shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the eligible voting members present to reject the new member and expel them from the Department and the person shall wait a minimum of 90 days before submitting a new application for membership.

New members who complete their probationary period and are determined and recommended by the Probation Committee to be acceptable for membership in the department will be accepted as a member in good standing in the Department and no election will be held unless called for as provided in Section 9.

If any person, having been elected a member of this Department, fails to appear within 30 days after having received notice of their election, the election shall be declared void, unless prevented by sickness, absence from the city or such other misfortunes that may render it impossible to attend.

Should any member of the Department fail to attend any meeting or practice for 90 consecutive days without submitting a request for leave of absence, then this extended absence shall be considered as a resignation from the Department unless the absence is covered under Article 8, Section 4.

To be elected to, or remain eligible for student membership in this Department, student members shall meet or maintain the following requirements:

1. Must be enrolled in and remain enrolled in Karnes City High School, or have a High School diploma or GED, or be home schooled in the Karnes City area.
2. Must have passing grades on their most recent report card prior to election.
3. Must maintain passing grades to remain active in this Department.
4. Must submit a copy of each report card and progress report to their sponsoring member.
5. Must live within a reasonable proximity to the Karnes City fire station as determined acceptable by the membership.

Upon receipt of a failing progress report or report card, a student member will be suspended from any and all functions of the Department until passing grades are shown on the next progress report or report card. Should a student member receive (3) three failing progress reports or report cards during any one semester, the student member will be expelled from the Department and will not again be eligible for student membership.

New members will be issued protective clothing, helmet, pager, and other equipment following their election into the department as a new member, and upon completion of the Courage to be Safe training. They shall also read the Constitution, the By-Laws, and the Standard Operating Procedures and Rules and Regulations Manual and must sign a form stating that they understand the requirements of each and agree to abide by them before being issued any equipment. New members will not be issued a key to the station until they have completed their probationary period and are voted in as an active member. All department property will be returned to the department when membership in the Department ceases.

Members of this department may not request a leave of absence while on probation, under suspension, or while holding an office within this Department. New members may not hold any office in the department.

Each and every member of the department shall perform the duties of a firefighter faithfully and to use their utmost endeavor to promote the interest and welfare of the department.

The Department shall have the right to reprimand, suspend or expel any of the members for bad character, criminal or other such misconduct as is considered infamous, or calculated to bring disgrace, contempt or derision on the Department as a body. Fighting, being intoxicated at meetings, practices, alarms or other Department functions, offering false excuses and failure to follow orders may also be reasons for suspension, expulsion or reprimanding members. Any member who knowingly defaces, damages, destroys, discards, or sells for profit or personal gain, any department property may be subject to suspension, expulsion, or reprimand.

The Department reserves itself the right to strike from the roll any of its members for non-performance of any of the several duties imposed by this Constitution, the By-Laws, and the Standard Operating Procedures and Rules and Regulations Manual.

Members on probation, whether they are new members on probation or active members placed on probation, will be responsible for keeping the station and apparatus clean. If there are less than four members on probation, then the last four members to join the department shall be responsible for the cleaning responsibilities.

All members of this department will be required to turn in a copy of their vehicle liability insurance policy and copy of their driving record annually, and it shall be submitted on or before the annual meeting of this department in February.

This Department prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

#### MEETINGS

The meetings of this department shall be held on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 P.M. Special meetings may be called as necessary.

Any member or new member failing to attend at least 25% of the meetings per calendar year may be expelled from the department.

#### PRACTICES

The regular practices of the Department shall be held at 7:30 P.M. on each Monday of the month, except for the second Monday, unless a holiday makes scheduling practice inappropriate.

Any member who fails to attend at least 40% of the practices per calendar year, and any new member on probation who fails to attend at least 60% of the practices per calendar year, may be expelled from the Department unless they display some good and satisfactory excuse for their absence.

Any new member missing three practices in a row may be expelled from the Department unless they display some good and satisfactory excuse for their absence.

## ALARMS

Any member failing to attend at least 25% of the alarms per calendar year may be expelled from the department unless they display some good and satisfactory excuse for their absence.

It shall be the responsibility of the members, after each alarm they answer, to see that their name is listed on the board showing that they were present.

Student members leaving class upon receipt of an alarm shall return to class as soon as is reasonably possible following the completion of the alarm. Student members must also be aware that there may be times, at their instructors' discretion, whereby the student member may not be allowed to leave class for an alarm.

New members on probation shall respond to all alarms in a non-emergency manner and shall abide by all non-emergency vehicle traffic laws of the State of Texas. This includes responding to the fire station and/or to the scene of the alarm in privately owned vehicles (POV). Members on probation will not be allowed to run emergency lighting on their privately owned vehicle.

New members on probation will not be allowed to drive a fire department vehicle in an emergency situation unless ordered to do so by the highest-ranking officer present and then will abide by all non-emergency vehicle traffic laws of the State of Texas.

New members on probation will not be allowed to drive a fire department vehicle in non-emergency situations unless accompanied by an active member of the department in good standing.

New members on probation will not be allowed to perform radio communications during an emergency situation unless ordered to do so by the highest-ranking officer present.

New members on probation will not be allowed on an attack line upon initial attack on any type of emergency incident unless ordered to do so by the highest-ranking officer at the scene.

New members on probation may enter a structure for final extinguishment, only after the officer in charge declares it under control, if under the direct supervision of an active member of the department in good standing unless ordered to do so by the highest-ranking officer present.

New members on probation will not be allowed to enter into the warm or hot zone at the scene of any hazardous materials incident, unless ordered to do so by the officer in charge at the scene.

New members on probation will not be allowed to participate in the extrication of patients at the scene of an emergency, unless ordered to do so by the officer in charge at the scene.