

NEW MEMBER RULES

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, and live in the Karnes City VFD service area, and shall in this Constitution be referred to as student members. Student members in this department shall follow the same rules, and shall have the same duties, responsibilities, and attendance requirements as any other probationary member.

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 the 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 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 member on probation. Any applicant rejected by the membership shall wait a minimum of 90 days before submitting a new application for membership.

Each member voted in 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 member must complete the following training within 90 days of being voted 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)

ICS-800 (National Response Framework)

Each member must complete the SFFMA Firefighter I Certification training and must pass a minimum of three randomly selected skills from a list of SFFMA skills before being removed from probation.

Upon being removed from probation, each new member will have their name placed on the back of their bunker coat and will be given a helmet front with their name and number to be placed on their structural helmet.

Each new member must complete the following classroom instructed courses as soon as possible after being voted in, preferably within one year of being voted in if the courses are available. On-line courses will not be accepted.

Courage to be Safe

Traffic Incident Management

Probationary 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. Probationary 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 members on probation shall be evaluated at least quarterly or as necessary by a Probation Committee consisting of the Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain, Lieutenant, Certification Coordinator and Assistant Certification Coordinator. Probationary 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 thereof, that may be used for the purpose of a fair evaluation of a probationary member. The Probation Committee shall report to each probationary member and/or sponsor, 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 probationary 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.

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.

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.

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 probationary 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 present at the meeting as to why the member should be removed. Voting on the expulsion of probationary 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 member and expel them from the Department and the person shall wait a minimum of 90 days before submitting a new application for membership.

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 13. A motion may be made and a vote taken to confirm the recommendation of the Probation Committee.

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.

Active members, who resign from the Department in good standing, may rejoin the Department as an Active member in good standing by submitting a request for re-entry into the Department. The request must be presented during a Department meeting within a time frame from the original date of resignation that is less than or equal to the past members previous years of service and does not exceed 5 years.

Approval of the reactivation request shall be done by a secret ballot and shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the eligible voting members present at a meeting to reactivate a member into the Department. Any applicant rejected by the membership shall wait a minimum of 90 days before submitting a new request for reinstatement into the Department.

Any past member that has been inactive for more than 5 years, or resigned from the Department while not in good standing, or any past member whose resignation was accepted due to the 90 day rule, as addressed in Section 14 or Section 15 of this article, shall fulfill the same application and

entry requirements as of any other new member, except that their requirement for practice attendance will be set at 40% per calendar year.

When a full complement of 32 members is attained, a waiting list shall be kept by the Department and applicants shall be notified in order of date of application, at which time membership drops below 32 active members.

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.

A member may request only one six-month leave of absence from this Department during any 12-month period. At any time during, or at the end of that 6-month leave of absence, the member must return to active membership or resign from the Department. Members on leave of absence will be notified of the expiration of their leave of absence and will be given 30 days to respond. Failure to respond will be considered as a resignation from the Department.

Members of this Department may not request a leave of absence while on probation, under suspension, or while holding an office within this Department.

Any person applying for membership in this Department as a Fire Marshal or Fire Marshal/Firefighter shall fulfill the same application requirements as of any other person requesting membership in this Department and shall meet the same probationary requirements of any other active member in this Department. In addition, the applicant shall provide a written resume with their application.

All immediate family members of active members in good standing in this Department, as determined by the membership, who are between the ages of 16 and 18 shall be eligible for student membership in this department. In addition to immediate family members, there shall be a maximum of (5) five student members in the Department at any one time. An active member in good standing in the Department may sponsor only one student member at any one time.

An active member who sponsors a student member must remain in good standing in this Department in order for the student member to remain eligible for student membership in this Department. Should a sponsoring member become ineligible to sponsor a student member due to probation, suspension, expulsion, resignation, or any other cause that may so cause ineligibility, then the student member shall also become ineligible for student membership, unless the sponsorship is accepted by another active member of the Department in good standing.

To be elected to, or remain eligible for Student membership in this Department, or for any member over the age of 18 who is enrolled in High School or is home schooled to be elected a member of this Department, the applicant/member 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 and live in the Karnes City VFD service area.

2. Must have passing grades on their most recent eligibility/progress report or report card prior to election and submit a copy of their most recent report with their department application.
3. Must maintain passing grades to remain active in this Department.
4. Must submit a copy of each eligibility/progress report and report card to their sponsoring member within 5 days of issuance.
5. Must live within a reasonable proximity to the Karnes City fire station as determined acceptable by the membership.
6. Student members failing to provide a copy of their eligibility/progress report and/or report card within 5 days of issuance will be suspended from any and all functions of the Department except for meetings and practices until the report is provided.

Upon receipt of a failing eligibility/progress report or report card, the student member or any member over the age of 18 who remains enrolled in High School or is home schooled will be suspended from all functions of the Department, except for meetings and practices until passing grades are shown on the next eligibility/progress report or report card. Quitting school to circumvent this rule will be cause of immediate expulsion from the department.

A person requesting membership in the department may request to be voted in as a Support Personnel member. Support Personnel members shall abide by all the same rules and regulations as any other member being voted in with the exception of training requirements and any other requirements established by the Support Personnel section of the Standard Operating Procedures and Rules and Regulations. Support Personnel may not perform duties outside of the scope of their training.

In order for this department to operate, there are many functions that must be administered to in order for the department to be successful. In addition, this department is involved in many other activities to support the community, activities that in turn help to promote a positive reputation of the fire department within the community. It is only through the assistance of all of the members of the department that we are able to provide this support to the department and to the community. When possible, the activities will be announced during the business meeting or practice prior to taking place, and when that is not possible, members will be notified as soon as is practical.

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

Except for in December, 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.

Special practices may be called by the Chief or Assistant Chief as deemed necessary at their discretion.

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

Should any member of the Department on probation miss three practices in a row without displaying some good and satisfactory excuse for their absence, then this absence shall be considered as a resignation from the Department. Should a probationary member commit a second violation of this section, then the member 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 each member answering an alarm to verify that all appropriate apparatus has responded and/or the member(s) have verified from the officer in charge of the alarm that no additional apparatus is needed. Any firefighter failing to do so will not be credited for attendance at the alarm.

It shall then be the responsibility of each member answering an alarm to see that their name is listed on the board showing that they were present and available to respond and then, the responsibility of the officer in charge at the alarm to see that the names are recorded onto the report and that the members are credited for their attendance.

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 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 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.