

ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT



MEMBER HANDBOOK

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ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMBER HANDBOOK

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ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The Abington Township Fire Department is a unified team of five individual volunteer fire companies providing excellent fire services to protect the health safety, and welfare of our community and member.

ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT VALUES

Teamwork We are dedicated to providing professional services by five individual fire companies working together as a unified department.

Respect We value respect for our fellow firefighters and the community by compassionately caring for their needs.

Excellence We embrace excellence that demonstrates itself through consistent professionalism, pride and a positive attitude.

Safety & Health We prioritize the safety of our firefighters and will provide policies, programs, training and equipment to ensure their welfare.

Community Engagement We are committed to outreach and service to our community through engagement in communication, events, and partnerships.

ATFD EXPECTATIONS

Joining a volunteer fire department requires sacrifice, dedication and a large time commitment from each member of the department. In addition to responding to emergency calls for service at any given time of day, any day of the year, regardless of birthdays, holidays or bad weather, there are weekly training commitments, monthly meetings, annual certifications and frequent community events that members are expected to attend. Although the ATFD is all volunteer, the community depends on us and expects us to respond when called upon.

The Abington Township Fire Department prides itself on being the ONLY all volunteer fire department in the United States to gain accreditation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence. This is an accomplishment that is credited to every member of the ATFD and is expected to be carried on by new members. This means that new members are expected to be active members of the department by attending as many emergency calls, trainings and community events as possible.

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PROBATIONARY STATUS

The ATFD spends a lot of time and money equipping and training each new member, and therefore expects the new member to be an active member of the crew. Each new member of the ATFD serves a probationary period for the first year of their membership. During this period, the member is expected to complete the Firefighter 1 Basic Fire Academy class, as well as attend calls for service, training, meetings and special details as determined by the bylaws of the ATFD Fire Company to which that member belongs. During the probationary period, the probationary member can be removed from the rolls of the fire company due to inactivity, lack of interest, and failure to complete the requisite training, among other things. Probationary status may be extended at the discretion of the Board of Directors and Line Officers of the member's fire company on a case-by-case basis, for good cause shown.

TRAINING

Each new member of the ATFD is required to attend a minimum amount of training, as set forth by both the ATFD Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG's) and the individual fire company's internal bylaws, policies and procedures. For new members joining as firefighters, they will be expected to complete the Firefighter 1 Basic Fire Academy (FF1) class through an approved agency. The majority of new ATFD firefighters attend Firefighter 1 at our own state of the art fire training facility located on Florey Lane. This facility is equipped with a live fire burn building, a classroom building, a technical rescue simulator, vehicle fire and rescue station and large storage facility. The Firefighter 1 class is held each Fall, running from August through late November each year. At the conclusion of the class, each member will test for the Pro-Board Firefighter 1 certification, which is the national standard certification for new firefighters.

EQUIPMENT

Each firefighter in the ATFD is issued a full set of fire resistant Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), also referred to in the fire service as "Turnout Gear" or "Bunker Gear", which includes Bunker Pants and Coat, Boots, Gloves, Hood and a Helmet. This equipment is expensive and represents a large investment into each member, therefore everyone should try to respond to as many calls for service as possible.

MEMBERSHIP IN MULTIPLE ATFD FIRE COMPANIES

Due to insurance and other benefits considerations, such as LOSAP, as well as overall fire company and fire department cohesion, members of the ATFD can only maintain membership status in one ATFD Fire Company at any given time. If the member moves into another ATFD Fire District and wishes to change fire companies, they must resign membership in the first ATFD company upon accepting membership in the new ATFD company.

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HISTORY OF ABINGTON TOWNSHIP

Certain agreements with Native American tribes transferred a vast area of southeastern Pennsylvania to representatives of William Penn before settling there. One such deed dated June 23, 1683, the year after Penn came to America, conveyed to him the land between Pennypack and Neshaminy Creeks. This included the eastern part of what is now Abington Township. Another Indian deed, written in 1687, gave Penn the land on both sides of the Schuylkill River, extending south to Chester Creek and north to the Pennypack, including most of present-day Abington.

It is thought that Quakers who settled in the area soon after Penn became Governor of the Province brought the name "Abington" with them from one of several English parishes so named. The name Abington Township came into use about 1702, although no record of the Township's formal organization has been found.

The Township's population in the first United States census of 1790 was 881. The 1950 Census recorded a population of 28,988. Official 1960 U.S. Census figures showed 55,831; 1980 Census 59,084; and a decrease in population was indicated in the 1990 Census with a figure of 56,322 residents. According to the American Community Survey, 2018 5 Year Estimates the population is 55,573. Abington Township is 15.5 square miles in area.

Early records show that the first governing officials of Abington Township were the supervisors of roads. A State act of 1808 provided that in addition to the highway supervisors, an assessor and two inspectors of elections were to be chosen. Starting in 1810, voters also chose two constables annually.

A new State law in 1899 made provisions for two classes of townships: First and Second Class. To be a Township of the First Class, a population of at least 300 to the square mile was required. Townships of the First Class were to be governed by a commission with the members heading up the various municipal departments, somewhat like cities and boroughs. Abington became a Township of the First Class in 1906, with a population of 4,500.

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ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT'S FIRE COMPANIES

The Abington Township Fire Department is comprised of individually incorporated fire companies that serve the citizens of Abington Township every day. The five fire companies that form the Abington Township Fire Department are:

Abington Fire Company
Founded 1889
1920 Horace Avenue
Abington, PA 19001
Training Night: Thursday

McKinley Fire Company
Founded 1906
893 Jenkintown Road
Elkins Park, PA 19027
Training Night: Tuesday

Weldon Fire Company
Founded 1904
412 N. Easton Road
Glenside, PA 19038
Training Night: Thursday

Edge Hill Fire Company
Founded 1908
2843 Limekiln Pike
North Hills, PA 19038
Training Night: Monday

Roslyn Fire Company
Founded 1922
1128 Bradfield Road
Roslyn, PA 19001
Training Night: Wednesday

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TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

Abington, as a Township of the First Class, operates under a governmental organization much like that of a large business corporation. The citizens are the stockholders, the 15-member Commission is the board of directors, and the Township Manager holds a position similar to that of a chief executive. The Board elects a president and a vice president from its membership. Board members serve for four years on staggered terms and are elected in odd-numbered years.

The Board of Township Commissioners is the legislative and policy-making body. It enacts ordinances, passes resolutions and determines the broad policies of the Township. It also appoints the Township Manager, who is the chief administrative officer.

Directly responsible to the Board, the Township Manager manages the administrative affairs of the Township. The Manager submits proposals to the Board in addition to providing facts and advice in order to facilitate the process by which the Commission makes decisions on community goals.

The Manager has no vote in commission meetings, but as chief administrator handles all personnel matters. Responsibility for carrying out Commission policies rests with the Manager.

The Manager, through the staff and operating departments, provides the services that the Township furnishes to its citizens. Your job falls in one of the departments or offices responsible for furnishing these services.

FIREFIGHTER EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Firefighters are considered township employees for the purposes of Worker's Compensation coverage when operating at fire calls and official fire company business. This includes training, meetings, and all sanctioned activities. When participating in these activities, firefighters are covered by the Abington Township workers' compensation program.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP POLICY

Your Employer...The Public

Our mission is to provide services that promote a good quality of life for our citizens, and as a member of the ATFD your work and conduct are always subject to their approval.

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Your contact with individual citizens will often be the basis upon which the ATFD is judged.

The Abington Township Fire Department's reputation has been built on excellent service and quality work. Maintaining this reputation requires the active participation of every member.

Each member must be sensitive to the importance of providing courteous treatment in all working relationships.

YOUR FELLOW FIREFIGHTERS AND OFFICERS

The secret to getting along with other people is to be considerate of their rights. A courteous, friendly, and cooperative attitude toward your fellow members and officers will help you to succeed in your job as an Abington Township Firefighter.

Your fire company officers are very important in your fire department relations and should be the first people that you consult for information and help. In most instances, your company officers will be able to answer your questions directly and will be in a position to provide information to help you.

Just as you need help at times, your company officers need your help. Each firefighter is expected to help get the job done. Each firefighter plays a very important role in striving toward the objectives of the Township of Abington, which are effective and efficient government.

ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Customer Service

The prestige of the Township government and the ATFD depends a great deal on you. To the public you are the Township and the Fire Department. Therefore, customer service is one of the most important aspects of your job.

Customer service in the performance of public service is neither new, complicated, nor mysterious. It is the sum of all the contacts, attitudes, impressions and opinions that the municipal government presents to its citizens. It is the most important phase of municipal government administration, and yet easily the most neglected. Since many people will judge an entire organization by the actions of a few of its members, each time you come into contact with the public you are contributing to their impression of Abington Township government and the ATFD. Be aware of the impression you may be giving and

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take care through your actions to avoid creating ill will for yourself, your fellow firefighters, the ATFD, and the Township government.

Remember that everyone, you included, wants to be treated courteously and with respect. Not everyone you meet in the course of your duties will be courteous to you, however part of your job is to maintain good customer service in spite of these difficult cases. Good customer service costs absolutely nothing yet pays the biggest dividends in goodwill. It's easy once you get started, and you will find your job will be more interesting and enjoyable.

Appearances

Appearances have a great deal to do with the township and the fire department's customer service. People are impressed by what they hear as well as by what they see. Good grooming and appropriate attire are an important aspect of good customer service. Proper attention to attitude and physical appearance, balanced with high standards of service, will combine to overcome many of the public criticisms regarding municipal government. Employees are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal cleanliness and present a neat, professional appearance at all times.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

The Abington Township Fire Department is committed to equal employment opportunity. We will not discriminate against members or applicants for membership on the basis of real or perceived race, age, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, national origin, physical or mental disability, use of a service animal or veteran status. The Abington Township Fire Department is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.

DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE FIREHOUSE

The Abington Township Fire Department (ATFD) is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. This policy recognizes that it is essential that all members are able to work in an environment free from all forms of illegal discrimination, harassment and retaliation. For that reason, the ATFD will not tolerate any conduct which has the tendency to create a hostile work environment based on one's membership in the protected class.

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Sexual harassment is a serious offense and is prohibited. The ATFD has never tolerated sexual harassment and we reaffirm our commitment to that policy. We believe in providing an environment free of all forms of harassment.

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Unwanted sexual advances;
- b. Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
- c. Making or threatening reprisals after negative response to sexual advances;
- d. Visual conduct – leering, making sexual gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons or posters;
- e. Verbal conduct – making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, jokes;
- f. Verbal sexual advances or propositions;
- g. Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about individuals’ bodies, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations;
- h. Physical conduct – touching, assaulting, impeding or blocking movements; and
- i. Creating a hostile work environment that interferes with one or more employees’ normal work performance.

Persons Covered:

This policy applies to anyone who is a member of the ATFD, as well as residents, visitors, and business contractors or vendors. It prohibits sexual harassment of members, applicants for membership and non-members. All members are responsible for reporting violations of this policy, whether or not they have been the victim of the discrimination or harassment.

Actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual’s sexual orientation, race, national origin, ethnicity, age, religion, gender identity, gender expression, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. As an example, sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the membership relationship, and is strictly prohibited.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual that is based upon a person’s protected status, such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, color, race, ancestry, religion, national origin, age, physical condition or handicap, medical condition, disability, mental status, veteran status, or other protected status.

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Reporting Violations:

Any member who feels that he or she has experienced or witnessed harassment should immediately report the matter to their Fire Chief, a Fire Company Line Officer or the President of the Fire Company either verbally or in writing. The Fire Company will promptly and thoroughly investigate all such reports as discreetly as possible. The confidentiality of any such report or complaint shall be maintained to the maximum extent possible in investigating such matter.

The Abington Township Fire Department recognizes that every investigation requires a determination based on all the facts in the matter. Each member should be sensitive to the serious impact a false accusation can have. The ATFD trusts that all members will act responsibly in reporting harassment under this policy.

Retaliatory action will not be taken against a member who reports or participates in the investigation of a violation of this policy. Violations of this policy will not be permitted and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Any individual who is reasonably determined to have engaged in acts of sexual harassment will be disciplined appropriately, up to and including termination.

POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The ATFD believes that all members are entitled to work in an environment that is free from all forms of harassment. Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual that is based upon a person's protected status, such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, color, race, ancestry, religion, national origin, age, physical condition or handicap, medical condition, disability, mental status, veteran status, or other protected status. Harassment also includes, but is not limited to, slurs, derogatory statements, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to a protected status. This includes "jokes" or "pranks" that are hostile or demeaning.

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Retaliatory action will not be taken against a member who reports or participates in the investigation of a violation of this policy. Violations of this policy will not be permitted and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Any member who is reasonably determined to have engaged in acts of sexual harassment will be disciplined appropriately, up to and including termination.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

This is to reiterate and formally state Abington Township's policy regarding the work-related effects of drug and alcohol use and the unlawful possession of controlled substances on township, fire department, or individual fire company's premises. The policy is as follows:

- Firefighters are expected and required to respond to fire calls and other fire company/fire department business in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their duties. It is our intent and obligation to provide an alcohol-free and drug-free, healthful, safe, and secure work environment.
- The consumption and possession of alcohol and/or the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance while conducting fire department/fire company business is absolutely prohibited. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, and may have legal consequences.

FIRE DEPARTMENT INTERNET GUIDELINES

The Abington Township Fire Department provides Internet access solely to facilitate the conduct of fire department business as a public service provider. Access to the Internet may be limited at the fire department or the individual fire company's sole discretion. This includes the use of filtering software to bar access to certain addresses. Members are expected to use the Internet and Intranet in the manner that benefits the fire department at all times. Conducting business unrelated to the fire department, other than incidental

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personal traffic, is expressly prohibited. The downloading and installation of software programs onto a fire department computer or onto a fire department or township network server without prior approval from the System Administrator is prohibited.

Appropriate Use

Members of the Abington Township Fire Department are encouraged to use the Internet to further the goals and objectives of the department and their individual work assignments. The types of activities that are encouraged include:

1. Communicating with fellow members, businesses, residents, and other clients within the context of a member's assigned responsibilities.
2. Acquiring or sharing information in the form of text files and other non-executable files, necessary or related to their position and assignments,
3. Participating in educational or professional development activities.

Inappropriate Use

Individual Internet use is not permitted to interfere with others' productive use of Internet and network resources. Users will not violate the network policies of any network accessed through their account. Internet use at the Abington Township Fire Department will comply with all Federal, State and local laws, all Township policies, and all regulations imposed by the System Administrator or a Member's Fire Company. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The Internet may not be used for illegal or unlawful purposes, including, but not limited to, copyright infringement, obscenity, libel, fraud, defamation, plagiarism, harassment, intimidation, forgery, impersonation, gambling, politics, unauthorized soliciting, participation in pyramid schemes, and computer tampering.
2. Use of the Internet in a manner that is not consistent with the mission of the ATFD, misrepresents the ATFD, or violates any ATFD policy, including but not limited to the ATFD's policy against harassment, sexual harassment or workplace violence is prohibited.
3. The continuous use, uploading, or downloading of files for personal use, gaming, competitive commercial activity, and the dissemination of jokes and chain letters.
4. The viewing, uploading or downloading of material that is pornographic, obscene or otherwise offensive.
5. In the interest of maintaining network performance, users may not download large electronic files, and music or video files not needed for department purposes.
6. Participating in non-work-related blogs, web journals, webinars, chat rooms or personal instant messaging, selling or purchasing services or products for personal use, using any site which charges fees, or any other real-time connections which occupies continuous bandwidth (resources) in the network.

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7. Copyright Infringement: Copying or distributing without authorization of copyrighted material, trademark or logo, including, but not limited to, digitization of photographs from books, magazines and other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music, and the installation of any copyrighted software without valid licenses is prohibited.
8. Participation in interactive games, continual instant messaging, peer to peer communication and other interactive sites is not permitted.

No Expectation of Privacy

The ATFD or the individual fire company owns the rights to all data and files in any ATFD-related computer, network resource, or other information system used in the ATFD or purchased by it, and to all data and files sent or received using any township device, or using the ATFD's access to any computer network, to the extent that such rights are not superseded by applicable laws relating to intellectual or individual property.

The ATFD and/or the individual fire company has the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of the network or on individual computers or storage media purchased by the ATFD or fire company, without notice and for any reason, including in order to assure compliance with ATFD policies and state and federal laws.

Monitoring and Filtering

The Abington Township Fire Department or the individual fire company may monitor any Internet activity occurring on ATFD/Fire Company equipment or accounts. Members should assume that whatever they do, type, enter, send, receive, and view on ATFD/Fire Company electronic information systems is subject to inspection, monitoring, and evaluation. Further, employees who use ATFD/Fire Company systems and Internet access to send or receive files or other data that would otherwise be subject to any kind of confidentiality or disclosure privilege thereby waive whatever right they may have to assert such confidentiality or privilege from disclosure. Members who wish to maintain their right to confidentiality or a disclosure privilege must send or receive such information using some means other than ATFD or fire company-provided Internet access.

The Abington Township Fire Department reserves the right to employ filtering software to limit access to sites on the Internet. If the ATFD/Fire Company discovers activities which do not comply with applicable law or departmental policy, records retrieved may be used to document the wrongful content in accordance with due process.

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND NETWORKING POLICY STATEMENT

The following is the social media and Social Networking Policy for the Abington Township Fire Department. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a specific site or platform does not limit the application of this policy. Where no policy or guideline exists, members should use their best judgment and take the most prudent action possible. Consult with your Chief if you are uncertain. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of membership.

Social Media

The term "Social Media" refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking that aim to facilitate communication, secure information sharing, interoperability and collaboration on the internet. These include web-based communities, hosted services and application and social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), video sharing sites (such as YouTube and Tik Tok), photo sharing sites (such as Snapchat), wikis (such as Wikipedia), blogs (both personal and employer-sponsored), microblogs (such as Twitter), business networking sites (such as LinkedIn) and recommendation sites (such as Yelp).

The ATFD recognizes that its employees are citizens of the online world who share their knowledge and opinions, engage in social interaction and collaborate with each other, family, clients, partners and friends. The ATFD believes that social media can drive business and support your professional development efforts.

Use Prohibited

While typically what employees do outside of work is their personal business and generally not subject to ATFD policies, certain activities, like use of social media, may affect a member's compliance with policies.

Members maintain their rights to speak as private citizens about matters of public concern and may post on Social Media information about the Township and/or the ATFD but should include a disclaimer that the views expressed are the member's own views and are not the views of the Township or ATFD. When posting your point of view, you should neither claim nor imply you are speaking on behalf of the ATFD, unless you are authorized in writing to do so.

You Are What You Post

In the event that you obtain prior written approval from post information on the internet, you will be held personally accountable for everything you post. When you use a fire

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company email address or ATFD/Fire Company assets to engage in any social media or professional social networking activity, all actions are public, and you will be held fully responsible by the ATFD/Fire Company for any and all such activities. Be mindful that what you publish is indeed "public" in the broadest sense of the word and that it will remain in the public domain for a very long time. Pay particular attention to proprietary information and avoid misrepresentation in all circumstances.

Under no circumstances are you to represent yourself as a spokesperson for the ATFD or your Fire Company unless expressly authorized to do so.

Social Media Code of Conduct

- A. Harassing, threatening or discriminatory comments may be deemed inappropriate and may subject you to disciplinary action, including termination, even if the name of your fire company or the ATFD is not mentioned.
- B. You may not transmit, post, retrieve, download or store messages or images (including videos) that are offensive, derogatory, defamatory, off-color, sexual in content, or otherwise inappropriate in a business environment.
- C. Know and follow the Member Handbook. All the rules that apply to member behavior in the office or while working also apply to your online conduct.
- D. Obey the law. Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate local, state or federal laws or regulations.
- E. Be honest. Never be false and misleading in your online credentials. Likewise, do not embellish your online bios
- F. Think before you post. Be direct, informative and brief. Be respectful of how you appear online. Do not use slurs or personal insults, obscenity or anything else that might be found unacceptable in the ATFD work environment. Show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics they might find objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics or religion.
- G. Be respectful. Respect members, elected officials, volunteers, vendors, customers and members of the public. Never identify someone by name without their permission. Do not reference or quote customers, suppliers or partners without their express, written approval. When quoting, always refer back to the source.
- H. Credit appropriately. Identify all copyrighted or borrowed materials using citations and links.

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- I. Fact-check your posts. Before posting any material online, ensure that the material is accurate, truthful and without factual error.
- J. The competition. Do not post any comments about other fire companies, fire departments or emergency service organizations.
- K. Correct errors promptly. If you find that anything you have posted online contains an error or has been made inaccurate, you are required to fix the error promptly. Admit your mistake, apologize if necessary and correct the error.
- L. Don't shout. Be respectful and informative. Do not be condescending or loud. Do not use capital letters.
- M. Take the higher ground. Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications. If a blogger or any other online influencer posts a statement with which you disagree, voice your opinion, but do not escalate the conversation to a heated argument. Write reasonably, factually and with good humor. Understand and credit the other person's point of view and avoid any communications that could result in personal, professional or credibility attacks.
- N. Be careful of who you "friend." When using social networks with your department/fire company email and professional identification, do not "friend" anyone whom you either do not actually know or with whom you have not previously corresponded. Use "friend lists" for different categories such as family, work, classmates, etc.
- O. Your use of the internet may not interfere with the performance of your job duties.
- P. You may not place copies of ATFD or ATFD Fire Company trademarks, logos or symbols on any website, blog or web page without first obtaining prior written approval from your Chief.

CODE OF ETHICS

Resolution #92-015, enacted June 11, 1992, established the Code of Ethics for all elected and appointed officials and employees of the Township of Abington. The following code is to be observed:

- 1. In the carrying out of his/her duties, each official and employee (member) shall comply with the applicable laws, ordinances, resolutions, rules and regulations of the Township, and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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2. Each appointed official and employee (member) shall place the competence and effectiveness of service to the public before the interest of any individual, including himself or herself, or party.
3. Disclosure of confidential information, without proper authorization, regarding the property, government or affair of the Township.
4. No official or employee (member) shall disclose confidential information acquired in the course of official duties or use such information to advance directly or indirectly his/her financial or private interest, or that of any other person or persons.
5. No official or employee (member) shall directly or indirectly solicit or accept any gift, loan, service, promise, or employment which might influence, or tend to influence, the proper performance of his/her duties.
6. No official or employee (member) shall render advice, consult with, or appear on behalf of private interests before any board, commission or judicial body wherein the Township is involved directly and the interest of the party is adverse to the position of the Township.

A Commissioner or other official may appear before Township Boards or Commissions on behalf of constituents in the course of his/her duties as a representative of the electorate or in the performance of public or civic obligations. However, no Commissioner or other official or employee shall accept compensation for such appearance or representation.

7. Any official or employee (member) who shall have any financial interest in any business entity, transaction or contract with the Township, or in the sale or rental of real estate, materials, supplies, or services to the Township, shall make known to the Board of Commissioners such interest in any matter on which he/she may be called to act in an official capacity. Such official or employee (member) shall refrain from voting upon, or otherwise participating in, the transaction or the making of such a contract or sale. Such official or employee (member) shall not discuss such matter with any other official or employee (member).
8. NOT APPLICABLE TO ATFD VOLUNTEERS
9. Nothing in this Code of Ethics shall be construed to prohibit any officer or employee (member) from openly and publicly pursuing his/her own private interest as a resident or elector of the Township and as an occupant or owner of property in the Township.

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10. This Code of Ethics is intended to reinforce and support the applicable State Law pertaining to Ethics and Conflict of Interest.

OPERATION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT VEHICLES/APPARATUS

Note: Most of the apparatus operated by the Abington Township Fire Department are owned by the individual fire companies. The following rules are intended to supplement the rules of the individual fire companies with regard to the operation of their apparatus. If there is a conflict, the fire company rule takes precedence. For the purpose of this section, the terms “Fire Department” and “Fire Company” are intended to be interchangeable.

1. Vehicles are to be operated only with specific permission.
2. Members must have, and carry at all times, a valid current Pennsylvania driver’s license to operate any fire department vehicles.
3. Vehicles may be used for official fire department business. If any member is involved in any type of accident with a fire department vehicle, the member must notify his/her Fire Chief or officer in charge and the police department in the jurisdiction in which the accident occurred. A police accident report must be completed for each accident, regardless of whether or not any injuries occurred.
4. Damage to or mechanical failure of a fire department vehicle must be reported immediately to the driver/operator’s Fire Chief or officer in charge.
5. Members may be required to take periodic refresher courses in the operation of any fire department apparatus.
6. Members operating a fire department vehicle in a grossly negligent manner as determined by the fire department, the police department, or a line officer in that member’s fire company, will be subject to discipline. Members found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal non-prescription drugs, as defined by law, while operating a fire department vehicle will be expelled.
7. The fire department will check all members’ driving records periodically, and those with unacceptable records or revoked privileges will not be allowed to drive fire department vehicles.

DISTRACTED DRIVING POLICY

While operating a Fire Company or Township-owned vehicle and/or while in the performance of AFD business while operating any vehicle, members shall not use a cell phone, electronic communication device or any other electronic equipment, including hands-free devices or GPS navigational systems. “Use” consists of, but is not limited to,

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answering or making phone calls, engaging in phone conversations, reading or responding to emails, any text messaging, accessing the internet, taking photographs, or any other utilization of the device.

Operation of a vehicle is defined as including, but not limited to, when the vehicle is in motion, stopped in traffic, or at a traffic light/sign.

This shall apply to Fire Company and Township-owned/issued devices or ones owned by the member. Members shall not initiate or receive calls or use such devices in any way while driving, except when absolutely necessary during an emergency situation.

If a member must initiate or receive a call, text message or other communication, the member must drive to a safe location and stop the vehicle and place the vehicle in “Park”, prior to activating the device, remaining there until the communication is completed. A safe location might include, but is not limited to, rest areas, parking lots or designated parking areas. Stopping along the side or on the shoulder of a major highway should not be considered.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

Each firefighter in the ATFD is provided thousands of dollars in personal protective equipment when they become a member. Additionally, the equipment carried on each fire apparatus costs tens of thousands of dollars. Equipment essential in accomplishing job duties is often expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using ATFD/Fire Company equipment, members are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Please notify your Fire Chief or a line officer if any apparatus, equipment, machines, or tools appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to members or others. The Fire Chief or line officer can answer any questions about a member’s responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment used on the job.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment can result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the ATFD.

Equipment and apparatus may not be removed from the premises without the proper authorization of the Fire Chief of your station.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

The following outline of disciplinary infractions is to serve as a general guideline to help members understand what is considered unacceptable behaviors that are not in the best interest of the Abington Township Fire Department, your individual fire company, the Township of Abington, its citizens, or your fellow firefighters. It should be understood that the individual fire company to which you belong has disciplinary procedures in place to deal with unacceptable behavior, up to and including expulsion from the fire company and fire department.

All members must understand that no group of rules and/or regulations can be established that will cover all situations arising from the performance or non-performance of duties, and the following list of infractions is not all inclusive but rather a basic guide to be used by members and officers.

The following is a list of infractions that will not be tolerated in the Abington Township Fire Department and may cause disciplinary action from your individual fire company:

- Misappropriation of fire company funds or property
- Equipment stolen or lost due to gross negligence.
- Deliberate destruction and/or theft of fire company property
- Intentional falsification of official records or documents
- Engaging in or committing an act of violence
- Possession of, use of, or sale of illegal drugs on fire company property
- Arrest and conviction of a felony.
- Falsifying employment/membership application
- Offering or taking a bribe
- Making unfounded claims of occupational injury, illness, or disability
- Discourtesy to a citizen
- Use of rude or profane language toward a citizen
- Reporting to fire calls, schools, or other fire company functions under the influence of alcohol or narcotics
- Unwillingness to perform job duties.
- Persistent violation of safety rules

Please note that this list is not meant to be all inclusive. It is intended to provide each member with a guideline of behaviors that are considered unacceptable.

DISCIPLINE

All disciplinary issues within the ATFD, including violations of the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook, are governed by ATFD Standard Operating Guideline #100-114 as well as the bylaws, policies and procedures of the individual fire company to which the member belongs.

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INSURANCE & OTHER BENEFITS

Worker's Compensation Coverage

All members of the Abington Township Fire Department are covered by Abington Township for injuries and illnesses sustained as a result of being a firefighter for the Township. It is the desire of the Abington Township Fire Department (ATFD) be a safe as safe as possible. Toward this end, the ATFD desires that no member should unreasonably place himself/herself in a position of likely physical danger. Unsafe working conditions should be immediately called to the attention of the appropriate supervisor. Unfortunately, there will be occasions when members receive work-related injuries, even when every reasonable effort is made by both the department and the member to function safely. All work-related injuries, whether or not they require medical attention, whether or not they require that the member leave the work site, whether or not they require that the member miss work, must be reported by both the member and the member's Fire Chief (or designee) to the Workers' Compensation Administration through the Human Resources Office of Abington Township. Appropriate notice of injury forms, as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, will have to be completed. Abington Township's workers' compensation reporting procedures and panel of physicians are posted on all departmental bulletin boards. These procedures must be followed to ensure your benefits.

Any on-the-job injury, no matter how slight, must be reported immediately to your Fire Chief or line officer. On-the-job injuries are covered by a workers' compensation insurance policy. Failure to report in a timely manner could result in a denial of coverage.

Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize a member's claim. Management needs to be alerted to any condition which could lead to, or contribute to, a member accident.

Abington Township and the ATFD will abide with all requirements set forth by the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act and other applicable laws. Adverse action will not be taken against a member in retaliation for filing a workers' compensation claim.

The amount of benefits payable to the member and the duration of payment depends upon the nature of the injury or illness. The injured member will be taken to a panel physician or hospital if he or she cannot be treated adequately on the premises.

A member must obtain treatment for work-related illnesses from one or more of the designated health care providers on the Townships panel of physicians for ninety (90) days from the date of first visit to a designated provider.

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Additional Insurance Coverage

In addition to the Township provided Worker's Compensation Insurance coverage, each ATFD fire company carries additional supplemental insurance, including life insurance coverage, for members who are injured in the line of duty. Further information on this coverage is available from the member's individual Fire Company

Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP)

Abington Township provides a Length of Service Award Program for the volunteers of the ATFD, which provides a lump sum cash award to vested members upon reaching the age of 60. All members of the ATFD are eligible and receive one credit for each year served. The final award is based on the number of credits accumulated by the member by the time they reach age 60. Members vest in the program after 10 qualified years of service in the ATFD. Members must maintain a certain minimum level of activity each year in order to qualify for that year's credit.

Serving your community as a volunteer firefighter is a privilege and an exciting challenge – an experience that will last a lifetime.

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