

# Southern Inyo Fire Protection District

## Employee Handbook

*This Handbook is designed to cover the obligations, duties, and rights of all members of the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District. It is not intended nor designed to limit members in exercising judgment or initiative in taking action to perform their duties. For a full listing of District policies go to: [www.sifpd.org/board-of-directors-manual](http://www.sifpd.org/board-of-directors-manual).*

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# **SECTION 1**

## **FORWARD**

# Southern Inyo Fire Protection District

Dear Team,

Welcome to the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District! As your Fire Chief, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for your commitment to our community and to each other. This employee handbook serves as a resource, outlining our policies, procedures, and the values that guide our work. There are other policies and procedures that may be of interest and I encourage you to read them on our website, [www.sifpd.org/board-of-directors-manual](http://www.sifpd.org/board-of-directors-manual).

In our line of duty, teamwork, integrity, and professionalism are paramount. Each of you plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook, as well as visiting our website as it will help you understand our expectations and the support available to you.

Please remember that my door is always open for any questions or concerns you may have. Together, we can continue to uphold the high standards of our department and serve our community with pride.

Thank you for your dedication and service.

Sincerely,



William (Bill) Lutze, Chief

Southern Inyo Fire Protection District

760-852-4130

# **Southern Inyo Fire Protection District**

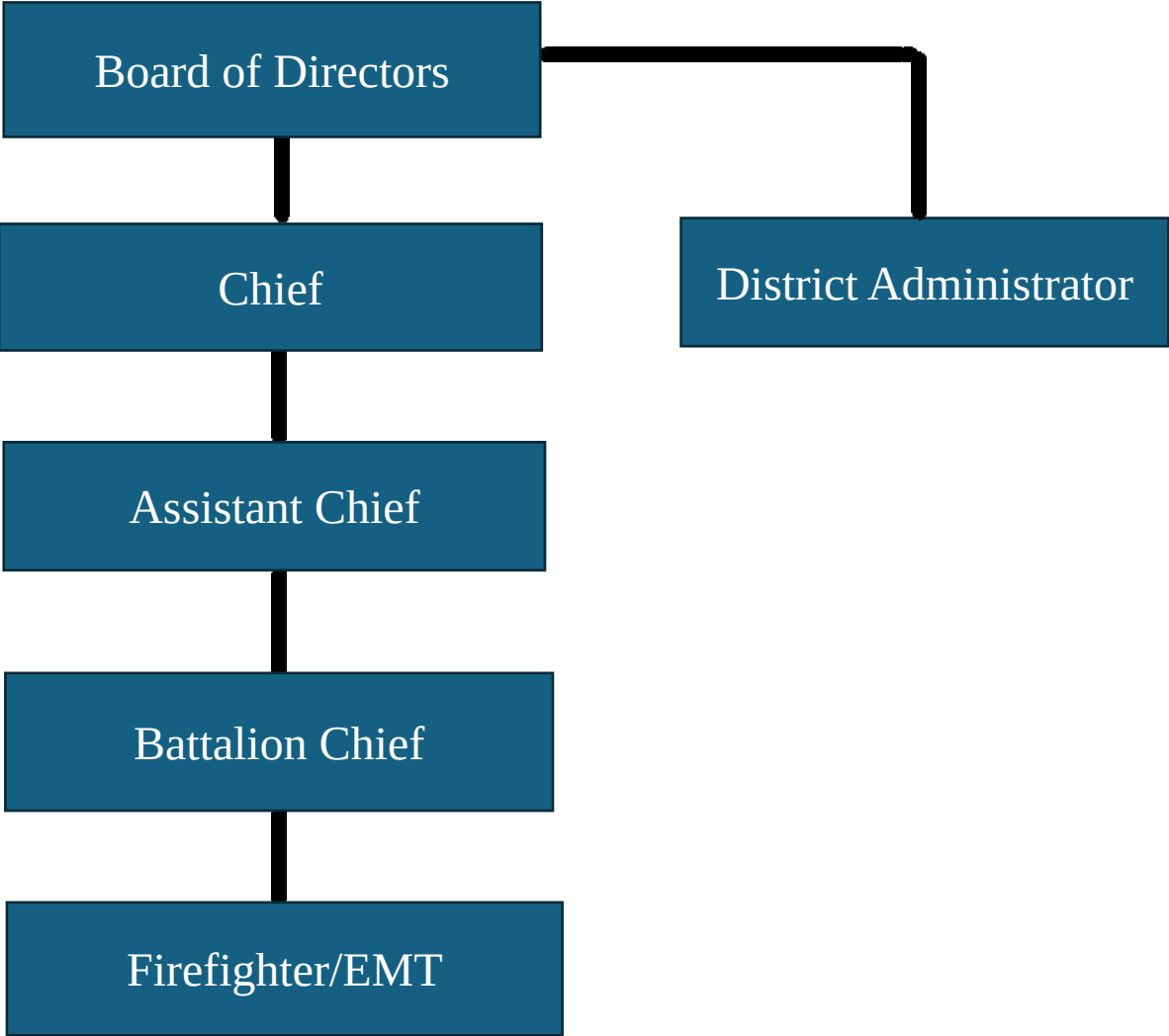
## **Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to safeguard our rural communities through professional fire protection, emergency medical services, and disaster response. We commit to maintaining response readiness while promoting safety awareness and prevention throughout our service area.

## **Vision:**

To build a resilient rural emergency response system that combines modern firefighting techniques with traditional community values, ensuring the safety and security of our residents.

**SOUTHERN INYO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**



# **SECTION 2**

## **EMPLOYEE GENERAL INFORMATION**

**POLICY TITLE: Equal Opportunity**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2225**

**2225.1** The District employs persons having the best available skills to efficiently provide high quality service to the public.

**2225.2** The District provides equal opportunity for all persons in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, educational assistance, benefits, discipline, working conditions, reduction in force, reinstatement and all other matter of employment.

**2225.2.1** Such equality of opportunity shall be based solely on job related knowledge, skills, and job performance, and shall be without discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, handicap, veteran status, or any other factor unrelated to job performance.

**POLICY TITLE: Affirmative Action**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2220**

**2220.1** It is the policy of the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District that there shall be no discrimination based upon race, national origin, religion, sex, physical handicap, veteran's status, or age in any personnel action, including recruitment, appointment, performance evaluation, promotion, the granting of leaves, and any disciplinary or grievance action.

**2220.2** This policy contains two major commitments:

**2220.2.1** To recognize both a moral and legal obligation to work toward a work force composition reflecting the mix of ethnic minorities and women in the labor markets from which the District draws its staff.

**2220.2.2** To make a demonstrable and deliberate effort in hiring to solicit applications from minority and women candidates in all cases where their representation is below the labor force standard.

**2220.3** Allegations of wrongdoing, such as arbitrary and discriminatory action, should be made through the "Grievance Procedure", as described in Policy# 2180, or complaints to regulatory agencies.



POLICY TITLE: **Grievance**

POLICY NUMBER: **2180**

**2180.1** This policy shall apply to all regular and volunteer employees in all classifications.

**2180.2** The purpose of this policy is to provide a procedure by which employees may formally claim that they have been affected by a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of a law, District policy, rule, regulation or instruction.

**2180.3** Specifically excluded from the grievance procedure are subjects involving the amendment of state or federal law; resolutions adopted by the District's Board of Directors, ordinances or minute orders, including decisions regarding wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.

**2180.4** Grievance Procedure Steps:

**2180.4.1** Level I - Preliminary Informal Resolution: Any employee who believes they have a grievance shall present the evidence thereof orally to their immediate supervisor within fifteen (15) working days after the employee knew, or reasonably should have known, of the circumstances which form the basis for the alleged grievance. The immediate supervisor shall hold discussions and attempt to resolve the matter within five (5) working days after the presentation of such evidence. It is the intent of this informal meeting that at least one personal conference be held between the employee and the immediate supervisor.

**2180.4.2** Level II - Fire Chief: If the grievance has not been resolved at Level I, the grievant must present their grievance in writing on a form provided by the District (attached hereto as Appendix "A") to the Fire Chief within thirty (30) working days after the occurrence of the act or omission giving rise to the grievance.

**2180.4.2.1** The statement shall include the following:

- a) A concise statement of the grievance including specific reference to any law, policy, rule, regulation, and/or instruction deemed to be violated, misapplied or misinterpreted;
- b) The circumstances involved;
- c) The decision rendered by the immediate supervisor at Level I;
- d) The specific remedy sought.

**2180.4.2.2** The Fire Chief shall communicate their decision within ten (10) days after receiving the grievance. Decisions will be in writing setting forth the decision and the reasons therefore and will be transmitted promptly to all parties in interest. Time limits for appeal shall begin the day following receipt of the Fire Chief's written decision. Within the above limits, either party may request a personal conference with the other. If the Fire Chief does not respond within the time limits, the grievant may appeal to the next level.

**2180.4.3** Level III - Board of Directors: In the event the grievant is not satisfied with the decision at Level II, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing on a form provided by the District (attached hereto as Appendix "A") to the District's Board of Directors within ten (10) days. The statement shall include a copy of the original grievance; a copy of the written decision by the Fire Chief; and a clear, concise statement of the reasons for the appeal to Level III. This appeal should be filed with the District Administrator and the District office.

**2180.4.3.1** The Board of Directors, as soon as possible at a regular monthly meeting of the Board, shall schedule a hearing in closed session to formally receive the written grievance and the answers thereto at each step and to hear evidence regarding the issue or issues. The Board's decision shall be announced in open session immediately after the closed session in which it was made.

## **2180.5** Basic Rules.

**2180.5.1** If an employee does not present the grievance, or does not appeal the decision rendered regarding the grievance within the time limits specified above, the grievance shall be considered resolved.

**2180.5.2** By agreement in writing, the parties may extend any and all time limitations specified above.

**2180.5.3** The Fire Chief may temporarily suspend grievance processing on a District-wide basis in an emergency situation. Employees covered by this policy may appeal this decision to the Board of Directors.

**2180.5.4** A copy of all formal grievance decisions shall be placed in the employee's permanent personnel file.

Appendix "A"

**EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE FORM**

Southern Inyo Fire Protection District

Employee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of grievance, including specific reference to any law, policy, rule, regulation and/or instruction deemed to be violated, misapplied or misinterpreted:

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Circumstances involved:

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Decision rendered by the informal conference:

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Specific remedy sought:

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**POLICY TITLE: Pay Periods**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2130**

**2130.1** The salaries and wages of all District employees shall be paid semi-monthly, being the 15th day and the last day of the month.

**2130.2** Volunteer staff will be paid on a "Call-Out" basis at a rate to be set by the Board of Directors. Total call-outs per staff member will be paid monthly at the end of the month. The Fire Chief will be responsible for sending in call-out reimbursement requests to the Inyo County Treasurer.

**2130.3** The Inyo County Treasurer will be responsible for disbursing payment to individuals receiving monies each month.

**POLICY TITLE: Educational Assistance**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2120**

**2120.1** Employees of the District are encouraged to pursue educational opportunities, which are related to their present work, which will prepare them for foreseeable future opportunities within the District, or which will prepare them for future career advancement.

**2120.2** To be eligible for reimbursement of costs, the employee must receive advance approval for the class(es) and expenses through the Chief and the Board of Directors. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted in writing. The employee will be notified of formal approval, or the reasons for disapproval.

**2120.3** Upon completion of the class (es), the employee is responsible for sending copies of the proof of completion, and expense receipt(s) to the Chief.

**2120.4** The type of classes generally eligible for reimbursement per this policy:

**2120.4.1** Classes which are related to the employee's present work assignment or which may contribute to the benefit of the District. Such classes may be taken individually and need not be directed toward a degree or certificate.

**2120.5** Specialized training is defined as any training that is not mandated as a requirement for performing the service of a Volunteer/Employee in which the District deems beneficial to District operations. The intent of that specialized training is training that is not required to be taken and is training that is accepted by the Volunteer/Employee without any loss of status/rank or by negative reflection on job performance/evaluation.

**2120.5.1** Obligations/Expectations: All specialized training will require a written agreement to be executed between the Fire Chief and the Volunteer/Employee, or the Fire Chief and Chairperson of the Board, to be brought to the Board of Directors specifying what is to be provided to the Volunteer/Employee and what the District expects to receive in return from the Volunteer/Employee.

The agreement should include particulars in regards to training, materials, and volunteer service. The District will retain the original copy of all materials provided. All agreements will comply with the Equal Opportunity Employment requirements. Any refusal of specialized training will not affect the Volunteer/Employee's job performance review or status/rank.

**POLICY TITLE: Outside Employment**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2240**

**2240.1** No District employee shall be permitted to accept employment in addition to or outside of District service if:

**2240.1.1** The additional or outside employment leads to a conflict, or potential conflict of interest for said employee; or,

**2240.1.2** The nature of the additional or outside employment is such that unfavorably on the District; or,

**2240.1.3** The duties to be performed in the additional or outside employment are in conflict with the duties involved in District service.

**2240.2** An employee who does have additional or outside employment shall not be permitted to use District records, materials, equipment, facilities, or other District resources in connection with said employment.

# **SECTION 3**

## **EMPLOYEE POLICY & PROCEDURES**

POLICY TITLE: **Hours of Work**

POLICY NUMBER: **2010**

**2010.1** This policy shall apply to all hourly employees. The regular hours of work each day shall be flexible contingent upon agreement between the employee and the Board of Directors.

**2010.2** Other than regular employees, volunteer staff shall work as follows:

**2010.2.1** A schedule shall be maintained by the Fire Chief whereby volunteer employees shall be assigned to be "on-call".

**2010.2.2** When an employee is on-call, he/she shall be provided a radio or pager, which will provide notification in the event of an emergency. Said radio or pager shall be kept in the on-call employee's possession during the entire on-call period. Notification of an emergency may also be given in person, by phone call or electronically by the Fire Chief or the next chain of command volunteer.

**2010.2.3** When an employee is called-out for an emergency, he/she will be paid an amount of "call-out" pay per call as established by the Board of Directors.

**2010.2.4** When an employee is on-call, he/she shall be free to utilize his/her time as desired but must remain within the general Southern Inyo Fire Protection District area.



**POLICY TITLE: Personal Appearance**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2080**

To establish guidelines for appropriate dress, safety considerations, and appearance during tour of duty and/or work periods. Appropriate attire and good personal appearance serve to demonstrate that the District and its employees are professional and serious about the services they provide.

This policy applies to all employees of the District.

**2080.1** When responding to a call, employees shall use their best effort to be neat and clean in their personal appearance.

**2080.2** Garments shall be neat, clean and safe. Employees shall use sound discretion in wearing repaired or altered uniform and equipment items. Proper garments shall be worn by all employees to avoid bringing attention to one' s attire or person.

**2080.3** Good personal hygiene must be maintained. All employees must come to work smelling clean and must avoid excessive use of perfume or cologne. Fingernails shall be clean and trimmed.

**2080.4** While on call, scented products should be used sparingly. It may be necessary to prohibit employees who work in close proximity to each other, from the application or use of scented products, while on duty.

**2080.5** Hair on personnel will be clean, neatly trimmed and present a well-groomed appearance at all times while on duty. Employees shall not wear exaggerated hairstyles that impact safety.

#### **Fire Personnel**

**2080.6** Hair extending over the forehead shall not be worn below the highest point of the eyebrows, and shall not prevent the helmet from resting on the forehead while being worn.

**2080.7** Hair may not cover the entire ear.

**2080.8** If hair must be secured (mechanically restrained) to meet these requirements, the device or method used to so restrain must not interfere with the safe and proper use of helmets, face pieces, or other required safety equipment. It must remain restrained under all conditions of work or activity.

**2080.9** No facial hair shall prevent a "good face seal" with a Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) respirator, as defined in 20 CFR 1910.

**2080.10** Sideburns will not extend below the bottom of the ear lobe or compromise in any manner the face seal of an SCBA as defined in 20 CFR 1910.

**2080.11** Any jewelry worn by personnel that may cause personal injury must be removed while performing the job.

**2080.12** Supervisors are responsible to evaluate and ensure that the dress and appearance of employees meet the personal appearance standards as established by this policy.

**2080.13** Uniform T-shirts provided by the District are encouraged to be worn at fire department functions.

POLICY TITLE: **Rules of Conduct**

POLICY NUMBER: **2081**

To assure safe, efficient and harmonious operations and to fully inform all employees of their responsibilities in this regard.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of the District.

**2081.1** The District's standards of conduct are established for the guidance of all employees. The following represent only a partial list of unacceptable behaviors and conduct, including but not limited to the following:

In matters of general conduct all employees are to be governed by common and reasonable rules of behaviors observed by law abiding and self respecting citizens.

All members of the District shall abide by the rules and regulations of the District.

Infractions of Standards of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. (Ref: Policy 2260 Disciplinary Action)

**2081.2** Employees and volunteers will keep themselves in readiness to perform their duty at all times when on the schedule, and not absent themselves from duty or place of assignment without specific permission of their supervisor.

**2081.3** Firefighters shall attend all emergency response calls to which they may be assigned, detailed, or summoned and exert their greatest energy and ability in the performance of their duty under any and all circumstances.

**2081.4** Employees and volunteers shall participate in training activities as directed; be thoroughly familiar with all equipment required to perform the requirements of the position, and perform related work as may be required.

- 2081.5** Accord obedience, respect and courtesy to supervisors and those performing the duties of a higher rank.
- 2081.6** Be courteous and respectful when dealing with the public.
- 2081.7** Exercise precautionary measures to avoid injury to self and others while in the performance of duty.
- 2081.8** Be responsible for the safe keeping and proper care of all property in your charge.
- 2081.9** Instruct individuals designated to act in their absence and be confident that their relief is capable and able to perform the duties to which they are assigned.
- 2081.10** When assigned to act in a higher rank, accept responsibility for the performance of the duties of that position, with the right to decline for any valid reason.
- 2081.11** In the event two or more members of rank below that stipulated as "Officer" find themselves in a position which requires initiative action, the senior member present shall assume command unless or until otherwise directed by a supervisor.
- 2081.12** When an employee receives an order which is in conflict with a previous order, the employee shall so inform the supervisor who issued the conflicting order and be governed by his/her instructions.
- 2081.13** Employees will keep their person, attire, workspace, and lockers in a neat and clean condition.
- 2081.14** On-duty scheduled personnel will have their turn-out gear (helmet, coat, gloves, boots, trousers, and other safety issue) with them, ready to respond to any summons.
- 2081.15** Response to a summons shall be completed in a safe and lawful manner. It is not necessary to speed or otherwise endanger yourself or others in response to a call. Traffic signs will be observed at all times in responding to the station.
- 2081.16** Horseplay, practical jokes or other disorderly conduct which may endanger the safety or well-being of any employee or District operations is unacceptable.
- 2081.17** Personnel shall not engage in such other practices as the District determines may be inconsistent with the ordinary and reasonable rules of conduct necessary to the welfare of the District, its employees or the citizens which we serve.
- 2081.18** Personnel shall report any accident or personal injury to his/her supervisor.

- 2081.19** Falsifying or mutilation of any District document or record is prohibited.
- 2081.20** Engaging in acts of dishonesty, fraud, theft or sabotage is prohibited. Employees will not conspire with anyone to permit circumvention or evasion of any law or regulation pertaining to Fire and Public Safety.
- 2081.21** Wrongful or injurious exercise of authority by any member of the District while on duty, while conducting District business or representing the District in any capacity is prohibited.
- 2081.22** Personnel are to notify his/her supervisor and administration within twenty-four (24) hours of any change of residence or telephone number.
- 2081.23** No employee shall go off duty or schedule before the change of shift unless properly relieved or authorized.
- 2081.24** No information relative to the business of the District will be furnished to persons not directly connected with the District without prior approval of the Fire Chief
- 2081.25** Employees will not, on or off duty, use the uniform, badge or prestige of the District for the purpose of personal gain.
- 2081.26** Employees will not lend their name or approve the use of same, as a member of the District, to any commercial enterprise without approval from the Fire Chief.
- 2081.27** No employee shall directly or indirectly solicit the influence or intercession of any person or persons to effect their promotions, transfer or other personal gain.
- 2081.28** No employee will be party to any malicious gossip, report or activity which could disrupt District morale or bring discredit to the District or its employees.
- 2081.29** In adherence to government regulations, no employee may offer or provide a gratuity to any government employee or official on behalf of, or in pursuance of, District business. Gratuities are defined as meals, drinks, gifts, expenses, cash, or any other item of value, including personal service.
- 2081.30** An employee may not receive, give, pay, promise, or offer to the public anything of value whether cash or other property for the purpose of securing or appearing to secure preferential treatment.
- 2081.31** Any general or specific orders issued hereafter are to be recognized as additions to these Rules of Conduct and shall have equal force and effect.

- 2081.32** No employee shall receive a reward, fee or gift from any person for service incident to the performance of duty, except as authorized by the Fire Chief or board of Directors of the District.
- 2081.33** Conduct which the District feels reflects adversely on the employee or District is prohibited.
- 2081.34** Unauthorized use of District material, time, equipment or property is prohibited.
- 2081.35** Unauthorized access to District records, misuse or removal without authorization of District records or confidential information of any kind is prohibited.
- 2081.36** Employees shall not belong to any organization, association or society which will in any manner divide their loyalty to the District or to the United States of America.

POLICY TITLE: **Gifts**

POLICY NUMBER: **2155**

- 2155.1** An employee or their immediate family may not accept from, or provide to, individuals or companies doing or seeking to do business with the District, gifts, entertainment, and/or other services or benefits unless the transaction meets all of the following guidelines:
- 2155.1.1** Is customary and gives no appearance of impropriety and does not have more than a nominal value;
  - 2155.1.2** Does not impose any sense of obligation on either the giver or the receiver;
  - 2155.1.3** Does not result in any kind of special or favored treatment;
  - 2155.1.4** Cannot be viewed as extravagant, excessive, or too frequent considering all the circumstances including the ability of the recipient to reciprocate at District expense.
  - 2155.1.5** Is given and received with no effort to conceal the full facts by either the giver or receiver.

**POLICY TITLE: Drug & Alcohol Free Workplace**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2190**

**2190.1** The Southern Inyo Fire Protection District has the responsibility to the general public which it serves, and to the members (employees) of the District including any subdivision, charter, or branch to assure such employees do not work for the District while under the influence of any substance which is either prohibited by law or has the ability to alter a person's mental or physical status which may compromise the safety of that person, fellow employees, or the general public. Any work situation that involves drug and substance use shall be handled with zero tolerance.

**2190.1.1** Influence: To cause stupefaction, stimulation, or excitement by or as if by use of a chemical substance. An effect on the mind and/or body by substances which may result in unsafe behavior.

**2190.1.2** Drug and Substance Use: Refers to the use of or dependence on a stimulant, depressant, chemical substance, herb (plant) or fungus leading to the effects that are detrimental to the individual's physical or mental health, or the welfare of others.

**2190.1.3** Use of prescription drugs known to have impairment oriented side effects must be reported to a supervisor prior to the start of duties.

**2190.2** The use, sale, possession, purchase, or transfer of drugs, alcohol and/or any other substances, including prescribed medications that may cause impairment, by any District employee or officer on District property or work sites or while said employee or officer is on District business is prohibited.

**2190.3** All District employees shall be provided training for recognizing drug and substance influence. The training shall include the employee's responsibilities for assuring a safe workplace, and the conditions of this policy.

**2190.4** All prospective District employees are subject to a one time pre-employment drug and substance test to establish a baseline condition of existing use.

**2190.4.1** Current employees may decline the initial one time drug screening without prejudice.

**2190.4.2** All test information, both compliance and results, become part of the employee's file and will remain confidential.

**2190.5** District employees may, at the District's discretion, be subject to drug testing for reasonable cause.

**2190.5.1** Reasonable cause is determined whenever a person exhibits signs of "being under the influence" or when more than one piece of evidence leads to the belief that a person is being influenced by a substance as per 2190.2.

**2190.6** Drug testing shall be limited to a urine analysis by a clinic or laboratory qualified to conduct such testing, unless federal, state, or local law dictates other drug testing methods.

**2190.7** Whenever the District requests an employee to take a drug and substance test, the District shall be responsible for the costs of the tests. When the employee has tested positive and the employee wishes to challenge the results of the test or attempt to be reinstated to active duty, it will be at the employee's expense.

**2190.8** It is the responsibility of all District employees to report possible substance abuse and any person exhibiting signs of being under the influence, through the chain of command, as per 2190.2

**2190.8.1** Reports pertaining to the District employees shall be handled by the Fire Chief. Law enforcement may take control whenever the situation took place in their presence or when requested to do so by the Fire District.

**2190.8.2** All reports pertaining to non District employees shall be handled by law enforcement.

**2190.8.3** All reports submitted under this policy must be supported by a signed statement from the person reporting their suspicions. The statement shall include all pertinent and objective information that supports the report.

**2190.8.4** The Fire Chief shall investigate all substance abuse reports to insure validity and accuracy unless the Board of Directors appoints a Board Director or a commission.

**2190.8.5** All reports shall be held confidentially unless superseded by federal, state, or county law.

**2190.9** Disciplinary Action:

**2190.9.1** A written warning will be used whenever circumstances of the incident are suspected to be linked to drug or substance use and there are no injuries or property damage. The employee will be suspended from work and required to complete a drug and substance abuse test. This warning will remain in the employee's file for one year where it will then be dismissed if no further infractions of this policy occur.

**2190.9.2** A final written warning may be issued if an employee has an existing written warning on file or the incident involves an injury or property damage. The employee will be suspended from work until a post incident drug and substance test is completed. The second warning will remain in the employee's file for one year when it will then be dismissed if no further infractions of this policy occur.

**2190.9.3** Termination of employment should be used as a last resort. The employee shall be allowed to voluntarily seek counseling and/or entry into a twelve-step program, at the employee's expense, within thirty (30) days after the incident. The employee shall remain suspended from work until a drug and substance test is taken and proof of counseling and/or entry into a twelve-step program and a negative drug and substance test is submitted to the Fire Chief

**2190.9.4** Immediate termination of employment is warranted whenever an employee is involved in an accident resulting in injuries, an OSHA reportable incident or property damage and when use is suspected as per section 2190.2 and refuses to take a drug test.

**2190.9.5** Termination may also become effective if the Fire Chief has investigated and substantiated a report of drug or substance abuse and determines the employee has jeopardized any person's safety and the employee has failed to take corrective actions after receiving the first warning.

**2190.10** Appeals:

**2190.10.1** Any employee may appeal their disciplinary action in writing to the Fire Chief within thirty (30) days of the action. The Fire Chief shall submit the employee's request to the Board of Directors for action at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The employee shall be informed when the appeal will be heard by the Board of Directors and be allowed to speak to the Board of Directors when the item appears on the agenda.

**2190.11** This policy shall become effective after adoption by the Governing Board of Directors.



**CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM**

**DRUG/ALCOHOL TESTING**

I hereby authorize Southern Inyo Fire Protection District, and any laboratories or medical facilities designated by Southern Inyo Fire Protection District, to perform a urinalysis test to detect the presence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs in my body. I further authorize the reporting of the results of such test(s) to Southern Inyo Fire Protection District Board of Directors and Fire Chief. I recognize that the results of such test will be used to determine my suitability for employment or for continued employment with the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District.

Any attempt to switch a sample or adulterate a sample will be considered the same as a positive result. The laboratory may test the sample for adulteration.

This release form is valid for one time only.

NAME OF EMPLOYEE: \_\_\_\_\_

FACILITY PERFORMING TEST: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF TEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant/Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Chief Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Substance Abuse and Smoking Policy**

### **Substance Abuse**

The use of Alcohol, and controlled substances is prohibited. If anyone is found working and/or performing duties as a representative of the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District while intoxicated or under the influence of any controlled substance, that person(s) shall be immediately dismissed from the incident scene or place of work. It will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander or the highest ranking responder on scene to report such incidents involving substance abuse to the Fire Chief. It will also be the responsibility of the Incident Commander or highest ranking responder to notify law enforcement if the incident of substance abuse has taken place on an emergency call. There will be no tolerance for substance abuse. A mandatory drug test will be required immediately and a suspension from duties will begin at time of incident for a length of time no less than 72 hours or until a personnel review is given by the Fire Chief. Upon review, anyone testing positive for substance abuse will be suspended from service for a minimum of 1 year and a retest will be required before returning to service. Dismissal from duties may be requested by the Board of Directors at any time or if the retest results are positive.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited while en route to a call-out and during an emergency call. Smoking is also prohibited during any contact of a patient and around the storage or use of oxygen. Smoking is prohibited in public buildings and schools. Personnel may smoke when not actively working an emergency call or training and must be a minimum of 50 feet from the storage and/or use of oxygen and other combustible substances. Anyone found disobeying this smoking policy will be given a verbal warning upon the first offense and a written warning on the second offense. A third infraction of this policy will result in a one month suspension from duties. A fourth infraction will result in a 1 year suspension or dismissal from services. A fifth infraction will result in dismissal from services.

I have read this policy and understand my responsibilities to report infractions of this policy to the Fire Chief. I also understand the punishment(s) for disobeying this policy.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**POLICY TITLE: Tobacco Use**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2195**

**2195.1** Ample research exists demonstrating the health hazards of the use of tobacco products, including smoking and the breathing of second-hand smoke. Therefore, in the best interest of the health and safety of employees and the general public, the smoking of tobacco products shall be banned completely within District buildings or confined spaces, or in District vehicles.

**2195.1.1** The successful implementation of this policy depends upon the thoughtfulness, consideration and cooperation of smokers and non-smokers. All individuals on District premises share in the responsibility of adhering to this policy.

**2195.1.2** Employees are prohibited from smoking within fifty (50) feet of any District buildings or equipment and while actively engaged in providing services for the District.

**2195.2** All District employees will be responsible for advising members of the public who are observed smoking tobacco products on District property of the District's policy on the matter. Said individuals shall be asked by staff to refrain from smoking.

**2195.3** District employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Policy #2260.

**POLICY TITLE: Smoke-Free Workplace**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2197**

**2197.1** Smoking is prohibited within the buildings and facilities of the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District. Those who smoke are requested to do so outdoors, and to dispose of cigarette butts properly.

**2197.2** Extra care should be taken when working around combustible materials, or out in the field.

**2197.2.1** Personnel who smoke in the field should use extreme caution and dispose of cigarettes in a responsible and safe manner.

**2197.3** Smoking is not allowed in any District vehicles.

POLICY TITLE: **Sexual Harassment**

POLICY NUMBER: **2210**

**2210.1** Acts of sexual harassment by employees, supervisors, or managers, are prohibited employment practices and are subject to sanctions and disciplinary measures.

**2210.2** Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

**2210.2.1** Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.

**2210.2.2** Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual.

**2210.2.3** Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a person's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

**2210.3** Prohibited acts of sexual harassment can take a variety of forms ranging from subtle pressure for sexual activity to physical assault. Examples of the kinds of conduct included in the definition of sexual harassment are:

**2210.3.1** Direct or indirect threats or suggestions of sexual relations or sexual contact which is not freely or mutually agreeable to both parties.

**2210.3.2** Continual or repeated verbal abuses of a sexual nature including graphic commentaries on the person's body; sexually suggestive objects or pictures placed in the work area that may embarrass or offend the person; sexually degrading works to describe the person, or propositions of a sexual nature.

**2210.4** Policy Publicizing: All employees shall be informed of the District's sexual harassment policy and complaint process prior to their need to know, and again when any complaint is filed. Also, said policy and complaint process shall be readily available to all employees and members of the general public utilizing the District's facilities and services.

**2210.4.1** All new employees shall be given a copy of the sexual harassment policy at the time of hiring and said policy's contents shall be discussed with said employee at the time by the General Manager.

**2210.4.2** An annual bulletin shall be prepared and distributed to all employees re informing them of the District's sexual harassment policy.

- 2210.5** Within three (3) working days after any complaint has been filed in accordance with this policy, a bulletin shall be prepared and distributed to all employees re-informing them of the District's sexual harassment policy.
- 2210.6** Complaint Process: Any employee who believes they are the victim of sexual harassment may file a formal or informal confidential complaint without fear of reprisal or embarrassment.
- 2210.6.1** An informal complaint is made verbally by the employee to their immediate supervisor. Although filing the complaint with the immediate supervisor is preferred; the employee is free to file their complaint with any supervisory employee.
- 2210.6.2** A formal complaint is made in writing, using the "Employee Grievance Form," see "Appendix A" in Policy# 2180. Said form should be submitted by the employee to their immediate supervisor. Although submitting the formal complaint with the immediate supervisor is preferred, the employee is free to submit their formal complaint with any supervisory employee or with the Chairperson of the Board of Directors if the employee's immediate supervisor is the General Manager and the General Manager is unavailable or personally involved in said complaint.
- 2210.7** Complaint Response Process: Any supervisory employee who receives a formal or informal sexual harassment complaint shall at all times maintain the confidentiality of the plaintiff and shall personally deliver said complaint immediately and directly to the General Manager.
- 2210.7.1** Within twenty-four (24) hours of the filing of a formal or informal complaint, even if it is withdrawn. The investigation shall be conducted by the General Manager.
- 2210.7.2** A written record of any investigation of an alleged sexual harassment shall be maintained.
- 2210.7.3** All discussions resulting from said investigation shall be kept confidential by all informed of said investigation.
- 2210.7.4** The person initiating the complaint has the right to be accompanied by an advocate(s) when discussing alleged incidents. Said person shall be advised of his/her right prior to the commencement of such discussions.
- 2210.8** Disciplinary Procedures and Sanctions: Upon conclusion of the investigation of an alleged sexual harassment, appropriate action shall be taken by the General Manager against the harasser where sexual harassment is found. Whatever punishment is meted out to the harasser shall be made known to the victim of the harassment.

- 2210.8.1** Appropriate action shall be taken to remedy the victim's loss, if any, resulting from the harassment.
- 2210.8.2** Action taken to remedy a sexual harassment situation shall be done in a manner so as to protect potential future victims.
- 2210.8.3** Employees complaining of sexual harassment shall be protected thereafter from any form of reprisal and/or retaliation.

**POLICY TITLE: Harassment**

**POLICY NUMBER: 2215**

- 2215.1** Southern Inyo Fire Protection District is committed to providing a work environment for its employees that is free of harassment. The District prohibits sexual harassment (see Policy# 2210) and harassment because of race, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law, ordinance or regulation. This policy applies to all persons involved in the operation of the District and prohibits harassment by any employee of the District; supervisors and co-workers.
- 2215.2** Harassment because of race, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation or any other protected basis is prohibited, including, but not limited to the following behavior:
- 2215.2.1** Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments;
  - 2215.2.2** Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures;
  - 2215.2.3** Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race or any other protected basis; and,
  - 2215.2.4** Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.
- 2215.3** If any employee of the District believes that they have been harassed, they should provide a written complaint to their supervisor or the General Manager as soon as possible after the incident. Their complaint should include details of the incident(s), name(s) of the individual(s) involved, together with the name(s) of any witness (es).
- 2215.3.1** Staff receiving harassment complaints will refer them immediately to the General Manager or the Chairperson of the Board of Directors (in the event the complaint involves the General Manager), who will undertake an immediate thorough and objective investigation of the harassment allegation(s).
- 2215.4** If it is determined that harassment has occurred; effective remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved. Any employee determined to be responsible for harassment will be subjected to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Whatever action is taken against the harasser will be made known to the employee lodging the complaint, and appropriate action will be taken to remedy any loss to the employee resulting from the harassment. Retaliation by management or co-workers against anyone filing a complaint will not be permitted or tolerated.
- 2215.5** Employees are encouraged to immediately report any incident of harassment so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved.

POLICY TITLE: **Confidentiality**

POLICY NUMBER: **2217**

### **2217.1** Intent

**2217.1.1** This policy is to establish procedure for maintaining confidentiality of information protected by Local, County, State, and Federal Laws pertaining to medical information, personal identification, and other sensitive information.

**2217.1.2** This policy does not exempt the Fire District or its staff from the responsibilities inherited by any law governing the protection of medical, personal, and government classified information.

### **2217.2** Background

**2217.2.1** In the course of providing services as described in the Health and Safety Code, Fire District Law of 1987, the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District may collect information from anyone directly or indirectly receiving services from the Fire District.

**2217.2.2** Information gathered in the course of providing services to the public may be used to document the occurrence of the emergency or non-emergency event, provide evidence of services rendered, billing for services rendered, preplanning, or enforcement purposes.

**2217.2.3** Information may be collected on paper forms, computers, or recording devices, such as voice recorders and cameras, as approved by the Fire Chief.

### **2217.3** Policy

#### **2217.3.1** Information Collection

**2217.3.1.1** Any person working for the Fire District who directly or indirectly is involved in the delivery of services rendered by the Fire District, whether for emergency purposes or otherwise, is considered to be a representative working for the Fire District. Additionally, any Fire District staff or Board Member, regardless of duty status, may be perceived as actively engaging as a representative of the Fire District at any time.

**2217.3.1.2** All information collected for the purpose of billing for services rendered, investigation for cause, issuing permits, or for code enforcement, is property of the Fire District. Persons as described



in 2217.3.1.1 are responsible to hold such information in trust of the Fire District and will immediately deliver all said information to the Fire Chief for proper processing.

**2217.3.1.3** Use of personal recorders and cameras used to collect information about any person to whom the Fire District is directly or indirectly rendering services, are strictly prohibited without the direct consent of the Fire Chief or an incident commander. In the event that consent is given to use personal recorders or cameras, that information becomes property of the Fire District and as described in section 2217.3.1.2.

**2217.3.1.4** All papers, forms, or other documents used to collect information about the person or persons the Fire District is directly or indirectly rendering services to, is property of the Fire District and as described in section 2217.3.1.2.

**2217.3.1.5** Use of electronic devices to photograph people who are either directly or indirectly receiving service from the Fire District, is strictly prohibited without written consent from the person or persons involved.

## **2217.3.2** Information Storage

**2217.3.2.1** All information collected as described in this policy will be stored at the Fire District's main office. No employee of the Fire District will hold or store information as described in this policy on any personal electronic device or in paper form without authorization of the Fire Chief.

## **2217.3.3** Information Security

**2217.3.3.1** All information collected by all forms of media shall be stored at the Fire District office. Information will be made available by the Fire Chief by request as prescribed by law.

**2217.3.3.2** Sharing of personal information is restricted to direct consent of the person whose information is being requested and such consent must be in writing.

**2217.3.3.3** Transfer of medical information is restricted as prescribed by the HIPAA law.

**2217.3.3.4** Any response to a request from the public to obtain specific information from the Fire District must be carefully edited to ensure confidentiality, by obscuring personal information, such as but not limited to, names, addresses, financial account numbers, and social security numbers. Furthermore, any request for information from the public may also be restricted or prohibited by HIPAA law.

**2217.3.4** Violations and Disciplinary Action

**2217.3.4.1** All violations of this policy will be investigated by the Fire Chief and/or the Board of Directors.

**2217.3.4.2** Punitive action will be weighed against the nature of the violation and damages incurred.

**2217.3.4.2.1** Disciplinary action may include written corrective action against the staff member for minor offenses. Serious offenses may include termination from employment. Additionally, the violator may be subject to punitive action as described by applicable law.

**2217.3.4.3** Record of any violation of this policy will remain in the employee's personnel record for a minimum of one year. A second violation of this policy within one year will result in termination of employment with record of the violations permanently maintained in the employee's personnel file.

**2217.3.5** Appeals

**2217.3.5.1** Employees that receive disciplinary action under this policy may request an appeal within thirty days of the action.

**2217.3.5.2** Employees must make a request to appeal disciplinary action to the Fire Chief who will arrange for the issue to be added to the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors.

**2217.4** Effective Date

**2217.4.1** This policy will become effective thirty days after Board approval.

POLICY TITLE: **District Vehicle Usage**

POLICY NUMBER: **2290**

**2290.1** This policy applies to employees who drive District vehicles to and from work.

**2290.1.1** During working hours, extraneous trips for personal purposes will be avoided. Occasionally, stopping at a store en route to a business destination, or going to or from work, occasionally stopping to buy groceries, pick up laundry, medications, etc., is also permitted.

**2290.1.2** Other than the forgoing uses, District vehicles will not be used for any personal purposes without prior approval. This means that weekend or after hours trips to the store (regardless of how close to home), trips back to the office to retrieve forgotten personal items, or any other non-business usage will not be permitted.

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

POLICY TITLE: **Social Media**

POLICY NUMBER: **2300**

**2300.1 Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to make employees and other persons who use Southern Inyo Fire Protection District (hereinafter "District") technology aware of their responsibilities when using social media. Employees should be aware of the potential consequences of violating this policy whether on or off duty. The purpose of this policy is also to protect the interests of the District, the privacy of employees, and protect private information about members of the public served by the District where applicable. This policy is also intended to ensure efficient use of employee time and to minimize distractions from an employee's assigned tasks and duties and to assist employees in making informed decisions concerning the appropriate use of social media. What is said online comes under close scrutiny by others, especially when a communication involves public employees. This policy is intended to protect employees from unintended consequences of inappropriate social media posts and protect the District from harm to its reputation that can result from such posts. This policy also establishes that only authorized individuals are permitted to post on the District's official media sites or speak on behalf of the District when posting on social media.

**2300.2 Scope:** This policy applies to all District employees (including but not limited to volunteer first responders) whether on or off duty, regardless of using District or personal technology, and to any person using District equipment (phones, computers, networks, internet connections, etc.). For purposes of this policy, the term "Social Media" includes websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking. Nothing in this policy should be construed as denying employees their civil or political liberties under the U.S. and State of California Constitutions. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with any rights under the National Labor Relations Act.

## **2300.3 Official District Social Media Accounts:**

**2300.3.1** The establishment of any District social media account must be authorized by the Board of Directors (hereinafter "Board"). Any questions regarding District Social Media accounts should be directed to the Board.

**2300.3.2** Posting on District Social Media sites may only be executed by authorized users (hereinafter "Authorized Users"), as determined by the Board.

**2300.3.3** Annually, each officer shall provide the Board with a list of Authorized Users. Any changes in the status of an Authorized User must be coordinated with the Board.

**2300.3.4** When using official Social Media, Authorized Users shall comply with the commenting policy set forth in the attached Exhibit A.

**2300.3.5** Employees who are responsible for maintaining and posting on any District approved Social Media site must have knowledge of the District's record retention obligations and comply with those obligations. In general, there are very limited circumstances in which content posted on District Social Media sites should be deleted by District employees.

**2300.3.6** The Board should be consulted for further guidance prior to content being deleted other than in keeping with the policy described in Exhibit A.

#### **2300.4 Social Media Usage at Work**

**2300.4.1** Social Media use shall not interfere with the performance of job duties.

**2300.4.2** No person shall use District-issued electronics (desktops, laptops, cell phones, etc.) to post, view, or engage with Social Media unless they are an Authorized User or the usage is specifically permitted as a part of that person's job duties.

**2300.4.4** Authorized Users are expected to comply with "Terms of Use" of social media platforms.

**2300.5 Prohibited Conduct:** Prohibited conduct for both on-duty and off-duty conduct as applicable, is set forth below. This includes, but is not limited to the following behavior on Social Media:

**2300.5.1** Disclosure of confidential information, proprietary information, and/or information that is prohibited from release by law.

**2300.5.2** The use of an employee's or any District email address to register on social media or other online tools utilized for personal use.

**2300.5.3** Sharing content that is sexual, obscene, violent, or pornographic in nature, in connection with any reference to the District or the individual's employment with the District.

**2300.5.4** Conduct or encourage illegal activity.

**2300.5.5** Promote, foster or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, familial status, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or military status.

- 2300.5.6** Threaten, intimidate, or harass any individual.
- 2300.5.7** Incite or promote violence.
- 2300.5.8** Defame any individual, group or organization.
- 2300.5.9** Share information or images that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety, or privacy rights.
- 2300.5.10** Attribute personal statements, opinions, or beliefs to the District or do anything to give the false impression that the employee is representing the District in such personal statements.
- 2300.5.11** Conduct public business or make official statements as a representative of the District via personal social media accounts (including private or direct messages), unless so authorized.
- 2300.5.12** Retaliating for reporting a possible violation of this policy or for cooperating in an investigation.
- 2300.5.13** Post statements or images that disrupt District operations.

## **2300.6 Advisements**

- 2300.6.1** Employees assume any and all risk associated with their off-duty personal/private blogging and use of social media. Remember, what is shared may be available permanently and publicly—even if you think you did not share it publicly or attempt to modify or delete it.
- 2300.6.2** Statements made on social media that affect the workplace may be investigated under any relevant District policy including, but not limited to, the use District-owned property policy, anti-harassment/sexual harassment/non-discrimination policies, computer usage policy, and the equal employment opportunity policy.
- 2300.6.3** Work-related complaints are more likely to be resolved in the workplace than by posting on social media. The District encourages employees to follow the applicable internal complaint procedures rather than using Social Media to voice work-related complaints.
- 2300.6.4** If an employee can be easily identified with, or identifies himself or herself as, a District employee on a social media profile, the employee is encouraged to make clear that the views expressed on the account are their own and do not reflect the views of the District. However, the use of such a disclaimer does not prevent

statements or posts from being the basis of disciplinary action. Employees are not absolved of their responsibility to comply with this policy simply by using such a disclaimer.

**2300.6.5** Communications related to public business may meet the definition of a record under California Public Records Law (and therefore possibly be subject to review and release) even if the communication is on the employee’s personal account.

**2300.6.6** This policy may be amended from time to time.

**2300.6.7** Employees are expected to comply with the law and all other District policies when using social media platforms.

**2300.7 Consequences of a Policy Violation**

**2300.7.1** Violation of this policy may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**2300.7.2** Violations of law or other policies that occur through social media usage may also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**2300.8 Acknowledgment**

**2300.8.1** I hereby acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District Social Media Policy and its Exhibit A.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

## **2300.9 EXHIBIT A of the Social Media Policy Moderation of Third Party Content on District Social Media Sites**

The Southern Inyo Fire Protection District uses a variety of social media platforms to inform the public about the latest news, activities, programs, projects, and events happening in the District and is intended to serve as a means of communication between the District and the public. Our goal is to share ideas and information with as many individuals as possible and our policy is to accept the majority of comments made to District social media pages.

All comments posted to any of the District's social media sites will be monitored. Comments should be related to the posted topic for the District's social media page or post. The District's social media accounts are not meant for comments that do not directly relate to the purpose or topic of the social media website or for service requests. Social media platforms utilized by the District shall not contain any of the following, and the District reserves the right to remove or hide comments containing any of the following elements as soon as possible:

- Contains profane language or obscene content
- Contains sensitive personal information (medical information, social security numbers, etc.)
- Conducts or encourages illegal activity
- Promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, familial status, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or military status
- Threatens, harasses, or is a personal attack against any individual
- Incites or promotes violence
- Defames any individual, group or organization
- Contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety
- Unsolicited business proposals or endorsements/promotion of commercial services, products, or entities
- Directly promotes or opposes a candidate for political office

Appeals regarding the removal or hiding of any comments containing the above elements can be submitted to the Board.

A lack of response shall be considered a denial of an appeal. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the District is not obligated to take such actions, and the District disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for materials that the District deems inappropriate for posting which cannot be removed or hidden in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner.

A comment posted by a member of the public on a District social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and the posting of a comment does not imply endorsement



of, or agreement by, the District, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the District.

The District neither guarantees the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of external links, websites, or content linked thereto. Any content posted to this site is subject to public disclosure.

This comment policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time.