



# Professional Standards Manual

Revised: November 26, 2013





# Message from the Fire Chief and Surrey Fire Fighters Association President

On behalf of the members of the Surrey Fire Service and Local 1271, it is our privilege to introduce the new Professional Standards Manual.

In many ways the Surrey Fire Service is a leader in the public service. As part of our commitment to excellence in our service, we are committed to improving ourselves and implementing best practices discovered throughout the fire service as well as adopting new practices and concepts. Following a similar initiative by other fire departments, the Surrey Fire Service is providing this manual to all members as a means of sharing our philosophy and raising awareness of member expectations.

This document is a testament to the hard work performed by our department's pioneers and the values they instilled in our organization. Through the efforts of our members, we have established a culture of serving our residents that is extraordinary. We have reviewed and revised some of our policies to reflect the expectations we all share. We now have a comprehensive document describing the Surrey Fire Service's philosophy.

The Professional Standards Manual explains the philosophy that makes us all so very proud to belong to this organization. The expectations for our members is to serve with passion, aiming to please all our customers and to endorse changes that make our organization better suited to meet the demands of a changing world.

It is incumbent upon all of us to understand the essence of this manual and to ensure while we perform our duties our actions align with these values. We encourage all members to review the Professional Standards Manual often. Officers should discuss it with their crews at the firehalls. Most importantly, we urge you to adopt and hold these standards in high regard.



Len Garis  
Fire Chief



Mike McNamara, President  
Surrey Fire Fighters Association

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# Our Values

## Service Excellence

We do all we can to ensure we deliver the best possible service to our internal and external customers/communities through smart, well trained, humble, dedicated, competent, hard working, safe members. We are active participants in the communities where we live and work.

## Embrace Diversity

Recognizing the value of diversity helps us to work together as a team to serve our community. We are dedicated to reflecting and respecting diversity throughout our organization.

## Integrity and Honesty

We value the public's trust and are committed to honest and ethical behavior. We hold each other accountable to these values. We believe in a personal commitment to the organization and the community. Self-discipline is the foundation for managing behaviour.

## Teamwork

We seek out and value the input and opinions of members at all levels of the organization. Teamwork is the building block that drives the department's labour/management process. We work as a team to cooperate locally, regionally, and nationally to improve service to the public and maintain a safe, effective work environment. We believe that members have a responsibility to mentor others.

## Innovation

We recognize the value of change in responding to and meeting the ever-evolving needs of our customers and members. We are committed to seeking out effective methods and progressive thinking. We recognize the value of ongoing education and training.

## Honour and Respect

We are a fire department family. We are committed and accountable to each other because our lives depend on it. We value the role each member plays in our organization. We respect those that came before us and will strive to make the organization better for those who follow.

## Communication

We believe communication is essential to the cohesiveness and performance of our organization. We are committed to providing effective and responsive means of communication throughout the organization and community.



## The Surrey Way – Approach & Standards

The City of Surrey (the City) is a well-managed community. Our municipal leaders are proactive and growth oriented. City employees are committed to providing excellent service. This approach supports an environment that encourages excellence and is one that has allowed the Surrey Fire Service (SFS) to excel.

The SFS is consulted on a regular basis by other fire departments and the private sector on our achievements and what makes us different from the other departments. The answer to this question is simple - it is our people and our philosophy.

As a department, we prize excellence. SFS has expectations and standards for behaviour that are not optional. We, individually and collectively, care about the well being of our organization, because it serves the common good of the members and our customers: the public.

All unionized SFS members belong to the International Association of Firefighters, Local 1271, AFL-CIO (Surrey Fire Fighters Association). Local 1271's leadership has a positive approach to improving service and maintaining a safe, positive work environment.

We are dedicated to the community we serve and to each other. We have a workplace to be proud of and are committed to holding each other accountable and to protect the reputation built by the hard work of those who were here before us.



## Executive Summary

The Surrey Fire Service (SFS) is a world-renowned leader in its approach to emergency response using evidence-based research, customer service, community involvement and personnel philosophy. This document is intended to ensure we continue to uphold the department's philosophy in our day-to-day interactions with each other and the public.

SFS' goal is to constantly provide the best possible service to the citizens of Surrey. We exist to protect and serve the citizens of our community.

Our beliefs are structured on the principle that our members are the foundation of this organization. Being a member of the SFS requires a commitment to our fellow members, City leadership and the citizens of Surrey. This commitment must be backed with individual responsibility. Each member is accountable for his or her own actions. Solid personal integrity and spotless ethics are essential traits of a Surrey firefighter and are the backbone of a trustworthy, responsible, professional and unified organization.

Each member must accept the varied responsibilities of this career. We are expected to be professional, smart, physically fit, compassionate and empathetic. We are a team that delivers consistent quality emergency response service. This requires a high level of commitment and dedication to what is in the best interest of the organization and the public we serve. This is a commitment that must begin the day we enter the organization and endure throughout the length of our career.

True commitment requires loyalty to the organization. Member commitment is easy during the good times, but may be tested during difficult times. The SFS will certainly face challenges, but it is up to us to strive together to find appropriate and fair solutions. Members are responsible for the organization and it will only be as strong as we are willing to make it. Organizations are constantly changing and evolving. Members of the SFS are committed to allowing change to be a positive and healthy experience for our members and the public.

SFS recognizes that the most appropriate organizational goals and programs are usually developed through the process of considering a number of opinions. Members are encouraged to share ideas, concerns, criticisms and complaints within the structure of the organization. We also recognize Surrey Fire Fighters Association Local 1271's role in the department. Union leadership has shown a consistently positive approach to improving customer service and maintaining a safe, effective work environment. Union leaders are an excellent resource for promoting growth, new programs and political involvement.

## Leadership

Leadership is critical in helping our members achieve high standards of performance and in fostering the department's philosophy. All SFS leaders must share their expectations with the employees for whom they are responsible and stress accountability. These should be realistic and in concert with the overall expectations of the department. Our leaders should be agents of positive change and growth. It is the inherent responsibility of current leaders to develop and instruct a capable cadre of leaders for the future who live and practice the tradition and values we embrace.



Positive motivation is far more effective in encouraging members to be productive than simply identifying and punishing negative behaviour or performance. Desirable behaviour and commendable performance should be recognized at every opportunity. A supervisor's job includes recognizing and rewarding effective employees.

In situations where self-discipline breaks down, disciplinary action must be imposed. Punitive action should only be used in conjunction with other corrective measures designed to resolve the problem. The department has a responsibility to help members "get back" or re-enter the organization after disciplinary action, as long as the members are willing to put forth a sincere effort to help themselves.

## We are a Family

To remain an exceptional team we must take care of each other. Consideration, discretion, acceptance and unity begin at home, within the family – the other members of our department. To really be effective, these traits must be practiced at every level of the organization. The responsibility to learn and practice this philosophy lies with each individual.

Members must make a conscious choice to belong. With membership comes a commitment to excellence internally and externally. It is this affirmative commitment to each other and the community that has made us a successful department. Through constant assessment and change, this same positive commitment will lead us into the future.





*Being a member of the Surrey Fire Service requires a commitment to other department members, the organization, and to the citizens we serve.*

## Philosophy and Culture

The Surrey Fire Service is composed of a very diverse workforce, but one thing we share in common is the sincere desire to serve the citizens of Surrey. It is our goal to deliver fast, safe, effective emergency response. We strive for excellence in every contact with our customers. We are held accountable for people's lives and property and we take that responsibility very seriously.

In many respects, the role of firefighter is a higher calling. There are expectations for behaviour and performance that are non-negotiable. When we go to work in the morning, we know the fight for our lives may be minutes away. We are prepared for that challenge. We care about each other and are committed to putting our lives on the line for our brothers and sisters.

Surrey firefighters train frequently, follow standard operating procedures, and operate within safe guidelines in order to deliver the best possible emergency response.

Our integrity is measured through our daily interactions with one another. We are expected to follow the **Golden Rule**: Treat others as you would like to be treated. This applies to every member at every rank. We are a family and we are fully inclusive.

Our members are our most important resource. No matter what position an individual holds, he or she is considered important and is to be treated as such.

## Personal Accountability

*Each individual member of the Surrey Fire Service is responsible and accountable for his/her own actions and for the well being of other members.*

Members have a right to be different, as long as their behaviour, appearance and job performance are not in conflict with the rules, regulations and organizational culture. Honouring and respecting individual and cultural diversity is critical in our department and society in general. Being flexible and non-judgmental are keys to developing heightened levels of acceptance within the organization. However, a member's individualism may not be acceptable if it causes a significant distraction for the group (i.e. something that distracts from the professionalism of the member, or personal activities that put other department members at a disadvantage in the organization or in the community).



Members are provided with the training, equipment, procedures, leadership, supervision and feedback necessary to prepare and guide them. But ultimately, each member is responsible for his/her own performance. If a member is unable to meet these expectations, he or she should bring this fact to their supervisor's attention at the first opportunity.

When we become members, we, for the most part, give up our ability to misbehave in an independent manner. We may all suffer in the community for the actions of one of us. Remembering this should help guide our conduct at all times. Before doing something, consider how it would look if it was reported on the front page of the local newspaper.

Each member's stature in the organization is reinforced by his/her conduct and performance. No system can overcome a particular member's lack of personal respect for himself/herself or respect for others. Simply put, you will only receive the respect that you earn, no matter what your formal position in the system. Your reputation is a valuable possession – guard it, and remember: it starts the day you enter the family.

## Self-discipline

Self-discipline is the foundation for managing behaviour. Imposed discipline, when necessary, should be designed to correct the situation and return the member to a positive, productive and healthy position in the department.

A positive, well-balanced work environment is maintained by commitment and discipline, preferably self-discipline. Members are expected to manage their own behaviour in a manner that conforms to the rules and regulations of the department. In theory, members should require very little supervision. Members are also expected to follow their supervisor's directives in a cooperative, positive manner. Supervisors are responsible for identifying actions, behaviours and issues that may lead to performance, behavioural or disciplinary problems down the road.

SFS realizes that members may be faced with personal and/or work-related challenges during their careers. When this occurs, they are expected to seek appropriate assistance. It is important to remember that professionals *don't* let personal problems interfere with their performance. They recognize problems, address them, and correct them.

SFS offers a number of options for members who require support. We encourage our members to seek help if a life or career-threatening situation is getting out of hand. These issues may be professional or personal in nature. We offer a number of appropriate options for both members and family members.

### ***Alcohol and Drugs***

The Surrey Fire Service's anti drug and alcohol abuse policy is firm:

- It is absolutely unacceptable for a member to use illegal substances on or off duty. ***Surrey Fire Service members don't do drugs.***
- Abuse of alcohol, prescription drugs, anabolic steroids or any other substances is not acceptable.
- The unauthorized use of alcohol, or the use, sale, purchase or possession of controlled substances at any fire department worksite is absolutely prohibited, and may result in the dismissal of those involved.

### ***Discipline***

If disciplinary actions become necessary, they will be corrective, progressive and lawful. Disciplinary action will match organizational expectations and follow established procedures.

A standard problem-solving approach can be taken in most situations involving misconduct or poor performance. The core problem should be identified before a solution is developed.

The union has the responsibility to represent its members in the disciplinary process, whether it agrees or disagrees with the member's conduct or behaviour. The union's role is to ensure any discipline issued is fair and reasonable and that due process was followed.

The department owes it to the members to keep disciplinary proceedings confidential. This can avoid unnecessary embarrassment to the member and the department. However, given the requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act* and the high-profile coverage our members' misconduct can generate, it may be impossible to keep all disciplinary issues a secret. It is important that we make every attempt to protect the confidentiality of the process and the integrity and self-esteem of the member.



*Supervisors play a crucial role in the department. Our leadership is expected to mentor, guide and lead by example.*

## Leadership

Supervisors at all levels are expected to carry out their duties in a considerate, respectful manner. Positive motivation is the preferred method of guiding members to be effective and more productive. Positive reinforcement, "catching members doing something right," and citing positive performance has proven to be much more effective than identifying negative behaviour or performance and punishing it. Positive, or in some cases improved behaviour and performance, should be acknowledged at every appropriate opportunity. Unacceptable behaviour or performance should never be rewarded or tolerated. It must be immediately identified and corrected under the appropriate circumstances.

Supervisors are in an excellent position to strengthen team dynamics. Whether we are training, exercising or preparing our meals, firefighters are constantly building and reaffirming relationships. This helps us stay connected to one another, our department and the citizens.

Leaders look for opportunities to include members in new programs, explain departmental growth issues and mentor. Supervisors are an excellent resource for guiding a firefighter's growth and promotional potential. Leaders have experienced promotional exams, extra-curricular programs and community involvement. This experience should be shared with members at the appropriate times. It is up to supervisors to build a strong cadre of bright, safe, effective future leaders.

To consistently tackle challenges in a positive manner, leaders must take a very flexible approach to problem solving. It is critical for supervisors to be good listeners. Are you really hearing what is being said and can you read between the lines if necessary? Leaders are also compassionate and empathetic. If you can put yourself in the place of an individual, understanding the next step may be less complicated.

Avoid self-righteousness or making personal judgments when evaluating problems involving the conduct of others. Supervisors are expected to turn negative situations into positive ones whenever possible, keep problems in perspective, and address them at the proper level in the department. Effectively dealing with a negative situation can create loyalty and commitment from the member in the future.

Firefighters are skilled observers, which is why effective supervisors know it is critical to lead by example. Supervisors are under constant scrutiny and their actions should be above reproach. Coaching, counseling, encouraging, nudging, directing and other supportive behaviours go a long way toward motivating employees. But there's no substitution for action. Managers must practice what they preach.

Supervisors don't avoid problem people. In fact, good supervisors should make a point of spending time with problem people. Find out what makes them tick. Supervisors who attempt to be diagnostic with the work group will find they can head off problems before they occur or escalate to the point where formal supervisory action is required.

*Leadership is critical in maintaining the high standards of performance and the positive image of the department within the community and the fire service.*

There are many definitions of leaders in the SFS. Some are formal leaders while others are informal leaders. Initiative and authority are crucial elements in the overall effectiveness and well being of the department. We should periodically ask ourselves if our words or actions are undermining our ability to address future situations or problems we may encounter with members of the department. It is extremely difficult for an individual to act unprofessionally in his/her work group, then attempt to take a professional approach to problem solving with the same group of members. Actions speak louder than words. Great leaders lead by example.



All supervisors and leaders in the department should share their expectations up front with people for whom they are responsible, and stress the accountability of each member. Those expectations need to be realistic and in concert with the overall expectations of the department. If a leader condones a particular unacceptable act or substandard performance, they will most likely see it again in the future. Someone once said, "If you condone it, you own it." This advice is appropriate at every level.

All SFS members, at any rank, are empowered to stop dangerous, negative, unprofessional behaviour and actions wherever they may encounter them. We are ambassadors of goodwill, safety and compassion. All members are responsible for the actions of our workforce and should seek opportunities to correct issues before they get big. We are professionals and know how to address these issues in the appropriate arena. This is what makes us leaders. We are all accountable for our own conduct and that of our co-workers.

True leaders, when faced with a problem, must attempt to not only solve the immediate difficulty, but also improve the situation for the future. This facilitates a lasting solution and models a positive approach to problem solving to current (and future) leaders in the department.

Authority is dynamic and complex. It is recognized as "the ability to influence a person's behaviour or performance without the apparent exertion of force." Authority is most effective when it is supported with genuine respect. To be respected, a leader/supervisor must balance influence and leadership with performance.

Another important element of effective leadership is effective "followership." Every leader is a follower in some other departmental group, function or relationship. It is hard to sustain a reputation as an effective leader when you are an ineffective follower. Place a high level of importance on followership, and don't do things to your leaders that you wouldn't want your followers to do to you. **Remember the golden rule.**

## Labour Relations

*Labour and management share an important partnership and commitment to maintaining or improving our environment.*

A good labour relationship is one of the key elements for the continued success of the Surrey Fire Service. Good labour relations can be described as maintaining a professional business-like relationship that is founded on the principles of respect and trust.



For SFS to progress and continue providing excellent service to the citizens of Surrey, both the management team and union leaders must be successful within their respective domains.

Our labour-management relations are based on a mutual respect for each other. Both the management and union leaders of SFS recognize this principle and agree to adopt the following best practices for respectful, productive and healthy labour relations:

- To strive for effective communication and openness between parties, as they are the foundation to ensure mutual understanding and effective resolution of issues.
- To recognize and respect each other's roles, interest and constraints (e.g. accountability to constituency).
- To share information that may affect the other party (unless there are valid reasons for not doing so) and respect confidentiality.
- To develop meaningful, objective and balanced consultation and problem-solving processes for addressing issues.
- To attempt to resolve issues/problems internally before raising them outside the department.
- That each party is responsible for determining its own decision-making processes, and that these processes will be respected by the other party.
- To clarify and make each other aware of their decision-making processes and lines of authority (e.g. who has authority to make decisions and what parameters their representatives are acting within).
- That, as far as possible, representatives of the parties will have the authority to conclude agreements on the issue being addressed.
- That mutual agreements will be clear about what has been decided (and what hasn't) and what actions flow from the agreement.
- To honour agreements reached between them, unless changes are made based on mutual agreement.
- That the collective agreement is "owned" by both parties and its content must be respected.
- That it may be necessary – and mutually beneficial – to vary the terms and conditions of the collective agreement from time to time, provided the parties mutually agree to do.

These best practices are designed to be a guideline and capture the intent and spirit of how to maintain good labour relations in practice.

### ***Labour Relations Process***

The labour relations process brings labour and management together in an open and honest arena to work through tough issues, deal with conflict, and reach agreement.

The emphasis of this partnership is on tackling issues and seeking equitable solutions without damaging relationships.

The process allows room for differing opinions without inviting disrespect or unhealthy politics. The end result is a fair, effective organization with buy-in from all members, no matter what rank or position.

The process works because both sides respect each other as being credible participants who have value to offer, and because both sides remain open to another point of view.

## Maintaining a Safe, Positive and Healthy Workplace

Being a member of the Surrey Fire Service means a commitment to supporting other members. We are a family! When one of our brothers or sisters is suffering or needs support, it is our duty to identify and address their needs. We should always be alert to signs and symptoms of a member in need of our assistance. Nobody benefits if we hide or avoid a member in need of help.

If you recognize a member is in need of assistance, connect him or her with the best resources to help get them back to a healthy state. The Member Family Assistance Program (MFAP) is a discreet, professional resource available to any member or family member in need of drug, alcohol, relationship, financial, emotional, anger management, family support or addiction issues.

Our department is compassionate and committed to our members' total wellness.

The Surrey Fire Service provides a Wellness Program, and the MFAP provides assistance for behavioural health. It is the duty of every member to actively participate in these programs to ensure that they are always fit for duty.

By talking about our own experiences, we may spare new members from making mistakes that could cost them their reputation, their career, or their life. These life lessons are critical for mentoring our new members.

SFS is committed to providing the most realistic, meaningful and up-to-date training possible to our members. Ongoing training is one of the most effective tools for keeping our skills sharp. This allows us to be safe and effective. It is essential for all members to actively participate in this training and to strive to constantly improve.

*We must all accept the responsibility associated with maintaining a safe, positive, productive environment, delivering quality service, and for cultivating change and improvement in the future.*

SFS members ALWAYS treat each other with Consideration, Discretion, Acceptance and Unity:

1. **Consideration:** Be considerate of one another's values, ideals, possessions, feelings, etc. Respect yourself, your colleagues and customers.
2. **Discretion:** Be discreet regarding personal information. If you are told something in confidence,



*The Surrey Fire Service is founded on the principle that our members are the foundation of our organization.*

keep it confident unless it jeopardizes someone's safety or well-being. Don't talk about members behind their backs. If you are willing to say it out loud, be willing to say it to the member in person and be willing to own your comments.

3. **Acceptance:** Accept our cultural, ethnic and gender differences. This diversity makes us stronger and better prepared to serve the needs of our community.
4. **Unity:** Value the unity of the department. Our members have a strong commitment to each other. We are family and we take care of one another.

When this happens at all levels all the time, members learn that they can trust others and that they are trusted, and that the organization cares about them individually as a person.

## An Exceptional Workplace for Exceptional People



We hire our members with the expectation that, barring some unusual circumstances, they will remain members for life. We owe a great deal of gratitude to Surrey Fire Fighters Association Local 1271 for its political involvement on our behalf. Thanks to their efforts to secure our generous benefits, we needn't be concerned with the basic security needs for survival. We have fair remuneration, which in turn allows us to concentrate on excelling at our duties to the community.

For the most part, members can be confident in knowing that if we consistently behave and perform professionally, we will remain secure in our career. Maintaining this environment requires a high level of professionalism from all members. It demands focused dedication and commitment to what is in the best interest of our organization and community.

SFS takes an exceptional approach to managing our members because our members are exceptional people. We are self-disciplined and highly motivated employees. We understand what is expected of us.

The input of our members is encouraged in the planning and implementation of new programs and operational changes. Involving our members fosters personal ownership. This is not to say that the union, members and management always see eye to eye on every issue. In fact, a strong indicator of the value of our working relationship between labour and management has been our ability to find solutions to the issues on which we may differ. One goal on which we'll always agree is to make Surrey the safest, most progressive, professional fire department in the nation.

## Conclusion

"Organizational imperfections" may always challenge our department. In fact, sometimes they often provide the clues we need to direct change and create improvement in the system. But if we recognize imperfections as opportunities to continue to improve, then we can keep them in perspective and continue to positively move the organization along.



Surrey Fire Service members are a family. Whether performing as a firefighter, working as a staff support person or as a volunteer, we rely on each other to get our jobs done right. It is critical to remember that to really be an exceptional team; everyone must take care of everyone else.

Being nice to one another is absolutely crucial to sustain a high level of service to our customers. Avoiding the use of terms "us" and "they" (unless you can identify specifically who "us" and "they" are) will help sustain unity within the department.

Hazing new members or being disrespectful toward older, more senior members is damaging and will not be tolerated.

We each have the responsibility to leave this department better than we found it. We have the liability to pass along to future generations the appropriate traditions, values, knowledge and determination that has moved our department forward, and to personally give back to an organization that has given each member so much over the years, and continues to do so.

We are all members of the Surrey Fire Service by choice. We are committed to excellence internally and externally. It is our positive commitment to quality service and to each other that has made us what we are today, and through constant assessment and change, will sustain us in the future.





*Picking people up when they are down. It's what we do.*

## Member Family Assistance Program

The Member Family Assistance Program (MFAP) is a discreet, professional resource available to any member or family member in need of drug, alcohol, relationship, financial, emotional, anger management, and family support or addiction issues.

If you have questions or need assistance, we have several options for professional care and advice. If you require assistance:

- Call a Member Family Assistance Program contact person by referring to the list on the Fire intranet site and choosing the contact of your choice, (L1271 & Surrey Fire Service program) or
- Call the Employee Family Assistance Program at 1-800-667-0993 (City of Surrey program).

*If you know someone struggling with an issue, help them get help. Sometimes the person who needs the most help is the one standing right next to you.*



## Surrey Fire Service Code of Conduct and Ethics Policies

### Introduction

#### Policy Statement

*This policy is developed within the parameters of Code of Conduct bylaw No. 12196 of the City of Surrey, which is “A by-law to provide for a code of conduct for the officers and employees of the City that is deemed necessary to carry on the good government of the City of Surrey.”*

*“WHEREAS the Council may pursuant to Section 251 of the **Municipal Act** provide by by-law for the officers and employees that may be deemed necessary to carry on the good government of the City and may prescribe their duties and responsibilities.*

*AND WHEREAS the Council of the City of Surrey deems it in the best interests of the City to adopt a Code of Conduct to aid officers and employees of the City in carrying out their duties honestly, ethically and without conflict of interest or breach of trust.”*

The essential ingredients of a positive work environment and a healthy organization are personal respect and individual integrity.

Surrey Fire Service (SFS) members are individually responsible for knowing and complying with the Surrey Fire Service Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy (the policy).

Members are accountable for their actions and responsible for their performance. Responsibilities outlined in the policy extend both to other City employees and to the public.

SFS is committed to providing the highest quality of service possible and insists that members represent the department in a positive manner. Each member's conduct must be ethical and beyond reproach in order to maintain a high level of public confidence and trust.

The policy is a principle-driven document, meaning that the spirit or intent of this document should govern your actions even in situations that are not specifically addressed in the policy.

SFS members must remain cognizant that they represent the City of Surrey and the Surrey Fire Service, and their actions should promote the goodwill of the fire service. Being a member of the fire service is an honour that includes an obligation to uphold the sacrifices made by others to achieve the respect and honour we receive.

## Purpose

This code applies to all Surrey Fire Service employees and volunteers. The term "members" refers to both employees and volunteers.

The purpose of this document is to provide members with a reference guide to key City and department policies that address risk areas a member may encounter.

The choice of employment in the fire service carries with it a special obligation of trust and responsibility. Members must:

- Carry out their duties impartially, fairly and honestly;
- Conduct themselves in a manner that is so scrupulous that their conduct will bear the closest public scrutiny; and
- Avoid not only actual impropriety, but also the potential or appearance of impropriety.

The guide is intended to help members meet these responsibilities. The employer expects members to abide by these policies in their daily activities and in their personal conduct.

## Contents

This guide includes both complete and summarized versions of City or SFS policies. Members are responsible for adhering to all aspects of the policies referenced, and should read and understand their full content. The employer expects members to abide by these policies in their daily activities and in their personal conduct.

## Scope

Every action a member takes should support the core values, goals and policies of the City and the Surrey Fire Service. If it isn't in the best interests of the City or SFS, don't do it.

## Further Information

If you have any questions or wish to clarify the contents of these policy summaries, please refer to the complete policy document or talk to a supervisor.



## Policies

### Communication, Technology and Social Media

#### *Technology*

SFS provides technology resources to its members to improve productivity and enhance communication effectiveness. Personal use of departmental technology should be brief and not conflict with City policy. Personal phone calls, electronic communications, and faxing should be kept to a minimum number and should be brief. No long distance calls will be permitted, unless approved by the Fire Chief. Members



shall not access, circulate or store materials that could be considered inappropriate.

Use of personal communication devices should be limited and not interfere with workplace duties. Use of personal communication devices is strictly prohibited while en route to an emergency or while attending to an incident.

Personal or private wireless routers should not be installed or connected to provide internet connections at any City of Surrey fire hall or building. Fire department routers and internet connections are not to be tampered with. Exclusions to this policy require permission from the Fire Chief.

#### *Email*

Using the SFS email folder is not permitted without the approval of a chief officer. Consideration will be given to the value of the message versus the time expended by employees to access and read the message.

Emails should follow the chain of command and be respectful and business-like.

#### *Social media*

The City respects members' right to free speech and to host, comment or otherwise participate on social media sites (including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs, wikis or other social media). However, it is important that you take the necessary steps to ensure your social media activities do not interfere with your work duties or negatively impact the City in any way.

It must be remembered that citizens, colleagues and supervisors often have access to the online content posted by employees. Online content is never anonymous and can never be fully deleted. Information originally intended solely for friends and family can be forwarded to others.

The City has the right to audit its systems to ensure compliance with this policy. The employer may monitor, copy access or disclose any information or files that you store, process, receive or transmit from City devices.

If your conduct violates City values or policies and you can be identified as a City employee, you may be subject to discipline – up to and including termination of employment.

### *SFS or City sites*

Only authorized individuals may create, operate or administer a social media feed, page or site that represents itself as having an official link to the SFS or to the City of Surrey. SFS or City social media sites, pages or feeds must not be used by any member for personal gain or to promote any unsanctioned groups or activities.

### *Personal use*

Keep personal social media activity and work separate.

Any postings to any online media outlet by members that reference the SFS or the City (including but not limited to either organizations' employees, affiliate groups, policies, internal operations or daily activities) must adhere to all applicable policies, including:

- SFS Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy
- Surrey Respectful Workplace Policy
- Surrey Human Rights Policy
- Surrey Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy Manual

Members are legally liable for anything they write or present online. As such, members can be disciplined or prosecuted by the SFS, the City of Surrey or other affected individuals or authorities for comments, content or images that are inappropriate, including those that are defamatory, derogatory, discriminatory, libellous, pornographic, harassing, damaging to the employer's reputation, contrary to the Human Rights Code or other statute, or that can create a hostile work environment or disclose proprietary, confidential, or private information.

### *Privacy*

Members of the SFS and the City hold a position of trust, and must protect the privacy and integrity of citizens, fellow employees, the SFS, the City and citizens.

- Details of incidents (including, but not limited to, the names of victims, condition of patients, vehicle plates, criminal activities, age, race or religion) shall not be posted or discussed on any social media sites.
- Pictures of incidents that depict victims or responders shall not be posted to social media sites. Members may only take pictures of incidents under the direction of the Incident Commander and for legitimate work purposes.
- Non-public and/or confidential information regarding the SFS or the City of Surrey should not be posted on social media.

*Reference: City of Surrey Social Media Policy, City of Surrey Electronic Communications Policy, OG # 2.03.30*



## Conflict of Interest

Each of us make work-related decisions every day. Sometimes outside interests can make these decisions more difficult. When in doubt about what to do, ask yourself these questions:

- Will this result in personal gain or benefit?
- Could an outside person, co-worker, or the media perceive this action as unethical or inappropriate?
- Will I owe somebody something as a result of this action?
- Was this action intended to influence my decision?
- Would I hesitate to take this action or to allow my employees to take this action in my own company?

If you answered, “yes” to any of these questions, you may have an ethical dilemma. If in doubt, seek guidance from a supervisor.

### ***Gifts, benefit or favour***

Members will not accept or provide any gift, benefit or favor in exchange for special consideration or influence, or where it may be *perceived* to be in exchange for special treatment.

Members shall not accept a reward, gift or gratuity for services rendered. A member is expected to courteously decline such offers with the explanation that the service rendered is a normal part of the job, and acceptance of any such reward, gift or gratuity is against departmental policy.

Members shall not use the name of the City or the Surrey Fire Service to obtain discounts, goods or services for personal or non-City purposes, without the prior authorization of the Fire Chief.

Members shall not solicit or accept preferential treatment in the use of civic facilities or services without the prior authorization of the Fire Chief.

*Reference: Code of Conduct By-Law #12196, and City of Surrey Conflict of Interest Policy*

### ***General***

Members shall not sell tickets, or solicit advertising, subscriptions, gifts or contributions for any purpose that relates to SFS without permission of the Fire Chief.

Members shall not engage in other employment that conflicts with City duties, policies, or puts members in competition with services provided by the City. Members shall not engage in activities that may be construed as other employment while on duty.

Members shall not participate in any parade or attend a private or public function while in departmental uniform without the consent of the Fire Chief.

No apparatus or any other department equipment shall be applied to any private or like use, or taken beyond the limits of the City without the permission of the Fire Chief.

No member shall, at anytime, make public, or provide to the media information gained from their employment without the prior permission of the Fire Chief. All information released is to be in an approved format and in compliance with the *Freedom of Information & Privacy Act* and City policies.

*Reference: City of Surrey Conflict of Interest Policy*

## Personal Appearance



Every SFS member shall wear the prescribed department uniform while on duty. Members shall maintain proper department, be neat, clean, well groomed and tidy in appearance, and shall not cause or wear anything that will deter from the efficiency, good conduct, and well being of the SFS.

All current uniforms, clothing, and equipment furnished to SFS members shall remain the property of the City and shall be returned to the City upon leaving the service. The Fire Chief may allow a member that is retiring to keep their uniform.

*Reference: Uniform Guidebook, OG 5.01.04 - 5.01.04.02, 5.01.04.03.01*

## Respectful Workplace

Members will perform their duties with honesty and integrity and in a manner that is helpful, respectful and courteous. Acting as ambassadors for the SFS, members will do their jobs to the best of their ability, conduct themselves appropriately, and will be considerate and helpful to all people, both internally and externally.

Members shall act with respect and courtesy and address superior officers by the officer's rank.

No member shall wantonly or maliciously make any false report about another member and shall at all times comply with the City of Surrey Respectful Workplace Policy.

Members shall ensure that during the course of their employment, while on City property or while recognized as a member of the Surrey Fire Service, their language and conduct upholds the good reputation and image of the fire service. The use of profane, immoral or indecent language, or conduct that may be prejudicial to the employer's good reputation is, prohibited.

*Reference: City of Surrey Respectful Workplace Policy and City of Surrey Human Rights Policy*

## Safety

It is the policy of the Surrey Fire Service to operate with the highest level of safety for all members, so injuries, accidents and property damage are reduced and prevented.

Members are to know the safe working procedures and perform their duties in a safe manner at all times. Furthermore, members are expected to report and assist in correcting unsafe conditions and activities, and to work collectively toward the prevention of accidents.

Officers serve a key leadership role influencing the behaviour of their crews. Members are not empowered to compromise safety procedures, and supervisors do not have the option as to whether or not to follow up on any compromises to safety.



We observe these principles:

- We may risk our lives within a structured plan to save saveable lives.
- We will *not* risk our lives to save property.
- We will *not* risk our lives to save lives that are already lost.

Drivers of apparatus shall obey all traffic and vehicle rules and regulations as defined by department policy and the *Motor Vehicle Act*. While driving non-emergency, the driver shall operate the vehicle in a courteous and safe manner.

Fitness for duty:

- Members shall not report for duty or be permitted to report for duty if their ability is impaired by the use of any intoxicating substance.
- Members shall not consume any intoxicating beverage or drug while on duty.
- Members shall report to work rested, nourished, and fit for duty.



*Reference: Collective Agreement Art. 6.16, Occupational Safety and Health Program, OG #1.05.04, OG #5.01.01, #5.06.06, OG 1.06.03*

## Liability

Surrey Fire Service members are individually responsible for knowing and complying with the Surrey Fire Service Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy.

Any member finding or receiving valuables at the scene of a fire (or during the course of their duties) shall immediately turn such valuables over to, or notify, their senior officer.

Members charged with an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada shall immediately report such charge to the Fire Chief and union President.

Snow and ice shall be removed from walkways by employees in accordance with City bylaws.

Members shall be responsible for the care and condition of fire department equipment and personal equipment issued to them.

*Reference: OG #5.06.02, OG # 2.25.09*

## Absenteeism

The Attendance Management Program was developed with input from the Surrey Fire Fighters Association Local 1271, City of Surrey Human Resources, and Surrey Fire Service through the labour/management process. It is designed to promote and achieve high standards of attendance from all employees and must be administered in a fair and consistent manner with consideration to both the department and the member.

Surrey Fire Fighters Association Local 1271 recognizes that sickness has a direct financial impact on its members. Therefore the members of Local 1271 have a vested interest in reducing absenteeism and participating in the Attendance Management Program.

Members are responsible for complying with the reporting of absences as per department policy. If a member is unable to work a scheduled shift, he/she must inform the employer, providing as much notice as possible.

Members who have been absent due to injury or illness and recover enough so they can perform either regular or alternate duties must notify the employer and make arrangements for a work schedule and assignments. For both occupational and non-occupational illness and injury, the onus lies with members to inform the employer of their availability for regular or alternate duties.

If a member fails to report for a scheduled shift, the officer or person in charge shall report this immediately to the Battalion Chief.

If a member notices an error or omission in Telestaff, they must notify the supervisor or Duty Chief.

*Reference: OG # 5.01.02.04, OG # 5. 01.02.01.01, Collective Agreement, Attendance Management Policy*

## Daily Activities

Members shall follow all policies, operational guidelines, directives or general orders.

Members shall report for duty at the time prescribed and shall remain on duty until relieved or excused by a supervisor.

Members shall not engage in gambling of any form or type while on duty.

Members shall not arrange for a substitute unless the substitute possesses similar qualifications, and qualification requirements for that station have been satisfied. All such changes are to be entered into Telestaff. Approval for the request rests with the Battalion Chief Office. *Reference: 5.01.16.01*

All requests for leave are subject to approval of the Fire Chief or his/her representative. *Reference: Collective Agreement*

If at the start of a shift, the crew to be relieved is attending an incident, it is the responsibility of the oncoming crew to initiate contact to determine if an on-scene crew change is required.

Any member making a report, request or complaint regarding the activities of the fire department shall do so in writing to the Fire Chief.

Members will refer all inquiries about department operation to the person designated in charge, who will, if necessary, consult with the Duty Chief, Battalion Chief, or department supervisor.

The officer-in-charge at a fire station shall report to the Battalion Chief any discrepancies between the personnel assigned in Telestaff and the persons reporting to work.

## Equipment

Members shall not loan, or dispose of any department material or equipment without authorization of the Fire Chief. All members shall carefully protect the same from waste and abuse.

Recharging of air cylinders or fire extinguishers other than for the department is prohibited unless approved by the Chief or a Deputy Chief.

### *Visitors / Strangers*

The officer-in-charge at a fire station shall report to the Battalion Chief any undesirable characters, intoxicated persons, or known malingerers loitering or meeting on fire station property.

Visitors will not be allowed within the station after 22:00 unless by special permission of the officer-in-charge or the Fire Chief.

### *Contact information*

Members shall ensure the employer is aware of their current address and phone number.

Members who change their address or phone number are to promptly notify the employer to keep contact information current. Members are responsible for keeping their telephone contact information in Telestaff up to date.

## **Discipline**

Members who fail to comply with their obligations or any decision made or directions given pursuant to department policies may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

SFS members should have a good understanding of the policies that govern the workplace. If it is required, members should obtain clarification on any item listed in these policies.

The expectation is that all members of the SFS will adhere to policy requirements. For the purposes of this section, discipline as construed in Article 2 of Collective Agreement will be considered. Job-related actions performed in good faith by senior staff and management (such as work direction, performance appraisal, attendance monitoring and implementation of other corrective actions within the parameters of SFS policies), will not be taken as harassment or discrimination and/or be grounds for disciplinary action against a member.

*Reference: Collective Agreement Article 2*





## Surrey Fire Service Customer Service Guide

### Introduction

#### **When people need help, they call us.**

The Surrey Fire Service (SFS) has built a legacy of serving the citizens of our community since 1898. It is a tradition of which we are very proud. The core of our strength as a department comes from our members' excellent customer service delivery, high professional standards, and our personal pride in this very unique calling.

Firefighters are looked upon and perceived by the public as heroes. How many times in your daily duties do you hear, "Thank you for what you do"? There is no greater compliment. The level of trust instilled in firefighters is unmatched by any other profession.

As individuals we may be indistinguishable to the public. Our customers see the highly recognizable uniform that immediately identifies us as Surrey firefighters. Our names are stenciled proudly on our personal protective equipment and we are perceived as one. As a whole we are admired, trusted and identified by our uniformed shirts and our big red trucks, and that's why we are expected to be consistent when it comes to our actions and behaviours. We are professionals who have been entrusted to serve the public.

Our conduct both on duty and off must be exemplary. Surrey firefighters are judged by a higher standard. One misstep by a member tarnishes all members. It is a weighty responsibility, but one that we all signed on to uphold. The gratification firefighters experience daily, simply by performing our duties, may be one of life's greatest honours.



*Surrey Firefighters are respectful, smart, safe, highly trained, professional problem solvers.*

## Purpose

The purpose of this Customer Service Guide is to clearly define the SFS customer service goals for our members. This should also help reinforce and establish our ongoing mission for all members.

*It is our goal to provide the highest standard in internal and external customer service at all times.*

As employees of the City of Surrey, members of SFS and Surrey Fire Fighters Association Local 1271, our ultimate organizational goal is to provide the best possible service to the citizens of Surrey. We have a personal, professional, and contractual obligation to be physically and mentally ready every time the alarm sounds. The proud members of SFS understand and embrace this mission.

Our jobs are multi-faceted. However, the bottom line must always be customer service and a positive attitude is a must. The highest percentage of our calls is for medical assistance, followed by motor vehicle accidents, alarms, miscellaneous, structure fires, hazardous materials and vehicle fires.

Each dispatch is an opportunity to interact positively with the public. The experience should result in a satisfying resolution for the

person(s) who called. Although we may not be able to solve every problem, we should make an honest, good faith attempt, utilizing all of our resources to assist each person in need.

The public trusts Surrey firefighters with their lives and property. Our customers rely on us to always do the right thing. This is a dynamic relationship that we must continually honour by maintaining high standards, integrity and flawless ethics.

As you move through your career, frequently ask yourself if it will pass "the headline test" and if the answer is no, don't do it.

The responsibilities of firefighters in Surrey and around the country have changed immensely. Our job is to serve the citizens of Surrey in any manner that enhances their safety and well being as defined by the Fire Chief, City management, the Mayor and Council.



*Every call is important to the person who called.*

## Serving our customers

### Duties of Surrey Firefighters

*Our continued employment at a respectable salary is dependent on our ability to recognize and implement revisions in our duties.*

In most cases it takes our crews about four to six minutes to reach the scene of an emergency. That places us in a unique position. We are the principal safety net for our citizens. Emergencies may occur at any time during our shift. It doesn't matter if we are participating in physical training, doing inspections, or eating dinner, Surrey firefighters respond safely and quickly, any time, day or night.

It is our responsibility to arrive on the scene with a positive attitude and deliver fast, safe, professional service. Every member is expected to comply with this mission throughout his or her career.

When SFS was formed in the late 19th century, our main function was to extinguish fires. That has changed vastly over the years – for example, in the 1980s we adopted the responsibility of providing emergency medical services. This responsibility has made us a key link as a first responder and indispensable to the public. As emergency first responders, we literally save lives every day.



Our disaster mitigation responsibilities have also expanded immensely. We are hazardous materials specialists, technical rescue specialists, dispatch specialists, community education specialists, fire prevention experts, fire investigators... the list goes on and on.

*Our customers depend on us for safe, effective emergency response and we will not let them down.*

Many of us would become a firefighter for free, nevertheless we are paid to perform a variety of tasks, some of which may be considered occasionally routine and at times mundane. Professionals do not judge the level of importance of dispatches for incidents. We arrive ready, willing and able to assist in any endeavor, large or small, that we are called upon to help.

While we proudly wear the name Surrey Fire Service on our uniform and personal protective equipment, we fill many other roles. It is crucial that we understand that we must be many things to many people.

The services we deliver cover a very broad range, and SFS is continually exploring opportunities to protect and serve the citizens of our city.

It's the routine dispatch, shift after shift that separates the professional from the amateur. Due to the high volume of calls we respond to, there can be a tendency to become complacent, so it is important that we recognize that every call is important. We must be professional every single time we interact with the citizens we serve.

Always remember, everything we do is subject to the scrutiny of our customers. We have pledged to deliver the highest standard in customer service on every single dispatch. That's a promise we intend to keep!

## Compassion and Our Customers

Surrey firefighters are professional problem solvers.

Our customers are both external and internal: they are the individual who dials 911, hospital staff, law enforcement officers and our co-workers. Everyone we encounter should be considered a customer.

*There is zero room for prejudice and intolerance in the Surrey Fire Service.*

Our treatment of the public begins with how we treat each other. Each of us has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. In turn, we have an obligation to treat others with the same dignity and respect. It is our diversity that makes us so capable and successful at serving the public. Remember that having compassion for each other opens the doors to better understanding our differences. Often those differences are not as vast as we may initially perceive.

It is our mission to be respectful to each person we encounter, no matter what ethnicity, socioeconomic status or demeanor. We would not be here if not for our customers and each other.

We respond to nearly 30,000 dispatches each year. The people who call us with their problems depend on us. They are not interruptions to our work – they are our work. Our customers are the reason we continually train, stay fit and polish our skills as public servants and emergency responders.

On average, each call we respond to is viewed by the person who called as well as two or three friends, relatives or bystanders. In a span of three to four years, nearly every person in Surrey will receive assistance, view us treating a patient, or observe our actions at a fire or other emergency incidents. That places us in a truly unique position to educate the public through our appearance, attitude and actions.

It's easy to do the right thing if you remember the **Golden Rule**: Treat others as you would like to be treated. Kindness, patience, compassion and consideration go a long way toward strengthening our ties to the community and each other. People have long memories; it's up to us to make those recollections positive. Remember some incidents may appear to be trivial or humorous in nature to those responding but to those needing assistance and the people watching it is a serious incident.



*Every interaction with the public is an opportunity to impact public perception of the Surrey Fire Service and its members.*

## Our Customers' Needs

Understanding our commitment to our customers allows us to provide useful input when decisions are made regarding City revenues. Our City leaders depend on us to monitor the community and respond appropriately by forecasting and providing for future needs.

*We must always be receptive to our customers.*

It's our duty as emergency first responders to be proactive. We provide a number of services that are above and beyond the basic call of duty:

- Our firefighters protect the citizens of Surrey through the HomeSafe program. Residents of Surrey may request a free home safety inspection at any time during the year to identify and address safety concerns. Each visit inside a customer's home is an opportunity to check the smoke alarm and batteries. We carry replacement smoke alarms on our apparatus, which are meant for customers in need.
- Surrey Fire Service personnel have received instruction from Fraser Health Child Protection representatives to assist in recognizing indicators of abuse or neglect. They have also received RCMP training on recognizing indicators for human trafficking.
- Our fire prevention specialists regulate access, and ensure older buildings and new construction is compliant with the BC Fire Code and bylaws.
- Our Surrey Fire Service website <http://www.surrey.ca/city-services/4597.aspx> provides pertinent, timely information for the public



The importance of firefighting and emergency medical services will continue and we should embrace opportunities to learn new skills and deliver appropriate service. We have made it our business to look for opportunities to answer to the needs of our community.

## Competition for Scarce Resources

Demands on local government are increasing faster than revenues. Competition for tax dollars is fierce. Today's tax burden is already perceived as too high.

Our City leaders are accountable to the public for every penny spent on municipal services. As Surrey firefighters, we are responsible for managing our equipment appropriately. Our continued reliance on generous allocations is tied directly to whether we take care of our facilities, apparatus, tools and people.

*Waste or misspending will not be tolerated.*



Our continued growth as a department depends directly on our ability to deliver the services expected by our customers. We enjoy an excellent relationship with City leaders, members of the community and local businesses. SFS and Surrey Fire Fighters Local 1271 are always seeking opportunities to solidify these bonds.

*Maintaining close ties to the community ultimately benefits the fire service and our customers when taxes are raised.*

Surrey firefighters are fortunate in that we have many opportunities to shape and redefine our jobs. That's because we are constantly monitoring and forecasting the needs of our customers. We should always be flexible and receptive to change. The ability to adapt to change is the key to our future.

### Attitudes, Actions and Accountability

Attitudes are infectious! We frequently experience opportunities to reinforce positive attitudes or to correct negative behaviour. We are accountable to each other and our customers for our behaviour, skills, knowledge and abilities.



Surrey firefighters exceed expectations when it comes to service delivery. That extra "wow" factor should be something we strive for in every encounter with the public, both on and off duty.

Our department enjoys a worldwide reputation for excellence. That reputation stems from our professionalism.

Should you witness an occasion of poor customer service, it is your responsibility to correct it immediately in the most appropriate manner possible. This type of

"corrective" action isn't a violation of our commitment to one another. Corrective action reinforces our commitment to the organization and the customer. Corrective action should never be viewed as punitive, especially if it is approached in a calm, mature and reasonable manner.

Point out examples of poor customer service or unprofessional behaviour at the appropriate time. There's a diplomatic way to communicate the correction. Remember, "letting it slide" perpetuates the perception that it's okay. We have no room for negative attitudes or behaviour at SFS.

*Poor customer service is never okay.*

### Professional Etiquette

Surrey firefighters have a number of opportunities each day to demonstrate the highest standard in professional behaviour. We should seek situations in which we can prove our value to the community. Whether it is our physical presentation, driving, skills, tone of voice or station behaviour, we must always remember that we are always accountable to our co-workers and the public.

Sloppy uniforms, inappropriate language and unprofessional behaviour have no place in the SFS. The fire station is a City facility, owned by the public.

When a customer visits a fire station we are duty bound to be polite, considerate and treat the visitor well. No matter what time of day it is, the customer comes first.

*Customers are not an interruption of our work – they are our work.*

Any time we are out in public, it is imperative that we monitor our behaviour. Surrey firefighters are always professional: in the station, shopping for groceries, running at the local park, or delivering service in homes and businesses.

If you find yourself becoming professionally complacent, just think back to your firefighter recruit interview. Remember the promises you made to the department and the public?

Consider how difficult it was to earn this career. Let that be a reminder that Surrey firefighters are extremely fortunate to hold our prestigious positions with the City.

*Our conduct, attitudes, performance and manners should always be at their best.*

## Conclusion

The Surrey Fire Service has a proud history of providing quality service to the citizens of Surrey. We are genuinely caring, compassionate, professional, safe and accountable.

Our philosophy is really very simple:

- Use common sense.
- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Be respectful.
- Remember that everyone is a customer, internally and externally.

An integral factor in our ability to carry on this tradition is commitment. We must remain committed to the department, each other, the citizens of Surrey, training, safety and professionalism.



As professionals we must provide excellent service on each and every call, to each and every customer. We have a professional obligation to carry on the tradition of providing the highest standard in customer service delivery to those who need our assistance. That philosophy must be continued by each successive generation of Surrey firefighters.



