

SPOKANE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT
Board of Fire Commissioners
Policy for Ethics #002

Purpose:

To establish an ethics policy and procedures for the implementation of investigations and discipline for the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Authority:

Revised Code of Washington Title 52 Fire Protection Districts
RCW 52.14

Policy:

Public confidence in Fire Commissioners is eroded by irresponsible or improper conduct by a Fire Commissioner. A Fire Commissioner must expect to be the subject of public scrutiny. The prohibition against behaving improperly or in an irresponsible manner applies to both the professional and personal conduct of a Fire Commissioner.

I. Characteristics of a Fire Commissioner:

The following is designed to provide guidance to and for Fire Commissioners:

A Fire Commissioner should:

1. Respect and comply with the law and should act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the office of Fire Commissioner.
2. Participate in establishing, maintaining and enforcing high standards of conduct, and should personally observe those standards.
3. Exhibit unquestionable integrity and have an uprightness of character and soundness of moral principal.
4. Have a National pride, a high regard for the Constitution, and the authority of their office, and should show respect for others through temperance, fairness and civility in the execution of their duties and conduct of personal lives.
5. Have the courage to do what is right and if necessary stand up for those without authority.
6. Have compassion that is inherent to understanding another's problems while controlling and understanding personal feelings.
7. Recognize that public office involves public trust and service to the public.
8. Understand how your powers, duties and authority are limited by statute.
9. Adhere to your Oath: Faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of the office.
10. Attend and participate in open public meetings.
11. Do not meet and discuss Department business with more than one other Commissioner informally.
12. Limit executive sessions to areas allowed by statute.
13. Not disclose information obtained in an executive session.
14. Recognize that public records belong to the public.
15. Not disclose confidential information.
16. Protect your employees and constituents right to privacy.
17. Secure and maintain confidentiality of medical records.

18. Not intercept, record or divulge private communications.
19. Not give away public funds.
20. Not lend public funds.
21. Verify the appropriateness of all expenditures of public funds.
22. Account, with documentation, all uses of petty cash and advance travel funds.
23. Immediately deposit public funds received in department accounts.
24. Not use or take department resources for personal use.
25. Report misappropriations of public funds to the state auditor.
26. Not enter into any contract in which you have a direct or indirect beneficial interest.
27. Not accept, directly or indirectly, any compensation, gratuity or gifts.
28. Disclose and do not vote on contracts where you have a remote interest.
29. Limit your contractual interests with the Department to less than \$1,500.00 per month.
30. Not use your position to secure special privileges or exemptions.
31. Not accept payment or other benefits as a condition of voting or taking actions.
32. Not bribe or intimidate witnesses in any proceeding.
33. Not lie.
34. Not be ignorant of the facts and the law.
35. Comply with the law.
36. Avoid all appearances of unfairness.
37. Not use force to influence your fellow commissioners.
38. Not attempt to circumvent or avoid the public bid laws and procedures.
39. Not remove, alter, mutilate, destroy or conceal protected public records.
40. Practice non-discriminatory conduct as an example to others.
41. Adopt policies and procedures to protect your employees from discrimination.
42. Not engage in unfair labor practices.
43. Disclose all political contributions and expenditures.
44. Not use public resources in any political campaign.
45. Conduct political campaigns in an honest and forthright manner.
46. Lead by example.

Procedures:

II. Procedures for the Implementation of Investigations and Discipline:

Upon receipt of a written, signed, request for investigation of a possible ethic violation(s), the Board of Fire Commissioners by a 3/5 majority may direct the Chief to appoint an investigative committee.

1. The Committee shall have two months after appointment to investigate the charges that have been made.
2. The person being investigated will be given an opportunity to explain/rebut the charges that have been made.
3. The Committee will then report their findings to the Board. The report will include recommendations for penalties if warranted.

If the investigating Committee has found the charges to be valid, the Board may take one of the following steps:

1. First offense – minor infraction. The Board will notify the accused, by letter, of the findings but no penalty will be assessed. (Copies of all letters retained for six years).
2. First offense – major infraction. (Misfeasance, malfeasance, violation of Washington Constitution, or violation of RCW's relating to fire Departments). The Board will write a letter of Censure with a cc to the State Commissioner's Association. A copy will be made available to a recall committee if requested.
3. Second or subsequent infractions. The Board will write a letter requesting that the Fire Commissioner refrain from attending Fire Commissioner's meetings. Again, a letter will be sent to the State Commissioner's Association requesting similar measures and a copy will be made available to a recall committee upon request.

Adopted:
Spokane Valley Board of Fire Commissioners:
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