

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS

Developed by the National Society of Executive Fire Officers, The National Firefighter Code of Ethics Reminds Firefighters of Their Obligation in Serving.

The American fire and emergency services has a very proud tradition of serving communities across our nation that dates back to colonial times. Throughout our nation's history, firefighters have been looked upon with great respect and admiration for their courage and dedication to their profession. To preserve the public's trust, a National Firefighter Code of Ethics was developed by a group of fire service leaders that calls on individual firefighters to pledge their support for maintaining the highest level of professionalism and behavior.

The idea for the Code was initially proposed in the Fire Service Reputation Management White Paper published by the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association (CVVFA). Since then, the idea gained momentum and received support from the highest echelon of fire service leadership.

Code of Conduct

"We may never have the opportunity again and I urge all fire service leaders to develop, establish, disseminate, abide and enforce a fire service code of ethics, said then-U.S. Fire Administrator Kelvin Cochran in 2010.

The Code is a guide for acceptable behavior already practiced by all but a very small percentage of the fire service. Isolated events that have occurred across the country involving lapses in ethical judgment by fire service personnel, led to the Code of Ethics being developed. **It was the brainchild of the National Society of Executive Fire Officers (NSEFO) and has since gained the support of a number of local, state and national organizations, as well as prominent fire service leaders.**

"The Code of Ethics serves to remind our brethren firefighters of our moral and ethical obligation to the profession as well as to the people we serve," said CVVFA Past President Steve Austin. "The public places great trust in our profession and we need to exercise good judgment in order to preserve that trust. The Code of Ethics can serve as a compass to guide us in that direction."

With the support of various fire service organizations, the Code will be distributed throughout the fire service. Individual firefighters are encouraged to sign the Code and keep it in view to remind themselves each day of their pledge to the highest standards of professionalism and behavior.



Distributed by the
NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

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FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS

I understand that I have the responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of the fire service. Therefore, I pledge the following

- Always conduct myself, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively on myself, my department and the fire service in general.
- Accept responsibility for my actions and for the consequences of my actions.
- Support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.
- Avoid situations that would adversely affect the credibility or public perception of the fire service profession.
- Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.
- Conduct my personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the performance of my duties, or bring discredit to my organization.
- Be respectful and conscious of each member's safety and welfare.
- Recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment and that these are protected from misuse and theft.
- Exercise professionalism, competence, respect and loyalty in the performance of my duties and use information, confidential or otherwise, gained by virtue of my position, only to benefit those I am entrusted to serve.
- Avoid financial investments, outside employment, outside business interests or activities that conflict with or are enhanced by my official position or have the potential to create the perception of impropriety.
- Never propose or accept personal rewards, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honors or gifts that may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.
- Never engage in activities involving alcohol or other substance use or abuse that can impair my mental state or the performance of my duties and compromise safety.
- Never discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition or handicap.
- Never harass, intimidate or threaten fellow members of the service or the public and stop or report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors.
- Responsibly use social networking, electronic communications, or other media technology opportunities in a manner that does not discredit, dishonor or embarrass my organization, the fire service and the public. I also understand that failure to resolve or report inappropriate use of this media equates to condoning this behavior.