

Fauquier County Department of Fire Rescue

RULE & REGULATION

No. 101



Written Department Communications

Effective Date: March 3, 2017

Page 1 of 6

Revision Date:

Forms:

Approved By: Darren L. Stevens, Fire Rescue Chief

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren L. Stevens'.

PURPOSE

To describe the various forms of departmental written and electronic communications and the procedures related to their development, implementation, distribution and use.

SCOPE

This regulation pertains to all Fauquier County Department of Fire and Rescue members (operational and administrative).

I. PREFACE

The guidelines pertaining to established policies, operating procedures and manuals, general orders, rules and regulations, and related information are contained within this document.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. An **Operating Procedure** (OP) is an organizational directive that establishes a prescribed course of action related to the operational activity of the department. OP's shall apply to all fire and rescue organizational units, unless otherwise specified. OP's shall be considered permanent unless changed through modification or deletion and subsequent directive.

All OP's shall include the following elements:

1. Number (to be assigned by administration)
2. Effective Date
3. Title
4. Prepared By – person who prepared document
5. Authorized By – signature of recognized authority
6. Scope – situation and audience for which the OP is intended to apply
7. Purpose – why the OP is needed
8. General or specific procedures – detailed procedural guidelines or specific actions or steps to be taken
9. References – source materials used to prepare OP (if applicable)

Written Department Communications		No. 101
Effective Date: March 3, 2017	Revision Date:	Page 2 of 6

- B. A **General Order (GO)** or **Standing General Order (SGO)** is a formal directive that applies to one or more persons, either by name or by class/group, to take some specific action(s). These documents generally have a specific time period (start and end date) and should include an expiration date if appropriate. An SGO would not include an expiration date.

All GO's shall include the following elements

1. Number (to be assigned by administration)
2. Effective Date
3. Expiration Date (if applicable)
4. Title
5. Purpose – why the GO is needed
6. Prepared By – person who prepared document
7. Authorized By – signature of recognized authority

- C. **Fire and Rescue Rules and Regulations (R&R)** are formal codes governing the actions of departmental members with respect to the fire and rescue organization. These principles shall be considered as absolute directives requiring strict compliance by all personnel.
- D. **Human Resource Policies (HRP)** are the governing policies issued by the Fauquier County Department of Human Resources and relate to general county-wide administrative procedures. As employees of Fauquier County, all personnel are expected to comply with all applicable county HRP's.
- D. **Informational Bulletin (IB)** is a document designed to convey material for the general knowledge or interest of the recipients.
- E. **Safety Bulletin (SB)** is a published document designed to convey safety- related information to all department members. Information conveyed in a safety bulletin typically will be critical to the safe operations of all department members.
- F. **Manuals** are published documents designed to promulgate uniform skills, techniques, and/or evolutions, including the methods of operation accepted and approved by the department which are to be utilized by department members when engaged in specific, related activities.

III. OPERATING PROCEDURES (OP)

- A. Adherence to operating procedures

An operating procedure (OP) establishes a process which shall be followed by all fire and rescue personnel. Deviations from OP's shall not be permitted except under extenuating circumstances with appropriate justification. OP's are part of a continuing program and shall remain valid until a written change is approved and released. Violation of an OP, without cause, shall be handled

Written Department Communications		No. 101
Effective Date: March 3, 2017	Revision Date:	Page 3 of 6

as a disciplinary issue. OP's may also be used as references in promotional examinations and other tests.

B. Distinction between OP's and General Orders

By their continuing nature, OP's differ from General Orders which direct specific action within a specific time period, except in instances of standing general orders. OP's shall not be published and issued as general orders except in instances where time is critical and it is essential that personnel receive a directive in a time frame not allowed by the normal OP preparation period. These emergencies shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the fire chief or designee. When approved, the general order shall contain a notation indicating that an OP or similar continuing document will follow. It shall be the responsibility of the chief's office to ensure that the appropriate document is initiated, at least as a draft, within 30 days.

C. Operational Procedure Review and Approval Process

1. Any employee of the department may submit a recommendation to change or issue an operational policy or procedure.
2. Recommendation for a new or modified OP should be made through their respective supervisor to the shift battalion chief. The employee shall advise whether he/she feels the new procedure can be included in an existing OP. Where appropriate, the battalion chief shall review the initiator's draft for content, clarity, and completeness. If necessary, the draft shall be revised and returned to the initiator for review or further work.
3. Draft OP's shall be prepared as word document on plain paper excluding any templates, logos or other masthead. Each OP shall begin with a clear, concise statement of the purpose. Draft OP's shall include the elements described in section II. A. of this document.
4. The draft OP shall be forwarded to the assistant fire chief's office for review. The draft shall then be circulated to the appropriate staff, committee members or any other potential stakeholders as determined by the author to designated staff of the department, as well as any other appropriate individuals/groups who may be affected by the procedure, for concurrent review and comments.
5. Battalion chiefs and the deputy chief of training are responsible for ensuring that their staff review any new or revised procedures which may affect them, and the battalion chiefs shall provide comments from personnel under their supervision to the chief's office by the designated due date.
6. Senior Staff Review – Following stakeholder review, the revised draft shall be sent to the administrative assistant for tracking and circulation to senior operations staff.
7. Fire chief's review and approval – Final draft shall be prepared for review, approval and signature by the fire chief. (If significant changes are made, the document shall be redistributed starting at the battalion chief's level for review and move through the process again).
8. The approved OP shall be converted to PDF format and distributed through electronic means.

Written Department Communications		No. 101
Effective Date: March 3, 2017	Revision Date:	Page 4 of 6

D. Revision of OP's

1. Proposed revisions to OP's shall be clearly marked on all copies distributed for review by "highlighting" any language/section(s) in which a change is proposed.
2. The final approved OP shall be annotated with a single vertical line in the right margin parallel to any language/section(s) in which a revision has occurred. This will enable personnel to quickly determine and follow changes in operating procedures.

E. Department Personnel Responsibilities

All department personnel shall be responsible for:

1. Familiarizing themselves with, maintaining a constant awareness of, and complying with the OP's maintained in electronic form in a common network drive or other location.
2. Making suggestions for new and/or revised policies and procedures they feel are necessary.
3. Upon separation for any reason, returning to the department any official documentation, including media and printed documents.

F. Supervisory Personnel Responsibilities

All supervisory personnel shall be responsible for:

1. Compliance by subordinate personnel with applicable policies and procedures. It shall be the responsibility of work location supervisors to see that procedures affecting career personnel are brought to their attention;
2. Reviewing all suggestions for new and revised policies and procedures submitted to them by subordinate personnel and transmitting these proposals for approval, as appropriate;
3. Reviewing and commenting on all other draft policies and procedures in a timely fashion.

IV. GENERAL ORDERS (GO) and STANDING GENERAL ORDERS (SGO)

- A. A general order/standing general order is a directive that tells one or more persons, either by name or by class/group, to take some specific action and is generally time specific. Failure to comply with a general order shall be handled as a disciplinary issue.
- B. All GO/SGO's shall be prepared on the department's general order form and be approved by the fire chief's office. Each general order shall state specifically on the first page the subject addressed.
- C. When approved, the GO/SGO shall be signed, dated, and assigned a number by the fire chief's office. Distribution of GO/SGO's shall be the responsibility of the fire chief's office.

Written Department Communications		No. 101
Effective Date: March 3, 2017	Revision Date:	Page 5 of 6

- D. GO/SGO's shall be maintained at each work location in a three-ring binder or two ring clip board provided for that purpose, and maintained in electronic form in a common network drive or other location.
- E. In January of each year, the fire chief's office shall issue a general order identifying obsolete GO/SGO's and directing that they be removed from work location general order binders or board.

V. RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. The rules and regulations of the Fauquier County Department of Fire and Rescue are absolute directives which require strict compliance by all department personnel. Violations of department rules and regulations shall be handled as a disciplinary issue.
- B. Rules and regulations shall be stored in the same manner as the operating procedures.

VI. INFORMATIONAL BULLETINS (IB)

- A. Informational bulletins are published for the general information and knowledge of the members of the department.
- B. Any department member may initiate an informational bulletin. Informational bulletins shall be submitted through the chain of command to the fire chief's office for approval. If approved, it shall be numbered, dated, reproduced and distributed by the fire chief's office in accordance with the standard distribution process.
- C. Informational bulletins shall be distributed to each work location and posted through electronic means.

VII. SAFETY BULLETINS

- A. Safety Bulletins are published to disseminate safety-related information to the members of the department.
- B. Safety Bulletins may originate from the safety committee, the safety officer or the fire chief of the department. Any member may suggest the need for a safety bulletin; however, it must be forwarded to the designated safety officer for a determination as to whether or not the safety committee should review it prior to distribution.
- C. Safety bulletins may also cover critical safety related information from other organizations that may have an impact on our operations, such as NIOSH, OSHA, VOSH, NFPA or other departments.

Written Department Communications		No. 101
Effective Date: March 3, 2017	Revision Date:	Page 6 of 6

- D. Safety bulletins shall be distributed to each work location and posted through electronic means. Information contained in a safety bulletin shall be read by all department members.

VIII. OPERATIONS MANUALS

- A. Manuals are published to assure safety, consistency, and efficiency during all department operations, including training exercises and emergency incidents. These manuals may be internal documents or part of the Northern Virginia Fire and Rescue Departments Mutual Response program (NOVA), to which the Fauquier County Department of Fire and Rescue participates.
- B. Any department member may submit their recommendation for the creation of a new manual or a change to an existing manual through their chain of command to the assistant fire chief of operations. The assistant fire chief shall review the recommendation and, if appropriate, assign personnel to develop the manual. If the manual is appropriate for NOVA consideration, it will be recommended as work product under the NOVA manual development program.
- C. All manuals shall be distributed to each work location, and kept in electronic format in a common file.
- E. Manuals shall be reviewed annually and updated or revised accordingly under the direction of the assistant fire chief.

IX. DISTRIBUTION OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- A. All new or revised OP's, general orders, informational bulletins and other formal documents shall be transmitted in electronic form to every member of the Fauquier County Department of Fire and Rescue from the fire chief's office.
- B. The office of the fire chief shall ensure that new OP's, rules and regulations, general orders, informational bulletins, safety bulletins and manuals are added to their respective databases.
- C. Each employee and member shall be responsible for reviewing these documents as appropriate.