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Standard Operating Guidelines

SOG NO.: KP-1-0020
SOG TITLE: HARASSMENT POLICY
ADOPTION DATE: 07/94
REVISION DATE:
NO. OF PAGES: 3

Purpose: To provide for a healthy environment for all members of the King of Prussia Volunteer Fire Company in regards to sexual, racial, or other types of harassment, and to provide procedures for reporting, investigation, and resolution of complaints of harassment, sexual or otherwise.

It is the policy of the King of Prussia Fire Company that all members have the right to work in an environment free from all forms of harassment. The King of Prussia Fire Company does not condone, nor will it tolerate, any type of harassment directed towards its members. Therefore, the King of Prussia Fire Company will take direct and immediate action to prevent such behavior and to remedy all reported instances of harassment, sexual or otherwise.

A. Prohibited Activity

1. No member shall explicitly or implicitly ridicule, mock, deride, or belittle any other member of the King of Prussia Fire Company.
2. Members shall not make offensive or derogatory comments based on

race, color, sex, religion, or national origin directly or indirectly to another member. Such harassment is a prohibited form of discrimination under Pennsylvania State and Federal employment laws, is also considered misconduct within the King of Prussia Fire Company, and is subject to disciplinary actions.

- 3 Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions regarding the offended party's status or position within the King of Prussia Fire Company. Sexual harassment can also occur if such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a member's ability to perform his/her duties due to the creation of a hostile, intimidating, or offensive working environment.

B. Member's Responsibilities

1. The Fire Chief or his/her designee shall be responsible for preventing acts of harassment within the fire company. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Monitoring the work environment on a regular basis for signs that harassment may be occurring
 - b. Informing all members on the types of behaviors prohibited by the King of Prussia Fire Company and the procedures involved for reporting and resolving complaints of harassment
 - c. Stopping any observed acts of harassment and taking appropriate steps to intervene when suspected harassment is or has occurred.
2. The Fire Chief or his / her designee has the responsibility to assist any member of the Fire Company who wishes to file a complaint of harassment in documenting and filing such a complaint.

3. Each member of the King of Prussia Fire Company is responsible for assisting in the prevention of harassment through the following acts
 - a. retraining from participation in, or encouragement of, such activities that could be perceived as harassment
 - b. reporting acts of harassment to an officer
 - c. encouraging a member who confides that he / she is being harassed to report these acts to an officer
4. In the event of a complaint involving harassment, neither party shall make any statements to the press or other outside agency (except legal counsel) until such time that the initial investigation has been completed.
5. **Failure to take action to stop known harassment shall be grounds for disciplinary action.**

C. Complaint Procedures:

1. Members encountering harassment shall tell the person that his / her actions are unwelcome and/or offensive. If the behavior persists, the member shall document all incidents of harassment in order to provide the full basis for an investigation and pending disciplinary action.
2. Any member who thinks he / she is being harassed shall report the incident(s) to the Fire Chief or his / her designee as soon as possible. Any **delay** in reporting an incident involving suspected harassment can undermine the investigation of said incident.
3. The Fire Chief or his / her designee will document the incident in question, including in such documentation all written or other evidence gathered by the complainant.
4. Once the complaint has been received and documented an internal investigation shall take place, with both parties being given many opportunities to present their respective cases before any action is taken.

The investigation shall include a determination whether other members are being harassed by the person involved, and whether any other members participated in, encouraged, or witnessed the incident(s).

The Fire Chief shall inform both parties of the results of the investigation in **writing** within 25 days of the complaint.

There shall be no retaliation against any member for filing a harassment complaint assisting in the subsequent investigation, or acting as a witness for or against either party involved in the complaint.

Either party may file a grievance/appeal in accordance with the By-Laws and/or Standard Operating Guideline of the King of Prussia Fire Company if they disagree with the findings and/or actions resulting from the initial investigation. The Fire Chief shall make all documentation available to both parties in case of an appeal.

This policy does not preclude nor supersede any member from filing a harassment complaint or grievance with any appropriate outside agency.