
NON-BARGAINING UNIT



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Excellence, Safety, Valor, Integrity, Dedication

The Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District

Non-Bargaining Employee Handbook

October 1, 2021

Effective: October 2021

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Section 1

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District (hereinafter "The District"). As a taxpayer funded special district and as custodians entrusted to operate with the people's money, the District expects each employee to provide the community with outstanding, quality service respectful of the fact that we are the servants of the community.

The District has prepared this Employee Handbook to help answer some of the questions you may have concerning the District and its policies. Please read it thoroughly and retain it for future reference.

For purposes of this Handbook, any reference to "Fire Chief" also includes the Fire Chief's designee, if any. Any reference to "Fire Chief" also includes "the District" and vice versa, unless where otherwise noted herein.

All District rules, regulations, standard operating procedures ("SOPs"), policies or other directives previously issued that are inconsistent or contrary to those contained in this Handbook (Effective subsequent to Board approval) are hereby fully and completely superseded. Otherwise, those SOPs, policies, rules or regulations previously implemented that are interpreted by the Fire Chief, as being consistent with the terms of this Handbook, shall remain in effect. The policies contained in this Handbook apply to non-bargaining unit employees only.

Please note that this Handbook is not a contract guaranteeing employment for any specific duration. No employee of the District, other than the Fire Chief, with the approval of the Board of Commissioners, has the authority to enter into an enforceable contractual agreement with you for employment for any specified period or to make any promises or commitments contrary to the foregoing. Further, any contractual employment agreement entered into by the Fire Chief shall not be enforceable unless it is in writing.

Customers are among our organization's most valuable assets. Every employee represents the District to our customers and the public. The way we do our jobs presents an image of our entire organization. Customers judge all of us by how they are treated with each employee contact. A professional appearance, courtesy, friendliness, helpfulness, promptness and the attention you give to customers creates a positive image of the District. Therefore, one of our first priorities is to assist any customer or potential customer.

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Our personal contact with the public, our manners on the telephone, and the communications we send to customers are a reflection not only of ourselves, but also the professionalism of the District. Positive customer relations not only enhance the public's perception or image of the District, but also pays off in greater customer loyalty.

Over the years, we and the public safety industry at large have spoken about the importance of customer service delivery. Not only from an emergency standpoint, but also and maybe more importantly, from a non-emergency view. Based upon the importance of customer service we will all work together to assist the members of our community, not only during an emergency crisis, but also during a non-crisis by placing our customers first in all of our daily tasks and activities. Take the time to speak with members of the public when out in the community and when in the stations. Value, honor, and respect the customer.

The District wishes you good luck and success in your position and hopes that your employment relationship with the District will be a mutually rewarding experience, which leads to quality service for the public at large.

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HISTORY

The District was established in 1963 with volunteers and a single fire engine stationed under a canopy on Homestead Road. After providing volunteer firefighting services for 13 years, the District began hiring Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) to operate one ambulance in 1976, which was funded through community support. In 1981, the District realized Advanced Life Support (ALS) was essential and added paramedic services. As a result, the name was changed to Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District, which is one of only two ALS transport services in Lee County. Firefighting and ALS services are responsible for preserving life and property in an area of 142 square miles with a population of 130,000+ citizens.

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Section 3

PERSONNEL CLASSIFICATION AND POLICIES

- 03.1.) **At-Will Employment Status** – The employment relationship between the District's non-bargaining unit employees and the District is an at-will relationship, meaning that the employees serve at the will and pleasure of the District. This at-will employment relationship may be severed by either the employee or the District with or without cause for any lawful reason at any time subject to the notice provisions. In the event of an involuntary separation, the employees may be eligible for severance pay subject to the terms outlined in section 04.09.) herein.
- 03.2.) **Probationary Period (New Hires and Incumbents)** – Employees who are newly hired from outside the District are required to complete a one (1) year probationary period in the new position. The one (1) year probationary period may be extended at management's discretion for a period not to exceed six (6) months.
- 1) During the new hire probationary period, management shall make reasonable efforts to provide appropriate instruction and training for the employee to succeed in the new position. In the event the employee's performance and/or conduct during a probationary period does not meet management's expectations, and it is determined by management in its sole discretion not to retain the employee in the new position, the District will evaluate and determine whether or not there is another suitable position in which to offer and place the employee. In these circumstances, the employee is not guaranteed another position.
 - 2) Incumbent employees who are promoted or transferred are required to complete a six (6) month probationary period in the new position. The six (6) month probationary period may be extended at management's discretion for a period not to exceed three (3) months. During this probationary period for employees, management shall make reasonable efforts to provide appropriate instruction and training for the employee to succeed in the new position. In the event the employee's performance and/or conduct during a probationary period does not meet management's expectations, and it is determined by management in its sole discretion not to retain the employee in the new position, the employee shall be returned to their previous rank and classification without any loss of seniority, so long as there is an open position in that previous classification. Upon return to their previous position, the employee shall be paid at their former pay rate or the current pay rate in effect for that job classification.

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3) In the event there is no open position in the previous classification, the District will evaluate and determine whether or not there is another suitable position in which to offer and place the employee. In these circumstances, the employee is not guaranteed another position. However, the District will make good faith efforts to offer the employee an available open position for which the employee is qualified.

03.3.) **Equal Employment Opportunity** – It is the policy of the District to grant equal employment opportunity to all qualified persons in accordance with all applicable federal, state and any local laws governing nondiscrimination in hiring, discipline, termination, promotion, compensation, allocation of benefits and all other terms and conditions of employment. If you believe you have been discriminated against during your employment with the District, you are encouraged to follow the complaint procedure in **Policy: Discriminatory Workplace Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure.**

03.4.) **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** – It is the policy of the District to comply with all the relevant and applicable provisions of the ADA and its amendments. In accordance with the ADA, the District does not discriminate against any employees or applicants on the basis of disability. It is the responsibility of the employee or applicant to request an accommodation of any physical or mental disability that substantially limits a major life activity of the employee or applicant. In accordance with the ADA, the District will take all such requests seriously and will promptly determine whether the employee or applicant is a qualified individual with a disability and whether a reasonable accommodation exists which would allow the employee or applicant to perform the essential functions of the job without imposing an undue hardship on the District or other employees.

03.5.) **Employee Classification** – For the purposes of benefits administration, the District classifies its non-bargaining unit employees as follows:

1) **Full-Time Exempt Employees** – Employees who have successfully completed the District's probationary period and who are hired to work the District's normal, full-time work week and any additional hours beyond 40 per week that may be necessary in the performance of their jobs. These employees are exempt under the FLSA and, thus, not eligible for overtime compensation. These employees are eligible for all benefits subject to any insurance or benefit provider requirements. Positions in this category are:

- 1) Fire Chief
- 2) Deputy Fire Chief
- 3) Assistant Chief
- 4) Division Chief

- 5) Finance Manager
 - 6) Human Resources Manager
 - 7) Information Technology Administrator
 - 8) Logistics Coordinator
 - 9) Public Relations Officer
- 2) **Full-Time Non-Exempt Employees** – Employees who have successfully completed the District's probationary period and who are hired to regularly work the District's normal, full-time work week, which is 40 hours, and any additional hours that may be necessary in the performance of their jobs. These employees are required to be compensated either in pay at 1-1/2 times their regular rate or in compensatory time at 1-1/2 times for all hours worked beyond forty (40) in a work week. These employees are eligible for all benefits subject to any insurance or benefit provider requirements. Positions in this category are:
- 1) Billing Specialist
 - 2) Finance Specialist
 - 3) Tradesman
 - 4) Administrative Secretary
- 3) **Part-Time Employees** – Employees who have successfully completed the District's probationary period and who are hired to regularly work less than the District's normal, regular, full-time schedule, as authorized by the Board. Eligibility for benefits will be determined at the Board's discretion.
- 1) Plans Examiner
- 4) **Temporary Employees** – Employees who may be employed for a specific project or for a limited period of time, and whose employment will normally terminate no later than the completion of that project or period of time. These employees are not eligible for benefits.

03.6.) **Veterans' Preference** – With respect to the applicable terms, conditions and privileges of employment, the District will comply with the requirements of the applicable Florida veterans' preference law.

03.7.) **Filling a Vacancy** – Hiring or promotions into District positions shall be based upon the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and qualifications of the applicant(s) or candidate(s). In circumstances where more than one applicant or candidate for a vacant position is deemed reasonably equal in qualifications, then the Fire Chief reserves the right to utilize a tie-breaking factor in their discretion.

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- 03.8.) **Seniority** – “District seniority” is defined as the length of time an employee has been actively employed in any capacity in the District. “Classification seniority” shall be defined as the length of time an employee has worked continuously in a specific job classification within a department in the District.
- 1) Seniority shall apply in the computation and determination of eligibility for all benefits where length of service is a factor or where specifically designated for the determination of relative standing between employees.
 - 2) An employee's seniority standing shall be lost whenever they: Resign or retire; are involuntarily terminated; fail to report to work after layoff within ten (10) calendar days after the date of delivery of recall Notice to Return to Work is first attempted by certified mail, return receipt requested; fail to report for work on the next regular scheduled working day following the end of a Leave of Absence unless otherwise approved by the District; give a false reason for obtaining a Leave of Absence; are laid off for more than twelve (12) months or are otherwise absent from work for any reason for a period of twelve (12) months except as provided in this Agreement; accept full-time employment not held prior to commencement of the Leave of Absence during the time that they are on such approved Leave of Absence.
- 03.9.) **Chain of Command** – The District's chain of command is a graduated sequence of authority for the purpose of providing leadership to every employee or unit of employees, to provide a process of imparting District orders and policies, expediently and efficiently to the concerned employees of the District and to provide an organized means to redress issues of concern to District employees. Any employee desiring to discuss a matter related to their employment with the District shall have the right to do so, and highly encouraged to adhere to the established chain of command as detailed in the District organizational chart. However, an employee may address concerns to any supervisor or any member of management at any time.
- 03.10.) **Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace** – The District is a drug and alcohol-free workplace. The District is committed to providing a safe, efficient and productive work environment and the highest quality service to the public. The District wishes to ensure that employees perform their duties in a manner that protects the interests of all persons in the workplace and the public we serve. **Refer to SOP: Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace.**
- 03.11.) **Hiring of Relatives (Anti-Nepotism)** – For the purposes of this policy, “relative” is defined as a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, first cousin, niece, nephew, or corresponding “in-law” or “step” relation. This policy shall not apply to individuals who are cohabitating, but not related. **Refer to Policy: Personal & Family Relationships in The Workplace.**

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03.12.) **Responding to Employment Reference Inquiries** - The Fire Chief has the authority to respond to any reference inquiries from other employers relative to current or former District employees. Unless otherwise required by law to provide additional information and data, the District's policy is to provide references that confirm only the name, position(s) held, wage/salary paid, and dates of employment.

03.13.) **Outside Employment/Business Interests** – An employee may, under most circumstances, hold a job with another organization or maintain business interests as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with the District. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to the District's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements or business obligations.

If the District determines that an employee's outside work or business interests adversely interferes with performance, quality service to the public, or the ability to meet the requirements of the job, including attendance at District meetings, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment or business interests if they wish to remain with the District.

Employees who hold outside jobs or have outside business interests must notify the District and must disclose the identity of the employer, organization or type of business interests held, and any other information requested by the District to determine whether a conflict of interest exists. Failure to do so may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

03.14.) **Access to Personnel Files and Changes to Personal Data** – The District maintains a personnel file on each employee. Personnel files are the property of the District but employees and members of the public have the right to review personnel files upon request made of the District. An appointment will be made to set a time and place for review. The personnel file may be reviewed, but originals may not be removed. If copies are requested of any documents contained in the personnel file, the employee or member of the public may be asked to pay a reasonable copying fee. Any copies made of a personnel file must be made by authorized District personnel only; the employee whose file is being reviewed or any other member of the public reviewing the said file is not authorized to make the copies. At the appointed meeting time, the review of the personnel file will be made in the presence of an individual custodian appointed by the District to maintain the files.

With respect to employee information, it is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the District of any changes in personal data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, insurance/dependent changes, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times.

03.15.) **Computer, Internet and E-mail Usage, and Social Media - Refer to Policy: Acceptable Use Policy Governing Internet and Technology Access. Refer to Policy: Social Media.**

03.16.) **Telephone and Cell Phone Usage** – The use of the District's office phones for personal reasons should be limited to emergencies only. Personal cell phones or any other personal electronic communication device (*e.g.*, PDA's, pagers, etc.) may be used on a limited basis while in District buildings. To minimize disruption to the District's operation and out of respect to co-workers or guests, the District expects employees to exhibit appropriate and professional judgement in using personal cell phones during the workday. To facilitate their managerial functions, an exception for members of management may be granted by the Fire Chief.

03.17.) **Clothing and Maintenance Allowance – All new full-time employees will be furnished the following required uniforms:** Five (5) pair of pants, Five (5) polo's, One (1) White Polo with title for Commission meetings, One (1) white dress uniform long-sleeve shirt with appropriate patches, One (1) department gold badge appropriate size for dress shirt, One (1) dress pants. On October 1st, of each fiscal year, the District shall credit each employee with a four-hundred (\$400.00) dollar credit to be used towards the purchase of “Department” uniforms. Each employee’s remaining credit amount, not to exceed \$80.00 shall roll over to their new fiscal year credit amount. In addition to uniform clothing credit made available to the employees, the District will also provide administrative and staff personnel an allowance of up to two-hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) per fiscal year towards the maintenance of clothing or purchase of non-uniform attire. This allowance will be paid once per year during the month of December.

All clothing purchased must conform to the dress code specified by the Fire Chief herein or otherwise by the District.

Because the payment is an allowance instead of a reimbursement, there is no need to submit receipts for items purchased. The allowance provided to purchase non-uniform work clothing is required by the IRS code to be reported by the District as a taxable fringe benefit.

03.18.) **Employee Use of District Vehicles** – All employees (who are or may be responsible for driving or otherwise operating a District vehicle, including all engines) must maintain a valid Florida Driver License and all other required licenses. If an employee's license is suspended, revoked, or otherwise placed in question, the employee must immediately notify the District. Failure to do so will subject the employee to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. **Refer to SOP: Employee Use of District Vehicles.**

03.19.) **Travel and Business Reimbursement** – To the extent practicable, the District must preapprove all job/District-related travel. The District expects all employees to use good judgment to ensure taxpayer funds are used wisely and reasonably. To the extent practicable, all such job-related travel and business expenditures should be minimized. For any job-related travel and business expenses to be reimbursed and approved, employees must complete a District reimbursement form and provide all receipts and all other documentation as deemed necessary by the District. The District reserves the right to place a cap on reimbursable expenses depending upon the travel or business-related event at issue. The District also reserves the right to not authorize travel, or to deny a request for reimbursement if the job-relatedness of the travel or event is either questionable or deemed to not be in the best interests of the District.

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Section 4

COMPENSATION POLICIES

04.1.) **Hours of Work** – Normal hours of operation are Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 am until 5:30 pm. Administrative Employees covered by this agreement are expected to work a 40 hour work week during the normal hours of operation; however, individual employee's hours may be flexible on a temporary or intermittent basis, so long as the temporary or intermittent scheduling adjustment does not disrupt District operations and are approved by their direct supervisor. Each non-exempt employee shall be afforded a duty-free, unpaid half-hour for lunch.

- 1) The normal work week for any authorized regular, part-time employees is less than 30 hours per work week.
- 2) **Timekeeping** – Time worked for all non-exempt employees, must be accurately recorded to reflect the starting, lunch times, and ending times for each workday. The beginning and ending time of any period during which, they are not working or stop working, including all vacations or other leave, must also be recorded in Aladtec. Also, any variations to the work schedule (e.g. change in starting or ending times) must be recorded in Aladtec. The District reserves the right to require exempt employees to similarly document time worked.
- 3) If corrections or modifications are made to the time record, both the employee and the supervisor must verify the accuracy of the changes recorded in Aladtec.
- 4) Altering, falsifying, or tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record will subject an employee to disciplinary action, including but not limited to termination.

04.2.) **Salary Administration** – To attract and maintain a competitive workforce, the District endeavors to pay salaries competitive with those paid by other area fire departments, while also stewarding through taxpayer-funded budgets; the District's policy is to review compensation and make adjustments in accordance with 04.3.).

04.3.) **Wages** – Annual raises for all employees governed by the handbook will coincide with the approved District 19 collective bargaining agreement.

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04.4.) **Steps** – The step pay plan is an eight (8) step system from top to bottom in each position. The employee shall begin at step one (1) of each position and progress to the next step on their anniversary date of hire. If an individual has been assigned or promoted to a new position, the steps will progress on the anniversary date of the assignment or promotion to the new position, unless the new position is a lateral move. All step pay increases shall begin the next pay period after the step increase.

Refer to Appendix [A](#): Non-Bargaining Step Pay Plan

04.5.) **Longevity** – shall be paid to each employee according to the following schedule beginning on their 5th anniversary with the department. Longevity pay will begin the next pay period after the anniversary occurs.

Employee longevity schedule:

Anniversary	Added to Bi-Weekly Compensation
• 5 years	\$52.00
• 10 years	\$104.00
• 15 years	\$156.00
• 20 years	\$208.00
• 25 years	\$312.00

04.6.) **Overtime** – May be necessary based on the District's operating needs. When possible, advance notification of overtime assignments will be provided. Any employee working overtime must be authorized to do so by the immediate supervisor, or other supervisor within the chain of command. At the Fire Chief's discretion, Exempt employees are eligible for comp time (hour-for-hour) for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week.

- 1) Non-exempt employees will be paid 1½ times their regular hourly rate for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a single work week. Alternatively, non-exempt employees, at their choice, may be afforded compensatory time off equivalent to 1½ times the overtime hours worked up to the maximum number of forty (40) hours. Such accrued comp time hours must be utilized within the calendar year it was earned. In compliance with applicable law, Exempt employees shall receive overtime at one and one-half (1½) times their current hourly rate of pay for hours worked in excess of (40) hours during declared states of Local, State, or National disasters and/or emergencies, including those declared by FEMA.

04.7.) **Payroll Deductions** – The law requires that the District make certain deductions from employee wages. Among these are applicable federal income taxes, Social Security and Medicare. The District also has the right to make deductions within the limits of the law for debt or reimbursement of District funds as necessary.

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- 04.8.) **Payday** – All non-bargaining unit employees of the District are normally paid on a bi-weekly basis, on Thursdays. If a scheduled payday falls on a District observed holiday, you will usually be paid on the day preceding the holiday. The District will not pre-authorize or advance payroll to an employee.
- 04.9.) **Direct Deposit** – The District has established a program for the electronic deposit of up to one hundred percent (100%) of an employee's paycheck into a specified account of the employee's choice, and at a financial institution of the employee's choice, provided that such electronic deposit is technically feasible with the financial institution subject to the computer software and hardware limitations of the District.

It is your responsibility to establish accounts and provide the District with the necessary written authorization to make deposits on your behalf. The District must be notified of changes to deduction amounts by written confirmation. The change will usually take effect with the next pay period following receipt of the request.

- 04.10.) **Separation and Termination** – Employees desiring to terminate their employment relationship are required to notify the District at least two (2) weeks in advance of their intended separation date, except that managerial or supervisory employees desiring to terminate their employment relationship are required to notify the District at least four (4) weeks in advance of their intended separation date. Employees who plan to retire are required to provide the District with a minimum of sixty days (60 days) notice. This will allow ample time for the processing of appropriate pension forms to ensure that any retirement benefits to which an employee may be entitled commence in a timely manner.

Such notices should be given in writing to your supervisor with a copy to the Fire Chief. Proper notice generally allows the District sufficient time to calculate unused, accrued vacation or sick leave and to include any monies owed in your final paycheck. Without proper notice, however, you may have to wait until after the end of the next normal pay period to receive such payments.

The employee who desires to terminate their employment is requested to submit, in writing, a signed statement of resignation explaining the reasons for voluntary separation. The District also may require that separating employees participate and fully cooperate in an exit interview prior to departure.

Although the District hopes that its relationship with employees are long term and mutually rewarding, the District reserves the right to terminate the employment relationship at will, with or without notice.

- 04.11.) **Severance Pay** – Severance pay may be provided to laid-off employees as a result of economic conditions or budgetary constraints (except for the Fire Chief or any other

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employee who is employed pursuant to a written employment agreement) in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein. Severance pay will not be provided to those employees who leave District employment solely of their own volition, or to those employees terminated for misconduct or other violations of District policy.

Severance pay will not be provided to regular part-time employees, temporary employees or employees on probationary status at the time of separation. At the District's discretion, if afforded, severance pay will be paid in a lump sum or in a number of bi-weekly payments not to exceed the equivalent of the number of weeks' severance pay to which the employee is entitled.

If afforded, severance pay will be one week of severance pay for each year of credited service after completion of at least two years of service in such non-bargaining unit position with the District, up to a maximum of eight (8) weeks of severance pay. Credit will not be given for the first two years of service. For example, the non-bargaining unit employee who has been employed with the District in a non-bargaining unit position for three (3) consecutive years will receive one week of severance pay; if employed for four (4) consecutive years of service, then two weeks of severance pay, etc.

To be entitled to any severance pay in accordance with this provision, the separating employee shall be required to provide in writing, prepared by the District, a release and waiver, to the extent legally permissible and enforceable, of any and all claims that the employee may have against the District. The employee will also be required to acknowledge that the severance pay shall serve as legal consideration for such release and waiver.

04.12.) **Return of Property, Reimbursement and Final Paycheck** – Employees must return all of the District's property in their possession, custody or control upon resignation or termination of employment, or earlier upon request. The District may seek reimbursement from the employee or withhold from the employee's paycheck the cost of any items that are not returned when required and/or may seek the return of its property through appropriate legal recourse. Any employee who fails to provide the requisite notice upon resignation or who fails to return the District property will forfeit any accrued, but unused paid leave. Any employee who is terminated for misconduct, at the discretion of the District, will also forfeit any accrued, but unused paid leave.

04.13.) **Payout Upon Death of Employee** – In the event of the death of an employee, payment for all unused vacation time and fifty 50% of unused sick time shall be made at the employee's rate at the time of death to the employee's beneficiary, estate, or as provided by law.

Section 5

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

- 05.1.) **Performance Evaluations** – All Non-Bargaining employees will receive an annual evaluation to discuss job performance and goals. Performance evaluations will be conducted in accordance with **SOP: Performance Evaluations**.
- 05.2.) **Workplace Violence** – The District will take immediate action, up to and including termination, against any employee who makes verbal threats of violence or engages in any threatening behavior or acts of violence. Each employee is expected to embrace the District's strong commitment to provide a safe, healthy and secure work environment. The District expects all employees to report to management immediately any threatening behavior or acts of violence. In order to maintain consistency within the District's Policies and Procedures, and any other governing documents. **Refer to Policy: Workplace Violence**.
- 05.3.) **Rules of Conduct and Progressive Discipline** – The District expects its employees to meet standards set for high quality work performance and conduct. From time to time, discipline may be necessary for the efficient operation of the District in cases where an employee falls below these standards. Forms of discipline may include oral reprimand, written reprimand, suspension without pay, demotion, and discharge from employment (termination).
- In order to maintain consistency within the District, disciplinary action will be in accordance with the District's Rules and Regulations, SOP's, and Policies, to include any other governing documents. **Refer to SOP: Employee Disciplinary Action Guideline**.
- 05.4.) **Reporting Misconduct or Violation of Rules** – It shall be the responsibility of each member of the District to immediately report violations of any rules, regulations, orders, policies or directives governing the District. Exercise of the chain of command, beginning with the immediate supervisor, is strongly encouraged when reporting violations. However, a violation can be reported to any District member in a supervisory position to expedite corrective action. The reporting member then must also notify their immediate supervisor of the report at the first available opportunity.

05.5.) **Open Door Communications** – Misunderstandings or conflicts can arise in any organization. To ensure effective working relations, it is important that such matters be resolved before serious problems develop. Most incidents resolve themselves naturally; however, should a situation persist that you believe is detrimental to you or to the District, you should follow the procedures described here for bringing your complaint to management's attention.

Step 1: Prompt discussion of the problem with your immediate supervisor should take place as a first step. If, however, you don't believe a discussion with your supervisor is appropriate, you may proceed directly to Step 2.

Step 2: If your problem is not resolved after discussion with your supervisor, or if you feel discussion with your supervisor is inappropriate, you should request a meeting with the person at the next higher level of supervision. In an effort to resolve the problem, he/she will consider the facts, conduct an investigation if appropriate, and develop potential solutions to the problem.

Step 3: If you are not satisfied with the Step 2 resolution and wish to pursue the problem or complaint further, you may prepare a written summary of your concerns and request that the matter be reviewed by the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief, after a full examination of the facts (which may include discussion with all individuals involved and further investigation, if necessary) will advise you of his decision in writing. The Fire Chief's decision in the matter will be final.

You may have a co-worker accompany you during discussion of your complaint in any of the steps of the process; however, you will be responsible for articulating the substance of your complaint. If you choose to have a co-worker accompany you, the person you choose must not be someone who has any involvement in the matter being discussed.

The procedure should not be construed, however, as preventing, limiting, or delaying the District from taking disciplinary action against any individual, up to and including termination, in circumstances such as those involving problems of overall performance, conduct, attitude, or other factors where the District deems disciplinary action appropriate.

05.6.) **Investigation of Charges of Misconduct – Refer to SOP: Employee Disciplinary Action Guideline.**

05.7.) **Conflicts of Interest** – Employees have an obligation to provide services to the public and to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. Employees must notify the District of any potential or existing personal, business or other relationships or interests that may pose a conflict of interest with the District's interests. Failure to do so may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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Employees are prohibited from accepting gifts or services (e.g., cash, clothing, etc.) from non-employees that have a value of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) or more.

- 05.8.) **Non-Disclosure and Non-Use of Confidential Information** – The District is actively committed to maintaining confidentiality to the extent allowed by law and the Florida Public Records Act. The Act provides for public access to almost all information contained in District files, except for District information that is protected under either Federal or State laws. One exception to these laws is a statute that prohibits the public disclosure of the names, addresses, telephone numbers or photographs of certain employees of fire departments, their spouses and their children. Other exceptions may include confidential medical information of employees, and other specified exemptions pursuant to the Florida Public Records Act.

Employees are required to maintain confidentiality where allowed. If you encounter any situation about which you have doubts, we strongly encourage you to express these doubts to your supervisor as soon as possible. Any employee found not to have complied with appropriate regulations and policies may be disciplined, up to and including termination.

- 05.9.) **Workplace Monitoring and Security Inspections** – The District is committed to a safe and secure workplace. Workplace monitoring of the premises, the telephone system, computer system and electronics system may be conducted by the District to ensure employee safety, security, quality control and the conduct of business consistent with the expectations of the taxpaying public.

Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy at the workplace. Accordingly, the District reserves its right to conduct video and audio surveillance of workplace areas (except private areas, such as restrooms) for safety, quality control and security purposes.

In furtherance of its concern for safety and security, the District also reserves its right to conduct constitutional workplace searches and inspections, that could include, but not be limited to, desks, lockers, employee vehicles, employee packages, personal bags, lunch bags or tool boxes. Each District employee impliedly consents to such legal searches by continuing in the District employ and entering onto its premises.

- 05.10.) **Visitors** – To provide for the safety and security of employees, co-workers, and guests of the District, only authorized visitors are allowed. Visitors may be required to sign in upon entry. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, ensures security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

Employees are responsible for their conduct in front of visitors and must ensure the safety of the District visitors at all times.

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If an unauthorized individual is observed on the District premises, employees should immediately notify their supervisor or, if necessary, direct the individual to the main entrance.

05.11.) **Use of District Property and Equipment** – When using the District property or equipment to accomplish their work, employees are expected to exercise care, perform appropriate maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards and guidelines. Employees should direct any questions to their immediate supervisor concerning the operation and maintenance of any equipment used on the job.

Employees are required to notify their immediate supervisor if any District property or equipment appears to be damaged, defective or is in need of repair. Employees will be accountable and responsible for reckless, negligent or unsafe use or operation of the District equipment. In such cases, employees are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

An employee is responsible for the damage or loss of property or equipment due to misconduct or misuse of the equipment on the part of the employee. An employee may be required to pay for equipment or property that is lost or damaged. The amount to be paid may not exceed the value of the item, at the time of loss or damage. If the damage or loss involves an insurance claim, the employee will only be responsible for the amount of the current insurance deductible (up to \$1,000.00 or depreciated value, whichever is less). The District is responsible to provide the employee a receipt, upon request, showing the cost of replacement or the reasonable cost to repair the property or equipment. If the employee is charged, the item must either be replaced or repaired. The amount may be divided equally and deducted from each paycheck, not to exceed thirteen (13) consecutive paydays. The Fire Chief will make the determination regarding the appropriate level of employee fiscal responsibility.

05.12.) **No Smoking and Non-Tobacco Usage** – In keeping with the District's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, and in accordance with Florida Administrative Code 69A-62.024(6), tobacco use shall be prohibited at all firefighter employee places of employment. This prohibition includes all types of tobacco and tobacco-like products, including smoked and smoke-less tobacco, other smoking products, and electronic cigarettes. **Refer to SOP: Tobacco-Free Workplace.**

05.13.) **Workplace Safety** – The District is proud of the safe working conditions it provides for the community we serve. It is the responsibility of each employee to prevent accidents by observing all safety and fire precautions. Use all safety equipment as provided. Employees should avoid indulging in "horseplay" as it is the cause of many accidents. Immediately report all injuries and accidents on the job, no matter how minor. These safety rules are not meant to be all-inclusive or to cover every conceivable situation.

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Always use good judgment and common sense to protect visitors, yourself, and other employees. Failure to follow these policies or otherwise acting in an unsafe manner will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination discharge. **Refer to Policy: Workplace Safety.**

05.14.) **Contagious or Other Serious Illness** – The District recognizes that employees with a contagious or other serious illness may wish to continue their employment, and, in fact, that continued employment may be therapeutically important to their recovery process. The District also recognizes that it must satisfy its legal obligation to provide a safe work environment for all employees, Commissioners, vendors, and visitors to our premises.

In such circumstances, the District encourages employees to continue working, provided that their condition does not pose any significant risk to other persons, and they are able to perform the essential functions of the job. The District will take steps to provide reasonable accommodation, if necessary, consistent with applicable laws, to permit employees to continue working during a contagious or other serious illness.

The District also reserves its right to ask any employee with a contagious or other serious illness that may pose a significant workplace hazard to other employees, visitors, or to themselves to take any accrued paid leave or leave without pay until certified medical clearance is obtained that the illness no longer poses a risk to the employee or others in the workplace. Any such clearance requested must be certified by a medical provider.

If you have a contagious or other serious illness, you are encouraged to contact the District's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP will provide you with information about the illness and about programs that are available to assist you and your family. All of your contacts with the EAP are confidential and not available to the District unless you approve.

It is your responsibility to inform the District of your illness, and authorize the release of medical information that may be needed in determining what accommodations are reasonable. Any reasonable accommodations to your situation that may be decided on must be consistent with the business needs of the District, established District policy, and applicable law.

05.15.) **Personal Appearance, Dress Code and Allowance** – In keeping with the District's expectation that all of its employees will present themselves in a professional manner, the District has adopted dress, grooming and personal cleanliness standards. These standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image that the District presents to the public. The District desires that its employees present a professional image to the public they serve.

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05.16.) To this end, employees will be provided uniform clothing of the type and quantity that is appropriate for the particular class and position, in the sole judgment of the Fire Chief.

In general, while on-duty or on-call, employees are expected to present a clean and neat appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their positions and in accordance with the departments Rules and Regulations. Visible tattoos and body piercings, other than piercings on earlobes, are prohibited. Extreme or unconventional hairstyles and colors, and strong or offensive fragrances are also prohibited. For safety and sanitary reasons, jewelry should not interfere with job duties. Nails should always be maintained, cleaned and trimmed. Clothing, including any uniforms, must be kept clean at all times. Employees who appear for work inappropriately dressed will be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire. Under such circumstances, employees will not be compensated for the time away from work and are subject to discipline.

Please refer to any additional, specific rules or regulations that may be separately implemented for dress and uniform relating to your particular classification/department within the District. Consult your supervisor or the Fire Chief if you have any questions as to what constitutes appropriate attire, or if a reasonable accommodation for religious or disability reason is desired. **Refer to SOP: Personal Appearance and Grooming Standards / Refer to SOP: Uniforms.**

05.17.) **Attendance and Tardiness** – The District expects all employees to assume diligent responsibility for their attendance and promptness.

Unexcused or excessive absenteeism or tardiness, as determined in the sole judgment of the District, is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. All disciplinary action shall be determined at the sole discretion of the Fire Chief.

The following protocol and progressive disciplinary procedures apply to absenteeism and tardiness:

1. If you are unable to report for work or you anticipate being late, contact your immediate supervisor (or designee in the absence of a supervisor) as soon as practicable prior to your scheduled work time. Messages left with co-workers for the supervisor are not an acceptable form of reporting your tardiness or absence. If you are unable to make contact with your supervisor or designee, you are to leave a message on the District's main contact phone number.
2. An employee who fails to report for work without contacting his or her supervisor (or designee) or who fails to return from a leave of absence on the designated date is considered Absence Without Authorized Leave (AWOL) and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

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Section 6

LEAVE BENEFITS

06.1). **Holidays** – The District recognizes the following paid 10-hour day holidays:

- 1) New Year's Day
- 2) Martin Luther King Day
- 3) Presidents' Day
- 4) Monday after Easter
- 5) Memorial Day
- 6) Independence Day
- 7) Labor Day
- 8) Columbus Day
- 9) Veterans' Day
- 10) Thanksgiving Day
- 11) Christmas Eve
- 12) Christmas Day

The District business office is closed on the above listed holidays, and all employees receive those days off with pay, or the preceding or following weekday off with pay when the holiday is on a weekend.

06.2). **Vacation Leave** – Shall be accrued by regular full-time employees in accordance with this section. Regular part time employees and temporary employees do not accrue vacation benefits. Vacation leave shall be accrued by employees as follows:

0 through 5 complete years of service:	7 hours per month
6 through 10 complete years of service:	10 hours per month
11 through 15 complete years of service:	14 hours per month
16 through 20 complete years of service:	17 hours per month
21 through 25 complete years of service:	20 hours per month
26 completed years of service to separation:	26 hours per month

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Effective: October 2021

For each vacation day used, an amount that equals the hours for the employee's otherwise scheduled workday, shall be deducted from the accrued vacation leave. Employees may request vacation as it is earned. In order for vacation requests to be considered on a seniority basis, they must be submitted to the Fire Chief by December 1st of each year for the following calendar year. Vacation leave not submitted by December 1st will be approved on a first-come, first-serve basis. The District will attempt to accommodate vacation requests, but workload demands may necessitate denial or cancellation of requested vacation.

At the Fire Chief's discretion, a member that has prior service with the District, and left the District under favorable conditions, may be credited for each month of prior service to apply toward the current vacation accrual schedule.

Experience credit will be given to any Chief Officer, or Exempt position, covered under this handbook for the accrual of vacation benefits at a rate of .5 (half-year) for each year of verified (documented) paid, professional experience in the fire service or other relevant field. Experience credit is limited to a total of five (5) years credit for ten (10) years of documented experience. Years of service will be verified and rounded down; credit will not be awarded for "partial" years of service.

Employees serving their initial probationary period may not take vacation leave during the first ninety (90) days of their employment. Under special circumstances, vacation leave may be granted during this time period as determined by the Fire Chief.

Employees may accumulate and carryover vacation time from year to year to a maximum amount of 500 hours, with all other unused vacation leave being forfeited. Payment of accrued vacation time upon separation will be made up to a maximum of the employees' annual accrual amount of hours at the regular hourly rate in effect at the time of separation, with all other unused vacation leave being forfeited. An employee who is involuntarily separated for misconduct or other violation of District policy for just cause will forfeit payment of any accrued vacation leave. Employees who enter the FRS DROP may be paid for 500 hours of vacation leave to go towards their final annual compensation.

At the end of each year, employees may elect to receive pay for unused vacation hours from the current year, in lieu of carrying the unused vacation hours forward. A maximum of forty (40) hours can be cashed in each year at the rate of 100%. The employee shall submit a written request for such conversion by December 31st for the current year. Payment will be made the second pay period in January.

Employees have the ability to donate accrued, accumulated vacation time into a donation bank for use by other employees, with the approval of the Fire Chief.

- 06.3). **Sick Leave** – The District recognizes that inability to work because of illness or injury may cause economic hardship. For this reason, the District provides paid sick days to employees.

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Regular, full-time employees will be eligible to accrue up to 84 hours (7 hours per month) of paid sick time on an annual basis, with the accrual awarded on January 1st of each year. For the months of October through December 2021, employees shall continue to accrue seven (7) hours per month.

At the end of each year, employees may elect to receive pay for unused sick hours from the current year, in lieu of carrying the unused sick hours forward. A maximum of eighty-four (84) hours can be cashed in each year at the rate of 100%. The employee shall submit a written request for such conversion by December 31st for the current year. Payment will be made the second pay period in January.

Sick time may only be used for a bona fide illness, injury, attending doctor's visits or health-related appointments, or when an employee must provide care for an immediate family member—to include employee, employee's spouse, mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, children, stepchildren, grandchildren, sister, brother, grandparents, step-grandparents, of both the employee and the employee's spouse/domestic partner having the same legal address. If you are absent for more than two (2) consecutive workdays, a statement from a physician may be required before you will be permitted to return to work.

In such instances, the District also reserves the right to require you to submit a statement from your physician or be examined by a District designated physician at its discretion. Such a requirement may be utilized in cases where abuse is suspected (For example, where an employee's record indicates a pattern of short absences and/or frequent absences before or after holidays and weekends).

Employees may accumulate sick time from year to year, with the ability to also donate accrued, accumulated sick days into a donation bank for use by other employees, with the approval of the Fire Chief.

06.4). **Sick Leave Incentive Payout** – The District recognizes employees that have accrued sick time through their years of service with the District. Upon Departure/Retirement from the District, employees are eligible to receive the following incentive pay below:

- 3 through 5 years - 25% of accrual
- 6 through 10 years - 30% of accrual
- 11 through 15 years - 35% of accrual
- 16 through 20 years - 40% of accrual
- 21 years and up - 50% of accrual

06.5). **Military Leave** – Military leave shall be granted in accordance with applicable State and Federal law. Nothing in this handbook shall be construed to exclude any military leave privileges. In the event the required weekend drills and the two (2) week camp are not covered by military leave, the District will supplement the employee's military pay to maintain the employee at his current hourly rate.

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- 06.6). **Court-Related and Jury Duty Leave** – An employee who is required or subpoenaed to appear in court, and the court appearance is resulting from or related to District affairs, will be permitted to serve the court for the period of time required with pay. Parking fees relating to such court attendance will be reimbursed with a receipt. All witness fees provided to the employee must be given to the District.

Any other fees received by the employee from the Court, or from any party of the proceeding, must also be provided to the District.

The District also takes seriously the duty to serve on a jury. The District will comply with the applicable federal and state laws on jury duty and will ensure that employees who are summoned to serve as a possible juror are afforded the time necessary to fulfill this important public service. The District will continue the salary or wages of the employee from the initial summons date through the entirety of the employee's service on a jury.

Employees who appear in court unrelated to District business, for personal litigation, for personal criminal charges, or on a voluntary basis (not jury duty) will not be paid for the time spent in court, nor will any associated costs be paid by the District.

To qualify for paid court or paid jury duty leave, you must submit to your supervisor a copy of the summons to serve/appear within two (2) workdays of its receipt. In addition, the District may request reasonable proof of service as it deems necessary, at its discretion, prior to your return to work.

- 06.7). **Bereavement Leave** – Employees shall be entitled to forty (40) hours of bereavement leave in the event such employee suffers the loss of a spouse, child or spouse's child, mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, stepchildren, grandchildren, sister, brother, grandparents, and step-grandparents of both the employee and the employee's spouse/domestic partner having the same legal address. Special consideration shall also be given to any other person whose association with the employee was similar to any of the above relationships.

Requests for bereavement leave should be made to your immediate supervisor. The District may request reasonable proof of as it deems necessary, at its discretion, prior to your return to work. The Fire Chief may grant additional leave that is unpaid under other circumstances the Fire Chief may deem appropriate. Refer to section 06.10

- 06.8). **Domestic Violence Leave** – In accordance with Florida law, eligible District employees are entitled to leave where the employee or a family or household member (as defined in the law) has been subject to domestic violence. Employees, who have worked for the District for at least three (3) months, may take up to three (3) working days of Domestic Violence Leave in a twelve month period.

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The twelve-month period within which the three days of leave may be taken is a "rolling" twelve-month period, measured backwards from the date an employee's Domestic Violence Leave would begin. Eligible employees may take Domestic Violence Leave for the following reasons:

- 1) Seek an injunction for protection against domestic violence or an injunction for protection in cases of repeat violence, dating violence, or sexual violence.
- 2) Obtain medical care or mental health counseling, or both, for the employee or a family or household member to address physical or psychological injuries resulting from the act of domestic violence.
- 3) Obtain services from a victim-services organization, including, but not limited to, a domestic violence shelter or program or a rape crisis center as a result of the act of domestic violence.
- 4) Make the employee's home secure from the perpetrator of the domestic violence or to seek new housing to escape the perpetrator; or,
- 5) Seek legal assistance in addressing issues arising from the act of domestic violence or to attend and prepare for court-related proceedings arising from the act of domestic violence.

Unless there is imminent danger to the employee's health or safety or to the health or safety of an employee's family or household member, the employee must provide advance notice to the District of his or her need for leave. Sufficient documentation must also be supplied regarding the fact that the employee or a member of the employee's family or household has been subject to domestic violence.

Before a District employee is entitled to take any Domestic Violence Leave, the employee must exhaust any accrued, unused paid time off provided by District policy, such as vacation or sick leave. If the employee has no paid time off available, any Domestic Violence Leave taken will be paid.

The District will keep all information pertaining to this leave confidential to the extent required by law.

- 06.9). **Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)** – The District provides family and medical leaves of absence to eligible employees in certain circumstances in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and applicable DOL regulations. FMLA leave, as well as leaves for family and medical reasons for employees not eligible for FMLA leave, are provided in accordance with policy adopted by the Board of Commissioners. **Refer to the District's current FMLA policy.**

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06.10). **Unpaid Personal Leave of Absence** – Leaves of absence for periods up to twelve (12) months may be requested by regular, full-time employees who have completed one year of continuous service. Personal leaves of absence are leaves without pay, without accrual of benefits, without accrual of insurance benefits, without accrual of seniority, without accrual of vacation or sick time and without accrual of retirement credit during the entire duration of the leave.

Requests for personal leaves must be made to the Fire Chief, in writing, at least two weeks prior to the time you wish the leave to commence. Leaves that are necessitated by an emergency may be approved with shorter notice.

Personal leave may be granted for justifiable reasons at the Fire Chief's discretion, provided the leave does not seriously disrupt District operations.

The District will make a good faith effort to return the employee to a position within the District for which the employee is qualified, but without any guarantee of being returned to work or an equal position or equal pay. Reinstatement cannot be guaranteed to employees returning from approved personal leaves that are more than three (3) months in duration. The District reserves the right to fill position vacancies at any time depending upon operational needs.

An employee may request leave without pay when all accrued paid leave has been exhausted. Other than retaining the original date of hire, no benefits will be provided during periods of leave without pay. However, subject to carrier rules and requirements, an employee in an unpaid leave status may continue to participate in group benefits at their sole expense so long as the benefit is provided, and premiums are paid timely.

Section 7

INSURANCE BENEFITS

07.1.) **Health Benefits** – The District currently provides the following insurance coverage:

- 1) Medical
- 2) Dental
- 3) *Flexible Spending Account (FSA) – January 1, 2022
- 4) *Vision
- 5) **Life Insurance and Disability

Medical and dental coverage for employee's dependents will be offered and fully paid for by the District, subject to the eligibility requirements described herein. Indeed, all coverage is subject to the exclusions and limitations imposed by the insurance provider. Further, due to increasing costs of providing insurance benefits, the District provides no guarantee that family coverage benefits will be continued from year to year. The District will not be responsible for providing coverage or benefits that are not available through, or discontinued by the insurance provider.

Employees with dependent coverage shall be responsible for notifying the District of any change in the eligibility status of persons listed as their dependents, and will be responsible for reimbursement of the premiums paid after thirty (30) days of a dependent becoming ineligible.

Dependent coverage for children will depend upon the insurance provider's policies.

*Flexible Spending Account is funded by the employee 100%

*Vision coverage is paid by the employee 100%

**Life Insurance and Disability is available to the employee only

07.2.) **Retirement and Life Insurance** – The District provides a retirement plan for all eligible employees through the Florida Retirement System (FRS). Your retirement benefit is based upon your FRS classification (Special Risk or Regular Risk), years of service, and pay. Consult your FRS member guidebook for more information.

The District also provides retired employees with a life insurance benefit. Please contact the Human Resource Manager for further details.

07.3.) **Retiree Health Insurance Subsidy** – When an employee of the District, who has at least ten (10) continuous years of verified service with the District, separates from employment as a result of their acceptance of retirement benefits under the rules of the Florida Retirement System (FRS), the employee, their spouse, and eligible dependents may continue their participation in the District's group health plans (medical, dental, vision, and other qualifying plans that may be introduced in the future) as provided for in F.S. 112.0801, and may be eligible for a monthly credit toward their premiums in the form of a Health Insurance Subsidy (HIS), based on their years of service to the District. A monthly payment of five dollars (\$5.00) for each year of verified service shall be made to the retiree's insurance company, or the retiree (at the retiree's request) until the retired employee reaches the eligible age to collect Medicare.

Employees must inform the District in writing of their intention to continue participation, for themselves, or themselves and their dependents, in the District's medical and/or dental insurance plans. The written notice to continue participation must be provided to the District prior to the employee's last day of employment. Retired employees who failed to continue participation in a District insurance plan prior to their last date of employment will forfeit their ability to rejoin any District insurance plan at a later date.

Upon becoming eligible for Medicare, the retiree must designate the District's insurance plans as being secondary to their Medicare coverage.

Upon the death of an eligible retiree, their surviving spouse and dependents may be eligible for continued participation in the District group health plan through COBRA. If eligible through COBRA, the District will continue to award premium credit that the retiree had qualified for and do so until the spouse's and/or dependent's COBRA eligibility expires.

07.4.) **Disability Benefit** – The District provides all full-time regular employees with long-term disability insurance at no cost to the employee, as long as the District elects to provide such coverage. Under this program, benefits are payable for non-work-related injuries or illnesses. Benefit amounts and the benefit payment duration are subject to the insurance provider's requirements for eligibility. Employees may use accrued paid vacation or sick time to maintain a normal income level by making up the difference between their long-term disability benefit and normal salary weekly wage, so long as the combination does not exceed what their normal salary weekly wage would be. Please refer to the official plan document for further details.

Section 8

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- 08.1.) **Employee Education** – The District encourages employees to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities to foster a more productive, educated, and motivated work force. Education achievement plays an integral role in the success of the District and in employee careers. The District reserves the right, in the Fire Chief’s sole discretion, to establish individual limits for education assistance.

The District does not guarantee placement in any particular job after completion of a course of study. Employees will be expected to submit for promotional opportunities in accordance with the Filling a Vacancy Policy.

Employees obtaining and maintaining any of the educational pay incentives listed in the Eligible Educational Pay Incentives Listing, that is not required in their current job description, will receive an additional \$52.00 per incentive, per pay period. Incentives are capped at a maximum of eight (8) incentives. Incentive pay will begin in the next pay period after appropriate confirmation of eligible educational pay requirements.

Refer to Appendix [B](#): Eligible Educational Pay Incentives Listing

An employee who receives an educational pay increase as provided in this section and fails to maintain current training certificates as defined in this section will lose their educational pay unless and until such time as their certificate or license is restored. Any gap time in lost educational pay due to expired or non-current training or other related required certificates will not be paid.

- 08.2.) **Employee Assistance Program** – The District recognizes that problems which are not directly associated with an employee’s employment can be detrimental to an employee’s performance on the job. An employee assistance program (EAP) is provided to employees and their families at no charge.

EAP consultations are strictly confidential except for information specifically authorized by the employee for release to the District or information that State or Federal law may require. EAP pamphlets are available at each District facility.

Section 9

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Non-Bargaining Step Pay Plan

Finance/Billing Specialist

Step 1	\$25.16 / \$52,332.80
Step 2	\$26.25 / \$54,600.00
Step 3	\$27.34 / \$56,867.20
Step 4	\$28.43 / \$59,134.40
Step 5	\$29.52 / \$61,401.60
Step 6	\$30.61 / \$63,668.80
Step 7	\$31.70 / \$65,936.00
Step 8	\$32.79 / \$68,203.20

Administrative Secretary

Step 1	\$20.31 / \$42,244.80
Step 2	\$21.40 / \$44,512.00
Step 3	\$22.49 / \$46,779.20
Step 4	\$23.58 / \$49,046.40
Step 5	\$24.67 / \$51,313.60
Step 6	\$25.76 / \$53,580.80
Step 7	\$26.85 / \$55,848.00
Step 8	\$27.94 / \$58,115.20

Tradesman

Step 1	\$22.38 / \$46,550.40
Step 2	\$23.47 / \$48,817.60
Step 3	\$24.56 / \$51,084.80
Step 4	\$25.65 / \$53,352.00
Step 5	\$26.72 / \$55,577.60
Step 6	\$27.81 / \$57,844.80
Step 7	\$28.90 / \$60,112.00
Step 8	\$29.99 / \$62,379.20

IT/HR/Finance Manager

Step 1	\$39.57 / \$82,305.60
Step 2	\$40.66 / \$84,572.80
Step 3	\$41.75 / \$86,840.00
Step 4	\$42.84 / \$89,107.20
Step 5	\$43.93 / \$91,374.40
Step 6	\$45.02 / \$93,641.60
Step 7	\$46.11 / \$95,908.80
Step 8	\$47.20 / \$98,176.00

PR Officer/Logistics Coord.

Step 1	\$32.04 / \$66,643.20
Step 2	\$33.13 / \$68,910.40
Step 3	\$34.22 / \$71,177.60
Step 4	\$35.31 / \$73,444.80
Step 5	\$36.40 / \$75,712.00
Step 6	\$37.49 / \$77,979.20
Step 7	\$38.58 / \$80,246.40
Step 8	\$39.67 / \$82,513.60

Division Chief

Step 1	\$56.56 / \$117,644.80
Step 2	\$57.65 / \$119,912.00
Step 3	\$58.74 / \$122,179.20
Step 4	\$59.83 / \$124,446.40
Step 5	\$60.92 / \$126,713.60
Step 6	\$62.01 / \$128,980.80
Step 7	\$63.10 / \$131,248.00
Step 8	\$64.19 / \$133,515.20

Assistant Chief

Step 1	\$63.10 / \$131,248.00
Step 2	\$64.19 / \$133,515.20
Step 3	\$65.28 / \$135,782.40
Step 4	\$66.37 / \$138,049.60
Step 5	\$67.46 / \$140,316.80
Step 6	\$68.55 / \$142,584.00
Step 7	\$69.64 / \$144,851.20
Step 8	\$70.73 / \$147,118.40

Deputy Fire Chief

Step 1	\$69.64 / \$144,851.20
Step 2	\$70.73 / \$147,118.40
Step 3	\$71.82 / \$149,385.60
Step 4	\$72.91 / \$151,652.80
Step 5	\$74.00 / \$153,920.00
Step 6	\$75.09 / \$156,187.20
Step 7	\$76.18 / \$158,454.40
Step 8	\$77.27 / \$160,721.60

Fire Chief

Step 1	\$76.18 / \$158,454.40
Step 2	\$77.27 / \$160,721.60
Step 3	\$78.36 / \$162,988.80
Step 4	\$79.45 / \$165,256.00
Step 5	\$80.54 / \$167,523.20
Step 6	\$81.63 / \$169,790.40
Step 7	\$82.72 / \$172,057.60
Step 8	\$83.81 / \$174,324.80

APPENDIX B

Eligible Educational Pay Incentives Listing

- 1) Associate's Degree in an approved field (1-incentive).
- 2) Bachelor's Degree in an approved field (2-incentives).
- 3) Master's Degree approved by the District (3-incentives).
(Only the highest degree will be accepted)
- 4) *Certified District Manager (CDM) Certification.
- 5) *Foreign Languages.
- 6) *Basic First Aid Instructor.
- 7) *Clowning I.
- 8) *Microsoft Office Certifications.
- 9) *Florida Drone certification (FAA Part 107 Aeronautical Knowledge Test).
- 10) *Electrical (Diploma Program).
- 11) *Certified Indoor Air Quality Manager.
- 12) *Foundations of Plumbing.
- 13) *Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) or Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI) certification.
- 14) *Certified Public Accountant (CPA).
- 15) *Certified Government Finance Officer (CGFO).
- 16) Florida BFST Fire Officer I Certification.
- 17) Florida BFST Fire Officer II Certification.
- 18) Florida BFST Fire Officer III Certification.
- 19) Florida BFST Fire Safety Inspector I Certification.
- 20) Florida BFST Fire Safety Inspector II Certification.
- 21) Florida BFST Fire & Life Safety Educator Certification.
- 22) Florida BFST Fire Service Instructor I, II, or III Certification.
- 23) Florida BFST Live Fire Training Instructor I Certification.
- 24) Florida Live Fire Adjunct Trainer Certification.
- 25) Florida BFST Safety Officer Certification.
- 26) Florida BFST Health & Safety Officer Certification.
- 27) Florida BFST Incident Safety Officer Certification.
- 28) Florida BFST Fire Investigator I.
- 29) Florida BFST Fire Investigator II.
- 30) Florida BFST Pump Operator Certification.
- 31) Florida BFST approved Aerial Operations Certification.
- 32) EVOC Instructor.
- 33) AHA BLS Instructor Certification.
- 34) AHA ACLS Instructor Certification.
- 35) AHA PALS Instructor Certification.
- 36) FLUSAR Rescue Specialist (Approved USAR member only).
- 37) National Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Certification.
- 38) State of Florida Paramedic License (non-credentialed).

*At the discretion of the Fire Chief additional incentives may be added or removed from this list for each job description.

[TOC](#)

Effective: October 2021

APPENDIX C

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the District's Employee Handbook (Effective October 1, 2021). I further acknowledge that this version supersedes all other Employee Handbooks or manuals.

I understand that the policies and procedures contained in the Employee Handbook constitute guidelines only and are not intended to be all-inclusive and that the District's employment practices and procedures and policies will vary from time to time as circumstances require. This Handbook also incorporates by reference any and all rules, regulations, SOPs, or other procedures that can be interpreted by the Fire Chief as being consistent with the guidelines contained in this Handbook.

I further understand that the policies and procedures contained in the Employee Handbook are not to be interpreted or considered as a contract of employment, or any other contract, that my employment relationship with the District is at-will, meaning that both the District and I will always retain the right to terminate our employment relationship at any time and for any reason. The District reserves the right to unilaterally change, add to, or delete any of its employment policies and procedures at any time.

I further understand that if I have any questions or need clarification about anything, I will inquire of my supervisor or the Fire Chief.

I have read the contents of the Employee Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained in the Employee Handbook.

_____ (Date)

_____ (Printed Name of Employee)

_____ (Signature of Employee)