

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP'S)



**ALLIGATOR POINT / SAINT TERESA
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are broad, high-level statements that set up the foundation for how an organization functions and what principles govern its operations. They are designed to establish clear objectives, standards, and principles that guide actions and ensure consistency across all levels. These policies include topics such as the department's ethical standards, training requirements, response protocols, and equipment usage. The following Standard Operating Procedures are in effect as of the date listed below and shall be adhered to by all members of the APSTVFD.

Effective Date: 01/15/2026

Fire Chief
Caleb Harper

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CHAPTER 1 — DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION & ROLES

1.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes the organizational structure, roles, membership requirements, and application procedures for the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD) in Franklin County, Florida.

1.2 Legal Authority

APSTVFD operates as a volunteer fire department under Florida law, including:

- §125.01 FS — Fire protection authority
- §633.402–633.426 FS — Fire service standards
- §768.28 FS — Sovereign immunity
- §112.1815 FS — Firefighter benefits

APSTVFD is not a licensed EMS provider and does not operate under a medical director.

1.3 Organizational Structure

APSTVFD operates under a defined chain of command for safe and efficient service delivery.

A. Governance

- Governed by a Board of Directors
- Fire Chief reports to Board and holds operational authority

B. Command & Leadership

- **Fire Chief:** overall command; approves SOP/SOGs; default IC
- **Deputy Chief – Fire Prevention:** oversees fire prevention, inspections, outreach, CRR, documentation; may assume command
- **Captain – Training:** manages training, curriculum, scheduling, documentation, compliance; coordinates with Safety Officer
- **Captain – Emergency Medical Responders:** oversees EMR program, CPR tracking, training coordination, medical documentation

- **Lieutenants (Two):** one per station; responsible for station readiness, apparatus checks, inventory, and personnel

C. Operational Personnel

- **Operational Firefighters:** perform suppression, rescue, EMR support, fireground operations within training/certification
- **Fire Ground Support Members:** provide accountability, rehab, traffic control, staging, logistics; do not enter IDLH environments

1.4 Membership Requirements — Active Operational

To maintain Active Operational status, members must:

- maintain CPR certification
- hold or pursue EMR certification (recommended)
- attend ≥25% scheduled training
- participate in response as available
- comply with PPE/safety policies
- maintain professional conduct
- be approved by command

Failure to meet requirements may result in probation, reclassification, or removal.

1.5 Application & Probation

Applicant Minimum Qualifications

- 18+ years old
- valid driver's license
- criminal background check
- physical ability to perform duties
- eligible under §633.412 FS
- completed application

Probationary Members

- may respond under supervision
- must complete onboarding
- may not serve as IC, Driver, or Safety Officer
- evaluated on performance, attendance, and conduct

1.6 Code of Conduct

Members shall act professionally; treat responders and the public with respect; avoid harassment, discrimination, and retaliation; and comply with all legal, ethical, and operational standards. Violations are addressed under administrative policy.

1.7 Resignation & Termination

Members may resign by written notice to the Fire Chief. Membership may be revoked for failure to meet requirements or misconduct. All department-issued equipment (PPE, radios, keys, etc.) must be returned upon separation.

CHAPTER 2 — ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

2.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes administrative policies governing nondiscrimination, conduct, policy enforcement, disciplinary procedures, and appeals applicable to all members of the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD).

2.2 Legal Authority

Relevant authority includes, but is not limited to:

- Title VII Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – as applicable to volunteers
- §112.1815 FS — Volunteer firefighter protections
- §760.01–760.11 FS — Florida Civil Rights Act
- §541.303 FS — Emergency management volunteer protections

Nothing in these SOPs creates employment status. All members serve as volunteers and are not considered employees unless defined by law for limited purposes (e.g., workers' compensation, benefits, LODD coverage).

2.3 Nondiscrimination Policy

APSTVFD shall not discriminate against any member, applicant, or member of the public based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, disability, marital/familial status, veteran status, or any protected status under federal or state law.

Harassment or retaliation for reporting or opposing discriminatory conduct is strictly prohibited.

2.4 Anti-Harassment & Professional Conduct

Members shall conduct themselves professionally while representing the department during emergency responses, trainings, meetings, public events, and electronic communications.

Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:
sexual harassment, intimidation or bullying, retaliation, hostile environment behavior,
threats of violence, and discriminatory remarks or actions.

2.5 Substance Use

Members shall not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or impairing substances while responding to incidents, attending training, operating apparatus/equipment, participating in department functions, or wearing identifiable department clothing.

Prescription medication that may impair judgment or physical performance shall be disclosed to command for operational safety.

2.6 Enforcement of Policy

The Fire Chief is responsible for enforcing department policies. Officers may take immediate corrective action for observed violations, including verbal warnings, removal from scene/assignment, or suspension pending review.

Violations may be reported by command staff, officers, members, the Safety Officer, or through documented public complaints.

2.7 Disciplinary Procedures

Discipline shall be proportional, consistent, and documented. Actions may include:

- verbal warning (documented)
- written warning
- suspension from response/training
- loss of operational status
- removal from membership

The following offenses may result in immediate suspension or termination:
criminal acts while representing the department, misuse of apparatus/equipment, safety violations resulting in injury/hazard, harassment/discrimination, theft/dishonesty, intoxication on duty/response, or repeated insubordination.

The Safety Officer may independently remove responders from unsafe operations.

2.8 Appeals Process

Members subject to written discipline or removal may submit a written appeal to the Fire Chief within **10 days** of notice.

If unresolved, the member may appeal to the Board of Directors within **10 days** of the Chief's decision. The Board's decision is final.

CHAPTER 3 — DRIVING POLICY

3.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes standards for the operation of department apparatus and privately owned vehicles (POVs) to ensure safe, compliant, and consistent driving practices.

3.2 Legal Authority

Relevant Florida statutes include:

- §316.072 FS — Authorized emergency vehicles; privileges and duties
- §316.126 FS — Operation of vehicles; yielding to emergency vehicles
- §316.2397 FS — Display of red and blue lights
- §768.28 FS — Liability & sovereign immunity

Florida Firefighter OSHA Standards (FFOSHA) apply.

Nothing herein permits reckless operation or assumption of exemptions not granted by law.

3.3 Applicability

Applies to all department-operated apparatus, support vehicles, and POVs operated during official APSTVFD duties.

3.4 Driver Qualification Requirements

Members must hold a valid driver's license. Drivers of apparatus must be:

- approved by the Fire Chief or designee
- trained and evaluated on each apparatus
- enrolled in the department's driver qualification program

EVOC Requirement:

EVOC (minimum 16 hours) is required for apparatus drivers.

Only authorized and qualified drivers may move, position, or operate apparatus.

3.5 Seatbelt & Passenger Safety

Seatbelts are mandatory for all occupants in apparatus, support vehicles, and POVs. Members shall not:

- mount or dismount moving vehicles
- ride on tailboards
- ride in unenclosed or standing positions

3.6 Distracted Driving

Handheld device use while driving is prohibited. Radios/data devices may be used only hands-free or when safely stopped.

3.7 Emergency Response Mode — Apparatus

Apparatus may operate **Code 3** (lights & sirens) when appropriate based on call type. Drivers shall:

- stop at red lights and stop signs
- yield at uncontrolled intersections
- adjust speed for conditions
- never exceed safe operating speeds

Legal exemptions do not protect against liability for negligence.

3.8 / 3.9 Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs) & Use of Red Lights

POV response is permitted for authorized operational members. POVs are **not** emergency vehicles under Florida law and have **no** legal authority to:

- disregard traffic laws
- exceed posted speeds
- force right-of-way
- run signals

Members responding in POVs shall obey all traffic control devices and avoid creating hazard.

Under §316.2397 FS:

- volunteer firefighters may equip POVs with **red emergency lights**
- red lights may be used **only while responding to an emergency**
- lights serve as a **courtesy request** for right-of-way, not legal authority to demand it

POV red light use requires a **valid red light authorization letter signed by the Fire Chief** and kept with the member or in the vehicle. Drivers must exercise courtesy and prioritize safety.

3.10 Sirens on POVs

APSTVFD does not authorize sirens for POVs.

3.11 Non-Member Riders

Non-members shall not ride in department apparatus unless approved by the Fire Chief for official business.

Non-member ride-alongs are prohibited during emergency responses.

Transporting non-members in POVs during emergency response is discouraged except for structured support roles or approved public outreach events.

3.12 Apparatus Backing Procedures

When backing apparatus:

- a spotter shall be used whenever available
- if no spotter is available, the driver shall perform a 360° walk-around and back cautiously with hazard lights on

Spotters shall maintain visual contact with the driver.

3.13 Collision Reporting

Any collision involving apparatus, support vehicles, or POVs during response shall be reported immediately to:

- the Officer in charge
- the Fire Chief or designee
- law enforcement (as required)
- insurance (if applicable)

Internal accident reports shall be completed per Chapter 6.

3.14 Removal of Driving Privileges

Driving privileges may be suspended for:

- unsafe driving behavior
- negligent collisions
- policy violations
- disciplinary action
- loss or suspension of driver's license

Restoration requires Fire Chief approval.

3.15 Training & Documentation

The Captain of Training shall maintain:

- EVOC records
- driver qualification records
- refresher/annual review records
- collision history logs

CHAPTER 4 — TRAINING

4.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes training requirements, standards, competency expectations, and documentation responsibilities for all personnel of the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD).

4.2 Training Philosophy

Training ensures responders:

- operate safely
- maintain competency
- meet recommended standards
- support the department mission to protect life, property, and the environment

4.3 Legal & Regulatory Reference

Guided by standards and best practices from:

- Florida State Fire Marshal / Bureau of Fire Standards & Training
- Florida Firefighter OSHA (FFOSHA)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) (guidance, non-mandatory)
- Florida Statutes regarding volunteer responders (§112.1815 FS)

APSTVFD is a non-career volunteer department; NFPA standards are used for guidance rather than strict compliance.

4.4 Minimum Training Requirements — Operational Members

To maintain active operational status, members must:

- maintain valid CPR certification (required before responding)
- attend ≥25% of scheduled training (rolling 12-month period; approved makeups may count)
- complete probationary onboarding training (see §4.8)
- demonstrate competency for assigned tasks/roles

Failure to meet standards may result in:

- loss of operational status
- reclassification to support member
- suspension until remediation

4.5 EMR Training Requirements

For medical response functions:

- EMR certification recommended for operational personnel
- EMR curriculum shall meet DOT 40-hour EMR or equivalent
- CPR required before EMR participation
- EMR refresher training coordinated by the Captain of EMRs

APSTVFD does not operate under a medical director and does not provide ALS or transport services.

4.6 Firefighter Training Requirements

Operational firefighters shall receive training in:

- exterior suppression
- interior suppression (if applicable)
- pump operations
- water supply
- ladder operations
- emergency communications
- basic rescue operations (non-special rescue)

Training may include:

- in-house drills
- mutual aid training
- county or state fire courses

4.7 Fire Ground Support Training

Support members shall receive training in:

- scene safety
- accountability systems
- traffic control
- rehab operations

- communications
- PPE limitations
- non-IDLH support tasks

Support members are not authorized for IDLH entry or suppression.

4.8 Company Drills & Multi-Agency Training

The Captain of Training shall:

- schedule regular drills
- coordinate joint training with mutual aid partners
- integrate county/state/wildland training when available
- ensure topics reflect district operational hazards

Training topics may include:

- structure fire operations
- brush/wildland operations
- vehicle accident/extrication support
- EMR operations
- communications
- incident command
- water supply & drafting
- fire prevention & inspections

4.9 Probationary Training Requirements

Probationary members must complete onboarding including:

- department orientation
- PPE issuance & use
- scene safety & ICS introduction
- radio communication basics
- traffic control
- accountability procedures
- emergency response procedures
- CPR (prior to response)
- introduction to EMR
- introduction to firefighter operations (if applicable)

Completion must be documented.

4.10 Training Documentation

The Captain of Training shall:

- maintain attendance logs
- track certifications
- track training hours
- track CPR/EMR expirations (with EMR Captain)
- file completion certificates
- maintain training records for ≥ 5 years

Documentation may be paper, digital, or hybrid.

4.11 Certification Management

The department shall maintain a certification roster including:

- CPR expiration dates
- EMR certification status
- applicable state fire coursework
- specialty endorsements
- recommended NIMS/ICS coursework (ICS-100/200/700/800)

4.12 Failure to Meet Training Requirements

Members who fail to meet training expectations may be:

- temporarily restricted from operations
- removed from operational roster

The Fire Chief makes final determinations.

CHAPTER 5 — COMMUNICATION

5.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes communication standards for APSTVFD operations including dispatching, radio usage, internal messaging platforms, public information control, and confidentiality.

5.2 Dispatch & Call Notification

All emergency incidents within the district are dispatched through the Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO).

The department utilizes EDispatch (or similar) for:

- tone-out relay to mobile devices
- text/audio alerting
- call information dissemination

5.3 Radio Communications

A. Radio Use Requirement

Operational members participating in emergency response shall carry and utilize radios when issued for:

- accountability
- safety
- situational awareness
- command and control

B. ICS-Compatible Communications

Radio traffic shall follow ICS practices including:

- plain language
- avoidance of 10-codes (unless county-required)
- confirmation of orders
- acknowledgment of critical traffic

C. Radio Discipline

Members shall:

- limit transmissions to essential communications

- avoid unnecessary chatter
- yield priority to command and safety traffic
- avoid interrupting mayday/emergency traffic

D. Priority Radio Traffic

Priority transmissions include:

- Mayday / Firefighter Down
- Emergency Evacuation Orders
- Urgent Safety Warnings
- Command or Strategic Direction

5.4 WhatsApp Messaging Policy

APSTVFD uses WhatsApp for **non-emergency internal communication** including:

- member check-ins
- administrative updates
- logistical coordination
- internal announcements

WhatsApp is **not a dispatching system** and shall not be used to:

- initiate or request emergency response
- self-dispatch
- make operational decisions during incidents

Messaging between **2200 hrs and 0700 hrs** shall be limited unless time-sensitive or emergency-related. Professional conduct applies at all times.

5.5 EDispatch & Mobile Alerting

EDispatch provides:

- audio pager relay
- call detail notifications
- mapping/response information

Members using EDispatch shall:

- configure volume/alerting appropriately
- avoid distracted driving

- refrain from sharing call data publicly
- **use the appropriate “response button” to indicate their response status**
so other members are aware of turnout and staffing availability

5.6 Public Information & Social Media

Only authorized personnel may speak on behalf of the department to media or the public:

- Fire Chief
- Deputy Chief (if delegated)
- Designated PIO (if assigned)

Members shall not:

- post incident photos without approval
- discuss patient information
- share operational/sensitive content
- release information before reviewed by command

HIPAA protections apply to patient information even without EMS licensure.

5.7 Confidentiality

Members responding to medical incidents may encounter protected information and shall not disclose:

- patient names
- medical conditions
- treatment details
- call specifics that could identify an individual

Violations may result in disciplinary action.

5.8 Recording

Members shall not audio or video record incidents for personal use.

Official recording must:

- be authorized by the Fire Chief
- serve training, documentation, or safety purposes

5.9 Communication Contingencies

If primary systems fail:

- radios remain the primary operational communication tool
- cellular/WhatsApp may be used as secondary fallback
- face-to-face communication shall be used when electronic systems fail or are unreliable

CHAPTER 6 — SAFETY & HEALTH

6.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes safety and health policies for the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD) to prevent injuries, illnesses, and exposures and ensure safe conduct of emergency and non-emergency operations.

6.2 Legal & Standards Basis

This chapter is guided by nationally recognized standards and state requirements including:

- FFOSHA (Florida Firefighter OSHA Standards)
- NIOSH Firefighter LODD recommendations
- NFPA standards for guidance (non-mandatory for volunteer departments)
- §112.1815 FS — Volunteer firefighter protections

6.3 Safety Officer

A. Appointment

APSTVFD shall maintain a designated Safety Officer appointed by the Fire Chief.

B. Authority

The Safety Officer may stop or alter operations deemed unsafe, reports directly to the Incident Commander during emergencies, and evaluates safety during training.

C. Responsibilities

The Safety Officer shall:

- monitor emergency operations for safety compliance
- oversee rehab coordination
- assess PPE usage
- support post-incident safety analysis
- review accident and exposure reports

6.4 Safety & Health Committee

APSTVFD shall maintain a Safety & Health Committee composed of:

- Safety Officer (Chair)

- an Officer (Secretary)
- three (3) Committee Members (Firefighters or Fire Support)

Committee functions include:

- reviewing accidents, injuries, and exposures
- recommending corrective actions
- evaluating training for safety improvements
- monitoring PPE condition and replacement needs
- advising on exposure control planning
- recommending policy changes

The Committee shall meet at least quarterly or after significant incidents.

6.5 Incident Safety Practices

All responders shall:

- follow the Incident Command System (ICS)
- utilize accountability procedures
- maintain radio contact when equipped
- use PPE appropriate for assigned tasks
- maintain situational awareness
- withdraw from unsafe conditions when necessary

No member shall operate in IDLH environments without:

- appropriate PPE
- accountability tracking
- radio communications
- assignment from Command

Fire Ground Support Members are prohibited from IDLH operations.

6.6 Rehabilitation (Rehab)

Rehab shall be established when:

- heat/humidity or weather stress is present
- prolonged operations occur
- multiple SCBA cycles occur
- responders exhibit fatigue or distress

Rehab shall provide:

- shade/shelter
- hydration
- rest cycles
- medical monitoring (if available)

6.7 Exposure Control Plan

APSTVFD shall maintain an Exposure Control Plan addressing:

- bloodborne pathogens
- OPIM (other potentially infectious materials)
- body fluid exposure
- post-exposure procedures
- PPE usage
- waste disposal
- immunization recommendations (e.g., Hepatitis B)

The plan shall be reviewed annually.

6.8 Accident, Injury, & Exposure Reporting

The following shall be reported immediately:

- responder injury or illness related to duty
- body fluid exposure
- chemical/environmental exposure
- apparatus collisions
- near-miss events

Written reports shall include, as applicable:

- Accident/Injury Report Form
- Exposure Report Form

Reports shall be submitted to the Fire Chief, Safety Officer, and Safety & Health Committee for review.

6.9 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE shall be:

- issued by the department
- used for all applicable operations
- maintained in serviceable condition
- inspected during weekly apparatus checks

PPE management policies are expanded in Chapter 7.

6.10 Post-Incident Review

The Safety Officer may conduct post-incident or post-training reviews for:

- injuries or exposures
- near-misses
- safety system failures
- opportunities for operational improvement

Recommendations shall be forwarded to the Fire Chief and Safety & Health Committee.

6.11 Confidentiality

Accident, injury, and exposure information shall be treated as confidential medical information and shared only as required for department, insurance, or regulatory purposes.

CHAPTER 7 — EQUIPMENT & GEAR MANAGEMENT

7.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes policies for the issuance, storage, maintenance, inspection, and accountability of personal protective equipment (PPE), department gear, tools, and equipment owned by the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD).

7.2 Ownership of Gear & Equipment

All PPE, radios, tools, hoses, appliances, and equipment issued to or used by members remain the property of APSTVFD.

Members shall not sell, loan, gift, or modify department equipment without authorization.

7.3 PPE Issuance

APSTVFD shall issue PPE based on member role and qualifications.

A. Firefighters — PPE may include:

- turnout ensemble (coat, pants, boots, hood, gloves)
- structural helmet
- high-visibility vest
- firefighting gloves
- eye protection
- SCBA mask (if individually assigned)

B. Fire Ground Support Members — may receive:

- high-visibility vest
- eye protection
- gloves
- helmet (as assigned)

C. Medical Responders (EMR) — may be issued:

- medical gloves
- protective eyewear

- CPR barrier devices
- high-visibility vest

7.4 PPE Care & Maintenance

Members shall:

- keep PPE clean and dry
- inspect PPE before and after use
- report damage immediately
- avoid prolonged storage in vehicles or sun exposure

Contaminated PPE shall be cleaned in accordance with the Exposure Control Plan.

7.5 PPE Damage & Replacement

PPE shall be replaced when:

- service life expires
- it becomes damaged or fails inspection
- no longer fits the member
- Contaminated beyond safe cleaning capability

Damaged PPE shall be turned in with a description of the issue.

7.6 Tools, Equipment & Radios

Tools and equipment shall be:

- stored on assigned apparatus
- inventoried during weekly checks
- maintained in working order
- reported if damaged or missing

Radios, pagers, and assigned equipment shall be secured and not left unattended in public areas.

7.7 Loss, Theft, or Misuse

Loss or theft of equipment must be reported immediately.

Misuse or intentional damage may result in disciplinary action (see Chapter 2).

7.8 Gear at Resignation or Membership Termination

Members who resign, are removed, or reclassified shall return all issued items including PPE, radios, pagers, keys, and accessories.

Failure to return equipment may result in:

- civil recovery actions
- law enforcement involvement (if theft suspected)

7.9 Storage of Equipment

PPE and equipment shall be stored:

- in designated stations
- on assigned apparatus
- in approved storage areas

Members should avoid storing PPE in POVs for prolonged periods due to heat and contamination concerns.

7.10 Cleaning & Decontamination

The department shall:

- provide cleaning supplies when feasible
- provide decontamination instructions
- ensure contaminated gear is handled per the Exposure Control Plan and Safety policies

Biological decontamination shall follow Chapter 6 protocols.

CHAPTER 8 — APPARATUS MAINTENANCE

8.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes maintenance and readiness standards for department apparatus to ensure operational reliability, safety, and compliance with recognized fire service recommendations.

8.2 Responsibility for Apparatus Readiness

Primary responsibility for apparatus readiness resides with:

- the assigned Station Lieutenant
- Drivers/Engineers qualified to operate apparatus
- operational members conducting weekly checks

The Fire Chief retains authority to place apparatus in or out of service based on condition or operational requirements.

8.3 Weekly Apparatus Checks

A full apparatus check shall be completed weekly on Thursday evenings or as otherwise directed by command.

Weekly checks shall include verification of:

- fuel and fluid levels
- tires, brakes, and lights
- pumps and valves (if applicable)
- scene lighting
- radios and charging systems
- equipment/tools presence
- PPE inventory
- medical bag contents (if applicable)
- accountability boards/forms
- electrical/battery systems
- warning lights and sirens
- hard suction and supply hose presence
- drafting/hydrant capability (if applicable)

Deficiencies shall be documented and reported to the Lieutenant and Fire Chief.

8.4 After-Use Inspections

After emergency incidents, training, or deployments, members shall:

- refuel as needed
- replace used or missing equipment
- restore hose loads
- reset pumps
- clean apparatus as needed
- report mechanical issues immediately

8.5 Annual Apparatus Testing

APSTVFD shall conduct or arrange for the following annual testing:

Hose Testing

- all attack and supply hose shall be pressure-tested
- defective hose shall be removed from service and documented

Pump Testing

- pump performance testing shall follow manufacturer or NFPA guidance
- results shall be documented

Ladder Testing

- ground ladders shall be inspected and tested for integrity and safety
- defective ladders shall be removed from service

Testing may be outsourced if equipment or capability does not exist in-house.

8.6 Maintenance & Repairs

Maintenance may include:

- fluid changes
- mechanical repairs
- electrical repairs
- pump repairs
- tire replacements
- body/compartment repairs

Repairs may be performed by:

- qualified department personnel (if trained)
- contracted service providers

8.7 Out-of-Service Procedures

Apparatus shall be placed **Out of Service (OOS)** when deficiencies render them unsafe or ineffective.

OOS apparatus shall:

- be clearly marked
- be communicated to Command and dispatch (if relevant)

Apparatus shall not be returned to service without approval from the Fire Chief or designee.

8.8 Equipment Inventory

An equipment inventory shall be maintained for each apparatus including:

- hose load specifications
- tools and appliances
- nozzles and adapters
- medical kits (if applicable)
- radios/chargers
- PPE (if staged)
- miscellaneous equipment

Inventory shall be reviewed during annual inspection.

8.9 Driver Reporting Requirements

Drivers shall immediately report:

- abnormal performance
- safety concerns
- leaks or noises
- malfunction indicators
- damaged components
- missing equipment

Failure to report deficiencies may result in disciplinary action under Chapter 2.

8.10 Fueling & Readiness

Apparatus shall be maintained with **≥ ¾ tank of fuel** after use or weekly checks unless otherwise directed.

Batteries, chargers, and auxiliary systems shall remain:

- charged
- ready for immediate response

CHAPTER 9 — FIRE PREVENTION

9.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes policies for fire prevention, community risk reduction, pre-incident planning, public education, and outreach activities conducted by the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD).

9.2 Authority & Responsibility

Fire prevention activities shall be coordinated and overseen by the **Deputy Chief – Fire Prevention**.

Responsibilities include:

- development of prevention programs
- public education & community outreach
- pre-incident planning coordination
- documentation and hazard reduction recommendations
- liaison with community partners and agencies

9.3 Pre-Incident Planning (Pre-Plans)

Pre-incident plans shall be developed for:

- commercial occupancies
- critical infrastructure
- multi-unit residential structures (if applicable)
- high-risk properties
- special hazards (fuel, docks, unique hazards, etc.)

Pre-plans shall identify:

- building layout & construction
- ingress/egress points
- utility shutoffs (power/gas/water)
- fire protection systems (if present)
- water supply
- known hazardous materials
- occupancy hazards
- tactical considerations

Documentation:

Pre-plans shall be:

- documented on approved forms
- updated when conditions change
- stored where accessible to responding personnel

Digital storage is preferred.

Frequency:

Pre-plans may be conducted or updated based on:

- annual review
- hazard profile changes

9.4 Community Risk Reduction (CRR)

APSTVFD may conduct CRR efforts including:

- smoke alarm installation programs
- hazard awareness & mitigation
- hurricane and evacuation preparedness
- wildfire & burn prevention messaging
- elderly and mobility-impaired outreach

9.5 Public Education & Outreach

The department may participate in prevention and safety events such as:

- open houses
- school programs
- HOA & civic meetings
- community fairs
- county events

Topics may include:

- fire extinguisher use
- life safety messaging
- CPR awareness (non-certification)
- hurricane/seasonal preparedness
- wildfire risk reduction
- first responder awareness

Members shall conduct themselves professionally at all public events.

9.6 Recruitment Activities

As a volunteer department, APSTVFD may recruit during:

- public events
- outreach initiatives
- community meetings
- digital campaigns

Recruitment shall:

- reflect accurate membership expectations

9.7 Fire Prevention Documentation

The Deputy Chief – Fire Prevention shall maintain records of:

- pre-plans
- outreach & education events
- smoke alarm installations
- CRR initiatives
- attendance (if available)
- special prevention projects

Documentation may support:

- Board reporting
- annual reports
- grant applications
- risk assessments
- strategic planning

9.8 Coordination with External Agencies

Fire prevention efforts may be coordinated with:

- Franklin County Emergency Management
- Florida State Fire Marshal
- Florida Forestry Service
- partner HOAs & civic groups

- educational institutions

Coordination increases effectiveness and reduces duplication.

9.9 Fire Investigations

All structure fires shall have an attempted Origin and Cause investigation completed by APSTVFD prior to requesting response from the State Fire Marshal.

The Fire Chief serves as the department's Fire Investigator for the purpose of origin/cause determination and coordination with the State Fire Marshal when required.

9.10 Public Information Messaging

Fire prevention messaging released to the public shall only be issued by:

- the Fire Chief
- the Deputy Chief – Fire Prevention
- the designated PIO (if assigned)

Members shall not independently release prevention guidance that may appear to represent department policy.

CHAPTER 10 — EMERGENCY RESPONSE

10.1 Purpose

This chapter establishes standards for emergency response operations conducted by the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD), including response mode selection, operational limitations, and safety expectations.

10.2 Dispatch & Response Initiation

All emergency responses are initiated through the **Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO)** dispatch center.

Members shall not self-dispatch or respond based on:

- scanner traffic
- social media
- text messages
- WhatsApp messages
- third-party notifications

10.3 Response Modes

APSTVFD recognizes two response modes:

A. Code 2 (Non-Emergency, No Lights/Sirens)

Used when urgent intervention is **not** required. Examples include:

- public assists without life risk
- lift assists
- fire alarms without confirmation
- odor investigations without visible fire
- non-injury MVCs without hazards
- standby assignments

B. Code 3 (Emergency, Lights/Sirens)

Used when immediate intervention may reduce risk to life or property. Examples include:

- confirmed structure fires
- MVCs with injury or entrapment

- brush/wildland fire threat to structures
- medical emergencies requiring rapid first response
- confirmed hazardous conditions

10.4 POV Response Mode Restrictions

Privately owned vehicles (POVs) may respond to the station or scene as permitted; however:

- POVs may **not** operate Code 3 under Florida law
- red lights are courtesy only (see Chapter 3)
- all traffic laws must be obeyed

10.5 On-Scene Operations

Upon arrival, the first qualified officer or senior member shall:

- establish command
- identify hazards
- request resources as needed
- determine staging and assignments

Command may be transferred to higher-ranking officers as they arrive.

10.6 Assignment of Roles

Operational assignments may include:

- Incident Command
- Fire Attack
- Water Supply
- Medical/Patient Care
- Traffic Control
- Accountability
- Safety
- Rehab

Assignments shall reflect training, certification, and safety limitations.

10.7 Marine & Coastal Response Limitations

APSTVFD shall **not** engage in:

- water entry rescue
- dive operations
- vessel-based rescue
- swiftwater/flood rescue

Members may assist from shore with:

- observation
- communication
- scene safety
- landing zone establishment
- patient care after water removal

Primary agencies may include:

- FWC
- USCG
- Franklin County EMS
- Florida Park Service
- Sheriff's Office

10.8 Hazardous Conditions & Special Situations

APSTVFD may respond to:

- downed power lines
- roadway obstructions
- gas leaks
- fuel spills
- odor investigations
- fire alarms

Operations shall be **defensive** unless personnel are trained, equipped, and authorized for aggressive actions.

10.9 Accountability & Safety

All incidents shall implement accountability measures appropriate to incident complexity.

Safety priorities are:

1. responders
2. victims
3. property
4. environment

10.10 Mutual Aid

APSTVFD may request or provide mutual aid consistent with existing agreements. Unified command may be established with:

- Franklin County EMS
- Forestry
- Sheriff's Office
- FWC
- Florida Park Service
- other VFDs

10.11 Post-Incident Procedures

After incidents, members shall:

- return apparatus to service
- replace or restock supplies
- report deficiencies
- complete required reports
- participate in post-incident review if requested

CHAPTER 11 — EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE (EMR-LEVEL ONLY)

11.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Policy (SOP) is to establish a clear, lawful, and defensible framework governing emergency medical response by the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD). This policy defines the authority, limitations, responsibilities, and operational procedures for department members providing emergency medical assistance solely at the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) level.

This policy ensures compliance with applicable Florida statutes, protects responders and the department from liability, and clearly delineates the department's role as a non-transporting, non-licensed EMS support agency operating in coordination with Franklin County Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

11.2 Authority & Legal Status

1. APSTVFD is a volunteer fire department organized to provide fire suppression, rescue, and emergency support services within its designated response area in Franklin County, Florida.
2. APSTVFD is **not** licensed as an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provider under Chapter 401, Florida Statutes, and does **not** provide advanced or transporting medical care.
3. Emergency medical assistance rendered by APSTVFD members is provided under the authority of:
 - a. Florida Statutes **§401.435 – First Responder Agencies**
 - b. Florida Statutes **§768.13 – Good Samaritan Act**
 - c. Operational coordination with Franklin County EMS
4. APSTVFD members function strictly as medical first responders, providing immediate care within their training until relieved by licensed EMS personnel.
5. Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted as creating:
 - a. a physician–patient relationship
 - b. a medical control relationship
 - c. EMS provider status for APSTVFD
 - d. ALS, transport, or EMS agency-level responsibilities

11.3 Scope of Practice

A. Authorized Medical Care

Members may provide only the following interventions:

- Basic life support (BLS) at the EMR level
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use
- Bleeding control (including direct pressure and tourniquets)
- Basic airway management (positioning, suctioning, adjuncts if trained)
- Oxygen administration (if available and trained)
- Patient assessment (vitals, SAMPLE/OPQRST history)
- Comfort care and reassurance
- Assistance to licensed EMS personnel upon arrival

All care shall remain strictly within EMR training standards recognized in the State of Florida.

B. Prohibited Medical Care

APSTVFD members shall **not**:

- transport patients
- provide care beyond EMR scope
- administer, assist with, or recommend medications
- perform invasive or ALS procedures
- operate as EMS providers
- delay EMS transport without clinical justification
- override EMS treatment decisions
- accept patient responsibility after EMS assumes care

Violations may result in disciplinary action and removal from medical response duties.

11.4 Medical Oversight

1. APSTVFD does not operate under a medical director.
2. Medical care is based on:
 - a. recognized EMR curriculum standards
 - b. nationally accepted BLS principles
 - c. assumption of care by Franklin County EMS

3. Members shall defer all medical authority to EMS upon their arrival.

11.5 Dispatch & Response

1. APSTVFD shall respond to medical calls only when dispatched by the **Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO)** or an authorized dispatch center.
2. Self-dispatching is strictly prohibited.
3. APSTVFD responses are intended to:
 - a. provide early BLS assistance
 - b. assist EMS with patient access and scene control
 - c. improve patient outcomes through rapid intervention
4. APSTVFD shall be dispatched to medical calls within its district when EMS is also dispatched.

11.6 Scene Safety

1. Scene safety is the paramount responsibility of all responders.
2. Members shall not enter scenes deemed unsafe including:
 - a. active violence or unsecured scenes
 - b. hazardous materials incidents
 - c. structural collapse hazards
 - d. severe weather exceeding department safety thresholds
3. Appropriate PPE must be worn at all medical incidents.

11.7 Consent & Refusal

1. Care may be provided under:
 - a. **Implied consent** (unconscious/incapacitated patients)
 - b. **Express consent** (verbal or affirmative acceptance)
2. APSTVFD members shall **not** accept or document refusals of transport.
3. Refusal decisions are the sole responsibility of licensed EMS personnel.
4. If patients refuse care prior to EMS arrival, members shall:
 - a. notify dispatch
 - b. await EMS arrival
 - c. avoid confrontation
 - d. document observations only

11.8 Transfer of Care & EMS Coordination

1. Upon EMS arrival, APSTVFD shall provide a concise verbal report including:

- a. patient condition
 - b. care rendered
 - c. observations
 - d. time of EMS arrival
2. Transfer of care occurs when EMS assumes patient responsibility.
3. Members shall continue to assist EMS only if requested.

11.9 Documentation

1. APSTVFD shall complete a department medical response report for all medical incidents.
2. Documentation shall include:
 - a. date, time, and location
 - b. personnel and unit(s)
 - c. patient age and gender (if known)
 - d. care rendered and observations
 - e. time of EMS arrival
 - f. transfer of care confirmation
3. Documentation is **not** a Patient Care Report (PCR) and shall not be represented as such. APSTVFD generates a First Responder Medical Incident Report for documentation purposes only. This report is not a Patient Care Report (PCR) and is not intended to serve as a medical record. The official PCR is completed by Franklin County EMS.
4. Reports shall be maintained in accordance with department record retention policy and applicable state requirements.

11.10 Infection Control

1. Universal precautions shall be followed at all medical incidents.
2. Exposure incidents shall be reported immediately and documented per the Exposure Control Plan (see Chapter 6).
3. Contaminated equipment shall be cleaned, decontaminated, or removed from service as required.

11.11 Equipment & Supplies

Authorized medical equipment is limited to:

- PPE
- AEDs

- basic first aid supplies
- bleeding control supplies
- oxygen equipment (if available)
- EMR-approved devices only

No ALS equipment or medications shall be carried or used.

11.12 Training & Competency

A. CPR Certification

- Required to respond to medical calls
- Must be current and on file
- Members without valid CPR certification shall not respond

B. EMR Certification

- Strongly recommended for operational members
- May be facilitated or sponsored by the department
- Skills verification may be conducted periodically

C. Competency Requirements

Members shall demonstrate competency through:

- initial EMR-level training
- refresher or continuing education
- periodic skills assessment

D. Suspension of Medical Privileges

The Fire Chief or designee may suspend medical response privileges for:

- lapsed CPR certification
- training deficiencies
- violation of this policy

11.13 Liability & Member Protection

1. Members acting within this policy and within their training are protected under applicable Florida statutes.

2. Members acting outside this policy may be subject to:

- a. personal liability
- b. discipline
- c. removal from medical operations
- d. removal from the department