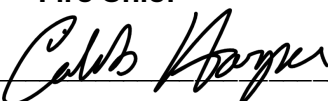# ALLIGATOR POINT / SAINT TERESA

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

(SOP's)

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are broad, high-level statements that set 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: 05/01/2025

Fire Chief

Signature: _____

Date: _____ 04/22/2025 _____

Deputy Chief

Signature: _Matthew Hepner_

Date: _____

Safety Officer

Signature: _____
Randy Taylor (Apr 22, 2025 16:12 EDT)

Date: 22/04/25 _____

1. Department Organization and Membership Policy

1.1. Membership Requirements

To maintain a high level of professionalism, safety, and capability, all members must meet the following criteria:

Age Requirement

- Applicants must be at least 18 years old to qualify for membership.
- This ensures maturity and legal capacity to perform duties effectively in demanding and potentially dangerous environments.

Driver's License Requirement

- All members must maintain a valid driver's license throughout their membership.
- Members may be required to drive department vehicles, including emergency apparatus, during operational responses.
- **Drivers of emergency apparatus** (e.g., fire trucks) must:
    o Undergo additional verification, including practical driving assessments.
    o Complete periodic re-evaluations to ensure safe operation of specialized vehicles.

Background Check Requirement

All prospective members must pass a background check, which includes:

- **Criminal History Check** – Ensures no history of criminal behavior that could compromise department safety or integrity.
- **Driving Record Check** – Verifies applicants have a clean driving history, especially those operating emergency vehicles.

Application Submission

Prospective members must submit a completed application form, including:

- **Emergency Contact Information** – Critical contact details in case of emergencies.
- **Prior Experience** – Relevant experience, certifications, or training in firefighting or emergency medical services.

Initial Training and Probationary Period

Once an application is accepted, prospective members must complete:

- **Initial Orientation** – Introduction to department policies, procedures, and structure.
- **Safety Training** – Comprehensive training on safety protocols for hazardous environments.

Probationary Period (6 months):

During this period, new members must:

- Actively participate in department activities, training programs, and operational responses.
- Demonstrate commitment to safety, teamwork, and department standards.
- Complete any additional required certifications or role-specific training.

1.2. Department Organization Chart

The department is structured with clear lines of authority and responsibility, ensuring organized and efficient operations.

Fire Chief

- Holds ultimate command and decision-making authority.
- Oversees department operations, strategic direction, resource allocation, and external relations.

Deputy Chief - Fire Prevention

- Oversees fire prevention efforts, including fire code enforcement, inspections, and community fire education.
- Ensures compliance with national, state, and local fire prevention regulations.

Captain - Training

- Develops and implements department-wide training programs.

- Identifies training needs and ensures all members maintain required certifications.
- Coordinates advanced and specialized training.

Captain - Emergency Medical Responders

- Manages all medical emergency response operations.
- Oversees EMS training and ensures responders are fully certified and equipped.

Lieutenant - Station 1 & Station 2

- Responsible for daily operations at their respective stations.
- Supervises personnel, manages resources, and ensures equipment readiness.
- Oversees operational response effectiveness and safety.

Safety Officer

- Ensures adherence to safety regulations and protocols.
- Monitors safety during training and active responses.
- Investigates safety incidents and ensures proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Support Safety Officer

- Assists the Safety Officer in incident review, safety drills, and department-wide safety initiatives.
- Promotes a culture of safety within the department.

Firefighters

- Respond to emergency calls related to fires, rescues, and medical incidents.
- Operate firefighting equipment, perform rescues, and administer medical aid.
- Ensure public and personnel safety during operations.

Fire Support Members

- Assist in operational and logistical roles.
- Provide support in **non-direct firefighting** operations and remain outside the hot zone.
- Perform tasks within their trained capabilities.

1.3. Application Process

The application process ensures that all prospective members meet department standards for competence, integrity, and commitment.

Step 1: Application Submission

- Submit a fully completed application form, including emergency contact details and prior experience.

Step 2: Review and Interview

- Department leadership reviews applications to ensure all requirements are met.
- Qualified applicants are invited for an interview to assess:
    - Motivation and readiness to serve.
    - Experience and commitment to department values.

Step 3: Background and Driver's License Check

- A comprehensive criminal background check and driving record review will be conducted.

Step 4: Probationary Period

- Approved applicants enter a six-month probationary period, during which they must:
    - Complete all required training.
    - Actively participate in department activities.
    - Demonstrate ability to work effectively within the team.
- At the end of the probationary period, leadership reviews the applicant's performance to determine eligibility for full membership.

2. APSTVFD Administrative Policies

The administrative policies of the Alligator Point / Saint Teresa Volunteer Fire Department (APSTVFD) are designed to maintain a fair, respectful, and effective work environment while ensuring the safety and success of both personnel and the community we serve.

These policies set expectations for conduct, ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards, and provide a clear framework for handling disciplinary matters when necessary.

2.1. Non-Discrimination Policy

APSTVFD is committed to fostering an environment where all members are treated with respect and fairness. Discrimination based on race, gender, religion, national origin, disability, age, or any other legally protected characteristic is strictly prohibited.

Policy Details:

- **Scope of Non-Discrimination:**
    - This policy applies to recruitment, promotions, disciplinary actions, work assignments, training opportunities, and community interactions during operations.
    - Discrimination in any form, direct or indirect, will not be tolerated.
- **Equal Opportunity:**
    - **Training:** Every member has equal access to training and professional development programs.
    - **Promotion:** Advancement is based on merit, performance, and experience, ensuring equal opportunities for all.
    - **Operational Assignments:** Assignments are based on qualifications, experience, and readiness—not on protected characteristics.

Complaint Process:

- Any member who experiences or witnesses' discrimination is encouraged to report the issue immediately to the Fire Chief.
- All complaints will be handled promptly and confidentially.
- Reports of discrimination will be investigated thoroughly, and appropriate corrective actions will be taken.

2.2. Enforcement of Policies

APSTVFD enforces policies consistently and fairly to maintain professionalism and accountability. Violations of department policies are addressed through a structured disciplinary process.

Disciplinary Measures:

Disciplinary actions depend on the nature and frequency of the violation and may include:

A. Verbal Warning

- Issued for minor infractions or first-time offenses.
- Serves as an informal notic**e** that a member has violated department policies.
- Documented internally in the member's file.

B. Written Warning

- Issued for repeated offenses or more serious violations.
- Clearly outlines the offense and the necessary corrective actions.
- Serves as an official record of the violation and may lead to more severe disciplinary actions if unresolved.

C. Suspension

- Used for serious violations or repeated misconduct despite prior warnings.
- Suspension may be:
    - Short-term (e.g., a few days) or long-term, depending on the severity of the offense.
    - Imposed during an investigation or as a corrective action.
- During a suspension, the member is prohibited from participating in operations or accessing department resources.

D. Termination

Termination is the most severe disciplinary measure and is enacted for:

- Severe breaches of conduct (e.g., physical violence, theft, dishonesty).
- Major safety violations that endanger others.
- Criminal activity that impacts the department's integrity.

- Harassment, discrimination, or retaliation against others.
- Repeated policy violations, especially after prior warnings and disciplinary measures.

Termination is final and will only be enacted after a thorough investigation and review.

2.3. Actions Warranting Disciplinary Measures

The following behaviors are grounds for disciplinary action, depending on the severity:

Insubordination

- Refusing to follow lawful orders from superiors.
- Failing to comply with directives related to assignments, training, or safety protocols.

Safety Violations

- Ignoring safety protocols or misusing personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Engaging in reckless behavior that endangers team members, the community, or department resources.

Misconduct

- Behavior that reflects poorly on the department or violates ethical standards.
- Includes dishonesty, unethical conduct, or actions that harm the department's reputation.

Unauthorized Use of Department Resources

- Using department vehicles, equipment, or resources for personal purposes without approval.
- Misuse of tools, apparatus, or department-funded materials.

Criminal Activity

- Any criminal involvement that affects department operations, safety, or integrity.
- Arrests or convictions for dishonesty, violence, or illegal activity.

Harassment

- Any form of verbal, physical, sexual, or discriminatory harassment toward colleagues, department members, or the community.
- Zero tolerance policy—harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Failure to Follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- Non-compliance with established procedures affecting safety, efficiency, or service quality.
- Repeated violations will result in escalating disciplinary actions.

2.4. Appeal Process

APSTVFD provides a structured and fair process for members to appeal disciplinary actions (verbal/written warnings, suspensions, or termination).

Steps for Appeal:

1. Submit a Formal Appeal

- The member must submit a written appeal within 10 business days of the disciplinary action.
- The appeal should include:
    o A clear explanation of why the action was unjust.
    o Any supporting documentation or evidence.

2. Initial Review by Fire Chief

- The Fire Chief will review the appeal and all relevant information.
- The Fire Chief may consider new evidence or mitigating factors before making a decision.

3. Independent Review Panel

- If unresolved, the case is referred to an independent review panel consisting of senior personnel not involved in the original decision.
- The panel will conduct a thorough review and make a final recommendation.

4. Final Decision

- The Fire Chief will issue a final written decision based on the review.
- The decision is final and binding.

3. APSTVFD Driving Policies

The APSTVFD's driving policies are in place to ensure the safety of all personnel, protect the integrity of department vehicles, and maintain a high standard of conduct while responding to emergencies. All drivers must be trained, vigilant, and adhere to safe driving practices at all times. These policies apply to all members driving department vehicles, including personally owned vehicles (POVs) when responding to emergencies.

3.1. New Driver Training

Ensuring that all personnel are properly trained before operating department vehicles is crucial for maintaining safety and effectiveness during emergency responses.

Policy Details:

Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC):

- All personnel must successfully complete a **16-hour Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC)** before being authorized to drive any department vehicles, including apparatus, rescue vehicles, and emergency response vehicles.
- The course will cover:
    - Safe operation of emergency vehicles
    - Handling emergency situations
    - Vehicle control and navigation through traffic under emergency conditions
    - Basic vehicle maintenance checks
    - Accident prevention strategies
    - Handling of department-specific apparatus

Supervised Non-Emergent Drive Time:

- In addition to completing the EVOC, all new drivers must accumulate supervised non-emergent driving time on each type of department apparatus.
- Supervised driving includes both in-station and on-road training to ensure familiarity with vehicle handling.

Red-Light Authorization for POVs:

- Personnel who wish to use red lights in their personally owned vehicles (POVs) while responding to calls must have a valid EVOC certificate on file.

- In addition, they must always carry a signed red-light authorization letter from the Fire Chief in their vehicle.

3.2. Seat Belt & Hands-Free Policy

Safety is the department's top priority, and this policy ensures that all members are safely secured in their vehicles while maintaining legal and safe communication practices.

Policy Details:

Seat Belt Requirement:

- All personnel must wear seat belts at all times while operating or riding in department vehicles.
- Failure to wear a seat belt will be considered a violation of department safety protocols and will result in disciplinary action.

Hands-Free Communication:

- When driving any department vehicle, personnel are required to use hands-free devices for all communication, including radio transmissions and mobile phone use.
- The use of hands-free devices helps prevent distractions and ensures that the driver's full attention is on the road.
- Any form of manual communication (e.g., using a mobile phone, writing notes) while driving is strictly prohibited.

3.3. Use of Red Lights in POVs

The use of red lights in personally owned vehicles (POVs) allows personnel to respond to emergencies but comes with specific responsibilities and limitations.

Policy Details:

Authorized Personnel Only:

- Only personnel who have completed the EVOC course and obtained the red-light authorization letter from the Fire Chief may use red lights in their POVs.
- The use of red lights in a POV is strictly for emergency response purposes and must not be used for personal or non-emergency situations.

Adherence to Traffic Laws:

- The use of red lights in a POV does not exempt the driver from following all applicable traffic laws.
- Personnel must obey speed limits, stop signs, and other traffic regulations while driving with emergency lights activated.
- Any violations of traffic laws while using red lights in a POV may result in disciplinary action and possible revocation of red-light privileges.

Use of Red Lights Within the Response Zone:

- Personnel are only authorized to use red lights within the department's designated response zone.
- Use of red lights outside the response zone is strictly prohibited and may result in legal consequences if stopped by law enforcement.
- Unauthorized use of red lights in non-jurisdictional areas poses safety risks and may lead to suspension of red-light privileges.

3.4. No Non-Members in Apparatus

To maintain operational integrity and ensure the safety of all personnel and the public, this policy strictly prohibits non-members from riding in department vehicles during emergency responses.

Policy Details:

Non-Member Restrictions:

- Non-members, including family members and friends, are not permitted to ride in any department apparatus during emergency responses, drills, or operational activities.
- This policy applies to all emergency vehicles, including fire trucks and rescue vehicles.

- Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis with approval from the Fire Chief for non-operational purposes (e.g., public education events).

4. Training Policies

The APSTVFD is committed to providing its members with comprehensive and standardized training that ensures they are fully prepared to perform their duties safely, effectively, and efficiently. Ongoing education and skills development are critical to maintaining a high level of competency and readiness in all operational areas, including fire ground operations, medical response, vehicle extrication, and wildland firefighting.

4.1. Comprehensive Training Program

The department's training program provides all members with the necessary skills and knowledge to respond effectively to various emergency situations. This includes both initial training for new recruits and ongoing training to maintain proficiency.

Policy Details:

- **Core Areas of Training:**
    - *Fire Ground Operations:* Structural firefighting, search and rescue, ventilation, hose handling, and fire suppression tactics.
    - *Extrication:* Safe vehicle extrication techniques, including tool usage and victim removal.
    - *Wildland Firefighting:* Suppression tactics, fire behavior understanding, and operations in rugged terrain.
    - *Medical Response:* Emergency medical services (EMS), trauma care, airway management, patient assessment, and medical protocols.
- **Annual Training Requirements:**
    - Members must attend at least **25% of all scheduled training sessions annually** to maintain proficiency.
    - Training includes classroom instruction, hands-on drills, and live simulations.
    - Members failing to meet the requirement may face operational restrictions until compliance is met.

4.2. CPR Certification Requirement

To ensure medical readiness, all members must be CPR certified before responding to medical calls.

Policy Details:

- **CPR Certification:**
    - Members must complete a CPR certification course covering adult and pediatric CPR, as well as AED usage.
    - Certification must be maintained through regular renewals per AHA or another recognized organization.
    - Only certified members may engage in medical response operations.
- **CPR Training Frequency:**
    - The department will schedule regular CPR recertification courses for compliance.
    - Members are responsible for attending and maintaining their certification proactively.

4.3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is issued according to **training level** and **operational responsibilities** to ensure member safety. Proper care, usage, and return of PPE are mandatory.

Policy Details:

- **Issuance of PPE:**
    - *Structural Firefighting Gear:* For Florida Certified Firefighters or those enrolled in Firefighter I training. Includes full turnout gear.
    - *Dual-Certification Gear:* For vehicle extrication & wildland firefighting personnel. Includes specialized gloves, jackets, and boots.
    - *Medical Responder Bags:* For Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) or higher. Includes essential EMS equipment.
- **Maintenance and Care of PPE:**
    - Members must clean, inspect, and report damaged PPE after each use.
    - Department guidelines dictate cleaning protocols, replacement cycles, and inspections.
- **Return of PPE:**
    - All issued PPE must be returned upon separation from the department.
    - Failure to return PPE may result in financial charges or disciplinary action.

4.4. Ongoing Training and Certification

The department encourages continuous education and skill advancement in specialized areas of service.

Policy Details:

- **Specialized Training:**
    - The department may sponsor external training based on professional development needs.
- **Training Documentation:**
    - Members must document all completed training and certifications for departmental records.
    - Training records must be kept up to date and accurate.
- **Training Evaluations:**
    - The department will conduct regular evaluations and drills to assess training effectiveness.
    - This ensures relevant and high-quality instruction that meets department needs.

5. Communication Policies

Effective communication is crucial for maintaining smooth operations, ensuring the safety of all personnel, and providing timely responses to emergencies. The APSTVFD has established these communication policies to ensure that all members utilize department-approved communication methods efficiently, clearly, and in accordance with established protocols.

5.1. Radio Use & ID Numbers

Radio communication is essential for operational coordination, especially during emergency responses. To maintain clarity and accountability, all members must adhere to assigned radio ID numbers for both operational and non-operational communications.

Policy Details:

- **Radio ID Assignments:**
    - *AP 1-10:* Assigned to Command Staff (Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Captains, Lieutenants, and Safety Officers) responsible for operational decisions and scene management.
    - *AP 11-20:* Assigned to Certified Firefighters directly engaged in fire suppression, rescue, and medical responses.
    - *AP 21-50:* Assigned to Fire Support Members handling logistics, supply management, and incident support.
- **Radio Etiquette:**
    - Members must use their assigned ID numbers when communicating over the radio to ensure clear identification and accountability.
    - Communication should be clear, concise, and professional to prevent misunderstandings.
    - Radio transmissions should be brief and direct to avoid frequency congestion during critical operations.
- **Prioritization of Communication:**
    - **Emergency communications** take priority.
    - Non-urgent discussions should be minimized, especially during active incidents.

5.2. WhatsApp Restrictions

WhatsApp is used for department communication but has specific restrictions to ensure it remains an effective tool.

Policy Details:

- **Operational Use:**
    - WhatsApp should primarily be used for emergency and operational discussions between 7 AM and 9 PM.
    - Emergency messages outside these hours (9 PM – 7 AM) should be urgent only and require immediate attention.
- **Non-Emergency Use:**
    - Non-urgent matters should be communicated via email or in-person meetings to prevent overloading WhatsApp.
- **Professional Use Only:**
    - All messages must be professional and relevant to departmental operations.
    - Group chats should be kept to a minimum, and unnecessary notifications should be avoided to reduce distractions.

5.3. EDispatch as Primary Dispatch System

EDispatch is the department's primary method for receiving dispatch alerts and must be actively monitored.

Policy Details:

- **Notification Setup:**
    - All members must ensure EDispatch notifications are active and functioning properly.
    - The department will conduct regular checks to verify that all members receive alerts.
- **Monitoring EDispatch:**
    - EDispatch is the primary alert system for emergency calls, including fire, rescue, and medical responses.
    - Active members are responsible for monitoring and responding to new dispatches promptly.

5.4. Use of Response Buttons on EDispatch

To streamline communication and avoid confusion, members must use the EDispatch response buttons instead of alternative communication methods.

Policy Details:

- **Response Status:**
  - Members must use the designated EDispatch response buttons:
    - **"Responding to Station"** – For members heading to the station to pick up an apparatus.
    - **"Responding to Scene"** – For those responding directly to the incident in a personal vehicle (POV).
    - **"Not Available"** – For members who are unavailable to respond. No further explanation is required.
- **Prohibition of Alternative Communication:**
  - Members must not use WhatsApp to communicate response status.
  - EDispatch is the official system for tracking availability and response readiness.
- **Response Tracking:**
  - **Command staff** will monitor EDispatch to track response times and personnel availability.
  - This system ensures efficient resource allocation and a well-coordinated response.

6. Emergency Response Policies

Effective emergency response is critical for ensuring the safety of the community, protecting property, and safeguarding the well-being of all personnel involved. The APSTVFD has established the following emergency response policies to guide personnel in executing appropriate actions during different types of emergency incidents, ensuring consistency, safety, and efficiency throughout each response.

6.1. Fire Response (Structural, Wildland, Illegal Burning, and Vehicle Fires)

Policy Details:

- **Initial Scene Size-Up:**
    - Upon arrival, personnel must conduct a thorough scene size-up to evaluate the situation, including:
        - Identifying hazards (e.g., structural instability, hazardous materials, environmental factors).
        - Locating the fire origin and spread.
        - Assessing exposures (structures, vehicles, or resources at risk).
- **Incident Command:**
    - Establish incident command immediately, designating a qualified officer to manage the scene.
    - Relay initial findings to dispatch and incoming units to ensure the correct resources are deployed promptly.
    - Maintain clear communication with all personnel.
- **Requesting Additional Resources:**
    - Assess the situation and request additional resources as needed (e.g., additional fire engines, aerial support, hazmat teams, mutual aid assistance).
    - Use the **incident command system** to manage resource requests efficiently, preventing fatigue and ensuring personnel safety.
- **Attack Procedures:**
    - Follow standard attack procedures based on the fire type:
        - **Structural Fires:** Employ tactics such as interior attack, ventilation, search and rescue to protect lives and contain the fire.

- **Wildland Fires:** Prioritize structure protection, coordinate with Florida Forestry Services, and use defensive tactics like creating fire breaks and indirect attack methods.
- **Illegal Burning:** Determine if the burning is legal or illegal, respond accordingly, and ensure compliance with regulations.
- **Vehicle Fires:** Use proper suppression techniques while considering hazardous materials risks (e.g., fuel tanks, electrical systems).

6.2. Vehicle Accidents, Downed Power Lines, Alarms, & Water Emergencies

Policy Details:

- **Vehicle Accidents:**
    - Upon arrival, conduct a rapid hazard assessment for risks such as fires, hazardous materials, unstable vehicles, or endangered bystanders.
    - Ensure scene safety using traffic control, protective barriers, and full PPE (including reflective vests when near roadways).
- **Downed Power Lines:**
    - Maintain a minimum safe distance of 50 feet from downed power lines.
    - Do not approach downed lines unless verified as de-energized by the utility company.
    - Establish a safety perimeter to keep bystanders away.
- **Alarm Responses:**
    - Respond swiftly and cautiously, verifying whether the alarm is genuine or false.
    - Secure the area, assess for hazards, and coordinate with law enforcement if needed.
- **Water Emergencies:**
    - In water-related incidents (e.g., river, lake, or flood rescues), personnel must not enter the water unless properly equipped and trained.
    - Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are mandatory when working near water or in situations where immersion is possible.

6.3. Response Protocols (Code 3 vs. Code 2)

Policy Details:

- **Code 3 Response (Lights & Sirens):**
  - Used for emergency calls requiring **urgent, immediate attention**, including:
    - **Fires** (structural, wildland, or vehicle).
    - **Medical emergencies** (e.g., severe trauma, cardiac arrest).
    - **Hazardous materials incidents**.
    - **Vehicle accidents** with potential entrapment or severe injuries.
  - While using lights and sirens, personnel must maintain situational awareness, obey traffic laws, and practice defensive driving to ensure safe navigation.
- **Code 2 Response (No Lights or Sirens):**
  - Used for **non-emergency** calls that do not require immediate response, such as:
    - Non-emergency medical calls (e.g., lift assists).
    - Standby calls or mutual aid that are not time sensitive.
    - Alarm responses confirmed as non-threatening.
  - Personnel must remain prepared to escalate their response if new information from dispatch warrants an upgrade.

7. Medical Response Guidelines

Purpose

To establish clear, non-conflicting procedures for Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs) responding to medical emergencies. This guideline ensures patient care is provided safely, effectively, and within the responder's certification limits.

7.1. Initial Actions and Scene Approach

a. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Don gloves and any other appropriate PPE before patient contact.

b. Scene Safety

- Ensure scene safety for yourself, the patient, and others. Check for hazards (e.g., fire, unstable structures, traffic, etc.).

c. Patient Introduction and Consent

- Identify yourself clearly:

 "Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I'm an Emergency Medical Responder with [Department Name]. I'm here to assess your condition and provide care until EMS arrives."

- Request consent for treatment. If refused, remain on scene and inform dispatch unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Use implied consent if the patient becomes unresponsive or is unable to provide informed consent.

7.2. General Medical Response Procedures

First Arriving Personnel

- Establish scene safety
- Perform an initial patient assessment (consciousness, ABCs)
- Call for additional resources as needed

Second Arriving Personnel

- Assist with detailed assessment
- Prepare patient documentation for EMS handoff

Third Arriving Personnel

- Manage scene control (traffic, bystanders, etc.)
- Support primary care personnel as directed

7.3. Basic Life Support (BLS) Interventions

a. Airway and Breathing

- **Airway Adjuncts**:
  - *OPA*: For unconscious patients with no gag reflex
  - *NPA*: For semi-conscious or conscious patients with a gag reflex
- **Oxygen Delivery**:
  - *Nasal Cannula*: 1–6 LPM (24–44% O_2)
  - *Non-Rebreather Mask*: 10–15 LPM (60–90% O_2)
  - *Bag-Valve Mask (BVM)*: For inadequate breathing or apnea

b. Circulation

- Control bleeding with direct pressure
- Apply tourniquet if bleeding does not stop
- Monitor for shock (pale, clammy, rapid pulse), keep patient warm and supine
- Initiate CPR and apply AED if patient is unresponsive with no pulse

c. Splinting and Immobilization

- Stabilize suspected fractures/dislocations
- Apply splint above and below injury
- Recheck circulation before and after splinting
- Use C-collar and backboard for suspected spinal injuries

7.4. Medical Conditions and Treatment Steps

Chest Pain

- Monitor vitals
- Provide oxygen if needed
- Assist with nitroglycerin if patient has prescription and consents

Stroke

- Use **FAST**: Face droop, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, Time
- Document last known normal
- Administer oxygen and prepare for rapid EMS transport

Allergic Reactions

- Ask for epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen)
- Assist with administration if prescribed and patient consents

Trouble Breathing

- Ensure airway is open
- Administer oxygen using appropriate delivery device

Seizures

- Protect patient from harm during seizure
- Post-seizure: check ABCs, provide oxygen, and monitor

Unresponsive Patient

- Check for breathing and pulse
- Begin CPR and use AED if necessary
- Maintain airway and provide ventilations as needed

Heat/Cold Emergencies

- **Heat Exhaustion**: Move to cool area, hydrate
- **Heat Stroke**: Cool rapidly, call EMS, no fluids if unresponsive
- **Hypothermia**: Gradual warming, avoid rapid heat

- **Frostbite**: Rewarm gently, don't rub affected areas

Drowning

- Remove from water only if safe
- Start rescue breathing or CPR as needed
- Administer oxygen, monitor for aspiration

Large Blood Loss

- Apply direct pressure
- Elevate if appropriate
- Use tourniquet if bleeding is uncontrolled

Burns

- Remove from source, do not remove stuck clothing
- Cool with water (not ice) for 10 minutes
- Cover with dry, sterile dressing
- Monitor for shock

7.5. EMS Coordination and Handoff

a. EMS Handoff

- Once EMS arrives and assumes patient care, they take over full responsibility
- Remain available for assistance or coordination

b. Certification Limitations

- EMRs must stay within 40-hour EMR scope
- No advanced procedures, even with higher certifications

c. Transport Limitations

- **EMRs do not transport patients**
- Assist with lift or loading only when needed
- Notify EMS via dispatch after lift-assist or patient contact
- Never cancel EMS unless directed by EMS

7.6. Medication Assistance

- **Epinephrine**: Assist only if prescribed and patient consents
- **Nitroglycerin**: Same as above
- **Oral Glucose / Blood Sugar**: Do not administer or check; may assist if patient has personal equipment and consents

7.7. Documentation Requirements

- Submit report within **48 hours**
- Include:
    - Patient name, DOB, address
    - Names of all responders
    - At least two sets of vital signs
    - Detailed list of treatments
    - EMS disposition: transport, refusal, or other
    - Notes on trauma, seizures, burns, lift-assists, or notable events

8. Employee Exposure Control Plan

Purpose

 To protect department personnel from occupational hazards, including exposure to bloodborne pathogens, hazardous materials, and workplace accidents. This plan outlines procedures for reporting exposures, accidents, and injuries to ensure appropriate action is taken to minimize risks and safeguard the health and safety of all members.

8.1. Exposure Reporting

a. Immediate Reporting

- Any exposure to bloodborne pathogens or hazardous materials must be reported immediately to department leadership and supervisory personnel.
- Use of PPE is required at all times to reduce risk, but any exposure, even when PPE is worn, must still be reported without delay.

b. Written Exposure Report

- The personnel involved must complete a written exposure report as soon as possible after the incident.
- The report must include:
    - Type of exposure (e.g., bloodborne pathogen, chemical, etc.)
    - Circumstances of the exposure
    - Actions taken to mitigate or address the exposure
    - Date, time, and location of the incident

c. Follow-Up Medical Evaluations

- The department will coordinate with medical professionals to evaluate any risks posed by the exposure.
- If required, personnel will be referred for:
    - Testing
    - Vaccinations
    - Treatment
- All medical follow-ups will comply with current health regulations and departmental policies.

8.2. Accident Reporting

a. Documentation of Injuries

- All injuries sustained during department operations (on duty or in training) must be documented in an incident report.
- The report should include:
    - Nature of the injury
    - How the injury occurred
    - Immediate care provided
    - Any further treatment or interventions needed
- **All injuries**, including minor ones, must be reported to help identify safety trends or problem areas.

b. Leadership Review

- All reports are to be reviewed promptly by the department leadership.
- Leadership will:
    - Assess the incident
    - Identify any systemic issues or unsafe practices
    - Implement appropriate corrective actions, which may include:
        - Updated training
        - New safety protocols
        - Additional protective equipment

c. Follow-Up on Corrective Action

- Leadership will conduct a follow-up review to evaluate the effectiveness of the corrective measures.
- Further adjustments will be made as needed to prevent future incidents.

9. Safety & Health Committee Implementation

Purpose

The Safety & Health Committee plays a vital role in maintaining a safe working environment for all department personnel. It is responsible for reviewing safety incidents, identifying hazards, and recommending improvements to policies and practices. The committee fosters a culture of continuous safety improvement across the department.

9.1. Roles & Responsibilities

a. Safety Officer (Chair)

- Leads the Safety & Health Committee and facilitates safety discussions.
- Reviews incident and exposure reports to identify trends and improvement areas.
- Oversees the implementation of safety improvements recommended by the committee.
- Coordinates with department leadership to ensure all safety protocols are current and followed.

b. Officer (Secretary)

- Documents meeting minutes and maintains records of all safety meetings.
- Distributes all meeting recommendations to appropriate personnel.
- Tracks implementation and progress of safety recommendations and updates.

c. Committee Members

- Three experienced personnel from different roles within the department.
- Actively participate in discussions, offering insights from their operational perspectives.
- Identify hazards, review incidents, and suggest safety improvements.

d. Support Safety Officer

- Assists in implementing safety protocols.
- Supports investigations of incidents and exposures.

- Works closely with the Safety Officer and committee to uphold safety standards.

9.2. Quarterly Meetings

a. Meeting Schedule & Agenda

- The committee will meet **quarterly** (four times per year) to review safety performance and evaluate reports.
- Each meeting agenda may include:
    - Review of incident reports and near-misses
    - Discussion of injuries, exposures, or accidents with root cause analysis
    - Updates on previously implemented safety improvements
    - Feedback from personnel regarding safety concerns or suggestions
    - Assessment of training needs or policy updates
    - Evaluation of PPE standards and equipment

b. Recommendations

- Based on discussions, the committee may recommend:
    - Updates to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
    - Introduction or replacement of PPE and safety equipment
    - New training initiatives to improve preparedness

9.3. Committee Accountability and Follow-Up

a. Implementation of Recommendations

- Upon approval, the Safety Officer will work with department leadership to ensure recommendations are implemented effectively.
- Implementation may include:
    - Additional training
    - Procurement of new equipment
    - Adjustments to operational procedures
- The Secretary will monitor and track progress to ensure completion and evaluate outcomes.

b. Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

- The committee will continually assess the effectiveness of implemented changes.
- Additional meetings may be scheduled if urgent safety concerns arise between quarterly reviews.
- Regular feedback from personnel will be collected to identify new safety issues or opportunities for improvement.

10. Equipment & Gear Management

Purpose

 To ensure all department-issued equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) remains in optimal condition, the department follows a comprehensive management system. This includes inventory control, maintenance and inspection procedures, gear replacement policies, and accountability protocols.

10.1. Inventory Control

a. Quarterly Inventory Checks

- Yearly inventory checks will be conducted to ensure all issued and department-owned equipment is properly accounted for.
- A complete inventory, including PPE, tools, and apparatus, will be maintained and updated by the Training Captain or designated personnel.

b. Updated Inventory List

- The Training Captain or designee will update the inventory list to reflect all new acquisitions, retired equipment, and disposals.
- The inventory list will be reviewed quarterly and updated as necessary to ensure accuracy.

10.2. Gear Maintenance

a. Post-Call Inspections

- All firefighting gear (e.g., turnout gear, SCBAs, helmets, boots, gloves) must be inspected after each call involving exposure to smoke, fire, or hazardous materials.
- Inspections will focus on identifying contamination, damage, or wear and tear.

b. Yearly PPE & SCBA Inspections

- Annual detailed inspections of PPE and SCBAs will be conducted by designated personnel.

- Inspections will include checks for tears, stains, chemical damage, and proper SCBA functionality, cleanliness, and expiration.

c. Cleaning & Decontamination

- Turnout gear will be cleaned according to NFPA 1851 standards following exposure to hazardous environments.
- The department will maintain appropriate procedures and equipment to ensure timely, safe cleaning of gear.

10.3. Replacement Policy

a. Damaged, Expired, or Failed Gear

- Any gear that is damaged, expired, or fails inspection must be reported immediately to designated personnel.
- Replacement will occur as soon as possible to avoid disruption of operations. Temporary gear will be provided if needed.

b. Helmets

- Helmets must be replaced every 10 years, regardless of condition, or sooner if damaged.
- Helmets will be tracked by manufacture date and inspected at time of replacement.

c. SCBA Masks & Cylinders

- Must be replaced according to manufacturer guidelines and NFPA standards.
- Replacements will be based on age, condition, and any wear impacting performance.

d. Damaged or Missing Tools

- Tools such as axes, pry bars, and medical bags must be reported if damaged or missing during weekly truck checks.
- The department will replace or repair tools promptly to maintain readiness.

10.4. PPE Accountability

a. Personal Responsibility

- Each member is responsible for the care and security of their assigned gear.
- Gear must be properly stored, kept clean, and maintained per departmental guidelines.

b. Return of Gear Upon Separation

- All issued gear must be returned within seven (7) days of separation from the department.
- Unreturned items may result in assessed fees or legal action to recover equipment costs.

c. Lost or Damaged Gear

- Members may be held accountable for gear lost or damaged beyond reasonable wear and tear.
- Severe cases will be reviewed by leadership for further action or disciplinary measures.

11. Truck Maintenance

Purpose

To ensure all fire apparatus is operational and ready for emergency response, the department follows a consistent and thorough weekly truck maintenance procedure. These procedures help identify and resolve potential issues before they impact operations, ensuring equipment and vehicles remain in peak condition.

11.1. Thursday Night Checkoffs

a. Scheduled Maintenance

- Every Thursday night, all fire apparatus will be inspected for mechanical or equipment issues that could affect readiness.

b. Inspection Areas

i. Mechanical and Operational Check

- Inspect engine, brakes, suspension, and drive systems.
- Verify functionality of emergency lights, sirens, and other critical systems.
- Conduct a visual check for damage, leaks, or other issues.

ii. Fuel and Fluid Levels

- Confirm all fuel tanks are filled to appropriate levels.
- Check engine oil, coolant, transmission fluid, and other vital fluids.
- Ensure firefighting foam, hydrant adapters, and other supplies are stocked and functional.

iii. Tire Condition

- Inspect tires for wear and verify appropriate tread depth.
- Check for correct tire pressure and visible defects.

iv. Tools and Equipment

- Confirm availability and condition of hoses, SCBAs, rescue tools, and medical equipment.

- Ensure medical bags are fully stocked with unexpired supplies.
- Inspect hoses for damage or kinks; ensure proper storage and deployability.
- Check SCBAs to confirm air cylinders are full, masks functional, and harnesses secure.

c. Documentation

- Each apparatus will have an inspection checklist covering all items above.
- The lead inspector will complete and submit the checklist to leadership.
- Any deficiencies or required repairs will be documented and reported immediately for corrective action.

11.2. Reporting and Follow-Up

a. Missing or Damaged Equipment

- Any missing or damaged items must be reported to leadership immediately.
- Leadership will coordinate repairs or replacements through appropriate vendors or sources.

b. Corrective Actions

- Identified mechanical or operational issues will be addressed promptly through:
    - Scheduling certified repairs
    - Ordering parts or replacement equipment
    - Making temporary adjustments to maintain emergency capabilities

11.3. Accountability and Maintenance Records

a. Record-Keeping

- All weekly inspections and maintenance actions will be logged and archived for future reference.
- A maintenance log will be maintained for each apparatus, detailing inspections, repairs, and other relevant actions.

b. Follow-Up

- Recurring issues will trigger a more detailed review to determine whether replacements, upgrades, or increased maintenance are necessary.
- A quarterly review of all apparatus will be conducted to ensure long-term maintenance goals are being met and persistent issues are resolved.

12. Mutual Aid & Automatic Aid Policies

Purpose

APSTVFD collaborates with neighboring Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs), Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO), Franklin County EMS, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and the Florida Park Service to ensure a unified and effective response to emergencies that exceed the department's capabilities. These partnerships are critical to community safety and regional emergency preparedness.

12.1. Activation Criteria

a. Mutual Aid Requests

- **Mutual Aid** will be requested when an incident surpasses the department's operational capacity and additional resources, or expertise are required.
- Common scenarios for mutual aid include:
    - **Structure Fires** involving multiple buildings or requiring specialized apparatus (e.g., aerials, hazmat units).
    - **Large-Scale Search and Rescue (SAR)** in remote areas or mass casualty scenarios.
    - **Major Vehicle Accidents** with multiple patients or complex extrication needs.
    - **Wildland Fires** threatening structures or requiring sustained operations.

b. Automatic Aid Agreements

- **Automatic Aid** is pre-established for areas or incident types that consistently require rapid, multi-agency response.
- These agreements ensure immediate dispatch of neighboring agencies based on specific, predefined triggers, such as:
    - High-density or high-risk areas (e.g., wildland-urban interface zones).
    - Hazmat incidents or other specialized response situations.
    - Traffic accidents on major highways requiring advanced extrication or EMS support.

12.2. Communication Protocols

a. Coordination Through Franklin County Dispatch

- All mutual aid and automatic aid coordination will be routed through Franklin County Dispatch.
- APSTVFD will ensure clear, accurate, and timely communications to prevent duplication of resources and promote clarity in assignments.

b. Radio Discipline

- APSTVFD members must maintain strict radio discipline, especially when operating in multi-agency environments:
    - Follow standard radio protocols and utilize designated inter-agency frequencies.
    - Avoid cross-channel interference and maintain clear, concise communication.
- All operations will adhere to the Incident Command System (ICS) to establish clear roles, responsibilities, and effective command hierarchy.

c. Liaison Officer

- During large-scale events, the Incident Commander (IC) will assign a Liaison Officer to coordinate with external agencies.
- The Liaison Officer will:
    - Facilitate communication.
    - Manage mutual aid resources.
    - Serve as the primary point of contact for all assisting departments.

13. Public Relations & Community Outreach

Overview

APSTVFD is committed to engaging the community through fire safety education, volunteer outreach, and public awareness to strengthen trust and improve emergency readiness.

13.1. Fire Prevention Education

- **National Fire Prevention Week (October):** Annual events include fire safety demos, station open houses, and interactive displays.
- **School & Community Outreach:** Firefighters teach age-appropriate safety (e.g., Stop, Drop, and Roll), home escape planning, and extinguisher use (PASS method).
- **Smoke Alarm Installations:** Free alarms provided to at-risk households (elderly, low-income, older homes), coordinated through community programs (Red Cross).

13.2. Volunteer Recruitment & Retention

- **Recruitment:** Promoted via community events, social media, flyers, and open houses.
- **Retention:** Supportive environment with recognition, training opportunities, and appreciation events.

13.3. Community Relations & Awareness

- **Business & Organization Engagement:** Fire drills, safety audits, and youth outreach programs.
- **Social Media & Public Info:** Active online presence with safety tips, department news, and event announcements.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Partner with agencies for community drills, evacuation planning, and emergency readiness education.

14. Department ID Cards

APSTVFD issues Department ID Cards to all active members for identification during emergency responses, official duties, and public interactions.

14.1. Issuance

- **Eligibility:** Issued to all active members after completing orientation and training.
- **Card Includes:** Full name, photo, rank, department ID number, logo/badge, and expiration date.
- **Replacements:** Lost/damaged cards must be reported. Replacements issued after verification; fees may apply.

14.2. Usage

- Must be carried during duty and official events.
- Used to verify identity with law enforcement or other agencies during emergencies or mutual aid responses.

14.3. Security & Accountability

- Cards must not be shared, altered, or misused.
- Lost/stolen cards must be reported immediately; written reports may be required.
- Must be returned within 7 days of leaving the department.

14.4. Prohibited Uses

- Use for personal gain, misrepresentation, or unauthorized access is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.

15.5. Expiration & Renewal

- Cards expire based on member status or rank changes.
- Members will be notified 60 days before expiration and required to submit updates for renewal.