



Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association

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TFCA CODE OF ETHICS

The following rules and standards of conduct have been developed for the safe and efficient operation of Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association (TFCA) and for the benefit and protection of the rights and safety of all. TFCA members and/or officers and representatives are expected to observe the highest standards of professional conduct at all times, while at work or when engaged in TFCA business. Members' and/or officers' and employees' professional conduct shall remain consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives of the TFCA.

Obey all laws, rules and regulations governing our business. It is the policy of the TFCA that all applicable laws, rules and regulations are complied with fully and completely. Members and/or officers and employees shall conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring discredit upon TFCA or the fire service as a whole.

Be honest, truthful, fair and trustworthy in all TFCA activities and relationships. TFCA expects each of its members and/or officers and employees to treat one another with respect and honesty. This includes providing information that is accurate, complete, objective, timely, relevant and understandable.

Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity. It is critical that honor and integrity be presented at the highest of standards in all public and personal relationships in order that the Association may merit the respect and confidence of the elected officials, of other members and/or officers, and of the public. Members and officers shall maintain these high standards of conduct and character so as not to discredit the profession or the Association. Behavior that violates the expectations set forth in this policy shall be considered a violation of this ethical standard.

Promote a positive environment for all TFCA members: TFCA supports and adheres to laws and regulations dealing with harassment and discrimination of all kinds. This includes behaviors which could be interpreted as intimidation, bullying and/or discrimination based on sex, race, age, religion, national origin, or sexual preference.

Report accurate information: Because the Association may use membership numbers and statistics to make decisions about its future and members' involvement, its officers' and employees' ethical responsibility to provide correct information at all times, especially in regard to the following:

- Membership numbers, including the number of current members, retention, and attrition rates;
- Membership projections;
- Budgets;
- Integrity of membership criteria; and
- Quality and use of database information

Respect and protect TFCA assets: Assets are anything of value owned by TFCA. All TFCA members and/or officers and employees are expected to be the custodian of those assets. Members and/or officers and employees are responsible to maintain company assets in good condition and to protect them from loss. This includes real assets and equipment of all kinds. It also includes so called "soft assets" such as intellectual property, member lists and other confidential information owned by the association. TFCA assets of any kind, but including such assets as telephones, PCs, email, copiers, faxes, should not be used for personal gain.

Avoid all conflicts of interest between work and your personal affairs: All members and/or officers and employees are expected to act with total objectivity with regard to the TFCA's business. Accordingly, it is improper for a TFCA member and/or officer and employee to be in a position where their personal interests conflict, or appear to conflict, with TFCA interests. TFCA members and/or officers and employees should not use their position with the TFCA to influence the TFCA or others for their personal benefit. Members and/or officers and employees should not engage in any business or secondary employment which, because of the demands on their time and interest, interferes with their obligations and responsibilities at the TFCA. If a member and/or officer or employee believes that a conflict of interest has developed or may develop, it should be promptly reported to a TFCA officer.

Avoidance of Private Employment: Members and/or officers and employees should not engage in, solicit, negotiate for, or promise to accept private employment, nor should they render services for private interests or conduct a private business when such employment, service, or business creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of their official duties. Teaching, lecturing, writing, or consulting are typical activities that may not involve conflict of interest, or impair the proper discharge of their official duties. Prior notification of the appointing authority is appropriate in all cases of outside employment.

Promote an ethical culture for all TFCA members: TFCA expects all of its members and/or officers and representatives to conduct themselves ethically at all times and to encourage and support that behavior in their fellow officers/members. Members and/or officers and representatives shall refrain from abusing their relationship with the TFCA in an improper economic, professional, or other manner.

Establish Equal Opportunity: All decisions pertaining to appointments and discipline should prohibit discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, political affiliation, disability, age, or marital status. It should be the members' and/or officers' and representative's personal and professional responsibility to actively recruit and hire a diverse staff throughout their organizations.

Maintain Appointment Commitment: Members and/or officers and employees who accept an appointment to a position should not fail to report for that position. This does not preclude the possibility of a member or officer considering several offers or seeking several positions at the same time, but once a *bona fide* offer of a position has been accepted, that commitment should be honored. Oral acceptance of an offer is considered binding unless the TFCA makes fundamental changes to the terms of the offer. Position should show professional respect for persons formerly holding the position or for others who might be applying for the same position. Professional respect does not preclude honest differences of opinion; it does preclude attacking a person's motives or integrity in order to be appointed to a position. Participation in less than 75% of the quarterly meetings or committee meetings to which a member is assigned, including TFCA sanctioned conference calls, would be considered a breach of this commitment. Exceptions for extenuating circumstances may be granted by the Board President and communicated to the Board Members.

Conduct Self-Assessments: Each member and/or officer and employee should assess his or her professional skills and abilities on a periodic basis.

Gifts: Members and/or officers and employees should not directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gift—whether it be money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, promise, or any other form—under the following circumstances: (1) it could be reasonably inferred or expected that the gift was intended to influence them in the performance of their official duties; or (2) the gift was intended to serve as a reward for any official action on their part. It is important that the prohibition of unsolicited gifts be limited to circumstances related to improper influence. In *de minimums* situations, such as meal checks, some modest maximum dollar value should be determined by the officer/member as a guideline. The guideline is not intended to isolate members and/or officers and employees from normal social practices where gifts among friends, associates, and relatives are appropriate for certain occasions.

Violation of the TFCA Code of Ethics and Conduct may subject a member and/or an officer or employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Handling of Violations or Complaints: If a TFCA member believes that a breach of ethics has occurred, that member shall submit the details of the perceived breach, in writing, to an Officer or Board Member of the Association who will then notify the President. The President will convene a meeting of the Executive Committee, either in-person or via conference call, to present the complaint.

The TFCA Executive Committee will review the complaint(s) of violation(s) and contact the individual in question to enable them to respond, either in-person or via conference call, before making a final determination. Once the validity of the complaint has been assessed, the Executive Committee will make a recommendation, via majority vote, regarding the sanction(s) that should be administered. This recommendation will then be brought before the entire Board of Directors, either in-person or via conference call, where final disposition will take place via majority vote.