



Pranks, Hazing, and Bullying	Related Policies:
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a duty to act or a higher duty of care with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable State Statutes:	
OSHA:	
NFPA Standard:	
Date Implemented:	Review Date:

Policy: The fire department has a zero tolerance policy toward workplace and work related hazing or bullying. Hazing or bullying of members is unacceptable and will not be tolerated for any reason. All personnel should be able to work in an environment free of hazing and bullying. The department further does not tolerate work related pranks that violate a law or department rule, regulation or policy.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to prohibit workplace and work related hazing and bullying. Workplace and work related hazing and bullying may cause the loss of trained and talented employees, reduce productivity and morale, and create unnecessary legal risks for the department. This policy also prohibits pranks that violate a law or department rule, regulation or policy.

Definitions

Bullying: Repetitive acts of aggressive behavior that intentionally threaten, humiliate, intimidate, degrade, or hurt, physically or mentally, another person. Bullying usually involves repeated acts committed by a person or group who has, or is perceived as having, more power than the victim/target of the bullying.

Hazing: Ritualized harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group.

Prank: A mischievous trick or practical joke



Procedure

1. Fire department personnel shall not engage in hazing and bullying other members of the department at any time whether on-duty or off-duty regardless of the members' willingness to participate or submit to the conduct.
2. Fire department personnel shall not engage in the hazing and bullying of any other person while on-duty, while in uniform, while on fire department property, while in or on fire department apparatus, or while representing the fire department, regardless of the person's willingness to participate or submit to the conduct.
3. Fire department personnel shall not participate in any prank that violates a law or violates any department rule, regulation or policy. Specifically, fire department personnel shall not engage in any activity, whether intended as a prank or otherwise, that:
 - a. interferes with or delays response or readiness for response
 - b. places any member or civilian at risk of injury or harm
 - c. risks or causes any property damage to department or privately owned property
 - d. disables any apparatus, equipment, safety equipment, or PPE, if even momentarily.
4. Officers shall ensure that personnel are not bullied or hazed, and that personnel do not engage in bullying, hazing, or pranks that violate a law or violate a department regulation. Officers have an affirmative obligation to intervene and stop any bullying, hazing, or pranks that violate a law or department rule, regulation or policy when observed. Officers who fail to intervene will be subject to being disciplined at least as harshly as those responsible for the conduct.

Acts Constituting Bullying

1. The following acts are examples of the kind of behavior that if repeated and committed under circumstances of a power imbalance, constitutes bullying:
 - a. Physical violence, hitting, striking, punching, slapping, shoving, tripping, and other acts that hurt people physically, or otherwise result in inappropriately touching
 - b. Spreading rumors intended to humiliate, embarrass, degrade, or intimidate another



- c. Teasing, taunting, harassing, isolating, or excluding another
- d. Name calling, verbal abuse, threats, or coercion
- e. Encouraging others to engage in similar activities intended to humiliate, embarrass, degrade, or intimidate another
- f. Engaging in any of the above using telephones, cellphones, emails, text messages, instant messages, online, electronically, or using cyber technology. This can include:
 - i. Sending offensive or threatening text, email, or instant messages
 - ii. Posting offensive, humiliating pictures or messages about others in blogs or on Web sites
 - iii. Using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies about someone

What To Do

1. Members who believe they are being bullied or hazed should immediately ask the member or members to stop.
2. If after being asked to stop hazing or bullying, a member resists stopping in any manner other than offering an apology and stating that it will not happen again, the target of the hazing or bullying should promptly inform his or her immediate supervisor. If the immediate supervisor is involved in the allegation or the member is uncomfortable with making a report to their immediate supervisor, the member may by-pass the chain of command in order to report the harassment or discrimination to any ranking officer, up to and including the Fire Chief.
3. All reports of workplace bullying or hazing, or pranks that violate a law or violate any department rule, regulation or policy, will be treated seriously and investigated promptly and impartially.
4. Supervisors who fail to enforce this policy, or who fail to report complaints of workplace bullying or hazing, or pranks that violate a law or violate any department rule, regulation or policy in accordance with the procedures contained in this policy, shall be subject to progressive disciplinary action up to and including **termination from employment.**



Retaliation

1. No member shall be retaliated against for reporting an allegation of hazing, bullying or prank that violates any department rule, regulation or policy. Any such retaliation is prohibited and may be disciplined as an additional offense.
2. Retaliation against a member who supports another member who has reported any act of hazing, bullying or prank that violates any department rule, regulation or policy, such as by corroborating the victim's account, is prohibited and may be disciplined as an additional offense.