

Seminole Trail Volunteer Fire Department

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Article 1 Organization and Purpose

Seminole Trail Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., a Virginia corporation, hereinafter referred to as the Department, was organized in 1976 for the purpose of providing a continuing emergency firefighting service for the northern corridor of Route 29 North. Such service shall be provided by the Department with the mutual aid assistance of neighboring fire companies when necessary.

Article 2 Membership

Section 1 General Qualifications

Members are persons, residing in the Charlottesville-Albemarle area, who have met the requirements of these Rules and Regulations and have been accepted into the Department.

Section 2 Categories of Membership

1. **Firefighters** -- Persons not less than eighteen (18) years of age with full emergency responsibilities who demonstrate the necessary qualities and interest to participate in firefighting and rescue.
2. **Probationary Firefighters** -- Firefighters who have not completed the probationary period required for graduation to regular Membership status. All new members shall be on probation for a minimum of six (6) months. At any time during this period, the Probationary Firefighter may lose his membership status by an act of the Membership on recommendation of the Review or Membership Committees.
3. **Associate Members** -- Associate Members are non-voting members who may

fall into one of the three following categories.

I) Active Associate: These are Members who offer some extraordinarily valuable asset to the Department but who do not wish to be full Members. Active Associate Firefighters will be issued gear and required to answer a minimum of ten (10) percent of the calls. The number of these Members shall not exceed ten (10) percent of membership.

II) Inactive Associate: Previous Firefighters with at least three (3) years active service who, due to relocation or some other extraordinary circumstance, are unable to continue to be full members. These Members will be permitted to run calls when available, but will not be issued gear on a permanent basis.

III) Non-Firefighting Associate: Persons who do not wish to be Firefighters but would like to participate in other Department functions. The Review Committee shall evaluate the status of all Associate Members and report to the membership quarterly.

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(d) **Junior Firefighters** -- Persons between 15 and 18 years of age and in good physical condition. The number of Junior Firefighters shall be limited to twelve (12) and they shall be voted upon and elected to membership in the same manner as members of the Department are voted on and elected. Junior Firefighters shall obey such rules and regulations of the Department as the Department may, from time to time, adopt and promulgate. Junior Firefighters shall at all times be under the supervision and control of the Department. Junior firefighters between 16 and 18 years of age having at least Firefighter 1 qualification and parental permission shall be allowed to enter structure fires when escorted by an officer.

(e) **Honorary Members** -- Persons who have made some type of extraordinary contribution to the Department but do not participate regularly in any Fire Department functions. These persons may be, but are not limited to, large financial contributors or business people whose organization provides some type of service or donates some piece of equipment to the Department. Honorary members are non-voting and are not afforded any of the rights and privileges of Members of the department

6. **Life members** -- Persons who have served ten years with the fire department as full active members in good standing. Life members are afforded all the same rights and privileges, including voting, as active members of the fire

department.

Article 3 Duties of Members

Section 1 Each Member shall perform the duties usually performed by a Firefighter, and further shall perform all duties assigned to him by the Officer in charge. Firefighters shall make every effort to attend relevant fire schools and other classes or training programs pertaining to their level of expertise.

Section 2 When an alarm is sounded, it shall be the duty of each active Member to proceed, with all dispatch, to the fire station, and then proceed to the scene of the incident with the necessary apparatus. The Driver Pump Operator first arriving at the fire station, shall assume command until some line officer of the Department arrives and takes command. When three (3) Members, one of whom is qualified as an operator of the apparatus, have arrived, they shall proceed to the scene . If all apparatus has responded from the station, all Members shall proceed to the scene and report to the Officer in charge or his designee.

Section 3 After the incident, each member shall go to the fire station and remain there until dismissed by the officer in charge. No Member shall leave an incident, or be excused from returning to the station, before reporting to the officer in command and obtaining his permission.

Section 4 It shall be the absolute duty of all Members of this Department to conduct themselves at any function, trip, convention, or fire department activity in such a manner as to bring honor and credit to the organization and to follow all guidelines outlined in the Standard Operating Guidelines of the Department.

Section 5 It shall be the duty of each Member of the Department who has emergency red warning lights on his personal vehicle to see that the lights comply with the provisions of the current emergency motor vehicle Code of Virginia; that the lights pass state inspection; and that the lights receive the approval of the Chief of the Department.

Section 6 Failure to observe the requirements of this Article shall subject the offender to suspension, dismissal, or other appropriate disciplinary measures.

Article 4 Application for Membership

Section 1

Firefighters -- Prospective members should be introduced to the Department at a regular meeting. The prospective shall also submit (1) an application for membership, (2) a criminal history check, and (3) a physical or doctor's

evaluation indicating the prospective is of satisfactory health to meet the demands of the position. The prospective shall complete a ride-along with four-fifths (4/5) of the department's crews. With required forms submitted and ride-alongs complete, the Membership Committee will make a recommendation for the prospective member at a regular meeting, at which time the Department will vote on the prospective member. The introductory meeting is not mandatory should the prospective meet all other requirements prior to the first regular meeting.

Active Associate Members -- Procedure for selection of Active Associate Members shall be the same as for Firefighters. Exceptions will be considered for Firefighters wishing to change their status to Active Associate. In this case the Firefighter shall submit a request in writing to the Department indicating the desire to change status.

Inactive Associate Members -- Active Firefighters wishing to take an Inactive Associate membership shall make such request in writing to the Review Committee. The Review Committee, upon receipt of such request, shall investigate the matter and make a recommendation to the Membership at the regular monthly meeting. The Membership shall then vote to grant or deny the request under the voting procedure outlined by Article 4, Section 3 of these Rules and Regulations, and must achieve 3/4 favorable votes of the

Membership present

Non-Firefighting Associate Members -- Non-Firefighting Associate members shall be appointed by the carrying of a motion during the Membership Committee report at the regular monthly meeting according to Robert's Rule of Order as outlined in Article 9, Section 4 of the Rules and Regulations.

Honorary Member -- Procedure for selection of Honorary Members shall be the same as for Non-Firefighting Associate Members.

Junior Firefighters -- Procedure for selection of Junior Firefighters shall be the same as for Firefighters; however, parental authorization forms must be completed.

Section 2

Committee Review -- Application is referred to the Membership Committee which shall consist of at least three (3) Department Members, who shall be elected by two-thirds (2/3) of the Membership present, and whose purpose it is to process and review Membership applications. The Committee will report its findings and make appropriate recommendations to the Department at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. It is the applicant's responsibility to furnish the Committee with a physician's certificate stating the physical

condition of the applicant and other requested documents prior to the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

Section 3

Department Vote -- Following introduction, the applicant shall be voted upon at the business meeting when the Committee report is presented. The applicant must not be present at this meeting. Vote shall be by secret ballot, and results entered into the minutes of the meeting. The prospective may be voted in pending the receipt of an acceptable criminal history check. The applicant must receive three-fourths (3/4) favorable votes of Members present to become a Firefighter. Firefighter and Junior Firefighter probation, as described in previous sections, shall commence upon the applicant's acceptance by the Department. If the applicant is not accepted, the applicant must wait sixty (60) days before re-applying.

Section 4

Department Resignation -- A Member in good standing may resign from the Department in good standing by tendering a written resignation to an officer and obtaining a statement signed by the Quartermaster that all articles of clothing and equipment issued to the member have been returned and accounted for in full. Any member on suspension or under probation who requests resignation will do so in not-in-good standing unless a majority of quorum at the monthly brigade meeting votes to change this status. Such resignation will be effective as of the date indicated on the resignation form, and the Department will be notified at the next regular business meeting.

Article 5 Members in Good Standing

Section 1

1. Must attend scheduled duty assignments unless excused by an officer.
2. Must attend all monthly meetings and participate in work details and other activities that the officers of the Department deem necessary, unless excused by a line officer.
3. Must obey legitimate orders of superiors.
4. Must conduct himself at all times in such a manner as to reflect credit on the Department.

5. Must participate in maintenance of all firefighting and medical equipment, fire station, and grounds.

Section 2 Junior Firefighters

1. All provisions in Article 5, Section 1 shall apply to Junior Firefighters.
2. All Junior Firefighters must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0, with no failures, in all of his school work. A Member who fails to maintain passing grades will be suspended temporarily from duty, until such time as his grades are acceptable. At no time will a Junior Firefighter be required to attend calls or perform duties that interfere with school work or with other important commitments.
3. No Junior Firefighter will be permitted to enter a burning structure or be put in any other situation that an officer of the Department deems unsafe.
4. In all other firefighting responsibilities, Junior Firefighters will be under the direct supervision of an officer or a designated firefighter of the department.
5. Junior Firefighters may ride in the cab or jumpseat of a fire department vehicle if sufficient Senior personnel are not available to fill the vehicle. Junior Firefighters may drive their personal vehicles or the vehicles of his parents or guardians directly to the fire ground according to the provisions of Art. 3, Sec 2. Junior Firefighters shall be suspended if:
 - He leaves school to respond to an alarm
 - He responds to an alarm with any persons in his vehicle who are not members of the Department.
 - He receives any traffic citation while responding to an alarm.
6. Junior firefighters wishing to spend the night at the station

may do so only if they check in with the Officer in charge by 22:00. Junior firefighters not spending the night must be off the premises by 22:00.

Section 3 Active Associate Members

1. Must attend at least 50% of scheduled duty time or 50 hours per month, unless excused by a line officer.
2. Must obey legitimate orders of supervisors.

Section 4 Inactive Associate Members

Must obey legitimate orders of supervisors.

Article 6 Review Committee

The Review Committee shall be established to provide reconciliatory and investigative services for the Department should problems or disputes arise. The Review Committee will consist of at least three (3) members elected by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present for a term of one (1) year.

Section 1 Problems relating to conduct of a fellow Member may be called to the attention of the Review Committee directly through its chairman or indirectly through an officer. The Review Committee will investigate the problem, discuss the problem with the Member's officer, and attempt to find a solution, which will satisfy all Parties. If the problem is irreconcilable, the Committee will report the facts to the Department, which will vote on the charges as discussed.

Section 2 The Review Committee will meet quarterly to review attendance and performance records of all Members to verify their good standing. The Committee will also meet monthly as needed to review the status of Probationary Firefighters. If Members fail to meet requirements, or present explanation to the Committee, their status as a member automatically will be terminated and so notified in writing by the Review Committee. If the member meets with the Committee, the results of such meeting will be made known at the next regular business meeting; and the charges will be voted upon.

Article 7 Suspension and Expulsion

Section 1

A Member may be suspended summarily by an officer for up to 30 days. Effective with the suspension, the member automatically will be denied access to any functions or emergencies of the Department as a member of the Department.

Section 2

A member may be suspended summarily by an officer, as a result of charges brought by another member and communicated to the Review Committee or officers. This suspension, if invoked, will continue until the matter has been resolved by the Review Committee or subjected to the vote of the Department. If the accused chooses not to defend himself, his connection with the Department automatically will terminate; and he will be so notified .

Section 3

If the Review Committee reconciles the dispute to the satisfaction of all parties or charges are not pursued, the matter will be dropped and summary suspension will terminate if previously invoked.

Section 4

Neither the accused nor the complainant may vote in the hearing. If the accused elects to defend himself, the case will be brought before the Department at either a regular or special business meeting. The Review Committee will present the general facts of the case and the charges. Both the accused and the complainant may address the Department. Other members of the Department also may present arguments. The Department then will decide by secret ballot to drop the charges, put the accused on probation for sixty (60) days, or expel. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present will be necessary for expulsion. Categories will be listed on the ballot, and there will be one ballot per member, and one vote per ballot. If probation is chosen, the case will be reviewed at the end of sixty (60) days, new facts declared; and another vote taken. The member will have full duties during the probationary period.

Section 5

Probationary Firefighters -- the provisions above do not necessarily apply to probationary members. Probationary members may be dropped from the department rolls solely through Department vote.--See Art. 2, Sec 2-b.

Article 8 Department Officers

Officers of the Department shall be Chief, Assistant Chief, Battalion Chiefs, and Captain(s).

Section 1

Chief and Assistant Chief -- The Chief shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. The Board shall ensure that the Chief has had at least five (5) years active service in the Department, at least three (3) of which as a line officer. In addition, the Chief must have fulfilled all other requirements needed for the position of officer in the Department. Assistant Chief shall be appointed by the Chief of the Department, the qualifications for the position being the same as for Chief.

Section 2

Line Officers -- Department Battalion Chiefs will be appointed by the Chief for one (1) year terms. Department Captains shall then be appointed by the Chief at the recommendation of the line officers for one (1) year terms. These appointments will be announced at the regular meeting following the Board of Directors annual meeting. Officers must be active Firefighters with a minimum training requirement of Firefighter I. In addition, officers must have had at least one (1) year's service with the Department and meet all the qualifications for Firefighters according to the provisions of Art. 2, Sec. 1 and 2. Leniency in these requirements is at the discretion of the Chief.

Section 3

Senior Firefighters -- The position of Senior Firefighter shall be by appointment of the Department's Chiefs and Line Officers and in accordance with the standards of training set forth by the current membership. Minimum qualifications are Firefighter II, Pump Operator, and Emergency Medical Technician. In addition to the training certifications, a minimum of 2 years service with the Department as a firefighter is required. The position of Senior Firefighter is not a lifetime appointment and a Senior Firefighter may be re-instated to the position of Firefighter at the discretion of the Line Officers.

Section 4

Vacancies -- Any vacancy(ies) in company officer(s) will be appointed for the remainder of the term by the Chief after the recommendation of the line officers.

Section 5

Authority of Officers

1. The Chief will have control and command of the Department and its equipment at all times

2. In absence of Chief, command will devolve in the following order: Assistant Chief, Battalion Chief(s), Captain(s).
3. If no officer is present, driver of the first engine to arrive will be in command until an officer listed above arrives on the scene. Driver will give officers a report on the fire and what action has been taken. Driver then will return to duties of his engine.
 4. The Department will appoint individuals to fill specialist positions as required by the Department for normal operation. These positions include, but are not limited to Fire Marshall, Training Officer, Quartermaster, Department Secretary, and Station Manager.

Article 9 Meetings

Section 1

Business -- The Department will hold regular meetings on the third (3rd) Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. All active Brigade Members must attend unless excused by an officer of the Department.

Section 2--Other

- (a) Special meetings may be called by officers. Three (3) days notice, designating time and place, will be given to each member. At no time shall there be a business meeting other than those specified in this article.
- (b) Training meetings other than regularly scheduled meetings will be at the discretion of the Chief(s) and/or the Training Officer.

Section 3

Presiding Officer and Secretary at Business Meetings -- The highest ranking officer present at 7:30 p.m. will call the meeting to order and preside. In the event the secretary is not present, the second highest officer will serve as secretary. If no other officer is present, presiding officer shall appoint an acting secretary.

Section 4

Order of Business -- Robert's Rule of Order shall govern the meeting. Order of business is as follows:

- (a) Roll Call
- (b) Reading of minutes from the last meeting, and approval
- (c) Committee and Specialist Reports
- (d) Officers Reports
- (e) Unfinished Business
- (f) New Business
- (g) Announcements
- (h) Adjournment

Section 5

Quorum and Voting -- A quorum consists of one-half (1/2) of Department's active Members and must be present before Department business is initiated. All voting related to personnel shall be by secret ballot.

Article 10 Training

The Department will maintain a training program which shall maintain and advance proficiency as Firefighters and EMT's.

Article 11 Fire Prevention

The Department will support a program in fire prevention for the County and surrounding areas.

Article 12 Miscellaneous

Section 1 Leave of Absence -- A leave of absence of no more than thirty (30) days may be granted to any Member by the Chief. A leave of absence of more than (30) days, but not to exceed twelve (12) months, may be granted if the applicant presents his request in person or in letter, stating his reasons for such request, at a regular business meeting of this Department. Any Member who receives a leave of absence of more than thirty (30) days must return all turn-out gear and equipment to the Quartermaster or to an officer.

Section 2 Amendments to Rules and Regulations -- These Rules and Regulations may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present at any regular business meeting.

Section 3 Insignia

1. Insignia patch of the Department shall be worn on right upper arm, one inch below the shoulder seam.

(b) Badges shall be worn over left pocket of uniform.

(c) Any clothing bearing the Departments name or insignia must be approved by the Chief of the Department.

Section 4 Adoption -- Amendments to these Rules and Regulations shall require a 2/3 vote of a quorum present at a business meeting.