

Operating Guideline # 1201

Professional Conduct – Firefighter Code of Ethics

Created October 1, 2020

Reviewed July 14, 2022



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish criteria that encourages fire service personnel to promote a culture of ethical integrity and high standards of professionalism in our field. The broad scope of this guideline is intended to mitigate and negate situations that may result in embarrassment and waning of public support for what has historically been a highly respected profession.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

The Fire Service is a noble calling, one which is founded on mutual respect and trust between firefighters and the citizens they serve. To ensure the continuing integrity of the Fire Service, the highest standards of ethical conduct must be maintained at all times.

Ethics comes from the Greek word ethos, meaning character. Character is not necessarily defined by how a person behaves when conditions are optimal and life is good. It is easy to take the high road when the path is paved and obstacles are few or non-existent. Character is also defined by decisions made under pressure, when no one is looking, when the road contains land mines, and the way is obscured. As members of the Fire Service, we share a responsibility to project an ethical character of professionalism, integrity, compassion, loyalty and honesty in all that we do, all of the time.

We need to accept this ethics challenge and be truly willing to maintain a culture that is consistent with the expectations outlined in this document. By doing so, we can create a legacy that validates and sustains the distinguished Fire Service institution, and at the same time ensure that we leave the Fire Service in better condition than when we arrived.

GUIDELINE:

1. Company officers shall be vigilant for unprofessional behaviours and understand that failure to resolve or report behaviour contrary to this guideline equates to condoning and may result in discipline for the officer.
2. MLFD members who demonstrate unprofessional conduct contrary to this guideline are subject to progressive discipline, up to and including dismissal.
3. MLFD members must always conduct themselves, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively on their person, our fire department and the fire service in general.
4. MFLD members will accept responsibility for their actions and for the consequences of their actions.

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5. MLFD members will support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.
6. MFLD members will avoid situations that would adversely affect the credibility of public perception of the fire service profession.
7. MLFD members will be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.
8. MLFD members conduct their personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the performance of our collective duty, or bring discredit to the organization.
9. MLFD members will be respectful and conscious of each members safety and welfare.
10. MLFD members must recognize that they serve in position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment and that these are protected from misuse, abuse and theft.
11. MLFD members will exercise professionalism, competence, respect and loyalty in the performance of their duties and use information, confidential or otherwise, gained by the virtue of our position, only to benefit those they are entrusted to serve.
12. MLFD members will avoid financial investments, outside employment, outside business interests or activities that conflict with their official position or have the potential to create the perception of impropriety.
13. MLFD members will never propose or accept personal rewards, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honours or gifts that may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.
14. MLFD members will never engage in activities involving alcohol or other substance use or abuse that can impair the mental state or the performance of their duties and / or compromise safety.
15. MLFD members will never discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition or handicap.

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16. MLFD members will never harass, intimidate or threaten fellow members of the service or the public and stop or report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors.

17. MLFD members will responsibly use social networking, electronic communications, or other media technology opportunities in a manner that does not discredit, dishonor or embarrass the organization, the Township of Muskoka Lakes, the fire service and the public.