

Winterville EMS Standard Operating Guidelines

Article I

General Responsibilities

Section 1-1 Knowledge of Responsibilities and Procedures

Each member of Winterville EMS is responsible for learning and understanding all matters contained in these Rules and Regulations and for following all policies, rules and regulations contained herein. Upon employment with the Department, each member is issued a Policy and Procedure Manual. It is the responsibility of each member to keep his or her manual up to date and to be aware of all changes. Failure to know and follow the rules and regulations, or to keep his or her manual up to date, will subject the member to disciplinary procedures.

Section 1-2 Authorization of Power and Duties

The EMS Chief shall have and exercise the powers and duties authorized by state law and the Pitt County Emergency Services contract.

Section 1-3 Standard of Conduct On and Off Duty

The Winterville EMS department is judged by the behavior, demeanor, and performance of its members in their official capacity and in many unofficial encounters in which their behavior and/or words are linked to the Department. This section specifies some standards of conduct, which are required of all department members. But since it is impossible to anticipate every situation or question regarding personal conduct, the first rule is given as a general guideline.

- A. Conduct Unbecoming a Member. A member must conduct himself or herself at all times in a manner most favorable to the department, avoiding behavior unbecoming a member of the Winterville EMS Department. Conduct unbecoming a member is any word or act, which in the opinion of the EMS Chief, reflects discredit, causes disrepute, or produces criticism or abuse to the Department or the individual as a member of the department, or impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department or member. This conduct is cause for serious disciplinary action, including dismissal.

- B. Insubordination. Intentional insubordination is willful disobedience of a lawful order; refusing to submit to departmental authority; knowingly countermanding, reversing, or refusing to issue orders as given by a higher ranking officer; interfering with or intervening in matters beyond the scope of one's duty; or interfering with administrative policies. Such conduct is cause for serious disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- C. Obedience to Laws and Regulations. Each member must observe and obey all Federal and State laws, city and county ordinances, rules, regulations, personnel policies, and orders of the Winterville EMS Department.
- D. Deception. Intentional deception through falsehood, failure to report all relevant information, implication, or inaccurate reports is not allowed and may result in serious disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- E. Intoxication. While on duty or when assigned call duty, a member may not consume or take alcoholic beverages or non-prescribed drugs, be intoxicated, or be under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs consumed or taken off duty to the extent that it impairs the member's ability to perform regularly scheduled assignments. A member suspected of being under the influence of alcohol while on duty may be required to take a breathalyzer test, and the results of the test may be used for any administrative purpose concerning the incident. Members under the influence of prescribed drugs or otherwise intoxicated or impaired will notify the on call Captain or Chief prior to reporting to work. Members are subject to serious disciplinary action, including dismissal, for any of the following offenses:
 - a. Failure to report to regular duty or assigned call duty or tardiness in reporting to duty because of intoxication, being under the influence of any beverage containing alcohol, use of non-prescription drugs, or abuse of prescription drugs.
 - b. Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol, non-prescription drugs, or abuse of prescription drugs.
 - c. Concealing, storing, carrying, selling, or attempting to sell any alcoholic beverage, drug, or drug compounds on EMS property, on the way to or at any EMS scene, or while in uniform.
 - d. Drinking or being under the influence of any alcohol or non-prescription drug while in uniform anywhere, anytime.
 - e. Refusing to take a blood alcohol test as part of an investigation of a disciplinary incident.
- F. Malicious Gossip. Members shall not engage in malicious gossip about other members of the Department.

- G. Courtesy. Members shall give courteous attention and use proper address toward ranking members, public officials, visitors, and other members of the public working in, visiting, or telephoning the station.
- H. Social Calls. Members are not allowed to visit with persons while on duty at any time for sexual encounters.
- I. Lounging Outside Station. Members may sit only in chairs on Department property. Sitting on sidewalks and curbing is prohibited.
- J. Loyalty. All members of Winterville EMS are expected to be loyal to the department and its associates as is consistent with the law, personal ethics, and professional standards.
- K. Cooperation. All members are expected to perform all duties in a high spirit of cooperation with fellow personnel, other emergency services providers, and the public at large. All members are expected to assist other members of the department in performing assigned duties.
- L. Impartiality. All members must perform work with complete impartiality towards all people encountered. The people of the State of North Carolina are guaranteed equal protection under the law. Exhibiting partiality for or against a person because of race, creed, sex, religion, origin, influence, or other factors is not acceptable and may result in disciplinary action.
- M. Privacy. All members shall comply with the federal mandates of the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. If a member or public citizen feels that a violation has occurred, this must be reported in writing to the designated officer.

Section 1-4 Physical Fitness

All members of the department must be good physical condition to handle the strenuous physical exertion often required in EMS work. The EMS Chief may establish physical fitness standards appropriate to age and assignment.

Section 1-5 Residence and Telephone Requirements

- A. Residence. Members of Winterville EMS are not required to live within the Winterville response district. Members who reside in the response district will have priority over other members when decisions are made regarding paging and radio equipment.
- B. Telephone. All members are required to have a telephone number on file with the department. Such member should be accessible for department contact at this number.
- C. Change of Address or Telephone Number. At all times, a member must have his or her current address and telephone number on file

in the Office of the Chief. In the event that an address or telephone number changes, the member must report the change to an officer on or before the day it occurs. The officer shall be responsible for forwarding this information to the Chief in a timely manner.

- D. Providing of Home Address or Telephone Number. No member of the department shall furnish another member's home telephone number or address to a member of the public without the permission of the member whose number or address is requested.
- E. Listing of Telephone Number. A listing of all members' telephone numbers shall be posted in an accessible location in the EMS office to be used only for departmental emergency operations.

Section 1-6 Political Activity

Each member has a civic responsibility to support good government. Each member may join or affiliate with civic organizations of a partisan or political nature, may attend political meetings, may advocate and support the principles or the policies of civic or political organizations in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the State of North Carolina and the United States of America. However, no member shall:

1. Engage in political or partisan activity while on duty;
2. Be required as a duty of employment or as a condition for employment, promotion, or tenure of office to contribute funds for political or partisan purposes;
3. Solicit or act as custodian of funds for political or partisan purposes;
4. Coerce or compel contributions for political or partisan purposes by any other WEMS employee;
5. Use any supplies or equipment of WEMS for political or partisan purposes; and
6. In any manner contribute to, influence, participate, or take part in any election, primary, or any political contest for offices of the city of Winterville other than exercising the right to vote.

Article II

On-Duty Responsibilities

Section 2-1 Delegation of Duty

A member must, at all times, respond to the lawful orders of supervisory personnel and other proper authorities. Orders shall be clear and understandable and issued only in the pursuit of departmental business. If there is doubt about the meaning of an order, the member shall seek clarification. If conflicting orders are issued, the member to whom they are issued shall so inform the person issuing the second order. The responsibility for resolving the conflict, if possible, or countermanding the original order, if resolution is not possible, then rests with the person issuing the second order. A member receiving an unlawful, unjust, or improper order shall, at first opportunity, report in writing to the next higher authority through official channels. This report shall contain the facts of the incident, and the action taken. Appeals for relief from such orders may be made at the same time.

Section 2-2 Conduct toward Superior and Subordinate Members

- A. Employees shall treat other members, officers, subordinates, and associates with respect. An employee shall be courteous and civil at all times in relationship with others when on duty and particularly in the presence of other members, employees, or the public.
- B. A supervisor will not reprimand subordinates in the presence of other members, employees, or the public. Exceptions would include the necessity of a reprimand to ensure safe operations.

Section 2-3 Conduct toward the Public

Each employee of the Department shall be courteous and orderly in his or her dealings with the public. He or she shall perform duties without using harsh, violent, profane, or insolent language and always remain calm. Upon request, a member is required to supply his or her name in a polite manner.

Section 2-4 Attendance

- A. Reporting for Duty. EMS members reporting for duty should arrive 15 minutes prior to their scheduled shift. If a member is going to be late, the off going shift should be notified as well as the designated officer.
- B. Tardiness. Tardiness will result in disciplinary action unless it has been approved in advance by the designated officer or Chief.
- C. Illness. Members who are ill and cannot report for duty must personally notify the designated officer 4 hours prior to the beginning of the shift. In extreme cases, a family member may notify the officer according to these procedures. A member who misses work because of illness may be required to bring a statement from a doctor concerning the necessity of the absence.
- D. Leaving Duty Early. No member may go off duty before change of shift without receiving permission from the designated officer or Chief.

Section 2-5 Personal Appearance

- A. Uniforms. Uniforms are issued as available. Coats and keys are required to be turned back into the department upon request and/or termination of membership. Failure to do so will result in financial penalty. All members shall maintain a neat personal appearance while on duty or special event attendance. During the day EMS pants with departmental shirts will be worn. Approved jumpsuits may be worn at night or when responding to calls off-duty.
- B. Hairstyles and Jewelry. Hair must be kept brushed in a manner that projects a proper public appearance. For females, hair of length must be kept pulled back from the face while on duty. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum; a watch, two rings. Earrings should not dangle, as these could prove hazardous on a scene. Facial rings should be removed during duty. Perfumed products should be kept to a minimum.

Section 2-6 Safety

- A. Duty to Practice Safety. All members shall practice safety and efficiency in every aspect of their work.
- B. Driving. Any person driving an EMS unit shall have in his or her possession a current NC operator's license. When responding to calls, the driver shall proceed to the scene using safe methods of driving. He or she must at all

times maintain the vehicle in complete control and always keep a reasonable clearance between the vehicle and any vehicle in front traveling in the same direction. When turning corners, passing through crowded streets, intersections, school or hospital zones, and wherever traffic is heavy, the driver must slow the vehicle to a speed consistent with safety and traffic conditions. Excessive speed, careless and reckless, or other unsafe driving and abuse of equipment is strictly forbidden. Any member who loses his or her operator's license for 90 or more days, without driving privileges, will be dismissed. Any member who loses his or her operator's license for less than 90 days will be suspended for that amount of time.

C. Report of Accidents. All accidents, including personal injuries, shall be immediately reported to the officer on call. A written incident report of the accident is to be completed and turned in to the Chief before the member goes off duty.

Section 2-7 Departmental Equipment and Property

A. Condition of Equipment. All equipment must be clean, in good working order, and conform to department specifications.

B. Individual Responsibility. Each member is responsible for the proper care of departmental equipment and property issued to him or her. Any member losing or damaging departmental property through negligence, carelessness, or malicious intent may be required to reimburse Winterville EMS for the loss or damage and may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. A member must report to the officer on call any loss or damage to departmental property assigned to or used by the employee before the member goes off duty. The officer will conduct such investigation as is needed to determine the facts. A member must report to the immediate supervisor any defect or hazardous condition which the employee knows or believes to exist in any departmental equipment, building, or property.

C. Buildings. No member shall mark, mar or deface any surface in the building. No material shall be affixed to any wall or posted on any bulletin board without authorization from an officer.

D. Notices. No member will mark, alter, or deface any posted notice of the department. No notices of derogatory or obscene nature will be posted at any time.

E. Maintenance of Manuals. Each member who is issued a membership manual is responsible for its maintenance and will make appropriate changes or inserts as they arise.

F. Equipment Return upon Separation. A member is required to surrender all departmental equipment in his or her possession upon separation from the department. A member will be charged with the fair market value of non-expendable items not returned.

Article III

Disciplinary Procedures

Section 3-1 Purpose

Disciplinary procedures are established to insure fair and equitable treatment of department personnel who deviate from established departmental policy or procedures.

Section 3-2 When Invoked

The disciplinary procedures will be invoked whenever:

- A. a member has violated a rule, regulation, or policy of the department;
- B. there is a valid internal or external complaint against an employee;
- C. a member has committed an act or omission which:
 - (1) seriously undermines his or her ability to carry out duties effectively;
 - (2) violates a North Carolina or United States law or city or county ordinance regardless of whether charges are filed, an arrest is made, or judicial resolution is rendered;
 - (3) brings serious disrepute upon the employee or department;
 - (4) is gross misconduct;
 - (5) is in violation of another's civil rights.
- D. an employee fails to perform assigned duties.

Section 3-3 Responsibility for Action

All members shall be responsible for reporting violations of rules, regulations, policies, and procedures by members of the department that come to their attention. Reports may be given either verbally to immediate supervisors or in writing to the Chief.

Section 3-4 Preliminary Steps

If a complaint against a member is of such serious nature that the member cannot effectively perform his or her duties, or the department is handicapped in its function because of the member's employment, or the alleged offense is one for which the member may be dismissed, the member may be suspended immediately pending the outcome of the investigation and disciplinary process.

Section 3-5 Findings

Once the facts have been determined, the results will be classified as follows:

- A. Unfounded. The facts indicate that the member did not commit the alleged act or that the member's actions were not of such a nature that disciplinary procedures could be invoked.
- B. Unresolved. The allegations about the member cannot be clearly proven based on available facts.
- C. Founded. The facts indicate that the member committed the alleged act and that said act is one for which disciplinary procedures should be invoked.

The standard for resolving complaints against members or violations by members shall be the preponderance of evidence.

Section 3-6 Disciplinary Action

Consistency in applying disciplinary actions is a departmental goal; however, each case shall be considered individually, and mitigating and unusual circumstances may be taken into consideration. After determining that an offense or infraction has occurred, the following options are available:

A. Counseling Conference. It is recommended that counseling be used for the first offense and minor infractions. Counseling means that the officer works with the member to decide how to resolve the incident and warn him or her that more serious disciplinary action will be taken if there is a recurrence. The officer does not have to document these conferences, but should record the date, time, and subject.

B. Disciplinary Conference. The officer should counsel the member, instruct him or her not to repeat the incident, warn of future consequences, and write up the conference which must be signed by the member, officer, and Chief.

C. Suspension. In addition to the officer's ability to suspend a member for the remainder of a duty shift, the Assistant Chief has the option of suspending the member pending completion of an investigation. Any suspensions for greater than 14 days must have the approval of the Chief. The member should be counseled and informed of the suspension in a meeting where the member is warned that another infraction may lead to dismissal.

D. Disciplinary Probation. The Chief or Assistant Chief may place a member on disciplinary probation for a period not to exceed one year. Disciplinary probation shall serve as a period of final notice to a member that a problem exists and, that if continued, repeated, or not appropriately corrected, may jeopardize continued association with the EMS department.

Section 3-7 Duty to Cooperate

Every member has a duty to cooperate with any investigation.

Section 3-8 Criminal Prosecution

If an employee commits a criminal offense, the department may elect to press criminal charges in addition to any internal disciplinary procedures it may apply.

Article IV

Grievance Procedures

Section 4-1 Purpose

The grievance procedure is designed to provide an employee/member fair, impartial, and prompt consideration of a problem or dissatisfaction without fear of reprisal. Open, two-way communication is encouraged and can often lead to informal resolution of problems.

Section 4-2 Procedure

A member who has a grievance with a disciplinary action may request a hearing from a grievance committee. The committee will be comprised of 4 members of the department, varying levels of certification. They will named randomly. Also present will be at least one member of the Board of Directors. Also present will be the Chief, and at least one officer. Neither the Chief nor the officer shall be allowed to vote on the hearing. At the close of the hearing, the committee may vote to overturn the disciplinary action taken by the Chief.