Southern Webster County Fire Protection District

Disciplinary Policy
Policy No.: 2025-11
Effective Date: _____
Issued By: Deputy Chief Justin Levy
Approved By: Board President _____ on _____

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, consistent, and progressive disciplinary process for all members of the Southern Webster County Fire Protection District. The goal of discipline is to correct behavior, maintain professionalism, support accountability, and preserve the integrity and safety of the District.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Southern Webster County Fire Protection District, including cadets, firefighters, and all officers.

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3. Policy Overview

The District utilizes a **progressive discipline model**, designed to address misconduct or performance deficiencies at the lowest effective level:

1. **Verbal Counseling**
2. **Written Warning**
3. **Suspension** (Board Notified)
4. **Recommendation for Removal** (Board Approval)

The District may accelerate steps depending on severity, safety risk, or repeated behavior.

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4. Definitions

4.1 Verbal Counseling

A formal discussion to identify concerns, explain expectations, and prevent recurrence.

4.2 Written Warning

A documented notice specifying the violation and corrective actions required.

4.3 Suspension

Temporary removal from district activities; the Board of Directors will be notified of all suspensions.

4.4 Recommendation for Removal

A formal request submitted to the Board for membership termination.

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5. Grounds for Discipline

Disciplinary action may be taken for violations including:

● Unsafe actions
● Disrespect or insubordination
● Damage or misuse of district equipment
● Unprofessional behavior
● Harassment, discrimination, hostile conduct
● Alcohol/drug use on duty
● Policy or procedural violations
● Criminal behavior

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6. Disciplinary Process

6.1 Step 1: Verbal Counseling

Used for minor violations or first-time occurrences. Documented by the Officer and placed in the member’s file.

6.2 Step 2: Written Warning

Issued for repeated issues or more serious misconduct.
The written warning:

● Describes the violation
● Lists corrective expectations
● Is signed by both the member and the Officer
● Is filed in the member's record

6.3 Step 3: Suspension (Board Notified)

Suspension may occur when:

● Verbal and written steps fail
● The violation involves safety or operational impact
● Misconduct requires immediate corrective action

The Board of Directors will be notified within 24 hours.

6.4 Step 4: Recommendation for Removal (Board Approval)

Used when:

● Misconduct is severe
● There is a repeated pattern after suspension
● Behavior endangers personnel, the public, or the District's reputation

The Board reviews the recommendation and votes on removal.

6.5 Twelve-Month Discipline Window

All progressive disciplinary actions remain active for a **12-month period** from the date of issuance.

● If a second violation occurs **within 12 months**, the process automatically advances to the **next disciplinary step**.
● If **no additional violations occur for 12 months**, the progressive discipline cycle resets, and future issues begin again with verbal counseling unless the violation is severe.
● Suspensions and recommendations for removal **remain permanently recorded**, even after the 12-month period, but are not counted as active steps unless new violations occur.

This ensures fairness, consistency, and accountability while supporting long-term improvement.

7. Immediate Removal Clause

The District reserves the right to bypass steps when misconduct is serious, dangerous, illegal, or significantly impacts district operations.

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8. Member Rights & Due Process

Members have the right to:

- Be informed of the violation
- Provide their perspective
- Appeal discipline to the Chief, Deputy Chief, or Board of Directors
- Receive documentation of all actions taken

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9. Documentation & Recordkeeping

All disciplinary actions—including counseling, warnings, suspensions, and Board rulings—are documented and stored in the member's personnel file.

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10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Chief and submitted to the Board for updates.