

ALBANY COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #1 FITNESS FOR DUTY POLICY

**Approved: 5/15/2019, Art Sigel, Joe Witt, Jon Essley
Updated: 7/20/2022, Luke Hawkins, Brett Wadsworth, Matt Burkhart**

Section I

Purpose

Albany County Fire District #1 (ACFD#1) is committed to promoting a safe and healthy environment for its volunteers. Such an environment is possible only when each volunteer is able to perform his or her duties in a safe, secure, and effective manner, while remaining able to do so throughout the entire time he or she is working. ACFD#1 recognizes that many situations and/or substances can impair our volunteers "fitness for duty". Volunteers who are not fit for duty may present a safety risk to themselves, the community, and other responders.

We recognize the responsibility and obligation we have to conduct both our personal and professional lives with scrupulous attention to values, morals, and ethics, in order to retain the trust and confidence of our community, County, and State.

The goal of ACFD#1 is to ensure that volunteers responding to emergency events are both physically and psychologically fit to discharge their duties without unusual risk to themselves, other responders, and/or the general public.

ACFD#1 is required to comply with federal and state disability laws (Primarily the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)). In doing so, ACFD#1 is authorized to require medical examinations if the requirement is job-related, and consistent with the operational necessities of a volunteer fire district.

Section II

1. Scope

- a. This policy applies to all individuals responding to emergencies or planned events as they relate to ACFD#1. Regardless of which department, station, or office within ACFD#1 such person is directly associated with, this policy applies to all incidents and activities that fall under the jurisdictional authority of ACFD#1.
- b. Each volunteer is responsible for managing their own health in such a way that they can safely perform their duties as a volunteer of the district.

2. Definitions

- a. "Fit[ness] for Duty" means that an individual is physically and mentally capable of safely performing the essential functions of his/her job as a volunteer firefighter of the district, in a physical mental and emotional state which enables the person to perform the essential tasks of his or her work assignment as a volunteer and/or representative of the district in a manner which does NOT threaten the safety or health of oneself, co-volunteers/workers, property or the public at large. "Fitness for Duty" can be reduced by medications, prescribed drugs, illegal drugs, alcohol, injuries, health status, psychological disorders and other situations.

- b. "Duty" means "when responding to any emergency incident or planned activity as a representative of ACFD#1 and/or Department in ACFD#1".

3. Conduct

- a. A person and/or volunteer not "Fit for Duty," should not respond to a Dispatch call or otherwise participate in responding to any emergency activity or needs of ACFD#1.
- b. If a person and/or volunteer has responded, but later realizes he/she is not "Fit for Duty," the individual is obligated to immediately notify the senior officer in charge and voluntarily disqualify himself or herself from any further response, actions or activity. The individual should physically remove himself or herself from the site of the emergency or any other place where official activity on behalf of the district is being undertaken. If the individual is severely impaired, the senior officer or his designee should call 911 and request assistance.

Understand and accept _____

- c. If the Senior ACFD#1 Officer or his designee observes an individual and/or volunteer is not fit for duty, the Officer or his designee will do the following.
 - 1. Inform the individual that he/she is being relieved from duty at this time and he/she is required to leave the site.
 - 2. Assure the individual has safe transportation to leave the site.
 - 3. Document the circumstances that led to the individual being relieved of duty and verbally communicate such information to the person's Department Chief.
 - 4. The Chief of such person, within 24 hours, will schedule a meeting to discuss the situation with the individual, to discuss the circumstances, and to determine next steps.

Understand and accept _____

- d. All persons have an obligation to immediately report concerns regarding fitness for duty to a senior officer. That officer will be responsible for handling the situation further.

Understand and accept _____

4. Discipline

- a. Episodes that involve a volunteer being found unfit for duty due to physical injuries, medical issues, or prescribed medications will require an examination by a licensed physician and physician's statement of full or conditional clearance before returning to duty.
- b. Episodes that involve a volunteer being found unfit for duty due to possible alcohol or illegal drug use will require the volunteer to be transported immediately to Iverson Medical Center for drug and alcohol related lab work at the volunteer's consent. Refusal of consent will result in immediate termination of the volunteer's affiliation with ACFD#1. Positive test results for alcohol or illegal drugs will also result in immediate termination of the volunteer's affiliation with ACFD#1
- c. Any officer or acting officer suspected of knowingly disregarding this policy will be placed on suspension from duty until a panel of fire officers from the departments within ACFD#1 is chosen, that panel concludes an investigation, and the appropriate disciplinary action is implemented.

Understand and accept _____

ALBANY COUNTRY FIRE DISTRICT #1

Fitness for Duty Consent Form

By signing this document, I affirm I have received a copy of the Albany County Fire District #1 (ACFD#1) Fitness for Duty Policy. I am aware of and accept the Conduct and Discipline sections of this Policy.

Minimum Fitness requirements for District personnel include:

Light Duty Test for support personnel responding in support roles to incidents.

Moderate Duty Test for personnel involved in direct suppression efforts to incidents

As reference by NWCG 310-1 Work Capacity tests *Walk Test* and *Field Test*

I understand that I am responsible for understanding and complying with this policy and the procedures therein. I am aware that the ACFD#1 Board and/or Department Chiefs are available to answer questions to help me understand this policy.

Print Name Date

Department

Signature

Moderate Duty Test (Field Test) – This is a job-related test to determine an individual’s ability to perform the minimum standards of moderate duty. It consists of completing a 2-mile walk over level terrain in 30 minutes or less while carrying a 25-pound pack.

Light Duty Test (Walk Test) – This is a job-related test to determine an individual’s ability to perform the minimum standards of light duty. The test consists of completing a 1-mile walk over level terrain in 16 minutes or less with no load.

For more information about the Work Capacity Test consult [Work Capacity Test Administrators Guide \(nwcg.gov\)](https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pms307.pdf) <https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pms307.pdf>