



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY HANDBOOK

### FOREWORD

The decisions which the administration make for the operation of this District will be based on the policies determined by the Board as set forth in this policy manual.

The manual will be kept current as to revisions, additions, and deletions. It will be available to the public and District staff at all times.

This manual is subject to change and therefore not a complete statement of Board policies. It does not form a part of any employment contract nor promise any specific treatment. It is simply a general summary of the Board's current policies, procedures, and benefits.

Flexibility in making policy changes means the Board is able to meet future needs and challenges. Accordingly, the Board reserves the right to amend, modify, and eliminate any of these policies, rules, procedures, and benefits at any time.

The Board reserves full discretionary authority to interpret and apply all District policies and procedures and reserves exclusive authority to determine how those policies and procedures will apply to specific issues and specific circumstances. The Board's determination on all such matters is final and binding.

This manual supersedes any other oral or written provisions, descriptions, or understandings of the District's policies, rules, procedures, and benefits. The provisions summarized herein may be modified, supplemented, or waived only in writing when approved by the Board (or designee) and signed by the Chief or designee(s).

Those policies required by federal and state laws and regulations are subject to changes of those laws and regulations.

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## DIRECTORS, QUALIFICATIONS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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## THE DIRECTOR IN A FIRE DISTRICT (SUMMARY)

Anyone who is a voter or owner within a Rural Fire Protection District and not an employee or volunteer with the District can be a Director on that District's Board. Bonding is required of at least the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board. District Directors carry a great deal of responsibility. They must be aware of legal requirements in areas ranging from budgeting and taxation to holding public meetings and elections. They are responsible to the people of the District for the quality of fire service and the competency of those persons providing that service. They must be able to put aside self-interests in order to assure that the needs of the people are met. Effective leadership from District Board members is essential to quality fire and life safety in Oregon.

## GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board members of Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue carry a great deal of responsibility.

They must be aware of legal requirements in areas ranging from budgeting and taxation to holding public meetings and elections.

They are responsible to the people of the District for the quality of service and the competency of those persons providing that service.

They must be able to put aside self-interests in order to assure that the needs of the people are met.

Effective leadership from the Board of Directors is essential if quality service is to be provided to their patrons. Board members should:

1. Recognize that an individual member has no legal status to act for the Board outside of an official meeting.
2. Refuse to make commitments on any matter that should properly come before the Board as a whole.
3. Respect the opinion of other members and graciously accept the principle of "majority rule" in Board decisions.
4. Insist that all District transactions be on an ethical and above-board basis.
5. Refuse to allow personal problems to be brought into Board considerations.
6. Insist that personnel complaints first go through the proper chain of command and only to the Board if not resolved at these levels.

## POLICY MAKING

Policy making is one of the most important responsibilities of a Board member. It is essential that the member thoroughly understand the goals, objectives, and general operating policy of the District. Developing objectives and policy is a two-step process:

**Planning:** Begins with broad, but measurable goals and objectives for the District. Planning allows the District to adapt to changing conditions by identifying and analyzing potential opportunities.

**Policy:** After goals and objectives are identified, specific strategies or policies to achieve these goals must be developed. Policy simplifies decision making. By developing defined steps and guidelines to steer the Board's actions, objectives can be more easily realized. Policies should be evaluated periodically to assure they lead toward stated goals. If not, they should be modified.

## MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

A Board member's time is limited. The following techniques assist in utilizing time efficiently and lead to more effective decision making:

**Set Priorities:** Prioritize projects in order of importance and act on them accordingly.

**Develop Study Plans:** List steps that must be followed and completion dates for each project.

**Encourage Citizen Participation:** Citizen groups and advisory committees can produce a great deal of information and expertise to aid the Board in its decision making. Generally, at least one Board member should be on each committee.

**Delegate Responsibility Where Possible:** Do not become involved in every activity of the District.

**Preparation:** Be knowledgeable of the District's activities.

**Follow Through:** Use leadership and authority to assure good ideas are implemented.

## LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS (ORS 478.050)

A Director of a Rural Fire Protection District shall be an elector or an owner within the District.

## BONDING

The District requires bonding of any member of the governing body or any officer or employee of the District who is charged with possession and/or control of District funds and properties.

The premium for this bond shall be paid from District funds. The amount of the bond shall be fixed by the Board. (ORS 198.220)

It should be realized that all Board members can be bonded for a minimal additional charge to the cost (premium) of bonding only one Board member. Thus, it can be both practical and beneficial to take the necessary steps to bond all members of the Board.

## POLICY DECISIONS

The following policy decisions should either be considered at the annual organizational meeting or reviewed each year:

1. How the Fire Chief and subordinate staff members are selected.
2. Mutual aid or mutual response with adjacent fire protection agencies (define which of the plans will be in force).
3. The regular Board meeting schedule.
4. Participation in Board meetings by the Board members (what percent of meetings missed before requesting resignation).
5. Activities permitted within the fire stations and other District facilities.
6. Responses outside District and not within mutual aid or response agreements to establish fee schedule.
7. Participation of staff and Board members in Fire District related educational sessions.
8. Accident insurance coverage for personnel (paid and/or volunteers).

## LEGAL REFERENCES

ORS 198.220  
ORS 478.050