Warning: Hot Coffee!

The Emerging Issue of Fire Service Ethics

No. HC-2012-2 September 5, 2012

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to identify a source for the National Society of Executive Fire Officers and Congressional Fire Services Institute Code of Ethics.

Loday's fire service leaders face a variety of challenges managing budgets, personnel, and programs. Occasionally, ethical issues emerge for which there are no easy answers.

To provide guidance to address these complex questions, the National Society of Executive Fire Officers (NSEFO) and Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) jointly have released a firefighter code of ethics that can be adopted by local fire and emergency medical service organizations. The ethics statement is the result of almost 2 years of effort by the Board of Directors of NSEFO.

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 nonexistent. 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.

In acknowledgement of the importance of this first-of-its-kind fire service ethics statement, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has posted the statement throughout

the National Fire Academy (NFA) facilities and will now include the statement in all course materials distributed to NFA students.

To download a copy of the NSEFO statement suitable for posting within fire department facilities and for distribution, visit the USFA website at www. usfa.fema.gov/fireservice/



FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS

- behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of service. Therefore, I piedge the following...
- Always conduct myself, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively or and the fire service in general. Accept responsibility for my actions and for the consequences of my actions. Support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.
- Avaid situations that would adversely affect the credibility or public perception of the profession.
- Processon: Processon: Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dish compromise the integrity of the fire service. compromise the integrity of the new service. Conduct my personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the perform duties, or bring discredit to my organization.

- (a) powerow rom misuse and theft, sectice professionalism, competence, respect and loyalty in the performance of my formation, confidential or otherwise, gained by virtue of my position, only to be utrusted to serve.
- to an examination of your promotion to more use potentions to trace the perception or impropriety. The propose or accept personal reveals, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honors or gifts may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.

Eligible for Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/