



# Bristol Fire Department Policy Manual

Adopted: 00/00/0000

**Section 1. Scope of Manual**

- 1.01 The purpose of this manual is to establish policies for the Bristol Fire Department that is hereby recognized as a Municipal Volunteer Department by the Town of Bristol, pursuant 24 V.S.A. § 1951.
- 1.02 This manual, after adoption by the Selectboard, shall replace the Bristol Fire Department Policy Manual adopted January 2, 2017.
- 1.03 All firefighters shall familiarize themselves with and abide by all policies and general rules and regulations concerning the Bristol Fire Department, hereinafter referred to as the “Department”.

**Section 2: Definition of Terms**

- 2.1 Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the words, combination of words, terms, and phrases as used in these Rules and Regulations shall have the meanings set forth in the following subdivisions.
  - 2.1.1 “Firefighter”: Any firefighter, officer and probationary firefighter. Firefighters are subject to applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to, the Workers’ Compensation Rules, and such withholding deductions from call status pay as are required by law.
  - 2.1.2 Active Status: Compliance with the minimum requirements for training and response to calls and maintenance of all department standards for fitness for duty.
  - 2.1.3 Inactive Status: Non-compliance with the minimum requirements for training and/or response to calls and/or maintenance of all department standards for fitness for duty.
  - 2.1.4 Fire Officer: Any person who has been appointed/elected and has command authority over a portion of Department operations as designated by the Fire Chief. Officers include a Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Captains and Lieutenants.
  - 2.1.5 Support Officer: Any person who has been appointed/elected and provides a critical support in carrying out the Department Mission. This includes the Apparatus Maintenance Officers.

- 2.1.6 Place of Residence: The domicile where a firefighter lives and is or would be eligible to become a registered voter and at which the individual would be allowed to declare homestead property (if the individual owns the property and meets other eligibility requirements) for real estate tax purposes.
- 2.1.7 Response Time Requirement: All firefighters on active status (including those on probationary status) are required to be able to respond by arrival at the fire station within eight (8) minutes of the initial sounding of the fire alarm. This response time requirement of eight (8) minutes shall be determined by the Fire Chief and will be timed under normal atmospheric conditions and while the firefighter is abiding by all applicable speed laws and traffic regulations.
- 2.1.8 Town: Town of Bristol Selectboard or its designated representative(s).

### **Section 3: Fire Department Organization**

- 3.1 The organization of the Fire Department shall be as authorized by the Town.
- 3.2 Chain of Command and Staffing
- 3.2.1 Under the direction of the Town, the Department shall be administered by the Fire Chief, and such other officers as provided for in this manual and other rules, regulations and/or policies as otherwise established by the Town.
- 3.2.2 The Department shall have as many firefighters as the Town shall deem necessary.
- 3.2.3 A reduction or increase in staffing of the Department shall be recommended by the Fire Chief and approved by the Town.
- 3.2.4 The Chain of Command for the Department shall be as follows:
- Fire Chief
  - Deputy Chief
  - Assistant Fire Chief
  - Captain (2)
  - Lieutenant (2)
- 3.2.4.1 The Fire Chief shall determine who has the higher rank between officers with the same rank.
- 3.3 Minimal position-relevant Requirements, Desirable Qualifications and Essential Duties of the Command and Support Officers, are outlined in the Bristol Fire Department Position Manual.

**Section 4: Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Personnel and Maintenance of Job-Relevant Requirements**

4.1 General Provisions

4.1.1 The Fire Chief shall provide for the recruitment, selection and recommendation of personnel consistent with Department Policies, the Town's Personnel Policies and applicable laws with Town approval. The Town, in exercising its authority and discretion as appointing authority may consider all relevant information including recommendations from the Fire Chief.

4.2 Minimal Job-Relevant Requirements and Desirable Qualifications.

4.2.1 Minimal position-relevant requirements and desirable qualifications are located in Appendix-A.

4.3 Recruitment

4.3.1 Recruitment of personnel shall be on going and comply with all provisions outlined in Department Policies and Town Personnel Policies.

4.4 Selection Procedures

4.4.1 All applicants must complete a Town of Bristol Fire Department application and submit it to the Fire Chief.

4.4.2 The selection procedures shall include the following, not necessarily in the order below:

1. Residency and Response Time compliance;
2. Interview with Chief Officers and Town representative; and
3. Medical evaluation.

4.4.3 Department appointments are made contingent upon passing a medical evaluation by a physician selected by the Town, and a background investigation administered by the Bristol Police Department. These are completed at no cost to the applicant.

#### 4.5 Health and Fitness Requirements

- 4.5.1 Tentative offers of appointment are made contingent upon passing a medical evaluation by a physician selected by the Town. The examining physician shall submit a written report concerning the applicant's health and fitness for duty to the Fire Chief. The physical administered shall meet the requirements of NFPA 1582: Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments.
- 4.5.2 All probationary firefighters and all regular firefighters may be required on a periodic or an "as needed" basis to undergo, at the Town's expense, an examination(s) to determine health and fitness for active status.
- 4.5.3 If, as a result of such examination(s) a firefighter is determined to be not fit for duty, the firefighter's condition and Town service needs shall be assessed to consider possible temporary light duty assignment for the firefighter. If, for reasons of business necessity and undue hardship the Town is unable to provide temporary light duty assignment, the firefighter may be placed on inactive status or terminated.
- 4.5.4 Medical evaluations will be retained in accordance with Town policies.

#### **Section 5: Probationary Period**

- 5.1 Initial Appointment as a Probationary Firefighter
  - 5.1.1 The initial appointment by the Town of any applicant shall be as a probationary firefighter. A probationary firefighter shall actively serve on the Department for twelve (12) months.
- 5.2 Minimum basic certification for Probationary Firefighters
  - 5.2.1 The Fire Chief shall enroll each probationary firefighter in the VT Fire Service Training Council approved Firefighter I program at the first available course opportunity.
  - 5.2.2 Probationary Firefighters with a current Firefighter I certification or equivalent at the time of appointment and with approval from the Fire Chief, will be exempt from completing the Firefighter I program. All other probationary requirements shall apply.

- 5.3 Each probationary firefighter shall undergo an evaluation every three (3) months. Each evaluation shall be discussed with the probationary firefighter and shall include, but not limited to, an understanding of the work, the quality and quantity thereof, and the probationer's ability to follow orders, dependability, initiative, work objectives and progress. The Fire Chief shall review each quarterly report with the Command Officers.
- 5.4 If, during the probationary period, the firefighter does not meet the standards or comply with active status annual requirements for the position or is otherwise determined to be not fit for active status, the probationer may be released by the Town at its discretion with recommendation from the Fire Chief.
- 5.5 Upon the Fire Chief's written report to the Town indicating that a probationer has successfully completed all job-relevant minimum requirements or came back in to compliance for active status, the Town may, at its sole discretion, appoint the individual from probationary firefighter status to active firefighter status.

**Section 6: Annual Requirements for Maintaining Active Status**

- 6.1 All firefighters shall meet the following requirements annually (calendar year) in order to maintain active status. Such requirements are subject to change.
  - 6.1.1 Respond to a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of all calls for service.
  - 6.1.2 Attend/participate in thirty hours (30 hrs.) of training, education, and professional development;
  - 6.1.3 Attend/participate in twenty-five percent (25%) of scheduled Department trainings;
  - 6.1.4 Demonstrate competency and proficiency in the duties and functions the firefighter is expected to perform;
  - 6.1.5 Maintain Standards for Recertification as outlined by the Vermont Fire Service Training Council;
  - 6.1.6 Attend/participate in scheduled staff meetings unless excused by a Chief Officer;
  - 6.1.7 Attend/participate in scheduled equipment/apparatus inspections and other scheduled work details unless excused by a Chief Officer;
  - 6.1.8 Maintain place of residence or response time requirement;
  - 6.1.9 Maintain a valid Driver's License.

- 6.2 Firefighters that do not comply with the annual requirements for active status shall be placed on probationary status for the next full evaluation period (January 1 – December 31). Following the evaluation period in which requirement(s) for active status were not met the Town, with recommendation from the Fire Chief, shall terminate appointment as a Town of Bristol Municipal Volunteer Firefighter.

**Section 7: Leave of Absence**

7.1 Leave of Absence - Request

7.1.1 Any probationary firefighter or regular firefighter may request a leave of absence from active status because of personal, family or medical reasons. Such request shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief shall consider the request and shall make a recommendation to the Town, which shall approve or reject the request based on consideration of the facts and circumstances of the request and Town service needs.

7.1.2 No more than ten percent (10%) of active firefighters shall be on leave at any time.

7.2 Leave of Absence - Duration

7.2.1 A leave of absence shall be for a minimum of three (3) months and a maximum of twelve (12) months except in case of medical reasons or if otherwise required by law. A firefighter must serve twelve (12) months of active status before requesting additional leave.

7.3 Leave of Absence - Medical

7.3.1 All requests for medical leave of absence shall be made to the Fire Chief and shall be accompanied by a written statement from a physician stating that the probationary firefighter or active firefighter is not able to perform all essential job duties of the firefighter position. The physician's statement shall include an estimated period of time for which the firefighter's condition is expected to continue.

7.3.2 The Town may require the firefighter's physician to provide additional information and prognosis at reasonable intervals.

7.3.3 Medical leave of absence may, at the discretion of the Town, be granted for a continuous period of up to one (1) year. At the end of one (1) year, if the firefighter is unable to return to active status, the firefighter may request an extension of medical leave. Such request for an extension shall be accompanied by additional information provided by the firefighter's physician. Each request shall be considered by the Town on a case-by-case basis.

7.4 Leave of Absence - Involuntary

7.4.1 The Fire Chief, following consultation with the Town Administrator, shall have the authority to impose an immediate involuntary leave of absence on a firefighter for reasons of concern for the health and/or fitness for duty of a firefighter. Such a determination shall also be made in consideration of the safety and welfare of the Department and the public.

7.4.2 The firefighter upon whom an involuntary leave of absence has been imposed shall have the right to appeal, within thirty (30) calendar days of placement on involuntary leave of absence, to the Town for a hearing.

7.4.3 The written notice of appeal shall be filed with the Town Administrator. If the firefighter seeks a second medical opinion in preparation for the hearing, the Town shall assume the expense of the examination and medical report.

7.4.4 The timely filed appeal shall be heard by the Town at its next regular scheduled meeting held no sooner than fourteen (14) calendar days or more than thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the written appeal.

7.5 Leave of Absence - Military

8.5.1 See Town of Bristol Personnel Policy on Military Leave (Section 30).

7.6 Leave of Absence - Return

7.6.1 A firefighter who returns to duty following a medical leave of absence in excess of one (1) year may, at the discretion of the Town and as a precondition to returning to duty, be required to undergo a medical examination at the Town's expense in order to determine the firefighter's fitness for duty and ability to perform all essential job functions.



7.7 Leave of Absence - Town Property

8.7.1 All Town property shall be returned;

8.7.2 Fire Station access shall be revoked.

**Section 8: Officers**

8.1 Command Officer

8.1.1 Fire Chief

8.1.2 Deputy Fire Chief

8.1.3 Assistant Fire Chief

8.1.4 Captain (2)

8.1.5 Lieutenant (2)

8.2 Support Officer

8.2.1 Apparatus Maintenance Officer (2)

8.3 Appointment of Officers

8.3.1 The Town shall appoint a Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief pursuant 24 V.S.A. § 1953 for a three (3) year term after reviewing applicants and determining whether individual applicants meet the appropriate certifications, qualifications and expectations for the position of Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief.

8.4 Election of Officers

8.4.1 Election of the Assistant Fire Chief, Captains, Lieutenants and Maintenance Officers, shall be for term of one (1) year (January 1 - December 31).

8.4.2 All nominations for officer candidates shall be announced at the November Staff Meeting of the Department.

8.4.3 The Fire Chief and Deputy Chief shall meet with each candidate and verify job-relevant criteria and minimum requirements/certifications are met. The name(s) of qualified candidate(s) will be announced by Department email prior to the December Staff Meeting of the Department.

8.4.4 Officer Elections will occur at the December Staff Meeting of the Department.

8.5 Minimal job-relevant requirements, certifications and desirable qualifications for officer positions are located in the "Officer Position Appendix Manual".