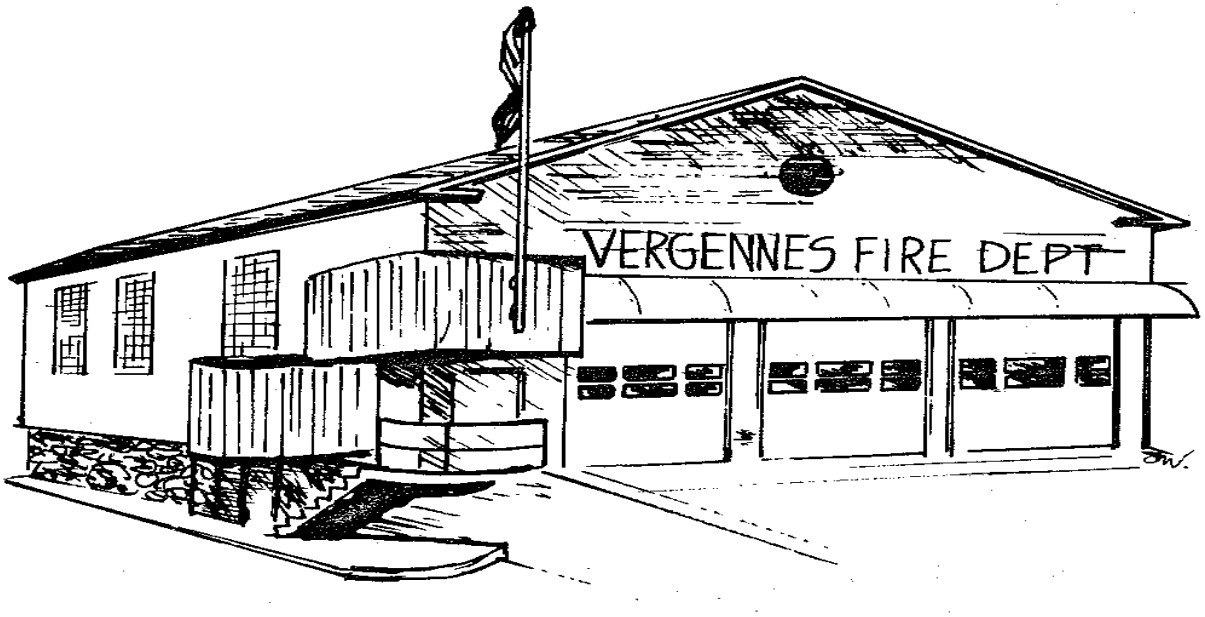
CITY OF VERGENNES FIRE DEPT



Fire Headquarters

50 Green Street

Vergennes, Vermont 05491

Station Office 802-877-3201

MANUAL

RULES, REGULATIONS

AND

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

8TH EDITION

2024

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Contents

1 Purpose of this Manual 6
2 Mission Statement 6
3 Responsibility of Fire Personnel 6
4 Department Membership and Roster 6
4.1 Honorary Membership 6
4.2 Life Membership 6
4.3 Recognition of Service 6
5 Standard for wearing of the Department Uniform 7
5.1 Adoption / Revision 9
6 Authority and Responsibility of Officers 9
6.1.1 Fire Chief 9
6.1.2 Authority - Chief 9
6.1.3 Authority and Responsibilities of Deputy Chiefs 9
6.1.4 Company Officer – Captains 10
6.1.5 Department Dispatcher 10
6.1.6 Staff Officer Appointments and Functions 11
6.1.7 Apparatus Drivers 11
6.2 Department Pay, Incentive, and reimbursement Policy 11
6.2.1 Chief Officer department owned equipment 11
7 Department Business Organization 12
7.1 Meetings 12
7.1.1 Special Meetings 12
7.2 Presiding Officer 12
7.3 Secretary 12
7.4 Executive Board 12
7.5 Firefighter 12
7.6 Probationary Firefighter 12
7.7 Qualified Firefighter 14
7.8 Annual Training Requirement for Firefighters 14
7.9 Annual In-Service Training for Interior Firefighters 14
7.10 Training for Assigned Drivers 14
7.11 Cadet Firefighter 14

8 Department Rules and Regulations 16
8.1 Standard of Conduct 16
8.2 Cooperation 16
8.3 General Responsibilities 16
8.4 Duty Responsibilities 16
8.5 Insubordination 16
8.6 Questions Regarding Assignments 16
8.7 Knowledge of Rules and Regulations 16
8.8 Performance of Duty 17
8.9 Restrictive Duty 17
8.10 Grievance, Reports and Appeals 17
8.11 Relief from Duty 17
8.12 Care of Department Property and Equipment 17
8.13 Wearing of Protective Clothing 17
8.14 Policy – Leave of Absence 17
8.15 Policy – Sexual Harassment 18
8.16 Department Discipline 18
8.16.1 Who is Subject to Disciplinary Action 18
8.16.2 Penalties 18
8.16.3 Department Authority to Discipline 18
8.16.4 Informing the Person(s) to be Disciplined 19
8.16.5 Appeals Process 19
8.17 Response to Alarms 19
8.17.1 Personnel 19
8.17.2 Personnel Response with Personal Vehicle 19
8.17.3 Officer Sign-On 19
8.17.4 Assigned Drivers 19
8.17.5 Operation of Apparatus 20
8.17.6 Status 20
8.17.7 Mutual Aid Response 20
8.17.8 Hazardous Materials Response 20
8.17.9 Command 21
8.17.10 Establishment 21
8.18 Fire Ground Operations 21

8.18.1 Fire Department Safety 21
8.18.2 Infection Control 22
8.19 Notification Policy Regarding Insurance Claim for Injury 22
8.20 Alcohol, Drugs and Narcotics 22
8.21 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus 22
8.21.1 Standard – Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) 22
8.21.2 Annual In-Service Training with SCBA 22
8.21.3 Responsibility 23
8.22 Release of Public Information 23
8.22.1 Policy – Release of Public Information 23
8.22.2 Responsibility for Release of Information 23
8.22.3 Liaison with Vergennes Area Rescue Squad 23
8.23 Fire Cause Investigation 24
8.23.1 Responsibility 24
8.23.2 Investigation 24
8.23.3 Preservation of Evidence 24
8.23.4 Observation 24
8.24 Fire Reports 24
9 Signature 24

1 Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this manual is for the guidance and information of all fire department personnel. The objective of this document is to provide complete information regarding standard operating guidelines, assignments, and general knowledge as it relates to the proper function and duties of all department personnel in the City of Vergennes Fire Department.

2 Mission Statement

In serving the public, firefighters must remember that their first duty to the citizens of the City of Vergennes and the fire district is the protection of life, property, and that they are doing something for someone, whether it be rescue, protection of property or special services. In other words, a firefighter is considered to be part of an emergency team, specializing in the prevention and suppression of fire. Responsibility of Fire Personnel

In order to perform their duties properly, it is absolutely essential that all fire department personnel familiarize themselves thoroughly with the contents of the manual.

3 Department Membership and Roster

The City of Vergennes Fire Department will consist of a roster of up to thirty-five (40) active firefighting personnel, and five (5) cadet firefighters and (1) dispatcher. Unless otherwise authorized by the City Manager.

3.1 Honorary Membership

The City of Vergennes Fire Department membership at any regular business meeting may confer HONORARY MEMBERSHIP on any person as a means of recognizing their outstanding efforts and services to the department. Honorary membership grants no voting or other privileges to the recipient.

3.2 Life Membership

LIFE MEMBERSHIP may be conferred on any active firefighter who has completed twenty (20) years in the fire service of which fifteen (15) of the years must be with the City of Vergennes Fire Department. The recipient's name and date of recognition will be inscribed on a plaque maintained by the department and a framed certificate will be presented to the recipient.

3.3 Recognition of Service

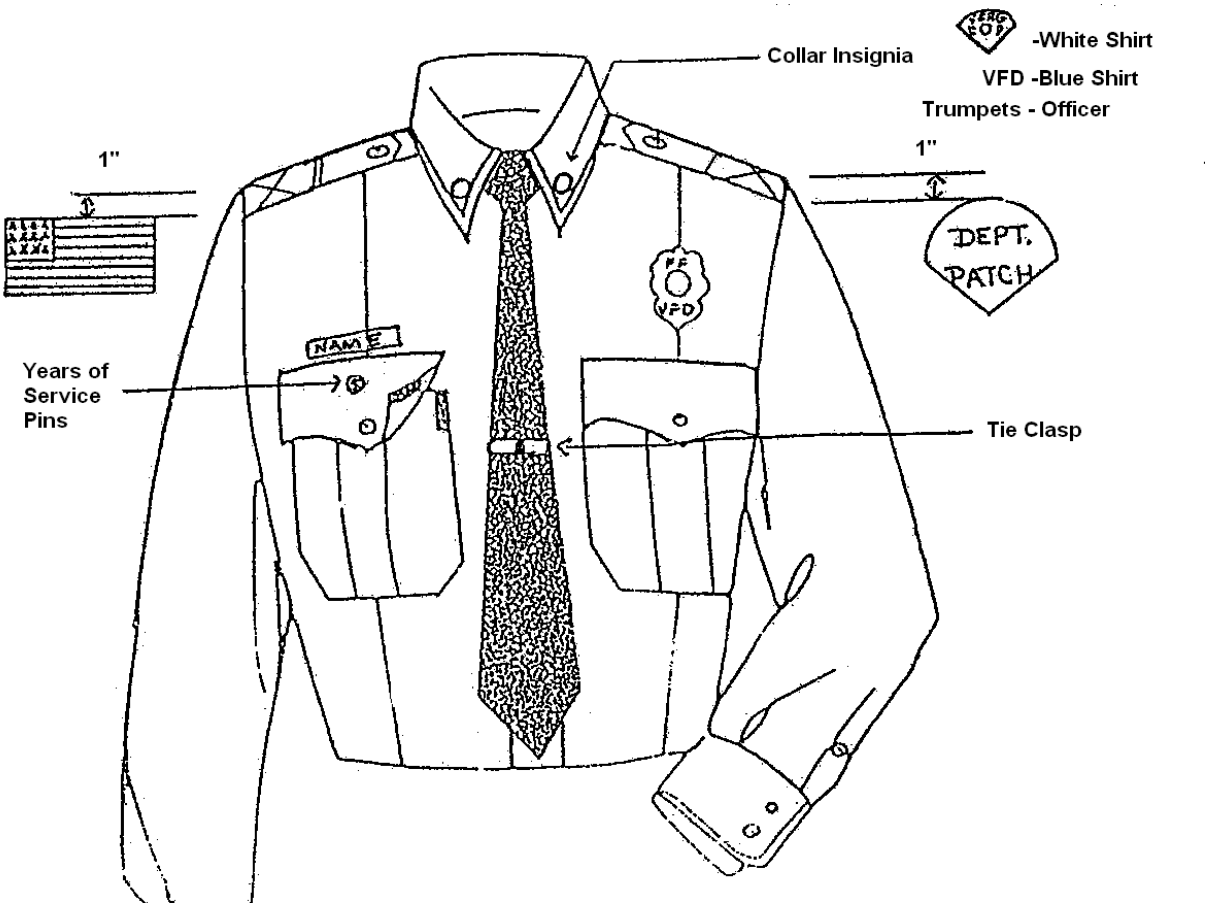
Gold service award pins will be awarded to active members on the basis of the first year and each five years of service thereafter.

4 Standard for wearing of the Department Uniform

The department provides the following uniform and insignia and prescribes how the uniform will be worn and maintained by the firefighter to whom it is assigned:

- One pair of midnight blue uniform trousers
- One long sleeve dress white shirt
- One Class A jacket
- One blue clip-on tie
- One tie clasp – silver for firefighters and captains, gold for officers
- Two miniature department emblems – collar insignia
- Two VFD collar insignia to be worn on Class A jacket
- Officer trumpets according to rank – collar insignia
    - Two silver trumpets for Captains
    - Four crossed gold trumpets for the Deputy Chiefs
    - Five crossed gold trumpets for the Chief
- Two name badges
- One black belt
- Two Department badge –
    - silver for firefighters and captains
    - gold for chief officers
- Large badge for Class A jacket and small for white dress shirt
- All personnel obtaining rank of a Chief Officer will be allowed to wear gold after resigning their position.
- Maintenance:
    - The items of clothing are to be maintained in a neat, clean and pressed condition at all times.
- Shoes:
    - Shoes are to be supplied by personnel.
    - Shoes will be black, clean and shined for the occasion.

Wearing:
When wearing the uniform, the position of the collar insignia, shoulder emblems, badges, name badge, tie clasp, and years of award pin are to be located on the shirt as indicated in the diagram below. If more the one service award or other type of award is worn on the right pocket flap, they will be in a straight line.



4.1 Adoption / Revision

This manual is subject to periodic review and revision. Subsequent changes must be approved by the executive board and the City Manager. All revisions will be distributed by the secretary of the department to all department personnel.

5 Authority and Responsibility of Officers

5.1.1 Fire Chief

The Fire Chief of the City of Vergennes is appointed by the City Council and serves on a continuous basis with removal by resignation or just cause.

5.1.2 Authority - Chief

The Fire Chief is the chief executive officer of the department and the final department authority in all matters of policy, operations, and discipline. The Chief exercises all lawful powers and issues such lawful orders as are necessary to assure the effective performance of the department, as provided by the City of Vergennes, Vermont State Statutes, and applicable Federal laws.

5.1.2.1 Responsibility - Chief

The Fire Chief is responsible for:

- The protection of life and property within the legal jurisdiction
- The planning, direction, coordinating, controlling, and staffing of all activities of the department, for its continuous and efficient operation
- The enforcement of the rules and regulations of the department
- The completion and forwarding of reports to the City Manager and the State of Vermont Agencies as required
- Development and submission of the department's annual budget in coordination with the executive board's recommendations.

5.1.3 Authority and Responsibilities of Deputy Chiefs

Deputy Fire Chiefs of the City of Vergennes are confirmed by the City Manager on the recommendation of the Fire Chief and serve on a continuous basis with removal by resignation or for just cause by the Chief.

5.1.3.1 Authority – Deputy Chiefs – Command Officers

Subject to direction from higher command, a command officer has direct control over all members within their command. During the absence of the Fire Chief at any assembly of the department shall in order of their rank, discharge the duties of the Fire Chief.

Responsibilities – Deputy Chiefs – Command Officers

Deputy Chiefs -Command Officers are responsible for:

- The direction and control of personnel under their command to assure the proper performance of duties and adherence to established rules, regulations, policies, and guidelines.
- the maintenance of discipline, proper organization, and assignment of duties, to assure efficient performance of the department functions and those of their command.

5.1.4 Company Officer – Captains

The Fire Chief of the department will make all appointments for the position of Captain after posting the vacancy for thirty (30) days, receiving applications from qualified candidates, reviewing same and conducting interviews with the assistance of the Deputy Chiefs. The position of Captain shall serve at the pleasure of the Chief.

5.1.4.1 Authority – Company Officer - Captains

The Captains shall assume line firefighting duties as prescribed in the Departments Standard Operating Guidelines and any other duties as directed by their Command Officers. In the absence of their superior officers, the Captains shall take command and have the authority, powers, duties, and responsibilities of such superior officers.

5.1.4.2 Responsibilities – Company Officer - Captains

Company officers – Captain's responsibilities are:

- The first officer to arrive on scene of any alarm shall assume charge and be in full command until passing command to another officer.
- Shall assign duties to subordinates and require these duties to be performed promptly and efficiently.
- Shall carry out other duties assigned to them by Chief or other Command Officers of the Department
- Other duties as assigned.

5.1.5 Department Dispatcher

The City of Vergennes Fire Department is authorized to have one member designated for non-firefighting duty serving as radio dispatcher. The person in this position is appointed by the Chief.

5.1.5.1 Authority - Department Dispatcher

By the authority of the Fire Chief of the department, the Dispatcher after being advised of the status of the emergency by the officer in charge, will assume the responsibility for station coverage, arrange for canteen service at the scene and notifying outside agencies.

5.1.5.2 Responsibilities – Department Dispatcher

The dispatcher will be responsible for:

- Operation of the base radio during alarms and emergencies for which the department has been alerted.
- Maintain an accurate radio log of transmissions.
- Respond to fire scene orders as issued by the officer-in-charge.

5.1.6 Staff Officer Appointments and Functions

The Chief of The Department, at the beginning of each calendar year, will assign staff duties to each command and company officer.

5.1.7 Apparatus Drivers

The Chief of the department will appoint assigned drivers to each vehicle in the department's fleet, The driver's responsibility will be:

- Operate their assigned vehicle when available at drills and emergency responses.
- Inspecting their vehicle after each use.
- Notifying the Apparatus Officer of any repairs or service needed.
- At the termination of any use, the driver may solicit the assistance of any member to assist in returning the apparatus to service including the cleaning and loading of hose and equipment. The department membership will assist all drivers in preparation (cleaning and waxing) of apparatus for special functions. The Drivers are responsible for the upkeep and operation of inventory.

5.2 Department Pay, Incentive, and reimbursement Policy

- All members of the department shall receive payment for their services as determined by the City Manager. The pay shall not be less than the State of Vermont minimum wage.
- Members who utilize their vehicles for department business or responses as approved by the Chief or his designee may be reimbursed at the U.S General Services Administration rate. Members must submit a mileage reimbursement request

5.2.1 Chief Officer department owned equipment.

Due to Chief officers utilizing their personal vehicles to respond to emergencies and to ensure a safe and positive environment and outcomes the following are herby authorized at the discretion of the Chief. Any and all equipment purchased by the city will remain the property of the city and at such time a member is no longer a Chief Officer of the department, the department will pay to remove the department owned equipment.

- Chief officers that utilize their personal vehicles will be supplied with a mobile radio paid for and installed by the department.
- Chief Officers that utilize their personal vehicle for department responses will also be to the department issued emergency warning paid for and installed by the department.

6 Department Business Organization

The Department will have a social business organization consisting of officers and active department membership for the expressed purpose of conducting matters of business as it relates to the fire fraternity.

6.1 Meetings

The Department will hold its regular monthly meeting on the first Monday evening of the month, except when the first Monday is a holiday, then the meeting will be postponed to the following Monday evening. All meetings will be held at 6:30 P.M. unless otherwise announced.

6.1.1 Special Meetings

The Chief shall call a special meeting at any time they determine necessary.

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6.2 Presiding Officer

The Chief of the department or his designee will preside at all business meetings of the department and will follow parliamentary procedure as is cited in "Robert's Rules of Order."

6.3 Secretary

The Secretary will take accurate minutes of all meetings, record the same in the journal, reply to all correspondence, maintain a roll call of all members attendance at meetings and post a copy of the minutes on the department bulletin board and send out via email.

6.4 Executive Board

The Executive Board shall consist of the Chief of the Department, the Deputy Chiefs, the Captains, they will meet on the Thursday prior to the first Monday of each month, for the purpose of formulating policy, setting schedules, coordinating information between the officers, interviewing prospective applicants for membership, and other matters pertinent to the efficient operation of the department. A minimum of one Chief Officer must be present in order to conduct business.

6.5 Firefighter

Firefighters in the City of Vergennes Fire Department will be classified to their level of training and experience:

- Probationary
- Qualified

6.6 Probationary Firefighter

A probationary firefighter must meet the following standard to be considered for admission to the department:

- have satisfactorily passed a background check
- must be eighteen (18) years of age or older and have submitted a completed application
- be physically fit as approved by a physical examination by the City Physician
- have an interview with the executive board to be followed by a recommendation for membership which will be submitted to the City Manager for probationary appointment
- satisfactorily complete a probationary experience period of 6months.

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6.7 Qualified Firefighter

Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the person will be classified as a Qualified Firefighter upon action by the Executive Board.

Any applicant to the Department who can show proof of previous firefighting experience and training, may have some or all probationary requirements waived by action of the Executive Board.

6.8 Annual Training Requirement for Firefighters

Firefighters will attend and participate in no less than twenty four (24) hours of training annually. Failure to comply with this requirement may be grounds for suspension or dismissal.

Firefighters who have a minimum of fifteen years of service will attend and participate in no less than sixteen (16) hours of training annually.

6.9 Annual In-Service Training for Interior Firefighters

Firefighters who are qualified for Interior Structural Firefighting must satisfactorily complete the annual S.C.B.A. training as set forth in Section 6.21.1, as well as the annual training requirement for Firefighters.

6.10 Training for Assigned Drivers

Assigned apparatus drivers-pump operators will adhere to the driver training program.

6.11 Cadet Firefighter

6.11.1.1 Purpose:

The City of Vergennes Fire Department sponsors a cadet firefighter program to:

- Encourage youth to develop an awareness and understanding of the role of a volunteer firefighter in the community.
- Provide a participating experience in youth career selection and development.
- Foster and encourage recruitment of a Cadet Firefighter to become a Firefighter as soon as they become eligible.
- Provide assistance to the city department according to specified tasks, as indicated by an Officer of the department.

6.11.1.2 Application

Persons who are in good health, who are at least fifteen (15) years of age and prior to their seventeenth (17) birthday who expresses interest, may complete an application form and submit to the Personnel officer.

Applicants will have an interview the executive board, who then review and make a recommendation to the City Manager.

Upon completion of the application and interview, the applicant must have a physical examination paid for by the department.

6.11.1.3 Probationary Service

Cadet firefighters will serve a six (6) months probationary period, during which time they will be encouraged to attend regular meetings and training sessions of the department.

Cadet Rules and guidelines:

- Cadets will carry out functions or assignments issued to them by the officers of the department
- Cadets will maintain a "C" or better grade point average (GPA) and will maintain exemplary conduct at all times. A failing grade will result in automatic suspension for that marking period or until a "C" GPA is achieved
- Cadets will provide a copy of their grades for each marking period for observation by the cadet advisor
- Cadets will not be permitted to leave school grounds to respond to an emergency, unless contacted by the department dispatcher and they must have prior approval from parent/guardians and the school administration. Home-school parents/guardians will call the department Dispatcher to determine if Cadet is needed
- Cadets will study and become familiar with the department's standard operating guidelines
- Cadets will maintain a personal code of conduct that will not reflect negatively on them or the department
- When responding to an emergency, they will report to staging on scene for assignment
- Cadets will ride in the Hose Reel or Utility vehicles unless otherwise authorized by the officer-in-charge
- Cadets who have personal vehicles will not be allowed red lights or signal devices.
- Cadets will not participate in initial fire attack
- Cadets may be requested to participate in scheduled meetings which are called by the Cadet advisors
- Upon reaching the age of eighteen (18), cadets may request status as a Firefighter after review by the Executive Board and the availability of a position, may be given preference for the opening over other applicants on the waiting list.

7 Department Rules and Regulations

This section refers to the professional conduct and responsibilities of members of the department.

7.1 Standard of Conduct

All members and officers shall conduct themselves in a professional manner when on duty to avoid bringing discredit on the City of Vergennes Fire Department.

7.2 Cooperation

Cooperation is essential between firefighters and officers of the department as well as with personnel from other agencies

7.3 General Responsibilities

Firefighters will at all times take appropriate action to protect life and property of its citizens and will seek compliance with all laws and ordinances within the department's jurisdiction.

7.4 Duty Responsibilities

Officers and firefighters will:

- Perform all duties delegated to them in a manner prescribed by law, ordinance, and standard operating guideline.
- Acquire the operating knowledge of all the various types of apparatus, tools and equipment in use by the department. The officers and firefighters will maintain familiarity with the principles of firefighting, suppression, prevention, and rescue operations.

7.5 Insubordination

Failure or deliberate refusal of any officer or firefighter to obey any issued order by any superior shall constitute insubordination.

Insubordination is subject to penalties of Section 6.16

7.6 Questions Regarding Assignments

Firefighters in doubt as to the detail, or their ability to safely do an assignment will seek clarification and further information from their superior.

7.7 Knowledge of Rules and Regulations

All personnel are required to establish and maintain a working knowledge of all rules , regulations and policies of the department. In the event of improper action or breach of discipline, it will be presumed that the person is familiar with all rules, regulations and policies.

7.8 Performance of Duty

All personnel shall perform their duties as required or directed by the department's rules, regulations, policies and standard operating guidelines or by order of a superior officer.

7.9 Restrictive Duty

Any active member of the department with a medical restriction will report immediately to an officer and provide restrictions in writing.

7.10 Grievance, Reports and Appeals

Any personnel receiving an order which is felt to be unjust or improper, may at first opportunity, submit a report in writing the Chief of the Department. The report must contain the facts of the incident and the action taken. Appeals for relief from duty from such orders may be made through the Chief or any Chief Officer to the City Manager.

7.11 Relief from Duty

All personnel are to remain at their duty assignments until properly relieved by a command officer.

7.12 Care of Department Property and Equipment

All personnel are responsible for the proper care of department property and equipment assigned to, or used by them. Loss or damage of department property assigned to any person shall be reported to a superior officer. When a member terminates or is terminated from the membership in the department, all department owned property and equipment will be surrendered upon request or at time of separation to the personnel officer.

7.13 Wearing of Protective Clothing

All personnel, when engaged in training or emergency response, shall wear assigned fire helmets, bunker coats, bunker pants, regulation boots, and gloves unless otherwise specified by officer in charge. All clothing is to be maintained in clean, serviceable condition by those to whom it is assigned.

7.14 Policy – Leave of Absence

Any member of the department finding it necessary to request a leave of absence for personal or medical reasons shall appear before the Chief Officers prior to requesting the leave.

As a general policy, leave will be granted to the member whenever possible, but said leave cannot conflict with the department's responsibility of providing adequate response of emergency personnel to alarms. The request will be considered by the chief officers, who will make a recommendation to the City Manager. All requests must be submitted in writing.

7.15 Policy – Sexual Harassment

It is against the policy of the City of Vergennes Fire Department and is illegal under state and federal law, for any member, male or female, to sexually harass another member. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when it is known or should be known that the person does not welcome such behavior. If the Chief receives a complaint of sexual harassment, or otherwise has reason to believe that sexual harassment is occurring all necessary steps will be taken to ensure that the matter is promptly investigated and addressed. The Chief will report any sexual harassment complaint to the City Manager. If the allegation is found to be credible, proper corrective action will be taken ranging from verbal warning up to and including dismissal.

7.16 Department Discipline

7.16.1 Who is Subject to Disciplinary Action

Any member who violates the laws of the federal government, state, city ordinances, standard operating guidelines, or disobeys any order or who neglects to perform their duties, is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

7.16.2 Penalties

The following penalties may be addressed against any member of the department as disciplinary action although not necessarily in the sequence noted:

- oral reprimand
- written reprimand – letter filed in the personnel file
- suspension
- dismissal

7.16.3 Department Authority to Discipline

Final disciplinary authority and responsibility rests with the Chief of the Department and is subject to review and approval of the City Manager. For disciplinary purpose, the Deputy Chiefs and Captains have the authority to reprimand and may also recommend such other disciplinary action as they deem necessary. If desired, they may apply to the Chief of the Department for a hearing with the City Manager.

7.16.4 Informing the Person(s) to be Disciplined

The member being disciplined shall be informed in writing of the charges being made and disciplinary action taken.

7.16.5 Appeals Process

If desired, the member who has been disciplined may appeal to the Chief for a hearing with the City Manager.

7.17 Response to Alarms

7.17.1 Personnel

Upon receipt of an alarm, all firefighters will report to the station for assignment. They will don full protective clothing and mount the cabs of the apparatus and fasten their seat belts ready to respond, unless otherwise approved by the officer in charge. Unless otherwise authorized by the Chief.

7.17.2 Personnel Response with Personal Vehicle

Firefighters responding to the fire station at the sound of an alarm or on the way to the scene of an emergency, will operate their personal vehicle in a safe and prudent manner, observing all State of Vermont Motor Vehicle Regulations. Red lights and sirens will be used only during response.

7.17.3 Officer Sign-On

Officers receiving an alarm should immediately sign-on the radio to indicate who is responding, i.e. “Vergennes C1 is en-route).

7.17.4 Assigned Drivers

Responding apparatus should be driven by assigned drivers if they are available. However, if assigned driver isn’t available, the apparatus may be driven by any qualified operator. The apparatus will be turned over to the assigned driver when they arrive on scene. Upon arrival on the scene, drivers of the apparatus should don full protective clothing.

Drivers of apparatus should not move vehicles from the station until:

- the apparatus is full or at the direction of the officer-in-charge.
- all personnel on the apparatus have full protective clothing on and seated.
- the firefighter seated in the officer’s position will transmit on the radio that the apparatus is responding, i.e. “Vergennes engine 1 is responding” and will also operate the air horn and siren.

7.17.5 Operation of Apparatus

Drivers and all personnel will use siren and all warning devices with great discretion when responding to an alarm. Sirens and warning devices will be used only when responding to emergencies, they will not be sounded during parades or other functions where apparatus is on display.

All drivers of apparatus will operate fire department vehicles in safe and prudent manner at all times consistent with safety, considering traffic, weather, road conditions and in full compliance with the Vermont Motor Vehicle Code. Speed will be observed and special care will be taken when approaching all intersections.

7.17.6 Status

Upon arrival at the scene of an emergency, the officer-in-charge will establish command and advise the dispatcher with an initial report and status.

7.17.7 Mutual Aid Response

7.17.7.1 Personnel

If personnel are requested, the Officer-in-charge will designate a special detail of firefighters to respond with an officer to accompany them. The names of the responding detail will be recorded with the dispatcher prior to departure and Vergennes Utility will be the carrier.

7.17.7.2 Apparatus

Apparatus will be dispatched according to the request made by the department calling for assistance unless otherwise specified by the Officer-in-charge.

7.17.8 Hazardous Materials Response

Alarms – Response and Actions

Upon receipt of alarm indicting a real or potential incident involving hazardous material, the following response procedure is established:

- All personnel that respond will have completed hazardous material operations level training.
- All responding personnel, except driver don full protective gear before gaining entrance to the apparatus and will approach the scene with extreme caution.
- Upon arrival, the following actions will be initiated by the officer-in-charge:
- Establish command
- Assess the situation, attempt to identify the hazard, report findings to the dispatcher.
- Request dispatch to alert Vermont Emergency Management and other necessary state agencies.
- Request additional resources as needed.
- Secure the scene

7.17.9 Command

The effective functioning of fire department units and personnel at operating incidents requires clear decisive action on part of the officer-in-charge. The following outlines the standard operating guidelines to be employed in establishing command and operating a command post. It also identifies the responsibility for the command function and its associated duties and places this responsibility on the one individual. The National Incident Management System and Incident Command System has been adopted by the City of Vergennes Fire Department and the city of Vergennes; and will be employed at all incidents.

7.17.10 Establishment

Command will be established at every incident. The commander of an incident is responsible for the command function at all times. The term "command" refers jointly to both the person and function. Command procedures are designed to accomplish the following:

- Identifies the responsibility for command and places it on certain individuals and depending upon arrival sequence of chief officers, company officers, driver-operators and firefighters at the scene of an operating incident.
- Insures that a strong visible command will be established as early as possible in the operation.
- Establishes the proper delegation of duties to subordinate officers and firefighters.
- Provides for appropriate information to be relayed to subsequent arriving officers.
- Discourages "freelancing" of incoming personnel.
- Responsibilities
    - Responsibilities assigned to command are as outlined in the National Incident Management System a
    - Incident Command System.

7.18 Fire Ground Operations

7.18.1 Fire Department Safety

7.18.1.1 Protective Clothing

Definition:
Full protective clothing includes approved helmet, nomex hood, bunker coat and pants, reflective vest, bunker boots and gloves.

Wearing:
Firefighters will wear full protective clothing when responding on apparatus to all alarms and during training activities. Wearing of protective clothing by drivers of apparatus during a response is optional, but upon arrival at the scene, they will don full protective clothing.

The officer-in-charge may alter the above requirement to a more suitable type of protective gear.

7.18.1.2 Fire Ground Conditions

Firefighters need to be constantly aware of the factors and conditions that can affect their personal safety and health on the fire ground including structural collapse, presence of toxic

gases, smoke fumes, sharp or falling objects. Firefighters will utilize a hands off policy when working around energized electrical service or equipment. Qualified utility company personnel will be called to handle these situations.

7.18.2 Infection Control

When responding to emergencies including vehicle accidents or other situations where the firefighter may be exposed to blood borne pathogens or other body fluids, strict wearing of protective clothing will be enforced. Upon return to quarters, all affected clothing will be properly disposed of or will be appropriately cleaned. Any firefighter who is exposed to possible infection must immediately report exposure to the Officer-in-charge.

7.19 Notification Policy Regarding Insurance Claim for Injury

Any personnel who is injured in the line of duty or during a training activity shall immediately advise the Officer-in-charge. If it is determined that the person is unable to continue to perform their duty, the Officer-in-charge will require that person to cease active duty and file a written report of the nature of the injury. The report is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The injured person will be granted disability leave of absence pending determination of claim and release of applicable insurance carrier and/or Chief of the Department prior to being reinstated for return to active duty.

7.20 Alcohol, Drugs and Narcotics

It is the policy of the Vergennes Fire Department that the use of alcohol, drugs or narcotics by any member of the department that results in the impairment of that member in performing their duties is prohibited. It is the responsibility of the individual member to determine impairment. Any member with a Blood Alcohol Content of 0.8% is by Vermont law impaired. Any member of the department who considers another member to be impaired will immediately bring the concern to the Officer-in-charge or most senior firefighter if an officer is not available.

7.21 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus

7.21.1 Standard – Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

The firefighter, prior to becoming certified to wear SCBA must:
Have had a physical and be shown to be free from any health defects (i.e. respirator, heart, etc.)
Be free of facial hair, heavy sideburns, heavy rim eyeglasses or other conditions that could prevent the achievement of sealing of the mask.
Submit to annual in-service training with the department.
Submit to annual testing determine capability of the user.

7.21.2 Annual In-Service Training with SCBA

An annual performance test for all firefighters wishing to be certified able to wear SCBA, will be conducted semi-annually at a minimum by the department.

7.21.3 Responsibility

It will be the responsibility of the user of the SCBA to clean and inspect the unit after each use or when returning from an alarm and making sure that it is returned to service.

7.22 Release of Public Information

7.22.1 Policy – Release of Public Information

It is the Policy of the City of Vergennes Fire Department to establish and maintain a positive operating relationship with all public media agencies.

7.22.2 Responsibility for Release of Information

Command will be responsible for the management and release of all public information on the fire ground and at the station. All inquiries from the media will be referred to Command. The Officer-in-charge may delegate this responsibility.

7.22.2.1 Guidelines for Release of Information

Release of information will follow these guidelines:

- Shall be approved by the Chief or his designee.
- Information release must be accurate, factual, and complete to avoid misunderstanding.
- Information such as number of units and personnel responding and their identity, first actions taken, involvement of the fire should be volunteered if not requested.
- Do not release names of fatalities – refer to Vermont State Police.
- Do not place monetary value on loss. The indicated damage was minor, considerable, or extensive.

7.22.2.2 Liaison with Other Agencies

The City of Vergennes Fire Department is a service agency dedicated to serving the needs of all citizens within the city limits and the fire district. Recognizing its limits in apparatus and personnel, the department fully appreciates its positive relationship with other agencies. Therefore, it is intended that complete cooperation be maintained at all levels with other support agencies.

7.22.3 Liaison with Vergennes Area Rescue Squad

The City of Vergennes Fire Department will maintain a cooperative relationship with the Vergennes Area Rescue Squad Inc. by:
Providing heavy rescue and fire protection support services to them when requested for vehicle accidents or other emergencies.
Participation in training activities which facilitates performance and provides service to the customers we serve.

Assisting in any other way which results in the provision of the best emergency service for our citizenry.

7.23 Fire Cause Investigation

7.23.1 Responsibility

It is the responsibility of command to provide for cause investigation of every fire incident causing injury, fatality, or property damage. There is a responsibility to attempt to determine the cause in all cases, not only when arson is suspected. The lessons learned in cause determination of accidental fires will be related back to the state reporting system and public fire education program and the information will be used to prevent future fires.

Command will:

- Maintain custody until released from the scene.
- Prohibit unauthorized persons entry to building or scene.
- Prevent fire personnel from unnecessarily disturbing the fire area.

7.23.2 Investigation

If the need exists, the officer-in-charge will request the dispatcher to alert the Addison County Firefighters Association fire investigation unit and/or Vermont State Police.

7.23.3 Preservation of Evidence

All fire personnel will cooperate in protecting the fire scene and the preservation of physical evidence as soon as life safety is secured, and fire control is achieved. All fire personnel will cooperate fully with the fire investigation unit.

7.23.4 Observation

If firefighters should observe suspicious behavior of persons and items in and around a fire scene, they shall report the same to the officer-in-charge.
Reports

7.24 Fire Reports

The Officer-in-charge of each incident shall provide dispatch with the data needed to complete an incident report.

8 Signature

Note: if this page has signatures on it this the released copy of the Manual of Rules, Regulations and Standard Operating Guidelines

Accepted by:

City Manager Ron Redmond Print Name

Ron Redmond Digitally signed by Ron Redmond Date: 2025.01.16 12:03:02 -05'00' Sign Name

Fire Chief David DiBiase Print Name

David DiBiase Digitally signed by David DiBiase Date: 2025.01.14 12:45:21 -05'00' Sign Name

1/14/2025

Date