



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

General Order Number: 11-24	Effective Date: March 21, 2025
Division: Personnel Management	
Chapter: Volunteer Disciplinary Process	
By Order of the County Fire Chief: Tiffany D. Green <i>TG</i>	Prior Revision: December 2015

POLICY

This General Order shall ensure a consistently fair, reasonable, and equitable method for resolving conduct and/or performance related infractions of established rules and regulations of the Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department.

It shall be the general policy to follow a pattern of progressive discipline that provides members with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve both performance and conduct problems. Supervisors have the authority to initiate and/or take authorized disciplinary actions against members whenever such disciplinary actions are warranted by virtue of violations of standards of conduct, or behavior, or failures to maintain satisfactory performance.

The performance and conduct of each volunteer member directly impact the public's trust in government and Prince George's County's ability to achieve its mission of service to the public. All volunteer members are, therefore, responsible for adhering to the standards of performance and conduct.

SCOPE

This General Order is intended for all volunteer personnel, operational and administrative, in the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department or its volunteer member companies.

DEFINITIONS

Authorized Disciplinary Action – Types of disciplinary actions defined by the Supervisory Guidelines for Conduct/Performance Actions.

Conduct Related Violation – An act or acts which constitute a violation(s) or failure(s) to comply with any duty, obligation, or requirement imposing a standard of conduct or behavior on such member by virtue of the provisions of any criminal or civil law or statute or any rule or regulation authorized and promulgated pursuant thereto, provided such violation(s) or act(s) of noncompliance:

- Bears a demonstrable relationship to the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the member's position; and,
- Constitutes a willful, indifferent, or grossly negligent act or commission by such member.

Departmental Disciplinary Coordinator (DDC) – Appointed by the County Fire Chief to ensure that an administrative review of all Department disciplinary hearings and actions is uniformly conducted.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

Identifying Supervisor – Any supervisor that identifies a violation of Department General Orders that require the use of the Volunteer Disciplinary Process. The Department Chain of Command should be used for sending a request for a Disciplinary Inquiry to the Volunteer Company Chief.

Office of Professional Standards and Compliance (OPS) – Is directed by the Departmental Disciplinary Coordinator (DDC) and is responsible for ensuring that Departmental disciplinary procedures are conducted in accordance with all County and Departmental policies and procedures, the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), and state and federal law. Other areas of responsibility include providing Departmental training on disciplinary procedures and practices, and acting as a resource for inquiries into how disciplinary matters should be handled.

Performance Related Violation – A member's performance has become less than satisfactory with respect to the execution of any of the duties, tasks, and/or responsibilities set forth in the member's position description:

- Where the member's actions, inactions, and/or attitudes constitute a representative course of conduct characterized by a general inability, incapability, and/or unwillingness on the part of the member to maintain a minimum standard of performance with respect to the quality and/or quantity of any of the duties, tasks, and/or responsibilities properly assigned to the member; or,
- Where the member unjustifiably fails to carry out a particular work assignment which was within the scope of the duties, tasks, and/or responsibilities properly assigned to the member; or,
- Where the member loses or fails to maintain any of the requirements or standards set forth in the qualification requirements statement, as defined in the Fire/EMS Department General Orders.

Step I – Verbal counseling of member with supervisor documentation of unsatisfactory conduct or performance.

Step II – Written reprimand, *Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance*, issued to the member.

Step III – Written formal *Statement of Charges* issued to the member and presented for further disciplinary action.

Volunteer Company Chief – Identified in General Order 01-03, *Chain of Command*. The Volunteer Company Chief will be the immediate supervisor in all disciplinary proceedings for personnel from their company unless otherwise stated in this policy.

Volunteer Disciplinary Coordinator (VDC) – Appointed by the County Fire Chief to work with the Departmental Disciplinary Coordinator (DDC) concerning all volunteer disciplinary matters. The DDC or VDC will sit as the Chair of Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board (VDRB) Hearings.

Volunteer Discipline Appeal Panel (VDAP) – A Departmental review panel responsible for providing additional review and insight into all disciplinary determinations of the Volunteer



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

Disciplinary Review Board. This review panel will formulate a recommendation of discipline to the County Fire Chief.

Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board (VDRB) – A Departmental administrative hearing board convened, as necessary, to hear all Step III – *Statement of Charges* filed against any volunteer member of the Department, unless a *Disciplinary Waiver* is offered in lieu of a hearing by the County Fire Chief.

PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Supervisors (Identifying Supervisor/Volunteer Company Chief)

- A. The identifying supervisor of a conduct or performance related issue should first ensure personnel have ceased the behavior in question.
 - 1. Section VII: Other Authorized Actions of this General Order may be used to eliminate an immediate and/or continued safety issue.
- B. The identifying supervisor should notify the member's Volunteer Company Chief in writing either by handwritten letter and/or by email. This information should be captured on the *Disciplinary Inquiry Checklist*.
- C. The identifying supervisor should attempt to notify the Volunteer Company Chief by telephone about the pending *Disciplinary Inquiry* request. This information should be captured on the *Disciplinary Inquiry Checklist*.
- D. In order to reduce the need for disciplinary actions, immediate supervisors must make every effort to educate and train personnel thoroughly in all aspects of expected conduct and levels of performance required of them. When appropriate education and training fail, the Department will implement a timely three-step disciplinary process to correct a member's unsatisfactory conduct and/or performance. The level of discipline must be commensurate with the severity of the action or inaction in question. Volunteer Company Chiefs should contact the Office of Professional Standards and Compliance for guidance and direction.
- E. The identifying supervisor shall notify the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) and Compliance within 24 hours of a suspected or probable violation.

II. The Investigation

- A. Upon notification, the Office of Professional Standards and Compliance will begin tracking the incident, research any prior events in the employee file, ask the supervisor/officer to provide a brief synopsis and provide the reporting supervisor/officer with the appropriate interview/investigation package. The goal of the interview/investigation package is to find the truth of what occurred.
- B. Any matters that require any court system intervention will suspend the timeframe until the matter has been adjudicated by the responsible courts.
- C. The supervisor/officer will complete the interview/investigation package and return to OPS within two (2) weeks for review and further guidance.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

- D. The OPS will review the interview/investigation package and will provide the supervisor/officer with the appropriate level disciplinary package for the incident reported. The supervisor/officer will then have two (2) weeks from receipt of the documents to issue the disciplinary package to the employee and return all documents to OPS.
- E. OPS will review the submitted disciplinary package, filing Step I and Step II, as required by Departmental policies and procedures. Step III's will be offered waivers if applicable, or hearings will be scheduled.

NOTE: The goal of the Departmental disciplinary procedures is to ensure a fair, consistent, and timely delivery of administrative discipline as required. Following the above guidelines will ensure that the goal is met.

III. Level or Steps of Disciplinary Action

Once the level or step of disciplinary action is determined, the supervisor or their designee shall initiate the appropriate procedures as outlined below for the various steps of the disciplinary process:

The identifying supervisor shall notify the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) and Compliance within 24 hours of a suspected or probable violation.

A. Step I – Verbal Counseling with Documentation

- 1. When a member fails to maintain the level of conduct or performance that is reasonably expected of personnel in their position, the first step in correcting such behavior is a verbal warning or counseling session. This step can only be taken in cases that involve minor violations, where modified behavior can be reasonably expected through counseling, and when more severe action is not warranted. (Reference Attachment #1)
- 2. The Volunteer Company Chief shall:
 - a. Investigate of the conduct/performance at issue.
 - b. Conduct a personal, confidential interview with the member within seven (7) days.
 - c. Advise the member where the member's action(s) or interaction(s) failed to meet prescribed standards and why.
 - d. Provide the member an opportunity to explain their action(s) or inaction(s).
 - e. Advise the member what corrective action(s) should be taken and give a reasonable time frame to comply.
 - f. Document and sign a Step I – *Supervisor's Record of Counseling* form (Attachment #2) outlining the violation and counseling session as a record for future use.
 - g. Provide the member a copy of the form and advise that a copy will be filed with and retained by the Office of Professional Standards and Compliance for a period of three (3) years.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

B. Step II – Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance

1. If verbal counseling fails to correct a previous conduct and/or performance-related violation or the severity of the violation warrants a stronger response than a verbal counseling, a written reprimand should be issued. Attachment #3 contains the *Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance*. The written reprimand is intended to document and outline specific areas for improvement and specific steps to achieve such improvement. (Reference Attachment #1)
2. The Volunteer Company Chief shall:
 - a. Complete an investigation into the conduct/performance.
 - b. Complete a personal, confidential interview with the member within seven (7) days.
 - c. Advise the member where their action(s) or interaction(s) failed to meet prescribed standards and why.
 - d. Give the member an opportunity to explain their action(s) or inaction(s).
 - e. Advise the member what corrective action(s) should be taken and give a reasonable time frame to comply.
 - f. Complete, including obtaining signatures of a Step II – *Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance* form outlining the violation and counseling session as a record for future use.
 - g. Ensure the member receives a copy and is advised that a copy will be filed with the Office of Professional Standards and Compliance for a period of three (3) years.
3. The *Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance* memorandum shall:
 - a. State the date of the violation.
 - b. Give a brief description of what occurred.
 - c. Quote the section(s) of the Department General Orders, directives, etc., that applies to this violation.
 - d. List the previous efforts to counsel and afford opportunities to take remedial action only if the previous efforts to modify behavior are relevant to this specific charge.
 - e. Give specific instruction and/or actions to be taken by the member to prevent a recurrence, if applicable.
 - f. State that any subsequent violation(s) or act(s) of noncompliance may warrant the taking of more severe disciplinary actions.
 - g. State that the reprimand has been read and understood and that any signature does not indicate admittance of guilt, only an acknowledgement that the member has received a copy of the notice.
4. The *Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance* shall be signed and dated by both the member and the Volunteer Company Chief. If the member refuses to sign said *Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance*, the supervisor shall attach a signed certification that they issued the written reprimand to the member and that the member does not elect to respond in writing to the reprimand or sign the reprimand.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

5. The member will be given a copy and advised that a copy will be filed and maintained in the Office of Professional Standards and Compliance for three (3) years. The original signed Step II *Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance* will be forwarded to the Volunteer Disciplinary Coordinator (VDC) within fourteen (14) days to be maintained in the member's Department records.
 6. A Volunteer Company Chief who fails to take the necessary action concerning the *Disciplinary Inquiry Request* sent to them by the identifying supervisor in the 10 business days identified in the original document, may face disciplinary action. Any request for additional time should be sent in writing to the Volunteer Disciplinary Coordinator within the time prescribed. The Office of Professional Standards and Compliance will provide a response in writing with an approved and/or denied determination, providing a new deadline or a reason for denial.
- C. Step III – Formal Statement of Charges
1. A Step III – *Statement of Charges* (Attachment #4) shall be issued to a member when:
 - a. The severity of an alleged conduct and/or performance violation is beyond acceptable levels for a first-time violation;
 - b. A member has repeated similar/related conduct or performance violations; or
 - c. A member has multiple conduct and/or performance violations that generated previous disciplinary actions. (Reference Attachment #1)
 2. The Office of Professional Standards and Compliance and/or the Volunteer Company Chief shall investigate the conduct and/or performance violation.
 - a. If the Office of Professional Standards and Compliance decides to lead the investigation, the Volunteer Disciplinary Coordinator shall notify the Volunteer Company Chief of the decision in writing.
 - (1) If the Volunteer Company Chief fails to take the necessary action concerning the *Disciplinary Inquiry Request* sent to them by the identifying supervisor within the 10 business days identified in the original document, the Volunteer Company Chief may face disciplinary action. Any request for additional time should be sent in writing to the Volunteer Disciplinary Coordinator within ten (10) business days. The Office of Professional Standards and Compliance will provide a written response to the extension request, approving or denying the request and providing a new deadline or a reason for denial, as applicable.
 3. The *Statement of Charges* memorandum shall:
 - a. State the date of the violation.
 - b. Give a brief description of what occurred.
 - c. Quote the sections of the Personnel Law, Departmental General Orders, Directives, etc., that apply to this violation.
 - d. List the previous efforts to counsel and afford opportunities to take remedial action and/or previous disciplinary actions. Only include if previous efforts to modify behavior are relevant to this specific charge or if a member's action, inactions, and/or attitudes constitute a representative course of conduct characterized by a general inability, incapability, and/or unwillingness on the



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

part of the employee to conform to the applicable standards of conduct or behavior or to maintain a minimum standard of performance with respect to the quality and/or quantity of any or all of the duties, tasks, and/or responsibilities properly assigned to the employee.

- e. State the *Statement of Charges* shall be forwarded through the chain-of-command for appropriate action. Members could be issued a waiver of hearing or notified of the time, date, and location of the hearing, which will be conducted to address the aforementioned charges.
- f. State the reprimand has been read and understood and that any signature does not indicate admittance of guilt, only acknowledgement that the employee has received a copy of the charges.

IV. Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board (VDRB)

- A. A Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Hearing shall be convened to hear evidence and explanation for any Step III – *Statement of Charges* for which a *Final Disciplinary Notice – Waiver of Hearing* is not approved and/or accepted by the respondent and/or County Fire Chief, or is not warranted due to the nature of the infraction or the number of previous similar/related infractions. The DDC will work with the VDC to assign a Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board (VDRB) to conduct an administrative hearing.
- B. The VDC shall forward a written hearing notice to the respondent containing the date, time, and location of the VDRB hearing and shall inform the supervisor, witness(es), VDRB members, and the member's supervisor(s) of the same. Members are responsible for notifying any legal counsel or representation.
- C. The VDC will obtain the availability of the respondent and schedule accordingly to form the Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board. This board shall be comprised of at least three (3) Volunteer Chief officers, one (1) of which shall be a Volunteer Duty Chief – Assistant Fire Chief.

NOTE: All efforts should be made to find participants unaffiliated with the member(s) involved.

- D. The VDRB *Disciplinary Hearing* notification memorandum (Attachment #6) shall:
 - 1. State the location, day, date, and time of the VDRB hearing.
 - 2. List the members assigned to the VDRB panel.
 - 3. State that the member and/or supervisor may request personnel to attend the hearing and testify to the facts and issues concerning the charges.
 - 4. State that the member has the right to legal or other representation at the VDRB hearing.
 - 5. State that the member and/or supervisor shall notify the VDC of any representative or witness who will attend the VDRB hearing at least one day before the hearing.
 - a. If a hearing notice cannot be delivered to the member in a timely fashion, the supervisor shall notify the member verbally with a memorandum to the VDC of the date and time the notification was made.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

- E. Once notified, attendance at the hearing is considered an order. Failure to attend as directed may be considered insubordination, subject to additional disciplinary action, including dismissal. The VDC may enter a “not guilty” plea on behalf of any member who fails or refuses to attend the VDRB hearing.
- F. Any deviation from the hearing schedule will be at the discretion of the VDC. Any person advised to attend a VDRB hearing that may have an issue with the date and/or time, shall notify the VDC promptly, but generally no later than three (3) days prior to the hearing.
- G. Prior to the hearing date, all information, i.e., signed statements, police reports, relevant documents, tapes, etc., to be used during the hearing shall be forwarded to the VDC by the supervisor, respondent, and/or respondent’s counsel to be duplicated for the VDRB panel and exchanged between parties.
- H. A VDRB hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the format shown in Attachment #7 – Disciplinary Review Board Hearing Procedures.
- I. The VDRB hearing format shall include:
 - 1. A release for the member with an option to sign to have a copy of the final disciplinary action released. If signed, one original to be maintained by the VDC/DDC, and one original to be given to the member or their representative at the hearing (Attachment #8).
 - 2. A preliminary introduction to the hearing to include general conduct, procedures, and that the hearing will be taped. A copy of the tape will be made available to the respondent and/or legal counsel upon written request to the DDC.
- J. A formal introduction to the hearing shall include:
 - 1. The date and time the hearing is convened.
 - 2. An introduction of all persons present and their respective roles.
 - 3. A review of the date of the charges, notification of the hearing, and the member’s right to legal and/or union representation.
 - 4. Questions to and responses from the member to ensure:
 - a. They understand the nature of the charges placed against them.
 - b. They are aware of their rights as a member of the Department.
 - 5. A general statement to include:
 - a. The purpose of the hearing, the right to admit or deny the charges, the right to present any witness or explanations.
 - (1) A mute response will be considered a denial of the charges.
 - (2) A report of findings will be sent to the County Fire Chief with a determination if the charges have been substantiated or not, the VDRB findings are advisory in nature, and the final determination as to the taking of any authorized disciplinary action thereto shall rest exclusively with the County Fire Chief or their designee.
 - 6. A cursory review of the Department rules and regulations and the Prince George’s County Code which were violated.
 - 7. A question and response from the member.
 - 8. Presentation of the infraction, evidence and explanations by the supervisor(s), the employee, the union and/or legal counsel with cross-examination as warranted.
 - 9. Testimony from witnesses and cross-examination as warranted.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

10. Questions from the VDRB panel of the member, supervisor and/or any witnesses.
 11. One summation by the member or member's representative, and one summation by the supervisor.
 12. A closing statement advising the member they will be notified in writing by the County Fire Chief or their designee of any further action to be taken regarding this matter.
- K. The VDRB will conduct a complete and thorough examination of the significant facts and circumstances presented at the hearing. By a majority vote, the VDRB will determine if the charges have been substantiated or not. In determining whether the charges have been substantiated or not, the required degree of proof shall be the preponderance of the evidence. That is the amount and quality of evidence that tips the scales of justice toward one determination or another. It also relates to witnesses' character, the intrinsic characteristics of evidence, and the probability of truth when tested by the ordinary experience of average people.
- L. Any hearing information, documentation or other disciplinary matters must be held in the strictest confidence by all personnel at the VDRB hearing. Any breach of confidentiality will be dealt with appropriately, including, but not limited to, disciplinary action as warranted.
- M. The member must notify the Department of any legal representative (attorney) or Department member they elect to represent them in these proceedings.
1. If the member hires an attorney, the attorney shall notify the Office of Professional Standards and Compliance in writing and provide "DESIGNATION AND NOTICE OF LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORIZATION TO SPEAK WITH ATTORNEY, AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION/DOCUMENTATION."
 2. If the member authorizes a member of the Department to represent them, the member shall provide in writing the Name, ID #, and Company affiliation, allowing the Department to speak with this member in reference to their case.
- N. The VDRB shall be convened within thirty (30) days and completed within sixty (60) days of the volunteer member's response to the written *Statement of Charges* or within sixty (60) days of when a response to the written *Statement of Charges* or a request for delay should have been received. An extension may be granted:
1. Upon written request from the volunteer member and/or their representative, provided that the written request states the reason for the requested delay and when, in the judgement of the volunteer member, the volunteer member will be prepared to appear before the VDRB; or
 2. Upon written order from the County Fire Chief.

V. Proposed and Final Notices of Disciplinary Action

- A. Upon receipt of the VDRB recommendations, the County Fire Chief may accept or reject the recommendations of the VDRB.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

- B. The County Fire Chief shall prepare a *Proposed Notice of Disciplinary Action* (Attachment #5) in accordance with Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department General Orders, including:
 - 1. The specific grounds or other reasons for taking such disciplinary action.
 - 2. The proposed adverse action authorized under the provision of Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department General Orders.
- C. The *Proposed Notice of Disciplinary Action* shall be delivered directly to the member for signature. The *Proposed Notice of Disciplinary Action* shall be signed and dated by the member. If the member refuses to sign said *Proposed Notice of Disciplinary Action*, the supervisor shall append a signed certification that they issued the *Proposed Notice of Disciplinary Action* to the member who refused to sign.
 - 1. For Step III – Statement of Charges, whereas the proposed disciplinary notice proposes an operational separation, the member is entitled to request an appeal with the Volunteer Disciplinary Appeal Panel, in writing to the County Fire Chief via the Office of Professional Standards, no later than ten (10) business days after the date of receipt of the notice by the member.
- D. Upon receipt of a signed *Proposed Notice of Disciplinary Action*, the County Fire Chief shall issue a Final Notice of Disciplinary Action.
- E. Any matter heard by the Volunteer Disciplinary Appeal Panel as outlined in Section VI of this General Order, the VDAC shall provide a written report to the County Fire Chief of their recommendations. The Fire Chief can consider the recommendations of the VDAC prior to issuing a Final Notice of Disciplinary Action.
- F. A *Final Notice of Disciplinary Action* (Attachment #6) shall be prepared in accordance with Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department General Orders. The *Final Notice of Disciplinary Action* shall state:
 - 1. The specific grounds or other reasons for taking such disciplinary action.
 - 2. The final adverse action imposed and authorized under the provision of Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department General Orders.
 - 3. The consideration of any written member appeal received in accordance with procedures above.
- G. The *Final Notice of Disciplinary Action* shall be hand-delivered to the member for signature. The *Final Notice of Disciplinary Action* shall be signed and dated by the member. If the member refuses to sign said *Final Notice of Disciplinary Action*, the supervisor shall attach a signed certification that they issued the *Final Notice of Disciplinary Action* to the member and that the member did not elect to sign the *Final Notice of Disciplinary Action*.
- H. Two (2) copies are returned to the Office of the Fire Chief, the original is kept by the member.

VI. Volunteer Disciplinary Appeal Panel (VDAP)

- A. The VDAP will be comprised of three (3) members, including one (1) Prince George's County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (PGCVFRA) member, one (1) Fire Commission member, and one (1) Citizen Member appointed by the Office of the Fire Chief. One member will be appointed as the Chairperson by the County Fire Chief.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

The Chairperson will be responsible for submitting a report to the Office of the Fire Chief.

- B. The VDAP will be notified of any appeals by the Office of Professional Standards and Compliance and will make every effort to hear any matter of appeal within 10 business days after receipt.
- C. The VDAP will consider all details from the VDRB and the appeal letter from the member to the Office of the Fire Chief and after review, will issue a report to the Office of the Fire Chief, Office of Professional Standards and Compliance.

VII. Other Authorized Actions

A. Operational Removals/Operational Restrictions

- 1. Any supervisor above the rank of Assistant Fire Chief shall have the authority to take immediate action to place a member in Limited Public Contact (LPC) or No Contact status with the Fire/EMS Department.
 - a. Performance:
 - (1) The supervisor issuing the operational removal will confer with the Emergency Services Command (ESC) Deputy Chief and/or their designee.
 - (2) The supervisor issuing the operational removal shall make contact with the appropriate Volunteer Company Chief.
 - (3) ESC will issue the operational removal to the Volunteer Company Chief.
 - b. Conduct:
 - (1) When notified of a conduct-related event such as those identified in General Order 11-16, *Notification of Arrest – Revocation of License*, the member and the immediate supervisor shall make the appropriate notifications.
 - (2) The issuing supervisor shall make contact with the appropriate Volunteer Company Chief.
 - (3) Once notified, the ESC Deputy Chief and/or designee shall issue the operational removal.
- 2. The County Fire Chief or their designee shall review the member's actions which lead to the temporary removal of operational authority. This review may include, but not be limited to, an interview with the member, supervisor, and/or the command officer.
- 3. The County Fire Chief reserves the right to reevaluate all operational removals and may reverse and/or modify any removals based on the facts presented during initial interviews.
- 4. If applicable, a written memorandum shall be sent to the member by the County Fire Chief or their designee, updating the member on their operational status, outlining the actions to be taken.
- 5. This authority is normally reserved, but not limited to, those situations where the member:
 - a. Places the lives of the general public and/or emergency services personnel in danger.
 - b. Operates in an unsafe manner, creates an unsafe work environment, and/or commits an act or series of acts which have had or may be reasonably expected



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

- to have a harmful or injurious effect on the member, other emergency service personnel, or the general public.
- c. Commits an act, a series of acts, or fails to carry out a particular work assignment(s) which has had or may be reasonably expected to have had an adverse impact or disruptive effect on emergency operations and/or the delivery of emergency services.
 - d. Commits a breach of peace or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
 - e. Commits an act or a series of acts which have had or may be reasonably demonstrated to have an appreciated effect on the general public's confidence and/or trust in the operation of the Fire/EMS Department.
 - f. Violates the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department General Orders.
6. Any Command Officer shall:
- a. Immediately halt any acts which are in violation of the above.
 - b. Immediately advise the member that they are temporarily removed from operations and are no longer authorized to participate in an operational capacity.
 - c. Direct the member to immediately leave an area involving operational activity and remove the member from the accountability check.
 - d. Prepare a package of information which includes, but is not limited to, an *Incident Notification* form, witness statements, etc., and forward such to the County Fire Chief or their designee for review.
7. Any imposition of operational removal/suspension shall **NOT** be construed as a Final Disciplinary Action. The imposition of any operational removal/suspension shall, however, be considered in any future *Final Disciplinary Action* to be taken as applicable.

REFERENCES

Departmental Guidelines Conduct/Performance Actions

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 - Release Form

Attachment #2 - Disciplinary Review Board Hearing Procedures

Attachment #3 - Disciplinary Hearing

Attachment #4 - Final Disciplinary Action - Waiver of Hearing

Attachment #5 - Step I – Supervisor's Record of Counseling

Attachment #6 - Step II - Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Conduct or Performance

Attachment #7 - Step III - Statement of Charges

Attachment #8 - Disciplinary Process Flowchart



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



MEMORANDUM

(Date)

I, _____, do hereby grant my approval
(Print Name)
for the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department to release a copy of any
Proposed Notice of Disciplinary Action and Final Notice of Disciplinary Action resulting
from the disciplinary hearing conducted on _____, to the
(Date)
President/ Chief of your volunteer corporation, the _____

Signature



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



MEMORANDUM

(Date)

(Member Name, Rank)

- ☐ Department Release of Final Disciplinary Action to the Volunteer Chief of your company:
 - ☐ Accepted/Signed by Member –
 - ☐ Declined
- ☐ Preliminary hearing introduction read by the DDC:
- ☐ Formal hearing introduction read by the DDC:

Hearing taped:

- ☐ Yes - Start tape
- ☐ No

This Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Hearing is hereby convened on the **(##)** day of **(Month, Year)** and called to order at **(Time)** hours.

Let the record show the following persons are present. (Have each person introduce themselves by name and whom they are presenting).

On **(Date)** you received a Statement of Charges for alleged failure to comply with Departmental rules and regulations and the Prince George's County Code.

You also received notification that a Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Hearing, which is authorized by the Fire Chief and the County Personnel Law, would be convened to consider the charges placed against you and that you had the right to legal representation.

(Member Rank, Name) do you understand the nature of the charges, which have been placed against you? Response:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other: _____

Are you aware of your rights ? Response:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other: _____

The purpose of this Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board hearing is to hear evidence and explanations concerning the charges that have been placed against you. This hearing will not introduce a platform to argue or debate the merits of this hearing or the disciplinary process in general. This Board will make a determination of facts through submission of a written report of findings to the Fire Chief. The findings are advisory in nature and the final determination as to the taking of any authorized disciplinary action in relation thereto rests exclusively with the Fire Chief.

You will be asked to either admit or deny the charges placed against you. If you admit to being guilty of those charges, you have the right to present any evidence or explanation during this hearing. Any information presented will be considered prior to submitting the Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Report of Findings.

If you deny the charges against you, this Board will hear evidence and explanations, and determine whether the Fire/EMS Department has proven the allegations against you. The Fire Chief will be advised whether the charges have been substantiated or not. If you choose to stand mute, your silence will be considered a denial of charges.

Under the authority granted to the Fire Chief by the Prince George's County Code, and in accordance with the provisions of the current Agreement made by and between Prince George's County, Maryland, you have been charged with "failure to comply with, but not limited to, the following Departmental rules and regulations:"

(List Departmental rules and regulations violated)

Do you plead guilty or not guilty to these charges? Response:

- ☐ Guilty
- ☐ Not Guilty
- ☐ Not Guilty Plea entered by the DDC on behalf of the Member: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

- ❑ Hearing Procedure: (Based on Member plea)
 - ❑ Not Guilty Plea
 - ❑ Supervisor(s) testimony
 - ❑ Cross examination
 - ❑ member, and/or legal counsel testimony
 - ❑ Cross examination
 - ❑ Witness testimony
 - ❑ Cross examination
 - ❑ VDRB questions/cross examination
 - ❑ VDRB questions/cross examination
 - ❑ Member and/or legal counsel summation
 - ❑ Supervisor(s) summation
 - ❑ Guilty Plea
 - ❑ Member, and/or legal counsel explanation
 - ❑ Supervisor(s) comments
 - ❑ VDRB questions/cross examination
- ❑ Closing statement read by the DDC:

This concludes the Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board hearing. You will be notified in writing by the Fire Chief as to the taking of any further disciplinary action in this matter.

- ❑ VDRB panel worksheets completed and forwarded to the DDC:



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



MEMORANDUM

(Date)

TO: **(Member Name, Rank, Position)**

FROM: **(DDC Name)**
Office of Professional Standards

RE: Disciplinary Hearing

You are hereby directed to appear at a Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board hearing at the **(Location)**, on **(Day, Date)**, at **(Time)**. The hearing, which will be convened by **(Rank, DDC Name)**, will address your "failure to comply with Departmental rules and regulations."

The Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board panel will consist of:

(Name, Rank)

(Name, Rank)

(Name, Rank)

(Name, Rank), Alternate

You have the right to have a Fire/EMS Department member and/or legal representation at this hearing. Please notify this office of the names of representatives who will accompany you, at least one weekday (excluding holidays) prior to the hearing.

Copy to: **(List of Supervisors in the member's chain-of-command - Name, Rank, Position)**
(Charging Officer - Name, Rank, Position)
(Name), President/Chief VFD
(Witness(es) - Name, Rank, Position)
(VDRB - Name, Rank, Position)



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT



DATE: Click or tap to enter a date.

TO: **Member Name, Rank**
Station 8XX

FROM: George N. Michaelides, Disciplinary Coordinator
Office of Professional Standards

RE: Waiver of Hearing

On Click or tap to enter a date., you received a Statement of Charges for your **Infraction**. As a volunteer member, you are entitled to participate in a Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Hearing to hear and review conduct and/or performance-related disciplinary charges. The Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Hearing renders a recommendation to the Fire Chief as to the type of authorized disciplinary action, if any, should be imposed.

You have the right to waive your participation in a Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Hearing by accepting a summary disciplinary action. If you accept summary disciplinary action, you are not disputing that the violation occurred. Further, if you accept summary disciplinary action you officially waive your right to a formal Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Hearing.

In accordance with General Order 11-24 Volunteer Disciplinary Process and the Departmental Disciplinary Matrix, the disciplinary penalty for your infraction is a **x-day suspension**. Acceptance of summary disciplinary action is considered final discipline.

You must return the attached document to me by 1500 hours on Date. All disciplinary documents for the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) should be sent to PGFD-OPS@co.pg.md.us in PDF or DOC (Word) format.



ONE COUNTY. ONE DEPARTMENT. ONE MISSION.

Member Name, Rank

Click or tap to enter a date.

Page 2 of 2

No disciplinary documents can be hand-delivered to any other personnel nor any other office. Last, do not slide any documents under the Office of Professional Standards' door.

If you have additional questions regarding this document or the disciplinary process in general, please feel free to contact me on my cell at (240) 736-6132.

Declination of Waiver—Request Disciplinary Hearing Review:

☐ I do not waive my right to a formal Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board Hearing, nor do I accept this summary disciplinary action that is being assigned by the Department Disciplinary Coordinator, as a representative of the Fire Chief.

Respondent's Signature

Printed Name

Date

☐

- ☐ I authorize the Department to release a copy of the Statement of Charges and this summary disciplinary action to the President/Volunteer Chief of .
- ☐ I do not authorize the Department to release a copy of the Statement of Charges and this summary disciplinary action to the President/Volunteer Chief of .

Members Signature

Printed Name

Date

*This form may only be issued by the DDC for minor infractions. The DDC's recommendation rendered by the issuance/acceptance of this form is advisory in nature and the final determination as to the taking of any authorized disciplinary action in relation thereto rests exclusively with the Fire Chief. If this form is not approved and/or accepted by the Respondent and/or the Fire Chief, neither the form nor its contents may be used in the Volunteer Disciplinary Review Board hearing, disciplinary appeals, arbitration hearing, or for any other purpose.

☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Tiffany D. Green
Fire Chief

Date



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



MEMORANDUM

(Date)

TO: **(Name)**

Department Disciplinary Coordinator

FROM: **(Supervisor Name, Rank, Position)** **(Supervisor's Signature Required)**

RE: Supervisor's Record of Counseling

Date/Time of Counseling: **(Date/Time)**

Member: **(Member Name, Rank, Position)**

Action(s) or inaction(s) of member, making counseling necessary:

(List action(s) or inaction(s) that failed to meet prescribed standards of conduct or performance - Include time, date, and place where applicable)

Supervisor's recommendation(s) made to member to prevent reoccurrence:

(List recommendations made during counseling and time frame to comply if applicable)

Comments:

Initial counseling, first occurrence.

(List any additional supervisor comments and/or member explanation/comments)



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

MEMORANDUM



(Date)

TO: **(Member Name, Rank, Position)**

FROM: **(Supervisor Name, Rank, Position)** **(Supervisor's Signature Required)**

RE: Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Performance or Conduct

Your actions on **(date of violation)** when you **(give brief description of what occurred)**, is unacceptable.

Your actions place you in violation of and/or noncompliance with, but not limited to, the following Departmental rules and regulations, and the Prince George's County Code:

(Quote the sections of the Personnel Law and Departmental General Orders, Directives, etc. that apply to the infraction.)

Previous efforts to counsel and afford opportunities to take remedial actions include:
(Include only if there are previous efforts to modify the member's behavior relevant to this specific statement of charges.)

**(List the previous efforts to counsel as applicable to this statement of charges: Date(s) -
List violation(s), action(s) taken, step(s) of disciplinary imposed)**

(Give specific instructions and or actions to be taken by member to prevent reoccurrence as applicable.)

This "Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Performance or Conduct" will be placed in your station and/or supervisor's file, as well as a copy forwarded within the command at the appropriate level to the Department Disciplinary Coordinator.

Any subsequent violation(s) or act(s) of noncompliance may warrant the taking of more severe disciplinary actions(s).

RECEIPT: I have read and understand this "Written Notice of Unsatisfactory Performance or Conduct." My signature does not indicate admittance of guilt, only acknowledgement that I have received a copy of the written notice.

Signature and Rank

Date



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM



(Date)

TO: (Member Name, Rank, Position)

FROM: (Supervisor Name, Rank, Position) *(Supervisor's Signature Required)*

RE: Statement of Charges

On (date of violation) (give brief description of what occurred).

As a result of your actions, you have been charged with failure to comply with, but not limited to, the following Departmental rules and regulations, and the Prince George's County Code:

(Quote the sections of the Personnel Law and Departmental General Orders, Directives, etc. that apply to the infraction.)

Previous efforts to counsel and afford opportunities to take remedial actions include:
(Include only if there are previous efforts to modify the member's behavior relevant to this specific statement of charges.)

(List the previous efforts to counsel as applicable to this statement of charges:
Date(s) - List violation(s), action(s) taken, step(s) of disciplinary imposed.)

This Statement of Charges shall be forwarded through the chain-of-command for appropriate action. You will be notified of the time, date, and location of the hearing, which will be conducted to address the aforementioned charges. The responsibility to contact a Fire/EMS member and/or legal counsel rests with you the member.

Within five (5) working days of receipt you may forward written comments to the Departmental Disciplinary Coordinator (DDC) through their supervisor in the Office of Professional Standards. The DDC shall attach a copy of the member's written comments to this document. The DDC shall notify you that the written comments have been appended.

RECEIPT: I have read and understand this Statement of Charges. My signature does not indicate admittance of guilt, only acknowledgement that I have received a copy of the charges.

Signature and Rank

Date

Copy to: **(List of supervisors in the member's chain-of-command)**
Departmental Disciplinary Coordinator

*DIVISION 11 – PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Chapter 24 – Volunteer Disciplinary Process*

