

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY
- Station 29 -
Departmental Policy
Sexual Abuse, Molestation & Misconduct

Purpose:

The Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company is committed to protecting the safety, health and well being of all members in our organization. We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy regarding acts of physical, mental or sexual abuse, sexual molestation or misconduct (prohibited conduct) within our organization. This policy outlines the mandatory procedures that must be followed when there is reasonable suspicion, learned or witnessed acts of prohibited conduct.

Scope:

Any individual who conducts business for the organization, represents the organization or is conducting business on the organization's property is covered by this policy. Our policy includes, but is not limited to the members of the Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company.

Introduction:

Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company prohibits actual or threatened acts of physical, mental or sexual abuse, sexual molestation or misconduct (prohibited conduct) within the organization or during any organization-related activity. Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company provides procedures for members, officers or any other victims of physical, mental or sexual abuse, sexual molestation or misconduct to report such acts.

Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse, molestation or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of membership, as well as criminally prosecuted. No member, officer or other person, regardless of his or her title or position has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse, molestation or misconduct.

All members who learn of, have a reasonable suspicion of prohibited conduct, must immediately report it as outlined under "Reporting Procedure".

Definitions and Examples:

The following definitions or examples of sexual abuse, molestation, or misconduct, may apply to any and/or all of the following persons – members, officers or other third-parties.

Sexual abuse, molestation or misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Child sexual abuse – any sexual activity, involvement or attempt of sexual contact with a person who is a minor (under 18 years old) where consent is not or cannot be given.
- Sexual activity with another who is legally incompetent or otherwise unable to give consent.
- Physical assaults or violence, such as rape, sexual battery, abuse, molestation or any attempt to commit such acts.

- Unwanted and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, brushing, massaging someone's neck or shoulders and/or pulling against another's body or clothes.
- Material such as pornographic or sexually explicit images, posters, calendars or objects.
- Unwelcome and inappropriate sexual activities, advances, comments, innuendoes, bullying, jokes, gestures, electronic communications or messages (e.g. email, text, social media, voicemail), exploitation, exposure, leering, stalking or invasion of sexual privacy.
- A sexually hostile environment characterized as comments or conduct that unreasonably interferes with one's work performance or ability to do the job or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
- Direct or implied threats that submission to sexual advances will be a condition of membership or affiliation with the organization.

Reporting Procedure:

Any member, who learns of, witnesses or has a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse, molestation or prohibited conduct, must immediately report it to an Executive Officer or Line Officer of the department.

Any Junior Member who feels they may have been a victim of sexual abuse, molestation or misconduct shall immediately report it to the Junior Advisor, Executive Officer and/or Line Officer.

The notified Junior Advisor, Executive Officer or Line Officer shall immediately notify the President and/or Fire Chief. If at any time the report is against the President and/or Fire Chief, the next highest ranking Executive Officer and/or Line Officer shall be notified.

It is not required to directly confront or question the person who is the source or the target(s) of the report, before notifying any of the individuals listed above. The Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company will take every reasonable measure to ensure that those named in the complaint of misconduct, or are too closely associated with those involved in the complaint will not be included in part of the investigative team.

Appropriate family members of the victim must be notified immediately by an Executive Officer in suspected child abuse or neglect reports.

Anti-retaliation and False Allegations:

The Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company prohibits retaliation made against any member, officer, or other person who lodges a good faith complaint of sexual abuse, molestation or misconduct or who participates in any related investigation.

Making knowingly false or malicious accusations of sexual abuse, molestation or misconduct can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. The Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company prohibits making false or malicious sexual misconduct allegations, as well as deliberately providing false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of membership and criminal prosecution.

Investigation and Follow-up:

The Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company will take all allegations of sexual abuse, molestation or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. The investigation may be undertaken by an internal team comprised of Executive Officers or an independent third party may be utilized. The Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies and we may refer the complaint and the result of our investigation to those agencies. We reserve the right to place the target(s) of the investigation on suspension until the investigation is completed. The Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation and keeping with our legal obligation to report suspected prohibited conduct to the appropriate authorities.

Reporting to Law Enforcement or Appropriate Child/Adult Protective Services:

The Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective services organizations. It is the policy of the Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse as a condition before reporting the allegation to proper law enforcement authorities or protective services organizations.

Membership Screening and Selection:

As part of the sexual abuse, molestation and misconduct prevention program, the Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company is committed to maintaining a diligent screening program for prospective and existing members and others that may have interaction with those associating with or serviced by the Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company. The organization may utilize a variety of methods of screening and selection, including but not limited to applications, personal interviews, criminal background checks and personal and professional references.

Supervision of Youth:

To provide a safe environment for minors, the Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Company strives that a minimum of two adult members supervise or be in attendance with minors during organization-related activities. The purpose is to avoid one-on-one interactions between adults and minors that are not easily observable by others. If individual meetings with a minor must be held in an office, doors will be kept open. Closed door meetings should only be conducted when another adult is put on notice of the meeting and the door remains unlocked.

The original **Sexual Abuse, Molestation & Misconduct Policy** was approved, adopted and implemented on April 04, 2017.

Donnie Wallace, *Fire Chief*

Johncarlo Ligi, *President*