



Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS

Standard Operating Procedure: 2.12	Effective Date: June 8, 2023
Subject: Off-Duty Conduct	Section: Human Resources
Authorized: Chief Michael Robinson	Revision Date: N/A

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to clearly establish the Off-Duty Code of Conduct for the Carroll County Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

II. DEFINITIONS

DFEMS Employees- Uniformed career employees.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS personnel are subject to standards of performance not only for their specific job functions but also for their general conduct because they serve the taxpayers and visitors of Carroll County. The public nature of their decision and commitment to the fire service requires that all personnel adhere to high standards of ethical and moral behavior in their job functions and in their personal conduct.
- B. Personnel are expected to comply with all County ordinances, standards, policies, and procedures set forth by Carroll County Personnel Rules, Department of Fire and EMS policies and procedures and all written laws of the State of Maryland. Personnel are expected to exercise sound judgment in carrying out their duties in a professional manner for the betterment of the community and Department as a whole. While the Department of Fire and EMS is not normally concerned with the off-duty conduct of its personnel, when off-duty conduct has a bearing on Department operations or brings discredit on the Department, then such conduct becomes a serious concern and will result in appropriate disciplinary action against the employee concerned.
- C. The standards set forth in these policies and procedures are not intended to and obviously cannot be exhaustive of all appropriate responses and actions of personnel or list every possible situation. These policies shall be used by Carroll County DFEMS personnel to

provide guidance as to the principles and standards they should strive for in every situation.

D. Unbecoming Conduct

1. Every employee shall conduct him/herself at all times in a manner which reflects most favorably on the Department of Fire and EMS. The phrase “reflects most favorably” pertains to the perception of both the citizens and other employees. Conduct unbecoming an employee shall include that which tends to bring the Department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon the employee as a representative of the Department, or that which tends to impair the operation or efficiency of the Department or employee.
2. Employees will always be governed by ordinary rules of good behavior observed by law-abiding citizens, both on and off duty. Employees will be subject to discipline for any conduct tending to bring reproach, disgrace or discredit upon the Department and its uniform, and for any conduct that undermines or interferes with the efficiency or operations of the Department, even though such conduct may not be specifically prohibited by policy or procedure.

E. Employee’s Obligation to Notify the Department of Certain Activities

1. Employees must immediately report (completely and in writing) any of the following matters to the Director/Chief, Fire & EMS, through the chain of command:
 - a. When the employee is arrested or cited for any criminal offense, including all categories of felonies, misdemeanors, and major traffic violations (such as driving under the influence of intoxicants, driving with suspended license, hit and run, attempt to elude, and reckless driving).
 - b. When the employee is a party to any judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative hearing or proceeding related to one’s job duties (such as the proposed suspension of the employee’s driver’s license, or the proposed suspension of a job-related certification, license or permit, such as EMS or ALS certification).
 - c. When the employee knows that another DFEMS uniformed employee is involved in any of the matters listed above.
2. DFEMS will conduct an appropriate investigation into any of the matters listed above. Employees must cooperate fully with investigators and provide copies of all police reports, accident reports, Motor Vehicle Administration reports and court records as directed. Employees may be required to provide periodic updates of such records.
3. When an employee’s driver’s license is suspended by an agency or court, the employee must immediately notify DFEMS of the occurrence.
4. If the Department determines that an employee cannot effectively perform their assigned job duties because of pending criminal charges, or because of pending investigation into their conduct, it may determine whether a different, temporary job assignment may be available. The Department will evaluate each case closely in determining whether to offer temporary reassignment. The needs of the Department will be primary. The facts and circumstances of

- each incident will be considered, as well as the employee's history of discipline and the availability of suitable alternative positions.
5. If another assignment is available and is determined by the Department to be appropriate, the employee may be assigned to perform other duties on a temporary basis. The Department will review the circumstances of such an assignment every 30 days and may choose to limit the duration of such a temporary assignment.
 6. If an employee's driver's license, EMS certification is revoked or suspended for an undefined or extended period, DFEMS may take disciplinary action including suspension without pay or termination of employment. The employee shall immediately document the circumstances in writing and forward to their immediate supervisor.

F. Examples of Off-Duty Misconduct

1. The following list is provided for information purposes: it is not exhaustive and is not intended to cover all situations in which disciplinary actions may be taken for off-duty conduct or behavior. The Department of Fire and EMS retains the sole discretion to determine when disciplinary action, up to and including termination, is appropriate.
 - a. Commission of a felony, misdemeanor or a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty
 - b. Conduct reflecting discredit on the Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS
 - c. Alcohol abuse or illegal drug possession or use in any shape or form
 - d. Discourteous treatment of the public, Department personnel or Carroll County DFEMS personnel, including the personnel of volunteer companies
 - e. Misappropriation or misuse of Carroll County property
 - f. Possession of firearms or other dangerous weapons against the laws of the state of Maryland or the laws of another state
 - g. Falsification or destruction of official records or documents
 - h. Using obscene or offensive language; engaging in obscene, outrageous, or other offensive conduct
 - i. Any other action or inaction not in the Department's best interest as determine by the Director/Chief, Fire & EMS.

IV. RECISION

This Standard Operating Procedure rescinds all directives regarding Off-Duty Conduct or similar content previously issued for personnel of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS.