| | Standard Operating Guideline: PERSON 6 | |
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| | Subject: | Membership Criteria |
| | Effective Date: | August 1, 2014 |
| | Revision Date: | |
| | Signature of Approval: | |

**PURPOSE:** The Franklin County Department of Public Safety has established the following guideline to outline membership process to become affiliated with any county fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies. All licensed EMS agencies are required by Virginia law to conduct a criminal history background check through the Virginia State Police no more than sixty (60) days prior to an applicant's affiliation with the EMS agency (12 VAC 5-31-540).

Franklin County guidelines also apply the same background check be conducted on applicants to fire departments also.

Proper selection and screening of personnel is necessary to protect the citizens and communities served by the Franklin County Department of Public Safety. It is incumbent upon all agencies to conduct proper background screenings on the personnel providing vital emergency services to the public.

**DEFINITIONS:** For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

**Affiliated Agency:** All agencies listed in Sections 8-11 (b) and 8-71 (b) of the Code of Ordinances for Franklin County.

**Applicant:** An individual that is 16 years or older, that has submitted an application to a fire or EMS agency in Franklin County to be considered for membership.

**Candidate:** An applicant that has submitted an application for membership to a fire or EMS agency that is currently awaiting the results of the NCIC criminal history background check. A candidate cannot be considered for membership of an EMS agency until the NCIC background check has been received from the Office of EMS.

**Letter of Eligibility:** Letter submitted to any Franklin County fire or EMS agency from the Department of Public Safety that states whether an applicant is eligible for membership in any fire or EMS agency.

**Member:** A probationary member that has completed the probationary membership process and has been approved to be a member of the fire or EMS agency.

**Probationary Member:** A Candidate that has completed the required background check that is in the process of completing the probationary training/membership process.

## I. POLICY:

A. An application for membership shall be submitted to the Franklin County Department of Public Safety for any individual seeking to become a member of any volunteer fire or EMS agency in Franklin County. The application may be submitted by the individual or by the agency in which they have applied for membership.

B. As part of the application process, all individuals that have filed an application for membership with any Franklin County fire or EMS agency are required to submit a signed waiver authorizing the Department of Public Safety to conduct a driving and criminal records check. Public Safety will obtain the applicants driving and criminal records histories through the Department of Motor Vehicles network (DMV), and the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN). Applicants to EMS agencies must submit written permission to allow a criminal history records check through the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS). The OEMS criminal history check will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Virginia and will include the submission of a fingerprint card to query the National Criminal Information Center database managed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

C. Upon completion of the DMV and VCIN records check by the Department of Public Safety a Letter of Eligibility will be mailed to the agency regarding the results. Included in this packet will also be an F.B.I fingerprint card for EMS agency applicants.

D. EMS agency applicants should take a copy of the Letter of Eligibility and the fingerprint card to the Franklin County Sheriff's Office for fingerprinting. Applicant fingerprinting will be conducted on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm at the Franklin County jail located at 70 East Court St., Rocky Mount, VA 24151.

E. Upon completion of the fingerprint card, the applicant shall submit it to the OEMS office by mail. Applicants should note that the fingerprint process typically takes 4 – 6 weeks to complete. The copy of the results of the NCIC check will be released by mail to the applicant's EMS agency by the Office of EMS.

F. The Letter of Eligibility shall be returned to the Public Safety office manager within 30 days of receipt by the Chief or Captain of the agency. The letter of eligibility must be received by the office manager for the member to be added to the agency roster and be eligible for any benefits available to volunteer personnel.

G. Currently, applicants to the following fire companies shall comply with the OEMS background checks since these agencies also provide EMS responses:

1. Boones Mill Fire & Rescue
2. Scruggs Fire & EMS
3. Henry Vol. Fire Department

H. Members of Franklin County EMS agencies as of 7/1/2014 are not required to submit to an OEMS background check to maintain membership in the agency.

I. Members that leave, quit, resign, from a licensed EMS agency and applies for membership at another licensed EMS agency are required to complete all aspects of the application process in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

J. Members that leave, quit, resign, or have their membership terminated, and are not in good standing with their prior fire or EMS agency affiliated with the Franklin County Department of Public Safety, shall be ineligible for membership in another affiliated agency of the Franklin County Department of Public Safety.

K. Before operating any county vehicle titled to Franklin County, the operator must authorize the Department of Public Safety to conduct a DMV records check. Driver eligibility criteria are further outlined in the Operations 2 section "K" of the Department of Public Safety SOG manual.

L. If a member is not in good standing with ALL Franklin County Department of Public Safety agencies they shall be prohibited from membership on all agencies. Example if a member is on suspension from an agency they are NOT eligible for membership in another agency.

M. The Director of Public Safety reserves the right to deny any application for membership of any applicant to a Franklin County fire or EMS agency based on the results of the background investigation.

N. The Operational Medical Director reserves the right to suspend the EMS certification of any member of an EMS agency in Franklin County.

O. Each agency may have bylaws that exceed what is addressed in this SOG in regards to membership.