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| <b>Subject:</b>        | <b>PUBLIC ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT RECORDS</b> |
| <b>Section:</b>        | <b>PPG# 3300.1</b>                         |
| <b>Chapter:</b>        | <b>Community Relations</b>                 |
| <b>Effective Date:</b> | <b>7/1/98</b>                              |

## 1.0 POLICY

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- 1.1 The following procedures shall be used to carry out the department's policy regarding public access to department records:

**Display of descriptions, policies and procedures-** The chief shall compile, prominently display and make available the following for inspection and copying by the public at the department headquarters:

1. Descriptions of the department's organizational structure;
2. Statements of policy and procedure by which the department operates;
3. Descriptions of how, here and from who the public can obtain information and copies of public records;
4. Department procedures; and
5. All interpretations of general applicability developed or utilized by the department.

The chief shall update the displayed materials identified above whenever an item is amended, revised or repealed.

**Requests for inspection and copying-** Upon written request, the department shall make available to any person for inspection and copying any record or records not exempted by district policy.

A written request for inspection and/ or copying of records shall include:

1. Name, address, and signature of the party requesting disclosure and the date of request;
2. Specification of the records or types of records requested; and
3. A statement of the intended use if lists of individuals are included among the requested documents.

Written requests shall be made and records shall be available for inspection and copying during the customary business hours of the department.

A response to each written request for inspection and copying of department records shall be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable, and in no case later than 48 hours after

receipt of the request. Records shall not be released until authorized by one of the following staff members:

- Chief
- Assistant Chief
- District Administrative Secretary

Upon request, the department shall make copies of public records for a per-page fee, which shall cover copying costs (15 cents/ page).

Staff shall provide full assistance to members of the public making inquiries or requests related to department records. Staff shall locate and produce for inspection requested records which are not exempt from disclosure and which have been sufficiently identified in a request for inspection.

The chief shall have authority to impose reasonable conditions on the manner of inspection of records so as to minimize the risks of damage or disorganization of the records and to prevent excessive interference with other essential operations of the district.

**Request for inspection or copy of incident report-** Investigative records which are being compiled by the fire district during the investigation of any suspected arson fire, until such time as the investigation has been completed are exempt from public disclosure. However, in the event the investigative record has been referred to a law enforcement agency (includes city or county fire marshal), the determination of whether to disclose such record shall be made by such enforcement agency.

Medical incident reports may be released provided such is limited to information that would be public knowledge to a bystander at the district station, at the scene of the incident, or at the hospital. This information would include the following items:

1. The fact that an aid call was received (date, incident number)
2. The time of the call
3. The time of arrival on the scene
4. Weather conditions
5. Location of response (address)
6. The name of the person treated
7. The phone number of the person treated (unless it is an unlisted number)
8. Description of the equipment dispatched
9. The number and names of personnel dispatched
10. Whether or not the victim was transported
11. The place where the victim was transported
12. If no transportation was involved, then the time the personnel left the scene
13. The manner in which the call was received, such as by phone, radio, etc., but not necessarily the name of the person reporting the incident, if such individual was a private person rather than a member of another governmental agency.

**Full release of a medical incident report in its entirety-** A medical incident report in its entirety shall not, under any circumstances, be released to any person without full

authorization from the fire chief and without the individual's (patient's) consent to the release of the report or portions of the report.

Before an individual can consent to the release of a record or portion of a record, the individual must know and understand the contents of the record, the identity of the person or entity to whom the information will be given and the consequences of the release of the information. Prior to consenting to the release of a record, therefore, the individual must inspect and understand the record and know what information is contained in the record including the meaning of any code symbols used in the record. A representative of the district will not only have to show the individual the record, but also explain the material content in the record.

The release form an individual signs to consent to the release of a record or information from a record (except a public record) shall contain the following information:

1. Name and address of the individual signing the form.
2. Name or description of the person or entity to whom the record and information will be given.
3. The title, date and description of the report to be released.
4. A statement that the person signing the form has read the report and understands the information contained in the report.
5. A statement that the person signing the form knows the identity of the person or entity to whom the report will be given.
6. A statement that the signatory consents to the release of the report or an identified portion of the report.
7. A statement that the signatory releases the district and its personnel from any liability that may result from the release of the information.
8. The date, time and place that the release is signed.