

### III. Training and Education



Adopted  
11 Feb 2020

*We will achieve 100% of all our training assignments. We will make every reasonable effort to make all members successful, while holding them accountable to meet training expectations.*

#### Goals:

*The District is committed to effective, current and applicable training and education to all members in order to deliver the best response and customer service.*

#### Values:

Key values that drive planning for training and education include:

- Training & education will be driven by operational and administrative needs of the District.
- Training & education are a top priority for the District. All members will be held accountable for their competency and skills for their assignment(s).
- The District shall implement a training & education program that is responsive to members' needs and schedule. The principle is that the District will help all members be successful in achieving competency in their assignments.
- Resources (e.g. staff, facilities, tools, curriculum, etc.) needed to properly conduct training and education shall be provided by the District as reasonably possible (i.e. budget, time, staffing capacity).

#### Historical perspective:

The District's incident readiness and response (IR&R) mission has been primarily defined as 1) structural and wildland-urban-interface fire protection and 2) emergency medical services (EMS) as a basic-life-support level. Other, less frequent and immediately critical risks include non-emergency hazard mitigation (e.g. burn permit violation, non-medical assistance, etc.) technical rescue (e.g. patient extrication) and disaster (storm) response.

Generally, prior to the merger between South Bay And North Olympia Fire Districts, the training was focused primarily on a weekly basis for volunteer responders. As the post-merger District was deployed on a shift-based IR&R model, the training system changed to coincide with the shift schedule utilizing shift leaders for training delivery.

The continuum of fire suppression training has included initial training through a county-wide recruit academy, with subsequent ongoing skills maintenance training provided at the District level, based on standardized curriculum. EMS initial and ongoing training has been provided by Thurston County Medic One in a "turn-key" basis for all EMS responders (county-wide).

#### Current situation:

Based upon the results of the 2017 District staffing master planning work, the District adopted the principle making quality training & education a top priority to support member recruitment and retention. This necessitated a complete review of the training and education process, expanding the role of the District

***Above all, the District needs to invest time and energy into its membership!***

training officer and staff. Training philosophy was changed from an “upside bottle model” (small number of inputs into training doctrine and widespread responsibility for delivery of the training) to an “upside down bottle model” (large number of inputs into training doctrine, limited and standardized delivery of training).

In order to facilitate this changed philosophy, modification to the organization and system include:

- The development of training & education programming will be done at the senior IR&R management level in order to reflect IR&R needs;
- Training and education delivery will be provided by a small number of staff properly trained and equipped to do so;
- Training will be provided to all members in a consistent and standardized manner;
- All training and education will be properly documented in a timely manner;
- Members will be held accountable for obtaining their training & education and maintain competencies through their shift leadership
- The Performance & Development Plan (PDP) process; and will reflect the levels of success of all members.
- Capital and operating assets needed for the training & education mission will be identified and integrated into the District’s asset planning & budgeting process.

**Future Strategies:**

Because any member can only achieve mission competency when there is effective leadership and support for them, the competency and skill of their first line supervisor and ranking managers is critical. Therefore, focus on development of leaders at all levels will be a top priority.

***Provide incentives and help members achieve their personal and professional goals through the training and education programs that are intended to help grow and support them!***

Training and education programs will act as a catalyst for teamwork among all members, regardless of their rank, membership status (i.e. volunteer, career) or tenure. Basic performance standards will be understood by all members, and they will be held accountable to achieve and maintain them.

The District will be cognizant of influencing factors for IR&R, training and education. Local, state and national standards, protocols, practices and processes will be considered in development of criteria in order to promote inter-operability.

With dedicated staff to plan, provide and document ongoing training, shift officers will be able to *participate* as a team member and focus on their supervisory and operational tasks. Likewise, they will receive supervisory-managerial level education in a regular manner. This should lessen the burden on their daily task demands.

A dedicated team of Training & Education Program staff will ensure a) appropriate and meaningful curriculum, b) effective and consistent delivery of that curriculum, c) accurate and timely documentation, and d) assurance of resulting member competency (performance testing).

**Objectives:**

1. Grow an organization that every member has an effective leader in place that fully comprehends, embraces and implements all training goals and objectives. This effort shall be in concert with the organization's PDP process.
2. Establish a program for initial and ongoing skills maintenance training and education for supervisory and managerial staff based upon generally accepted standards.
3. Ensure that training and education needs are identified by senior IR&R management and are properly implemented as part of a well-planned, well-resourced and effective process. Evaluate the need for expanded training in new or emerging community risks.
4. Integrate resource allocation with planned delivery of training and education. These include provision of qualified staff, facilities, equipment, tools, systems (e.g. documentary and media) and curriculum.