

Thurston County Fire Protection District 8

DISTRICT POLICY MANUAL



POLICY TITLE:	Salaries & Benefits
POLICY NUMBER:	3-04-PO-00
REVISION:	6
DATE ISSUED/REVISED:	DRAFT
BOARD APPROVAL	
SIGNATURE:	

This Policy shall cover the general provisions of the District's salaries and benefits program and specify those provided to career bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit staff of the District. Salaries and benefits specifications for bargaining unit staff are also referenced under the current District Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with IAFF Local 2903. Compensation paid to volunteers is referenced under *Policy 1-01 "Compensation & Reimbursement."* Annual and sick leave provisions for paid staff are covered under *Policy 3-12 "Annual & Sick Leave."* Benefit programs for volunteers are covered under *Policy 3-13 "Volunteer Benefits Programs."* The compensation and benefits for Board members are referenced under *Policy 0-01 "Board of Fire Commissioners Roles & Responsibilities."*

I. Workday Schedule: The posted office hours for the District (at Station 8-1) will be generally from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday (exclusive of holidays); staffing will be planned and provided for accordingly. Exempt non-bargaining unit employees are allowed a flexible schedule based upon their work demands.

Non-exempt non-bargaining unit employees, are expected to work scheduled hours, with one hour off for lunch (if the work period exceeds five hours) and a twelve-minute break once every two hours. Some flexibility in hours may be acceptable if workloads and responsibilities are being met and approved in advance by the Fire Chief.

Non-exempt non-bargaining unit employees cannot work more than 40 hours per week without prior approval from the Fire Chief. Time over 40 hours per workweek will be paid one and one half times hourly rate established for the non-exempt paid staff classification.

II. Payroll & Payroll Deductions: It is the policy of the District to strictly comply with federal, state and local law regarding payment of wages to employees. Therefore, making of any improper deductions of wages from employees' payroll is prohibited. The District also strives to ensure that every paycheck is accurate, and if there has been an error, the employee should immediately notify the District Secretary of such error. The cause of the error will be investigated in a timely manner, and an appropriate correction will be made to the employee's paycheck and compensation.

Documentation: to ensure the District's payroll accuracy and record-keeping, written documentation for any and all changes made to each employee's payroll records will be maintained by the District Secretary. Any changes shall have received appropriate authorization beforehand.

Distribution: Employees may choose one of the following methods to receive their monthly paycheck:

- In person pickup: Employees may receive their paycheck from the District Secretary at the office;
- Direct deposit: Paychecks will be deposited directly into the employee's designated bank account. Employees are responsible for providing accurate Automatic Clearing House (ACH) banking information to the District Secretary in a timely manner.

Paychecks will be issued on or before the 27th of each month; if the 27th falls on a holiday or weekend, distribution will occur on the preceding business day.

Advances on paychecks: An employee advance on the monthly paycheck may be granted for a serious emergency or an extra-ordinary circumstance. Requests for advances must be made by the employee in

writing and approved by the Fire Chief. The amount of the advance is limited to no more than fifty percent (50%) of the accrued salary and shall be subject to required withholdings.

III. Non-Bargaining Unit Employee Salaries: Typically, the initial salary or wage (and benefits) rate for a paid staff member will be applied from the first day of employment. The District's current annual compensation range schedule is shown in Appendix "A" attached.

Generally, the employee entry level step will be "Step 1," and progressive thereafter on the employee's compensation review date contingent upon a satisfactory performance evaluation by the supervisor and recommendation by the Fire Chief to the Board for approval. After an employee has attained a salary level of "Step 5," any adjustment shall be negotiated between the Fire Chief and the Board.

Effective January 1st of each year, the salary ranges will be adjusted based upon the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U), Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton index for the twelve months preceding June of the preceding year. Other adjustments to the salary schedule may be negotiated by the Fire Chief and Board at any time.

IV. Establishing Salary Levels for Exempt Non-Bargaining Unit Staff: for senior administrative staff (Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, District Secretary, and other positions designated by the Board):

- a. Salaries for administrative staff should be competitive, reasonable, and justifiable. Salaries should be set within the context of a total compensation system designed to attract and retain qualified staff and encourage high levels of performance.
- b. The process for managing administrative staff compensation is designed to assure there are no real or perceived conflicts of interest in the development of compensation plans for staff who report directly to the Board.
- c. Compensation salary ranges will be determined and adjusted as follows:
- d. The compensation salary ranges for administrative staff will be re-evaluated by the Board periodically as determined by the Board or after a significant change involving District size, financial condition, or organizational design.
- e. The Board will appoint a sub-committee composed of two commissioners with staff support to research the salary ranges of comparable fire agencies' staff.
- f. In determining comparables the sub-committee may consider agencies that are within 50% more and less of the District's assessed value, population and staffing level. Furthermore, other consideration may be the other agencies' similarity of organizational design, risk profile, geographical proximity and a rural nature. Preference should be given to agencies in Thurston County and adjacent areas.
- g. The full Board may accept, reject, or amend proposals from the sub-committee.

The current range for the exempt non-bargaining unit staff are shown on Appendix "A" attached.

V. Compensation for Special Non-District Emergency Assignments: The response of employees to major emergency situations outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the District is recognized and deemed to be in the best interest of the District, the region and the state. Such response must be approved by the Fire Chief or designee. Employees responding to and participating in emergency fire resource mobilization shall remain employees of the District, and shall be compensated as prescribed by the current compensation plan as described in Section III above or the current Collective Bargaining Agreement, as applicable. Reimbursement of special assignment compensation expense shall be sought from or through the State of Washington when there are provisions for such reimbursement by either agreement or law.

Exempt non-bargaining unit employees responding to and participating in mobilization by the State of Washington pursuant to the State Fire Services Mobilization procedures (RCW 43.43.960) may be granted special extra hourly compensation for all extra hours as authorized under *Resolution 00-09*. The special hourly compensation shall be at a rate of one and one-half times the current monthly salary rate divided by 173 (exempt average salary hours per month) and paid for each hour the employee works beyond eight hours in a workday (from midnight to midnight). This special compensation provision is made in recognition of the special requirements and duties of their emergency fire mobilization assignments, and is subject to the review and approval of the Board.

Non-exempt employees responding to and participating in emergency fire mobilization shall remain employees of the District at all times, and shall be paid their usual regular or overtime rates for all hours

pursuant to normal and usual compensation procedures as provided for in this Policy or the current Collective Bargaining Agreement as appropriate.

VI. Benefits: District non-bargaining unit employees (and bargaining unit employees as noted) have the following benefit programs available (subject to change at any time by action of the Board as appropriate:

- a. Pension benefits: All eligible employees will be automatically enrolled in a qualified Washington State Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) plan, either the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) or the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF). Enrollment is based upon the employee's job classification and role within the District. Contributions to either pension system are shared between the District and the employee based upon DRS rules.
- b. Deferred compensation plan: Employees may choose to participate in the Washington State Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) or any other plan chosen by the employee that is a qualified Schedule 457 plan. The District will double the contribution made by an employee up to 2.5% of the employee's base wage (for a total District maximum matching contribution of 5%).
- c. Health reimbursement account (HRA): for full-time, fully-compensated employees, the District will contribute to the employee's HRA account, and, as provided for under *Policy 3-12 "Annual & Sick Leave"*, the cash out of accrued but unused annual or sick leave funds may be deposited into the employee's HRA at the employee's direction. The employee may voluntarily contribute to the HRA from regular payroll deduction.
- d. Annual leave, sick leave, and holidays: Refer to *Policy 3-12 "Annual & Sick Leave"*.
- e. Disability and insurance coverage: The District provides both short-term and long-term to eligible employees through its subscribed health care provider. In addition, additional coverage including life insurance is available to employees (at no cost to the employee).
- f. Medical insurance: The District provides employee and family medical insurance including preventative medical, dental, vision, and family health care programs available through the subscribed health care provider.
- g. Family medical leave: The District complies with the Federal Family Medical Leave Act and Washington State Paid Family Medical Leave Act (refer to *District Policy 3-61 "Washington State Paid Family Medical Leave"*).
- h. Employee special support: Refer to *District Policy 3-14 "Member Assistance Program"*.
- i. Military leave: As provided under *WAC 357 Section 31*.
- j. Educational support: The District sponsors program(s) as specified in *District Policy 3-40 "Tuition Reimbursement"* and/or the current CBA.

Specific benefits for bargaining unit employees are identified in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement. Part-time or temporary non-bargaining unit employees may be eligible for certain or all benefits. A determination of eligibility will be made by the Fire Chief and recommended to the Board for approval upon hire or status change of the member.