



SOUTHERN MANATEE FIRE RESCUE DISTRICT POLICY		
DATE October 1, 2013	VOLUME #1 ADMINISTRATION	NUMBER #120
CATEGORY POLICY		
SUBJECT Code of Ethics		

The Southern Manatee Fire Rescue District affirms its commitment to the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees as set forth in Part III of Chapter 112, Florida Statute and specifically endorses the following declarations of policy:

- (1) It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of government that public officials and employees be independent and impartial and that public office not be used for private gain other than the remuneration provided by law. The public interest, therefore, requires that law protect against any conflict of interest and establish standards for the conduct of elected officials and government employees in situation where conflicts exist.
- (2) It is also essential that government attract those citizens best qualified to serve. Thus policies against conflict of interest must be so designed as not to impede unreasonably or unnecessarily the recruitment and retention by government of those best qualified to serve. Public officials should not be denied the opportunity, available to all other citizens, to acquire and retain private economic interests except when conflicts with the responsibility of such officials to the public cannot be avoided.
- (3) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the District that no officer or employee shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, engage in any business transaction or professional activity or incur any obligation of any nature which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his duties in the public interest.
- (4) It is declared to be the policy of the District that public officers and employees are agents of the people and hold their positions for the benefit of the public. Such officers and employees are bound to observe, in their official acts, the highest standards of ethics regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that promoting the public interest and maintaining the respect of the people of their government must be of foremost concern.

Gifts

- No District employee or member of the employee’s family shall accept gifts of any type, price or size from any person or firm doing business with the Southern Manatee Fire Rescue District, or any person who intends to do business with the District, that would reasonably tend to influence the employee in the discharge of the employee’s official duties or give the appearance of the employee being improperly influenced.

Ethics

All employees shall behave in a completely ethical, truthful and honorable manner in all dealings with the public and other District employees. To avoid misunderstandings and conflicts of interest, the following policies are adopted in accordance with Chapter 112, Florida Statutes "Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees":

- No employee of the District shall solicit or accept anything of value to the recipient, including a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment, favor or service based on the understanding that any official action or judgment of the employee would be influenced thereby.
- No employee acting in his official capacity shall either directly or indirectly purchase, rent or lease any realty, goods or services for the District from any business entity in which he or his spouse or any of the children, parents, grandparents or grandchildren of the employee or his spouse is an officer, partner, director or proprietor or in which the employee or his spouse or any of the children, parents, grandparents or grandchildren of the employee or his spouse, or any combination of them has a financial interest.
- No employee, acting in a private capacity, shall rent, lease or sell any realty, goods or services to the District.
- No employee of his spouse or minor child shall, at any time, accept any compensation, payment or thing of value when the employee knows, or with the exercise of reasonable care should know, that it was given to influence any action in which the employee was expected to participate in his official capacity.
- No employee shall use or attempt to use his position or any property or resource which may be within his trust to secure special privileges, benefits or exceptions for himself or others.
- No employee shall have or hold any employment or contractual relationship with any business entity or agency which is subject to the regulation of, or is doing business with the District.
- No employee shall have or hold any employment or contractual relationship with any business entity or any agency which is subject to the regulation of, or is doing business with, the District.
- No employee shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which he might reasonable expect would require or induce him to disclose confidential information acquired by him by reason of his official position.
- No employee shall disclose or use information not available to members of the general public and gained by reason of his official position for his personal gain or benefit or for benefit of any other person or business entity.

- No employee shall transact any business in his official capacity, or advocate or advise any other District employee to transact business with any business of which he is an officer, director, agent or member or in which he is an officer, director, agent or member or in which he owns a financial interest.
- No employee shall have personal investments in any enterprise which would reasonably create a conflict between his private interests and the public interest.
- No employee shall hold direct or indirect ownership of more than five percent (5%) of the total assets or capital stock of any corporation, partnership, limited partnership, proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, association or trust whether fictitiously named or not, which is subject to the regulation of, or which has business transactions or commitments with, the Southern Manatee Fire Rescue District.

Employee Notification Requirements

- Any employee who is, or becomes, an officer, director, partner, proprietor, associate or general agent or member of, or who owns or acquires a financial interest in any corporation, partnership, limited partnership, proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, association, trust or other business entity which is subject to the regulation of, or which has business transactions or commitments with the District shall file a statement to this effect with the Fire Chief within five (5) working days of the effective date of this subsection, or within five (5) working days after becoming affected by this subsection. The statement shall disclose the nature and extent of the relationship and financial interest the employee holds with the entity.
- Any employee who submits an application for employment or for a contractual relationship for remuneration with an individual or firm doing business with or subject to regulation by the District shall report such application to the Fire Chief in writing within five (5) working days of having made application.
- Any employee who received an offer of employment or for a contractual relationship for remuneration from an individual or firm doing business with or subject to regulation by the District shall report such offer in writing to the Fire Chief within five (5) working days of such offer.
- Any employee who received an offer of a gift from any individual or firm doing business with or regulated by the District shall report such offer in writing to the Fire Chief within five (5) working days of such offer.

Administration of the Code of Ethics

Where a question arises concerning whether or not any activity conforms to the Code of Ethics, the Fire Chief, with advice from General Counsel, as needed, shall decide the question. Any employee wishing to determine whether a proposed activity would be prohibited may document the circumstances of the proposed activity and request an opinion from the Fire Chief. Copies of the request and resulting opinions shall be provided to the employee prior to engaging in the activity.

Employees who violate the Code of Ethics as defined herein, or in Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from District employment and, in the event found guilty of violating Chapter 112, Florida Statutes; civil penalties not to exceed \$5,000.00.

Political Activities and Unlawful Acts Prohibited

- No person shall be appointed to, demoted or dismissed from any position or in any way favored or discriminated against with respect to employment with the District because of race, color, sex, religion, creed, handicap, age, national origin or political opinion or affiliations.
- No person shall use or promise to use, directly or indirectly, any official authority or influence, whether possessed or anticipated, to secure for any person an appointment or advantage in appointment to a position in the District, or an increase in pay or other advantage in employment in any such position, for the purpose of influencing the vote or political action of any person, or for any consideration; provided, however, that letters of inquiry, recommendations and references by public employees or public officials shall not be considered political pressure unless any such letter contains a threat or intimidation or irrelevant, derogatory or false information.
- No person shall directly or indirectly give, render, pay, offer, solicit or accept any money, service or other valuable consideration for or on account of any appointment, promotion or proposed promotion to or any advantage in a position in the Southern Manatee Fire Rescue District.
- As an individual, each employee retains all rights and obligations of citizenship provided in the Constitution and Laws of the State and the Constitution and Laws of the United States. However, no employee of the District shall:
 - (a) Hold, or be a candidate for elective public office while in the employment of the District or take any active part in a political campaign while on duty or within any period of time during which they are expected to perform services for which they receive compensation from the District.
 - (b) Use the authority of his/her position to secure support for or oppose any candidates, party or issue in an election or affect the results thereof.
 - (c) Use any promise of reward or threat of loss to encourage or coerce any employee to support or contribute to any political issue, candidate or party.
 - (d) Display on their person or vehicle use for official business while on duty or in their workplace any button, sign, decal or other symbol of support for any political party or candidate for public office.

Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from District employment, and, if found in violation of Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, civil penalties not to exceed \$5000.00.