



Scarborough Fire Department

Scarborough, Maine



Standard Operating Guidelines

Book:	Organization
Chapter:	Manual of Operations
Subject:	1020 - Preparation of Policies
Revision Date:	12/12/2003
Approved by:	<i>B. Michael Thurlow</i>

PURPOSE

- A. To establish a systematic procedure for preparing, amending and distributing Fire Department policies.
- B. To insure the proper and regular systematic review of the Operations Manual.
- C. To insure the proper, timely, systematic and controlled revision and update of the Operations Manual.

POLICY

- A. A "policy" shall be defined as: a declared objective that shall be used as a basis for decision and action.
- B. A "procedure" shall be defined as: a prescribed or acceptable routine or method of performing or implementing a desired course of action.
- C. The establishment of policies shall be a management prerogative. An SOP Review Committee shall be established to encourage employee participation from throughout the department to provide input and perspective from several points of view.
- D. It shall be the policy of this department, insofar as possible, to establish, in writing, the guiding principles and acceptable methods of action to be used by our personnel.
- E. These policies are intended to provide internal consistency.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. It is the responsibility of the Fire Chief to review and edit new and proposed policies.
- B. It is the responsibility of the SOP Review Committee to review or revise policies, to follow the prescribed review process, to ensure continuity with existing policies, and to present their recommendations to the Fire Chief for adoption.
- C. The Fire Chief shall be responsible for the distribution of all policies and procedures and shall maintain the master copy of the Operations Manual.
- D. The Fire Department Officers shall be responsible for communicating and training on all established policies to all employees in their command.

FORM

- A. The appropriate standard format template shall be used when composing the final draft of any given policy or procedure. All numbering and coding shall be consistent with existing policies.
- B. The standard typing format will be utilized when typing the final draft of any policy or procedure.
- C. A policy may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. **PURPOSE:** The general goal of the policy stated in such a manner so as to indicate why the policy is necessary.
 - b. **POLICY:** Statements as to what the policy shall be.
 - c. **SCOPE:** The parameters of the subject.
 - d. **ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING:** The policy may either change existing or create new organizational structure to accomplish its purpose. This may include the formation of a special committee to carry out some function. Staffing may be treated separately, with a delineation of the number of classifications required, and a description of duties and responsibilities.
 - e. **PROCEDURE:** Specific tasks to be accomplished generally in chronological order.
 - f. **DEFINITIONS:** Any “industry terms” terms or abbreviations will be defined in this section.
 - g. **AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:** For purposes of implementing the policy and ensuring its effective operation, authority and responsibility must be clearly defined. Authority may be treated separately from responsibility if the nature of the policy requires it.
 - h. **OTHER HEADINGS:** Other functional sub-headings that are appropriate to the subject matter may be used as necessary.
 - i. **REFERENCES:** The code, standard, policy, law, or basis for the policy.

DISTRIBUTION

The Fire Chief shall coordinate the distribution of policies and memorandums within the parameters of the following process:

- A. After approval by the Fire Chief, the final copy of the policy will be updated to the webpage, printed and placed in the appropriate Operations manual.
- B. Operational changes of a policy shall be sent with the attached memorandum and will be sent to the appropriate members having charge of the various operations.
- C. Officers receiving a copy of the new policy will insure that the copy of the Operations Manual in their charge is promptly updated. They will also inform all personnel in their command of the new policy. The copies of the old policies which are being replaced shall be removed or discarded.

PREPARATION PROCEDURE

In order to insure uniformity and continuity of departmental policy, those members involved in the preparation or change of policy must correctly follow the prescribed standard procedures listed in this text. This procedure shall be followed when developing a new policy or when processing an unscheduled change in policy.

- A. When a need for change is realized or a new policy is desired, the proposed policy should be formulated into a rough draft.
- B. Additional staff input should be incorporated into the formulation process through staff meetings and/or other means.
- C. The refined proposal should be drafted and sent to the SOP Review Committee for review and then forwarded to the Fire Chief.
- D. The Fire Chief will review the proposal and decide whether the new policy is necessary or not and may approve the policy as is or modify it. The final approval remains with the Fire Chief.
- E. The Fire Chief is the final review level in the policy preparation process. As such, it is the Fire Chief's prerogative to establish policy directly or seek staff input as seen fit.

REVIEW AND REVISIONS

A regular periodic review has been built into the system in order to review and revise the existing policies. Policy reviews are scheduled on an annual basis. The different books of the Manual are reviewed each year. This approach involves asking basic questions in order to determine the validity of an existing policy. The idea is to decide whether or not a given policy is still necessary, needs revision, or can remain in effect as it is. The following procedure shall be the process for review and revision of existing policy.

- A. The SOP Review Committee will initiate the review process at least annually.
- B. If the policy being reviewed is considered invalid, then a revised policy should be forwarded to the Fire Chief.
- C. The Fire Chief will review the recommendations and either approve the removal or re-contact the reviewing committee for questions and discussion.
- D. If removal is not approved, the Fire Chief may re-contact the reviewing members for discussion. After said discussion, the Fire Chief may maintain the original decision or may reconsider. If the decision is to reconsider, the Fire Chief may decide to remove the policy from the system or to have it revised.
- E. If, at the beginning of the review process the SOP Committee decides that the policy in question is still valid, then the next step is to determine whether or not a revision of the policy is in order.
- F. If no revision is needed, then the SOP Committee would then simply reschedule the policy for the next review period.
- G. If revision was in order, then a proposed revision would be formulated and sent to the Fire Chief for review and approval.

REFERENCES

“Guide to Developing Effective Standard Operating Procedures for Fire and EMS Departments”, Federal Emergency Management Agency, United States Fire Administration