



# Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS Standard Operating Procedure

## DOCUMENT DETAILS

<b>Standard Operating Procedure: 2.04</b>	<b>Effective Date: May 5, 2023</b>
<b>Subject: Duties and Responsibilities of Employees</b>	<b>Section: Human Resources</b>
<b>Authorized: Michael Robinson, Director/Chief</b>	<b>Revision Date: May 15, 2026</b>

**Applicability:**         Volunteer         Career

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a comprehensive code of ethics and standards of conduct for employees of the Carroll County Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS).

This policy defines the professional behavior, ethical standards, and responsibilities expected of DFEMS employees both on duty and when off duty in situations that may impact the Department, its operations, or its reputation.

These rules are established by the Director/Chief of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS under authority granted by Chapter 37 of the County Code.

## II. DEFINITIONS

**DFEMS Employees:** Uniformed career employees of the Carroll County Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

**Off-Duty:** Time during which an employee is not performing or authorized to perform Department functions and is not acting under Department authority, regardless of pay status.

**On-Duty:** Any period during which an employee is authorized or required by the Department to perform services, activities, or responsibilities on behalf of the Department, regardless of whether the individual is receiving compensation.

**Conduct Unbecoming:** Behavior that brings discredit upon the Department, undermines public confidence, or interferes with the efficient operation of DFEMS.

### III. PROCEDURES

#### A. General Standards of Conduct

1. All employees are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, ethical behavior, and professionalism in their interactions with coworkers and the public.
2. Employees shall conduct themselves in a manner that protects the integrity and reputation of the Department and maintains the public trust.
3. As public servants, employees are held to strict standards of conduct both on duty and in situations where off-duty behavior may affect the Department.
4. Conduct that brings discredit upon the Department, impairs operations, or undermines public confidence may result in disciplinary action.

#### B. Performance of Duties

1. Employees shall report for duty punctually and respond to all assignments and emergency calls within required timeframes.
2. Employees shall perform assigned duties efficiently, competently, and safely.
3. Employees shall not feign illness, avoid responsibility, or attempt to shirk assigned duties.
4. Employees must maintain in good standing all licenses, certifications, or credentials required to perform their duties.

#### C. Compliance with Laws and Policies

1. Employees must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and County policies.
2. Employees must immediately report through the chain of command any:
  - a. Criminal charges or arrests
  - b. Orders of protection
  - c. Arrestable traffic violations
  - d. Judicial or administrative proceedings related to job duties
  - e. Suspension or revocation of driver's licenses or professional certifications.
3. Employees must cooperate fully with Department investigations and provide documentation such as police reports, court records, or other official documents when requested.

#### D. Orders and Directives

1. Employees must obey lawful orders and directives issued by supervisors unless compliance would require illegal, reckless, or unethical conduct.
2. Supervisors shall not issue orders that knowingly violate laws or Department policies.
3. If an employee receives a directive that conflicts with a previous order, the employee shall notify the supervisor issuing the order. If the order is not rescinded, the most recent directive shall stand.
4. The authority of DFEMS officers extends to all employees of lower rank.

#### E. Personal Conduct and Professional Behavior

1. Employees shall conduct themselves professionally and avoid behavior that constitutes conduct unbecoming a public servant, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Violent or threatening language or behavior
  - b. Discriminatory or demeaning remarks
  - c. Behavior that endangers others
  - d. Conduct that damages property
2. Employees shall treat members of the public and fellow employees with courtesy, respect, and professionalism.
3. Employees are prohibited from soliciting or accepting bribes, gifts, payments, or favors in exchange for performing, delaying, or failing to perform their duties.
4. Harassment or unwelcome conduct based on protected characteristics, including sexual harassment, is strictly prohibited.

#### F. Honesty and Integrity

1. Employees shall not knowingly provide false, inaccurate, or misleading information to County officials, employees, investigators, or members of the public.
2. Employees shall not falsify, alter, or misuse Department records, reports, or documents.
3. Employees must cooperate fully with official investigations.

#### G. Records and Confidentiality

1. Employees shall ensure that Department records and required reports be maintained in accordance with applicable laws and DFEMS standards.
2. Employees shall safeguard confidential and sensitive information obtained through Department operations and shall not access, use, or disclose such information for personal purposes or to unauthorized persons. This obligation includes verbal, written, electronic, and social media communications.
3. Employees shall not remove, copy, or access Department documents or records without proper authorization.

#### H. Use of Department Property and Equipment

1. Employees shall properly care for and maintain Department and volunteer company property.
2. Employees shall not:
  - a. Take or borrow Department or volunteer equipment without permission
  - b. Tamper with or damage Department or volunteer property
  - c. Use Department or volunteer equipment for unauthorized personal purposes
3. Personal electronic devices shall not be used for personal purposes during emergency operations.

#### I. Guests

1. For purposes of this section, a guest is defined as any individual visiting a fire station, including but not limited to family members such as a spouse, child, sibling, or other relative, as well as friends, other personal acquaintances, or employees who are off duty.

2. On-duty employees are responsible for the conduct of their guests while on Department or volunteer company property.
3. Guests must not impair, disrupt, damage, delay, or otherwise negatively affect DFEMS operations, or violate any provision of this regulation.
4. If a guest fails to comply with any request to cease offensive behavior, on-duty employees must notify the DFEMS Shift Commander, volunteer company local fire and rescue corporation chief, or president, who must take appropriate action.
5. Guests under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

#### J. Off-Duty Conduct

1. The Department generally does not regulate employees' personal activities while off duty; however, employees remain responsible for conduct that may impact the Department, its mission, or their ability to perform assigned duties.
2. Off-duty conduct that may result in disciplinary action includes conduct that:
  - a. Brings discredit upon the Department
  - b. Interferes with Department operations
  - c. Compromises public trust
  - d. Impairs an employee's readiness, judgment, or ability to perform assigned duties
  - e. Violates federal, state, or local laws or professional standards.
3. Examples of off-duty misconduct may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Criminal activity
  - b. Illegal drug use
  - c. Discourteous, abusive, harassing, or discriminatory behavior toward the public or coworkers
  - d. Misappropriation or unauthorized use of County, Department or volunteer property
  - e. Falsification, misuse, or destruction of official records
  - f. Possession of illegal weapons
  - g. Obscene or offensive conduct that reflects negatively on the Department
4. Use of Department Affiliation
  - a. Employees shall not use their position, title, uniform, badge, or Department affiliation for personal gain or to exert influence in non-official matters, unless authorized.
5. Off-Duty Emergencies
  - a. In the event that employees of DFEMS, while not on duty, are at the scene of a fire, medical or other emergency, they are authorized to take whatever professional and reasonable action they may deem necessary for the protection of life and property.

#### K. Additional Conduct Standards

1. Employees shall provide their name and duty assignment upon request while on duty.
2. Employees shall not attempt to use improper influence to obtain promotions, transfers, or preferential treatment.

3. Employees shall not engage in political activity while on duty or while wearing the DFEMS uniform, except to exercise their right to vote.
4. Employees shall not publicly criticize Department actions while on duty in a manner that brings discredit to DFEMS.
5. Employees shall not use the Department name or affiliation for commercial purposes without written approval from the Director/Chief.
6. Employees shall, within five days of its occurrence, report any change in residence, personal and emergency contact telephone number, or any other item of personal information kept by DFEMS.

#### L. Courtesy Services

1. Employees are often called upon to provide services that are not emergency oriented, but which relate to the public good or order or have an impact on the public's general safety. When this occurs, employees are to provide, within reasonable means, courtesy services that are consistent with DFEMS policies and procedures, County policy, and the law.

#### M. Enforcement

1. The Director/Chief of DFEMS or their designee is the enforcement authority for this policy.
2. Violations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with County and Department policies.

## IV. RECISSION

This Standard Operating Procedure rescinds all directives regarding Duties and Responsibilities of Employees or similar content previously issued for employees of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS.

## V. RELATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES / DOCUMENTS

2.03 Disciplinary Policy

1.11 Social Media Policy

## VI. ATTACHMENTS

None