

# Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.

Sta. 54

P.O. Box 327  
311 Main St.  
Little Creek, DE 19961

## Bullying Policy

### **POLICY:**

The Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company has a zero tolerance policy toward Fire House and Fire Company related bullying. Hazing or bullying of members is unacceptable and will not be tolerated for any reason. All members should be able to be in an environment free of hazing and bullying.

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to prohibit Fire House and Fire Company related hazing and bullying. Fire House and Fire Company hazing and bullying may cause the loss of trained and talented members, reduce productivity and morale, and create unnecessary legal risks for the company.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Bullying:** Repetitive acts of aggressive behavior that intentionally threaten, humiliate, intimidate, degrade, or hurt, physically or mentally, another person. Bullying usually involves repeated acts committed by a person or group who has, or is perceived as having, more power than the victim/target of the bullying.

**Hazing:** Ritualized harassment, abuse, or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group.

### **PROCEDURE:**

Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company members shall not engage in hazing and/or bullying other members of the Company at any time regardless of the person's willingness to participate or submit to the conduct.

Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company members shall not engage in the hazing and bullying of any other person while at the scene of an alarm, while in uniform, while on Company property, while in or on Company apparatus, or while representing the Company, regardless of the person's willingness to participate or submit to the conduct.

Officers shall ensure that personnel are not bullied or hazed, and are required to intervene to stop any bullying or hazing that is observed. Officers who fail to intervene will be subject to being disciplined at least as harshly as those responsible for the bullying and/or hazing.

### **ACTS CONSTITUTING BULLYING:**

The following acts are examples of the kind of behavior that if repeated and committed under circumstances of a power imbalance, constitutes bullying:

Physical violence, hitting, striking, punching, slapping, shoving, tripping, and other acts that hurt people physically, or otherwise result in inappropriately touching.

Spreading rumors intended to humiliate, embarrass, degrade, or intimidate another

Teasing, taunting, harassing, isolating, or excluding another

Name calling, verbal abuse, threats, or coercion

Encouraging others to engage in similar activities intended to humiliate, embarrass, degrade, or intimidate another

Engaging in any of the above using telephones, cell phones, emails, text messages, instant messages, online, electronically, or using cyber technology

This can include:

- a) Sending offensive or threatening text, email, or instant messages
- b) Posting offensive, humiliating pictures or messages about others in blogs or on web sites
- c) Using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies about someone

### **WHAT TO DO**

Members who believe they are being bullied and/or hazed should immediately ask the member or members to stop.

If after being asked to stop the offensive behavior, a member resists stopping in any manner other than offering an apology and stating that it will not happen again, the target of the hazing and/or bullying should promptly inform an Officer.

All reports of bullying and/or hazing will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, confidentially, and impartially.