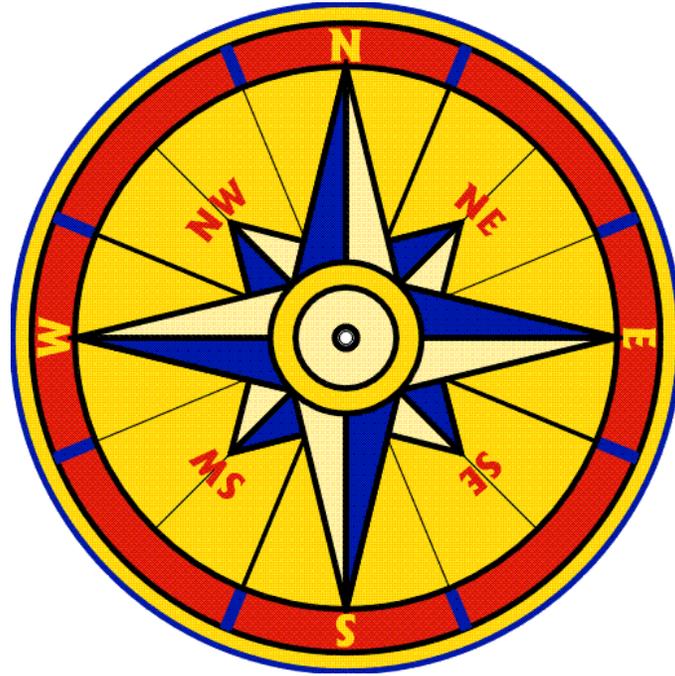


The Brentwood Compass



A Guide to
Effective Membership
in the
Brentwood Fire Department

The Brentwood Compass

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Departmental Vision Statement

The Brentwood Fire Department strives to be a recognized leader in the development and delivery of professional and innovative emergency and life-safety services.

Departmental Mission Statement

The Mission of the Brentwood Fire Department is to provide a safe community by developing a population of safety conscious citizens.

We will serve these citizens in emergency and non-emergency situations with a well-trained, dedicated and professional staff. In the event of manmade or natural disasters, our priorities are life safety, incident stabilization and property conservation.

Departmental Values

As a department, we value and are committed to:

- The basic values of respect, honesty, compassion and cooperation
 - Supporting our members and their families by encouraging teamwork and cooperation
 - Training, education, and opportunities for advancement and professional development
 - A progressive department with an environment open to change
-

Departmental Code of Ethics

- To recognize and adhere to the obligations, duties and honor of our chosen profession as firefighters
- To set high standards for ourselves, refrain from destructive criticism and be team players
- To conduct our personal and official affairs in ways that will inspire public confidence and avoid disfavor to ourselves or the department
- To speak the truth and not allow personal beliefs to influence our decisions or activities
- To avoid illegal activities or affiliations that will conflict with our position as firefighters
- To pledge our loyalty to the City of Brentwood, the fire department and our fellow firefighters

Why *The Compass*?

The fire service has a long history of getting the job done. Since the creation of the modern fire service by Benjamin Franklin, there have been principles and values that have driven the fire service values such as commitment, dedication, courage, integrity, bravery and honor.

The Compass is intended to outline the philosophy and values of the Brentwood Fire Department. It is also intended to serve as a guide for the behavior of all members. By establishing these values in a written form, we establish a standard and a model by which to measure our personal, interpersonal and organizational behaviors.

The Compass is based on the principal that people are the foundation of any organization. Our department is no better than its membership. Being a member of the department is more than just a job; it is a commitment. It is a commitment to the City of Brentwood, its citizens and visitors, the department, fellow firefighters and ourselves. This commitment must be implemented through personal responsibility and accountability. Each member is responsible and accountable for his or her actions. Organizational and personal integrity are important elements of any successful organization.

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All organizations have what is called “corporate culture,” a philosophy that makes each organization distinct. Think about any organization you deal with, and you’ll recognize something that makes it different from all others. This corporate culture is readily identifiable, most often by persons outside the organization. It is stated that this corporate philosophy expresses the values of the organization. These values, in turn, are reflected in the behavior exhibited by the organization and its members. Behavior, resultantly, changes the philosophy of the organization.

The Compass outlines the price of membership with the Brentwood Fire Department. It points to values we recognize and accept as standards of behavior for our department. It provides guidance as to what we should do and how we should do it. Finally, in times of uncertainty, it serves as a beacon calling us back to the standards we have accepted. When describing principles or beliefs, it is difficult not to sound idealistic. This is true when trying to describe a department’s philosophy or “culture.” **The Compass** was developed with the primary purpose of describing the way we would like our department to be.

The Points of *The Compass*

A compass is used to provide direction when traveling or lost in the wilderness. A compass can point us in the right direction and help us locate ourselves on a map. Like-wise, **The Compass** can provide direction for our department when seeking guidance in the delivery of emergency services.

A compass has four points: north, south, east and west. **The Brentwood Compass** also has four points: *Excellence, Leadership, Integrity* and *Service*.

Excellence

Excellence can be described as a passion for continued improvement and innovation that will result in greater performance and accomplishment for the fire department.

Organizational excellence is the provision of superior service while continually exploring innovative ways to respond to the public’s needs and anticipating future requirements. It involves procuring, developing and maintaining essential resources in a state of readiness at all times. It means recruiting, training, promoting and retaining the best people for the job. Organizational excellence provides services that respond to and anticipate customer needs.

Interpersonal excellence is the level of accomplishment achieved when team members work together to reach a common goal in an atmosphere that is free of fear while retaining individuality.

Personal excellence joins professional development, training and education with physical and mental fitness to maintain professional competence. It means that, while seeking out leadership opportunities for the department and for ourselves, we conduct our personal and public lives in the highest legal and ethical manner, twenty-four hours a day.

Leadership

Leadership is critical in maintaining the standards that we set for ourselves and is reflected by the quality of service provided to the public. We can, and should, choose to take leadership roles as an organization, as department members, and as individuals.

Organizational leadership consists of being a leader within the fire service and the community. This is best accomplished by being committed to providing superior service to the citizens, visitors of the city and to each other. Our department can also assume a leadership role by maintaining and promoting a progressive environment that welcomes change and improvement.

Interpersonal leadership is an equally important form of leadership called followership. Every leader is a follower, and some followers already are or can be leaders. It is important to make the distinction between when to follow and when to lead. Follow as you would want others to follow and understand that followership is important.

As a department, we should be willing to be followers. We expect honesty and dependability in our dealings with our leaders. We expect respect, not only for ourselves but also for our leaders and others we deal with daily. We expect cooperation and enthusiasm in our interactions. Above all, we expect professionalism.

Personal leadership is leading by example. There are many leaders within the fire department - some formal and some informal. Formal leaders have responsibility not only because of authority, but also because of demonstrated ability. Informal leaders may not have authority, but are looked upon as leaders due to their ability. Leaders are expected to set the example, realizing their leadership reflects on the organization.

As a department, we expect our leaders to lead. We expect them to lead by being positive role models, by setting a good example, and by making good decisions. We expect our leaders to be fair and consistent, to be mentors to others by passing on their knowledge and by viewing training as a process, not a goal. We expect our leaders to listen to suggestions and opinions and to trust, encourage, support and respect us.

Integrity

Integrity is the willingness to do what is right even when no one is looking. Integrity includes: *courage* - doing what is right even if the personal cost is high; *honesty* - always telling the truth; *responsibility* - acknowledging your duties and acting accordingly; *accountability* - assuming the blame when it's rightfully yours and declining credit that isn't yours; and *respect* - respecting oneself and others as a professional and as a person.

Organizational integrity demonstrates commitment to positive change and constant improvement, meeting the challenges while adhering to a higher standard of organizational and personal conduct. It is being mindful of the privilege for the opportunity to serve our fellow citizens.

Interpersonal integrity is being honest and truthful in our dealing with each other and with those outside the fire department. It is showing respect toward all people. It is treating each individual with human dignity. The day-to-day duty of each of us is to work together as a team to improve the quality of our work and each other.

Personal integrity embodies the highest degree of moral character, technical excellence, quality and competence in the things we are trained to do. It shows the courage to meet the demands of our profession and our mission although hazardous, demanding, or otherwise difficult. It means making decisions in the best interest of the fire department and the city, conducting ourselves in the highest ethical manner in all relationships with team members, superiors, subordinates and the public. It is abiding by an uncompromising standard of integrity, taking responsibility for our actions and our work. Personal integrity is fulfilling or exceeding our legal and ethical responsibilities in our public and personal lives twenty-four hours a day. Illegal or improper behavior or even the appearance of such behavior is unacceptable. We, alone, are accountable for our professional and personal behavior. Loyalty to our city and department, ensuring the resources entrusted to us are used in an honest, careful and efficient way, is evidence of personal integrity.

Service

Service is the backbone of the fire profession. We serve others! We must remember that our primary mission is to deliver the best possible service to our customers. It requires that we regard everyone as customers.

Organizational service is being there when people need us, first determining the customer's needs, then providing these needs or helping to develop solutions for their problems. It is being kind and empathetic and taking care of what matters to others as we would want them to take care of what is important to us. It is communicating courteously and politely in terms the customer understands, fully understanding the customer and assuring that the customer understands us. Organizational service is watching how we do things and how it may appear to others. Lastly, we should never act as though service is an inconvenience to us. We should be willing to provide superior service at all times. We are here to protect the community and we exist solely to serve the citizens of the community.

Interpersonal service is teamwork. Fire department personnel are not just employees, but members of a team. Team members must take care of each other if they expect to attain excellence; they must be enthusiastic and motivated about the job and their team. Interpersonal service is being dependable and punctual. Honesty and discipline in our affairs with our superiors, subordinates and each other exemplifies interpersonal service as does being courteous and respectful of each other's values, possessions and differences. Respecting your superiors, listening for orders, and then following them are components of personal service, as are respecting your subordinates, listening to their concerns and ideas, and implementing any ideas that would benefit the department. Interpersonal service is evidenced in the unity required for a team and the department to prosper, in good times and in bad times.

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Personal service demands that professional duties take precedence over personal desires. It means being a team player and working hard to do your share, using teamwork to attain goals. It is self-discipline, following the rules and being responsible and accountable for your own actions. Personal service involves managing your own behavior so that it conforms to the laws of our state and country and the rules and regulations of our city and department. Seek to reduce organizational and interpersonal stress, taking care not to create it. Be loyal and committed to the team, the department and the city.

When implementing personal service, ask yourself the questions Chief Alan Brunacini of the Phoenix, Arizona Fire Department suggests:

1. Is it the right thing for the customer?
2. Is it the right thing for our department?
3. Is it legal, ethical and nice?
4. Is it safe?
5. Is it on your organizational (decision) level?
6. Is it something you are willing to be accountable for?
7. Is it consistent with our department's values and policies?

If the answer to all of the questions is "Yes!" then do it!

Summary

The Compass describes the philosophy and values of the Brentwood Fire Department and serves as a guide for the behavior of all members. Remember, it was developed with the primary purpose of describing the way we would like our department to be.

By establishing these values in a written form, we have established a standard and a model by which we will measure our personal, interpersonal and organizational behavior. Each member has made a choice to belong to our department. With this choice and membership comes a commitment to the city, the department and each other. This commitment must be implemented through personal responsibility and accountability. Each member is responsible and accountable for his or her own actions and, therefore, must maintain an attitude that reflects the values described in **The Compass**.

As earlier stated, a compass is used to provide direction when traveling or lost in the wilderness. A compass can point us in the right direction and help us to locate ourselves on a map. However, to be pointed in the right direction, we must know where we want to go. By knowing where you and the fire department want to go, **The Compass** can be a great help getting us there.

The Compass was created for your use and benefit. If you have questions, comments or suggestions about **The Compass**, ask your company officer or shift commander. He or she will be happy to assist you.

Acknowledgements

The Brentwood Fire Department wishes to acknowledge and thank the Phoenix Fire Department, the United States Air Force, the United States Navy, and our own Lieutenant Russell Peterson for their contributions to this document.