

## Board of Directors Code of Ethics

### 218.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to the Board of Directors of the Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District to provide excellence in legislative leadership that results in the provision of the highest quality services to its constituents and to comply with State laws.

### 218.2 POLICY

In order to assist in the governance of the behavior between and among members of the Board of Directors and District staff, the following rules shall be observed.

- (a) The dignity, style, values and opinions of each Director shall be respected
- (b) Responsiveness and attentive listening in communication is expected.

The needs of the District's constituents should be the priority of the Board of Directors. When a Director believes they may have a conflict of interest, the legal counsel shall be requested to offer advice whether one exists or not.

The primary responsibility of the Board of Directors is the formulation and evaluation of policy. Routine matters concerning the operational aspects of the District are to be delegated to professional staff members of the District.

Directors should commit themselves to focusing on the business of the District, emphasizing the positive, avoiding double talk, hidden agendas, gossip, backbiting, and other negative forms of communication and interaction.

Directors should commit themselves to focusing on issues and not personalities. The presentation of the opinions of others should be encouraged. Cliques and voting blocks based on personalities rather than issues should be avoided.

Differing viewpoints are healthy in the decision-making process. Individuals have the right to disagree with ideas and opinions, but without being disagreeable. Once the Board of Directors takes action, all Directors commit to support said action and not to create barriers to the implementation of said action.

Directors should practice the following procedures:

- (a) In seeking clarification on informational items, Directors may directly approach the Fire Chief or professional staff members to obtain information needed to supplement, upgrade, or enhance their knowledge to improve legislative decision-making.
- (b) In handling complaints from residents and property owners of the District, said complaints should be immediately referred directly to the Fire Chief.
- (c) In handling items related to safety, concerns for safety or hazards should be reported to the Fire Chief. Emergency situations should be dealt with immediately by seeking appropriate assistance and reporting to the Fire Chief.

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- (d) In seeking clarification for policy-related concerns, especially those involving personnel, legal action, land acquisition and development, finances, and programming, said concerns should be referred directly to the Fire Chief and District Counsel.
- (e) Requests for Assistance. Directors shall direct all requests for work, studies, information, or any task which is to be performed by the District Staff to the Fire Chief. If the Fire Chief determines that an individual Director's request for Staff services shall result in a substantial expenditure of time or District resources, the Fire Chief may refer the request to the Board for its approval. In no event shall any Director make any request of Staff for information or services not related to District business. This policy shall in no way limit the authority of individual Directors to contact the Fire Chief and District Counsel for the purpose of inquiring about potential conflicts of interest regarding a Director's own economic interest.
- (f) If approached by District personnel concerning specific District policy, Directors should direct inquiries to the Fire Chief.

The work of the District is a team effort. All individuals should work together in the collaborative process, assisting each other in conducting the affairs of the District.

- (a) When responding to constituent requests and concerns, Directors should be courteous, responding to individuals in a positive manner and routing their questions through appropriate channels and to responsible management personnel.
- (b) Directors should develop a working relationship with the Fire Chief wherein current issues, concerns and District projects can be discussed comfortably and openly.
- (c) Directors should function as a part of the whole. Issues should be brought to the attention of the Board as a whole, rather to individual members selectively.
- (d) Directors are responsible for monitoring the District's progress in attaining its goals and objectives, while pursuing its mission.