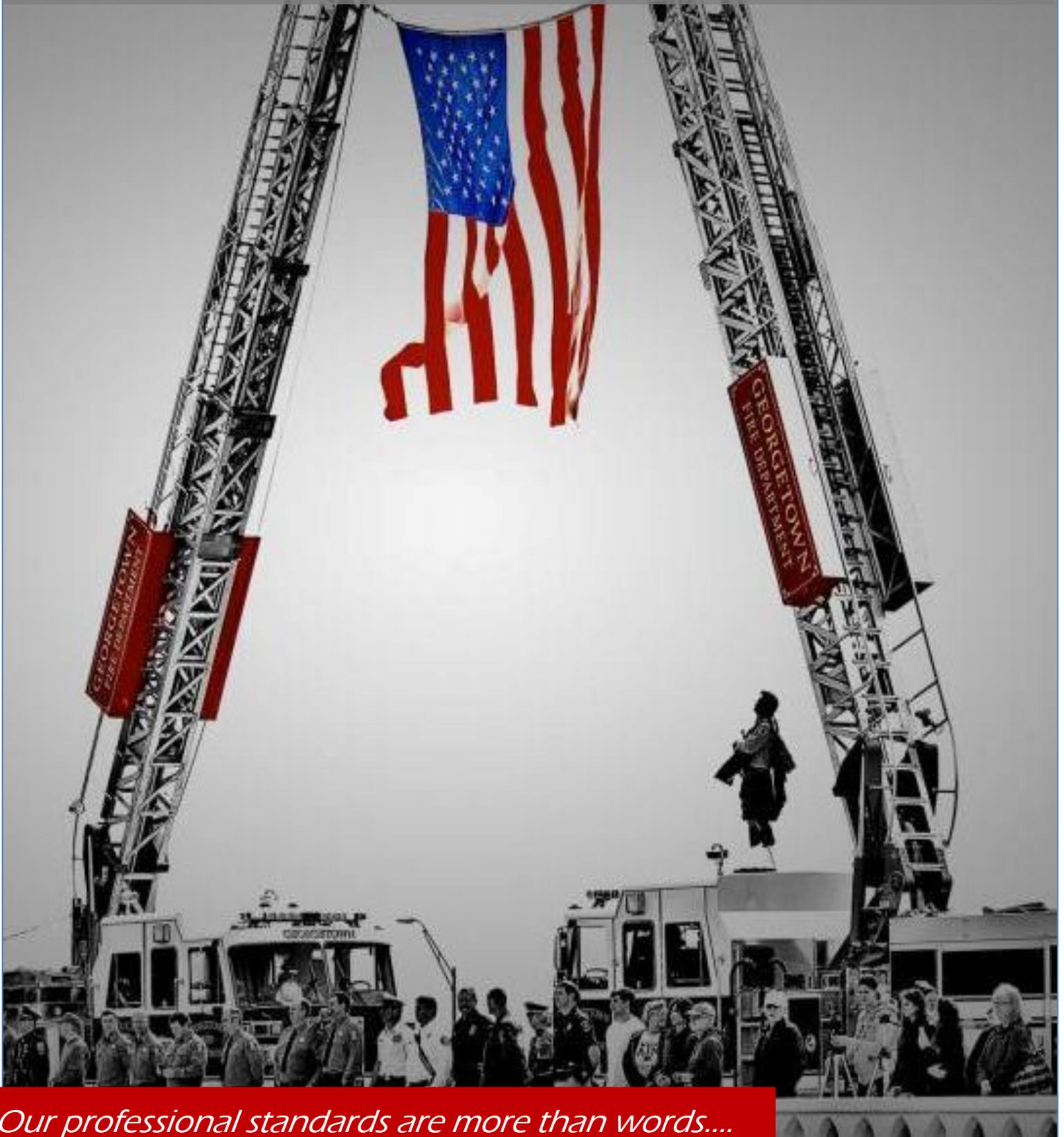


PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Georgetown Fire Department



*Our professional standards are more than words....
Our professional standards define us.*

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WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

At Georgetown Fire Department, you are not just an employee - you are a member, part of a family and a team. You become a member the day you join the organization, in any capacity, and put on the GFD uniform. You will always be associated with our family and reciprocal trust, care, and respect must be maintained.

We are a family in the sense that we spend a considerable amount of time together and “getting along” is not an option – it’s a requirement. Much like family members care for one another, we must equally show caring concern for one another and the community we serve.

Moreover, we are a team in the sense that we must always pull together to get the job done.

*We are all members of this family and team by choice,,,,,
[No one] forces us to remain a member of the team.*

The following pages will describe the philosophy of our family and our team. It is intended to communicate to existing and new members the expectations of the way members are treated in the system, expectations for individual behavior and performance, guidelines for leadership, the importance of our history and the general approach that we all use when interacting with each other.



This document is based upon the fundamental principle that our members are the foundation of this organization; therefore, the organization can be no better or stronger than its membership.

Being a member of the Georgetown Fire Department is more than an occupation; it includes a commitment and responsibility to the public and to the other members of our family and team. This commitment must be backed with individual responsibility and accountability, and a commitment to the organizational mission, vision, goals and values.

Our professional standards are more than words – they define us. It is every member’s responsibility to learn, embrace, and apply these standards to ourselves and each other.

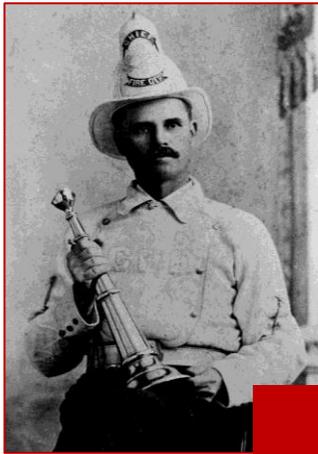
We are all members of this family and team by choice. No one forced us to apply for our membership, nor does anyone internally force us to remain a member. To a great extent, it is our voluntary entry into our organization, team, and family that attracts people to our organization.

We are committed to excellence internally and externally. We avoid doing “just good enough to get by,” and avoid actions that are destructive to each other. Our pride in the organization and our positive commitment to quality and to each other have made us what we are today and through constant assessment and change, will sustain us in the future.





OUR HISTORY



In 1881, the Georgetown Fire Department was created and in January, 1882, the City's first Hook & Ladder Company was organized and the following officers were elected: John H. Leavell, president; W.F. Steele, vice president; J.C. Cameron, secretary; Emzy Taylor, treasurer; J. W. Kincaid, foreman; S.T. Atkin, first assistant foreman; and W.C. Pfaeffle, second assistant foreman.

About the same time the Hook and Ladder Company was started, a second company, Rescue Hose Company 1, was also organized, although the exact date of its beginning has not been determined. Many stories and archived records suggest it originated in 1881.

Since 1881, professional and caring services have been provided to the City of Georgetown

All personnel of those early years were volunteers. The Hook and Ladder was pulled by manpower to the fire, then a bucket brigade sent water from the hose to the fire. This was primitive, indeed, compared to sophisticated equipment now. But, it saved many homes and buildings in the community from serious loss.

The organization of the Georgetown Fire Department happened fairly soon after the great fire in Taylorsville (Taylor, Texas), which destroyed almost all of the businesses of Taylorsville on February 25, 1879.

Since 1881, professional and caring emergency services have been provided to the City of Georgetown. We are one of the longest standing fire departments in the United States.

Over the years, the department has evolved in size and capabilities to meet the emergency and rescue challenges of the community.

Today, the department is comprised of highly professional and dedicated members that continue to meet the increasing service demands for our community. The Department responds to nearly 7,000 emergency incidents per year, which is typical for cities in size similar to that of Georgetown. In addition to combating complex fires, firefighters provide pre-hospital emergency medical care to complement the regions emergency medical system, rescue people trapped as a result of accidents and respond to hazardous material releases. Specialized rescue capabilities include high angle rescue, confined space, trench rescue, wild fire mitigation, dive/recovery, and swift water rescue.

In addition to emergency response, Georgetown Fire Department also provides non-emergency services such as pre-fire planning, disaster preparation, arson investigation and community education programs.

The department is committed to meeting the emerging needs of the community and considers planning an integral part of our response model. We would prefer to prevent emergencies through education rather than respond to a deteriorating emergency event.



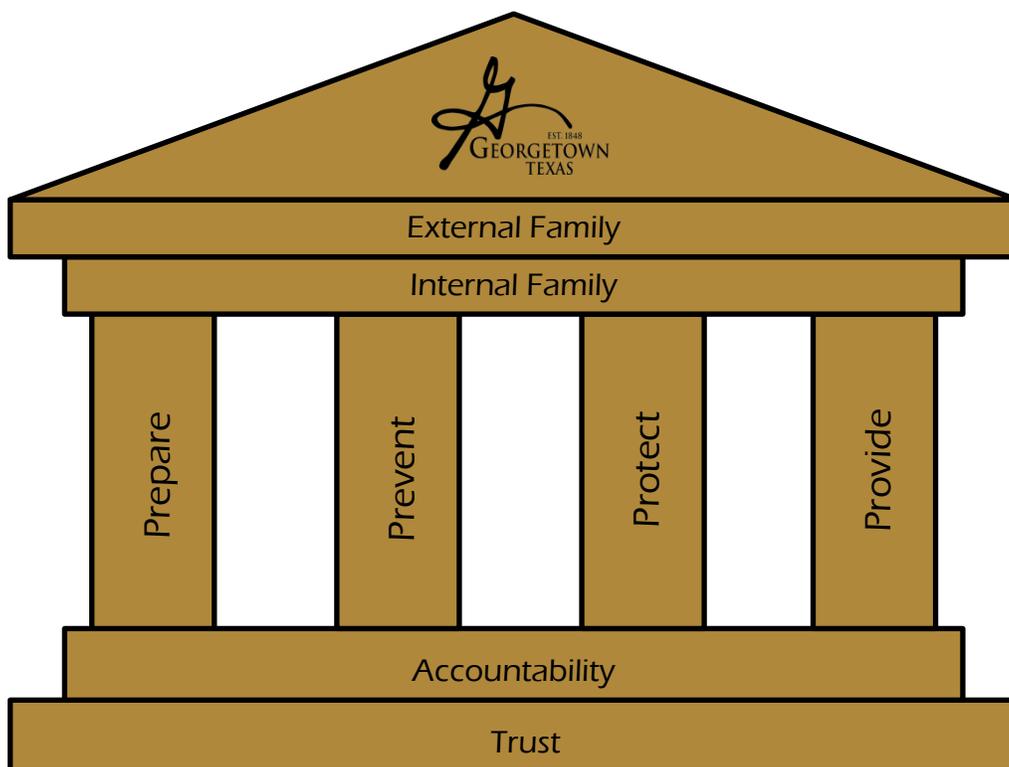


OUR SHARED PRINCIPLES

No amount of training can cover every situation that will confront the members of our organization. That is one reason why we have defined four core principles – known to the members of Georgetown Fire as “*The Pillars*” to remind all members of our organization that excellence is achieved only when decisions are made consistent with the foundational elements and pillars.

The diagram includes a foundation, four pillars and a cover (roof). This can easily be understood as the basic framework of a home and/or building. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that a building is only as strong as its foundation. This truism applies equally to an organization and reinforces the need for us to strengthen trust and accountability within our organization and the community that we serve.

The four pillars include prepare, prevent, protect, and provide. The aforementioned foundation and pillars will serve as the framework for this strategic plan.





OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose can be simply defined as people helping people. Moreover, we have chosen to protect and serve the community. It is our goal to “live” our mission statement and this goal is reinforced through our declaration of ideals.

Our vision statement defines the direction that our organization is traveling and our motto reinforces our role as public servants.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be the premier emergency service provider that is best known as a caring service provider.

Our ideology supports the mission and vision of the department. We will....

Prepare ourselves through continued training to improve the safety and efficiency of the community and ourselves - everyone goes home mentality.

Prevent emergencies, whenever possible, through public education, inspection, community advocacy, and enforcement.

Protect the community from all hazards that exist and promote community preparedness.

Provide caring service that is indiscriminate and genuine – we do not disqualify others because of our professional qualifications. We demonstrate professional actions and attitude within the station and the community - we are fire service professionals 24/7.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to prepare, prevent, protect, and provide caring service to the City of Georgetown and surrounding region.





OUR VALUES

Our values are reflective of us as individuals and as an organization. We are...

Trustworthy

Uncompromised honesty and integrity in all situations. This is demonstrated through our ability to speak and live the truth and by doing the right thing even when it's the hard thing to do.

Courageous

*The ability to stand for what is right and SAFE. We will...
Risk a lot to save a savable life,
Risk a little to save a savable property,
Risk nothing to save what has already been lost.*

Compassionate

Recognize the needs of others and place their needs ahead of ours.

Respectful

Embrace individual differences while appreciating the value of each person.

Accountable

Take ownership of our individual and collective actions in the community.

Proud

Take pride without arrogance....by honoring those that served before us and striving for excellence in all we do.





COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The Georgetown Fire Department's foundational goal is to provide the best possible service to the community that we serve. More simply, we exist to protect and serve the people.

As a member of the Georgetown Fire Department you must be committed to each other, City leadership and the community we serve. It is through this commitment that we engage in a relationship that assumes personal accountability, unwavering ethics, and trustworthy actions.



Each of us is responsible and accountable for our own attitude and performance. A positive work environment is maintained by commitment and self-discipline. Members are expected to manage their own behavior in a manner that reflects the cultural philosophy of our organization. As individuals, we are very important, but never more important than the team itself.

Members are expected to manage their own behaviors in a manner that reflects [our] cultural philosophy

When describing any guiding set of principles or underlying beliefs, concepts, or expectations, it is difficult not to sound idealistic. We are a group with selective membership and each member has to choose to belong. If individuals choose to belong, there are expectations and standards of behavior that are not optional. We individually and collectively care about the well-being of our fellow members and are concerned with preserving the well-being of our organization because it serves the common good of our members and the community.

Each member's stature in the organization will be reinforced by his/her conduct and performance. There are some things that only you can do for yourself. No system can overcome an individual's lack of personal respect or respect for others. To simplify this statement, you will only receive the respect that you earn, no matter what your formal position is, within the organization. Your reputation is one of your most valuable possessions; focus on it, and remember - it starts the day you join the family.

There are really very few organizational secrets, and creating unnecessary intrigue over an issue can result in distrust in the system. Other than personal problems, disciplinary actions, issues involving litigation, and perhaps politically sensitive issues that require appropriate timing to be effective, it is best to keep issues in the organization out in the open for discussion.

Effective teams communicate well internally and externally and demonstrate respect and consideration for all members of the organization regardless of rank or tenure. Kindness and care must be practiced throughout the entire organization, from the top down and from the bottom up.





ETHICS

Ethics can be simply defined as a set of standards used to determine right from wrong and on which we base our decision. It can be further defined as the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation, or a set of moral principles or values; a theory or system of moral values; the principles of conduct governing an individual or group.



As a member of the Georgetown Fire Department your ethics, your crew's ethics and company's ethics affect how you deliver quality service. The public demands that the ethics of its firefighting and support personnel be above reproach. The dishonesty of a single member may impair public confidence and cast suspicion upon the entire Department. These guidelines define how we remain above ethical reproach on a daily basis in the course of our assigned duties as we interact with the public, businesses, and elected officials.

- Ethics is the essence of your self-worth
- It determines how you present yourself
- It affects how you are perceived
- It determines how you are respected
- It is a measurement of your character

*If it appears to be unethical, assume that it is.....
When in doubt....ask your supervisor.*

As a public servant sworn to serve and protect the public your integrity is held to the highest standard possible. We subscribe to the following edicts:

Georgetown Fire Department (GFD) Members Will:

- Follow all laws and use information gained from our positions only for the benefit of those we are entrusted to serve
- Assure that requests for information made by the public, media, other agencies and elected officials are responded to by the proper GFD authority promptly and accurately
- Conduct ourselves in a manner that is legally and morally above reproach

Georgetown Fire Department (GFD) Members Will Not:

- Use confidential information gained from our positions for our gain or the gain of others
- Seek special favors from the public for ourselves or groups that we represent
- Individually benefit from the generosity of the community by accepting monetary gifts of any kind, alcohol or non-monetary gifts (Donations must be communicated)
- Have a material or financial interest in any private business or professional activity that would be, or appear to be, in conflict with City or GFD job responsibilities
- Have a material or financial interest in any private business or professional activity that would tend to impair independent judgment or actions in the performance of City or GFD duties.





SELF-CONTROL

The Georgetown Fire Department recognizes the fact that our members may be faced with personal and/or work-related challenges during their career. When this occurs, the member is expected to seek appropriate assistance. Assistance can be obtained through your peers, immediate supervisor, HR, or directly with the Fire Chief and his open-door philosophy.

You don't have to suffer alone.....a broad range of assistance will be provided to help you.

The City of Georgetown and GFD offer a variety of options to help you. Please ask....don't go it alone. As a professional organization we are committed to helping our members. It is important to remember that professionals don't let personal problems interfere with their performance. They recognize problems, address problems, and correct problems.

As professionals, we must maintain self-control and unilaterally support a drug and alcohol free workplace. It is unacceptable to be under the influence of any substance that has the potential to affect your performance, thinking, decision making and/or safety. Moreover, the community trusts us to protect them and will not tolerate a member being under the influence of a substance.



*GFD members don't do drugs or get DUI's.....
We won't compromise the trust of our community*

When we made the decision to join the fire service, specifically, Georgetown Fire Department, we assumed the responsibility to maintain community trust and safety. As such, we are held to a high standard both on-duty and off-duty. Self-control must be maintained and we must avoid any actions that compromise the safety of those around us.

Off-duty behavior and decisions can have an irreversible impact on the member and our organization because the public associates you as a firefighter, even when you are not working. It is never okay to "roll the dice" and/or assume that you'll be okay. Whether it be drinking, drugs, bullying, or theft.....it's never okay to break the law.





BE POSITIVE



Like many other fire service professionals, the Georgetown Fire Department has identified four behaviors that must be practiced by all members. These “practices” are much more than words because they embody the actions of our professional organization.

Accept the fact our organization is not perfect, however, we will achieve excellence through our pursuit for perfection

1. Consideration
 - a. Be considerate of one another’s values, ideals, possessions, and feelings
 - b. Respect yourself, your peers, and our customers
 - c. We have the responsibility to leave this department better than we found it
 - d. Being nice to one another is the only way we can achieve/provide great service
2. Discretion
 - a. Don’t start rumors or continue rumors.....go to the source and get the facts
 - b. Be discrete with personal information that you “hear” and read
 - c. If you are told something in confidence, keep it confidential unless it compromises someone’s safety or well being
 - d. Don’t talk behind a members back
 - e. If you are willing to say it out loud, be willing to say it directly to the member
3. Acceptance
 - a. Accept our culture, ethnic, religious and gender differences
 - b. Diversity makes us stronger and better prepared for the community
 - c. Accept the fact that our organization is not perfect, however, we will achieve excellence through our pursuit for perfection
4. Unity
 - a. Value the unity of Georgetown Fire Department
 - b. Our members have a strong commitment to one another and our organization
 - c. We are family and we take care of one another
 - d. Hazing new members or disrespect to more tenured members is damaging and will not be tolerated





BE A LEADER (NOT A MANAGER)

As you move up the organizational hierarchy, you're likely to have a greater proportion of your time devoted to the leadership role and a lesser proportion to the supervisory role. You don't get a choice about whether you're a leader or not. You're a leader because that's what the people who work with you expect you to be. They will look to you for purpose and direction.

There are many leaders in the Georgetown Fire Department. Some are formal leaders who have this responsibility not only because of their structured positions in GFD, but also because of demonstrated ability. Others are informal leaders who do not hold structured positions of leadership in GFD but are viewed by the members as leaders just the same. This leadership responsibility, whether formal or informal, is one of the most critical elements in the overall effectiveness and well-being of GFD. As a leader, formal or informal, you are always setting an example, whether intentional or not. Formal and informal leaders should periodically ask themselves if their words or actions are undermining their ability to address future situations or problems that they may encounter with members of GFD.

Leaders lead with respect and not with the badge



It is extremely difficult for a leader to act unprofessionally in his/her work group and then attempt to take a professional approach to problem solving with the same group of members. As a leader, your actions will speak much louder than anything you say and your actions will be constantly analyzed by your peers.

- Leaders respect each other and the members of GFD
- Leaders don't take credit for the actions or ideas of others
- Leaders give praise and credit at every opportunity
- Leaders work in a spirit of cooperation, not competition
- Leaders share information with other leaders, not withhold it for their own advantage
- Leaders are sensitive to the overall good of the organization and do not circumvent the chain of command for personal gain
- Leaders understand that the most effective change occurs from the bottom up, and not the top down (value and respect your members)
- Leaders coach their members, relay good news and bad and give + feedback that works
- Leaders lead with respect not with the badge
- Leaders must be consistent and willing to accept/give feedback





IT STARTS WITH THE BADGE



It is important to understand that supervisors are paid to solve problems, and when they don't, problems get exaggerated. In order for supervisors to consistently solve problems in a positive manner, they must take a very flexible approach to problem solving, keeping the goal of their actions in mind at all times. When dealing with problems involving the behavior or performance of members, the supervisor's success will many times depend on his/her ability to put the responsibility for the solution back on the member....then help them.

Supervisors are paid to solve problems, and when they don't, problems get exaggerated

Supervision is critical in maintaining the high standards of performance and the positive image of GFD within the community and the fire service in general. The supervisor's style is a factor in determining the overall effectiveness and well-being of GFD and our members. All of our supervisors must share their expectations up front with people for whom they are responsible, in a success oriented manner and stress the individual accountability of each member. Those expectations need to be realistic and in concert with the overall expectations and philosophy of our organization. It is an inherent responsibility of all Georgetown Fire Department supervisors to develop a capable cadre of members for the future leadership of GFD. In simple terms, all supervisors must be looking for and developing the next "you." We expect that:

- Supervisors will understand and support the standards established by GFD and hold their members accountable
- Supervisors will not disqualify members who meet GFD standards but do not meet the supervisor's personal standards
- Supervisors will formally request to raise GFD standards if they appear to be too low rather than imposing their own standards
- Supervisors will be consistent with their subordinates and themselves and remember someone else is always watching (and learning)

It is important that supervisors have excellent listening skills, display empathy when listening and carrying out their duties, avoid being self-righteous when evaluating problems involving the conduct of others. Supervisors are expected to turn negative situations into positive ones whenever possible, keep problems in perspective, and address them at the proper level in the Department. Effectively dealing with the negative can create loyalty and commitment from the member in the future. A good supervisor knows how to approach each of his/her members in a way that will provide a positive change in performance or attitude.

The most effective tools supervisors can use are setting a good example, listening, coaching, counseling, encouraging, nudging, directing, and other supporting actions. In fact, to prevent major problems, regular coaching and counseling are critical.





BE CHANGE ORIENTED

The Georgetown Fire Department has evolved considerable since its inception in 1881. As we continue to grow, we must make change a positive and healthy experience for our members and the public; however when change becomes controversial, like any healthy family or team, we agree to resolve differences "in-house," and not publicly.



*If GFD fails, it will do so from the inside, not the outside.
Strife, gossip and rumors are internally destructive.*

GFD provides opportunities for members to provide input, channel concerns, criticisms, suggestions, and complaints within the structure of the organization. However, once a decision has been reached, it is the member's responsibility to support it as if it were their own.

Our professional standards are not intended to smother internal disagreement or to stifle individuality. It is intended to describe and maintain an environment in which GFD can remain committed to our vision of being the "premier emergency service provider that is best known as a caring service provider."

At times we must be willing to subordinate ourselves to the group in order to make the team successful and to maintain its cohesiveness. We must regard problems and imperfections in our organization and our members as opportunities to improve. We must not dwell on them to the point of missing the positive aspects. The organization and members will support the GFD change environment by:

- Considering change as a regular event
- Assuring that change is a well-managed problem-solving process
- Helping other members adapt to change
- Admitting when change hasn't worked and make the changes necessary for success; always striving for common goals and consensus
- Pursuing change creatively and actively
- Communicating change and ensuring that the decision to change is inclusive of all affected members
- Supporting change that is best for the organization and community, not just the individual member or group
- Maintaining the latest equipment and technology through an active Research and Development process

We must all accept the responsibility associated with maintaining our organization's health. Maintaining a healthy work environment requires a high level of commitment by all members. It is far from a "good ole boy" system, and it demands incredible dedication and support to be successful. If GFD fails, it will do so from the inside, not the outside. Strife, gossip, and rumors are all internally destructive and cancerous to an organization's health. We all lose if the inside atmosphere is negative. What happens on the inside will eventually happen on the outside.





EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

The fire service has historically considered the people who need us as victims. That is not how we choose to see them. People call us when they need us and we must consider them our customers and/or an extension of our family.



One important aspect of customer service is compassion and/or caring. Our organization is in the business of helping people. Compassion is a vital trait that allows us to provide a caring service and allows us to find the right treatment or approach for the people we help.

The definition of “customer” is very simple. We choose to define customers as “anyone or everyone that we encounter.” Our customers are both internal and external; they are the person who calls 9-1-1, hospital staff, law enforcement, co-workers, etc. Everyone we encounter should be considered OUR customer.

[Our customers] and their problems are not an interruption to our work – they are our work

Our treatment of the public begins with how we treat each other. Each of us has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. In turn, we have an obligation to treat others with the same dignity and respect. It is our diversity that makes us capable of serving the public. Remember that having compassion for each other opens the doors to better understanding our differences.

It is our mission and vision to provide a caring service. This is accomplished by treating everyone with respect and being nice, regardless of their ethnicity, socioeconomic background or demeanor. Simply put, we would not be here, if not for our customers and each other.

The people that call us with their problems are not an interruption to our work....they are our work. They depend on us and we depend on them. Our customers are the reason that we continually train, stay fit, and refine our skills as public servants and professionals.

On average, each call we respond to is observed by the person who called and two or three friends, relatives, or bystanders. In a span of three or four years, nearly every person in Georgetown will receive assistance or view us treating someone or observe our actions at an emergency scene. That places us in a truly unique position to educate the public through our appearance, attitude and actions.

It's easy to do the right thing if you remember the golden rule and treat everyone as you would like to be treated. Kindness, patience, compassion and consideration go a long way toward strengthening our ties to the community and each other. People have long memories; it's up to us to make those memories positive, rather than destructive.

