



## Standards of Conduct

All members of the Southwest Florida Urban Search and Rescue Team (SWF USAR) perform functions that are extremely important to public safety. Therefore, it is critical that all personnel treat other members with the utmost respect and dignity. Because of the unique circumstances present in this diverse group, it is the responsibility of each and every member to ensure that there is no inappropriate behavior that may negatively impact the ability of the team to operate in an efficient and professional manner. It is imperative that all members recognize their fundamental responsibility to perform their assigned functions to the best of their ability. These functions must be accomplished without prejudice towards anyone. The members of the team must be honest in all their dealings and never allow personal feelings, friendships, or relationships to influence their decisions. All members must strive to achieve the high standards of excellence this team demands.

In order to meet these standards of conduct the following guidelines have been established:

### 1) Chain of Command:

- a) The chain of command shall follow the flow of the team's organizational chart.

### 2) Incident Management:

- a) The incident management and accountability procedures utilized by the team will be followed at all times.

### 3) Harassment:

- a) Harassment of any type by anyone will not be tolerated.
- b) *Sexual Harassment*: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and any other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
  - i) Unwelcome sexual propositions
  - ii) Sexual innuendo
  - iii) Sexually suggestive remarks
  - iv) Vulgar or sexually explicit comments, gestures or conduct
  - v) Sexually-oriented kidding, teasing or practical jokes
  - vi) Physical contact such as brushing against another's body, pinching or patting

- (1) Sexual harassment may occur when the intended target of the conduct is not offended, but others reasonably find the conduct to be intimidating, hostile, or abusive.
- (2) Any team member who believes he or she has been the subject of sexual harassment is to report the alleged act immediately to the Task Force Leader. The Task Force Leader will then contact the reporting individual's agency and investigate the situation with the reporting individual's agency. Any team member found guilty of sexual harassment will be removed from the team.

c) *Unlawful Harassment*: Verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of their race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital status, weight, or disability may constitute unlawful harassment.

Unlawful harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- i) Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital status, weight, or disability.
- ii) Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital status, weight, or disability. This includes acts that purport to, or are meant to be jokes or pranks, but that are hostile or demeaning, such as hate mail, threats, defaced photographs or other such conduct.

- (1) Any team member who believes he or she has been the subject of unlawful harassment is to report the alleged act immediately to the Task Force Leader. The Task Force Leader will then contact the reporting individual's agency and investigate the situation with the reporting individual's agency. Any team member found guilty of unlawful harassment will be removed from the team.

#### **4) Personal Appearance:**

- a) The SWF USAR team is a uniformed service where professionalism and discipline are judged, in part, by the manner in which the members present themselves to the public and other team members. Therefore, a neat and well-groomed appearance is fundamental to the team and contributes to the pride and esprit de corps essential to the team. All assigned personal protective clothing and equipment is to be carried in the team member's assigned gear bag and is to be present at all training sessions and deployments. Attendance at all general team meetings, training sessions and deployments will require the team member to be dressed with the following attire. Failure to do so will result in the member being asked to leave the function.
  - i) USAR T-shirt
  - ii) USAR cap (not required when indoors or when wearing helmet)
  - iii) BDUs (black or blue in color, blue preferred, and worn in a blouse fashion)

- iv) ANSI safety approved boots (black in color, military/tactical style, at least 8" in height)
- v) Black heavy duty belt or last chance belt
- vi) Other items as required by the Task Force Leader.

(1) Use of issued clothing and equipment:

- (a) All issued clothing and equipment is to be used by team members only, unless approved by the Task Force Leader.
- (b) No unauthorized stickers, emblems, or patches are to be placed on USAR clothing or equipment, unless approved by the Task Force Leader.
- (c) Members are responsible for lost or stolen personal protective equipment (PPE).
- (d) Members are responsible for PPE damage due to negligence. The USAR team will replace any and all PPE and equipment damaged or worn-out due to normal usage.
- (e) Assigned USAR PPE and equipment are not to be used outside of USAR team functions except under the following circumstances:
  - (i) As approved by the Task Force Leader.
  - (ii) Utilized for rescue operations within the member's own agency if so allowed.

**5) Tobacco products:**

- a) During USAR training sessions, meetings, or deployments all tobacco products will be used only in areas designated by the Safety Officer or his/her designee.

**6) Alcohol or liquor:**

- a) No team member may participate in any USAR team function if alcohol has been consumed within eight (8) hours of the team function. No alcohol consumption will be allowed during any team activity. No SWF USAR team labeled PPE or equipment is to be worn in any established bar or liquor store or the equivalent, unless said establishment is a designated rescue or training site. Violation of this section will result in automatic dismissal from the team.

**7) Drugs and Medication:**

- a) Use of illicit/illegal drugs is strictly prohibited and will result in automatic dismissal from the team and notification to the member's agency.
- b) Prescription drugs should be used with caution. Members taking prescription drugs must assure that these drugs do not interfere with their ability to perform their assigned function(s).

**8) Vulgarity:**

- a) Vulgarity of any nature is condemned. Vulgarity used in the presence of the public or a non-team member may result in removal from the team.

### **9) Stealing:**

- a) Stealing will result in automatic dismissal from the team.

### **10) Safety:**

- a) The SWF-USAR team shall operate on the principle of least acceptable risk.
- b) All PPE shall be worn in an appropriate manner at the appropriate times and when designated by a member of the command staff/section.
- c) All applicable safety standards shall be adhered to in the most reasonable manner possible.
- d) Team members should wear only assigned USAR safety equipment. The only exception to this policy will be when the equipment exceeds the safety standards of the USAR issued equipment and it has been pre-approved by the Task Force Leader or the Safety Officer or his/her designee.
- e) Members will be advised once of a safety violation while on a training site/deployment. A second notice will result in the member being dismissed from the site.
- f) All command staff/section members are to wear their Incident Management Vests when on training sites and deployments.

### **11) Complaints/Problems:**

- a) Any complaint by members should be submitted in writing to the appropriate team manager. Team managers shall attempt to resolve all complaints/problems. If they are unable to resolve a complaint/problem, it shall be forwarded to the Task Force Leader for resolution. Complaints made by members of the command staff/section shall be submitted to the Task Force Leader. If resolution to the complaint/problem can not be made by the Task Force Leader, the situation will be forwarded to the SWF USAR Fire Chiefs for resolution.

### **12) Removal from the Team:**

- a) A team member who violates any of the above listed rules, unless otherwise stated, more than three times, will be removed from the team. Failure to fulfill the assigned team position description over an appropriate time period as determined by the command staff/section will result in removal from the team.

### **13) Scope:**

- a) These guidelines are intended to augment the rules and regulations of each member agency and are not designed to overstep their authority.



## **Standards of Conduct**

### **Documentation of Receipt**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the December 2001 edition of the Standards of Conduct for the Southwest Florida Urban Search and Rescue Team on this day of \_\_\_\_\_. I have received my personal copy of the document and I understand that failure on my part to fulfill any of the listed items as stated will result in my removal from the team. I pledge to adhere to and assist in the enforcement of these items and will promptly report any violation noted by any team member.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Team member (printed name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Team member signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (printed name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Task Force Leader