

Central Joint Fire District

Standard Operating Procedure



Central Joint Fire District

SUBJECT: Department Philosophy

SOP Number: 120A
Effective Date: 5/2/93
Revised Date:
Approved:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this standard is to define the basic philosophy by which this department is to be operated.

SCOPE: This standard applies specifically to all elected and appointed officers who are charged with the responsibility of managing the department. This statement does not relieve any member of this department of the responsibility to voice an opinion or provide constructive input towards the betterment of services provided by the Central Joint Fire District.

ENFORCEMENT: Enforcement of this standard rest with all elected and appointed officers who are charged with the responsibility of managing the department.

DEFINITIONS:

Subordinates: Anyone with less seniority and or rank. Inclusive of all members.

System: Method by which operations are carried out and the department is managed.

MBO: Management by Objective

APPLICATION: Management, which for the purposes of this standard shall be defined as: "all elected and appointed officers who are charged with the responsibility of managing the department" is ultimately responsible for the successes and failures of the department. Successes and failure of the department are not the direct results of subordinate performance, but is rather a result of the **system** implemented by management. It is therefore the responsibility of management to provide a workable system which will provide sufficient resources to allow subordinates to successfully and competently complete assigned objectives. Towards that goal management's primary duty shall be to provide a system, and constantly work toward improving that system.

The following points shall serve as a guideline for developing, implementing, and revising the systems used by management.

1. **Create constancy of purpose for improvement of service**

The emergency services provided by this department are a service provided to the public. In many ways this service is not unlike the service provided by a restaurant, service station, grocery store, or other private sector enterprise. The primary difference between the services provided by this department and the services provided by a private sector enterprise is the simple fact this department has a monopoly over the services we provide. This monopoly does not relieve the department and management of the responsibility of provide

the best service possible. Towards this goal two factors must be considered; (1) Problems of today and (2) Problems of tomorrow.

Problems of today involve short term planning, where are we going to be in one year or even two years? Problems of tomorrow should address where the department will be in five years, ten years or even twenty years.

Innovation is another concept vital to improvement of services or constancy of purpose. One requirement of innovation is faith that there will be a future. Innovation should address new services, new tools and resources required to provide new services. New skills shall be required to provide new services. The skills needed to provide the new services may require training or retraining of both subordinates and management. The cost of the new service, taking into consideration, training, equipment, and support activities vital to the new service, is another area that requires innovation.

All resources should be directed toward research and education. Striving to constantly improve the quality and type of services provided by the department should be the constancy of purpose which we all shall work toward.

2. **Adopt the new philosophy**

In these times of economic hardship and declining membership, management owes the community and the membership of the department a commitment to excellence. We can no longer tolerate accepted levels of mistakes, defects and materials not suited for the job, people who do not know what the job is, and are afraid to ask, inadequate and ineffective supervision, and poor training, all of which manifest themselves as obstacles to providing quality services. All of these obstacles combine to produce low morale and declining membership. I few are to continue to expect people to volunteer their time, the time must be spent productively.

The new philosophy should be: **Innovate! Ask questions! Suggest ways of improving the system! Commit to Excellence!**

3. **Provide quality resources from the beginning.**

The services provided by this department will be as good as the system provided by management. Subordinates, even when putting forth their best effort, will be able to perform to the level allowed by the system. Therefore the system must eliminate the barriers referred to in point 2, and provide quality training to develop the necessary skills. Through this method of quality assuredness, quality can be built into the services provided by the department from the very beginning, limiting the need for analysis of the end result of the services provided. Simply put, quality raw materials will help ensure a quality product as an end result.

4. **End the practice of awarding business on the basis of price tag alone.**

We can no longer leave quality, service, and price to the forces of competition for price alone. The aim of any purchase of tools or equipment should be to minimize the net cost per hour or year of life. This requires long-term thinking, not just a cheap price tag. Take into consideration: initial cost, maintenance cost, and length of life.

For example: A crescent wrench is purchased for \$6 and is used for 3000 hrs. before it breaks. A second crescent wrench is purchased for \$3 but only performs for 1000 hrs. before it breaks. Both wrenches are used for the same purpose but we can see that the cheaper wrench has 1/3 the service life of the more expensive wrench. To perform a task for 3000 hrs., the cheaper wrench would cost us \$9 to complete the task over the required time while the more "expensive" wrench would cost us \$6. Which wrench would you buy for this application?

Another aspect of suppliers is that by limiting the number of suppliers, we can deal with the supplier more directly to fit the needs of the department. Closer control can be maintained over on supplier, thus providing better quality and accountability.

5. **Improve constantly and forever the system of service.**

Again, quality must be built into the personnel and resources expended on the service. Improvement of our system of operation and management will improve our quality and productivity. Input from all members is constantly necessary to improve the system.

6. **Institute training.**

How can a subordinate function effectively if he or she doesn't know what his or her job is? We are engaged in one of the world's most dangerous professions. The need for training has never been more urgent. The changing environment, technology, legal aspects, and demographics demand current knowledge of the profession in which we are all engaged. Only through training will we be able to improve our system of operations.

7. **Institute leadership.**

The aim of leadership shall be to help subordinates do a better job. Conversely, supervision focuses on what the member is doing wrong when it's generally the fault of the system implemented by the supervisors in the first place. Leadership takes the lead in changing and improving the system. A true leader will implement the 14 points outlined in this standard.

8. **Drive Out Fear.**

One of the basic elements of a successful system is the absence of fear. All efforts shall be directed toward eliminating fear so all members may contribute to the improvement of the system. How can a system be improved if subordinates are afraid to make suggestions. Fear cannot be tolerated if the system is to be successful.

9. **Break down barriers.**

Barriers, although necessary for the function of command, cannot exist to the extent where communication, interaction, and accessibility are impaired. We are all engaged in the business of providing the very best service to the community. Barriers between various groups, either official or unofficial, cannot co-exist with teamwork. If the department is not working together then it must be working against itself because the system will not improve under these conditions. If the system is not constantly improving, the department is not providing the best service possible.

10. **Eliminate slogans, exhortations, and production targets.**

The blame for ineffective, inefficient departments lie with the system and the persons responsible for the creation of the system. By and large, subordinates do the best job possible under the system they are required to function with. Slogans, exhortations, and production targets will not correct a situation created by a system.

11. **Limit the use of quotas and Management by Objective.**

Replace quotas and MBO with leadership. As explained in point 10, productivity is determined to a large extent by the system. Subordinates have minimal impact on the system. Therefore, strong leadership will play the most important role in changing the system and increasing productivity.

12. **Remove barriers that rob subordinates of pride in workmanship.**

We are all in the business of providing a service to the community. If we all work together, improvement of the system will remove barriers which prevent pride in the work completed. Emergency services by their nature involve stabilization of disasters. Since the work by nature, is negative, the realization that an incident was concluded successfully without compounding the problem, may be the only positive thing to come out of the incident. It is therefore of paramount importance that the system be geared toward the removal of barriers that rob members of pride in workmanship for the physical and mental well being of all department members.

13. **Institute programs of education and self improvement.**

Through education and self-improvement, members will become more skilled, productive, and better able to cope with the demands of the service we provide. The well being of all members is the primary focus of this point. Positive attitudes result in positive outcomes.

14. **Make transformation a team effort.**

Everyone must work toward improving the system for the system to improve. If the system is going to work all members must contribute to it's improvement.

As each of these points is implemented and improved upon, the development of future leaders and a successful organization will be ensured. Each member must strive to improve the system and the services provided by this department.