



International  
Association  
of Fire Chiefs



National  
Fire Protection  
Association

# Fire Officer

Principles and Practice  
THIRD EDITION



## Chapter 9 Evaluation and Discipline (Fire Officer I)

# Fire Officer I Objectives

- Discuss the purpose of regular fire fighter evaluations.
- Describe methods of positive discipline.
- Discuss the role of documentation and record keeping for evaluations and discipline.

# Introduction

- Evaluation and discipline are essential components of a fire fighter's development.
  - The fire officer conducts regular evaluations of job performance, behavior, and problem resolution.

# Introduction

- Discipline can be positive or negative.
- Discipline should be progressive.
- Some problems may lead to immediate suspension.

# Evaluation

- The fire officer conducts regular evaluations of fire fighter performance:
  - Helps ensure each fire fighter knows what is expected of him or her
  - Helps the fire fighter know where he or she stands relative to expectations

# Evaluation

- The evaluation process helps the fire fighter:
  - Set goals for professional development
  - Set goals for performance improvement
  - Have the motivation to perform at the highest possible level

# Evaluation

- Many career fire departments require an annual performance evaluation.
  - In volunteer departments, the procedure may be less structured, but is otherwise equivalent.

# Starting the Evaluation Process

- The fire officer has a special responsibility when starting the evaluation process with a probationary fire fighter.
  - Determine skills, knowledge, aptitudes, strengths, and weaknesses.
  - Set expectations.

# Recruit Probationary Period

- Most departments include in-station training as part of the probationary period.
- Structured probationary programs require the fire officer to complete a monthly evaluation.

# Providing Feedback After an Incident or Activity

- Performance evaluation should be continuous.
- Feedback is most effective when delivered as soon as possible after an incident.



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# Discipline

- Discipline is a moral, mental, and physical state in which all ranks respond to the will of the leader.

# Discipline

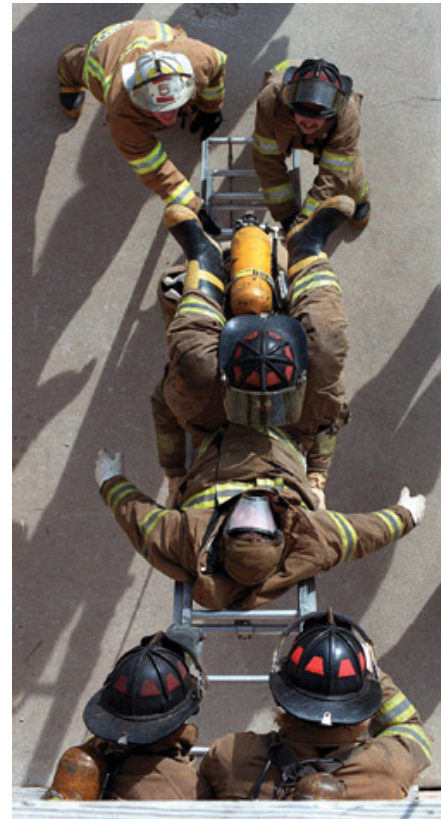
- Discipline may be positive or negative.
  - Positive discipline: Encouragement of appropriate behavior or performance
  - Negative discipline: Punishing inappropriate behavior or performance

# Positive Discipline: Reinforcing Positive Performance

- Directed toward motivating individuals to meet or exceed expectations
  - Establish a set of expectations.
  - Recognize improved performance and reward excellent performance.

# Positive Discipline: Reinforcing Positive Performance

- A fire officer should “walk the talk.”
  - Commit to department goals and objectives
  - Participate in activities that are expected of fire fighters



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# Empowerment

- One of the most effective strategies in positive discipline
- The fire officer helps fire fighters learn how the department and local government work.
- The fire officer identifies the tools that others have used to achieve success.

# Oral Reprimand, Warning, or Admonishment

- First level of negative discipline
- Will often suffice to correct behavior
  - If not, the officer must determine whether the fire fighter is:
    - Unable to meet the required performance
    - Unwilling to perform

# Informal Written Reprimand

- Some fire departments require the fire officer to use a standard form.
  - Ensures that all of the requirements are covered
  - Allows the fire fighter to understand that this is a disciplinary issue

# Documentation and Record Keeping

- Rules usually require all of the official records of an employee's work history to be in a secured central repository.
- Some departments maintain a second personnel file at fire headquarters.

# Summary

- Supervision of fire fighters requires conducting regular evaluations.
- Fire fighter evaluations should be an ongoing process. The annual evaluation is a formal written documentation.
- The fire officer must set specific expectations for each new fire fighter.

# Summary

- Regular feedback should be given.
- The fire officer builds discipline by training, using rewards/punishments, instilling confidence in team leaders, and creating a collective will.
- Positive discipline is directed toward motivating individuals and groups.

# Summary

- Rules usually require the official records of an employee's work history to be stored in a secured central repository.