



International
Association
of Fire Chiefs



National
Fire Protection
Association

Fire Officer

Principles and Practice
THIRD EDITION



Chapter 10 Organized Labor and the Fire Officer (Fire Officer I)

Fire Officer I Objectives

- Discuss the impact of the International Association of Fire Fighters on fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel.
- Describe how to establish a strong supervisor/employee relationship.

Fire Officer I Objectives

- Discuss the value of positive labor–management relations.
- Describe the fire officer’s role as a supervisor.

Introduction

- In municipal fire departments, labor–management relations influence:
 - Wages
 - Working conditions
 - Other aspects of the work environment

Introduction

- A fire officer's supervisory activities are defined by:
 - Local labor contract
 - Municipality's personnel regulations
 - Fire department's rules, regulations, and procedures

Introduction

- Often a fire officer is both:
 - A supervisor representing management
 - A member of the union bargaining unit

Introduction

- Most career fire fighters work under a labor contract or MOU.
- These agreements cover:
 - Various working conditions
 - Promotion/assignment practices
 - Problem-solving procedures

Introduction

- Collective bargaining: Unions and employers determine the conditions of employment through direct negotiation.
- In departments with a contract or MOU, each fire station has a shop steward.

Introduction

- The relationship between employer and labor organization is determined by labor laws and regulations at the federal, state, and local levels.

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)

- Largest fire service labor organization in the United States



Courtesy of IAFF.

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)

- Three original objectives:
 - Obtain pay raises
 - Establish the two-platoon/12-hour workday
 - Ensure promotions are based on merit
- All fire fighters, including volunteers, have benefited from IAFF efforts.

Establishing a Strong Supervisor/Employee Relationship

- The basis of the relationship between the fire officer and the fire fighter is communication.
 - Schedule regular one-on-one meetings.
 - Schedule regular company meetings.
 - Work together to solve disagreements.
 - If you and a fire fighter do not get along, list areas in which you can succeed together.

Establishing a Strong Supervisor/Employee Relationship

- The fire officer and the fire fighter must have trust.
- The firefighting profession consists of professionals working together for the common good and common goals.

Positive Labor–Management Relations

- The value of a positive labor–management relationship is widely recognized.
- The root cause of almost every labor disturbance is failure to properly manage the relationship between labor and management.

Positive Labor–Management Relations

- The most successful fire departments put significant effort into managing these relationships.
- Public support is usually viewed as vital by both management and labor.

The Fire Officer's Role as a Supervisor

- Supervision is a fundamental duty.
- Supervisors must follow all established rules, regulations, and procedures.
- The distinction between labor and management may be complex.

The Fire Officer's Role as a Supervisor

- The fire officer is generally the first point of contact between workers and the organization.



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Grievance Procedure

- A grievance is a dispute, claim, or complaint involving the labor agreement or personnel regulations.
- The grievance procedure specifies a process and timeline to resolve the matter.

Grievance Procedure

- An employee can contact a union representative at any time to discuss the situation.
 - The union representative acts as an advocate for the individual or group that submitted the grievance.

Grievance Procedure

- Example of a grievance procedure:
 - The employee presents a complaint.
 - The employee submits a written grievance.
 - If the grievance is denied, another grievance form is submitted to the second-level supervisor.
 - If the grievance still remains unresolved, the employee presents it to the fire chief.

Grievance Procedure

Fire Officer I

SAMPLE GRIEVANCE FORM

STEP TWO: TO BE COMPLETED BY UNION OR EMPLOYEE

Date of filing: _____

From: _____
Employee Rank Assignment/shift

Grievance form must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the incident being grieved.

STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE Must (1) contain a statement, as complete as possible under the circumstances, of the grievance and the facts upon which it is based, including dates, times, locations, names of witnesses, and other appropriate information; (2) identify the section(s) of the Contract Agreement that affect this grievance; (3) state requested remedy or corrective action.

Additional pages may be attached to the Sample Grievance Form.

(this is where the employee enters the statement)

Original copy of the completed Sample Grievance Form shall be delivered to the employee's immediate supervisor, with a copy to the Human Resources office and the Union representative.

Employee Date

TO BE COMPLETED BY IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR within 10 calendar days of receipt of Sample Grievance Form

Supervisor's Name Rank Work Location/Shift Date Grievance received

(this is where the immediate supervisor enters a response)

Supervisor Signature Date

If employee is satisfied with Supervisor's answer, sign the original Sample Grievance Form acknowledging agreement and submit it to the Human Resources Director for placement in your employment records. If employee is NOT satisfied, shall sign the original Sample Grievance Form acknowledging disagreement and immediately notify the Union in writing. The original Sample Grievance Form shall then be submitted by the employee to the Deputy Chief within ten (10) calendar days of the decision of the immediate supervisor.

Agree: _____ Do not agree: _____

Summary

- Wages, working conditions, and aspects of the work environment are influenced by labor–management relations.
- The IAFF is the largest fire service labor organization in the United States.

Summary

- Recommendations for a strong supervisor/employee relationship:
 - Regular one-on-one meetings
 - Regular company meetings
 - Working together to develop solutions
 - Working together to improve relationship
- A healthy labor–management relationship is essential.

Summary

- The supervisor's authority and the subordinate's duties are defined by the rules of the organization as well as by the fire department.
- An employee can contact a union representative at any time.