

State of Nevada Fire Marshal Division
Ethics Course

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Identify the importance and impact of ethics on Fire / EMS Instructors and its members.**
- **Identify the roles of the Fire / EMS Instructor in establishing, modeling, and managing ethical behavior.**
- **Analyze their own department's existing ethical rules and guidelines, and where the gaps might be.**
- **Demonstrate decision making involving ethical practices.**

OVERVIEW

- **Ethics and Their Impact**
- **Sample Code of Ethics (from ASPA)**
- **Guidelines and Resources**
- **Characteristics of an Ethical Organization and an Ethical Leader**



ETHICS

STRATEGIES FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS



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Activity: 1 Ethics at Any Level



Ethics and Their Impact

- One of the greatest desires of most Fire/ EMS officers is to provide service in an honorable way and to follow a long history of leaders who provided great service to great numbers of people.
- This class will assist you in sorting out the ethical demands placed upon you and in preparing for ethical challenges in the future.



Ethics and Their Impact (cont'd)



- How do you feel personally about receiving a 10 percent discount at certain local restaurants when you are in uniform?



Ethics and Their Impact (cont'd)

- Ethics is
 - Given system of conduct
 - Principles of honor or morality
 - Guidelines for human action
 - Rules or standards for individuals or professions
 - Character of a group



ETHICS AND THEIR IMPACT (cont'd)



- Ethics have roots in:
 - Ancient history
 - Religion
 - Systems of law
 - Social customs
 - Our own personal code of conduct



ETHICS AND THEIR IMPACT (cont'd)



- Codes of ethics
 - Provide specific guidelines
 - Informs of a common set of standards
 - Encourage members to live by those standards
 - Purpose is to protect integrity and reputation



HIPPOCRATIC OATH



- A well-known code of ethics is the Hippocratic Oath of physicians, which states in part, "Above all, do no harm."



Ethics and Their Impact (cont'd)

- Spell out standards of behavior for:
 - Professional life

Example: "They will recognize his badge of office as a symbol of public faith, and accept it as a public trust to be held as long as they are true to the ethics of their office."
(Fire Marshal's Association of America.)



Ethics and Their Impact (cont'd)

- Spell out standards of behavior for:
 - Relations with the public or society

Example: "Be courteous, considerate, enthusiastic, and cooperative. Be especially tactful and considerate in dealing with those who have experienced a loss due to fire."

Firefighter's Ten Commandments (Carl E. McCoy, author.)



Ethics and Their Impact (cont'd)

- Spell out standards of behavior for:
 - Relations with employers

Example: "Not accept, for the same service, compensation of any kind (other than from the client, principal, or employer) without full disclosure, knowledge, and consent of all parties concerned."

International Society of Fire Service Instructors.



Ethics and Their Impact (cont'd)

- Spell out standards of behavior for:
 - Relations with other employees/coworkers

Examples:

- "Be honest in all my professional relationships." Data Processing Management Association.
- "Handle all matters of personnel on the basis of merit so that fairness and impartiality govern decisions pertaining to appointments, pay adjustments, promotions, and discipline."

International City Manager's Association.



Ethics and Their Impact (cont'd)

- The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) has a code of ethics that is directly applicable to the Fire / EMS. Services



Sample Code of Ethics-- ASPA

- Serve the public interest
- Exercise discretionary authority
- Oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment
- Recognize and support public's right to know
- Involve citizens in policy decision making
- Exercise compassion, benevolence, fairness, and optimism
- Respond to the public positively
- Assist citizens in their dealings with government
- Be prepared to make decisions that may not be popular



Sample Code of Ethics--ASPA (cont'd)

- Respect the Constitution and the law
- Understand and apply legislation
- Work to improve and change laws and policies
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Prevent all forms of mismanagement of public funds
- Respect and protect privileged information
- Encourage and facilitate legitimate dissent activities
- Promote constitutional principles of equality, fairness, representativeness, responsiveness, and due process in protecting citizens' rights



Sample Code of Ethics--ASPA (cont'd)

- Demonstrate personal integrity
 - Maintain truthfulness and honesty
 - Ensure others receive credit for their work
 - Zealously guard against conflict of interest or its appearance
 - Respect superiors, subordinates, colleagues, and the public
 - Take responsibility for their own errors
 - Conduct official acts without partisanship



Sample Code of Ethics—ASPA (cont'd)

- Promote ethical organizations
 - Enhance organizational capacities
 - Subordinate institutional loyalties
 - Establish procedures that promote ethical behavior
 - Provide organization members with an administrative means for dissent, assurance of due process, and safeguards against reprisal
 - Promote merit principles
 - Promote organizational accountability
 - Encourage organizations to adopt, distribute, and periodically review a code of ethics as a living document



Sample Code of Ethics— ASPA (cont'd)

- Strive for professional excellence
 - Provide support and encouragement
 - Keep up to date on emerging issues and potential problems
 - Encourage others to participate in professional activities and associations
 - Allocate time to meet with students



CURRENT INTEREST IN ETHICS

- Have you noticed any recent increase in news headlines or media coverage of ethical issues?



Activity ET.2 Differing Expectations and Ethical Conflicts





Activity ET. 3

Ethical Decision-making



GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

Recap.

- Many groups (and individuals) have a stake in decisions.
- May all have legitimate but contradictory expectations.
- Fire/EMS officer's own personal ethics.
- Numerous courses of action in making a decision.
- Seldom a clear, totally right or wrong answer to ethical dilemmas.
- A person must base a decision on community, organizational, and/or personal standards. The clearer they are, the easier the decision!



Guidelines and Resources (cont'd)

Examining and evaluating available resources/guidelines can help you to:

- Determine what standards exist
- Identify gaps
- Determine whether to follow rules or conscience.



Returning to Activity ET.1



What conditions led to this problem?



Returning to Activity ET.1 (cont'd)



What expectations do the firefighters/emergency medical technicians (EMTs) have?



Returning to Activity ET.1 (cont'd)



What expectations does the President have?



Returning to Activity ET.1 (cont'd)

What expectations does
the public have?



Returning to Activity ET.1 (cont'd)

What guidelines might
exist to help the chief
determine a course of
action?



Guidelines and Resources (cont'd)

An ethical decision will

- Honor formal department decisions and documents
- Not violate laws, rules, etc.
- Reflect reasonable and positive cultural characteristics
- Reflect interest of all parties feel right .



Characteristics OF AN ETHICAL ORGANIZATION AND AN ETHICAL LEADER

Characteristics of an ethical organization:

- Senior management defines and clarifies
- Senior management demonstrates commitment
- Supports ethical behavior
- Gives consideration to all stakeholders
- Prides itself on its ideals



Characteristics OF AN ETHICAL ORGANIZATION AND AN ETHICAL LEADER (cont'd)

❖ Characteristics of an ethical leader:

- Models ethical behavior after others
- Balance of personal and organizational ethics
- Considers impact of decisions on others
- Operates with integrity, honesty, and courage
- Approaches ethics from a positive point of view



Characteristics OF AN ETHICAL ORGANIZATION AND AN ETHICAL LEADER (cont'd)

❖ Tests of an ethical decision

- Do I feel unembarrassed, unashamed, not guilty, or not defensive?
- Do I object to my decision being published openly?
- Am I willing to risk criticism for my decision?
- Could I justify and defend my decision to my greatest critics and enemies?
- Have I considered all who would be affected by the decision and given them proper priority or weight?
- Does it feel right in my gut--is my conscience clear?



Summary

"Ideals are like stars-- we never reach them. But, like mariners at sea, we chart our course by them."

✓ Author unknown



Summary (cont'd)

"...Men (women) often stumble over the truth, and most manage to pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened."

— Winston Churchill

- It should be the goal of all of us to operate according to the highest possible standards. We have a serious responsibility to ensure that our personal conduct is above reproach and as difficult as it may be at times, we also have obligations regarding the conduct of those who work around us.