

A Publication of the
**Wildland Fire Education
Working Team**

Sponsored by
United States
Department of Agriculture

United States
Department of the Interior

National Association of
State Foresters



**NATIONAL INTERAGENCY
FIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION
EDUCATION TEAM LEADER
GUIDE TO CONDUCT, ETHICS
AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT
CONSIDERATIONS**

Version 1.0.3

August 2004

6A-01-P-410-HO

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I. Conduct, and Ethics Considerations for Fire Prevention Education Teams

- A. Introduction: This guide has been developed using existing federal agency procedures and utilization of Fire Prevention Education Team subject matter experts. The guide should be used as a reference for teams upon arrival at an assignment. This guide is not intended to replace agency standards or local considerations, and is considered as a quick reference.

- B. Definitions
 - 1. Ethics: The rules or standards governing the conduct of the members of a profession. The accepted principles of right and wrong that govern the conduct of a profession.
 - 2. Conduct: To behave or act, the way a person acts, behavior.
 - 3. Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment at work occurs whenever unwelcome conduct on the basis of gender affects a person's job. Further defined as "unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature."

- C. Work Standards

The following is a description of what is expected of a member of a fire prevention education team. Although some of the items mentioned may seem repetitious, it is felt that an occasional reminder is necessary.

As a member of a fire prevention education team, you must get along with others to function well. You must be ready to work with any member of the unit. Competition is encouraged; hostility and pettiness won't be tolerated. If the performance of the team is reduced because of animosities, steps will be taken to eliminate the problem. The quality of the team depends on you, and that you, as a member of the team, will be expected to act in a safe, responsible manner in all phases of your work.

1. The following areas are covered in this section:
 - a. Time and Attendance
 - b. Use of Government Facilities
 - c. Alcohol and Drug Abuse
 - d. Physical Fitness
 - e. Appearance
 - f. Health and Safety
 - g. Relationships

D. Time and Attendance

1. Hours of duty

Work schedules will be developed by the Host Unit and Team Leader. Due to the nature of the assignment, this schedule could be on an irregular basis. If you are required to work in excess of 40 hours per week, you will be paid at overtime rates. AD's are covered under a separate pay plan. Team members will be assigned to various work projects. It should be understood that acceptance of the position indicates your willingness to work where assigned. Changes of duty stations will be according to the needs of the Host Unit and may occur at any time. Annual or sick leave will be approved by the Team Leader. Work/Rest requirements will be followed.

2. Holidays

The following are legal public holidays. Absences on these days are not charged against leave.

New Years Day	January 1
Martin Luther King	January 15
Washington's Birthday	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Columbus Day	Second Monday in October
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Christmas Day	December 25

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the Friday immediately before the holiday will be observed as the legal holiday. Also, if these holidays (or Inauguration Day) fall on a Sunday, the following Monday will be observed as the legal holiday. An employee who is required to work on a legal holiday receives holiday pay.

E. Use of Government Facilities

The following should be considered:

1. Team members cannot bring firearms to work or carry them in a government owned, leased, rented, chartered, or privately owned vehicle. Firearms cannot be stored in a government owned or leased quarters facility.
2. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed or consumed at a government facility.

F. Misuse of Government Time, Equipment, and Information

1. It is each employee's responsibility to protect and conserve government time, property, and information, and to use them economically and for official purposes only.
2. Care, use, custody, and operation of government owned/leased motor vehicles
 - a. Team members may not willfully use or authorize the use of government-owned, leased, rented, chartered, or privately owned motor vehicle or aircraft for other than official purposes.
 - b. Transporting of unofficial passengers: Transportation of unofficial passengers is not authorized unless all of the following requirements are met and approval has been granted:
 - 1) The entire trip is fully and solely justified by its official purpose.
 - 2) No additional expense to the Host Unit is involved.
 - 3) Government business is not delayed and no private profit-seeking activities or commercial dealings, other than normal consumer purchases are involved.
 - 4) No circuitous routes are used.
 - 5) Authorization to approve unofficial passengers lies with the Host Unit Administrator and cannot be re-delegated.
 - 6) Emergency situations.
3. Team members must meet the Host Agency driver's license requirements, prior to use of a government owned, leased, rented, chartered or privately owned vehicle.

3. The rules for unofficial passengers applies to the transportation of government or non-government personnel in extra space in a government-owned, leased, rented, chartered, or privately-owned motor vehicle or aircraft engaged in official business.
 - a. When using a government vehicle, team members have the obligation to obey state and local motor vehicle traffic laws. If cited for traffic violations, employees are responsible for fines and may be disciplined or terminated. Example: government driving privileges suspended.
 - b. No smoking: Smoking in all government owned or leased vehicles is prohibited.
 - c. Vehicle inspection: Vehicle operators must first perform a mandatory basic maintenance and safety check prior to operating the motor vehicle. The safety check should consist of fuel, oil and coolant levels, tires for inflation, cuts, breaks, treads, etc.

4. The request for approval of repairs should be coordinated with the Team Leader.

5. Employees must exercise sound judgment regarding the responsibility for ensuring proper use of all government owned, leased, rented, chartered, or privately owned vehicles. If there are any questions about what is appropriate, please discuss the situation with the Team Leader.

6. Penalty and franked mail and official stationery

Employees are prohibited from using official government envelopes (with or without applied postage) or official letterhead stationery for personal business.

7. Misuse of government time

a. Team Members may not use official time other than in an honest effort to perform official duties.

b. Team Members shall not encourage, direct, coerce, or request a subordinate to use official time to perform activities other than those required in the performance of official duties.

8. Theft, embezzlement, or misuse of government property

Team Members shall not convert for personal use, even temporarily on loan, any government property or equipment. Nor may you use government purchasing authority for personal acquisitions, including official credit card, even though you reimburse the government.

G. Team Members Responsibilities for the care and use of government owned or leased property

1. Responsibilities

Team Members that have been issued government-owned or leased property is required by law to exercise reasonable and prudent care in the use, custody, and safeguarding of such properties. This means that they must:

- a. Follow established procedures to receive, inspect, accept, and issue the property.
- b. Lock or secure the property when not in use.
- c. Account for and maintain the mechanical fitness/integrity of the property.
- d. Promptly report any change in custody or condition of the property(s). Prepare necessary documentation and keep copies of all records

2. Property covered by these procedures

Government-owned or leased properties are defined as any material asset in which a United States Government Agency, Department, Bureau, or Office or other Host Unit that has invested money to acquire, construct, configure, develop, or enhance when such assets have been transferred, donated, confiscated, seized, abandoned, or found and recorded as an acquisition. Therefore, it covers practically any form of property an employee is provided to perform his/her job.

For the purposes of this guide, government properties are identified in the following categories:

- a. Real property: Any buildings, facilities, quarters, or permanent structures such as trailheads, kiosks, and signs. This includes trailers with the running gear removed or immobilized and any items added or improved and permanently affixed to such facilities or structures.
- b. Personal property: This includes all equipment, materials, supplies, and commodities owned as previously defined above.

3. Reporting a loss

If property assigned becomes damaged, stolen, lost, destroyed, or unserviceable, it must be reported immediately. The report must be submitted to the Team Leader, in writing, with a full explanation of the details surrounding the loss of the property. The Team Leader, in turn, must confirm the loss and contact the Office Property Management staff or Administrative Officer of the Host Unit to initiate the appropriate process to officially document the loss.

H. Performance Standards

Individual performance expectations should be established by the Team Leader upon reporting to the assignment. Performance evaluations will be conducted periodically. Performance standards should include:

1. Roles and responsibilities
2. What is expected of you?
3. Standards of work elements
4. Task elements
5. Consequences of poor performance
6. Documentation – performance ratings forms available on team web site

I. Employee Standards

1. Official conduct

As a Fire Prevention Education Team Member, you are expected to comply with all applicable laws and policies of the Host Unit. As a team member, you should be guided by these regulations in your official, as well as nonofficial, conduct. You are urged to cultivate those personal qualities that characterize a good employee.

- a. Employees must be representative of the agency.
- b. While off duty, it should not be apparent that you represent the agency.
- c. Individuals or teams can be sent home for inappropriate behavior.
- d. Team Members will be ready to meet the assignment.
- e. Team Members will obey local policy, laws and regulations.
- f. Personal conduct standards should be included in briefings.

- g. Guidelines for use of the telephone/cell phone for personal use and incoming calls will be established.
- h. Limit work from the home unit.
- i. Maintain timeliness and team schedules.
- j. Follow agency computer use standards.
- k. Ensure proper procurement procedures are maintained.
- l. Provide for Team Member safety and security.
- m. Adhere to agency smoking policy.

2. Misconduct

Loud, abusive, derogatory, or objectionable language, loitering, creation of hazards, improper disposal of rubbish and waste, and any other unseemly conduct are prohibited on Federal property. Criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or disgraceful conduct on the part of an employee is cause for removal from the team.

Fighting will not be tolerated

3. Public contact

Employees will treat the public with respect, courtesy, and present themselves as helpful. Employees are representatives of the government; if they can't answer a question, let the person know where he or she can get additional help.

4. Travel to and from an incident

- a. No alcohol while on duty.
- b. Travel regulations will be enforced.

5. Subordination to authority

Employees are encouraged to express your opinions and points of view on matters before you for consideration. However, after a policy decision has been made, you are required to comply and support it. Personal opinions expressed to the public or in a public meeting are not appropriate. Refer these issues to the Host Unit.

Chain of command and protocol will be followed.

6. Information

Employees may disclose general information concerning the activities of the team provided it is factual, recorded, not detrimental to national security, and is within the scope of your authority.

7. Performance problems

The proper protocol actions for employees resulting from poor performance are:

- a. Verbal warning
- b. Written documentation
- c. Demobilization to home unit

J. Alcohol and Drug Abuse

1. Consuming intoxicating beverages on Government-owned or leased property or transporting such beverages in government owned or leased vehicles, or using such beverages at any time or place to the extent that it adversely affects performance of official duties is not permitted.
2. Reporting for duty under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or recovering from the use of either will not be tolerated. Failure to abide by these conditions shall result in termination of the assignment.
3. Use of illegal narcotics on or off duty will not be tolerated. Use or possession of such drugs while on duty shall result in termination from the Fire Prevention education Team assignment.

K. Physical Fitness Program

The nature of the work as a Team Member requires maintaining a physical fitness level that allows functions in various environmental conditions over extended periods of time and meets qualifications standards.

L. Appearance

1. Wearing apparel must be such that the appearance of the employee will reflect credit upon themselves and the Team.
2. Personal
 - a. Appearance should be professional.
 - b. Personal hygiene must be maintained.
3. The Host Unit can determine the appropriate dress code.

M. Health & Safety

It is recommended that the following training be obtained:

1. First Aid
2. CPR
3. Personal Protective Equipment, as required by the assignment
4. Aviation Safety
5. Defensive Driving, where appropriate
6. Blood Borne Pathogen

N. Relationships

1. Relationships on the team:
 - a. Should be discouraged.
 - b. Relationships with contractors are to be discouraged.
 - c. Separate facilities for men and women will be made available.
2. Negative impacts that could result from relationships:
 - a. Preferential treatment.
 - c. Negative effect on crew.

II. Sexual Harassment Prevention – Equal Employment Opportunity

A. Creating a respectful work environment

Team Leaders will ensure a harassment free workplace. It is important to be reminded that the workplace can be a field site as well as the office and that temporary and seasonal employees are also included in this policy.

Teams could mistakenly consider a remote location or the incident environment enough of a departure from the usual workplace to depart from acceptable workplace behavior. Employees must correct this misconception where it is found. Additionally, it is the Team Leaders responsibility to take immediate positive action when they receive a report of sexual harassment or if they believe there are indications that some behaviors may be construed as sexual harassment.

Harassment in any form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Fire Prevention Education Teams must take every opportunity to reinforce the message that harassment could cost an individual their job, and they could be held personally liable for other associated costs.

We ask your personal commitment and support to convey the message that harassment in any form involving team personnel will not be tolerated.

B. Harassment-free workplace policy

1. Policy

It is the policy to prohibit sexual harassment in all of its various forms, to maintain a work environment that is free of sexual harassment, and to ensure that such conduct by any team member will not be tolerated.

The standard is to strive for a harassment-free work environment where people treat one another with respect. Managers, supervisors, and all employees, as well as contractors, cooperators, and volunteers, have the primary responsibility for creating and sustaining this harassment-free environment. All employees, contractor personnel, and visitors must take personal responsibility for maintaining conduct that is professional and supportive of the environment.

2. Action required

Team Leaders must take immediate action to stop harassment, to protect the people targeted by the harasser, and to take all reasonable steps to ensure that no further harassment or retaliation occurs. Employees who witness harassment should report it to the proper authority.

3. Locations covered

The work environment covers any area where team members work or where work-related activities occur, including travel. This includes field sites, government buildings, and other facilities such as fitness centers and campgrounds. Also included are vehicles or other conveyances used for travel.

4. What is harassment ?

Harassment is coercive or repeated, unsolicited and unwelcome comments, gestures or physical contacts and includes retaliation for confronting or reporting harassment. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Physical conduct: Unwelcome touching, standing too close, looking up and down, inappropriate or threatening staring or glaring, obscene, threatening, or offensive gestures.
- b. Verbal or written conduct: Inappropriate references to body parts; derogatory or demeaning comments, jokes, or personal questions; sexual innuendoes; offensive remarks about race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation; obscene letters or telephone calls; catcalls; whistles; sexually suggestive sounds; loud, aggressive, inappropriate comments or other vocal abuse.

5. Visual or symbolic conduct

Display of nude pictures, scantily-clad, or offensively-clad people; display of intimidating or offensive religious, political, or other symbols; display of offensive, threatening, demeaning, or derogatory drawings, cartoons, or other graphics; offensive T-shirts, coffee mugs, bumper stickers, or other articles.

C. Individuals who believe they are being harassed or retaliated against should exercise any one or more of the following options as soon as possible:

1. Tell the harasser to stop the offensive conduct; and/or
2. Tell the Team Leader about the conduct

D. Penalties

Any team member who engages in harassment will face consequences ranging from verbal warnings and letters of reprimand, up to and including termination from the assignment, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. Team Leaders who do not take action when they know or suspect that harassment is occurring will face the same range of consequences. Contractor staff who engage in harassment may be subject to comparable penalties from their employees, and a contractor who fails to enforce this policy may have its contract terminated. Visitors who harass may be removed from any workplace and prevented from returning.

E. Key points when dealing with sexual harassment issues.

1. Team Leaders are:
 - a. NOT expected to be experts on sexual harassment.
 - b. Expected to appropriately deal with sexual harassment situations that are brought to their attention, that they hear about, and/or see.
 - c. Responsible for monitoring their workplace.
 - d. Not to wait for complaints before dealing with sexual harassment situations.
2. Team Leaders who do not deal with subtle sexual harassment situations they are aware of because they don't want to cause problems for themselves, their organization, the sexual harasser, and/or the recipient, often create the following problems:
 - a. The sexual harassment often has a greater negative impact on the recipient.
 - b. Waiting usually creates and/or increases liability.
 - c. Waiting for the resolution often does damage to the career and personal life of the harasser.
 - d. After waiting, many recipients of sexual harassment may have less confidence in the complaint procedure.
 - e. After waiting, there will be a greater chance of the organization taking inconsistent corrective action to resolve that sexual harassment situation.

It is important for organizations to be consistent when investigating and resolving sexual harassment situations.

F. Management does not take action

There are several reasons why some management personnel do not take action to resolve sexual harassment situations when they are aware of them:

1. If I ignore it, it will stop by itself.
2. I engaged in similar behavior, so how can I tell another person to stop?
3. It is embarrassing to talk about.
4. I don't like conflict.
5. I could make the situation worse by dealing with it.
6. If the alleged harasser is an executive level manager, I could hurt my career if I did anything.
7. It is not serious.
8. I want to be liked.
9. Production could go down.
10. The harasser is about to retire.
11. The recipient asks me to do nothing.

IMPORTANT: None of the reasons listed above protects management personnel from legal liability if they did not take action to deal with the sexual harassment situations they know or should have known about

G. Summary

When Team Leaders initially deal effectively with a sexual harassment complaint, they will usually facilitate a quick and informal resolution of that complaint and, therefore, dramatically reduce the employer's and their own potential liability.

H. Equal Employment Opportunity

1. Fire Prevention Education Teams will prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital/family status, disability in any terms, conditions, or privileges of employment.

I. Composition of the workforce

1. Fire Prevention Education Teams will provide the opportunity to bring together a professional workforce which closely reflects the ethnicity and gender of the public they serve.
2. Total quality in Fire Prevention Education Team activity can only be attained with people engaged in a focused objective of meeting wildfire prevention objectives of the Host Unit. This can only be attained with a workforce that can work toward meeting standards for ethics and conduct.