Updating Union Township Fire Department's Standard Operating Procedures

By:

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A research project submitted to the Ohio Fire Executive Program

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

1.   This paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

2.   I have affirmed the use of proper spelling and grammar in this document by using the spell and grammar check functions of a word processing software program and correcting the errors as suggested by the program.

Signed: _____

Printed Name: _____Robert C. Cabral_____

ABSTRACT

The problem this study addressed was that the Union Township Fire Department was operating with a set of operational procedures which were outdated and confusing to use as a reference. As a result, effectiveness and efficiency was lacking in daily operations. The purpose of project was to utilize the action research method to test a model process to develop and implement standard operation procedures and guidelines that are consistent, accurate and functional to the operations and expectations of the staff officers and administration of the Union Township Fire Department. Research was utilized to answer the following questions: 1. What are the national and state standards and practices regarding the development and implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and standard operating guidelines (SOGs)? 2. How does UTFD develop and implement SOPs and SOGs? 3. How are other similar departments developing and implementing SOPs and SOGs? 4. How could UTFD improve the way that SOPs and SOGs are developed and implemented?

The procedures utilized to answer these questions consisted of a literature review, interviews and a testing process using a "model process" to create an operational procedure. The interviews revealed that the department members were not involved in the procedure development process and that a consistent process would benefit them in their jobs. The research found that the requirement for operational procedures by fire departments falls within national standards. A test procedure was created using the model process and was then disseminated to department members for a trail period. The results revealed that the "model process" for producing a written operational procedure was effective. The recommendations made by the author are to use the model process to correct the problems associated with Union Township Fire Department's written operational procedures and to implement an update and revision program to update and maintain a current operational document.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

  Change has been an integral part of Union Township Fire Department's (UTFD) culture. Established in 1990 UTFD has experienced a high rate of employee turnover and expansion within its operations leaving few long term employees or experienced company officers. The primary resource in place for the company officers to use as a guide was an operation manual. The current manual contained policies and procedures that had been developed and inserted as needed, since the inception of the fire department.

  The lack of a systematic and consistent approach to developing, disseminating and implementing proper standard operating procedures (SOP's) and guidelines had caused a negative impact on effective and safe performance of operations. Evidence of this was found in a recently distributed procedure concerning daily tasks (Appendix 1). Training on the new procedure was not conducted, reviews of the new procedure verses old procedures as well as conflict checks with other procedures or policies were not conducted prior to the procedure being disseminated. The problem that this study addressed was the lack of consistent and correct performance of operations when the manual was used as a reference. The research method chosen for this study was action research.

Purpose of the Study

  The purpose of this action research project was to develop and test a model approach that had been proven in other departments to ensure consistent, accurate, and efficient development, dissemination and application of SOPs by all personnel.

<u>Research Questions</u>

The following questions were answered using the action research method:

1. What are the national and state standards and practices regarding the development and implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and standard operating guidelines (SOGs)?

2. How does UTFD develop and implement SOPs and SOGs?

3. How are other similar departments developing and implementing SOPs and SOGs?

4. How could UTFD improve the way that SOPs and SOGs are developed and implemented?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Union Township is located in Clermont County, south east of the City of Cincinnati and just north of the Ohio River in Southwestern Ohio. Nestled in approximately 31.5 square miles, Union Township has a residential population of approximately 46,900. It is the location of most major retail traffic for Clermont County with increases in its transient population to over 200,000 during normal business hours. The Village of Amelia is located just east of Union Township and consists of one square mile of real-estate housing approximately 3,500 residents. The village contracts with Union Township to provide fire, EMS and dispatching services. UTFD provides these services to Union Township, Amelia and Automatic Mutual Aid to surrounding jurisdictions.

UTFD provides services including fire protection and suppression, ALS EMS, Hazmat, and fire prevention activities from five fire stations. Making approximately 7000 runs yearly, 63 full time personnel provide emergency and non emergency services to the customers within the township. Three chief officers, an administrative assistant, a captain and 15 line lieutenants make up the supervisory staff for 43 fulltime firefighters.

UTFD was established on September 5, 1990 after merging two private departments. At the time of the merger, the department had 19 full-time, 17 part-time and 26 volunteers of employees and made an average of 3300 calls per year.

The merger and establishment of a new department were completed in a short time period, less then six months. Guidelines for new employees were established, most being adopted from only one of the prior departments and were based on its previous culture and operations. Within a short time, change began to take place in the newly formed fire department due to growth and development of the department and the community. Run volume increased prompting the need for additional stations and personnel. Within the department's 20 year

existence it grew from two manned stations and one unmanned station to five manned stations with plans for a sixth manned station. Over the years, individual procedures were written as the need arose and most appeared to have been created in a reactive manner without future planning considered. As incidents or problems arose a policy or memo was written to address that issue and in turn was added to the compilation of procedures. An example of such a memo is included in the Appendix (Appendix 2).

A formal procedure for writing, training and implementing new operational procedures or reviewing existing procedures did not exist within the department's documentation.

The need for a standard policy system was evident in daily operations. Manning issues called for changes in response guidelines on a daily bases. The written guidelines in place for incident response dictated the number of people responding first and the number of apparatus second. This allowed for company officer at stations with two people to decide which unit to take on certain responses. Several times in the recent past, officers have chosen the wrong units and were turned around by chief officers to get the correct unit. This confusion has extended to mutual aid runs where units are dispatched by alternate dispatch centers and a decision has to be made as to which units from which station responds to the call. The wrong unit has responded and the officer has been corrected using radio traffic and told to return to quarters.

Additional example of the problem lies with the implementation of a new breathing apparatus guideline created by a company officer without the guidance of a policy or procedural system to create a guideline. The new guideline was distributed to the department in a format different from that of the written manual and they were not reviewed properly. Upon distribution several conflicts in procedure were readily found. This caused confusion among the crews and the guidelines had to be rewritten.

The UTFD Standard Operating Guidelines (2009) at the time of this research was a collection of procedures that was disorganized within the manual. The table of contents (Appendix 3) contained areas that differed from the actual content in the chapters and were not pertinent to the main subject matter, thus forcing the user to search for topics and content.

The significance of this study for the UTFD, was the development of a more organized and efficient operational procedures model that could result in a better reference document. Creating a reference document that reflects the true vision of the chief officers will aid company officers in their decision making on a daily basis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review used in preparation of this research paper included review of published research papers, journal articles, periodicals, books and documents obtained through web base searches. The review attempted to answer the research questions posed in the introduction section and to provide relevant information on the development and application of organizational policies, procedures and guidelines.

Plans are put in place and operational procedures are developed by fire departments to provide the best service with the least risk. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1500 (2007) states in Chapter 4 Fire Department Administration, that "a fire department shall prepare and maintain written policies and standard operating procedures that document the organization's structure, membership roles and responsibilities, expected functions and training requirements (p. 1500-11)." The NFPA is put in place to assure occupational, health and safety for the fire service. NFPA is used as a standard to help fire departments operate safely.

The International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) (2004) Chief Officer, a fire service training publication, informs the chief officer of the importance of written policies and procedures as they relate to the plans and vision of the department. The focus of the chief officer training is on communications and how to relate the thoughts and orders of a chief officer to the subordinate. It further gives examples of written procedures and how to format the information consistently, but falls short of techniques or methods to get the audience to take ownership of the information that is presented. Research into the issue of how to achieve ownership of information when it is presented was retrieved from literature on the subject of how adults learn. Although not part of this project, additional subject matter on adult learning can be found in Additional Reading section of this paper's reference section.

IFSTA Chief Officer (2004) states that the partnership of the instructor and student is unique. This principle when applied to operational procedures creates the partnership of the vision of the chief officer with that of the company officer. Baitinger (2005) believed that we must find creative ways to engage people and to encourage them to actively participate in their own learning. Using company officers to help develop written procedures for what they do on a daily basis, is consistent with this statement. Baitinger writings point to using people for their opinions and by using those opinions helps with ownership and acceptance.

Abrashoff (2002) stated that he wanted to make "partners, not peons" out of his sailors (p.105). Although a naval officer is trained to follow strict rules and regulations, Abrashoff actions and philosophies got people involved. Basically he suggested that getting employees involved in the process to produce the operational procedure document can only benefit the organization. Such involvement would require that all the fire officers to be trained in the purpose, scope and writing of a procedure. Cook (1998) suggested that the procedures should be appropriate for the department and the procedures should take into account the conditions in the locale, the capabilities and limitations of the department as well as any requirement to written guidelines or procedures. Having all the fire officers involved in the process meets the suggestions of Cook.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) developed a document to assist fire departments in their efforts to create effective standard operating procedures. FEMA (1999), documents explain that the decisions personnel face within the fire service are complex and controversial. Therefore managers in the fire service need a mechanism to convey operational guidance to the members and ensure departmental compliance with laws, regulations and standards. They need the tools to direct and control the rapid pace of change. FEMA (1999) suggests this as "standard in the fire service".

The importance of having the right tools to convey operational guidance is highlighted by Gratz (1972) who discussed the importance of decision making and how everything is accomplished, good or bad, from the decisions made. Gratz further offers that guidelines set forth for making decisions, ease the decision making process and allow the decision maker to look at the problem with more options.

The literature reviewed was consistent in expressing the need and requirement for having written guidelines and procedures. Cook (1999) wrote about the most visible part of life being the routine, and that a routine's origin may not be known by those who follow it but they follow it anyway. The structure, predictability and concreteness of the procedures are what make organizations work. Cook defines a "guideline" as a statement of policy by a person or group having authority over an activity; a "policy" as a plan or course of action designed to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matter; and a "procedure" as a way of performing something or a preset established method for conducting affairs or actions . By defining a procedure in this way Cook helps push the need for fire officers to use written guidelines in their decision making process. Alternate definitions by NFPA are offered in the definition section.

Brunacini (1985) insisted that it is the responsibility of fire ground commanders to develop an overall plan of action on an incident and that the plan is related to a standard set of rules, principles or standard operating procedures. This is consistent with what Cook is saying and takes the need for written procedures to the fire scene as well as daily operations.

Due to the need for a resource document that could be used by all supervisors for decision making, this researcher directed the literature review toward the process of developing a model for developing written procedures. DeLorie (2002) found that no matter the avenue taken to develop operational procedures, the standard should reflect the values of the department. His research identified the legal need as well as the value in using the existing writings of other

departments to prevent unnecessary work. Using DeLorie's findings as a guide, a random search was conducted on the internet for published fire department procedures and guidelines. Several were found and reviewed for format and content. However, a written process for creating the documents was not found during the internet search.

The business community uses procedures and guidelines for effective operations to increase productivity and profit. The business world deals with policy and procedure more from a human resource angle according to Campbell (1998) who suggests that policy and procedures are actually organizational position statements that explain why there is a rule and why it should be followed. She suggests that writing procedures should be done in steps and work best with a team approach. However, she further indicates that "some ambiguity" (Campbell, 1998 p.2) should be allowed in the procedure for flexibility to the situation. Campbell and Brunacini hold similar views on the need for directives to be "flexible and expandable" (Brunacini, 1985 p.19).

Heimlich and Dresbach (2002) discussed written operating procedures for community groups and advocate the need for written policy, procedures and guidelines in everyday organization. They suggested that equality, fairness and consistency are benefits of properly written guidelines.

It appears by the review that the process of creating a procedure can be involved and should be. Knapp (1992) suggested that when writing operational procedures, be prepared that the document may have to be "rewritten several times" (Knapp 1992, p.96). When the final draft is completed, he recommended having someone who is unfamiliar with the topic, review the document and see if it is easily understood.

The challenges associated with writing an operations document are explained by Lesniak (2002). He wrote that all levels of the organization should be included in the process and

additionally, the research conducted for the development of the document should be expanded to determine if other management tools could be used to help manage the department.

In summary, each of the works reviewed indicated the importance of having a written development procedure. The process to create the procedure can be lengthy and involved and will boil down to one of four input practices as summarized by DeLorie: 1) adopt a national standard as written, 2) adopt a national standard and modify it to local needs, 3) create a procedure internally that is locale specific using local information and input from involved personnel or 4) adopt a neighboring department's existing procedure that will work locally.

The common theme within the literature is the importance of the process in the development of the procedure. The research stresses the importance of how the process is created to be used consistently by the organization when creating a procedure. The direction of the consistent process drove the project to process development. Success was demonstrated by the research by the cooperation and by in demonstrated by the referenced material.

PROCEDURES

The intent of this action research project was to develop and test, a process or model template for creating a written procedure or guideline for use by Union Township Fire Department.

Research and data collection began with a literature review of professional journals, professional fire service standards, fire service training course materials, and various books written on the subject of developing standards for operating procedures and guidelines.

Contact was made with ten local departments in an effort to acquire an existing written document in use by those departments for procedures development. The lacks of available samples lead to an expanded search using the internet. Several documents published by large city departments were reviewed for examples.

Interviews were conducted with five officers and five firefighters of the Union Township Fire Department at Union Township Fire Department. The officers and firefighters were on duty at the time of the interviews. The interviews were conducted in a private informal manner. And their anonymity was promised to achieve honest answers. A questionnaire (Appendix 4) was developed for use during the interviews.

Using the information obtained from the interviews and information from literature review, a model process for developing a procedure was created. To create the model process, a method that would allow for several people to be involved with the process as well as to use research was developed. A format was chosen to develop a procedural guide for a test procedure (Appendix 5). The model was then tested using a group of four department members. The members were to create a SOP for a test procedure to be used by all five Union Township Stations. The procedural guide involved the weekly inspection of the station generator.

The group met to discuss the design of the written procedure and to determine if it could be incorporated in to an existing procedure. Using the model process, the group searched for existing information on checking a generator and found that since each station used a different model or manufacturer of generator, a generic form would have to be developed for each station to use covering all required checks. A draft of the procedure and form was created that would cover the weekly checks (Appendix 6). This draft was then forwarded to the fire department staff for approval and support of the test period. A test period of three weeks was given for the procedure to be reviewed and implemented by each station. At the end the test period a comment period covering three shifts was offered with no negative comments or problems reported.

Definition of Terms

Procedure – An organizational directive issued by the authority having jurisdiction or by the department that establishes a specific policy that must be followed (NFPA 1561,   2008).

Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) – A written organizational directive that establishes or prescribes specific operational or administrative methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or actions (NFPA 1561, 2008).

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – An organizational directive that establishes a standard course of action or prescribes specific operational or administrative methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or actions (NFPA 1720, 2010).

Limitations of the Study

The researcher recognizes several limitations with this project. The first limitation was the time period of a few months for project completion. This minimal time period did not allow for extensive detailed research. The second limitation was the lack of information from local departments. Contact made with ten local departments to acquire samples of procedures used to

develop SOPs did not produce any examples. The lack of local data required the researcher to search beyond the local level to an internet search of existing published data by departments from around the nation. Lastly, limited testing of the model and its use on a rather simple operation with a small group of personnel created limited results.

RESULTS

Interviews' were conducted with ten Union Township Fire Department employees, five officers and five line personnel. The ten participants represented 6.1% of the department's responders. The participants were selected based on eagerness to participate and ease of access for questioning. The participants were all asked the same questions, all questions were answered by all participants. The interviews resulted in the following data to answer the question of how Union Township Fire Department develops and implements its operational procedures.

Question 1: Are you aware of any national and/or state standards and/or practices regarding the development and implementation of SOPS?

Response: Of the ten people asked, two were aware of at least some standard requiring a department to have Standard Operating Procedures. Of the two that were aware, only one was an officer, the other a firefighter.

Question 2: Do you feel that there is a difference between a SOP and SOG?

Response: Of the ten people asked, one person believed there was a difference, that person being an officer, and nine did not think there was a difference.

Question 3: What is the procedure for creating a new SOP for UTFD?

Response: None of the ten people was aware of a procedure for creating a new SOP.

Question 4: Have you been or are you currently involved in writing UTFD SOPs?

Response: No one was currently or had been involved in writing SOPs.

Question 5: Can you name a recent policy that you think was not implemented properly and if it was not what do you feel would have made the process better?

Response: Four people replied referring to a recent procedure on sealing apparatus compartments, two replied referring a recent response procedure on two medic units on one run. The remaining 4 referred to a recent procedure on SCBAs. All ten responded that the problem was not with the policy but how it was written and implemented.

Question 6: Do you currently work for an additional organization that has, in your opinion, a better process for developing and/or implementing SOPs?

Response: Of the ten people asked, only two worked for other organizations that they thought had implemented policies better than UTFD. Additionally, none had written procedures for another organization.

Question 7: What is your current position with UTFD?

Response: Five were officers and five were line personnel.

Question 8: How long have you been with UTFD?

Response: The minimum years of employment was nine with the maximum of twenty two. Average was fifteen.

Question 9: How long have you been in the fire service?

Response: The tenure of the ten people interviewed ranged from ten to twenty five years. With the average of fifteen.

Question 10: Do you believe a written operational manual containing procedures, guidelines and policies could benefit you in your job?

Response: All ten people answered in the affirmative.

In an effort to solidify the need for the model process, several national standards were reviewed to answer the question if national industry standards or practices exist. The results of the literature determined that set written guidelines are required by fire departments and the use of those guidelines by many different personnel, require the language and format to be consistent, easily read and understood. Twelve local departments were contacted and none could provide a process for creating an operational procedure. Even with the requirement and the importance of the documents, none of the departments had in place, a method to develop, evaluate or revise their documents on a regular basis. This query of local departments reinforced the need for a model process.

Using the newly proposed model development process with the support from the department's chief officers, an operational procedure for conducting an inspection of a station generator was developed and distributed for use by all stations and shifts. A test period of three weeks was allowed. The test procedure involved the task of checking the station generator and recording the task on a log sheet. Each station had a different generator configuration with different fuel sources and operations for each generator. The test procedure was written to take into account the difference among the stations. Using the model process as a guide, each crew member was given instruction by the individual station officers. The trial resulted in a consistent distribution of the information resulting in 100% compliance with the test policy. Feedback solicited from fourteen station officers, indicated that the model process and format as presented was easy to follow and was thought to be of benefit to the operations of the department. The trial indicated that each station achieved the intended result though the generator units were different at each station. It was the opinion of the test group that the process was superior to any other approach currently in place in the department.

DISCUSSION

The Union Township Fire Department is a department in constant change and has been since its inception. In order for its employees to keep abreast of the changes in operations, an operational procedure manual is essential. The current "Standard Operational Procedure Manual" is out of date and confusing at best. The need for a consistent process to follow when developing operational procedures was evident. A resource manual that describes what is to be completed, how it is to be completed and by whom as well as what is to be expected from each employee, can assure safer, efficient and effective operations Cook (1998).

Nationally, standards are put in place requiring departments to create operational procedures NFPA (2001), however, those standards are not laws and if the department does not agree with the standard or adopt that standard, there is no means for enforcement.

Businesses use written policy and procedures to control the work force in an effort to create the most productivity with the most profit Campbell (1998). Without clear direction and compliance by all employees a business will not succeed. Fire departments, although not a for-profit business, still have the obligation to provide the most service that possible for the money available. Inefficient and ineffective operations cause loss of time and increased costs and can creates a potential for personnel injury and loss of life (Brunacini 1985).

Leaders of fire departments are faced with a multitude of new problems, the current economy and changing demographics are but two of these. Union Township Fire Department is no exception. The reduction in workforce without the reduction in service requires that those performing the work are making the most of the time allowed. The vision of chief officers must be clear to those required to carry out that vision. Supervisors responsible for managing that service must have constant, clear and up to date directions to follow. Union Township Fire Department supervisors have to manage change on constant bases. The communication that is

required to manage the change effectively is made more efficient when it is in writing and can be readily referenced.

The test procedure used by Union Township's Officers allowed a glimpse into to a system that would aide them in their jobs. Comments made by some of the officers addressed a concern expressed by the officers of the lack of a reference manual for supervisors. The comments continued into a desire by some of the officers to help re-develop the fire department procedure manual.

The model process developed by the research project is an example of a solution for fire departments such as Union Township that currently do not have a process to develop procedures. Using this model process Union Township Fire Department could potentially create a pathway to a more efficient and effective operation. The use of the model process will allow for involvement of personnel as well as create the opportunity to review and update current procedures.

With the success of the simple test procedure, the Union Township Fire Department is encouraged to continue testing the model process with more complex procedures or guidelines. A method to decrease the overall project time of re-developing the fire department procedure manual, would involve creating several small test groups each using the model process to review and/or re-develop existing procedures at the same time. This would allow for more member involvement and a better understanding for the users of the procedure manual. It would create an avenue to organize the manual and determine the pertinence and need for the current content.

Reviewing and updating the content of the current procedures manual using a process such as the model developed by this project, will allow the fire department administration to evaluate its operations, update its direction and involve its staff in a manner not yet used by this department.

Fire Departments that consider using this model process for their own operations will most likely have a procedures format to fits it needs, the process to create the procedure is the key to the successful implementation. It was clear from the literature reviewed that the involvement of all personnel in creating a model template to use for performing work is the recipe for a safe, productive and efficient operation. Use of this model by any department will directly affect their operations and enhance the effectiveness of their procedures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information gathered and the results of the test procedure, the following recommendations are made:

1. Commit to a program that will update and standardize the UTFD Standard Operations Manual.

2. Using a model process, involve the members of the department in creating and revising the Standard Operational Manual.

3. Develop and implement a schedule for review and revision of the Manual.

4. Develop and implement a training program for company officers in managing changes to the operations manual and writing new procedures.

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APPENDIX 1 – UTFD CHAPTER 10

Union Township Fire Department- Standard Operating Guidelines
Chapter 10- Duties
Revised: May 1, 2011
Approved by: Asst. Chief Jackson

Daily Duties

General Station Duties
- Bathrooms
- Bedrooms: cleaned w/beds made
- Kitchen: floors cleaned, garbage emptied, cook-tops/countertops cleaned and cleaned, dishwasher emptied prior to shift change
- Garbage: removed during station cleaning and as needed
- General Organization
- Vacuum carpets
- Mop/clean floors
- Laundry
- Snow removal as necessary
- Exterior survey for debris, property damage, unusual conditions, flag and light conditions
- Clean areas needing special attention as necessary

0700 – 0720   Shift briefings, daily inspection

0720 – 0800   Vehicle/equipment checks

0930 – 1200   Tests with building department

0800 – 2300   Includes but not limited to:
- Training (formal & station) hands-on in the AM, classroom in the PM
- Station duties – starts in the AM
- Fire hydrants
- Fire and safety inspections
- Street familiarization training
- Preplans
- Vehicle cleaning and maintenance (PM, waxing, etc.) performed in the AM
- Fire hose testing – as scheduled or as needed
- Public education
- Fire prevention
- Reports – fire and EMS reports completed before end of shift if return to station is prior to 6:30 AM. If return to station is after 6:00 AM, complete fire and EMS report before leaving the fire station. Contact a supervisor regarding questions about finishing a fire or EMS report
- Data entry, etc.

1830 – 2300   Personal fitness training

APPENDIX 2 – UTFD MEMO EXAMPLES

TO: ALL PERSONNEL

FROM: CAPT. JACKSON

RE: E.M.S. UNITS AVAILABILITY

MEMO # _116_

Due to some recent confusion on when an E.M.S. unit should go available from the hospital, I would like to clarify this procedure. As soon as the E.M.S. unit is available at Clermont Mercy or Anderson Mercy (leaving the hospital drive) they shall notify dispatch that they are available. In the event that they are called for another run the decision must be made by the crew leader whether they are the closest E.M.S. unit or if another unit can provide a more timely response. An example to this would be: M-21 is at Clough and State returning from Anderson Mercy and they are dispatched to a sick person at 716 Cinti-Batavia Pk. M-31 is in quarters and available. The crew of M-21 should advise dispatch to send M-31 since their arrival on scene will be much quicker. If you have any questions concerning this clarification please contact myself or you immediate supervisor. Thanks for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jeff

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UTFD STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

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Interview Questions:

1. Are you aware of any national and/or state standards and/or practices regarding the development and implementation of SOPS?

2. Do you feel that there is a difference between a SOP and SOG?

3. What is the procedure for creating a new SOP for UTFD?

4. Have you been or are you currently involved in writing UTFD SOPs?

5. Can you name a recent policy that you feel was not implemented properly and if it was not what do you think would have made the process better?

6. Do you currently work for an additional organization that has, in your opinion, a better process for developing and/or implementing SOPs?

7. What is your current position with UTFD?

8. How long have you been with UTFD?

9. How long have you been in the fire service?

10. Do you believe a written operational manual containing procedures, guidelines and policies could benefit you in your job?

APPENDIX 5 – MODEL OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

Procedure Model for Developing a Written Procedure or Guideline

1. Establish the Need for the SOP or SOG

   The determination for developing the SOP or SOG should also include labeling the new procedure as a Standard Operating Procedure or Guideline. Definition of a procedure is a definitive method or result and should be used when a task is to be performed in only one manner. A guideline is an educated method but not exclusive to all applications and should be used when the document is to be used as a source of reference to aide not define an action or task.

   The determination as to what section of the Employee Manual the new or revised procedure is to be inserted and listed, will be made at this time.

2. Build a Development Team

   A small team of users will be selected to create the proposed written procedure. This team can be created using personnel of any ranks as long as the procedure is applicable to all those on the team.

3. Establish Team Procedures

   The team should meet with agreement on procedures to divide the workload among the team members.

4. Gather Information and Identify Alternatives

   Each team member should research a portion of the proposed procedure using existing departmental procedures and outside resources, such another department procedure to determine if a usable solution is readily available.

5. Analyze and Select Alternatives

   The team should meet with the research data collected and discuss alternative solutions as well as decide if a new document is to be created.

6. Write the SOP

   A writer is to be chosen from the team to write the proposed procedure using the determination of the team and to submit the final product for review by the department staff. If changes are to be made by staff recommendations, then the repeat of this step is warranted.

7. Review and Test the SOP

   Upon completion of the procedure draft, it is to be reviewed by the department staff officers. The staff officers are to the present the procedure to the company officers in a training that allows for questions and clarification. A test or implementation period is to be set by the staff officers.

   Any problems or revisions are to be addressed at the end of the test period. Changes if needed should be kept at a minimum.

8. Ratify and approve the procedure.

   The final draft of the procedure will then be ratified by the Fire Chief and approved for use and insertion into the employee manual. No procedure is to be inserted into the procedures document manual unless approved by the Chief Officer.

Union Township Fire Department
Standard Operating Procedure

Page 1 of _

Section: 100-ADMIN   Effective Date:
Subsection: 100.1   Review Date:
Subject: Developing SOPs/SOGs   SOP or SOG:

1.0 PURPOSE

    1.1   The purpose of this guideline is to establish a common system by which the department can develop and implement SOPs and SOGs.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

    2.1   Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are used to ensure personnel perform common tasks in a specific manner to promote continuity and reproduction of the end results.

    2.2   Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) are used as guidelines for personnel to perform common tasks in a preferred manner to promote continuity and reproduction of the end results.

    2.3   There shall be an SOP/SOG book at each station.

        2.3.1   There shall be a contents page for each SOP/SOG book.

        2.3.2   Each category shall have its own section.

        2.3.3   There shall be a permanent file at Station 51 for all SOP/SOG's and their revisions. The acknowledgement sheet for each SOP/SOG shall also be kept in this file.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

    3.1   The Fire Chief is responsible for the final approval of all SOPs/SOGs.

    3.2   The Assistant Chief is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the SOP/SOG program. This may include, but is not limited to the following:

        3.2.1   Identifying tasks that may require an SOP/SOG and ensuring that one is developed.

        3.2.2   Appointing personnel to develop an SOP/SOG.

        3.2.3   Reviewing the final draft of proposed SOP/SOGs for content.

        3.2.4   Forwarding proposed SOP/SOG's to the required discipline officer for review:

            3.2.4.1   Administrative - Asst. Chief
            3.2.4.2   Maintenance - Asst. Chief
            3.2.4.3   Fire Ground Operations – Asst. Chief
            3.2.4.4   Rescue Operations – Asst. Chief

3.2.4.5   Haz-Mat Operations – Hazmat Officer-Asst. Chief
3.2.4.6   Support Operations - Asst. Chief
3.2.4.7   Training - Training Officer – Asst. Chief
3.2.4.8   Station – Asst. Chief

3.3   All Department Personnel are responsible for:

3.3.1   Developing and implementing SOPs/SOGs as required.

3.3.2   Advising the Asst. Chief through the chain of command, when SOPs/SOGs need review and/or revision.

3.3.3   Propose revisions for SOPs/SOGs as needed.

3.3.4   Signing the SOPs/SOG Acknowledgement sheet within 30 days of adoption.

3.3.5   Abiding by the SOPs/SOG's.

4.0 FORMAT

4.1   The SOP/SOG Template shall be used.

4.2   The final draft of an SOP/SOG shall be in outline format.

4.3   The SOP/SOG shall be numbered (aaaa-bbb) as follows:

4.3.1   aaaa is category:
4.3.1.1   100 ADMN – Administrative
4.3.1.2   200 MAIN – Maintenance
4.3.1.3   300 FIRE - Fire Ground and Misc. Operations
4.3.1.4   400 RESC - Rescue Operations
4.3.1.5   500 HAZM - Haz-Mat Operations
4.3.1.6   600 SUPP - Support Operations/Public Education
4.3.1.7   700 TRNG – Training
4.3.1.8   800 STAT – Station

4.3.2   The SOP/SOG shall be addressed to all affected personnel. For example, it may be for all or some personnel, all or some officers, maintenance only or any combination of personnel.

4.4   The "Effective Date" of the SOP/SOG shall be no later than 30 days after its adoption.

4.5   The "Subject" of the SOP/SOG shall be what the document covers.

4.6   The "Review Date" of the SOP/SOG shall be no longer than 2 years from the Effective Date. However, SOPs/SOGs shall be reviewed and revised as often as required.

4.7   The body of an SOP/SOG shall always begin with the purpose, and include any disclaimer for deviation should any be allowed.

4.7.1   Example: The purpose of this guideline is to establish procedures for vehicle fires. This is a general guideline only and will not cover all situations. Deviations from this guideline shall be made by the on-scene incident commander, and that person shall bear the responsibility for any event resulting from any deviation.

4.8   The remainder of the SOP/SOG body shall be made up of sections as required. These sections may include but are not limited to the following:

4.8.1 General Information - is specifics regarding the SOP/SOG.

4.8.2 Definitions - any definitions that need to be clarified.

4.8.3 Responsibilities - who is responsible for what.

4.8.4 Procedure(s) - how is the SOP/SOG to be carried out.

4.8.5 Forms - should any be required.

4.9 The approval and adoption of the SOP/SOG shall be in the following format:

This standard operating procedure has been approved and adopted.

Fire Chief	Date	XXXXXXXXX	Date

4.9.1 XXXXXXXXX is the discipline officers signature (e.g. Asst. Chief, Training Officer).

4.9.2 The approval and adoption statement shall be signed by the Fire Chief and discipline officer at their earliest convenience, preferably at the time of adoption.

4.9.3 The SOP/SOG shall be read and an acknowledgment sheet signed by all department personnel within 30 days of the adoption.

4.10 Standard Fire Service and other reference texts may be used as SOPs/SOGs. For example, the Aircare Operations SOG may simply state that the Aircare Ground Operations Manual shall be followed.

V. Approval

This standard operating procedure has been approved and adopted.

Fire Chief	Date	Asst. Chief	Date

APPENDIX 6 – UTFD STATION GENERATOR TEST SOP

Union Township Fire Department
Standard Operating Procedure

Page 1 of _

Section: 300-Maintenance   Effective Date:
Subsection: 300.1   Review Date:
Subject: Developing SOPs/SOGs   SOP or SOG: SOP

1.0 PURPOSE

    1.1 The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to assure that the backup generators are in working order and ready for service in the event of a power interruption.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

    2.1 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are used to ensure personnel perform common tasks in a specific manner to promote continuity and reproduction of the end results.

    2.2 This SOP shall be placed in the Operations Manual at each station.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

    3.1 The Station Supervisors assigned to each station on Tuesdays of each week are responsible for compliance with this procedure and all associated documentation.

4.0 Procedure

    4.1 A weekly generator check log will be issued to each station.

    4.2 The weekly generator check will be conducted on Tuesday of each week.

    4.3 The completion of the checks will be documented on the weekly generator check log by the person performing the check.

    4.4 The generator check log will be retained at each station and will consist of the yearly records for that station.

    4.5 The previous year's record will be filed at each station as an archived station record.

    4.6 The generator check will include:
        4.6.1   Visual Check for leaks
        4.6.2   Fuel Level Check
        4.6.3   Fluid Level Check
        4.6.4   Any defects noted are to be reported immediately up the chain of command.

V. Approval
    This standard operating procedure has been approved and adopted.

_____   _____   _____   _____
    Fire Chief   Date   Asst. Chief   Date

Union Township Fire Department
Station Generator Weekly Tuesday Check
Station _____ Year _____

Week	Crew Member	Visual Inspection	Fuel Level	Oil Level	Belts
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
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Appendix 7 Additional Reading

Additional Reading

City of Cincinnati (2011) Procedure manual, digital version. Cincinnati, OH
http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov

Dallas Volunteer Fire Department (2002) Standard operating guidelines. Dallas, TX

Ferozali, F. (2011). Adult learning theory approaches among healthcare instructors. MS Walden
University, Ann Arbor, MI ProQuest LLC

Goad, T.W. (1982). Delivering effective training. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company.

Granito, A.R. (1972) Fire instructor's training guide. New York, NY: Dun Donnelley

International Fire Service Training Association [IFSTA]. (2006) Challenges of fire and
emergency services instruction. In IFSTA fire and emergency services instructor (7th ed.,
9-30) Stillwater, OK: Fire Protection Publications.

Lowell Massachusetts Fire Department (1998) Standard operating procedure manual. Lowell,
MA.

State of Tennessee (2010) Manual for developing polices and procedures. Nashville, TN

Viscuso, F.. (2010). The simple approach to writing effective sops. Retrieved from
www.fireengineer.com

Westover, J.H. (2009). Effective human resource training and development: Examination and
application of adult learning theory in the HR management context. *The Journal of
Human Resource and Adult Learning Vol. 4, Num.1, June 2008*