



Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS

Standard Operating Procedure

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Standard Operating Procedure: 1.15	Effective Date: April 1, 2025
Subject: Volunteer Background Checks	Section: Administration
Authorized: Chief Michael Robinson	Revision Date:

Applicability: ☒ Volunteer ☐ Career

I. PURPOSE

To require specific individuals who are members or applying to be members of a fire company under the umbrella of Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS (DFEMS) to successfully complete a background check.

The interests of DFEMS relative to members and their backgrounds are focused on operational members who are engaged in the delivery of emergency services as a function of the Carroll County Government. It shall also include those members engaged in any fire company youth programs as either a leader or advisor. In addition, all new members as of April 1, 2025, shall have a background check.

The purpose of this policy is to describe the parameters and procedures of completing the background check process for applicable individuals to be covered under this policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

Guilty: A person was found guilty following a trial, entered a guilty plea, entered a no contest plea accompanied by a court finding of guilty, regardless of whether there was an adjunction of guilt (conviction) or withholding of guilt. This recommendation does not apply if criminal charges resulted in acquittal, Nolle Prossed, or dismissal.

Member: Any individual who is affiliated with any fire company under the umbrella of Carroll County DFEMS.

Operational Member: Any individual with operational functioning as responders in either Fire or EMS as defined by completion of the initial and a current NFPA 1582 physical. This shall include probationary members who are engaged in training programs to become operational responders.

Youth Leaders or Advisors: Any fire company member with involvement in a fire company or county-based youth program to include junior firefighter entities, affiliated scout troops and CCVESA EST or similar programs who in the course of their activities would be engaged with children in any format.

New member: Any persons who, after April 1, 2025, seeks membership in any DFEMS fire company under any context to include either or operational or administrative participation.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. A background check shall be completed on company members as follows:
 - 1. All current operational members and of the fire companies under Carroll County DFEMS and youth program leaders/advisors by July 1, 2025.
 - 2. A background check shall also be completed on all company members engaged in any company youth programs as leaders/advisors who are not operational members.
 - 3. Beginning April 1, 2025, any individuals applying to become members of a fire company under Carroll County DFEMS must complete the background check.
- B. As the County must abide by applicable employment law and County policy, certain requirements governing career personnel do not apply to volunteer members.
- C. The responsibility for ensuring the completion of a background investigation shall rest with the volunteer company to which the individual is seeking membership. Each company shall provide to DFEMS the name of a company officer responsible for this process. Verification of the background investigation shall be maintained by DFEMS.
- D. The decision to allow a new applicant to join a volunteer company, prior to receiving the results of a background investigation rests solely with the company granting membership. Any individual who is disqualified from membership due to the results of a background investigation shall not be permitted to hold membership with any company under the umbrella of Carroll County DFEMS.
- E. The background check will be completed one time initially with Carroll County DFEMS reserving the right to perform subsequent background checks as necessary.
- F. The company delegated background officer shall receive notification of any disqualifiers per section G below.
- G. Disqualifiers - The following list of disqualifiers is not intended to be exhaustive. Areas of concern shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis within the scope of the background investigation.
 - 1. Absolute Disqualifiers
 - a. Conviction involving sexual misconduct where the victim's failure to affirmatively consent is an element of the crime, such as forcible rape.
 - b. Conviction of any crime involving the sexual or physical abuse or exploitation of a child, elderly, infirm or disabled adult; sexual misconduct with a child; making or distributing child pornography; using a child in a sexual display; incest with a child; or assault on a child, elderly, infirm or disabled adult.
 - c. Conviction of any crime in which the victim is an out-of-hospital patient or a patient or resident of a healthcare facility including abuse of, neglect of, theft from, or financial exploitation of a person entrusted to the care or protection of the applicant.
 - d. Conviction of any crime listed in Title 6, Subtitle 1 and Title 4, Subtitle 5, of the Code of Maryland (which includes, but is not limited to, arson, the incendiary burning

- of property, and/or threats to bomb, burn, destroy or in any manner damage any place of assembly, building or other structure, or any means of transportation).
 - e. Crimes of violence against persons such as murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, or robbery of any degree.
 - f. Permanent revocation of license or certification by any state ambulance office or other recognized state or national healthcare provider licensing or certifying body.
 - g. Conviction of any felony.
 - h. Any conviction for which the individual is currently incarcerated, on probation, or on parole.
 - i. Conviction of serious crimes against property, such as felony theft, burglary, embezzlement, or insurance fraud.
 - j. Conviction of any crime involving abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation.
2. Additional Disqualifiers – Membership/Employment will be denied for applicants who have been convicted of crimes in the following categories unless at least five years have passed since such conviction:
 - a. Any other crime involving sexual misconduct or those listed in Title 3, Subtitle 3 of the Code of Maryland.
 - b. Calling or summoning, by phone or otherwise, any ambulance or fire-fighting apparatus, or the malicious activation of a manual or automatic fire alarm.
 - c. Illegal use of a Schedule I or II controlled substance (as set forth in §§5-402 and 403 of the Code of Maryland).
 - d. Unlawful possession, distribution, or intent to distribute unlawful Schedule I through V drugs, as defined in the Code of Maryland §5.601-628 et seq.).
 3. Refusal to comply with this policy and complete the background check will disqualify the individual from operational, youth or new member participation.

H. Reporting the results of the background check

1. The Director/Chief of the DFEMS (or designee) and fire company President and the designated company background officer shall have access to view the results of the background checks.
2. Flagged applications will be reviewed by the Director/Chief of DFEMS.
3. If the decision is made to disqualify an applicant or current member, the Director/Chief (or designee) will notify the fire company President and the designated company background officer.

IV. RESCISION

This Standard Operating Procedure rescinds all directives regarding Volunteer Background Checks or similar content previously issued for personnel of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS.

V. RELATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES / DOCUMENTS

VI. ATTACHMENTS