

CENTRAL PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD POLICY
NUMBER 4.48

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SUBJECT: PUBLIC ACCESS TO FIRE STATIONS AND DISTRICT FACILITIES

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for public access to fire stations and facilities operated by the Fire District to ensure the safety of the public, the security of district personnel and assets, and the continuity of emergency operations.

AUTHORITY & RESPONSIBILITY:

The Board of Fire Commissioners and Executive Staff Members have the authority and responsibility to ensure all District members are familiar with, and operate, within the parameters of this Board Policy.

POLICY: This policy applies to all members of the public seeking entry to any Fire District station or facility. It also applies to all Fire District personnel, including full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff, who are responsible for enforcing access controls and ensuring public safety during visits.

PROCEDURE:

I. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Public Access: Unscheduled entry by individuals not employed by the District, including members of the public, guests, or groups not on official business.
- B. Authorized Personnel/Groups: Fire District employees, contractors, scheduled station tours and designated visitors with written authorization from the Fire Chief or their designee.
- C. Family and Close Friends: Spouses, domestic partners, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and individuals with close personal ties to a District member, regardless of legal or biological relationship.
- D. Apparatus Bay: The area where emergency vehicles and operational equipment are stored and maintained.
- E. Lobby: The designated public-facing entry area within a fire station.
- F. Escort: A Fire District employee designated to accompany and supervise visitors.

II. ACCESS HOURS

- A. Public Access to fire stations is allowed Monday through Friday from 0900 to 1700, or 0800 and 2000 for Family and Close Friends.
- B. Public Access to other District facilities is allowed Monday through Friday from 0900 to 1630, or 0800 and 2000 for Family and Close Friends, as long as the facility is staffed and has a lobby.
- C. Except for Family and Close Friends, no Public Access is permitted on weekends, holidays, or outside of designated hours without written approval from the Fire Chief or designee.
- D. Except for Family and Close Friends, Public Access visits will be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes.
- E. Except for Family and Close Friends, Public Access visits are limited to one visit per individual or group per calendar quarter.
- F. Family members and close friends of District personnel may visit fire stations between 0800 and 2000 daily, subject to operational needs and security protocols.

IV. PERMITTED ACCESS AREAS

- A. Visitors are permitted in the public entrance lobby only.
- B. Access to apparatus bays is allowed only when accompanied by an Escort. Access must be for educational or official purposes and not interfere with emergency readiness.
- C. Access to the District's fire stations does not authorize visitors or Family and Close Friends to participate in emergency response activities or ride along on District apparatus. Individuals seeking to observe District operations beyond the scope of Public Access must apply under Standard Operating Guideline 4.08 (Observer Program) and comply with its requirements, including approvals, forms, and insurance documentation.

V. SUPERVISION AND VISITOR LOG

- A. Visitors beyond the public lobby must be accompanied by an Escort at all times.
- B. When requesting access to the apparatus bay, a visitor must complete the station's Visitor Log. The Log is located online and can be accessed via QR code or through the District's website.

VI. EMERGENCIES AND OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES:

- A. In the event of an emergency call, scheduled or unscheduled training, or any other reason for a crew's unavailability that would leave the public without an Escort, all visitors must immediately vacate the station. Staff shall courteously inform visitors and ensure their prompt exit.

VII. GROUP VISITS AND SCHEDULING:

- A. Authorized Group visits (e.g., schools, scouts, community organizations) must be approved and scheduled by the Division responsible for community outreach coordination.
- B. Station Visits can be requested by accessing the District's website and filling out the EVENT REQUEST form. All requests must be made at least 30 days in advance and are subject to approval based on station availability and staffing.
- C. Visitors are expected to follow staff directions, respect privacy of employees, and maintain a safe environment.
- D. Minors must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult at all times.

VIII. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:

- A. Visitors are not permitted to:
 - 1. Enter living quarters nor administrative offices.
 - 2. Operate, handle, nor climb on apparatus or equipment.
 - 3. Engage in conduct that is illegal, disrupts operations, or pose a safety risk.
 - 4. Photographing, filming, or recording in non-public areas, except with the prior written approval of the Fire Chief or their designee.
 - 5. Bringing weapons of any kind onto District property. Prohibited items include but are not limited to: firearms (concealed or open carry), knives, pepper spray, tasers, explosives, and other hazardous implements.

IX. SIGNAGE AND NOTIFICATION:

- A. All stations must post signage in prominent locations stating:

EMPLOYEES ONLY

This area is restricted to District staff and authorized personnel.

No public access beyond this point.

No weapons of any kind allowed on District property.

X. ACCESSIBILITY:

- A. The District is committed to providing access to services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Visitors requiring reasonable accommodation

must contact the Administrative Office (253-538-6400) at least 48 hours in advance of their visit.

XI. EXCEPTIONS AND AMENDMENTS:

- A. Any exceptions to this policy must be submitted in writing AND signed by the Fire Chief or designee prior to implementation.
- B. The on-duty Company Officer may grant case-by-case exceptions to the access areas or length of visits for visitors to accommodate unique circumstances, operational needs, or emergency conditions. Exceptions may not alter the established visiting hours or override prohibited activities and must be recorded in the visitor log.

XII. ENFORCEMENT

- A. District personnel are responsible for enforcing this policy and ensuring public safety.
- B. Non-compliance by visitors may result in:
 - 1. Immediate removal from District property by Law Enforcement
 - 2. Restrictions on future visits

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