

West Virginia Fire Commission Response to Comments of Specialized Membership 87-11

BACKGROUND

The Fire Marshal has been given authority to promulgate this Rule, pursuant to a statutory shift passed in SB 586, during the 2020 legislative session. The Marshal is proposing a revision to the rule, to bring the rule into compliance with newly passed legislation, in HB 4308, and to perform technical clean up pursuant to SBB 586.

The proposed rule was reviewed, and revisions made, prior to the initial filing with the Secretary of State for comment.

During the public comment period, the Fire Marshal received written comments from one entity, each was considered by the Marshal. The response is outlined as follows

1) Greg Shepard submitted comments stating that the Rule may cause confusion to specialize members being a part of the department and not in the category of auxiliary or administrative members.

Answer: The Commission voted to reject the comments as it is outside the scope of the intent of the rule.

2) Robert Davis submitted a comment asking questions and presenting hypothetical situations.

Answer: The Commission voted to reject the comments as it is outside the scope of the intent of the rule.

Technical clean-up was made to the Rule.

This summarizes the topics upon which comments were made to the West Virginia State Fire Commission on the topic of the proposed rule, Specialized Membership, 87-11.



Fire Commissioner, WV <wvfirecommissioner@wv.gov>

[External] rules and training July 16, 2021

1 message

Loudendale Volunteer <loudendalevolunteerfd@msn.com>
To: "wvfirecommissioner@wv.gov" <wvfirecommissioner@wv.gov>
Cc: Loudendale Volunteer <loudendalevolunteerfd@msn.com>

Fri, Jul 16, 2021 at 12:33 PM

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The only thing I have issues with is people that could joined a volunteer fire department that doesn't have to be firefighter trained what would happen for example if I had 2 firefighters respond to lets say an auto accident and have reported entrapment with the vehicle is on fire (which happen to us last year) are they allowed to fight fire? or do they call for help and wait? I also feel that that the module fire training should be start to finish and when done you are a legal firefighter in state of West Virginia. Another example let's say I have 2 firefighters that respond to a working fire that are trained up to module 3 and they can't fight fire from the inside and half way there they get an update from dispatch saying confirmed entrapment and when they arrived and meet with a frantic parent saying their one year old is up stairs in the back bedroom in their crib now what? do they break the rules and try to save the child try and knock the fire down ? or again call for help and wait? Do you know if they have to wait on someone else to fight the fire what could happen? would the fire department be held liable on to a law suit? and then the fire department would be trashed by everyone possibly? There are many unanswered questions but the biggest is what if I done this or that? would I get in trouble? is it worth it to continue being a volunteer firefighter? What would be their mental status after a call like I referred to early?

I also believe that the fire commission needs to look at the training requirements and hours for Volunteer firefighters it's so hard to get younger people to join a volunteer fire department when you tell them that they have to go though I think it's a 130 hours of training before they get to answer an Emergency call. Most of my firefighters have jobs working 40 hours plus a week how can they get training besides what's done in house? I have meet past firefighters over the years and most of them say they quit because of the training requirements. Now what? I am not against the training but it's the hours and time off work to go and get the required training. I am fortunate to have worked for South Charleston Fire Department and get all the required training because it was job to do so. But again how does someone working 40 hours a week get training? to keep serving their communities? This is just my input on some thoughts.

Thank you
Robert (Bobby) Davis
Chief Loudendale VFD
Capatin SCFD (retired)



Fire Commissioner, WV <wvfirecommissioner@wv.gov>

[EXTERNAL] 87CSR11

1 message

Greg Sheperd <g_sheperd@yahoo.com>
To: wvfirecommissioner@wv.gov

Sat, Jul 17, 2021 at 12:24 AM

Related to 'special function' members...I believe that there would be 2 primary categories: EMS and Administrative.

For fire departments that run ambulances or serve as medical first response agency, ANY properly certified Medical (only) responder would be subject to additional administrative overhead and delayed approval of department membership by this rule. As such there would be harm caused in those cases by its adoption.

For fire departments that have non firefighting members as administrative officers (ie: president, secretary, treasurer, or fundraiser) this rule would also be burdensome...as what certification would be acceptable to hold those offices? - regardless of the answer, the application must be filled out, submitted, received, voted on at meeting, and then have notification sent out regarding the decision made...all after the same process has happened at the local level. In the mean time a vacancy in that position or delay in the ability to utilize the skills would exist. Many fire departments are now reaching out to their communities for members to fill these administrative roles so that firefighters can focus on firefighting. This rule would complicate and delay the process of bringing such a person on board -potentially causing the administrative volunteer to disengage - causing harm to the department overall.

What certification do you require of a department corporate secretary that does not run calls? (Or President or Vice President, or trustee, bingo caller, etc.)

Is the fire commission prepared to handle and grant these requests in a swift fashion by meeting more often?

The worst thing you can do when asking for volunteers is to tell them they have to hurry up and wait before they can help. Many at that point will walk out the door, since they would not be permitted to step up when they are willing and able.

Is there a legal reason departments are not able to have 'special function' members as they have been doing to this point without this legislative rule?

That is why many already have membership categories such as 'social' , 'auxiliary' 'retired' 'administrative' 'fundraising' etc.

This comment authored and sent by:
Gregory G. Sheperd
Sent from my iPhone