

# *La Crosse County Fire Officers Association*



## *Explorer Post Manual & Signature Pages*

Updated September 10, 2021

Welcome to the La Crosse County Fire Officers Explorer Program! This program provides exciting activities and mentorship for youth looking to discover their future.

The following guidelines are put into place to protect the Student Explorer and the La Crosse County Fire Officers' Fire Department personnel, and the Fire and EMS Departments

It is important that all Explorers and their parent(s) or guardian(s) read and follow the guidelines in this manual. Student Explorer and parental or guardian permission and agreement to abide by these guidelines must be indicated by signatures at the end of this manual. In addition, the release of information and the waiver need to be signed to participate in the program

Please give careful consideration to each guideline and discuss with your parent, guardian, or advisor before signing the Fire EMS Exploring Signatures Document pages. By signing, you are making a commitment to yourself, to the post, and to your community.

Any problems or questions should be brought to the post advisor's attention immediately.

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## CHAPTER 1 PROGRAM GUIDELINES & POST MANUAL

### 1.1 THE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Fire and Emergency Services Exploring Program Guidelines are published by Learning for Life and Exploring.org and must be followed.

See these Fire EMS Program Guidelines in ATTACHMENT 1.

### 1.2 THE POST MANUAL

This Post Manual is the official publication of Fire EMS Explorer Post #134, sponsored by the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association. This manual contains the policies, procedures, and regulations related to Explorer Post #134. These policies, procedures, and regulations are established to direct all explorers and adult leaders in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Nothing in this manual shall conflict in any way with policies of the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association, Wisconsin Law, or regulations of the Boy Scouts of America or the Learning for Life organization.

Definitions:

Shall, Will, Must - These are required actions.

Should, Can, May - These are suggested actions, not required.

Manual - Refers to this document containing policies whether in electronic or hardcopy form.

## CHAPTER 2 MISSION

### 2.1 LA CROSSE COUNTY FIRE OFFICER ASSOCIATION MISSION FOR EXPLORING

The mission of Fire EMS Exploring is:

- To provide area youth with a better understanding of Fire and Emergency Management Services (EMS), its functions and responsibilities, to various aspects of the fire service while developing character, citizenship, and responsibility.
- To provide information and exploration of Fire EMS careers and prepare participants for a path to a career in a Fire Department.

### 2.2 FIRE EMS CODE OF ETHICS

The La Crosse County Fire Officers Association requires its officers to adhere to the Firefighter Code of Ethics. Explorers should familiarize themselves with these standards as well. A copy of the Code of Ethics is found at the end of this manual (ATTACHMENT 2).

## CHAPTER 3 APPLICATION AND MEMBERSHIP

### 3.1 REQUIREMENTS:

AGE:	Currently enrolled in high school.
EDUCATION:	Minimum 2.0 academic grade point average prior to and maintained after appointment with good attendance record.
PHYSICAL FITNESS:	Good physical and mental health.
APPROVALS:	Have parent / guardian approval to participate in Explorer activities.
ADDITIONAL RQMTS:	Possess the qualities of honesty, maturity, self-discipline, and initiative. Have a desire to learn. Make a commitment to volunteer time to serve the association and community.

### 3.2 APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Review these requirements.
2. Complete the following:
  1. Complete the BSA Exploring Youth Application and Signature Pages.
  2. Pay Explorer Fee (a scholarship program to offset cost is available upon request.)
  3. Complete the Annual Health and Medical Form (A, B, and C)

### 3.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Attend monthly meetings and training sessions, arriving 10 minutes early so the meeting can begin on time.

It is expected that the Explorer attends 10 out of 15 sessions. If an Explorer cannot attend, they need to communicate that to the Post Advisor as soon as possible before the session. If they do not communicate, it will be marked as “unexcused.” If there are three unexcused absences, a meeting with the Explorer and parent / guardian will be held to discuss their participation status.

### 3.4 OPPORTUNITIES

Assist at local community events such as festivals, and parades.

Participate in Ride-Along Program once basic training requirements are completed.

Participate in state and/or national conferences and competitions.

### 3.5 APPLICANT DISQUALIFICATION OR TERMINATION FACTORS:

Applicants are advised that areas for disqualification from further consideration or termination from program include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Current use of non-prescribed or illegal drugs, or abuse of prescription drugs.
- Any felony conviction, some misdemeanor convictions, to include domestic violence charges.
- Police history - type, frequency, and nature of contacts(s).
- Driving record with a major offense.
- Outside activities, which may be classified as a conflict of interest.
- Revelation of assaultive behavior via background investigation or by the admission of the applicants.
- Repeated unsuccessful completion of any basic training requirement.

## CHAPTER 4 YOUTH PROTECTION

### 4.1 YOUTH PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Adult leaders of Explorer Post #134 will practice Youth Protection Guidelines as directed by Learning for Life/Exploring which include:

- There must be two-deep leadership on all trips and on all activities, which means that there must be at least two adults at every post event and activity when possible.
- There must be no one-on-one contact with explorers. Other explorers or advisors must be present (exception is certified Fire EMS ride-along).
- Respect the privacy of explorers.
- Provide separate accommodations for advisors and explorers and for males and females on overnight trips.
- Ensure proper preparation for activities, especially those with safety risks. Secret organizations are not permitted.
- Appropriate standards for attire should be upheld.
- Proper training, supervision, and monitoring of officers and youth is necessary.

### 4.2 YOUTH PROTECTION TRAINING

All members of the Exploring Post, including advisors, explorers, and adult leaders are required to take the online Exploring Youth Protection Training which can be found at [www.exploring.org](http://www.exploring.org) under Training and Safety. Their training completion certificate should be kept on file with the Exploring Post and with Gateway Area Council Office.

## CHAPTER 5 POST ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND STRUCTURE

### 5.1 LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Leadership of Explorer Post #134 will be provided by Fire and EMS advisors, volunteer adults, and appointed post officers (from the youth members).

### 5.2 CHARTERED ORGANIZATION AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The responsibilities of the executive officer of the chartered organization include:

- Ensure that all participating adults complete the required Exploring Youth Protection training and Exploring Training.
- Ensure adequate facilities for the participants to meet on a regular schedule with a time and place reserved.
- Ensure resources for the program planning meetings, exploring sessions, and open house.
- Ensure the organization's approval of the Post Manual and Program Guidelines along with legal approval of any additional documents such as waiver and hold harmless documents.
- Participate in at least one evaluation of the program with Learning for Life/BSA representatives each year.

### 5.3 POST ADVISORS

The responsibilities of the post advisors include:

- Foster an environment within the Explorer post to make it a fun, interactive experience that has a true sense of community and that encourages everyone's growth and responsibility to one another.
- Lead the Advisor Team to develop the initial program setup:
  - Program Calendar of Sessions
  - Program Guidelines and Post Manual
  - Application Requirements
  - Ideas to Make Each Session Interactive and Hands-on
  - Open House and Recruitment
- Lead the Advisor Team to develop and execute the Exploring Sessions:
  - Works with the Associate Advisors and Session Instructors to plan out the details for each session (location, communications, materials, photo-taking, follow-up)

- Upholds Safety Guidelines:
  - Upholds the standards and policies of the participating organization and Exploring.
  - Provides the necessary framework for protecting the members of the post from abuse.
  - Ensures that activities are conducted within Learning for Life Safety First Guidelines and requirements.
- Must complete an adult application and submit to a criminal background check.
- Must be 21 years of age or older.
- Must complete the Exploring Advisor training.
- Must complete Youth Protection training every two years.

The post advisors shall be members of the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association. The post advisors will have authority to make operational and administrative decisions for the post. The post advisor may consult with members of the advisory committee on personnel, long- term planning or fundraising matters. The post advisors may also seek advice and consent from individual fire department officers as needed.

#### 5.4 ASSOCIATE ADVISORS

Fire department adults may assist the post advisors in providing two-deep leadership and coverage for female leadership requirements to Explorer Post #134. Adult leaders appointed to assist the post advisors will be designated as associate advisors. In addition, they:

- Must complete an adult application and submit to a criminal background check.
- Must be 21 years of age or older.
- Must complete Youth Protection training every two years.

#### 5.5 SESSION LEADERS

The session leaders provide the following:

- Provide the location for the Exploring Session.
- Provide the needed personnel to conduct the Exploring Session
- Provide hands-on activities for the Exploring Session.
- Provide or coordinate the materials needed.
- Ensure the session is as interactive as possible.
- Must be 21 years of age or older.



## 5.6 PROGRESSION OF EXPLORERS

- First year – Probational Explorer (Grey shirt)
- Second year – Explorer (Navy shirt)
- Third and Fourth Year – Explorer Officer (Red shirt)
  - Lieutenant Explorer
  - Captain Explorer

## 5.7 POSSIBLE CAREER PATH FOR EXPLORERS

A potential career path for explorers could be:

- Exploring Program (9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Fire Academy (offered to Seniors through Onalaska Fire Department)
- Western Technical College Fire EMS program
- Fire Department (starting at 18 years)

## 5.8 POST OFFICERS (YOUTH MEMBERS)

Active participation by youth members as leaders in the post is essential to teaching responsibility and leadership skills. Youth members should be selected to fill leadership positions within the organization.

## CHAPTER 6 POST MEETINGS & TRAINING

### 6.1 POST MEETINGS AND TRAINING

Explorer Post #134 will hold regular meetings at dates, times, and at a location as directed by the post lead advisor. Meetings and hours of operation will be set forth by the advisors. Minimum attendance standards are 70% of the yearly meetings/trainings.

The Post Advisors and/or Associate Advisors along with Post Officers or designee will conduct the meetings in an orderly manner and each meeting will begin with all members reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. All members will be given an equal opportunity to participate in the discussion of post business, and the Post Advisors will have the final authority over the content or agenda of the meetings.

### 6.2 ATTENDANCE

The post advisor or associate advisor will conduct roll call at each meeting and notify the lead post advisor of habitually absent explorers. Explorers who continuously fail to attend post meetings, without acceptable reason will be subject to disciplinary action.

### 6.3 FIRE DEPARTMENT FACILITIES

The use of a Fire Department as a meeting place is a unique privilege offered to Explorer Post #134. All members will take special care of this facility and will not enter any section of the building not authorized by an advisor. Explorers will thoroughly examine the meeting space prior to departure from each meeting and ensure it is in the same condition (leave no trace). Explorers will also keep noise levels to a minimum due to others using the building.

### 6.4 RIDE-ALONGS & TRAINING

In a future year of the program beyond 2021-22, the ride-along program may be established. The requirements, training, and rules will be established at that time. In addition to ride-along training, post advisors may direct training in various subject matters necessary to attain the goals and objectives of Explorer Post #134.

### 6.5 ADVISOR TRAINING

In addition to any training that the Chief of Fire directs, all post advisors will receive training in “Exploring Youth Protection Training” and “Exploring Advisor Training”.

## CHAPTER 7 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

7.1 The official uniform of Explorer Post #134 will be issued by the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association as indicated below and will consist of the following:

### 7.2 CLASS B UNIFORM TO BE WORN TO EACH SESSION & FOR COMMUNITY USE

The Explorer shirt will be provided by the chartered organization. The other parts of the class B uniform should be purchased by the Explorer - a scholarship program to offset cost is available upon request.

SHIRT: Post-issued t-shirt in color to match year in Explorer program (see 5.6)

TROUSERS: Navy blue pants (Explorer purchased).

BELT: (Explorer purchased).

SHOES/BOOTS: Black leather toed boots and will be highly shined (Explorer Purchased).

SOCKS: Black (Explorer Purchased).

### 7.3 BUNKER GEAR

The bunker gear will be provided by the chartered organization.

- Helmet
- Jacket
- Pants
- Boots
- Gloves
- Hoods

### 7.4 UNIFORM USE

Explorers' uniforms will be issued by the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association as indicated above. Explorers will wear the proper and complete uniform in the prescribed manner. The bunker gear will be kept by the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association and transported to the designated fire house based on the session schedule. Members will not wear their post uniform except as part of official post activities. Any exceptions must be approved by the post advisor.

### 7.5 UNIFORM MAINTENANCE

Explorers will maintain their shirt uniforms in good condition (clean and pressed).

## 7.6 UNIFORM RESTRICTIONS

A. Explorers shall not wear their uniform at any time while not participating in Exploring Post activities, nor shall they display any uniform item or equipment in an unauthorized manner. The uniform may be worn when the Explorer is in their official capacity while in route to/from the fire department in order to participate in an event.

B. No unauthorized uniform apparel or equipment shall be worn or carried by Exploring members.

D. Exploring uniform/equipment shall not be used for any private purposes.

E. All uniforms/equipment issued to Explorers is property of the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association. Any intentional damage/theft of equipment may result in criminal charges against Explorers.

F. Upon completion of the Exploring Post, or for any reason his/her connection with the Post is severed, he/she shall immediately turn in all Unit and Departmental property which may be in his/her possession.

## 7.7 EQUIPMENT

Explorers shall carry only that equipment which is authorized by the explorer post.

## 7.8 DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT

Explorers will utilize fire department equipment only for its intended purpose, in accordance with established procedures, and under the supervision of fire department personnel.

## 7.9 DAMAGED, INOPERATIVE EQUIPMENT

Explorers will immediately report any damage of equipment or bunker gear assigned to them to a post advisor or associate advisor of the fire department. In addition, explorers will report any inoperative, defective, or hazardous equipment which comes to their attention.

## 7.10 LOSS OR DAMAGE

Losing or damaging explorer post or fire department equipment through negligence, carelessness or improper use will be grounds for disciplinary action. The explorer responsible for such loss or damage may be charged for the property in question or face other disciplinary action.

## 7.11 RETURN OF EQUIPMENT

Upon leaving the program or when otherwise directed, explorers will return all explorer uniforms and equipment assigned to them. The uniforms should be cleaned and on a hanger.

## CHAPTER 8 RULES OF CONDUCT

First, and most importantly, an Explorer will never take the place of a regular trained firefighter.

### 8.1 CONDUCT

Explorers should remember that they are at all times a reflection upon the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association, Explorer Post #134, and the Fire EMS profession. They should act accordingly so as not to bring discredit to any of these related organizations or themselves. Misconduct by explorers cannot be tolerated because it erodes public trust and can endanger members of the public, or members of the department.

### 8.2 ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

As directed, explorers will perform their assigned responsibilities to the best of their ability and in accordance with established directives in this manual.

### 8.3 REPORTING FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Explorers will report for assignments on time and will be physically and mentally fit to perform. They will be properly equipped and will make themselves aware of information necessary for proper performance.

### 8.4 REPORTING LATE / ILLNESS

If due to an illness or other circumstances, an explorer will be late or cannot attend a function at the assigned time, he/she will contact a post advisor or post officer to explain the reason so that other arrangements can be made.

### 8.5 HEALTH / PHYSICAL FITNESS

Explorers should maintain a level of physical fitness which will allow them to perform Explorer functions effectively. Advisors shall be notified of any health problems a member might have that would limit his/her activities in the post. Physical disabilities will not be cause for denial of membership to any applicant, but safety concerns may dictate restricting certain activities such as ride-along. Such restrictions will be at the discretion of the post advisor and or the advisory committee.

### 8.6 INJURIES

Any injury suffered by an explorer during a post related activity, regardless of its severity, shall be reported immediately to the Post Advisor or other adult leader.

## 8.7 PUBLIC CONTACT

Explorers will, at all times, be courteous to the public. They will be orderly, attentive, and will exercise patience and discretion in dealing with the public. The explorer post will not tolerate any discourtesy toward the public by Post members.

## 8.8 COMPLIANCE WITH ORDERS

Explorers will promptly obey any lawful orders of a superior post officer, advisor or member of the fire department. Any explorer who refuses to obey a lawful order will be considered insubordinate and subject to disciplinary action.

## 8.9 CONFLICT OF ORDERS

Any conflicting orders given to explorers by their superiors should be brought to the attention of the post advisor, who will review the matter and make an appropriate decision. When such conflicts occur, the explorer will follow the last order given until the conflict is resolved.

## 8.10 PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Explorers will not make any statements on behalf of the Department activities for publication or broadcast, concerning plans, philosophy or procedures unless authorized to do so. Questions to explorers from members of the public about fire policies and procedures should be directed to the appropriate fire personnel.

## 8.11 PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Explorers will maintain a neat and clean appearance. They will keep their hair neat and clean cut. Proper hygiene will be practiced by explorers. The post advisor will make the final decision as to whether or not a haircut is acceptable. A clean, conservative appearance will be the guideline.

## 8.12 FACIAL HAIR AND TATTOOS

A. Male explorers will be clean shaven when engaged in Explorer related activities. Mustaches must be neatly trimmed and cannot extend over the top lip or out further than the corners of the mouth. Goatees and beards are not permissible.

B. Tattoos, brands and scarification: Tattoos, body art, or brands that are extremist, indecent, sexist, racist, offensive, or inappropriate for the Fire EMS community are prohibited, regardless of location on the body. The final decision on the interpretation of a tattoo is determined by the Chief's designee. An Explorer shall not have any tattoos, body art, or branding on the head, face, neck, scalp, or hands, unless authorized by the Chief because of special circumstances. While on post, tattoo's, body art, or brandings shall not be exposed or visible (including through the uniform). Arm sleeves may be worn with short sleeve shirts to cover up tattoos as long as they are flesh toned.

### 8.13 JEWELRY AND BODY PIERCINGS

Male explorers will not wear earrings while wearing the Explorer uniform. No Explorer will wear bracelets or an excessive number of rings while in uniform. Jewelry can take away from the professional appearance of a uniform and some jewelry can present a risk of injury in certain situations. Body piercing and jewelry on the tongue, neck, face, or head or any other area exposed when wearing an Explorer uniform is prohibited. This does not include ear piercing as long as they are modest in appearance and not hoop style or other design that can be easily torn from the ear.

### 8.14 GRATUITIES / PRIVILEGES

Explorers will not directly or indirectly solicit or accept any gratuities. A gratuity is defined as a gift or reward, usually of money, for services rendered. This does not apply to official fundraising efforts sponsored by the post. Explorers will not use their post membership or identification cards to obtain privileges not otherwise available to them. Explorers will not accept rewards or compensation resulting from performance of their assigned duties.

### 8.15 VERBAL ABUSE / HARASSMENT

Explorers will not verbally abuse or otherwise harass their post officers, fellow explorers, advisors, or members of the community. Foul language by post members, while in public or engaged in post activities, will not be tolerated.

### 8.16 FRATERNIZATION

The La Crosse County Fire Officers Association does not condone and will not permit fraternization between Explorers and their adult leaders or other affiliated adults. This applies to all youth members regardless of local or state laws related to age of consent. Fraternization is not morally appropriate, nor is it in keeping with the relationship between youth members and adult leaders. Fraternization is defined as the development of a close, friendly, relationship outside of one's professional duties.

### 8.17 CRIMINAL CONDUCT

Explorers will obey all laws of the United States, the state of Wisconsin, and local ordinances. Violation of any law will be grounds for disciplinary action against an explorer, in addition to any penalties resulting from a legal proceeding.

### 8.19 DRUGS AND MEDICATIONS

Explorers will not have in their possession any controlled substances except when legally prescribed by a physician. When an explorer is taking medication, and when such medication could affect performance of an assignment, the explorer will notify an advisor.

#### 8.19 USE OF TABACCO

Explorers over the age of 18 will not use smokeless tobacco, smoke cigars, cigarettes, or e-cigarettes while in uniform or during official post functions.

#### 8.20 CONFIDENTIALITY

Explorers shall treat official business of the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association as confidential. Explorers who have knowledge of ongoing fire investigations will not divulge such information. Explorers will not remove or copy any official record or report from a fire facility. Explorers will protect the privacy of persons he/she comes in contact with during ride-alongs or other fire related assignments.

#### 8.21 LIMITATIONS

Explorers should realize that they have no fire powers. They are volunteers and should never take any enforcement action. Explorers who in any way attempt to identify themselves as being a Fire EMS officer will be expelled from the post and possibly face criminal charges.

#### 8.22 IMPROPER ASSOCIATION

Members shall avoid association with persons whom they know are under criminal investigation or who are known to that member to have a reputation in the community or the fire department for involvement in illegal or other inappropriate behavior. An exception to this is when association is unavoidable due to family relationships.

#### 8.23 SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY

Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of Title VII (Federal Law). It is also a violation of Wisconsin Statutes 111.36 (b). Sexual Harassment, either verbal or physical, is unlawful practice and will not be tolerated by the La Crosse Fire Exploring Post, the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association, or the City of La Crosse.

A. Definition – Sexual Harassment is defined as:

i. “Unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature include but not limited to deliberate, repeated making of unsolicited gestures or comments, or the deliberate, repeated display of offensive sexually graphic material which is not necessary for business purposes.”

ii. “Engaging in sexual harassment; or implicitly or explicitly making or permitting acquiescence in or submission to sexual harassment the term or condition of participation or the



basis of any part the basis for any promotion decision affecting an Explorer; or permitting sexual harassment to substantially interfere with an Explorer's work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, work environment.”

B. Procedures

i. Any and all concerns which any Explorer may have, related to this issue, should be brought immediately to the attention of the advisor or any member of the Board with whom they are comfortable. The rights of the Explorer to raise such issues are protected under Title VII and Wisconsin Statutes.

C. Penalty

i. Any and all Explorers, who engage in such prohibited behavior, will subject themselves to disciplinary action up to and including termination from the La Crosse Fire Exploring Post. Criminal charges may be incurred if the investigation proves that it is warranted.

D. Retaliation Prohibited

i. The Exploring Post takes all complaints seriously and, as such, will take prompt action to investigate the above described complaint in a fair, impartial manner. Confidentiality will be maintained to the highest extent possible. Any incidence or retaliation due to the filing of this complaint will not be tolerated and should be reported to the advisor officer immediately.

8.24 DISCIPLINE

a. The Executive Board has the authority to reprimand an Explorer member for an unjustified or unreasonable absence as long as the reprimand is approved by the Post Executive designee.

b. The Executive Board has the authority to reprimand or discipline an Explorer member for any violation of the Unit's principles, any articles or section of the Unit's Constitution, By-Laws, General Orders and Procedures, Ordinance, State, or Federal law.

## CHAPTER 9 GUIDELINES FOR CELL PHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

### 9.1 CELL PHONES / SMART PHONES

Cell phones / smart phones should not be used during Exploring meetings and training unless specifically allowed by the Post Advisor or Assistant Advisor.

### 9.2 SOCIAL MEDIA BACKGROUND

Social media is starting to be a critical way to reach young people, enhance communication, and promote education and positive youth development outcomes. However, the use of social media entails certain risks, some common to face-to-face interaction, while others are unique to this networked public space.

### 9.3 SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Exploring Post Members including Advisors, Adult Leaders and Explorers SHALL:

1. Be smart about what you publish. Once something is posted, it exists online forever. Ask yourself, "Would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or ten years from now?" If the answer is "no," do not publish.
2. Encourage others to engage in positive interactions on social media. If you are concerned about any Post Member's use of social media, please bring your concerns to the attention of the Post Advisor.

Exploring Post Members including Advisors, Adult Leaders and Explorers SHALL NOT:

1. Do not post content that would harm the post or a post member or damage the post's reputation. Remember that even while you are on your own personal time, you are a representative of the post, and people may interpret your online postings or social interactions as though they were official post statements.
2. Do not attempt to gain access to areas, information, servers, domains, or other material to which expressed permission has not been given. Also, at no time will post members or adult volunteers intentionally violate the laws governing copyrighted material.
3. Do not harass or cyberbully others using technology. Harassment by e-mail, chats, or otherwise shall NOT be tolerated.
4. Do not transmit, post, or willingly receive correspondence, text, graphics, movies, sounds, or other media which contains profanity, advocacy of the use or possession of illegal substances or alcoholic beverages, advocacy of the illegal use or the illegal possession of weapons, or solicitation or the advocacy of sexual misconduct.
5. Do not misrepresent or assist someone else in misrepresenting his or her identity to others through technology. Members or adult volunteers will not claim to be or represent themselves as being someone else.

## ATTACHMENT 1

### FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES EXPLORING PROGRAM POLICIES

#### 1 Safety Issues

There are some issues and hazards specific to Fire and Emergency Services Explorer programs that must be considered when organizing a post. These issues are fairly unique compared with other types of Explorer posts, being a direct result of the post's affiliation with the department and the potential for hazards.

Before engaging in any training activity or direct operational activities with the department, Exploring and/or department officials should investigate the legalities of Explorers participating in such activities. Most states have child labor laws that define what minors under the age of 18 may and may not participate in. Even though the individual may not be an actual member or employee of the department, these regulations may still apply. The following is a general list of guidelines that should be used for the formation of a post Explorer safety policy. As with any program, extremes of temperature, humidity, and other atmospheric conditions should be considered during any activity.

One issue that requires particular attention is what the Fire and Emergency Services Explorer will be allowed to do at the emergency scene. Many departments allow Explorers to respond on the apparatus with trained personnel. A solid policy must be established as to what the Explorer may and may not do once he or she arrives on the scene.

All policies must fit with departmental regulations, Learning for Life regulations, and state laws. All of these issues should be resolved in the post bylaws before Fire and Emergency Services Explorer activities begin. If you have any questions about the safety of an activity not listed, contact your local Learning for Life office.

- Explorers may not be substituted for trained personnel.
- Explorers must be equipped with personal protective equipment that is appropriate for the activity being done.
- Explorers may be mobilized only as a post, with required leadership. Explorers are not on call as individuals.
- Explorers who ride on apparatus or other department vehicles must be seated and must wear a seat belt.
- Explorers may not drive department vehicles.
- Explorers may not climb aerial ladders.
- Explorers may not climb ground ladders that exceed 35 feet in length, or not supported against a structure.
- Explorers may not enter or perform ventilation procedures on a burning structure.
- Explorers may not use any tools or gloves on energized electrical equipment.
- Explorers may not operate cutting torches.
- Explorers, 16 years of age or older, may operate hydraulic rescue tools or equipment. (see policy)

**Exceptions:** Using an official training facility, the use of aerial ladders with the appropriate safety equipment and entering a controlled burn building is approved.

## **2. Policy Statement on Blood-borne Pathogens**

Questions have been raised regarding the position of Learning for Life on OSHA's Regulation for Blood-borne Pathogens (29 CFR Section 1910.1030) as it relates to Exploring adult volunteers, youth members, and participating organizations.

This position statement is for those individuals who may be exposed to blood and body fluids; specifically, members of posts with specialties in medicine, fire rescue, law enforcement, etc.

- I. The OSHA rules apply only to employees in jobs that involve "occupational exposure" to blood-borne pathogens. They do not apply to situations or posts involving volunteers.
  
- II. However, we recommend the following in instances where youth and/or adults may be exposed to blood or body fluids.
  - a. The participating organization and its leaders should always explain and make clear the possible degree of exposure to blood or body fluids as a result of Exploring activities.
  - b. As a precaution, adult volunteers and youth members should consider getting a hepatitis B vaccination. The cost of the shots will not be borne by Learning for Life, nor is the participating organization required to underwrite the cost.
  - c. However, the participating organization may arrange to have hepatitis B vaccinations given at a reduced rate or free of charge.
  - d. If vaccination is recommended, any adult volunteers and youth members who decline the shots, either at the full cost to them, at a reduced rate, or free, should sign the refusal waiver (which you may download from Exploring.org). A declination file must be maintained for five years.

### **III. Learning for Life also recommends the following:**

Treat all blood as if it were contaminated with blood-borne viruses. Do not use bare hands to stop bleeding; always use a protective barrier. Always wash exposed skin areas with hot water and soap immediately after treating the victim. The following pieces of equipment are to be included in all first aid kits and used when rendering first aid to those in need:

- a. Latex or vinyl gloves, to be used when bleeding is being stopped or wounds are being dressed.
- b. A mouth-barrier device, for rendering rescue breathing or CPR.
- c. Plastic goggles or other eye protection, to prevent a victim's blood from getting into rescuers' eyes in the event of serious arterial bleeding.
- d. Antiseptic, for use in sterilizing or cleaning exposed skin areas, particularly if no soap or water is available.

## **3 Safety First Guidelines**

[http://www.exploring.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/LFL-safety-first-guidelines-3.21.17\\_8.pdf](http://www.exploring.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/LFL-safety-first-guidelines-3.21.17_8.pdf)

## ATTACHMENT 2

### Firefighter Code of Ethics

I understand that I have the responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of the fire service. Therefore, I pledge the following...

- Always conduct myself, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively on myself, my department and the fire service in general.
- Accept responsibility for my actions and for the consequences of my actions.
- Support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.
- Avoid situations that would adversely affect the credibility or public perception of the fire service profession.
- Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.
- Conduct my personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the performance of my duties or bring discredit to my organization.
- Be respectful and conscious of each member's safety and welfare.
- Recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment and that these are protected from misuse and theft.
- Exercise professionalism, competence, respect and loyalty in the performance of my duties and use information, confidential or otherwise, gained by virtue of my position, only to benefit those I am entrusted to serve.
- Avoid financial investments, outside employment, outside business interests or activities that conflict with or are enhanced by my official position or have the potential to create the perception of impropriety.
- Never propose or accept personal rewards, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honors or gifts that may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.
- Never engage in activities involving alcohol or other substance use or abuse that can impair my mental state or the performance of my duties and compromise safety.
- Never discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition or handicap.
- Never harass, intimidate or threaten fellow members of the service or the public and stop or report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors.
- Responsibly use social networking, electronic communications, or other media technology opportunities in a manner that does not discredit, dishonor or embarrass my organization, the fire service and the public. I also understand that failure to resolve or report inappropriate use of this media equates to condoning this behavior.

## SIGNATURES

### AGREEMENT TO MANUAL GUIDELINES

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the Explorer requesting membership, has read and agree to the La Crosse County Fire Officers Explorer Program Manual Guidelines for the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association Explorer program. I understand that firefighting by nature is a hazardous duty, and these guidelines are written to protect the firefighters and the Explorer group. They must be always obeyed by all members, including myself. Failure for me to follow these procedures or the directions given by the program leaders, or department officers or firefighters may result in my expulsion from the program.

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to the above Manual Guidelines for the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association Explorer Program. I understand that firefighting by nature is a hazardous duty, and these guidelines are written to protect the firefighters and the Explorer group. They must be always obeyed by all members. I hereby give permission for my son/daughter to participate in this program and give permission in the event of an emergency for treatment of my son/daughter.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parental Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

## SIGNATURES

### RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I, the undersigned, hereby empower any employee of the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association to obtain any records and information concerning the enumerated items below, reference to my application for the Fire EMS Exploring Program.

I hereby release any individual or institution, including its Firefighters, Employees, or Related Personnel, both individually and collectively, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind, which may at any time result from/to me, my heirs, family or associates because of compliance with this authorization and request to release information or any attempt to comply within. I understand that the results are confidential, and I do not have access to them, as the information is obtained from sources in confidentiality.

1. From Fire or EMS Departments.
2. From Current or Past Employers.
3. From Schools and Learning Institutions.
4. From Medical, Physical, Mental Offices, Clinics, Hospitals, Treatment Facilities, or other institutions engaged in such services.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURES

WAIVER OF LIABILITY, RELEASE OF CLAIMS, AND INDEMNIFICATION

In consideration for admission into the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association Explorers Program and permission to engage in La Crosse County Fire Officers Association Explorer activities which further my or my child’s education and knowledge of fire and emergency services activities.

I, the undersigned, hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association, its officials, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers from any and all claims, injuries, or damages of any nature, sustained to my person or property which occur as a result of my, or my child’s involvement in the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association Explorer activities including damage or injuries which occur while I or my child are accompanying members of the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association as they conduct their official duties.

I further release and waive any and all claims and causes of action, including but not limited to actions based on negligence, which may arise against the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association, its officials, officers, employees, agents and volunteers, as a result of any injury to my or my child’s person or property which occur as a result of or during my or my child’s involvement in the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association Exploring activities or while I or my child are accompanying members of the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association during their official duties.

I further agree for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, to defend and indemnify the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association, its officials, officers, employees, agents and volunteers, their sureties against any and all actions, suits, debts, claims, demands, damages, liability, or expenses of any kind incurred or arising by reason of any actual or claimed negligence or wrongful act or omission of mine or my child’s while accompanying any La Crosse County Fire Officers Association official, firefighter, employee, agent, and volunteers, or while engaging in any La Crosse County Fire Officers Association Explorer activity.

All parties signing below endorse the preceding three paragraphs as their own and represent that the waiver of liability, release of claims, and indemnification is entered into a knowing and intelligent manner and pursuant to his or her free will.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_