	Document Title:	Document ID: POL001
	Development and Administration of Fire Department Policies and Standard Operating Guidelines	Author: SOG Committee
		Issue Date: 07/20/2015
		Revision Date:
		Approved By: PL1 K. Toner

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1. Purpose


It is the intent of the Plainville Fire Department (PFD) to establish, in writing, a series of Policies and Guidelines within which the members of the Plainville Fire Department shall operate. It is intended that these guidelines will provide internal consistency in methods of operation, but when and where appropriate not limit the judgment of Plainville Fire Department Officers while operating within the principles established by these policies and guidelines.

It is the purpose of this specific policy to establish a process and define the necessary resources for the preparation, development, review, and revision of written guidelines and policies for the operation of the Plainville Fire Department.

2. Scope and Application

The Chief Officers of the Plainville Fire Department have the authority and responsibility to establish policies and guidelines for the administration and operation of the fire department. For a Policy or Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) to become effective it must be approved by the Chief of the Plainville Fire Department. All Officers and members of the Plainville Fire Department are expected to read, understand, and comply fully with the PFD Policies and Standard Operating Guidelines.


This policy defines the process and methods for the preparation, development, review, and revision of the Plainville Fire Department guidelines and policies.

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3. Definitions

The definitions in this section apply to this SOG, as well as all other Plainville Fire Department policies, guidelines and procedures within which the members of the Plainville Fire Department shall operate.

Directive	Directives are written orders issued by the Fire Chief. Directives may be issued to direct, standardize, or clarify an operation or procedure in the short term and may modify or evolve into a Policy or Standard Operating Guideline. Directives will always identify the period for which they are in effect - i.e. 30 days, until replaced by policy, until further notice, etc.
Form	A form is a specific type of document, in digital or print format, that is designed and intended for the purpose of capturing and recording information. Forms are standardized and revision controlled, and are typically required by and developed for specific Policies, SOGs, Rules, Regulations, and Standards. Where forms are required by a PFD document, they will always be listed in the Table of References section in the Policy, SOG, or Procedure.
Policy	Policies provide clear and formal definition of what is expected in certain situations. Policies are strategic in nature, and are intended to provide clearly defined boundaries or parameters within which judgments and decisions are made. Policies are expected to be complied with in all circumstances, and may only be amended on a temporary basis by a Directive.
Procedure	Procedures provide specific direction and instruction on how to comply with a Policy, Rule, or Regulation. Typically, procedures are intended to be followed as documented, within the criteria provided in the procedure. For example, a procedure for SCBA inspection is intended to be followed precisely and consistently.
Rules and/or Regulations	Rules and regulations implement a law, ordinance or regulation that has been enacted by a federal, state, or local agency. Examples include the ordinances, rules and regulations of the Town of Plainville, and the regulations of the Connecticut Department of Labor. Directives, Policies, and Standard Operating Guidelines may be implemented to assure compliance with rules and regulations.

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**Standard
(National
Consensus
Standard)**

A National Consensus Standard is defined as a standard that is developed by the same persons it affects, and then is adopted by a nationally recognized organization. A consensus standard is not a regulatory document; however, in certain circumstances consensus standards may be adopted in whole or in part in statutes and regulations. In these cases, compliance with the adopted portion of the consensus standard would be required and enforceable by law. There are numerous national and international organizations that develop consensus standards; for example, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has developed many consensus standards utilized within the fire service.

**Standard Operating
Guideline (SOG)**

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) are tactical in nature, and provide documented guidance for a designated topic or action. This guidance is aimed at ensuring that PFD operations are consistent, safely conducted and effective in achieving the established objectives.

A Standard Operating Guideline is not intended to limit the capability or responsibility of the PFD to adapt to unusual circumstances. Rather, they are intended to help provide a safe, consistent, and organized effort and to help define the expectations of the fire department personnel. The SOGs are expected to be employed at all appropriate scenes and situations. When situations do arise that require a temporary deviation from the SOGs, PFD Officers are expected to use their knowledge and experience to choose an alternative or variant course of action, and then be able to explain the decision following the incident or situation. As appropriate, SOGs may be revised to address situations or conditions that have resulted in the need for an alternative or variant course of action.

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4. Policies and Guidelines Committee

To facilitate the implementation and maintenance of this policy, a permanent Policies and Guidelines Committee has been established consisting of the following positions:

- 1st Assistant Chief
- Captain
- 1st Lieutenant (as appointed by the Policies and Guidelines Committee Chair)
- Lieutenant(s)
- Safety Officer(s)

Plainville Fire Department members serving in the positions listed above shall assume a member role on the Policies and Guidelines Committee upon assignment to the above listed positions. For the sake of continuity and transition efficiency, and upon approval of the Fire Chief, any active member vacating a Policies and Guidelines Committee member position may continue as an ad-hoc member of the committee until any assigned tasks (including any document revisions and reviews) have been completed to the satisfaction of the committee.

From time to time the Chief may appoint additional individuals or groups, in coordination with the permanent Policies and Guidelines Committee to develop, review, or revise specific policies, procedures, and SOGs in accordance with this policy.

The Policies and Guidelines Committee shall be chaired by the 1st Assistant Chief, and co-chaired by the Captain. A secretary shall be selected by the committee to record committee meeting attendance, minutes and assigned tasks.

Policies and Guidelines Committee meetings are intended to be collaborative work sessions, and therefore are not typically open to non-committee members. However, the committee may invite any of the Chief Officers, Officers, or other Fire Department members to a committee meeting from time to time for collaborative input on specific topics.

Records of scheduled meetings, attendance, and minutes shall be documented and maintained by the Policies and Guidelines Committee secretary, and made available to committee members and Chief Officers.


5. Document Structure and Control

This section defines the means to serially identify PFD documents, standardize the document organization, and control the release and revision. Further definition of the document types included in this section can be found in Section 3.

Serial Identification of Documents:

PFD documents shall be assigned a unique, sequential serial identification following this format:

- Policy: POL prefix, followed by sequential three digit number (example: POL001)
- Standard Operating Guideline: SOG prefix, followed by sequential three digit number (example: SOG002)
- Procedure: PRO prefix, followed by sequential three digit number (example: PRO003)
- Directive: DIR prefix, followed by sequential three digit number (example: DIR004)
- Form: FOR prefix, followed by sequential three digit number (example: FOR005)

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The Policies and Guidelines Committee shall maintain a master list of controlled documents assigned a serial identification number. This master list will also include:

- Document name,
- Author,
- Location of the original or controlled version of the document,
- Initial document release date,
- Last review or revision date and name of reviewer or reviser,
- Chief Officer review and approval date and name of the approving Chief Officer.

Standard document organization for Policies and Guidelines:

PFD policy and guideline documents should be organized in a standardized manner to assure proper sequence of the content, improve readability, and provide a consistent appearance. While at times there may be a need to modify this organization, the following ordered sequence of document sections should be followed as a general rule:

- **Table of contents**, listing each major section heading and any appendices.
- **Purpose**, briefly defining the purpose or reason the document has been developed.
- **Scope and Application**, defining who the document applies to, what situations, where (if applicable), and how the policy or guideline is applied.
- **Definitions** of document-specific terms and any document-specific abbreviations.
- **Topic-specific technical and administrative content**, in as many major sections as necessary
- **Communication and Training**, explaining how the content of the policy or guideline will be disseminated
- **Table of References**, listing all documents, rules, regulations, and standards referenced within the topic-specific content sections.
- **Table of Revisions**, listing all revisions along with a very brief description.


The Policies and Guidelines Committee shall maintain a standard template for policy and guideline documents for use by document authors as new documents are developed, or existing documents are substantially revised.

Review and Approval of Documents:

Upon review and final draft of an initial or revised document by the Policies and Guidelines Committee, the committee chair or co-chair will forward the document accepted by the committee to the Fire Chief for review, comment, and approval. The Fire Chief shall review the document within 30 days, and respond to the committee chair or co-chair with any questions, concerns, or with approval of the document as drafted.

Alternatively, the Fire Chief may request to meet directly with the committee to discuss the drafted document. In this case, the committee chair or co-chair will arrange the meeting and notify the committee members of the meeting agenda.

Once the Fire Chief is satisfied with the draft document, the Chief will sign a printed copy and indicate the intended release or effectivity date. This signed copy will be filed as the initial version of the approved document.

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The Policies and Guidelines Committee shall maintain a revision file for each controlled document for historical reference. This file shall contain the initial approved copy of the document, and a copy of each successive approved revision in sequential order. This serves to provide a permanent and complete record of all revisions over the life of the document.

Master Document Control:

The Policies and Guidelines Committee shall maintain a digital file of the most current and approved version of each controlled document. These files will be maintained in an access-controlled network drive folder. Digital copies of each current and approved document in a non-editable file format may be stored in a network folder or website that is accessible to PFD members.


In addition to digital file access, the Policies and Guidelines Committee shall maintain binders of all current approved policies, guidelines, procedures, and directives. These binders will be available in the following locations:

- PFD Conference Room; for general PFD member access
- PFD Dispatch Office (accessible for use by dispatch personnel only)
- Fire Chief's Office
- Deputy Fire Chief's Office
- 1st Assistant Fire Chief's Office
- 2nd Assistant Fire Chief's Office
- Company Officers' Office

6. Review of Policies and Guidelines

On a regular periodic basis, not less than annually, the Policies and Guidelines Committee will review all PFD policy and guideline documents and determine if any revisions are necessary. If revisions are deemed necessary, a committee member will be assigned to draft the necessary changes to the document.

In addition, a potential need for revision may be identified during training, post-incident debriefings and reviews, internal accident and close-call investigations, internal or external safety inspections/audits, or recommendations or concerns provided to the Policies and Guidelines Committee from any internal or external source. Any committee member receiving information or recognizing a potential need for a policy or SOG creation or revision will notify the committee Chair to add the topic to the next meeting agenda, or at the Chairperson's discretion call a special meeting to discuss the topic.

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7. Communication and Training

This Policy primarily charts the formation of the Policies and Guidelines Committee, and defines the structure and administration of the Plainville Fire Department Policies and Standard Operation Guidelines documentation system. Therefore, this policy shall be reviewed in detail with all PFD personnel upon assignment to the Policies and Guidelines Committee.

The preferred communication and training method for this Policy is an interactive meeting format facilitated by the committee Chair (or designee), where questions and clarifications can be immediately addressed. Attendance shall be recorded, with records maintained by the designated Training Officer.

Secondarily, certain elements of this policy directly affect all PFD personnel; for example, the naming convention of the documents, location of the documents for reference, and the positions assigned membership to the Policies and Guidelines Committee. This policy may be summarized in an interactive meeting format facilitated by the committee Chair (or designee), where questions and clarifications can be immediately addressed from any PFD personnel. Attendance shall be recorded, with records maintained by the designated Training Officer.

8. References

Document ID	Document Name
FOR005	Plainville Fire Department Policy and Guidance Document Master List
FOR006	PFD Policies and Guidelines Committee Meeting Record Form

9. Revisions

Date	Revision Description
07/20/2015	Initial Release