



Town of Georgia
Fire Department Standard
Operating Guidelines

Approved 11 November 2019

Table of Contents

1	Article 1 – General Guidelines.....	1
1.1	Section 1 – Make Up of the Department	1
1.2	Section 2 – Recruitment/Selection/Appointment	1
1.3	Section 3 – Regular Active Employee.....	2
1.4	Section 4 – Driver/Operator Employee.....	2
1.5	Section 5 – Senior Advisors.....	2
2	Article 2 – Officers and Their Responsibilities	3
2.1	Section 1 – Chain of Command	3
2.2	Section 2 – Positions Summary	3
2.3	Section 3 – Responsibilities of Fire Chief	4
2.4	Section 4 – Responsibilities of Assistant Chief(s).....	5
2.5	Section 6 – Responsibilities of Lieutenant(s)	5
2.6	Section 8 – Responsibilities of Treasurer	5
2.7	Section 9 – Responsibilities of Training Officers	6
2.8	Section 10 – Responsibilities of Safety Officer(s).....	6
3	Article 3 – Qualifications for Officers.....	6
3.1	Section 1 – Position of Lieutenant	6
3.2	Section 2 – Position of Captain	7
3.3	Section 3 – Position of Assistant Chief.....	7
3.4	Section 4 – Position of Fire Chief	7
4	Article 4 – General Operating Procedures and Rules of Conduct.....	7
4.1	Section 1 – Procedural Items	7
4.2	Section 2 – Rules of Conduct	8
4.3	Section 3 – Procedures for Handling Alleged Misconduct.....	10
5	Article 5 –Town of Georgia Personnel Policy; Relevance	10
5.1	Section 1 – Town Personnel Policy	10

1 Article 1 – General Guidelines

These Standard Operating Guidelines (“SOGs” or “Guidelines”) govern day-to-day operation of the Town of Georgia Fire Department and have been recommended by the Fire Chief, in consultation with the Fire Department Officers, and approved by majority vote of the Town of Georgia Selectboard. They are to be read in conjunction with the Town of Georgia Personnel Policy, as amended from time to time, and the general laws of the State of Vermont, as set forth in the Vermont Statutes Annotated. In the event of a conflict between these Guidelines and the Town of Georgia Personnel Policy, the Personnel Policy shall govern and control. Further, nothing herein is intended to be in contravention of the laws of the State or of the United States or of constitutional standards. If any provision is deemed to be unenforceable under applicable law, it shall be severed, and the remainder of this document shall continue to exist and be applied to the operation of the Georgia Fire Department.

1.1 Section 1 – Make Up of the Department

- 1.1.1 The Town of Georgia Fire Department shall consist of not more than thirty-five (35) active employees, not including senior advisors, and shall be called the “Georgia Fire Department.”
- 1.1.2 Active employees shall include regular active firefighters and driver/operators, and such other active firefighter categories as the Chief may define. Senior advisors shall be considered inactive firefighters, as further discussed below.
- 1.1.3 This maximum number of thirty-five (35) Fire Department employees shall not be changed without the recommendation of the Fire Chief and approval by the Town of Georgia Selectboard.

1.2 Section 2 – Recruitment/Selection/Appointment

- 1.2.1 Appointment of active employees to the Fire Department shall be open to any resident of the Town of Georgia who is at least eighteen (18) years of age or any individual employed in the Town of Georgia, with his or her employer’s written permission, who is at least eighteen (18) years of age. All prospective fire department employees shall make written application for appointment, with applications submitted to the Fire Chief. All appointments to the Fire Department are subject to approval by the Town of Georgia Selectboard.
- 1.2.2 Fire Department employees are required to serve a 180-day probationary period as required in the Town Personnel Policy and acquire the Vermont State Firefighter I Certification or Certification Reciprocity recognized by the State of Vermont (within three (3) years) before being eligible to become a Regular Active employee. Alternatively, employees may apply to become a Driver/Operator, in which case, with prior approval of the Fire Chief, the employee shall serve a 180-day probationary period and be required to obtain a certificate from the State of Vermont or a Vermont county basic firefighting course during the same probationary period.
- 1.2.3 In certain cases, the 180-day probationary period may be extended by recommendation of the Fire Chief to the Selectboard. The probationary period shall not be less than 180 days.
- 1.2.4 Any Department employee, who is an active member of the Department as of the effective date of these Guidelines, who no longer resides in the Town of Georgia (and is not employed in the Town) and requests to remain on the Department may be exempted from the residency requirement by approval of the Fire Chief, provided that normal drive time from his or her residence to the station does not exceed fifteen (15) minutes.

- 1.2.5 In the event that the Selectboard deems it appropriate to hire a full-time or part-time fire department employee, he or she shall be exempt from the above-referenced residency requirement(s).
- 1.2.6 The Department shall not accept on probationary status more than five (5) individuals at any one time who do not possess an existing Vermont State Firefighter I Certification or Certification of Reciprocity recognized by the State of Vermont or a certificate from the State of Vermont or a Vermont county basic firefighting course. Once this limit is met, no new probationary employees without an acceptable certification shall be allowed and those persons who are interested in joining the Department who do not have the requisite certification may ask to have their names placed on a waiting list. New members may be allowed when the number of people without an acceptable certificate drops below five.

1.3 Section 3 – Regular Active Employee

- 1.3.1 Regular Active employees must possess a valid Vermont State Firefighter I Certification or Certification Reciprocity recognized by the State of Vermont.
- 1.3.2 Regular Active employees must complete all training necessary to maintain their Firefighter I Certification annually.
- 1.3.3 Regular Active employees who fail to comply with 1.3.1 or to meet the training requirements according to 1.3.2 of this section shall be subject to disciplinary action as described in Article 5.
- 1.3.4 An employee out for an extended duration or on leave of absence due to illness or injury shall provide a physician's note or other appropriate medical evidence to commence leave and to return to service. Upon return to service, he or she shall have six (6) months to make-up any missed training requirements.

1.4 Section 4 – Driver/Operator Employee

- 1.4.1 The Fire Department may consist of up to eight (8) Driver/Operator Employees.
- 1.4.2 Driver/Operator Employees shall have all the duties and responsibilities of the Regular Active Employee, except they are not required to possess and maintain Firefighter I Certification.
- 1.4.3 Driver/Operator Employees must be checked off to drive and operate all department apparatus (within (3) years) before being eligible to become a Driver/Operator Employee.
- 1.4.4 Driver/Operator Employees will not participate in interior firefighting operations or any other activity which would expose the employee to conditions considered immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH) such as those which may require use of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Driver/Operator Employees are required to meet the meeting and training requirements of a Regular Active Employee.
- 1.4.5 Driver/Operator Employees are not eligible to hold the rank of Lieutenant, Captain or Chief Officer.

1.5 Section 5 – Senior Advisors

- 1.5.1 The Fire Department may additionally consist of up to ten (10) senior advisor employees. Senior Advisors are those Fire Department employees who meet the requirements set forth below and who, due to their education, training or experience, the Department and Town believe provide a valuable on-going service that does not involve responding to emergency calls.

- 1.5.2 Senior Advisors shall be considered inactive employees. They shall have none of the duties and obligations of active employees except as provided in this section. Senior Advisors shall not be issued firefighter gear, except in the event that a Senior Advisor assists with a training, in which case firefighter gear will be issued, as needed, for the training and then returned.
- 1.5.3 Senior Advisors must have at least twenty (20) years of active service and shall at least have attained the age 55 before becoming eligible to be considered for a position as an advisor.
- 1.5.4 Senior Advisors shall perform those non-emergency duties and functions as are deemed most useful and appropriate by the Fire Chief, in the exercise of his or her discretion. Senior Advisors shall not be required to meet the meeting requirements of an active employee or attend any particular meeting unless their attendance is specifically directed by the Fire Chief. Senior Advisors shall be subject to and comply with the conduct and disciplinary requirements of these Guidelines and the Town Personnel Policy.
- 1.5.5 Appointment of a Senior Advisor employee requires the recommendation of the Fire Chief and approval of the Selectboard.
- 1.5.6 Senior Advisor employees may participate in non-emergency department functions including training, meetings, events and other functions at the discretion of the Fire Chief.

2 Article 2 – Officers and Their Responsibilities

2.1 Section 1 – Chain of Command

- 2.1.1 The Fire Department is a hierarchical department of the Town that shall operate in accordance with principles of chain of command, with ultimate authority over and oversight of the Department in the Selectboard, operational authority in the Fire Chief, and other authority in the Officers and firefighters, according to rank, as outlined herein.
- 2.1.2 The first active employee arriving at the scene of an emergency shall discharge the duties of the Incident Commander until the Fire Chief or ranking Officer on scene arrives and assumes the role of Incident Commander.
- 2.1.3 It is not mandatory that the Fire Chief or ranking Officer on scene relieve a subordinate of his or her duties as Incident Commander if the Fire Chief or ranking Officer deems that the situation is under control and that both the subordinate and Fire Chief or ranking officer are capably and efficiently discharging their duties. However, nothing shall preclude the Fire Chief or ranking Officer from assuming command of the scene at any time.

2.2 Section 2 – Positions Summary

- 2.2.1 The “Officers” shall consist of one chief engineer (“Fire Chief”), one 1st assistant chief engineer (“1st Assistant Fire Chief”), and any number of fire captains as the Selectboard may deem appropriate.
- 2.2.2 Per 24 V.S.A., Section 1953, the Selectboard shall appoint and remove the Officers subject to applicable provisions of the Town Personnel Policy. The Fire chief shall make, and the Selectboard shall consider, recommendations for appointments to the position of 1st Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Captain(s).

- 2.2.3 Per 24 V.S.A., Section 1954, firefighters and other personnel shall be appointed by the Fire Chief, subject to applicable provisions of the Town Personnel Policy. Within the management discretion of the Fire Chief, the duties of some Department personnel may be limited to non-emergency functions such as administrative, clerical, or financial. The Fire Chief may designate other officers, which may include:
- 2.2.3.1 2nd Assistant Chief
 - 2.2.3.2 Lieutenant (as many as deemed necessary)
 - 2.2.3.3 Secretary (one position only)
 - 2.2.3.4 Treasurer (one position only)
 - 2.2.3.5 Training Officers (committee of Captain(s) and Lieutenants)
 - 2.2.3.6 Safety Officer (as many as deemed necessary)
- 2.2.4 Offices with more than one individual sharing the same position shall be ranked first, second, etc.
- 2.2.5 The Fire Chief is precluded from holding the position of Secretary or Treasurer due to the potential conflicts that may arise.

2.3 Section 3 – Responsibilities of Fire Chief

- 2.3.1 The Fire Chief shall have charge of and responsibility for the overall operation of the Fire Department and assure compliance with all relevant Town rules, policies and guidelines as they apply to the Fire Department, as well as all applicable State of Vermont and NFPA codes and statutes.
- 2.3.2 The Fire Chief shall direct firefighting operations, oversee the training of the department employees, manage the Fire Department budget, and see that the personnel and equipment of the Department are adequate and appropriate to meet the needs of the Department and public in the event of fire and/or emergencies.
- 2.3.3 The Fire Chief shall have the power to delegate any portion of his or her responsibilities to any other employee, as he or she deems necessary, but the Chief shall retain overall responsibility for Department operations. Within the scope of his or her responsibility, the Fire Chief shall have the authority to issue any lawful general or specific orders, orally or in writing, to ensure the safe, orderly, effective operation of the Department and its personnel. Whenever possible, general orders shall be reduced to writing. For ease of reference, written general orders of the Fire Chief shall be clear, concise, dated, and maintained in a binder at the Fire Department. Failure to comply with a lawful order of the Fire Chief shall provide a basis for discipline under Article 4, Section 3 and the Town of Georgia Personnel Policy.
- 2.3.4 Subject to the provisions of these Guidelines, the Fire Chief shall assume complete control at fires and emergencies and shall be responsible for summoning aid from outside agencies as he or she deems necessary or required.
- 2.3.5 The Fire Chief shall manage the Department in a manner that preserves order, discipline and efficient operation within the Department. The Fire Chief shall be deemed a “Department Head,” within the meaning of the Town Personnel Policy, shall report directly to the Selectboard or its designee, and shall exercise reasonable managerial discretion, as appropriate.

- 2.3.6 The Fire Chief shall be the official spokesperson for the Department in all matters requiring communication with the press or the public and the representative of the Department at all functions where representation is appropriate, except as otherwise directed by the Town of Georgia Selectboard.
- 2.3.7 The Fire Chief shall assure timely and accurate submittal of time sheets and shall review and recommend for payment or non-payment, as appropriate, all invoices or other requests for reimbursement to the Town Treasurer.

2.4 Section 4 – Responsibilities of Assistant Chief(s)

- 2.4.1 The Assistant Chief(s) shall assist the Fire Chief in performing the duties described in Article 2, Section 2. In the absence of the Fire Chief, the Assistant Chief(s) shall perform the duties and exercise the authority of Fire Chief, according to rank, as outlined in Article 2, Section 2, except that the Assistant Chief(s) shall not have the authority to delay, overrule or contravene a written order of the Fire Chief to be executed in his or her absence. In the event that an Assistant Chief is unclear regarding a written order of the Fire Chief, he or she shall immediately seek clarification thereof.
- 2.4.2 The Assistant Chief(s) shall perform such other duties as are reasonably assigned by the Fire Chief.
- 2.4.3 Section 5 – Responsibilities of Captain(s)
- 2.4.5 The Captain(s) shall assist the Assistant Chief(s) in performing the duties described in Article 2, Section 3. In the absence of the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief(s), the ranking Captain will be charged with the duties as listed in Article 2, Section 3.
- 2.4.6 The Captain(s) shall be part of the training committee and responsible for conducting, assisting or establishing the Fire Department training throughout the year.

2.5 Section 6 – Responsibilities of Lieutenant(s)

- 2.5.1 The Lieutenant(s) shall assist the Captain(s); and, in their absence, the ranking Lieutenant shall perform the duties and exercises the same authority as the Captain as outlined in Article 2, Section 5.
- 2.5.2 The Lieutenant(s) shall be part of the training committee and responsible for conducting, assisting or establishing the Fire Department training throughout the year.
- 2.5.3 Section 7 – Responsibilities of Secretary
- 2.5.5 The Secretary shall keep an accurate and detailed record and roll of department employees.
- 2.5.6 The Secretary shall assist the Officers to carry on department correspondence.
- 2.5.7 The Secretary shall keep the minutes of Department meetings, including attendance at meetings, as well as an accurate record of the names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mails addresses (if applicable) of all employees.
- 2.5.8 The Secretary shall perform such other duties as are reasonably assigned by the Fire Chief.

2.6 Section 8 – Responsibilities of Treasurer

- 2.6.1 The Department Treasurer shall be responsible for the issuing of Department petty cash checks from an approved account at a financial institution, as directed by the Town Treasurer.

- 2.6.2 In the event that the Department Treasurer is unavailable due to absence or disability, the Fire Chief may sign checks as a duly authorized agent of the Department.
- 2.6.3 The Department Treasurer shall make financial and other records promptly available for inspection or audit, as requested by the Fire Chief, the Selectboard or the Town Treasurer.
- 2.6.4 The Department Treasurer shall perform such other duties as are reasonably assigned by the Fire Chief.

2.7 Section 9 – Responsibilities of Training Officers

- 2.7.1 The Training Committee shall consist of the Captain(s) and Lieutenant(s) and who shall collectively be known as the “Training Officers.” The Training Officers shall report directly to the Fire Chief.
- 2.7.2 The Training Officers are responsible for the administration of all training sessions for the Department.
- 2.7.3 The Training Officers shall maintain training records of all individuals within the Department.
- 2.7.4 The Training Officers shall provide community education in fire prevention techniques or appoint one or more qualified Department employee(s) to do so.
- 2.7.5 The Training Officers shall recommend specific courses of study to enable Department employees and others to further their knowledge of fire sciences.
- 2.7.6 The Training Officers shall perform such other duties as are reasonably assigned by the Fire Chief.

2.8 Section 10 – Responsibilities of Safety Officer(s)

- 2.8.1 The Safety Officer(s) shall be appointed by the Fire Chief.
- 2.8.2 The Safety Officer(s) shall oversee the safety of all employees on the scene of an incident or training and make any concerns known to the Incident Commander, Fire Chief or ranking Officer in charge.
- 2.8.3 If no Safety Officer is present at an incident, the ranking Officer in charge may appoint a Fire Department non-probationary employee to perform the duties of the Safety Officer.
- 2.8.4 The Safety Officer(s) shall perform such other duties as are reasonably assigned by the Fire Chief.

3 Article 3 – Qualifications for Officers

To serve in the Officers positions listed below, at least the following qualifications must be met:

3.1 Section 1 – Position of Lieutenant

- 3.1.1 Shall have a minimum of three (3) years of experience while operating at the level of Firefighter I or greater and currently possess a valid Firefighter I certification.
- 3.1.2 Shall have completed the Vermont State Firefighter I Certification or obtained a Certification of Reciprocity recognized by the State of Vermont, at the time in which the Certification of Reciprocity was obtained, along with two (2) other certificate issuing fire-training courses.

3.1.3 Shall be qualified to drive and capable of operating at least one engine and one water tanker safely.

3.2 Section 2 – Position of Captain

3.2.1 Shall have completed the courses required for the position of Lieutenant, as well as one (1) additional certificate issuing fire training course.

3.2.2 Shall have met all the criteria for the position of Lieutenant.

3.3 Section 3 – Position of Assistant Chief

3.3.1 Shall have a minimum of five (5) years of experience while operating at the level of Firefighter I or greater and currently possess a valid Firefighter II certification.

3.3.2 Shall have completed the courses required for the position of Captain, as well as two (2) additional certificate issuing fire-training courses.

3.3.3 Shall be qualified to drive and capable of operating all fire apparatus safely.

3.3.4 Shall be capable of overseeing all fire ground activities.

3.3.5 Shall have met all the criteria for the position of Captain.

3.4 Section 4 – Position of Fire Chief

3.4.1 Shall have a minimum of seven (7) years of experience while operating at the level of Firefighter I or greater and currently possess a valid Firefighter II certification.

3.4.2 Shall have completed the courses required for the position of Assistant Chief, as well as two (2) additional certificate issuing fire-training courses.

3.4.3 Shall have met all the criteria for the position of Assistant Chief.

4 Article 4 – General Operating Procedures and Rules of Conduct

4.1 Section 1 – Procedural Items

4.1.1 The Fire Department personnel will keep the fire station, and all apparatus and equipment belonging to the Department clean, neat, and organized condition and will see that it is always ready for immediate use.

4.1.2 All personnel will return to the station after any operation of the Department to re-service, maintain, clean and organize all apparatus, unless otherwise authorized by the Officer in charge.

4.1.3 Portable fire extinguishers, self-contained breathing apparatuses and similar apparatus or equipment shall be inspected at least monthly by an employee appointed by the Fire Chief. Any unit found to be in deficient or questionable condition shall be removed from service immediately and repaired by qualified individuals.

4.1.4 The Fire Chief or an Assistant Chief shall be promptly notified regarding any deficient or questionable apparatus or equipment and will authorize the repair/replacement of any defective unit without delay.

4.1.5 A record will be kept by the individual performing any maintenance and/or inspection on units identified in Article 4, Section 1, Paragraph 3, indicating the dates of all inspections/maintenance performed.

- 4.1.6 The Fire Chief or Assistant Chief(s) may call one or more additional meetings each month to accomplish any additional needed maintenance, cleaning or organization of the fire station, apparatus or equipment.
- 4.1.7 Each active employee is required to take one (1) certificate issuing fire-training course at the Department's expense every two (2) years.
- 4.1.8 All employees are responsible for maintaining their turn out gear in such a manner that it is clean, neat, organized and available for immediate use when required. Any turnout gear damaged or soiled at an incident or training must be appropriately repaired (or turned in for repair) and/or cleaned immediately following event.
- 4.1.9 Employees on the scene of emergencies shall be properly attired in their complete turn-out gear as provided by the Department, unless otherwise approved by the Fire Chief or ranking Officer in charge. For woodland fires and other incidents or conditions where complete turn-out is ordinarily not appropriate, a minimum of gloves, firefighting or leather work boots, helmet, trousers/jeans and a long sleeve shirt shall be worn. Employees shall wear traffic vests when working on or along a highway, unless actively extricating a patient or fighting a fire.
- 4.1.10 No Fire Department employee shall be allowed to participate in any Fire Department activities unless and until approved by the Fire Chief. Prior to such approval the Fire Chief shall confirm that all required paperwork has been completed and received by the Town Treasurer or Town Administrator, including an executed Town Personnel Policy Receipt form.
- 4.1.11 Officer appointments shall be made (or renewed) by the Fire Chief on an annual basis during the month of February, with such appointments approved by the Selectboard during its organizational meeting following Town Meeting, or on such other date of the Selectboard's choosing. To qualify for consideration, candidates for officer positions shall provide a letter of interest to the Fire Chief on or before February 1st. Interviews shall be conducted jointly by the Fire Chief and the Town Administrator, with the Fire Chief making the final recommendations for appointment to the Selectboard.

4.2 Section 2 – Rules of Conduct

- 4.2.1 Except for special training meetings or other causes deemed necessary by the Fire Chief, all active and probationary employees shall meet at the fire station on the first, second and third Thursdays of each month at 7:00 p.m.
- 4.2.2 If an employee is unable to attend a meeting, a reasonable excuse, such as illness, injury or family or work commitments, shall be given at the earliest convenience to the Fire Chief, by email, @ firechief@townofgeorgia.com who shall cause it to be placed into the record of the meeting as an excused absence. An excused absence shall not be included in calculating the percentage of meetings attended.
- 4.2.3 All employees shall comply with the rules and regulations of the Department, including all lawful orders of the Fire Chief and all directions of the Incident Commander or ranking Officer unless the employee reasonably determines that compliance presents an objectively unreasonable and immediate risk to his or her health or safety and promptly states those concerns to the Fire Chief, Incident Commander or ranking Officer. Non-compliance may result in discipline under Article 5 of these Guidelines or the Town Personnel Policy.

- 4.2.4 Any regular active, driver/operator, or probationary employee absent from nine (9) regular meetings within a twelve (12) month period without satisfactory excuse, such as illness, injury or family or work commitments, provided to the Officers shall be subject to disciplinary action as described in Article 5. (Regular meetings shall be defined as monthly business, maintenance, and training meetings.) The above-mentioned Fire Department employees shall also be subject to disciplinary action, as described in Article 5, for failure to respond to a minimum of 15% of all fire department calls annually.
- 4.2.5 While on duty, all employees shall conduct themselves in a reasonable and professional manner. At no time shall any employee engage in any conduct that is in violation of federal or state anti-discrimination or harassment laws or regulations.
- 4.2.6 If any employee becomes aware of an alleged breach of discipline or other misconduct, he or she shall report the incident to the Fire Chief or an Officer of the Department who shall handle the matter in accordance with Article 5.
- 4.2.7 After each public alarm of fire or emergency, the Department will promptly convene and discuss the operation. If circumstances allow, this discussion will typically occur at the first Fire Department meeting following the event. An opportunity for comments, suggestions and observations regarding the operation shall be provided at this time, subject to reasonable rules of the Fire Chief.
- 4.2.8 While at the scene of an active emergency, no employee of the Department shall openly criticize or disparage another employee or Officer, the efficiency of the operation, or other departments or agencies operating at the scene. Instead, all concerns or observations related to life-safety matters only shall be immediately brought to the attention of the Fire Chief, ranking Officer or Incident Commander.
- 4.2.9 No person(s) who are not employed by the Department or Town shall ride in the apparatus of the Department except during special functions or as deemed necessary due to a reasonable safety concern of the Fire Chief or ranking Officer in charge. Nothing herein shall preclude employees of the Town Highway Department from driving or riding in apparatus in connection with service and maintenance activities.
- 4.2.10 No employee of the Department shall respond to a fire or emergency scene, or drive or operate any fire apparatus of the Department, while under the influence/impairment of alcohol and/or drugs, including prescription and non-prescription substances.
- 4.2.11 Except for training purposes, employees of the Department and Town shall not drive Department vehicles unless fully qualified.
- 4.2.12 Employees shall not drive Department vehicles unless they possess a valid driver's license, including all required driver's license certifications, and are at least eighteen (18) years of age, unless otherwise authorized by the Town or Fire Chief.
- 4.2.13 Fire vehicles and equipment may be used only for emergencies, training, at civic functions or other Department related functions. Fire vehicles and equipment may also be used for public educational purposes or at a special event, at the discretion of the Fire Chief.
- 4.2.14 Fire Department equipment and/or employees may be requested to assist other departments through the use of "mutual aid". This request shall be honored provided that adequate fire protection is maintained in the Town of Georgia.

4.2.15 Employees are not permitted to ride on either the tailboard or the running boards of any emergency vehicle. The driver of the vehicle shall be responsible for the enforcement of this provision and may also be subject to discipline for non-compliance.

4.3 Section 3 – Procedures for Handling Alleged Misconduct

4.3.1 Per 24 V.S.A. Section 1954: “a firefighter may be dismissed or suspended by the fire chief [engineer] on written notice”.

4.3.2 It is the responsibility of each and every employee to notify the Fire Chief or an Officer of any suspected breach of discipline, misconduct or a violation of these Guidelines.

4.3.3 An Officer other than the Fire Chief who has been approached with an allegation of breach of discipline, misconduct or a violation of these rules shall immediately inform the Fire Chief or, if the allegation involves the Fire Chief, the First Assistant Chief.

4.3.4 The Fire Chief or First Assistant Chief shall refer, by written notice, all allegations of misconduct to the Town Administrator, who shall serve as the designee of the Selectboard to conduct any initial investigation and hearings, as appropriate, under the Town of Georgia Personnel Policy.

4.3.5 All members of the Fire Department shall cooperate with and provide factual information to the Town Administrator in the conduct of his or her investigation. If the Town Administrator determines, as a result of his or her investigation, that there is a factual basis to take further action under the Town of Georgia Personnel Policy, he or she shall notify the alleged offender and the Fire Chief or First Assistant Chief. The Fire Chief or First Assistant Chief, as the case may be, shall thereafter make a recommendation to the Town Administrator regarding appropriate discipline, to which the Town Administrator shall give due consideration in any subsequent proceedings.

4.3.6 While use of the reporting process identified herein is encouraged, nothing shall preclude any employee of the Department or Town, or any other person, from bringing any report of misconduct, breach of discipline, violation of the Town Personnel Policy, or of these Guidelines, including any report of sexual harassment or abuse, discrimination, or workplace safety violation, directly to the Town Administrator or any Selectboard member at any time.

4.3.7 In the event of any instance in which the person charged with conducting a disciplinary investigation or recommending appropriate disciplinary action is related, by blood, marriage or adoption, or other family relationship, with the person who is the subject of the investigation or potential discipline, the person charged with conducting the investigation or recommending discipline shall, without delay, refer the matter to the Selectboard for further action and shall otherwise recuse themselves from further involvement. Thereafter, the Selectboard may designate an unrelated individual from inside or outside the fire department to conduct an investigation and make any disciplinary action recommendations.

5 Article 5 –Town of Georgia Personnel Policy; Relevance

5.1 Section 1 – Town Personnel Policy

5.1.1 All Fire Department Employees are subject to applicable provisions of the Town of Georgia Personnel Policy, as amended from time to time. Last amended May 22, 2017.

All Fire Department Employees shall be provided with copies of the Town of Georgia Personnel Policy and these Standard Operating Guidelines and to execute appropriate receipt forms prior to commencing

work for the Department. The Fire Chief shall be responsible for ensuring that all relevant paperwork has been distributed to and executed by all Fire Department employees.