

KEY LARGO FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES



Section 100: RULES AND REGULATIONS

Subject: Explorer Post

S.O.P. 105.00

Effective: 11/1/04

Revised:

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Approved By: Donald Bock, Fire Chief

Forms Required:

I. Purpose:

- A. The purpose of the Key Largo Fire Department Explorer Post is to provide hands-on training to eligible teens that are interested in pursuing an exciting career or volunteer position in the Fire Department Service. Skills that are learned at the post are those that could strengthen the desire for teens to continue pursuing a career in the Fire Services and help them develop a better understanding of the role and responsibilities fire Department personnel hold in the community. The post provides young teens with a safe and structured pastime as an alternative to the negative impact society could have on them today.

II. Membership:

- A. Applicants for Fire Explorer must maintain **all** of the following eligibility criteria to become/remain a member of the post. Each member must:
- B.
1. Be between fourteen (14) and eighteen (18) years of age: after age eighteen full volunteer/career status can be applied for.
 2. Be physically/mentally capable of safely performing normal firefighting duties as required of the Post;
 3. Be willing to submit to a background check (Any conviction that will exclude a Firefighter applicant from participating in the fire service may exclude an Explorer applicant from becoming a Fire Explorer);
 4. Attend at least three (3) meetings consecutively, prior to receiving an application packet, being issued clothing/gear and achieving Probationary Fire Explorer status;
 5. Maintain an overall 2.5 average in the middle/high school they are attending (Copies of Report Cards will be collected quarterly);
 6. Consistently attend at least three (3) meetings or activities each month throughout his/her membership with the post.
 7. Pass a written and practical Probation test within one year of joining the Post.
 8. Maintain membership in only ONE fire related organization.
- C. Fire Explorer Advisors (Executive and Associate) must maintain **all** of the following eligibility criteria to remain an Explorer Advisor of the post:
1. Be twenty-one (21) years or older;
 2. Be an active member of a Fire Department;
 3. Attend any applicable meetings;
 4. Actively participate in special events and details with the Explorers.

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III. Rank:

A. This post utilizes a para-military design in commanding all operations, emergency and non-emergency. As a result, a command structure has been organized to identify specified levels of position or "rank" that each member of the post holds. Each successive rank holds authority over the preceding rank, and receives commands from and directly reports to the subsequent rank.

B. Fire Explorers can achieve five levels of rank at the post. Rank levels in rank order (low ranking to high ranking) are as followed:

1. Probationary Fire Explorer:

- a) Entry-level Fire Explorer.
- b) Responsible for maintaining a positive attitude;
- c) Minimum six-month period; where the Fire Explorer concentrates on learning basic Firefighting skills.
- d) Probationary Fire Explorers will be given a six-month Probation test.
- e) Fire Explorers must pass the written portion of the test with an 80 percent and pass the practical portion of the test with a 100 percent.
- f) Probationary Fire Explorers who do not pass the Probation test after one year of start date will be removed from the post.

2. Fire Explorer:

- a) Responsible for maintaining a positive attitude;
- b) Have successfully completed probation period;
- c) Will be enrolled in Standby Program;
- d) Will receive Department Id card (when available)
- e) Will be eligible for Explorer Officer testing;

3. Fire Explorer Squad Leader:

- a) Responsible for maintaining a positive attitude;
- b) Responsible for notifying squad members of drill and details;
- c) Responsible for relaying gear issues;
- d) Responsible for relaying absences/tardies to the Fire Explorer Lt.;
- e) Responsible for recruitment into the post.

4. Fire Explorer Lieutenant:

- a) Responsible for maintaining a positive attitude;
- b) Responsible for coordinating efforts of the squads assigned to them.
- c) Responsible for relaying absences/tardies to the Fire Explorer Captain.
- d) Encouraged to assist in planning and teaching of drills.

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5. Fire Explorer Captain:

- a) Responsible for maintaining a positive attitude;
- b) Responsible for relaying absences/tardies to the Advisors;
- c) Encouraged to assist with planning of post activities;
- d) Encouraged to assist in planning and teaching of drills;
- e) Required to attend Advisor meetings;
- f) May issue written reprimands;

6. Explorer Coordinator:

- a) Responsible for maintaining a positive attitude;
- b) Initial contact of interested candidates explaining benefits of the program
- c) Acts as a greeter to all new candidates who choose to attend meeting
- d) Act as Liaison for new candidates for the first 3 weeks during observation period.
- e) Initiate and maintain verbal and electronic communication to maintain interest.
- f) Coordinate measuring of uniforms, issuing of uniforms and books for Candidates that choose to become Probationary Explorer.
- g) Coordinate processing of paperwork, SOP's, Emergency Contact form, Book receipts, Probation Packet and any other Forms that need to be filled out.
- h) Maintain voice and electronic communication throughout 6-month probation.
- i) Provide report on all candidates and Probationary Explorers as to status, productivity and interest on quarterly basis to the Advisors.
- j) Any other duties that deem necessary to define guidelines and accountability for interested candidates to the Explorer Post as deemed by the Advisors of the Post.

C. After achieving Probationary Fire Explorer status, in addition to successfully completing written and practical examinations, the Fire Explorer must regularly participate in post activities and details. Advancement to Squad Leader and Officer Rank is dependent on vacancies and determined through experience with the post and the results of written, practical and oral examinations.

D. A Guest Instructor holds rank above the Fire Explorer Officer and reports directly to the Fire Explorer Advisor.

E. As a para-military organization, level of rank is strict. During operations, questions, comments and concerns should be directed to the next ranking level from the person having an issue that needs to be addressed. Any senior ranking Explorer/Alternate Instructor/Advisor should be addressed by their ranking title (i.e. Captain, Lieutenant, Advisor, and Instructor) and their last name (i.e. Thompson, Smith) or Sir if the ranking title is not known. Please note that established rank

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procedures must be respected for **any** Fire Department personnel who may be present during an Explorer function.

F. All Explorers will maintain a professional image and attitude while participating at meetings, details, public gatherings and Standbys.

IV. Accommodations for Testing:

A. Written and Practical exams may be given on a regular basis. If a Fire Explorer has a documented need for special accommodations relating to reading, learning or testing, they can request to have the test presented to accommodate that need. If requested, an Advisor and a Fire Exploring Officer will present the test to them.

V. Attendance and Punctuality:

A. Attendance and punctuality are extremely important to the function of the Key Largo Fire Explorer Post. Evolutions require a significant amount of planning and lesson plans tend to continue for multiple meetings. If appropriate attendance and punctuality are not maintained, significant information may not be conveyed and life-preserving skills may not be adequately learned. Consequently, making an evolution or fire scene unsafe for all participants.

B. To maintain membership with the post all Fire Explorers must demonstrate an active interest in attending post meetings and Fire Explorer events. Fire Explorers are required to attend at least three each month when scheduled. ***The Fire Explorer Post meets every Tuesday evening between 5:00pm and 6:00pm with department meeting continuing from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. Disciplinary consequences can result from Explorers not being ready to begin at exactly 5:00pm.*** Attendance for Fire Explorer events is required and will be announced by Post Advisors at the regularly scheduled meetings, phone or via e-mail.

C. During Post meetings, Explorers will be given breaks in the lesson plans. They are at the discretion of the Instructor.

D. Insufficient attendance is defined as missing two (2) or more post meetings or having two (2) or more latenesses per month without prior approval from an Advisor. Any occurrence of an Explorer having insufficient attendance will be addressed and the Fire Explorer will be subject to disciplinary consequences as defined in the "Disciplinary Actions" section of this manual.

E. Advisors are required to attend applicable meetings. Failure to meet this requirement for two (2) consecutive months without proper justification may result loss of the position.

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VI. Detail requirements:

- A. We have established minimum requirements for Fire Explorers to follow for maintaining their attendance requirements with Details. Explorers are required to arrive at details 15 minutes prior to the start time.

Captain:	75% of all details a month
Lieutenant:	75% of all details a month
Squad Leader:	50% of all details a month
Explorers:	33% of all details a month

VII. Uniforms/Gear:

- A. Fire Explorers are required to dress in a Class "C" uniform for all Explorer functions. Upon reaching the rank of a Probationary Fire Explorer, the explorer will be issued two class 'C' "T"-shirts carrying the Key Largo Fire Explorer logo and 1 Class "B" shirt. Explorers are required to provide 1 pair of steel toe boots, and 1 pair of pants (navy or black), BDU's preferred.
- B. Explorers are to ensure that uniforms are kept clean and ironed and worn in a manner that presents the Fire Explorer as a distinguished member of the post. Variations or alterations of uniforms are not permitted without written approval of a Post Advisor. Jewelry is not to be worn at Fire Explorer meetings or a Fire Explorer event. Fire Explorers are encouraged to wear a watch.
- C. Fire Explorers will be issued Bunker gear if available. Explorers are required to provide a twenty (20) foot length of double-braded nylon rope that will become a necessary part of their Bunker Gear and used in Explorer operations.
- D. Upon completion of Probationary Fire Explorer status, each Fire Explorer will be issued an identification card verifying status as an Key Largo Fire Explorer. Fire Explorers are required to maintain their identification card on their person at every Fire Explorer event. **Fire Explorers are in no way permitted to display identification cards in or on vehicles or for anything other that official fire department business. Doing so will result in immediate termination from the post.**
- E. All items issued to Explorers are the property of the Key Largo, Fire Department and **must** be immediately returned to the Department upon leaving the post. Additionally, **it is the Explorer's responsibility to ensure the integrity and accountability of each item issued. Damaging or losing any issued item may result in a monetary cost for replacement.** Issued items are for the sole purpose of Fire Explorer activities and must not be worn and/or used for any other purpose.

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VIII. Leave of Absence:

A. Leave of absence will be granted with advance notice and written documentation on reasons why. All issued equipment; gear, uniforms, text books, pagers etc will be turned in to the Post and will be reassigned to the Explorer upon returning to the Post.

IX. Dismissal:

A. Upon dismissal from the Key Largo Fire Department Explorers Program, All issued equipment from the Post and Department will be returned within one week. All equipment can be returned at a meeting or by coordinating the efforts with an Advisor through the Post email address.

X. General Conduct:

A. An Key Largo Fire Department Explorer represents every other Fire Explorer who holds membership with the post, every Advisor who instructs the post and the Key Largo Fire Department. Any conduct reflects greatly on the training, respect and attitude that are taught to the Fire Explorer. As a result, the following guidelines for general conduct should be respectfully applied in all situations a Fire Explorer encounters.

B. **Maturity** – The Advisors of the Post hold each Explorer to high standards. Explorers will be constantly evaluated on their maturity, interpersonal skills and professionalism. Counseling will be provided to those who show the need for it. This counseling can be in form of verbal guidance and projects. The goal for this counseling is to have the Explorer look within themselves to find the desire to overcome these issues.

C. **Dignity and Respect** – Explorers are required to treat **everyone** (fellow Explorers, Advisors, Firefighters, and citizens) with the utmost dignity and respect. Additionally, Explorers are required to refrain from using course, profane or disrespectful language at all times. Actions that could discredit, bring ill repute to, insult or disrespect an individual, regardless of the circumstances will be subject to immediate disciplinary actions. Examples of such actions include but are not limited to; conduct unbecoming of a Fire Explorer, publicity criticizing the official actions of a Post Advisor or any other Fire Department Personnel and unauthorized release of any information concerning essential Fire Department matters to the press or general public.

D. **Chain of Command** – Except for cases of extreme emergencies and immediate hazards, Explorers are required to follow the chain of command outlined in the Rank section of this manual. Questions and comments should be directed to the individual who holds immediate rank over the Explorer's ranking status.

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- A. A demonstrated failure to follow the chain of command will be subject to immediate disciplinary actions.
- B. **Orders** – When an individual is given an order, it is that person’s responsibility to carry out that order as quickly and efficiently as possible. Orders may only be questioned if the act of carrying out the order will present immediate physical danger to Fire Explorer. If a Fire Explorer is presented with orders from two different higher-ranking personnel, the Fire Explorer is responsible for informing that he/she has already been ordered to perform a task and that the second order will be carried out immediately after the first order is completed. Individuals who demonstrate a failure with completing orders and neglect of performing assigned duties will be subject to immediate disciplinary actions.
- C. **Fire Explorer Events** – Public events that the Key Largo Fire Explorer Post are invited to attend require a great deal of planning and create expectations from the public that these events will be successful. It is the responsibility of every Fire Explorer to show up on time and attend all special events that are signed up for. Explorers who arrive late to or fail to attend special events that they have signed up for will be subject to immediate disciplinary actions.
- D. **Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs** – Any Explorer who has consumed or is under the influence of *any* type of alcoholic beverage or drug (including tobacco products) while in uniform, on Department property or representing the Explorer Post, Key Largo Fire Department Department or the Key Largo will be immediately terminated from the post.
- E. **Weapons** – Any Fire Explorer who possesses a weapon (or any item capable of or intended to inflict injury on a person or damage property and not intended for the sole purpose of fire operations) while in uniform, on Department property or representing the Explorer Post, Key Largo Fire Department Department or the Key Largo will be immediately terminated from the post.
- F. **Fire Calls** – Explorers are not permitted to attend activities or visit fire stations if not applicable to their duties or without prior authorization from a Post Advisor. This is not in anyway to discourage an Explorer from alarm stand-by duties. Additionally, Explorers are not permitted to show up on fire scenes unless they have the applicable training and arrived on the apparatus with a crew. Any Explorer who fails to follow either guideline about fire calls will be subject to immediate disciplinary actions.
- G. **Personal Pagers and Cell Phones** – Pagers, cellular telephones or any other non-fire related communication device are a distraction when attending training, special functions, responding to alarms, etc. is not permitted when attending Fire Explorer meetings or Fire Explorer Functions. Failure to refrain from carrying these devises will result in confiscation of the device and immediate disciplinary actions.

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- H. **Use of Post and Department Property** – All items issued to Explorers are the sole property of the Key Largo Fire Department. Additionally, activities performed at the post will very often require the use of Fire Department tools, equipment and supplies. All items, belonging to the Key Largo Fire Department and the Key Largo are to be exclusively for post activities and fire fighting operations, and may only be used if previous authorization is granted by a Post Advisor, Station Officer or higher ranking fire official. Any unauthorized use of post or department property will be subject to disciplinary actions.
- I. **Integrity** – All Explorers will be held accountable for all actions that violate the integrity of the Key Largo Fire Department Explorers Post, Key Largo Fire Department or the Key Largo. This includes all actions during meetings, drills, Alarms, Standbys and events. Any actions away from the Explorers Post that have the potential of violating the integrity of the above organizations will be addressed and discipline actions will follow depending on the severity of the infraction.

XI. Discipline

A. Discipline is a necessary component in the function of any acting organization. Through the use of disciplinary actions, the post will attempt to mold a sense of respect for authority in the post and essentially instill the virtue of discipline in the Fire Explorer. When applicable, the disciplinary sequence will be carried out as follows for minor infractions of post rules and responsibilities:

1. **First Violation:** The individual will receive a verbal warning. The preceding incident will be documented in the individual's personal file.
2. **Second Violation:** The individual will receive a written warning. The written warning and preceding incident will be documented in the individual's personal file.
3. **Third Violation:** The individual will be suspended from post meeting and all Explorer Events. The length of the suspension will be at the discretion of the Post Advisors. The need for suspension and preceding incident will be documented in the individual's personal file.
4. **Fourth Violation:** The individual will be dismissed from the Key Largo Fire Department Explorer Post. The need for dismissal and the preceding incident will be documented to the individual's personal file.

B. The above sequence is a guideline. Minor disciplinary actions may be taken by any Post Advisors or the Fire Explorer Captain for any offense and can include activities such as additional physical training and/or written assignments.

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C. The Advisors of the Post reserve the right and prerogative to make disciplinary decisions based on repeated occurrences of varying incidents, past performance or the severity of the incident. Any member of the post can be dismissed from the post at any time for committing major violations.

D. Additionally, please note the following items related to disciplinary actions at the post:

1. Any Advisor has the right to take disciplinary action for **any** violation of these Standard Operating Procedures.
2. Any Advisor has the right to suspend a member of the post for severe discipline violations.
3. Any Advisor or the Fire Explorer Captain has the right to confiscate any member's issued equipment in conjunction with a suspension.
4. Term of suspension from the post is ultimately at the discretion of Post Advisors and Fire Explorer Captain.
5. All disciplinary actions are at the ultimate discretion of the Post Advisors and Fire Explorer Captain.
6. The level of discipline may differ as the severity of the infraction of the SOPS.

XII. Creation of Positions:

A. The Key Largo Fire Department Explorers Post holds all rights to create positions to benefit the cause of the Key Largo Fire Department Explorers Post, the members of the Program and the image of the Key Largo Fire Department Explorers Post and/or the Key Largo Fire Department Department. Eligibility, requirements and outlines of such positions will be made available in addendum form as the positions are made available.

XIII. Updates:

A. Information in this packet is subject to updates. Addendums will be issued prior to the implement of changes.

XIV. Safety Fire and Emergency Services Exploring:

- A. Explorers may not be substituted for trained personnel.
- B. Explorers must be equipped with personal protective equipment that is appropriate for the activity being done.
- C. Explorers may be mobilized only as a post, with required leadership. Explorers are not on call as individuals.
- D. Explorers who ride on apparatus or other department vehicles must be seated and must wear a seat belt.
- E.

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- F. Explorers may not drive department vehicles.
- G. Explorers may not climb aerial ladders.
- H. Explorers may not climb ground ladders that exceed 35 feet in length, or not supported against a structure.
- I. Explorers may not enter or perform ventilation procedures on a burning structure.
- J. Explorers may not use any tools or gloves on energized electrical equipment.
- K. Explorers may not operate cutting torches
- L. Explorers may not operate hydraulic Department tools or equipment.
- M. **Exceptions:** Using an official training facility, the use of aerial ladders with the appropriate safety equipment, and entering a controlled burn building is approved.

XV. Bloodborne Pathogens Fire and Emergency Services Exploring:

- A. Treat all blood as if it were contaminated with bloodborn 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:**
 - 1) Latex or vinyl gloves, to be used when bleeding is being stopped or wounds are being dressed.
 - 2) A mouth-barrier device, for rendering Department breathing or CPR.
 - 3) Plastic goggles or other eye protection, to prevent a victim's blood from getting into Department rs' eyes in the event of serious arterial bleeding.
 - 4) Antiseptic, for use in sterilizing or cleaning exposed skin areas, particularly if no soap or water is available.

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KEY LARGO FIRE DEPARTMENT
EXPLORER POST
Standard Operating Procedures
Acknowledgement

I have read all the guidelines identified in the Key Largo Fire Department Explorer Post Standard Operating Procedures. I understand that any deviation from these guidelines may result in disciplinary actions. Furthermore, I understand that if I should have any questions regarding any guidelines outlined in the Standard Operating Guidelines, I am to immediately address it to a post Advisor or Fire Explorer Officer.

Explorer Name: _____

Explorer Sign: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Sign: _____

Post Advisor Name: _____

Post Advisor Sign: _____