

VESTAL FIRE DISTRICT

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

Adopted: February 19, 2025

Revised

Policy #:	202.00
Policy:	Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy
Effective Date:	February 19, 2025
Authority:	Town Law §§ 176 (11) and (21)
Cross-reference:	

PURPOSE: The Vestal Fire District (“Fire District”) recognizes drug and alcohol abuse as a modern-day problem affecting all professions. The Fire District also recognizes that many contributing factors cause certain individuals to use illegal drugs, abuse alcohol or abuse prescription drugs. Firefighting and emergency medical service professionals are not immune from these problems. Fire District employees and department members having such problems are encouraged to seek diagnosis and follow through with treatment that may be prescribed by any qualified professional in order to address the problem as early as possible.

TERMS:

1. No Fire District personnel will report to or remain on duty while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
2. No fire district personnel will drive or operate or otherwise ride on or work with apparatus, vehicle or equipment while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. Fire District’s personnel shall not knowingly allow fellow Fire District personnel to violate the Fire District’s policy regarding the abuse of alcohol or drugs in the workplace.
4. Personnel who use authorized prescription drugs that may have an adverse effect on the individual’s ability to perform the job performance requirements and essential functions of his or her job shall not report for duty or engage in other activities unless or until they have the approval of the Chief of Department after recommendation by the Fire District’s Medical Advisor.
5. Any Fire District personnel who feel they may have a dependence on alcohol or drugs, attributable to a line of duty event, should contact a Chief Officer or a member of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Fire District to make arrangements for confidential counseling or treatment.
6. The Board of Fire Commissioners reserves the right to refer a firefighter to its Medical Director for drug and/or alcohol testing.

7. The use, sale, transfer, possession, distribution or manufacture of alcohol, drugs or any controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, or combination thereof, or the misuse of prescription medication, on any premises of the Fire District or worksites including, but not limited to, district or department owned vehicles and any private vehicles parked on district premises or worksites by employees of the Fire District or members of the Fire Department is strictly prohibited.
8. The term 'drugs' as used in the policy includes marijuana and action can be taken against any member who exhibits "articulable symptoms" or behavior indicative of impairment. These instances includes when impairment:
 - (1) Decreases or lessens the member's performance of the duties or tasks of the job position;
 - (2) Interferes with the Fire District's obligation to provide a safe and healthy workplace, free from recognized hazards, as required by state and federal occupational safety and health law; or
 - (3) When the Fire District is required to act by another law or ordinance.

Articulable symptoms of marijuana use include, but are not limited to elevated heart rate, bloodshot eyes, diminished tears, dry mouth, slurred speech, lack of attention, motor delay, odor, decreased concentration, confusion and drowsiness.

9. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

By Order of the Board of Fire Commissioners
Vestal Fire District
Date approved: February 19, 2025
Reviewed and Approved: January 7, 2026