

**Defining and Developing a Professional Standard of Conduct
for Lincoln Fire & Rescue**

Executive Leadership

By: Bruce Sellon
Lincoln Fire & Rescue
Lincoln, NE

An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy
As part of the Executive Fire Officer Program

January 2008

Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

When unethical behavior occurs, it can create incredible challenges at all levels of an organization. In today's complex business climate it is nearly impossible to monitor every action or decision employees make. The problem is that Lincoln Fire & Rescue (LF&R) employees have not been consistent when dealing with internal and external customers in a variety of situations. The purpose of this Applied Research Project (ARP) is to determine what ethical principles are important to LF&R, review the current rules of conduct and develop an ethical standards policy.

Literature review and surveys were used to conduct descriptive and action research to define ethical principles and study the current ethical opinions of LF&R employees. The research was able to answer four questions. What are considered to be ethical principles? What ethical principles are important to LF&R employees? What ethical principles are important to the LF&R leadership team? How can the desired ethical behaviors be communicated and implemented throughout the LF&R organization?

The results found a core set of values important to both the employee and leadership groups of LF&R and were a foundation for a professional standard of conduct. These ethical values should then be conveyed to all employees to improve behaviors and actions that would be realized by both internal and external customers.

Research recommendations included implementation of a professional standard of conduct and revising the vision statement, mission and goals to include organizational values. LF&R should explore the Federal Sentencing Guidelines for Organizations (FSGO) by establishing a compliance program for training, education and to monitor employee conduct. Annual reviews of ethical behavior are vital for continued success and accountability.

CONTENT

Abstract.....	3
Table of Contents.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Background and Significance.....	6
Literature Review.....	8
Procedures.....	18
Results.....	24
Discussion.....	31
Recommendations.....	37
References.....	40
Appendix A - Prestige of 23 Professions and Occupations - Table 1.....	44
Appendix B - LF&R Management Policies 101.01, 104.30 & 208.01.....	45
Appendix C - LF&R Employee Zoomerang™ Survey.....	49
Appendix D - LF&R Leadership Zoomerang™ Survey.....	56
Appendix E - Proposed Professional Standard of Conduct for LF&R.....	65

Introduction

Would any organization actually endorse unethical behaviors or employ personnel with little or no integrity? They may not actively encourage these behaviors, but for any customers to experience or observe such employee or organizational actions is advertising those characteristics all the same.

When unethical behavior occurs, it can create incredible challenges at all levels of business and government. In many organizations, it is nearly impossible to monitor every action or decision employees make. Therefore, guidelines or a code of ethical behavior along with proper training can help clarify the expectations and minimize employee indiscretions. John Holt speaks volumes when stating, “The true test of character is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we don’t know what to do” (Holt, 2005).

Lincoln Fire & Rescue (LF&R) needs something to tie the organizational values, rules and policies to employee behavior during the course of their duties. It is not clear if individual values coincide with those of the organization or if the core values of LF&R are even apparent to all employees.

The problem is that LF&R employees have not been consistent when dealing with internal and external customers in a variety of situations. The purpose of this Applied Research Project (ARP) is to determine what ethical principles are important to LF&R, to review the current rules of conduct for LF&R and to develop an ethical standards policy.

Descriptive and action research methods will be used to define ethical principles and study the current ethical opinions of LF&R employees to answer the following four research questions. What are considered to be ethical principles? What ethical principles are important to LF&R employees? What ethical principles are important to the LF&R leadership team? How

can the desired ethical behaviors be communicated and implemented throughout the LF&R organization? Research information will be attained by literature review and surveys to develop a professional standard of conduct for LF&R.

Background and Significance

LF&R is a medium sized metropolitan fire department serving the City of Lincoln, NE with a population of approximately 236,000 in an area of nearly 83 square miles (City of Lincoln, 2007a). Lincoln is the second largest city in Nebraska and LF&R has 280 paid fire suppression members and 23 administrative and civilian employees with an operating budget of just under \$24 million dollars (City of Lincoln, 2007b). LF&R provides emergency and non-emergency fire, rescue and medical services, typical of most paid professional fire departments of similar size. LF&R is also host to Nebraska Taskforce-1 (NETF-1), Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) since 1993 (LF&R, 2007a).

Nationally, firefighters have repeatedly experienced the highest occupational prestige among polled Americans age 18 and older. In a July 10-16, 2007 Harris poll of approximately 500 adults nationwide, firefighters rated the highest of 23 occupations for both 2006 and 2007 (The Harris Poll, 2007). The 2007 poll results for the occupations can be found in table 1, Appendix A

Occasional letters to LF&R administrative offices (LF&R, 2007b) and public letters forwarded from the City of Lincoln Mayor's office affirm a sense of gratitude and to a limited degree, the impression of community satisfaction. The positive communications seem to be the only ones posted on the department website. Occasionally, letters and communications are received to show dissatisfaction. This informal community feedback is an unscientific barometer of public perception and customer sentiment.

LF&R has for many years been considered a respected organization among peer fire service agencies. Their employees demonstrated a high degree of integrity and professionalism. However, in the past eight to ten years, LF&R seems to have experienced a loss of credibility within the Lincoln community. The local political climate changed in 1998 after a lengthy court case between the City of Lincoln and the members of International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 644 over salaries and comparability. The nearly three year court case resulted in substantial salary increases and back-pay for most firefighter pay classes in order to meet comparability with other department's pay scales and working conditions. An unsubstantiated perception by department members was that public and local business organizations thought an increase in firefighter's salary would drive local taxes up. They also felt this scenario would create an increase to salaries and benefits of all local public and private sector labor classes.

During the May 1999 Lincoln mayoral election, the winning candidate had been supported by IAFF Local 644. Within days of his appointment, the mayor further politicized the fire department by appointing the IAFF Local 644 Union president, who held the rank of captain, as the next LF&R Fire Chief (City of Lincoln, 2007c).

The political climate intensified after LF&R's bitter takeover of the ambulance transport service from a private company beginning in 2001. Several years of internal issues continued to polarize the community and fire department. LF&R leadership seemed to be consumed by crisis management and damage control. A controversial two million dollar fire engine purchase was being negotiated by the fire chief and a local apparatus dealer that continued to falter until the current mayor finally requested and received the resignation of the fire chief on July 7, 2006.

Since August 25, 1997, the department has been accredited through the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. (CPSE), formerly known as Commission on Fire Accreditation

International, (CFAI). The department was notified by letter that accreditation had expired for failure to reapply with supporting documentation (CPSE, personal communication, September 3, 2007). An extension was granted, but this lapse highlighted the lack of community and political support for LF&R in maintaining excellence through the accreditation process. After more than a year without consistent leadership, a new mayoral administration conducted a national search and selected a permanent fire chief to begin October 1, 2007. During the nearly 15 month interim period without a permanent leader, pressing issues continued and political and media pressures created a breakdown in employee morale, prevented implementation of long term goals and resulted in considerable organizational dysfunction.

An unproven management observation by the author was that LF&R had experienced an increase in employee behaviors detrimental to the organization. Abuse of leave, computer and internet rules violations, false statements during investigations and in official documents, loss or theft of department property and lack of personal accountability are a few examples of questionable actions. LF&R's organizational changes and lack of strong positive leadership for the past several years seems to show a cultural change that indicates an increase in unethical behavior. The feeling among employees is that LF&R has lost individual and organizational credibility both locally and nationally and service delivery is inconsistent and below community expectations.

A department and its members facing ethical dilemmas as just described can lead to consequences such as potential loss of LF&R accreditation, or even legal action for indiscretions. It seems that these series of events are significant detractors and lead to the problem this research is trying to address, which is the ability for LF&R employees to provide consistent service to internal and external customers. If the entire LF&R organization desires to continue providing

effective team oriented operations and the highest quality service, it is essential that the research questions of this ARP be addressed.

This research will also meet the United States Fire Administration (USFA) objective “To appropriately respond in a timely manner to emerging issues” (USFA, 2005, Sec. II, p. 2).

Ethical dilemmas are becoming more common as fire departments are continually held to higher standards. For the fire service, it will be an emerging issue as accountability to customers likely will challenge even the most open and transparent organization.

Literature Review

Most public and private institutions from financial groups to hospitals as well as various relief organizations, promote their beliefs along with a vision, mission and goals. LF&R mission and goals consists of a statement and list of measurable items with tangible results, but lacks an association to organizational values (LF&R, 2007c). This should be at the forefront of any organization to clearly define who they are individually and collectively, and what they hope to do for the community. The International City Management Association (ICMA) completed a case study with the City of Santa Clara, CA by developing a written code of ethics and values with clear positive statements of ethical behavior for officials of their community. The eight core values are not only described, but followed by a statement that includes the value and an example of what the actions would look like to the community with specific demonstrated examples (ICMA, 2007).

Question one of this ARP asks what are considered to be ethical principles. The highest standards of accountability, truthfulness, personal integrity and honesty are all fundamental elements of ethical behavior for employees entrusted with public safety. These principles define the value and reputation of the individuals and the organization. If these values are compromised

it will negatively affect the department's ability to perform vital services and they may fail in their mission (Bruegman, 2006). Even though the focus may be intent on demonstrating ethical business practices, organizations still struggle and indiscretions, falsification, theft and discrimination seem to be more prevalent.

In order to properly respond to question one of this ARP, ethical principles and related behaviors should be more clearly defined. Ethics can be subjective since definitions tend to be based on values that can be as different as every individual. Many definitions of ethics contain lists of positive behaviors that are a collection of ethical principles and personal conduct.

Most organizations strive for excellence through a variety of avenues ranging from customer service programs to quality assurance training. When an organization is considered ethical, it may actually be achieving excellence. According to the on-line Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2007a), *ethics* and *virtue ethics* may be perceived as also having excellence. The electronic definition of *ethics* from the on-line Merriam-Webster dictionary (2007a.) is a set of moral principles and a theory or system of moral values.

Many times, actions are based on a decision-making process and it is important to note that an ethical decision may be a distinction between competing choices (Bruegman, 2005). Sometimes that choice is between the legal definitions of right and wrong but it is often a grey area. This ethical dilemma can be a challenge for any leader, but according to a Southwest Pennsylvania study, if three systematic principles are incorporated, this dilemma will at least follow a logical problem solving process (Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, 2001). Do no harm, which also means to choose actions that accomplish the most good for the most people and to serve the public interest over self-interest. The second is to treat each other, and all who we serve, fair and just. Finally, respect the rights, dignity and freedom of all individuals. If our

decisions and actions follow these three principles, then we have successfully used ethical reasoning to best serve the public (2001).

The American Psychological Association (APA) has promoted an exhaustive document, *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*, known as the *Ethics code*. For decades it has offered guidance for the psychology profession as well as setting an ethical standard for business and academia (APA, 2007).

The terms *code of ethics* and *code of conduct* are nearly synonymous with references and definitions describing or including both terms. The electronic definition of *conduct* from the on-line Merriam-Webster dictionary (2007b) states it is a mode of standard for personal behavior especially based on moral principles. *Code of conduct* and *code of behavior* from the on-line Thinkmap Visual Thesaurus® (2007) are stated as conventional principles and expectations that are considered binding on any person who is a member of a particular group. Equally interesting to the definition is a thought that for individuals not to follow a Code of Conduct is considered a breach of confidence (Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, 2007b). In other words, little credibility can be offered to an unethical organization or one with unethical members.

Ethical practices have been scrutinized since 1991 when the United States Sentencing Commission developed judicial guidelines referred to as the Federal Sentencing Guidelines for Organizations (FSGO). These guidelines are considerations when representatives or employees of organizations are involved in potentially illegal actions. In 2004, the FSGO were revised in an effort to require organizations and businesses to monitor potentially illegal activities and to specifically establish an ethical culture by developing an ethics compliance program (Ethics Resource Center, 2007).

Unethical behavior is not only distracting to managing a workforce and meeting the goals of an organization, but it can be costly. A Josephson Institute Report, *The hidden costs of unethical behavior* states that absenteeism, loss of productivity, employee fraud and misconduct, retention and recruitment difficulty and sabotaging behavior are all examples that detract from an organization (Josephson Institute, 2004).

In addition to defining ethical principles, conduct and related behaviors it is important to establish how they apply to daily activities and interactions with others. Development of ethical behavior begins during childhood development by programs such as Character Counts. The philosophy promotes positive behaviors as simple as helping children determine right from wrong. The Josephson Institute of Ethics teaches trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship as the Six Pillars of Character (Josephson Institute, 2007). They work as a support resource for parents and successfully promote character education for millions of youth in schools, agencies and organizations.

Many other youth organizations have promoted ethical behaviors at a young age with the intent of fostering continued positive citizenship as adults. The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) specifically teaches the 12 scout laws which are trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent (Boy Scouts of America, 1998). The 12 laws seem inclusive of most positive or desired human behaviors and have been a foundation belief of scouting youth and adult leaders for almost a century.

The International City Managers Association (ICMA) addresses ethics for the fire officer by referring to several published examples but also states that common sense should be a guideline for professional conduct. This suggestion may be adequate for many employees, but common sense is not clearly defined and requires guidance for others (Coleman & Granito,

1988). Common sense is considered to be sound practical judgment that is independent of specialized knowledge or training according to the on-line version of Dictionary.com (2007). Common sense, like ethics, tends to be abstract and difficult to measure.

In the NFA course *Executive leadership*, unit 4 of the course manual, “Developing decision-making skills” defines the phenomenon of groupthink as a decision making process made with such a high influence from the group that it overrides alternate and often more realistic conclusions. Compliance or even non-compliance to groupthink can directly apply to ethics and conduct with regard to morality (NFA, 2005). The symptoms relating to groupthink when considering ethical behaviors seem to be primarily when considering pressure to conform, illusion of unanimity and rationalization (NFA, 2005, p. 4-5). One of the case studies from *Executive leadership* demonstrated an example of groupthink during the Kennedy presidential administration with reference to the Bay of Pigs incident.

Frievalt (2006) describes the rules that fire departments developed years ago and are considered the norm. For firefighters to fit in, they developed a type of organizational common-sense from those rules. He continues to describe some negative effects of this organizational common sense, but emphasizes the more positive aspect of a community based groupthink by members of the organization when considering the firefighters shared values (Frievalt, 2006). In other words, this may be considered an example of positive reinforcement.

After defining what are and are not ethical principles, question two of this ARP then asks what ethical principles are important to LF&R employees. Fire department organizations usually maintain a written form of ethical principles or guidelines often found in their Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) or rules and regulations. Although rarely embraced by each individual, they are essential to give direction and maintain order. LF&R's written guidelines

are in the form of Management Policy (MP) and are available by on-line Internet access to all personnel.

Sometimes ethical principles are defined for an organization as expectations by the governing body, board of directors or other designated authority. The City of Lincoln is no different from other cities that have developed personnel rules and regulations for employees. The Lincoln city charter, article II, section 4, *Code of ethics* grants the city council authority to adopt a code of ethics for employees, elected officials and members of committees with provision for penalties if violated (City of Lincoln, 1992). The Lincoln municipal code, personnel section 2.76.035, *Departmental rules and regulations* allows for directors to develop their own department rules and regulations to govern employee conduct with approval of the personnel director. Additional policy 2.76.445 outlines 16 employee items or behaviors that are cause for disciplinary action (City of Lincoln, nd). These behaviors are typical of general employee guidelines such as the use of intoxicating beverages, damage or negligence to city property, and political activities. Other personnel rules outline guidance for nepotism, gifts, outside employment and discrimination. It is important to note that rather than being positive in nature, these expectations tend to be written as negative behaviors with consequences for disciplinary action should they be violated.

Most LF&R employees are firefighters and also members of IAFF Local 644. The constitution and by-laws of the IAFF in article III, section I, requires active members to be of good moral character (IAFF, 2006). There is no definition or guidelines offered to determine what good moral character consists of and it seems to be a judgment call by each Local's membership officials.

Three LF&R policies indirectly address ethical principles for department employees. In MP 101.01, *Description of the mission and organization of Lincoln Fire & Rescue*, the department mission is stated and it broadly defines administrative responsibility and implementation. The second, MP 104.30 *Internet access and use* gives general rules on computer and Internet use and outlines disciplinary action for violations. The third policy, MP 208.01, *Rules of conduct* elaborates on conduct standards of both desirable and undesirable behaviors with progressive disciplinary action for failure to comply. This department policy resembles a code of conduct and is included with MP 101.01 and MP 104.30 in Appendix B.

Sixteen key words were found through literature review and research to best describe ethical conduct as it is thought to apply to LF&R. The 16 words were used in two surveys and to help answer ARP questions. They ultimately were incorporated in the Professional standards of conduct. These key words are honesty, fairness, compassion, public confidence, tolerance, trust, respect, responsibility, competent, loyal, considerate, dependable, moral, teamwork oriented, accountable and integrity.

For purposes of this research, LF&R employees includes both civilian and fire suppression personnel. In order determine ethical opinion and values of individual employees, an on-line Zoomerang™ survey was developed and provided to all LF&R employees to help answer ARP question two. The survey questions and participant response can be found in Appendix C.

Question three of this research asks what other ethical principles are important to the LF&R leadership team. The LF&R leadership team abides by the same personnel rules and Management Policies as all other LF&R employees identified in ARP question two. Ethical principles should apply equally to the rank and file members and civilian employees of the

department. The survey will help confirm that notion. It is common practice among fire service organizations that fire department upper management be held to an even higher standard. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), promotes such a high standard in their own *Fire chief's code of ethics* (IAFC, 2007)

Leaders of any organization are essential to setting the standard for behavior of subordinates. Fire chiefs have the same expectation of their department leaders. These behaviors are usually measured by observed ethics based on words and actions of those leaders. Ethical responsibility can be observed in the commitment made to internal and external customers, daily actions, and the degree of professionalism and honesty of the leadership team. Finally, ethical responsibility is the commitment of leaders to maintain a positive productive and healthy contribution to the organization (Coleman, 2003).

Most fire service leaders are responsible for operations of several remote fire station locations and personnel who are operating independent of direct oversight. Chief officers cannot control every circumstance of poor judgment but as leaders, they can set expectations for the organization. Crucial to success of this management challenge will be personal integrity, a practical code of conduct and statement of ethical behavior (Bruegman, 2006)

For purposes of this research, the leadership team of LF&R consists of department chief officers, the IAFF Local 644 union president and those captains who have participated in the promotional testing process for chief officer or are occasionally acting in that capacity. This group consisted of 28 department members. The leadership team survey and participant response can be found in Appendix D.

Question four of this ARP asks how can the desired ethical behaviors be communicated and implemented throughout the LF&R organization. To answer this question, the methods of communicating to LF&R employees were studied.

A review of the LF&R mission and goals indicates there is no direct reference to ethical business practices for the organization or employees. LF&R like many fire departments seems to be a rule driven organization as opposed to one based on values. It is suggested from research (Wallace, 2005), that LF&R had a written policy in response to most every employee indiscretion.

A written code of ethical conduct is an important means to communicate desired ethical behaviors to the department. Prompted by so many recent high profile illegal or unethical acts, it seems that at the forefront of every business and organization there is a code of ethics to assure customers of their honorable intent. Several examples of code of ethics and code of conduct from other fire departments, businesses and organizations were found during this literature review and all had some significance to the final component of action research in development of a revised LF&R code of ethical conduct.

Once a formal code of ethical conduct is developed, it is important that new employees are given proper orientation. Current members should receive and understand not only the words, but the spirit, intent and importance for successful implementation. Management and leadership training should include the same message as well as constant and critical review to assure the message and ultimate results align with the vision, mission and goals of the organization (Bruegman, 2005)

Literature Review Summary

City of Lincoln personnel code and LF&R policy offer only general guidelines in a rules and regulation format. This format tends to have a negative tone listing mostly what employees should not do and the consequences for discipline. Negative policies generally seem to be rejected more often by employees than those that outline positive expectations. Lincoln city policy did outline general personnel rules and regulations, but did not seem to adequately address issues specific to LF&R in consistent delivery of services to internal or external customers.

The literature review for this ARP has adequately defined ethics and conduct. There are many references to support a professional standard of conduct but they also show specific behaviors and values that are relevant to developing this standard.

Sixteen key words describing ethical conduct and behavior were revealed through literature review and research to be relevant for use in the surveys and final professional standard of conduct. These 16 words are honesty, fairness, compassion, public confidence, tolerance, trust, respect, responsibility, competent, loyal, considerate, dependable, moral, teamwork oriented, accountable and integrity.

Research found through literature review and a survey that the use of a professional standard of conduct in the fire service seems to be an effective and common means of fostering positive individual behaviors for meeting organizational goals and ultimately to better serve the Lincoln community. The literature review has found sufficient information to provide answers to this research.

Procedures

Descriptive and action research was used for this ARP to study ethical issues as they apply to LF&R employees. Research of published literature began at the NFA Learning Resource Center (LRC) in Emmitsburg, Maryland in May, 2007. A subject search was

conducted using key words such as ethics, code of conduct, code of ethics and ethical behavior. To better address the complexity of workplace dynamics, search subjects also included reasons for unethical behavior. Internet sources were also researched for similar subject matter. LF&R Management Policies (MP) is available to all personnel through Internet access. Research focused on policies that were open to employee interpretation and behaviors that may lead to inconsistencies. It was also important to determine if they are applied with the spirit and intent of the department mission. The purpose of this research is to determine what ethical principles are important to LF&R and to review the current rules of conduct and develop a professional standard of conduct.

Information was obtained from Internet and library research of business, private and government sector agencies. A list of possible questions and key words describing both ethical and unethical behaviors were reviewed to determine the relationship relevant to conduct of LF&R employees. Research focus was to explore the problem of why these behaviors would lead to inconsistent actions and how performance could improve. Sufficient information was available to determine what are considered ethical principles from ARP question one.

While conducting literature review, the author assembled a list of key words and phrases that reflect positive behaviors consistent with successful programs and organizations. This information and 16 key words were used to develop survey questions to assess the employee and organizational values. These key words are: honesty, fairness, compassion, public confidence, tolerance, trust, respect, responsibility, competent, loyal, considerate, dependable, moral, teamwork oriented, accountable and integrity. Four additional questions were developed for the leadership team to assess values in personnel management and to create a more positive behavior outcome that reflects the current LF&R mission and goals.

Survey questions were developed to reflect a general feeling and consensus of LF&R employee's ethical values. Survey results and several examples of code of ethics and code of conduct from other fire departments, businesses and organizations were reviewed to develop a revised LF&R professional standard of conduct and the final component of this action research. An external survey with other agencies or fire departments was not considered relevant to this research because the author determined all information to answer the research questions could be obtained from literature review and survey of only LF&R employees for their individual values and opinions.

Once information was gathered and reviewed, questions for the survey were developed to seek LF&R employee feelings and general sense of ethical behaviors. Employee perceptions of personal and organizational values were important along with some determination of individual knowledge and compliance to current policy. None of the questions were considered to provide a psychological profile of the employees, but rather to seek opinions and a sense of organizational values in order to develop a professional standard of conduct.

Two on-line surveys were developed using a survey website service called Zoomerang™ and can be found at <http://www.zoomerang.com/>. The author felt it was important to separate the surveys of the rank and file and civilian staff from the leadership team for purposes of determining a defined difference in response to 23 core questions. The first 23 questions and the two demographic questions were identical for both groups for the purpose of seeking comparative data and would help answer ARP question two. Both surveys allowed respondents to elaborate on two questions for clarification and to add any final comments.

The second Zoomerang™ on-line survey was developed and sent to 28 members of the LF&R leadership team for a management and strategic view and to provide answers to ARP

question three. The LF&R leadership team consisted of the department chief officers, the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 644 union president, and those captains who work in temporary interim positions or tested for potential promotion to chief officer positions. The Local 644 union president was included because of his influence with a majority of LF&R employees with the hope labor will support the entire project.

The leadership survey consisted of the same 23 questions as were asked of all other LF&R employees but with the addition of four questions considered relevant to exploring reasons for behaviors and possible solutions for accountability and an improved ethical climate. Several survey questions offer suggestions for communicating and implementing ethical conduct for LF&R employees. A comments section was also available to the leadership survey. All results from both surveys are considered for organizational assessment and development of the professional standard of conduct.

The employee survey was proofread, tested several times for functionality and launched on September 28, 2007 to 275 e-mail addresses of LF&R employees including firefighter, firefighter/paramedics, captains, training division and civilian staff. After 14 days, approximately one-third of respondents had completed the survey and an Internet reminder was sent on October 11, 2007. The survey was closed on October 28, 2007 with 178 completed of 275 invitations or nearly 65% response. The employee survey questions with results can be found in Appendix C.

The second survey was proofread, tested several times for functionality and launched on October 4, 2007 to 28 e-mail addresses of the LF&R leadership team. An Internet reminder was sent on October 11, 2007 to encourage completion. The survey was closed on October 28, 2007

with 22 completed of 28 invitations or nearly 79% response. The leadership survey questions and results can be found in Appendix D.

Assumptions and Limitations

Literature and reference materials used in research for this ARP were thought to be credible and unbiased and as current as possible. Once literature review began, it was apparent from volumes of information available on the subject, that ethics, conduct and related issues are subjects of high interest among government, business and organizations on a national and international level. With such an abundance of relative subject matter and the time constraints for this ARP, it was not possible to review all research and valuable information may have been overlooked.

Many LF&R department policies, the vision, goals, mission statement and strategic plans are under revision. The timing of this research could not have been better, however, the current fire chief and leadership team are in transition and many changes in organization policy and philosophy are evolving.

It is assumed that response to the survey is an accurate representation of LF&R employees. Response to both Zoomerang™ surveys was lower than the desired 100% return. Incomplete response from some employees can be partly attributed to the inflexible Zoomerang™ policy which allows anyone to opt-out of a survey and no ability to prevent participant opt-out. A request was made for survey participants to not exercise the opt-out feature in an e-mail notice but 26 employees still exercised the opt-out feature on the employee survey and one person opted out of the leadership team survey. Reasons for other incomplete response are most likely due to respondents overlooking the e-mail invitation or long term leave

of several employees when the survey was open. Participants were allowed to respond to the survey only one time.

Survey analysis would have been more efficient if the questions common to both the employee and leadership survey groups were combined. The leadership survey could then have been used and would have consisted of only the four separate management questions. Several questions written in a matrix format could have been redesigned for a more defined response summary. These survey results are still thought adequate and the survey valid since all LF&R employees were invited to participate and the primary goal was for information and soliciting ideas for improving the ethical climate and establishing the professional standard of conduct.

Valuable comments were made to questions 13, 24, 26 and 30 from both the employee and leadership surveys and helped by allowing respondents to elaborate on a question or identifying issues not completely discussed. Several respondents revealed individual names and identifiable situations. These comments are important to this research and considered in the discussion section. Due to the personal nature of comments from these questions and an effort to assure anonymity, they were not included in the appendix and only shared with the LF&R leadership team.

The action research of this ARP consisted of a professional standard of conduct developed from this research and employee input gleaned from the surveys. This document will not be a final version, but it will be considered a draft and forwarded through the policy development process of LF&R. Once approved, the intent is that it will be a working document to be applied for all LF&R employees.

Definition of Terms

Zoomerang™ A web based survey instrument, Copyright© 1999-2007 MarketTools,

Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Results

This applied research project is for concern that LF&R employees may not meet national or industry expectations of good business practice and ultimately are not consistent in serving the community. In order to address these concerns, results of the literature review, survey of LF&R employees and current LF&R policy and practices were used to respond to the first three research questions for this ARP. The fourth question of this ARP then asked how can the desired behaviors be communicated and implemented throughout the LF&R organization. To better address this, a Code of Ethical Conduct and policy was developed for review and implementation.

Question one of this ARP asks what are considered to be ethical principles. Literature research found that ethical principles and conduct are positive behaviors based on individual values. These values are essential within an organization and should be clearly stated in the vision, mission statement and goals (Bruegman, 2006).

Results of the literature research of definitions (Merriam-Webster, dictionary.com, Britannica concise, 2007) and organizational philosophies (BSA, 1998, Josephson, 2007, IAFC, 2007, etc.) found 16 core values that demonstrate positive behaviors felt to be important to LF&R. These 16 core values are honesty, fairness, compassion, public confidence, tolerance, trust, respect, responsibility, competent, loyal, considerate, dependable, moral, teamwork oriented, accountable and integrity. If these core values were a part of the organizational values for LF&R employees, then the expectation is that Lincoln citizens would experience a higher and more consistent level of service.

ARP question two asks, what ethical principles are important to LF&R employees.

Several management policies indirectly address ethical principles. In MP 101.01, *Description of the mission and organization of Lincoln Fire & Rescue*, the department mission is listed, but there is no direct mention of ethics in relation to the organization or its members. MP 104.30 *Internet access and use*, gives general rules on computer and internet use, but falls short with the absence of ethical guidance.

In order to answer ARP research question two, an internal survey was developed for LF&R suppression members and civilian administrative staff. ARP question three was also researched through additional questions to the LF&R leadership team. The surveys were intended to determine the ethical climate of the organization, the perception of current department and city policy, and individual feelings of identified behaviors or qualities desired in LF&R employees. It was designed to be anonymous with varying format such as yes and no, multiple choice, rating importance and offering occasions for respondents to comment and add clarification. The questions with results for the employee survey can be found in Appendix C. The Leadership team survey questions and response is found in Appendix D.

Survey question one asks if LF&R employees behave in an ethical manner and 86% strongly agree or agree. Eighty two percent of the leadership team had a similar opinion. It was clear in question two that 94% of employees and 100% of leadership felt that ethical conduct of LF&R employees was essential. Sixty-five percent of employees and 68% of the leadership team when answering question four stated they strongly agree or agree that LF&R members treat each other with respect.

It was also clear from question three that citizens and visitors of Lincoln expect a high ethical standard of conduct from LF&R employees with 97% employees and 100% leadership in

agreement. When asked in question five if LF&R members treat all citizens with a high degree of respect, 76% of employees and 73% of leadership strongly agreed or agreed. A contrary response to this question also indicated that both groups disagreed according to 14% of employees and 11% of leadership. Fourteen percent of the leadership team was unsure in their response.

Question six asked whether ethical behavior is adequately addressed in LF&R policy and only 48% of employees agreed, 20% disagreed and 32% unsure. Question seven addressed the need for a written code of conduct for all employees and 44% of employees and 36% of leadership stated the current rules were adequate as written, 21% of employees and 36% of leadership felt they were not clear. Twenty percent of employees and 23% of leadership felt they were adequate as long as everyone followed them. A surprising 15% of employees and 5% of leadership were not familiar with the rules of conduct.

Employees were asked in question eight whether they personally follow department or city policy even if they don't agree with it and 76% of employees and 86% of the leadership team would follow policy. Respondent comments to this question offered that several policies are outdated, contradictory and based on circumstances, or that policy may not be the best course of action. When asked if there should be consequences for failure to follow a code of conduct in question nine, a surprising eight percent from employees said there should not be while leadership was unanimous that there should.

Question 10 asked if the leaders of LF&R set good examples of ethical behavior and only 22% felt they did but 20% were unsure. The leadership team thought that 36% of leaders set good ethical examples and 23% were unsure.

To get a sense of ethical climate and related pressures to conform, question 11 asked if respondents felt pressure to do things that were unethical or dishonest and 19% of employees and 12% of the leadership team said they strongly agreed or agreed that there was some pressure for dishonorable behavior. To get a sense of observed unethical behavior during the past year, 44% of employees and 73% of leadership responding to question 12 stated they observed unethical behavior while at work and nine percent of employees were unsure. Question 13 allowed those responding *yes* or *unsure* in question 12 to briefly explain and 72 respondents replied. The employee comments included various behaviors observed which were grouped into the several categories by order of frequency. Treatment of co-workers and even vindictive actions by leaders was the most common behavior followed by disrespect of patients, lies and dishonest acts, rules violations, sexual and racial harassment, unprofessional conduct and theft. Comments from the leadership team were a very close reflection of the response made by employees.

Seventy-five percent of employees and 73% of the leadership team are aware of how their actions appear to others in question 14. Eighty-eight percent of employees and 86% of leadership care about their actions whether they are on-duty or off-duty in question 15.

Question 16 asked if as public employees, it is important to not abuse public trust and 100% of all LF&R employees and leadership agreed. Employees to question 17 felt the following attributes were important to show by order of importance in every aspect of their job: professionalism, competence, service and dedication. The leadership team agreed but valued dedication slightly before service.

Question 18 asked as a public employee if they would accept a gratuity for work performed and 92% of employees and 86% of leadership said they would not. General comments to both surveys from the final question indicated confusion with the term gratuity.

There is a difference between a plate of cookies brought to a fire station and some type of financial benefit. Ninety-two percent of employees and 86% of the leadership team strongly agree or agree to have a moral obligation to serve the public ahead of their own interests in question 19. Nearly 100% in both surveys responding to question 20 felt it was important to protect private information of those we are entrusted to help.

When asked about trust in question 21, 80% of employees and 82% of leadership strongly agree or agree to trust relationships with their co-workers, but in question 22, only 67 and 68% of employees and leadership trust their supervisor. The survey was not specific enough to determine if the respondents were supervised at the company or administrative level.

Sixteen key words were found in literature review references to be consistent with positive ethical behaviors and core values. Question 23 was designed for employees to rate the importance of each behavior which would ultimately define individual and organizational values. Nearly all employees and leadership felt every key behavior was either essential or important. A very few said the key behaviors were of no importance.

Question 24 was for demographic information of respondents and described all ranges of service years from recently employed to those with over 20 years of service. Twenty-two percent had less than five years of service, 24% were with six to ten years, 20% had 11 to 15 years and the smallest representation was those in the 16 to 20 year range represented by 14%. Those with over 20 years of service represented 21%. The leadership team survey differed with all respondents being more senior employees of LF&R. Question 28 of the leadership survey showed nine percent of the leadership team having 11 to 15 years service, 23% were from 16 to 20 years and 68% had over 20 years of service.

Response in question 25 of the employee survey regarding department classification showed 28% were completed by firefighters, 18% were firefighter/paramedics, 20% fire apparatus operators (FAO), 29% captains, and four percent civilian employees. One chief officer was marked as having taken this survey but since the chief officers only took the leadership survey, that response is thought to be an error. When asked the classification in question 29 of the leadership survey, 59% of respondents were captains identified as part of the leadership for the organization and 41% were chief officers of LF&R.

Question 26 was an option for employees to add comments or suggestions and 65 employee and leadership comments were recorded. These responses were reviewed for relevance and summarized that morale is low and there is a need for trust, respect and kindness at all levels of the organization. All personnel should be held accountable and discipline issues should be handled quickly and with fairness. A code of conduct should apply to all employees and there is renewed hope for the newly appointed Fire Chief to implement the change LF&R has long needed.

ARP question three asks what principles are important to the LF&R leadership team. For purposes of answering this research question, a second Zoomerang™ on-line survey was developed and sent to 28 members of the LF&R leadership team for a management and strategic view and is described in the procedures section of this research.

Question 24 of the leadership survey asked if respondents felt LF&R employees followed city and department policy and to what degree. Fifty percent felt only when rules personally affect them, 23% thought only for those rules with legal and regulatory consequences, and 23% thought they followed rules to avert discipline. Comments to this question elaborated that some

employee reasons for compliance to rules are self-centered, or violated rules are ones that attract the least attention and there may be a difference in interpretation of rules.

Question 25 asked to rate reasons why LF&R employees may not follow the rules of conduct. Response of *strongly agree* or *agree* were for leadership issues, generational differences and inconsistent discipline as the leading reasons. Authority issues, lack of training and obstinate behavior also were felt to be important factors. Labor management issues, unclear code of conduct and lack of employee input was not considered as important.

When asked in question 26, what it would take for employees to be more compliant to rules of conduct. Strong leadership, personal accountability for all, fair and consistent discipline and clear expectations were all answered *strongly agree*. Improved communication, reestablish a code of conduct, consistent written discipline policy and training were also considered important. Improved labor management relations, and committee input with consensus were not as significant.

Question 27 asked for ideas on holding employees accountable for conduct and behavior. Setting clear expectations, mentoring, fair and consistent discipline and additional training were all strong recommendations.

Comments and suggestions from the leadership team in question 30 indicated that the subject of this ARP is a long-term and complicated issue. Hiring ethical employees, be fair, consistent, and accountable and get rid of the “good ole boy” system were all noted response. One comment offered a detailed account of removing the negative aspects of discipline in order to encourage supervisors to help employees outline steps for improvement, ultimately leaving the burden with the employee and not the supervisor.

Discussion

LF&R, like many other organizations, has a dilemma with regard to managing ethical issues by employees representing the department. An organization can take a proactive approach to guiding employee actions at the forefront by promoting the desired ethical behaviors through written policy, training and ethical leadership from within. A less desirable, reactionary or negative approach would be to use an internal affairs system of investigation and discipline in order to manage. A solid values system seems to be the difference.

Literature review indicates that the highest standards of integrity are fundamental to services offered by public safety employees and these attributes actually define the individuals and their organization. Any failure in these values can compromise vital services (Bruegman, 2006). Survey question 13 comments from employees speculate that any deficiencies in these values may be a reason for the subtle decline in LF&R credibility and observable unethical behaviors.

Ethics can be defined as moral principles while conduct is considered a standard of personal behavior based on those same moral principles (Merriam-Webster, 2007). These behaviors often result in actions based on competing choices derived from morals or what is considered right and wrong. An ethical dilemma can be created for individuals and it may ultimately influence personal behavior or actions.

The phenomenon of groupthink was defined as a decision making process with such a high influence from the group that it overrides alternate and often more realistic conclusions that may be ultimately applied to ethics and conduct (NFA, 2005). Organizationally, positive groupthink is easily promoted by leadership and negative groupthink can be avoided by encouraging individuals to be critical evaluators and by using outside observers to raise

questions, avoid pitfalls, and offer new insight. These were all points of discussion during the case studies from *Executive leadership* with reference to the Bay of Pigs incident from the Kennedy presidential administration.

The federal judicial system is becoming more involved in requiring ethical practices to be promoted by business and organizations. The Federal Sentencing Guidelines for Organizations (FSGO) is a means to encourage ethical compliance (Ethics Resource Center, 2007). It is unclear from this research if governmental agencies such as LF&R are required to comply. It may be assumed that if FSGO's are required by business, then ultimately the public will also demand the same requirements for government agencies. LF&R should research voluntary compliance to FSGO's.

The Josephson Institute (2004) report on the effect of unethical behavior pointed to the broad impact not only in costs of absenteeism, fraud, and lost productivity, but with intangibles such as ineffective teamwork and general misconduct. The most damaging aspect could be the loss of credibility for the organization.

The literature review found some deficiencies, ambiguity and employee disconnect with current department policy. Employees of LF&R are governed by both City of Lincoln (1992 & nd) and department policies (Appendix B) that typically outline discipline for bad behavior and rewards for positive. What they lack are defined expectations of ethical principles based on values of LF&R, the City of Lincoln or its citizens. LF&R does address conduct through MP 208.01, *Rules of conduct* found in Appendix B. They essentially outline what is right and wrong and leave little consideration for ethics in relation to individual human beliefs and behaviors. This author feels a cultural shift in organizational values seems to be a positive move from the

way LF&R business is currently conducted and more toward individual accountability based on positive ethical values.

The results of both surveys provided considerable insight to LF&R employee feelings of current ethics, department policy and how they are all applied within the organization and to the community. Results from survey questions six indicate that a majority of LF&R personnel feel current department policy adequately addresses ethical behavior, yet 20% of employees and 32% of the leadership team disagree or strongly disagree.

Question seven elaborates on concerns with department policy when 21% of responding employees and 36% of the leadership team indicate the rules of conduct are not clear. This difference of opinion indicates a strong need to review and address ethical behavior of employees. If there are rules of conduct, they need to be clearly written, promoted and applied. This question also indicated that 20% of employees and 23% of the leadership team consider the rules are okay as long as everyone follows them. Employees and leaders want rules but they need to be followed and enforced. This same feeling was also supported by several respondent comments. The importance of training and orientation are evident from question seven of the survey when at least 15% of LF&R employees are not even familiar with the current rules of conduct.

Employees have a strong belief that fair and ethical treatment should exist internally as well as for the customers. Survey question four indicated the majority of respondents had a high level of respect between LF&R employees. The employee group, however, found a greater number who disagreed than those of the leadership group.

Bruegman (2006) claimed that employees operating in remote locations are difficult to supervise. The author feels this difference in treatment could be that employees observe more

disrespect than managers because of remote and separate fire station work locations. The second reason may be that the survey question did not differentiate between a level of disrespect that could take place between a crew and their supervising captain or between the crews and chief officers.

LF&R is one hundred percent in the business of helping people. It was disturbing to find a lack of respect for citizens and the disadvantaged from response to survey question five. It is unacceptable to have even one report of mistreatment to patients, the disadvantaged or any customer. LF&R and the citizens of Lincoln should accept nothing less than quality service delivered to all. Providing this level of service will be an organizational cultural change and require some employees to modify their behavior. If recruiting objectives were more clearly defined it may identify employee candidates with strong core values prior to employment. Combine recruitment with a comprehensive internal training program and service to internal and external customers may improve.

When asked if there should be consequences for failure to follow a code of conduct in question nine, a surprising eight percent from employees said there should not be while leadership was unanimous that there should. This response seems to show a lack of personal accountability from some employees and a clear sense of accountability from leadership. In order for LF&R to effectively work together, each employee will need to take ownership and be accountable for their actions. This behavior is a fundamental pillar of responsibility from Character Counts (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2007) and the Boy Scouts of America (1998).

Survey questions 11 indicated some pressure toward dishonest or unethical behavior and question 12 respondents actually observed unethical behavior while at work during the past year. Question 13 found 72 employee comments to explain various behaviors observed and were

grouped into the several categories by order of frequency. Treatment of co-workers and even vindictive actions by leaders was the most common behavior followed by disrespect of patients, lies and dishonest acts, rules violations, sexual and racial harassment, unprofessional conduct and theft. Comments from the leadership team were a very close reflection of the response made by employees. To put these figures in perspective, several respondents appeared to be commenting on a single unethical event within the department as identified by the author. All of these are clear violations of ethics, professional conduct and will again show a need for individual and organizational change in culture and values.

Sixteen key words were found throughout literature review references to be consistent with positive ethical behaviors and core values. Question 23 was designed for employees to rate the importance of each behavior which would ultimately define individual and organizational values. Nearly all employees and leadership felt every key behavior was either essential or important and although concerning, an insignificant number felt several key behaviors were of no importance. Any or all of the 16 key behaviors could apply to core values of the LF&R professional standard of conduct.

The leadership group was asked four additional questions to determine some insight to consistent employee motivations, compliance and accountability with regard to rules and policies. Results indicate that employees are motivated most by only those policies that personally affect them in some way. Another primary reason employees may not be following the rules of conduct was lack of consistent leadership. Considering the comments of all survey respondents, the reason for lack of strong leadership at all levels was exacerbated during the 18 months that LF&R was without a permanent fire chief. Consistent discipline, authority issues,

lack or training, labor management issues and an unclear code of conduct were other areas that should be improved.

In an effort to improve employee conformity to rules of the organization, the survey questions were written with an ethical and values intent. The leadership felt that response to achieve compliance would require strong leadership, personal accountability for all, setting clear expectations and administering fair and consistent discipline. Least effective would be the use of committee input and improved labor management relations.

Finally, there is the question of what is the best means for holding employees accountability for behavior. Clear expectations by consistent written policy, administering fair and consistent discipline and providing additional training and orientation were all recommended. Establishing an ethics or internal affairs committee was not thought to be an effective means for accountability.

Discussion Summary

Response to both surveys confirms the research that LF&R employees are not providing consistent and desirable service to internal and external customers. It is also evident that the current policy, vision, goals and mission of LF&R do not clearly address the values of the employees, citizens or the organization.

The literature review identified many benefits to ethical standards and shows undeniable correlation to the benefits of positive behavior, through moral conduct and ethical values of individuals in an organization. The surveys found that LF&R is very receptive to a positive change. If presented with professional standards of conduct, these values would be more apparent to all employees and improved behaviors and actions would be evident to both internal and external customers. Evidence from this research indicates that if LF&R individual and

organizational values are not addressed, inconsistent and negative behaviors to internal and external customers will likely continue.

Recommendations

The problem being addressed by this research was that LF&R employee behavior was not consistent when dealing with internal and external customers in a variety of situations. The purpose of this research was to determine what ethical principles were important to LF&R by reviewing current rules, policy, definitions and to establish organizational values through employee surveys.

This research found sufficient information that showed a need to identify core values in which a professional standard of conduct for LF&R should be developed. Research also found the following recommendations for applying and communicating these core values to employees.

1. The professional standard of conduct was developed from literature review and survey results and is found in Appendix E. It will then move through the LF&R policy process from draft, to final review and implementation.
2. The LF&R vision statement, mission and goals should be revised to reflect employee, citizen and organizational values.
3. Training and orientation for every employee of the organization will be essential to successful implementation, accountability and ultimately a more consistent application of LF&R organizational values.
4. LF&R needs a way to monitor and assess behaviors of both leadership and employees in order to make needed corrections in ethical behavior.

5. This research did not take into consideration response from external customers of LF&R. In order to further evaluate the problem of inconsistent service delivery, a mechanism for routine evaluation of external customers should be implemented.
6. LF&R needs to consider a method of recruiting and hiring new employees with ethical values that reflect those of the organization.
7. High ethical standards need to be a prerequisite for promotion and LF&R needs to employ management and leadership training that is applicable and necessary at every level.
8. As department policies are reviewed or developed, it is important that they are positive, clearly written, promoted and applied equally to all.
9. Societal values seem to be constantly changing. It can also be assumed that these societal changes have some affects on employees and their behavior. It is important that research continues in order to reflect current ethical practices from other businesses and organizations.
10. Many businesses and organizations are complying with the Federal Sentencing Guidelines for Organizations (FSGO) by establishing a compliance program for training, education and to monitor employee conduct. LF&R should explore the FSGO regulations and consider compliance.
11. Feedback is essential in any problem solving process. A review should be conducted annually of the LF&R vision statement, mission, goals and professional standards of conduct.

Change is often difficult, especially when it blends individual beliefs and values within an organization. It may take months or even years to realize positive results. Implementing

these recommendations will provide guidance for desired performance within the LF&R organizational culture and ultimately will provide positive and more consistent service to internal and external customers.

References

- American Psychological Association (APA). (2007). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. Retrieved on September 6, 2007 from <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>
- Boy Scouts of America (BSA). (1998). The meaning of the boy scout law. *Boy scout handbook*. (11th Ed.). Irving, TX: Author.
- Britannica Concise (2007a). *Encyclopedia*. Retrieved September 6, 2007, from <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9382075>
- _____. (2007b). *Encyclopedia*. Retrieved September 6, 2007, from <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1B1-382075.html>
- Bruegman, R. (2005). *The chief officer: a symbol is a promise*. (1st ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Bruegman, R. (2006). Ethics in the fire service. J. M. Buckman III (Ed.), *Chief fire officer's desk reference*. (p. 199). Fairfax, VA: International Association of Fire Chiefs.
- City of Lincoln, (1992). *Lincoln municipal code: charter*. Retrieved October 9, 2007 from <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/attorn/lmc/charter.pdf>
- _____. (2002). *LFR earns accreditation and national recognition*. Retrieved August 29, 2007, from <http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/fire/info/accredit.htm>
- _____. (2007a). *Welcome to the City of Lincoln*. Retrieved August 20, 2007, from <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/index.htm>
- _____. (2007b). *Annual operating budget, 06-07*. Retrieved August 5, 2007, from <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/finance/budget/pdf/fire07.pdf>

- _____. (2007c). *Past mayors of Lincoln, NE – Don Wesely*. Retrieved September 4, 2007 from <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/pstmayor/wesely.htm>
- _____. (nd). *Personnel system, chapter 2.76*. Retrieved October 9, 2007 from <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/attorn/lmc/ti02/ch276.pdf>
- Coleman, R. J., & Granito, J. A. (Eds.) (1988). *Managing fire services*. Washington, DC: International City Managers Association (ICMA).
- Compton, D. (2003). Leadership for today and tomorrow. In Coleman, R. *The fire chief's handbook*. (6th ed.). (p. 209-210). Oklahoma City, OK: PennWell Corporation.
- Dictionary.com (2007). *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. (v 1.1). Retrieved October 16, 2007, from [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/common sense](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/common%20sense)
- Ethics Resource Center (2007). *Federal sentencing guidelines*. Retrieved September 14, 2007 from <http://www.ethics.org/erc-publications/federal-sentencing-guidelines.asp>
- Frievalt, F. (2006, July). Culture shift: Is it time your department shifts its focus from rules to values? *FireRescue*, 24, pp. 64-66.
http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=793
- The Harris Poll (2007). Firefighters, scientists and teachers top list as “most prestigious occupations,” according to latest Harris poll. Retrieved September 7, 2007 from http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=793
- Holt, John (2005). *Leadership quotes*, Distributive Education Club of America (DECA). Retrieved December 9, 2007 from <http://www.deca.org/pdf/LeadershipQuotes.pdf>

International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). (2007). *Fire chief's code of ethics*.

Retrieved October 11, 2007 from

<http://www.iafc.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=5#ethics>

International Association of Firefighters (IAFF). (August 2006). *Constitution and by-laws*.

Washington, DC: Author.

International City Managers Association (ICMA). (2007). *Santa Clara, CA code of*

ethics and values. Retrieved October 16, 2007 from

<http://www.icma.org/upload/library/IQ/118005.pdf>

Josephson Institute (2004). *The hidden costs of unethical behavior*. Retrieved September

11, 2007 from http://www.josephsoninstitute.org/pdf/workplace-flier_0604.pdf

_____. (2007). *Character counts*. Retrieved September 14, 2007 from

<http://charactercounts.org/defsix.htm>

Lincoln Fire & Rescue (LFR). (2004). *Emergency services, inc. system policies and*

procedures for Lincoln Fire and Rescue. Retrieved October 9, 2006 from

<https://intra.linc.lincoln.ne.gov/city/fire/mp/emspolpr.pdf>

_____. (2007a). *NETF-1 history*. Author. Retrieved August 20, 2007, from

<http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/fire/ucar/hstry.htm>

_____. (2007b). *Feedback from residents*. Retrieved September 7, 2007 from

<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/fire/feedback/feedback.htm>

_____. (2007c). *Mission & goals*. Retrieved October 16, 2007 from

<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/fire/mission.htm>

Merriam-Webster (2007a). *Dictionary*. Retrieved September 6, 2007 from

<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/ethics>

_____. (2007b). *Dictionary*. Retrieved September 6, 2007 from

<http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conduct>

National Fire Academy (NFA). (2005). *Executive leadership*. (5th Ed.). Emmitsburg,

MD: Author.

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, (2001). *Attaining a wise outcome: problem-*

solving for public officials. (pp. 71-79). Pittsburgh, PA: Author.

Thinkmap (2007). *Visual thesaurus*. Retrieved September 6, 2007 from

<http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>

United States Fire Administration. (2005). *United States Fire Administration*

operational objectives. Retrieved September 14, 2007, from

<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/efop-guidelines.pdf>

Wallace, M. (2005, August). Eliminating silly rules in a value-driven organization. *Fire engineering*, 158, pp. 105-108.

Appendix A
PRESTIGE OF 23 PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS

"I am going to read off a number of different occupations. For each, would you tell me if you feel it is an occupation of very great prestige, considerable prestige, some prestige or hardly any prestige at all?"

Base: All Adults		Very Great Prestige	Considerable Prestige	Some Prestige	Hardly Any Prestige At All	Not Sure/ Refused
		%	%	%	%	%
Firefighter		61	26	10	2	-
Scientist		54	28	13	4	*
Teacher		54	24	16	6	*
Doctor		52	35	12	1	-
Military officer		52	29	15	4	*
Nurse		50	29	17	4	-
Police officer		46	27	19	7	*
Priest/Minister/ Clergy		42	23	26	9	*
Farmer		41	16	26	17	-
Engineer		30	37	25	6	1
Member of Congress		26	32	23	17	2
Architect		23	33	39	6	*
Lawyer		22	20	41	17	*
Athlete		16	20	45	19	*
Business executive		14	28	42	15	*
Journalist		13	24	47	16	*
Union Leader		13	20	36	30	1
Stockbroker		12	17	46	25	1
Entertainer		12	16	42	31	-
Accountant		11	25	48	16	1
Banker		10	28	45	17	*
Actor		9	19	34	38	-
Real estate agent/broker		5	18	43	34	*

*Less Than 0.5%

"-"No Response

Appendix B

Lincoln Fire & Rescue, MP 101.01, *Description of the mission and organization of*

Lincoln Fire & Rescue

Lincoln Fire & Rescue, 104.30 *Internet access and use*

Lincoln Fire & Rescue, MP 208.01, *Rules of conduct*

Lincoln Fire & Rescue - Management Policy
Mission and Organization (MP101.01 11/08/07)

Description of the Mission and Organization of Lincoln Fire & Rescue.

Implemented 4/97

Mission

To provide the highest level of life and property safety through the extension of fire prevention, fire control, emergency medical services and public education services to the citizens of the Lincoln community.

Purpose

Supporting this mission is the LFR administration, which coordinates the functional areas by planning, organizing, implementing, controlling, evaluating and communicating within the organization. It is therefore the responsibility of administration to implement, manage, and support the various functional areas and processes within the LFR structure.

Sound management and administration are vital to the leadership of any successful organization. Research and planning will help to determine future needs of the Department in relation to needs of the community. Organizational policies, procedures and special programs need to be continually developed and maintained to provide the most effective operation, while keeping with organizational goals and objectives. Communication and correspondence within the organization and between other agencies must remain a high priority for administration to promote and maintain. It is also an administrative responsibility to monitor and review legislative actions pertaining to laws, ordinances and their effect on the Department.

Lincoln Fire & Rescue - Management Policy
Internet Access and Use (MP104.30 11/15/07)

Identifies authorized use of Internet access.

Implemented 2/98

Purpose

Lincoln Fire & Rescue currently provides Internet access through the network system. This policy establishes authorized use for this Internet access.

Policy

Access to the Internet through the city computer hardware/software systems will be used only for official fire department business. Fire department business can be research, communications, data, and information requests to other users of the Internet. Unauthorized uses such as personal communications, inquiries to web sites containing gambling, sexual, or pornographic information is prohibited. Anyone utilizing city Internet access or equipment for these purposes may be subject to disciplinary actions.

Lincoln Fire & Rescue - Management Policy
Rules of Conduct (MP208.01 10/00)

Description of the rules of conduct for Fire Department employees.

Implemented 5/92

Purpose

The following list of directories represents the conduct standards for members of Lincoln Fire & Rescue. The basis for these regulations is the following policy:

Every member of Lincoln Fire & Rescue is expected to operate in a highly self-disciplined manner and is responsible to regulate his/her own conduct in a positive, productive, mature way. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action ranging from counseling to termination. Violations of Rules 19 or 20 shall result in automatic termination.

ALL MEMBERS SHALL:

1. Follow Management Policies, oral & written directives from supervisors, and written directives for both Lincoln Fire & Rescue and the City of Lincoln.
2. Use their training and capabilities to protect the public while on duty.
3. Work competently in their positions to cause all departmental programs to operate effectively.
4. Always conduct themselves to reflect credit on the department.
5. Supervisors shall manage in an effective, considerate manner; subordinates will follow instructions in a positive, cooperative manner.
6. Always conduct themselves in a manner that creates good order inside the department.
7. Keep themselves informed to do their jobs effectively.
8. Be concerned and protective of each members' welfare.
9. Operate safely and use good judgment.
10. Keep themselves physically fit.
11. Observe the work hours of their position.
12. Obey the law.
13. Be careful of Department equipment and property.

ALL MEMBERS SHALL NOT:

14. Engage in any activity that is detrimental to the Department.
15. Engage in a conflict of interest to the Department or use their position with the Department for personal gain or influence.
16. Fight.
17. Excessive use or abuse of their sick leave.
18. Steal.
19. Use alcoholic beverages, debilitating drugs, or any substance which could impair their physical or mental capacities while on duty.
20. Engage in sexual activity while on duty.

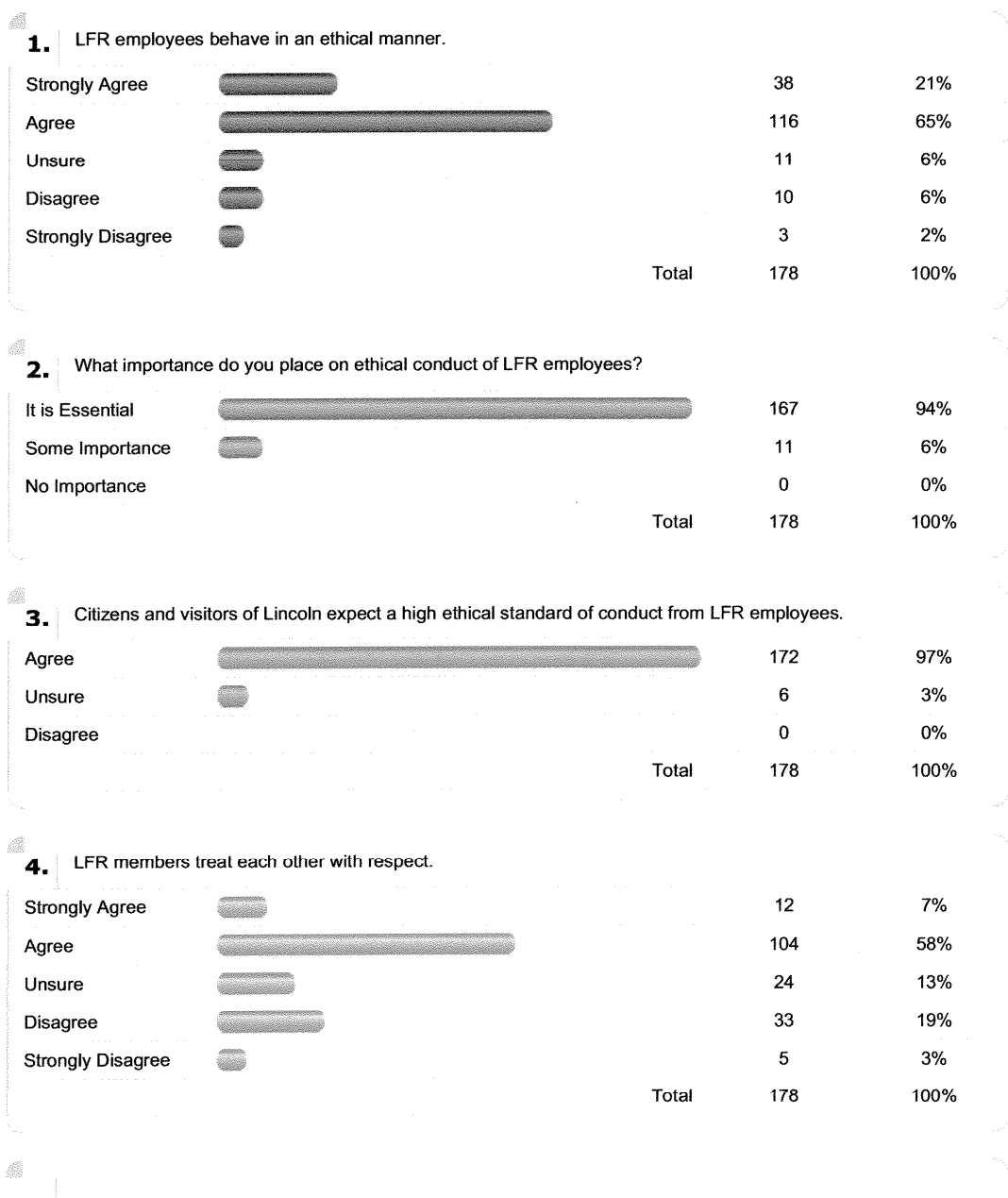
Appendix C

Lincoln Fire & Rescue employee Zoomerang™ survey
questions and response






LFR Code of Conduct
Results Overview








Date: 11/8/2007 2:31 PM PST
Responses: Completes
Filter: No filter applied







5. LFR employees treat all citizens, even the disadvantaged, with a high degree of respect.

Strongly Agree		35	20%
Agree		99	56%
Unsure		19	11%
Disagree		22	12%
Strongly Disagree		3	2%
Total		178	100%





6. Current LFR policy adequately addresses ethical behavior of employees.

















Strongly Agree		16	9%
Agree		70	39%
Unsure		57	32%
Disagree		32	18%
Strongly Disagree		3	2%
Total		178	100%

7. LFR needs a written Code of Conduct for all employees.

The current Rules of Conduct are OK as they are written.		78	44%
The Rules of Conduct are not clear.		37	21%
I am not familiar with the Rules of Conduct.		27	15%
The Rules of Conduct are OK as long as everyone follows them.		36	20%
Total		178	100%


8. I follow LFR and City policy even if I don't always agree with it.

Agree		136	76%
Unsure		22	12%
Disagree		10	6%
Other, please specify		10	6%
Total		178	100%





9. Should there be consequences for failure to follow a Code of Conduct?			
Yes		164	92%
No		14	8%
		Total	178 100%
10. The leaders of LFR set good examples of ethical behavior.			
Agree		40	22%
Disagree		102	57%
Unsure		36	20%
		Total	178 100%
11. At work, I feel pressure to do things that are unethical or dishonest.			
Strongly Agree		3	2%
Agree		18	10%
Unsure		14	8%
Disagree		80	45%
Strongly Disagree		63	35%
		Total	178 100%
12. During the past year I have observed unethical behavior on-the-job by LFR employees.			
Yes		78	44%
No		84	47%
Unsure		16	9%
		Total	178 100%
14. I am always aware of how my actions appear to others.			
Yes		133	75%
No		23	13%
Unsure		22	12%
		Total	178 100%
15. Whether I am on-duty or off-duty, my actions reflect favorably on the department.			

Agree		156	88%
Disagree		5	3%
Unsure		17	10%
Total		178	100%



16. As a public employee, it is important that we not abuse public trust for personal benefit.

Yes		178	100%
No		0	0%
Total		178	100%





17. In every aspect of my job, it is important to show: (Check all that apply)

Dedication		159	89%
Service		161	90%
Professionalism		176	99%
Competence		170	96%



18. As a public employee, would you accept a gratuity for work performed?

Yes		14	8%
No		164	92%
Total		178	100%

19. As an employee of LFR, I feel a moral obligation to serve the public interest ahead of my own?

Strongly Agree		64	36%
Agree		100	56%
Disagree		13	7%
Strongly Disagree		1	1%
Total		178	100%

20. It is important to protect private information that we have access to in the course of our duties.

Yes		176	99%
No		2	1%
Total		178	100%

21. I trust my co-workers.

Strongly Agree		50	28%
Agree		93	52%
Unsure		22	12%
Disagree		10	6%
Strongly disagree		3	2%
Total		178	100%

22. I trust my supervisor.

Strongly Agree		59	33%
Agree		61	34%
Unsure		30	17%
Disagree		17	10%
Strongly Disagree		11	6%
Total		178	100%

23. Please rate your feelings about the importance of the following behaviors or qualities of LFR employees. (1 is no importance and 4 is essential)

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option.
Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.







	No Importance	Some Importance	Important	Essential
Honesty	2 1%	1 1%	22 12%	153 86%
Fairness	3 2%	3 2%	56 31%	116 65%
Compassion	4 2%	11 6%	73 41%	90 51%
Public Confidence	3 2%	3 2%	52 29%	120 67%
Tolerance	2 1%	15 8%	82 46%	79 44%
Trust	2 1%	2 1%	25 14%	149 84%
Respect	3 2%	3 2%	55 31%	117 66%
Responsibility	4 2%	2 1%	33 19%	139 78%
Competent	4 2%	0 0%	28 16%	146 82%
Loyal	2 1%	21 12%	62 35%	93 52%

Considerate	1 1%	16 9%	67 38%	94 53%
Dependable	3 2%	3 2%	32 18%	140 79%
Moral	3 2%	13 7%	44 25%	118 66%
Teamwork oriented	3 2%	5 3%	43 24%	127 71%
Accountable	3 2%	2 1%	41 23%	132 74%
Integrity	3 2%	3 2%	32 18%	140 79%

24. Please indicate the number of years of service with LFR.

0 - 5 Years		39	22%
6 - 10 Years		42	24%
11 - 15 Years		35	20%
16 - 20 Years		25	14%
20 + Years		37	21%
Total		178	100%

25. What is your classification with LFR?

Firefighter		50	28%
Firefighter/Paramedic		32	18%
FAO		36	20%
Captain		51	29%
Chief Officer		1	1%
Civilian		8	4%
Total		178	100%

To type in your initial question, click Edit. Insert adds a new question either above or below this one.

Appendix D

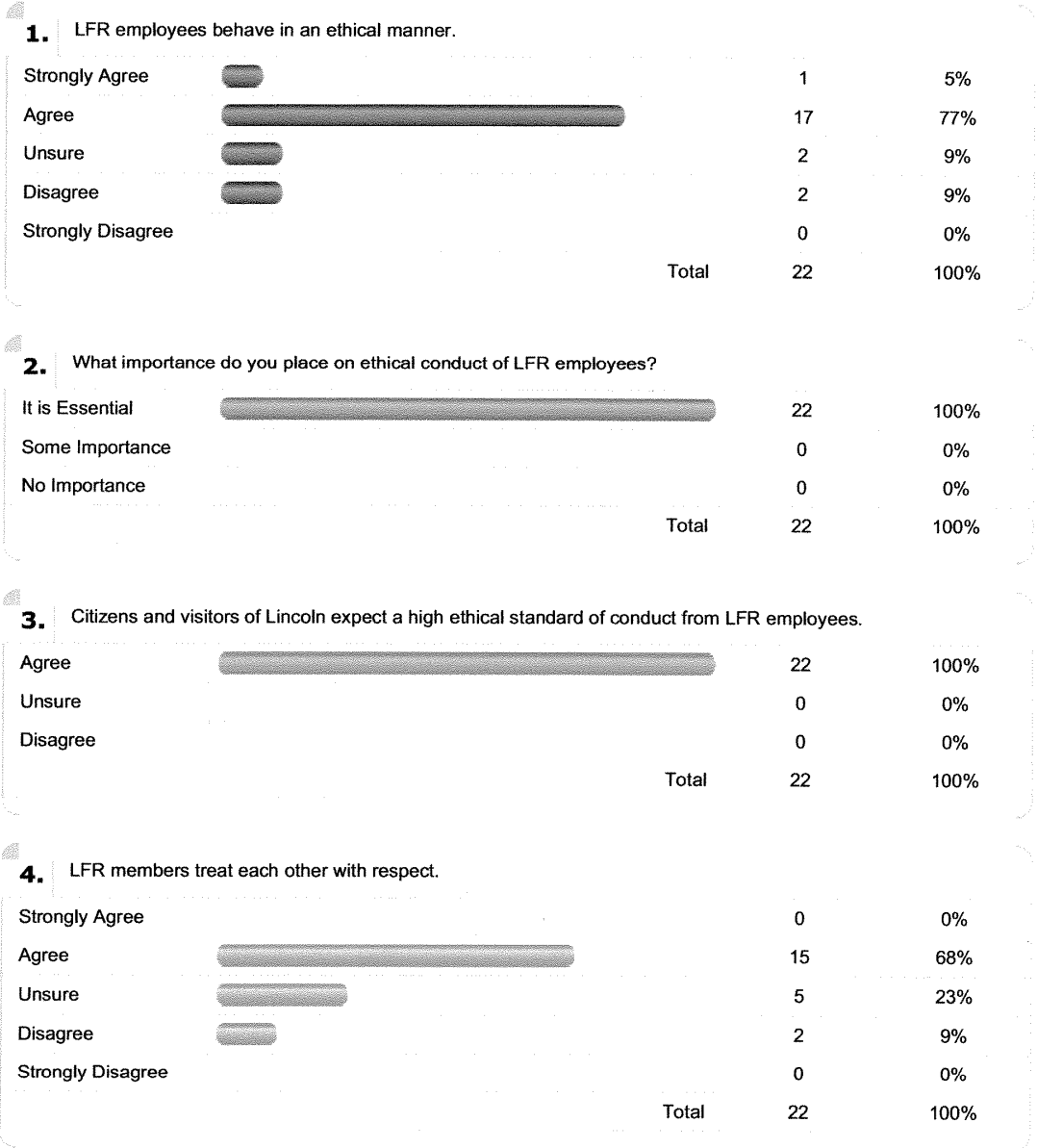
Lincoln Fire & Rescue leadership Zoomerang™ survey
questions and response

LFR Code of Conduct - Leadership Team

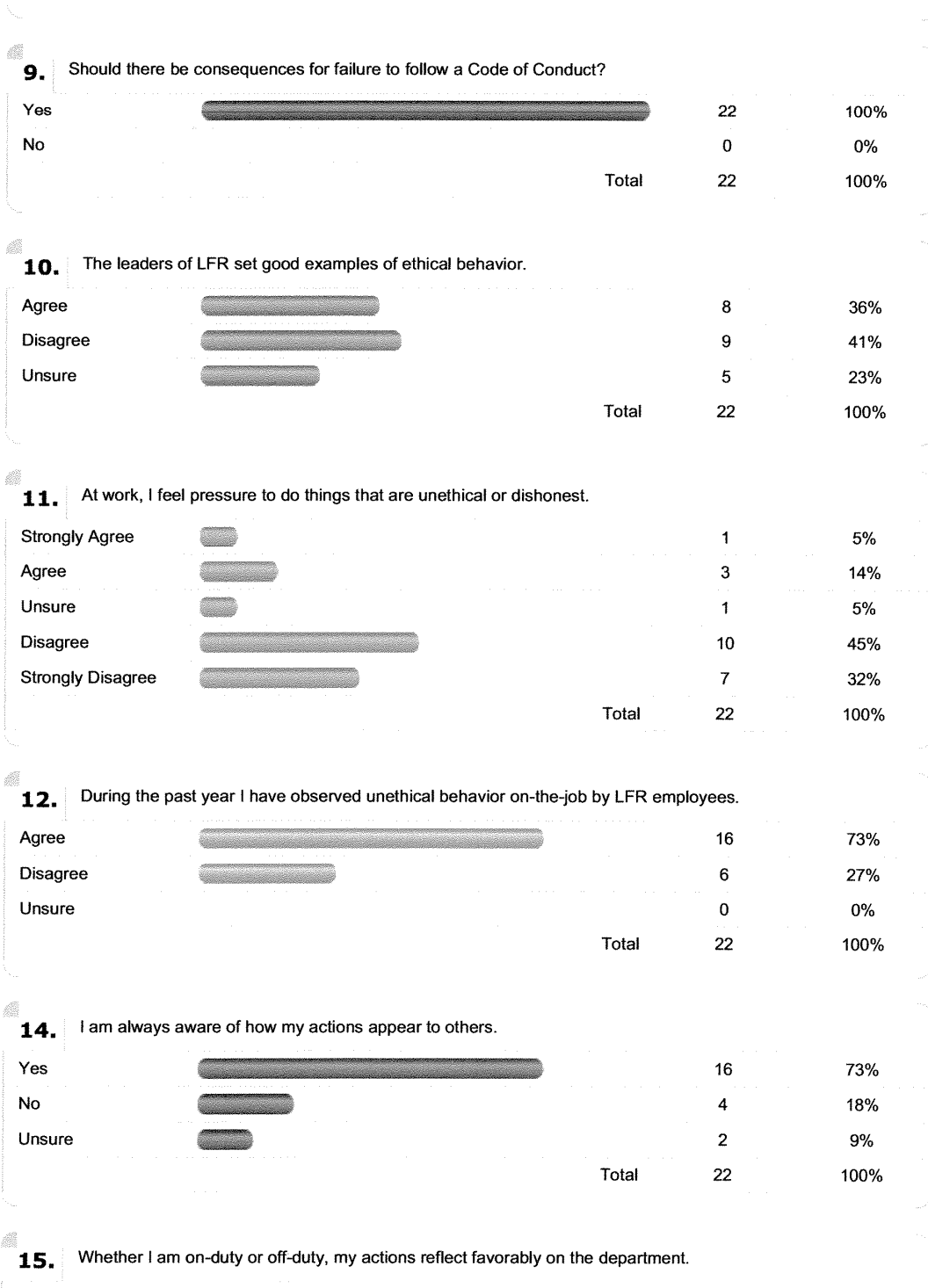





Results Overview

Date: 11/8/2007 2:29 PM PST
 Responses: Completes
 Filter: No filter applied











Agree		19	86%
Disagree		1	5%
Unsure		2	9%
Total		22	100%

16. As a public employee, it is important that we not abuse public trust for personal benefit.

Yes		22	100%
No		0	0%
Total		22	100%

17. In every aspect of my job, it is important to show: (check all that apply)

Dedication		19	86%
Service		18	82%
Professionalism		22	100%
Competence		21	95%

18. As a public employee, would you accept a gratuity for work performed?

Yes		3	14%
No		19	86%
Total		22	100%

19. As an employee of LFR, I feel a moral obligation to serve the public interest ahead of my own?

Strongly Agree		15	68%
Agree		4	18%
Disagree		3	14%
Strongly Disagree		0	0%
Total		22	100%

20. It is important to protect private information that we have access to in the course of our duties.

Yes		22	100%
No		0	0%
Total		22	100%

21. I trust my co-workers.

Strongly Agree		5	23%
Agree		13	59%
Unsure		3	14%
Disagree		1	5%
Strongly disagree		0	0%
Total		22	100%

22. I trust my supervisor.

Strongly Agree		7	32%
Agree		8	36%
Unsure		4	18%
Disagree		2	9%
Strongly Disagree		1	5%
Total		22	100%







23. Please rate your feelings about the importance of the following behaviors or qualities of LFR employees. (1 is no importance and 4 is essential)

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option.
Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.

	No Importance	Some Importance	Very Important	Essential
Honesty	0 0%	0 0%	4 18%	18 82%
Fairness	0 0%	0 0%	8 36%	14 64%
Compassion	0 0%	2 9%	11 50%	9 41%
Public Confidence	0 0%	0 0%	4 18%	18 82%
Tolerance	0 0%	2 9%	14 64%	6 27%
Trust	0 0%	0 0%	1 5%	21 95%
Respect	0 0%	1 5%	5 23%	16 73%
Responsibility	0 0%	0 0%	5 23%	17 77%
Competent	0 0%	0 0%	2 9%	20 91%
Loyal	0 0%	2 9%	9 41%	11 50%

Considerate	0 0%	2 9%	12 55%	8 36%
Dependable	0 0%	1 5%	4 18%	17 77%
Moral	0 0%	0 0%	5 23%	17 77%
Teamwork oriented	0 0%	0 0%	8 36%	14 64%
Accountable	0 0%	0 0%	4 18%	18 82%
Integrity	0 0%	0 0%	3 14%	19 86%

24. NOTE: The following questions are for LFR Chief Officers and Acting Chiefs.
Do you feel LFR employees consistently follow city and organizational rules and policy?

Always		1	5%
Never		1	5%
Only rules that personally affect them		11	50%
Only legal rules and regulations		5	23%
Only rules to avert discipline		5	23%
Other, please specify		6	27%

25. What reasons do you think LFR employees may not follow the Rules of Conduct?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option.
Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lack of training	3 14%	15 68%	3 14%	1 5%
Generational differences	5 23%	15 68%	2 9%	0 0%
Authority issues	6 27%	13 59%	3 14%	0 0%
Leadership issues	8 36%	13 59%	1 5%	0 0%
Unclear Code of Conduct	2 9%	13 59%	7 32%	0 0%
Labor - Management differences	9 41%	8 36%	4 18%	1 5%
Obstinate behavior	8 36%	10 45%	2 9%	2 9%

Lack of input from employees on the rules	6 27%	7 32%	8 36%	1 5%
Inconsistent discipline	14 64%	6 27%	2 9%	0 0%

26. What would it take for employees to be more compliant to rules of conduct?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option.
Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Committee input with consensus	2 9%	10 45%	7 32%	3 14%
Additional policy training and orientation	5 23%	13 59%	2 9%	2 9%
Consistent written discipline policies	11 50%	7 32%	2 9%	2 9%
Administering fair and consistent discipline	16 73%	4 18%	1 5%	1 5%
Improved labor - management relations	9 41%	6 27%	5 23%	2 9%
Clear expectations	14 64%	6 27%	0 0%	2 9%
Strong leadership	18 82%	4 18%	0 0%	0 0%
Personal accountability for all	14 64%	8 36%	0 0%	0 0%
Improved communications	14 64%	5 23%	3 14%	0 0%
Reestablish a code of conduct	11 50%	5 23%	5 23%	1 5%




27. How should we hold employees accountable for conduct and behavior?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option.
Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.



	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Peer review	4 18%	13 59%	5 23%	0 0%
Mentoring	4 18%	14 64%	3 14%	1 5%
Clear expectations	15 68%	7 32%	0 0%	0 0%
Consistent written discipline policies	12 55%	8 36%	1 5%	1 5%
Administering fair and consistent discipline	15 68%	6 27%	1 5%	0 0%

Provide additional training and orientation	7 32%	12 55%	2 9%	1 5%
Empowerment of employees	7 32%	11 50%	3 14%	1 5%
Reestablish and promote a code of conduct	7 32%	11 50%	4 18%	0 0%
Establish an ethics committee	4 18%	10 45%	8 36%	0 0%
Establish an internal affairs committee	4 18%	11 50%	7 32%	0 0%

28. Please indicate the number of years of service with LFR.

0 - 5 Years		0	0%
6 - 10 Years		0	0%
11 - 15 Years		2	9%
16 - 20 Years		5	23%
20 + Years		15	68%
Total		22	100%

29. What is your classification with LFR?

Firefighter		0	0%
Firefighter/Paramedic		0	0%
FAO		0	0%
Captain		13	59%
Chief Officer		9	41%
Civilian		0	0%
Total		22	100%

To type in your initial question, click Edit. Insert adds a new question either above or below this one.

Appendix E

Proposed management policy version of the
Professional standard of conduct for Lincoln Fire & Rescue

Lincoln Fire & Rescue - Management Policy
Professional Standard of Conduct (MP 101.05 1/08/08)

Professional Standard of Conduct for all Lincoln Fire & Rescue employees.

Implemented 1/08/08

Purpose

We believe the following Values are essential to the Code of Ethical Conduct for all members and employees of Lincoln Fire and Rescue. Our purpose is to work together serving the visitors and citizens of Lincoln.

Policy

All employees of Lincoln Fire & Rescue shall abide by all federal, state and local laws. As employees of the City of Lincoln, we are held to employee expectations as outlined in City Charter and the Personnel Code for the City of Lincoln.

A Professional Standard of Conduct is defined as conventional principles and expectations that are considered binding on any person who is a member of a particular group. Members of LFR have identified six primary areas of ethical value to the organization and citizens of Lincoln. They are:

- Integrity/Honesty,
- Responsibility/Community Service,
- Fairness,
- Respect for Internal and External Customers,
- Compassion and
- Loyalty to Lincoln Fire and Rescue.

Procedure

Employees of LFR will use the following Code of Ethical Conduct to guide them.

Professional Standard of Conduct
Lincoln Fire and Rescue

- **Integrity/Honesty**
 - We support the highest ethical standards of the Fire and Rescue Profession.
 - Above all else, we will conduct ourselves with the best interests of the public in mind.
 - Honesty and integrity are core values that strengthen and support our customer service.
- **Responsibility/Community Service**
 - We are highly trained, well prepared teams.
 - Safety, health and wellness are vital in our professional and our personal lives.
 - Our personal and professional conduct makes a statement about our values and is a reflection of LF&R.

Lincoln Fire & Rescue - Management Policy
Professional Standard of Conduct (MP 101.05 1/08/08)

Professional Standard of Conduct for all Lincoln Fire & Rescue employees.

Implemented 1/08/08

- We encourage public participation to enhance our Fire and Rescue Services.
- We always take ownership and responsibility for our actions.
- **Fairness**
 - We believe in fair, consistent and equitable treatment for everyone.
 - We believe everyone should be treated in a fair consistent manner without prejudice or bias.
- **Respect for Internal and External Customers**
 - We are a team.
 - We treat each other and the public with patience, respect and dignity.
 - We will always protect the privacy of customers.
 - We will always be tolerant, listen and respect each other.
- **Compassion**
 - We are compassionate, caring and respectful to every person.
 - We will always remember that our customers are somebody's loved one.
- **Loyalty to Lincoln Fire and Rescue**
 - We are dependable, loyal and dedicated professionals.
 - We follow policy, even if we don't always agree with it.
 - We will think before we act and always consider the consequences of our actions.
 - We will conduct ourselves knowing the team is greater than the individual for the betterment of the organization and community.
- **A Common Vision**
 - We have the desire to serve, the ability to perform and the courage to act.
 - Citizens and visitors of Lincoln expect the highest ethical standard from each of us.
 - Our duty is to serve and we are a symbol of public trust and faith.