



Position Statement

THE IAFC SUPPORTS INDIVIDUALS' RIGHTS TO SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES IN MULTIPLE CAPACITIES

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) has a long history of encouraging individuals to serve their communities and their nation. Based upon this principle, the IAFC Board of Directors supports the rights of volunteer, career, or paid-on-call firefighters to serve multiple organizations or communities. Each man and woman who chooses to live a life of volunteer service, does so out of a selfless and personal commitment. It should not be incumbent upon any organization to dictate or influence the extent of this deeply personal act.

As an independent leadership organization, the IAFC also recognizes the right of organizations (including trade organizations, unions and volunteer fire departments) to adopt a constitution and bylaws and set rules and qualifications for membership, as long as their membership requirements are neither illegal nor discriminatory. However, in the interest of public safety, the IAFC would recommend that no membership organization – volunteer, trade, or paid – should restrict membership and the right to serve in multiple organizations or communities.

When the exercise of the responsibility to serve a community involves choosing the fire and emergency service, the IAFC supports the rights of each individual to choose to serve in any capacity, whether in a volunteer, paid, or paid-on-call position. We further believe that individuals should have the right to engage in secondary employment, single or multiple volunteer activities, or a combination thereof on their own time so long as they do so in accordance with applicable laws. As the fire and emergency service's premier leadership organization, we urge the members of the service to remember their esteemed place in their communities and act with respect, integrity, common sense and decency toward each other. When conflicts arise, we encourage fire and EMS departments – and other affected organizations – to work together in a constructive manner to resolve these conflicts at the local level.

In the 21st Century, the requirements and demands on the fire and emergency service have grown tremendously. While new and terrible threats have emerged and natural disasters continue to grow in frequency and intensity, our cities and towns are under extreme financial pressure. In this perilous situation, it is essential that those in the fire and emergency service maintain working relationships with individuals and organizations that protect our communities, even when there are differences of opinion or approach. It is equally important that we continue to collaborate and provide a united voice for the fire and emergency service. The IAFC encourages the entire fire and emergency service community to focus on our first priority, which is to provide for the safety and security of our citizens.

Proposed By: IAFC Board of Directors
Date of Adoption: October 2008