



Take Leadership All the Way

In light of recent events in our communities and around the world, the IAFC Board of Directors believes that it is important to reemphasize our strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. As modern fire chiefs, ensuring the men and women in our departments are prepared and equipped to meet the challenges of the job is not enough. Our changing society demands that today's fire service leaders and emerging leaders adapt accordingly. As trusted, high-profile public officials, fire chiefs can no longer push diversity and inclusiveness matters down their priority list.

All fire service leaders must make it a priority to promote diversity, inclusion, and basic human dignity inside the firehouse. There are far too many incidents involving bullying, hazing, discrimination, harassment, and abuse in the news. We must be in tune with the culture in our departments and lead change by example. How we treat each other matters all of the time, not just some of the time. When under our watch we look the other way at words and deeds that are inappropriate – or worse – we are doing our entire industry and the public a grave disservice.

The IAFC urges the entire fire and emergency service to take positive steps to ensure human dignity by avoiding any remaining vestiges of discrimination or unequal treatment including, but not limited to, a basis on race, color, spirituality, gender, age, national origin, ancestry, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, ethnicity, marital status or any legally protected characteristic.

The IAFC stands firmly behind its [Human Dignity Statement of 2013](#) which "strongly recommends that all fire and emergency services organizations/agencies develop written policies and have procedures in place to support these position recommendations. Included in these policies should be a statement reinforcing a zero tolerance posture for acts of deliberate and/or intentional discrimination."

Written policies are not enough, however. The policies must be enforced every shift, every day. The culture of the firehouse, if it is poisoned socially and culturally, must be changed and it begins with the chief officer of the department. The IAFC Board of Directors challenges all members and fire service organizations to reaffirm their commitment to promoting diversity and inclusiveness in their departments and adopt this statement.

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