



# POSITION STATEMENT

## Human Dignity Statement

The IAFC faces many new challenges as we continue to provide leadership to a fire and emergency service that is ever evolving and in an environment where technology and the demographic composition of our society and workforces are changing at unparalleled rates. Our greatest resources for meeting the challenges of change are the members of the IAFC and their respective organizations who respond daily in operational and support roles to carry out their organizations' missions.

As an organization, we must 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. To allow such discrimination or unequal treatment, whether active or passive, weakens our abilities to respond to our varied customer bases.

The IAFC will lead by example to ensure an equal opportunity and fair treatment for all. Further, the IAFC 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.

It is important to maintain a fire and emergency service where each of us is morally committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and inclusivity for every individual. We all assume a personal responsibility for assuring that our responsibility transcends throughout our fire service. We must practice inclusive behaviors and we must educate others regarding the benefits and wisdom of inclusive behaviors while carrying out our missions.

The words we speak and write play a significant role in creating the reality of an inclusive work environment. With an increasingly diverse workforce, the IAFC recognizes the need for inclusive language in written fire department policies and communications, as well as in daily fire department verbal communications. The IAFC has an Inclusive Language Guidance document available to assist.

**Submitted by the IAFC Human Relations Committee**  
**Approved by IAFC Board of Directors on October 10, 2013**