

CLARENCE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1

MAIL AND PARCEL HANDLING

POLICY STATEMENT: To establish a standardized and transparent procedure for handling all incoming mail and packages to Clarence Fire District No. 1, ensuring that official communications are properly routed, time-sensitive materials are promptly addressed, and district operations remain secure, accountable, and efficient. This policy is not intended to infringe upon personal privacy but rather to ensure the secure, efficient, and professional management of all official communications addressed to the Clarence Fire District No. 1. It reflects best practices in public administration and supports the district's mission of operational excellence and public trust.

OBJECTIVES:

1. **Operational Efficiency:** The fire district frequently receives mail containing time-sensitive documents such as grant information, legal notifications, regulatory compliance documents, invoices, and equipment orders. Delayed handling due to unopened mail can impede operations, result in missed deadlines, or incur financial penalties. This policy ensures timely review and processing.
2. **Continuity of Governance:** As a public entity, the fire district must maintain continuity in communication even during staff absences, turnover, or leaves. A policy allowing designated administrative personnel to open all mail ensures no critical information is left unattended due to it being addressed to an unavailable individual.
3. **Transparency and Accountability:** As a taxpayer-funded organization, the fire district is held to high standards of transparency and public accountability. A universal mail-opening policy ensures that no official correspondence is handled privately or inappropriately withheld, thereby fostering trust and openness within the organization and with the public.
4. **Security and Risk Management:** Incoming mail can sometimes include malicious content (e.g., threats, suspicious packages) or confidential information. Having fire district personnel open all mail in a controlled and secure manner reduces the risk of exposure, mishandling, or miscommunication.
5. **Recordkeeping and Documentation:**
Centralized mail handling supports proper documentation and archiving of all official

correspondence. It helps ensure that all relevant communications are recorded in accordance with state and local retention policies and can be easily retrieved for audits, legal purposes, or public information requests.

GUIDELINES:

- A. No member, employee, director or officer (hereinafter “individual”) shall utilize the Department’s mail system or address for personal mail or personal deliveries. With few exceptions, all mail is presumed to belong to the Department and not to an individual. Any person utilizing the Department for personal mail hereby grants the Secretary and/or Fire Commissioner designee the right to open such mail.
- B. When registering any address for mailing with any vendor or third-party entity, the individual shall use their official title and not their name. All individuals are instructed to notify any vendor or other sender of mail that they are to utilize a title instead of a name.
- C. All mail sent to an individual by name or title is presumed to be sent to such individual in their capacity as a member, employee, director or officer of the Department.
- D. The Secretary and/or Fire Commissioner designee shall be authorized to open all mail of every individual sent to the mailing address for the Department. Items marked to a title, such as Chief, Treasurer, President or Secretary shall belong to the Department and may be opened by the Secretary and/or Fire Commissioner designee.
- E. There is no exception to this policy if the envelope marks the addressee as “Personal and Confidential” or similar. Should a letter arrive addressed “personal and confidential” to an individual, by a title or addressed to their name, the Secretary and/or Fire Commissioner designee shall open it, and shall notify the individual of its arrival if in fact, it is for them personally, or otherwise, deliver it to the correct individual.
- F. Should any item arrive addressed to an individual who no longer holds the title used for the addressee, the mail may be opened by the Secretary and/or Fire Commissioner designee and provided to the individual now holding such title.
- G. The Secretary and/or Fire Commissioner designee is hereby instructed to keep and maintain the confidentiality of all correspondence and may not disclose any information gathered from reviewing the letter.

Note: This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee’s legal duty or civil liability in any way. This policy should not be construed as creating duty to act or a higher duty

of care, with respect to third party civil claims against employees or the department. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.

Reference: OSHA: 18 U.S.C. 1702, Postal Operations Manual 614.1

This policy was adopted August 11, 2025 by order of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Clarence Fire District No. 1.