



Constitution and Bylaws

Essex County Fire Chief's Association, Inc.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Essex County Fire Chief's Association is to provide a single source of programs to assist the fire departments of Essex County in their efforts to prevent or mitigate harm to life, property, and the environment.

Revised 06.10.2026

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ARTICLE I: ORGANIZATION

- Section 1.** This organization shall be known as the Essex County Fire Chief’s Association, Inc. as incorporated under the Articles of Incorporation General laws, Chapter 180, and is a non-profit organization within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and also a federally recognized tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization.
- Section 2.** All records, accounts and correspondence shall bear the name Essex County Fire Chiefs’ Association, Inc. and shall not be official unless bearing said name of the organization and signed by an appropriate officer of the Association.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

- Section 1.** To provide a means for exchanging ideas among members and with those having specialized knowledge on particular matters affecting the fire service, and the study of such matters by its committees including professional development and training seminars as the Association sees fit from time to time to present to its members (and/or non-members in accordance with the rules established by the Association.
- Section 2.** To encourage and cooperate in the development of new techniques, equipment and practices and to promote more effective organizations and functions of fire departments with a view toward greater protection of life and property from the dangers of fire and other hazards including training of specialized response teams in accordance with rules established by the Association.
- Section 3.** To provide a source of support for its members who may be encountering difficulties or problems in the performance of their duties and responsibilities as chief, and to provide the resources which may be needed from time to time by any member for the betterment of their department or office.
- Section 4.** To aid in the dissemination of information among the Fire Chiefs of Essex County concerning new equipment, techniques and procedures for fighting fires and carrying out the other functions of the fire service, the developments and practices within the scope of management of fire departments, and other matters affecting and concerning the fire service including the collective purchasing and maintenance of equipment belonging to the Association.

Section 5. To represent the interests of those in the profession of firefighting before Legislative and other bodies considering matters in which they are concerned, and to report on any legislation which affects the fire service and its members.

Section 6. To maintain and keep in repair, the mutual aid communications system utilized by the members and any equipment, apparatus, and tools owned by the Association.

ARTICLE III: Regular & Associate Memberships

The levels of nonsocial membership in the association are as follows. The dues for each level shall be determined by the Board of Directors and presented to the voting membership for ratification.

Section 1. Gold Membership

Gold level memberships shall be open to all Essex County permanent paid, call or volunteer fire chiefs.

Any chief requesting active membership in the association shall do so in writing. Approval for membership shall require a majority vote of the voting membership present at a meeting of said membership.

Acting or temporary fire chiefs, serving in such capacity during which time there is no permanently appointed fire chief serving in the same department shall qualify for membership only for the duration during which they serve in said capacity.

Active members shall have full voting rights within the organization.

Any permanent fire chief who vacates their position for any reason shall cease to be a gold member of the Association.

Section 2. Sterling Membership

Sterling level memberships (Associate memberships) shall include (but not be limited to), Chiefs of Non-Essex County fire departments., and the district warden of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, members of the Department of Fire Services. Any person requesting associate membership in

the association shall do so in writing. Approval for associate membership shall require a majority vote of the Board of Directors present at a meeting of said board, and ratification by a majority of the members present at a general membership meeting. Sterling members may serve on committees and vote within the committee. At regular meetings they may vote on all matters brought before the association.

Section 3. Silver Membership

Silver level memberships shall be available to vendors who wish to join the Association. Approval for Silver level membership shall require a majority vote of the Board of Directors present at a meeting of said board, and ratification by a majority of the members present at a general membership meeting. Silver members may serve on committees and vote within the committee. At regular meetings they may vote on all matters brought before the association, except on matters that affect any fire department operations.

Silver members shall enjoy membership in the Association at the will of the Board of Directors. Vendor members may be removed from membership for just cause or for acting or representing themselves in any way against a Fire Chief or their fire service organization.

Section 4. Platinum Membership

Any retired Chief, Acting Chief or eligible Deputy Chief who has served in their capacity for a period of at least one full year shall be a Platinum member. Any Gold member who vacates his/her position as Chief, after serving at least one full year, shall become a Platinum member upon ratification (majority vote) of the membership. Platinum members may attend all meetings and functions of the association. They may serve on committees and vote within their committee. At regular meetings they may vote on matters brought before the Association, but may not vote on operating issues that affect fire departments.

The Chaplain of the Essex County Fire Chief's Association shall be considered a platinum member.

Section 5. Life Membership

Any Platinum member who has attained the age of 70 and has been retired from active service for a period of at least five years shall be eligible for Life Member status and all the benefits of said membership.

Section 6.

Any member of the Association may be removed from membership for just cause after a hearing by a majority vote of the Board of Directors present at a meeting called for that specific purpose. The Board's recommendation shall be brought to the General Membership for a majority vote of members in attendance of a General Membership meeting.

Section 7.

Each community is allowed to offer and recommend membership into the ECFCA to any Chief Officer with the following provisions:

The recommended individual must hold the rank of a Chief Officer.

The Chief of Department shall approve in writing the additional Chief Officer membership. In cases where the Chief refuses to approve, the ECFCA membership must bring to a regular monthly meeting the reason(s) why he/she is not in support of the new membership.

The Chief of Department may at any time for cause request the removal from the ECFCA of any Chief Officer within their ranks by submitting a request in writing to the Board of Directors.

In the instance when a vote is taken the Chief of Department or designee may vote but at no time will there be more than one vote per department.

A Chief Officer may not hold an elected position but may serve on any committee with full voting rights only on that Committee.

If an issue arises at a meeting where a Chief Officer's membership vote may become volatile in nature, the President may close the meeting to Chief Officer Members to address the issue at hand.

ARTICLE IV: Social and Division Memberships

The conditions of social and divisional membership in the association are as follows. The dues schedule for social membership shall be determined by the Board of Directors and presented to the voting membership for ratification.

Section 1. Divisional Membership

Division memberships shall provide a means for exchanging ideas among members having specialized knowledge on particular matters affecting the fire service. Divisions will allow members to network and share information with others who have a common interest.

Divisions shall also spread their professional expertise throughout the fire service community by sponsoring publications, workshops and conferences, Web sites and e-mail lists.

Divisional memberships shall be open to any fire service discipline that applies for membership and is sanctioned by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Each Division will offer a unique array of benefits specifically tailored to meet the needs of its members. Divisions shall include, but not be limited to the disciplines of Fire Prevention, Training, EMS, Technical Rescue, and Communications. Divisions shall be formed by a consensus of the Board of Directors and the Membership Committee of the Essex County Fire Chief's Association.

Section 3. Each Division shall form their own Board of Governance, by electing officers annually and either appointing or electing a Board of Directors.

Section 4. The President shall appoint a liaison and an alternate to the Essex County Fire Chief's Association Divisions. Said liaison shall routinely make report to the general membership or the Board of Directors as needed or requested.

Section 5. Division dues shall be determined by the Division Board of Governance. Division dues of active fire service personnel shall be billed to the respective city or town as an option to Gold member dues.

ARTICLE V: Meetings

Regular meetings of the Association shall be held on the second Wednesday of each month. Any deviation from this schedule shall be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors of the Association.

ARTICLE VI: Dues

Dues shall be determined by the Board of Directors and ratified by the membership no later than November 30th before the upcoming dues cycle. Dues shall be payable by September 30th each year. Notices shall be sent out by the Treasurer indicating the amount of the dues and the date payable at least ninety (90) days prior to the due date. Any member delinquent in dues by the September meeting shall be notified of their delinquency in writing by the Secretary. If dues are not paid by November 1st, membership shall be terminated.

Dues notices of Gold and Sterling members shall be sent to the community. Dues of Platinum and Silver membership shall be sent to the individual Chief unless otherwise indicated.

Any increase in dues shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of active members present.

Annual dues shall be for the period July 1 to June 30.

ARTICLE VII: Duties of the Officers

Section 1. President

It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings. The President shall appoint all committees unless otherwise voted by the membership. The President may call for special meetings as they see fit or when requested to do so by three or more members of the Association.

The President shall have the authority to expend funds of the Association up to and including One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) for unexpected expenses of an appropriate nature which are in the best interests of the Association without prior approval of the membership. Such expenditure(s) shall be reported to the membership with receipt(s) provided at the next regular scheduled meeting.

Section 2. 1st Vice President (VP)

It shall be the duty of the 1st VP to perform the duties of the President during the President's absence. The 1st VP shall assist the President in conducting the business of the Association and to perform such other duties as prescribed by the Association.

Should both the President and the 1st VP be absent from a meeting, the 2nd VP shall carry out the duties of the President for that one meeting.

Section 3. 2nd Vice President (VP)/Clerk

It shall be the duty of the 2nd VP/Clerk to keep a true record of all regular and special meetings of the Association and they shall keep such reports and communications as may be important to the membership. The 2nd VP/Clerk shall notify members of monthly and special meetings at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting.

Should the President, 1st VP or 2nd VP/Clerk be absent from a meeting, membership shall elect a President Pro Tempore to carry out the duties of the President for that one meeting.

Section 4. Treasurer

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive and keep records of all monies of the Association; to disburse funds, pay bills, and invest funds according to the vote of the membership at a regular or special meetings, or as directed by signed vouchers by the officers.

The Treasurer shall make a report of income, expenses and financial position at each monthly meeting of the Association.

The Treasurer shall submit all financial records pertaining to the previous Calendar Year (unless otherwise requested) to the Auditing Committee which shall be convened and reviewed no later than the last day in March.

The Treasurer shall work with the Board of Directors to create an annual budget to be presented to the membership no later than the November

General Membership meeting.

Section 5. Executive Director

It shall be the duty of the Executive Director to carry out the provisions of the job description as determined by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director shall report to the Board of Directors through the President of the Association. The Board shall determine the Executive Director's salary and other compensation, as well as conditions of employment.

ARTICLE VIII: Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall consist of seven (7) members including the President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President/Clerk, Treasurer, Immediate Past President and each member elected from each of the two major fire districts (5 & 15) for FCAM Board of Director Positions. If the Immediate Past President is not available to serve, the President shall appoint a member to serve in their place.

In the event that the Executive Director also holds the position of the Immediate Past President, the Executive Director shall recuse themselves from voting. In this situation a seventh voting member shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors.

A quorum of the Board of Directors shall consist of four (4) members. The President may at any time call a meeting of the Board of Directors to conduct business pertinent to the Association.

The Board of Directors shall have the authority to expend funds of the Association up to and including Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for the unexpected expenses of an appropriate nature which are in the best interests of the association without prior approval of the membership. Such expenditure(s) shall be reported to the membership with receipt(s) provided at the next regular scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE IX: General Meeting

Section 1: The rules of order for the Association shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.

Section 2: No request for appropriation of funds from the floor can exceed \$5,000. Requests for amounts greater than \$5,000 must first be reviewed and

approved by a 2/3 vote of the Board of Directors, and then be presented to the general membership for approval. That approval shall be a majority vote of the members present at a general meeting.

ARTICLE X: Elections and Terms of Office

Section 1. Officers Established

The elected officers of the Association shall be: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President/Clerk, and Treasurer.

Section 2. Terms of Office

- a. The President, 1st VP, and 2nd VP/Clerk shall each serve one (1) year terms.
- b. The Treasurer shall each serve terms of three (3) years, unless otherwise amended by the Association.
- c. All officers shall serve until their successors are duly elected and installed.

Section 3. Succession and Progression

- a. The Association shall maintain a progressive officer system to ensure leadership continuity.
- b. Upon completion of a one (1) year term:
 1. The President shall assume the role of Immediate Past President.
 2. The 1st VP shall automatically succeed to the office of President.
 3. The 2nd VP/Clerk shall automatically succeed to the office of 1st VP.
- c. An election shall be conducted annually for the office of 2nd VP/Clerk.

Section 4. Elections

- a. Elections shall be held annually at the May business meeting of the Association.
- b. The Nominating Committee, appointed by the President, shall present a slate of candidates for 2nd VP/Clerk and any other offices requiring election.
- c. Additional nominations may be made from the floor in accordance with established procedures.
- d. Election shall be by majority vote of members present and eligible to vote. Voting may be conducted by voice, show of hands, or written ballot at the discretion of the presiding officer.

Section 5. Vacancies

- a. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the 1st VP shall assume the office of President for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- b. In the event of a vacancy in the office of 1st VP, the 2nd VP/Clerk shall assume the office of 1st VP.
- c. In the event of a vacancy in the office of 2nd VP/Clerk, a special election shall be held at the next regular meeting to fill the unexpired term.
- d. Vacancies in the office of Treasurer shall be filled by appointment of the President, subject to approval by a majority vote of the membership, until the next annual election.

Section 6. Installation of Officers

Newly elected and succeeding officers shall be installed by taking oath after the election and no later than 15 days after and shall assume the duties of their respective offices at that time.

Section 7. Eligibility

All candidates for elected office must be members in good standing, a Gold member of the Association and meet any additional eligibility requirements established by the Association.

Section 8. Removal from Office

Any elected officer may be removed for cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a regular or special meeting, provided that notice of the proposed action has been given in advance in accordance with the Association's bylaws.

Section 9. Retirement during Office

If an elected officer retires during their term, they shall be allowed to complete the term of office.

ARTICLE XI: FCAM District Directors

Section 1. Positions Established

The Association shall elect two (2) FCAM District Directors, representing Fire District 5 and Fire District 15. Each Director shall serve as the Association's representative to the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts (FCAM) for their respective district.

Section 2. Term of Office

- a. FCAM District Directors shall serve a term of one (1) year.
- b. Directors shall serve until their successors are duly elected and installed.

Section 3. Nominations

- a. The Nominating Committee shall prepare and present a slate of candidates for each FCAM District Director position.
- b. The slate shall be presented to the membership no later than the September regular monthly meeting.
- c. Additional nominations may be made from the floor in accordance with established Association procedures.

Section 4. Elections

- a. Elections for FCAM District Directors shall be conducted at the October business meeting.
- b. Election shall be by majority vote of members present and eligible to vote.
- c. Election shall be by majority vote of members present and eligible to vote. Voting may be conducted by voice, show of hands, or written ballot at the discretion of the presiding officer.

Section 5. Eligibility

Candidates for FCAM District Director must be members in good standing of the Association and affiliated with a department within the respective Fire District (District 5 or District 15) they seek to represent.

Section 6. Vacancies

- a. In the event of a vacancy, the President shall appoint an interim Director from the respective district, subject to approval by a majority vote of the membership.
- b. The appointed Director shall serve until the next regular election cycle, at which time the position shall be filled in accordance with this Article.

Section 7. Duties

FCAM District Directors shall:

- a. Represent the interests of the Association at FCAM meetings and functions.
- b. Serve as a liaison between the Association and FCAM.

- c. Report regularly to the Association on FCAM activities, initiatives, and matters of regional or statewide concern.
- d. Serve on the Association's Board of Directors

ARTICLE XII: Committees

Section 1. Nominating Committee

It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to present a slate of candidates for 2nd Vice President/Clerk, Treasurer, Audit Committee, FCAM representatives, or any specially elected positions. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President at the February meeting and shall stand for a one-year term.

Section 2. Standing Committees

Chairpersons of standing committees shall be appointed by the President.

Standing Committees shall be determined as required by the needs of the Association.

The President and/or the Board of Directors may appoint Standing Committees as necessary to carry on the business of the Association. Standing Committees shall report to the membership at a regularly scheduled business meeting.

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Section 3. Ad Hoc Committees

The President and the Board of Directors may appoint Ad Hoc Committees as necessary to carry on the business of the Association. Ad Hoc Committees shall report to the membership at a regularly scheduled meeting.

The President shall appoint a minimum of three members to the Audit Committee in February and they shall meet in May to conduct an audit of the Association. The Committee shall report back to the membership at the regularly scheduled meeting in June.

ARTICLE XIII: Amendments

Amendments to the bylaws may be proposed at any regular meeting, but shall be acted upon no sooner than the next regular meeting. A two-thirds vote of the active members present shall be required to pass any amendment. All active members shall be notified in writing at least three (3) days prior to the meeting at which any amendment(s) will be voted upon.

ARTICLE XIV: Bylaws

Section 1.

These Bylaws will become effective on May 13, 2009 after being duly voted at a regular meeting of the Association.

Section 2.

These Bylaws may be amended in accordance with Article XII by a two-thirds vote of the active membership of the Association present at a meeting. It shall be the responsibility of any group or individual proposing a bylaw change to present said change to the Board of Directors at least ten (10) days prior to the next monthly meeting of the Association in order for the committee to make a recommendation to the full membership. Any vote by the active membership for a change in the Bylaws shall take place at the next monthly meeting of the Association following the initial presentation.

Section 3:

Changes in the Bylaws shall take effect upon approval by the active membership.

ARTICLE XV: Order of Business

The order of business at business meetings of the Association may include the following:

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes From Previous Meeting
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Communications from the President
5. Communications from the Secretary
6. Communications from the Executive Director
7. Standing Committee Reports
8. Ad-Hoc Committee Reports
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Good & Welfare
12. Next meeting
13. Adjournment

ARTICLE XVI: Conduct of Members

- Section 1. No member shall claim to represent the Association, other than declaring membership, in either written or verbal formats without the express permission of the Board of Directors and/or the Executive Director.
- Section 2. We recognize that the most important function of Fire Departments is to serve in the best interest of their communities.
- Section 3. We shall be dedicated to the highest ideals of personal character, honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships so Fire Chiefs may merit the respect and confidence of the community.
- Section 4. We shall handle all matters in our best judgment so that fairness and impartiality govern our decisions.
- Section 5. We shall make known the risks to be anticipated, should the Fire Chiefs professional recommendations be disregarded by others.
- Section 6. We shall never intentionally injure or embarrass the reputation or position of another Fire Chief. We shall strive to protect and maintain the integrity of the Fire Service and our fellow Fire Chiefs.
- Section 7. Any member who violates the Code of Ethics of the Association by intentionally causing harm or embarrassment to a member in good standing may face annulment of his or her membership.

Amendment Tracker

#	Presented Date	Adoption Date	Article	Section	Modification Addition Deletion	Change
1	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	All	All	Modification	Formatting of Document to include Table of Contents and Amendment Tracker
2	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	All	All	Modification	Removed references to singular pronoun
3	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	I	1	Modification	and also a federally recognized tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization.
4	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	II	6	Modification	and any equipment, apparatus, and tools owned by the Association
5	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	III	1	Modification	Delete “on the form provided”
6	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	III	1	Modification	Change “unanimous” to “majority”
7	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	III	2	Modification	Delete “on the form provided”
8	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	III	4	Modification	Change “unanimous” to “majority”
9	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	III	6	Modification	“The Boards recommendation shall be brought to the General Membership for a majority vote of members in attendance of a General Membership Meeting.”
10	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	III	8	Delete	Delete Section 8 “Any application for membership shall be accepted at a regular meeting of the association and voted upon at the next regularly scheduled meeting.”
11	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	IV	4	Modification	Change “Each Division shall appoint” to “The President shall appoint a liaison and an alternate”
12	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	IV	4	Modification	Delete “The Board of Directors of the Essex County Fire Chief’s Association shall appoint a liaison to each division.”
13	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	VI		Modification	Add in 1 st sentence after “membership” the following: “no later than

						November 30th before the upcoming dues cycle.”
14	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	VI		Modification	Second sentence replace “July 20 th ” with “September 30 th ”
15	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	VI		Modification	Third sentence replace “sixty days (60)” with “ninety days (90)”
16	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	VII	1	Modification	2 nd Paragraph, 1 st Sentence: change \$250 to \$1,000
17	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	VII	4	Modification	3 rd Paragraph: Change to read: The Treasurer shall submit all financial records pertaining to the previous Calendar Year (unless otherwise requested) to the Auditing Committee which shall be convened and reviewed no later than the last day in March.
18	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	VII	4	Modification	Add 4 th Paragraph: " The Treasurer shall work with the Board of Directors to create an annual budget to be presented to the membership no later than the November General Membership meeting.
19	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	VIII		Modification	1 st Sentence: Change “one” to “each”; Add “for FCAM Board of Directors Positions” at end of sentence.
20	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	VIII		Modification	2 nd Paragraph; 1 st Sentence add “Immediate” before “Past President”
21	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	IX	2	Modification	Appropriation change from \$1,000 to \$5,000
22	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	X	Sections 3 &4	Modification	Swapped places of section 3 and 4 to read in order logically
23	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	X	4	Modification	Deleted section pertaining to D5 and D15 positions for Association SEPARATE from FCAM (See Article VIII)
24	2/7/2025	3/12/2025	XV	2-7	Addition	Added sections 2-7 to Article XV
25	5/13/2026	6/10/2026	VII	2-3	Modification	Vice President now 1 st VP/ Secretary now 2 nd VP/Clerk and relevant language

26	5/13/2026	6/10/2026	X	All	Major Modification	All new language and terms of office
27	5/13/2026	6/10/2026	XI	All	New	Removed FCAM Positions from previous Article X and created new article
28	5/13/2026	6/10/2026	Affected		Modification	Renumbered/Renamed positions based on Article X
29	5/13/2026	6/10/2026	VIII		Modification	Added Board of Directors spending language up to \$5,000