



Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN 2016.06

Organizational Approach to the Assignment of Management Officers

OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF

Issue Date: June 8, 2016
Expiration Date: N/A
Applicability: Career Captains, Battalion Chiefs, and Assistant Chiefs

MESSAGE

The purpose of this bulletin is to communicate the Departmental approach to the assignment of Management Officers.

For purposes of this bulletin, Management Officers are defined as those full-time DFRS employees that hold the rank of Captain, Battalion Chief, and Assistant Chief.

It is recognized that Management Officers have chosen to become officers by voluntarily participating in a competitive promotional process, and then ultimately accepting an offer of promotion or an offer of an acting position. By accepting such an offer, new Management Officers also accept all of the roles and responsibilities that come with becoming part of the organization's management team. This critically important team provides oversight and human resource management throughout the organization. Management Officers also provide valued insight, perspective, and recommendations regarding Department direction, policy, and activity.

The organization maintains a carefully structured network of management positions designed to provide efficient and effective oversight of the services we provide and the teams of personnel that provide them. It is important to the organization that the network of management positions results in an optimum functioning team. There are a wide variety of management positions across the organization, including field positions and support staff positions, and each offers unique challenges and opportunities. There are numerous reasons that necessitate re-assignments within the management team position network that result in transfers. These situations include, but are not limited to, promotions, demotions, resignations, retirements, separations, changes in services, professional development, and other organizational needs. Any of these reasons may result in the re-assignment of Management Officers.

The fundamental responsibility of the organization is to provide safe, effective, and efficient service to Howard County. The goal is to assign management officers in a way that ultimately ensures operational success. This includes ensuring that adequate depth and succession opportunities be developed by ensuring management officers obtain a variety of assignment experiences. Therefore, Management Officers must realize that assignment rotations will occur among the various management team positions that exist throughout the organization, to include both field and staff positions.



Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

In general, the following approach shall be taken to Management Officer transfers:

1. The Chief of the Department has both the authority and responsibility to assign management officers to positions where the effectiveness of the organization can be maximized.
2. Assignments for Captain and Battalion Chief positions are likely to rotate every three to five years, with two years generally being considered a minimum length for a "tour of duty."
3. The Department recognizes that every Management Officer offers a unique skill set, and has preferences regarding work site, work schedule, and position assignment. While the Department often tries to take advantage of the unique skill sets of its Management Officers, it is impossible to maximize every person's skill set, all of the time. In fact, having one strong unique skill set does not negate the need to develop other skill sets. As such, an organizational goal is to attain a balance between taking advantage of existing strengths, and developing new strengths through assignments that offer beneficial experiences and challenges.
4. Individual assignment preferences can be communicated through established mechanisms, such as the Transfer Request process. During the ongoing management assignment decision-making process, these assignment preferences shall be reviewed, understood, and considered. It is acknowledged that there could be personal and unique circumstances also considered. However, it must also be understood that the personal circumstances or preference of any single team member will not necessarily preclude a particular management team assignment for that individual, or any other team member. Management Officers must realize that assuring everyone's preferences are satisfied does not ensure operational and organizational success. As on any team, the needs of individual team members must be balanced with the needs of the team as a whole. As such, the group of officers that hold a particular rank share the responsibility for filling the management team positions that exist across the Department at that rank, and therefore, must expect, anticipate, and be willing to be assigned to any of those team positions during their career.
5. Management Officers, as members of the management team, have a responsibility to "buy in" to the team concept of organizational management. This entails fully embracing and owning one's responsibilities to the larger team. Also included in these responsibilities is active and constructive participation in that overall management team, a commitment to setting a good professional development example, being a good counselor to our peers and subordinates, and encouraging others to do the same through positive communication. By challenging and encouraging others to be well-trained, well-educated, and well-rounded, both the individual and organization are strengthened.