



NIPSTA FIRE ACADEMY CANDIDATE POLICY MANUAL

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SECTION I

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Purpose and Intent.

The Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy's ("NIPSTA") Fire Academy Candidate Policy Manual is a set of guidelines for the implementation of policies and procedures impacting NIPSTA Fire Academy ("NFA") Candidates and sponsoring fire departments.

1.2 Overview of the Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy (NIPSTA).

First created in 2001 on the site of the former Glenview Naval Air Station as a training site for local first responders, NIPSTA has emerged as a national model for the consolidation of talent and resources along with state-of-the-art reality-based disaster response training. While NIPSTA has traditionally provided year-round training for fire service, law enforcement, hazardous materials, public works and other types of municipal response agencies, services have recently expanded to include a wide range of training for disaster medical personnel, along with progressive education on homeland security, crisis leadership, and private sector emergency management.

1.3 NIPSTA's Mission Statement.

The mission of NIPSTA is to develop and provide high quality, cost-efficient educational programs that address the training requirements of fire, police, EMS, public works, hazardous material, and disaster response personnel. Accordingly, the NIPSTA curriculum responds to the public safety educational needs and high professional standards of local government and private industry.

SECTION II

2 THE NIPSTA FIRE ACADEMY

2.1 Introduction to the NIPSTA Fire Academy (“NFA”).

The NIPSTA Fire Academy was established in 2008 with the goal of becoming the premiere fire service training academy in Illinois. Once just the vision of dedicated professionals, NFA now thrives as a robust example of teamwork, proficiency and enthusiasm for professionalized education dedicated to continuing the essential mission of the fire service.

The NIPSTA Fire Academy serves as the backbone of the organization. With a cadre of over fifty (50) individually selected instructors, the NFA is a daily reminder of the success of NIPSTA as a whole. The NFA Basic Operations Firefighter (BOF) Program is conducted four (4) times per year in nine (9) week terms. Students enrolled in NFA are referred to as Candidates. Regardless of whether or not a Candidate has already achieved state certification as a firefighter in Illinois or another location, their fire department or fire protection district has sent them to NFA for training, education, and evaluation of knowledge, skills and abilities.

2.2 Authority of the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal.

NIPSTA strictly adheres to the requirements for firefighter certification as established by the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (“OSFM”) and the National Fire Protection Association (“NFPA”).

See Section 5.10 for additional information.

2.3 Values of the NIPSTA Fire Academy.

NIPSTA embraces the overarching theory of DUTY-PRIDE-TRADITION at all times. We strive to unfailingly maintain the inherent honor of the fire service through a commitment to professionalism and personal integrity. Ultimately, NIPSTA provides Candidates with the knowledge and skills to function safely and competently under the direction of a Company Officer. We believe that respect is earned, and that perseverance is imperative for success.

SECTION III

3 NIPSTA CAMPUS OPERATIONS

3.1 Hours of Operation.

NIPSTA's routine business hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., with occasional weekend programming.

3.2 Communications.

3.2.1 Contact Information.

- The main telephone number at NIPSTA is 847-998-8090.
- The Fire Academy may be reached by phone by contacting the main telephone number.
- The primary email address for the Fire Academy is BOFcandidate@nipsta.org.

3.2.2 NIPSTA Website.

NIPSTA actively maintains an organizational website to ensure accurate, timely and pertinent information. Documents relevant to the NFA may be found on the [NIPSTA's Website](#).

3.3 Holidays.

The NIPSTA Fire Academy is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

3.4 Emergency Campus Closure.

The NIPSTA campus may be closed due to a severe weather event or other type of unanticipated crisis. In the event of a campus closure, Candidates will be notified by a representative of the NIPSTA Fire Academy as quickly as possible.

3.5 Cafeteria and Kitchen.

NIPSTA provides a kitchen and lunchroom for use by Candidates and other students. Complimentary coffee is available. All Candidates are responsible for ensuring the kitchen and lunchroom remain clean by discarding trash and removing contents from the refrigerator on a regular basis. Refrigerators and microwaves are available for Candidates to store and prepare meals.

3.6 Field Training Facility: NFA Classroom.

NIPSTA maintains multiple classrooms and training areas across the campus. The main classroom of the NFA is in the northeast corner of the Field Training Facility.

Candidates are expected to maintain a professional and alert demeanor while in the NFA classroom. Candidates shall not display a lazy disposition, such as lounging about, placing feet on the desk, or leaning back in their chair.

Eating and drinking in the classroom are considered privileges. When not being consumed, all food items must be stored in designated bins or the refrigerator.

Candidates are not permitted to neglect or misuse any property in the classroom. When leaving the classroom, Candidates must ensure the entire area is clean and organized before leaving. This includes but is not limited to cleaning and straightening tables, picking up and disposing of trash and consumed food/beverage containers, emptying all trash cans, cleaning whiteboards, cleaning all cooking devices, and returning coffee pots to the main kitchen.

3.7 Training Grounds.

Horseplay on the training grounds will not be tolerated.

At the discretion of the BOF Program Coordinators, Candidates are responsible for ensuring that the training grounds and training props are clean before leaving for the day.

3.8 Use of NIPSTA Technological Resources and Network Systems.

NIPSTA maintains a robust technology network to support modern educational programming. All uses of NIPSTA internet access and computer equipment must be in support of and consistent with NFA educational objectives.

NIPSTA provides free wireless internet access across the campus. The public network is an open network provided for the convenience of candidates, students, instructors, and visitors; its use is at your own risk. The network is not inherently secure. NIPSTA cannot and does not guarantee the privacy of your data and communication while using this service.

Any technological property issued to a Candidate for training purposes remains the property of NIPSTA throughout the Candidate's enrollment in NFA. All equipment must be carefully maintained and protected. It is expected that all devices will be returned to NIPSTA in the same condition in which they were issued. Replacement of any damaged or missing equipment will remain the responsibility of the Candidate.

3.9 Parking.

NFA Candidates are required to park their vehicles on the east side of the south parking lot. The parking area must always be kept clean. NIPSTA is not responsible for damage to vehicles or missing items.

3.10 Candidate Lockers/Gear Racks.

All lockers are the property of NIPSTA and therefore subject to search or inspection at any time. The use of a particular locker is assigned by NIPSTA. Locks applied to lockers may be removed (including removal by cutting) at any time. No unsealed food items may be stored in any locker.

Gear racks shall be utilized for their intended purposes throughout a Candidate's enrollment in the NFA. NIPSTA reserves the right to inspect items stored on gear racks at any time.

3.11 Campus Emergency Operations Plan.

NIPSTA maintains an Emergency Operations Plan in preparation for potential natural and manmade threats, including severe weather, active threat/shooter, and fire. NIPSTA instructors and administrative staff have acknowledged receipt of this policy and are expected to respond according to the plan.

SECTION IV

4 REGISTRATION, TUITION & REFUNDS

4.1 Registration.

Registration for the NFA is available via the NIPSTA website. Candidates are generally registered by their Training Officer or Fire Chief. Fire Departments or municipalities are required to set up an account prior to registering candidates for NIPSTA Basic Operations Firefighter (BOF) Program. Account Set Up & Registration may be found under the About NIPSTA menu or click [HERE](#). Assistance with registration is available by contacting NIPSTA Senior Administrative Manager Woods at cwoods@nipsta.org.

Sponsoring fire departments are responsible for ensuring that their account information with NIPSTA remains current regarding Candidate name, primary and secondary contact information, and billing address. Departments desiring to hold a spot without a name should register that spot by adding “TBD” as the first name and the “Department Name” as the last name to their roster and complete a registration using the “TBD Department Name” for example “TBD NIPSTAFD”. If more than one spot needs to be held without a name, Departments should add numbers to the “TBD”, for example “TBD1 NIPSTAFD”. If you have questions, contact the NIPSTA administrative office for assistance. Final Candidate names are required within one (1) week of the first day of the Academy.

4.1.1 Priority Registration.

NIPSTA members may receive priority registration privileges up to eight (8) weeks before the beginning of an Academy.

4.1.2 Waiting List.

Once the maximum enrollment is reached, potential Candidates will be placed on a waiting list. Training Officers/Candidates will be automatically notified by the registration system that they have been placed on a waiting list at the time of registration. Training Officers may contact NIPSTA administrative representatives at 847-998-8090 for updates on the status of the waiting list.

4.1.3 Priority Waiting List Registration.

NIPSTA Members receive priority registration for their Candidates on the waiting list.

4.2 Tuition.

Invoices are automatically generated at the conclusion of the Candidate registration process. Tuition for the NIPSTA Fire Academy is due in full prior to the first day of the program. NIPSTA members receive a discounted tuition rate.

4.3 Use of Credit Cards.

Tuition payments may be made by credit card. A 2.5% (minimum \$2.00) service fee will be assessed for all credit card payments and is the responsibility of the candidate or sponsoring department. The Credit Card Fee will not be reflected on invoices or receipts.

4.4 Refunds.

Refunds will be issued for cancellations prior to the first day of the Academy. Fire Departments with Candidates who begin the Academy but drop out within the first week will be issued a fifty percent (50%) credit. Departments with Candidates who drop out during the second week will be issued a thirty percent (30%) credit. Departments with Candidates who drop out after the second week will not be issued a credit.

4.5 Substitutions.

After payment is received, a fire department/district may substitute for a confirmed candidate for any reason prior to the first day of the Academy.

4.6 Physical Preparation, Pre-Program.

The NFA promotes an active physical fitness and conditioning program with the goal of establishing a life-long commitment to a healthy fire service career. In an effort to prepare Candidates for a successful start to the program, information is provided prior to the first day of the Academy. Candidates and their sponsoring departments should review together the Physical Fitness Preparation and Expectation page in the applicable BOF Candidate Registration & Information Packet.

4.7 Required Paperwork, Pre-Program.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that all forms in the applicable BOF Candidate Registration & Information Packet (Candidate Packet) are completed and submitted at least one week prior to the first day of the Academy. The BOF Candidate Registration & Information Packet (Candidate Packet) consists of the following documents:

- NIPSTA Fire Academy Program Director Letter
- Fire Department Attestation Form
- Candidate Participant Acknowledgment of Conditions and Release of Claims Form
- Candidate Information Form
- Emergency Information Form
- Office of State Fire Marshal Certification Exams Notice
- Candidate Equipment and Apparel Checklist Form
- Textbook Requirements Notice
- Physical Fitness Program: Preparation & Expectations

On the first day of the Academy, Candidates will complete the following documents. Please have your candidate read the NFA Candidate Policy Manual prior to the first day of the Academy.

- NIPSTA Participant Waiver and Release of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement
- NFA Candidate Policy Manual Acknowledgement of Receipt

4.8 Veterans' Benefits, Use of the GI Bill.

Depending on the organization's current certification status through the US Veteran's Administration, NIPSTA may allow for the use of the GI bill as a form of tuition. When approved, the NFA is recognized as a training site available for Veterans' educational benefits under the GI Bill. Candidates are responsible for notifying the NIPSTA Executive Director and submitting all applicable paperwork at least four (4) weeks prior to the beginning of the program. Written communication from the Candidate's Sponsoring Department acknowledging the use of the GI Bill for tuition is simultaneously expected. Failure to notify NIPSTA and submit the paperwork for approval by the deadline may preclude Candidates from utilizing this benefit.

NIPSTA is not responsible for communicating with the Veteran's Administration on behalf of the Candidate. Candidates who are denied benefits after the start of the program will be 100% responsible for immediately providing tuition payment in its entirety or will be dropped from the program. Candidates are responsible for immediately notifying their sponsoring departments if their GI benefits have been denied.

4.9 Required Candidate Equipment.

Each Candidate is responsible for providing required equipment on the first day of the program. The list of CANDIDATE EQUIPMENT AND APPAREL CHECKLIST is found in the applicable Candidate Packet.

SECTION V

5 ATTENDANCE, TEXTBOOKS, CANDIDATE EVALUATION, ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS, CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION

5.1 Mandatory Attendance.

Classes begin at 0800 and may not conclude until 1730 or later depending on scheduled training objectives. Attendance is mandatory. Throughout the nine (9) week program, all Candidates must be present and capable of full participation. The training schedule does not allow time to make up for missed material.

5.1.1 Excused Absences.

It is recognized that a Candidate may have a pending family event during the nine (9) week Academy, such as the birth of a child. It is also recognized that a Candidate may have an unforeseen event occur such as the serious illness or death of a family member. In such cases and in conjunction with the sponsoring department, the Academy staff will attempt to provide appropriate accommodations. However, at the conclusion of the program the Candidate must have completed all requirements in order to qualify for the state examination and successfully complete the program. Candidates are required to maintain active communication with the BOF Coordinators and take the lead in establishing a plan to minimize missed material. The Academy is not permitted to waive missed requirements regardless of how genuine the reason for the absence.

5.1.2 Tardiness.

Candidates are advised to ensure adequate travel time so as to be fully prepared when class begins each day. Tardiness will not be tolerated and will be noted on the Candidate's weekly evaluation form.

5.1.3 Illness or Emergency Absence.

If a Candidate is ill or has an emergency which precludes them from attending a scheduled class day, the Candidate shall make four (4) notifications prior to the start of the day:

1. Contact their fire department in order to advise the appropriate department member of the absence.
2. Contact a member of their company and advise them of their absence.
3. Contact one of the three BOF Coordinators. The BOF Coordinators' contact information will be given out on the first day.
4. Contact NIPSTA via the main NIPSTA phone number (**847-998-8090**) and leave their name and department name with a NIPSTA staff member or on the answering machine.

5.1.4 Making up Missed Classes.

The makeup of missed classes is not always possible due to operational constraints, such as program schedule, logistics involving prop requirements, and the availability of instructors. If it is possible for a missed activity to be replicated, there may be an additional cost to the sponsoring fire department.

5.2 Candidate Textbooks and Access to Learning Materials.

The Candidates are required to purchase new textbooks with the “Advantage Access” and new student workbooks from Jones & Bartlett Learning prior to the start of the program. NFA has found that the textbook with the “Advantage Access” code has led to an improvement to the NFA by enhancing the candidate learning experience, providing multiple technology-based educational tools and ultimately improving organization’s academic standards.

Specific information regarding the current text is made available on the NFA webpage, syllabus and during the registration checkout process.

The required material for Basic Operations Firefighter (BOF) are as follows:

Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills & Hazardous Materials Response textbook with Navigate Advantage Access, Jones & Bartlett Learning Enhanced, [Edition provided prior to course]. ISBN: Available upon request.

Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills & Hazardous Materials Response Student Workbook, Jones & Bartlett Learning Enhanced, [Edition provided prior to course]. ISBN: Available upon request.

Other learning materials may be required of Candidates. If so, Candidates will be provided with directions to or copies of materials as necessary.

Candidates are required to bring their own materials for taking notes during lectures.

5.3 Candidate Evaluation.

NFA Candidates are evaluated in multiple ways throughout the program.

5.3.1 Quizzes and Examinations.

Quizzes are provided upon the completion of the instructional and practical portion of each subject. All quiz scores are reported to sponsoring departments as an indication of the Candidate’s effort and academic success.

A mid-term examination and a final examination will be required. The final examination consists of at least two hundred (200) multiple choice questions. A Candidate must achieve a minimum of 80% on the final examination in order to successfully complete the program. In the event that a

Candidate does not achieve a minimum of 80% on the final examination, the Candidate's Fire Chief will be contacted in order to discuss a retake of the examination. The retake of the final examination is at the discretion of the sponsoring Fire Chief. Only one (1) retake will be permitted.

5.3.2 Practical Evaluations.

After practicing a subject, a practical examination(s) are given on each subject. A final practical exam, based upon all OSFM individual and team Job Performance Requirements ("JPRs") is given at the conclusion of the Academy. Practical evaluations are graded on a pass/fail basis. A Candidate must pass all individual and team practical examinations in order to successfully complete the program. Requests for retests will be considered on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the sponsoring fire department.

5.3.3 Grading.

Cumulative Quiz Average	25% (80% minimum required)
Mid-Term Examination	25% (80% minimum required)
Final Examination	50% (80% minimum required)

Minimum Final Average	80%
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Practical Examination	Pass/Fail
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5.4 Requesting Reasonable Accommodations, ADA Compliance.

It is the policy of NIPSTA to comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). In order to receive an accommodation(s), a Candidate must have a documented disability that substantially limits one or more of their life activities. A reasonable accommodation is one that removes barriers to their access to examinations or a modification, adjustment or elimination of a barrier that enables an individual with a disability to academically participate on an equal basis. Examples include but are not limited to; extended time for test taking, verbal test questions, distraction-reduced testing environment, large print exams, and assistance with Scantron sheets.

Any Candidate wishing to request a reasonable accommodation must submit their request in writing along with supporting documentation to the NIPSTA Executive Director (see Section 5.4.3). Additional information is available on the NIPSTA Website's ADA Compliance page found under the About NIPSTA menu or click [HERE](#). Requests must be received at least two (2) weeks before the first day of the Academy. The Candidate will be notified in writing of the final determinations regarding requested accommodations. Arrangements may be available for a Candidate who submits their request after the two (2) week deadline.

5.4.1 Candidate Rights.

Candidates with documented disabilities have the right to:

- Equal opportunities to participate, work and learn,
- Reasonable accommodations,
- Appropriate confidentiality,
- Information about available services and accommodations,

- Information about decisions made by NIPSTA regarding appropriate accommodation(s), and
- Advocacy within the NIPSTA community of learning.

5.4.2 Candidate Responsibilities.

Candidates with documented disabilities have the responsibility to:

- Identify themselves in order to receive accommodation(s),
- Provide current and valid supporting documentation,
- Request appropriate accommodations with ample notice,
- Follow published procedures for obtaining accommodations and services,
- Meet all qualifications and standards set for NIPSTA programs,
- Advocate for their individual needs, and
- Notify their Fire Chief or sponsoring agency.

5.4.3 Required Forms.

The following forms are required to be submitted for consideration:

- [NIPSTA CONFIDENTIAL REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM](#)
- [NIPSTA ADA ACCOMMODATIONS: AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM](#)

5.5 Evaluating Candidate Progress.

Weekly Progress reports will be issued to each Candidate, the Candidate's Fire Chief and the Candidate's Training Officer throughout the program. Reports generally contain the following information:

- Quiz and test scores
- Attendance
- Subjects/skills covered to date
- Upcoming subjects/skills
- Objective evaluation of skill performance
- Subjective evaluation of appearance, behavior, group dynamics, ability and attitude
- Areas of concern and any recommended corrective action plan(s)

Candidate evaluations are shared only with the sponsoring department and the Candidate. Requests from other employers or departments will only be shared with the written consent of the Candidate.

5.6 Voluntary Withdrawal from the Program.

A Candidate who wishes to voluntarily withdraw from the program is expected to first contact their sponsoring fire department. NIPSTA will work directly with the fire department to discuss the withdrawal process. No tuition credits or refunds will be issued after the second week of the NFA. See Section 4.4 for additional information.

5.7 Failure to Perform.

Each NFA Candidate must be able to complete all assigned classroom work, physical fitness requirements, training evolutions, and other related functions during the entire length of the Academy. Candidates that do not, or cannot, complete assigned tasks may be dismissed from the training program.

5.7.1 Physical Limitations.

Candidates who are unable to perform due to either acute or chronic physical limitations must secure a written statement from a physician detailing any restrictions. Candidates are required to secure an updated written statement from a physician in order to return to full participation. Regardless of the situation, Candidates must complete all Academy requirements in order to successfully complete the program.

Candidates who submit a written statement from a physician indicating that they are unable to fully participate will not be permitted to attend NFA programming on practical skills days. Such Candidates will be required to report directly to their fire department until the physical restriction has been lifted. Candidates with physical restrictions may be permitted to attend classroom lecture only sessions at the discretion of the BOF Coordinators.

NIPSTA reserves the right to seek an additional medical opinion from its physician for which the sponsoring department will be billed at cost.

5.8 Candidate Dismissal.

The dismissal of Candidates from the NIPSTA Fire Academy is performed in collaboration with the Sponsoring Department, the NIPSTA Academy Director, the BOF Coordinators and NIPSTA Staff. Any such determination shall be provided to the Candidate in writing. The Candidate is entitled to submit a written rebuttal to the NIPSTA Executive Director within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the dismissal. Once the rebuttal is received, the NIPSTA Executive Director will review the rebuttal, review previous deliberations, confer with the sponsoring Fire Chief or employer, and issue a determination(s) that sustains the original dismissal, modifies the original dismissal determination, or reinstates the Candidate. All such determinations are final. If reinstated, the Candidate may be required to attend a future Basic Operations Firefighter Academy in order to meet program requirements.

5.9 Candidate Records.

Candidate records are maintained according to processes established by the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal.

5.9.1 Candidate Privacy.

Candidate records are shared with the sponsoring agency. (See Section 5.5). Any additional requests to share Candidate educational or performance records must be sent in writing to the Executive Director.

5.9.2 Certificates of Completion.

Candidates who successfully complete the NFA are awarded a Certificate of Completion. Candidates who do not successfully complete the NFA may be awarded a Certificate of Attendance. Sponsoring fire departments receive a copy of the Certificate from NIPSTA.

5.9.3 Copies of Certificates.

Candidates seeking a copy of the Certificate of Completion may contact the NIPSTA administrative team at 847-998-8090. A \$10 fee will be assessed for a copy of the certificate.

5.10 OSFM Testing.

Candidates who successfully complete the NIPSTA Fire Academy will be eligible to take the Basic Operations Firefighter certifying examination through the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal (“OSFM”). All OSFM certification exams will be administered via a secondary testing site.

5.10.1 NIPSTA Responsibilities

Within a week of graduation, NIPSTA will submit course completion rosters for all eligible Candidates for the OSFM Basic Operations Firefighter, Advanced Technician Firefighter, Fire Service Vehicle Operator and Hazardous Materials Operations examinations.

5.10.2 Fire Department Responsibilities

Fire Departments are responsible for adding their Candidate to their OSFM Departmental Roster no later than the first week of the Academy (see Office of State Fire Marshal Certification Exams form in the applicable Candidate Packet).

Request for exams must be submitted to OSFM Division of Personnel Standards & Education (DPSE) by the fire chief, training officer or designee and must be submitted via the OSFM portal. Refer to the Office of State Fire Marshal Certification Exams Form in the applicable Candidate Packet for additional information.

SECTION VI

6 PROGRAM SPECIFICS

6.1 Work Uniform

Candidates are expected to always wear their work uniform unless otherwise directed by NFA representatives. The work uniform shall be kept clean and pressed.

The work uniform shall consist of the following:

- Shirt: Department issued shirt with collar, properly sized.
- Sweatshirt: Department issued sweatshirt, properly sized.
- Trousers: Department issued trousers of permanent-press fabric, navy blue in color. Trousers may not have cuffs and should be of a length so that the lower hem will reach the center of the lacing area of the uniform shoe/work boot. The trousers shall be the correct size for the Candidate.
- Belt: Plain, black in color. Buckle to be department issued or plain without embellishment or decoration.
- Shoes: Black public safety style shoes or boots with steel/composite toes. Shoes and/or boots must be clean and shined at all times. Athletic-type shoes are not permitted as part of the work uniform. The Candidate's shoes/work boots will be kept clean and shined at all times.
- Socks: Black socks shall be worn with black shoes. Other colored socks may be worn with boots.

6.2 Physical Fitness Uniform

The physical fitness ("PT") uniform will be worn when reporting for NFA PT or at other times as specified by NFA representatives. The PT uniform should be clean; any part of the uniform that has been worn, torn or permanently stained or faded must be immediately replaced.

The PT Uniform shall consist of the following:

- Shirt: Department issued t-shirt of the correct size and suitable for running and exercising. The shirt must be tucked in at all times.
- Pants: Department issued navy blue sweatpants, cotton-polyester blend of the correct size and with drawstring waist. No markings other than the sponsoring fire department are permitted.
- Shorts: Navy blue and suitable for running and exercising.
- Socks: Athletic socks without embellishment.
- Shoes: Comfortable athletic shoes, suitable for running and exercising.

6.3 T-Shirts, Specific Information

Candidates may only wear t-shirts issued by their sponsoring department. The wearing of any other type of t-shirt or pride wear is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, t-shirts from a fire

department other than the one with which the candidate is affiliated, along with t-shirts with commercial logos, advertisements, slogans, and the like.

6.4 Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) and Structural Firefighting Gear

All Candidates are required to provide the following protective clothing and associated equipment on the first day of the Academy:

- Structural Firefighting Coat
- Structural Firefighting Pants
- Two (2) Protective Hoods
- Structural Firefighting Helmet with Goggles or Face Shield
- Boots (steel or composite toes with an appropriate heel)
- Two (2) Sets of Structural Firefighting Gloves
- Work Gloves (extrication/leather)
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (“SCBA”), including Spare Cylinder (minimum thirty (30) minute capacity) and Spare Batteries
- Safety Glasses
- Industry approved decontamination wipes

Prior to the first day of the program, all PPE items must be cleaned and in proper working order. All items must be examined and approved by an authorized representative of the sponsoring fire department. Under no circumstances will a Candidate be allowed to wear personal firefighting gear that does not meet NFPA 1851 standards. Any non-compliant, dirty or damaged equipment will be returned by the Candidate to his or her department for immediate replacement.

Candidates must provide their own department-issued structural firefighting gear, structural firefighting helmet, boots, gloves, protective hood, SCBA air packs, and SCBA spare bottles each day of class. It is the Candidate’s responsibility to clean and maintain their gear. Any gear that has become damaged or unserviceable should be brought to the attention of the NFA staff and the sponsoring fire department by the Candidate immediately.

6.5 Personal Grooming, Hair, Cosmetics and Jewelry

Hair will be kept clean and neatly trimmed at all times. Hair may not be braided, colored, cut or styled in an extreme manner. Hair will not touch any part of the uniform shirt collar and should be maintained in a manner that facilitates safe and easy donning and doffing of the breathing apparatus face piece.

Facial hair that interferes with the SCBA mask is prohibited by both NFPA standards and OSHA regulations. Candidates should be clean-shaven prior to the start of each day. Mustaches and sideburns will be neatly trimmed and of an acceptable and professional length.

Excessive use of cosmetics, perfumes or colognes is prohibited.

Fingernails must be kept neatly trimmed and may not exceed past the end of the finger. Fingernail polish and acrylic nails are prohibited.

Candidates are permitted to wear a watch, wedding band or single necklace that must be maintained underneath the shirt. Any other type of jewelry, including earrings, is prohibited.

Tattoos that contain subject matter that is of an offensive nature must be covered by an approved uniform item at all time. Offensive is defined as meeting the criteria of harassing or hateful to any class of persons.

6.6 Cellular Telephones

Personal cell phones or any other electronic communication devices are not permitted on the drill field or in the classroom and may only be utilized during breaks. Any special situations must be approved by a BOF Coordinator in advance.

Candidates are prohibited from using a NIPSTA telephone unless they have obtained advance permission from an Instructor. Candidates may receive phone calls that are of an emergent nature; all other calls are prohibited.

6.7 Inspections

Strict and frequent uniform inspections reflect pride in the professionalism of the fire service. Upon any request for inspection, Candidates will immediately assemble into their designated formation. Instructors will inspect each Candidate to ensure that their uniform is complete and in order. Any Candidate found wearing a uniform that is not complete or in proper order will fail the inspection. Failed inspections will be reported to the Candidate's sponsoring department.

6.8 Firefighting Equipment and Gear

Candidates will not handle any equipment or gear unless they have been trained to use such equipment. All proper protective gear will be worn at all times while on the training grounds unless otherwise directed by an NFA representative. Misuse or neglect of NFA equipment or gear will be cause for immediate dismissal from the program. Candidates shall notify their instructor immediately if they discover broken or damaged equipment or gear.

At the direction of the BOF Coordinator or Lead Instructor, Candidates are responsible for cleaning NFA equipment.

6.9 Vehicles

Candidates are not permitted to drive NIPSTA vehicles.

Candidates riding in NIPSTA vehicles must ride in provided seats and use seat belts. Riding in the bed of a pickup truck or on tailboards, whether seated or standing, is prohibited.

SECTION VII

7 CANDIDATE HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1 Participant Waiver and Associated Paperwork

All paperwork must be completed and submitted to NIPSTA prior to the first day of the Academy or the Candidate will not be permitted to participate in the first day of programming. See Section 4.7 for additional information.

7.2 Injuries and Illnesses

Candidates who experience any type of injury or illness while on the NIPSTA campus must immediately report the event to a NIPSTA instructor or administrative representative. NIPSTA will contact the sponsoring department's Chief Officer or their designee to report the event. The Candidate will be required to complete written paperwork detailing the event. Instructors should refer to the NIPSTA Standard Operating Policy Manual for additional information.

7.3 Rehabilitation during Training

A brief period of rest and re-hydration will be provided after strenuous evolutions and/or during inclement weather. Candidates will assist Instructors in ensuring that rehab supplies remain in place prior to the start of all training ground evolutions. Instructors shall refer to NIPSTA Standard Operating Policy Manual for additional information.

All Candidates are responsible for immediately notifying an Instructor if they require rehabilitation or a physical or mental break.

7.4 Breaks and Lunches

Periodic breaks will be provided during lectures and drills at the discretion of the Lead Instructor. At no time will Candidates leave a training session without first notifying their instructor.

Candidates will not be permitted to leave the campus during the lunch break. Should a Candidate need to leave the campus during the lunch break for personal reasons, the Lead Instructor must be notified and grant permission by 0800. Many lunch breaks will be 'working lunches' involving short presentations. Candidates are required to bring their lunches to campus each day. Water is provided and readily available across campus.

7.5 Candidate Assistance

Candidates may experience personal challenges throughout the program. Such situations may include, but are not limited to; class standing, career direction, progress in the training program, family challenges, and/or learning/study habits. Special meetings may be scheduled with the Candidate in order to discuss personal or professional issues which may be interfering with the Candidate's performance. NFA representatives remain available to provide special assistance in

the event that a Candidate desires such services. NIPSTA also maintains an Academy Chaplain who is available to provide assistance for personal issues or concerns.

7.6 Use of Alcohol and Controlled Substances

Candidates are prohibited from using alcohol or controlled substances during training hours, including lunch breaks. Any Candidate suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be immediately removed from participation. The Fire Chief (or their designee) of the sponsoring department will be notified. If a Candidate suspected of using drugs or alcohol elects to leave the NIPSTA campus prior to a representative of their department arriving at NIPSTA, the Candidate will be considered absent and insubordinate.

If a Candidate is taking prescription medication which may influence their ability to function as a Candidate according to this policy manual, the Candidate must notify the Firefighter Academy Director or BOF Coordinator. Efforts to implement reasonable and confidential accommodations will be made.

7.7 Smoke-Free Campus

State law prohibits smoking in all public facilities. Use of tobacco products is not allowed during the NFA program. On January 1, 2008, the Illinois legislature passed the Smoke Free Illinois Act, (410 ILCS 82/ 1, et seq.), which repeals the Illinois Clean Indoor Air Act and creates new state-wide smoking regulations. NIPSTA has adopted the Illinois state smoking regulations contained in the Smoke Free Illinois Act.

“Smoke” or “smoking” means the carrying, smoking, burning, exhaling of any kind of lighted pipe, cigar, cigarette, hookah (e.g., shisha or sheesha), weed, herbs, or any other lighted smoking equipment.

No person shall smoke in a public place or in any place of employment or within fifteen (15) feet of any entrance to a public place or place of employment. No person may smoke in any vehicle owned, leased, or operated by the State or a political subdivision of the State. Smoking is prohibited in indoor public places and workplaces unless specifically exempted by Section 35 of the Act.

A person who smokes in an area where smoking is prohibited under the Smoke Free Illinois Act shall be fined in an amount that is not less than \$100 and not more than \$250. A person who owns, operates, or otherwise controls a public place or place of employment that violates the Smoke Free Illinois Act shall be fined (i) not less than \$250 for the first violation, (ii) not less than \$500 for the second violation within one year after the first violation, and (iii) not less than \$2,500 for each additional violation within one year after the first violation.

7.8 Concealed Carry

See SECTION X.

7.9 Workplace Violence

NIPSTA is committed to promptly responding to situations that involve the potential for violent behavior that are brought to NIPSTA's attention. Any Candidate who threatens or attempts to intimidate or commit an act of violence toward any other Candidate, member of the public, or other third party on NIPSTA premises or in the performance of NIPSTA duties will be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate dismissal from the Academy. Any Candidate who is subject to or witnesses such conduct by another Candidate or third party should report the incident immediately to the BOF Coordinator or a Lead Instructor.

7.10 Automatic External Defibrillators ("AED")

Automatic External Defibrillators ("AED") are located in the main hallway of the Education Center and near the north entrance of the Field Training Facility.

SECTION VIII

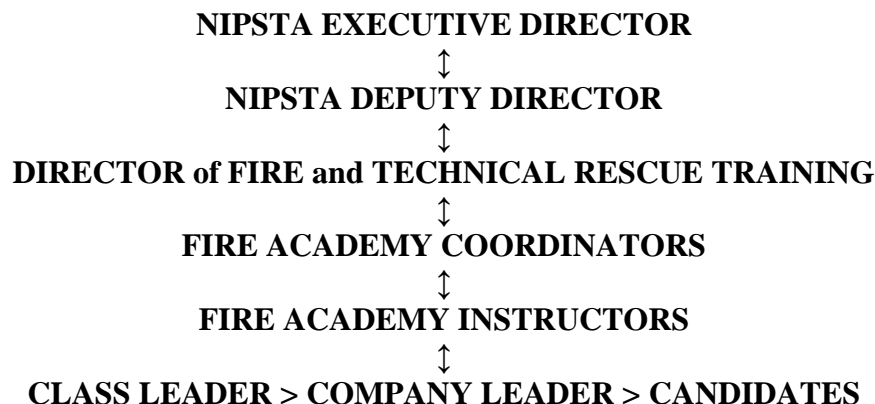
8 CANDIDATE CONDUCT, ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, DISCIPLINE

8.1 The Chain of Command

The fire service observes a strict management concept identified as the chain of command. This system provides an efficient means of moving information up or down the ranks of an organization.

Utilizing the chain of command, the Candidate will send or receive information to and from assigned individuals. Steps in the chain of command should be followed precisely; failure to do so may result in disciplinary action against the candidate. Notably, individuals identifying serious issues, such as personnel matters, harassment or discrimination, are permitted to circumvent the process.

Candidates enrolled in the NFA shall employ the following chain of command model:



8.2 Candidate Conduct

Candidates are expected to always conduct themselves in a safe manner and to use good judgement for every action while on campus. Candidates will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

All Candidates are expected to extend courtesy and respect to all Academy Instructors, staff, visitors, and fellow candidates and students/participants. All Instructors, staff and visitors will be properly addressed as Mr., Ms., or by fire service rank or Academy position. The first candidate to observe the present of a uniformed Chief Officer shall institute the Chief Officer protocol as instructed on Day One of the Academy.

Candidates are required to understand rules and regulations, directives, policies and procedures. Candidates will comply promptly with all lawful orders or directives given by an Instructor or Administrative Staff.

Insubordination, which will include conduct directed at Instructors or Staff that is disrespectful, insolent, or verbally or physical abusive will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with, carryout or

otherwise follow through on an instruction or order given by an Instructor, Coordinator or the Director is considered an act of insubordination.

8.3 Prohibited Behavior

The following acts are prohibited:

- Violation or attempted violation of any Federal, State, County or Municipal law
- Disobedience of orders
- Fighting or quarreling
- Vandalism
- Lying or cheating
- Any hazing or harassment of fellow Candidate(s), Instructors, Staff or visitors
- Making a vexatious or unnecessary complaint against an Instructor or fellow Candidate
- Engaging in any sexual activity while at NIPSTA
- Engaging in any horseplay, either as a participant or spectator
- Using profanity towards members of the public, fellow Candidates, Instructors, or NIPSTA Staff
- Bringing discredit to the Fire Academy or NIPSTA
- Destroying or defacing any official written notice related to NIPSTA business. In addition, the posting or circulation of any notices of a non-official, derogatory character relating to any person or group, or Fire Department and/or Fire Protection District.
- Participating in any physical activity when under restrictions of a Physician.

Nothing in this section shall be a violation of one's Federal, State or Constitutional rights.

8.4 Candidate Academic Integrity

Candidates of the NIPSTA Fire Academy are required to demonstrate the highest level of academic integrity and to follow the Code of Academic Conduct at all times.

8.5 Code of Academic Conduct

The NIPSTA Code of Academic Conduct prohibits the following:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism, or submitting work that is not written by the candidate or lacking proper citation
- Falsification and fabrication, such as lying or distorting the truth
- Helping others to cheat
- Making unauthorized changes on official documents
- Pretending to be someone else or having someone else pretending to be you
- Making or accepting bribes, special favors, or threats
- Any other behavior that violates the concept of academic integrity

8.6 Disciplinary Procedures

All Candidates shall be afforded due process by NIPSTA utilizing the following procedures*:

***NOTE:** The employing fire department or fire protection district is not bound by NIPSTA's disciplinary procedures and may issue its own discipline independent of this program.

Disciplinary issues are categorized as affecting one or more of the following areas:

- Behavioral: Issues which do not involve technical knowledge or skill and do involve violations of policy, procedure or guidelines and/or affect the general health and/or safety of other Candidates, instructors or the general public. Disruptive, unprofessional and/or immature conduct that is inconsistent with expectations of a professional firefighter is a behavioral issue.
- Cognitive: Issues which involves the Candidate's ability to read, write, speak clearly, comprehend written and/or oral instructions, directions or commands, and communicate understanding and/or knowledge through questions, quizzes and tests, both oral and written.
- Psychomotor: Issues which involve the Candidate's ability to safely, properly and/or effectively perform skills in compliance with generally accepted practices and/or published Job Performance Requirements.

Except for serious or urgent infractions which may result in immediate dismissal from this program, a progressive model of discipline is generally followed:

- STEP 1:** Coaching or counseling with notations on the Candidate's evaluation
- STEP 2:** Development of a Performance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the Candidate, Academy management, and a management representative of the sponsoring fire department or fire protection district.
- STEP 3:** Dismissal, as appropriate

All disciplinary actions will be performed in conjunction with the Candidate's sponsoring department. Due to the nature of the program, suspension is not a viable option.

SECTION IX

9 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, NON-HARASSMENT POLICY, PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS

9.1 Workplace Violence Policy

NIPSTA is committed to promptly responding to situations that involve the potential for violent behavior that are brought to NIPSTA's attention. Any Candidate who threatens or attempts to intimidate or commit an act of violence toward any other candidate, NIPSTA employee, director, manager, coordinator or instructor, member of the public, or other third party on NIPSTA premises or in the performance of NIPSTA duties will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. Any candidate who is subject to or witnesses such conduct by a candidate, a NIPSTA employee, director, manager, coordinator or instructor, member of the public, or third party should report the incident immediately to the NIPSTA Executive Director.

9.2 Non-Harassment Policy

NIPSTA is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination, harassment or retaliation. In keeping with this commitment, NIPSTA will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or retaliation of its employees by any supervisor, co-worker, vendor, client, instructor/contractor, candidate/student/participant, or guest.

9.2.1 Definition.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's actual or perceived protected status, such as sex, color, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other legally protected group status. NIPSTA will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, or interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

9.2.2 Conduct.

The conduct forbidden by this policy specifically includes but is not limited to: (a) epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or intimidating acts that are based on a person's protected status; and (b) written or graphic material circulated within or posted within the workplace that shows hostility toward a person or persons because of their protected status.

9.2.3 Sexual Harassment.

Sexual harassment deserves special mention. Sexual harassment is defined as any harassment or discrimination on the basis of an individual's actual or perceived sex or gender, including unwelcome sexual advance(s), request(s) for sexual favors, other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or any conduct of a sexual nature directed at a specific person that would cause the victim or survivor emotional distress, or when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by the individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or

- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

9.2.4 Specific Behaviors. Specific behaviors that NIPSTA will consider sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- d. **Verbal:** Sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, insults, humor and jokes about sex, anatomy or gender-specific traits, sexual propositions, threats, repeated requests for dates, or statements about other employee, even outside their presences, of a sexual nature.
- e. **Non-Verbal:** Suggestive or insulting sounds (whistling), leering, obscene gestures, or sexually suggestive bodily gestures.
- f. **Visual:** Posters, signs, emails, printed materials, objects, or slogans of a sexual nature, viewing pornographic materials or websites.
- g. **Physical:** Touching, unwelcome hugging or kissing, pinching, brushing the body, any coerced sexual act or actual assault.
- h. **Texts/Electronic:** "Sexting" (electronically sending messages with sexual content, including images, pictures or video), the use of sexually explicit language, harassment, cyber stacking and threats via all forms of electronic communications (email, text/picture/video messages, intranet/on-line, postings, blogs, instant messages and social network platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or others).

9.2.5 Supervisor Responsibility.

Each supervisor has the responsibility to maintain his or her workplace free from harassment. This duty includes informing all candidates, employees and Instructors/Contractors as well as any other non-employee of the substance of this policy and assuring them that prompt action will be taken in response to claims of harassment including remedial action when circumstances dictate. Each supervisor must also lead by example and refrain from engaging in any inappropriate conduct or behavior outlined in this Policy. If a supervisor receives a complaint of harassment directly from a candidate/student/participant, employee, or independent contractor, or non-employee, or becomes aware of such conduct, the complaint shall be immediately reported to the Executive Director, or her/his designee.

9.2.6 Employee's and Instructor/Contractor's (non-employee's) Responsibility.

All NIPSTA employees and Instructors/Contractors (non-employees) are responsible to help assure that harassment is avoided. In the event that an employee or Instructor/Contractor (non-employee) has a complaint concerning sexual or another type of harassment, or is aware that such conduct may be occurring, then the employee or Instructor/Contractor (non-employee) should immediately report the complaint or incident as soon as possible (preferably within 48 hours) to his or her supervisor or Executive Director. No one making a complaint in good faith will be retaliated against even if the complaint is not substantiated.

9.2.7 Reporting Procedures.

An employee or Instructor/Contractor (non-employee) who either observes or believes they are the object of harassment should deal with the incident(s) as directly and firmly as possible by clearly communicating their position to the offending employee, reporting the incident(s) to their immediate supervisor (or NIPSTA contact for Instructor/Contractor/non-employee). Upon receipt

of the complaint, NIPSTA leadership will take immediate and appropriate steps to investigate the complaint. Following the investigation of the complaint, the facts will be weighed and a decision will be made concerning the validity of the complaint. If the complaint is determined to be valid, then the offender will face immediate and appropriate disciplinary action. This action shall be based upon the severity of the incident, and may include warnings, suspensions, or employment termination. To the fullest extent practicable, NIPSTA will keep complaints and the terms of their resolution confidential. If the complaining party is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter, then a written appeal may be submitted to the President of the Board of Directors. The NIPSTA Executive Committee will then review the allegation and recommend action. NIPSTA endeavors to investigate any complaint of harassment as confidentially and discreetly as possible.

9.2.8 Concurrent Filing with IDHR.

An employee who believes that he or she has been the subject of harassment or retaliation for complaining about harassment also has a right to file a charge of civil rights violations with the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) within 300 days of the harassment or incident, to have that charge investigated by the IDHR, and adjudicated pursuant to applicable law and regulations. A complaint may be filed with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 300 days of the incident(s). For further information, any such employee may call or write to IDHR, 555 West Monroe Street, Suite 700, Chicago, Illinois 60661, (312) 814-6200, (800) 662-3942, or TTY (866) 740-3953 or the EEOC, JCK Federal Building, 230 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604 (800) 669-4000, or TTY (800) 869-8001.

9.3 Procedure for Handling Complaints of Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and/or Retaliation (included above).

9.3.1 Retaliation.

No one making a complaint in good faith will be retaliated against even if the complaint is not substantiated. Retaliation against anyone for reporting harassment, assisting in making a complaint, cooperating in an investigation of harassment, or otherwise engaging in conduct that constitutes protected activity outlined above or as defined by the Illinois Whistleblower Act is prohibited and is grounds for discipline up to and including termination. Victims and witnesses are encouraged to come forward. For purposes of this provision, retaliation means any reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, denial of promotion or transfer, or changes in the terms and conditions of employment taken against employee for involvement in a protected activity.

9.3.2 False Complaints.

False or frivolous complaints refer to cases in which the accuser is acting in bad faith and using a sexual harassment complaint to accomplish some end other than stopping sexual harassment. It does not refer to charges made in good faith that cannot be proven. False accusations of sexual harassment can have serious adverse effects on those falsely accused. Given the seriousness of the consequences for the accused, a false or frivolous complaint is a severe offense that can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

9.4 Conflict.

In the event there is a conflict between any provisions of this chapter or any rule or regulation promulgated hereunder and any applicable law, the law shall govern and prevail.

SECTION X

10 CONCEALED CARRY

10.1 Purpose

Public Act 98-0063 created a new “Firearm Concealed Carry Act” and also amended portions of many other statutes, creating a system whereby Illinois residents can apply for and receive a license to carry concealed firearms.

10.2 Policy

All property, buildings, or portions of buildings, as well as NIPSTA vehicles, owned or under the control of NIPSTA are designated as “Prohibited Areas” for concealed carry licensees to carry their firearm. All Prohibited Areas that are buildings must clearly and conspicuously display a 4”x6” sign on the premises, which states that concealed firearms are prohibited. Signs shall be in accordance with the design approved by the Illinois State Police. The NIPSTA Executive Director shall determine placement of these signs at all building and restricted parking area entrances. The NIPSTA Executive Director, or his designee, shall be responsible for the placement and maintenance of the signage.

All Candidates, regardless of whether they are licensed under Illinois law, are strictly prohibited from carrying a concealed firearm or weapon into any Prohibited Area, and from carrying a concealed firearm or weapon while acting in any capacity as a NIPSTA candidate.

A firearm may be transported into a parking area within a Candidate’s personal vehicle if the firearm and its ammunition remain locked in a case out of plain view within the parked vehicle. “Case” is defined as a glove compartment or console that completely encases the firearm and its ammunition, the trunk of the vehicle or a firearm carrying box, shipping box or other container. The firearm may only be removed for the limited purpose of storage or retrieval from within the trunk of the vehicle. A weapon or firearm must first be unloaded before removal from the vehicle. All Candidates who are storing their firearm in their personal vehicle, pursuant to Illinois law, must inform the NIPSTA Executive Director of the location that their vehicle is parked.

10.3 Enforcement

Any Candidate found to have carried a weapon or firearm onto a Prohibited Area knowingly, or found to be carrying a weapon or firearm under circumstances in which the Candidate should have known that he or she was in possession of a weapon or firearm, may be subject to administrative action and discipline up to and including, but not limited to, immediate dismissal, subject to such other rules or regulations as may be applicable, and possible arrest and prosecution.

Any individual visiting or conducting business on NIPSTA property found to have carried a weapon or firearm into a Prohibited Area knowingly, or under circumstances in which the person should have known that he or she was in possession of a weapon or firearm, may be banned from NIPSTA property.

Violations of this Policy may result in referrals to external law enforcement agencies.

10.4 Exceptions

The provisions of this Policy do not apply to the possession of weapons or firearms in any Prohibited Area if the weapon or firearm is carried by a sworn law enforcement officer required to carry a weapon or firearm as a condition of his or her employment.