

# COMPANY OFFICER EXPECTATIONS (From a BC)

**By Steve Prziborowski – Deputy Chief**

First of all, I am very enthusiastic about working with you and your crew! The purpose of this is to ensure that we are on the same page with each other; whether on the fireground or at the fire station, it is paramount that we safely and competently perform and accomplish the duties expected of us. So you know where I am coming from, here are my two most important goals for us each shift as well as my general expectations:

1. To allow each of us to go home safely at the end of our shift.
2. To impart knowledge that will assist you in your daily operations and with your fire service career. My job is to provide you with the necessary information to someday either take my position or be the best fire captain or firefighter/engineer you can be. We all have an obligation to assist our team in getting the job done and even more importantly, passing our knowledge and experience on to our newest firefighters so that they can one day do the same to other firefighters.

## I expect you and your crew to.....

- Teach me new things and reinforce previously learned items; based on your knowledge and experiences, especially since you have worked in this area for some time.
- Do your job, lead by example.
- Treat your customers with respect and courtesy.
- Treat your personnel and co-workers with respect and courtesy.
- Be familiar with all aspects of your apparatus
- Know how to operate and use every piece of equipment on the apparatus.
- Be considerate of local neighbors when performing your apparatus and/or equipment checkout.
- Ensure that our apparatus is looking professional and functioning at all times. Cleaning the windows, tires, hand tools, power tools, & other equipment are functions to perform as needed. These items are not “busy-work.” They are typically things that just need to be done on a regular basis.
- Know your first-in district streets, target hazards, and other unique and/or related items that may be of importance. I also expect you to be familiar with your second-due district streets and target hazards. I don’t expect you to know every single street in your second-due district, but I think you should know every street in your first-due district after at least a year at the station.
- Ask me questions whenever you are not sure about your assignment or duties.
- Advise me of any special needs you may require. I consider myself very flexible if you give me proper and adequate notice.

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- Perform the required daily and weekly station, apparatus, and equipment maintenance and checkouts that are required. Take ownership in your station, your equipment and your personnel. Leave the station, apparatus, & equipment in excellent condition for the oncoming crew.
- If you are a captain, to supervise and manage your crew. They are your responsibility. Take care of discipline at the lowest level, and do not let discipline issues get out of hand.
- Let me know a.s.a.p. of any deficiencies that require immediate attention from the Shop or may inhibit your ability to deliver quality service to our customers.
- Put up or take down the flags if they have not been done (some stations have lit flag poles; thus this is not an issue). Also, when taking down the flags, please fold them in the proper and respectful way they are intended to be folded.
- Accurately complete your T-card in the morning during your apparatus and equipment checkout.
- Be familiar with and knowledgeable of the Fire Department Rules and Regulations, Standard Operating Guidelines, Policy Manual, Training Manuals, and Automatic Aid/Mutual Aid binders. They are there for a reason, and they will guide us in our everyday activities.
- Always “keep me in the loop,” I hate surprises.
- Not complain when given assignments or tasks. Especially in the case of station move-ups. Just because a station is not a “core-station” doesn’t mean we cannot move up a unit to cover the first due area. If we have two apparatus at one station, and a station that will be vacant for a significant time or there is a large response area uncovered, I will make appropriate move ups to reduce response times.
- Make decisions appropriate to your level. Don’t expect me to make all of your decisions for you. If your paramedic goes to the hospital, plan on picking your paramedic up yourself. Do not ask for concurrence; just have the dispatcher notify me so I am aware of your being out of your area. If there is a better method to pick up your paramedic, I will let you know. Most of the time I feel it is more appropriate to have you get your crew back together a.s.a.p.
- Use the headline test when making decisions:
  - Is it the right thing for our personnel?
  - Is it the right thing for our department?
  - Is it the right thing for our customers?
  - Would you like to read about it on the headline of tomorrow’s newspaper?
  - If you can answer a firm yes to all of the above items, then by all means, go for it.
- Ensure the following responsibilities are up-to-date and completed on time:
  - Training Records
  - Month-end supply order and paperwork
  - Pre-fire plans
  - Company Inspections

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- Hydrant Maintenance
  - Brush Inspections
  - Apparatus Maintenance
  - Probationary Reports and Training
  - Personnel at your station are intimately knowledgeable about their first-due area and assigned apparatus. Regularly test your personnel on their street knowledge.
  - Other routine assignments and tasks.
- Listen to the radio during the day so that you are aware of what the other resources in our Department are doing at all times. Knowing that our normal second-due engine is on an EMS call or out-of-service due to being at the shop (or our Truck and Rescue are unavailable due to a Special Operations training session) can make a major difference in our responses (because we might have to go into their area) as well as our strategy and tactics.
  - Tactfully and respectfully advise me of something that I may be missing or not completing. I take care of you and you take care of me. We're all human (myself included), and we can forget or miss things on occasion. I will also try to do the same of you.
  - Last but not least, I expect you not to know everything! Every one of us should strive to continue learning at least one new thing every day of our life (myself included)! The day we think we know it all is the day we're opening up ourselves to failure and to letting Murphy's Law takeover.

While this might seem like I am expecting a lot of you, please understand where I am coming from. My goal is to set us up for success with our Department and the customers we serve. While we all have a great deal of knowledge and experience to gain, I want to at least allow you to see where I am coming from and what I expect of you. Your goal should be to be a low maintenance Captain with a low maintenance crew. My goal is to be a low maintenance Battalion Chief for the Deputy Chief of Operations (I initially wrote this as a BC). I don't think I'm asking too much of you or that I have high expectations of someone in your position. All I am doing is challenging you to be the best that you can be for the Department and the customers we provide service to; I don't think that is asking too much of you or asking you to do anything that is out of line.

Why am I doing this? Because the customers we serve deserve the best and I will do everything in my power to ensure that they get the best level of service we can provide. **Short and sweet – just do your job, be responsible and accountable for your actions (or non-actions), and have fun!** This is the greatest job in the world that I can think of; and we need to make the best of it. Thanks for taking the time to listen; your assistance and effort in meeting these goals and expectations is appreciated! If at any time you have any questions or concerns, or if I can be of assistance to you in any way, please feel free to contact me on my personal cellular phone at (408) 205-9006 or at [sprziborowski@aol.com](mailto:sprziborowski@aol.com) - I look forward to working with you and getting to know you better.

Lastly, please remember I am here to serve you and support you.

Respectfully,

Steve Prziborowski