

**CONSTITUTION  
CORDRY SWEETWATER VOLUNTEER  
FIRE DEPARTMENT AND AMBULANCE CORPS, INC.**

In order to render it more efficient and reputable, Cordry Sweetwater Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Corps, Inc., requires that its members be residents or property owners on the Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District right of way in Brown County, Indiana, who are able-bodied and interested citizens, willing to conduct themselves in an orderly and peaceful manner in the course of their duties, and to pay proper respect to the rules and regulations of this organization and the laws of the State of Indiana.

- Article I.** The name of this organization shall be Cordry Sweetwater Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Corps, Incorporated.
- Article II.** The purpose of this organization shall be to provide fire protection and emergency services for the Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District. Further, it shall promote brotherly regard and good fellowship for its members and provide mutual aid to other fire departments and emergency service organizations.
- Article III.** This organization shall be governed by the rules and regulations provided by this Constitution, the Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG), and Bylaws approved by a majority of its members on this the 12th day of August 2010.
- Article IV.** The business of this organization shall be conducted by its Board of Directors consisting of the five (5) officers, all duly elected.
- Article V.** This organization shall be non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian and will treat all its members and residents of the community as equals regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, or national origin.
- Article VI.** This Constitution may be altered or amended (after its initial adoption as provided in Article III above) by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the active members on an annual basis.
- Article VII.** In the event this organization shall cease to exist for any reason, ownership of all property will be decided by majority vote of existing active members.

**BYLAWS**  
**CORDRY SWEETWATER VOLUNTEER**  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT AND AMBULANCE CORPS, INC.**

**Article I      Membership**

Section 1.      Categories

- (a) Active Fire Fighter Membership – (Limited to 30 maximum) Any resident or property owner on the Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District right of way in Brown County, Indiana, who is of sound mind and body, is age eighteen (18) years or older, and has a high school diploma or the equivalent, shall be eligible for active membership in this organization.
- (b) Active EMS Membership – Any resident or property owner on the Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District right of way in Brown County, Indiana, who is of sound mind and body, is age eighteen (18) years or older, and has a high school diploma or the equivalent, shall be eligible for active membership in this organization. EMS members must be 1st Responder or EMT certified. They have the same rights and benefits as active members, but will not be issued first-line fire equipment. They must keep their certifications to stay an EMS member.
- (c) Auxiliary Membership – (10 maximum) Any resident or property owner on the Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District right of way in Brown County, Indiana, who is of sound mind and body, is age eighteen (18) years or older, and has a high school diploma or the equivalent, shall be eligible for active membership in this organization. Auxiliary members are members who may not want to participate in fire-fighting activities. These members may participate in all functions of the fire department, including fire-fighting, if they are up-to-date on training. They will not have voting rights, retirement benefits, be issued active member first-line turnout gear, cannot run blue lights, or operate department equipment unless directed by an officer and cannot hold an elected office.
- (d) Cadet Membership – Any resident of the Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District right of way in Brown County, Indiana, who is of sound mind and body, age fourteen (14) to nineteen (19) years, and who has parental or guardian consent, may be sponsored by an active member of this organization as a cadet member.
- (e) Special Membership – Special membership must be approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors. Special membership has same rights, privileges and responsibilities as an active member.

Section 2.      Membership

- (a) Membership in this organization shall be obtained by submitting a written application and appearing before the membership of this organization at a regular meeting. (The Board of Directors must approve any reason for non-appearance). At such appearance, the applicant shall provide as much information about him/herself as may be requested by the members present. No applicants with a felony record will be accepted. It shall be the duty of the members to provide the Board of Directors with any information known about an applicant. Acceptance for membership requires the unanimous vote of the Board of Directors. Voting will take place at the next regular meeting of the Board following the applicant's appearance before the membership. All new members are subject to a twelve (12) month probationary period. A cadet with one (1) year of service may become a regular member at the first regular meeting following his/her eighteenth (18) birthday with high school diploma or

equivalent, and shall serve a six (6) month probationary period.

- (b) A member on probation is not allowed to operate any department vehicle until successfully completing mandatory training, Emergency Vehicles Operations Course and completing probationary period, unless authorized by an Officer for each occurrence. A probationary member is not allowed to hold office and has no voting privileges, but may participate in any open discussion.
- (c) Wherever a member or officer of this organization has a financial or personal interest in any matter coming before the membership, the board of directors shall ensure that:
  - (i) The interest of such member or officer is fully disclosed to the Board of Directors and membership.
  - (ii) No interested member or officer may vote or lobby on the matter or be counted in determining the existence of a quorum at the meeting at which such matter is voted upon.
  - (iii) Any transaction in which a member or officer has a financial or personal interest shall be duly approved by the members and officers not so interested or connected as being in the best interests of the organization.
  - (iv) Payments to the interested member or officer shall be reasonable and shall not exceed fair market value.
  - (v) The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention, and rationale for approval.

Section 3. Certain qualifications must be met for CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP. They are:

- (a) Complete mandatory training required by the State in a timely fashion.
- (b) Complete additional training as required by the standardized program established by the Line Officers.
- (c) Make an attempt to become Firefighter 1 & 2 or obtain State EMT or 1st Responder certification within two (2) years of becoming a member. (as applicable)
- (d) Maintain firefighter status and/or EMT or 1st Responder certification, as appropriate for position.
- (e) Any member convicted of a felony will be immediately discharged from the department.

Section 4. CONDUCT

- (a) Failure to abide by the rules and regulations or to meet any of the above applicable requirements may be cause for dismissal from this organization. Failure to obey a direct order from a superior officer may be cause for dismissal from this organization. Willful conduct detrimental to this organization shall be cause for dismissal from this organization.
- (b) Any member who deliberately abuses property or equipment belonging to this organization may be dismissed from this organization and be responsible for the cost of repair or replacement. No person shall use departmental property for personal use without an officer's approval.
- (c) It shall be the duty of all members to protect and preserve the rights and property of this organization, its members, and the general public.
- (d) Every member shall make a conscientious effort to attend all meetings, trainings, emergency runs, special events and fund-raising events. Failure to do so indicates a serious

lack of interest and may be considered grounds for dismissal from this organization.

- (e) Any member who resigns from this organization, or is removed from this organization, will not be eligible to apply for membership for at least one (1) year for the date of departure.
- (f) Any question concerning membership that cannot be resolved by the Board of Directors shall be referred to the active membership of this organization for final action.
- (g) No member may be an active member of any other volunteer fire department unless approved by the Board of Directors.
- (h) No member shall use or allow the use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs on fire department property.
- (i) No member shall be (in the public's view) in the state of intoxication or under the influence of illegal drugs (as defined by state statute) while representing the fire department, i.e. clad in fire department garments/gear or operating fire department equipment, including all radios issued by the department.
- (j) Members who want to remain as operators shall keep up-to-date driver's training, valid Indiana driver's license and pass a yearly test which will include, but not be limited to, drivers training and pump operation. Members not up-to-date will not operate equipment unless authorized by an officer.

## **Article II      BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Section 1.      The Board of Directors shall consist of five (5) elected members of this organization with the following titles:

- Chief
- Assistant Chief
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Ambulance Captain

Section 2.      The Board of Directors shall be responsible for the financial and administrative affairs of this organization. Any general expenditure two-hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) or greater must be approved by the majority of the membership present. If the purchase exceeds the approved amount, three (3) elected officers must approve the additional expenditure in advance not to exceed two-hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00). If purchase exceeds the approved amount by greater than two-hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00), it must go back before the membership in advance for approval. In the event an emergency expenditure under Five-hundred dollars (\$500.00) is needed, any three (3) elected officers may approve the expenditure. In the event an emergency expenditure is needed which exceeds Five-hundred dollars (\$500.00), any three (3) elected officers may approve the expenditure providing the Board of Directors is notified within twenty-four (24) hours of such expenditure. An emergency expenditure is defined as one required to keep the department and/or current equipment functional prior to the next regular meeting.

Section 3.      Expenditures presented to the membership for approval, with the exception of emergency (as defined above) and normal operating (defined in this section), must be presented for consideration by the members. It will be presented for a vote at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Voting will be done by ballot and will require a majority of eligible membership in attendance to vote. A normal operating

expense is defined as office supplies, cleaning supplies, supplies required for maintenance of vehicles and equipment, supplies for fundraisers and events, beverages, etc. A waiver of the one month waiting period may be voted on by the membership for any item deemed time critical by the majority of the Officers.

- Section 4. No business may be conducted at a Board of Directors meeting unless a quorum of at least three (3) members is present. The Chief or Assistant Chief must be one (1) of the three (3) members present to conduct business. All actions of the Board must be approved by majority vote. The Chief, or acting Chief, shall vote only to break a tie. (Exception: The Chief shall vote on new member applicants).
- Section 5. The Board of Directors shall meet monthly at a time and place designated by the Chief. Special meetings may be called by the Chief or by any two (2) members of the Board provided twenty-four (24) hour notice is given the members.
- Section 6. No more than two (2) Directors or Officers of this organization may be from the same family. Family is defined as parent-child, brother-sister, husband-wife, or in-laws.
- Section 7. In the event a complaint, grievance, or charge is made by any member of this organization or any member of the community against this organization or its members, it shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors to establish a committee to deal with the matter(s). This committee will be comprised of three (3) members of this organization and two (2) members of the general public not associated with this organization or its members. The appointed committee will hold a discovery hearing, review the facts, and make recommendation(s) to the Board of Directors for resolution.

### **Article III    LINE OFFICERS**

- Section 1. Line Officers shall consist of at least six (6) members of this organization with the following titles:
- Chief
  - Ambulance Captain
  - Assistant Chief
  - Fire Lieutenant
  - Fire Captain
  - Ambulance Lieutenant
- The Fire Chief or Ambulance Captain may appoint additional Captains and/or Lieutenants as needed.
- Section 2. The Officers shall be responsible for providing the services of this organization.
- Section 3. The Officers shall establish a training program to meet or exceed the minimum requirements of the State of Indiana for members of this organization.
- Section 4. The Officers shall meet monthly at a time and place designated by the Chief. Special meetings may be called by the Chief at any time provided twenty-four (24) hour notice is given all Officers.
- Section 5. The Chief shall be in charge at all fire and/or emergency runs made by this organization and shall have complete authority at all such runs except patient care. The Department will follow National Incident Management System (NIMS) guidelines for all scenes. Additionally, the first EMT starting patient care will assume patient care responsibility. Further, the Chief shall have complete authority over all training activities and programs and shall be responsible for the maintenance of all

equipment. The Chief may delegate any part of his authority assignments to another Officer and/or any member for the betterment and operation of this organization. The Chief (or acting Chief) shall preside at all meetings.

- Section 6. The Assistant Chief shall assist the Chief at all times and shall act as Chief in the absence of the Chief.
- Section 7. The Fire Captain shall carry out the duties assigned by the Chief or Assistant Chief and may be the officer-in-charge on all fire runs in the absence of the Chief and Assistant Chief.
- Section 8. The Ambulance Captain shall carry out the duties assigned by the Chief or Assistant Chief. The Ambulance Captain shall be responsible for records of all ambulance runs and medical training sessions including attendance. The Ambulance Captain shall complete and submit all reports and information requests required or requested by authorized governmental agencies. The Ambulance Captain may delegate any part of his/her authority and/or assignments to any member for the betterment and operation of this organization.
- Section 9. The Fire Lieutenant and the Ambulance Lieutenant shall carry out the duties assigned by the Chief or Assistant Chief and their respective Captains. The Fire Lieutenant shall act as the Fire Captain in the absence of the Fire Captain. The Ambulance Lieutenant shall act as the Ambulance Captain in the absence of the Ambulance Captain.
- Section 10. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year. The Chief and Assistant Chief must be a Firefighter 1 & 2 for at least two (2) years and a member of this organization for at least two (2) consecutive years up to the time of the election. The Ambulance Captain must be a certified EMT for at least two (2) years and a member of this organization for at least two (2) consecutive years up to the time of the election. All other officers (elected or appointed) must be members of this organization for at least one (1) year. The Fire Captain, Fire Lieutenant, Ambulance Lieutenant, and Cadet Officers shall not be subject to election. These officers shall be appointed by the Chief and are subject to demotion by the Chief.
- Section 11. Chain of Command: National Incident Management Systems (NIMS)

Fire Scene:	Ambulance Scene:
Chief	Chief
Assistant Chief	Ambulance Captain
Fire Captain	Ambulance Lieutenant
Fire Lieutenant	

**Article IV ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS AND DUTIES**

- Section 1. The following duties apply to the business affairs of this organization.
  - (a) Chief – Responsible for conducting all regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors and all regular and special meetings of the membership. Shall perform all duties usual to those of a presiding officer. The Chief, inherent with the title, shall have the authority to enter into contracts with other outside entities for the betterment of the department such as for obtaining equipment, vehicles, property, etc. and any stipulations thereof. The Chief

shall also be responsible for the daily operations of the department.

- (b) Assistant Chief – Assist the Chief as requested and serve as presiding officer in the absence of the Chief.
- (c) Responsible for keeping accurate minutes of all meetings. Shall keep an accurate record of attendance at all meetings. The secretary shall perform all duties usual to the office.
- (d) Responsible for all monies received and expended by this organization. Shall keep accurate records and receipts of all financial transactions. Shall make timely deposits of monies received; shall be bonded with such bond paid for by this organization. Treasurer shall submit all financial records for audit annually or as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors. An internal audit will be performed every six (6) months by an audit committee (assigned by the Chief and Assistant Chief) consisting of the Treasurer, one (1) officer, and one (1) member. The Treasurer shall also be responsible to pay all authorized bills of this organization in a prompt and professional manner and be responsible for the prompt and accurate billing for services rendered. Additionally, the treasurer shall complete and submit all reports and information requests required and/or requested by authorized governmental agencies, including all State and Federal tax filing, tax exempt status, and corporate filing. The Treasurer shall submit a monthly financial statement to the membership at monthly meetings. The Treasurer may delegate some assignments to another member for the betterment and operation of this organization. Delegation of certain responsibilities may be deemed best handled by an independent contractor; the treasurer may recommend this to Board of Directors who will make final decision. The Treasurer shall perform all duties usual to the office.
- (e) Ambulance Captain – Carry out the duties assigned by the Chief or Assistant Chief. Responsible for the records of all ambulance runs and medical training sessions including attendance, and all operational and equipment requirements of the ambulance. Shall complete and submit all reports and information requests required or requested by authorized governmental agencies. The Ambulance Captain may delegate any part of his/her authority to any member for the betterment and operation of this organization.

## **Article V      MEETINGS, TRAININGS & EVENTS**

- Section 1.      Regular meetings of the membership of this organization shall be held on the third (3rd) Thursday of each month unless that date falls on a national holiday. In such case, the Chief shall name a meeting date at the regular monthly meeting preceding such holiday.
- Section 2.      Fire training and maintenance meetings shall be held on the first (1st) Thursday of each month. These are subject to change by the Fire Chief or his delegates. Any member who misses more than two (2) consecutive trainings, without being properly excused, may be subject to dismissal from this organization or probation for one hundred and twenty (120) days. Any member who cannot attend training shall give notice to any officer explaining the reason for absence within one (1) week, and reschedule the missed training. The Board of Directors will determine if the reason for absence is to be considered an excused absence. The absent member must be notified within seven (7) days if the absence is not an excused absence. Any member who does not attend at least nine (9) regular trainings in any calendar year, without being properly excused, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from this organization and/or probation for one hundred and twenty (120) days.

- Section 3. Approved EMT training costs will be paid at fifty percent (50%) by this organization at the time a member enrolls in such training program. Upon acceptance of payment for training, said member will sign an agreement stating he/she will remain an active member of this organization for no less than two (2) years following successful completion of the training. Should a member resign or otherwise fail to remain an active member of this organization for the two (2) year period, said member shall reimburse the expenditure paid by the department. Exceptions may be made to this section by a majority of the voting membership.
- Section 4. Other training costs to benefit the department and community will be submitted for prior approval by a majority of the voting membership, to be paid by the department. This expenditure will be paid in accordance to the financial and administrative guidelines stated in Article II, Section 3 of the bylaws.
- Section 5. All meetings will be held at the fire station unless such change of meeting place is announced in advance by the Chief.
- Section 6. Special meetings may be called by the Chief or Acting Chief at any time provided notice is given all members at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to such meeting. Notice may be oral or written.
- Section 7. The Annual election shall be the regular monthly meeting occurring in December, effective 2011.
- Section 8. Any member who misses more than two (2) consecutive regular meetings, without being properly excused, may be subject to dismissal from this organization or probation for one hundred and twenty (120) days. Any member who cannot attend a meeting shall give notice to any officer explaining the reason for such absence within one (1) week. The Board of Directors will determine if the reason for absence is to be considered an excused absence. The absent member must be notified within seven (7) days if the absence is not an excused absence. Any member who does not attend at least nine (9) regular meetings and at least four (4) duty team assignments in any calendar year, without being properly excused, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from this organization or probation for one hundred and twenty (120) days.
- Section 9. A quorum at any meeting of the membership shall consist of no less than fifty percent (50%) of the active members. No business requiring a vote may be conducted unless a quorum is present. Seventy percent (70%) attendance shall be required to be a quorum at an election meeting.
- Section 10. All administrative meetings will be conducted by parliamentary procedure. The Chief may name a parliamentarian to determine proper procedure.
- Section 11. EMS training shall be held the second (2nd) Wednesday of each month. These are subject to change by the Fire Chief or his delegates. Any member who misses more than two (2) consecutive trainings, without being properly excused, may be subject to dismissal from this organization or probation for one hundred and twenty (120) days. Any member who cannot attend training shall give notice to any officer explaining the reason for absence within one (1) week, and to reschedule the missed training. The Board of Directors will determine if the reason for absence is to be considered an excused absence. The absent member must be notified within seven (7) days if the absence is not an excused absence. Any member who does not attend at least nine (9) regular trainings in any calendar year, may be subject to



disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from this organization or probation for one hundred /or probation for one hundred and twenty (120) days.

- Section 12. Events (including fund raising and special) are held at various times throughout the year. Any member who misses more than two (2) consecutive events, without being properly excused, may be subject to dismissal from this organization or probation for one hundred and twenty (120) days. Any member who cannot attend an event shall give notice to any officer explaining the reason for absence within one (1) week. The Board of Directors will determine if the reason for absence is to be considered an excused absence. The absent member must be notified within seven (7) days if the absence is not an excused absence. Any member who does not attend at least two-thirds (2/3) of the department's events in any calendar year, is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from this organization or probation for one hundred and/or probation for one hundred and twenty (120) days.

## **Article VI ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- Section 1. The Chief will appoint a Nominating Committee at the October meeting. This Committee shall consist of three (3) members, one (1) of whom shall be an officer. The Committee shall speak with every eligible member of the fire department. This Committee shall present to the membership at least one (1) candidate for each office at the regular monthly meeting held one (1) meeting (November) prior to the Annual election. At the November meeting, the Nominating Committee shall accept nominations from the membership for the annual election. Nominations from the floor will be accepted during the November meeting only. Nominations for each office will then be closed and the slate will be set by the Committee for voting at the next meeting. This is the annual election meeting held in December.
- Section 2. A committee will be named to establish guidelines, if necessary, for absentee balloting. This committee shall consist of three (3) members, one (1) of whom shall be an officer. Absentee ballots will be accepted by the Officer of the election committee. It is the voting member's responsibility to deliver their absentee ballot, before the December election meeting, in a sealed envelope with the member's name printed on the front of the envelope. It is the Officer's responsibility to make sure the sealed envelope is delivered to the December election meeting. Absentee ballot details should be discussed by Officers prior to the November business meeting.
- Section 3. Election of officers shall take place at the Annual election meeting. New officers will be sworn in at the end of the Annual election meeting and assume their office the first (1st) of the month following the elections. This allows for turnover of duties from the previous officer. (Note: Seventy percent (70%) membership attendance is required for a quorum) In the event an election quorum is not present, the Chief shall name a special election date as early as possible so those absent may be present.
- Section 4. If, for any reason, an elected officer cannot fulfill his/her term of office, the Board of Directors shall appoint a successor to complete the un-expired term.
- Section 5. A probationary member may not vote at an election meeting.

## **Article VII AMENDMENTS**

- Section 1. These bylaws may be amended, altered or repealed by a seventy percent (70%) majority vote of the membership. Any proposed change shall be submitted in writing two (2) months prior to a vote and shall be read to the membership at least once before the meeting at which such changes are to be voted on. These bylaws should be reviewed annually.

## **Article VIII RETIREMENT**

- Section 1. Volunteers who have served fifteen (15) years of consecutive active service for the Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department are eligible to retire from the Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department with written notice to the Fire Chief.
- Section 2. Volunteers who serve ten (10) consecutive years of active service with the Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department and ten (10) verified years to another department which totals twenty (20) years of fire service are eligible for retirement from the Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department with written notice to the Fire Chief.
- Section 3. Upon retirement, the retiree will have his/her IVFA dues paid for life. His/her name will be added to the retired plaque at Cordry-Sweetwater Fire Department Headquarters. He/she will continue to have the benefits of the Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department and privileges granted to the current membership, except voting privileges. They are welcome, as a regular member, to all functions given by Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department. The retired firefighter's name and previous unit number, preceded by an "R", will remain on the roster of the Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department, so all members will know the firefighter is a respected retiree of the Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department.
- Section 4. Upon the retirement, the retired firefighter will receive a commemorative plaque, a night's stay at a hotel/motel of their choice and dinner at the expense of the Cordry Sweetwater Fire Department for that member's generous service to the community. The Department will also notify the public served via local paper, newsletter and Indiana Volunteer Firefighters Association paper.
- Section 5. If a retired member wishes to reinstate his/her membership after his/her retirement, they can do so, to active status. He/she will be allowed that request one (1) time only. Acceptance shall be with unanimous approval of the Board of Directors. If retiree has received the retirement benefits, as stated in Section 4 above, he/she cannot receive them a second time. When a retired member requests to be reinstated, and was retired for less than twenty-four (24) months, he/she may become an active member again without the probationary period being served. Members retired more than twenty-four (24) months must fulfill requirements as a new member.