



NEVADA FIRE CHIEF 101 GUIDE

DRAFT v1 October 21, 2025

The Nevada Fire Chiefs 101 Guide is a practical resource designed to assist new, current, and aspiring fire chiefs in Nevada. It offers a foundational overview of the knowledge, responsibilities, and relationships essential for effective leadership in the fire service.

Addressing the unique challenges faced by chiefs in rural volunteer departments, fire protection districts, and combined Fire/EMS-wildland agencies, the guide emphasizes the importance of the role in safeguarding lives, property, and natural resources. While not a policy manual or legal reference, it provides valuable insights into the systems and expectations of fire service leadership in Nevada, helping build a supportive network for chiefs and their communities.

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Foreword

Welcome to the *Nevada Fire Chiefs 101 Guide*.

This guide was created by the Nevada Fire Chiefs Association with one goal in mind — to help fire service leaders across our state succeed. Whether you're stepping into the role of Fire Chief for the first time, preparing for the opportunity ahead, or simply looking to strengthen your leadership, this guide is here to support you.

Inside, you'll find practical information, templates, and insights gathered from fire chiefs who have walked the same path — from small volunteer departments in rural Nevada to larger fire districts and combined EMS-wildland agencies. Every department is unique, but the challenges, responsibilities, and sense of purpose we share as fire service leaders unite us across geography and agency size.

This is not a policy manual or a legal handbook. It's a collection of lessons learned, best practices, and resources meant to make your job a little easier — and to remind you that you're not in it alone. We encourage you to use it, adapt it, and share your own experiences to make it even better over time. The *Fire Chief 101 Guide* will continue to grow and evolve with input from Nevada's fire service community.

Serving as a Fire Chief is both an honor and a tremendous responsibility. It means leading with integrity, supporting your people, and serving your community with dedication and compassion. As you take on that challenge, know that your part of a strong network of leaders across Nevada who are ready to help, collaborate, and stand with you.

Thank you for your commitment to the fire service — and for your leadership in keeping Nevada's communities safe.

Best Regards,

Dave Cochran, President
Nevada Fire Chiefs Association
Fire Chief – City of Reno, Nevada

RECORD OF CHANGES

Date	Author	Section/Pages	Synopsis

* As you use this guide, we encourage you to share any feedback, updates, or suggestions for improvement. This guide is meant to be a living document — one that stays current, useful, and relevant to Nevada’s fire service leaders.

The Nevada Fire Chiefs Association will host an annual workshop to review feedback and update the guide as needed. Please send your ideas, comments, and recommendations to Kelli Baratti at kelli@nvfirechf.org. Kelli will collect all submissions and prepare them for discussion during the workshop.

Your input helps ensure this guide continues to serve as a practical and valuable resource for fire chiefs across Nevada.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of This Guide

The *Fire Chiefs 101* guide is designed to support new, current, and aspiring fire chiefs in Nevada by providing a foundational overview of the knowledge, responsibilities, and relationships critical to success in the role. Whether leading a rural volunteer department, a fire protection district, or a combination agency with EMS and wildland responsibilities, every Nevada chief plays a vital role in protecting lives, property, and natural resources.

This guide is not a policy manual or legal reference—it is a practical tool to help you understand the systems, expectations, and challenges unique to fire service leadership in Nevada. It’s also a place to start building a network of support and resources that will serve you and your communities well.

1.2 The Role of a Nevada Fire Chief

Being a fire chief in Nevada is more than overseeing emergency response—it requires leadership across multiple fronts:

- **Operational Command:** Leading responses to fires, medical emergencies, rescues, and disasters.
- **Interagency Coordination:** Navigating federal, state, tribal, and local partnerships.
- **Administrative Oversight:** Managing personnel, budgets, training, and facilities.
- **Public Engagement:** Communicating with citizens, elected officials, and the media.
- **Strategic Planning:** Preparing for growth, hazard changes, and future needs.

The demands vary by jurisdiction, but the expectations remain the same: integrity, competence, accountability, and service.

1.3 Nevada’s Fire Service Landscape

Nevada’s fire service is as diverse as its terrain. Chiefs serve:

- City and town fire departments
- County fire protection districts
- Volunteer fire departments
- Combination agencies with fire and EMS responsibilities
- Departments responsible for vast wildland areas or heavily urbanized WUI zones

Most agencies operate with limited staffing, shared resources, and tight budgets. Success relies on collaboration, innovation, and a clear understanding of local and state-level frameworks.

1.4 How to Use This Guide

Each section of this guide focuses on a major component of the fire chief's role. Sections are organized to support reference and real-time use—not just reading front to back. Use it to:

- Onboard into your position
- Train and mentor officers and future leaders
- Navigate unfamiliar situations with confidence
- Advocate for your department at the local or state level

Supplement this guide with your agency's specific policies, local agreements, and training documents. Consider this your foundational playbook—and build upon it.

Section 2: Governance and Authority

2.1 Understanding the Legal Framework

Nevada fire chiefs operate under a complex web of state laws, local ordinances, intergovernmental agreements, and administrative codes. Understanding your legal authority—and its limitations—is key to effective and accountable leadership.

2.2 Key Statutes and Legal References

- **NRS Chapter 474 – Fire Protection Districts**
Governs county-level fire protection districts, including their formation, powers, funding, board structure, and duties of the district fire chief—see *NRS 474.003–474.500* (nevada.public.law, law.justia.com).
- **NRS Chapters 268 & 269 – Municipal/Town Fire Departments**
Define how municipalities or towns may organize, fund, and manage their fire services.
- **NRS Chapters 433 & 441A – EMS & Public Health**
Cover emergency medical services—licensing, operational standards, and chief oversight responsibilities.
- **NRS Chapter 414 – Emergency Management**
Details chief authority during declared emergencies and disasters.
- **NRS Chapter 288 – Collective Bargaining**
Covers negotiation rights, labor practices, and union interactions within fire service agencies.
- **NRS Chapter 241 – Open Meeting Law**
Mandates transparent public meetings for fire boards or commissions. All public bodies must comply unless a specific exemption applies (ag.nv.gov, law.justia.com, leg.state.nv.us).

2.3 Local Governance Structures

Chiefs may report to any of the following:

- **Fire Board of Directors** (fire protection districts)
- **City/Town Council** (municipal departments)
- **County Commission** (unincorporated fire districts)
- **Joint Powers Authorities or Interlocal Agreements**

In all cases, chiefs present budgets, answer questions, and maintain regular reporting at public meetings.

2.4 Chief's Legal Authority

Your authority is established through:

- Local ordinances or resolutions
- Your employment agreement and job description
- Departmental policies and SOGs
- Mutual aid and interagency agreements

Typical powers include:

- Directing emergency response
- Managing staff and fiscal resources
- Enforcing fire codes and ordinances
- Executing agreements and declaring burn bans
- Representing your department to media and agencies

2.5 Codes, Ordinances & Enforcement

Chiefs often:

- Draft or enforce burn permits, fireworks bans, and development reviews
- Administer the International Fire Code (IFC) or WUI-specific amendments
- Coordinate code enforcement with planning and law enforcement partners

2.6 Mutual Aid & Interagency Agreements

Because many Nevada communities have limited staffing and vast territories, mutual aid is essential. Chiefs should:

- Keep aid agreements current and legally sound
- Understand indemnity, liability, and cost-sharing provisions

- Be familiar with dispatch protocols, jurisdictional boundaries, and the legal weight of standing orders

2.7 Public Meetings & Open Meeting Law

If your board is covered under **NRS 241**, you're subject to strict meeting rules:

- Public notice must be posted in advance
- Meetings require an agenda and opportunity for public comment
- Quorum-based decisions must occur in an open public forum (codelibrary.amlegal.com, leg.state.nv.us, ag.nv.gov, thenevadaindependent.com, leg.state.nv.us)
- Closed sessions are only permissible under narrow legal circumstances (e.g., personnel or legal counsel)

Violations can render actions void or result in civil/criminal penalties and removal from office.

2.8 Chief as Public Administrator

You are not only an emergency leader—but also a public official. Your duties include:

- Upholding ethical standards and avoiding conflicts of interest
- Ensuring compliance with labor laws, ordinances, and board directives
- Monitoring legislative changes and advocating for your department's needs

2.9 Registration with the Nevada Secretary of State

Some appointed officials in Nevada—including fire chiefs who serve on certain boards or commissions—may be required to register with the **Nevada Secretary of State** as a public officer or file financial disclosures.

2.9.1 Who Must Register or File:

- Fire chiefs serving on a **governing body, advisory board, or oversight committee** created by law or ordinance
- Fire chiefs **appointed** to a public office (such as ex officio board member of a fire protection district)
- Individuals designated as **public officers** under NRS Chapter 281A (Ethics in Government)

2.9.2 Common Requirements:

- **Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS):** Required annually for some public officers
- **Public Officer Registration:** Must be completed through the Secretary of State's NVSOS system (<https://www.nvsos.gov/>)

2.9.3 Additional Notes:

- Failing to file or register may result in administrative penalties.
- If you are unsure of your status, consult your legal counsel, county clerk, or the **Nevada Commission on Ethics** (<https://ethics.nv.gov>).

2.9.4 Recommended Action for Chiefs:

Confirm whether your position includes an official board or public office designation.

If appointed by resolution, ordinance, or statute, check with your legal advisor about filing requirements.

Review the [Secretary of State's Forms and Resources](#) for updates on compliance.

2.10 Key Takeaways for Fire Chiefs

1. Understand and own your legal authorities, references, and local ordinances.
2. Build strong relationships with your governing body—boards, councilors, and commissioners.
3. Always comply with Open Meeting Law protocols.
4. Keep interagency and mutual aid agreements up to date.
5. Strive to lead by example—as both a public safety and public administration professional.

2.11 Governance and Authority Checklist

For Nevada Fire Chiefs – Fire Chiefs 101 Guide

How to Use This Checklist

This checklist is designed to help Nevada fire chiefs quickly assess and manage their responsibilities related to governance, legal authority, and compliance. Use it as:

- A **new chief onboarding tool** (first 30–60 days)
- An **annual review** to ensure your agency stays aligned with local and state expectations
- A **preparation guide** before audits, board evaluations, or interagency reviews
- A **resource binder insert** for fire district leadership teams

You can check off completed items, note review dates, assign tasks to staff, or use this as part of a leadership transition packet. Supporting documents mentioned here should be stored in an accessible, shared administrative file (digital or physical).

Legal & Statutory Knowledge

- ☐ Review **NRS Chapter 474** (Fire Protection Districts)

- ☐ Review applicable **city/town statutes** (NRS 268, 269)
- ☐ Understand **NRS Chapter 414** (Emergency Powers)
- ☐ Understand **NRS Chapter 288** (Labor Relations)
- ☐ Know if and how **NRS 241 (Open Meeting Law)** applies to your agency

Board / Governance Engagement

- ☐ Identify your **governing body** (Board of Directors, Commission, Council, etc.)
- ☐ Know your agency's **establishing ordinance or resolution**
- ☐ Attend all required board or council meetings
- ☐ Present monthly or quarterly updates to your board (budget, calls, projects)

Ordinances & Codes

- ☐ Confirm adoption of the **International Fire Code (IFC)** or local amendments
- ☐ Maintain or recommend **burn ban**, fireworks, and defensible space ordinances
- ☐ Coordinate with **planning/building** on fire access, water supply, and WUI development
- ☐ Keep copies of key fire prevention ordinances and SOGs

Mutual & Automatic Aid

- ☐ Maintain updated **mutual aid and auto-aid agreements**
- ☐ Understand activation procedures for outside resources
- ☐ Confirm legal language includes **liability, cost recovery, and indemnification**
- ☐ Participate in **regional fire chief group** or operational coordination meetings

Appointed Official Registration

- ☐ Determine if you are considered a “**public officer**”
- ☐ If so, register with the **Nevada Secretary of State** (<https://www.nvsos.gov/>)
- ☐ If required, file an **annual Financial Disclosure Statement**
- ☐ Consult with legal counsel if you serve on any official **fire board or authority**

Internal Policies & Authority

- ☐ Review your **employment agreement or job description**
- ☐ Maintain and update department **Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs)**
- ☐ Ensure clarity on your authority for:
 - Signing contracts
 - Declaring burn bans
 - Ordering or deploying resources
 - Approving expenditures

Ethics & Public Administration

- ☐ Review Nevada's **Ethics in Government** guide (<https://ethics.nv.gov>)
- ☐ Avoid conflicts of interest (procurement, personnel, outside employment)
- ☐ Maintain transparency in **board communications and financial decisions**
- ☐ Uphold ethical standards in hiring, discipline, and promotions

2.12 Recommended Supporting Documents

Keep copies of the following:

- ☐ Establishing ordinance or resolution
- ☐ Current SOGs or SOPs
- ☐ Mutual and automatic aid agreements
- ☐ Burn ban/fire prevention ordinances
- ☐ Board meeting calendar and minutes
- ☐ Public officer registration confirmation (if applicable)

Section 3: Financial Management

Managing Public Funds with Accountability and Strategy

3.1 Overview

Fire chiefs in Nevada are ultimately responsible for managing taxpayer funds, cost recovery, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability. Whether managing a fire protection district, a municipal department, or a combination agency, financial decisions must align with state law, local policies, and the expectations of your board or commission.

3.2 Annual Financial Timeline for Fire Chiefs (Nevada-Specific)

Month	Task
January	Start preparing preliminary budget requests
February	Confirm preliminary revenue projections with County Finance or Comptroller
March	Draft tentative budget (due by April 15)
April	Submit Tentative Budget to the Nevada Department of Taxation (NRS 354.596)
May	Conduct public hearing and submit Final Budget by June 1
July	Begin new fiscal year (July 1); review purchasing thresholds and reset grant trackers
August	Confirm audit engagement with CPA or county auditor
September	Review prior year fire reimbursement status
October	Begin financial closeout of fire season; finalize documentation for audits
November	Submit Annual Audit and Annual Report (NRS 354.624)
December	Begin capital improvement plan updates and review of carry-forward balances

Nevada Budget Resource: [Nevada Department of Taxation – Local Government Budget Portal](#)

3.3 Financial Management Checklist for Fire Chiefs

Budgeting & Planning

- Review current fiscal year budget by program/category
- Submit tentative and final budgets to governing body & state
- Maintain a 5–10 year **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**
- Align equipment/apparatus replacement schedules with budget
- Attend or host a public budget hearing

Revenue Tracking

- Confirm property tax projections with County Assessor or Finance

- Track revenue from ambulance billing (if applicable)
- Track grants by award number, match amount, and spend-down deadlines
- Record wildland reimbursement revenue separately

Purchasing & Compliance

- Review or adopt purchasing policy (based on NRS 332 or local code)
- Use correct quote thresholds (e.g., 1 quote < \$10K, 3 quotes <\$50K)
- For federal grants, ensure compliance with **2 CFR Part 200**
[Uniform Guidance Overview](#)

Audit & Transparency

- Prepare and submit audit materials to your auditor (due by Nov 30)
- Present financials publicly at least quarterly
- Post budget and audit summaries on the agency's website (if available)
- Maintain organized records for all expenditures, bids, and contracts

3.4 Common Revenue Sources in Nevada

Source	Notes
Property Tax (Ad Valorem)	Most stable source; capped by local rate
Consolidated Tax (CTAX)	Sales tax and related sources shared across local government units
EMS Billing	Must follow Medicare/Medicaid guidelines and submit timely claims
Fire Service Contracts	Paid by cities, tribal nations, mines, or federal partners
Wildland Fire Reimbursement	From WFPP, BLM, USFS – based on documentation
Grants (AFG, SAFER, BRIC, CWDG)	May require match, reporting, and multi-year tracking
Infrastructure/Capital Tax	Must be voter-approved or set by ordinance/resolution

3.5 Expenditures to Monitor

- **Personnel:** Salaries, overtime, fringe, incentives
- **Operations:** Fuel, utilities, radios, turnout gear
- **Capital:** Vehicles, SCBA, fire stations, communication towers
- **Training:** Tuition, travel, wildland courses
- **Grant Projects:** Special tracking & reporting required
- **Fire Reimbursements:** Must be matched to individual fire numbers and tracked separately

3.6 Cost Recovery & Fire Billing (Wildland Fires)

Documents Required:

- Resource Orders (from IROC/ROSS)
- OF-288: Crew time reports
- OF-286: Equipment use invoices
- Shift Tickets, Task Logs
- Signed Cost Share Agreements (if applicable)

Administrative Overhead:

- Standard administrative rates are often **10–15%** of direct personnel and equipment costs
- Ensure your department's rate is defensible and consistent
- Keep a documented methodology (e.g., based on payroll or indirect costs)

OF Forms Reference: [National Wildfire Coordinating Group \(NWCG\) Business Forms](#)

3.7 Capital & Strategic Financial Planning

- Develop and update a **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)** annually
- Include vehicle/apparatus rotation (12–20 year lifecycle)
- Include facilities, tech infrastructure, radios, SCBA, PPE
- Tie funding requests to the strategic plan or response data
- Share the CIP with your governing board during the budget cycle

3.8 Transparency & Ethics

- Comply with **NRS 354.6241** (ending fund balance) and ethics statutes
- Avoid conflicts of interest in purchasing, contracts, or vendor selection
- Clearly report all grant awards and restricted fund use
- Never co-mingle fire reimbursements with general fund use unless approved

3.9 Key Links for Reference

- [Nevada Department of Taxation – Local Government Finance](#)
- [NRS Chapter 354 – Financial Administration](#)
- [Nevada Open Meeting Law Guide \(AG's Office\)](#)
- [2 CFR Part 200 – Federal Grant Compliance](#)
- [NWCG Finance Forms & Fire Business](#)

3.10 Labor Relations & NRS Chapter 288: Collective Bargaining Timelines

Nevada's **Collective Bargaining Statute (NRS 288)** sets firm deadlines and obligations for public employers and employee organizations (e.g., IAFF locals). Chiefs involved in negotiations should work closely with HR, legal counsel, and board representatives.

3.10.1 Key Dates & Benchmarks Under NRS 288:

Action or Requirement	Deadline / Timeframe	Statute / Notes
Begin Negotiations	Must start on or before February 1 each year	<i>NRS 288.180(3)</i>
Mediation	Mediation after May, 1 st . best option to reach before arbitration	
Fact-Finding Triggered	If no agreement by May 1 , either party may request fact-finding	<i>NRS 288.200</i> (optional unless arbitration applies)
Submit Tentative Agreement to Board	Must be submitted before May 15 for inclusion in final budget	<i>NRS 354.6241 & 288.153</i>
Impasse Declaration	Can be declared if negotiations fail by May 1	Impasse initiates fact-finding or arbitration process
Fact-Finder Decision Due	30 days after hearings close , unless extended by both parties	<i>NRS 288.200(6)</i>
Arbitration (for essential employees)	Final and binding for firefighters, police, etc.	<i>NRS 288.215</i> (arbitrator decision must be included in budget)
Legislative Body Adoption Deadline	Final agreements must be incorporated into June 1 final budget	<i>NRS 354.6241(1)(b)</i>

[NRS Chapter 288 – Relations Between Governments and Public Employees](#)

3.10.2 Labor Relations Checklist for Fire Chiefs

- ☐ Verify if your employees are represented (IAFF or other)
- ☐ Review current MOU/contract expiration date
- ☐ Coordinate with HR/legal to prepare for bargaining by January
- ☐ Ensure board/commission is briefed and appoints a negotiation team
- ☐ Begin formal negotiations before February 1
- ☐ Keep detailed notes, proposals, and counterproposals
- ☐ Track timelines to avoid last-minute disputes or impasse
- ☐ If impasse declared, initiate fact-finding or arbitration by May
- ☐ Incorporate all agreements into the June 1 final budget

3.11 Special Notes for Fire Chiefs

- Fire and law enforcement are considered essential employees, which means binding arbitration applies instead of strikes.
- Chiefs should not negotiate alone—use a designated representative or bargaining team.
- You may be asked to cost out proposals, present financial impacts, or testify at hearings.
- Any salary or benefit increases must be reflected in your department's final budget and pay scales.

Section 4: Incident Response Oversight

Leadership, Coordination, and Operational Accountability

4.1 Overview

The fire chief is ultimately responsible for how the department responds to emergencies—whether through direct command, delegated authority, or strategic coordination. Nevada’s unique geography and multi-jurisdictional structure require fire chiefs to be skilled not only in incident management but also in mutual aid, interagency operations, and maintaining public trust.

While many fire chiefs may not serve as the primary Incident Commander on every call, they are expected to ensure that every incident is managed professionally, lawfully, and in accordance with training and policy.

4.2 Chief’s Oversight Responsibilities

- Ensure safe, timely, and professional response to all incidents
- Maintain a qualified and well-trained duty officer system
- Monitor performance of captains, incident commanders, and crews
- Lead during major or multi-agency incidents
- Ensure post-incident documentation and reporting
- Manage political, media, and public communication during incidents

4.3 Response Oversight Timeline / Expectations

Frequency	Oversight Task
Daily/Weekly	Confirm staffing and coverage for all stations and duty officers
Red Flag Days	Coordinate readiness plans and elevated coverage
After Major Incidents	Conduct post-incident review or after-action reports (AARs)
Monthly	Review incident reports, trends, and unusual response patterns
Annually	Conduct response performance reviews, update preplans and dispatch protocols

4.4 Chief Officer Duty Coverage

Nevada agencies often operate with limited full-time staffing. Chiefs must ensure:

- A chief officer (or designee) is **on-call 24/7**
- Duty officers have clear **dispatch notification criteria**
- Duty phones or radios are rotated and functional
- Clear guidance exists for:

- Extended attack
- Special operations (SAR, hazmat, law standby, bomb threats)
- Wildland/Red Flag responses
- PSOM or power outage incidents

Sample Duty Officer SOG or Template available on request.

4.5 Mutual Aid & Interagency Response

Nevada relies heavily on **mutual and automatic aid**. Chiefs must:

- Know all **boundaries and agreements**
- Ensure **updated run cards** are shared with dispatch
- Preplan **aircraft, strike teams, and law enforcement coordination**
- Build strong relationships with:
 - BLM, NDF, USFS
 - Tribal, city, and volunteer departments
 - Emergency Management and law enforcement partners

Keep printed and digital copies of current **mutual aid agreements**, dispatch zones, and preplans.

4.6 Dispatch & Communications Oversight

Chiefs are responsible for ensuring dispatch protocols match operational expectations:

- Define when dispatch must notify the duty officer
- Confirm **radio frequencies and tactical plans** for major incidents
- Work with dispatch centers to ensure:
 - CAD notes are accurate
 - Response times are tracked
 - Unit statuses and AVL/GPS are monitored

Use incident types and CAD codes to trigger elevated response or auto-aid.

4.7 Wildland, WUI & Complex Incidents

Chiefs must be ready to escalate when needed:

- Know thresholds for moving to **Type 3 or higher incidents**
- Ensure red card-qualified staff are available or mobilized
- Maintain relationships with dispatch centers and agency reps
- Be involved in **cost share, aircraft ordering, and initial attack support**

Coordinate closely with the **Nevada Fire Chiefs Wildland Committee** and state partners.

4.8 Incident Documentation & Quality Assurance

Ensure the department maintains accurate records for:

- NFIRS or local RMS reports
- Wildland billing documentation (OF-288, shift tickets, etc.)
- After-action reviews or near-miss documentation
- Evidence or photos for suspicious fires, code violations, or investigations

All documentation should be completed within 24–72 hours of the incident unless otherwise specified.

4.9 Chief's Role in High-Profile or Critical Incidents

In major incidents, fire chiefs are expected to:

- Brief elected officials and media
- Coordinate joint statements with law enforcement or emergency management
- Activate EOCs or Unified Command if needed
- Support community notification systems (e.g., CodeRED, AlertSense)
- Begin cost tracking and resource accountability immediately

Consider appointing a **Public Information Officer (PIO)** or designate a chief officer to manage messaging.

4.10 Incident Oversight Checklist for Fire Chiefs

- Duty officer program in place and actively staffed
- Mutual/auto aid agreements updated and accessible
- Dispatch protocols include clear duty officer notification triggers
- Pre-incident plans and response zones reviewed annually
- Red Flag response plan active and communicated
- High-risk response checklists (e.g., school fires, hazmat) available
- Post-incident reviews completed and archived
- Strike team/task force deployment documentation complete
- PIO and elected official briefing plans in place

4.11 Key Resources and Templates

- [NIMS/ICS Field Operations Guide \(FOG\)](#)
- [NWCG Wildland Fire Incident Management Field Guide](#)
- [Sample Duty Officer Guidelines – Available on request]

Section 5: Training and Certifications

Building Competency, Credibility, and Operational Readiness

5.1 Overview

Training and certification are foundational responsibilities for every fire chief. In Nevada, fire chiefs must ensure that all personnel—from career firefighters to volunteers—meet applicable state, federal, and agency standards for operations, EMS, and wildland fire. Beyond compliance, a strong training program builds safety, operational effectiveness, and leadership succession.

5.2 Chief's Training Responsibilities

- Ensure minimum training standards for all personnel
- Maintain accurate training records and certifications
- Oversee task book and red card issuance (wildland)
- Coordinate required EMS continuing education and recertification
- Facilitate leadership development and promotional readiness
- Ensure compliance with grant-funded or state-mandated programs
- Support succession planning through mentorship and structured training

5.3 Core Training Standards and Programs

Area	Standard / Requirement
All Hazard Response	Nv State Exterior Firefighter
Structural Fire	NFPA 1001 (FFI & FFII), OSHA 1910.120, NRS 477 requirements
EMS	NRS 450B; Nevada EMS licensure through the State Health Division
Wildland Fire	NWCG and PMS 310-1 standards; IQCS recordkeeping; RT-130 and Pack Test annually
Hazmat Awareness	OSHA 1910.120(q); required for most firefighters
ICS/NIMS	FEMA IS-100, IS-200, IS-700, IS-800 for all responders; ICS-300/400 for officers or chiefs
Vehicle Operations	EVOC or CEVO required by most insurers and departments
Leadership	Chief Fire Officer, Company Officer, and Fire Officer I/II tracks (NFPA or State Fire Marshal aligned)

[Nevada State Fire Marshal Training Site](#)

[Nevada EMS Training & Certification](#)

[NWCG Wildland Training Catalog](#)

5.4 Annual Training Cycle – Suggested Benchmarks

Timeframe	Training Focus
January–March	Leadership courses, CPR recertification, ICS refreshers
Spring (Apr–May)	Wildland RT-130, Pack Test, wildland task book reviews
Summer (Jun–Aug)	Field exercises, structure/wildland drills, multi-agency training
Fall (Sep–Oct)	EMS refreshers, EVOC, hazmat, driver/operator reviews
Winter (Nov–Dec)	AAR reviews, plan next year’s training calendar, audit certifications

5.5 Credentialing & Documentation

Fire chiefs must track certifications through:

- Internal department training logs
- Nevada Fire Marshal Division (FFI, FFII, Instructor, Inspector, etc.)
- State EMS registry for EMTs, AEMTs, and Paramedics
- IQCS/IQS or similar system for wildland qualifications
- NWCG Task Books (paper or electronic)
- Employee personnel files with scanned certificates

Tip: Use shared spreadsheets, web-based tools (e.g., TargetSolutions, Vector LMS, TrainHeroic), or agency training software for recordkeeping.

5.6 Wildland Certification & Red Card Management

- **Annual Requirements:**
 - RT-130 (Annual Fireline Safety Refresher)
 - Arduous, Moderate, or Light Pack Test
 - Qualification Review & Red Card Issuance
- **Task Books & Position Currency:**
 - Task books must be initiated, reviewed, and certified by qualified evaluators
 - Positions (e.g., FFT1, ENGB, TFLD) must meet **currency standards** per PMS 310-1
- **Deployment-Ready Personnel:**
 - Track who is deployable, locally available, or out-of-state qualified
 - Update pre-position and dispatch rosters seasonally

[RT-130 Annual Refresher Guide](#)

[PMS 310-1 Qualification Standards](#)

5.7 EMS Certification Oversight

- Coordinate EMS licensure through **Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health**
- Monitor expiration dates for CPR, EMT, AEMT, and Paramedic licenses

- Facilitate continuing education (CE) hours and agency refreshers
- Ensure compliance with **NRS 450B** and any local protocols

Chiefs should work with medical directors or regional EMS coordinators to verify scope of practice and continuing ed standards.

5.8 Promotional and Officer Development

Promotional pathways should include:

- Fire Officer I / II or equivalent company officer development
- ICS-300/400 for supervisory or command-level personnel
- Peer review boards or written/oral testing process
- Tactical simulations or practical evaluation
- Wildland leadership (e.g., L-280, L-381, S-200+)

Offer mentorship and encourage cross-training to prepare captains, battalion chiefs, and future leaders.

5.9 Training Program Management Checklist

- ☐ Maintain current department training plan/calendar
- ☐ Track all certifications and expiration dates
- ☐ Conduct annual red card reviews and issue qualifications
- ☐ Maintain complete task book files and evaluator logs
- ☐ Submit EMS license renewals and CEs on time
- ☐ Conduct multi-agency training at least twice per year
- ☐ Align trainings with strategic and operational goals
- ☐ Prepare AARs for major incidents and integrate lessons learned

5.10 Key Links & Resources

- [Nevada State Fire Marshal Certification Portal](#)
- [Nevada EMS Training and Recertification Portal](#)
- [NWCG Wildland Training Standards](#)
- [PMS 310-1 Wildland Qualifications](#)
- [FEMA EMI IS Course Catalog \(ICS/NIMS\)](#)

5.11 Adopting Local Training Standards or Equivalencies

In Nevada, fire chiefs may find that existing state or national training programs do not fully meet the operational needs, staffing models, or rural challenges of their agency. In these cases, you may adopt your own training standards or use equivalency processes, provided they are **defensible, documented, and approved by your governing body or fire board.**

Why Adopt Local Standards?

- Limited access to State Fire Marshal-certified instructors
- Remote staffing models (volunteers, paid-on-call)
- Seasonal employees who need condensed onboarding
- Specialization in wildland, EMS, or non-structural duties
- Need for realistic entry-level or lateral programs

5.11.1 Steps to Adopt a Local Training Standard

1. **Identify the Purpose and Scope**
 - Is this for onboarding, wildland, EMS, rescue, or officer development?
 - Is the new standard replacing or supplementing an existing model?
2. **Base It on Recognized Frameworks**
 - Reference national standards such as:
 - NFPA 1001 (Firefighter I & II)
 - NWCG standards (wildland)
 - FEMA/NIMS ICS training
 - OSHA or ANSI for safety-related content
3. **Document the Curriculum**
 - Include objectives, hours, delivery method, instructor qualifications, and testing criteria.
 - Include a syllabus, skill sheets, and evaluation tools.
4. **Seek Legal and Administrative Review**
 - Submit the draft policy to:
 - Your **governing board or fire commission**
 - County HR or legal counsel (if applicable)
 - Insurance or risk management providers (e.g., POOL/PACT)
5. **Adopt by Resolution or SOP**
 - Pass a formal policy or resolution (e.g., "Elko County Fire Training Standard – Wildland Module I").
 - Include the standard in your SOGs or SOPs.
6. **Track Participation and Completion**
 - Issue local certificates or letters of competency
 - Keep rosters, testing results, and field evaluations on file
7. **Review and Update Annually**
 - Evaluate effectiveness after incidents or deployments
 - Adjust for legal or operational changes
 - Reaffirm with board or agency leadership if needed

5.12 Local Training Standard Template Outline

Title: Wildland Firefighter Type 2 (Agency-Adapted)

Authority: Purpose: To certify seasonal or volunteer responders in basic wildland fire duties

Scope: Applies to all personnel assigned to wildland or mutual aid incidents

Based On: NWCG FFT2 position (S-130, S-190, ICS-100, L-180)

Delivery: 24 hours classroom + 16 hours field + RT-130 annually

Evaluation: Written exam (70% pass), pack test, field simulation

Records: Maintained in department training database

Review Date: January 1 each year

Cautions & Considerations

- Local standards do **not replace state certifications** where legally required (e.g., EMS licensure, State Fire Marshal Firefighter I/II if mandated by ordinance).
- If deploying out of district (especially wildland), your staff must meet **NWCG** or recognized minimums for reimbursement eligibility.
- Clearly label internal certifications as “**Agency Qualified Only**” unless part of a recognized external program.

Checklist for Creating Local Training Standards

- ☐ Define operational need or gap in current certification models
- ☐ Build curriculum from recognized NFPA, NWCG, or OSHA references
- ☐ Document hours, objectives, and testing processes
- ☐ Present to legal or board for approval
- ☐ Adopt formally in SOG/SOP or by board resolution
- ☐ Track participation, testing, and expiration dates
- ☐ Review effectiveness annually

Section 6: Personnel and Labor Management

Hiring, Leading, and Sustaining a Capable Fire Service Workforce

6.1 Overview

People are the heart of your agency—and managing them well is one of your most critical and sensitive responsibilities as fire chief. Whether you lead career staff, volunteers, part-time responders, or seasonal crews, you must balance staffing needs, labor laws, performance standards, and morale.

Nevada fire chiefs are responsible for aligning personnel practices with **local policies, state law (including NRS Chapters 288, 281, and 286)**, and often collective bargaining agreements (CBAs).

6.2 Personnel Types in Nevada Fire Agencies

Type	Description
Fire Protection District (FPD)	Created through NRS 474 or 318, often covering rural or multi-community areas. Governed by a board or county commissioners.
Municipal Fire Department	Operated under a city or town. Funded through the general fund and overseen by the city council or manager.
Tribal Fire Department	Managed under tribal authority; may participate in mutual aid with local/state agencies.
Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)	Community-based, often with limited tax support. May be recognized under county oversight or operate independently.
Contracted Service Provider	Fire protection is contracted to another department, district, or private firm.

Personnel Type	Description
Career / Full-Time	Paid employees, often including suppression, EMS, prevention, and admin staff.
Paid-on-Call (POC)	Responders who receive compensation for calls or training hours.
Volunteer	Unpaid community members who respond to calls and participate in training.
Combination	Departments with both full-time and volunteer/POC members.
Collateral Duty	Public employees (e.g., road crews, deputies) who respond in fire/EMS roles.

6.3 Key Laws and Policies to Know

- **NRS Chapter 288** – Collective Bargaining for public employees
[NRS 288 Overview](#)

- **NRS Chapter 286** – Public Employees’ Retirement System (PERS)
[NV PERS Info](#)
- **FLSA** – Fair Labor Standards Act (especially for overtime, stipends, exempt/non-exempt status)
- **NRS Chapter 281** – Public Officer ethics, hiring, and political activity
- **County/City HR Policy** – For hiring, promotion, leave, discipline, etc.

Fire chiefs should also follow any **fire board-adopted personnel policies** or shared HR practices (if under county umbrella).

6.4 Personnel Oversight Checklist

- ☐ Maintain up-to-date job descriptions for all positions
- ☐ Document clear chain of command and supervisory responsibilities
- ☐ Know which employees are hourly vs. exempt
- ☐ Confirm PERS eligibility and tracking
- ☐ Maintain written personnel files for every employee and volunteer
- ☐ Review onboarding and exit processes for completeness
- ☐ Track training, licensure, and performance reviews
- ☐ Ensure policies for harassment, discipline, and grievances are current and followed

6.5 Hiring & Onboarding Best Practices

- Use **written applications**, background checks, and interview panels
- Provide a structured **orientation checklist**
- Include:
 - Job expectations
 - Training plan
 - Safety briefing
 - Equipment issue log
 - Department policies and SOPs

Tip: Create a new-hire packet for each role (career, seasonal, volunteer).

6.6 Performance Evaluation & Corrective Action

Fire chiefs must consistently manage performance:

- Use **objective, documented evaluations** (quarterly or annually)
- Maintain a culture of regular feedback and coaching
- Address issues promptly with verbal counseling or written documentation
- Follow **progressive discipline** if performance fails to improve
- Document all steps and file in the employee’s record

Consider using a **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** template when formalizing expectations.

6.7 Working with Labor Organizations (Unions)

If your department is unionized (e.g., IAFF local):

- Maintain open, professional communication with union leadership
- Respect the scope of **collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)**
- Ensure compliance with **NRS 288 timelines** for negotiation (see Section III)
- Clearly separate **management rights** from bargaining items
- Work with legal or HR on grievance responses and contract interpretation

6.8 Health, Wellness & Critical Incident Support

Chiefs should support wellness programs to reduce injury, burnout, and PTSD:

- Encourage or provide access to:
 - Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
 - Peer support teams
 - Annual medical evaluations (NFPA 1582)
 - Fitness programs or incentives
- After serious calls or fatalities, activate:
 - CISD teams
 - Chaplain services
 - Line-of-duty injury or death protocols

6.9 Volunteer and Seasonal Personnel Management

Volunteers and seasonal staff require clear expectations and structured support:

- Provide:
 - Position-specific training and PPE
 - Regular drills and inclusion in operational planning
 - Clear accountability for attendance, conduct, and readiness
 - Written agreements or waivers for insurance or liability

Consider a **Volunteer/Seasonal Agreement Template** outlining expectations and terms of service.

6.10 County “Pattern Agency” Models

In some counties, a **single fire district or agency** has formed **multiple volunteer fire departments (VFDs)** to serve different geographic areas. These are sometimes called “**pattern agencies**” due to the repeating structure across a rural county.

Example Setup:

- Elko County Fire Protection District oversees ~10 VFDs
- Each VFD is community-based (e.g., Jarbidge VFD, Spring Creek VFD)
- Apparatus and support are supplied by the central district
- Personnel may be 100% volunteer or mixed with county staff
- Governance, budgeting, and reporting go through the main district

Pros:

- Local presence in remote areas
- Centralized training, equipment standards, and policy
- Easier access to grant funds under one EIN or agency umbrella

Challenges:

- Complex coordination and supervision
- Inconsistent participation levels by area
- Travel and communication limitations

6.11 Personnel Administration Quick Checklist

- ☐ Accurate organizational chart posted and current
- ☐ Job descriptions reviewed annually
- ☐ Pay and classification plan documented
- ☐ Orientation and exit checklists in use
- ☐ Performance reviews and discipline procedures followed
- ☐ PERS status and hours reported properly
- ☐ Union or employee group relations are respectful and legally compliant
- ☐ Volunteers and seasonal employees are trained, tracked, and protected

6.12 Key Considerations for Chiefs

- Know your **legal formation type** (FPD, city, tribal, etc.)
- Understand your **personnel mix** and its impact on training and insurance
- Establish a clear **command and accountability structure** across multiple stations
- Document which VFDs or stations operate under **central authority** (e.g., county or fire district)
- Coordinate recruitment, PPE issuance, and duty logs across all outlying VFDs

6.13 Key Resources

- [NRS 288 – Collective Bargaining](#)
- [Nevada PERS](#)
- [US Department of Labor – FLSA Overview](#)

- [NFPA 1500 & 1582 – Safety & Wellness Standards](#)
- [Nevada State Fire Marshal – Personnel Records Guidance](#)
- Pool Pact

Section 7: Community Risk Reduction (CRR)

Prevention, Preparedness, and Public Protection in Action

7.1 Overview

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is more than inspections and burn bans—it's a strategic, data-informed approach to protecting life, property, and the environment. As a fire chief, you're responsible not just for response, but for **leading a culture of prevention and mitigation** in your community.

Nevada's fire environment, WUI growth, aging infrastructure, and rural-urban divide make CRR a vital part of public safety.

7.2 The 5 Pillars of CRR

1. **Education** – Outreach to schools, public events, social media
2. **Engineering** – Codes, infrastructure planning, water systems
3. **Enforcement** – Inspections, citations, burn bans, code compliance
4. **Emergency Response** – Strategically located, trained, and equipped
5. **Economic Incentives** – Grants, mitigation funding, insurance savings

[Vision 20/20 National CRR Model](#)

7.3 Risk Identification and Prioritization

Use data from:

- NFIRS or local RMS
- Fire investigation reports
- Insurance Services Office (ISO) data
- WUI and fuel load mapping
- EMS and overdose trends
- School/fire drill and preplan observations

Compile this into a **CRR Plan** or integrate with your agency's strategic plan.

Sample Template: Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or CRR Risk Profile available upon request.

7.4 Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) and Fuels Mitigation

In Nevada, WUI risk is one of the top threats to lives and homes.

Fire chiefs must:

- Promote defensible space and Firewise USA® programs
- Partner with BLM, NDF, USFS, and landowners on shaded fuel breaks
- Pursue funding (CWDG, FEMA BRIC, State Fire Assistance)
- Maintain/update CWPPs
- Educate the public on evacuation, alerts, and personal preparedness
- Engage in **home hardening**, water source access, and access improvement

[Nevada Fire Adapted Communities Network](#)

7.5 Code Enforcement and Development Review

Work with building/planning departments to:

- Adopt and enforce the **International Fire Code (IFC)** or local amendments
- Ensure new subdivisions include:
 - Adequate road widths and turning radii
 - Fire hydrants or cisterns
 - Secondary access for emergency vehicles
 - Vegetation management or clear zones

Track and enforce:

- Business inspections
- Hazardous occupancy permits
- Fire lanes and Knox box requirements
- Illegal burning or fireworks violations

Use a structured **inspection log or tracking sheet** to document activities and follow-ups.

7.6 Fire Prevention and Public Education

Every Nevada fire agency, large or small, has a role in public outreach.

Effective tools include:

- **School presentations** (grades K–6 or high school fire careers)
- **Senior safety** (smoke alarm installs, cooking safety)
- **Burn permit education** (in person or online)
- **Wildland readiness** (spring and summer events)
- **Social media messaging** (red flag warnings, fireworks bans)

Sample public messaging toolkit and fire safety flyer templates available on request.

7.7 ISO Ratings and Community Preparedness

The **Insurance Services Office (ISO)** evaluates fire protection capabilities and helps determine property insurance rates. Chiefs can directly impact this score by:

- Maintaining hydrant maps and testing logs
- Updating automatic aid agreements
- Ensuring engine staffing and response records are accurate
- Documenting training, response times, and preplans

[ISO Fire Suppression Rating Schedule \(FSRS\)](#)

7.8 CRR Integration with Emergency Management

CRR overlaps with your **emergency management role**, especially in:

- Evacuation preplanning
- Public alert systems (e.g., CodeRED, AlertSense)
- PSOM (Public Safety Outage Management) coordination
- Shelter planning and fire weather forecasting

Coordinate with your **Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)** and emergency manager regularly.

7.9 Community Risk Reduction Checklist for Chiefs

- ☐ Maintain an up-to-date CRR Plan or integrated risk assessment
- ☐ Assign CRR responsibilities to an officer or shared position
- ☐ Conduct or oversee annual business and hazard inspections
- ☐ Host at least two public education events per year
- ☐ Apply for fuels or mitigation grants annually
- ☐ Maintain hydrant/cistern testing logs
- ☐ Participate in development review for new projects
- ☐ Track ISO-relevant activities and submit updates as needed
- ☐ Collaborate with local law enforcement and planning departments
- ☐ Review CWPP annually and update every 3–5 years

7.10 Key CRR Resources

- [Vision 20/20 CRR Framework](#)
- [Living With Fire – Nevada WUI and Firewise Resources](#)
- [Nevada Division of Forestry – Mitigation & WFPP](#)
- [Ready.gov – Public Preparedness Messaging](#)
- [NFPA Community Risk Assessment Tool](#)

7.11 Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs)

A Strategic Tool for Wildfire Risk Reduction and Funding Eligibility

A **Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)** is a locally developed wildfire risk assessment and mitigation plan that outlines strategies to reduce WUI threats and protect lives, homes, and critical infrastructure. CWPPs are not just planning documents—they are often **required for federal and state grant eligibility**, such as the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) and FEMA BRIC.

In Nevada, CWPPs should reflect the state’s fire-adapted community goals and align with NDF and federal priorities.

7.11.1 What a CWPP Includes

- A **community wildfire risk assessment** (fuels, structure exposure, fire history)
- Identification of **critical infrastructure** and at-risk populations
- Maps showing:
 - Fire-prone areas
 - Fuel breaks
 - WUI boundaries
 - Proposed treatments
- List of **priority mitigation projects**
- Community collaboration process (signatures from fire dept, local gov’t, and NDF or federal partner)
- Recommendations for:
 - Defensible space
 - Access improvements
 - Home hardening
 - Water supply upgrades
 - Public education

[Sample CWPP Template – Living With Fire](#)

7.11.2 CWPP Development & Update Process

Step	Description
1. Assemble a Planning Team	Include fire chiefs, NDF, BLM/USFS, local officials, emergency manager, and community leaders
2. Define the Planning Area	Outline the jurisdiction or service area and key WUI boundaries
3. Conduct Risk Assessment	Use fire history, fuels, topography, weather, and structure location data
4. Identify Projects	List defensible space zones, fuel breaks, road widening, hydrants, etc.
5. Draft the Plan	Use templates or GIS tools; ensure maps are accurate and printable

Step	Description
6. Collaborate & Sign	Secure required signatures: fire, local government, state/federal land managers
7. Adopt and Submit	Present to your fire board or city council and submit to NDF or grant agency
8. Review and Update	Update every 5 years or after major wildfires

Nevada CWPPs must comply with guidance from **Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA)** and may be submitted to NDF or BLM for review.

7.11.3 Nevada-Specific CWPP Resources

- [Nevada Division of Forestry CWPP Guidance](#)
- [Living With Fire CWPP Hub](#)
- [Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program \(CWDG\)](#)

7.11.4 CWPP and CRR Integration/ Combine with Haz-Mit plan

CWPPs should directly support your agency's Community Risk Reduction strategy by:

- Guiding fuels mitigation planning and grant applications
- Informing ISO and development review conversations
- Supporting public education with locally specific data
- Serving as the backbone for multi-agency wildfire response zones and priorities

Use the CWPP as a bridge between **planning and operations**, ensuring that suppression resources, mitigation funding, and public messaging are all working from the same roadmap.

8. Wildland Fire Support & Oversight Guide

This section supports fire chiefs and agency administrators navigating multi-jurisdictional wildland fire response, including interagency coordination, fiscal oversight, and legal responsibility. It covers decision-making tools like WFDSS, the responsibilities of an Agency Administrator, the role of an Agency Representative (AREP), and the Nevada Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP).

8.1 What is WFDSS?

Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) is a national web-based platform developed by the U.S. Forest Service that helps incident leaders make informed strategic decisions during wildfires.

WFDSS is required on most large federal fires and fires with multi-jurisdictional coordination.

Key Uses:

- Document incident objectives, strategies, and decisions
- Evaluate fire behavior and model potential spread
- Define decision space based on values at risk
- Provide cost-share justification and boundary mapping
- Create Delegations of Authority and decision records

8.2 Agency Administrator (AA)

The **Fire Chief**, County Emergency Manager, or designated executive is typically the **Agency Administrator** for local government during major wildland incidents.

Agency Administrator Duties:

- Approve incident objectives and Delegation of Authority
- Monitor fiscal exposure and safety risk
- Approve long-term strategy through WFDSS
- Ensure documentation for cost recovery is initiated early
- Coordinate with elected officials and board members as needed

It is recommended that the Agency Administrator attend a **WFDSS 101 or AA briefing** at least once per year and maintain a log-in.

8.3 Agency Representative (AREP)

An **Agency Representative (AREP)** is the fire department or jurisdictional contact assigned to work directly with the Incident Management Team (IMT).

Who Can Be an AREP?

- Chief officers
- Captains with local authority
- Trained district or county emergency personnel

AREP Responsibilities:

- Attend all planning, operations, and cost meetings with IMT
- Ensure local priorities and risks are considered
- Monitor equipment and personnel usage
- Maintain logs (ICS-214) and gather reimbursement documentation
- Represent the jurisdiction in any public or stakeholder meetings

AREPs are critical to ensuring your department is not overextended or overlooked in multi-agency coordination.

8.4 Nevada Wildland Fire Protection Program (WFPP)

The **WFPP** is a cooperative agreement administered by the **Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF)** that provides wildfire suppression and mitigation support for participating counties and local governments.

Key Benefits:

- NDF assumes cost and incident management once certain thresholds are met
- Participating agencies receive support for prevention and fuels treatment
- Participation reduces fiscal exposure on large fires
- Encourages local responsibility for initial attack and preparedness

Fire Chief Responsibilities Under WFPP:

- Submit annual planning documents (risk profile, map updates)
- Participate in fuels mitigation coordination
- Maintain initial attack capability and dispatch coordination
- Engage in annual review with NDF Area Forester

[Nevada Division of Forestry – WFPP Info](#)

8.5 Checklist for Chiefs

- ☐ Ensure you and your deputies are WFDSS-trained and have accounts
- ☐ Designate a trained Agency Representative (AREP) at the beginning of fire season
- ☐ Update your WFPP documentation annually and confirm participation

- ☐ Coordinate incident response with NDF and federal partners
- ☐ Track costs early and maintain ICS documentation for reimbursement

Section 9: Emergency Management and Interagency Coordination

Bridging Fire, EMS, Law, Public Health, and Disaster Operations

9.10 Overview

In addition to managing fire and EMS operations, Nevada fire chiefs are often responsible for—or heavily involved in—emergency management and disaster response. From wildfires and floods to mass casualty incidents (MCIs) and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSOMs), your leadership will be needed **before, during, and after emergencies**.

Strong interagency coordination and emergency planning are vital for small, rural, and understaffed communities to survive and recover from major events.

9.2 Chief's Emergency Management Roles

Depending on your jurisdiction, you may be:

- The **Local Emergency Manager** (in unincorporated counties or fire protection districts)
- A **supporting agency representative** to the County Emergency Manager
- The **lead incident command** for fires, hazardous materials, or mass rescue incidents
- The **liaison** to county, tribal, or regional emergency operations centers (EOCs)

Your role must be clearly defined in your agency's **emergency operations plan (EOP)** or **continuity of operations plan (COOP)**.

9.3 Core Plans Every Fire Chief Should Know

Plan Type	Description
EOP (Emergency Operations Plan)	County- or city-level disaster response plan; defines responsibilities and procedures
Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)	Identifies long-term hazard risks and infrastructure protection strategies
Continuity of Operations (COOP)	How your agency continues services if impacted by disaster (e.g., backup comms, stations, dispatch)
Mass Casualty Plan (MCI)	Details EMS surge response, triage, mutual aid, and hospital coordination
PSOM/Energy Shutoff Plan	Defines procedures during public safety power outages (PSOMs), including generators, water supply, notifications

Request your county's latest plan set and participate in future revisions.

9.4 Interagency Coordination in Nevada

Fire chiefs must actively build and maintain relationships with:

- **County Emergency Managers**
 - _____
- **Sheriff's Offices and EMS**
 - **SO** _____
 - **EMS** _____
- **Tribal Nations and Health Clinics**
- **Hospitals and Air Medical Providers**
- **NV Energy and local power co-ops**
- **BLM, USFS, NDF, and local conservation districts**
- **State DEM, FEMA Region IX, and NDOT**

Establish working relationships **before** an incident. Train, meet, and debrief **annually** with key partners.

9.5 Your Role in Emergency Operations Centers (EOC)

During major incidents, your agency may:

- Staff a seat in the **county or regional EOC**
- Serve as **Operations Section Chief** or **Agency Representative**
- Provide real-time field updates, resource requests, and public messaging input
- Coordinate fire suppression, evacuation, shelter, or critical infrastructure support

Make sure your command staff is NIMS-compliant and can rotate through EOC roles.

9.6 Mass Casualty and Special Events Planning

Fire chiefs should be prepared for:

- School bus crashes
- Multi-patient trauma events
- Hazmat releases (rail, mine, or highway)
- Large-scale public events or protests
- Active shooter / hostile event response (with law enforcement)

Coordinate with EMS agencies, law enforcement, and hospitals to build **multi-agency protocols and drills**.

9.7 Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSOMs)

In Nevada, wildland fire risk can result in preemptive utility de-energization. Fire chiefs must:

- Be on the **PSOM notification list** (contact NV Energy's liaison officer)
- Preplan generator power at:
 - Fire stations
 - Water pumping infrastructure
 - Emergency shelters
- Establish procedures to **monitor well pumps, tanks, and dispatch radios**
- Coordinate with emergency managers and public works in rural areas

[NV Energy PSOM Information](#)

9.8 Disaster Documentation and Cost Recovery

Post-incident, you must help document costs and impacts to support:

- **FEMA Public Assistance (PA)** reimbursement
- **State emergency declarations and resolutions**
- **Mutual aid or WFPP reimbursements**
- **Hazard mitigation funding requests**

Maintain records for:

- Equipment and personnel time (ICS 214, OF-288)
- Resource orders and mission numbers
- Incident reports and after-action reviews
- Communications logs and cost tracking spreadsheets

Keep a disaster documentation folder ready with templates and digital backups.

9.10 Emergency Management Checklist for Fire Chiefs

- ☐ Have access to and knowledge of your county's EOP and HMP
- ☐ Define your agency's EOC and disaster response roles
- ☐ Ensure command staff are NIMS and ICS-trained (IS-100 to IS-800, ICS 300/400)
- ☐ Build contact list of all local, state, and federal emergency partners
- ☐ Review and update agency COOP plan annually
- ☐ Preplan PSOM and backup generator capabilities
- ☐ Participate in county LEPC and quarterly emergency manager meetings
- ☐ Conduct or attend at least one multi-agency drill per year
- ☐ Maintain disaster cost documentation templates and tracking process
- ☐ Be prepared to represent fire service at public briefings or during community recovery

9.11 Key Emergency Management Resources

- [Nevada Division of Emergency Management \(DEM\)](#)
- [FEMA Emergency Management Institute \(NIMS/ICS\)](#)

- [NV Energy PSOM Dashboard](#)
- [Nevada Local Emergency Planning Committees \(LEPCs\)](#)
- [FEMA Public Assistance Grants](#)

Section 10: Communications and Public Relations

Building Trust, Clarity, and Confidence Through Every Message

10.1 Overview

Communication is one of the most important tools a fire chief has. Whether speaking to your team, briefing elected officials, or issuing a statement after a major incident, your ability to **inform, lead, and represent your agency** matters as much as operational decisions.

In rural and frontier Nevada, where news travels fast and communities are tight-knit, poor communication can lead to confusion, mistrust, or conflict. Good communication builds **public confidence, interagency alignment, and internal morale**.

10.2 Chief's Communication Responsibilities

As a fire chief, you are expected to:

- Lead **internal communication** with staff and officers
- Maintain **interagency coordination** with dispatch, law, EMS, and utilities
- Provide **timely updates** to governing bodies and elected officials
- Represent your agency with the **media and public**
- Oversee or delegate **public information officer (PIO)** duties
- Manage your agency's **social media presence** and public notifications

10.3 Internal Communications

- Conduct **weekly or monthly officer meetings**
- Provide clear updates on:
 - Response expectations
 - Duty coverage and staffing
 - Policy changes
 - Safety alerts or red flag status
- Use platforms such as:
 - Email, internal memos
 - WhatsApp, GroupMe, or department radios
 - Station briefings or chief's reports

Tip: Consider a “**Chief's Corner**” **update** every 2–4 weeks to maintain consistency.

10.4 Incident Communications

During major incidents, the chief is often the voice of the agency. You should:

- Establish a clear **chain of communication** with duty officers, captains, and command staff
- Use **incident briefings** (verbal or written) to coordinate with responding units
- Keep **dispatch and partner agencies** informed of incident size-up and evolving conditions
- Assign a **PIO or lead communicator** early during significant events

ICS 209 or ICS 201 forms can help structure major incident briefings and public updates.

10.5 Public Information & Media

Every fire chief must be prepared to speak with:

- Local news media (TV, newspaper, radio)
- Community members at meetings or events
- Concerned residents during incidents or evacuations
- Social media followers seeking quick updates

10.5.1 Best Practices:

- Use **clear, jargon-free language** for non-fire audiences
- Be **honest, calm, and concise**, even when information is limited
- Never speculate—stick to confirmed facts and processes
- Designate a **single point of contact** during active incidents (yourself or a PIO)
- After the incident, **follow up** with accurate summaries, recovery guidance, or safety tips

10.5.2 Social Media Strategy

Many Nevada fire agencies maintain Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter/X pages. Chiefs should:

- Approve **who can post** and set expectations for tone, timing, and content
- Use social media for:
 - Fire restrictions or red flag warnings
 - Burn ban updates
 - Wildfire incident updates (confirmed, not speculative)
 - Public education campaigns
 - Recruitment and events
- Avoid:
 - Posting live videos from active firegrounds without context
 - Political or controversial content
 - Interactions with trolls or argumentative users

Tip: Have a **drafted plan** for incident-level social media posts including timing, approval, and follow-up info.

10.6 Communicating with Boards and Elected Officials

As a chief, you are often the most visible public safety leader in your community. You should:

- Provide **monthly or quarterly reports** at public meetings
- Use **graphs, call volume data, and plain language summaries**
- Prepare **briefings before controversial votes or budget items**
- Keep them informed during:
 - Major wildfires or structure fires
 - Ambulance shortages or PSOM events
 - Large grant awards, funding shortfalls, or staffing issues

Consider a **one-page monthly Chief's Report Template** summarizing:

- Call volume
- Major incidents
- Training completed
- Fuel or CWPP updates
- Budget status
- Upcoming needs

10.7 Interagency Communication

Your department should maintain working communications with:

- Local and regional dispatch centers (CAD notes, frequency plans)
- Law enforcement, EMS, and public works
- State fire agencies and utilities (e.g., NDF, NV Energy)
- Schools, hospitals, tribal leaders, and industrial partners

Host or attend **quarterly coordination meetings** to ensure expectations, call protocols, and joint response plans are up to date.

10.8 Communications & Public Relations Checklist

- ☐ Designate and train at least one PIO
- ☐ Maintain a list of key media and government contacts
- ☐ Conduct regular officer or staff updates
- ☐ Use social media responsibly and consistently
- ☐ Provide monthly updates to board or council
- ☐ Participate in regional coordination meetings or press briefings
- ☐ Have a public statement template or draft for critical incidents
- ☐ Review or test emergency notification systems annually
- ☐ Follow up after major events with press releases or community debriefs

10.9 Key Resources

- [FEMA Emergency Public Information and Warning Training \(IS-29\)](#)
- [ICS Forms for Incident Communication](#)
- [International Association of Fire Chiefs – PIO Resources](#)
- [Ready.gov – Public Messaging Templates](#)

Section 11: Planning and Strategic Development

Shaping the Future of Your Fire Department with Purpose and Precision

11.1 Overview

Beyond emergency response and daily operations, fire chiefs are responsible for guiding their agency's long-term growth, sustainability, and community service capacity. This requires **strategic planning, data-informed decision-making**, and ongoing collaboration with elected officials and community partners.

Whether your department is planning to build a new station, replace a fleet of aging engines, or expand staffing, having a structured planning process shows **accountability, readiness, and leadership**.

11.2 Why Strategic Planning Matters

- Anticipates future **community growth and hazard exposure**
- Aligns fire protection with **budgets, tax policy, and infrastructure**
- Improves ISO scores and emergency response times
- Builds trust with governing bodies and taxpayers
- Enhances grant readiness and legislative support
- Helps maintain affordable insurance and supports economic development

11.3 Key Planning Tools for Fire Chiefs

Tool	Purpose
Standard of Cover (SOC)	Analyzes response times, resource deployment, risk zones, and coverage gaps
Strategic Plan	Outlines long-term agency goals, strategies, and performance indicators
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	Forecasts major purchases: engines, stations, SCBA, radios, etc.
Community Risk Reduction Plan	Links hazards, prevention strategies, and mitigation priorities
Response Data & NFIRS Analysis	Supports decision-making with call volume, types, and turnout times

Templates available for SOC, CIP forecasts, and 3-year strategic planning models.

11.4 Standard of Cover (SOC) Planning

An SOC uses your **call data, staffing, hazard types, and geography** to define:

- Response time benchmarks (travel, turnout, dispatch)
- High-risk areas needing additional coverage
- Appropriate staffing models (volunteer, career, blended)
- Justification for station placement or automatic aid

SOC documents are also used during **ISO reviews** and when applying for grants or funding capital improvements.

[CPSE SOC Model Reference](#)

11.5 Capital Improvement Planning (CIP)

Plan capital needs across a 5–10 year horizon:

- Engines and brush trucks (10–20 year life cycle)
- SCBA, PPE, radios, thermal imagers (5–15 years)
- Fire stations (50+ year life cycle)
- Communications systems and AVL
- Hydrant systems, water supplies, wildland equipment

CIP documents should align with your budget cycles and infrastructure tax or bond requests.

Tip: Include **estimated costs**, **replacement year**, and **funding source (e.g., grant, tax, general fund)**.

11.6 Strategic Plan Elements

A good fire department strategic plan includes:

1. **Mission, Vision, and Values**
2. **Stakeholder Input** (community, staff, elected officials)
3. **SWOT Analysis** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
4. **Strategic Goals** (3–5 broad goals with 2–4 objectives each)
5. **Performance Measures** (e.g., turnout time <90 sec, % of staff certified)
6. **Annual Review Process**

Strategic plans are useful for budget hearings, board briefings, and interagency agreements.

11.7 Using Data to Drive Planning

Fire chiefs should regularly analyze:

- **Call volume trends** (EMS vs fire vs wildland)
- **Response time distributions** (turnout, travel, total)
- **Population growth and land use maps**

- **Volunteer availability trends**
- **Overlapping or simultaneous incidents**

Use tools such as:

- Excel, Power BI, or Tableau for basic analysis
- NFIRS exports and CAD reports
- GIS mapping (with County or State GIS staff support)
- ISO pre-survey tools and hydrant mapping

11.8 Integrating Planning with Other Agencies

Fire departments must coordinate long-range plans with:

- **County/City Master Plans**
- **Public works and utility providers**
- **School districts and housing authorities**
- **Emergency management and LEPCs**
- **Tribal governments and conservation districts**

Present your SOC, CIP, and strategic plans during public safety meetings, planning commission hearings, or budget workshops.

11.9 Strategic Development Checklist for Fire Chiefs

- Maintain a current **Standard of Cover** (reviewed every 3–5 years)
- Maintain and update a **5–10 year Capital Improvement Plan**
- Complete or update a **Strategic Plan** every 3–5 years
- Use GIS or data tools to support staffing and coverage proposals
- Present strategic planning documents to your board or commission
- Engage staff and community in the strategic planning process
- Align your plans with funding opportunities and political timing
- Coordinate with local planning, engineering, and public works agencies

11.10 Key Strategic Planning Resources

- [Center for Public Safety Excellence \(CPSE\)](#)
- [NFPA 1710/1720 – Staffing and Deployment Standards](#)
- [ISO Fire Suppression Rating Resources](#)
- [USFA Community Risk Reduction Planning](#)
- [Nevada Division of Emergency Management – LEPC Contacts](#)

Section 12: Tools, Templates, and Resources

Practical Documents and Links to Help You Lead with Confidence

12.1 Overview

This section is your go-to **reference hub**. While the earlier chapters provide the "what" and "why," this section provides the "how" — in the form of **templates, checklists, sample policies, and key web links**. These resources are curated specifically for Nevada fire chiefs to streamline onboarding, operations, planning, and reporting.

You can customize these documents to fit your agency's needs or use them to build your own local systems.

12.2 Essential Tools and Templates by Section

Section	Recommended Tools & Downloads
Governance & Authority	- Mutual Aid Agreement Template - Fire Board Briefing Sheet Template - Open Meeting Agenda Sample
Financial Management	- Annual Budget Worksheet - Fire Billing Packet (OF-288, OF-286) - CIP Forecast Template - NRS 288 Labor Timeline Chart
Incident Oversight	- Duty Officer SOG Template - Red Flag Response Checklist - Major Incident Summary Report Template
Training & Certifications	- Training Matrix by Rank - RT-130/Pack Test Tracking Sheet - Local Training Standard Policy Template
Personnel Management	- Volunteer Agreement Form - Corrective Action Log - Job Description Template (FF, Officer, Admin)
Community Risk Reduction	- Fire Prevention Inspection Checklist - CWPP Project Tracker - Wildland Hazard Assessment Form
Emergency Management	- COOP Plan Template - EOC Role Assignment Matrix - PSOM Resource Plan Checklist
Communications & PR	- Public Info Statement Template - Social Media Policy Draft - Chief's Report to Board Template
Strategic Development	- Standard of Cover Starter Template - 3-Year Strategic Plan Outline - Capital Planning Spreadsheet

Let me know if you'd like any of these pre-filled for Elko County Fire or formatted as Google Docs or Excel sheets.

12.3 Quick-Access Links for Nevada Fire Chiefs

Agency / Function	Link
Nevada State Fire Marshal	fire.nv.gov

Agency / Function	Link
Nevada Division of Emergency Management (DEM)	dem.nv.gov
Nevada Department of Taxation – Budgets	tax.nv.gov/LocalGovt/Budget
Nevada PERS	nvpers.org
Living With Fire – CWPP & WUI Guidance	livingwithfire.com
NV Energy PSOM Resources	nvenergy.com/safety/psom
NWCG Fire Forms & Training	nwcg.gov
FEMA IS/NIMS Courses	training.fema.gov
CPSE (Strategic & SOC Planning)	cpse.org
ISO Fire Protection Ratings	isomitigation.com

12.4 Custom Resource Development Available

Ask for:

- Localized red card tracking spreadsheets
- Annual Board Report templates (customized by station/district)
- Grant tracking dashboards for fuels/AFG/SAFER
- Mutual aid run cards formatted for dispatch
- Pre-written public messaging for red flag days, burn bans, fireworks, PSOM events

12.5 Ongoing Updates and Collaboration

Fire chiefs are encouraged to:

- Share templates and lessons learned with regional partners
- Collaborate through the **Nevada Fire Chiefs Association**
- Join working groups such as:
 - NV Fire Chiefs Wildland Committee
 - Nevada Statewide Mobilization Committee
 - LEPC or State Interagency Dispatch Coordination calls

Suggestion: Maintain a shared "District Chief Drive" or USB key with editable copies of all these tools for you and your command staff.

12.6 Final Takeaways

- Leadership is more than response—it's **planning, prevention, people, and policy.**
- Use these tools to build consistency, transparency, and trust in your agency.
- Ask for help, adapt as needed, and leave your department stronger than you found it.

Section 13: Line-of-Duty Injury or Death (LODI/D)

Chief Responsibilities in the Event of a Serious Employee or Department Injury

13.1 Overview

Firefighting, EMS, and wildland operations carry inherent risk. A **serious injury or death involving a department member**—on or off duty—requires immediate, compassionate, and structured leadership. This is one of the most difficult duties you may ever face as a fire chief.

This section provides a **checklist, notification flow, and support actions** to help you manage a critical incident involving one of your own.

13.2 Definition of a Serious Injury / Line-of-Duty Event

A serious or reportable event includes:

- Line-of-duty death (LODD)
- Hospitalization due to on-duty injury or occupational exposure
- Career-altering or disfiguring injury (burns, trauma)
- Suicidal ideation or suicide attempt
- Off-duty death with departmental connection (e.g., volunteer, active-duty staff)

You may also need to support an employee's **immediate family** or **partner agencies** affected by the incident.

13.3 Immediate Response Checklist

Action	Timeframe
Stabilize scene and ensure responder safety	Immediately
Assign a command staff liaison	Immediately
Secure scene documentation (photos, logs, witness statements)	Within 2–4 hours
Notify Dispatch to enter report notes	Immediately
Notify Fire Chief / Duty Chief	Immediately
Notify Medical Director (if EMS)	As appropriate
Initiate Department Accountability Check	Within 1 hour

13.4 Notifications and Communication

Notify the following, using pre-approved contact trees:

- Family (by Chief or senior staff + liaison officer)
- Governing board or county/city manager

- Law enforcement (for scene or investigative support)
- Fire marshal (if applicable to fire cause)
- Workers' comp insurer / HR department
- Chaplain, peer support, or CISD team
- NV Fire Chiefs Association (for state LODD or funeral support)
- NIOSH and OSHA (if required — within 8 hours for fatality)

[NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation Program](#)

13.5 Documentation and Investigation

Chiefs must ensure all of the following are initiated:

- **Incident Report** (NFIRS and/or local RMS)
- **Workers' Comp Claim**
- **Injury/Illness Form** (State of Nevada OSHA Form 301 or equivalent)
- **Photo documentation** of scene, gear, vehicle, and conditions
- Secure:
 - Turnout gear
 - SCBA and air cylinders
 - Logs and 214s from involved personnel
 - Dispatch audio and CAD printouts
- Initiate **internal review or after-action** (within 7–14 days)
- Request state or third-party investigation assistance, if warranted

13.6 Family and Department Support

- Assign a **Family Liaison Officer**
- Provide frequent, **truthful updates** to family members
- Activate department **CISM or peer support teams**
- Initiate **modified work duty or administrative leave** if needed
- Provide support for:
 - Counseling
 - Time off
 - Financial assistance
 - Memorials or services

Prepare a **Condolence Protocol or Guide** for off-duty or volunteer-related deaths.

13.7 If Death Occurs: Line-of-Duty Death Protocol

- Contact:
 - **State Fire Marshal**
 - **Nevada Fire Chiefs Association**
 - **USFA for national LODD recognition**

- **Funeral Honor Guard / Pipes & Drums**
- Coordinate:
 - **Funeral/Memorial service support**
 - **Flags, badges, apparatus draping**
 - **Public statements and media requests**
- Complete:
 - **LODD Notification Form**
 - **Federal Public Safety Officer Benefits (PSOB) Claim**

[PSOB Program \(DOJ\)](#)

13.8 Chief's LODD/Injury Response Kit Checklist

- Notification tree for department, family, partners
- Injury/death forms and OSHA/NIOSH guidance
- Scene and documentation checklist
- Family liaison assignment and contact log
- CISM and mental health resources directory
- Funeral and service coordination SOP
- Press release template and PIO coordination plan

13.9 Key Resources

- [National Fallen Firefighters Foundation – LODD Guide](#)
- [USFA Firefighter Fatality Reporting](#)
- [Nevada Division of Industrial Relations – Safety & OSHA](#)
- [Nevada Public Employees' Benefits Program \(PEBP\)](#)
- [Public Safety Officer Benefits \(PSOB\)](#)