



Commission on
Professional
Credentialing[®]

**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)
DESIGNEE
HANDBOOK**



Congratulations on achieving Public Information Officer (PIO) designation status. You have joined an elite group of chief officers who have demonstrated career excellence and achievement and a commitment to personal continuous improvement.

Share your accomplishment with others by posting your achievement to your LinkedIn profile.

POST NOMINAL LETTERS AND USE OF LOGO

You are encouraged to display your achievement as a designee by placing the PIO honorific letters attached after (suffix) your name. For example: Jane J. Jones, PIO

Should you wish to use the PIO logo in your signature block or on your business cards, request the Limited Use Release for Logo form from Chris Welch, CPC Program Assistant, at cwelch@cpse.org.

MAINTAINING YOUR PIO DESIGNATION

Your designation is valid for three years. In order to maintain you are required to complete a renewal application demonstrating proficiency in the following areas:

- Professional Development
- Professional Contributions / Recognition
- Professional Memberships and Affiliations
- Community Involvement

To ensure there is no lapse in your status, CPC must receive your renewal prior to the expiration date. The CPC begins accepting renewal applications 120 days prior to the expiration date.

We frequently get asked the question whether or not a designee is eligible to renew once no longer affiliated with a fire department. The good news is once designated, you can maintain your status as long as you maintain currency in the required components.

Download the renewal application from the Forms & Applications page of the CPSE website. Please note that CPC will be moving to an on-line environment watch for details in future communications.

Re-designation is also valid for three years. Application fee is \$325.

Please keep the CPC informed when your contact information changes to ensure you receive all notifications and updates. You can send your new information to info@cpse.org or log-in to the CPSE portal at <https://cpse.ps.membersuite.com/login.aspx>.



DUAL DESIGNATION

Interested in seeking an endorsement within your area of expertise and wish to pursue designation as a Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Chief EMS Officer (CEMSO) or Fire Marshal (FM) may do so by completing a streamlined application process.

To acquire the streamlined applications, contact Mike Higgins, CPSE CPC Program Manager at mhiggins@cpse.org.

Application fee is \$325.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Designees in good standing agree to abide by the Commission on Professional Credentialing Code of Professional Conduct. The Code of Professional Conduct states:

In fulfilling their responsibilities, each individual participant in the Public Information Officer (PIO) Designation program serves as a moral and ethical agent. Every action will affect the health and well-being of individuals, organizations, and communities; therefore, participants must assess the consequences of their decisions and actions and accept responsibility for them. Public Information Officer's must speak out and strive for the most moral and ethical course of action for themselves and for the sections, divisions, or organizations they lead.

Participants in the Public Information Officer program are required to comply with this Code of Professional Conduct and the administration thereof. Non-compliance may subject me to disqualification, denial, or revocation of my professional designation credentials.

Responsibilities to Individuals:

The Public Information Officer shall:

- Set an exemplary standard for subordinates and peers to follow.
- Be courteous and tactful in all interactions.
- Ensure the communication of rights, responsibilities and information are upheld to foster informed decision making.
- Respect the customs and beliefs of others – consistent with the mission of the organization.
- Respect the confidentiality of information, except where it is in the public interest or where there is a legal obligation to divulge such information.
- Promote competence and integrity among individuals associated with the fire and emergency services.



Responsibilities to the Profession:

The Public Information Officer shall take a leadership role to ensure the fire service:

- ❑ Serves the public interest in a moral, ethical, and efficient manner.
- ❑ Strives to provide quality services as defined by the community and based upon accepted industry standards.
- ❑ Communicates truthfully and avoids misleading representation, raising unreasonable expectations in other persons, or in the community as a whole.
- ❑ Uses sound management practices and makes efficient, effective, economical, and ethical use of resources.
- ❑ Promotes understanding of public protection and safety services and issues.
- ❑ Conducts inter and intra organizational activities in a cooperative way that improves community well-being and safety.
- ❑ Develops and maintains the required level of physical and mental health to enhance and promote individual quality of life which allows for the proper discharge of duties.
- ❑ Reports to the Commission on Professional Credentialing when there are reasonable grounds to believe a member has violated this Code of Professional Conduct.

Responsibility to the Community and Society:

The Public Information Officer shall:

- ❑ Abide by the laws of all levels of government but may seek changes by lawful means where deemed appropriate.
- ❑ Contribute to improving the well-being and safety of the general population, including participation in educational programs, dialogue, and recommendations to enhance the quality of life and to improve fire and emergency services.
- ❑ Strive to identify and meet the needs of the community within the resources available and within the mission of the organization.
- ❑ Consider the effects of management policy decisions on the community and society and make recommendations based on these considerations.

Conflict of Interest:

A conflict of interest exists when the Public Information Officer uses their position, authority, or privileged information to:

1. Obtain an improper benefit, tangible or otherwise, either directly or indirectly.
2. Obtain an improper benefit for another.
3. Make decisions that attempt to, or do, negate the effectiveness of the Fire Officer Designation program.



The Public Information Officer shall:

- ❑ Conduct all relationships in a way that assures management decisions are not compromised by a perceived or real conflict of interest.
- ❑ Disclose to the appropriate authority all direct or indirect personal or financial interests, appointment, or elections which might create a conflict of interest whether real or perceived.
- ❑ Neither accept nor offer personal gifts or benefits with the expectation or appearance of influencing decisions.
- ❑ Refrain from using the Public Information Officer designation or credentials to promote or endorse commercial products or services without the express written permission of the Commission on Professional Credentialing.
- ❑ Value ethics within the fire and emergency services. Most professions abide by a “Code of Ethics or Conduct,” which expresses their members’ agreement as to what constitutes acceptable behavior.

The Code of Professional Conduct has been adopted by the Commission on Professional Credentialing to promote and maintain the highest standards of professional performance and personal conduct. Abiding by these standards is required for continued designation as a Public Information Officer and serves notice to the public who entrust their confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Public Information Officer.



CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

When the Commission finds that an individual has violated the Commission on Professional Credentialing Code of Professional Conduct, or is found to have falsified information on their application, or has utilized the appropriate credentialing logo in an unauthorized manner, or has failed to pay the associate program fees, the Commission may:

Issue a warning to the individual to correct their deficiencies within a stated period of time. A warning does not affect the designee status of the individual.

Suspend or Terminate Credentials: When, in the judgment of the Commission, an individual has egregiously violated the code of professional conduct, the Commission may take action to suspend or terminate an individual's designated status.

APPEAL PROCESS

1. An individual (Appellant) may file an appeal within 14 calendar days after receiving notification that either the individual's credentialing application is being denied or the individual's candidacy or credential is being terminated.
 - a. The appeal must be based on the information or documentation that was incorporated or attached to the credentialing application. If the appeal is for termination of credentials; then the appellant must provide appropriate explanations and/or documentation that support their appeal relative to the evidence that supports termination of their credentials.
 - b. The appeal letter shall clearly state the reasons for the appeal and explanations relative to the evidence that will be reviewed in the appeal. The letter along with all supporting documentation shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested to the CPC Manager at the Headquarters of the Center for Public Safety Excellence.
 - c. The appellant will maintain their credentials or candidate status until the appellate process is completed and a final decision rendered.
2. The CPSE will communicate with the Appeals Committee to communicate the request for an official appeal. All documents, proceedings, materials, and supporting documents will be made available to the Appeals Committee for their appeal process.
3. During the initial review, the Appeals Committee members will determine if they have a conflict of interest, if so, they will recuse themselves.



4. The Appeals Committee will meet with the appellant, applicable Commission of Professional Credentialing members (as determined by the CPC Chair), Peer Reviewer(s), and Staff within 45 calendar days of the appeal submittal.
5. The Appeals Committee shall determine if additional steps are required after the initial hearing. These steps include, but are not limited to, requesting additional explanatory information, or requesting subject matter experts to analyze the matter and provide a recommendation.
6. Following the initial hearing and additional steps the Appeals Committee will meet to render a vote. A majority vote will rule, and the Appeals Committee will document the reasons for their vote.
 - a. If the Appeals Committee grants the appeal, the earlier CPC decision will be overturned, and the officer will be designated.
 - b. If the Appeals Committee rejects the appeal, the earlier CPC decision stands. The appellant may further appeal the decision to the CPSE Board of Directors.
7. The CPSE will notify the individual by certified mail of the Appeals Committee decision.
8. If the appellant appeals to the CPSE Board of Directors, which must be within 14 calendar days of the decision of the Appeals Committee, the Board at their next scheduled meeting will review the Appeals Committee decision and their process materials and vote to grant or reject the appeal. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final and binding.
9. The CPSE will notify the individual by certified mail of the Board of Directors decision.
10. The cost for any appeal hearing is borne by the individual for his/her portion and by the CPSE for their portion.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

From time-to-time CPC seeks to increase the cadre of peer reviewers. This voluntary position is an extremely important part of the designation program. Becoming a peer reviewer requires attending mandatory web-based training as well as continuing education to ensure reviewers maintain currency and familiarity with the program and application requirements.

Should you be interested in being considered for future peer reviewer vacancies, contact Mike Higgins, CPSE CPC Program Manager at mhiggins@cpse.org.