



**International Association of Fire Investigators,  
New York State Chapter #23**

**Constitution and By-laws**



# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Article 1:** Name and Purpose

**Article 2:** Membership

**Article 3:** Officers – Responsibilities, Elections and Terms

**Article 4:** Meetings

**Article 5:** Dues and Fees

**Article 6:** Standing Committees

**Article 7:** Amendment



## **ARTICLE I - NAME AND PURPOSE**

### **Section 1 - Name**

This organization shall be known as the International Association of Arson Investigators New York State Chapter 23, hereinafter the "Chapter". No member shall use the name of the Chapter publicly, other than using their membership card for identification purposes, without the express permission of the Board of Directors. This shall not restrict the officers, appointees, or agents of the Chapter using the name to carry out the purpose of the Chapter.

### **Section 2 – Purpose**

The purpose of the Chapter shall be to:

- A. Unite, for mutual benefit, public officials and private persons engaged in the control of arson and kindred crimes.
- B. Provide for the exchange of technical information and developments.
- C. Cooperate with other law enforcement agencies and associations to further fire investigations and the suppression of crime.
- D. Encourage high professional standards of conduct among arson investigators
- E. Strive to eliminate all factors which interfere with the administration of crime suppression.

The Chapter shall not be operated for profit and its funds may not be used to influence legislation.

## **ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1 - Active Membership**

Any representative of government, or of a government agency, and any representative of a business or industrial concern who is engaged in the control of the crime of arson and is a resident of, or employed in, the State of New York shall be eligible for active membership upon application, provided such person possesses the other qualifications for membership at the discretion of the Membership Committee and provided such person at least eighteen (18) years of age at the time of application.

### **Section 2 - Associate, Lifetime, Sustaining Membership**

- A. Associate Membership  
Persons not qualified for active membership may become associate members after determination of their qualifications by the Membership Committee. Associate members shall have the privileges of an active member, except voting and holding office. The Chapter may, by majority vote of active members present, exclude associate members from any business meeting.

- B. Lifetime Membership  
Past Presidents of the Association and Charter Members shall be lifetime members. Lifetime members shall have all privileges of active members and shall be exempt from payment of dues. The Board of Directors may bestow Life Membership upon any qualified member who:
- i. Is an active member of the association?
  - ii. Has been an active member in good standing for ten years.
  - iii. Has rendered distinctive service to the Association through participation on committees or activities for a minimum of five years.
- Nominations for Life Membership shall be made to the Board of Directors at least sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting. No more than two nominations for such membership may be approved in any year.
- C. Sustaining Membership  
Individuals, organizations, businesses, firms, corporations, and other parties interested in carrying out the purposes of the association may be granted sustaining membership. The annual cost and level of sustaining membership shall be in accordance with guidelines established by the Board of Directors. Sustaining members shall have no voting power nor ability to hold office within the Chapter.

### Section 3 - Membership Approval

Applications for membership shall be made to the Chairman of the Membership Committee, upon recommendation of an active member in good standing. The Membership Committee shall process such application in accordance with Section I of this Article.

### Section 4 - Termination / Elimination

A. Termination

Membership in the Chapter may be terminated by;

- i. voluntary withdrawal, or
- ii. the Secretary/Treasurer, when after notice such member is determined to be in arrears for payment of dues provided in Article VI, Section 1 of this document, or any other obligation to the Chapter.

B. Elimination

The Board of Directors may censure any member in the event such member;

- i. Falsified his application or made misrepresentations therein, or
- ii. Conducted himself in such manner as is prejudicial to the good name or best interest of the Chapter, or
- iii. Exhibited traits of character or conduct inconsistent with qualification for membership in this Chapter.

In cases subject to Article II Section 4 (B), the Board of Directors shall provide such member with a hearing, due notice and the opportunity to be heard. A majority of the Board of Directors present at such meeting shall be sufficient to cause censure, or termination of membership, for the action(s) specified in that notice.

## Section 5 – Reinstatement

Any former member may be reinstated at the discretion, and by consent, of a majority of the Board of Directors. However, if such former member had been in financial arrears to the Chapter, they shall be required to pay all such arrears as a condition to their reinstatement.

## **ARTICLE III – OFFICERS – RESPONSIBILITIES, ELECTIONS, AND TERMS**

### Section 1 - Officers

The officers of the Chapter shall consist of a President, five (5) Regional Vice Presidents, a Secretary / Treasurer, and a Sergeant-at-Arms.

- A. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Chapter. In the absence of the President, the senior Vice President shall fulfill the duties of the President. Should the senior Vice President also not be present, the next senior Vice President will act in the capacity of the President. This order of succession shall continue to the least tenured Vice President. Should the President and all Vice Presidents be absent, the Secretary / Treasurer will preside.
- B. President  
The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Chapter and shall supervise and coordinate the activities of the Chapter. The President shall appoint appropriate committees and require reports at each Chapter meeting. The President shall be responsible for appointing the Membership Committee; provided that such committee shall include the Secretary/Treasurer, one (1) member of the Board of Directors and one (1) active member of the Chapter.
- C. Vice Presidents  
Vice Presidents shall be elected from each of the five (5) geographic regions of the State. The Vice Presidents shall represent the members of their geographic region at all meetings of the Chapter. In addition to other duties, each Vice President shall supervise committees as assigned by the President.
- D. Secretary / Treasurer
  - i. Shall keep records and minutes of the organization. maintain a current roll of membership, and maintain copies of the Constitution and all other documents of value to the Chapter according to the New York State Archives and Records Administration pamphlet entitled “Records Retention and Disposition Schedule MU-1”.
  - ii. Shall compile a yearly attendance record of meetings for all Officers and Directors and publish that record in the FALL Newsletter.

- iii. Shall be the custodian and sole depositor of funds of the organization and shall disburse such funds by check as authorized. The Secretary / Treasurer shall render a complete summary of all income, disbursements and balances, whenever requested by the Board of Directors and to the members at the annual meeting.
- iv. Perform such duties as designated by the President.

E. Sergeant – at – Arms

The Sergeant - at - Arms shall properly identify all members and guests at meetings, act as the Chapter parliamentarian, and perform such duties as assigned by the President.

## Section 2 - Board of Directors

The officers and ten (10) other members of the Chapter, duly elected as Directors, shall constitute the Board of Directors.

- A. The government of this Chapter shall be vested in the Board of Directors. Members elected to the Board of Directors shall comply with the geographic residency requirements for "Regional Directors".
- B. Geographic Requirements for Regional Directors.
  - i. One member in good standing shall be elected from each of the five (5) geographic regions of the State.
  - ii. There shall also be four (4) "At Large Directors. Members elected to the Board of Directors as "At Large" Directors do not have to comply with the geographic requirement.
- C. Seven (7) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.
- D. The Board of Directors shall have full power to initiate and transact business necessary to the existence of the Chapter and the observance of its purposes. The Board of Directors shall have general powers to direct, control and supervise the affairs of the Chapter.

## Section 3 - Terms of Office

- A. The President, Vice Presidents, and Sergeant-at Arms shall hold office for a term of two (2) years from the time of their election, or until the election and affirmation of their respective successors.
- B. The Secretary/Treasurer shall hold office for a term of three (3) years from the time of their election, or until the election and affirmation of their respective successor.



- C. Members of the Board of Directors shall hold office for a term of three (3) years from the time of their election. Their terms shall be arranged so that at least two (2) retire each year.

#### Section 4 - Ex-Officio Members of the Board of Directors

All retiring Presidents shall become ex-officio members of the Board of Directors.

#### Section 5 – Honorary and Advisory Members

The Board of Directors may appoint individuals as Honorary or Advisory Members of the Chapter. These appointments shall be reserved for individuals or agencies that contribute significantly, through exceptional means, to the benefit of the Chapter. Honorary and Advisory Members shall have no voting power nor ability to hold office within the Chapter

#### Section 6 - Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy occurring on the Board of Directors, the President shall appoint an active member to fill such vacancy. If the vacancy is in the office of the President, a majority vote of the Board of Directors shall appoint an active member to fill the vacant Presidency. Such newly appointed member(s) shall hold office for the duration of the vacant incumbent's term.

#### Section 7 - Election

Election of Officers shall be conducted in accordance with procedures developed and published by the NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

#### Section 8 - Eligibility for Election

- A. To be eligible for election as an Officer or member of the Board of Directors, an active member shall;
  - i. Have attended at least three (3) Chapter endorsed events within two (2) years,
    - i. Events shall include Chapter seminars, the OFPC Arson Seminar, IAAI ITC, and seminars sponsored by other Chapters.
  - ii. Be an active member, in good standing, for at least three (3) years.
- B. To be eligible for re-election Officers or members of the Board of Directors shall;
  - i. Have participated in at least six (6) Chapter endorsed events within two (2) years,
    - i. Events shall include Board of Directors meetings, Chapter seminars, the OFPC Arson Seminar, IAAI ITC, and seminars sponsored by other Chapters.
  - ii. Remain an active member in good standing.
- C. No member can be nominated for more than one position per election.

## Section 9 - Elimination of an Officer or Member of Board of Directors

By two thirds vote of the general membership present at the annual meeting, the membership of the association will have the ability to remove any Officer or Director from office who;

- A. Has failed to attend (3) consecutive Board of Directors meeting, unless absence was approved by the President and/or applicable Regional Vice President, or
- B. Has conducted themselves in such manner as is prejudicial to the good name or best interest of the Chapter, or
- C. Has traits of character or conduct inconsistent with qualification for an Officer in this Chapter.

In such case(s) the Officer or Director shall be provided with a hearing, due notice and the opportunity to be heard, prior to any vote of elimination.

## **ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS**

### Section 1 – General Membership Meetings

A general meeting of the Chapter membership shall be held during each calendar year. That meeting shall be held at such time and place as designated by the Board of Directors. The location of the meeting shall be announced at least thirty (30) days in advance by the Chapter Secretary / Treasurer to all members.

### Section 2 - Special Meetings.

Special meetings may be called by order of the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors shall be given due notice of at least two (2) weeks in advance.

### Section 3 - Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall meet at any time or place upon call of the President or any seven (7) members of the Board of Directors.

### Section 4 – Meeting Procedure

When any question comes before the meeting not specifically provided for herein, the presiding officer shall be governed in his / her decision by the rules laid down in "ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER", as revised. In the absence of Legal Counsel or Sergeant - at - Arms at the meeting, the Chairman of the Constitution and By - Laws Committee shall act as parliamentarian

## **ARTICLE V - DUES AND FEES**

### **Section 1 - Dues**

- A. Dues for Chapter active and associate membership may be fixed by majority vote of the members present at a General meeting of the Chapter.
  - i. A Member who fails to pay dues, within ninety (90) days of the due date, shall be terminated according to Article II, Section 4(A).
  - ii. Reinstatements are conditioned upon approval of the Board of Directors as provided in Article II, Section 5 of the By - Laws.
  
- B. A fee schedule for Sustaining Membership, endorsements, and advertising involving Chapter events, documents or media may be set by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE VI - STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1 - Standing Committees**

The following committees shall be standing committees.

- A. Budget and Finance:  
The committee shall be responsible for all financial matters involving dues, expenses, income, salaries, and honorariums incurred by, or on behalf of, the Chapter. In addition, the committee will see that proper planning and budgeting is carried out during the year and conduct an annual audit.
  
- B. Constitution, By-Laws, Standard Operating Procedures:  
The committee shall advise the officers, directors, and members of the Chapter on matters pertaining to the Constitution and By-Laws. The committee shall review and prepare proposed changes to the Constitution and By-laws in a suitable format for presentation to the officers, directors, and members of the Chapter. Additionally, the committee shall serve to review Standard Operating Procedures developed by other committees.
  
- C. Ethical Practices and Grievances:  
The committee shall be to investigate all allegations of misconduct directed towards the officers, directors, or members of the Chapter. Allegations of misconduct may include, but are not limited to the following: criminal offenses, neglect of duty, violation of the code of ethics, policies, rules, or procedures of the Chapter, or conduct that tends to reflect unfavorably on the members of the Chapter.

D. Nominating.

The committee shall be to encourage, solicit, receive and screen all nominations for the various officer and director positions of the Chapter. The committee shall present all qualified nominees to the membership on opening day of a general meeting. The committee shall establish procedures for, and conduct any necessary election for those positions.

E. Membership:

The committee shall promote, encourage and solicit membership in the Chapter through appropriate means and liaison with the International Association of Arson Investigators to cover all applicable membership business.

F. Certified Fire Investigators:

The committee shall make available to the membership an overview of all applicable means to attain certification, and be responsible to promote and encourage participation in the Certified Fire Investigator programs by all qualified persons.

G. Education, Training and Seminar Site Selection:

The committee shall receive and screen all bids for sites to host training seminars and meetings of the Chapter, and to make recommendations regarding those bids, and serve as liaison between the site host and the Chapter to ensure that both parties comply with the standard operation procedures. The committee shall further encourage, solicit, and assist in the development of new and innovative ideas for the education and training of the membership.

H. FIRE SCENE / Peer Review:

The committee shall oversee the development and production of the Chapter's FIRE SCENE newsletter. The committee shall also be responsible for peer review of articles submitted for publication through the Chapter.

I. Awards:

The committee shall develop criteria and solicit nominations for awards that will be presented through the Chapter. The committee will also evaluate and judge those nominations for each award and select worthy recipients.

J. Marketing:

The committee shall develop marketing strategies, both internal and external, for the Chapter.

K. Merchandise:

The committee shall be responsible for procurement, inventory, storage, and sale of various products which promote the Chapter. The committee shall advise the Board of Directors regarding accounting and inventory matters.

L. Social Media:

The committee shall be responsible for dissemination of relevant Chapter information to members, related professionals, and the public by means of various digital media platforms. The committee shall advise the Board of Directors of the various platforms utilized and activities from each of those platforms.

## Section 2 - Additional Duties

In addition to the duties described, each committee shall perform additional duties, as described in the Standard Operation Procedures for that committee, and the Association may delegate other duties as may be delegated by the Association. Each Regional Vice President has been assigned oversight responsibilities for various committees. All committees, both standing and non-standing, will be chaired by the oversight Vice President for that committee or his or her designee.

## Section 3 - Standard Operating Procedures

The standard operating procedures for each standing committee shall be subject to review and recertification every two years or as necessary upon substantive change.

# **ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENT**

## Section 1 - Requirements

This constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Chapter by a vote of two - thirds (2/3) of the membership present, provided thirty (30) days written notification of proposed amendments has been sent to all members.