



SFPE Chapter Leadership Survival Manual



PREFACE

Congratulations! You are an active SFPE member involved in Chapter leadership! Serving as a Chapter officer or in another leadership role can be immensely satisfying and a fulfilling part of your ongoing development as a fire protection engineer. That said, Chapter leadership can also be intimidating. Confidence, in any arena, comes from being able to predict the likely outcome. We lack confidence when we don't know the result of our involvement will be...and we often assume the worst! The more you prepare and the more you do something, the more you can be sure of the outcome. There are several ways to gather the knowledge and experience to be an effective Chapter leader.

Naturally, most Chapter leaders learn from their predecessors, especially for officers in a succession path, moving from vice-president to president-elect to President. Society and Chapter bylaws and procedures are also essential resources for becoming familiar with the structure and function of SFPE and its Chapters. This guide is meant to supplement these other means of increasing your confidence and competence as a Chapter leader. If you are just getting started with SFPE, use this as a 'how-to' guide to the basics of leadership, keeping your Chapter well-organized and resources available via the SFPE headquarters office. Nothing can take the place of experience, but this guide is intended to help you address immediate questions about Chapter leadership and set a course to becoming an effective leader.

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SFPE Chapter Public Relations Guide

Chapter Operations Guide

Since its inception in 1950, SFPE has recognized the essential role chapters play in linking the organization and the fire protection engineer. In *A Brief History of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, 1950 to 1975*, it states, "to a major degree the Chapters are the driving force that makes our Society successful." The Chapters provide for the most significant proportion of the membership the opportunity for participation and personal growth essential to the welfare of SFPE. SFPE strives to build a strong unified local and international voice for the fire protection engineering profession through its chapters. The Society's bylaws charge the chapters with conducting programs that carry out SFPE's purpose and objectives, allowing members to exert their influence in the ever-changing fire protection engineering field.

The Chapter Operations Guide is your reference source on SFPE. It is designed to help chapter officers work more closely with the SFPE officers and staff. IT IS INTENDED AS A GUIDE, and with certain exceptions, such as directions based on Chapter Constitution and Bylaws, etc., the chapters should feel free to amplify and modify the suggestions to suit their own needs. The guide is provided to chapters to improve organizational continuity as SFPE grows and officers change. It is recommended that new chapter presidents should conduct planning meetings early in their term, using this manual as a guide to set goals and objectives.

Chapter officers and committee chairs should keep in mind that there is no better way to ensure the success of a chapter than to have each member feel a definite sense of responsibility. To accomplish this, participation is essential and insofar as practicable, every person should be a part of at least one committee.

A good liaison between chapters and Society Headquarters is vital to the overall effectiveness of the Society. The SFPE Board of Directors, CEO , and Headquarters Staff are committed to supporting chapter leaders' operating efforts.

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Section 1. Intro - Overview of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers

1.0 Society Vision, Mission, and Goals

1.0.0 Vision Statement

The Leaders in Engineering a Fire Safe World.

Fire protection engineering is the application of science, engineering principles, and experience to protect people and their environments from the destructive effects of fire.

SFPE's vision will be successfully achieved through:

- Identification and facilitation of fire science and engineering research.
- Helping members to apply fire science and engineering principles in practice.
- Development and promotion of fire protection standards of design.
- Collaboration with organizations concerned with safety in the built environment
- Leadership and guidance toward lifelong fire protection engineering education.
- Growth of SFPE worldwide membership.
- Expanded involvement of dedicated members and vigorous chapters.
- Effective staff activities supported by continuously developed broad and varied revenue sources.

1.0.1 Mission Statement

"To define, develop, and advance the use of engineering best practices; expand the scientific and technical knowledge base; and educate the global fire safety community, in order to reduce fire risk."

1.0.2 Goals and Strategic Objectives

SFPE's vision and mission are further defined in the SFPE Strategic Plan in four strategic goals:

- Advocate for the role of fire engineering in innovation and emerging issues.
- Increase the competency of fire protection/fire safety engineers.
- Develop opportunities for the fire protection engineering profession to influence & elevate sustainability in the built environment.
- Set up SFPE for global success

FPE Constitution and Bylaws

The most recent version of the SFPE Constitution and Bylaws is available on the SFPE website: <https://www.sfpe.org/about-sfpe/governance/new-page>

[SFPE Standing Rules](#)

The Standing Rules build off the SFPE Constitution & Bylaws, providing more detail and documenting board-approved policies and procedures. They may be amended by the Board of Directors at any time.

1.1 Volunteer Leadership

The SFPE Board of Directors is the single governing body of the Society and actively promotes the objectives of the Society, operating in accordance with and administering and implementing programs and policies established by the Constitution & Bylaws and by the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors are elected to serve by and are accountable to the members of the Society.

1.2 Networking Internationally

Chapters are subgroups of SFPE members who share common interests because of geographic location. Chapters are chartered by SFPE and authorized by the Society's Governing Board if the charter seems likely to provide a valuable and long-term service to the Society. Chapters differ

from Society committees in that they aren't charged annually with specific tasks related to Society business, and membership is determined by an individual's professional interest, location of or choice to join, not an appointment. Chapter membership is extremely valuable in bringing together fire protection professionals from the same state, province, or geographic regions. Chapters typically host monthly meetings and/or one main meeting annually, and these meetings convey information directly relevant to attendees because of the localized nature of the Chapter.

A complete list of current Chapters, [click here](#). Chapters offer localized membership services, networking, and professional development opportunities through seminars, conferences, meetings, and newsletters.

1.3 Code of Ethics for Fire Protection Engineers

Under SFPE's Constitution & Bylaws, all SFPE members must comply with the SFPE [Code of Ethics](#) and report any observed violations. Follow the link for the full text of the most recent Code of Ethics: <https://www.sfpe.org/about-sfpe/governance/ethics>

1.4 The following are the Various Membership Grades:

Individual
Member
Professional
Fellow

Further details on each membership grade and their associated requirements can be found on the [SFPE webpage](#).

1.5 Chapter Websites and social media

SFPE Chapter websites and social media play an essential role in communication with SFPE members. These guidelines are intended to assist Chapters in the effective operation of their websites and assist you in ways to help promote your Chapter and SFPE through social media. Both are built around engaging your audience with great content.

Many chapters have already established websites. While some use it to post information like meeting announcements, others use it for meeting registration, chapter membership dues, etc. Additional guidance relating to chapter websites and social media presence can be found within **Attachment A: Chapter Website and Social Media Toolkit**.

Section 2. Chapter Organization

There are three types of chapters within SFPE structure:

Incorporated: Must have current state incorporation and by-laws within the U.S. or equivalent outside the U.S. Funding is responsibility of a chapter. Must maintain the dual membership requirement as defined by SFPE (either 10% of paid chapter members hold SFPE Professional Member Grade, or higher; OR 20% are SFPE members).

Affiliated: reserved for chapters located outside of North America. Each group will have the flexibility to focus on any given topic or issue appropriate to the region but will largely focus on networking, education (career or topic related), local public awareness and outreach, and local community engagement. Funding is responsibility of a chapter.

Networking: an integral part of SFPE; as part of SFPE membership, in other words, 100% of Networking Chapter members are members of SFPE global. Funding provided by SFPE.

All guidelines are intended for all types of chapters unless otherwise stated

2.0 Charter

The Society charters chapters to carry out its purposes and objectives. The chapter membership governs chapter policies, activities, and actions, operating in accordance with chapter bylaws, as approved by the SFPE Board of Directors.

To many members, chapters are the closest and most visible part of SFPE, looked upon to deliver Society services on the local level. Such services include networking, professional development, enhancement of the profession, and governmental affairs. The quality of chapter programs and committee work determines the perceived benefit of these services and, ultimately, member satisfaction.

2.1 Maintaining the Chapter Charter

Following is a list of recommendations to assist you in maintaining your Chapter's charter.

1. Nominate and elect chapter officers and executive committee members annually, according to chapter bylaws. Submit to SFPE Headquarters a list of officers and executive committee members within one month of elections. **As of September 2021, all officers of chapters must be SFPE members in good standing.**
2. Establish and maintain current bylaws. The Chapter Constitution and Bylaws are recommended to be reviewed and updated periodically.

2.2 Chapter Officers

SFPE offers the following officer position descriptions and guidelines for chapter officers.

Please note: As of September 2022 all of the Chapter Board of Directors members must be SFPE Members in good standing.

2.2.0 SFPE Position Description: **Chapter President**

Qualifications: Fellow, Professional Member, or Member of the Society.

The President shall be responsible for conducting and supervising all Chapter activities during their term of office, all in accord with the constitution and bylaws of the Society and the Chapter. Specific responsibilities include:

- 0) Chair all Chapter and executive committee meetings.
- 1) Appoint the Nominating Committee, standing committee chairs, and special committees.
- 2) Coordinate activities of chapter committees

- 3) Represent the Chapter at SFPE Senate and annual meeting
- 4) Represent the Chapter at meetings of other organizations when official representation benefits the Society or Chapter.
- 5) Develop a calendar of events for the Chapter's operating year.
- 6) Submit a list of incoming Chapter Officers to SFPE Headquarters.
- 7) Ensure the complete transfer of all chapter records to the succeeding chapter president.
- 8) Complete and submit paperwork for Chapter Excellence Awards/Chapter Annual Report

2.2.1 SFPE Position Description: **Chapter Vice President or President-elect**

Qualifications: Fellow, Professional Member, or Member of the Society.

Specific responsibilities include:

- 0) Act for the President at meetings and functions in the President's absence.
- 1) Supervise the activities of those committees reporting to them.
- 2) Perform other duties as assigned by the President or executive committee.
- 3) Transfer all chapter records to the succeeding chapter vice president or president-elect.

Note: The size of a chapter and its scope or activities may determine the need for more than one vice president/president-elect. Some chapters have a vice president responsible for chapter meetings and seminars and a second vice president who focuses on Chapter membership.

2.2.2 SFPE Position Description: **Chapter Secretary**

Qualifications: Fellow, Professional Member, or Member of the Society.

The Secretary takes part in all Chapter activities, particularly as a record-keeper. Specific responsibilities include:

- 0) Maintain permanent chapter files, including minutes permanently and correspondence for two (2) years—issue notices of all chapter meetings and functions.
- 1) Record and distribute minutes of all chapter meetings.
- 2) Maintain chapter membership records. Larger Chapters may have individuals responsible for encouraging membership in the Chapter, but the Chapter Secretary is ultimately responsible for maintaining these records.
- 3) It is required annually to submit a chapter roster to SFPE Headquarters. Inform SFPE Headquarters of chapter member address changes or other changes to member information.
- 4) Provide information about new chapter members to other chapter officers and committee chairs.
- 5) Assist the chapter president in completing the Chapter Annual Report
- 6) Maintain a record of each member's attendance and chapter activities for the use of the Nominating Committee.
- 7) Arrange for distribution and/or printing and mailing of meeting notices.
- 8) Maintain custody of the chapter charter.
- 9) Assume chapter treasurer duties when necessary.
- 10) Transfer all records to the succeeding Secretary.

2.2.3 SFPE Position Description: **Chapter Treasurer**

Qualifications: Fellow, Professional Member, or Member of the Society.

The Treasurer is responsible for the receipt, safekeeping, and disbursement of chapter funds, keeping adequate records of finances, and keeping chapter expenditures in line with income. Specific responsibilities include:

- 0) Maintain chapter financial records, including copies of Chapter Financial Reports and supporting documents for the past five (5) years. Maintain records of all payments and receipts and maintain files for bank statements, canceled checks, paid invoices, and vouchers.
- 1) Maintain funds in a financial institution
- 2) Assist the chapter Executive Committee with budget preparation for each fiscal year.

- 3) Deposit all chapter income in a financial institution specified by the chapter Executive Committee and issue payments from that account for all expenditures approved by the chapter Executive Committee.
- 4) Assist the chapter president with preparing the Chapter Financial Report at the close of the chapter fiscal year.
- 5) Coordinate an annual audit on the previous fiscal year's books.
- 6) The new Treasurer should obtain new signature cards from the Chapter's bank. The new officers should sign these cards and return them to the bank.
- 7) Form 990 or Form 990EZ, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, must be filed with the Internal Revenue Service by specific Chapters. The Chapter Treasurer will be responsible for filing the form. A copy of the form is to be retained in the Treasurer's permanent file, and it is required that a copy be forwarded to Society headquarters for the master files.
- 8) Assume chapter secretary duties when necessary.
- 9) Transfer all records to the succeeding Treasurer.

2.2.3.1 Tax Implications for Non-USA Chapters

Non-USA chapters will have to contact local tax authorities to determine any tax implications.

2.2.4 SFPE Position Description: Director

Qualifications: Fellow, Professional Member, or Member of the Society.

Responsibilities: Participate on the Executive Committee represent the chapter membership as directed by the President or Executive Committee.

2.2.5 Replacing Chapter Officer and Directors

The Model Chapter Bylaws provide for filling major Chapter officer positions where vacancies might occur during the year.

1. Appoint a Nominating Committee to nominate one or more persons for the vacant position.
2. Notify members by special notice or regular newsletter of the nomination and the meeting held at which the election. Give sufficient notice, allowing members to nominate additional candidates by petition and/or floor at the designated election meeting.
3. Carry out the election process at the designated meeting and notify members of the election outcome via a regular Chapter newsletter.

For positions other than elected officers or directors, vacancies can be filled according to the Model Bylaws, which allow for the removal or appointment by the same authority responsible for initially filling that position.

2.2.6 Suggested Format for Installation of Chapter Officers

Election to the chapter office is a distinct honor bestowed upon SFPE members by their peers for their efforts, but more importantly, it is in anticipation of placing the chapter interest on their list of priorities. For any chapter to provide the appropriate and expected service to its members, the chapter officers and Executive Committee members must be committed to the tasks required and specified in the Chapter Operations Guide, which is necessary to achieve the Society's mission to advance the science and practice of fire protection engineering.

Past Society officers or the past chapter president should be considered to install the chapter officers.

Ask each individually, "Do you _____, promise to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of your office in accordance with the chapter constitution and bylaws? Your affirmative response indicates your willingness to accept the responsibility placed upon you by your Chapter, region, and your Society. I, therefore, install you as the duly elected and sworn officers and Executive Committee members of the _____ Chapter of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers. In closing, may I remind you that you have capable, willing chapter members to assist you, BUT, the success of the Chapter is in your hands."

2.2.6.0 Officer Commendations

Certificates of appreciation, past presidents' pins, and other forms of appreciation should be employed by the Chapter's Executive Committee to indicate their appreciation for the efforts of their members in taking leadership roles. At annual meetings or other special events, the chapters are urged to express their appreciation and thanks for the diligence of their leadership.

2.3 Executive Committee (Board of Directors)

The chapter Executive Committee consists of the Chapter's elected officers, the most recent past president, and other members elected by the membership in accordance with the Chapter's bylaws. The Executive Committee manages and conducts the Chapter's affairs in accordance with the bylaws of the Chapter and has supervision and care of all property of the Chapter. Responsibilities include:

- 0) Manages chapter affairs
- 1) Approves Chapter long-range plan and updates it periodically
- 2) Reviews the Treasurer's reports
- 3) Approves chapter budget
- 4) Refer business to the full membership, as required by chapter bylaws
- 5) Some other suggested activities of the EC would be:
 - Present to the members at the annual meeting a general statement on the year's work and the condition of the Chapter.
 - Meet regularly.
 - Review the chapter bylaws to be sure that the current operations of the Chapter are in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws.
 - Appoint from among the active members of the chapter one or more auditors to examine and certify the accounts of the Treasurer. It is recommended that neither an officer nor a member of the EC serves as an auditor.

2.4 Chapter Committees

Chapter committees consist of those elected by the Chapter and those appointed by the President or Executive Committee.

The President and the Executive Committee should consider that the longer-term strength and growth of the Chapter will be enhanced if (a) the continuity of each committee is planned for by including a variety of age and experience levels, and (b) including members from different occupations and various backgrounds. Try to assign every new chapter member to a committee right away and get them involved in the Chapter.

It is recommended that the chairs for committees accept a term of at least two years to maintain continuity of the committee activities.

Committee participation can help train and motivate all members and familiarize new members with the rewards and benefits of SFPE. Elected committees should be formed and operated as indicated in this manual or covered in the chapter bylaws. Each committee should meet immediately after its appointment to plan its activities. Committees should meet at regular intervals after that. Committee chairs should report to the Executive Committee in person when requested or through the assigned officer when requested.

2.4.0 Core Committees

Understanding the limitations on volunteer resources facing every chapter leader, the Chapter should maintain a minimum of four basic committees, Nominating Committee, Membership Committee, Program Committee, and Newsletter Committee, if possible.

2.4.0.0 Nominating Committee

- 0) Select candidates for chapter office from the chapter membership
- 1) Prepare a slate of officers for the coming year, review slate with Executive Committee
- 2) After review with the Executive Committee, contact the candidates and confirm willingness to serve in that office

2.4.0.1 Membership (or Membership Promotion) Committee

- 0) Attract qualified new members who will participate in the Society's activities, both locally and at the Society level.
- 1) Broaden the type of membership to include all grades of eligible members from all segments of industry which are concerned or connected with fire protection engineering.
- 2) Encourage advancement to a higher grade of membership when candidates' qualifications meet the specified requirements.
- 3) In conjunction with the Secretary, ascertain that all prospective chapter members are bona fide members of the Society.
- 4) Reduce the number of member resignations.
- 5) Advise the President and the Reception Committee when new members are elected or when members advance in membership grade to ensure proper recognition at the chapter meetings and publications.
- 6) Organize and execute membership drives.
- 7) Obtain and maintain an adequate supply of membership application forms and see a supply at chapter meetings.
- 8) Review each member's status to select and recommend members for honors and awards.
- 9) Encourage upgrade of student members.

2.4.0.2 Program/Education Committee

- 0) Hold the first meeting as soon as practicable after the appointment to plan the overall program and to discuss subjects and speakers. Making one member individually responsible for each meeting encourages an active sense of participation.
- 1) Contact and arrange speakers for programs and technical sessions at chapter meetings. Expenses that may be involved should be anticipated and reported to the Executive Committee to obtain authorization for reimbursement.
- 2) Determine any special requirements of the speaker, audiovisual equipment such as projectors, screen, PA systems, blackboard, chalk, pointer, lectern, etc.
- 3) Obtain a brief outline of the talk and a short description of the speaker's background for introduction purposes at the meeting. Make arrangements for the speaker's arrival at the meeting and introduce officers before the meeting and act as their host throughout the meeting. Assist the speaker with hotel accommodations and travel arrangements if necessary.
- 4) Thirty days before any meeting, give the secretary Newsletter editor a brief description of the talks to be presented for use in preparing the announcement of that meeting.
- 5) Write a letter to the speaker after the meeting, expressing appreciation for their time and effort.
- 6) Keep a record of meeting attendance for future planning.

2.4.0.3 Website/Newsletter Committee

Typically, it is a single person position acting as a Newsletter Editor, not a committee. The duties of the Newsletter Editor shall include the following:

- 0) Publish a periodic newsletter (either hardcopy or electronically) to promote the Chapter's activities.
- 1) Communicate with the chapter president, program chair, and all other chapter chairs to obtain information to include in each newsletter.
- 2) Organize and edit the information into the appropriate format.
- 3) Arrange for the printing and mailing of the newsletter. SFPE Headquarters and chapter liaisons should be included in the mailing.

2.4.1 Other Committees: If you have other willing Chapter volunteers, the Chapter may consider establishing other committees.

2.4.1.0 Audit Committee

Audit the chapter financial records at least once during the year if the Chapter completes a self-audit and does not complete an external audit.

2.4.1.1 Chapter Bylaws Committee

- 0) Maintain and monitor chapter bylaws to ensure accuracy
- 1) Recommend changes to chapter bylaws to reflect changes in chapter functions and/or to

- maintain compliance with SFPE bylaws
 - 2) Communicate current bylaw stipulations to the chapter members
- 2.4.1.2 Community Affairs Committee
Provide for and coordinate chapter activities within the community.
- 2.4.1.3 Welcoming Committee
- 0) Welcome and introduce new members to the chapter officers and committee chairs
 - 1) Manage any chapter activity or response to personal and professional events in members' lives.
- 2.4.1.4 Long-Range Planning Committee
Develop a long-range strategic plan to enhance the ability of the chapter leadership to serve its members
- 2.4.1.5 Student Activities Committee
- 0) Act as liaison between the chapter and area educational institutions.
 - 1) Develop and coordinate scholarships and other student incentive awards.
 - 2) Encourage the formation and continuing operation of student engineering organizations such as SFPE Student chapters
 - 3) Provide information on present and future industry manpower needs at both faculty and student levels through counseling, programs, group discussion, etc.
 - 4) Promote credit courses in the fields of fire protection engineering at universities, colleges, technical institutes, and junior colleges.
 - 5) Provide speakers to college and high school groups.
 - 6) Sponsor awards at high school science fairs.
 - 7) Provide individual counseling to promote fire protection engineering fields of interest to college students.
- 2.4.1.6 Technical and Government Activities Committee
- 0) Coordinate dissemination of technical information in the Chapter's geographic area.
 - 1) Provide input to, and maintain liaisons with local, provincial, and state governments on technical issues.
 - 2) Promote the appointment of chapter members to local, provincial, and state governmental advisor bodies.
 - 3) Keep the Chapter informed on governmental activities on technical issues related to fire protection engineering.
 - 4) Investigate government-related matters as may be referred by the Chapter's President or Executive Committee.
 - 5) When the Chapter has been requested by a governmental body to assist in the writing or development of a regulation, a code, an ordinance or law, or to participate as a member of an advisory group to a government agency, it may do so when approved by the SFPE Board of Directors, provided such activity:
 - Does not conflict with Society or chapter bylaws.
 - Does not conflict with Society publications.
 - Involves technical aspects only and not political aspects.
 - Does not involve lobbying.
 - Does not take a position contrary to the position of the Society HQ
 - 6) Assist the Chapter Publicity Committee in contacting local news media and chapter publications and offering to provide necessary information and material.
 - 7) Be the contact point for outreach to other Societies and Organizations
 - 8) Assist the Chapter Historian in maintaining a history of the Chapter's technical governmental activities.
 - 9) Serve as the communication network between the chapter and SFPE Headquarters regarding governmental affairs and activities
 - 10) Coordinate legislative actions involving local, state, regional, and national issues impacting the fire protection engineering profession
 - 11) Provide input on codes, standards, technical positions, federal laws, and regulations on which SFPE HQ is proposing to comment.
- 2.4.1.7 Finance Committee:

- 0) Formulate an annual budget.
 - 1) Arrange with the Chapter Programs Committee for obtaining funds necessary to defray the expenses of any special events or endeavors the Chapter may be authorized to undertake.
 - 2) Attend to any other financial matters referred by the President or Executive Committee
- 2.4.1.8 Historical Committee and/or Chapter Historian: The chair should be a member who is interested in collecting historical data.
- 0) Request members to write their versions of the chapter history and its progress.
 - 1) Take pictures of chapter functions for inclusion in records and programs.
 - 2) Try to get a member to furnish the library space for artifacts and historical materials for chapter use.
 - 3) Prepare/update chapter history.
- 2.4.1.9 Awards Committee
The Honors and Awards Committee should include the chair and at least two additional members. The duties of this committee are as follows:
- 0) Promote the recognition of outstanding chapter members within the Chapter, Society, associated societies, and the community.
 - 1) Submit the names of chapter members to SFPE and other organizations for honors and awards given by SFPE and the other organizations.
- 2.4.1.10 Public Awareness Committee: The duties of this committee are as follows:
- 0) Procure biographical sketches of speakers, prominent guests, and officers who may attend a chapter meeting as a basis for preparing publicity.
 - 1) Obtain publicity in the local press, radio and TV stations, and elsewhere on activities of the Chapter and publicize important meetings with SFPE. Prepare and distribute press releases and public service announcements on chapter activities to the local media
- 2.4.1.11 Reception/Attendance Committee
- 0) Greet all members and visitors and introduce them to other members.
 - 1) Ensure members and guests have name badges.
 - 2) Request all visitors to fill out an information card designating name, home and business addresses, telephone number, FAX and Email address, and name of the member who has invited them to the meeting. These cards will be turned over to the Membership Promotion Committee for follow-up.
 - 3) Keep a record of all members and guests attending the meeting and submit a report to the Secretary and the Membership Committee Chair.
 - 4) Publicly introduce visitors.
 - 5) Foster increased member participation in chapter affairs, particularly at chapter meetings.
 - 6) Determine why members are not attending meetings; such information should be brought to the attention of the chapter officers.
- 2.5.2.13 Scholarship Committee
- 1) Coordinate activities such as golf tournaments, raffles at chapter meetings, etc., aimed at raising scholarship funds.
 - 2) Review all scholarship award applications and make recommendations on those Individuals to receive scholarship awards.
 - 3) In concert with the Treasurer, fiscally manage the monies within the overall scholarship fund.

2.6 Reporting requirements

2.6.1 Change of Chapter Officers report

Following each election cycle, Chapter leaders (typically the immediate past president) complete an electronic Change of Chapter Officers Report form and submit it to the SFPE headquarters office. This form advises headquarters staff of any leadership changes for the Chapter and allows for the SFPE website and other contact and distribution lists to be updated. Completing this form is essential to ensure accurate and timely communications between Society, Chapter Leaders, and membership at large. [Change of chapter officers form link](#) (login required)

2.6.2 Preparing Annual Chapter Evaluation Reports (ACE)

Reporting is an essential element of transparent and effective governance. Furthermore, reporting is how we gather quantitative information regarding Society and Chapter activities to understand our past successes, guide future efforts, and help others to recognize the value of membership and supporting SFPE. All chapters are required to submit the Annual Chapter Evaluation (ACE) Report. Engineering professionals appreciate the value of reliable data and science-based management. Reports are typically due at the beginning of April. SFPE uses an [online reporting system](#). Each Chapter receives an automated copy of the submission for their records.

Submitted ACE reports are verified by the Awards Subcommittee, which determines ACE Awards.

Section 3. Chapter Meetings and Activities

3.0 Effective Chapter Meetings

There isn't one formula for chapter meetings. Some chapters hold their meetings at the same time, on the same day each month, so members become accustomed to a particular day. Others find that they reach different chapter members by alternating day and evening meetings. Ask your members what will work best for them. Meeting in person certainly brings in special value; however, it is advisable to schedule some meetings in a virtual format in today's reality. There are many benefits to such meetings, like cost/time savings less travel time for busy families, to name a few.

The primary chapter activity is the meeting. It is the obligation of the officers and the committee members in charge to make the meetings interesting and instructive to all areas of membership interest and to make prospects, guests, and members feel welcome and "at home."

The number of meetings scheduled will vary.

Persons attend meetings for one or more of the following reasons:

- 1) To receive and transmit technical information.
- 2) For better acquaintance among members and others engaged in the same fields.
- 3) Fellowship and enjoyment.
- 4) To develop knowledge of the problems encountered in the industry.

A successful meeting is designed to provide opportunities for the maximum amount of these four things.

3.0.1 Suggestions for Chapter Meetings

- 0) The business meeting should be brief, motions clearly stated, and actions decisive.
- 1) The meeting place and programs should be carefully selected, and meetings should begin and end on schedule.
- 2) Opportunity to promote benefits of SFPE membership and belonging to a larger community

3.1 Speakers and Subjects for Chapter Meetings

The selection of good speakers and appropriate subjects for meetings is the most important single responsibility in a chapter because attendance depends upon the degree of excellence of the speakers and their subjects. Therefore, extreme care should be used in selecting speakers and subjects, which will appeal to the greatest percentage of the membership. The following procedure has produced satisfactory results:

- 0) Poll the members to find out which subjects will be of interest to the greatest number. The form, which is mailed to them may contain as many subjects as deemed desirable.
- 1) When the results of the membership poll indicate the preferred subjects, the Chapter Programs Committee should start as soon as possible to line up suitable speakers for the following year, with emphasis on speakers in the area. Out-of-town speakers are sometimes desirable, but there is often a tendency to overlook local speakers outside and from within the membership.
- 2) A panel of two or more people on a selected subject is often very effective but should be adequately prepared in advance.
- 3) If practicable, all of the meetings during the year should be arranged to be published in the chapter newsletter.
- 4) Chapters in close proximity can consult with each other to coordinate the exchange of speakers or to occasionally hold joint meetings
- 5) Tours of facilities with some pertinent fire protection interest may be of interest to members.
- 6) Host a new technology night where a few manufacturers are invited to present for a few minutes on a new technology they offer and allow the audience to ask questions. Before or after the event, allow the manufacturers to exhibit their new technology.
- 7) Alternate the focus of the meeting to increase the number of attendees. A speaker on fire alarms is likely to have several installers and manufacturers, while a presentation on modeling would be attended by another group of individuals.

Section 4. Membership

4.0 General

The Membership (or Membership Promotion) Committee of the Chapter is charged with promoting increased membership enrollment and the upgrading of members.

The following suggestions are made to help in the recruitment of potential members:

- 0) Develop a mentor program in which the Chapter provides a mentor for each candidate to:
 - 1) Introduce the candidate to the chapter membership.
 - 2) Provide information on chapter activities and meeting time.
 - 3.) Arrange transportation.
 - 4) Encourage involvement in chapter programs.
 - 5) Keep the Chapter informed on the candidate's progress.
- 1) Invite and encourage graduating students to become SFPE members.

4.1 The Process of Becoming a Member

4.1.0 Application for Membership

Membership applications can be made online [at www.sfpe.org](http://www.sfpe.org).

4.1.1 Qualifications Board

If a member chooses to upgrade to Professional Member Grade, all data indicated on the form must be supplied. Together with information submitted by the applicant's references, these facts comprise the basis upon which the Qualifications Board recommends a proper grade of membership to the Board of Directors.

4.2 Treatment of New Members

New applicants or new members are often overlooked during the period of application processing or the first few months of membership. It is essential that these individuals be made welcome and, if possible, given a part in the chapter activities. The following suggestions are made to help hold the interest of a new member:

- 0) Add name on mailing list immediately upon receipt of application.
- 1) Set up installation procedure for induction into Chapter. Consider the presentation of the SFPE pin, along with the membership certificate.
- 2) Give publicity in chapter publication immediately upon election.
- 3) Make it a policy to immediately assign the member to a committee.
- 4) Introduce to the members at the first chapter meeting following the election.

4.3 Reinstatement

A former member who has resigned or has been dropped from membership may apply for reinstatement in the grade to which they formerly were assigned by filling out a new application, indicating on the face of the form that application is being made for reinstatement. Members may be reinstated by paying the dues for which they are in arrears, thus maintaining their seniority rights.

4.4.1 Renewal of membership

Chapters are responsible for sending out their own renewal invoices and renewal reminders. It is recommended that members receive at least three reminders before being dropped to non-member status. Please refer to the renewal reminder templates attached to this document.

4.4 Advancement to Higher Grade

Application for advancement is made by the use of the regular application blank. There is no fee required. Pertinent data concerning the applicant's qualifications, particularly the qualifications that have been acquired since the member's original application was filed, is required. This is the information the SFPE Qualification Board uses for final determination. Each member should be encouraged to advance to the highest grade attainable to receive the greatest benefit from and be able to provide the most input into the functioning of the Chapter and Society.

4.5 Chapter Membership Requirements

There are different requirements for maintaining membership depending on the chapter type.

Networking chapters are subsidiaries of SFPE, and therefore all SFPE members residing within a networking chapter boundary are automatically considered members of that Chapter. There are no additional chapter dues.

Incorporated chapters must maintain the dual membership requirement as defined by SFPE (either 10% of paid chapter members hold SFPE Professional Member Grade or higher, **OR** 20% are SFPE members). Chapters set up their dues structure.

Affiliated Chapters must maintain three dual memberships at all times. Chapters set up their own dues structure.

Section 5. Chapter Finances

5.0 Bank Accounts

Each Chapter, except Networking, should set up checking and/or savings accounts in the Chapter name. Chapter funds must never be deposited in an individual officer's account

Recommended signers on each bank account are the chapter president and Treasurer. You can request your bank to send account statements to the Treasurer and President

5.1 Dues Revenues

Chapters are responsible for their own dues collection.

5.2 Processing Cash Receipts and Disbursements

Chapter records are generally maintained on a "cash basis," which means that money received by the Chapter is considered a Cash Receipt only when deposited in the bank. Money spent is viewed as a Cash Disbursement when the check is written. All cash receipts should be recorded and deposited as soon as possible, and all expenditures should be recorded when they are made. The Chapter records should be balanced periodically and reconciled with the bank balance.

5.2.0 Cash Receipts: All funds (checks and cash) received by the Chapter should be deposited as soon as possible. All checks should be made payable to the Chapter. **NEVER accept a check made payable to an individual Chapter officer.**

5.2.1 Cash Disbursements: It is recommended that the Chapter establish and follow a formal, written policy for making cash disbursements. A good practice is to have all requests for payment (invoices and check request/expense reimbursement forms) approved by a chapter officer other than the Treasurer. Once the disbursement is approved, the Treasurer can write the check. Debit Cards: Some Chapters have debit cards. The Treasurer uses this to pay for online services that only accept credit cards. In some cases, the Board may approve payment of events through this method. This allows for prompt payment to the Chapter vendors to avoid late fees.

5.3 Financial Reporting

5.3.0 The Chapter Treasurer is responsible for developing and following a system of financial management that supports the main function of the position. The cash method of accounting is acceptable, as is the accrual method (which adheres to generally accepted accounting principles - GAAP), whereby income and expense items are recognized as earned or incurred, even though they may not yet have been received or paid in cash. There are many small accounting packages

and online subscription-based systems that will track this information quite easily for the Treasurer under either accounting basis. SFPE recommends Club Express.

5.3.1 Monthly Financial Reports

It is recommended that the Treasurer submit a monthly financial statement to the Chapter Executive Committee. Comparing it to the annual budget is another useful benchmark.

5.4 Auditing

5.4.0 Transfer of Financial Records from Treasurer to Treasurer

Before "handing over the reins," the outgoing Treasurer should complete the following:

***Last month's monthly financial report
Reconciliation of all bank accounts
Annual Financial Report***

All financial records should be given to the incoming chapter treasurer when these tasks are completed. It is recommended that the Chapter have its financial records audited annually even if there is no change in treasurers. This audit can be done by an audit committee appointed by the Chapter Executive Committee or an independent accounting firm.

5.4.1 Chapter Self Audit

The chapter president should appoint an audit committee from chapter members for chapters choosing to self-audit. The purpose of an audit is to express an opinion on the accuracy of the financial records/statements. It is recommended that the audit committee meet with both the outgoing and incoming treasurers and review the Chapter's financial records.

The following are some suggestions for questions to ask and things to check.

- 0) Are the bank statements reconciled, and do they reconcile to the cash accounts? Select one or two months and ensure all deposits in the financial records show up on the bank statement and all canceled checks returned with the bank statement are recorded in the financial records.
- 1) Randomly select 23 deposits and 1012 checks (more or less depending on your chapter size) and make sure they have proper supporting documentation. If your Chapter has a formal, written policy for cash disbursements, verify that the cash disbursements processed follow this policy.
- 2) Compare the June financial report's year-to-date amounts (these are the amounts that will be presented on the Annual Financial Report submitted to SFPE Headquarters) to the financial records to make sure they agree.
- 3) Verify that the financial report balances.

5.4.2 Independent Audit

The Chapter President may wish to engage an independent accounting firm to audit/review the Chapter's financial records. Your independent accountant should be able to complete any necessary tax forms. When selecting an independent accounting firm, you want to keep two things in mind:

- 0) It is recommended that the accounting firm selected have some experience in nonprofit accounting since the filing rules for nonprofit organizations are very different from those for-profit organizations.
- 1) It is good to agree to the fee upfront before the audit or tax preparation is done.

5.5 Non-US Chapter Taxes

- 5.5.0.0 Non-US Chapters are responsible for following their local government guidelines for filing taxes and maintaining the non-profit status.
- 5.5.0.1 SFPE will aid the non-US Chapters with certifying or notarizing documents proving the Chapter's non-profit status with SFPE.

5.5.0.2 **Employer Identification Number: US Incorporated Chapters Only**

The Employer Identification Number (EIN) is merely a "Social Security" number for identification purposes and should not be confused with an exemption. The two are separate and distinct. It is advisable that all incorporated chapters obtain EINs, which will allow them to open a checking account under Chapter's name. The process is free. This service is provided free of charge by IRS. **Do not** use web services that charge fees for EIN. The SFPE headquarters office can assist new Chapters in obtaining EINs as needed. To apply for EIN, follow this link: <https://sa.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp>. All chapters must have an EIN, whether filing under Group or individual exemption status. Should you need additional information on EIN filing, contact the IRS or SFPE Headquarters.

5.5.1 General Record Keeping Recommendations.

To avoid problems all chapters should keep in a safe place all necessary documents relating to chapter financial and program activities. These should include (retain for the time in parentheses):

1. Bank statements (permanent)
2. A book of minutes (permanent)
3. Canceled checks (7 years)
4. The Internal Revenue Service exemption letter (permanent)
5. The Articles of Incorporation (if Chapter is Inc.) (permanent)
6. Supporting data for income and expenses (7 years)
7. Contracts, leases, etc. (for the life of agreement)
8. Annual Financial Report and/or Audit Report (permanent)
9. All types of tax returns (permanent)

5.6 Guidelines for Filing Tax Returns for USA Incorporated Chapters

All Incorporated Chapters within the U.S. must obtain a federal tax-exempt determination letter. A copy of the letter should be forwarded to SFPE for record keeping.

5.6.1 Most organizations exempt from income tax must file an annual information return (Form 990 or 990-EZ) or submit an annual electronic notice (Form 990-N), depending upon the organization's gross receipts and total assets. Form 990 is an annual information return required to be filed with the IRS by organizations exempt from income tax under section 501(a) and certain other entities. Form 990 reports certain gross income, receipts, and disbursement activities and additional information about the organization. This form and how the public perceives an organization are available. Detailed filing can be found on the IRS website (referenced using the following link): <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement-for-small-exempt-organizations-form-990-n-e-postcard>

5.6.2 Reinstatement of tax-exempt status. If a chapter has had its tax-exempt status automatically revoked and wishes to have that status reinstated, it must apply for exemption and pay the appropriate user fee, even if it was not required to apply for exempt status initially. Details and proper applications can be found on the IRS website; please follow this link: [Tax-exempt reinstatement](#).

5.6.3 All tax-exempt organizations must make available for public inspection a copy of the

organization's application for federal tax exemption and copies of any relevant documents sent to or received from the IRS. (IRS Notice 88-120). Some nonprofits publish Form 990 on the organization's website to address the administrative challenges for public inspection. Organizations like Guidestar privately collect and publish this information on their website.

- 5.6.4 Timetable for filing Internal Revenue Service and Supplemental Forms: For a fiscal year from July 1 and June 30 , November 15 is the deadline for filing Internal Revenue Service Forms 990N. Each Chapter may have a different fiscal year.

Section 6. Policies Affecting Chapters

6.0 Dues Invoicing

SFPE Headquarters mails invoices for Society dues to all members prior to each individual member's anniversary date, rather than on a single, common calendar date.

The anniversary billing cycle enables SFPE to process members' dues faster because payments arrive at Headquarters evenly throughout the year. In addition, Society benefits from this steady cash flow over 12 months. The anniversary billing cycle ensures that all new members are billed for one full year. Members prepay their Society dues.

6.1 Membership Mailing List Rental Policy

In general, SFPE's mailing list is available to nonprofit and profit-making organizations or individuals for educational and/or informational purposes that serve or are compatible with the purposes of the Society. You are urged to tailor your Chapter's policy to that of SFPE.

While SFPE membership lists are not available to companies for the purpose of employment search, your own Chapter's policy in that respect is open to your individual discretion.

6.1.0 Chapter Mailing List Rental Policy

The Board of Directors has approved a policy allowing chapters to rent their mailing lists to outside organizations. If your Chapter does not wish to take this responsibility, refer those interested to the SFPE Headquarters.

Lists rented out by chapters must be produced by the chapters themselves. Chapters may not rent any lists created by Headquarters for chapter use.

Chapters may develop their own policies, requirements, and charges for such rental. However, it must be understood that income from mailing list rental is considered Unrelated Business Income (UBI) by the IRS. If any Chapter's Unrelated Business Income (from advertising, mailing list rental, etc.) in a particular year exceeds \$1,000, form 990-T must be filed with the IRS.

Tips for developing a chapter policy:

- 0) List Rental – by using mailing labels, users can only use them once.
- 1) You should request potential list users to sign a List Rental Agreement. A sample rental agreement is as follows:

"The one-time (only) use of this list shall be limited solely and exclusively to the agreed-upon mailing as submitted to the Chapter Executive Committee for prior approval. I understand and agree that this is to be used one time only, and guarantee that the List Renter will not duplicate or retain in any form whatsoever all or any portion of the said mailing list, nor shall the List Renter permit any third party to do so. Absolutely no reference will be made to SFPE in any material sent. Sample mailing pieces will be submitted for approval based on the material's relation to the fire protection engineering profession and competitive SFPE offerings. Furthermore, it is clearly understood that SFPE in no way endorses any product or service by renting this list. This agreement includes this rental and covers all subsequent rentals."

- 2) You may require that a sample mailing piece be approved by your Chapter's designated representative or Executive Committee in advance of list rental.
- 3) Several chapter members should be aware of the preapproved printed matter so the use of the list for other purposes can be spotted immediately.
- 4) You may want to provide your chapter members with the option of having their names removed from your list if they do not desire to receive such mail.

6.2 Policy on Representation of SFPE

- 6.2.0 Chapters by nature are considered an extension of the Society and as such must follow SFPE's current Standing Rules. Section T of the Standing Rules contains all the details and requirements that must be followed when representing SFPE or SFPE Chapter outside of Society: [follow this link](#).
- 6.2.1 Since many issues concerning our profession are international in scope and since the SFPE's image and influence are affected significantly by how it addresses itself to these issues, representation of SFPE and commitments on behalf of SFPE need to be carefully carried out.

No member may speak officially on behalf of the Society without the approval of the SFPE Board of Directors. In general, SFPE representatives on technical committees can only be members of SFPE staff.

Society Headquarters should clarify the application of these policies in specific situations.

Chapters shall not, directly or indirectly, make statements or take positions on behalf of the Society or other Chapters. Chapters are encouraged to work with the affected Chapters to reach consensus and present one unified position for all the Chapters of a state when making statements or issuing positions.

All Chapters are encouraged to appoint a Governmental Affairs Committee to safeguard the interests of the Chapter in the governmental affairs arena. The committee can monitor State Net mailings, assist the Chapter in governmental affairs, and encourage legislative/regulatory initiatives such as professional registration.

Each Chapter should develop a system of contacts and sources of information to obtain information on legislation/regulations which could impact the profession.

Chapters should only participate in legislative/regulatory proposals which impact them individually or as a profession.

6.3 SFPE Identity

- 6.3.0 [SFPE Standing Rules](#): Branding & Use of Insignia and Name of SFPE states: Use of the Society letterhead or official insignia is expressly prohibited for any purpose other than official business or events of the Society or its chapters, including student chapters; Chapter Foundations; regional groups; and Corporate 100 members. Society committees and Sections shall use the standard Society letterhead as authorized by the Society. Use of the SFPE insignia and/or name by any other company, organization, or entity, without the prior written permission of the Board of Directors has expressly prohibited Society committees, and sections shall use the standard Society letterhead as authorized by the Society. Color or black and white reproductions of the insignia or official letterhead should be good facsimiles of the master artwork authorized by the Society. Use of the insignia should be in good taste and limited to letterheads, brochures, certificates and ceremonial applications connected with sanctioned Society or chapter activities." Please refer to the [SFPE website](#) for additional information.

6.4 Policy on Sexual Harassment

For the most recent policy, please refer to the [SFPE website](#)

6.5 Chapter Liaison (Chapter Friends, Chapter Supporters)

Chapters are encouraged to maintain active liaison with persons in groups in related fields of endeavor or interest within their respective geographical areas. Such persons should be encouraged to apply for Society membership.

Chapters may accept support and encouragement from interested persons who are not members

of the Society, send them regular chapter publications, and routinely invite them to their chapter meetings. These persons may not be referred to as members of the Chapter or the Society and shall not refer to an affiliation with SFPE or its chapters in any advertising, letterheads, business cards, or similar published material. The chapters may charge an annual handling and mailing fee at their discretion."

APPENDIX A

SFPE Chapter Public Relations Guide

SFPE members have consistently identified increased recognition of our profession as a high priority for SFPE. In response, the SFPE formed a Public Awareness Committee, formulating action plans to increase our visibility with the general public.

Chapter leaders are encouraged to support this effort at the local level and serve as a media contact within your region for the profession. Public relations (PR) is one of the best and most cost-effective ways to get our messages out to the public. For that reason, it is important to understand how we can use the media to our advantage.

This document guides how to prepare when talking with the media to assist our Chapters. It describes a) the types of media contacts that may be encountered, b) how to prepare for an interview, and c) some suggested "Do's and Don'ts."

In addition, this document provides insight on how to develop a message. This section lists three of SFPE's public awareness goals and the corresponding messages that the Public Awareness Committee developed. The purpose of the first goal is to inform the general public about the risk of fire and how fire protection engineers can reduce this risk. The second goal is to inform prospective college students and their parents that fire protection engineering is a rewarding career. The third aims to inform design professionals (i.e., architects, engineers, fire marshals, code enforcement, etc.) about the benefits of using fire protection engineers to design safe buildings. For each goal, our Public Awareness Committee has drafted concise messages that are understandable to the public, interesting to the media, and supportive of our goals. When talking to the media, please employ these messages in your interview.

Our Chapter leadership is encouraged to contact your local media outlets and tell them that fire protection engineers can assist them. If you need additional assistance or have any questions, please contact SFPE Headquarters.

Tips for Talking to the Media

Why Talk to the Media?

Public Relations is one of the best and most cost-effective ways to get our message out to the public. Good PR is free advertising for our profession; the key is to know how to use the media to your advantage. The following pages provide you with tips on talking to the media.

Media Categories:

Print—Includes daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, trade publications, and the Internet. Keep in mind that print reporters will often take advantage of the seemingly conversational approach and keep you talking for hours on end. Make sure you set guidelines for the interview in advance. Determine who will speak for your organization, on what issues, and how long. Newspaper deadlines are typically in the afternoon. As a result, it is best to reach reporters in the morning unless otherwise requested. Please note that the placement of a story will reach different audiences. Make sure you know in advance where the story will run and who your audience is.

Television—Includes broadcast, local access, and cable channels. Television might be the most challenging category because of its brevity, complexity, and reach. Interviews are often edited down to "sound bites," which are frequently only a few seconds long. The television medium requires the most practice and preparation to use effectively. Television reporters often have morning and evening deadlines, so it is best to reach reporters between 10:00 am-2:00 pm, unless otherwise requested.

Radio—Includes AM and FM stations. Radio interviews offer an opportunity to narrowly focus your message on a specific demographic or a niche audience, depending on the station you're on. Deadlines vary depending on the time of the newscast. It is best to reach reporters immediately after their program goes off the air.

Remember, all newsworthy information has a very short life span. Your story for both electronic and print

media should be timely and targeted to your key audiences.

Interview Formats:

Reaction Statements are used when the media calls and asks for a comment. Ask the reporter how the interview will be used, who else is being interviewed, and the deadline. Tell the reporter you need time to formulate your statement and call back within an agreed-upon time.

One-On-One Interviews with reporters can range from a few minutes to much longer. They are generally set up in advance and can be over the phone or in person. Since they are planned in advance, you will have time to prepare for the interview, determine your key messages, and provide the reporter with background information on the key issues.

Panel Interviews are most frequently used to discuss hot topics and present various points of view on an issue. Think of *Meet the Press* or the *Chris Mathews Show*.

Call-In Shows offer you a great opportunity to get your message across. Radio call-in shows can be done over the phone or in person. A key point in preparing for a call-in show is anticipating possible questions and preparing your answers in advance.

How to Prepare:

Once you, or your spokesperson, have agreed to be interviewed, it is critical to prepare for the interview. First, determine the interview format and find out all you can about the reporter and the medium. For example, is the reporter from a local paper with a reputation for sensationalizing the news? Or are you doing a live TV interview with a reporter who has a reputation for asking hard-hitting questions? When preparing, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is your audience?
- What type of media is it?
- Has anyone else in the industry been approached for their opinion?
- Is the reporter willing to briefly outline their questions in advance?
- What is the reporter's deadline?
- What is the interviewer's perspective on the story?
- How long will the interview be?
- How will it be conducted? (In-person, over the phone, etc.)
- Will the interview be taped or edited? Or will it be a live interview?

Next, be sure to outline your goals and clearly lay out what you hope to gain from the interview.

- Are you looking to set the record straight?
- Act as an expert to shed light on a situation?
- Serving to answer questions in a crisis situation?
- Seeking to promote your organization's point of view on a particular issue?

Developing Your Message: Develop two or three key messages you want to communicate during your interview. Your key messages should communicate the points you want the audience to know about your organization and fire safety issues facing the community.

For example:

- It is critical for fire protection engineers to be involved at the beginning stages of designing a new building to ensure the safety of the occupants.
- Fire Protection Engineering is a rewarding career.

Having specific messages outlined will help you control the interview and avoid being misquoted or "taken out of context."

When preparing your answers to, be sure to include "sound-bite statements." For example:

- Fire protection engineers are a valuable and necessary part of any building construction team

Practice:

Once you have selected your message and determined the questions you are likely to be asked during the interview; practice answering the questions and weaving in your message points. The best way to do this is to find someone to role-play the interview and ask you the tough questions. This will allow you to practice answering difficult questions and help you stay poised during the actual interview. Role-playing will also help you cut down on interview jitters and help you deliver your key messages more naturally. The more comfortable you are with the subject matter, the more relaxed and focused you'll be during the actual interview.

Do's and Don'ts:

Do's

- When an interviewer asks a question that strays from your message, use a "bridge" to get back on track with the points you are looking to make.
- If you get stuck during an interview, remember that it's perfectly acceptable to tell a reporter, "I'm not prepared to answer your questions at this time, but I will get back to you with an answer before your deadline."
- When closing the interview, always ask when the piece is likely to appear in the press.
- Always dress appropriately for television interviews. Keep in mind that you are looking to project a cool, confident, and professional image.

Don'ts

- Don't say anything to a reporter you wouldn't want to be printed or aired. There is no such thing as "*off the record*."
- Don't fudge facts or use statistics you are not absolutely sure about.
- Don't be rushed into giving an answer. Just pause, think and then answer. It is better to give a well-thought-out answer than say something untrue or damaging.
- Don't feel obliged to answer questions you don't want to address. Say instead, "The real issue is..." and return to your preplanned message points.
- Don't use professional jargon. Keep your message simple. Remember, you are an expert in the area of fire protection engineering, but your audience most likely is not.
- Don't say "no comment." If you haven't yet reviewed all of the information or haven't yet developed your message, let the reporter know that you will have a comment for them just as soon as you've had a chance to review all of the facts. Then make sure you follow up with the reporter in a timely manner.
- Don't ever attack the media. The media can hurt you more than you can hurt them.