



## City Position on Civil Service & Collective Bargaining

The Frisco Fire Fighters Association (IAFF Local 3732) is circulating two petitions, asking Frisco voters to support putting Civil Service and Collective Bargaining on a future ballot, effectively formalizing the unionization of the Frisco Fire Department. The City believes that these efforts are unnecessary.

The Fire Fighters Union is criticizing the City of Frisco's commitment to public safety. Published claims by the Union are false.

**Union Claim:** *"Your firefighters need to have a seat at the table to ensure that policy makers and city leaders invest in and prioritize public safety..."*

### **City of Frisco Response: 'Seat at the table'**

Frisco firefighters play an integral role in a variety of committees and focus groups that directly impact our department's decisions and policies. This participation reflects the City of Frisco's commitment to involving those on the front lines in shaping the work they do. At the Fire Department level, there are over 200 seats filled by Fire Department employees on 16 different committees/groups. Examples of these committees/groups are:

- **Engine / Truck / Rescue Focus Groups** - provides insight, influence on vehicle, apparatus functionality.
- **Promotional Process Review Group** - ensures promotional processes are fair, transparent.
- **Peer Support Group** - provides emotional and mental health support, commitment to firefighter well-being.
- **Peer Fitness Trainers Group** - ensures resources to maintain physical health, readiness.
- **Health & Safety Focus Group** - maintains and improves safety standards and health protocols.
- **Driver / Operator Focus Group** - provides insights, recommendations on vehicular operations.
- **EMS Quality Assurance Committee** - ensures highest standards for EMS based on real world experiences.
- **Awards / Ceremonies Focus Groups** - organizes celebrations of team achievements.

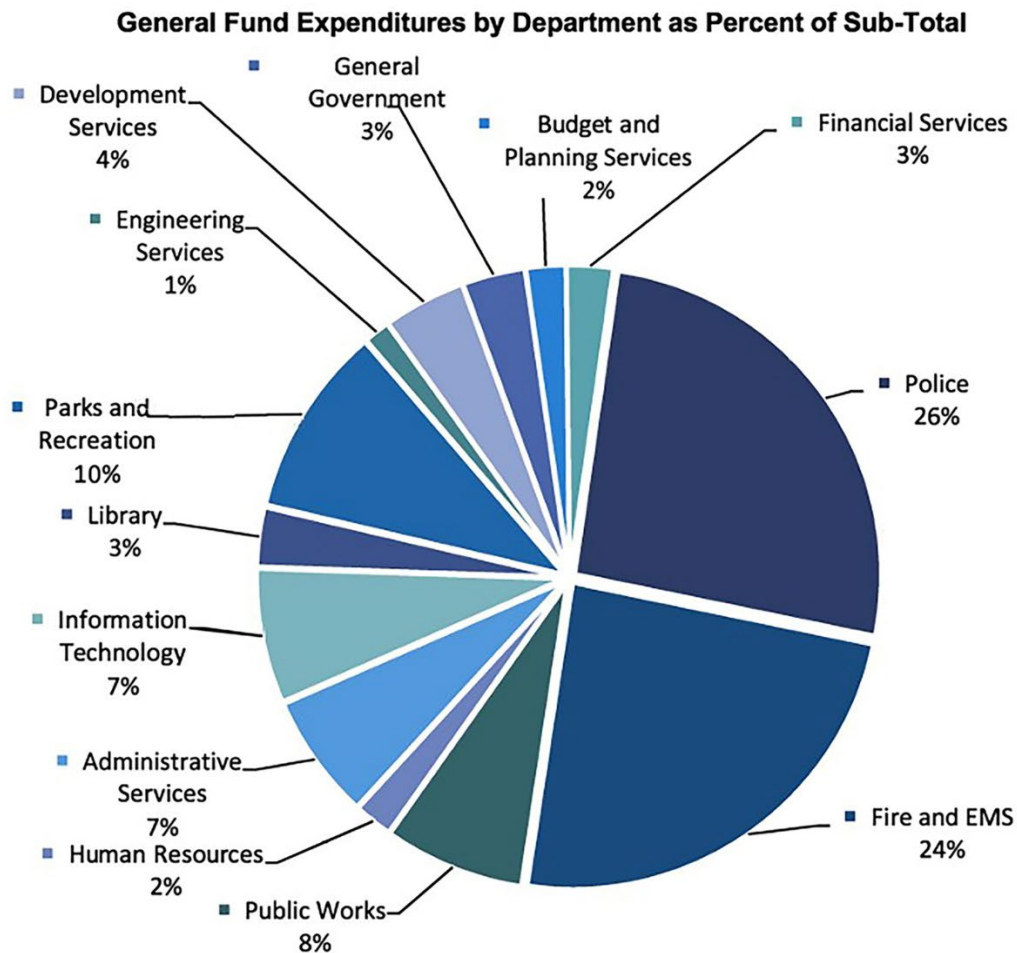
Moreover, Firefighters, individually and collectively, have a standing invitation to meet with the Fire Chief and City Manager on any issues of concern.

### City of Frisco Response: Investment

City Councils, past and present, have a history of investing in -- and prioritizing public safety. In fact, since 2004, the City of Frisco has had Public Health and Safety listed as a Strategic Focus Area.

**About half of the city's General Fund (property tax supported) budget is dedicated to public safety each fiscal year.**

- This involves significant investment in both personnel and equipment for both the police and fire departments. For example, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 the General Fund operating expenditures are budgeted at \$229.5 million. Police Department expenditures total \$56.3 million. Fire Department expenditures total \$52.4 million.
- In FY2023, the City committed a total of \$108.7 million for public safety for personnel and equipment. The City spends more annually on Fire and EMS Operations than Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and the Frisco Public Library combined. See the chart below See chart below for break out of General Fund expenditures by department as presented on page 29 of the [FY23 Citizen Budget in Brief \(PDF\)](#).



Currently, the Frisco Fire Department operates nine fire stations; however, the City of Frisco anticipates 14 stations at build out.

**As part of the last two bond programs, Frisco voters approved bonds for several public safety facilities and new equipment. Examples include approximately \$38.5 million for a Public Safety Training Center and approximately \$36 million for two new fire stations.**

**Phase I of the two-story Public Safety Training Center** opened in 2019, adjacent to Frisco Fire Station 9. Features include:

- a four-story, live-fire training structure;
- confined space/trench rescue props to train on rescue scenarios;
- a 300-foot by 600-foot driving pad;
- an indoor and outdoor classroom space;
- a vehicle extrication pad.

**Fire Station 10** is currently in the final stages of design and construction is scheduled to start fall of 2023.

**Fire Station 11**, as well as the **remodel of existing fire stations**, were approved by Frisco voters as part of recent bond elections.

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**Union Claim:** *"For too long, our community has been at needless risk, with substandard policies, safety and frankly not enough firefighters on duty to save lives and protect property."*

**City of Frisco Response: Safety Standards and Service Delivery**

The Frisco Firefighters Association has raised concerns about the safety of our community. However, it's important to base discussions on facts and evidence.

- Out of over 27,000 fire departments in the United States, the Frisco Fire Department is one of only 116 to have international accreditation and receive a Class 1 Public Protection Classification (ISO 1). This puts the Frisco Fire Department in the top 0.4% of fire departments in the nation for delivering excellent fire and emergency services.
- In Texas, out of more than 1,500 fire departments, the Frisco Fire Department is one of only eight to have international accreditation and to receive a Class 1 Public Protection Classification (ISO 1). This places the Frisco Fire Department in the top 0.6% of fire departments in Texas.

The following information further explains how international accreditation and the ISO 1 rating demonstrates the Frisco Fire Department's ability to deliver superior fire and emergency services to the Frisco community.

## International Accreditation:

- The Frisco Fire Department is internationally accredited by the [Commission on Fire Accreditation International \(CFAI\)](#).
- The CFAI is dedicated to promoting excellence in fire and emergency service agencies worldwide. Its primary purpose is to establish and maintain a voluntary accreditation program that recognizes fire departments and agencies that meet high standards of professional performance. The accreditation process involves a comprehensive evaluation of an agency's policies, procedures, and performance to ensure it adheres to industry best practices and is capable of providing effective emergency services to their communities. By pursuing accreditation, fire departments enhance their capabilities, improve their management practices, and ultimately provide better protection and services to the public they serve.
- The Frisco Fire Department first achieved accreditation in 2018, which is valid for five years. The department has recently completed the reaccreditation process and will be officially awarded reaccreditation by the CFAI in August of this year. The CFAI process involves an independent review of the department's operations, procedures, and policies. The auditors provided high praise and positive feedback on the Frisco Fire Department's operations and leadership during the recent reaccreditation evaluation. Examples of their comments include but are not limited to:
  - "Your members (firefighters) should be proud of their department and what you have going on here."
  - "It is easy to tell you to have great programs and equipment here."
  - "You are definitely on the leading edge of many fire service priorities."
  - "You are very fortunate to have the tools and resources you have; this isn't common with most fire departments."
  - "I can tell that continuous improvement is ingrained into the organization at every level."
  - "It's one thing to say that you have a good department, but this accreditation by an independent agency provides the validation that you are a great department!"

## **ISO 1 Rating:**

- An ISO rating is an objective measure of a fire department's ability to serve its community. ISO (Insurance Services Office) creates ratings for fire departments and their surrounding communities, which calculate how well-equipped fire departments are to put out fires in our community. The score looks at areas such as emergency communications, water supply and pressure, firefighter training, and much more. A fire department is given a score between 1 and 10, with lower numbers indicating a better score. High ISO scores can increase home insurance rates in the community.
- Even with Frisco's rapid growth, since 2000, the Frisco Fire Department has maintained a Class 1 Public Protection Classification (PPC) Rating – the best score awarded by the ISO.

## **Staffing:**

- Frisco's daily minimum staffing level is 62. This is the number of firefighters required to staff all our apparatus and safely deliver the highest level of fire protection and EMS services to the residents, businesses, and visitors of Frisco.
- There are currently 233 career firefighters assigned to fire operations on three rotating 24-hours shifts. Two shifts have 78 firefighters, one shift has 77 firefighters.
- By design, the 15 to 16-person difference in personnel above the minimum staffing level allows for firefighters from each shift to participate in training, take various forms of leave (i.e., vacation, sick time, worker's compensation) and employment vacancies.
- Any day we have more than 62 firefighters on a shift, the additional personnel are placed on engines or trucks, providing additional staffing on each fire apparatus.

## **Policies and Procedures:**

- The Frisco Fire Department is committed to maintaining and improving high operational standards. To achieve this, five years ago the department adopted Lexipol, a trusted third-party system. To date, the Frisco Fire Department has transitioned approximately 90% of existing policies into Lexipol.
- This ensures that department policies are aligned with the latest practices, regulations, and legal standards. Lexipol helps the Frisco Fire Department improve operational efficiency, reduce liability risks, and enhance the overall safety and effectiveness of our personnel. This process demonstrates our commitment to top-tier service and remaining accountable to the community we serve.

### **Fire Safety Statistics:**

- In 2022, there were 87 structure fires in Frisco. This equates to 0.39 structure fires per 1,000 people, which is almost four times lower than the national rate of 1.46 structure fires per 1,000 people.
- The fire fatality rate in Frisco is effectively 0% with only one fire fatality in recent years, which unfortunately was a suicide.
- There have been no line-of-duty member fatalities, and member injuries remain relatively low, considering the department's size and high call volume.
- In 2022, Frisco Fire Department Community Education Division had 72,769 educational contacts promoting fire safety in the community.
- The Frisco Fire Department was recognized by the Texas Sprinkler Coalition for the most fire sprinkler saves in buildings, during 2022.

### **High-quality Equipment and Rapid Response Times:**

The Frisco Fire Department operates a broad range of state-of-the-art apparatus, including nine fire engine/quints, seven ambulances, three ladder trucks, one heavy rescue, one Haz-Mat vehicle, and one special operations truck.

- The City of Frisco invests in Pierce fire apparatus and Braun ambulances. Both are renowned for their exceptional safety features and innovative designs. These manufacturers produce some of the most dependable and secure emergency vehicles on the market, ensuring the highest level of protection for our first responders and the community.
- The average age of front-line fire suppression apparatus is 3.5 years.
- A replacement fleet of seven front-line ambulances is currently in production and are expected to be in service by the end of 2024. The Fire Department proactively replaces its fire apparatus through its fleet replacement program and the department's in-house fleet maintenance center ensures all equipment is returned to service as quickly as possible.
- The department has also seen a rapid rise in call volume as the city continues to grow. The City Council has supported, and voters approved two additional fire stations that are currently in development to manage this increase and maintain effective response times.

### Workforce and Retention:

The City of Frisco offers competitive pay and benefits to public safety personnel. The table below shows the **average gross income** for the following fire positions in calendar year 2022.

Fire Lieutenant	\$120,177.13
Driver/Operator	\$113,395.15
Firefighter	\$105,149.54

- The table above only includes employees with full service in 2022; benefits not included.
- In addition to competitive pay, firefighters receive excellent benefits.
- Our team is staffed with 233 career firefighters, of whom 206 are paramedics. Our thorough hiring process ensures only the most competent individuals serve our community. The department demonstrates a commitment to the health and safety of its personnel with entry-level physicals, annual medical exams, and immunizations.
- As of July 2023, the average tenure of a Frisco Firefighter is 11 years and 7 months.
- As of July 2023, the department has issued conditional offers to seven firefighter applicants, which will subsequently fill all current firefighter vacancies.

### Building Code Standards and Fire Prevention Measures:

- The rapid development in Frisco is controlled by strict fire and building code standards, including requirements for sprinklers and fire alarms in large residential and commercial structures. This commitment to fire prevention improves public safety and has led to Frisco's **extremely low fire rate**.
- The Frisco Fire Department is the only agency of its size in Texas that employs two full-time Fire Protection Engineers to ensure strict compliance with fire codes throughout the development of all commercial buildings.

### Community Development and Growth:

- Frisco is one of the fastest-growing large cities in America. Throughout our growth, the Frisco Fire Department continues to keep pace with this growth and maintains the capacity to provide exceptional services safely and effectively to our community and in assistance to multiple neighboring jurisdictions in the Dallas/Fort Worth region, when requested.

## **Local Government Code 174: Provision of Collective Bargaining**

[Follow this link to access information](#) provided by the Frisco Fire Department regarding Collective Bargaining. This slide explains the various requirements of collective bargaining as present to fire personnel beginning July 5, 2023.

## **Local Government Code 143: Discussion on Civil Service**

[Follow this link to access information](#) provided by the Frisco Fire Department regarding Civil Service. The presentation highlights hiring and promotion challenges, as well as potential changes to benefits, if Civil Service is approved. Beginning July 5, the information was presented to fire personnel.

## ***GLOSSARY of terms mentioned in the Civil Service presentation by the Frisco Fire Department.***

### **Lateral program**

The lateral program is a recruitment-based program recognizing experience for new firefighters who get hired by Frisco. Prior to lateral program implementation, all firefighters started at Step '0' on the [pay plan](#). Through the lateral program, firefighters are eligible to be hired up to Step '5', depending on experience. For example, if a firefighter has 5 years of experience, he or she would be hired in at Step '5'.

### **Additional steps**

In 2020, existing Frisco firefighters who had not yet reach step 5, but had applicable fire or paramedic experience, were credited for their previous service and their pay was increased be commensurate with their experience. This ensured no new firefighters, hired under the Lateral Program, were paid more than existing Frisco firefighters with comparable experience.

### **Eligibility for beginning position**

*(Copied from Local Government Code 143.023. \*)* **a)** A person may not take an entrance examination for a beginning position in the fire department unless the person is at least 18 years of age. A person may not take an entrance examination for a beginning position in the fire department unless the person is at least 18 years of age but not 36 years of age or older. **b)** A person may not be certified as eligible for a beginning position in a fire department if the person is 36 years of age or older. \* The only exception to the above is the Fire Chief, who may be hired from the outside at any age.



### **Eligibility lists**

Lists are established as a result of a test (recruit or promotional). Eligibility lists in Civil Service are based on written test score, only. List order is determined by the highest grade first and then goes in descending order. No interviews conducted by the Assessment Center team, or the Fire Chief are considered. The City cannot prioritize a Firefighter/Paramedic (higher quality of care) over a Firefighter/EMT unless a Paramedic candidate and EMT candidate have the same written score. The other option would require us to do a Firefighter/Paramedic ONLY test, significantly reducing the number of candidates.

### **Position lower**

In the past, promotions required a firefighter serve in the 'position lower' for two years; no other qualifications were required. For example, when a firefighter wanted to promote to Captain, he or she served as a Lieutenant for two years to become eligible to promote to Captain. Currently, our firefighters take a written exam administered by a third-party and participate in an assessment center during which a team evaluates their leadership skills and ability to run a fireground. If Civil Service is adopted, the Frisco Fire Department could not require any certifications or include an Assessment Center. In other words, a person who scores highest on a written test would be promoted. However, a high score on a written test is not a good predictor of leadership or the ability to run a fireground.

### **Driver/Operator (DO)**

Currently, Driver/Operator (D/O) is an assignment in its own classification and rate of pay. DOs pass a written assessment and skills test which includes driving a course and operating the pumps. Under our current system, a D/O is NOT required to become a Lieutenant. In the current system, a firefighter can promote directly to Lieutenant.

There are two options for Driver/Operator under Civil Service: 1.) a firefighter would be required to promote to D/O before he or she could promote to Lieutenant (minimum of 2 years in each position). This would occur via written test only - No driving or skills test required. 2.) The D/O becomes an assignment, and the D/O only receives assignment pay when driving the firetruck -- and not when on leave or in training.

### **Fire Prevention**

Under Texas Civil Service law, several Fire Prevention positions are covered and are required to follow the Civil Service hiring and promotion regulations. These positions would include:

- Fire Marshal
- Assistant Fire Marshal
- Fire Inspector
- Fire Investigators
- Bomb Dog and Handler/Arson Investigator (EOD - Explosive Ordnance Disposal)
- Frisco Fire Safety Town (Community Education)

The best way to fight fires is to prevent fires. Texas Civil Service law prohibits the Frisco Fire Department from hiring and promoting trained and skilled individuals that desire to work in fire prevention and have a passion for this work. Instead, Fire Prevention positions become assignments that must be filled by certified firefighters that may not have the desire to perform this type of work. Additionally, the FFD cannot require that individuals hired in Fire Prevention have any Prevention training before being placed in those positions. Often no sooner does a firefighter get trained in Fire Prevention and start to understand the position then they test and promote out of Fire Prevention.

### **Civil Service Director**

(Local Government Code 143.012) On adoption of this chapter, the office of Director of Fire Fighters' Civil Service is established in the municipality. The commission shall appoint the director. The director shall serve as secretary to the commission and perform work incidental to the civil service system as required by the commission. The commission may remove the director at any time.

### **Driver Operator (D/O) Committee**

The D/O Committee is made up of 12 current firefighters of the Frisco Fire department. Committee members vary in rank, shifts and tenure. The committee was formed to give recommendations to the Fire Chief on how to improve the Driver/Operator testing process. The adoption of Civil Service would make this committee obsolete because the Civil Service law determines the requirements and testing for promotion.

### **Promotional Committee**

The Promotional Committee is made up of 14 current members of the Frisco Fire department. Committee members vary in rank, shift, and tenure. The committee provides recommendations to the Fire Chief on how to make our promotional process better including requiring more time in the previous rank before one can promote and minimum certifications and training to strengthen the experience and knowledge of the Frisco Fire Department staff. The adoption of Civil Service would make this committee obsolete because the Civil Service law determines the requirements and testing for promotion. Civil Service law only requires a firefighter to occupy the previous rank for two (2) years to be eligible to test and the selection is based only on the score of the written exam.

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*Find the information in this document online at [FriscoTexas.gov/PublicSafetyCommitment](http://FriscoTexas.gov/PublicSafetyCommitment)*