



By-Laws
of
Tri-State Mutual aid Association

May 2023

ARTICLE I

NAME AND PRINCIPAL OFFICE

- Section 1.1 The name of this organization shall be the **TRI-STATE MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED**, hereinafter referred to as the “**ASSOCIATION**”.
- Section 1.2 The principal office of the Association shall be at the Catoosa County Fire Department, Ringgold, Georgia.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

- Section 2.1 The purpose of the Tri-State Mutual Aid Association shall be to provide more efficient and better emergency services to the people of the Tri-State area by coordination and cooperation of the participating departments of this Association.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

- Section 3.1 There shall be Four classes of membership in the association; Department Membership, Associate Membership and Honorary Membership, Lifetime Membership.
- Section 3.2 Department Membership – Shall consist of each Fire, Rescue or Support Service organization in the Association, hereinafter referred to as the “Department”. A Department may name up to four authorized representatives, the senior of which shall be the Chief or equivalent position of authority of that department. A letter to the Secretary/Treasurer, signed by the Chief on Department letterhead, shall be the procedure for naming these representatives. In the absence of the Chief, one of these representatives shall act in his stead.
- Section 3.3 Any organization within the Tri-State area comprising Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina or Tennessee may apply for membership in the Association. The organization must have a written authorization from the governing body permitting them to sign the mutual aid agreement.

- Section 3.4 The organization desiring membership shall notify the Secretary/Treasurer, in writing state name, address, and Chief of the organization. The Secretary/Treasurer will forward the request to the President and he then to the Standards Committee for a report to the membership within 30 days of application. A majority vote of the members is required for admission. Official notification of action shall be sent to the applicant within a reasonable period of time. The Secretary/Treasurer will keep on file a copy of the document signed by the President and Secretary/Treasurer as the official acceptance.
- Section 3.5 Department's membership shall commence when the Mutual Aid Agreement is signed and the first year's dues are paid. The benefits and services rendered by the Association and the responsibilities of membership as set forth in the agreement and these by-laws shall take effect at that time.
- Section 3.6 Associate Membership - Any corporation or individual interested in, but which provides no services as listed in section 2 may apply for membership. Corporations may name up to two representatives to attend meetings.
- Section 3.7 Associate members shall pay dues equal to two times the Department membership dues and shall have no voting rights in the Association.
- Section 3.8 Honorary membership – Shall be only individuals or Government Agencies (such as Correctional Facilities). Proposals for membership may be made at any regular meeting. A majority vote of the members present is required for acceptance.
- Section 3.9 Honorary members shall pay no dues, and shall have no voting rights in the Association.
- Section 3.10 Honorary members, such as government agencies or correctional facilities, which operate a fire or rescue department shall be responsible for performing all the duties of participating department members except hosting meetings or paying dues.
- Section 3.11 Life Membership, Individuals who have been involved in the association for 10 years or more and-or have made a significant contribution to the association. Individual shall be nominated by a current member in good standing. Lifetime members in good standing shall be eligible to hold any office in the association.
- Section 3.12 Each Department member has only one vote. An individual may be appointed Department representative for only one Department. Multiple memberships in Association member departments will not allow the individual to act on behalf of more than one member Department.

- Section 3.13 Any member may at any time submit a written formal request to have their membership terminated in the Association. Such request shall be addressed to the Secretary/Treasurer on official letterhead and signed by the Chief Officer.
- Section 3.14 Termination shall be effective after notification of the membership at the next regular meeting. The Secretary/Treasurer will notify the requesting organization, in writing, that they have been terminated and shall file a copy as the permanent record. Notification shall also be submitted to the Mutual Aid Coordinator.
- Section 3.15 Termination for nonpayment of dues- Any member who has failed to submit their annual dues in full as of six (6) months past the due date shall be placed on an inactive status and their voting privileges (if a voting member) suspended until dues are submitted. If dues become 12 months past due the member will be brought before the association for termination. The member will be notified in writing of any action in this section.
- Section 3.16 The terminated member shall relinquish all rights, privileges and any equipment which has been supplied by the Association. The terminated member shall not be refunded any portion of any dues or assessments paid to the Association.
- Section 3.17 Any organization or individual who has terminated membership may rejoin at any time by following the prescribed method as outlined in this Article.
- Section 3.18 Any member department who has neglected to send a voting representative to six (6) regular meetings in a calendar year shall be brought before the body for termination. The attendance records shall be reviewed by the Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer shall notify the delinquent department after the third absence and as of the sixth absence, informing them of the meeting requirements and possible consequences. If the Department can show a justifiable cause or circumstances for absences termination may be waived by vote of the membership.
- Section 3.19 A member shall be terminated upon recommendation of the Standards Committee, following a period of probation established by the Executive Committee, by a majority vote of members present at a regular meeting.
- Section 3.20 All members share ownership of the foam bank and may call for the foam for use when needed. All members have agreed that any member that uses the foam is responsible for replacement of any foam used.

ARTICLE IV

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

PRESIDENT

VICE-PRESIDENT

SECRETARY/TREASURER

MUTUAL AID COORDINATOR

DEPUTY MUTUAL AID COORDINATOR

DIRECTORS

COMMITTEES

MEMBERSHIP

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS

Section 5.1 The affairs of the Association are to be managed by the Executive Committee, subject to the Constitution, By-Laws and Amendments as adopted.

Section 5.2 The officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Mutual Aid Coordinator, Deputy Mutual Aid Coordinator and five Directors-at-Large.

ARTICLE VI

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 6.1 President – Shall preside at all meeting of the Association and shall have general care and charge of the business and affairs of the Association. He shall perform such duties as are required to run and maintain the Association.

- Section 6.2 Vice-President – Shall, in the absence or inability of the President or Secretary/Treasurer, assume the vested powers of those positions.
- Section 6.3 Secretary/Treasurer – Shall serve as the budget committee chair and shall keep all records for regular, special or emergency meeting, as well as, Executive Committee meetings of the Association. Shall disburse money for the necessary operations of the association and the use of P card or purchase card during emergency operations
- Section 6.4 Shall keep in constant contact with members, notifying them of their financial standing with the Association. Shall make a report of receipts and disbursements at each regular meeting and a complete annual report at the annual meeting.
- Section 6.5 Shall at the expiration of term of office, deliver to the Executive Committee all monies, securities, books, papers, documents and other effects of the office of Secretary/Treasurer.
- Section 6.6 If required by the membership, shall procure and file with the President of the Association a surety bond in such sum as may be established by the Executive Committee. The amount of the bond may be increased at any time the Executive Committee should occasion warrant. The cost of such bond shall be defrayed by the Association.
- Section 6.7 Shall have the responsibility to issue and sign checks of the Association. The treasurer and/or the authorized purchaser in accordance with the purchasing policy shall have the authority to spend association funds as outlined in the purchasing policy without prior approval of the body in order to operate the association and support the association as deemed necessary.
- Section 6.8 Shall ensure that checks and Savings Account transfers of the Association be signed by the President or the Vice-President and Himself.
- Section 6.9 The President, Vice President and Treasurer will authorize the issuance of P cards as deemed necessary to make purchases of low dollar and non-capital items. Every purchase will be reconciled monthly with appropriate receipts.
- Section 6.10 Mutual Aid Coordinator – Responsible for the effective operations of the participating departments in providing assistance to other members at fires and other emergencies.
- Section 6.11 Supervises and is responsible for the dispatch of mutual aid at the request of the Chief, or in his absence the highest ranking official in charge.
- Section 6.12 Acts as an advisor to the Chief or officer in charge regarding mutual aid units available to them. Shall prepare and maintain necessary devices to depict status

of equipment, apparatus and manpower of each member department. Shall assure this device is kept current and available at the dispatch center. Shall prepare and keep available at the dispatch center, an inventory of each member department's equipment and apparatus.

- Section 6.13 Supervises and is responsible for logs and records of Mutual Aid calls provided by the Association. Shall prepare a report of Mutual Aid calls and present it at the regular meetings. Shall do other duties as needed that may be permitted by law and with approval of the Executive Committee.
- Section 6.14 With the approval of the Executive Committee, appoint assistant coordinators and staff members as necessary to conduct the operations of the organization.
- Section 6.15 Deputy Mutual Aid Coordinator – Shall assist the Mutual Aid Coordinator and assume his duties as required.

ARTICLE VII

ELECTIONS

- Section 7.1 An annual election of the President, Vice-President and Secretary/Treasurer of the Association shall be held at the annual meeting. The Mutual Aid Coordinator, Deputy Mutual Aid Coordinator and five Directors to be appointed from the states necessary to balance the state representation on the Executive Committee, shall be appointed by the incoming elected officers.
- Section 7.2 The term of office for the elected officers and other Executive Committee members shall be a one-year period. The term shall commence when sworn in and shall cease when the successor to that office is sworn in.
- Section 7.3 The out-going Secretary/Treasurer, or a person of his choice, shall conduct the swearing in of each elected officer of the Association. The swearing in shall take place immediately following elections.
- Section 7.4 To be eligible for nomination, election, and to hold an office, an individual must be a recognized representative of a Department as set forth in Article III section 2, or Article III, Section 11, at the time of the annual meeting. Only one representative from each member department will be eligible for election to any office.
- Section 7.5 Nominations shall be from the floor. No individual may nominate more than one person for each office. All nominees shall leave the meeting during a discussion by members. They shall be permitted to return before the balloting begins.

- Section 7.6 Voting shall be by secret ballot. The individual receiving the majority of votes cast shall be elected. In case of a tie, the discussion period will repeat and another vote taken. If a tie still remains, the outgoing president will cast the deciding vote.
- Section 7.7 The president shall appoint two tellers to distribute, collect, tally and post the election.
- Section 7.8 Elected officers and other Executive Committee members shall recite an oath of office administered from the mutual aid coordinator. The oath shall read:
“I state your name do solemnly swear to support and uphold the by-laws of the Tri-State Mutual Aid Association, and to perform the duties of my office to the best of my ability. So help me God!

ARTICLE VIII

DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Section 8.1 The Executive Committee shall exercise supervision over the affairs of the Association in the interim between meetings and shall be the supreme and final authority on all matters pertaining to the interests of the Association in such interim, reporting their actions at the next meeting. Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President, and upon request, by a majority of the Executive Committee. The President shall call a meeting at such place as he may designate.
- Section 8.2 The Executive Committee shall have the power to try any officer of the Association for usurpation of authority, neglect of duty, incompetency or misfeasance, and after a fair and impartial trial, may suspend such officer if the facts so warrant. No such officer shall be tried, however, until written charges have been submitted to the committee and a correct copy thereof transmitted to the officer, so charged, by registered mail. Charges may be preferred by any member of the committee or by any member of the Association with the endorsement of at least two other members of the Association. In the event charges are preferred by one member of the Executive Committee against another member of the Executive Committee, the member so charging and the member charged shall be ineligible to sit on the committee during the trial. In the event of conviction, the accused shall have the right of appeal to the membership. If the accused shall be convicted by the Executive Committee, they shall stand suspended immediately. The Executive Committee shall take charge of all books, papers, monies, documents, and other properties of that office.

- Section 8.3 The Executive Committee shall make a full and detailed report at the annual meeting of all matters coming before them for consideration during their term of office.
- Section 8.4 A majority of the committee shall constitute a quorum.
- Section 8.5 The President shall appoint a committee to audit the books of the Secretary/Treasurer and promptly report too the committee their findings.
- Section 8.6 The Executive Committee shall have the power to cite any member of the Association to appear before them and show cause why they should not be expelled whenever complaint shall have been made that the member has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a member and detrimental to the reputation and operation of the Association. If said member be found guilty, they shall stand expelled from the Association. From expulsion by the committee, the member may appeal to the Association at the next regular meeting. A majority vote of members present will continue the actions of the Executive Committee for expulsion.
- Section 8.7 If by reason of death, resignation or disqualification as described by this Article, an Executive office shall become vacant, the Executive Committee shall appoint from the ranks of the department representatives a person to fill that vacancy until the next election.
- Section 8.8 If an Executive officer becomes absent because of sickness or injury, at the request of that officer, the Executive Committee shall temporarily appoint a member from the department representatives to fill such vacancy until that officer can reassume his office.
- Section 8.9 If any Association officer is convicted of a felony, he shall be removed from that office and allowed to continue his membership in the Association.

ARTICLE IX

COMMITTEES

- Section 9.1 The standing committees of the Association are the Executive, Standards, Budget and Audit and other committees as may be found necessary.
- Section 9.2 The President shall appoint a standards committee of at least three Department representatives. The committee will develop and review minimum standards and their application to each department or service requesting membership. The members shall serve until their successors are appointed.

- Section 9.3 The audit committee shall be appointed by the President to review the books and records of the Secretary/Treasurer as required by Article VIII section 4.
- Section 9.4 The standards committee and audit committee shall be appointed no later than the next meeting following the annual meeting.
- Section 9.5 The budget committee shall be appointed by the president and chaired by the Secretary/Treasurer. The committee will prepare and present an annual operating budget for the coming year at the annual meeting.

ARTICLE X

DUTIES OF PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS

- Section 10.1 Each department shall render aid when called upon by the mutual aid dispatch center, as so stated in the signed agreement of the Association.
- Section 10.2 Each department shall notify the dispatch center when more than 50% of available apparatus or manpower, as reported to the Mutual Aid Coordinator, is committed to emergencies within the Department's district, providing services under contract, providing mutual aid per agreement with parties not in this Association, or providing mutual aid under the agreement of this Association. They shall also notify the dispatch center when 50% of available apparatus or manpower is back in service. Each department shall further notify the dispatch center when apparatus is out of service for extended repair, accident or otherwise. Shall further notify the dispatch center when new apparatus is added or old apparatus is permanently retired from service.
- Section 10.3 Each department shall furnish to the Mutual Aid Coordinator a list of apparatus available and any special equipment carried on that apparatus. Each Department shall also supply any pertinent information covering specialized hazards in their district, water supply locations, necessary road maps and any other information which will be of benefit to the Association.
- Section 10.5 It shall be the responsibility of each Department to appoint representatives to attend meetings of the Association.
- Section 10.6 Each Department shall be responsible for hosting one regular meeting of the Association as often as necessary for the training of members to the particular hazards of that area. The hosting department shall be responsible for a place to meet and any training material for distribution.

ARTICLE XI

MEETINGS

- Section 11.1 The regular meetings of the Association shall be held monthly on the third Monday beginning at 7:00 PM EST and continuing until adjournment.
- Section 11.2 The annual meeting of the Association shall be held at 7:00 PM EST on the third Monday in December. Unless otherwise announced, it shall be held at the principal office of the Association.
- Section 11.3 Regular meetings shall be held as set forth in Article X, section 5. The host Chief shall notify the Secretary/Treasurer of the meeting location and he shall in turn notify the membership.
- Section 11.4 The host department of the monthly meeting shall be responsible for the meal. The cost meal for the annual (December) meeting shall be split between Catoosa County and Tri-State Mutual Aid on a rotating basis.
- Section 11.5 Special or emergency meetings may be called by the President or Executive Committee when deemed necessary. The Secretary/Treasurer shall notify the membership of such meetings at least 24 hours prior to set meeting.
- Section 11.6 The President shall have the authority to appoint another Executive officer or Department representative to fill his and the Vice-Presidents places for a meeting if both are unable to attend.

ARTICLE XII

ORDER OF BUSINESS AND RULES OF ORDER

- Section 21.1 The format of each regular meeting shall be as follows:
- a) Call to Order – President
 - b) Opening statements, roll call, introduction of guests
 - c) Short devotional – Appointed
 - d) Reading of unapproved minutes – Secretary/Treasurer
 - e) Treasurer’s Report – Secretary/Treasurer
 - f) Election (if annual meeting)
 - g) Selection of meeting sites for ensuing year (annual meeting)
 - h) Report of Mutual Aid Coordinator
 - i) Business Discussion
 - 1. Old Business
 - 2. Committee Reports
 - 3. Consultant or Research Reports
 - 4. New Business
 - j) Training – Host Chief
 - k) Adjournment

Section 12.2 Robert’s Rules of order shall be the authority on all parliamentary questions.

ARTICLE XIII

DUES

- Section 13.1 The dues and assessments to be charged against each member for the ensuing year shall be set at the annual meeting by the members.
- Section 13.2 All dues and assessments shall be paid to the Secretary/Treasurer by March 15 of each year.
- Section 13.3 The annual dues and assessments shall be used in maintaining and operating the Association and other uses as directed by the membership.
- Section 13.4 Dues notices shall be sent by the Secretary/Treasurer to members by January 15 of each year.
- Section 13.5 The principal office member shall be exempt from the payment of dues in lieu of services provided to the Association.

ARTICLE XIV

AMENDMENTS

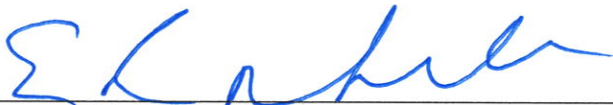
- Section 14.1 These by-laws may be amended, altered, or repealed by a majority vote at any annual, regular or specially called meeting of the Association providing the membership has been notified in writing or by email 30 days in advance of such meeting. The notification shall state proposed amendments or action to be taken.
- Section 14.2 A majority vote is defined as 50% plus one of the members present at the meeting where proposal is being acted on.
- Section 14.3 The amendment, alteration, or repeal shall be sent to each member of the Association and shall take effect immediately upon approval by the membership. A copy of such shall be filed with the Secretary/Treasurer as a permanent record.

ARTICLE XV

ATTACHMENTS

- Section 15.1 Budget
- Section 15.2 Policy and Procedures
- Section 15.3 Mutual Aid Agreement
- Section 15.4 Purchasing Policy

Adopted by the Tri-State Mutual Aid Association, May 15th, 2023.



President – Eric Mitchell



Secretary/Treasurer – Brent Sylar