

POCATELLO FIRE DISTRICT
POLICY 002

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Pocatello Fire District recognizes its responsibility to hear and respond to public comment, and therefore encourages public participation at regular fire district meetings. There will be a specific agenda item at each regular fire district meeting to provide members of the public with an opportunity to address the Commissioners. The Commissioners may, in their discretion, permit public comment at special fire district meetings.

All speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene language, libelous statements, threats of violence, statements advocating racial, religious, or other forms of prejudice will not be tolerated.

In order that the Commissioners may fairly and adequately discharge their overall responsibility, citizens who wish to make requests, representations, or proposals to the Commissioners are requested to direct these to the Chairman of the board. The intent of the rule is:

1. To allow everyone an opportunity to be heard;
2. To allow the Chairman of the board to take direct action or to recommend action to the fire district if policies have already been established by the fire district;
3. To minimize the possibility of the fire district making ill-advised, illegal, or improper rulings due to hasty action in the absence of adequate information and study, especially when a policy does not exist, a change in policy is proposed, or an exception to a policy is specifically requested; and
4. To see that the time so devoted does not interfere with the scheduled business of the fire district.

The Chairman of the board shall have the right to discontinue any presentation which violates this policy.

The following methods for presenting views to the fire district may, at the discretion of the Chairman and the co-Chairman, be used:

Placing Items on the Agenda

Any individual desiring to address the Pocatello Fire District Commissioners concerning a matter relating to the Pocatello Fire District may be scheduled at an appropriate place on the fire district agenda by notifying the Chairman of the board in writing of the proposed topic to be discussed at least fifteen work days prior to a regular fire district meeting. The Chairman of the board, in consultation with the co-Chairman, may take any appropriate action to ensure the efficient use of fire district time. These actions may include, but are not limited to, consolidating speakers or scheduling them to be heard at a later date. A spokesperson must be designated at the time the request is submitted. A maximum of 10 minutes will be allowed during the agenda for the presentation. The fire district may in its discretion, extend or shorten the time, as appropriate.

Public Participation

Early in the meeting, the public will be provided with an opportunity to address the fire district commissioners concerning any agenda item. Individuals wishing to speak must first be recognized by the

Chairman of the board, then identify themselves, any organizations that they may be representing at the meeting and the agenda item that they wish to address. Speakers may address only topics on the current meeting's agenda. Comments are limited to three minutes. Questions asked by the public requiring investigation may be referred to the fire district commissioners or administrative staff for consideration and later response. A maximum of 15 minutes will be reserved during each regular meeting for this purpose. The fire district may, in its discretion, extend or shorten this time, as appropriate. The public will be provided with an additional opportunity at the end of the agenda to address the fire district concerning topic relating to the business of the Pocatello Fire District, regardless of whether such topic is an agenda item, provided that the topic is not related to specific personnel matters, or personal attacks on individuals. Individuals wishing to speak must first be recognized by the Chairman of the board or co-Chairman of the board, then identify themselves, along with any organization(s) that they may be representing at the meeting, and the topic that they wish to address. Speakers shall not address individuals by name or title during public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes. Questions asked by the public requiring investigation may be referred to the fire district commissioners or administrative staff for consideration and later response. A maximum of 15 minutes will be reserved for this purpose. The fire district may, in its discretion, extend or shorten this time as appropriate.

Public Hearings

Individuals or representatives of groups may present their views at public hearings called by the fire district for a specific purpose. The board of fire commissioners shall develop regulations governing the conduct of such public hearings.

Ref: *Matter of Martin*, 32 EDR 381 (1992)
Appeal of Wittneben, 31 EDR 375 (1992)
Matter of Kramer, 72 EDR 114 (1951)
NYS Department of State, Committee on Open Government
OML-AO-#2696 (Jan. 8, 1997), OML-AO-#2717 (Feb. 27, 1997), OML-AO-#4292 (Dec. 6, 2006)