

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
MISSISSIPPI FIRE INVESTIGATORS ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I
NAME AND OBJECT

Section 1. Name

This organization shall be known as the “Mississippi Fire Investigators Association” and hereinafter referred to as the “Association”

Section 2. Object

The objective and purpose of the Association shall be:

- A. To unite for mutual benefit those public officials and private persons engaged in investigating the origin and cause of fire, and to assist in the control of arson and kindred crimes.
- B. To provide for the exchange of technical information and developments.
- C. To cooperate with other law enforcement agencies and associations to further the suppression of arson.
- D. To encourage high professional standards of conduct among fire investigators in the state of Mississippi.

This Association shall not be operated for profit.

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

Personal Qualifications

The following qualifications of applicants will be considered By the Board of Directors before acceptance into this Association:

- A. The personal character and reputation of the applicant.
- B. The nature, character, and reputation of the applicant's business.
- C. The Character and reputation of the applicant's employer and associates.
- D. The general nature, character, and reputation of the principal business of the applicant's employer and associates. No person shall be eligible for any class of membership if he/she has been a member, or is presently a member, or becomes a member of a subversive organization or of any organization whose objectives and operations are inconsistent with the purpose of the Association.
- E. All applicants for active or associate membership, if accepted, will be on temporary status until the next meeting of the Board of Directors. During this temporary status period a person's membership may be revoked at the discretion of the Board of Directors

Section 1. Active Membership

Any representative of government or of a governmental agency and any representative of a business or industrial concern who is actively engaged in some phase of the suppression of arson at the time he/she makes application shall be eligible to active membership on application, provided such person possesses the other qualifications for membership in the discretion of the Board of Directors.

- A. Active membership in the International Association of Arson Investigators is required for a member to hold office in the Mississippi Chapter
- B. Any person engaged in some phase of investigating fires, to determine origin and cause, and suppression of arson.
- C. An active member of the Mississippi Chapter can attend business meetings and vote

Section 2. Associate Membership

Persons not qualified for active membership may become associate members, after determination of their qualifications. Associate members shall have the privileges of an active member, except holding office.

Section 3. Sustaining Membership

Individuals or organizations interested in carrying out the purposes of the association shall be granted sustaining membership upon contribution of not less than two-hundred-fifty dollars (\$250.00) annually. All such funds shall be devoted to the education functions of the Association.

Section 4. Life Membership

The Association may bestow life membership upon any qualified member of the Association who has met the following requirements:

- A. The individual must be or have been an active member of the Association.
- B. The individual must be an active member in good standing for a minimum of ten (10) years.
- C. The individual must have rendered distinctive service to the Association through participation on committees or activities for a minimum of five (5) years.

A life member shall have all rights and privileges of an active member without payment of dues. Nominations for life membership shall be made to the Awards Committee Chairman at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting of the Awards Committee. The Awards Committee shall review the nominations and make its recommendations to the Board of Directors as to recipients of this life membership. No more than two (2) life memberships shall be bestowed by the Board of Directors in any year. (IAAI)

Section 4.1 Honorary Membership

Individuals can become Honorary Members if they are appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors.

The Mississippi Chapter, upon recommendation of the Board of Directors, and by majority vote of members present at the Fall Conference may confer Honorary Membership upon any person who has met the following requirements:

- A. Nominee is not currently a member of the Mississippi Chapter.
- B. Nominee shall have contributed outstanding service to the Mississippi Chapter or to the field of arson suppression and/or to the field of justice in the field of arson.

- C. Nomination must come from within the membership. Nomination shall be in writing in the form of a letter addressed to the Mississippi Chapter Board of Directors stating the reasons the nominee should be considered for Honorary Membership. The nominee's resume may accompany the nomination letter.
- D. That the membership be informed of the nomination no later than the last quarterly meeting prior to the Fall Conference. In the event that a quarterly meeting is either not scheduled or held, then the membership shall be notified by mail no less than thirty (30) days prior to the Fall Conference.
- E. Honorary Membership in the Mississippi Chapter has all the privileges of a regular member except for the privileges of voting and holding office. There are no dues for this membership.

Section 5. Termination

Membership in the Association shall be terminated by (1) Voluntary withdrawal. (2) Membership shall be terminated by the Board of Directors for lack of payment of membership dues, after proper notification, and if dues are not received within forty-five (45) days of the due date. (3) Membership shall be terminated by the Board of Directors, if such member has exhibited traits of character or conduct inconsistent with the qualifications for membership in the Association.

Section 5.1 Sanctions

The Board of Directors may place on probation, censure, suspend, or terminate the membership of any member. The Board of Directors may, upon receipt and after initial review of the circumstances, temporarily suspend the membership of any member pending the evaluation by a Grievance Committee, which will consist of four (4) members in good standing to be appointed as needed by the President and with the approval of the Board. Actions requiring referral to the Grievance Committee shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Falsifications or misrepresentations in applications for membership
- B. Conduct in a manner prejudicial to the good name or best interest of the Mississippi Chapter
- C. Exhibited traits of character or conduct inconsistent with the qualifications for membership
- D. Other questionable conduct
- E. Any board member or officer not attending three (3) of the four (4) Board meetings in their term of office.

Following an evaluation of the information by the Grievance Committee and upon its recommendation, the Board of Directors shall provide such member with due notice by certified letter, a hearing, and an opportunity to be heard. A majority vote of the Board present in a duly constituted meeting shall be sufficient to place on probation, censure, suspend, or terminate membership for any reason specified or consistent with this section. Disciplined members shall be notified by certified letter of any action taken by the Board of Directors concerning probation, censure, suspension, and/or termination. Any disciplined member shall have the right to appeal any disciplinary action by the Board, provided his/her request is received in writing within thirty (30) days following the date of disciplinary action.

Section 5.2 Reinstatement of Sanctioned Members

Any sanctioned former member requesting reinstatement of membership shall make such request in writing to the Board of Directors stating why reinstatement should be considered. Any sanctioned former member may be reinstated in the Mississippi Chapter at the discretion of and by the consent of a majority vote of the Board of Directors, provided, however, that if such a sanctioned former member shall have been in arrears in the payment of dues or other financial obligation to the Mississippi Chapter at the time of his/her separation, he/she shall be required to pay the Mississippi Chapter all such arrears as a condition to his reinstatement, unless the Board, for good cause, and by a majority vote, shall waive the payment thereof. Any sanctioned member whose membership has been terminated by the majority vote of the Board for any violations may not be re-instated for a period of one (1) year from the date of notice of termination. Reinstatement of membership of any sanctioned member terminated for violations shall be based on a positive follow-up investigation by the Grievance Committee.

ARTICLE III
ELECTION, TERMS, AND OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers

The Officers of the Association shall be President, Executive Vice-President, Northern, Central and Southern area Vice-Presidents, and Secretary/Treasurer. The member who seeks an officer's position must: 1) have served one (1) full term on the Board of Directors, 2) must be an active member of the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI), and 3) must be a resident of the state of Mississippi

Section 2. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall be composed of the Officers and one (1) Director for every ten (10) members, with a maximum of ten (10) Directors, duly elected shall constitute the Board of Directors. Directors shall serve a term of two (2) years with fifty (50) percent of the terms expiring annually. A Director shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. The member who seeks office must be an active member of the IAAI, and be a residence of the state of Mississippi

Section 3. Terms of Office

Elections shall be held annually at the fall training conference. All elected officers and Board of Directors shall take office at the Banquet following their announcement. A board meeting shall be scheduled by the new President before the end of the conference.

The Executive Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Northern, Central and Southern Vice-Presidents and Board of Directors will be elected annually. The Executive Vice-President will accede to the office of President.

- A. The president shall ascend from the position of Executive Vice President and serve in this position for one (1) year. At the end of one year, he/she will descend to the position of past president and serve on the Board of Directors as an ex-fico member.
- B. The Executive Vice President shall be nominated and elected by the general membership, to serve a period of one (1) year, after which time he/she will ascend to the office of president.
- C. The Secretary/Treasure shall be nominated and elected by the general membership and serve a one (1) year term.
- D. The Board of Directors shall serve a two (2) year term, with 50% of the terms expiring annually.
- E. Area Vice Presidents, to be nominated and elected by the general membership, to serve a term of (1) one Year.

Section 4. Vacancies

In the event an Officer or Board of Directors shall be unable to fulfill their term of office, between annual meetings, the following provisions shall apply.

- A. The President shall be succeeded by the Executive Vice-President.
- B. The Executive Vice-President, Secretary/ Treasurer shall be elected from the Board of Directors, and approved by a 2/3 (two-thirds) majority vote of the Board.
- C. In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the President may appoint a Director from the general membership with the approval of 2/3 (two-thirds) of the current Board of Directors.

Section 5. Removal from Office

The Board of Directors, for good cause, is empowered to depose from office, the President, the Executive Vice President, the area Vice Presidents, the Secretary/Treasurer and a member of the Board of Directors. Such action will require 2/3 (two-thirds) majority vote of the Board.

ARTICLE IV GOVERNMENT

Section 1. President

The President shall be the Executive Officer of the Association, and it shall be his/her responsibility to supervise and coordinate the activities of the Association and preside at meetings of the Association and Board of Directors. He/She shall appoint appropriate committees for the conduct of the activities of the Association.

Section 2. Executive Vice-President

In the absence of the President, the Executive Vice-President shall be Executive officer and shall act as such. Further duties of the Executive Vice-President will be to assist in coordinating the annual meeting and to assist the President in the performance of his/her duties.

Section 3. Secretary/Treasurer

The Secretary/ Treasurer shall keep the records and minutes of the organization and shall maintain a current roll of members, the constitution and all other documents of value. It shall be his/her duty to receive and acknowledge all communications of the Association addressed to him/her or that may be submitted to him/her by officers of the Association, and perform such duties as assigned by the President. All records of members and pertinent correspondence shall be backed up by CD, with a copy on file with the president. A copy of the minutes of previous board meetings shall be on display for general membership viewing at each conference.

The Secretary/Treasurer shall be custodian and sole depositor of the funds of the Association, shall disburse such funds by check as authorized by the Board of Directors for purposes which promote the welfare and objectives of this Association. He/she shall render a complete summary of all income, disbursements and balances on an annual basis no later than December 31. A copy of this summary shall be openly displayed along with the minutes of the preceding year, for viewing by members at each conference. A written copy of this report shall be made available to any member, upon written request.

Section 4. Area Vice-President

There shall be three (3) Vice-Presidents representing the North, Central and Southern portions of the State. These shall be geographically established as the following:

Northern Area – From the North State Boundary South to Highway 82.

Central Area – From Highway 82 to Highway 84.

Southern Area – From Highway 84 to the south State Boundaries.

Each Vice-President shall reside in his/her respective area and elected at large.

The duties of the area Vice-President shall be to supervise and coordinate any organizational activity in his/her area and to assist the President in the performance of his/her duties. Other duties include coordination of any seminar in his/her area.

Section 5. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall be composed of the President, Executive Vice-President, three (3) area Vice-Presidents, Secretary/ Treasurer, Past Presidents and one (1) Board Member for every ten (10) regular members (not to exceed ten (10) as of the fall general membership meeting. The duties of the Board of Directors will be to plan, review, and approve programs and policy of the Mississippi Fire Investigators Association and approve all budgets and expenditures of the association. Shall have the power to cancel any scheduled event for good reasons, given written notice to all members as quickly as possible. (Where an emergency has arisen, to prevent convening of the Board, Board approval can be accepted by telephone conferences, e-mail, fax or mail, where a 2/3s majority of the full board approves.)

ARTICLE V
SEMINARS

Section 1. Seminars

The Seminars of the Association shall be conducted semiannually at such time and place as determined by the Board of Directors. Notice hereof shall be mailed to each member at his last known address, not less than thirty (30) days in advance. Elections shall be held at the fall conference.

A. Any scheduled meeting shall be run following “Roberts Rules of Order” as revised.

Official Order of Business – (Robert’s Rules of Order)

1. Call of meeting to order
2. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting
3. Financial report
4. Report to officers
5. Reports of Committees
 - a. Standing Committees
 - b. Special Committees
6. Unfinished business
7. New business
8. Election of Officers (Annual Meeting)
9. Adjournment (Virginia)

Section 2. Special

The Board of Directors shall meet quarterly, at such time and place as designated by the president. Board of Directors shall be given a (7) seven day prior notice of such meetings.

- A. Special meetings: The President, or any four (4) Board of Directors, can call a special meeting of the board with a seven (7) day written notification of such meeting.
- B. Any member of the Association can attend Board meetings, but shall not have voting authority.

ARTICLE VI
FINANCE

Section 1. Fees and Dues

Dues for Active and Associate membership in this Association shall be thirty-five dollars (\$35.00) for the first year and twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) thereafter to be due and payable on the Association Annual Membership renewal date of October 31. International Association of Arson Investigation dues are \$100. Failure to pay Association membership dues within forty-five (45) days of the due date shall result in forfeiture of membership in the Association. Reinstatement is conditioned on approval by the Board and payment of all arrears. There shall be no other fees or assessment except as provided by amendment to these articles.

ARTICLE VII
AMENDMENT

Section 1. Requirements

This constitution may be amended by any regular or special meeting of the Association at the fall seminar by a vote of $2/3$ (two-thirds) of the members present.

ARTICLE VIII
STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. Committees

The following committees shall be appointed by the President, shall have the authority to appoint any committee as necessary.

A. Budget and Finance

The committee shall be responsible for all financial matters involving dues, expenses, and income. In addition, the committee will see the proper planning and budgeting is carried out during the year.

B. Constitution and By- Laws

The duties of the committee shall be to advise the officers, directors, and members of the Association on matters pertaining to the Constitution and Bylaws. In the event of proposed changes, it shall further be the duty of this committee to review and prepare the proposed changes in a suitable format for presentation to the officers and members of the Association. Additionally, the Committee shall serve in a review capacity for the Standard Operation Procedures for the committees of the Association.

C. Ethical Practices and Grievances

The duties of the Committee shall be to investigate any and all allegations of misconduct directed toward the officers, directors, or members of the Association. Allegations of misconduct shall include, but are not limited to the following (1) criminal offenses, (2) neglect of duty, (3) violation of the Code of Ethics, policies, rules and/or procedures of the International Association of Arson Investigators (4) conduct that tends to reflect unfavorably on the member of the Association. These duties also include the investigations of violations of Chapter 7 of the Certified Fire Investigators Practice and Procedures Manual. Following the completion of an investigation the Committee shall forward the results and recommendations in writing to the Officers and Directors of the Association for final action.

D. Nominating

The duties of the Committee shall be to encourage, solicit, receive and screen all nominations received for all the positions and Directors of the Association. The Committee shall present a list of qualified candidates to the membership. The Committee shall consist of one (1) representative from each of the following disciplines: fire service, law enforcement, legal, private, scientific, and a member at large who will be a non-voting Chair (except in the event of a tie). Members shall serve a term of three (3) years with the President appointing three (3) members each year. Members may be reappointed

E. Membership

The duties of the Committee shall be to promote, encourage and solicit membership in the Association through any appropriate means. In addition, the Committee shall develop and recommend guidelines to the Board relative to annual cost, levels, and benefits of Sustaining Membership.

F. Certification- Certified Fire Investigator

The duties of this Committee shall be the general administration of the Certified Fire Investigator (CFI) program in accordance with the Practice and Procedures Manual of the International Association of Arson Investigators. Additionally, the Committee shall be responsible to promote and encourage participation in the Certified Fire Investigators program by all qualified persons.

G. Education and Training

The duties of the Committee shall be to oversee the education and training portion of all training Seminars of the Association. The Committee shall further encourage, solicit, and assist in the development of new and innovative ideas for the education and training of the Association.

H. Conference site selection and planning

The duties of the Committee shall be to solicit, receive and evaluate all bids for potential sites for the Annual Training Conference. After evaluation, the Committee shall present recommendations to the Board of Directors for review and consideration. The determination of the site for the Training Conference shall be by the vote of the Board of Directors. The Vice President who is responsible for the training conference will be the chair of this Committee.

I. Election

The duties of the Election Committee shall include the publication of ballots and procedures for voting, the administration of the voting at the fall meeting, and the security and tallying of all votes cast.

J. Hospitality / Entertainment

The Duties will consist of maintaining the hospitality room during conferences and responsible for providing the Board of Directors with a budget and seek approval for any funds spent. The area Vice President shall serve as the chair of this Committee.