

*Central Arizona Fire and  
Medical Authority  
Compass*



*“May we never lose our way.”*

## Introduction

The fire service consists of a unique blend of individuals that exude determination, professionalism, bravery, and heart. It is a difficult world for those outside the fire service family to understand, and at times, it is even difficult for those within the fire service to understand. Each agency is a unique entity unto itself. This uniqueness can lead to confusion when trying to determine an individual organization's identity and philosophy.

In order to assist our Agency and its members in finding their way, we have developed the *Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority Compass*. When determining the framework for the Agency's Compass, we first had to understand the significance of the compass itself. Generally, when a person thinks of a compass they picture a device for determining direction. For centuries seafaring people have found the compass to be an indispensable tool in finding their way especially under difficult conditions. Merriam-Webster defines a compass as a channel or direct course of thought or action having a guiding, governing, or motivating purpose. The latter definition is the driving force behind the development of our Compass. We want it to **guide** us through both good times and bad; to **govern** our actions at all times treating our fellow members as well as the members of our community with the utmost respect; and to **motivate** us as a unit to be the best we can be always keeping in mind the Mission, Vision, and the Values we espouse — **Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Excellence**. We at the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority will depend on our Compass as we navigate the day-to-day challenges of being a dynamic and successful organization. The Compass will guide us no matter the ferocity of any storms we face.

The Board of Directors of the Central Yavapai and Chino Valley Fire Districts signed an agreement to blend the two organizations as the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority in October 2015. In November of the same year, a committee representing a cross section of our organization was formed to create one blended set of Mission, Vision, and Values. These were reaffirmed in spring of 2019.

The Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority is made-up of committed individuals who have chosen to become members of our *unique family*. Each one of us should be proud of this relationship and treat it with respect. When a person makes a conscious choice to become part of something, whether it is an emergency services agency, a club affiliation, or an association of any type, it then becomes their responsibility to adhere to the standards of conduct set forth by that group. As a group we developed our philosophies, and as a group we will champion our cause.

The *Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority Compass* illustrates the vision and culture of our family unit. The Compass exists to support our Mission and our members. It reinforces our belief in the labor-management process as well as our belief in supporting each other. This document will continue to evolve over time. As we embrace the changes of the future, it will be necessary to review the Compass and adjust accordingly to ensure it continues to reflect our philosophies. However, the core ideologies outlined within will remain unchanged as they are "**core**" to our organization.



## *Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority Compass*

The Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority is committed to providing service beyond the expectations of our community. In addition, we have deemed it equally important to treat each other with a level of professionalism and respect that surpasses our own expectations. This document has been prepared by and for us in order that we may each understand the philosophies and beliefs that have been deemed essential by the organization and our members. The Compass shall serve as a guide for all current and future members of the agency as we move forward in the reinforcement of our core ideologies and the attainment of our stated Mission, Vision, and Values.

Our Mission **“Protecting life and property through prevention and response”** recognizes the importance of prevention. We understand that the response aspect of our job, which is how we are normally identified by the public, is the reactionary part of the service we provide to our community. Prevention serves as the proactive segment of our work. Both are our purpose and our promise to all that seek our help.

Our Vision **“To be a progressive fire service leader in Arizona through leadership, cooperation, and innovation”** is an on-going effort to provide the best service we can for both our internal and external customers. It is not something that we can achieve without a true commitment to meeting the challenges of today and creating opportunities for tomorrow. The Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority was founded as part of this Vision.

Our core Values are what we as a group believe in; they are the cornerstone of our Agency. Times change, guidelines change, equipment changes, and personnel change, but our core ideologies will remain constant. As a group we worked together to define our core, and we will remain committed to their spirit and intent despite the test of time.

**We strive to serve our internal and external customers with **PRIDE**:**

**Professional** – We will adhere to the highest standards of our profession and adopt best practices.

**Respect** – We believe in the basic dignity of every individual and all members of the community and organization.

**Integrity** – We are honest and accountable.

**Dedication** – We are committed to quality, reliable and respectful service delivery.

**Excellence** – We will demonstrate a high level of knowledge and skill in all aspects of our profession.



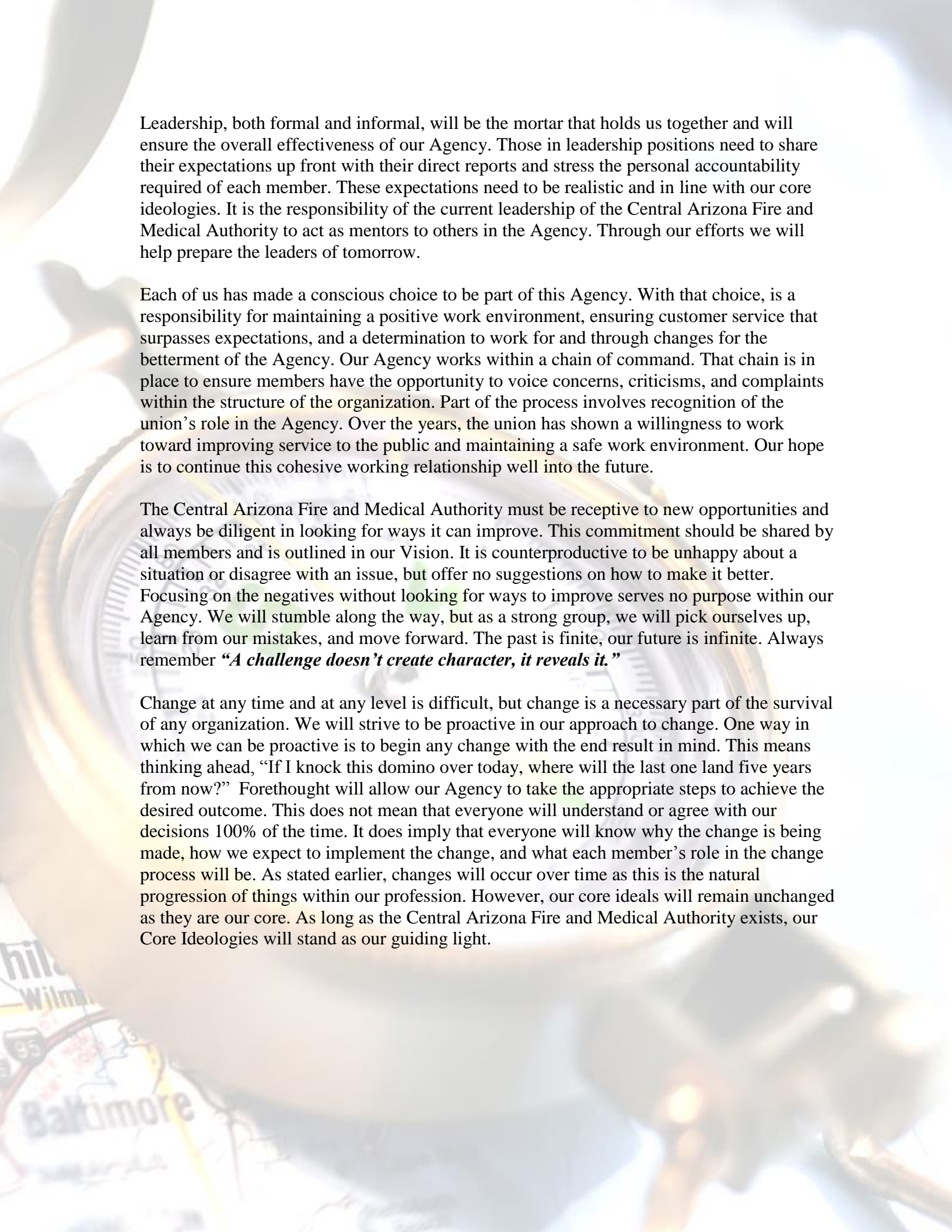
*The Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority Compass* focuses on the premise that our members are central to the success of the organization. A house cannot be any stronger than the foundation on which it is built. In that same regard, our agency cannot be any stronger than our membership. The fire service provides each of us with much more than a job. It provides us a relationship with a group of people we commit our lives to on a daily basis; with that commitment comes personal responsibility. Each member is responsible for their performance, and each member will be held accountable for their actions. We will only achieve a positive work environment by combining personal responsibility with respect for our fellow members. These are the minimum expectations for our agency.

Since we are an organization setting a course based on stated Mission, Vision, and Values, it is imperative that our member's exhibit behavior that is consistent with these values, philosophy, and vision. We want nothing less than a positive work environment, and to accomplish this goal, we must have the commitment of our entire team. As an Agency, we will strive for adherence to our Values. As a family, we know one of our members might fall. We are, to the best of our ability, a second chance organization, and as such, we have a responsibility to help our members get up, get on the right track, and be successful. In that same regard, our members have a responsibility to put forth a sincere effort to help themselves as well as those around them.

The Senior Staff and supervisors of the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority have equally important roles when it comes to communicating and upholding the Agency's philosophies. They must set an example for their direct reports by maintaining a consistent positive attitude, and by providing a positive work environment to the best of their abilities. Our supervisors should be proactive in their approach to leadership by working toward a solution to problems through adherence to our values. When communicating with others, they should remember the words of Stephen Covey, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." Working in this manner provides motivation for all members of the Agency. Remember, be patient when you are communicating with other members and listen—a person who can truly listen to what someone is saying will learn much more than someone who tries to control a conversation.

Part of being a leader is recognizing, supporting, and rewarding the positive actions of our members. When members achieve or surpass our expectations of service to both our internal and external customers, they should be recognized for those actions. Another aspect of being a leader is knowing when to provide corrective action for behavior that does not fall within our guidelines. When self-discipline fails, leaders need to be ready to help the member get back on track. We strive to create accountable people, but we must recognize that there will be times we have to hold people accountable. Leadership is critical to maintaining the high standards of the Agency that enable us to achieve our vision.

We can only adhere to the principle of accountability through courage. **All** of us must have the courage to engage in honest conversations with members that are not meeting Agency expectations. It is important to remember that avoiding these conversations or not taking action is a disservice to both the member in question as well as the rest of our members.



Leadership, both formal and informal, will be the mortar that holds us together and will ensure the overall effectiveness of our Agency. Those in leadership positions need to share their expectations up front with their direct reports and stress the personal accountability required of each member. These expectations need to be realistic and in line with our core ideologies. It is the responsibility of the current leadership of the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority to act as mentors to others in the Agency. Through our efforts we will help prepare the leaders of tomorrow.

Each of us has made a conscious choice to be part of this Agency. With that choice, is a responsibility for maintaining a positive work environment, ensuring customer service that surpasses expectations, and a determination to work for and through changes for the betterment of the Agency. Our Agency works within a chain of command. That chain is in place to ensure members have the opportunity to voice concerns, criticisms, and complaints within the structure of the organization. Part of the process involves recognition of the union's role in the Agency. Over the years, the union has shown a willingness to work toward improving service to the public and maintaining a safe work environment. Our hope is to continue this cohesive working relationship well into the future.

The Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority must be receptive to new opportunities and always be diligent in looking for ways it can improve. This commitment should be shared by all members and is outlined in our Vision. It is counterproductive to be unhappy about a situation or disagree with an issue, but offer no suggestions on how to make it better. Focusing on the negatives without looking for ways to improve serves no purpose within our Agency. We will stumble along the way, but as a strong group, we will pick ourselves up, learn from our mistakes, and move forward. The past is finite, our future is infinite. Always remember ***“A challenge doesn't create character, it reveals it.”***

Change at any time and at any level is difficult, but change is a necessary part of the survival of any organization. We will strive to be proactive in our approach to change. One way in which we can be proactive is to begin any change with the end result in mind. This means thinking ahead, “If I knock this domino over today, where will the last one land five years from now?” Forethought will allow our Agency to take the appropriate steps to achieve the desired outcome. This does not mean that everyone will understand or agree with our decisions 100% of the time. It does imply that everyone will know why the change is being made, how we expect to implement the change, and what each member's role in the change process will be. As stated earlier, changes will occur over time as this is the natural progression of things within our profession. However, our core ideals will remain unchanged as they are our core. As long as the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority exists, our Core Ideologies will stand as our guiding light.





## **Core Ideologies**

### **We will adhere to the highest standards of our profession and adopt best practices.**

Our commitment is to provide a growth environment for our personnel to ensure we have the best and the brightest ready to guide the organization for the future in every division. We will remain committed to the on-going review of our succession plans to ensure they meet the challenges of today and prepare our personnel for the opportunities of tomorrow.

This commitment extends beyond professional and technical development. Our profession is dangerous. Every year we are losing more fire service professionals to the ravages of cancer, heart disease, and PTSD as well as other ailments. We must continually educate and update policies/practices that will, to the best of our ability, protect our members so they can return home at the end of their shift as well as reach a happy and healthy retirement.

We will remain committed to the highest standard of technical training to ensure the safety of our members when faced with the physical and emotional stresses of emergency response.

### **We believe in the basic dignity of every individual and all members of the community and organization.**

We are committed to each other and our community. Each person we encounter will be treated with respect no matter their societal status. If one of our members is down, we will be there for them. Each of us has a family that we were born into or those we have created through other relationships. Together, the Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority is a family. We will create a safe place for our members to seek assistance without judgement, and will be there for our members in their time of need. We will also be there to celebrate in times of great joy. Our commitment to each other is at the core of who we are.

### **We are honest and accountable.**

We are committed to being and holding each other accountable. This requires each of us to display the courage necessary to be honest when someone is not meeting expectations or is not following our stated Values. We do no favors by not holding each other accountable, and we do not allow a person to grow if we do not have the courage to be honest.

We are accountable to our community which means we must commit to sound fiscal practices and be partners in community development. This requires that we have a Strategic Plan that is reviewed and updated regularly.



**We are committed to quality, reliable and respectful service delivery.**

We will remain adaptable through innovation continually looking for new ways to meet our challenges and plan for sustainability. Through individual commitment to professional development, we will ensure that our customers receive the highest quality of care. Adherence to our Values will ensure that our service is delivered with respect and ingenuity while we grow to meet demand through proper data and statistical analysis.

We will provide service beyond the expectations of our customers both internal and external.

**We will demonstrate a high level of knowledge and skill in all aspects of our profession.**

It is through our core values, our commitment to training, development, planning, community, and to family that we will be successful. We recognize the need for each of us to grow as professionals within our respective disciplines. There is no one division more important than another nor is there one person more important than another. We support each other so that we may provide the best possible service internally as well as to our community. Through this commitment we will ensure a sustainable organization.



## Organizational Expectations

As Fire Chief, I feel it is my responsibility to set and share what I expect of every member of Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority. My expectations are in line with our stated philosophies and reinforce our core principles.

1. Right Time, Right Place, Right Uniform
2. Know your job, do your job
3. See it, own it, solve it  
= **Accountability**
4. Clear, open, honest, and frequent communication  
= **Transparency**
5. Do the right thing  
= **Ethical behavior**
6. Be constructive in criticism
7. Make a decision; don't be afraid to make a mistake! You know the SOG's and policies as well as what needs to be done in a given situation... If it's off track, we'll work it out later.
8. Provide service beyond the expectations of our customers, both internal and external.
9. Set the example.
10. Act as if you are already in the position you aspire to attain (Thank you Chief Polacek for helping me articulate this one)  
= **Lead**
11. Always be a student as well as a mentor  
= **Learn**
12. Adhere to our agreed upon organizational values
13. Be honest with people even when it's uncomfortable i.e. evaluations or correcting behavior
14. Make the right, not popular decision  
= **Courage**
15. Think beyond today  
= **Vision**

Sincerely,

*Scott A Freitag*

Fire Chief