City of Bellingham
Classification Specification - Civil Service or AFSCME

CLASS TITLE	**Battalion Chief**
DEPARTMENT	**Fire**
UNION:	**106S**
SG:	
CS:	**Promotional**
FLSA:	**Y**
EE04CODE:	**OA**

NATURE OF WORK:

Manages the personnel, operations and activities of a battalion consisting of emergency response personnel and equipment/apparatus. Performs similar management duties when assigned to head a division or program within the Fire Department. Provides and conducts a variety of management, technical support and administrative duties in assigned functional areas of the Fire Department or on a special project basis. The Battalion Chief is a member of the Department management team and assists or is responsible for the development of assigned personnel and programs. Works closely and coordinates with other Division/Program managers in the accomplishment of Department goals and objectives.

Responds to emergency incidents as a command officer. Determines appropriate action and response to incidents and directs operations to assure the safe, efficient and effective deployment of personnel, equipment and resources.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

This classification functions between the Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief and the Captains in the management or supervision line of command. This position is distinguished from other positions by its responsibility for operations or Division and/or major Department program. When assigned to operations: oversees all non-emergency and emergency activities, support functions, standards compliance, special programs and daily routines of an assigned Battalion. When assigned to a Division and/or a major department program: recommends, plans, organizes, develops, coordinates, delivers and provides the supervisory/administrative/budget oversight required for the efficient and effective management of the program.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to the Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief. Exercises considerable independent judgment under guidance of City and Department policies and procedures, and City, State, and Federal applicable laws and regulations.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

1. Plans, organizes and manages the activities and support functions of a Battalion or Division/Program (including assignments, scheduling and staffing). Support assignments

include: Emergency incident reporting, pre-incident planning, fire facility repair and maintenance, fire station supplies, emergency apparatus and equipment, support officers, critical incident stress debriefing. Inclusive of these assignments are, program development/oversight, writing technical specifications; supervising the maintenance, operation and regular replacement of all emergency apparatus and equipment; equipment inventory, service and performance records per established industry standards; annual or regular testing of fire hose, ladders, aerials, pumpers and breathing apparatus.

2. Oversees the management of emergencies using industry standards of incident command, as necessary. Directs crews as to proper emergency methods and coordinates the efforts of assigned personnel to maximize operational efficiency and safety. Summons additional resources and support agencies, as needed, to manage an emergency.

3. Initiates or recommends personnel actions such as transfers, discipline, promotions and discharges. Conducts, assists and coordinates training of new officers. Initiates or recommends new methods, procedures or equipment in order to improve working conditions and overall departmental operations. Assists and trains supervisors on their duties. Assists personnel in solving work problems, such as scheduling conflicts and emergencies. Reviews reports written by supervised personnel for content and accuracy. Monitors personnel performance and does performance appraisals, as required.

4. Monitors and provides direction to Prospect Communications Center in the areas of crew assignments, apparatus status and their deployment as required by policy or as the situation dictates.

5. Coordinates with other Battalion Chiefs and Program/Division managers to provide consistency in department programs, goals and objectives. Interprets and enforces City policies and departmental rules and regulations. Assists with and/or is responsible for development of performance standards, departmental policies and procedures for areas of assigned responsibility.

6. Conducts inspections of company personnel, quarters, equipment and records; reviews and reports on drills.

7. Performs budget and financial administration, assigns work, sets priorities, prepares reports, plans, inspects for quality control and trains, coordinates with other agencies, acts as the liaison for community relations/education; may work with confidential information.

8. Has frequent contact with the general public, City staff, public officials, and emergency response providers for the purpose of problem resolution, providing information and coordinating mutual efforts.

9. Attends meetings, seminars, schools and/or training sessions to keep abreast of modern fire service training and techniques.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

10. Conducts training and drills.

11. May assume command of the Department in the absence of the Chief or Assistant Chief.

12. When necessary performs the tasks and duties of a firefighter.

13. Performs other related duties as required.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

- Excellent knowledge of modern emergency methods and equipment.
- Thorough knowledge of the principles, practices and operational aspects of fire prevention/suppression, emergency medical services and emergency management.
- Knowledge of City and County geography and location of principal hazards.
- Knowledge of and/or ability to learn Department, City, State and Federal rules, laws, code, ordinances, methods and contractual requirements related to areas of assigned responsibility.
- Interpersonal sensitivity to work effectively with employees and the general public.
- Excellent management skills including: leadership/supervisory skills, problem analysis, decision making, planning, organizing, management control, interpersonal sensitivity, adaptability/flexibility, stress tolerance and time management.
- Knowledge of and demonstrated competency in Incident Command system.
- Ability to direct efforts of firefighters under emergency conditions to maximize safety and minimize injuries and loss of property.
- Ability to conduct fire investigations, analyze fire investigation findings, draw sound conclusions and make appropriate recommendations.
- Excellent oral communication skills for working with a diversity of personnel, public officials and citizens. Ability to write effectively and with clarity.
- Ability to conduct training sessions.
- Knowledge of and ability to learn fiscal and records management including cost analysis, budget analysis and development.
- Ability to understand and use highly technical equipment/systems like radios, computer/radio networks, personal computers and associated support applications.
- Knowledge of building construction and fire protection/alerting systems, as applied to fire prevention/suppression.
- Ability to work effectively with agencies outside the department i.e. professional architects, engineers, building officials and vendors.
- Willingness and ability to respond to off-duty recalls for major emergencies.
- Ability to keep confidentiality.
- Ability to meet and maintain training and certification requirements mandated by Federal or State Law for Incident Commanders.
- Willingness and ability to maintain physical fitness and to participate in the Department fitness program.
- Physical ability to climb ladders, carry fire hose, lift patients and maintain Self Contained Breathing Apparatus certification.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

The work environment may involve shift work and off-duty recall for major emergencies, including weekends and holidays, in a paramilitary organization. Work is performed in a variety of settings including offices, a fire station, emergency scene, and emergency response vehicle. The environment ranges from a normal/routine to the emergency setting with unusual modes of communication, extreme noise, discomfort and hazard. The emergency environment may require the management/performance of hazardous tasks under conditions that require strenuous exertion with limited visibility, exposure to hazardous or toxic chemicals and gases, extremes in temperature, cramped surroundings, exposed heights, activities in and around water. It may also involve working with citizens experiencing a wide range of emotions (rage, grief, confusion, etc.) as a result of an emergency. May be exposed to infectious diseases which require the use of protective equipment, and exposure to the elements.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- A minimum of five years of experience in an officer level position (such as Fire Captain and EMS Captain, or Division Chief) with the City of Bellingham Fire Department
- A.A., A.S. degree or 90 credit hours of college with studies in education, public policy and administration, management, fire protection, fire technology, fire command and administration or related field required. A baccalaureate degree is preferred.
- Qualification in the following areas offered through the Bellingham Fire Department:
  - Tactics and Incident Management System (IMS)
  - Incident Safety Officer
- HazMat On-scene Commander

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- EMT or Paramedic certification
- Valid Washington State drivers license.

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COMMISSION ADOPTION: November 12, 2025