Connections

Providing resources and information from Management Services in support of the Department's mission.

"Character is power."

~Booker T. Washington

Tis the Season to be Safe!

Lynnette Round, Communications Office

As the holiday season ramps up, we want you and your loved ones to enjoy this time of year. As we come together to celebrate, here are just a few tips to ensure your festivities are safe and injury free.

If you are using candles to celebrate your holiday, make sure to place them in an open area and at least three-feet from combustible decorations. Extinguish candles before leaving a room (do not leave them unattended) and make sure to keep them out of the reach of small children and away from pets.

If you are cooking and baking, stay in the kitchen. It is so easy to get distracted with friends and family around. Did you know that unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires? Keep objects that can catch fire, such as pot holders, paper towels, loose clothing, and other flammable items, away from cooking surfaces. Try to keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean. Spilled oil, splattered grease, or food debris can catch fire while the stove or oven is being used or during the oven's self-cleaning cycle. Always check the oven to make sure it is empty before turning it on. Always have the lid or a fire extinguisher nearby when cooking. If a fire occurs, cover the pan with the lid to smother the fire or use the fire extinguisher. Never attempt to move the pan, and never pour water on an oil/grease fire, it will just make it bigger.

Did you know that a Christmas tree can be one of the most hazardous items in your home? An ignited tree can be totally consumed by a fire in three to five seconds, and generate over 2,000 degrees of radiant heat. Keep your tree in good shape by cutting two to three inches off the bottom of a fresh tree and putting it in water immediately. Use a sturdy holder and fill with water daily. Check lights carefully for broken sockets or frayed wired before you put them on your tree. Replace any damaged strings. Place your tree away from exits, fireplaces, and other heat sources and make sure to remove your tree promptly after the holidays.

Electrical fires run high during the holiday season, so try to repair or replace worn, damaged outlets, cords, and appliances immediately. Use a surge protector for lights to avoid an overload. Use no more than three sets of lights per single extension cord. Plug the surge protector directly into an outlet, not into an extension cord or another surge protector. Stapling cords to the wall can damage the wire and cause a fire. Avoid running cords across doorways, under carpets, or under furniture. Unplug lights before going to bed or leaving the house. Use outdoor lighting for outdoors and indoor lighting for indoor use.

"This should be a joyous time for your family and friends," said CAL FIRE's Chief of Public Education Lynne Tolmachoff. "We want you to have a wonderful celebration and following a few simple safety tips can help minimize your chance of an accident."

For more safety tips on how to protect you and your family, visit www.fire.ca.gov.

What's Inside?

What is Employee Engagement?

James McMillan, Workforce and Succession Planning Unit

You might be thinking, “What is employee engagement, and how does it benefit the workforce?” The Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement states that engaged employees are proud of their organization and committed to helping the department succeed (http://www.cpshr.us/EmployeeEngagement/). Engaged employees have a heightened connection with the mission of their organization and provide “discretionary effort,” challenging themselves to help the department succeed. Employee engagement drives performance and creates a positive and productive work environment.

Engaged employees can connect the dots between the work they do and the mission of their organization or department. Creating an environment to foster this notion can be as simple as understanding the mission. The mission of CAL FIRE can be found on posters throughout our offices, on the Intranet, or through our supervisors and managers. A Departmental e-mail was sent out regarding CAL FIRE being represented in the Netflix docu-series Fire Chasers, which has served to represent the professionalism and dedication of CAL FIRE’s personnel to support the mission to serve and safeguard the people and protect the property and resources of California. Simply associating the CAL FIRE logo with the efforts of the men and women battling wildfires can assist with our engagement efforts. Everyone from administrative staff to those out in the field support the mission, and a properly engaged workforce understands that and strives toward the success of that mission.

Engaged employees are more likely to rise to the challenge themselves to support the mission. Taking on challenges can be as simple as sharing an idea with another unit to help with an assignment or as complex as taking charge and leadership of a new project. With the generational shift, experienced employees retiring, and new employees and ideas coming in, the challenges will become greater, and the opportunities for growth, development, and hard work will be abundant.

Combining the aspects of connection with the Department’s mission and rising to challenges will create an engaged work environment. To make those connections and foster that environment, we can discuss the mission and what it means with our peers, supervisors, and managers. What challenges exist now, and what challenges will we see in the future? How can we prepare for these challenges now? We all have strengths and weaknesses that may complement or be complemented by our colleagues, and working to understand our role will assist us in facing whatever challenges stand in front of us.

Employee engagement takes a multifaceted effort from the whole Department to create an engaged culture that supports the Department’s mission. From small scale efforts to thinking positively every day to larger scale efforts such as using your expertise to help another employee or unit, fostering an engaged work environment will not only benefit the Department, but benefit you as an employee.

If you have any thoughts, comments, or ideas that you would like to share with the Workforce and Succession Planning Unit, please connect with us at WorkforcePlanningandSuccession@fire.ca.gov.

PSP on the Intranet

Monte Manson, Professional Standards Program

The Department’s Professional Standards Program (PSP) collaborates with other internal programs (e.g., Labor and Human Resource Management, Equal Employment Opportunity, Law Enforcement) and external stakeholders (e.g., the California Department of Human Resources, the State Personnel Board, Local 2881) to ensure that managers, supervisors, and lead employees have the necessary tools to improve hiring, training, discipline, and other developmental processes.
Some of these deliverables include statewide training delivered at the local units and the most recent release of PSP’s Intranet page. This page, accessible to all employees, provides a centralized resource for guidance on a variety of topics. For example:

- The mission/vision statement—PSP’s vision is to create a well-trained and diverse workforce that cultivates a culture of

(Cont’d. on Page 7)

Dates to Remember

Final Filing Date(s):

Arson and Bomb Investigator
Continuous Filing

Deputy State Fire Marshal
Continuous Filing

Deputy State Fire Marshal III (Specialist)
Continuous Filing

Fire Fighter II (Paramedic)
Continuous Filing

Forester I (Nonsupervisory)
Continuous Filing

Forester II (Supervisory)
Continuous Filing

Forester III
Continuous Filing

Forestry Assistant II
Continuous Filing

The Cloud Defined

Ron Ralph, Information Technology Services

What Is the Cloud?

You probably hear about "the cloud" frequently and think of a single, huge computer that holds all the world's information. Actually, the cloud refers to some company's network of data center servers that is accessible to consumers and organizations via the Internet. Amazon has its own cloud; so do Apple, Google, and a lot of other companies, as well as CAL FIRE itself. "The cloud" is a generic term to describe whichever company's network of servers to which you connect.

"Step by step and the thing is done."

~Charles Atlas

What Is the Cloud Used For?

The cloud makes sharing documents, photographs, and pretty much any type of file access and transfer easy, using any device running any operating system. All you need is an Internet connection. But the power behind the cloud is storage and everything as a service.

Whereas some clouds are built mainly for storage and sharing, such as Box and Instagram, other clouds deliver services. The services are typically sold on a monthly or annual subscription basis; others are free. Two common services are Software as a Service (SaaS) and Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS).

SaaS covers a lot of territory, such as online email, word processing, customer relationship management (CRM) software, software development management, content management, and much more. In California state service, information technology entities are allowed to procure SaaS quite a bit easier than other technology investments, but it still requires fairly rigorous justification. Over the last year, CAL FIRE has made SaaS investments in fleet management, training systems, inspections, and other niche applications.

With IaaS, you get a virtual server in the cloud, on which you can install and run applications just like you would on a physical server in your office. It has everything an ordinary server has: network connections, storage, and so on. The cloud provider owns the server, which runs within the provider's information technology infrastructure, and is responsible for making sure it runs properly. This eases the administrative burden for companies and saves them money. Procuring this type of system is much more difficult, as the State wants to consolidate these efforts under the data center, which is unfortunately, much more expensive.

Why Is Storing Documents All Over the Cloud Bad for Business?

Like all State entities, CAL FIRE needs to approach cloud services very carefully. With many services available, it seems reasonable to use them for holding work files, especially if existing CAL FIRE information technology services do not meet the need. However, storing files in any location other than CAL FIRE sanctioned servers makes those files difficult for information technology to find and track, which presents problem for our Legal Office, and it also poses additional security risks.

Remember, information technology is responsible for the protection of all electronic CAL FIRE information. If you save the only copy of certain files offsite, information technology can not recover it. If the files are lost or stolen, and they contain sensitive or confidential information, legal liability may not stop with the organization and may end up causing problems for you personally. It is also difficult for coworkers to access offsite files when and if they are needed in a pinch, which is likely to occur when you are on vacation or otherwise unavailable.

The level of security offered from one cloud provider to another differs as well. Not every provider has the best track record as far as keeping out bad guys who find new and interesting ways to breach servers every day. Products like Drop Box fall into this category.

Over the next few months, CAL FIRE Information Technology will continue to roll out cloud based services. Of special note will be the implementation of Microsoft SharePoint, and One Drive services in late winter/ spring. OneDrive is part of the Office 365 suite and allows individual storage. It is meant to work with SharePoint which is the group file storage and collaboration solution, and which will eventually replace our Intranet services.

Dear Claire DeAir: Purchasing Large

Stephanie Marley, Business Services Office

Are your procurement, contract, state, and federal property, or policy needs fraught with confusion? The Business Services Office (BSO) presents Claire DeAir, who will be here every month to offer advice and to ease all of your BSO burdens.

DEAR CLAIRE DeAIR,

I have been asked to make some large purchases for my unit—all of these purchases are for non-information technology (IT) goods, and some are over $50,000.00. It is my understanding that I must work with BSO before making any non-IT goods purchase $50,000 or above. Is that true?

-BIG SPENDAH

Dear BIG SPENDAH,

Yes, that is true! It is Department policy that purchases of non-IT goods exceeding $50,000.00 MUST come through BSO before the purchase is completed. You made a very important distinction in your question—you are purchasing non-IT goods. It is important to note that if any of these purchases were IT (goods or services), they all would be required to go through Information Technology Services in Sacramento Headquarters, regardless of dollar value, because IT purchases fall under CAL FIRE's centralized, IT purchasing authority. Furthermore, non-IT services have requirements involving the BSO Contracts Office at different thresholds.

Field purchasers, such as yourself, have a bit more autonomy when procuring non-IT goods. However, part of our delegated purchasing authority, which is granted to CAL FIRE by the Department of General Services (DGS), requires that there are controls set in place, especially for high-dollar purchases. Although these regulations often require extra steps, we should look at these regulations gratefully–they help ensure that we do not make mistakes before spending large amounts of money! They also help to ensure that we are following our procurement process correctly and will continue to receive our delegated purchasing authority in the future. Without this authority, our ability to make any non-IT goods purchases within the Department would be drastically reduced!

Depending on the purchase, BSO's role in making non-IT goods purchases above $50,000.00 will vary between approving the purchase, conducting the competitive bidding for the purchase, and working with DGS to procure the goods for the purchaser. We will look a bit closer at what role BSO has in different types of purchases above $50,000.00, what is expected of the unit purchaser, and what the overall process looks like. But, remember, all the scenarios that follow are for non-IT goods purchases, and we know that the processes and thresholds are not the always the same for different procurement classifications.

Unit Purchaser's Role

Once a unit identifies a need for a large purchase, the unit purchaser must draft the specifications, or Scope of Work (SOW), and contact BSO via the BSO Procurement mailbox (BSO.procurementmailbox@fire.ca.gov). A BSO analyst will work with the unit to determine the next necessary steps to make the purchase appropriately. Depending on the circumstances, the BSO analyst may require more supporting documentation, such as vendor quotes, product research, or a justification and/or state purpose for the non-IT goods. Let us look at the different types of purchases BSO assists in making, and what BSO does to make those procurements happen.

Leveraged Procurement Agreements (LPA)

Many large purchases are made through LPAs. LPAs include California Multiple Award Schedules (CMAS), Statewide Commodity Contracts (SC), State Price Schedule (SPS), Master Agreements (MA), and Cooperative Agreements (COOP). Each of these LPAs come with unique requirements and instructions, and part of BSO's role in approving LPA purchases above $50,000.00 is ensuring the purchase is made in accordance with that particular agreement.

When an LPA is used for a purchase over $50,000.00, BSO's role is to review and approve that purchase. This may require correspondence with the purchaser to ensure all back-up documentation has been acquired, the payment document is completed appropriately, and, like mentioned above, the agreement requirements have been fulfilled. An LPA is a great way to make large purchases, because DGS has already conducted the competitive bidding, a big piece of the procurement process! In many instances, once the purchase documents are approved by BSO, the unit can move forward with the purchase right

(Cont'd. on Page 7)

Developing a Maturity Model

Windy C. Bouldin, Office of Program Accountability

According to the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), maturity models describe the "as is" state of a process, provide prescriptive guidelines on improvement, and can compare one equivalent process implementation to another. A maturity model is not limited to evaluating a single process and can be used to evaluate a series of processes under a program or a system. In fact, a popular maturity model—The Capability Maturity Model developed by Carnegie Mellon University—was used to improve software development.

Most maturity models have numerical values assigned to the various levels—zero typically represents the lowest level, and the description of that level is often nonexistent or ad hoc. The highest level, typically a five, represents the optimized process that exceeds the benefit. In the example below—Compliance and Ethics Program Maturity Model adapted by the IIA's Research Foundation—no numeric value is assigned, but the levels are designated from lowest (i.e., initial) to highest (i.e., world class).

"Success is a decision."

~David Fischman

COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS PROGRAM MATURITY ATTRIBUTES[4]

Attribute	Initial	Repeatable	Defined	Mature	World Class
1. Code of Ethics How effectively does the code outline management's expectations regarding ethical conduct?	• There is no formally documented code of ethics. • In general, there are no other means of communicating management's expectations regarding ethical conduct.	• A code of ethics has been developed, but it may not be comprehensive or current. • Experienced employees generally understand management's expectations regarding ethical conduct, but new employees may not have any way of determining those expectations.	• A comprehensive code of ethics exists, was approved by the board, and is reviewed every two to three years to determine what updates are needed. • All employees must sign off annually that they are in compliance with the code of ethics. • New employees must sign a document asserting that they have read and understand the code.	• The code of ethics is reviewed as appropriate by outside legal counsel to ensure it remains current and appropriate. • The code of ethics is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. • All employees must complete annual questionnaires that ask more probing questions regarding compliance with the code of ethics.	• Specific compliance and ethics policies are in place to support and provide additional guidance on key components of the code. • Periodic focus groups and/or surveys are conducted with a representative sample of employees to assess their understanding of the code of ethics and their perceptions on the level of compliance throughout the organization.

To develop a basic maturity model, consider the following provided in part by the IIA:

1. *Determine the purpose of the maturity model and its components.* Examine the objective and identify the components that drive that objective. The example provided above is a line item of a maturity model established to assess an organization's compliance and ethics program (purpose). The attributes (components) for the maturity model include a Code of Ethics (illustrated), Culture and Consistency, Awareness, Structure and Accountability, Process Automation and Integration, and Goals and Metrics.
2. *Determine the scale*. What levels are going to be used? As previously mentioned, not all maturity models require numerical values; however, careful consideration should be given to the titles to ensure they convey the achievement expected.
3. *Develop the expectations for each component level*. The maturity model should reflect a progressively elevated set of expectations culminating at the highest level. Considerations should also include how well each level will build off of each other and how the levels align.
4. *Set a target for each component*. However, in some cases, the highest level of maturity may not be desirable to the organization, as it may be deemed too costly or too risky.
5. *Assess the level of maturity by component*. Assess the process or processes through observation, inquiry, re-performance, and other appropriate tests to validate the maturity.
6. *Consider what the model may have missed*. Keep in mind that no model can consider all the circumstances that mitigate risk. The IIA cautions, "Care should be taken not to apply the model as a simple checklist."
7. *Report on conclusions*.
8. *Revisit the model regularly*. Continuous improvement is necessary as the business environment is always evolving.

Maturity models can be used to evaluate many conditions. And, while they provide a great deal of motivation toward process improvement they also involve a certain level of subjectivity. However, the benefit of an honest assessment can help determine if the organization is working S.M.A.R.T./ S.M.A.R.T.E.R. or hard/harder.

For more information on a variety of business tools, please visit the Office of Program Accountability on the CAL FIRE Intranet.

Source: *Selecting, Using, and Creating Maturity Models: A Tool for Assurance and Consulting Engagements*

Protection Against Fraudulent Charges

Tom Lutzenberger, Management Services

The end of November marked the beginning of the winter holiday season as well as plenty of Black Friday consumerism. So, like many Americans, I promptly finished my turkey and went hunting online to see what sort of goodies available. Unfortunately, what I found on November 30th when I looked at my credit card statement was a transaction we all hear about in the news. Somebody fraudulently charged by credit card to the tune of $310 and change.

Fortunately, my card company reversed the charge and closed the account promptly. Unfortunately, this particular scam has been going on since at least June 2016 with hundreds of people across the country getting hit for amounts of $300 to $1,000 on the credit card and Visa ATM card accounts. The lesson, of course, is that no amount of prevention or protection is going to stop a credit card theft these days. It is too easy now. The transactions happen digitally, they are fast, and the culprit is gone before you know it happened. In my case, even though per the fake transaction code it was an in-person magnetic swipe sale, the entire theft happened digitally from a far away city without triggering any bank warnings or credit card monitoring alarms, all of which were in place on my personal account.

So, what is a person to do? Prevention helps, but it will not stop every digital theft. Nowadays, we live in a financial age where one just has to be ready to respond as soon as a problem comes up:

- *Monitor daily* – make sure to check all your personal accounts daily and review any new transactions. Also look at those a few days earlier as some lag and show up in the already posted group of transactions, depending on payment processor.

- *Reduce your card credit limit* – If you do not buy $10,000 every month why would you need a $30,000 spending limit? Reduce it and reduce your exposure risk.

- *Protect your kids* – Children's social security numbers are hot commodity since few parents check them or run credit reports. Then the kid becomes an adult and finds out his or her credit history is already destroyed at 18. Monitor them as you would your own account.

- *Have contact telephone numbers ready* – The biggest pain when a fraud happens is connecting with the right bank or card office fast. Have the phone numbers ready and easily accessible.

- *Check odd transactions right away* – Many share accounts with spouses and partners. Do not feel bad about asking, "Hey, do you know anything about this charge at Acme for $56 yesterday?"

- *Do not give out your ATM PIN* – Use your credit card function on an ATM card; never punch in your PIN with a vendor's payment machine.

- *Do not use an ATM that looks broken or messed with* – Card skimming is extremely common and involves inserting a skim device in an ATM or gas pump to steal card information.

DeAir *(Cont'd.)*

away.

If an LPA is not available for the items you need to purchase, there are a few other options available to fairly conduct the purchase.

Certified Small Business/Disabled Veterans Enterprises (SB/DVBE) Option

When purchasing from an LPA is not an option, the procurement must satisfy competition in another way. One such option is the SB/DVBE option, a procurement method that is defined by directly soliciting SB/DVBE vendors only, using a Request for Quote (RFQ). When using this procurement method, BSO's role is a bit more expansive, as we will write the RFQ and conduct the competitive bidding for the purchaser. However, this option is most successful when the purchaser already knows SBs or DVBEs that can respond to the Scope of Work.

The SB/DVBE option is informal and allows BSO to seek quotes up to $250,000.00 without the additional time and documentation required to advertise in the California State Contracts Register (CSCR), and without being required to include the DGS in making the purchase.

Competitive Bidding, Informal

If the SB/DVBE Option is not available, BSO will conduct the competitive bidding for the purchaser. This process involves BSO in an even greater capacity: BSO will write a RFQ (using the Unit's specifications or SOW), and advertise the RFQ in the CSCR. This is an informal process up to $100,000.00 and requires the solicitation to be advertised for a minimum of ten (10) working days. Once the quotes are received, BSO will award to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, and notify the unit. Thereafter, completing the purchase is just a matter of BSO approving the unit's completed purchase documents.

Formal Solicitation

When a purchase is over $100,000.00, and using an LPA or the SB/DVBE option is not available, then the solicitation becomes formal. A formal solicitation requires that BSO work directly with DGS to make the purchase.

Luckily for you, the unit purchaser's responsibilities are similar to when the solicitation is informal. BSO needs to have the purchaser's scope of work, justification or state purpose, as well as some other back-up information and documentation that is pertinent to that purchase. BSO will work with the purchaser to assemble documentation required by DGS to make the purchase. DGS will conduct the competitive bidding and award the contract, corresponding with BSO throughout that process. Once the contract is awarded, BSO will notify the unit.

I hope this information helps you better understand the procurement process once the purchase exceeds the $50,000 threshold.

If you have any further questions, please contact BSO at BSO.procurementmailbox@fire.ca.gov. We are here to help!

PSP *(Cont'd.)*

effective recruitment and exemplary professional conduct throughout the organization. The mission is to provide consistent and standardized guidance to all CAL FIRE employees, including managers, supervisors, and future leaders in the areas of hiring, on-boarding, employee behavior, leadership, investigations, and progressive discipline.

- Supervisor's Toolbox—standardized training, best practices, PowerPoint presentations including, but not limited to communicating expectations, onboarding, and performance evaluations.
- Information on the PSP internal complaint line as well as contact information for other PSP staff members.
- Links to a variety of forms including the Department's Code of Conduct (PO-227), which is in the process of being updated.

The location of the new PSP Intranet page can be found at: http://calfireweb.fire.ca.gov/organization/directorsoffice/psp/. In addition to building new material for its Intranet page, PSP will soon be providing guidance to managers and supervisors on reviewing the PowerPoint presentations on the PSP Intranet Page. Stay tuned...

"With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts."

~Eleanor Roosevelt

Provided by Management Services

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