

	UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY ORGANIZATIONAL MANUAL	
	Affiliation: Human Resources Policies	
	Title: Merit Probation (New Hire) Number: 900 - 140	
	Approved: 4/1/2025	By: Fire Chief Dominic Burchett
	Last Reviewed: 3/11/2025	By: HR Director Kiley Day

REFERENCES:

[UFA Policy and Procedure – General Human Resource Definitions](#)
[UFA Policy and Procedure – Re-employment of Former Employees](#)
[UFA Policy and Procedure – Employee Performance and Development Evaluation Process](#)
[UFA Policy and Procedure – Entry Level Firefighter and Paramedic](#)
[UFA Policy and Procedure – Bids, Bumps and Assignments](#)
[UFA Policy and Procedure – Reduction in Force and Reappointment Registry](#)
[UFA Policy and Procedure – Grievances and Appeals](#)
[UFA Policy and Procedure – New Hire Requirements and Process](#)
[UFA Policy and Procedure – Employment Status](#)

POLICY:

- 1.0 Status as a merit employee will be contingent upon the satisfactory completion of a merit probation period. Employees serving a merit probation period serve “at-will” under this status.
 - 1.1 The normal merit probation period is the first twelve (12) months of employment immediately following the date of hire. Merit probation is required of:
 - 1.1.1 All new full-time merit employees,
 - 1.1.2 Employees reinstated from a reappointment register (developed in accordance with UFA Policies and Procedures – Reduction in Force and Reappointment Registers) more than one year after the date of separation; in this instance the merit probation period will be reduced to the first six months above and beyond any training time determined necessary by the UFA’s Fire Training Division and EMS Division after a skills assessment,
 - 1.1.3 Employees rehired in accordance with UFA Policies and Procedures – Re-employment of Former Employees; if the merit employee left employment after serving their twelve (12) month probation period, the merit probation period will be reduced to six months. This would be in addition to any training time determined necessary by the UFA’s Fire Training Division and EMS Division after a skills assessment,
 - 1.1.4 Employees rehired in accordance with UFA Policies and Procedure – Re-employment of Former Employees; if the employee left employment

during their initial probation period, the employee must serve a new twelve (12) month probation period.

- 1.1.5 Employees who join UFA through a merger or other agreement will serve a merit probation period, if outlined in the specific agreement,
- 1.1.6 Employees who have been employed in a Part-time or At-Will Staff or Appointed status and are subsequently hired as a full-time merit employee.
- 1.2 Employees serving a merit probation period will be evaluated in accordance with UFA Policy and Procedure – Employee Performance and Development Evaluation Process at least twice, once during the first half of the merit probation period, and again during the second half, but are not limited to two evaluations.
- 1.3 During the twelve (12) month merit probation period, employees will be eligible for general pay increases (e.g., COLA increases) or increases due to pay scale market adjustments, if applicable.
- 1.4 Prior to the end of the twelve (12) month merit probation period, the Fire Chief or designee will evaluate whether to allow the employee to complete their merit probation and obtain merit status, or to extend their merit probation period, or to separate their employment in accordance with paragraph 2.0.
 - 1.4.1 A Notice of Personnel Action must be submitted prior to the completion of a merit probation period to separate employment or to extend the probation period.
- 1.5 The merit probation period may be extended for up to an additional three months for good cause.
 - 1.5.1 Employees placed on extended merit probation are not eligible for step increases until completion of the extension.
 - 1.5.2 Any extension to the merit probation period will be communicated in writing to the employee prior to the completion of the original twelve-month merit probation period and a copy of the notice will be retained in the employee's official personnel file.
 - 1.5.3 Individuals placed on an extended merit probation will be given at least one additional performance evaluation, either after two months or near the end of the extended period, whichever comes first.
 - 1.5.4 Individuals who have been placed on an approved extended merit probation period will not be entitled to benefits which are contingent upon merit employment status except the right to appeal to the Commission in cases of alleged discrimination in accordance with [UFA policy and Procedure – Grievances and Appeals](#).
 - 1.5.5 Prior to the end of the extended probation period, the Fire Chief or designee will determine whether to allow the employee to complete merit

probation and thereby obtain merit status, which does not require any additional action, or to separate the employment of the employee.

2.0 Dismissal During Merit Probation.

2.1 At any time during the merit probation period or extended merit probation period, an employee's employment may be dismissed, without right of appeal, hearing, or progressive discipline, except in cases of alleged discrimination.

2.1.1 The Human Resource Director, at the direction of the Fire Chief, will notify the employee in writing of the dismissal and the date of separation. This notification may also include an invitation for the employee to have a final interview with the Fire Chief.

3.0 Conditions Following the Merit Probation Period.

3.1 Merit employment status will begin when the merit probation period, or extended merit probation period, ends.

3.1.1 For administrative purposes, the effective date of the change from probationary to merit employment status will be the beginning of the next pay period following the completion of the merit probation period or the extended merit probation period.

4.0 Conditions Not Requiring Merit Probation Periods.

4.1 Employees who are promoted, demoted, or reclassified are not required to serve another merit probation.

4.1.1 Promoted merit employees are placed on a six-month job probation in accordance with UFA Policies and Procedures – Promotional Probation.

4.2 Employees reinstated from a reappointment register (developed in accordance with UFA Policies and Procedures – Reduction-In-Force and Reappointment Registers) within one year of the date of separation are not required to serve another merit probation. However, reinstated employees may be required to complete whatever training is determined necessary by the UFA's Fire Training Division and EMS after a skills assessment.

4.3 Employees who join UFA through a merger or other agreement may not need to serve a merit probation period, if so, outlined in the specific agreement.

5.0 Bids during Merit Probation

5.1 In accordance with UFA Policy and Procedure – Bids, Bumps and Assignments, employees wishing to submit a bid must have successfully completed their merit probation period.

6.0 Employees who wish to attend a UFA sponsored or approved course, school, or program for Engineer, Hazardous Material Specialist, or Heavy Rescue Specialist must have completed their merit probation period.

Replaces policy dated: May 16, 2024