

Fraternal Order of Leatherheads Society  
Articles of Association

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## **PREAMBLE**

The Fraternal Order of Leatherheads Society has truly become an international organization. With its inception in 1995, the Founding Fools had no idea that this organization would have grown to the size that it is today. With the help of the Fire Department Instructor's Conference and the Internet, Firefighters worldwide have been introduced to our society; one whose main purpose is to preserve the tradition, rich heritage and brotherhood of the Fire Service, a coveted possession that is found in no other profession. We, the Founding Fools, as well as all of our members, see a great need for the FOOLS in today's society. With all the obstacles we face in our jobs it is easy to lose sight of what it is we really stand for. Our forefathers have worked hard, struggled and died for what is considered by us the best job in the world, and we owe it not only to them, but also to ourselves to preserve all that they have accomplished. More over, it is the spirit of our fallen Brother and Sister firefighters that we must keep alive. The FOOLS symbol of the burning globe signifies that, worldwide, firefighters are all Brothers and Sisters, regardless of racial, ethnic, religious or language differences. Just as fire burns without prejudice, we, the brave soldiers of the war that never ends, are bonded in the same way; we are all Brothers, we are all Firefighters.

With the exponential growth of the Fraternal Order of Leatherheads Society, other chapters have developed. The purpose for the Articles of Association of the FOOLS is so we may all follow the same path in our never-ending pursuit to preserve of our beloved profession.

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

Section 1. IDENTIFICATION- These Articles of Association shall govern the association known as the "Fraternal Order Of Leatherheads Society" hereinafter referred to as "FOOLS, FOOLS INTERNATIONAL or THE INTERNATIONAL"

Section 2. GOVERNING BODY- The governing body of FOOLS INTERNATIONAL shall hereinafter be known as "Executive Board"

## **ARTICLE II. PERIOD OF DURATION**

Section 1. The duration of the FOOLS shall be perpetual.

## **ARTICLE III. PURPOSE**

Section 1. FUNCTION- The FOOLS is organized to implement and give voice to the principles embodied in the Mission Statement of this organization and to:

1. Functioning as a Fire Service entity separate and distinct from any and all other Fire Service bodies or movements
2. Provide the Fire Service the catalyst which embodies the growth of education and training

3. Move the Fire Services' collective conscience in a positive direction by building on long standing tradition and honor
4. Charter affiliate organizations throughout the world and promoting their growth and activities
5. Enter into public information activities to spawn a new understanding of today's Fire Service

Section 2. MISSION STATEMENT-The Fraternal Order of Leatherheads Society was founded in 1995 by a group of Central Florida Firemen. This group, known today as the Founding Fools, had a passion for not only the camaraderie and brotherhood that is forged between firefighters, but the rich tradition and heritage of the Fire Service.

The Leatherhead is a term used for a firefighter who uses the leather helmet for protection from the hazards we face everyday on the streets. The Leather Helmet is an international sign of a Firefighter, a symbol that is significant in not only tradition from the early years of firefighting, but one of bravery, integrity, honor and pride. This helmet is a sign of who we are, not what we are.

The FOOLS, like the traditional leather helmet, has always existed through the brotherhood and tradition of the Fire Service, and will continue to grow and flourish as long as there are fires to fight and emergencies to respond to. All firefighters are welcome to be a part of this great organization; one does not have to own a leather helmet to be considered a "Leatherhead". The only qualification is that you are true to your profession and true to your Brother and Sister firefighters. Our membership is growing everyday, and we encourage you to start a FOOLS chapter in your department and/or area.

One last thing that we as the Founding Fools ask of each and every one of you, let us never, ever forget those of us that have gone before us in the line of duty. Because those brave souls have given all, it is up to us to always keep them alive in our hearts and our memories. Long live the FOOLS.

#### **ARTICLE IV. DEFINITIONS**

1. "CAN, The"- A small flask like container, filled with a mystical potion. Used to partake in the "ritual of the CAN"
2. CHAPTER-sub organization of, and chartered by, FOOLS INTERNATIONAL
3. EXECUTIVE BOARD- A panel of officers established to manage FOOLS organizations
4. FOUNDING FOOLS- the founding fathers of FOOLS. The following are the ONLY people whom may claim this title: Michael A. Stallings, Ken W.

Ireland, Michael H. Gilbert, Walter J. Lewis, Thomas B. Redmond, and John R. Simpson.

5. F.T.C.- FOOLS Training Continuum, a committee of the International dedicated to education and training the Fire Service
6. MEMBER- anyone of good standing, officially registered with FOOLS INTERNATIONAL
7. WEBSITE- internet based web space for the purpose of promoting the FOOLS
8. BROTHERS- A gender neutral term used to recognize all members, male and female

## **ARTICLE V. TRAINING (F.T.C.)**

Section 1. The intent of F.T.C. training is to promote a safer and better-trained member of the fireground team. Each year, an average of 100 firefighters die from various causes while performing their duties. Educating and training our firefighters can prevent many of these deaths. We, as FOOLS, have dedicated our organization to this monumental task. Whether training is in the form of a formal conference, seminar, or in a manner in which FOOLS members task themselves to perform in-house training, this education is strongly advocated. However the training occurs, sharing the knowledge gained amongst members is paramount. Many of our FOOLS members are well versed in the science of fire and share their knowledge openly; some members are new to the fire service. It is incumbent upon all FOOLS to seek opportunities to learn and teach our craft. Training and education have no boundaries; opportunities abound, share your knowledge, and in turn, be prepared to learn.

## **ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. PREREQUISITES- The FOOLS invites any firefighter that supports the tradition of the fire service. We have fire chief's on down to the newest firefighter amongst our ranks. Career, Volunteer, Union, Management, FF/EMT's, FF/Paramedic's, or retired are all welcome. The FOOLS exists to keep the tradition of the fire service alive. We encourage anyone that is proud to be in this great profession to join the FOOLS and help us keep the tradition alive. FOOLS INTERNATIONAL reserves the right to decline or revoke membership for just cause as seen fit by the Executive Board of the International. The member may challenge the revocation of its status by written appeal to the International within 30 days of receipt of notice of such revocation. Failure to appeal within 30 days shall confirm the revocation and bar any later challenge or appeal.

Section 2. ELIGIBILITY- Eligibility requires members to hold the status of firefighter in one or more of the following capacities:

1. Career Firefighter
2. Paid on call
3. Volunteer
4. Retired from any of the above

### Section 3. BECOMING A MEMBER

1. Members must be true to one's profession and agree to uphold the mission statement of the FOOLS.
2. Members must register and make a \$10.00 donation to FOOLS International for a lifetime membership.
3. Only members who are registered with the International shall be eligible for appointment or membership to affiliate chapters.
4. Only members who are registered with the International shall be eligible to hold office in any FOOLS Organization.
5. Only members who are registered with the International shall be counted for delegate appointment, or International Committee representation

## **ARTICLE VII. AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS (CHAPTERS)**

Section 1. COPYRIGHTS, TRADEMARKS, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY- No person, group or organization may use the name "FOOLS", the "Flaming Globe" or any confusingly similar designation except an organization to which FOOLS INTERNATIONAL grants affiliate status. The Flaming Globe is a trademark of FOOLS INTERNATIONAL and may not be used singularly to represent or advertise an affiliate chapter. It may however be used, with permission, from the International E-Board, in conjunction with an affiliate's Logo. Any and all logos, proposed artwork and symbols, must be approved by the International E-Board prior to any production and distribution of same.

Section 2. CHARTERS- FOOLS INTERNATIONAL shall charter affiliate chapters from any qualifying parties requesting such status in each state, territory or country. Parties wishing to become affiliate chapters shall petition for such status in writing (using the Chapter application form) to FOOLS INTERNATIONAL. This petition shall be signed by no fewer than 5 members of the party requesting affiliation. Affiliate chapter status shall be granted only to those parties that adopt the Mission Statement and Articles of Association of FOOLS International. FOOLS INTERNATIONAL reserves the right to decline or revoke charters for just cause as seen fit by the Executive Board of the International. The affiliate chapter may challenge the revocation of its status by

written appeal to the International within 30 days of receipt of notice of such revocation. Failure to appeal within 30 days shall confirm the revocation and bar any later challenge or appeal.

**Section 3. FORMAL ORGANIZATION OF AFFILIATES CHAPTERS-**  
Formal organization of affiliate executive board is set forth within these bylaws and shall mirror the International.

1. No affiliate chapter will be allowed to form sub chapters within its organization. Refer to Article VII Section 2 for affiliate chapter authorization

**Section 4. DUES-** Dues for affiliate chapter's membership shall be set forth by said chapter.

**Section 5. WEBSITES-** Each Chapter is strongly urged to have a website representing their chapter organization. Each chapter website can be directly linked to the International Website.

**Section 6. AUTONOMY-** The autonomy of the affiliate chapter shall not be abridged by the International or any committee of the International, except as provided by these Articles of Association.

## **ARTICLE VIII. FORMAL ORGANIZATION AND DUTIES**

**Section 1. OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS-** The following is a suggested organizational structure for chapters, and may be amended as necessary. Any amendments to this structure must be approved by the International:

1. President
  - a. The President or his designee shall preside at all Conventions and all meetings of FOOLS INTERNATIONAL.
  - b. The President is the chief executive officer of the FOOLS with full authority to direct its business and affairs.
2. Vice President
  - a. The Vice President shall be the chief assistant to the President, performing such duties, as the President shall prescribe.
  - b. While holding such Executive powers as the President, The Vice President shall delegate and shall perform the duties of the President in the event that the President is, for any reason, unable to perform the duties of the office.
3. Secretary/Treasurer
  - a. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be the recording officer of the FOOLS and shall perform such duties as are assigned by

the President.

- b. The Secretary/Treasurer shall attend all meetings of FOOLS INTERNATIONAL and all FOOLS INTERNATIONAL Conventions and shall act as Secretary Thereof, keeping such minutes and records as necessary.
  - c. The Secretary/Treasurer shall receive, expend and account for the funds of the FOOLS INTERNATIONAL under the supervision and direction of the President.
  - d. The Secretary/Treasurer shall make periodic financial reports to the Executive Board.
4. 1<sup>st</sup>. Trustee
- a. The 1<sup>st</sup>. Trustee shall perform any and all duties as assigned by the President.
  - b. The 1<sup>st</sup>. Trustees shall attend all meetings of FOOLS INTERNATIONAL and all FOOLS INTERNATIONAL Conventions.
5. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Trustee
- a. The 2<sup>nd</sup>. Trustee shall perform any and all duties as assigned by the President.
  - b. The 2<sup>nd</sup>. Trustees shall attend all meetings of FOOLS INTERNATIONAL and all FOOLS INTERNATIONAL Conventions
6. Affiliate Chapters may appoint additional positions to their Executive Board, but must maintain an odd number to ensure proper voting status.
7. Executive Board Members shall hold office for a period of two years. Elections for the office of President and Secretary shall be held in December of every odd year. The office of Vice President, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> trustee shall be held in December of every even year.
- a. The International recognizes the aforementioned positions as being held by the Founding FOOLS. It is for this reason, and this reason alone, that these positions be maintained by said personal until resignation or death of the individual, with the exception of a unanimous vote of no confidence by the Executive Board of FOOLS INTERNATIONAL.
8. Any member of the FOOLS in good standing as stated in article VI for a minimum of one year is be eligible to be a candidate for office in FOOLS International. One individual may not hold two

offices simultaneously. Elections shall be held at the annual convention.

Section 2. Management of Affairs- The Executive Board shall have control and management of all the affairs, properties and funds of FOOLS INTERNATIONAL consistent with these Bylaws. The Executive Board shall establish and oversee an organizational structure to implement the purposes of the FOOLS as stated in Article 3. The FOOLS INTERNATIONAL shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its meetings and the carrying out of its duties and responsibilities. FOOLS INTERNATIONAL may delegate its authority in any manner it deems necessary.

## **ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS**

Section 1. Quorum- a majority of the membership of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at all meetings.

Section 2. The International shall meet at such times and places as may be determined by any of the following:

1. Action of a Committee
2. Call of the President,
3. Written request of 1/3 or more of it's members

Section 3. Annual Convention- The International shall hold a Regular Convention every year, at a time and place selected by the Executive Board. Affiliate Chapters shall submit bids for convention hosting to the International for site selection consideration.

Section 4. Affiliate Participation- Chapters are encouraged to sponsor meetings, gatherings and events sponsored by the chapter to celebrate the Brotherhood of our profession. Announcements of meetings and events should be forwarded to FOOLS INTERNATIONAL so FOOLS worldwide can be made aware of the growth of our organization.

Section 5. "Ritual Of The Can"- a symbolic ritual at all FOOLS events, staff meetings, and conventions. All Affiliate organizations are required to have a "Can"

1. The "CAN" must begin all FOOLS events, meeting, and conventions with a shot from it by each member of your E-Board chapter, if you so choose each member attending the meeting or convention.
2. The "Can" shall be filled with a mystic potion or juice of preference all voted on by the E-Board. The FOOLSINTERNATIONAL E-Board recommends TEQUILA. (We use Tequila because if you can take a shot

of tequila then you can do anything. It makes small men feel huge and big men look small).

3. The member having possession of the "CAN" shall raise the can and toast those present and have the first shot. That member shall then pass the "Can" to the President and likewise down the ranks. Each member will partake.

4. The member who has the "Can" in his possession at the beginning of the meeting, seminar, or FOOLS related activity shall receive the "CAN" back and announce the last shot of the night from the "CAN". The last shot will be a toast in remembrance of all brothers who are no longer with us, but rather they are present in spirit. This shot goes onto the ground, for that is where they lay.

5. After the shot is poured onto the ground the "CAN" is passed down to the next ranking official of the Executive Board, the "CAN" is then secured in their possession until the next related FOOLS gathering. The process of exchanging possession of the "CAN " is perpetual.

2. The "CAN" represents Brotherhood, Trust, and is a gesture of faith in one another. The partaking of the Ritual of the Can bonds us together in our struggle to preserve the heritage fire service.

## **ARTICLE X. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

Section 1. Rules of Order- the rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the FOOLS in all cases to which they are applicable.

Section 2. Order of Business- The standing order of business for all meetings and conventions of the FOOLS shall be as follows:

1. Call to order
2. Ritual of the "Can"
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Adoption of previous minutes
5. President's report
6. Vice Presidents report
7. Treasurers' report
8. Committee report(s)
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Resolutions
12. Other business (open forum)
13. Adjournment

## **ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENT AND RESOLUTIONS**

Section 1. These Articles of Association may be amended by a majority vote of the Executive Board

Section 2. Resolutions must be approved by a majority Vote of the Executive Board.

Section 3. Amendments and Resolutions must not conflict with Article III or Article VI of this document.

## ARTICLE XII . DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution, the residual assets of the organization will be turned over to one or more organizations which themselves are exempt as organizations described in Sections 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or corresponding sections of any prior or future law, or to the Federal, State, or Local government for exclusive public purpose.

## ARTICLE XIII. APPROVAL OF ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

Section 1. Adoption- These Articles of Association shall become adopted upon majority approval of the Executive Board and will supersede any previous Articles of Association or Guidelines of the FOOLS

Section 2. Effective Date-11/03/06

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Michael H. Gilbert, C.E.O. (Founding Fool)

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Michael A. Stallings, Founding Fool

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Ellen B. Brown, Administrative Director

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Ken W. Ireland, Founding Fool

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John R. Simpson, Trustee (Founding Fool)

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Walter J. Lewis, Founding Fool