

Conflict Resolution & Accountability Policy

The Firefly Gathering



Firefly Gathering, Inc. is dedicated to building a robust and vibrant community enriched by humans coming from diverse backgrounds, respectful of differences and enlivened by open dialogue, caring communication and justice-oriented attitudes. Firefly recognizes that valid differences of opinions and interests will arise within a unique and dynamic working community. It is, therefore, the responsibility of every member of that community to strive for effective communication and responsible decision making, and to try to resolve conflicts or disputes with reason, conscience, and compassion.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for staff / security team members to work through incidents of conflict with each other and the greater community. It is also to help hold each other accountable, as well as have clearly outlined pathways for repair. We seek to identify and resolve disputes with equal consideration of all sides of a conflict*, and hope for results that have clear accountability and repair actions when possible. Conflict resolution is seen as a partnership designed to meet some individual and shared needs, result in mutual benefits, and—when possible—strengthen relationships.

**Support for each party may differ; for instance, support for the person harmed may be extra safety measures and resources, whereas support for the person who harmed the other may involve guidance and resources for accountability and coming to terms with their own issues.*

Eligibility

All people participating in the Firefly community may be asked to participate in this process, and may utilize it as needed. This includes: all staff, worktraders, instructors, performers, and paying participants who experience conflict at a Firefly event, or in a way that directly impacts Firefly. We reserve the right to not engage with pre-existing conflict and / or incidents that are not directly connected to or happened separate from the Firefly Gathering.

Definition

Conflict resolution addresses problems, disputes, and/or complaints which claim a violation or misapplication of Firefly policies, regularly followed practices, our [Mission, Vision & Aims](#), [Community Leader Agreement](#), and [Social Conduct Agreement](#).

Timeliness

Individual attempts to resolve a conflict or dispute should begin within 14 calendar days of the decision, action, or event. Conflict resolution processes should begin within 30 calendar days of the event, but can come at any time.

Personal Responsibility

Information and Education: All staff, instructors, and people in positions of power within the Firefly community have access to information and educational resources and are encouraged to participate in self-growth. Resources are designed to equip members of the community with the skills to develop and maintain effective working relationships in which conflict is addressed and resolved reasonably, constructively, and for the common good. It is the responsibility of all persons to acquire and demonstrate needed conflict resolution skills in their daily work and interactions within the Firefly community. Persons in minor conflicts are encouraged to use their own skills and onsite resources creatively to resolve conflict in a mutually satisfying way.

Conflict Resolution Process

In an effort to effectively and efficiently deal with conflict, we utilize a color system to recognize that not all conflict is equal. In some situations, it is perfectly reasonable to suggest that the parties involved work things out themselves (informal process). In other situations, where power dynamics, trauma, etc. are at play, support may be called in and a Formal Process enacted. So we begin by highlighting the types / levels of conflict.

- **Level Red:** sexual assault, drugging, attacks (physical assault, emotional abuse, racial assaults), coercion, large scale theft, etc.
- **Level Orange:** threats, willful destruction of property, severe slander/libel and intentional disparagement, chronic and patterned issues, sexual harassment, intense verbal assault, public drunkenness / overt drug use, petty theft.
- **Level Yellow:** General disputes, verbal harassment / assault, lack of follow through on promised actions, lesser slander/libel and intentional disparagement, lying.

Informal Process: In the event of minor infractions and disagreements, we hope that community members will elect to stay calm and talk it out, even finding a neutral third party to help mitigate the levels of stress.

- **Level Yellow:** We've seen countless minor issues resolved this way, and even a few larger ones. We do not, however, want to err on the side of making emotional infractions / conflicts automatically the responsibility of the harmed party to resolve. At any time, they can enact the Formal Process (outlined below).

Formal Process: In the event of Level Orange and Red Infractions (or yellow but with requested assistance or repeat offenses), a Formal Process automatically is enacted. This process is as follows:

- [Incident Report Form](#) : The first step is documenting the issue so that Firefly is aware and has a clear record of all the details to consider and can refer back to it over time.
- Within 2 weeks of the Form being submitted, Firefly will strive to reach out to the indicated parties in the form and seek next steps. While we care deeply for our greater community, we also recognize our organizational limitations and therefore have limited resources that we can offer outside of our gatherings. Even within the context of

gatherings, there are limited resources to put towards people's personal conflicts, but we do offer The Care Tent, The Neighborhood and a robust Security Team.

- If the conflict occurs within the confines of a gathering it will be handled as follows:
 - **Level Yellow:** These can often be resolved through the informal process, but may at times be moved to the Formal Process due to complexity in resolution. Firefly security team and / or staff will have a conversation to gauge the severity of the conflict. Resolution should be able to be achieved this way, or parties can at least agree to disagree in peace.
 - **Level Orange:** Firefly security team and / or staff will have a conversation to gauge the severity of the conflict. We may ask one or both parties involved to leave the premises if communication is clearly not going to resolve the conflict within a reasonably brief time. The people involved may or may not be allowed back onsite, depending on the severity of the situation. *Firefly staff and security retains sole discretion to make these decisions.*
 - **Level Red:** Firefly security team and / or staff will have a conversation to gauge the severity of the conflict and secure the situation. Security will ensure that all parties are safe and contained, not spreading the negativity or harm out into the event. Security / Leadership will determine the outcomes and who (if anyone) is required to leave and under what circumstances.

PLEASE NOTE:

- ★ *Firefly Gathering does not have the resources to provide therapy, counseling, professional mediation, etc. We are an earthskills event and do not assume complete healing responsibility for our people. It is your responsibility to do your work, heal your wounds and bring your best self to the community.*
- ★ *Decisions at the Executive Director / Security Team Review level are final. One can appeal to the Board of Directors for a review of decisions, but the decision of security and staff will stand through the current event and hold until a convenient time for the Board to review said appeal.*
- ★ *No Retaliation: No adverse action may be taken against the individual bringing the complaint in good faith, or against any persons who furnish him or her with any assistance solely because of their involvement in the complaint.*
- ★ *Multiple lower level infractions can be combined to equal a higher level infraction if the behavior continues. SO that a person might be asked to not participate for continued Level Yellow offenses.*
- ★ *If the conflict occurs outside of our events, we reserve the right to decide if the situation poses a threat to future Firefly events and take appropriate actions.*

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each and every member of the Firefly Gathering community to keep themselves and each other as safe as possible, to look out for one another. And it is Firefly's responsibility to create and maintain a space of integrity, and to uphold the boundaries that we collectively agree to. When appropriate, we also want clear pathways back into the community when a break has occurred; a clear process to go from yellow, orange or red, back to green!

This pathway back will look like a variety of things, depending on the nature of the conflict and the behavior of the individuals involved after the infraction occurs / is reported. The more severe the infraction, the more severe the consequence, and therefore the longer and / or more complex the pathway of return. Firefly reserves the right to not allow people back who cross boundaries, who threaten, defame or otherwise impede the process of repair. Each case will be reviewed by the Executive Director and Board President to determine the most effective course of action and create a pathway back when appropriate.

Resources

Contact admin@fireflygathering.org if you have questions about this policy or if you would like more information.

Policy Approved:

Last Updated:

Last Reviewed: