



# SAFDE BYLAWS

April 24, 2015

## Article I: Organization

The name of this organization shall be Southeastern Association of Forensic Document Examiners and hereafter shall be referred to as SAFDE or the Association.

## Article II: Purposes

- Section 1 To exchange ideas and information within the field of forensic document examination and to foster friendship and cooperation.
- Section 2 To encourage a high level of competency among professionals in the field of forensic document examination.
- Section 3 To promote recognition of forensic document examination as an important part of the justice system.
- Section 4 To encourage continued research in the field of document examination, to develop new techniques and to improve those currently in use.
- Section 5 To support the goals of the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners as the sole certifying organization.

## Article III: Areas of Activity

- Section 1 Establish and enforce a Code of Ethics.
- Section 2 Assist in the formulation of training programs for members of this organization.
- Section 3 Review and act upon pending legislation which appears to be related to the field whenever and wherever possible.
- Section 4 Organize and/or sanction meetings, symposia and discussions to further the exchange of information.

## **Article IV: Geographic Boundaries**

The states that comprise SAFDE are: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. All meetings shall be situated therein.

## **Article V: Membership**

Section 1 A **Charter Member** is a forensic document examiner who attended the Atlanta meeting held April 20, 1988, and/or the Atlanta meeting July 25, 1988, both prior to the adoption of the initial bylaws on November 4, 1988.

Section 2 A **Regular Member** is a practicing examiner employed or residing in the geographical boundaries of the Association who can demonstrate completion of a full-time two year training program (or the equivalent) recognized by SAFDE in Forensic Document Examination. SAFDE recognizes the current version of ASTM E2388 (training standard) as containing the basic requirements for its new members and trainee members in the field of document examination, when considering their membership application. To qualify for Regular Membership, the applicant must have attended at least one annual meeting of SAFDE and made at least one presentation during an annual SAFDE meeting. Further, the applicant must possess an earned baccalaureate degree from a recognized institution of higher learning.

Section 3 A **Corresponding Member** meets the requirements for Regular Membership but does not reside or work within the geographic boundaries of the Association.

Section 4 A **Trainee Member** is a student pursuing a full-time course in forensic document examination recognized by SAFDE. Trainee Membership shall expire after a three (3) year period, at which time the trainee may apply for Regular or Corresponding Member status.

Section 5 All candidates for membership shall be sponsored by two (2) Charter or Regular Members. The sponsorship requirement for Trainee Members who are candidates for promotion to Regular Member is in addition to the sponsorship requirement for acceptance as a Trainee Member. For promotion to Regular Member, the sponsorship of a Trainee Member must be explicitly renewed by the original sponsors or new sponsors must be obtained.

Section 6 A membership application shall be submitted to the Membership Committee at least two (2) months prior to a regular scheduled meeting. Election to all classes of membership shall be by Membership Committee approval and an affirmative three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the eligible members who vote at the annual meeting.

Section 7 It is the duty of each member to observe the Bylaws and Code of Ethics and to serve the purposes of SAFDE.

Section 8 A member is required to maintain his/her correct membership status and to notify the Secretary in writing or via electronic mail of any change.

Section 9 Suspension/Termination of Membership

Any member may resign his/her membership by written request directed to the Secretary. A member may be terminated for non-payment of dues. A member may be suspended or expelled from the Association for unethical conduct, conduct detrimental to the profession of Forensic Document Examination or conduct detrimental to the welfare of the Association. Any person may initiate proceedings to expel a member for cause by petitioning in writing to the President who will refer the matter to the Ethics Committee. An affirmative three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the eligible members who vote at the annual meeting is required for suspension or expulsion of any member.

Section 10 Reinstatement for Membership

Any member dropped for the above reasons may be readmitted only upon the filing of a new application which shall receive the same consideration as any other application and which must be submitted according to rules and regulations governing applications. If terminated for nonpayment of dues, reapplication requires immediate payment of delinquent monies.

Section 11 Members shall attend an annual meeting at least once in any five (5) year period; and shall make a presentation, or act as Moderator, Workshop Chair, Program Chair or Site Chair, or serve SAFDE in some capacity acceptable by unanimous Executive Committee approval, at least once in any five (5) year period. Charter members and members in retired status are exempt from these requirements. The Executive Committee, by unanimous vote, may exempt members from this requirement on a case-by-case basis due to special circumstances.

Section 12 A Charter, Regular, or Corresponding Member who has held membership for a minimum of 20 years, has reached the age of 60, and is no longer engaged in the active practice of forensic document examination on a salary or fee basis, may request retired status. A written request providing

justification for retired status must be made to the President at least thirty days prior to the annual meeting where the request will be considered. The request for retired status must be approved by an affirmative three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the eligible members who vote at the annual meeting. The retired status of a member may be revoked by the Executive Committee if the member returns to the active practice of forensic document examination. If retired status is revoked, the member will revert back to the membership status held prior to being given retired status.

## **Article VI: Dues**

- Section 1 Members shall pay prescribed dues annually, except that members in retired status are exempt from the payment of dues.
- Section 2 Dues are payable on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, and if not paid by the end of the annual meeting of the same year, shall be regarded in arrears.
- Section 3 A Member who is in arrears of their dues payment shall be assessed a \$10.00 late fee.
- Section 4 Following the annual meeting, a Member in arrears will receive official written notice by certified letter that their payment (including late fee) is past due.
- Section 5 Should the Member fail to fulfill their financial responsibility within ninety days of the official notice being sent, the Executive Committee may, by a unanimous vote of the Committee, suspend the individual's membership. The Executive Committee will terminate the non-paying membership upon affirmation of a 2/3 majority of the membership present at the next annual business meeting.
- Section 6 The Treasurer shall issue one dues notice at least thirty days prior to the annual meeting. This notice may be made by posting in the SAFDE newsletter.

## **Article VII: Officers**

Section 1 Officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Officers shall be elected at the business meeting and shall hold office for two (2) years or until their successors have been elected and qualified. If the President is unable to complete the term for any reason, the Vice-President shall automatically be elevated to the office of President for the unexpired term. If the Vice-President is unable to complete this term for any reason, the position will be held by the Secretary for the remainder of the term. Only voting members may hold office.

Section 2 President

The President shall preside at the business meetings and appoint necessary committees. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall preside. In the absence of both, the Secretary shall preside. The President shall have, if necessary, power to sign checks. Term: Two (2) years.

Section 3 Vice-President

The Vice-President shall have the authority to preside at business meetings in the absence of the President. The Vice-President shall be designated as the Chairman of the Membership Committee for the duration of the term of the Vice-President. Term: Two (2) years.

Section 4 Secretary

The Secretary, keeper of all appropriate records of SAFDE, shall record the minutes of the meetings and publish them in a report. The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the SAFDE bylaws and posting all changes. Term: Two (2) years.

Section 5 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive all monies due SAFDE, keep accurate records of all transactions and present a statement to the membership. All monies shall be deposited in a bank authorized by the Association as soon as possible. The Treasurer is empowered to sign checks. Term: Two (2) years.

Section 6 Election of Officers is by majority vote of the voting members present at the annual business meeting.

Section 7 The files, books and records of the Association shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection and examination by any voting member. Upon vacating office for any reason, the past office holder must turn over all files, books and records to the successor in office.

### **Article VIII: Committees**

#### **Section 1 Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and the Treasurer. The immediate past-President may attend as a non-voting member.

#### **Section 2 Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee shall consist of a Chairman, who will be the Vice-President of the Association, and two (2) other voting members who will be appointed by the President. It shall fulfill all requirements concerning the membership of the Association as stated in these Bylaws.

#### **Section 3 Ethics Committee**

The Ethics Committee, consisting of the Executive Committee and two (2) voting members appointed by the President, shall be activated by the President when action against a member is initiated. The Ethics Committee shall: (1) investigate all such claims of unprofessional conduct as enumerated; (2) allow the accused and the accuser reasonable opportunity to be heard and to be confronted; and (3) give a report and recommendation to the membership at the next business meeting of the Association.

#### **Section 4 Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee shall be composed of the President, Conference Site Chairman, Program Chairman and one (1) member-at-large, who shall be appointed by the President. At least one hundred and eighty days prior to the annual meeting, the Treasurer will provide this committee with a current Treasurer's Report for Review. Prior to the Annual Business Meeting the Audit Committee will review the records of the Treasurer for the preceding year. The committee's findings will be reported to the Association at the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 5 The President shall have the authority to appoint all necessary and appropriate committees.

## **Article IX: Meetings**

- Section 1 Annual meetings shall normally be held in the spring and consist of a business meeting and scientific sessions which may include workshops. The place and date of the meetings shall be selected in advance and shall be ratified by a majority vote of the membership at a regular business meeting. Attendance at annual business meetings may be restricted to the membership. Attendance at scientific sessions may be restricted to members and invited guests. Invitations to non-members to attend scientific sessions shall be extended by the Secretary only, at the request of a member. Such invitations shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
- Section 2 Executive Committee meetings shall be held prior to each annual meeting unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise.
- Section 3 Unless otherwise ordered by a majority of the voting members present, the order of business at the annual meetings shall be as follows: (1) Reading and Approval of Minutes; (2) Reports of Officers, Boards and Standing Committees; (3) Reports of Special (Select and Ad Hoc) Committees; (4) Special Orders; (5) Unfinished Business and General Orders; (6) New Business
- Section 4 Any and all expenses chargeable to the Association must be approved through the Executive Committee. No members of the Executive Committee or any appointed committee shall receive, directly or indirectly, any salary or compensation for his/her services.
- Section 5 The fiscal year shall be from the first day of January through the thirty-first day of December of each year.
- Section 6 *Robert's Rules of Order* shall determine the Parliamentary procedure of the meetings, insofar as they do not conflict with these bylaws. The contents of these bylaws take precedent over Robert's Rules of Order.
- Section 7 These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the voting members, and the previous Bylaws are hereby replaced.

## **Article X: Voting**

- Section 1 Eligible voters are defined as Charter and Regular Members. Members in retired status retain voting eligibility.
- Section 2 A quorum to conduct business at any business meeting shall consist of at least eleven (11) voting members.

Section 3 An affirmative three-fourths (3/4) vote is needed to carry a motion.

Section 4 Voting may be conducted by secret ballot if it is included in the motion.

Section 5 Voting by proxy is not permitted.

#### **Article XI: Amendments to the Bylaws**

Any part of these Bylaws may be amended by an affirmative three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the eligible members who vote at the annual meeting, provided a quorum is present and that all copies of each proposed amendment shall have been distributed to all voting members at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting at which action is to be taken. Amendments may also be made in electronic form by an affirmative three fourths (3/4) majority vote of the eligible members who vote in between meetings, subject to approval by the executive committee. Any changes balloted in this manner shall be given a forty five (45) day posting period to allow for comments and discussion.