



EMERGENCY INCIDENT REHABILITATION

SCOPE

This guideline shall apply to all members of the Stoney Point Fire Department and shall be adhered to by all members.

PURPOSE

To establish the procedures to be utilized to ensure proper rehabilitation of operations personnel at an incident scene.

DEFINITIONS

Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health – (IDLH) hostile environment where exposure to airborne contaminants is likely to cause death, immediate or delayed permanent adverse health effects

Guideline - a general rule, principle, outline of a policy

Incident – emergency event or occurrence requiring a response

Member – any career, volunteer, staff, and auxiliary personnel affiliated with the department

Occupational Safety and Health Administration – (OSHA) federal agency responsible for developing and enforcing safety and health regulations

Rehabilitation – (Rehab) physical location designated for medical checks and rest at an incident scene, staffed by medical personnel

Responsibility - the state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone, being accountable for one's actions

Shall - indicates a mandatory requirement

GUIDELINES

Stoney Point Fire Department has a vested interest in ensuring the health and safety of all members, especially operational members at an incident scene and during training evolutions. Emergency operations are both physically and mentally taxing, and operational personnel can suffer from environmental and exertion related injuries and illness if not properly monitored and rehabilitated on scene. This guideline establishes the responsibilities and actions of Officers, Leaders, and individual responders for the wellbeing of all members involved in training or incident operations with regards to rehabilitation.

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Incident Commander

The Incident Commander shall consider the conditions of each incident or training evolution and make adequate provisions for the rest and rehabilitation of all members operating at the scene. These provisions shall include the establishment of a Rehabilitation Division, equipped with, at a minimum, a Basic Life Support provider, water and cups, and shelter from the current and projected environmental conditions.

Supervisors

Officers and other department leaders shall maintain situational awareness concerning the environmental conditions and the physical and mental condition of their personnel. All Leaders shall take positive actions to ensure the health and safety of their personnel, to include requesting replacements, rest periods, water breaks, and ensuring their personnel rotate through the Rehabilitation Division for monitoring and rest.

Personnel

Every member of Stoney Point Fire Department, from Recruit to Fire Chief, is responsible for ensuring that they can safely operate during training and at the incident scene. Therefore, all members shall hydrate throughout the day to be prepared for the exertions of training and emergency operations. During hot weather periods, Leaders and members shall encourage each other to drink water regularly. Each member shall inform their Supervisor whenever they believe that their level of fatigue or exposure to hot or cold environmental conditions is approaching a level that would negatively affect themselves, their crew, or ongoing operations. All members shall monitor other members for signs of exhaustion, illness, or dehydration and take positive actions to assist them, to include informing a Supervisor.

Rehabilitation Division Establishment

It is the Incident Commander's responsibility to plan for and establish a Rehabilitation Division for all multi-unit operations, large training events, and whenever environmental conditions indicate that rest and rehabilitation is needed. A member shall be assigned the responsibility of Rehab Officer. The Rehab Officer typically reports to the Operations Officer in the framework of the incident management system. The health and safety of all members at the training event or incident scene is the responsibility of the Incident Commander.

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Programs

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG)

Location

The Incident Commander shall designate a location for the Rehabilitation Division to operate. However, this task may be delegated to the Rehab Officer by the Incident Commander. The location shall follow these criteria:

- Far enough away from the Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health area so that members can safely remove their personal protective gear and self-contained breathing apparatus
- Provide adequate protection from environmental conditions. Provide shade during hot weather and warmth during cold weather
- Away from the exhaust fumes from apparatus, vehicles, and other equipment
- Large enough to accommodate multiple crews, based on the size of the incident
- Easily accessible by EMS units and evacuation vehicles
- Preferably out of visual sight of the incident to facilitate rest and destressing
- Permit prompt reentry back into the emergency operation or training following rehabilitation

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Examples

- Nearby garage, carport, building lobby, or other structure
- School bus, municipal bus, or trailer
- Fire apparatus, ambulance, or other emergency vehicles at the scene
- Open area in which a rehab area can be created using tarps, fans, etc

Resources

The Rehab Officer shall secure all necessary resources and personnel required to adequately staff and support the Rehabilitation Area:

- Fluids - water, sports beverages, oral electrolyte solutions and ice
- Trained Medical personnel with evaluation and treatment equipment and supplies, oxygen, IV fluids, cardiac monitors, etc
- Tarps, fans, blankets, towels, marking equipment, portable chairs (if available)



Hydration

It is important year-round to hydrate prior to conducting any strenuous activity. However, it is critically important to do so during the warm weather months to prevent heat injury and maintain healthy water and electrolyte levels. During hot weather conditions, and during periods of increased activity, one quart of water should be consumed every hour to prevent heat stress related injury. All commercial sports drinks, such as Gatorade, should be consumed at a 50/50 solution mixed with cool water for better absorption. Hydration during cool months is equally important as the stress of wearing protective equipment and operating in hazardous environments can lead to rapid water loss. Alcoholic, caffeinated, and carbonated beverages shall be avoided before and during operations and training because both interfere with the body's water conservation mechanisms.

Nourishment

Stoney Point Fire Department shall provide food and snacks during incidents and training operations that exceed four hours. Soups, broths, and stews are recommended as they are more readily digested than sandwiches or other fast-food products. Apples, oranges, and bananas provide excellent forms of supplemental energy replacement. Fatty and salty foods shall be avoided as they interfere with water absorption and maintenance.

Rest

Stoney Point Fire Department utilizes the "2 bottle rule" as the limit of operations prior to mandatory rehabilitation. This equates to approximately 45 minutes of exertion prior to reporting to the Rehabilitation Division for evaluation, hydration, and rest. Independently, each member shall rehydrate with at least 8 ounces (1 cup) of water during each SCBA cylinder (bottle) change. Individual Firefighters and Leaders are responsible for ensuring that after conducting operations totaling 45 minutes or 2 SCBA cylinders being utilized report to the Rehabilitation Division for rest and evaluation. The duration of each member's rest period shall be dependent upon the evaluation. At no time shall the rest period be less than 10 minutes and may be as long as necessary as determined by the Rehab Officer. Upon release from the Rehabilitation Division, all members shall report to the Accountability Officer for assignment.

Recovery

Members shall not be moved directly into an air-conditioned area without an appropriate cooling down period to prevent a shutdown of the body's natural cooling system. Diuretics, stimulants, antihistamines, and other medications increase heart rate and promote fluid loss and should be avoided prior to or during operations or training.

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Medical Evaluation

The medical evaluation of all members at the Rehabilitation Division shall be conducted by trained medical personnel. Whenever possible, Cumberland County EMS should be requested to provide a Paramedic and equipment to conduct the evaluations. However, a Stoney Point Fire Department Emergency Medical Technician with appropriate medical evaluation equipment may perform these duties with treatment and evacuation detailed to CCEMS as required. The designated evaluator shall advise the Rehab Officer of the status of each member as they are evaluated, and before recommending clearance from the Rehabilitation Division. Medical personnel are responsible for prevention of heat stress related, or cardiac related injury and shall be proactive in that prevention. The following criteria shall be utilized during evaluations:

- Pulse of less than 110 beats per minute, measured for 30 seconds
- Oral temperature of less than 100.6
- Blood pressure of less than 160mmHg systolic and 100mmHg diastolic
- Respirations between 12-20, regular and non-labored
- Blood Oxygen saturation of greater than 94%

All medical evaluations shall be recorded on a handwritten log along with the member's name and complaints and must be signed, dated, and timed by the Rehab Officer or his/her designee. All members, regardless of rank, or responsibilities shall adhere to these standards and remain in Rehab until they have had 2 successive evaluations within acceptable levels prior to returning to service.

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References

NFPA 1403

NFPA 1500

NFPA 1561

NFPA 1584

Emergency Incident Rehabilitation (USFA)

29 CFR 1910 (OSHA)