

City of Belleville Fire Department

Number: 3011

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Belleville Fire Department to provide a rehabilitation sector during emergency and training operations.

Date S.O.G. Comes Into Effect: July 3, 2006

Date S.O.G. Revised: November 6, 2018

Date Committee Approved S.O.G. : May 3, 2006

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GUIDELINE

1:00 **Purpose:**

1:01 To ensure that the physical and mental condition of personnel operating at the scene of an emergency or a training exercise does not deteriorate to a point that affects their health and safety.

2:00 **Procedures:**

2:01 **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

a. Incident Commander (IC)

The Incident Commander shall consider the circumstances of each incident and make adequate provisions early in the incident for the rest and rehabilitation for all personnel at the scene. These provisions shall include medical evaluation, treatment and monitoring, food and fluid replenishment, mental rest and relief from extreme climatic conditions and other environmental parameters of the incident. The rehabilitation shall include the provision of an ambulance staged at the scene.

b. Sector Officers

All Sector Officers shall maintain an awareness of the condition of all personnel operating within their sector and ensure adequate steps are taken to provide for all

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personnel's health and safety. The command structure shall be utilized to request relief and the reassignment of fatigued crews.

c. Personnel

During periods of hot weather, personnel shall be encouraged to hydrate themselves (drinking water, etc...) throughout the work day. During any emergency incident or training exercise, all personnel shall advise their Sector Officer when they believe that their level of fatigue or exposure to heat or cold is approaching a level that could affect themselves, their crew or the operation in which they are involved. Personnel shall also remain aware of the health and safety of other crew members.

2:02 **ESTABLISHMENT OF REHABILITATION SECTOR:**

a. Responsibility

The Incident Commander will establish a Rehabilitation Sector when conditions indicate that rest and rehabilitation is needed for personnel operating at an incident scene or training exercise. A Captain/ Officer in Charge will be placed in charge of the sector and shall be known as the Rehab Officer. The Rehab Officer will typically report to the Incident Command.

b. Location

The location for the Rehabilitation Area will normally be designated by the Incident Commander. If a specific location has not been designated, the Rehab Officer shall select an appropriate location based on the site characteristics and designation below.

c. Site Characteristics

- It should be in a location that will provide physical rest by allowing the body to recuperate from the demands and hazards of the emergency operation or training exercise.
- It should be far enough away from the scene that personnel may safely remove their turnout gear and SCBA and be afforded the mental rest from the stress and pressure of the emergency operation or training exercise.
- It should provide suitable protection from the prevailing environmental conditions. During hot weather, it should be in a cool, shaded area. During cold weather, it should be in a warm, dry area.
- It should enable personnel to be free of exhaust fumes from apparatus, vehicles or equipment (including those involved in the Rehabilitation Sector).
- It should be large enough to accommodate multiple crews, based on the size of the incident.
- It should be easily accessible by paramedics.
- It should allow prompt reentry back into the emergency operation upon complete recuperation.

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d. Site Designations

- A nearby garage, building lobby or other structure.
- Several floors below a fire in a high rise building.
- A school bus, municipal bus, etc...
- Fire apparatus, ambulance or other emergency vehicles at the scene or called to the scene.
- An open area in which a Rehab Area can be created using tarps, fans, etc...

e. Resources

The Rehab Officer shall secure all necessary resources required to adequately staff and supply the Rehabilitation Area. The supplies should include the items listed below:

- Fluids-water, oral electrolyte solutions and ice.
- Food-soup, broth or stew in hot/cold cups.
- Medical-blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, oxygen administration devices, cardiac monitors, intravenous solutions and thermometers.
- Other-awnings, rehab chair, fans, tarps, smoke ejectors, heaters, portable toilets, dry clothing, extra equipment, floodlights, blankets, towels, traffic cones and fire line tape (to identify the entrance and exit of the Rehabilitation Area).

2:03 **GUIDELINES:**

a. Rehabilitation Sector

Rehabilitation should be considered by the Incident Commander during the initial planning stages of an emergency response or training exercise. However, the climatic or environmental conditions of the emergency scene should not be the sole justification for establishing a Rehabilitation Sector. Any activity/incident that is large in size, long in duration and/or labour intensive will rapidly deplete the energy and strength of personnel and therefore merits consideration for rehabilitation. Climatic or environmental conditions that indicate the need to establish a Rehabilitation Area are a heat stress index above 32°C or wind-chill index below -30°C (see Appendix "A" and "B").

Note: All personnel that may have been exposed to any contaminants shall first proceed to the decontamination sector before entering Rehab. All efforts should be made to leave as much PPE outside of the Rehab sector as possible.

b. Hydration

A critical factor in the prevention of heat injury is the maintenance of water and electrolytes. Water must be replaced during training exercises and at emergency incidents. During heat stress all personnel should consume at least one litre of water per hour. The rehydration solution should be water and a mixture of electrolytes.

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Rehydration is important even during cold weather operations where, despite the outside temperature, heat stress may occur during firefighting or other strenuous activity when protective equipment is worn. Carbonated and caffeine beverages should be avoided before and during heat stress because both interfere with the body's water conservation mechanisms.

c. Nourishment

Arrangements should be made for food and refreshments at the scene of an extended incident when units are engaged for three or more hours. A cup of soup, broth or stew is highly recommended because it is digested much faster than sandwiches and fast food products. In addition, foods such as apples, oranges and bananas provide supplemental forms of energy replacement. Fatty and/or salty foods should be avoided.

d. Rest

One 60-minute SCBA cylinder or 40 minutes of intense work time without an SCBA is recommended as an acceptable level prior to mandatory rehabilitation. Personnel shall rehydrate (at least 250 ml of fluids) while SCBA cylinders are being changed. Firefighters having worked for one 60-minute SCBA cylinder or 40 minutes of intense work time without an SCBA shall be immediately placed in the Rehabilitation Sector for rest and evaluation. In all cases, the objective evaluation of all personnel's fatigue level shall be the criteria for rehab time. Rest shall not be less than 10 minutes and may exceed an hour as determined by the Rehab Officer. Fresh crews, or crews released from the Rehabilitation Sector shall be available in the Staging Area to ensure that fatigued personnel are not required to return to duty before they are rested, evaluated and released by the Rehab Officer.

e. Recovery

Personnel in the Rehabilitation Area should maintain a high level of hydration. Personnel should not be moved from a hot environment directly into an air conditioned area because the body's cooling system can shut down in response to the external cooling. An air conditioned environment is acceptable after a cool down period at ambient temperature with sufficient air movement. Certain pharmaceuticals impair the body's ability to sweat and extreme caution must be exercised if any personnel has taken antihistamines, diuretics or stimulants.

f. Medical Evaluation

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - EMS should be provided and staffed by paramedics. They shall evaluate vital signs, examine personnel and make proper disposition (return to duty, continued rehabilitation or medical treatment and transport to hospital). Continued rehabilitation should consist of additional monitoring of vital signs, providing rest, and providing fluids for rehydration.

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Medical treatment for personnel, whose signs and/or symptoms indicate potential problems, should be provided in accordance with local medical control procedures. EMS shall be assertive in an effort to find potential medical problems early.

Heart Rate and Temperature- The heart rate should be measured as early in the rest period as possible. If any personnel's heart rate exceeds 110 beats per minute an oral temperature should be taken. If any personnel's temperature exceeds 100.6F they should not be permitted to wear protective equipment. If it is below 100.6F and the heart rate remains above 110 beats per minute, rehabilitation time should be increased.

g. Accountability

Personnel assigned to the Rehabilitation Sector shall enter and exit the Rehabilitation Area as a crew if possible. The number of personnel and times of entry to and exit from the Rehabilitation Area shall be documented by the Rehab Officer or his designate. Crews shall not leave the Rehabilitation Area until authorized to do so by the Rehab Officer.

3:00 **Scope:**

3:01 It shall be the responsibility of the Captain/ Officer in charge of each shift to ensure that this guideline is explained. And followed.

3:02 It shall be the responsibility of **all employees** to understand and adhere to this guideline.

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