



OGLETHORPE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

TITLE: Firefighter Rehabilitation Standard

SECTION/TOPIC: Emergency Operations

ISSUE DATE: February 16, 2023

These SOPs/SOGs are based on FEMA guidelines FA-197

This standard meets or exceeds that of:
*NFPA 1584: Standard on the Rehabilitation Process for Members During
Emergency Operations and Training Exercises*

1.0 SCOPE

- 1.1 All personnel attending or operating at the scene of a fire/emergency or training exercise.

2.0 PURPOSE:

- 2.1 To provide guidance on the implementation and use of a rehabilitation process as a requirement of the incident management system (IMS) at the scene of a fire, or other emergency, or training exercise. It will ensure that personnel who might be suffering the effects of metabolic heat buildup, dehydration, physical exertion, and/or extreme weather receive evaluation and rehabilitation during emergency operations

3.0 RULES:

- 3.1 Rehabilitation shall commence when fire/emergency operations and/or training exercises pose a health or safety risk.
- 3.2 Rehabilitation shall be established for large-scale incidents, long-duration and/or physically demanding incidents, and extreme temperatures.
- 3.3 The incident commander shall establish rehabilitation according to the circumstances of the incident. The rehabilitation process shall include the following:
 - 3.3.1 Rest
 - 3.3.2 Hydration to replace lost body fluids
 - 3.3.3 Cooling (passive and/or active)
 - 3.3.4 Warming
 - 3.3.5 Medical monitoring
 - 3.3.6 Emergency medical care (if required)
 - 3.3.7 Relief from extreme climatic conditions (heat, cold, wind, rain)
 - 3.3.8 Calorie and electrolyte replacement
 - 3.3.9 Accountability
 - 3.3.10 Release

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The incident commander shall be responsible for the following:
 - 4.1.1 Include rehabilitation in incident/event size-up

- 4.1.2 Establish a rehabilitation group to reduce adverse physical effects on firefighters while operating during fire/emergencies, training exercises, and extreme weather conditions
- 4.1.3 Designate and assign an Incident Safety Officer (ISO).
- 4.1.4 Ensure sufficient resources are assigned to rehabilitation
- 4.1.5 Ensure EMS personnel are available for emergency medical care of firefighters as required
- 4.2 The Incident Safety Officer shall be responsible for the following:
 - 4.2.1 Whenever possible, select a location for rehabilitation with the following site characteristics:
 - 4.2.1.1 Large enough to accommodate the number of personnel expected (including EMS personnel for medical monitoring)
 - 4.2.1.2 Have a separate area for members to remove personal protective equipment
 - 4.2.1.3 Be accessible for ambulance and EMS personnel, should emergency medical care be required
 - 4.2.1.4 Be removed from hazardous atmospheres including apparatus exhaust fumes, smoke, and other toxins
 - 4.2.1.5 Provide shade in summer and protection from inclement weather at other times
 - 4.2.1.6 Have access to a water supply (bottled or running) to provide for hydration and active cooling
 - 4.2.1.7 Be away from spectators and media
 - 4.2.2 Ensure personnel in rehabilitation “dress down” by removing their bunker coats, helmets, hoods, and opening their bunker pants to promote cooling
 - 4.2.3 Provide the required resources for rehabilitation, including the following:
 - 4.2.3.1 Potable drinking water for hydration
 - 4.2.3.2 Sports drinks (to replace electrolytes and calories) for long duration incidents (working more than one hour)
 - 4.2.3.3 Active cooling where required
 - 4.2.3.4 Medical monitoring equipment (chairs to rest on, blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, check sheets, etc.)
 - 4.2.3.5 Food where required and a means to wash or clean hands and face prior to eating
 - 4.2.3.6 Blankets and warm, dry clothing for winter months
 - 4.2.3.7 Washroom facilities where required
 - 4.2.4 Time personnel in rehabilitation to ensure they receive adequate rest
 - 4.2.5 Ensure personnel rehydrate themselves
 - 4.2.6 Ensure personnel are provided with a means to be actively cooled where required
 - 4.2.7 Maintain accountability

- 4.2.8 Inform the incident commander, accountability officer (resource status unit), and EMS personnel if a member requires transportation to and treatment at a medical facility
- 4.2.9 Serve as a liaison with EMS personnel
- 4.3 Company officers shall be responsible for the following:
 - 4.3.1 Be familiar with the signs and symptoms of heat stress and cold stress
 - 4.3.2 Monitor their company members for signs of heat stress and cold stress
 - 4.3.3 Notify the IC when stressed members require relief, rotation, or reassignment according to conditions
 - 4.3.4 Provide access to rehabilitation for company members as needed
 - 4.3.5 Ensure that their company is properly checked in with the rehabilitation manager and accountability officer (resource unit), and that the company remains intact
- 4.4 Crew members shall be responsible for the following:
 - 4.4.1 Be familiar with the signs and symptoms of heat stress and cold stress
 - 4.4.2 Maintain awareness of themselves and company members for signs and symptoms of heat stress and cold stress
 - 4.4.3 Promptly inform the company officer when members require rehabilitation and/or relief from assigned duties
 - 4.4.4 Maintain unit integrity
- 4.5 EMS personnel shall be responsible for the following:
 - 4.5.1 Report to the incident commander or incident safety officer and obtain the rehabilitation requirements
 - 4.5.2 Coordinate with the rehabilitation manager
 - 4.5.3 Identify the EMS personnel requirements
 - 4.5.4 Check vital signs, monitor for heat stress and signs of medical issues
 - 4.5.5 Document medical monitoring
 - 4.5.6 Provide emergency medical care and transportation to medical facilities
 - 4.5.7 Inform the incident commander and the rehabilitation manager when personnel requires transportation to and treatment at a medical facility
 - 4.5.8 Document emergency medical care provided

5.0 PROCEDURES

- 5.1 All personnel shall maintain hydration on an ongoing basis (pre-incident, incident, post-incident)
- 5.2 Members shall be sent to rehabilitation as required
- 5.3 All members shall be sent to rehabilitation following the use of two 30-minute or 45-minute SCBA cylinders. Shorter times might be considered during extreme environmental conditions
- 5.4 Passive cooling shall be employed to reduce firefighter heat stress. This could include moving to a shaded or air-conditioned area, removal of PPE, ingestion of cool fluids, and rest

- 5.5 Active cooling shall be employed to reduce firefighter heat stress when passive cooling is ineffective or when a member is experiencing a heat-related illness. This could include forearm immersion, misting fans, and cold towels
- 5.6 In hot, humid conditions, members shall remain in rehabilitation for an appropriate amount of time in order to adequately cool and rest their bodies.
- 5.7 EMS personnel shall provide medical monitoring and emergency medical care as per medical protocol
- 5.8 If a member is demonstrating abnormal vital signs, he/she shall be monitored frequently during rehabilitation
- 5.9 Personnel who are weak or fatigued with pale clammy skin, low blood pressure, nausea, headache, or dizziness shall be assessed by EMS personnel
- 5.10 Personnel experiencing chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, or nausea shall be transported to a medical facility for treatment, as deemed necessary by EMS
- 5.11 Personnel transported to a medical facility for treatment shall be accompanied and attended to by a department representative, when possible
- 5.12 Members should drink water during rehabilitation. After the first hour, a sports drink containing electrolytes should be provided. Soda and caffeinated and carbonated beverages should be avoided
- 5.13 Nutritional snacks or meals shall be provided as required for longer duration incidents
- 5.14 No tobacco use shall be permitted in or near the rehabilitation area