

Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District Policy

Number: D 7

Replaces:

Date Issued: December 10, 2007

Revised: April 14, 2017

Date Effective: June 21, 2017

Subject: OPERATIONAL READINESS POLICY

Purpose: To effectively incorporate proper techniques which encourage each member performing emergency operations to be prepared for, monitor, and treat the fatigue from strenuous physical exertion during on-duty operations.

Procedure:

- 1.1 Each member shall be responsible for monitoring their physical condition, maintaining operational readiness and requesting assignment to Rehab Group as necessary. Additionally, Company Officers shall continually observe members of their crew for signs of fatigue and request assignment to Rehab as necessary.
- 1.2 To maintain operational readiness in cases of sustained incidents and strenuous activity, firefighters and support personnel must be adequately hydrated, rested, and nourished. The Stratmoor Hills Fire Department is responsible for providing periods of rest/recovery, a system of monitoring and rehabilitating firefighters, and a means to nourish firefighters during campaign incidents. Effective recognition and rehabilitation of engaged firefighters BEFORE fatigue occurs is the key to maintaining a safe, ready work force.
- 1.3 The System for maintaining operational readiness consists of three elements:

- (a) Preparation for Physical Exertion
 - (i) Firefighters shall prepare for emergency operations by maintaining an adequate level of physical strength/stamina, hydration and nourishment.
- (b) Physical strength/stamina
 - (i) Firefighters are required to maintain their physical strength and stamina. Proper conditioning of the muscle and cardiovascular system will provide level of ability.
- (c) Hydration
 - (i) Water is the key element to hydrate firefighters. Other drinks slow absorption into the system and therefore are less effective in maintaining hydration. Drinks such as Coffee, Pop, and Hot Chocolate are discouraged for “on scene” hydration. During sustained incidents, a replenishing fluid such as Gatorade or PowerAde may assist with electrolyte replacement. Firefighters shall keep in a hydrated state so that the system is never caught dehydrated.
 - (ii) Each primary apparatus shall have a case of water for hydrating that crew. Working crew members are recommended to consume a minimum of one liter of water per hour. Members assigned to the Rehab Group shall be responsible for replacing fluids lost during the preceding physical exertion or as recommended by the Rehab Officer. Firefighters are required to replace body fluids following a guideline of eight ounces of water for each bottle of air consumed. In cases when SCBA is not being utilized, work equivalent to one air bottle consumed would require eight ounces of water to adequately hydrate.

1.4 Nourishment

- (a) To maintain response readiness, firefighters shall eat meals. Being ready for sustained physical exertion is the goal of proper nourishment.
- (b) Common sense and consultation with a Physician will dictate the appropriate level required of these categories.
- (c) The Stratmoor Hills Fire Department shall provide nourishment when extended operations cross over normal meal times or in cases where companies are engaged for four or more hours. Nourishment shall be geared toward energy replacing foods.
- (d) Because of the various types, tastes, and specific desires for nourishment, the Rehab attendant shall send for food based on the weather, time, type, and projected length of the incident.

1.5 Monitoring Personal Physical Conditions

- (a) Firefighters engaged in operations, which require strenuous physical exertion should monitor their fatigue level. Not being aware of your own condition adds emphasis to the duty of team

members to monitor each other of signs of fatigue. All on site monitoring is to be conducted by the Training Officer or Rehab Officer.

1.6 Fatigue

- (a) The treatment for fatigue is rest until recovery. Personnel requiring extended rest should report to the Rehab Group. To effectively treat fatigue the Rehab Group should provide the necessary environment, which enables firefighters to remove their helmet, hood, gloves, and coat.
- (b) In all cases, the objective evaluation of a firefighter's fatigue level shall be the guiding criteria for assignment to Rehab. Rest should be not less than ten minutes and may exceed an hour as determined by a Rehab Officer. In extreme cases, firefighters may be sent to the treatment area of Rehab or even transported to a medical facility.