


FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE		
	SUBJECT: LIGHT DUTY	
	S.O.P. 02.03.06	
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	CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBCATEGORY: Occupational Health and Safety
APPROVED BY: Ronald L. Mastin <i>Ronald L. Mastin</i> FIRE CHIEF, FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT		EFFECTIVE DATE: August 26, 1993 REVISION DATE: September 1, 2008
FORMS REQUIRED: FRD-158, Work Status Notification Form FRD-159, Request for Light Duty Personnel FRD-177, Request for Light Duty – Non-Job-Related FRD-074, Medical Status Report FRD-091, Therapy Report HR-06, Certification of Health Care Provider		
NOTE: Current forms are located on the department's Intranet or the Risk Management Division's Infoweb page		

PURPOSE:

To establish policies and provisions for light duty.

I. PREFACE

The Light Duty Program is designed to keep an employee involved within the department by utilizing the skills of injured, ill, or other related conditions of uniformed personnel during rehabilitation. Light duty assignments are available to employees with medical disabilities due to either job-related or non-job-related injuries or illnesses. The Light Duty Program also can be utilized for performance-related issues and other temporary assignments.

Any employee on light duty shall report to the Light Duty Coordinator (LDC) in the Health and Safety Division (HSD). Physicians and therapists familiar with the job requirements of firefighters shall decide the functional capacities of uniformed personnel after significant injuries, illnesses, or other absences. The LDC also will work with the Public Safety Occupational Health Center (PSOHC) staff to ensure that uniformed personnel are properly rehabilitated before returning to full duty.

II. POLICY

Permanent light duty assignments or accommodation agreements shall not be made. Any light duty assignment that is required due to an employee's inability to perform the duties required of his or her position shall be limited to the equivalent of one calendar year from date of incapacity. Uniformed personnel assigned to the Operations Bureau shall be limited to a maximum of 12 months or 2,912 hours of light duty. Personnel assigned to either the Personnel Services Bureau or the Business Services Bureau shall be limited to a maximum of 12 months or 2,080 hours of light duty. Personnel who exceed the maximum shall refer to Section VI of this SOP.

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III. PROCEDURES FOR LIGHT DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

A. Occupational Injuries/Illness

1. Any employee being treated for a job-related injury shall notify his or her supervisor immediately when he or she is released to light duty. If the supervisor is unavailable, the employee shall notify the duty safety officer.
2. Any employee released to light duty shall report to the LDC on the following 40-hour week (Monday-Friday) workday.
3. Assignments shall follow the treating physician's guidelines in conjunction with Fairfax County Personnel Rules and the Virginia Workers' Compensation Laws.
4. Any employee reporting to light duty for the first time due to a job-related injury or illness shall have a completed Medical Status Report.
5. It shall be the employee's responsibility to provide weekly medical status updates from the workers' compensation treating physician to the LDC if the next appointment is not clearly indicated on a current Medical Status Report.

B. Non-job-related injury/illness

1. The employee shall have an approval for Family and Medical Leave (follow procedures outlined in SOP 02.01.12).
2. The employee shall submit a written request on a Request for Light Duty Non-Job-Related (FRD-177) Form to his or her immediate supervisor that includes a Certification of Health Care Provider Form (HR-06) completed by their treating physician stating the projected length of disability, work restrictions, and physical limitations. Due to medical confidentiality, the cause of the disability for non-occupational injuries does not need to be identified for light duty approval.
3. The employee's immediate supervisor shall forward the signed FRD-177 form through the chain-of-command to the battalion chief for recommendation and to the deputy chief or division supervisor for approval. The approved FRD-177 will then be provided to the LDC. The LDC shall notify the employee once the request has been approved.
4. A determination for a light duty assignment is based on:
 - a. The type(s) of job(s) available.
 - b. The benefit to the department and the citizens of Fairfax County.

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5. The Fire and Rescue Department is not under any obligation to provide light duty assignments for employees who have non-job-related medical disabilities. Decisions shall be appealed to the respective assistant chief.
6. It shall be the employee's responsibility to provide weekly medical status updates from his or her physician to the LDC if the next appointment is not clearly indicated on a current Medical Status Report form.

C. Pregnancy

1. Pregnant personnel shall immediately notify the PSOHC of a confirmed pregnancy and receive an informational packet.
2. Request a completed Work Status Notification form (FRD-158) for her supervisor and the LDC.
3. Once a decision has been made to abstain from regular duties, pregnant personnel may report to the LDC for assignment.
4. Submit a request for FML to the LDC following procedures outlined in SOP 02.01.12, Family and Medical Leave.
5. An employee shall return to full and unrestricted duty when she has been given written permission from her physician and has a completed FRD-158 form from the PSOHC.
6. If not fit for duty at the expiration of FML coverage, submit for fitness for duty evaluation and provide the LDC with a completed FRD-158 from the PSOHC indicating work status and follow guidelines as outlined in SOP 02.04.03, Fitness for Duty.

D. Performance-Based Issues

1. Light duty personnel may be assigned for other fitness-for-duty issues as outlined in Standard Operating Procedure 2.04.03, Fitness for Duty.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO LIGHT DUTY

- A. Personnel assigned to light duty shall report to the LDC for assignment. Personnel shall be issued a light duty assignment agreement specifying work location and hours.
- B. Personnel assigned to light duty shall wear a Class D uniform or clothing appropriate for their work assignment.
- C. Personnel working in a light/restricted duty capacity shall be allowed to perform physical fitness training only with written approval from their treating physician showing the type, frequency, and duration of fitness conditioning that they may perform.

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- D. Employees shall be required to provide Medical Status Report updates following each physician's visit.
- E. Training shall be maintained (e.g., OARS classroom session, EMT certification, EMSCEP, and ALS in-station drills).
- F. Any overtime must have prior approval of the Deputy Chief of the HSD.
- G. Annual and compensatory leave shall be granted as it is in the field; requests will be submitted at least one day before the leave day(s) requested. Any leave already approved during the time that the employee is expected to be on light duty shall be reported to the LDC when the employee first reports for light duty.
- H. Personnel assigned to light duty due to a job-related injury/illness shall not be granted injury leave without a physician's statement confirming that the absence is due to the job-related injury/illness. A Medical Status Report that is signed by a physician shall be presented to the LDC before personnel can be reassigned to light duty. If the employee is unable to physically report to the LDC while on injury leave, the employee shall immediately forward (by fax) the Medical Status Report to the LDC.
- I. Personnel assigned to light duty shall be responsible for completing their Time and Attendance (T&A) Reports and submitting them on time to the LDC. The following job numbers shall be used:
 - 1. **Job No. 92A020** - Job-related light duty
 - 2. **Job No. 92A014** - Non-job-related injury/illness
 - 3. **Job No. 92P010** - Pregnancy
 - 4. **Job No. 92P011** - Performance related
 - 5. **Job No. 11FMLA** - Family Medical Leave
 - 6. **Job No. 92INLV** - Injury Leave

The subobject code 102 or 402 (as appropriate) shall be used for all job- or non-job-related injuries/illness.

- J. Personnel released from light duty to full and unrestricted duty shall immediately notify the LDC and the respective battalion chief.
- K. Scheduled annual physical appointments shall be maintained when an employee is assigned to light duty.

V. PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING LIGHT DUTY PERSONNEL

- A. Light duty assignments shall be based on the limitations/qualifications of the employee.

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- B. Supervisors requesting light duty personnel shall submit a Request for Light Duty Personnel Form (FRD-159) or send a request via e-mail to the LDC with the following information:
1. Supervisor and work location
 2. Description of task to be performed
 3. Length of request: hour(s), day(s), week(s), and month(s)
- C. Supervisors requesting light duty must understand all procedures for personnel assigned to light duty (Sec. III of this SOP).
- D. Granting of such requests shall be based on the availability of personnel assigned to light duty, priority of the project, and time of receipt of the request. Field assignments shall require a written request from the employee's deputy chief and approval of the Assistant Chief of the Operations Bureau. The LDC shall review the continuation of extended light duty assignments monthly.
- E. Each section requesting light duty personnel shall designate one supervisor to whom all light duty personnel shall report. The supervisor shall ensure that light duty personnel maintain assigned work hours and that their T&As are correctly submitted. The supervisor also shall be responsible for completing employee performance evaluations for light duty personnel whose assignments are in excess of six months.

VI. LIMITATIONS ON LIGHT DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Any light duty assignment that is required due to an employee's inability to perform the full field duties required of uniformed personnel assigned to the Operations Bureau or the duties of an assignment to either the Personnel Services Bureau or the Business Services Bureau shall be limited to a maximum of 12 months from date of incapacity. These limitations are for any one compensable injury/illness event, non-job-related injury, or other performance-based issue. Employees who have exhausted the maximum time permitted (or have been non-operational in excess of 9 months with a prognosis indicating probability of work restrictions continuing beyond 12 months) will be offered the following options:
1. Participation in the Alternative Placement Program, as described in S.O.P 2.0.11, Procedures for Uniformed Retirement System Alternative Placement Program, is limited to employees with a job-related injury that precludes the employee from performing full field duties.
 2. Referral to County Human Resources for assistance with appointment to a general County position in which the employee can meet all of the essential job functions and qualifications.
 3. Referral to the Uniformed Retirement Board for service connected disability retirement.

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4. Referral to the Uniformed Retirement Board for non-service connected disability retirement.
5. Resignation.
6. Involuntary separation.

B. Documentation Required

All reports and personnel actions (to include transfers, temporary assignments, employee reclassifications, accommodation agreements, etc.) required to effectively administer the provisions of this SOP shall be documented in writing on the approved forms. Copies will be maintained in the employee's personnel file. Other documentation to include work performance evaluation results and medical status forms will be held in separate files with limited access within the HSD. Medical information, such as fitness for duty evaluations, shall be filed separately in the employee's medical record file that is maintained by the PSOHC and/or the authorized physician's file utilized for workers' compensation claims.

C. Evaluation Criteria

To ensure that this policy is administered in an objective, consistent, and nondiscriminatory manner, the determination of an employee's fitness and/or ability to perform essential firefighter job functions must be based on objective job-related criteria. The primary criteria to be used for a fitness for duty determination shall include one or more of the following:

1. Results of a medical and/or psychological examination performed by a County physician or a physician approved by the Risk Management Division (RMD) with determination of fitness for duty based upon the established *Medical Guidelines for Firefighters*, the firefighter's job description, and a list of essential job tasks as outlined in the work performance evaluation.
2. An official report, training record, administrative investigation, performance evaluation, or request for accommodation.