
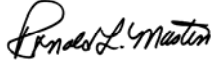


FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE		
	SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	
	S.O.P 02.03.08	
	PAGE 1 OF 8	
	CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBCATEGORY: Occupational Health and Safety
	APPROVED BY: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> Ronald L. Mastin  FIRE CHIEF, FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT </div> <div> EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1993 REVISION DATE: September 1, 2008 </div> </div>	
FORMS REQUIRED: Release of Information Form (EAP Form) EAP Performance Referral Form (EAP Form)		
NOTE: Current forms are located on the department's Intranet		

PURPOSE:

To describe the Fire and Rescue Department's Employee Assistance Program and to provide guidelines for using the program.

I. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is to assist employees in effectively coping with personal and/or job stress. EAP services are available to all employees, retirees, volunteers, and their immediate families. In addition, the EAP aims to retain valued employees, to facilitate job effectiveness, and to encourage a positive work climate. A policy overview is provided below.

- A. The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department recognizes that most personal problems can be improved and/or corrected with effective intervention. (See Section IV for a list of possible personal problems that can be addressed by the EAP.)
- B. The department has a vested interest in the health and well-being of employees and will endeavor to help when an employee requests assistance and/or when an employee's job performance is adversely affected.
- C. Employee consultation with and participation in the EAP, including all records and discussions of personal issues shall be treated in a confidential manner in accordance with the confidentiality regulations of the Virginia Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and Federal Regulation 42, CFR Part 2.
- D. Self-referral to the EAP is encouraged.
- E. Such voluntary participation in the EAP shall not jeopardize an employee's job security or long-term promotional opportunities. However, participation in the EAP does not relieve an employee of the responsibility of satisfactorily meeting job performance standards.

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program	EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1993 REVISION DATE: September 1, 2008	S.O.P 02.03.08
CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBCATEGORY: Occupational Health and Safety	PAGE 2 OF 7

- F. Beyond encouraging an employee to use the EAP, any formal performance referral (see Section VI. C.) to the EAP must be based strictly on the employee's job performance and/or conduct problems. Department supervisors shall concern themselves only with such job performance and/or conduct issues. They shall not attempt to clinically diagnose an employee's underlying personal problem(s). All levels of management shall be responsible for consulting and referring employees to the EAP when appropriate to assist in resolving such job performance problems.
- G. The Fire and Rescue Department will participate in the Fairfax County EAP Advisory Committee. This committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Department of Human Resources on EAP-related issues on a county-wide basis. Employee groups and organizations can communicate EAP-related matters or can request meetings with the EAP staff through the Human Resources Manager of the Human Resources Division, the Fire and Rescue Department's representative to this committee.

II. CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY POLICY STATEMENT

In addition to the provisions outlined in Section I, the following policies apply to chemical dependency:

- A. Chemical dependency (i.e., alcohol and/or drug addiction) is legally recognized as an impairment for which there is effective treatment and rehabilitation.
- B. Employees or volunteers who suspect that they may have an alcohol and/or drug problem are strongly encouraged to voluntarily seek assistance from the EAP.
- C. This policy is intended to ensure that no employee with an alcohol and/or drug problem will have his or her job security or long-term promotional opportunities jeopardized by voluntarily requesting help from the EAP.
- D. The individual's rights to confidentiality and privacy are recognized and protected in the strictest manner.
- E. Employees and volunteers with alcohol and/or drug problems shall receive the same careful consideration and opportunities for treatment that are extended to employees and volunteers with any other problem and/or illness.
- F. An alcohol and substance awareness Peer Support Program (PSP) has been established to assist members of the department. The PSP is comprised of members of the department and other helping professionals who also are in recovery. In addition to providing informal mentoring and sponsoring services to coworkers facing issues of substance abuse, the PSP works with the EAP and Fire and Rescue Department. The PSP is available to all career, volunteer, and civilian members of the department. Access to the PSP is available through the EAP or Local 2068.

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program	EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1993 REVISION DATE: September 1, 2008	S.O.P 02.03.08
CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBCATEGORY: Occupational Health and Safety	PAGE 3 OF 7

III. CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY STATEMENT

A. A primary responsibility of the EAP staff is to maintain confidentiality as outlined in the regulations of the Virginia Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Furthermore, the EAP adheres to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists, Standards for Providers of Psychological Services, and Federal Regulation 42, CFR Part 2. As such, information shall be released only under the following circumstances:

1. With the written and informed consent of the client. Such disclosures are made for the benefit of the client, and both the EAP Counselor and the client must agree that this release of information is, in fact, in the client's best interest. Any information that is provided shall be clearly identified as confidential.

A Release of Information Form authorizing this disclosure shall be utilized and shall contain the following information:

- a. Name of the EAP Counselor.
 - b. Name(s) of the person(s) and/or affiliate organization to whom the disclosure is to be made.
 - c. Name and birth date of client.
 - d. Purpose of the disclosure.
 - e. Specific information to be disclosed.
 - f. Date on which the consent will expire without express revocation. The duration of the consent shall be limited to a maximum of one year.
 - g. Date on which the consent is signed.
 - h. Statement that the client may revoke such consent at any time.
 - i. Signature of client.
 - j. Signature of EAP Counselor.
2. When the EAP Counselor determines that there is a clear and imminent risk to the client or to the community. "Clear and imminent risk" would include an individual who poses a serious, imminent physical threat of self-harm or harm to another person and/or an individual and whose ability to function on the job is so substantially impaired that he or she presents a serious threat to the safety or property of co-workers and/or the community.

If the EAP Counselor assesses a client to be a "clear and imminent risk," he or she shall attempt to resolve the situation in the least intrusive manner.

3. When required by judicial order.
4. When child or elder abuse is suspected or known to occur, it shall be reported in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Clients shall be informed in advance of these limits on the maintenance of confidentiality.

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program	EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1993 REVISION DATE: September 1, 2008	S.O.P 02.03.08
CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBCATEGORY: Occupational Health and Safety	PAGE 4 OF 7

- B. Other than specified in Part A, the Fire and Rescue Department shall have no access to EAP files of client data.

IV. EAP CLINICAL SERVICES

- A. The clinical services provided by the EAP to employees, retirees, volunteers, and their immediate families include (a) consultation, (b) referral, (c) short-term counseling, and (d) case management. These initial services are provided at no cost to the client. The nature of these various services is described below.
1. One of the primary roles of the EAP is to assist clients with personal problems such as marital or family stress; interpersonal conflicts; job stress; alcohol and/or drug use; weight control; smoking cessation; phobias; or possible financial, legal, or medical problems. (This is not an exhaustive list, and questions regarding the nature of any personal problem should be addressed to EAP.) Assistance is provided by assessing the client's needs and making recommendations regarding appropriate treatment of any identified problems. Treatment recommendations may include short-term counseling by EAP staff or may involve referral to outside resources.
 2. Individuals wanting to consult with the EAP staff should call the EAP office to discuss any questions and/or to schedule an initial appointment. Appointments will be scheduled on a timely basis with consideration given to the employee's schedule and need for immediate services.
 3. Confidentiality is a primary consideration. The EAP staff may opt to not leave their name or a message when returning phone calls unless specifically instructed to do so by the caller. In case of an emergency, the EAP staff may be reached 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, via the phone number indicated on the Employee Assistance Program's materials.
- B. If it is determined in the initial consultation session that the client would be best served by a referral to a community resource, the EAP staff will consider the client's health insurance coverage, ability to pay, location of the services, service provider's expertise and philosophy, and the client's expressed preferences. Personal leave shall be used in pursuing any EAP recommendation(s).
- C. If the problem can be resolved in a few sessions, counseling shall be provided by the EAP staff.
- D. When making a referral to a community resource, the EAP counselor shall request that the client sign a Release of Information Form. This release will allow the EAP to facilitate transition to this other resource and to maintain any necessary contact with the client and the service provider to monitor progress and to ensure that client needs are being met. The EAP counselor shall advise the client of this at the time the treatment recommendation is made.

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program	EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1993 REVISION DATE: September 1, 2008	S.O.P 02.03.08
CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBCATEGORY: Occupational Health and Safety	PAGE 5 OF 7

- E. The EAP staff shall not render an opinion regarding disability and/or Workmen's Compensation determination. This is a separate county function, and the employee will be advised accordingly. EAP involvement will be limited to providing crisis intervention and/or EAP services as previously cited. This may, however, include providing pertinent information to the agency evaluating the disability or Workmen's Compensation issue as required by law. Clients also will be advised of any pertinent information.
- F. The EAP staff shall make no determination of fitness for duty. The employee's supervisor shall exercise his or her judgment in determining the need for a fitness for duty evaluation as detailed in Standard Operating Procedure (S.O.P.) 02.04.03.

V. EAP EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

- A. Information about the EAP shall be made available to all employees, volunteers, and their families to familiarize them with the Program's procedures and available services. Educational activities focusing on stress, substance abuse, and other potential problem areas also shall be provided. These activities are designed to promote early problem identification and self-referral, to prevent problems from developing and/or becoming more severe, and to enhance the quality of life.
- B. Supervisor orientation and training sessions maximize EAP effectiveness for the department, as well as for employees in need of services. Supervisor training shall be provided to enable supervisors to understand EAP policies and procedures, to assist supervisors in the early recognition of employee job performance problems, to increase the effectiveness of supervisors' responses to these employees, and to encourage supervisors to consult with the EAP when dealing with employees with deteriorating job performance

VI. TYPES OF REFERRALS

The services of the EAP are available through any of the following types of referrals.

A. Self-Referral

An employee, retiree, volunteer, or an immediate family member experiencing a personal problem or job-related problem may initiate contact with the EAP office on his or her own. In addition, another individual may encourage an individual to utilize EAP services and may first consult with the EAP staff to discuss how best to make this suggestion and to initiate contact with the EAP.

B. Supervisor-Suggested Referral

A supervisor may casually and informally suggest or remind an employee or volunteer about the availability of EAP services and may facilitate this by providing the EAP phone number to the employee or volunteer. The emphasis here is that the supervisor proactively suggests that the employee consider utilizing the EAP before his or her job performance or behavior deteriorates as a result of some possible personal or job-related problem.

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program	EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1993 REVISION DATE: September 1, 2008	S.O.P 02.03.08
CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBCATEGORY: Occupational Health and Safety	PAGE 6 OF 7

This is not a formal action, and the supervisor may wish to first consult with the EAP staff to discuss how best to make this suggestion. At no point shall the supervisor attempt to label or to diagnose a suspected personal problem. Again, it remains the individual's choice to follow through with this suggestion and to initiate contact with the EAP.

C. Supervisory-Performance Referral

A performance referral is an immediate supervisor's formal, documented referral of an employee to the EAP based on identified job performance or conduct problems only, e.g., a job-related incident or a decline in an employee's work performance or interpersonal relationships. This is another proactive option available to supervisors in which the employee is strongly encouraged to consult with the EAP. The supervisor may choose to exercise this option before formal discipline becomes necessary or at the same time discipline is being proposed or implemented. Ideally, a supervisory-performance referral should be made before it becomes necessary to propose more severe discipline such as suspension or termination.

If the immediate supervisor makes a performance referral, the following guidelines should be considered.

1. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to consult with the EAP staff to discuss the most effective means of handling the situation prior to meeting with the employee and referring him or her to the EAP.
2. In a corrective interview session, the specific job performance problem(s) and/or job-related incident(s) shall be clearly described to the employee, with the focus on observable, documentable problem behaviors. Supervisors conducting a corrective interview should follow closely the guidelines in Section I.F.
3. The immediate supervisor making the referral shall complete the EAP Performance Referral Form and provide a clear description of the job performance problem(s). The supervisor should also contact the EAP regarding the referral. This form should be signed by the supervisor and the employee. In the event that the employee refuses to sign, this should simply be noted in the space designated for his or her signature. The original form shall then be provided to the employee and a copy immediately forwarded to the EAP so that, ideally, it is available at the time of the initial appointment. In addition, the supervisor shall retain a copy to document his or her action. The EAP staff will subsequently contact the immediate supervisor to confirm receipt of this Performance Referral Form.
4. If the employee decides to follow through with the referral, he or she should contact the EAP directly to schedule an appointment.
5. During the initial appointment of a supervisory performance referral, the EAP will suggest to the employee that he or she sign a Release of Information Form to the referring supervisor. This allows the EAP to advise the supervisor that the employee accepted the referral and kept the initial appointment.

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program	EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1993 REVISION DATE: September 1, 2008	S.O.P 02.03.08
CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBCATEGORY: Occupational Health and Safety	PAGE 7 OF 7

No other information will be released except as agreed upon by the employee and the EAP counselor. The supervisor will not be contacted if this authorization form is not signed. Authorized release of information is not a requirement of EAP participation, but it is in the employee's best interest in the case of a performance referral in that it shows a good faith attempt on the part of the employee to address the identified job-related problems.

6. If the employee declines the performance referral or does not follow through with the referral to the EAP and the job problem(s) does not recur after the corrective interview with the immediate supervisor, no further action shall be required. The supervisor may remind the employee that EAP services remain available on a self-referral basis if the employee decides to pursue assistance later. However, no disciplinary action shall be taken solely because he or she declines use of the EAP.
7. If job problems continue, then the immediate supervisor shall use disciplinary procedures as outlined in the county's Personnel Regulations, the Fire and Rescue Department's Rules and Regulations and/or Standard Operating Procedures.
8. Nothing in this section shall limit the department's right to take disciplinary action with an employee or volunteer in a manner consistent with department and county regulations. The employee's legitimate access to grievance procedures shall not be affected.

VII. EAP ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

- A. The EAP is an external program composed of designated EAP counselors under the supervision of the EAP Clinical Director. The EAP shall communicate regularly with the management of the Fire and Rescue Department, as well as the Fairfax County EAP Advisory Committee regarding the overall operation of the program.
- B. The EAP staff has offices located separately from, but convenient to, departmental facilities so that employees will have ready access to services while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.
- C. All requests for services shall be directed through the EAP access number as indicated in the Employee Assistance Program materials. In case of an emergency, the EAP staff may be reached 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, via this same number.
- D. Written records for individuals who utilize EAP services will be accessible only to the EAP staff and will be kept secured at the EAP office. Employees have the right to obtain information from their records. However, all records are the property of the EAP and are, therefore, the responsibility of the EAP staff and subject to EAP control.