

	<b>CAROLINE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE-RESCUE, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE</b>	
	<b>SUBJECT:</b>  <b>Rehabilitation Guidelines</b>	<b>SOP # 505.05</b>
	<b>APPROVED:</b> Edward F. Fuzy Director of Fire – Rescue and Emergency Management	<b>INITIATED July 1, 2007</b>
	<b>Applies to : Career and Volunteer Staff</b>	<b>REVISED</b>

### **A. PURPOSE**

This policy provides guidelines for the rehabilitation of firefighters while operating on emergency scenes or training scenarios, and to provide for a means to monitor the physical and mental condition of those involved. Members shall be evaluated for member safety through injury prevention, while ensuring the integrity of the operation at hand.

### **B. STANDARD**

Firefighting is a physically demanding occupation that requires the body to consume vital nutrients to continue to function. To ensure the health and safety of our members, it is necessary to establish a standard for rehabilitation.

### **C. GUIDELINES**

#### **1. ESTABLISHMENT**

It shall be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to initiate the appropriate rehabilitation group when conditions dictate. The Incident Commander shall place a designee in charge of the rehabilitation sector. Rehabilitation sectors shall be established but not limited to incidents involving high levels of mental and/or physical activity, all working structural assignments, incidents with unfavorable weather conditions, or at the discretion of the incident commander.

#### **2. LOCATION**

The Incident Commander, or the sector officer shall establish the location of the rehabilitation sector. The location of the rehabilitation sector shall provide protection from environmental elements. The location shall be far enough away from a hazardous atmosphere where personal protective equipment and self-contained breathing apparatus can be removed. When feasible the location shall also be easily accessible to EMS transport units. Smoking is prohibited in the rehab sector.

#### **3. RESOURCES**

The rehabilitation sector officer shall secure all necessary resources to properly supply the rehabilitation sector. Such supplies include but are not limited to food, water, EMS transport units with medically trained member, and any necessary shelter from environmental concerns.

#### **4. PROCEDURE**

##### **a. Assignment to Rehab**

The rehabilitation sector is under the command of a rehabilitation officer assigned by the incident commander. The incident commander will make assignment of companies to the rehabilitation sector. Company officers shall advise the incident commander of the need for rehabilitation. Whenever possible, the entire company will be sent to the rehabilitation sector together. Teams will maintain unity whenever possible and all member movement will be coordinated with team leaders and the incident commander to maintain accountability. After the consumption of two, thirty-minute SCBA bottles, member will be required to rotate through the rehabilitation sector. The sector officer shall keep documentation of all members entering the rehabilitation sector.

##### **b. Entry into Rehab**

Upon entry into the rehabilitation sector each member will be given the opportunity to rest, replenish fluids, and eat when necessary. Fluids shall consist of water and or commercially available activity drinks. Fluids with high caffeine levels such as soft drinks, and coffee should be avoided. Members shall be examined for abnormal medical conditions such as heat exhaustion, dehydration, breathing difficulty, cardiac problems or anything that may lead to further injury or jeopardize the operation. Upon entry into the Rehab sector, members will have their name, time of entry into rehab, pulse rate, respirations, and blood pressures taken and recorded.

##### **c. Release from Rehab**

Prior to member being released from the rehabilitation sector and returning to the manpower pool for re-assignment, vitals must be reassessed and within normal limits. If vitals are not within normal limits, the member will be required to remain in the rehabilitation sector for an additional evaluation fifteen minutes later. If at that time vitals have not returned to normal, member may need to be transported to a medical facility. Anytime that a member presents with an obvious injury, or signs of a medical condition they will also be transported to a medical facility. If the need for transport to a medical facility arises, the incident commander should be notified of the individuals name, the condition, and the receiving facility by messenger. At no time shall this information be broadcast over any radio channel.

Member must be cleared by the rehabilitation sector before accepting re-assignment to the operation. At such time the rehabilitation officer must notify command and record the time of member departure from the rehabilitation sector. At this time the member may return to the operation as re-assigned, with the proper personal protective equipment as assigned by the incident commander.

#### **D. RESPONSIBILITY**

All personnel are responsible for utilizing this established policy.

The only time personnel may deviate from this guideline is when it is superseded by another, more stringent guideline.