

HAMILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING GUIDE

PROCEDURE:	OPERATIONS	POLICY
TITLE:	Firefighter Rehabilitation	O-12

PURPOSE: Fire service rehab operations shall be instituted in order to insure that the physical and mental conditions of personnel do not deteriorate to a point that may affect health and safety during an emergency incident.

SCOPE: It is widely accepted in the fire service that firefighter stress and overexertion contributes to the majority of illness, injury, and accidents during and immediately following alarms. Rehab operations shall be consistently implemented in reduce the frequency of these incidents. Firefighter Rehab is required by NFPA Standard 1500.

PRE-ALARM PHASE: All firefighting personnel will be trained and familiar with rehab practices. Fire Officers will promote an attitude that encourages personnel to rest and be evaluated during alarms. There should be pre-planned procedures for rehab with SOMAC ambulance.

DURING THE ALARM: It is the responsibility of the IC to decide when to establish a rehabilitation sector.

1. The line officers, sector “operations” officers, and the safety officer shall continuously monitor the status of all personnel and report to the IC, who then may choose to establish rehab.
2. Environmental conditions should be considered when determining the need to establish rehab.

THE REHAB AREA / OPERATIONS: The Rehab area shall be set up:

1. Near the manpower pool but separated from the operational area of the fireground
2. Ideally uphill and upwind from the incident
3. In a quiet and comfortable area

Factors such as outside temperatures and expected duration will influence what will be needed in the rehab area. Considerations should include:

1. Water
2. Food / other beverages
3. Chairs or other area to sit/rest
4. AC, Fans / Heaters

Anytime personnel are returned to service or back to the staging area after completing an assignment, they shall pass through the rehab area. This may consist of refreshments, rest, medical evaluation, or all of the above. It shall be the responsibility of the company officers to decide that his/her crew needs to take a break and be relived by rested firefighters. All Fireground personnel have

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a duty to monitor other firefighters and ensure that they receive rehab support as needed.

The staging officer (or person controlling the manpower pool) shall be in charge of rehab operations. This person will have the responsibility of working with EMS personnel to determine what firefighters are physically and mentally ready to return to service. The staging officer shall also act as a communication link between rehab EMS and the incident commander. As an incident expands in size or duration, it may be necessary to appoint a rehab officer to allow the staging officer freedom needed to perform manpower coordination. This person would inherit the rehab responsibility's normally assigned to the staging officer.

The rehab shall be staffed by *properly trained and equipped* ALS level EMT's, (preferably Paramedics). Personnel shall be trained and familiar with advanced level cardiac care procedures that are consistent with local protocols and ACLS standards. There shall be an adequate number of caregivers for the number of firefighters expected to be evaluated by the rehab staff. This resource will be provided by SOMAC ambulance, or other appropriate EMS agency. If the ambulance cannot be near the rehab area, all BLS/ALS EMS equipment will be brought to the rehab area.

Upon entering rehab, a firefighter shall be asked questions and be subjected to interaction while evaluated for appropriate answers, changes in mental status, or other signs of fatigue. At the direction of the officer in charge, the firefighter may be medically evaluated which requires establishing baseline vital signs, a rest period and re-evaluation as necessary. Any concerns shall be reported back to the OIC. Medical treatment decisions will be made by the OIC, rehab EMS, and the patient.

If a firefighter requires transportation, the following shall occur. Incident Command shall be notified. An appropriately staffed transport ambulance shall be requested. The firefighter will be treated at the scene until they can be turned over to the transporting agency. This ensures continual EMS staffing at the incident. The firefighter will be transported to the closest appropriate hospital for treatment.

TERMINATING REHAB:

Operations shall be discontinued when the Incident Commander feels they are no longer necessary. At this time the officers and IC should consider long term needs of firefighters and implement prolonged resting periods, CISD teams, etc.

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