*This model program is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization’s policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor.*

**FIREFIGHTER REHABILITATION**

**Purpose**

The intent of this policy is to establish a procedure to lessen the risk of injury to firefighters resulting from extended field operations at emergency incidents, and

To meet the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs regulations requiring the use of Rehabilitation of firefighters at emergency incidents.

To meet the goals of NFPA 1561 *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*, and NFPA 1584 *Standard on the Rehabilitation Process for Members During Emergency Operations and Training Exercises*.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Incident Command to make an early determination of incidents or training requiring the implementation of Rehab Unit / Group.

***Consider adding types of dispatches that automatically trigger a rehab response***

Determination shall be made on anticipated duration of event, weather conditions, and other conditions, and other conditions that could negatively affect the health of firefighters, such as working fires, large brush fires, hazardous material incidents, large area searches, and weather extremes.

**Procedures**

The Rehab Area will provide:

* Revitalization: rest, cooling/warming, refreshments, etc.
* Periodic physical assessment of firefighters, which may include:
	+ Pulse rate, respiration rate, and blood pressure
	+ Pulse Oximetry monitoring
	+ Body temperature
* Treatment for injuries
* Transportation to medical facilities for firefighters needing further medical treatment or evaluation

The Rehab Area should be defined with fire line tape or similar markings, with a single entrance / exit point.

The Rehab Area should be divided into 2 sections; 1) a section for the immediate evaluation & rehab of firefighters, and 2) a section for ready firefighters.

**Describe when firefighters should be assigned to report to Rehab, such as after using 2 SCBA cylinders**

Firefighting companies / crews should report to Rehab Area as a unit, when possible. The Rehab Supervisor shall collect accountability tags of all firefighters at the entry/exit point and be logged into the Rehab Area.

Personnel returning to the incident site shall retrieve their accountability tags from the Rehab Supervisor and report to the Command Post.

The Rehab Area Log will indicate the names of individual firefighters, their arrival time, their initial and follow-up medical evaluations, and the time of return to ready status

Upon entering the Rehab Area, and as conditions allow, each firefighter should remove their turnout coat and helmet. Turnout pants should be removed or lowered to boot level to promote cooling.

Firefighters will receive 10 minutes of rest and drink a minimum of 8 oz. of a non-caffeinated beverage. Water or sport drink is recommended.

After 10 minutes, each firefighter will be reevaluated, looking for signs of environmental injuries or illnesses, and any of the following Red Flag conditions:

**Insert Red Flag criteria where a firefighter will be determined not to be able to return to strenuous firefighting duty or to be transported to a medical center. One set of criteria provided by FEMA is**

* **Pulse rate in excess of 120 bpm**
* **Body temperature in excess of 100.5 F**
* **Diastolic blood pressure above 90 mm Hg, and systolic blood pressure above 130 mm Hg.**
* **SpO2 less than 92%**

**NJ DFS Booklet 11, pages 26-29 provides additional guidance at**

[**https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dfs/publications/publication/reference\_booklet\_11.pdf**](https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dfs/publications/publication/reference_booklet_11.pdf)

Any firefighter with a Red Flag finding will be rested an additional 10 minutes and reevaluated. A firefighter, who continues to meet a Red Flag criteria will be treated as an emergency patient and transported to a medical center for further medical evaluation and treatment.

The Rehab Supervisor will update Incident Command throughout the operation **(consider specifying the frequency for the updates)** with pertinent information including the identity of crew/companies in Rehab, and the status of injured members.

The Rehab Supervisor shall have the authority to hold fire personnel from returning to service if his/her medical condition indicates.

Rehab Operations beyond the local level will be conducted in conjunction with County, State, and federal authorities.