

## **BLACKWOOD FIRE COMPANY OPERATING GUIDELINE**

### **7.10 FIREFIGHTER SAFETY - REHABILITATION**

- 7.10.1 The IC shall designate a Rehabilitation Area (Rehab) when this Company is engaged in physically demanding work, and temperatures are such, that heat related problems can be expected.
- 7.10.2 Rehab shall be designated away from the incident scene in a cool, or shaded area, or an air conditioned building. Rehab shall not be used as a manpower pool.
- 7.10.3 When designating Rehab, the IC should request a canteen unit to respond or make provisions to obtain cold water or other fluids (No Soda, or alcoholic beverages) for rehydrating personnel. The IC shall also place air conditioned vehicles in this area and consider placing a hoseline in area for cooling personnel.
- 7.10.4 Rehab shall be staffed by a minimum of 1 EMT with 1 BLS ambulance. The EMT(s) staffing Rehab shall evaluate personnel, and determine their status for returning to duty. The decision of the EMT regarding return to duty is final and members shall not attempt to return until released for duty.
- 7.10.5 The EMT(s) staffing Rehab shall have a copy of the baseline vital signs for members and shall assess members upon entering against their baseline. Assessment is to include:
- Ensure member has removed all protective clothing
  - Vital signs (pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and temperature)
  - Cognitive skills (when necessary have member count backward by sevens)
  - Hydrate with a minimum of 16 ounces of cold water or electrolyte solution. Members should avoid drinks containing large amounts of sugar. Sugar impedes the body's ability to absorb fluids.
- 7.10.6 Members shall be kept at rest and re evaluated every 10 minutes when the EMT observes:
- Abnormal vital signs (respiratory rate, pulse, or blood pressure exceed 10% of baseline values)

- Personnel without baseline with abnormal vitals ( pulse >110 or irregular, blood pressure >150/90, respirations >24, and/or an oral temperature >99.2)
- Changes in gait, speech, or behavior.
- Complaints of chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, weakness, or headache.

#### 7.10.7

Several of the preceding conditions can be related to heat stress. Heat stress encompasses several conditions outlined below:

- Heat Exhaustion - Caused by loss of fluid due to profuse sweating. Members with heat exhaustion will still sweat, frequently profusely, have cool, clammy skin and also experience extreme fatigue, giddiness, nausea, or headache. The treatment for heat exhaustion is rehydration and rest in a cool area.
- Heat Stroke - May or may not be accompanied by sweating, skin is reddish and hot to touch, pupils constricted, initially rapid strong pulse, tremors, mental confusion and anxiety, deep, rapid breathing, headache, dry mouth, convulsions or seizures. **HEAT STROKE IS A TRUE EMERGENCY.** The patient must be cooled immediately. Treatment includes stripping clothing, covering body with cool wet towels and cool water and administering oxygen. Patients exhibiting signs of heat stroke will be transported to hospital as soon as possible.

#### 7.10.8

The IC shall attempt to prevent heat related problems by having members in manpower pools remove protective clothing and hydrate prior to working.