

# Yamhill Fire Protection District

District Policies, Procedures, & SOG's

## *MISSION*

*Yamhill Fire Protection District is dedicated to  
serve and protect our community*

# District Guideline

## OPERATIONS

OPS-FIRE – 603.2

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## Establishing Rehabilitation Group

Issued: September 8, 2015

### *Rehabilitation Group Establishment*

Staff officers should consider rehabilitation during the initial planning stages of an emergency response. However, the climatic or environmental conditions of the emergency scene should not be the sole justification for establishing a Rehabilitation Area. Any activity/incident that is large in size, long in duration, and/or labor intensive will rapidly deplete the energy and strength of personnel and therefore merits consideration for rehabilitation.

### *Hydration*

A critical factor in the prevention of heat injury is the maintenance of water and electrolytes. Water must be replaced during exercise periods and at emergency incidents. During heat stress, the member should consume at least one quart of water per hour. The rehydration solution should be a 50/50 mixture of water and a commercially prepared activity beverage and administered at about 40° F. Rehydration is important even during cold weather operations where, despite the outside temperature, heat stress may occur during firefighting or other strenuous activity when protective equipment is worn. Alcohol and caffeine beverages should be avoided before and during heat stress because both interfere with the body's water conservation mechanisms. Carbonated beverages should be avoided.

### *Nourishment*

The department shall provide food at the scene of an extended incident when units are engaged for three or more hours. A cup of soup, broth, or stew is highly recommended because it is digested much faster than sandwiches and fast-food products. In addition, foods such as apples, oranges, and bananas provide supplemental forms of energy replacement. Fatty and/or salty foods should be avoided.

### *Rest*

The "two air bottle rule," or 45 minutes of work time, is recommended as an acceptable level prior to mandatory rehabilitation. Members shall rehydrate (at least eight ounces) while SCBA cylinders are being changed. Firefighters having worked for two full 30-minute rated bottles, or 45 minutes, shall be immediately placed in the Rehabilitation Area for rest and evaluation. In all cases, the objective evaluation of a member's fatigue level shall be the criteria for rehab time. Rest shall not be less than ten minutes and may

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exceed an hour as determined by the Rehab Officer. Fresh crews, or crews released from the Rehabilitation Group, shall be available in the Staging Area to ensure that fatigued members are not required to return to duty before they are rested, evaluated, and released by the Rehab Officer.

### *Recovery*

Members in the Rehabilitation Area should maintain a high level of hydration; Members should not be moved from a hot environment directly into an air-conditioned area because the body's cooling system can shut down in response to the external cooling. An air-conditioned environment is acceptable after a cool-down period at ambient temperature with sufficient air movement. Certain drugs impair the body's ability to sweat and extreme caution must be exercised if the member has taken antihistamines, such as Actifed or Benadryl, or has taken diuretics or stimulants.

### *Medical Evaluation*

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – EMS should be provided and staffed by the most highly trained and qualified EMS personnel on the scene (at a minimum of BLS level). They shall evaluate vital signs, examine members, and make proper disposition (return to duty, continued rehabilitation, or medical treatment and transport to medical facility). Continued rehabilitation should consist of additional monitoring of vital signs, providing rest, and providing fluids for rehydration. Medical treatment for members, whose signs and/or symptoms indicate potential problems, should be provided in accordance with local medical control procedures. EMS personnel shall be assertive to find potential medical problems early.

Heart Rate and Temperature – The heart rate should be measured for 30 seconds as early as possible in the rest period. If a member's heart rate exceeds 110 beats per minute, an oral temperature should be taken. If the member's temperature exceeds 100.6° F, he/she should not be permitted to wear protective equipment. If it is below 100.6° F and the heart rate remains above 110 beats per minute, rehabilitation time should be increased. If the heart rate is less than 110 beats per minute, the chance of heat stress is negligible.

Documentation – All medical evaluations shall be recorded on standard forms along with member's name and complaints and must be signed, dated, and timed by the Rehab Officer or his/her designee.

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### *Accountability*

Members assigned to the Rehabilitation Group shall enter and exit the Rehabilitation Area as a crew. The Rehab Officer or his/her designee shall document the crew designation, number of crewmembers, and the times of entry to an exit from the Rehabilitation Area on the Company Check In/Out Sheet. Crews shall not leave the Rehabilitation Area until authorized to do so by the Rehab Officer. The Rehab Officer or his/her designee shall maintain a passport accountability board with the passports of all companies assigned to the rehabilitation area, both staff, as well as rehabbing companies. The Rehab Officer may at his discretion or at the request of the IC reassign members to new teams if the members reporting to staging do so in teams of two.