

PURPOSE:

Fire, Rescue and EMS operations are recognized throughout the country as among the most hazardous duties of all occupations for which statistical data is available. Tasks required of fire service personnel are extremely demanding physically. Personnel performing these operations must possess above average strength, endurance, and agility. The Health Maintenance and Physical Fitness Program applies to all fire department personnel and is intended to provide maximum support in each individual's effort to achieve and maintain physical fitness, to promote improved health and fitness as a departmental goal, and reduce the risk of illness and personal injury.

It is recognized that a change in physical activity level may cause increased stress on the body systems. For this reason, personnel are encouraged to visit their family physician for a medical exam prior to beginning a new exercise program. Members are also reminded to begin any new program slowly to allow the body time to adjust to a new activity level.

Supervisors are expected to support personnel development in the area of personal wellness by providing time to exercise and encouraging participation in the health maintenance and physical fitness program. District personnel are ultimately responsible for implementing the elements of this program on a personal basis and following the guidelines as set forth in this policy.

PROCEDURE:

The goal of the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District is to provide a program, which will promote fitness programs that ensure department members have the physical strength, agility, endurance and mental alertness required for the proper performance of their duties. Additionally, the program is intended to reduce the frequency and severity of injuries suffered by members of the department, reduce the frequency and severity of illness, and extend the health and longevity of active and retired members.

Career and Volunteer personnel who use the physical fitness facility must go through an orientation of equipment for proper use, maintenance and cleaning as well as an orientation regarding general use of the facility. Orientations are scheduled through the Deputy Chief of Operations.

Career and Volunteer staff may use the physical fitness room from the hours of 0600 to 2200. Use between the hours of 0600 and 0700 and between 2000 and 2200 shall not create noise or disturb staff.

Career and Volunteer Staff of the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District are the only personnel allowed to use such facilities.

PRE EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Medical examinations and drug screens shall be required for all career personnel prior to appointment to full-time status in Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Department.

Employee will be sent to a local health care provider to provide for a comprehensive medical examination. The Administrative Assistant will schedule the exams pending an offer of full-time employment. Choice of health care provider shall be at the discretion of the District.

The District encourages all other personnel to have a yearly physical with their own primary care physician utilizing District paid health insurance.

Physical performance assessments shall be required for all career and volunteer personnel pending an offer of employment to a line position with Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District. The Fire District will schedule this assessment after a conditional offer of employment has been accepted.

A physical ability test which provides a realistic illustration of the possible demands placed upon the firefighter will be used. This test is designed to objectively measure a candidate's cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance and is based on nationally recognized standards.

Probationary career firefighters are required to repeat the physical ability test every 3 months during the probationary period. If the employee is unable to complete the physical ability test in the recommended time at 3, 6, or 9 months, they will be provided a comprehensive remedial fitness training program. The career probationary employee must pass the physical ability test at the end of probation (12 months) to become a permanent employee.

Permanently appointed 56-hour personnel and volunteers will have the opportunity to perform this physical performance assessment in the fall of each year.

FITNESS ACTIVITY PERIOD

Participation in physical fitness activities is mandatory for all career fire department personnel.

The workday will start at 0800 hrs and each shift will have a dedicated 90 minute workout period, including shower time, set aside each shift. Morning briefings and appropriate apparatus checks will take place before the fitness period. The fitness period will be planned around the training and activity schedule. This period will normally only be superseded by emergency responses. At the conclusion of these responses, the fitness activity period can resume until companies are able to

complete their workout. Any functions, which are prescheduled and may be affected by resuming fitness activities, will take place as planned to avoid the need to reschedule instructors and company time. In these instances, fitness activities will resume at the earliest convenience of the company. Under special circumstances, any chief officer may delay the fitness activity period in order to accommodate other department functions.

56-hour personnel working a 40-hour “light duty” schedule due to injury or illness will be allowed approximately 90 minutes each workday for maintenance of general fitness and/or rehabilitation consistent with the guidelines set below and the employee’s physician.

40-hour personnel are encouraged to participate in on duty fitness activities on no fewer than two workdays in any given week.

ON-DUTY FITNESS ACTIVITIES

Physical fitness goals should include activities to improve performance in each of four major areas: cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength/endurance, body composition and flexibility. A considerable amount of individual discretion is allowed in selecting and managing fitness activities to reach these goals.

Members will engage in non-recreational activities such as weight lifting, aerobic activities, stretching, and jogging during the daily fitness activity period. The Company Officer will regulate fitness activities and be responsible for ensuring that the activities are consistent with guidelines set forth in this policy, and that they are performed in a safe manner.

Exercise equipment will be furnished at the main fire station by the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Department and may consist of a variety of equipment to develop cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. Examples of such equipment are aerobic machines, free weight and universal style equipment, mats for floor exercise, and specialized equipment. Contact and team sports such as football, soccer, ice hockey, baseball, softball, volleyball and rugby are not permitted at any time. Weapons related sports such as archery are not permitted at any time. Outdoor bike riding for exercise will not be allowed while on duty. Team sports will be allowed on special events to include 5th Mondays.

UNIFORM AND ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

Standard department issue work uniforms or protective clothing shall be worn when responding to incidents from physical fitness activities. Fitness uniforms may be worn under department issued turnouts and jumpsuits.

All personnel shall be within monitoring distance of, or carry, a radio or alert device at all times during fitness activities. Running is encouraged but personnel shall stay within 1 minute response to the apparatus.

All exercise equipment is to be maintained in good repair and should be cleaned by the user after each use. Weights and bars shall be removed from benches and safely stored following each use.

All fitness activities are subject to the approval of the Fire Chief or designee.

REHABILITATION

It is the goal of this section to ensure all Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Department Personnel are “fit for duty,” through proper rehabilitation of injuries, reducing the risk of re-injury and improving the overall fitness of members when needed, in a non-punitive manner.

On-line personnel suffering from acute physical problems or assigned to “light duty” are required to work with their physician or physical therapist to develop an “exercise prescription”. This is a plan that identifies exercises that will speed the recovery process and improve overall fitness. Members suffering from chronic physical problems shall work with their physician or physical therapist to develop a “long term rehabilitation plan”. This plan will identify long-term goals and exercises to lessen the risk of re-injury and maintain overall fitness after formal therapy is completed. Members shall not participate in a physical activity beyond their physician’s restrictions.

Acute injury, chronic physical problems or an identified weakness in the area of physical fitness which are not resolved in a timely manner are cause for the Fire Chief to review the individual rehabilitation process, evaluate progress, and provide intervention to assist member’s rehabilitation on an individual basis.

The Fire Department may utilize outside resources such as physical therapists or personal trainers to facilitate members requiring rehabilitation. Other department members may be assigned as “Peer Trainers” to assist those undergoing required rehabilitation.

APPROVED EXERCISE AREAS AND ACTIVITIES

The following list of exercise activities has been compiled as a guide. Apparatus may be pulled out of the stations during the exercise period. Discretion must be used in regards to inclement weather conditions. Apparatus floors must be cleaned prior to use when used as an exercise area.

Approved non- recreational activities around fire stations:

- a) Weight Equipment
- b) Aerobic Equipment
- c) Jogging
- d) Stretching

Outdoor bike riding for exercise will not be allowed while on-duty.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District is committed to promoting the mental and emotional health and well-being of all District personnel.

- A. The District will provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is a confidential resource that is easy to use and focused on results in helping individuals overcome personal problems. This service can help personnel with marital and family conflicts, parenting concerns, financial issues, legal problems, grief, career changes, life crises, alcohol or drug concerns, child and elder care considerations and legal questions.
- B. The District has developed a chaplaincy program that provides a valuable resource to help someone meet spiritual and emotional needs.