



# Thurston County Fire Protection District 8 DISTRICT POLICY MANUAL

<b>POLICY TITLE:</b>	Emergency Responder Fit for Duty Status
<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>	3-15-PO-00
<b>REVISION:</b>	1
<b>DATE ISSUED/REVISED:</b>	<b>DRAFT</b>
<b>BOARD APPROVAL SIGNATURE:</b>	

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Emergency Responders are required to report for their shift fit for duty. If any Emergency Responder is unable to work their regular schedule or shift for a medical reason, they must report as directed in this Policy. Refer also to District Policy 3-16 “Members’ Disability Compensation”.

**Deleted:** For career Emergency Responders, leave issues shall be covered under Policy 3-12 “Annual & Sick Leave”. ...

Emergency Responders or their designee are required to maintain regular contact with the District through their supervisor during the course of the medical condition/event. Emergency Responders who do not participate in District activities – regular shifts, scheduled work periods, training, and/or emergency responses – for a period of 6 months or greater may be required to complete a fit for duty examination process before returning to work.

**I. Definitions:**

- 1) **Demonstrate competency** – the Emergency Responder’s ability to perform the essential functions defined in Section VI. The Emergency Responder’s functional capabilities (outlined in the *District Return to Duty Form*) are evaluated by a physician, psychologist or other appropriate licensed health care professional (LHCP).
- 2) **Emergency Responder** – A career or volunteer member of the District trained and qualified to respond on emergency incidents.
- 3) **Fit for Duty** – the state of physical conditioning and medical health that allows the Emergency Responder to safely perform the essential functions defined in Section VI.
- 4) **Fit for Duty Examination** – the examination performed by the LHCP; the examination documentation must include a completed and approved *District Return to Duty Form*.
- 5) **Release Statement** – a release to return to duty that is given by a LHCP. The release pertains only to the medical condition for which the LHCP was treating the Emergency Responder. The release also requires a completed and approved *District Return to Duty Form*.

**Deleted:** Refer also to NET Safety & Health Accident Prevention Manual Section 15 “Health & Wellness”.

**II. Reporting:** Emergency Responders shall inform their supervisor if any medical condition/event requires the use of sick leave or inability to staff a shift or planned activity. The Emergency Responder shall inform their supervisor as far in advance as possible if the medical condition/event is planned or otherwise known of in advance. The Emergency Responder (or designee) shall verbally report his/her progress to his/her supervisor every assigned shift they miss. Refer also to District Procedure 2-20-02 “Accident Reporting, Investigation and Documentation”.

**III. Light/Alternative Duty:** As provided for by Washington State disability compensation authorities and Article 25 of the District-IAFF Local 2903 Collective Bargaining Agreement, Emergency Responders may be assigned to light or alternate duty during the recovery and/or rehabilitation period or if:

- Such work or duty is reasonable and available
- The Emergency Responder is able to perform such work or duty (based upon the medical restrictions as identified by the LHCP), and/or
- The LHCP releases the Emergency Responder for such light/alternate duty.

If light/alternate duty is indicated, tasks involving only those Emergency Responder essential functions that can be safely accomplished by the Emergency Responder shall be assigned (e.g. driving apparatus but no interior structural firefighting). The District will establish and maintain a “light duty work/task description” that will be reviewed and approved by the Emergency Responder’s LHCP prior to assignment to such duty. A copy of the LHCP approved light duty/task assignment shall be forwarded as appropriate to the Washington Department of Labor & Industries.

**IV. Returning to Duty/Work:** If an Emergency Responder is absent from three or more shifts due to any medical condition/event, an approved *District Return to Duty Form* will be required. If the nature of the medical condition/event may impact fit-for-duty competency, a consultation with and/or an examination from a LHCP may be required. This may also indicate the Emergency Responder's permanent restriction to light/alternative duty.

**Deleted:** or weekly drills

**V. Absence from District Activity:** If an Emergency Responder is absent from the District for a period of 6 months or greater, whether or not the Emergency Responder is on an authorized leave of absence, he or she may be subject to a fit for duty examination process.

**Deleted:** Volunteer

**VI. Essential Functions for Emergency Responders:** essential functions for emergency responders assigned to structural firefighting duties ("FF") or emergency medical duties ("EMS") include:

**Deleted:** If an Emergency Responder is absent from his/her scheduled shift for any reason for 90 days or more, they shall demonstrate basic firefighting or EMS skills competency to the Assistant Chief of Training & Operations upon his/her return. Refer also to Policy 3-09 "Leave of Absence".

FF	EMS	Essential Function
X		Performing fire-fighting tasks (e.g., hose line operations, extensive crawling, lifting and carrying heavy objects, ventilating roofs or walls using power or hand tools, forcible entry), rescue operations, and other emergency response actions under stressful conditions while wearing personal protective ensembles and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), including working in extremely hot or cold environments for prolonged time periods
X	X	Wearing an SCBA, which includes a demand valve-type positive-pressure face piece or HEPA filter masks, which requires the ability to tolerate increased respiratory workloads
X		Exposure to toxic fumes, irritants, particulates, biological (infectious) and non-biological hazards, and/or heated gases, despite the use of personal protective ensembles and SCBA
X		Climbing four or more flights of stairs while wearing fire protective ensemble weighing at least 50 lb or more and carrying equipment/tools weighing an additional 20 to 40 lbs
X		Wearing fire protective ensemble that is encapsulating and insulated, which will result in significant fluid loss that frequently progresses to clinical dehydration and can elevate core temperature to levels exceeding 102.2°F
X	X	Searching, finding, and rescue-dragging or carrying victims ranging from newborns up to adults weighing over 200 lb to safety despite hazardous conditions and low visibility
X		Advancing water-filled hose lines up to 2-1/2 inches in diameter from fire apparatus to occupancy, approximately 150 ft, which can involve negotiating multiple flights of stairs, ladders, and other obstacles
X	X	Climbing ladders, operating from heights, walking or crawling in the dark along narrow and uneven surfaces, and operating in proximity to electrical power lines and/or other hazards
X	X	Unpredictable emergency requirements for prolonged periods of extreme physical and/or psychological exertion without benefit of warm-up, scheduled rest periods, meals, access to medication(s), or hydration
X	X	Operating fire apparatus or other vehicles in an emergency mode with emergency lights and sirens
X	X	Critical, time-sensitive, complex problem solving during physical and/or psychological exertion in stressful, hazardous environments, including hot, dark, tightly enclosed spaces, that is further aggravated by fatigue, flashing lights, sirens, and other distractions
X	X	Ability to communicate (give and comprehend verbal orders) under conditions of high background noise, poor visibility, and adverse scene conditions
X	X	Functioning as an integral component of a team, where sudden incapacitation of a Emergency Responder can result in mission failure or in risk of injury or death to civilians or other team Emergency Responders

**VII. Responsibilities:**

<p><b>1) Emergency Responders:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Report to shift fit for duty</li> <li>▪ Verbally inform the supervisor or a District chief officer when a sick day is needed</li> <li>▪ Complete <i>District Return to Duty Form</i> when absent from shift and under a doctor's care for 3 or more shifts or weekly drills; appropriate signatures must be included on the form before returning</li> <li>▪ Stay in contact with the District, preferably the supervisor, if unable to work for an extended period of time</li> <li>▪ Inform the supervisor as far in advance as possible if a medical event (e.g. surgery) is planned</li> </ul>
<p><b>2) Supervisor:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stay informed about the status of assigned personnel</li> <li>▪ Understand the scope and application of this Policy</li> <li>▪ Inform subordinates of this Policy and associated expectations</li> <li>▪ Apply policy, procedures, and standards appropriately</li> <li>▪ Inform the shift Battalion Chief if an Emergency Responder misses 3 or more regularly scheduled shifts or weekly drills for a medical reason (i.e. under a LHCP care).</li> <li>▪ Check in (talk to) the Emergency Responder on a regular basis if the Emergency Responder is not working for an extended period of time</li> </ul>
<p><b>3) District:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure all Emergency Responders are fit for duty</li> <li>▪ Administer Policy</li> </ul>

**Deleted:** <#>Make every effort to secure a replacement Emergency Responder of a like skills capability (e.g. EMT, Driver-Operator) for the shift¶

**Deleted:** Assistant Chief of Training & Operations

**Deleted:** doctors

# RETURN TO DUTY FORM

To be completed by physician, psychologist or appropriate licensed health care professional.

District rules state that Emergency Responders must be "Fit for Duty", that is, able to perform the essential functions of their position. The Emergency Responder you have been treating/attending has the position of an **Emergency Responder**, and thus has a high need for fitness/health.

Relative to the condition for which you have been treating/ attending/ seeing this Emergency Responder, your signature at the bottom of the page indicates you are releasing him/her for duty and that he/she should be capable of (please check a box on each line):

Yes	No	NA*	Functional Capability
			Jump off a raised area 3 to 4 feet high
			Drive a motor vehicle or apparatus weighing up to 34 tons under emergency response conditions
			Carry on his/her back, a self-contained breathing apparatus weighing approximately 35 pounds while carrying 100 pounds of hose on his/her shoulder for up to several minutes at a time
			Work at heights such as on roof tops or ladders where a sense of balance is needed
			Crawl on his/her hands & knees
			Climb up and down ladders and stairs with tools and/or equipment weighing up to 50 pounds
			Drag or pull heavy objects such as a person weighing up to 200 pounds, over various floor surfaces and/or terrain
			Work in ambient temperatures of 100 to 150 degrees F wearing protective clothing and a self-contained breathing apparatus on his/her back
			Work in a confining area such as an attic or crawl space of a structure
			Grip, lift and carry equipment and/or tools with gloved hands from the ground which may weigh up to 100 pounds
			Use tools to pull down ceilings or walls requiring his/her arms to be above head level
			Cut or chop holes in roofs, walls and floors using an axe or power saw
			Lift and carry a ladder weighing 75 pounds off a truck or from the ground
			Does the emergency responder's current emotional or physical condition in any way endanger themselves or others in the performance of essential functions?
			Is the emergency responder required to take medication that would cause them to become dizzy, disoriented or drowsy during their performance of essential functions?
			Are there any known physical or emotional limitations that could result in sudden or unexpected inability to perform essential functions?

\*NA indicates the injury/illness does not impact the functional capability

Defined essential functions for an Emergency Responder are included in the *District Policy 3-15 "Emergency Responder Fit for Duty Status"*.

Relative to the condition (injury, illness) for which I have been treating / seeing / attending the person named below, he/ she is:

- Approved to return to duty effective \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (date)
- Approved for duty with restrictions (list restrictions on separate sheet)
- Not approved to return to duty
- Unable to make a determination regarding returning to duty

Name of Patient: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of LHCP: \_\_\_\_\_

**Deleted:** Should you need a consultation regarding physical condition and other information on an Emergency Responder's job activities please contact [WESTCARE MEDICAL CLINIC at \(360\) 357-9392.....](#)

Signature of LHCP: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_