



Effective Date: December 1, 2009

Revision Date:

Bastrop County Emergency Services District No. 1

Standard Operating Procedures

Title: Wellness and Fitness

Originator – Fire Chief (Signature/Date): _____

Purpose

The wellness-fitness program is established to monitor the health of firefighters throughout their careers, prevent diseases and injuries, provide early detection of serious medical conditions, and encourage better health and fitness, thereby allowing firefighters to do their job more safely and effectively. The program is modeled after the IAFF/IAFC wellness-fitness initiative and in accordance with NFPA Standards 1500, 1582, and 1583. The medical examination will focus on the early detection of life-threatening injuries and illness, the timely referral for treatment of the discovered condition, and the return of the firefighter back to full duty as soon as possible.

Scope

This program applies to all certified firefighters. The goal of the district is to make the program available to all employees of Bastrop County ESD #1.

Fire Department Physician

Reference to fire department physician in this document means the physician designated by TML to oversee the medical testing and fitness assessments. This physician will determine whether the member is certified to perform the essential job tasks as listed in NFPA 1582.

Mandatory

Participation in this program is mandatory for all certified firefighters. The insurance provider will provide a comprehensive medical evaluation and fitness assessment at no cost to the employee annually. Medical evaluations and fitness assessments will be scheduled off-duty by the firefighter. Each employee shall ensure that the medical evaluation is scheduled and conducted prior to October 1 of each year. Following the evaluation the fire department member will discuss the results and request that the physician provide the firefighter with a personalized health improvement plan.

Confidentiality

An important element of the program is confidentiality. Medical information obtained through the medical physical exam and fitness assessment will be maintained according to physician-patient confidentiality standards and HIPAA Guidelines. All medical records will be kept by the medical group. Following the medical exam, all the department will receive is a form signed by the physician verifying that the member is medically certified to perform the essential job tasks of a firefighter as outlined in NFPA 1582.

If a medical problem is detected during the physical examination that would be deemed threatening for the member to remain on active duty, the Physician will recommend an alternative duty status. In order for the district to assist the member in returning to active duty, the member will need to authorize the physician to release the information necessary to determine what level of activity can be performed and what needs to be done to return the member to full duty. Members will report physician's recommendation directly to the Chief for alternate duty assignment.

In some instances, the physician may discover a medical condition that does not preclude the member from active firefighting, but does require further testing or treatment. In this case, the member will be

referred to his/her private physician for follow-up. As long as the member is medically certified to work as a firefighter, no other information regarding the individual's medical condition will be provided to the department.

Certain medical conditions may be job related and therefore eligible for workers' compensation benefits. The employee may consult with the department health and fitness coordinator who can assist in filing the necessary forms if such a condition exists. If the condition is not job related, any follow-up with the personal physician will be at the member's expense, utilizing their employee health benefits.

Non-Punitive

Another important aspect of the program is that it is intended to be non-punitive. An individual will only be placed on alternate duty status when the physician determines that a Category A medical condition, as described in NFPA 1582, exists. The health and fitness coordinator will work closely with the member and the fire department physician to expedite a return to full duty status.

Medical Evaluation

The annual medical exam will initially include the following:

 See Attached Personal Health Record (PHR)

Fitness Assessment

Following the medical evaluation, each member who is cleared by the physician will participate in a fitness assessment. This evaluation will assess aerobic capacity, muscular strength, and muscular endurance. The assessment will be modeled after "The Pack Test". This test will be the fitness requirement for "Arduous", which is a 3-mile hike with a 45 lb. pack in 45 minutes.

Members reporting for the medical and fitness evaluation should be in regular civilian clothes, and is recommended to be that of shorts, t-shirts, and wildland boots to be used for the fitness evaluation.

Physical Fitness Program

All members are expected to participate in the exercise program prescribed for him/her.

Members in staff assignments may be granted up to one hour each day to participate in their prescribed exercise program if daily workload allows. All members are encouraged to work out off duty at any of the fire stations equipped with physical fitness equipment.