

III. Health & Wellness



DRAFT

Goal: *Workplace safety, continuous improvement and a culture of care and support.*

Objective: *To prioritize the health and wellness of our members because they are our most valuable asset. Investing in member physical and mental well-being not only enhances their quality of life but ensures the safety and effectiveness of our operations.*

Strategies:

COORDINATION AND SUPPORT: This program is one of the team of programs that collectively work to achieve the District’s mission. It is expected that through policy direction, communication and coordination it will support these mutual efforts in an efficient and effective manner. The District programs include:

- Finance and administration (Fire Chief & District Secretary);
- Incident Readiness & Response (Assistant Chief);
- Facilities & Equipment;
- Community Outreach & Communications;
- Health & Wellness; and
- Training & Education.

RESPONSIBILITY: Fire Chief and program level managers.

FREQUENCY: Annually during the budgeting process, monthly coordination with individual and joint coordination meetings (e.g. program meetings with the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief-Battalion Chief meetings) and as needed.

WORKPLACE SAFETY: The safety of our members is paramount. The District is committed to providing them with the health screens, training and support necessary to perform their duties safely and effectively.

RESPONSIBILITY: District Health & Safety Officer (“HSO”), District managers and supervisors and members.

FREQUENCY: All day everyday.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: The District is committed to ongoing evaluation and improvement of its health and wellness program. Through feedback, a strong Safety Committee and collaboration, we can continuously seek opportunities to enhance the effectiveness and impact of our initiatives.

RESPONSIBILITY: HSO, Safety Committee and District managers.

FREQUENCY: Scheduled as appropriate.

CULTURE OF CARE AND SUPPORT: The District will establish peer support networks within the organization to facilitate informal communication and mentorship regarding physical and mental health.

The health and well-being of our members is our top priority because they are our greatest asset.

RESPONSIBILITY: HSO, District managers, Thurston County Peer Support Network.

FREQUENCY: On-going and as needed.

MEDICAL EVALUATION & SURVEILLANCE: The District and the Health & Wellness Program will:

- Establish a medical evaluation program for responders;
- Prior to performing emergency response duties, each team member and responder will be medically evaluated to determine fitness for duty;
- Provide additional medical surveillance for responders who are exposed to combustion products: the surveillance will be at least as effective as the occupational medical examination criteria specified in a national consensus standard such as National Fire Protection Association standard 1582; and
- Maintain a confidential record for each responder.

RESPONSIBILITY: HSO, District managers, medical health care provider services.

FREQUENCY: On-going and as needed.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & WELLNESS: The District and the Health & Wellness Program will:

- Identify where behavioral health and wellness resources are available at no cost;
- Provide, as needed, resources to include at a minimum (i) diagnostic assessments, (ii) short-term counseling, (iii) crisis intervention, and (iv) referral services for behavioral health and personal problems that could affect the responders performance of emergency duties;
- Inform each responder, on a regular and recurring basis of available resources; and
- Inform each responder following a potentially traumatic event of the resources available to them.

RESPONSIBILITY: HSO, District managers, District peer support and chaplaincy staff, professional mental health resources.

FREQUENCY: On-going and as needed.

PHYSICAL FITNESS FOR DUTY: The District and the Health & Wellness Program will:

- Implement a process to evaluate and re-evaluate annually the ability of responders to perform essential job functions based on the type and level of service;
- Establish and implement a physical fitness program that enables responders to develop and maintain a level of physical fitness that allows them to safely perform their assigned functions based on the type and level of service; and
- Include the following components in such program: (i) an individual designated to oversee the responder health and fitness program, (ii) a periodic (not to exceed three years) fitness assessment for all responders; (iii) an exercise training regimen that is available to all responders during their on-duty shifts and (iv) education and counseling regarding individual health promotion.

RESPONSIBILITY: HSO, member fitness program staff, District management, allied health & wellness professional resources.

FREQUENCY: On-going and as needed.

Members expect to come to work and leave for home in a healthy physical condition and a good state of mind.

RETURN TO WORK: The District will implement a formal process to have members return to work after a short-term or long-term absence due to injury or illness.

RESPONSIBILITY: HSO, District management, medical health care provider services, Washington Department of Labor & Industries, Washington Board of Volunteer Firefighters & Reserve Officers.

FREQUENCY: On-going and as needed.