



Division 08

Health and Safety

Chapter 10 – Risk Management

March 2009

POLICY

This General order shall establish administration, organization, functions, and standards for the Fire Department Safety Officer in accordance with NFPA 1521, “Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer,” 1992 edition.

The Prince George’s County Fire Department, hereinafter referred to as Department, recognizes that the fire and rescue service is one of the most hazardous occupations. Our members, career and volunteer, have experienced tragic loss of life and multitudes of injuries. We must utilize our existing levels of management in a direction which will develop more safety and discipline.

In order to properly protect all members of this Department, we must change the culture, especially with regards to the “attitude of acceptance” that exists in some people and we must establish a “resolve to improve.”

The elements of the Occupational Safety and Health Program are applicable to all personnel of the Prince George’s County Fire Department.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURES

1. Concept

The diversity of operations and services provided to the citizens of Prince George’s

County requires that an active program be pursued to identify and abate dangers, both hidden and apparent, which result in injury, damage to property, loss of time, or modification of the level of services provided to our citizens.

Under the premise that accidents do not happen, but are caused, the Occupational Safety and Health Program will focus on the identification, analysis, and abatement of hazards, and the human acts and attitudes that cause accidents, injuries, property loss, and related costs to the County.

2. Objectives

The Occupational Safety and Health Program will focus on reducing the number of injuries and monetary losses as a result of accidents. This objective is to be achieved by the following methods:

- Elimination and/or reduction of accidents through attitude changes of supervisors and employees/members, training of supervisors and employees/members in job safety-related practices, and the identification, modification and/or elimination of unsafe actions.
- Identification and control or elimination of hazards which are inherent in the delivery of fire/rescue services to the citizens of the County. Specifically, the program will minimize exposure to hazards.

3. Background



Loss prevention techniques are tools which the modern manager must use at all levels to accomplish the unit or organization's mission.

As incorporated into managerial functions, the daily awareness of safe practices and procedures is directly measurable in the ability of the manager to reduce injuries and property damage.

Quality supervision and performance can be evaluated by measuring the extent of the manager's commitment to the Occupational Safety and Health Program.

4. Program Implementation

Considering the variety of operations within the Prince George's County Fire Department, and the varying organizational structures, it is recognized that all occupation safety and health projects and procedures cannot be applied uniformly.

Majors/Managers have the latitude to develop individual subprograms for their divisions in order to meet or exceed program goals. Specific subprograms shall be considered core elements and their application shall be uniform. They should include, but are not limited to, areas such as:

- Vehicle Accident Prevention Program
- Safety Committee

Inspection Program:

- Buildings
- Appliances (station and apparatus)
- Protective equipment

5. Responsibilities

All Fire Department personnel shall be fully responsible for implementing the provisions of this program as it applies to his/her

operation. The responsibilities listed below are minimum and not intended to set a standard or prevent a supervisor from exceeding or modifying a portion of the program as dictated by sound supervisory judgment. A successful Occupational Safety and Health Program requires adjustments in order to reach the goals previously mentioned.

Lieutenant Colonel

Each Lieutenant Colonel shall be charged with the responsibility of ensuring a safe work environment. Considering that exposure hazards vary from incident to incident, each Lieutenant Colonel shall ensure that unrelenting efforts will be maintained toward controlling injuries, property damage, and other loss-producing situations which affect the County property and operations.

Therefore, the Lieutenant Colonel shall:

- Ensure that all personnel under their command are in compliance with the policies and procedures contained in the Occupational Safety and Health Program.
- Provide the active leadership and positive direction essential to maintain a firm concept of occupational safety and health.
- Review occupational safety and health activities during staff meetings in order to effect a more positive loss reduction.
- Attend Fire Department occupational safety and health meetings called by the Fire Chief. Each Lieutenant Colonel will ensure that plans, formats, programs, and other matters and information are disseminated properly.
- Administer operational plans which define problems, set goals, select



strategies, and identify projected savings. This should include both long and short range plans.

- Evaluate, modify, and plan bureau training programs to be compatible with general Departmental goals.
- Administer an operational safety program which will be furnished to all personnel. This program should contain instructions on safe work practices, injury and accident reporting, required personal protective equipment, and motor vehicle/equipment operations.
- Contact the Risk Management office for any advisory needs to promote the program.
- Discuss the present status of the operational Occupational Safety and Health Program during staff meetings with Majors/Managers/Battalion Chiefs, and other supervisory personnel. This time should be devoted to evaluating progress and results, identifying areas of concern, and furnishing an open line of communication in the area of loss control to that a united effort can be achieved.
- Hold each Major/Manager/Division Commander/supervisor responsible for preventable personal injuries, vehicular accidents, property damages and other losses incurred by the County as a result of actions of their subordinates.
- Ensure that all records are maintained as outlined in General Order 08-23, Vehicle Accident Reporting and Property Loss, and General Order 08-16, Reporting Injuries on the Job.
 - Be accountable to the Fire Chief for vehicle losses, property damage, and lost productive work days due to accidents/injuries.

- Ensure compliance with all Orders and Directives describing the required use, care, and maintenance of personal protective equipment within the Fire Department.

Majors/Bureau Managers/Division Commanders

Majors/Office Managers/Division Commanders, and/or other supervisors shall be fully responsible and accountable to their supervisor for compliance to the Occupational Safety and Health Program within their area of responsibility. Each Major/Manager/Division Commander, and/or supervisor shall ensure the following:

- Work rules are published and explained to all personnel to minimize the potential for personal injury and property damage. These rules should be specific and include the responsibilities required of all personnel.
- Personnel are properly briefed and trained to perform functions within the Department. Particular emphasis shall be placed on safe work practices.
- Methods of training new and existing employees are reviewed and evaluated with the view of reducing accident and injury potential.
- All personnel are aware of the requirements for the use and care of personal protective equipment.
- Skills, jobs, and other operations within the Department that demand particular attention due to the need for personal protective equipment or potentially hazardous methods of operation are evaluated periodically as part of the training cycle.
- Appoint a safety coordinator/committee to recognize



health and safety hazards within their respective office. Prioritize these hazards. Set goals and operational plans to eliminate or reduce these hazards. Conduct monthly meetings to review and appraise the success of their plans and to allow transmittal of problems and solutions to the Departmental Occupational Safety and Health Team. If resolution cannot be reached, the situation shall be referred to the Departmental Safety Officer.

- Encourage an informal safety plan within each unit. Each unit is to recognize hazards and implement procedures to reduce these hazards.
- All accidents and injuries are investigated in accordance with procedures as outlined in General Order 08-23, Vehicle Accident Reporting and Property Loss, and General Order 08-16, Reporting of Injuries.
- Budget responsibility includes anticipating costs for protective equipment, facility modifications, training, and other safety related accident prevention programs. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Fire Chief via the chain-of-command.
- Each supervisor will be held accountable for an explanation of the preventable personal injuries and accidents, and the preventable loss of property by subordinate employees/members.
- Each supervisor will consider an employee's safety record as part of the criteria when selecting an employee for unsupervised work schedules. Personnel who cause accidents to themselves and/or others demonstrate specific performance deficiencies that must be identified and corrected.

Battalion Chiefs/Volunteer Chiefs/Station Supervisors

Supervisors whose job descriptions include direct supervision for operations shall retain full responsibility for the safe actions of their assigned personnel and the safe operation of machines and equipment within their operating area. Each Battalion Chief/Volunteer Chief/Station Supervisor shall:

- Assume full responsibility for safe and healthful working areas and conditions for assigned employees/members.
- Be fully accountable for an explanation of preventable accidents and injuries, vehicle accidents, property damage, and other losses caused by the actions of subordinate personnel.
- Take the initiative in recommending correction of deficiencies noted in facilities, work procedures and habits, job knowledge or attitudes that have the potential to adversely impact on the Department's Occupational Safety and Health Program.
- Ensure that all personnel are properly trained, briefed, and informed of the safe operation of his/her assigned task.
- Make available to all personnel a copy of the Occupational Safety and Health Program and ensure their familiarity with the contents.
- Be firm in the enforcement of safety rules, regulations, and operations, and be alert for habits or situations which have the potential to be loss producing.
- Recognize personnel for their contributions to safe work operations, including active participation of safety committees, offering suggestions and



continuing concern for loss control within the scope of their positions.

- Fully cooperate with other personnel of the Fire Department, Risk Management office, and appropriate government agencies in the inspection of operations under their control.
- This cooperation shall include the immediate shutting down of operations which present a clear and present danger to personnel or removing personnel from hazardous locations when they are not wearing or using prescribed protective equipment.
- Conduct monthly scheduled inspections of their operations, work place, and equipment. A copy of the inspection work sheet shall be forwarded to the Bureau of Occupational Safety and Health.

Employees/Members

Employees are required, as a condition of employment, to exercise due care in the course of their work to prevent injuries to themselves and their coworkers, to conserve materials, and to prevent abuse of equipment. Each employee/member shall:

- Report all unsafe conditions to supervisors.
- Maintain a clean and orderly work area.
- Observe Departmental safety rules and regulations.
- Use personal protective equipment as required by Departmental policy.
- Report all accidents, injuries, and property damage to supervisors in accordance with General Order 08-23, Vehicle Accident Reporting and Property Loss, and General Order 08-16, Reporting Injuries on the Job.

- Stop and obtain instructions from their supervisor prior to resuming operations if any doubt exists about the safety of a job or operations.
- Use only the equipment prescribed for the operation, properly.
- Recommend improvements to safety conditions for his/her duties.
- Actively support the Occupational Safety and Health Program by following published work rules and procedures and reporting unsafe conditions.
- Work toward a zero level of accident occurrence and an integral part of his/her function.
- Serve on formal safety committees, as required.

6. Risk Management

The Departmental Risk Management Office shall be commanded by a Major/Manager with responsibilities and authority defined by the Fire Chief in this General Order. The Risk Management Major/Manager shall report directly to the Management Services Deputy.

Risk Manager Qualifications

- Maintain knowledge of current federal, state, and local laws regulating occupational safety and health applicable to the fire service.
- Maintain knowledge of the current health and physical fitness factors that affect the fire service work environment.

Safety Officer Authority

The Department Risk Manager or his/her designee(s) shall have the authority and responsibility to:



- Identify and cause correction of health and safety hazards.
- Cause immediate correction of situations that cause imminent hazard to personnel.
- When non imminent hazards are identified, develop actions to correct the situation within the administrative process of the Department and have the authority to bring notice of such hazards to whoever in the Department has the ability to cause correction.

Safety Officer Functions

The Department Safety Officer or his/her designee(s) shall have the authority and responsibility to:

- Coordinate the collection and analysis of records of all accidents, occupational deaths, injuries, illnesses, and exposures.
- Identify, analyze and develop corrective actions to deal with safety/health hazards.
- Assure the following records are maintained as specified in Section 2-7 of NFPA 1500.
 - Department safety and health policies.
 - Periodic inspection and service testing of apparatus and equipment.
 - Coordinates inspection/testing of personal protective equipment.
 - Coordinates inspection of Department facilities.
- Maintain records of all recommendations made and actions taken to implement or correct safety and health hazards or unsafe practices.
- Maintain records of all measures taken to implement safety and health procedures and accident prevention methods.
- Coordinate periodic reports to the Fire Chief on Department vehicle accidents, occupational injuries, illnesses, deaths, exposures, and disability claims.
- Coordinate with Office of Personnel, Pensions and Benefits and maintain record keeping and processing in accordance with procedures set forth by county, state, and federal regulations for the following:
 - Workers' compensation claims.
 - Inspection and investigative reports.
 - Loss control reports.
 - Injury summary reports.
 - Disability claims/leave/retirements.
- Act as a resource for divisions in areas of safety committees, specific safety problems, technical research, and other safety matters.
- Evaluate compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Programs by the Department and one or more sub activity. This evaluation will be accomplished by inspection of facilities and operations and tabulation of Departmental loss statistics. Results will be forwarded to the Fire Chief.
- Develop and distribute safety/health related material for education of Department members.
- Issue periodic reports to the Fire Chief on the status of the Occupational Safety and Health Program, including subprogram results, problem areas, training required, possible savings, and program liabilities.
- Maintain close monitoring of disability leave in accordance with the Personnel Law and existing Labor Agreement with periodic reports



forwarded to the designated officer in the chain-of-command for the appropriate action.

- Function as staff support of the Chair of the Occupational Safety and Health Team for activities for the operation of that Team.

Safety Officer as a Liaison

As a liaison, the Safety Officer shall:

- Be a member of the Departmental Occupational Safety and Health Team.
- Provide information and assistance to officers and firefighters surveying their response areas so that they will be able to identify and report safety and health hazards that could have adverse affects on Department operations.
- Coordinate with staff officers regarding recommended changes in equipment, procedures, and recommended methods to eliminate unsafe practices and reduce existing hazardous conditions.
- Maintain a liaison with equipment manufacturers, standards making organizations, regulatory agencies, and safety specialists outside the Department regarding changes to equipment and procedures and methods to eliminate unsafe practices and reduce existing hazardous conditions.
- Ensure that needed medical advice and treatment are available to the members of the Department.
- Act as liaison for safety inspections, other than those conducted by the County.

Rules, Regulations, and Procedures

The Department Safety Officer or his/her designee(s) shall have the authority and responsibility to:

- Develop, review, and revise rules, regulations, and standard operating procedures pertaining to occupational safety and health, and submit these recommendations to the Fire Chief.
- Periodically report to the Management Services Deputy on the adequacy and effectiveness of, and compliance with, the rules, regulations, and standard operating procedures.

Accident and Prevention

The Department Safety Officer or his/her designee(s) shall have the authority and responsibility to:

- Manage an accident prevention program that addresses the training of all Fire Department drivers/operators, and delegate the development, direct participation, review and/or supervision of this program.
- Periodically survey operations, procedures, equipment, and Department facilities with regard to maintaining safe working practices and procedures.
- Report any recommendations to the Fire Chief.

Apparatus and Equipment

The Department Risk Manager, along with representatives from Emergency Operations Command and Support Services Command shall be responsible to:

- Review specifications for new apparatus, equipment, and protective clothing and equipment for



compliance with applicable safety standards.

- Assist and make recommendations regarding the evaluation of new equipment and its acceptance, or approval, by the Department in accordance with Sections 4-1 and 4-5 of NFPA 1500.
- Assist and make recommendations regarding the service testing of apparatus and equipment to determine its suitability for continued service in accordance with Section 4-4 and 4-5 of NFPA 1500.
- Develop, implement, and maintain a protective clothing and protective equipment program that will meet the requirements of Chapter 5 of NFPA 1500.

Accident Investigation, Procedures, and Review

- Investigate or cause to be investigated in conjunction with the Safety Investigative Team all occupational injuries, illnesses, and fatalities involving Department members and all accidents involving Department vehicles, apparatus, equipment, or Department facilities.
- Develop corrective recommendations resulting from accident investigations, and submit such recommendations to the Fire Chief.
- Coordinate accident reporting and investigation procedures, and periodically review these procedures for revisions.
- Review the procedures employed during any unusually hazardous operations, and submit recommendations to the Administrative Services Deputy whenever it is determined that

incorrect or questionable procedures were employed.

Training, Education, and Special Assignments

- Ensure that training in safety procedures relating to all Department operations and functions is provided to members through the Fire/Emergency Medical Services Training Academy (FETA). The FETA shall address recommendations arising from the investigation of accidents, injuries, and observation of incident scene activities.
- Career and Volunteer Division Officers will be assigned specific responsibilities concerning fire operations' safety.
- The Advanced Emergency Medical Services (AEMS) will be assigned responsibilities concerning AEMS safety.
- The Apparatus Maintenance Division will be assigned specific responsibilities concerning vehicle accident and vehicle safety.
- The FETA will be assigned specific responsibilities concerning training, including the development of safety-related courses.
- Logistics will be assigned specific responsibilities concerning the purchase of firefighter protective gear, appliances, tools, and equipment.
- There will be monthly safety committee meetings as required by this General Order.

7. Control of Personnel Injuries

Physical Condition of Employees/Members

The physical condition of the employee work force represents a potential liability which



must be assess in view of injuries, absenteeism, disability leave, and retirements. Therefore, it is important that the health of employees be a matter of concern to all supervisors.

The Risk Management Coordinator will maintain a medical file on each recruit (employee/member). Special emphasis shall be placed in detecting latent conditions, such as previous back problems, hernias, heart and lung diseases, hypertension, and physical impairment.

The withholding of facts or the failure to answer the questions truthfully shall constitute the basis for denial of employment/membership or subsequent termination.

The Department shall require a physical, at County expense, as outlined in Administrative Procedures. Specialized categories may also receive periodic physical examinations and be required to participate in physical fitness programs.

Each volunteer will have a physical in accordance with Prince George's County Code, Subtitle 11, (CB-82).

Safety Training

Supervisors should not assume that a newly hired, newly assigned, or reassigned employee/member knows and understands safety procedures. The supervisor is responsible for the proper training of all personnel:

- All new personnel, career and volunteer, will be given safety instructions.
- Newly assigned station personnel will be given specific instruction in the use

of equipment to which they are assigned to utilize.

- All personnel will be periodically updated on the equipment they are required to use.

Personal Protective Clothing

Supervisors shall ensure that personnel are suitably dressed for the work they perform. Suitable dress is defined as protective clothing as outlined in General Order 08-13, Personal Protective Equipment.

Identification and Control of Recognized Hazards

Every effort will be made to identify, control, regulate, or eliminate all recognized hazards. Hazardous situations may be defined as circumstances that may cause serious physical harm or death.

Examples of hazardous situations include inadequate shoring, improper scaffolding, excessive toxic or oxygen deficient atmospheres, all electrical hazards, and certain vehicle malfunctions, i.e., faulty steering, etc.

All equipment necessary for recognizing or controlling such hazards must be readily available as required.

Effective measures will be taken to eliminate such hazards. If the hazard cannot be eliminated immediately, effective measurements and control procedures must be employed. All personnel subject to exposure will be fully informed and instructed as to the nature, severity, and emergency procedures necessary in case of an accident.

Hazardous operations may be defined as any activities that may cause serious physical



harm or death to personnel. Examples include:

- Actions necessary to control hazardous situations, i.e., repairing a chlorine gas leak.
- Any operation involving a hazardous situation, i.e., oxygen deficient fire scenes.
- Any operation that is in itself a hazard.

All hazardous operations will be identified, specific procedures specified, and all personnel will be familiar with appropriate Departmental General Orders and those approved Bureau Operating Procedures.

Safety Analysis for Occupational Hazards

To eliminate accidents in hazardous situations and operations, it is mandatory that all exposed personnel be thoroughly familiar with all existing Departmental rules and regulations and fully understand the methods and procedures for doing each job safely when such hazards cannot be eliminated.

It should be noted, however, that the primary objective is to eliminate the hazard or to effectively minimize the inherent risk.

Job safety analysis is the process of identifying, analyzing, eliminating, or controlling recognized hazards. The procedures for job safety analysis follow. They relate to both hazardous situations and hazardous operations.

- Identify and locate the hazard through individual company preplanning. Hazardous operations are usually identified by common sense. Hazardous situations may be more difficult to detect.
- When the hazards and potential dangers associated with each step are

identified and their causes understood, ways of eliminating or minimizing them shall be developed.

- Provide proper equipment to eliminated or minimize the hazard, or
- Provide personal protective equipment and enforce its use to eliminate or minimize the possibility of injury.
- If the hazards, either situational or operational, cannot be effectively eliminated or minimized, then formal guidelines should be formulated.

Work rules should be established in writing, disseminated among all personnel, and maintained on file for periodic review. This becomes a document to assist the supervisor in instructing his/her personnel in the safe method of performing their jobs and what protective equipment will be required. It also provides each person with a source of information he/she can use for occasional review.

Personal Protective Equipment

All personal protective equipment shall be worn in accordance with General Order 08-13.

8. Control of Motor Vehicle Losses/Safe Driving Incentive Program

Driving Regulations

The driving regulations for the operation of emergency and non-emergency Fire Department vehicles are specified in General Order 08-04, Driving Regulations, and shall be adhered to by all personnel. At no time will members be allowed to smoke while on moving apparatus.



Preventability Determination

In accordance with the National Safety Council definition, a preventable accident is one in which the driver fails to do everything reasonably possible to avoid the accident.

Personnel who have been charged with a preventable accident have the right to contest this determination by requesting it be evaluated by the Occupational Safety and Health Team.

Safety Investigative Team

The Safety Investigative Team's purpose is to establish a procedure for investigating the circumstances surrounding a Fire Department vehicular accident causing a fatality, serious injury, or excess vehicle damage.

Training and Discipline

Appropriate training will be provided by the Department when required. Personnel shall be selected for training on the basis of their assignment, special equipment operated, or when their driving records indicate additional training is required.

Personnel with unsatisfactory driving records shall be subject to disciplinary review. If disciplinary action is deemed necessary, the Department Safety Officer will make appropriate notification to the responsible supervisor and coordinate all activities with the responsible Lieutenant Colonel, Bureau Manager, or Volunteer Chief, when appropriate.

Safe Driving Incentive Program

The Fire Department Safe Driving Incentive Program has been established to recognize and promote safe driving practices. An annual award will be presented to the career and

volunteer employees/members of each station that accomplishes an "accident-free year."

10. Management Participation – Committees

The establishment of a series of interrelated safety committees within the framework of the Department is a measurement of management's intent, interest, and support for a program of occupational safety and health and accident reduction.

A primary function of the committee system is to facilitate exchange of ideas between management and employees/members and to clarify policies relative to hazards, problem areas, and loss prevention. In order to facilitate this exchange, a Departmental Occupational Safety and Health Team is established.

Management Participation – Committees shall:

- Be chaired by a Lieutenant Colonel to serve alternating successive six month terms.
- Consist of the Department Safety Officer, Risk Management Coordinator, and representative of the Volunteer Chiefs' Council, Volunteer Fire/Rescue Association, Local 1619, Volunteer Fire Commission, and each Bureau Safety Coordinator.
- Review loss experienced, cost analysis figures, Departmental problems at the policy level, progress of bureau's safety plans, the Occupational Safety and Health Program, coordinate and recommend top-level policies and procedures for upgrading the program with consideration for the impact on Departmental and County operations, and other related concerns.
- Meet monthly – minutes to be taken.



11. Posting – Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses

In accordance with Maryland Occupational Safety and Health regulations, the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses must be posted yearly for 30 days at all work sites.

The Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses shall be completed by the County's Risk Management Office. The survey results will be reissued on a yearly basis. After the survey has been posted for 30 days, it is to be filed with this General Order and the previous year is to be discarded.

REFERENCES

NFPA 1521, "Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer," 1992 edition.

NFPA 1002, "Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications," 1993 edition.

NFPA 1021, "Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications," 1992 edition.

NFPA 1500, "Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program," 1992 edition.

NFPA 1561, "Standard on Fire Department Incident Management System," 1990 edition.

NFPA 1581, "Fire Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program," 1991 edition.

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

N/A