



FIRE RESCUE

ALBEMARLE COUNTY

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

Subject:	Line of Duty Benefits
Reference Number:	SAP-DEP-048
Effective Date:	July 1, 2013
Last Revision Date:	N/A
Signature of Approval:	 J. Dan Eggleston, Chief

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures related to the Line of Duty Act including training, medical physicals, and record keeping.

Background:

It is well-known that the incidence of certain illnesses is more prevalent in first-responders than the general public. Accordingly, the fire departments and rescue squads of Albemarle County are covered under the Line of Duty Act, which can provide substantial benefits to personnel who are injured or develop certain occupationally related illness. In order to identify applicants who may already have health or physical conditions that place them at risk, a medical examination and clearance process is established as a requirement prior to any member becoming engaged in operational duties.

Scope:

This guideline applies to the Albemarle County Fire and EMS System as defined in County ordinance. As of the effective date of this policy, medical clearance physicals will be required for all new applicants.

Definitions:

Agency- The fire department or rescue squad in which the applicant is affiliated. The system as a whole is referred to as Albemarle County Fire Rescue (ACFR) or the County.

County Physician – Medical physician contracted by the County of Albemarle to conduct fit for duty physicals for all fire rescue agencies in Albemarle County. The contracted physician will have experience in occupational health and have an understanding of the essential job functions for firefighting and emergency medical response.

Line of Duty Act (LODA) – Virginia state law that requires localities to fund death and disability benefits for public safety personnel or their beneficiaries due to death or disability resulting from the performance of duties. (Virginia Code sections 9.1-400 through 9.1-407).

Operational Member- A member participating in any fire, rescue, or EMS service delivery activities that may occur in a potentially hazardous environment, including fire suppression, patient care, operating of emergency vehicles, hazardous material response, victim extrication, traffic operations, training, etc. All operational members will be covered by LODA benefits and will be divided into two groups based on their function.

- **Suppression-** A member of a fire company that has been deemed fit for duty including the use of a respirator. These members are eligible for the respiratory disease, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, and infectious disease presumption benefits under LODA.
- **Non-Suppression-** A member of a fire company that has failed to qualify for the use of a respirator or any operational member of a rescue squad. These members are eligible for the infectious disease presumption benefits under LODA.

Prospective Member- A member of the public that has not already received membership status within the Albemarle County Fire and Rescue system. They may conduct ride-alongs at the agencies' discretion after a signed assumption of risk has been placed on file. At no time shall a prospective member be allowed to participate in activities, inclusive of training, that occur in a hazardous environment or considered high risk including the operation of vehicles under emergent conditions. Prospective members are not covered by LODA benefits.

Support Member- A member that serves in an administrative or support role only. They may perform duties in and around the station including record keeping, cleaning, and maintenance. They may also on occasion support on scene operations by delivering or picking up supplies including food, water, and portable equipment. At no time shall a support member be allowed to participate in activities, inclusive of training, that occur in a hazardous environment or considered high risk including the operation of vehicles under emergent conditions. Support members are not covered by LODA benefits.

Funding:

All LODA benefits and related costs including medical clearance physicals will be funded by the County of Albemarle in full. The County Physician shall invoice ACFR directly for all costs.

Training:

All personnel entitled to benefits under LODA shall receive training on the benefits available in the case of disability or death in the line of duty. ACFR will provide the training materials and each agency will be responsible to document all personnel have received the training.

Medical Clearance:

1. Medical clearance physicals shall be conducted using NFPA 1582, focusing on conditions that may pose a risk to the safety and welfare of the applicant, other fire rescue personnel, or the public we serve. In addition, applicants will be screened for preexisting conditions covered under LODA. See appendix A for medical physical components.
2. The County Physician will certify the applicant to the highest level of activity eligible after reviewing their medical history and completing a medical clearance physical. The following levels of certification shall be recognized:
 - a. Fit for Duty including the use of a respirator
 - b. Fit for Duty excluding the use of a respirator
 - c. Not Fit for Duty
3. The following procedure shall establish the process for medical clearance prior to any member becoming engaged in operational activities. Support members will not be required to obtain medical clearance.
4. New Applicant
 - a. Agency receives a membership application, performs a criminal history background check and provides preliminary "ride-along" orientation to determine suitability per agency policy.
 - b. Once the applicant has been approved for membership the agency will record personnel data in FireRMS per SAP-DEP-029 and provide the applicant with a medical clearance packet.

- c. The applicant will contact the County Physician to schedule an appointment and complete the medical clearance packet prior to arrival.
 - d. The applicant will complete the required LODA training.
 - e. Following their physical, the County Physician will provide ACFR with a written "Certification of Fitness for Duty" statement (or notice of non-certification). The applicant will also receive a copy of the certification and their specific medical information.
 - f. ACFR will verify the applicant's personnel data, that they have received the required LODA training, and document they have received medical clearance. The applicant's agency will be notified of their status and a copy of the certification will be forwarded for their membership records.
 - g. Once all requirements have been met the applicant's membership status can be finalized and they may engage in operational activities per agency and County policy.
 - h. An applicant who does not receive fitness for duty certification may, at their own expense, arrange for follow-up medical assessment and/or management with another physician. If the applicant wishes to further review their situation with the County physician, or retake the medical examination within the next three years, the associated expenses are the applicant's responsibility.
 - i. Any member who leaves the system and returns at a later date is not required to repeat their medical clearance, unless more than 5 years has elapsed since their last active service date.
5. Incumbent
- a. Volunteer members are not required to complete incumbent medical clearance. However, if the member's agency feels that a member may have become unable to perform essential job functions due to changes in their health they may require the member to obtain a current fit for duty certification from the County Physician. The referring agency should contact the ACFR office to coordinate the physical.
 - b. Career staff will be required to complete fit for duty certifications annually.

Medical Information:

The County Physician will not share any protected medical information with anyone other than the applicant unless the applicant specifically approves the exception in writing.

Record Keeping:

Personnel records shall be maintained by each agency per SAP-DEP-029. ACFR will maintain a consolidated list of all active operational members and submit it to the office of the clerk of the circuit court monthly as required by law.

An annual audit will be conducted to determine the number of active operational members to report to the County's insurance carrier. Any members that have not responded to a call in the past year will be changed to an inactive status and removed from the circuit court list. Each agency will be provided a copy of the audit for review prior to finalizing.

Claims:

1. The member or their representative shall notify ACFR of any claim for benefits.

2. Albemarle County Human Resources shall provide information on continued health insurance when applicable and the process for initiating a claim.

Appendix A

Medical Exam Components Provided by the Department's Occupational Healthcare Provider

1. Health Questionnaire and OSHA Respiratory Questionnaire
2. Drug Screening (New Applicant only)
3. Immunizations
 - Screening for protection against Hepatitis-A, Hepatitis-B, Hepatitis-C, polio, HIV, measles, mumps, rubella, tuberculosis, tetanus/diphtheria, and chicken pox (Varicella) will be performed for all new applicant exams. These screenings and needed boosters/titers will be conducted and administered as needed.
4. Hands-On Physical
 - Vital Signs
 - ▶ Blood Pressure
 - ▶ Pulse
 - ▶ Respiratory Rate
 - ▶ Temperature
 - ▶ Height/Weight
 - Head, Eyes, Ears, Nose, & Throat
 - ▶ Vision Screening
 - Color Assessment
 - Distance Assessment
 - Near-Vision Assessment
 - ▶ Audiology Screening
 - Hearing Test (500-1000-2000-3000-4000Hz)
 - Neck
 - ▶ General Evaluation
 - Cardiovascular
 - ▶ Chest X-Ray
 - ▶ EKG
 - Pulmonary
 - ▶ Pulmonary Function Test (Spirometry)
 - Gastrointestinal
 - ▶ General Evaluation
 - Genitourinary
 - ▶ Men: Testicular & Hernia Evaluation*
 - Required for at-risk individuals.
 - ▶ Women: Pap-Smear, Clinical Breast Exam, Mammography*
 - Required for at-risk individuals.
 - Rectal
 - ▶ Digital Rectal Exam*
 - ▶ Fecal Occult Blood Testing*
 - Lymph Nodes
 - Neurological
 - ▶ Mental Status Exam
 - ▶ Cranial & Peripheral Nerves
 - ▶ Motor
 - ▶ Sensory
 - ▶ Reflexes
 - Musculoskeletal
 - ▶ General Range-of-Motion Evaluation

- Skin Exam
 - ▶ Cancer Screening

- 5. Laboratory Testing: Urinalysis, Complete Blood Count, Chemistry Metabolic, Lipid Profile (all).
 - White Blood Cell Count with differential
 - Red Blood Cell Count (hematocrit)
 - Platelet Count
 - Liver Function Test
 - Triglycerides
 - Glucose
 - Blood Urea Nitrogen
 - Creatinine
 - Sodium
 - Potassium
 - Carbon Dioxide
 - Total Protein
 - Albumin
 - Calcium
 - Cholesterol
 - RBC Cholinesterase
- Aerobic/Cardiopulmonary Testing (Stress Test)
 - Required for at-risk individuals.
- Follow-Up/Referral
 - ▶ Annual physical exam results will be forwarded to you and/or your primary care provider (PCP).
 - ▶ You will complete a HIPAA Release in order to release the results to you and/or your PCP.

**Individual may opt out of this element provided his/her PCP conducts this element as part of an annual exam.
The results of the exam must be forwarded to the Occupational Healthcare Provider.*