

Fauquier County Department of Fire Rescue

OPERATING PROCEDURE

No. 131



Light Duty Program

Effective Date: July 1, 2010

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Revision Date: February 16, 2018

Forms: FRF 901

Approved By: Darren L. Stevens, Fire Rescue Chief

PURPOSE

To establish policies and provisions for a light duty program.

SCOPE

This regulation pertains to all Fauquier County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management personnel (operational and administrative).

I. PREFACE

The Light Duty Program is designed to keep an employee involved with the department by utilizing the skills of injured, ill or other related conditions of uniformed personnel during rehabilitation and shall be in accordance with Human Resource polices. Light duty assignments are available to employees with medical disabilities due to either job-related or non-job-related injuries or illnesses. The Light Duty Program also can be utilized for performance-related issues and other temporary assignments.

Any employee on light duty shall report to the assistant chief. Physicians and therapists familiar with the job requirements of firefighters shall decide the functional capacities of uniformed personnel after significant injuries, illnesses, or other absences.

II. POLICY

Permanent light duty assignments or accommodation agreements shall not be made. Any light duty assignment that is required due to an employee's inability to perform the duties required of his or her position shall be limited to the equivalent of one calendar year from date of incapacity. Those members exceeding this time period, but having medical documentation confirming they will return to full duty may submit in writing to the chief of the department for an extension. Uniformed personnel shall be limited to a maximum of 12 months of light duty. Personnel who exceed this maximum shall refer to Section V of this operating procedure.

All reports and personnel actions (to include transfers, temporary assignments, employee reclassifications, accommodation agreements, etc.) required to effectively administer the provisions of this operating procedure shall be documented in writing. Copies will be maintained in the employee's personnel file. Medical information shall be filed separately in the employee's medical record file that is maintained in the administrative office and/or the authorized physician's file utilized for workers' compensation claims.

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III. PROCEDURES FOR LIGHT DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

A. Occupational Injuries/Illness

1. Any employee reporting to light duty due to a job-related injury or illness shall have a FRF-901, *Order for Medical Treatment and Environmental Demands Summary for Firefighter*, signed by their supervisor, taken by the member to the treating physician to be completed and returned to the assistant chief.
2. Any employee being treated for a job-related injury or illness shall notify his or her supervisor immediately with a phone call and then a follow up email when he or she is released to light duty. If the supervisor is unavailable, the employee shall notify the on duty battalion chief.
3. Any employee released to light duty shall contact the assistant chief for the reporting date, time and location.
4. Assignments shall follow the treating physician's guidelines in conjunction with Fauquier County Human Resource Policies and the Virginia Workers' Compensation Laws.
5. It shall be the employee's responsibility to provide bi-weekly medical status updates from the workers' compensation treating physician to the assistant chief if the next appointment is not clearly indicated on a current Environmental Demands Sheet.

B. Non job-related injury/illness

1. The Department is not under any obligation to provide light duty assignments for employees who have non-job-related medical disabilities. A decision made regarding light duty assignments is open to appeal to the fire chief.
2. The employee shall have filed the appropriate paperwork through Human Resources and have approval for family and medical leave.
3. The employee shall submit in writing through his or her chain of command to the assistant chief a request for light duty.
4. Any employee reporting to light duty due to a non-job-related injury or illness shall a FRF-901, *Order for Medical Treatment and Environmental Demands Summary for Firefighter* signed by their supervisor, taken by the member to the treating physician to be completed and returned the assistant chief. Due to medical confidentiality, the cause of the disability for non-job related injuries/illness does not need to be identified for light duty approval.

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5. A determination for approving a light duty assignment is based on:
 - a. The type(s) of job(s) available at the time of request.
 - b. The benefit to the department and the citizens of Fauquier County.
6. The assistant chief shall notify the employee once the request has been approved and provide the reporting date, time and location.
7. Assignments shall follow the treating physician's guidelines in conjunction with Fauquier County Human Resource Policies and the Virginia Workers' Compensation Laws.
8. It shall be the employee's responsibility to provide bi-weekly medical status updates from his or her physician to the assistant chief if the next appointment is not clearly indicated on a current Environmental Demands Sheet.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO LIGHT DUTY

- A. Personnel assigned to light duty shall report to the assistant chief for assignment. Personnel shall receive in writing their light duty assignment specifying work location and hours.
- B. Personnel assigned to light duty shall wear the appropriate uniform for their work assignment.
- C. Personnel working in a light/restricted duty capacity shall be allowed to perform physical fitness training only with written approval from their treating physician showing the type, frequency, and duration of fitness conditioning that they may perform.
- D. Certifications shall be maintained (i.e. CPR, EMT, etc.).
- E. Any overtime must have prior approval from the assistant chief.
- F. All leave requests shall follow the department's leave policy and must be approved by the assistant chief. Any leave already approved during the time the employee is expected to be on light duty shall be reported the assistant chief when the employee first reports for light duty.
- G. Personnel assigned to light duty shall be responsible for ensuring their time is accurately reflected in the payroll and attendance system.
- H. Personnel released from light duty to full and unrestricted duty shall immediately notify the assistant chief who will then notify the employee's battalion chief.
- I. Scheduled annual physical appointments shall be maintained when an employee is assigned to light duty.

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V. LIMITATIONS ON LIGHT DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

A. Any light duty assignment that is required due to an employee's inability to perform the full field duties required of uniformed personnel is limited to a maximum of 12 months from date of incapacity. Those members exceeding this time period, but having medical documentation confirming they will return to full duty may submit in writing to the fire chief for an extension. Uniformed personnel shall be limited to a maximum of 12 months of light duty. These limitations are for any one compensable injury/illness event or non-job-related injury. Employees who have exhausted the maximum time permitted (or have been non-operational in excess of 9 months with a prognosis indicating probability of work restrictions continuing beyond 12 months) will be offered the following options:

1. Referral to Human Resources for potential placement in a general county position in which the employee can meet all of the essential job functions and qualifications.
2. Referral to Human Resources for assistance with a service connected disability retirement.
3. Referral to Human Resources for assistance with a non-service connected disability retirement.
4. Resignation.
5. Involuntary separation.