



TRAVIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT No. 2
PFLUGERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
POLICY

SUBJECT: INCIDENT REHABILITATION

POLICY NUMBER: OPS 029

AUTHORIZED: RONALD G. MOELLENBERG, FIRE CHIEF

ORIGINAL DATE:

REVISED DATE: 01-02-2020

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03-02-2020

I. Purpose

To prevent deterioration of physical and/or mental condition of firefighters at an incident or training to an unsafe level.

II. Scope

This policy applies to District employees. It is the responsibility of each member of the Fire Department to read and comply with this policy/procedure. Failure to comply can result in discipline up to and including termination.

III. Policy

Two different levels of on scene rehabilitation will be practiced depending upon exertion requirements for personnel. All personnel should maintain body hydration throughout the shift in order to minimize the impact of exertion while performing at an incident and to improve recovery following an incident.

The two levels of Rehab are: Simple Rehab which occurs at the company level and Formal Rehab which is established during more complex incidents. Following are guidelines and procedures for each level of Rehabilitation.

IV. Guidelines and Procedures

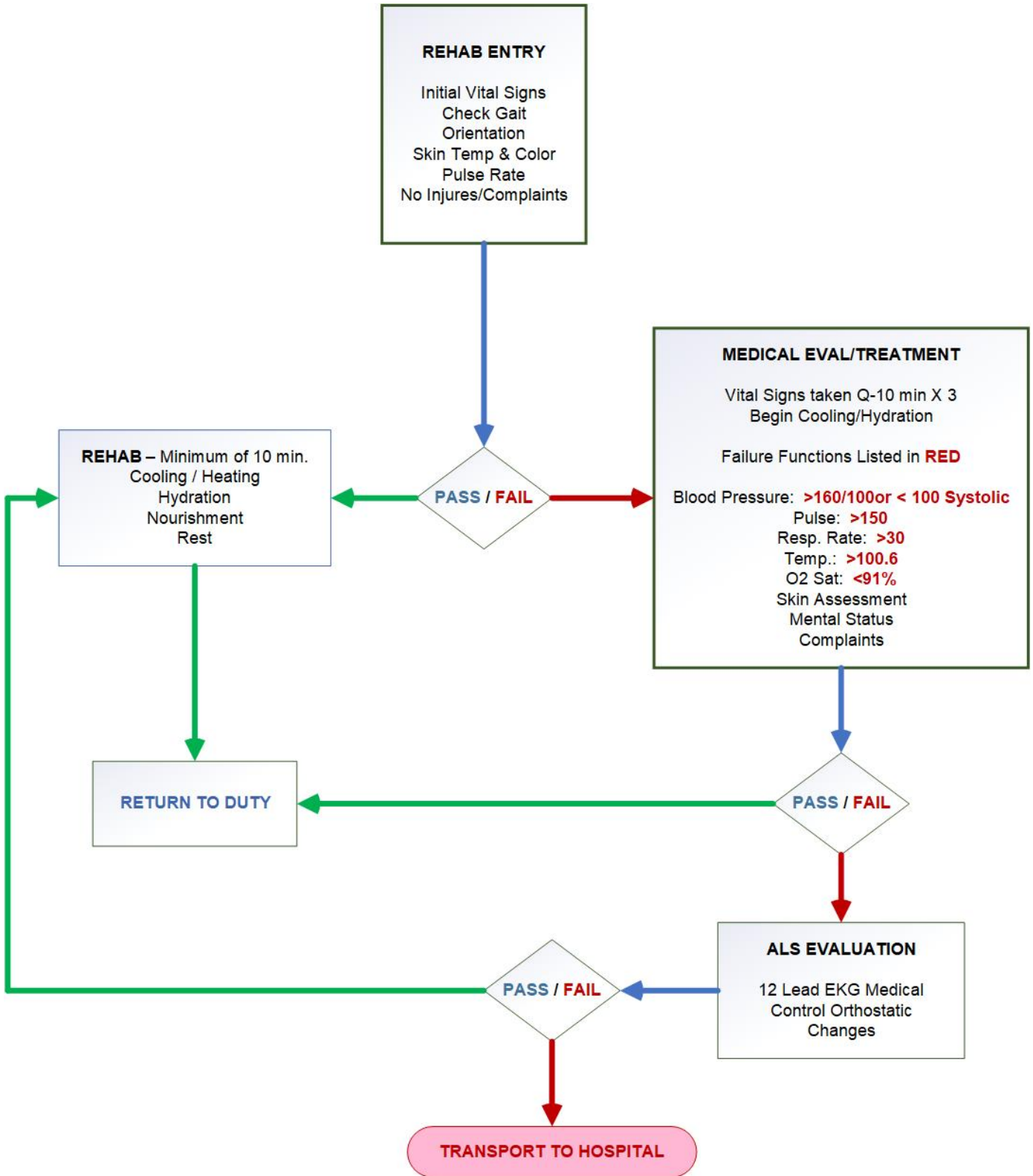
A. Simple-Rehab is generally practiced at an incident in which only one or two companies are involved. It is initiated by the Company Officer or IC when:

- Only one SCBA cylinder, (60-min. bottle) is used and there is a little likelihood of having to use second cylinder on the same event: or,
- After 20 minutes of intense physical labor, or
- Other times as deemed necessary.

B. Formal-Rehab is a process and will be established as a functional group within the Incident Command System. The IC may delegate Rehab to a Rehab Group Supervisor or assume the role his or her self.

A decision algorithm for implementation of Rehab and the ongoing process is shown in the diagram below:

Rehab Decision Algorithm



If a Rehab Group is established, there are four functions or responsibilities which must be met:

- Entry/Check-in:
 - Crews will enter Rehab in an orderly fashion and check in with the Rehab Group Supervisor.
 - The Rehab Group Supervisor will track crew entry times on the Rehab Check In/Out Form OPS 015a.
 - Pulse rate and general appearance checks will be performed upon entry.
 - Personnel shall wash hands and face as they enter the Rehab area.
 - Any person(s) requiring immediate medical treatment/transport will report to a Medical Treatment and Transport area.

- Hydration and Replenishment (Refer to Attachment OPS 015-01 Work-Rest-Hydration Chart):
 - During warm weather personnel will remove all PPE, bunker pants pushed down on boots, sit down and begin cool-down procedures (actively or passively).
 - Passive cooling includes removal of PPE, resting in a shaded area (preferably in the grass), and where natural wind currents would be effective.
 - Active cooling includes hand/forearm immersion in ice water (as a preferred method), cold, wet towels placed over head and neck, misting fans, and other methods to quickly remove heat from the body. Air-conditioned areas should be considered if available.
 - Consumption of water and/or electrolyte replacement sports drinks shall be consumed at a minimum rate of 16 oz. per 20 minutes of Rehab regardless of thirst. Avoid overhydration.
 - Consumption of appropriate snacks and/or other nourishment will take place in this area.
 - Initial vital sign assessment and documentation (Company Rehab Report, Form OPS 015b) shall be performed including:
 - Pulse
 - BP
 - Respiratory rate
 - Body Temperature
 - Pulse Oximetry (prefer to use CO detection style)
 - Each person assigned for Rehab will spend a minimum of 10 minutes in the Rehab area.
 - While in Rehab an initial CISM assessment and appropriate support should be provided.

- Medical Treatment / Transport: is generally staffed with an ALS crew with one transport vehicle.
 - This crew will follow standard EMS protocols including:
 - A focused examination for any person(s) complaining of chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, weakness, nausea, heat cramps, aches, pains, and/or headache; or other signs and symptoms of heat-related illness;
 - Observation for changes in gait, speech, alertness and/or other abnormal behavior;
 - Paying close attention to core body temperatures above 101°F and/or systolic blood pressures less than 100 mmHg after 20 minutes of Rehab.
 - Initiate a Patient Care Record for personnel treated.
 - Evaluate if personnel can return to duty, be held for additional time in Rehab, or sent for other medical treatment.
 - Transport any personnel needing further medical care to the closest appropriate medical facility.

- If any person is transported the IC and Safety Officer will be informed through the Rehab Group Supervisor.
- If a single crew member is severely injured the entire crew should be removed from service, if possible.
- **Reassignment**
 - It is the Company Officer's responsibility to ensure their crew members receive proper refreshments, rest, and medical clearance prior to reassignment.
 - Crews will check out together just as they entered Rehab. Group Supervisor will track crew exit times on the Rehab Form (Appendix A).
 - Rehab Group Supervisor will notify IC or Logistics Chief (if filled) when personnel are released from Rehab. Any crews that were fractured during Rehab (i.e. further treatment needed, special assignment, etc.) will be reported as such to the IC.

C. Responsibilities:

- Firefighters will:
 - Participate in Rehab as directed
 - Maintain hydration
 - Know their physical abilities and limitations in order to recognize significant fatigue or other signs/symptoms that may impact their ability to work on a scene and advise their Company Officer if they need Rehab.
 - Be aware of the health and wellness of other crew members.
 - Know how to establish a Rehab area and function as a BLS provider in Rehab (when specifically assigned to Rehab duty).
- A Company Officer is the vital first link in a chain of control to ensure safety and well-being of all members of the company. The Company Officer will:
 - Understand how the Rehab system is designed to function and the importance of it functioning properly.
 - Know the physical abilities and limitation of their crew in order to recognize significant fatigue.
 - Notify the IC or Div/Group Supervisor when in need of Rehab
 - Assess their crew at least every 45 minutes or more frequently when working.
 - Use the procedures and command structure established by NIMS; (unauthorized or unscheduled Rehab periods are discouraged).
 - Go directly to Rehab with the company intact, when assigned, and report to the Rehab Supervisor.
 - Ensure that the individual assigned to stay with and operate the apparatus will have access to relief and Rehab as necessary.
 - Remain aware of Rehab needs during Wildland Incidents
 - Understand that the Rehab Supervisor's directives and assignments are relayed from the Incident Commander.
- Division/Group Supervisors will:
 - Give specific instructions when directing Companies to report to Rehab.
 - Know the location of Rehab and give the location to Companies assigned to Rehab.
 - Give priority to the rest and Rehab of first-in Companies.

- The Rehab Supervisor will:
 - Report to the Logistics Chief if that position is filled
 - Be responsible for the safe, effective, and efficient establishment and delivery of the Rehab function.
 - Ensure that all needed support equipment, including air bottles, water and electrolyte replacement fluids, nourishment items, cooling devices, and necessary personnel are available at the Rehab Area when needed.
 - Keep accurate logs of Companies reporting in and out of Rehab.
 - Ensure personnel in Rehab are reassessed at least every 10 minutes before reassignment.
 - Determine who should receive further medical monitoring.
 - Keep the IC or Logistics Chief informed of personnel exiting Rehab
 - Keep an accurate log of the status of Companies in Rehab, including the total number of Companies, the Companies ready for the re-assignment, and Companies that may be delayed in their return to service.

- The Operations Chief will:
 - Ensure that Division Supervisors have access to relief and Rehab as needed.

- The Safety Officer will:
 - Ensure that EMS personnel are on the scene and assisting with Rehab (and medical monitoring, when needed).
 - Observe Rehab operations to ensure that all measures necessary are being taken.
 - Confirm that firefighters are adequately recovered and ready to re-enter operations.
 - Maintain a situational awareness of Weather including Heat Index relative to environmental stress on personnel. (Refer to Attachment OPS 015-02 Weather and Heat Index).

- The Incident Commander will:
 - Use the criteria listed below for determining when to assign a Company to Rehab including consideration of weather or environmental conditions.
 - Heat stress index above 90° Fahrenheit.
 - The wind-chill index below 10° Fahrenheit.
 - Time – including extended use of PPE and exposure to weather conditions.
 - Following 40 minutes of intense work (off SCBA).
 - Number of air bottles used.
 - (2) 60-minute SCBA cylinder @ 50% consumption have been used.
 - (1) 60-minute SCBA cylinder consumed to low air alarm activation.
 - Complexity – including crime scenes, special team's incidents.
 - Intensity – mental and/or physical stress at incidents such as major extrications, interior search and rescue, etc.
 - Verbal assessment of the Company.
 - The Company Officer's assessment of the Company's condition.
 - Multiple Greater Alarms in one shift.
 - Approve the location of Rehab.
 - Establish more than one Rehab area if the size of the incident or geographic barriers limit personnel's access and provide a geographic name for each Rehab site, consistent with its location at the incident.
 - Inform Operations Chief and Division Supervisors as to the location(s) of Rehab.

- Ensure that EMS is aware of the location(s) of Rehab.
- Assume the ultimate responsibility for Rehab being established, being properly equipped and functioning properly.
- Coordinates with Safety Officer to assure that Companies are Rehabilitated prior to returning to service.

D. Other general considerations:

- Ensure that the Rehab area is marked using scene tape and signs and provide a single entry/exit point.
- Ensure that Rehab is in a location that will provide physical rest by allowing personnel to recuperate from the demands and hazards of the emergency incident or training activity. Suggested criteria for selecting a Rehab location include:
 - Be far enough away from the scene that personnel may safely remove PPE and have their vital signs checked while receiving fluids and rest.
 - Provide suitable protection from the prevailing weather conditions. During hot weather it should be in a cool, shaded area. During cold weather, it should be in a warm, dry area shielded from the wind.
 - Large enough to handle the needs of the incident.
 - Easily accessible by ambulance.
 - Enable personnel to be free from the exhaust of apparatus, vehicles or equipment.
 - Allow for prompt re-assignment by the Rehab Supervisor as determined by the Incident Commander.
- Maintenance of active communications with the Logistics Chief (if filled).

A handbook has been developed to assist in setting up and managing Rehab. The "TCESD #2 Rehab Handbook", Attachment 015-03 is included with this policy for reference.

V. Definitions

- None

VI. Attachments

- OPS 029-01 Work-Rest-Hydration Chart
- OPS 029-02 Weather and Heat Index
- OPS 029-03 TCESD #2 Rehab Handbook

VII. Forms

- OPS 029a Rehab Check In/Out Form
- OPS 029b Company Rehab Report Form

VIII. References

- NFPA 1500. 2018 ed.
- NFPA 1584. 2015 ed.