



Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

**EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY****Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure safety for all emergency responders operating and providing services within Valencia County and surrounding counties alike. Safety in the fire service is paramount, for all responders, and is the responsibility of all Emergency Responders.

**Policy**

- I. All personnel shall conduct themselves, their apparatus, and emergency operations in a safe and effective manner so that lives and property of the citizens and visitors of Valencia County will receive expeditious and high quality service in their state of emergency. All Personnel shall report to duty at their assigned stations on time and be readily available for any and all possible incident they may incur during a shift. Personnel can ensure self-readiness by, but not limited to the following;
  - a. Exercise and physical fitness. It is recommended that Firefighters should engage in a minimum of 1 hour of cardio exercise and 1 hour of strength training daily.
  - b. Balanced diet ensuring proper nutrition to provide quality fuel to ensure personnel can withstand the stress and long operational hours and extended scene times
  - c. Adequate rest and sleep prior to reporting for duty to reduce fatigue induced injuries and/or accidents. Eight (8) hours of rest or sleep is recommended prior to a shift is recommended.
  - d. Ceasing alcohol consumption while off shift, at a minimum of 12 hours prior to reporting for duty.
  - e. No personnel shall report to work under the influence of alcohol, prescription drugs, or illicit drugs. If personnel are prescribed narcotics, the Fire Chief shall be advised and actions shall be taken at that time. No personnel shall permit, or engage in the use of illicit drugs at any time.
  - f. Reducing the use of tobacco both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco to ensure adequate organ function so that a firefighter's performance shall not be hindered.
  - g. Reporting to Rehab to ensure personnel(s) vital signs are obtained and within normal limits, to reduce possibility of stress induced injury during an emergency incident (i.e. structure fire). (See EMS Protocols)
  - h. Consuming appropriate amount of water in order to keep the body functioning appropriately throughout the shift, and/or long operational scenes that require excessive amounts of strenuous activity.



Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

**EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY**

- i. Avoid reporting to shift while feeling ill, or injured. This only hinders emergency response, and puts other personnel at risk of becoming ill or injured. Personnel should seek medical attention and recover fully from illness or injury prior to returning to shift.
  
- II. Safety in the workplace - Safety is a factor that should be considered during any emergency situation as well as at the station or during transit. Personnel can ensure workplace safety by, but not limited to the following;
  - a. Cleaning up any spills or clutter around the station, to reduce possibility of slips, trips, and falls.
  - b. Ensuring a clean and healthy environment, by sweeping, mopping, disinfecting, and general maintenance to reduce the spread of germs and bacteria within the station and apparatus.
  - c. Reducing items or clutter in public pathway, such as equipment, and or PPE. All equipment should be inspected, tested, performance maintenance, and placed in the appropriate compartment or storage place when complete. No items or equipment should be left unsupervised, without notifying other occupants within the building or area. Generators and power equipment should be allowed to run for a minimum of five (5) minutes and allowed an additional five (5) minutes to cool down, prior to being placed into closed compartments.
  - d. Reduce stacking and standing elongated, or heavy equipment, these types of equipment, should be placed securely on the ground to reduce possibility of falls or personnel injury.
  - e. SCBAs, SCBA bottles, and O2 cylinders should be placed parallel to the ground, never stood upright to reduce possibility of damage to the bottle and personnel injury.
  - f. All Bio hazard and sharps shall be secured in the appropriate containers to reduce the spread of blood borne pathogens and illness.
  - g. Traveling through the station should be limited to fast paced walking, Personnel should never run through bays, or doorways to reduce possibility of unforeseen obstacles that may inhibit emergency response



Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

**EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY**

- III. Safety during transit - Safety during transit is of utmost importance due to emergency vehicles are traveling through roadways, and intersections several times daily. It is the responsibility of the driver/operator and all occupants to ensure safe operation of the vehicle. Personnel can ensure safety during transit by, but not limited to the following;
- a. Ensuring all personnel within the vehicle, are restrained prior to any vehicle operation.
  - b. Conducting a walk around inspection to ensure no objects or personnel will hinder the emergency response, or cause damage to the apparatus, PPE, equipment, Station, or any other hazard that may be present.
  - c. Navigation and correct destination is clear prior to vehicle operation.
  - d. Obtaining "Certified Vehicle Operator" annually prior to any vehicle operation
  - e. Knowledge of apparatus operations to include pumps, Aerial apparatus, CAFS, etc prior to vehicle operation.
  - f. Knowledge of all equipment, tools, and appliances present on each apparatus prior to vehicle operation
  - g. Ensure apparatus has undergone a DOT test and is certified for operation annually prior to operation.
  - h. Maintaining and obeying all posted traffic laws.
  - i. Maintaining 10 mph over the posted speed limit when emergency response to an incident is warranted.
  - j. Apparatus staging per direction of the officer or superior firefighter, in attempt to allow for optimal egress and/or seamless transition into class A engine operations, or transport unit access for patient care. Apparatus staging on a roadway shall necessitate a "fend off" position in attempt to provide scene and responder protection from oncoming traffic.
- IV. Establishing Control Zones – Control Zones are needed to maintain consistency and seamless operations, aiding in incident stabilization. Size of control zones are depicted by the incident commander, scene dynamics, weather, and the situation in which the control zones are being constructed.
- a. Hot Zone- The "hot zone" is denoted as the area immediately surrounding the incident. This is where the location of the hazard is present and operations shall be underway to mitigate the incident.



Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

**EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY**

- b. Warm Zone- The “warm zone” is denoted as the area immediately outside the hot zone. Tool staging and decontamination shall be constructed in the warm zone.
  - c. Cold Zone- The “cold zone” is denoted as the area immediately outside the warm zone. The Incident Command post, personnel staging, preparation, planning, and apparatus staging shall be constructed in the cold zone.
- V. Safety during EMS Scene/Response Personnel;
- a. Shall ensure scene safety by requesting law enforcement, animal control, PNM Electric, NM Gas, or other entities necessary for scene control and hazard mitigation through Valencia County Dispatch.
  - b. Shall enter EMS scenes, with a minimum of 2 personnel, no exceptions.
  - c. Shall ensure all medical equipment is in good working condition and is present, by conducting medical equipment checks at the beginning of each shift.
  - d. Shall utilize Body Substance Isolation when working with sick and injured patients.
  - e. Shall be aware of their surroundings, and if the crew should feel unsafe, the crew shall remove themselves immediately from the scene, and request the appropriate resources for scene control.
  - f. Shall assess for additional resources prior to necessity, to ensure adequate response for each situation.
- VI. Safety during Technical Rescue/Response Personnel;
- a. Shall assess for additional emergency resources, prior to necessity
  - b. Shall ensure equipment is in good working order and is present, by conducting equipment checks at the beginning of each tour.
  - c. Shall assess for additional resources such as law enforcement, animal control, PNM Electric, NM Gas, or other entities necessary for scene control and hazard mitigation through Valencia County Dispatch.
  - d. Apparatus staging on a roadway shall necessitate a “fend off” position in attempt to provide scene and responder protection from oncoming traffic.
  - e. Provide a scene size up, and cancel unneeded resources, or order additional resources.
  - f. Establish Incident Command



Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

<b>EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY</b>
-----------------------------------

- g. Establish a tactical Communications radio channel.
  - h. Set fourth an Incident Action Plan
  - i. Set up tool staging
- VII. Safety during landing zone operations - When ordering air ambulances as a resource, it is imperative to establish a landing zone, and a ground contact for communications with the air ambulance. Air ambulances can be assessed for extended transport times, life threatening injuries and/or illness, prolonged extrication/disentanglement of patient(s), Personnel;
- a. Shall request air ambulance through Valencia County Dispatch
  - b. Shall select a landing zone, free of obstructions, overhead obstructions, and any other hazards
  - c. Shall select a ground contact from VCES, PD, VCSO, or other FD
  - d. Shall make contact with the air ambulance via tactical communications radio channel.
  - e. Shall ensure 100'x100' landing zone marked with traffic cones, or weighted marker lights.
  - f. Shall keep the landing zone free of personnel, vehicles, bystanders, or any other person(s) or objects that would hinder the landing of an aircraft.
  - g. Shall order a fire apparatus to wet down the landing zone, if time and resources permit.

Once the aircraft is on the ground;

- h. No personnel are permitted to approach the aircraft until the aircraft has powered down, and the aircraft personnel have dismounted.
- i. If a "hot load" is warranted, the aircraft will stay running, with propellers in motion. **At no time shall Personnel encroach on the aircraft without permission of the pilot.**
- j. When approaching an aircraft, personnel shall only approach from the **nose/front**, or the **pilot side** of the aircraft, in the event the pilot makes a decision to adjust the aircraft, personnel cannot be seen from the rear/tail, or the opposite side of the pilot seat.
- k. Only Personnel permitted to assist with Patient loading into the aircraft shall be allowed to approach the aircraft.



Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

**EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY**

- VIII. Safety during IDLH Atmospheres/Haz-Mat incidents - When dealing with an incident that has an immediate danger to life and health, personnel shall;
- a. Recognize an IDLH atmosphere
  - b. Identify the source, hazard, spill, or leak
  - c. Establish Incident Command
  - d. Establish Communication radio channels
  - e. Notify the agency responsible for the spill and additional resources
  - f. Notify definitive care facilities if needed
  - g. Establish Isolation and control zones per ERG manual
  - h. Develop an IAP to isolate and contain the hazard
  - i. Perform decontamination if needed
- IX. Safety during Wild land firefighting operations - When dealing with a wild land fire incident, personnel shall;
- a. Provide a scene size up
  - b. Establish Incident Command
  - c. Establish Communication radio channels
  - d. Request additional resources
  - e. Don appropriate PPE
  - f. Select fire attack method
  - g. Obtain frequent weather reports
  - h. Establish Look Outs
  - i. Identify Escape Routes
  - j. Identify Safety Zones
  - k. Identify and secure a static water supply
  - l. Establish a staging area for responding personnel and apparatus
  - m. Evacuate the area if necessary
- X. Safety during Structural firefighting operations
- a. Provide a scene size up
  - b. Establish Incident Command
  - c. Establish Communication radio channels
  - d. Request additional resources



Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

**EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY**

- e. Don appropriate PPE
  - f. Perform a 360 walk around
  - g. Secure utilities
  - h. Identify and secure water supply
  - i. Establish a staging area for responding personnel and apparatus
  - j. Evacuate the area if necessary
  - k. Designate an Operations Manager or Safety Officer
  - l. Select a fire attack method
  - m. Coordinate and conduct SAR
  - n. Protect Exposures
  - o. Coordinate Ventilation and Fire Attack
  - p. Perform Salvage and Overhaul
- XI. Emergency Incident Rehabilitation – (Also see EMS Protocols)
- a. Designation of Condition: Firefighters die of stress overexertion illnesses more often than burns/injuries from structural events. Key principles of Emergency Incident Rehabilitation (EIR) include the following:
    - i. Adequate hydration and rest should be maintained at all times while on shift
    - ii. Provide continuous medical monitoring to allow early identification of stress and heat related illness.
    - iii. Immediately ID and treat any potentially serious medical condition detected during an emergency incident.
    - iv. Treat traumatic injuries.
  - b. Baseline vital signs (VS) shall be recorded for all firefighters prior to their involvement in an incident. Keep resting and post-aerobic VS for each member confidential but accessible to the rehab sector. Pay special attention to members on beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, or diuretics as those drugs alter one’s response to heat and cardiovascular stress.
  - c. EMS personnel shall
    - i. Gather vital signs, HR, BP. If HR >120, consider obtaining tympanic temperature and record it.
    - ii. Question personnel and evaluate for medical history and current symptoms.



Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

**EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY**

iii. Based on the assessments and re-assessments of the personnel, there can be several dispositions as follows:

**1. Triage to Rest and Rehabilitation:**

- a. Re-assess VS after 20 minutes, if within normal limits, may return to duty.
- b. If cannot take or keep down oral re-hydration, reassign to treatment area.

**2. Triaged to Medical Evaluation and Treatment Area:**

- a. If Firefighter has injuries, HR >120 at entry, BP > 200 systolic or between 100– 120 diastolic, or <90 systolic, re-assess VS after 10 – 20 minutes and log VS. If after 20 minutes with oral re-hydration and rest VS have not returned to normal, **remove from duty.**
- b. If HR > 140 after approximately 20 minutes, or cannot take or keep down oral fluids. Initiate IV of Normal Saline or LR (if available) One (1) liter bolus, and re-assess. May repeat twice prior to MCEP consultation. If HR, BP, temp return to normal and firefighter is able to take oral fluid and keep them down, he/she may return to duty.

**3. Immediate transport to Hospital Required:**

- a. If temperature is > 101, HR is > 140 after 20 minutes, or any of the following signs or symptoms of heat exhaustion/stroke or other serious illness are present:
  - i. Headache
  - ii. Vomiting
  - iii. Chest Pain
  - iv. SOB
  - v. Altered Mental Status





Effective Date: 10/07/2014

Revised Date:

**EMERGENCY RESPONDER SAFETY**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of approval

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name