

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICIANS

Part of State Form 4928 (R13/11-16)

This information is designed to help physicians complete the following forms. The medical conditions outlined in these forms may impact on an individual's ability to perform the essential functions of the job for a first class firefighter. The application of these guidelines requires a careful consideration of the job duties of a firefighter and the medical conditions that might affect a person's capability to conduct those duties.

Firefighting and emergency response are very difficult jobs. People in these jobs must perform functions that are physically and psychologically demanding. These functions must often be performed under very difficult conditions. Studies have shown that firefighting functions at times require working at near maximal heart rates for prolonged periods of time.

The available health data on firefighters is limited. Given the delay between exposure and onset of many occupational illnesses (i.e. latency), current or past health studies of firefighters may not reflect future health risks. However, it appears that firefighters have increased risk for injuries, pulmonary disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and noise-induced hearing loss. The increased risk for injuries is expected given the demands and circumstances for this work.

BASIC ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS FOR FIREFIGHTERS

- Respond to alarms by reporting to assigned vehicle, riding in or on assigned vehicle to the scene of the emergency or fire.
- Lift, carry, drag, lay, and connect hose lines from hydrants and equipment to scene. Carry resuscitators, tools, and other equipment from vehicle to scene.
- Raise and climb ladders, crawl and walk on roofs and floors, open holes and windows with axes, bars, and hooks for access or ventilation.
- Combat fires by holding nozzles and directing streams of fog, chemicals, or water and move into fire area, including into confined spaces and upstairs.
- Communicate by voice or radio with other firefighters and other emergency personnel to relay observations, equipment needs, and other relevant information.
- Move people away from danger, including carrying unconscious people or holding a life net.
- Provide emergency medical treatment to injured people.
- Remove objects from buildings, place protective covers over objects, and monitor assigned areas for signs of recurrence.
- Conduct fire drills, critique drill participants on emergency procedure, and instruct groups on such procedures.
- Participate in training on firefighting, emergency aid, emergency procedures, and related subjects.
- Maintain departmental equipment and structures, which includes cleaning and washing walls and floors, hanging and drying fire hose, cleaning equipment, and performing preventative maintenance or motorized equipment.
- Maintain personal physical fitness.
- Perform related duties as assigned.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT JOB FUNCTIONS FOR FIREFIGHTERS

The essential job functions for a firefighter are performed in and affected by the following environmental factors. A firefighter must:

- Operate both as a member of a team and independently at incidents of uncertain duration.
- Spend extensive time outside exposed to the elements.
- Experience frequent transition from hot to cold and from humid to dry atmospheres.
- Tolerate extreme fluctuations in temperature and perform physically demanding work in (up to 400° F), humid (up to 100%) atmospheres while wearing equipment that significantly impairs body cooling mechanisms.
- Work in wet, icy, or muddy areas.
- Perform a variety of tasks on slippery, hazardous surfaces such as on roof tops or from ladders.
- Work in areas where sustaining traumatic or thermal injury is possible.
- Face exposure to carcinogenic dusts such as asbestos, and toxic substances such as hydrogen cyanide, acids, carbon monoxide, or organic solvents either through inhalation or skin contact.
- Face exposure to infectious agents such as hepatitis B or HIV.
- Perform complex tasks during life-threatening emergencies.
- Work for long periods of time, requiring sustained physical activity and intense concentration.
- Face life or death decisions during emergency conditions.
- Tolerate exposure to grotesque sights and smells associated with major trauma and burn victims.
- Make rapid transitions from rest to near maximal exertion without warm-up periods.
- Operate in environments of high noise, poor visibility, limited mobility, at heights, and in enclosed or confined spaces.
- Use manual or power tools in the performance of duties.
- Rely on sense of sight, hearing, smell, and touch to determine the nature of the emergency, maintain personal safety, and make critical decisions in confused, chaotic, and potentially life-threatening environments.
- Wear personal protective equipment that weighs approximately fifty (50) pounds while performing essential functions of the job.
- Perform physically demanding work while wearing protective pressure breathing equipment with 1.5 inches water column resistance to exhalation at a flow of forty (40) liters per minute.
- Be able to communicate with people effectively.