

Operating Guideline # 206
Dehydration and Exhaustion
Created September 20, 2019
Reviewed June 16, 2022



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish practices help protect firefighters from dehydration and exhaustion while performing their duties.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

Heat exhaustion and dehydration are serious risks to firefighters, firefighters should remain hydrated and afforded the opportunity to keep fluid intake occurring in a periodic manner. Firefighters can lose fluid at a rate of up to 2 litres per hour. The fastest a human body can absorb water is about 1 litre per hour.

GUIDELINE:

1. At any significant incident, a REHAB area under the control of an assigned sector officer should be established adjacent to the fire ground away from any danger area.
2. Drinking water is carried on the first response assignment for use at the REHAB area.
3. All fire ground personnel will be rotated through the REHAB area at established intervals where they will remove helmets and bunker coats to provide rest and allow natural cooling.
4. Bunker pants will be opened at the waist and drinking water will be available.
5. The frequency of rotation should be governed by work load and time spent. e.g. After the use of one air cylinder, no more than 45 minutes.
6. Company Officers will be responsible to see that this guideline is observed and to monitor all personnel.
7. Consideration should be given to medical monitoring of personnel while they are in REHAB (Request this assistance from Muskoka EMS, where possible).

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

REFERENCES:

- Section 21 Guidance Note GN-6-12, Rehab Operations During Emergency Operations
- OG 702, Rehab Sector Operations