

## **Operating Guideline # 231**

### **Workplace Hazard, Exposure, Incident and Illness Reporting**

**June 3, 2022**



#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to outline the various reporting requirements attached to workplace hazard reporting, exposure reporting, injury incident reporting, and illness reporting.

#### **ISSUE/RATIONALE:**

The need to promptly and accurately report workplace hazards, exposures, incidents and illnesses has its basis in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, particularly in Sections 51 and 52. Township of Muskoka Lakes Policy also reinforces the legislation by more fully describing the process to report these issues, this Operating Guideline helps explain the unique operational environment within the fire service.

#### **GUIDELINE:**

1. The Township of Muskoka Lakes has two forms and two health and safety policies relating to the issue of “reporting”. All of these are applicable to fire department staff members as well. All fire department staff should be familiar with these, and anyone appointed as a “Supervisor” must adhere to the provisions of the following:

- HS 1008 Incident Reporting and Investigation
- HS 015 Hazard Reporting

*NOTE: For the purposes of this OG, the term injury has broad implications for the fire service. More specifically, it includes issues relative to mental illness such as Operational Stress and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).*

2. The completion of all requisite forms for WSIB and Township of Muskoka Lakes reporting provisions are the responsibility of the Supervisor (Captain, Lieutenant) supervising the individual concerned at the time of the incident. Where an illness or injury is reported “after the fact”, the Fire Chief or his designate shall complete the necessary forms.

*NOTE: Human Resources staff members are available to assist/consult for any of the duties set out by Township of Muskoka Lakes Policies.*

3. Fire department staff members are encouraged to report all exposures via the departmental “Exposure Report” as soon as practical following the exposure, but in every case, within 60 days of the event occurring. Examples include:

- Exposure to heat and products of combustion at structure fire/car fire/grass fire etc.
- Exposure to blood and bodily fluids at motor vehicle collision.
- Exposure to carbon monoxide while investigating a CO alarm activation.
- Exposure to traumatic event, suicide by hanging of a young adult.
- Exposure to multiple casualties at bus crash.

*NOTE: Where an exposure report is submitted following a potentially emotionally charged event or one which may give rise to a heightened emotional response by one or more firefighters, the supervisors shall conduct wellness checks in accordance with the provisions of OG 230 (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and consider the need for post-incident*

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*intervention as outlined in OG 218 (Operational Stress Injuries; Chaplaincy Program/CISM Program; Employee and Family Assistance Program).*

4. Exposure reports are to be forwarded to administration for recording and are to be reviewed by the JHSC (with personal identifiers removed) at their meeting following the exposure incident.
5. A member of the department who becomes ill or is injured outside of the fire department work environment to the extent that they are/will be absent and unable to attend any fire department function (training, response to emergency incidents) for greater than forty-eight (48) hours - (2) consecutive days - shall immediately report this to their District Chief or designate. The District Chief in turn is responsible to notify the Fire Chief or his designate.
6. Any member on a medical leave can not access the fire department facility, must suspend all response and training immediately. The employee must make every effort to get well and only concentrate on recovery. There should be no involvement or obligation for the employee to return to work, worksites, train, or do anything that distracts from recovery.
7. All employees returning from a medical leave must complete and file a return to work form that requires clearance from a medical practitioner.
8. During the time that the employee is on a leave, the employee file in Fire Pro will have 30 day check ins to confirm that the employee status has not changed. Using the "Time Off" function to monitor for medical leaves. The employee is responsible to update the fire department administration every 30 days to extend the leave.
9. Failure to update the fire department administration every 30 days will result in the employee status returning to a condition whereby the attendance policy may be contemplated for unapproved leave, resulting in possible discipline.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the responsibility of all members to comply with the provisions of this OG and particularly that Company Officers (supervisors) and firefighters (workers) ensure that they adhere to their duties in accordance with the provisions of this document and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

**"Critical Injury" means** an injury of a serious nature that places life in jeopardy; produces unconsciousness; results in a substantial loss of blood; involves the fracture of a leg or arm (but not a finger or toe); involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand, foot (but not a finger or a toe); consists of burns to a major portion of the body; and/or causes the loss of sight in an eye.

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**“Incident” means** an undesired event which results in personal injury/illness, loss of production or service, or damage to equipment or property.

**“Ill” or “Illness” means** any medical condition (includes physical or cognitive illnesses) that could interfere with a firefighters ability to safely complete their duties.

**“Injury” means** any injury (includes physical or cognitive injury) however caused, that has the potential to interfere with a firefighter’s ability to safely complete their duties. Includes a condition that results from an exposure to a physical, chemical or biological agent, or any event which interferes with an individual’s normal physiological and psychological mechanisms to the extent that their health is impaired.

#### **REFERENCES:**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (RSO 1990, c. 0.1)
- Township of Muskoka Lakes health and safety policies
- MLFD OG 218 – Operational Stress Injuries; Chaplaincy Program/CISM Program; Employee and Family Assistance Program
- MLFD OG 230 – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- MLFD PTSD Prevention Plan