

Operating Guideline # 222

Firefighter Wellness

September 29, 2019



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to articulate the departmental position with respect to firefighter wellness and fitness, and to set our reporting practices.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

The subject of firefighter wellness is a subject that should be of paramount importance to us all. Statistics validate that annually in the United States; approximately half of the firefighters who die as a result of a “Line of Duty Death” (LODD) do so because of heart attacks or similar cardiovascular disease. In addition, the prevalence of workplace diseases such as cancer are becoming more widely recognized as our knowledge of the toxic environment we are called upon to work in grows each year.

Physical fitness, proper nutrition, adequate sleep and sound mental health all contribute to firefighter wellness, and we have a responsibility to ourselves – and to our family’s – to make sure we are “fit to fight” and don’t become a statistic ourselves.

GUIDELINE:

1. Members of the Muskoka Lakes Fire Department are encouraged to keep themselves physically and mentally fit. Engaging in physical activity at least three times a week in keeping with the recommendations of Health Canada and their own medical practitioner. Cardio-vascular fitness, strength and endurance are all important aspects of a firefighter’s ability to perform the duties associated with emergency response.
2. Members are encouraged to take a holistic approach to wellness that encompasses nutrition, adequate sleep and mental health activities in support of good physical and mental fitness.
3. All new members of the Muskoka Lakes Fire department are subject to a “pre-employment medical screening” to be completed by a medical professional. The pre-employment medical shall be documented on the standard form which shall form part of the member’s permanent record.
4. Where a member of the Emergency Operations Division is injured off-duty (or contracts any illness) such that they are unavailable to respond to an emergency for a period of more than 48 hours, they shall notify their immediate supervisor.
5. Where a staff member is injured while on-duty (or contracts a work-related illness), they shall immediately report the injury/illness to their supervisor and, where appropriate, seek first-aid or medical attention.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all staff to be familiar with the content of this Operating Guideline.

REFERENCES:

- MLFD OG 218 - Operational Stress, Chaplaincy Program/CISM and Employee and Family Assistance Program
- MLFD OG231 – Workplace Injury, Illness Reporting