

Light Duty Opportunities for Volunteer Fire and EMS

*Approved by: Workers Compensation Executive Committee 3/31/2021
Public Safety Committee 4/1/2021
Finance Committee 4/6/2021*

Consistent with the legislative intent of the New York State Volunteer Firefighters' Benefits Law and in full recognition of the sacrifice made by all volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel (first responder), the Wyoming County Workers' Compensation Plan does hereby enact the following policy:

Policy

It is the policy of the Wyoming County Worker's Compensation Plan to provide first responders a comprehensive firefighter physical to determine their fit for duty as required per their classification as well as following a significant injury and /or illness.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline a procedure for first responders, Chief Officers, and Work Place Health to follow in the event of an injury or illness sustained by a responder which may impact their ability to perform their duties within their organization.

This procedure shall take into account each first responders baseline medical restrictions, regardless of employment status.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all fire and EMS personnel within a Wyoming County based fire department or emergency medical services agency that is covered under the Wyoming County Worker's Compensation program.

Procedure

1. It is the responsibility of each first responder to report an injury/illness that could potentially impact their abilities to perform duties to their Department Chief or designated officer.
2. A medical note from the treating physician must be submitted outlining the injury/illness and any limitations will be filed in the members respective personnel file as well as submitted to the Wyoming County Office of Emergency Services and Wyoming County Insurance Office.
3. The member will be temporarily suspended from active duty by the Department Chief until such time as medical documentation from the treating physician is submitted. The temporary suspension order shall be on departmental letterhead and a copy submitted to the Wyoming County Worker's Compensation Plan (Wyoming County Insurance Office) and the Wyoming County Office of Emergency Services. While temporarily suspended the member may qualify for light duty.

Light Duty – A first responder’s injury and/or illness is significant enough to restrict certain aspects of their expected position. Light duty positions may include, but not limited to: general office tasks such as filing, computer work or answering phones, public education/awareness and assisting with food preparation. Attendance at department or county meetings and classroom training (no hands-on) is permitted under light duty.

No operation of fire apparatus, driving, or riding in any vehicle, departmental or privately owned, to or from the scene of an emergency or hands on training shall be permitted. Light duty designation may only be made following a release from the first responder’s treating physician outlining the restrictions.

4. To return to full duty, a medical note from the treating physician stating there are no restrictions will be provided to the Department Chief, Wyoming County Office of Emergency Services and Wyoming County Insurance Office. The County will provide the documentation to Work Place Health. Work Place Health may make the determination if a complete firefighter physical prior to resumption of normal duties is required. In the event the member has a new permanent baseline medical status, they will need to be cleared for active duty with appropriate permanent restrictions.

Disclaimer: Each injury/illness will be evaluated on a case by case basis by Work Place Health to determine which if any limitations may exist. It is the goal of all involved parties to allow each first responder to perform their duties in the most-safe and responsible means as possible given each circumstance.