

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Dennis L. Rubin**  
**Fire Chief**

**FROM: Michael L. Willis**  
**DFC Risk Management**

**DATE: December 7, 2007**

**SUBJECT: Events Planned for Firefighter Health and Safety Week in June 2008**

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With approval the Office of Risk Management shall for this very important national event spotlight the following items in relation to Firefighter/EMS Safety goals and objectives.

National Fallen fighters Advocacy Program-Seatbelt Pledge

Focus: 100 Percent Compliance to the Seatbelt Pledge by departmental employees. Obtaining certification from the National fallen fighters as being 100 percent compliant to the seat belt pledge. Additionally, a Memorandum reminding members of the following: Properly checking SCBA, wearing hearing protection, eye protection and various topics

Heat Stress

Heat stress and heat illnesses are well recognized hazards of firefighting and EMS operations. In particular fire suppression can increase the body temperature resulting in sweating and fluid loss, which can cause serum electrolyte changes, lower stroke volume (the volume of blood pushed during each contraction of the heart), or lower cardiac output {Rossi 2003}.

The focus will be on hydration, use of cooling chairs and rehab during incidents. The use of EMS interventional methods to determine if a firefighter is available for additional operational functions prior to leaving rehab. With approval this will be spotlighted by the purchase of carbon monoxide meters which shall measure more accurately the carbon monoxide levels within the firefighter bloodstream. With approval these meters will be placed on at least 10

medic units and this shall be a coordinated effort in conjunction with Risk Management and Special Operations.

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Environmental Tobacco Smoke

In 2006, the Surgeon General confirmed a casual relationship between exposure to second hand smoke and increased risks of coronary heart disease morbidity and mortality {USDHHS 2006}. An estimated 46,000 cardiac deaths occur each year due to second hand smoke in the United States {Cal/EPA2005}.

The focus will be on the Risk Management/Wellness smoking cessation program and adherence to the departmental and District of Columbia smoke free workplace policies.

Focused standard--NFPA 1500 Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program

Peer Fitness/Ace Trainer

IAFF, a labor union, and the IAFC, a management organization are devoted to the safety and health of their members, this same vested interested is shared by the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

Focus The Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative {NFPA 1582, IAFF/IAFC 1997}

The Risk Management Division will highlight the various measures taken by the department to promote physical fitness to include Ace Physical Fitness Trainers, Peer Fitness. The purchase of gym equipment for firehouses and the various wellness programs geared towards employee health.

