



## Division 06

## Fire and Rescue Operations

# Chapter 22 – Operational Safety Duty Officers

March 2009

### POLICY

To define the duties, responsibilities, and functions of Operational Safety Duty Officers in the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department.

### DEFINITIONS

**Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Officer** - Is an individual assigned by the Lieutenant Colonel for the Emergency Operations Command to perform the duties and functions related to the safe performance of operational personnel.

**The Incident Safety Officer** - Is an individual assigned by the Incident Commander to perform the duties of a Safety Officer at a specific incident.

**Member** - Denotes any career employee or volunteer member of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department.

### PROCEDURES

#### 1. General Guidelines

The Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Officers are assigned to assist the Lieutenant Colonel of Emergency Operations in implementing the safety goals and objectives of the Department. The goals of this program include vehicle collision and injury prevention, ensuring the response of a designated Operational Safety Duty Officer on appropriate incidents, hazard identification and mitigation, and the establishment and maintenance of a safe and healthy work

environment for all members of the Department.

The duties and responsibilities of Fire/EMS Operational Safety Duty Officers are described in NFPA Standard 1521 and General Order 06-15.

The Lieutenant Colonel will determine the qualifications, experience, and training levels that are appropriate for this assignment. Generally, Minimum qualifications for a Safety Officer are: five (5) years of experience in Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department as an officer, Fire Officer II certification. Other training and experience will be taken into account when selecting a Safety Officer. All Safety Officers will be required to obtain certification as Health and Safety Officer within 12-months of an appointment.

Both career and volunteer members may be assigned as Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Duty Officers.

#### 2. Emergency Incidents

A Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Duty Officer shall be on duty at all times to respond to appropriate emergency incidents, investigate accidents and injuries, and address critical safety issues. The Fire/EMS Operations Center shall maintain a roster of these duty officers and shall ensure notification of any situation requiring response or attention.



The Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Duty Officer shall be responsible to respond to:

- All working fires.
- All multiple alarm incidents.
- Incidents involving unusual or severe risks to responders.
- Any incident where a member is injured and requires treatment at a hospital.
- Any serious accident involving Fire/EMS Department vehicles or equipment.
- Any other incident when requested by the Incident Commander or any incident to observe emergency operations.

The response of an Operational Safety Duty Officer does not alter the responsibility of the Incident Commander to assign an Incident Safety Officer at appropriate incidents. The assigned Incident Safety Officer has the same duties and responsibilities as the on-duty Operational Safety Duty Officer at that particular incident.

Upon arrival at the scene of an incident, the Operational Safety Duty Officer shall report to the Incident Commander to determine the safety status of the situation.

- If an Incident Safety Officer has not been assigned, the Operational Safety Duty Officer shall be assigned that role.
- If another individual has been assigned as the Incident Safety Officer, the Operational Safety Duty Officer may be assigned to relieve that individual within the Safety Sector so that person can be utilized in another role. As an alternative, the Operational Safety Duty Officer shall

observe the operation and act as an advisory to the Incident Commander.

- At large scale or complex incidents, the Operational Safety Duty Officer shall be assigned as the Safety Sector Officer and be provided with the necessary resources to properly monitor incident operations. The Operational Safety Duty Officer shall report directly to the Incident Commander at all times.

Upon termination of an incident, the Operational Safety Duty Officer shall review the incident status with the Incident Commander and provide any observations or comments regarding health and safety issues. A written review of each incident shall be submitted to the Safety Commander. Appropriate data shall be recorded in the operational safety database for follow-up and/or corrective action through the appropriate chain-of-command.

### 3. Training

Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Duty Officers shall participate in training activities as appropriate in order to:

Provide safety-related training and materials to members of the Department.

Train individuals to function within the safety sector on emergency incidents.

Ensure that training exercises are conducted safely.

### 4. Consultation

The Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Duty Officers shall provide consulting services to all components of the Department to address the following issues:



- Selection, use, condition, and maintenance of protective clothing and equipment.
- Emergency and non-emergency risk analysis and hazard mitigation.
- Injury and vehicle collision reporting and procedures.
- Member health, fitness, and wellness.

## 5. Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of this position is the prevention and mitigation of safety hazards within our work environment.

Emergency Incidents: The Operational Safety Duty Officer shall report directly to the Incident Commander at all times. When a situation or act is deemed to present an immediate and exigent hazard, the Operational Safety Duty Officer may direct the affected individuals to withdraw from an area or to delay their actions. The Operational Safety Duty Officer shall immediately contact the Incident Commander to report his/her actions and address the safety concern.

Non-emergency Situations: When dealing with situations that do not constitute imminent hazards, Operational Safety Duty Officers shall act in an advisory capacity and work through the chain-of-command to mitigate the hazard and attain the goals as outlined in General Order 08-12.

The Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Duty Officer is responsible for coordinating with the Incident Commander to ensure that all incident health and safety concerns, such as accountability and rehabilitation, are appropriately addressed and that all health and safety requirements are satisfied.

The Fire/EMS Department Operational Safety Duty Officer shall initiate an investigation

into any injury requiring treatment of a member at a hospital and any accident involving major injuries to members or citizens.

Additionally, the Operational Safety Duty Officer may be requested to investigate any other safety-related concerns or events. The initial investigation report shall address:

- The nature and circumstances of the vehicle collision or injury.
- Causing factors.
- Use and effectiveness of protective clothing and equipment.
- Compliance with standard operating procedures.
- Initial corrective actions taken to prevent future occurrences.

The procedures for investigating serious accidents and injuries are outlined in General Order 08-18, Safety Investigation Team.

### REFERENCES

General Orders 06-15, 08-12, 08,-22

NFPA 1500 - Standard for a Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program.

NFPA 1521 - Standard for a Fire Department Safety Officer.

### FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

N/A