

# HIAWATHA FIRE-RESCUE

Policy 120  
Rules and Regulations  
Absence from work  
7/2/06

## **Scope:**

This policy applies to all members of Hiawatha Fire & Rescue. Members of Hiawatha Fire & Rescue include full time employees, part time employees, paid on call employees, and volunteers. This policy applies to injuries and physical or mental illnesses that occur outside of fire department activities. This policy does not apply to occupational illness or injury that occurs as a result of fire department participation.

## **Purpose:**

The purpose of this SOP is to provide guidelines to members who are injured or ill as a result of activities not associated with Hiawatha Fire & Rescue. The intent of this policy is to provide protection to both the member, from consequences that may result if participation results in making an illness or injury worse, and the department which relies on the full participation of its members.

## **Background:**

Fire Fighting and EMS work is difficult, strenuous, and performed under stressful conditions. Members who are sick or injured may present a risk to both themselves and to other members of the department. Additionally, conditions at emergency scenes may exasperate certain conditions.

It is the expectation of employers and insurance carriers that Hiawatha Fire & Rescue members who are sick or injured are truly unable to perform their work duties and are home recuperating. By most standards, participation in fire department activities would not constitute recuperation. Many insurance carriers and employers would consider it fraud to use sick time, and then participate in fire department activities. The fire department strongly discourages this practice.

# HIAWATHA FIRE-RESCUE

Policy 120  
Rules and Regulations  
Absence from work  
7/2/06

## **A. Reporting illnesses and injuries that occur away from FD activities:**

1. Members shall report the following injuries and illnesses to the command staff:
  - a. Any injury that will prevent or has prevented the member from performing normal FD activities (refer to number B.5 below) for more than 5 days.
  - b. Any illness or injury that will require or has required them to be off work for more than 5 days.
  - c. Any illness or injury that will require them to miss their ambulance or duty crew assignment, regardless of length.
2. If the illness or injury results in an absence of less than 3 days from work, AND the employee is able to fully function as per item B- 5, the employee is not required to report the absence. However, the other provisions in this policy regarding participation still apply.
3. If an officer feels that the person's ability to function appears diminished due to an illness or injury, they may remove the member from that activity and refer the incident to the Chief to investigate the circumstances.
4. The Chief may require an employee to present a "return to work" slip, at the members expense, if there is a reasonable belief the member is unable to perform the required duties.

## **B. Regardless of whether or not notification is required under A.1 above, the following policy applies:**

1. An employee that calls in sick, either for illness or injury, to any paid employment is not to respond to any calls. Nor are they to be at the station. This applies to any "off the job" illness or injury.
  - a. An employee under this category may return to normal duty status with the fire department after they return to their regular employment. Returned to work means they have completed one complete daily shift at their regular employment.
  - b. If an employee is absent from work for more than 1 week due to an illness they shall present a return to work slip to the Chief prior to responding to calls.

# HIAWATHA FIRE-RESCUE

Policy 120  
Rules and Regulations  
Absence from work  
7/2/06

2. An employee who suffers an on the job injury at ANY employment falling under workman's compensation and is off work, shall not respond to any calls. They shall not be at the station, except to communicate their status, or with approval of the chief.
  - a. An employee off from work on workman's compensation must present a return to work slip from their physician, to the Fire Chief in order to return to service, regardless of the amount of time away from their employment.
  
3. An employee who suffers an on the job injury at ANY employment falling under workman's compensation, and is on light duty at their regular employment may also be on light duty at the fire department:
  - a. They shall not respond to any incident scene, or be on any fire department vehicle.
  - b. They MAY respond to the station without the use of blue lights, and may work in the radio room under the same restrictions as authorized under their light duty.
  - c. They MAY be at the station for training or other activities, but only as an observer, and under the same restrictions as authorized under their light duty.
  - d. They must present a "light duty" return to work slip from their physician in order to function in light duty status at the fire department.
  - e. They must present a "normal duty" return to work slip from their personal physician in order to return to full duty status
  
4. The burden of reporting lies with the member. Failure to report an illness or injury, except as outlined in number 1 above, could result in suspension or termination.
  - a. If needed, a person who formally reports an illness lasting more than one month may request that their run percentage be adjusted in order to qualify for incentives.
  - b. Fire department records, particularly attendance records, fall under the open document law. They will be provided to employers and insurance companies upon request, should any question arise as to a member's participation.

# HIAWATHA FIRE-RESCUE

Policy 120  
Rules and Regulations  
Absence from work  
7/2/06

5. The following is an excerpt from the current FD and EMS job description. It shall serve as a benchmark when questions arise as to job requirements.
  - a. Firefighting and EMS activity requires climbing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, reaching, standing, walking, driving, pushing, pulling, lifting, grasping, feeling, talking, hearing, seeing, and repetitive motions.
    1. The following tasks are representative of task that may need to be demonstrated:
      - a. Walking up and down several flights of stairs, carrying 50 foot section of 2.5 hose and wearing SCBA.
      - b. Walking up and down several flights of stairs carrying the EMS Jump Bag and ECG Monitor.
      - c. Performing a search pattern while crawling, wearing full protective equipment, dragging a hose line, and wearing SCBA.
      - d. Laying and kneeling for up to 10 minutes while performing cervical immobilization and treatment on a patient in an area with less than 40 inches of clearance.
      - e. Having sufficient dexterity to tie required firefighter 1 knots or to start an IV.
      - f. Having sufficient hearing to communicate with a walkie talkie, locate a downed firefighter's PASS alarm, and to check a blood pressure using a stethoscope.
    - b. Employees may, in the course of their duties, be subjected to fumes, odors, dusts, poor ventilation, blood, body fluids, extreme temperatures, inadequate lighting, workspace restrictions, intense noises and travel.
    - c. Employees may be exposed to extreme temperatures, long hours, weekend, and holiday duties.
    - d. Firefighting and EMS activity requires exerting in excess of 150 pounds force occasionally, and/or in excess of 50 pounds of force frequently, and/or in excess of 20 pounds of force constantly to move objects.
      1. This may be demonstrated by:
        - a. Lifting and operating a loaded cot, with the assistance of one other person.
        - b. Performing CPR continuously for 5 minutes.
        - c. Carrying a 14 foot roof ladder without assistance.

# HIAWATHA FIRE-RESCUE

Policy 120  
Rules and Regulations  
Absence from work  
7/2/06

- e. Firefighters may have to complete these task while wearing fire protective turnout and self-contained breathing apparatus.
6. A return to work slip indicates that the employee is capable of complying with all the above requirements. This also includes EMS personnel, with the exception of wearing self contained breathing apparatus.

## **C. Light Duty**

1. Because of the rigors of both EMS and Firefighting, and the risk of sudden change in work conditions, employees on light duty are limited only to duties in the station, that comply with their doctor's limitations. Before going on ANY calls, they must obtain a full release from a physician.

## **D. Special Circumstances:**

1. Under certain circumstances, it may be to the benefit of the department and be in the best interest of the individual to allow participation outside of the above provisions. For example, an employees regular employer may not have light duty provisions, however, the department does. In that case the employee may take the following action.
  - a. Obtain written medical permission from the attending physician as to the extent of their capabilities.
  - b. Obtain written permission from the employer that they will allow the employee to participate in light duty activities.
  - c. Present that information to the Chief, who will review it for not more than 7 days from receipt.
  - d. The Chief will consult with the Command Staff and City Administrator as to whether to allow an exemption, and the extent participation will be allowed.
  - e. A memo of understanding will be signed by the employee outlining the provisions of the waiver