



# Coffee Break Training - Responder Health and Safety

## Emergency Incident Personnel Rehabilitation

No. HS-2012-4 March 28, 2012

**Learning Objective:** The student shall identify standards and techniques for rehabilitation of personnel at emergency incident operations.

**E**mergency incidents are unpredictable and require personnel to carry out tasks in adverse conditions. When you combine the inherent stresses of handling the emergency incident with the sudden increased workload, heavier load of carried equipment, and environmental dangers of extreme heat or cold, the safety and health of each individual person can be impacted adversely.

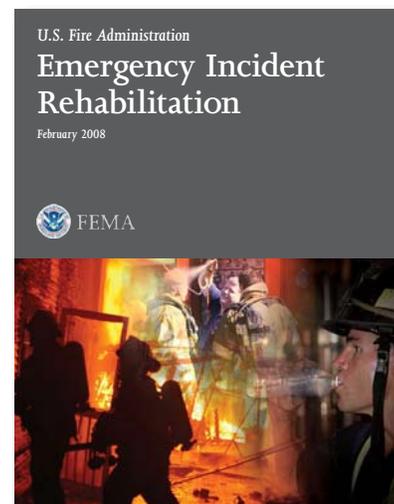
Emergency incident rehabilitation is designed to ensure that the physical and mental well-being of firefighters and other emergency responders operating at the scene of an emergency does not deteriorate to the point where it affects their health and safety. It can prevent serious and life-threatening conditions such as heat stroke and heart attacks from occurring. Rehabilitation is not just for incidents, it is also a must for operational training. While the implementation and operation of rehabilitation should be in accordance with local department standard operating procedures (SOPs), it should be instituted whenever emergency operations or training exercises pose a safety or health risk to personnel.

Emergency incident rehabilitation includes rest, rehydration, nourishment, and medical evaluation for responders between assignments. The goal of emergency incident personnel rehabilitation is to get personnel either back into the response assignments or to definitive medical care for identified health issues.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1584, *Standard on the Rehabilitation Process for Members During Emergency Operations and Training Exercises* establishes the minimum criteria for developing and implementing a rehabilitation process for fire department members at incident scene operations and training exercises. Examples include

- Personnel undergo rehabilitation following the use of two 30-minute, one 45-minute, or one 60-minute self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) cylinder **or** 40 minutes of intense work without SCBA.
- Rest period should be a minimum of 20 minutes.
- Active and/or passive cooling or warming should be provided as needed.
- Personnel should not return to operations if he or she does not feel adequately rested or if emergency medical services (EMS) or supervisory personnel see evidence of medical, psychological, or emotional distress.
- The minimum level of available medical care should be basic life support (BLS).
- Accountability and documentation should be tracked.

Information on the development of an emergency incident rehabilitation program in your department may be found from USFA's *Emergency Incident Rehabilitation* manual (found at the USFA Publications website: [www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa\\_314.pdf](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa_314.pdf)), developed in partnership with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). Additional information on this may be found on this page of the IAFF website: [www.iaff.org/hs/EIRP/index.html](http://www.iaff.org/hs/EIRP/index.html)



U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) *Emergency Incident Rehabilitation* manual

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