FIRE DEPARTMENT WASHINGTON TWP
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GLOUCESTER COUNTY N.J.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON
GLOUCESTER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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EMERGENCY
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FIRE DEPARTMENT POLICY # 29-03

FIRE DEPARTMENT PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

It is the policy of the Washington Township Board of Fire Commissioners to provide a physical examination of all personnel within the fire district assigned to perform fire fighting duties upon entry into the organization and at least annually there after. The physical examination program of the fire district is intended to comply with several regulatory standards including; 29 CFR 1910.134, 29 CFR 1910.20, 29 CFR 1910.95, 29 CFR 1910.1030, and N.J.A.C. 12:100-10.10. Selected portions of NFPA Standard 1582 shall be used as a guideline in the implementation of this policy. This policy supercedes Fire Department Policy #29-98 and portions of Fire Department Policy #25-96 regarding physical examinations and SCBA fit testing. This policy applies to all volunteer and paid personnel assigned to fire fighting duties within the Washington Township Fire District.

The Board of Fire Commissioners shall designate annually, by resolution, an agency to perform fire fighter physical examinations in accordance with federal, state, and district standards. The agency shall maintain custody of all medical records for the district and shall forward a certification to the office of the District Fire Chief indicating whether a fire fighter is qualified for fire fighting duty, qualified for SCBA wear, and if required, indicate if qualified in accordance with federal Department of Transportation rules for drivers with a Commercial Driver's License. The agency, physician's office, or clinic shall be qualified to perform occupational health physical examinations for the fire service and shall use NFPA 1582 as a guideline in determining whether a fire fighter or a candidate for a fire fighting position can be medically certified.

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- Category A Medical Condition – A medical condition that would preclude a person from performing as a member in a training or emergency operational environment by presenting a significant risk to the safety and health of the person or others.
- Category B Medical Condition – A medical condition that, based on its severity or degree, could preclude a person from performing as a member in a training or emergency operational environment by presenting a significant risk to the safety and health of the person or others.
- Fire Department Physician – A licensed doctor of medicine or osteopathy who has been designated by the fire district to provide professional expertise in the areas of occupational safety and health as they relate to emergency services.

- Medical Evaluation – The analysis of information for the purpose of making a determination of medical certification. Medical evaluation may include a medical examination and diagnostic screening.
- Medical Examination – An examination performed or directed by the fire district designated physician.
- Medically Certified – A determination by the designated fire district physician that a candidate or current fire fighter meets the medical requirements of this policy.
- Training Exercise – Includes any drill or training class other than seated in a classroom and observing. Personnel not currently certified may be permitted to attend seated classroom training.

Pre-placement Candidate Physical Examination:

Any person who completes an application to join the fire department in Washington Township as a member of a volunteer fire company or to work as an employee of the district shall complete a physical examination and be certified by the designated fire district physician to perform fire fighting duties prior to the issuance fire fighter turn out gear and before being permitted to ride fire apparatus, participate in any fire department training exercises, or participate in any emergency activity of the fire district.

A candidate shall not be certified for fire fighting duties if it is determined they have a Category A medical condition as described in NFPA 1582 and this policy. A candidate may not be certified for fire fighting duties if it is determined they have a Category B medical condition of sufficient severity to prevent them performing the essential functions of the position without posing a significant risk to the safety and health of the candidate or others. The medical examination shall include the following components:

- Vital signs
- Dermatological system
- Ears, eyes, nose, mouth, throat
- Cardiovascular system
- Respiratory system
- Gastrointestinal system
- Genitourinary system
- Endocrine and metabolic systems
- Musculoskeletal system
- Neurological system
- Audiometry
- Visual acuity and peripheral vision testing
- Pulmonary function testing
- Laboratory testing, including a CBC and urinalysis
- Electrocardiography
- Drug and alcohol testing
- Quantitative fit testing
- PSA test (available and optional over 40 years of age)

Annual Physical Examination:

The fire district requires that each person assigned to fire fighting duties complete an annual physical examination and be certified for fire fighting duty and be medically cleared for respiratory (SCBA) use. Each person shall be responsible to schedule their physical examination during their birth month. A sixty (60) day grace period will allow for schedule conflicts. Any person assigned to fire fighting duties, who, has not been medically certified within the previous fourteen (14) months, shall be prohibited from participating in any training or emergency operational environment until medical certification is completed.

Required components of the annual physical examination include all items listed for pre-placement except the drug and alcohol test, the EKG for under age 35, and the PSA for under age 40. Personnel not completing all required components of the medical examination shall be ineligible for medical certification to perform training or participate in any other emergency operational environment.

Stress Testing:

The fire district physician shall determine, utilizing recommendations of the standards for fire fighter physicals, the need for a fire fighter to have a stress test administered. The fire district shall be responsible for the initial cost associated with a stress test recommended by the fire district physician utilized to determine the medical qualification status of the fire fighter. Further medical evaluation, testing, and health care shall be the responsibility of the individual fire fighter. The fire district shall remain responsible for determination of medical qualification only. The type of stress testing recommended shall be an "echo" type stress test or equivalent type test. Refusal to submit to a stress test recommended by the fire district physician shall be cause for the fire fighter to remain in an unqualified medical status.

Return to Duty Medical Evaluation:

Any fire fighter who has been unable to perform fire fighting duties due to a Category A or Category B medical condition or any other medical condition, shall be referred for a Medical Evaluation by the fire district physician and receive an updated medical certification before returning to fire fighting duties. The fire district physician shall not certify any person with a Category A medical condition, and may not certify any person with a Category B medical condition if it is determined to be severe enough to affect the person's ability to perform the essentials of the position. A complete medical examination or a partial medical examination or a medical evaluation may be ordered by the fire district based upon the recommendations of the fire district physician.

Refusal to Comply:

This policy applies to all personnel, volunteer and career, assigned to fire fighting duties. Refusal of any fire fighter to comply with the requirements of this policy may subject the fire fighter to disciplinary action.

Confidentiality:

All medical information collected as part of a medical examination or medical evaluation shall be considered confidential medical information and shall be released only with the specific written consent of the person examined. The District Fire Chief shall ensure a file is maintained with medical certifications for all personnel assigned to fire fighting duties.

This policy was adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners on March 6, 2003.

BY: Edwin L. Etschman, Chairman

Attest: Donald C. Brown, Jr.
Donald C. Brown, Secretary