

FIRE DEPARTMENT POLICY #48-13
regarding
Light Duty

It shall be the policy of the Washington Township Board of Fire Commissioners to maintain a “Light Duty” policy for volunteer firefighters, career firefighters, and all administrative staff employees. In terms of this policy, Light Duty is regarded as any physical status other than Fit For Full Duty to perform all firefighting duties for all volunteer and career firefighters. Light Duty is regarded as any physical status other than Fit For Full Duty to perform all duties required within an employee’s job description for administrative staff employees.

Firefighters

All personnel assigned as firefighters from the volunteer component or the career component must complete a physical exam provided by the fire department’s medical provider in accordance with Fire Department Policy #29-03, and must maintain Fit For Full Duty status or shall be placed on light duty. The following conditions are examples of issues that would constitute being placed on light duty:

- A firefighter who has an expired medical exam and is not in compliance with Fire Department Policy #29-03.
- A firefighter who has been injured while on duty as a Washington Township firefighter and who required treatment at a medical care facility such as a hospital, an urgent care facility, or a physician’s office.
- A firefighter who has been injured off duty from the fire department or who has become seriously ill enough to require treatment at a hospital emergency department, or an urgent care facility, or who has been admitted overnight to a hospital facility.
- A firefighter who has become aware of a debilitating illness that could affect the safety of him/herself or the safety of other firefighters. NOTE: All firefighting personnel have an incumbent duty to notify their immediate supervisor and remove themselves from full duty status if they become aware of an injury or illness that could affect the safety of others. Disclosure of the specifics of their illness is a personal issue and need not be disclosed, but the firefighter must report that they are not fit for duty.
- A firefighter that has been prescribed medication that could affect their ability to safely perform their duties as a firefighter. This maybe a temporary arrangement not requiring disclosure to the fire department as long as the firefighter is not performing firefighter duties or responding to incidents. The medication need not

be disclosed, but the firefighter must disclose that he may be not be fit for duty due to taking medications.

While assigned to light duty firefighters may NOT ride fire apparatus or respond to emergency incidents. Light duty for firefighters may include the following if within medical clearance by an attending physician:

- Seated, desk duty at a fire station.
- Attendance at meetings.
- Riding in department vehicles such as chief's cars, inspector cars, or training van.
- Operating department vehicles such as chief's cars, inspector cars, or training vans so long medical clearance includes the operation of vehicles.
- Performing short duration inspections that does not include climbing or lifting so long as medical clearance includes sedentary work.
- Fire station office work including the answering of phones, filing paperwork, completing reports, research, computer work and other non physical work as assigned and as permitted by medical clearance. This includes work within the Emergency Operations Center if so activated and within the scope of medical clearance.
- Performing fire prevention work that does not involve lifting or moving, and is basically classroom educational in nature.
- Attending drills as an observer only.

Any firefighter assigned on light duty is prohibited from:

- Responding from home to emergency calls.
- Responding to emergency calls from a fire station.
- Operating any major fire apparatus including engines, ladders, rescues, utilities, or brush units.
- Participating physically in department drills or training classes.
- Climbing any department ladders including climbing onto fire apparatus.
- Attending external training programs whether or not they include classroom or physical activity.

In addition, career firefighters assigned to light duty shall:

- Report for duty at fire headquarters on the next duty day after being placed on light duty during the hours of 0800 to 1700.
- Not normally be eligible for extra hour duty assignments except under exceptional circumstances and as approved by the Chief of the Department.
- Be required to meet their obligation for hours of work within a work period including the three (3) hour interface time.

Any firefighter assigned to light duty for a consecutive period of up to one (1) year shall be evaluated by the fire department medical provider for determination of continued status as an active firefighter. Should a determination be made by the fire department medical provider that the firefighter will no longer be able to carry out the duties of a firefighter, the Board of Fire Commissioners shall place the firefighter on the permanent

disabled list. The permanent disabled list includes conditions caused as a result of a line of duty illness or injury or an illness or injury not as a result of firefighting duties. The list includes the following categories:

- An active life volunteer member would become either an inactive life member or a retired member.
- An active volunteer member would become a social member, or if eligible, a retired member.
- A career member would become a retired member in accordance with provisions of their respective CBA and the NJ State Pension Board rules, regulations, and decisions.

Clearance for Full Duty

In order for a firefighter to become cleared for Full Duty, the fire department medical provider must issue a clearance letter. Firefighters under the care of a personal medical provider for illnesses or injuries not a result of firefighting duty, will continue on light duty status until consultation with the fire department's medical provider has occurred and they issue the clearance letter.

Firefighters on light duty as a result of firefighting duties within this department will need to be cleared by the assigned Workers Compensation physician handling their specific case. A medical specialist providing care under the fire department Workers Compensation provider may provide the final clearance of Fit For Full Duty.

Administrative and staff employees who have been assigned light duty shall be cleared for Full Duty by the fire department medical provider after consultation with the District Fire Chief regarding their specific job specifications.

Any questionable duty status shall be directed to the District Fire Chief through the proper chain of command, who, through consultation with the fire department medical provider shall make a determination of final duty status.

This policy is approved and adopted by the Board of Fire Commissioners on November 7, 2013, supersedes any previous orders regarding light duty, and shall take affect immediately.

By:

Attest:

Sam Micklus, Chairman

Frank Stella, Secretary