

P-006 Firefighter & Family Assistance Program (FFAP)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Firefighter and Family Assistance Program is to help members and their families who develop social or health problems which may have an adverse effect on their wellbeing or their work performance and to assist them to return to a productive and meaningful life.

OBJECTIVE:

The program will provide assistance to members in obtaining counselling and/or referral to treatment for such health and social problems.

SCOPE:

The Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency has concern for the personal wellbeing of all its members.

POLICY:

It is recognized that these programs will only be effective if problems are treated in full confidence and that the confidential nature of the health records will be preserved. All records relating to assessment, diagnosis and treatment will remain **confidential**.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Managers/Fire Chiefs shall:

1. Be alert to any change in work patterns.
2. Discuss any performance problem with the employee in private without attempting to diagnose the cause.
3. Encourage the career member to obtain assistance for any problem contributing to unsatisfactory work performance.
4. Initiate a referral for career member to Firefighter and Family Assistance Program services when necessary.
5. Provide a supportive atmosphere for the member who participates in a recommended treatment program.
6. Ensure that new members are given a package of information on the program.
7. Ensure that current members remain aware that the program exists.
8. Ensure that any member experiencing problems, whether or not their performance is affected, knows how to access this program.
9. Maintain confidentiality

The member shall:

1. Preferably seek help on his/her own. However, this is often not the case. Experience indicates that problems seldom improve and situations may, indeed, worsen without intervention. Often the individual denies the existence of any problem, unless it is understood that discipline and possible loss of employment may result if the problem is not corrected. It is at this point that supervisory intervention can result in referral to the program, so that the employee may receive the assistance needed to enable a return to health and productivity.
2. Bring work performance up to an acceptable level and maintain an acceptable standard, once an agreement has been made to participate in a treatment program.

The Union shall:

1. Encourage members who are showing indications of a problem to seek early assistance before performance is affected.
2. Inform members of the availability of confidential treatment and counselling.
3. Encourage acceptance of treatment program.
4. Advise members of their options should they refuse assistance offered through the program and of the consequences of failing to improve job performance.

Rehabilitation:

1. Following assessment and referral to the appropriate community agency, the Supervisor will be notified of any absence from work required for appointments related to treatment and/or follow-up. **Reports from the treating agency regarding employee's progress will remain confidential.**
2. The Supervisor will be notified when a treatment program has been completed. The rehabilitation period is normally for a period of one year, but may be shortened or extended as indicated.
3. The rehabilitation program will vary with each individual but its main purpose is to assist the employee to return to a productive and meaningful life.

POLICY REVIEW:

This policy will be reviewed when/if there are changes to the current Fire Fighter and Family Assistance Program.

APPENDIX:

Coordinator:

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