

**Standard Operating Procedures Manual**  
**City of Poquoson Fire and Rescue**



**City of Poquoson  
Fire and Rescue**

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**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

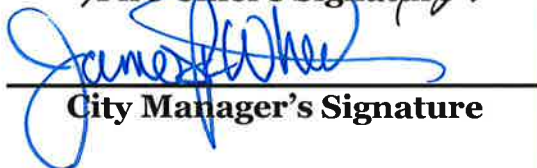
**SOP#:** GA 23.00

**Title:** Work Status Options for  
Pregnant Members

**Effective Date:** 04/27/2012

**Revised Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fire Chief's Signature

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager's Signature

**WORK STATUS OPTIONS FOR  
PREGNANT MEMBERS**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines with respect to work status options for pregnant members.

This SOP is not all-inclusive and cannot encompass all situations that may be encountered.

**II. APPLICABILITY**

All career staff

**III. POLICY**

It shall be the policy of Poquoson Fire and Rescue to adhere to all federal and state policies and laws with respect to work status options during pregnancy.

For the purposes of this policy, it is important to note that the pregnant members have the right to work as long as they are capable of performing their jobs. This puts the responsibility for determining when to request light duty almost entirely on the pregnant firefighter. The department does, however, strongly support recommendations that pregnant

firefighters should not participate in fire suppression, hazardous material and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) operations from the time pregnancy is confirmed. Additionally, due to the significant medical and physiological changes which typically occur during the late second trimester and third trimester of pregnancy, a pregnant firefighter would generally not be considered fit for full duty during the latter half of the pregnancy. This assessment may be made on an individualized basis through coordination with the member's physician (PCP or OB/GYN) and/or the department occupational physician. The primary determination of duty assignments of pregnant members will be safety.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES**

1. Consideration for determining light duty during pregnancy include, but are not necessarily limited to, certification by the member's physician (PCP or OB/GYN) that the member is unable to perform all essential functions of the full duty assignment.
2. Pregnant member should notify the Fire Chief of the confirmed pregnancy and receive an informational packet.
3. Once a decision has been made to abstain from regular duties, the member will submit a certification from the treating physician stating the projected length of disability, work restrictions, and physical

- limitations.
4. The pregnant member shall submit a letter requesting Light Duty Non-Job-Related.
  5. Upon approval by the Fire Chief, or his designee, the pregnant member shall report to Fire Administration for assignment. A determination for light duty assignment is based on the type(s) of job(s) available and the benefit to the department and the citizens of Poquoson.
  6. Work attire will be determined by the department. If uniforms are required, they will be provided by the department.
  7. If pregnant member plans to take FMLA please refer to SOP GA 22.00 for more information.
  8. The member may return to full and unrestricted duty when she has been given medical clearance from her personal physician or obstetrician/gynecologist.

## **V. MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The following information is excerpted from "Reproductive Hazards of Firefighting I and II," Melissa McDiarmid, M.D., et al., American Journal of Industrial Medicine, 1991.

"The job of firefighting presents many potential hazards to healthy reproduction. It poses physical hazards such as drastic temperature variations, extreme and unpredictable physical exertion demands and psychological stress. Firefighters may

also be exposed to biological or radiation hazards. The fire environment may also produce a wide range of chemical agents, including irritant and asphyxiant gases and other toxins.

Human reproductive health as it is affected by the work environment is a relatively new area of study. The clearest connection between an environmental agent and adverse reproductive outcomes for both men and women is in the case of ionizing radiation, which is not a common hazard for most firefighters. Prolonged exposure to high ambient temperatures, however, may also have a detrimental effect on fertility and pregnancy. High heat exposure has been related to infertility in men and may be linked to neural defects in the babies of exposed mothers.

Chemical agents in the fire environment are numerous and unpredictable. The toxic effects of fire smoke have been tentatively linked to a number of physical problems, including respiratory disease, coronary artery disease and malignancies. Many chemical agents encountered in the fire service may also adversely affect reproduction. Carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, hydrogen cyanide, acrolein and other aldehydes, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen chloride, nitrogen dioxide and benzene are all commonly produced in fire environments. Research shows that all of these compounds may have detrimental effects on reproduction. Pregnant women and their fetuses are especially affected by

carbon monoxide exposures.

Although much more study is needed, existing research suggests that both men and women are vulnerable to reproductive toxicity in the firefighting environment. In addition, the potential hazards to developing fetuses pose special concerns for pregnant firefighters.”