

Safety Week 2010 Wellness-Fitness Overview



What is Wellness-Fitness?

- Occupational safety and health
- Diet and exercise
- Mental health
- Awareness - exams and screenings
- Individual responsibility

What is Wellness-Fitness?

- Not “One-Size-Fits-All”
 - Individual
 - Department
 - Environmental Threats/Risks
 - Job-related
 - Geographic (e.g. weather)
- National trends indicate key common areas for consideration

Why Wellness and Fitness?

Goal: Increase the chance for a longer and healthier life.

- Reduce the risk of chronic diseases
- Ability to fulfill mission
- Reduce line-of-duty deaths and injuries
- Save money
- Contribute to research and innovation
- Happier personnel

Why Wellness-Fitness?

- Stress/Overexertion: 57.7%
- Heart Attack 47.7%
- Firefighter Fatalities Under Age 40: 28.9%
- Not Incident Related: 38.8%

Nutrition

- Reduce risk of leading killers of firefighters
- Education is critical
- Balanced diet
- Life choices; not quick fixes
- Access to healthy food
 - Firehouse
 - Home
 - Restaurants

Fitness

- “Fit to Fight”
 - CPAT and beyond
- Rehabilitation
- Daily exercise
 - Cardio
 - Calisthenics
 - One size may not fit all
 - Access to equipment in/near firehouse

Stress Management

- Causes
 - Daily routine: physical, mental strain
 - Major events / incidents; PTSD
 - Family-related stresses
 - Financial (work and home)
- Stress Reducers
 - Policies that support post-incident health (debriefings, stress management, etc.)
 - Exercise
 - Counseling
 - Family/Friends
 - “Down time”

Smoke and Smokeless Tobacco Cessation

- Smoking
 - #1 cause of premature death
 - Significant contributor to heart disease, lung disease and cancers
 - Economic impact: personal / departmental
- Smokeless tobacco
 - Not a safe substitute for smoking cigarettes
 - Nicotine addiction and dependence
 - Known cause of cancers, tooth/gum disease and reproductive disorders
- Education
 - Impact: health, financial, policy
 - Some immediate benefits to quitting
 - Why is it hard to quit?
 - Habit /cravings / brain chemistry
 - Nicotine addition (and withdrawal symptoms)
- How can we help?
 - Support groups
 - Encourage health plans to include cessation benefits
 - Assistance from health professional
 - Partnerships: mental, physical and dental health professionals; unions; researchers, veteran’s groups, etc.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

- Zero tolerance policies
 - Not on duty or during potential response times
 - Voluntary removal from duty if unexpectedly called
 - Not in the workplace at any time
 - Regular or random testing policy
- Assistance to fight addictions
 - Access to support groups and health professionals

Infectious Disease

- Stay educated on emerging diseases
- Follow departmental protocols and policies
 - PPE
 - Responder and patient care
 - Dispatch and response
 - Watch for changes in national guidance
- Vaccinations
 - Keep up to date
 - Policies re: priority on new vaccines

Suicide Prevention

- Education
 - **Talk about it:** Bust myths and taboos
 - Know the warnings signs and what to do when you see them
- Remove the stigma of asking for help
- Know where to get help
 - Employee Assistance Programs
 - Public or private mental health professionals
 - Support groups

Medical Exams and Screening

- Stay current
 - Annual medical exams
 - Routine or “milestone” screenings for cancer and other diseases
 - Know your medical history / keep good records
- Report known, unusual exposures to your doctor
- Report symptoms or unusual circumstances
 - Change the “it will go away” culture