

Health and Safety Officer (HSO)

1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the minimum qualifications for, and specify the duties and responsibilities of, the Health and Safety Officer (HSO).

2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Department that the HSO will be appointed by the Chief or the authorized designee, and should be responsible for the duties described in this policy and other duties as assigned. When the HSO is unavailable, the Chief or the authorized designee should identify a replacement.

3 QUALIFICATIONS

The department's HSO should be a member with qualifications and training that include:

- (a) Knowledge of federal, state, and local laws regarding occupational health and safety applicable to the fire service.
- (b) Knowledge of the health and physical fitness factors unique to the fire service.
- (c) Knowledge of health and safety hazards involved in firefighting and related activities.
- (d) Experience in fire suppression, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and instruction.
- (e) Familiarity with the operation of the department's apparatus and equipment, including emergency communications equipment.
- (f) Management skills appropriate to the operation of a Health and Safety program.
- (g) The physical capability to conduct operations at an incident scene.
- (h) The following certifications and courses:
 - 1. Fire Instructor I (NFPA Instructor I)
 - 2. NFPA Instructor II
 - 3. NFPA Fire Officer I
 - 4. Training program management
 - 5. Incident Safety Officer
 - 6. Health and Safety Officer

4 ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The HSO's administrative responsibilities should include but are not limited to:

- Developing and maintaining the Illness and Injury Prevention Program (IIPP) and general department safety standards, and serving as the chair of the Health and Safety Committee.
- Ensuring that health and safety regulations are followed and that any violations or deficiencies are immediately corrected and reported to the Chief or the authorized designee.
- Ensuring that information provided to the Chief or the authorized designee involving safety issues is also provided to the Health and Safety Committee for review.
- Conducting regular safety inspections.
- Serving as a resource for department officers regarding health and safety matters.
- Identifying, documenting, and notifying members of workplace safety hazards.
- Researching, identifying, and recommending appropriate safety equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Coordinating with the Training Officer for the development and implementation of health and safety training topics.
- Providing safety supervision at training activities when requested.
- Developing and distributing safety information to members.
- Ensuring that accidents, exposures, and injuries are thoroughly investigated.
- Developing and maintaining accident, injury, and exposure statistics, reporting on trends, and making recommendations to prevent a reoccurrence.
- Ensuring accidents are investigated and procedures are in place so that investigations will be handled appropriately.

5 RESPONSE DUTIES

Whenever available, the HSO will respond to the following incidents and assume the position of Incident Safety Officer to monitor scene safety and enforce appropriate health and safety practices:

- Working structure fires
- Greater alarm assignments
- Hazardous materials (HAZMAT) incidents
- Rescue response incidents, including trench, confined space, high angle, structural collapse, and water rescues

- Serious injury or death of an on-duty member
- Injuries to third parties that may result in hospitalization
- Upon the request of an Incident Commander due to special or unusual circumstances

6 HEALTH AND SAFETY INCIDENT REVIEW

The HSO should review health and safety incident reports and ensure copies are forwarded to the Health and Safety Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

The following information is provided to assist you in implementing this policy and should be deleted before the policy is issued to agency personnel.

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This policy is being provided to contribute to the ongoing discussions and actions regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019).

This policy is intended as a starting point for departments preparing policies for dealing with communicable diseases such as COVID-19 and exposure to the coronavirus. This is a national-level policy and does not include applicable state or local requirements.

Lexipol is not your agency's policy maker. Your agency is responsible for reviewing, customizing, and adopting any version of this policy for your agency. Neither the policy nor any information provided should be considered to contain legal advice or opinions. You should contact your legal counsel to obtain legal advice.

The policy establishes minimum qualifications and specifies the duties and responsibilities of the Health and Safety Officer (HSO). This policy does not restate the duties of this position, which are contained in the Illness and Injury Prevention Program Policy.

CUSTOMIZATION

You should customize this policy to meet your department's practice, paying particular attention to the following sections:

QUALIFICATIONS: Add to or delete from the list of qualifications to conform to existing department practices.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES and RESPONSE DUTIES: Review the lists of responsibilities of the HSO to ensure they conform to existing department practices.