A. **Scope:**

This operational guideline shall apply to all emergency operations and training exercises where strenuous physical activity or exposures to heat or cold exist in an effort to prevent the deterioration of firefighters physical and mental conditions.

B. **Guidelines:**

1. **Responsibilities:**
   a. The Incident Commander or Incident Safety Officer shall make adequate provisions for the rest and rehabilitation of all members operating at the scene to include:
      i. Medical evaluation, treatment and monitoring,
      ii. Food and fluid replenishment;
      iii. Mental rest; and relief from extreme climatic conditions
   b. All officers shall maintain an awareness of the condition of each member operating within their span of control and ensure that adequate steps are taken to provide for each member’s safety and health.
   c. All members shall advise their supervisor when they believe that their level of fatigue or exposure to heat or cold is approaching a level that could affect themselves, their crew, or the operation in which they are involved.
   d. Members shall remain aware of the health and safety of other members of their crew and shall report any potential situations to the officer in charge.

2. **Response:**
   a. A Rehab Unit shall be dispatched to all large-scale incidents for hydrating, feeding, and the overall health and welfare of emergency personnel at the incident to include:
      i. Fires and hazardous materials incidents
      ii. Hostage standoff or missing persons searches
      iii. Large scale training incidents.
   b. All 3rd alarm or greater fires may require the services of (2) Rehab Units

3. **Rehab Units shall be located:**
   a. Far enough away from the scene that members may safely remove their turnout gear and SCBA and be afforded mental rest from the stress and pressure of the emergency operation or training evolution.
b. Protected from the prevailing environmental conditions.
   i. During hot weather, it should be in a cool shaded area.
   ii. During cold weather, it should be in a warm, dry area

c. Free of exhaust fumes from apparatus, vehicles, or equipment (including those involved in the Rehab Sector/Group operations).

d. Rehab Units should be easily accessible by the EMS units.

e. Rehab Units should be positioned as close as possible to EMS units so that they may work together to provide adequate care.

4. The Rehab officer shall assess the scene and determine if there are adequate resources available to handle all affected personnel and will call for additional resources via their procedure as needed.

5. Rehab Units should allow prompt reentry back into the emergency operation upon complete recuperation and clearance by the Rehab/Safety Officer.

6. Firefighters may utilize a maximum of one 45 minute or two 30 minute air bottle(s) prior to mandatory rehabilitation.

7. Members shall rehydrate (at least 16-20 ounces) while SCBA cylinders are being changed.

8. Rest shall not be less than ten minutes and may exceed an hour as determined by the Rehab Officer.

9. Fresh crews, or crews released from the Rehab Sector/Group, shall return to the Staging Area.

10. Requirements for a Rehab unit:

    a. Be able to provide adequate food and liquids for the emergency personnel on the scene.

    b. Be able to provide hot food within 45-60 minutes of arrival on scene.

    c. Be able to provide cold liquids such as water and an electrolyte replacement drink upon arrival.

    d. Be able to provide adequate passive cooling with a supply of fresh water and an adequate number of hand towels.
e. Be able to provide cooling mister fans and an adequate supply of folding chairs to establish a rest and recovery area in conjunction with EMS.

f. Be able to provide adequate active cooling for personnel deemed at risk by EMS* evaluation using methods and devices that are generally accepted for active cooling.

g. Be able to provide shelter from the heat or cold.

h. Be able to provide rest room facilities for emergency personnel.

i. Rehab units must be prepared to operate for extended periods of time.

C. Safety

1. EMS units shall monitor 1st responders for signs of heat or cold stress and obtain medical vital signs when necessary per EMS protocol(s).

2. During periods of hot weather, members shall be encouraged to drink water and activity beverages throughout the workday.