
S.O.P. #: PERSONNEL-03

SUBJECT: JOB-CONNECTED ILLNESS/INJURY

Objective: Obtaining prompt medical attention for an on-duty member is the primary objective when a job-connected illness, injury, or exposure occurs. Reporting procedures must be followed to protect the member, as well as Baltimore County, who is required to follow state and federal laws and regulations relative to job-connected illnesses, injuries, and exposures. All members have the right to be evaluated/treated for job-connected injuries, illnesses, and/or exposures.

Section 1: Baltimore County's Designated Licensed Health Care Provider

- A. Mercy - Business Health Services (BHS) is the designated occupational Licensed Health Care Provider (LHCP) for Baltimore County, providing occupational medical/testing services consistent with NFPA 1500, Baltimore County employment policies, and Fire Department policies and procedures.

Location: 1766 York Road, Lutherville, Maryland 21093

Phone: (443) 275-5090

Fax: (410) 385-9390

Section 2: Notifications/Reporting of a Job-Connected Injury/Illness/Exposure

A. Members

1. Members incurring an illness, injury, and/or exposure while on-duty will immediately notify, or cause to be notified, their immediate supervisor.
2. If the member is unable to immediately notify the company commander/immediate supervisor, the notification must be made as soon as practicable. Delayed notifications may require justification as part of the injury/illness/exposure documentation, and may impact authorization for lost time and treatment.

B. Company Commanders/Immediate Supervisors

1. The Company Commander/immediate supervisor shall ensure prompt and appropriate evaluation/treatment of the member.
2. Members who are placed off-duty from a job connected illness/injury/exposure shall be relieved by the Company Commander, regardless of staffing levels.
 - a. Company Commanders will promptly notify the on-duty Chief Officer if a staffing shortage occurs.
 - b. Company Commanders are expected to make every effort to keep medic units in service should there be a personnel shortage.
3. If the member reports a potential exposure the Company Commander/immediate supervisor shall refer to, and follow, the Exposure Control Plan (Personnel-17) in conjunction with this SOP.
4. If the member reports an injury related to an on-duty MVC with a county vehicle, the Company Commander/Immediate Supervisor shall refer to and follow 400-2 in conjunction with this SOP.
5. In all of the following cases the Company Commander/immediate supervisor shall ensure contact is promptly made to the ADO so proper notifications can be made, regardless of the extent of injury/illness/exposure:

- a. A member is transported to any medical facility for evaluation/treatment an on-duty illness/injury/exposure. This includes BHS.
 - b. A member receives burn injuries.
 - c. A member is evaluated on-scene for smoke inhalation.
 - d. A member is exposed to a hazardous material.
 - e. An on-scene MAYDAY is declared.
6. If the injury occurs outside of their primary work location, Company Commanders are expected to notify the detailed member's assigned officers as soon as practicable, with consideration of off-duty/after-hours notifications.

Section 3: Obtaining Initial Medical Evaluation/Treatment

- A. Members who incur a job-connected injury/illness shall be sent to Mercy-BHS for evaluation and work status. Per the Maryland EMS Protocols, if the illness or injury is life threatening or requires immediate attention from a specialty center, the member should be transported to the most appropriate medical facility.
- B. Members treated at a facility other than Mercy-BHS should communicate to the intake personnel that the evaluation/treatment is due to a job-connected incident.
 - a. The medical facility may still require the member to provide their individual insurance information. The employer is **BALTIMORE COUNTY GOVERNMENT**. The reason for this is to ensure the facility has the correct billing information. See Personnel-06 for follow up billing information.
 - i. The contact information for Baltimore County's Workers' Compensation Claims Division is:
400 Washington Avenue, Room 219
Towson, Maryland, 21204
Phone: (410) 887-6565
Fax: (410) 832-1516
Claims email: bcwclaimsfax@baltimorecountymd.gov
- C. All officers have the authority to send an employee to Mercy-BHS, or an appropriate medical facility, for evaluation/treatment for a job-connected injury. The on-duty Safety Officer and EMS-1 are available to assist with questions about sending a member for evaluation/treatment.
- D. If both the member and the Company Commander/immediate supervisor agree that medical treatment is not needed, the member may not be required to be evaluated by Mercy BHS; however, the Workers' Compensation Division is not able to approve any WC Claims, including requests for accident leave conversion or authorization for medical treatment, unless the member is evaluated by the County's LHCP.
- E. Company Commanders shall ensure the member has transportation from the treating facility following discharge.
- F. Reporting to Mercy BHS Following Evaluation/Treatment of Initial Injury
 - a. In cases where members receive initial medical evaluation/treatment from a facility other than Mercy BHS for a job-connected illness/injury or non-BBP exposure, the member shall report to Mercy BHS.
 - i. If physically possible, this shall be on the same business day when Mercy BHS is open.
 - ii. If Mercy BHS is closed at the time of discharge from the evaluating/treating facility, the member is to report the next business day that the Mercy BHS is open.

1. The member is expected to report by 0800. The OIC of Safety can approve a later reporting time with just cause. The member's company commander or chief officer shall communicate with Safety Division, or their designee, to coordinate a later reporting time.
- iii. Members are expected to bring all discharge paperwork or instructions/recommendations provided to them by the initial treating provider.
- b. Members who are evaluated/treated at GBMC for a potential **BBP exposure**, shall not report to Mercy BHS until provided direction by the Safety Division or EMS-21. See the Exposure Control Plan/Personnel-17 for further guidance.
- c. Members will be expected to provide their state issued Driver's License and complete all required paperwork required by Mercy BHS.

Section 4: Documentation of a Member's Initial Job-related Illness/Injury/Exposure.

- A. Although the member AND the Company Commander are responsible to ensure all required documentation and record keeping is accurate and complete, the Company Commander is ultimately responsible to ensure the documentation is submitted per policy.
- B. Injury/Illness/Exposure Forms/Documentation
 - a. The Form 1 and Form 58 are used to document all job-related illness/injuries/exposures. Consistent with the Exposure Control Plan/Personnel-17, BBP exposures require completion of the "Exposure Packet" in addition to the Form 1 and Form 58(s).
 - i. A Form 1 and a Form 58 shall be completed and signed by the injured/ill member. The Form 1 and Form 58 will then be reviewed for accuracy and signed by the Company Commander/Immediate Supervisor.
 1. Should the member be medically incapable of completing their documentation, the Company Commander/Immediate Supervisor may complete and submit the Form 1 on the injured/ill member's behalf, and the injured/ill member may complete their portions for submission as soon as practicable.
 2. **At no time should medical evaluation/treatment be delayed to complete injury/illness/exposure forms.**
 - ii. All Fire Department member-witnesses shall complete and sign a Form 58, as soon as practicable, in accordance with established procedures.
 - iii. Each Form 58 should include all pertinent information regarding the member's injury/illness/exposure, including, but not limited to the event(s) leading up to the incident, weather, lighting, scene activities, and actions taken immediately after the injury/illness/exposure.
 - iv. The immediate supervisor shall complete a Form 58 documenting action(s) taken immediately following the injury/illness/exposure, including any pertinent information related to the circumstances of the injury/illness/exposure.
 - b. The completed Form 1 and all Form 58s shall be submitted electronically in PDF format **after** all applicable fields and signatures have been completed.
 - i. For incidents where signatures are not able to be obtained within twenty-four (24) hours, submit the documents without signatures and e-mail the signed documents as soon as practical.

- ii. Refer to SOP Personnel-17 for guidance on initial/follow-up treatment and internal documentation for BBP/infectious disease exposures.
 - c. The completed and signed Form 1, all signed Form 58's, and any other relative documents shall be e-mailed to fire-safety@baltimorecountymd.gov and bcwclaimsfax@baltimorecountymd.gov within twenty-four (24) hours of the injury, illness, and/or exposure. BCVFA forms are sent to volsafety@baltimorecountymd.gov and bcwclaimsfax@baltimorecountymd.gov.
 - i. The designated naming convention shall be used in the e-mail subject line to ensure the email is properly routed
 - ii. **Do not send any original documents via departmental mail, all documents shall be submitted electronically.**
 - iii. Incomplete forms, mailed forms, or forms sent as image files (.png, .bmp, .tiff, jpeg, etc) will not be processed and the officer submitting the information will be expected to resubmit in the correct format.
 - d. Prompt completion and submission of the Employer/Supervisor's Report of Injury (Form 1) is essential as the Workers' Compensation Claim Division (WC) is unable to approve payments for services or authorize additional follow-up evaluations/treatments prior to receiving a First Report of Injury for the incident.
- C. The on-duty Company Commander shall make the appropriate entries in TeleStaff and OLTA at the time of the incident.
 - a. Members who are sent for medical evaluation/treatment and who are cleared to return to work during the same shift shall be marked OFR (Off Roster) in TeleStaff beginning at the time of transport for evaluation/treatment and ending when the member returns to duty. No changes should be made to the payroll markings in OLTA.
 - b. Members who are sent for medical evaluation/treatment for a job-connected illness/injury/exposure and are not cleared to return to work shall be marked accordingly:
 - i. The member shall be marked OFR in Tele-Staff for the remainder of the shift. No changes shall be made to the working markings in OLTA
 - ii. For after-hour injuries when the members are not cleared to return to duty, the member shall be marked Off Roster (OFR) in TeleStaff and paid working OLTA for all other shifts until the member reports to Mercy-BHS on the next business day that Mercy-BHS is open and a work status is provided.
 - 1. The Safety Division will work with Fire Admin/Staffing to move members to/from the modified duty roster in Telestaff and OLTA. When the injury occurs after hours/weekends, The Safety Division will work with Fire Admin/Staffing to make any necessary payroll marking changes/roster adjustments for the prior shift(s) once the work status is provided by Mercy-BHS.
 - c. Refer to Personnel 06 – Workers Compensation for guidance on Accident Leave (A-leave).

Section 5: Returning to Duty Following the Initial Job-Connected Injury/Illness/Exposure

- A. Members are not permitted to return to full duty without being evaluated and released to a full work status by Mercy-BHS. The only exception is when the member is evaluated after hours in an emergency room and **ALL** of the below criteria apply:
 - a. The member is evaluated/treated in an emergency room and Mercy-BHS is closed;
 - b. The treating provider from the emergency room has released the member back to full-duty;
 - c. The Company Commander, in consult with the On-Duty Safety Officer, agrees it is proper to return to full duty, as the treating provider may not be familiar with the essential job functions of the member; and
 - d. The member is directed to report to Mercy-BHS on the next business day.
- B. Following the initial visit to Mercy-BHS, members will be provided a discharge document that includes a "work status." *Note: The Work Status is listed on the clinic slip provided to the member upon Mercy-BHS Discharge and is categorized as: "Able to Work" "Unable to Work" or "Able to Work with Following Limitations."*
 - a. Members released to full-duty, "able to work," by Mercy-BHS shall return to their on-duty assignment if working, or report to duty for their next scheduled work time when the initial visit is during non-work hours.
 - b. Members identified as, "unable to work" shall notify the company commander of their assigned station of their work status to ensure any staffing needs can be coordinated.
 - c. Members cleared to work Modified Duty, "able to work with the following limitations," by Mercy-BHS shall notify the company commander of their assigned station of their work status to ensure any staffing needs can be coordinated.
 - d. Members are expected to report to the Safety Division, or the assigned location as designated by the Safety Division, **on the next business day following their initial visit.** Members shall refer to Personnel-27 for further guidance.

Section 6: Follow-Up Evaluation/Treatment for a Job-Connected Injury/Illness/Exposure

- A. Appointments for follow-up evaluations/treatment for job connected conditions, must be pre-authorized by the Baltimore County Workers' Compensation (WC) division prior to attending the appointment.
- B. Members are expected to attend all scheduled appointments. Should a member need to reschedule an appointment, the member is to contact their claims representative for approval in advance of cancellation.
- C. Follow-up appointments with Mercy-BHS are scheduled at discharge and are documented on the clinic slip provided to the member.
- D. Members with post-treatment/evaluations by outside medical facilities are expected to bring all discharge paperwork, instructions/recommendations provided by the outside treating facility to their follow-up appointment with Mercy-BHS.
- E. Members reporting to Mercy-BHS during scheduled work hours shall be marked working for initial and follow-up Mercy-BHS visits. Members can elect to use sick, vacation, personal, or compensatory leave for WC pre-authorized medical evaluations/treatment outside of Mercy-BHS that are scheduled during the member's normal tour of duty.
 - a. Regardless of the leave used, in/out time slips from the outside provider must be submitted to the Safety Division and to their claim adjuster as outlined in Personnel-27 to document the appointment was kept and consistent with leave used.

- b. Members are not compensated for appointments scheduled outside of normal duty hours, except where defined in the current MOU with Local 1311.
- F. Members with job-connected illness/injuries will receive a FMLA packet of information and application when placed on a No-Work status by Mercy-BHS for five (5) or more consecutive work days, or when their condition will require intermittent leave usage based on the identified treatment plan.
- a. Members may elect to request a FMLA Packet directly from the Office of Human Resources (OHR).
 - b. Members are responsible to adhere to the approved FMLA stipulations as stated on the FMLA approval letter received from OHR.
 - c. Supervisors are responsible for informing Fire-FMLA and the member's corresponding Chief Officer if, after reviewing the FMLA approval letter, they are no longer meeting these stipulations. Should the member exceed the stipulations on the FMLA approval letter, they will be considered non-compliant and will be responsible to provide additional medical documentation to OHR to become compliant.

Section 7: Recurrence of a Job-Connected Illness/Injury

- A. Members who have a recurrence of a job-related illness/injury/exposure shall immediately notify the company commander/immediate supervisor. If the member is unable to immediately notify the company commander/immediate supervisor, the notification must be made as soon as practicable. Delayed notifications may require justification as part of the injury/illness/exposure documentation.
- B. Members who have a recurrence of a job-related job injury/illness shall be directed to report to Mercy-BHS. Members are not authorized to report off sick due to a recurrence or exacerbation on a prior or current job-connected injury/illness/exposure.
 - a. If, in the judgement of the Company Commander/Immediate Supervisor, it is determined the member requires transport to a hospital, the Company Commander/Immediate Supervisor is immediately to contact the on-duty Safety Officer for guidance.
 - b. At no time shall the member's medical needs be delayed for consultation with the on-duty Safety Officer.
- C. Company Commanders/Immediate Supervisors shall promptly contact the on-duty Safety Officer who will make the proper notifications to Workers' Compensation and/or Mercy-BHS. The Workers' Compensation Division will provide guidance on the required documentation for the recurrence. At a minimum, Form 58's as outlined in Section 5 (C) of this SOP will be required to include the original injury date.
 - a. The Workers' Compensation Division must authorize the visit to Mercy-BHS; therefore, prompt notification to the on-duty Safety Officer is necessary to coordinate the pre-authorization.

Section 8: Career Members who Sustain Injury/Illness/Exposure while functioning as a Baltimore County Volunteer

- A. When a career member of the Baltimore County Fire Department is injured while serving as a volunteer for any of the companies of the Baltimore County Volunteer Firefighter's Association (BCVFA), the member shall follow this SOP.
 - 1. The BCVFA First Report of Injury shall be used to document the incident and the report shall clearly indicate the incident occurred during volunteer activity.
 - 2. If the member is scheduled to work day or night shift on the date the injury/illness/exposure occurs and is not cleared to work by Mercy-BHS, or the treating facility after hours, the member shall be marked Off Roster (OFR) in Tele-Staff for the remainder of the shift.
 - 3. For after-hour injuries when the members are not cleared to return to duty, the member shall be marked Off Roster (OFR) in TeleStaff and paid working OLTA for all other shifts until the member reports to Mercy-BHS on the next business day that Mercy-BHS is open and a work status is provided.
 - a. The Safety Division will work with Fire Admin/Staffing to move members to/from the modified duty roster in Telestaff and OLTA. When the injury occurs after hours/weekends, The Safety Division will work with Fire Admin/Staffing to make any necessary payroll marking changes/roster adjustments for the prior shift(s) once the work status is provided by Mercy-BHS.
 - 4. Guidance on Accident Leave is found in Personnel 06 – Workers Compensation
- B. Career members who are functioning as paid employees of BCVFA companies, or who are volunteering for jurisdictions outside of Baltimore County, shall follow the respective company's procedures for job-related injuries. All markings for career members will be Sick Pending (SP) in TeleStaff and Sick (S) in OLTA until released by the treating provider.

Section 9: On-Duty Non-Job Connected Illness/Injury

- A. Personnel 02 shall be followed when an on-duty member becomes ill or injured that is non-job related. Mercy-BHS will not evaluate/treat a non-job connected illness/injury/exposure. Members are expected to use their own medical insurance when the incident is non-job related.

Section 10: Determination of Job Connected vs. Non-Job Connected Illness/Injury/Exposure

- A. As outlined in Personnel-06, no Fire Department member or supervisor has the authority to determine an illness/injury/exposure to be occupational or compensable. This determination is made by the Workers' Compensation Division and the Office of Law.

Section 11: Compliance

- A. The safety of our members and the community are our ultimate priority. Compliance with these mandatory reporting procedures ensures prompt attention and resolution of work-related injuries/illnesses/exposures. Failure to comply with these procedures may result in disciplinary action.