

Forsyth County EMS

Special Operations Policy: Hydration

I. Purpose:

- A. Protect responders from the effects of dehydration.
- B. To maximize performance of personnel by adequately meeting their physical needs during an event.

II. Procedure:

- A. Daily hydration should include 6 to 8 oz. of fluids every 6 hours in addition to those fluids ingested with a meal.
- B. Planned incidents / training: When a specific event is known in advance, hydration should include an additional 16 oz of fluids within 2 hours prior to the event, according to the following considerations:
 - a. When hydration is taken with a meal, water is appropriate.
 - b. Water or sports drinks are appropriate for prehydration when scheduled activities are of moderate intensity and are expected to last less than 1 hour.
 - c. Sports drinks are preferred for prehydration when scheduled activities are of higher intensity and are expected to last 1 hour or longer.
- C. During events:
 - a. Fluid intake of 2 to 4 oz of fluid every 20 minutes of structural fire fighting.
 - b. Fluid intake of 2 to 4 oz of fluid every 20 minutes of major medical / MCI response.
 - c. Fluid intake of 2 to 4 oz of fluid every 15 to 30 minutes of hazmat/special operations (considering time element in removing protective clothing).
 - d. Fluid intake of 2 to 4 oz of fluid every 20 minutes of wildland fire fighting, emphasizing sports drinks due to long duration of event.
- D. In rehabilitation area:
 - a. Fluid intake should be 12 to 32 oz during a 20 minute rest period.
 - b. When operating in temperature extremes (hot or cold) personnel should increase fluid intake.
- E. Post Incident: Fluid intake should be 12 to 32 oz over 2 hours after the end of operations
- F. Beverages and foods that should be avoided include the following:
 - a. Caffeinated, carbonated, high-fructose content, and high sugar drinks (exceeding 7% CHO solution).
 - b. Foods with high fat and / or high protein content
 - c. Alcohol within 8 hours prior to duty
 - d. Excessive fluids

III. Source: NFPA 1584 *Rehabilitation of Members Operating at Incident Scene Operations and Training Exercises*, 2003 edition

Approved by:
Dr. R.L. Alson
Medical Director
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