

2024 FIREFIGHTER SAFETY STAND DOWN



June 20, 2024

Physical and Behavioral/Mental Health Considerations



Behavioral health has affected first responders for many years without much notice. Acknowledging and accepting the mental and physical impact has only recently been recognized as having a short and long-term consequence on the mental wellness of our brothers and sisters, which we in the public safety community are now beginning to admit. It is a duty of ourselves to accept we cannot always deal with the stress that life and public safety brings to bear upon.

Tips for Dealing with Stress

GET CONTROL OVER YOUR LIFE. When we feel out of control regarding any aspect of our life, our stress hormones are activated. Think about aspects of your life—your home environment, family life, goals and aspirations, vacation dreams, spiritual or religious life, activities and interests that you've let go of or neglected—and consciously plan and live your life. Living consciously (mindfully) helps us feel in control of our life and future, rather than living in a reactive, powerless manner.

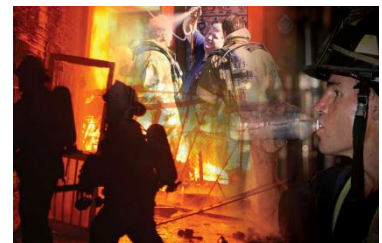
TALK IT OUT. Sometimes just saying the words aloud is enough. Slowing down long enough to have a meaningful conversation also helps. If you feel stress building, talk to someone in your family, a friend, coworker, counselor, religious leader, or with whomever you can open up. Responders understandably don't want to traumatize others with what they have experienced. However, you can talk about your feelings and mention that there was something about a call that really got to you without having to share the details. Your loved ones and friends want to be a part of your lives— don't shut them out.

[Stress Management](#)
[Stress vs. Anxiety](#)

- 100% of firefighters who have said they will sleep when they are dead are tired. Sleep can assist with recovery, help regulate food cravings, and improve your mood.
- Firefighters who screen positive for sleep disorders are also more likely to have cardiovascular disease (240%), diabetes (190%), depression (310%), and anxiety (380%).
- Caffeine, sugar, extra salt, other food additives – all these things in excess can lead to diminished physical health, impaired sleep and increased stress.
- The Institute of Medicine recommends 2.7 liters (91 oz) of fluid per day for women and 3.7 liters (125 oz) of fluid per day for men. This includes water, sports drinks, and water content in food.
- During training or drills, firefighters are encouraged to consume 8-12 oz every 15 minutes of a sports drink or oral rehydration solutions.
- Exercise is a proven stress reliever, in addition to improving overall health.
- It is recommended that people achieve more than 300 minutes of moderate physical activity per week to improve cardiorespiratory fitness and reduce the likelihood of cardiovascular disease, obesity, cholesterol, diabetes, and hypertension.

[Firefighters Risk of Irregular Heartbeat](#)

BEST PRACTICES
for Preventing
**FIREFIGHTER
CANCER**



See something, say something. "All firefighters must be empowered to stop unsafe practices" (NFFF 4th Life Safety Initiative).