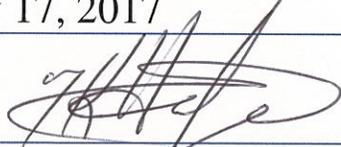
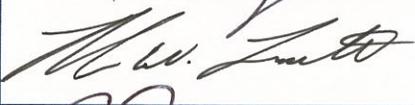
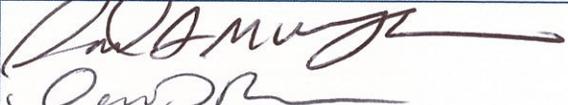
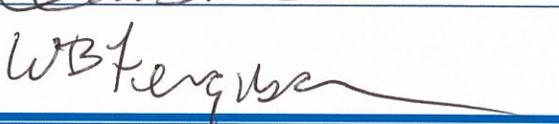
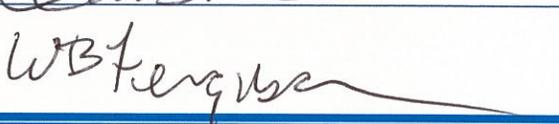


	Standard Operating Guideline: PERSON 2	
	Subject:	Light Duty
	Effective Date:	November 1, 2012
	Revision Date:	May 17, 2017
	Approval:	
	EMS Representative:	
	Fire Representative:	
Career Representative:		
Director:		

Purpose: The purpose is to establish policy for temporary light duty assignments and the procedures for granting temporary light duty to eligible firefighters and other personnel within the Department of Public Safety.

I. Background

- A. Temporary light duty assignments, as available and appropriate, may be given to employees in this department who, due to injury, illness, other disability or pregnancy, are temporarily unable to perform their regular assignments. Light duty assignments may be made available due to either job-related or non-job-related injuries or illnesses. Employees with disabilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) may require reasonable accommodations other than, or in addition to, light duty assignments.
- B. Use of temporary light duty can provide eligible employees with an opportunity to remain productive while convalescing, as well as, provide a work option for personnel who may otherwise risk their health or safety, or the safety of others, by remaining on duty when physically or mentally unfit for their regular assignment. Eligible personnel shall be given a reasonable opportunity to work in temporary light duty assignments as appropriate and available, not to exceed one year.

II. Definitions

- A. Light Duty- Any assignment that involves less than the full range of normally assigned duties and activities. The assignment may be for full-time or part-time hours. Typically, this assignment is less stressful and less physically demanding either specifically or generally. Light duty assignments are not intended for short-term (less than two weeks) injuries, illnesses or Conditions (see Restricted Duty Policy). Sick leave, annual leave, and compensatory time may be used for these absences.

- B. Light Duty Eligible Personnel- Any regular employee of this department experiencing a medically certified illness, injury or disability requiring treatment of a health care provider or pregnancy (“eligible condition”), and who, because of this eligible condition, is temporarily unable to perform their regular assignment or is temporarily at heightened risk of increased disability, injury or error, but is capable of performing alternative, less physically demanding assignments within the Department.

III. General

- A. Employees may request a light duty assignment when an eligible condition prohibits them from performing their normal job functions at full capacity. Light duty assignments may be requested for on- the-job or off-the-job injuries, illnesses or conditions.
- B. Light duty requests shall be in writing to the Director and shall include a completed “Light Duty Job Description Form”.
- C. Under most circumstances, light duty assignments will be granted for a work-related injury once the treating physician indicates that an employee may perform light duty tasks, once two weeks have passed since the application for light duty, and if there is light duty work available.
- D. All light duty assignments must meet Department needs and must be approved by the Director.
- E. The department will make a determination (approval, denial, defer) on a case-by-case basis, weighing the needs of the Department against the capabilities of an affected employee, and on whether or not the needs of the department can be met by assigning light duty status. There is no guarantee of light duty availability.
- F. The number and duration of light duty assignments will be evaluated and considered on a case-by-case basis by the Director, or his designee.
- G. Upon being medically released to full duty, light duty personnel will immediately notify the Director. The Director may extend the light duty status of an employee based on the number of hours worked during the pay period, or the pending completion of an assigned project in order to minimize overtime and/or to finalize a pending project.
- H. The employee is responsible for providing weekly or periodic updates from his/her physician and for scheduling and attending the required doctor’s appointments. These updates should be sent to the Director.
- I. Approval of the employee’s personal physician is required to return to full duty. This return must be documented by the physician and a copy provided to the Director.
- J. At the discretion of the Director, in consultation with County Human Resources, a full medical physical and/or physical ability test may be required prior to returning to full duty. The County may also seek a second medical opinion as to the “fitness for duty” of the employee; these expenses would be incurred by the County.
- K. All requirements of the Family Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”) will be followed. Thus, if the employee is eligible for FMLA, the first two weeks of work missed prior to any light

duty will be designated as FMLA leave and count towards their FMLA threshold, as will any hours not worked while on light duty, including time off for doctor visits.

- L. An employee can attend training, including continuing education classes or recertification courses, when training can be attended within the guidelines of the written physical restrictions provided by the employee's physician. The employee is responsible for having any training approved by the Director or his designee.
- M. In order to maintain physical conditioning, employees may be permitted to perform physical training, if approved by their treating physician, up to 5 hours weekly while on light duty. Schedule arrangements must be made with the Director or his designee.
- N. At no time shall a Light Duty employee perform his/her job as in a regular capacity, while on Light Duty.

IV. Pregnancy

- A. Firefighters are encouraged to consult with their personal physicians concerning maternity safety while performing firefighter functions. Light duty assignments may be appropriate for pregnant employees in order to reduce the risk of injury to the employee and unborn child. Employees are encouraged to consult with their physicians to determine whether a light duty assignment should be considered.
- B. Light duty assignments for pregnancy may be granted for periods both before and after the birth of the child.
- C. An employee will immediately be assigned to light duty when:
 - 1. The employee makes the request due to pregnancy or lactation
 - 2. The employee is no longer capable of safely and competently performing all assigned emergency response duties.
- D. No employee will be discriminated against on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions.

V. Return to Work Process

- A. The employee provides the Director documentation signed by the treating physician. The Director reviews the documentation and ensures that additional medical examination and/or physical ability testing is not warranted.
- B. If additional medical or physical ability testing is not warranted, the Director will notify County HR, and the respective supervisor, that the employee has been cleared for full duty.
- C. The department reserves the right to require a physical agility test and/or skills assessment.
- D. Supervisors must not allow employees to return to work until they have received official notification from the Director or his designee.

- E. A copy of all related forms and paperwork will be forwarded to County HR for inclusion in the employee's personnel and/or confidential medical file.

VI. Light Duty Limitations

- A. Most physicians believe a transition back to pre-injury work status is important through modified or light duty programs. Light duty opportunities give the department the ability to ease personnel back into their work routine and maintain an experienced workforce that may otherwise be forced to leave employment prematurely. While light duty programs are proven to increase the employee's morale and loyalty to the department, and their own internal sense of self worth, limitations must be identified and conveyed to all personnel.
- B. In extenuating cases and situations, employees may find that they are unable to physically or mentally return to full duty status.
- C. The maximum length of time on light duty for any one eligible condition is one year. At a minimum, the case shall be referred to Human Resources at 6 months for reviewing options if it is not anticipated that the employee will be able to return to full duty by one year.
- D. When this occurs, the following options may need to be considered:
 - 1. Seek placement in an alternative position within the County provided the employee applies, is qualified, and is selected for the position,
 - 2. Seek a medical retirement under VRS rules,
 - 3. Resign their position,
 - 4. Involuntary separation.
- E. These options will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on medical complexity and long and short-term medical prognosis. Decisions will be made under the auspices of the Director, County Administration and the Human Resources Department.