

## CAL FIRE PHYSICAL/MENTAL STRESS JOB DESCRIPTION



### FIRE CAPTAIN (DISPATCHER)

A DESCRIPTION IS GIVEN BELOW OF THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRESSES TO WHICH A FIRE CAPTAIN (DISPATCHER) IS SUBJECTED TO AT CAL FIRE. YOUR JUDGMENT IS NEEDED AS TO THE EMPLOYEE'S CAPACITY TO PERFORM THE REQUIRED DUTIES. IN YOUR CONCLUSION, TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LONG-RANGE OUTLOOK FOR CONTINUED PERFORMANCE, AND THE EMPLOYEE'S ABILITY TO SAFELY PERFORM THESE DUTIES WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT INCREASED RISK OF INJURY TO SELF OR OTHERS BECAUSE OF MEDICAL CONDITION.

The Fire Captain (Dispatcher) is the basic foundation of the Emergency Command Center system. The Fire Captain (Dispatcher) has the responsibility for dispatching personnel and equipment to respond to initial attack on fires. Through pre-attack planning, the Fire Captain (Dispatcher) has a set of "dispatch cards" to assist in the deployment of proper types and quantities of personnel and equipment to accomplish control of reported wildfires. The Fire Captain's (Dispatcher) good judgment in modifying the "dispatch cards", however, can be the deciding factor between small and large fires. The Fire Captain's (Dispatcher) actions are influenced by reports from lookouts or local citizens regarding fire location and rate-of-speed, by type of vegetative cover and topography, weather conditions, and other factors which affect the fire's behavior as its resistance to control. After equipment arrives on the fire, the Fire Captain (Dispatcher) assumes the role of expeditor of request from the incident commander for additional personnel, equipment, and supplies, and keeps informed of the conditions of communication facilities, transportation routes, and the detection system. The Fire Captain (Dispatcher) also performs considerable paperwork in reviewing fire reports, keeping radio and dispatchers' log, and preparing other written reports.

A Fire Captain (Dispatcher), although not physically involved in firefighting, does have the accompanying responsibility and mental stress in the role as dispatcher of personnel, supplies, and equipment to fire. This particular job requires that the individual be able to think clearly and to use good judgment during emergencies.

There may be long periods of time when no stressful situations occur; but when a fire, flood, or other emergency happens, a Fire Captain (Dispatcher) must be able to mobilize all the required resources to meet the demands of the incident.

A Fire Captain (Dispatcher) usually works a shift up to 14 hours with numerous interruptions during sleep periods; but during an emergency, the individual could be required to work up to 24 hours with no sleep; accompanied by erratic meals. The Fire Captain (Dispatcher) supervises a communication network capable of keeping track of the many contingencies involved in each particular emergency so that the strength of the attack forces can be altered. In a large fire, crews can work off some of the resultant tensions by just fighting fire, but a dispatcher does not have such an immediate outlet to relieve tensions. There is little or no time to let down. The resultant hidden or repressed tension and anxiety cannot be overlooked or underestimated in terms of their cumulative effects upon the individual.

A Fire Captain (Dispatcher) must have visual acuity (Snellen) of not less than 20/100 without correction in each eye, corrected to not less than 20/30 in one eye; hearing adequacy within speech frequencies (uncorrected); and normal speech. The individual must have full use of both hands and feet.

The incumbent may be required to wear respiratory protection equipment (including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The use of such equipment may place a physiological burden on the incumbent that varies with the type of equipment used, the job and workplace conditions in which the equipment is used, and the medical status of the incumbent. As such, Cal/OSHA requires that the incumbent be annually medically cleared to be fit-tested for respiratory protection equipment. This clearance process consists of a comprehensive medical evaluation including a review of the incumbent's medical history, a complete physical examination, and vision, hearing, spirometry, and exercise treadmill tests.

The incumbent typically is required to perform psychologically stressful and/or physically demanding duties consistent with firefighting, disaster response, and emergency medical response, including working in isolated areas, walking or running on uneven rough terrain, and remaining on duty 24 hours or longer without a break while performing these duties.

**CATEGORY I - ARDUOUS PHYSICAL WORK**

Duties involve field work requiring physical performances calling for above-average ability, endurance, and superior condition, including occasional demand for extraordinarily strenuous activities in emergencies, under adverse environmental conditions, and over extended periods of time; requires running, walking, difficult climbing, jumping, twisting, bending and lifting over 25 pounds; and the pace of work is typically set by the emergency situation.

THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFIES THAT HE/SHE HAS READ THE CAL FIRE PHYSICAL/MENTAL STRESS JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE EMPLOYEE NAMED BELOW AND THAT IN HIS/HER JUDGMENT THE EMPLOYEE HAS THE CAPACITY TO PERFORM THE REQUIRED DUTIES, HAS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE LONG-RANGE OUTLOOK FOR CONTINUED PERFORMANCE, AND THE EMPLOYEE IS ABLE TO SAFELY PERFORM THESE DUTIES WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT INCREASED RISK OF INJURY TO SELF OR OTHERS BECAUSE OF MEDICAL CONDITION.

EMPLOYEE NAME (PRINT)	WORK UNIT
MEDICAL PROVIDER'S NAME (PRINT)	DATE
MEDICAL PROVIDER'S SIGNATURE	
ADDRESS (PRINT)	
TELEPHONE	