**Chapter 20: Fire Fighter Rehabilitation**

**Chief Concepts**

* Rehabilitation is an important part of firefighting. It is designed to ensure that emergency personnel can rest, cool off or warm up, receive fluids and nourishment, and be evaluated for potential medical problems.
* Conditions such as stress, physical exertion, and weather extremes all take a toll on the body.
* Rehabilitation is essential to correct physical imbalances, such as overheating and dehydration, that could endanger members of the firefighting crew.
* Due to their protective qualities and weight, PPE and SCBA add heat stress on the body.
* Dehydration is a state in which fluid losses are greater than fluid intake into the body. If left untreated, it can lead to shock and even death. To avoid dehydration, frequently drink small amounts of nonsugary and noncaffeinated beverages throughout the shift.
* To work at peak capacity, the body needs to be fuelled with the right amount of nutrient-rich foods. A physically active fire fighter needs more calories than an office worker.
* Rehabilitation provides fire fighters with periods of rest and time to recover from the physical fatigue and mental stresses of fighting fires. Taking short breaks, replacing fluids, ingesting healthy food, and cooling or rewarming are all measures that can reduce the risk of injury and illness. They also improve mental focus.
* Rehabilitation needs to be addressed at all incidents, but establishing a rehabilitation centre may not be necessary for every incident. Types of incidents that require a dedicated rehabilitation centre include structure fires, high-rise fires, and wildland fires. Rehabilitation is also needed for hazardous materials incidents, search and rescue operations, and training activities.
* Emergencies that occur during weather extremes require a rehabilitation centre for cooling or rewarming.
* Rehabilitation includes seven components:
  + Relief from climatic conditions
  + Rest and recovery
  + Active or passive cooling or warming
  + Rehydration and calorie replacement
  + Medical monitoring
  + Member accountability
  + Release and reassignment
* Report the following signs to medical personnel at the rehabilitation centre if you notice any of them in yourself or in one of your crew members:
  + Chest pain
  + Dizziness
  + Shortness of breath
  + Weakness
  + Headache
  + Cramps
  + Mental status changes
  + Behavioural changes
  + Changes in speech
  + Changes in gait
* Your responsibilities in rehabilitation are to know your limits, to listen to your body, and to use the rehabilitation facilities when needed.