

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

POLICY MANUAL

Section	
Policy Number	
Policy Title	Employee & Family Assistance Program

POLICY OBJECTIVE

To foster and maintain the wellbeing and productivity of employees by providing confidential assistance or short term counselling to those who are experiencing personal or work-related problems.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The District is concerned with the personal wellbeing of employees and their families. The District recognizes that a wide range of personal problems may have an adverse effect on an employee’s wellbeing and their ability to perform their duties. Personal problems can include illness (physical or mental), emotional problems, stress, family, marital, elder care, financial, educational, legal or other problems such as alcohol/substance abuse.

The District recognizes that it is possible in the work environment to identify employees with problems and to motivate them to seek assistance or treatment at an early stage. Although there are numerous organizations in the community to help people with various problems, assistance is often required to determine the most appropriate resource.

GENERAL

The Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is designed to provide accessible, professional and confidential help to all employees and their immediate family members who are experiencing personal problems, and to help them resolve these problems through a process of assessment, short-term counselling, referral and follow-up. The program is completely voluntary and the services are available without charge to eligible employees and their families. Any decision on the part of an employee to use the EFAP will not impact on employment or promotional opportunities.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Information in records or gathered in counselling sessions shall be considered confidential and private. Personal information relating to individual case files of an EFAP client is released only with the written consent of the client or where the law requires or permits the release of that information.

EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY

All permanent and part-time employees of the District will be enrolled in the program upon completion of their probationary period or at such earlier time as agreed to by a collective agreement or employment contract.

All paid-on-call members employed by the District will be enrolled in the program upon completion of 3 (three) months of service.

Seasonal and casual employees are not eligible unless included in the offer of employment or authorized by the Fire Chief.

ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBERS

EFAP services are available to: an employee's spouse; dependent children; and immediate family members as defined by the service provider.

It is the employee's responsibility to confirm EFAP coverage for eligible family members.

SERVICES TO FAMILIES

Services to family members are limited to assessment and referral services with very short-term counselling in keeping with the intent of the EFAP program. The counselling is intended primarily to assist employees and their dependents to recognize the need to obtain appropriate counselling services from a specialist in the community. It is not intended to replace community counselling services that are available for families.

ACCESS TO EMPLOYEE & FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND REFERRAL

An employee or family member wishing to discuss a personal problem can contact the EFAP Provider directly. The service is confidential and is available 24 hours a day – seven (7) days a week. Any information pertaining to the service(s) an employee or their

immediate family member receives through the EFAP will not be disclosed to the District or included in the employee's personnel file.

Employees may be formally referred to the EFAP by management for reasons arising from work performance issues. Neither acceptance nor refusal of a formal referral to participate in the EFAP will itself be grounds for disciplinary action. An employee who agrees to participate in the EFAP will be expected to cooperate with the recommendation of the treatment professionals to whom the employee is referred.

It is the role of an employee's supervisor to inform an employee whose personal problem(s) is affecting the employee's job performance that confidential assistance is available from the EFAP.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

As District employees are likely to be involved in critical incidents because of the nature of their work, in response to a critical incident the District will provide support to employees as soon as possible after the event, either through in-house trained peer counsellors or WorkSafeBC's Critical Incident Response (CIR) Program. Counselling service may be available to an employee through the CIR Program and/or WorkSafeBC if a claim is approved.

PROGRAM LIMITATIONS

Limitations on the total hours of face-to-face counselling and telephone consultations are set by the service provider.

Should an employee be formally referred to EFAP by management for reasons arising from work performance issues and the employee has exhausted counselling available through the EFAP provider the District may, at its sole discretion and expense, provide access to short-term counselling services from a qualified professional in the community.

For purposes of this policy, short-term counselling is defined to be discussions leading to identification of a client's problems and referral to appropriate resources, normally up to three sessions.

In addition to community resources, additional professional counselling services may be available through other group benefit programs (Long Term Disability, Extended Health

Services, and/or Health Care Spending Account (HUB Financial Medical Benefit Plan) offered by the District.

BOARD DISCRETION

The provisions set out in this policy are subject to revision from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

OG - 1.05.00 Critical Incident Stress Program (CISM)

OG - 1.05.01 Firefighter and Family Employee Assistance Program (EFAP)

APPROVALS

Approval date:		Approved by:	
1. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
2. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
3. Amendment date:		Approved by:	