

## SLEEP HEALTH & HACKING



### The Science Behind Sleep

On average, humans sleep for about 1/3 of their lifetime. But does that 1/3 apply to fire rescue personnel who aren't getting the same sleep that the average person does? What you probably hear time and time again with sleep health education is that you need 8 hours of sleep a night, but where does that number come from? When you sleep, you cycle through 5 different phases of sleep that all together add up to about 90-120 minutes. For you to get adequate sleep, you need to enter non-REM and REM sleep, uninterrupted; meaning you go through an entire sleep cycle about 4 times (equating to 8 hours when you do the math). Getting uninterrupted sleep is impossible while on shift, so the aim of December's newsletter isn't to overwhelm you with what "normal" sleep should be or telling you that "you need 8 hours of sleep," but to give you the knowledge and tools that you can actually use on and off shift.

### Sleep & Injuries

Why should you make sleep health a priority while on the job? Well sleep is the foundation for physical and mental health. Inadequate sleep puts you at risk for:

- *Poor cognitive performance*- inability to make clear and rational decisions, fast thinking.
- *Poor physical performance*- decreased proprioception, "run time", strength and stamina.
- *Inability to prevent and recover from injuries*- hormones necessary for rebuilding and recovery aren't released, decreased awareness/body control = increased risk of slip, trip, fall.
- Difficulty regulating mood.

**Studies in firefighters have shown that with proper sleep health education and interventions, departments saw a decreased number of injuries.** If you are interested in more specific treatment for your sleep health, please visit a sleep specialist for sleep consultation and treatment.

### Hacking Your Sleep

You might already be hacking your sleep while on shift if you're taking a safety nap. **When taking a safety nap, aim for a nap that is no longer than 20 minutes, unless you are able to push it to 90 minutes.** A nap longer than 20 minutes and less than a full 90 minutes puts you in sleep stages that are hard to wake up from (explains why a lot of people get irritable or don't know where they are when woken up abruptly). You can even super charge your nap by drinking a cup of coffee before your nap. While sleeping, the caffeine is able to absorb more efficiently and leaves you waking up alert and more energized!

There are a lot of ways that you can hack your sleep on shift and at home. **Check out the sleep health handout by scanning or clicking on the QR code below.** This handout will provide you with how to perfect your sleep environment, how colored noise can aid in sleep, and more!



**SLEEP HEALTH  
HANDOUT**



### Dr. Kelsey Tanler

*Certified Athletic Trainer  
MCFR Health & Injury Prevention*

Did you know that you have someone working within MCFRS to provide you with quality injury care, injury prevention, and functional assessments to lengthen your time on the floor and keep you out of FROMS?

Dr. Kelsey Tanler began with MCFRS in February 2023 as the department's first ever Athletic Trainer in charge of health and injury prevention. **Dr. Tanler is the only Athletic Trainer working with a fire rescue department in the state of Maryland and prides herself in preventing injury and keeping personnel on the floor.**

### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Need an appointment for a minor injury concern or interested in 1-on-1 injury prevention? Dr. Tanler has appointment times available every Wednesday at 0945 and 1045 through the QR code above or the link at the bottom of the newsletter.

You can also email her directly to set up a visit to your station! Or keep an eye out for when she will be rounding through your battalion.

### 5TH BATTALION STATION VISITS IN DECEMBER/JANUARY!

Click on the link above or ask your Battalion Chief for more information on signing up!



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[CLICK HERE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH DR. KELSEY TANLER](#)