

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

BULLETIN NO. 9

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Project Safe Place Program

Since 1992, DCFEMS has been a partner in Project Safe Place. This nationwide program provides a safe place for youths who are in need of crisis-related help. DCFEMS makes all fire stations available as a Safe Place to youths in crisis. Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc., the District of Columbia sponsor for Project Safe Place, provides trained counselors for youths in need 24 hours a day.



How Does It Work?

The Department has designated each fire station as a Safe Place by hanging Project Safe Place signs in prominent locations on the exterior of fire stations. Youths in crisis can present themselves to fire stations at any time, day or night, for temporary shelter while representatives from the Sasha Bruce Youthwork make arrangements for transportation.

- When a youth comes to the fire station seeking help, on-duty officers will be responsible for calling the **Safe Place Hot Line at (202) 547-7777**. Provide the location, telephone number and address of the fire station to hot line personnel. The Hot Line representative will contact the fire station to inform the OIC of the name of the person who will be sent to pick up the youth.
- Safe Place Project personnel will make arrangements for the youth to be picked up, within 20 minutes when possible, and transported to a Safe Place shelter. Safe Place personnel will have proper identification cards which should be checked by the on-duty platoon commander before the youth is permitted to leave the fire station.
- As soon as it becomes apparent that Project Safe Place Services will be needed, the receiving company goes out of service until the youth is in the care of Project Safe Place representatives or other DCFEMS personnel. The Company OIC then notifies the nearest in-service BFC.
- A Street Calls unit or nearest in-service EMS Supervisor will also go out of service and proceed to the station providing shelter to stay with the youth and wait for Safe Place representatives. Once the Street Calls unit or EMS Supervisor has arrived, the Company shall go back in-service.

On-duty personnel shall admit youths desiring help into the fire station, and provide a place to wait for transportation. The on-duty platoon commander will immediately contact the Office of Unified Communications - Watch Commander to inform them that a youth is seeking Safe Place shelter, that the Safe Place Hot Line has been called, and place the Company is out of service. The on-duty platoon commander, Street Calls unit and/or EMS Supervisor shall ensure that at least two (2) members are in the youth's presence at all times to serve as witness to all actions or conversations involving the youth.

On-duty platoon commanders shall make a comprehensive journal entry for each incident of service provided to Safe Place youths. The entry shall include:

1. the name and age of the youth;
2. name and identification card number of the Safe Place representative who picks up the youth;
3. names of the two members who remained in the youth's presence;
4. name of the battalion fire chief who stood by until arrival of Safe Place personnel;
5. any other information which may be considered important concerning the youth.

On-duty platoon commanders shall submit a special report to the Assistant Fire Chief – Operations through the appropriate chain of command providing full particulars of the incident to include all information outlined above.

Members will continue to follow the legal responsibilities under DC Law 2-22, the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Act of 1977, by calling the 24-hour Child and Family Services Agency Hot Line at (202) 671-7233 if it appears that a youth has been neglected or abused, or if the youth indicates that they have been neglected or abused.

Each fire station will be supplied with:

1. Safe Place sign(s) to be hung in prominent locations on the exterior of the fire station.
2. Two (2) Safe Place Program posters that outline the proper steps to take when a youth in crisis arrives at the fire station. One poster shall be kept near the Watch Desk, and the second in the Company Office.
3. Two (2) Safe Place Program booklets with additional information on what to do when a youth in crisis arrives at the fire station. One booklet shall be kept near the Watch Desk, and the second at the officer's desk.