


# FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL

## POLICY MANUAL

	<b>SUBJECT</b> FHP TROOP SURGEON PROGRAM	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> 18.03
	APPLICABLE CALEA STANDARDS	<b>ISSUE DATE</b> 01/01/06
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		<b>TOTAL PAGES</b> 7

**18.03.01      PURPOSE**

Establish guidelines for the organization, qualifications and responsibilities of the Florida Highway Patrol Troop Surgeon Program.

**18.03.02      AUTHORITY**

Section 321.24(5), Florida Statutes

Section 768.28(9), Florida Statutes

**18.03.03      POLICY**

The Florida Highway Patrol Troop Surgeon Program authorizes a qualified physician to assist in promoting the health and safety of the members of the Florida Highway Patrol. A Troop Surgeon Program may be implemented at the direction/discretion of the Director.

**18.03.04      RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Troop Surgeon’s duties and responsibilities shall include the following:

- A. Promote health and wellness programs aimed at reducing absenteeism and use of sick leave, and enhance the overall wellbeing of members.
- B. Reduce the Patrol’s exposure to workers compensation claims through internal risk assessments and recommendations, evaluation of claims for preventive measures, and referrals to preferred providers in consultation with the DHSMV Workers’ Compensation Coordinator in those cases where extraordinary care is necessary;
- C. Enhance the quality of routine and specialty care available to troopers through the establishment of relationships with area hospitals and practitioners in consultation with state authorized health insurance providers;
- D. Enhance the quality of care and services provided to members injured in the line of duty through the establishment of relationships with local hospitals and practitioners, as well as the coordination of care in consultation with state

authorized health insurance providers, and the DHSMV Workers' Compensation Coordinator;

- E. Augment the medical support available to the Special Response Teams;
- F. Improve members' knowledge and understanding of health issues as they pertain to weapons of mass destruction, hazardous material exposure, other job related safety issues, and liability reduction;
- G. Support sick and injured troopers through hospital visitation and coordination of care with designated health care providers;
- H. Provide counseling for troopers regarding personal or family problems upon their request;
- I. Serve as a member of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team. Pursuant to Florida Statutes 401.30 (4) (e), discussions during a critical incident stress debriefing are to be considered privileged communication under s. [90.503](#);
- J. Visit patrol stations and attend meetings to become familiar with the operations and personnel of the Florida Highway Patrol;
- K. Keep all Departmental and medical information confidential;
- L. It is understood that physicians and other health professionals appointed to a troop medical unit are volunteering their time and expertise. Accordingly, in light of limitations on time, it is understood that individual members of the unit may be assigned to specific responsibilities for which they will be responsible; and
- M. Troop Surgeons are authorized to conduct pre-employment medical examinations and annual physicals for members. The authorized examinations must be within the Troop Surgeon's area of specialization or expertise.
- N. Troop surgeons' role in workers' compensation, CISM, and Members' Assistance Program issues shall be advisory only. Final determination of care shall vest in the overseeing program.

#### **18.03.05 PROCEDURES**

- A. The Florida Highway Patrol Troop Surgeon Program will consist of a Chief Surgeon and Troop Surgeons. The Chief Surgeon will be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Director of the Florida Highway Patrol and will serve as Program Coordinator. The Chief Surgeon will maintain contact with appropriate Florida Highway Patrol staff in General Headquarters. The Director of the Florida Highway Patrol will receive applications for Troop Surgeons (the State of Florida Employment Application shall be completed for background information purposes only) and shall approve or disapprove all appointments and reappointments. All appointments shall be for a term of one year. All appointments shall automatically expire on June 30, with reappointments effective July 1 of each year. Denial of application, removal from the program or non reappointment shall


NOT constitute a reportable adverse action against the physician. Troop Surgeons will be responsible for the medical operations of a Florida Highway Patrol Troop, and report to the Chief Surgeon. Troop Surgeons may, with approval of the Director, appoint Associate Troop Surgeons responsible for medical operations in each district. Each Florida Highway Patrol district may have one Associate Troop Surgeon, who reports to the Troop Surgeon. Large districts may require Assistant Troop Surgeons to assist, support and work under the direction of the Associate Troop Surgeon.

1. Florida Highway Patrol Troop Surgeons, Associate Surgeons, and Assistant Surgeons will become a member of the Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary upon appointment to either a sworn or non-sworn position. They will serve on a voluntary basis and without compensation. Whether appointed to sworn or non-sworn position, all troop surgeon applicants shall undergo the same application and screening process currently in effect for sworn auxiliary members
  2. The Chief Surgeon shall effect a system of credentialing physicians in order to assure that only the highest caliber of medical professionals are appointed to the position. Membership, by a physician, in the Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary does not automatically qualify him or her to work in the Troop's medical unit. Strict credentialing standards shall be adopted and followed. The Chief Surgeon shall also affect a method of peer review to ensure the performance of appointed medical personnel and the continued provision of the highest quality of care to the Patrol. The Director and Chief Surgeon retain ultimate control over the appointment and continuation of privileges for all medical personnel within the district. Physicians may be denied appointment, or have their appointment revoked for any reason deemed appropriate by the Troop Surgeon and Director. Any physician who has been denied privileges, or has privileges revoked, shall have no recourse for review whatsoever.
  3. Prior to appointment, the applicant for Troop Surgeon, Associate Troop Surgeon or Assistant Troop Surgeon must have the written recommendation of the Troop Commander, primary source verification of all medical training, privileges and credentials, and be a member in good standing of the Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary.
- B. At a minimum, the following qualification factors shall be considered by the Chief Surgeon in making recommendations for Surgeon and by the Director in making the initial appointment, and subsequent reappointments.
1. Unrestricted license to practice medicine or osteopathic medicine in the state of Florida and possession of a current, valid DEA certificate.
  2. Staff membership at a hospital licensed under Florida law and accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and/or the American Osteopathic Association.
  3. Successful completion of residency training in a program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education and/or the

American Osteopathic Association. Physicians who have not completed ACGME or AOA accredited residency programs may be considered with additional requirements imposed for documenting experience and competency.

4. Board certification by the appropriate specialty board of the American Board of Medical Specialties and/or the American Osteopathic Association. Board Certification must be maintained in the highest level of training appropriate to specialty.
5. Three years experience in the clinical practice of medicine following completion of residency training.
6. Demonstrate a personal interest in the Florida Highway Patrol Medical Program by training, work experience, and interest in law enforcement.
7. Must be available to respond on a 24-hour basis in the event of an emergency.
8. Never have been convicted of a criminal offense (minor traffic violations are excluded), or sanctioned by the Office of the Inspector General.
9. Valid Florida driver license.
10. Indicate a willingness to be involved in training that would enhance a physician's ability and efficiency in meeting and dealing with patients in occupational medicine, trauma and/or crisis situations. The physicians should also be familiar with community medical, psychiatric, and other such resources in the local area.
11. Be willing to respond to any situation where the presence of a physician is required.
12. Possess experience and professional maturity, emotional stability and personal flexibility.
13. Must have a caring and understanding attitude toward all regardless of race, sex or religious beliefs.
14. Grooming and appearance standards, as well as attitude of courtesy, respect and professionalism should be consistent with the Patrol's image.
15. Malpractice claims history shall be considered. The physician must provide a copy of their National Practitioner Data Bank Self-Query. The query must be dated within thirty (30) days of date application is submitted.
16. The physician must provide a letter from a peer in the same specialty of practice, attesting to their current competency. The physician must also provide a letter from each hospital for which they hold staff membership, indicating their privileges and standing.

Any exceptions to these qualification factors must be for good cause and will lie solely in the discretion of the Chief Surgeon and Director.

- C. The Surgeon is to be considered a part of the Florida Highway Patrol and is to be shown the courtesy and respect due the position. The Surgeon will be made welcome at Florida Highway Patrol stations and functions. The Surgeon will report through medical command to the Director. The Surgeon will be authorized to talk with personnel, have access to Patrol facilities, and other components of the Department. The Surgeon shall be kept abreast of updated information pertaining to the district and throughout the State with regard to programs of the Florida Highway Patrol.
- D. The Troop Surgeon will be a member of the Auxiliary, and required to maintain certification as an Auxiliary Trooper if assigned to a sworn position. Troop Surgeons assigned to non-sworn Level 1 positions will maintain training as required by FHPA policy commensurate with their position. While a member of the Auxiliary, the Troop Surgeon will not be required to attend Auxiliary meetings or participate in Auxiliary details. Time spent in performing responsibilities of the position will be counted toward Auxiliary Patrol Time. In addition, the Troop Surgeons, who are sworn members, shall be required to perform twenty-four (24) hours of patrol time, per calendar quarter, riding with a Trooper the first year following appointment and swearing in to the Auxiliary. Following that year, the Troop Surgeon should perform twenty-four (24) hours of patrol time, on shift with a trooper, per calendar year in addition to assigned medical duties.
  - 1. If sworn and certified, Troop Surgeons shall be appointed as officers in the Auxiliary. Assistant Surgeons shall be appointed the rank of Lieutenant; Associate Surgeons shall be appointed the rank of Captain; Troop Surgeons shall be appointed the rank of Major. The Chief Surgeon shall be appointed to the rank of Lt. Colonel.
  - 2. If sworn and certified, Troop Surgeons shall be issued and wear, when appropriate, uniforms consistent with that of the FHP Auxiliary. These uniforms will be modified to include a medical caduceus  on the epaulette, to be displayed medial to the designation of rank.
  - 3. Non-sworn Troop Surgeons may accompany sworn members of the Florida Highway Patrol or Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary on "ride-a-longs" with the prior approval of the Troop Commander or the Troop Commander's designee.
  - 4. If not sworn, Troop Surgeons shall be required to conduct a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of service, with at least one four (4)-hour observational "ride-a-long" with a trooper per calendar quarter.
  - 5. Non-sworn Troop Surgeons shall be issued and wear, when appropriate, articles of clothing which reflect their relationship to the Patrol. Non-sworn Troop Surgeons may be issued identification which identifies them as a Troop Surgeon in the Florida Highway Patrol.

- E. The surgeon will observe any applicable privilege not to disclose confidential information from a patient, as established by State or Federal law. Privileged patient records shall be maintained by the surgeon and shall not be kept at any FHP facilities. Records required by FHP Policy, such as PPE medical evaluation forms, shall be maintained in the member's confidential medical file.

Pursuant to Florida Statutes s. 90.503, and notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a person who consults, or is interviewed by, a troop surgeon (or persons participating in the diagnosis or treatment under the direction of the Troop Surgeon) for purposes of diagnosis or treatment of a mental or emotional condition has a privilege to refuse to disclose, and to prevent any other person from disclosing, confidential communications or records made for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment of the patient's mental or emotional condition.

- F. A Florida Highway Patrol Troop Surgeon and other voluntary members of the Medical Unit shall be considered a "volunteer" for the purposes of Section 110.501-.505, Florida Statutes.

- G. The Director may remove an incumbent assistant, associate, troop, or chief surgeon when it is in the best interest of the department or the division.

1. Basis for removal from service shall include, but not be limited to any violation of the provisions of this policy or the willful violation of statutory authority, Department rules, regulations or policies.
2. In every event, the decision of the Director regarding the removal of an incumbent Surgeon shall be final and without of any right of recourse for review.

- H. The Director, in consultation with the Chief Surgeon, may appoint other licensed health professionals (such as paramedics and nurses) to work under the direction of the Troop Surgeon. Such personnel shall become sworn Auxiliary Troopers prior to appointment, and fulfill the same requirements of membership activity as required for surgeons. Methods of credentialing, similar to that employed for surgeons, shall be utilized for other licensed health professionals. The Chief Surgeon shall be responsible for approving and implementing protocols for use by such personnel, when working under the direction and license of Troop Surgeons. Troop Surgeons may appoint a licensed health professional to serve as the Director of Operations of a Troop's Medical Unit (Director of Medical Operations).

- I. Troop Surgeons and other licensed health professionals qualified and appointed by the Director in consultation with the Troop Surgeon will comprise the voluntary medical unit.

- J. The voluntary medical unit, as a part of the FHP Auxiliary may contribute to and utilize funds in the FHPA Foundation.

- K. Pursuant to Section 321.24(5), Florida Statute, and notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any volunteer Highway Patrol Troop Surgeon appointed by the Director of the Florida Highway Patrol, and any volunteer licensed health

professional appointed by the Director of the Florida Highway Patrol to work under the medical direction of a Highway Patrol Troop Surgeon is considered an employee for the purposes of Florida Statutes section 768.28(9).