



Policies & Procedures

Article: 1.5

Effective Date: 08/30/2012

Revised Date:

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

PURPOSE

To establish policy for the issuance of equipment and the use and maintenance of protective clothing and equipment to reduce the risk of illness, injury, or death and limit members exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials that may occur during scene operations, decontamination, or disposal.

POLICY

This standard applies to all members required to work in potential environments that expose the member to hazards, contaminants and elements of the environment. It is the policy of this Department to issue gear based on member need.

I. Administrative Tools

- A. Policy & Procedure Manual
- B. EMS Protocols

II. Personal Protective Equipment

A. Structural Firefighting

1. Protective clothing and equipment that meet NFPA, Standard on Protective Clothing and Equipment for Structural Fire Fighting, shall be provided for use by each member that is expected to fight structure fires and has received training for the proper selection, use, and care of such issued gear. The items to be issued include:
 2.
 - Helmet (NFPA 1972) W/face shield
 - Hood (NFPA 1971)
 - SCBA Facepiece (NFPA 1981)
 - Coat (NFPA 1971)
 - Gloves (NFPA 1973)
 - Pants with suspenders (NFPA 1971)
 - Boots (NFPA 1974)
 - Gear bag
 3. To assist members with identifying rank at an incident scene, helmets are color-coded as follows:
 - White: Chief Officers
 - Black: Company Officers
 - Yellow: Firefighters and Paramedics
 - Each Volunteer District may have a different color code system for their department.

B. Wildland Firefighting

1. Protective clothing and equipment that meet NFPA 1977, Standard on Protective Clothing and Equipment for Wildland Fire Fighting, shall be provided for use by each member that is expected to fight wildland fires and has received training for the proper selection, use, and care of such issued gear. The items to be issued include:
 - Helmet
 - Head lamp
 - Neck shroud
 - Eye protection
 - Respiratory protection with N95 mask



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use of extrication equipment, generators and ajax tools. This list is not all-inclusive and it is the responsibility of each member to use good judgement in protecting their hearing.

3. Headsets shall be worn during vehicle checks when small engines are powered up and units are run.

III. Selection and Use of PPE

- A. In general, members should select PPE appropriate to the potential risk for injury or exposure. No Policy & Procedure, SOG nor PPE ensemble can cover all situations, but each member shall wear protective clothing and use equipment appropriate for the hazards to which he/she is exposed.
- B. Each member operating within a perimeter designated as potentially hazardous by the incident commander shall wear his/her full protective equipment in the prescribed manner. The incident commander shall determine when and if it is safe to remove some or all of the equipment.
 1. Structural firefighting equipment shall be worn in situations where sharp or rough edges are likely to be encountered, i.e. firefighting and extrication.
 2. Members shall be fully clothed beneath their turnouts (wearing the appropriate work uniform).
 3. Wildland gear shall be worn in lieu of structural protective clothing when fighting grass and brush fires.
- C. Emergency response is often unpredictable and uncontrollable. While blood is the single most potential source of HIV and HBV infection in the workplace, in the field it is assumed that all body fluids are potentially infectious. For this reason, PPE will be chosen to provide barrier protection against all body fluids.
 1. Safety glasses, masks and gloves shall be worn whenever there is potential for infectious contamination.
 2. Disposable gloves shall be worn during any patient contact when a potential exists for contact with blood, body fluids, non-intact skin, or other infectious material.
 - a) Gloves shall be replaced as soon as possible when soiled, torn, punctured, or broken. Members shall wash hands as soon as possible following removal of gloves.
 3. Members shall wear eye protection with side shields for all patient contact calls with potential Bloodborne Pathogens.
 4. When treating a patient with a known or suspected airborne transmissible disease, NIOSH-approved High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter masks, N-95 or better, shall be used. If it is possible, mask both the member and patient.
 5. Face shields on structural firefighting helmets will not be used for infection control purposes.
 6. If you can reasonably expect splashes onto your clothes, use a gown.

IV. Maintenance and care of PPE

- A. Each member shall properly maintain the protective clothing and equipment that has been issued to him/her and that are carried on the apparatus to which he/she has been assigned.
- B. A standard washing machine and dryer have been provided at most stations to allow members to maintain their work uniforms.
- C. Each member shall clean his/her protective clothing every time it is used following best practices and supervisor guidance.
- D. Any equipment or protective clothing that is found contaminated, unsafe, or inoperable shall be red-tagged, removed from service immediately, and forwarded to the warehouse through the chain of command for repair.



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E. No alterations shall be made to protective clothing and equipment without the approval of the Fire Chief.

V. Responsibilities

- A. Each member shall inspect protective clothing and equipment issued to him/her and assigned to his/her apparatus at the beginning of each shift. Each member is responsible for the cleaning, care, and maintenance of his/her clothing and equipment and for obtaining repairs or replacement items.
- B. Command Staff shall be responsible for maintaining documentation of inspections and assure that inspections are complete and follow up on any missing items.
- C. The incident commander shall be responsible for ensuring that all members operating within the hazardous perimeter of an incident are properly attired and using the appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment. Any member who is in violation of this procedure shall be ordered to promptly leave the hazardous area.