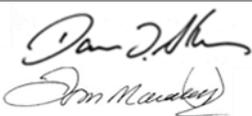


# Fauquier County Department of Fire Rescue

	<b>OPERATING PROCEDURE</b>	No. 710	
	<b>Protective Equipment and General Safety</b>		
	Effective Date: September 1, 2010 Revision Date: September 25, 2020	Page 1 of 5 Forms:	
	Approved By: Darren L. Stevens, Fire Rescue Chief Approved By: Tom Marable, President VFRA	 	

## PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for safe practices and proper wearing of all personal protective equipment by all personnel.

## SCOPE

This procedure applies to all operational personnel within the Fauquier County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management and the Fauquier County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association and its associated departments.

## I. PREFACE

All members of the Department will, in the performance of their duties, conduct themselves in a manner as to promote safety. In that Department personnel are routinely exposed to situations hazardous in nature, it is the responsibility of each member to take those measures necessary as to minimize the risk of injury, death and related health hazards while accomplishing their mission. Personnel assigned to supervisory positions will assure that those in their command adhere to safety policies and procedures.

## II. USE OF FIREFIGHTING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE ENSEMBLE (PPE)

A. Personnel, regardless of rank, will properly wear their PPE during all operations involving an Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) atmospheres or the potential thereof. PPE hereafter referred shall consist of:

1. Structural firefighting turnout coat
2. Structural firefighting turnout pants
3. Structural firefighting helmet (with protective ear flaps and face shield)
4. Nomex/aramid fiber protective hood
5. Structural firefighting gloves
6. Structural firefighting boots

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7. Self-contained breathing apparatus

- B. Personnel will wear full PPE when responding to and operating at all fires or other alarms or as determined by the Officer-in-Charge.
- C. Personnel will don structural firefighting PPE prior to the apparatus leaving on an emergency response. Personnel assigned to units or other apparatus designed in such a manner that the use of structural firefighting PPE during response may make the operation of the apparatus difficult and/or unsafe may forego the donning of the PPE during the response. Upon exiting the apparatus, the PPE will be donned prior to operating within the hot zone or cleaning.

### III. CARE, MAINTENANCE, STORAGE & INSPECTION OF PPE

#### A. Care and Maintenance of PPE

1. Proper PPE care and maintenance has a direct effect on the ability of PPE items to provide adequate protection to personnel as well as allow for the longest possible service life.
2. An important first step in limiting the exposure post fire contamination from PPE is to immediately do a gross decon on the fire ground. Studies have shown this dramatically reduces contaminants on the PPE.
3. The use of disposable gloves during the doffing process limits dermal contact and contamination of the skin.
4. PPE exposed to products of combustion should be removed from service as soon as possible and washed using the commercial cleaning contract. In accordance with NFPA 1851, cleaning should be performed by properly trained individuals. Manufacturer recommendations should be followed for proper advance cleaning.
5. The preferred method for cleaning is commercial PPE cleaning contractor. Gear extractor washers are next in line or if one is not available, cleaning of PPE may be accomplished utilizing the approved liquid detergent diluted in water and utilizing a utility scrub brush. Air-dry PPE and avoid direct sun light after cleaning.
6. PPE contaminated by flammable or combustible liquids or other hazardous materials should be placed in a plastic bag, labeled and arrangement made through the PPE program manager for commercial cleaning.

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**B. Storage of PPE**

1. PPE should be stored in the gear lockers assigned to personnel at their assigned station. PPE should be stored in a manner that provides for clean, dry and complete ensembles that are available for immediate use. No PPE component should be placed in long-term storage unless it is clean and thoroughly dried.
2. Structural firefighting PPE shall be restricted from all living areas, including the kitchen, bunkroom, offices or day rooms in fire stations and the training center.
3. PPE shall be inspected monthly by the station officer or their designee (DFREM gear) or a designated volunteer officer (volunteer gear) to ensure the safety and serviceability of each member's PPE. Personnel assigned to administration are responsible for the monthly inspection of their issued PPE. Monthly PPE inspections shall be documented in PSTRAX software. Deficiencies shall be forwarded to the PPE program manager through each shifts battalion chief, or his/her designee, or the appropriate volunteer chief.
4. In following NFPA 1851 Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting. Advance inspections twice a year are recommended, by an independent service provider, manufacturer or certified PPE inspector.
5. Any PPE found to be in need of immediate repair or replacement is to be brought to the attention of the on duty battalion chief or the appropriate volunteer chief for immediate remedy. An alert shall be documented in PSTRAX for the damaged PPE.

**IV. VEHICLE ACCIDENTS**

- A. All personnel not involved in fire suppression will wear the following appropriate gear as a minimum:
  1. Structural firefighting (or extrication) coat and helmet with gloves while directly involved with patient care during extrication.
  2. Reflective vests when working on or near roadways when extrication gear is not being worn.
  3. Helmets must be worn while operating on a roadway and on construction sites.
- B. While operating at incidents, the officer-in-charge may approve the removal of that portion of the protective equipment that may make the administration of care, basic and/or advanced life support

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difficult as long as the removal of said portion of the protective equipment will not take place while the member is in a hazardous location.

**V. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

- A. Emergency response personnel often work in unpredictable and uncontrolled situations. To minimize the risk of exposure, safe work practices and appropriate protective equipment must be used. Personal protective equipment is specialized clothing or equipment worn by an employee for protection against a hazard. For infection control practices, this shall include protective equipment for eyes, face, and extremities, and protective shields or gowns (as available on emergency response vehicles). All PPE shall be removed prior to leaving the work area. When personal protection equipment is removed, it shall be placed in an appropriate designated area or container for storage, washing, decontamination or disposal.
1. **Gloves:** Disposable gloves shall be a standard component of emergency response equipment. They will be donned by all personnel prior to initiating any emergency medical care. Gloves must be the appropriate size, quantity and quality for the procedures performed by emergency response personnel. Gloves shall be changed after each use and between patients then disposed of as if they were contaminated. Should a glove tear, replace the torn glove with another glove as soon as possible. Used gloves should be removed with care. The individual's unprotected skin should not come in contact with the outside of the glove.
  2. **Eye Protection:** Issued eye protection that meets ANSI Z87 standards shall be standard components of emergency response equipment. They will be donned by all personnel prior to initiating emergency medical care that may result in eye contact contamination or injury.
  3. **Masks:** The use of surgical type masks is required when there is a likely exposure of blood or body fluids to the mucous membranes (mouth or nose). This is essential when splashes or aerosolization of such material is likely to occur.
- B. Additional information is provided in the Department's Exposure Control Plan

**VI. USE OF SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS**

- A. All personnel who, in the performance of their duty, are exposed to toxic, super-heated, or otherwise hazardous environments involved Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) atmospheres will wear Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Personnel assigned to supervisory positions will ensure full use of SCBA where appropriate and practical. Use of SCBA should continue through the overhaul phase of the incident to limit exposure to carcinogens present post-fire.

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**VII. USE OF EYE PROTECTION**

- A. Eye and face protective equipment shall be required where there is a reasonable probability of injury that can be prevented by such equipment. Protectors should be suitable for the type of work being performed and employees shall use such protection.
- B. Suitable eye protectors shall be provided and worn where machines or operations present the hazard of flying objects (including embers), glare, liquids, body fluids or a combination of these hazards.

**VIII. SEAT BELTS**

- A. SEAT BELTS WILL BE WORN by all personnel AT ALL TIMES while riding/operating any apparatus or vehicle.

**IX. BACK STEP RIDING**

- A. There is no riding on back steps, running boards, or any other location on unit other than an approved seat with provided seatbelt.

**X. CHEMICAL EXPOSURE**

- A. All personnel shall make every effort to avoid unnecessary exposure to chemicals and chemical byproducts in the performance of their duties. It must be emphasized that protective equipment normally utilized for fire suppression activities may provide little or no protection from certain chemicals, and therefore any exposure to chemicals should be limited to situations where personnel are not exposed to unreasonable hazards. These entries will be handled by an appropriate Hazardous Materials Response Team.

**XI. HIGH VISIBILITY GARMENTS**

- A. While on emergency scenes on roads, roadways, or where personnel are exposure to vehicular traffic, all personnel will wear reflective vests for day or night visibility unless specifically participating in suppression or extrication activities where the exposure too heat, flame or hazardous materials is likely. In those situation the structural firefighting PPE shall be worn.