

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

**Barkhamsted Fire District**

**October 1, 2002**

### **In accordance with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.156**

#### **Purpose:**

- To establish a guideline to indicate the proper use of firefighter protective clothing in order to ensure the safety of the fire department personnel. To meet the requirements for the Fire Brigade Standard 1910.156

#### **Responsibility:**

The Chief or a designated officer has the responsibility of maintaining appropriate Personal Protective Equipment for all Emergency Responders within each department.

#### **Policy:**

- Personal protective clothing will consist of the following items when personnel are engaged in structural firefighting, fire suppression, or auto extrication.
  - Helmet with shield and or NFPA approved goggles, Nomex hood, Bunker coat, Bunker pants, Boots, Gloves,
  - Latex/ Nitrile gloves if at an automobile accidents.
- Personal protective clothing for forest fires will consist of the following items when personnel are engaged in bush, or grass fires.
  - Helmet or hard hat with shield and/or NFPA approved goggles, Long sleeved shirt, Long pants, Leather boots, Leather faced gloves,
  - Bunker gear is not recommended,

#### **Procedures:**

- If any firefighter is engaged in firefighting, or in extrication using hand or power tools, or exposed to broken glass or jagged metal, full protective clothing shall be worn.
- At no time shall gear be donned while the apparatus is in motion.
- Protective clothing shall be worn at all times that a hazard exists, or has the potential to exist.
- While training the proper personal protective clothing, for the training scenario, shall be worn.
- When protective clothing is required, it shall be worn in the proper and correct manner.
- Helmets, if required, shall be worn with the chinstrap under the chin, securing it to the head properly.
- Helmet face shield or NFPA approved goggles, shall be utilized at any time the need for eye protection is necessary.
- Gloves shall be worn any time a piece of firefighting equipment is being handled. Leather shelled gloves with woolen liners may be worn when weather dictates,

but only for exterior firefighting situation where they will not be exposed to heat, sharp objects, or hazardous materials.

- If a deficiency or damage is noted in any component of protective clothing, it shall be reported to the chief, as soon as possible, and taken out of service if necessary.
- If there is any blood or body fluids contamination to bunker gear, the gear should be removed at the scene and red bagged. This bunker gear shall be check over by the chief or safety officer and handled appropriately.
- Traffic vests shall be worn by all district personnel when working on roadways. The vests shall meet all applicable federal & state requirements.

**Exceptions:**

- The incident commander may use his discretion in order to regulate the use of protective clothing where exceptions appear necessary (extreme weather, time duration, etc).
- When passing a scene without bunker gear, personnel shall report to staging, put on an orange vest, and wait to be assigned. These personnel shall be utilized for non-hazardous duties such as traffic control, or filling out reports.
- When performing duties after the hazards have been eliminated, or fire has been suppressed command can allow personnel to remove bunker gear. Gloves shall be worn when handling firefighting equipment and vests if there is any traffic hazards.

**Inspection:**

- It is the responsibility of each firefighter to inspect his gear. The inspection shall be done after each incident and once a month. Once a year the chief shall inspect the gear and note the condition.
- Inspections shall include looking for:
  - Dirt,
    - Wipe off, brush off, hose off, or scrub off and then wash in department washer machine if needed.
  - Contamination----blood, hazardous materials, and/or hydrocarbons,
    - The bunker gear shall be checked over by the chief or infectious control officer and handled appropriately.
  - Tears, holes, or wear,
    - The personal protective clothing shall be taken out of service and repaired.
  - Wetness from external elements, like hose spray or rain, or internal from perspiration.
    - The personal protective clothing shall be dried before it is stored.

**Storage:**

- Personal protective clothing shall be stored in a dry place inside a gear bag (the department will supply a few gear bags each year to protect gear). Personal protective clothing shall be inspected before stored; this will prevent damage due to mildew, or chemical reaction. Proper storage also promotes readiness.

**Identification or personalizing:**

- Helmets shall have a minimum of reflectivity when issued; reflective may be added but not removed.
- Bunker coat shall have the department name sewn on with nomex thread and reflective letters, no paint.
- It is recommended that each piece of personal protective clothing shall have name marked inside.

**Maintenance, cleaning, and drying:**

- Helmets shall be maintained reasonably clean. Eye shields, chin straps, and suspension shall be kept in good condition. Helmets shall be cleaned with warm tap water and mild detergent (dish soap). Other cleaners that can be used are rubbing alcohol, non-ammoniated window cleaner, and household detergent. Industrial strength cleaners and petroleum-based cleaners will damage the helmets.
- Hoods shall be cleaned with warm water and mild detergent and then air-dried.
- Bunker coat and pants can be machine-washed **do not contaminate home washing machine**. If the gear is heavily soiled, wash in utility sink first, with warm water and mild soap. **If hand washing gear wear protective gloves**. Do not machine dry gear air-dry only.

**Decon at scene:**

- When ever possible, remove dirt and contaminates at the scene.
- If possible remove and bag contaminated gear at scene.

**Replacement:**

- All firefighter personnel shall be required to turn in defective or worn out equipment prior to the issuance of replacements.
- In the event equipment is lost, the firefighter shall immediately notify the chief or an officer and inform him of the circumstances surrounding the loss.

**General:**

- It is for the safety of every firefighter to keep their personal protective clothing in proper condition. Regular inspections and maintenance of the gear can accomplish this level of safety. Failure to do so places fire fighters at unnecessary risk of death, burns, injuries, illnesses and diseases. Personnel must keep their protective clothing clean and maintain them as set forth in the SOP's and garment labels.

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- All personal protective equipment shall meet ANSI, NIOSH and NFPA standards and be provided at no cost to emergency responders as required by OSHA standards