

Operating Guideline # 101

PPE

Created September 16, 2019

Reviewed June 15, 2022



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines to describe the circumstances under which personal protective clothing is to be worn.

GUIDELINE:

General

1. Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) for structural and vehicle firefighting applications (also commonly referred to as turnout gear) shall be comprised of NFPA 1971 compliant coat and trousers, gloves, boots, helmet, and balaclava, and shall be worn during all emergency response and training situations except as otherwise provided in this OG.
2. PPC for wildland fires (grass, brush, forest) shall include fire resistant coveralls, safety boots, gloves and wildland style helmets as a minimum. This type of PPC shall be worn for the types of incidents specified. (SEE ALSO OG 104)
3. All Officers and firefighters will wear only department-issued PPC. Use of non-issued equipment may be authorized by the fire chief where necessitated for medical or other reasons, but such approval is contingent upon a written application from the member outlining the reasons for the use of the non-issue equipment and a declaration that the department will not be responsible for any loss, replacement or maintenance costs.
4. Personnel must wear full PPC (turnout gear) for all structural and vehicle related firefighting activities, and wildland specific clothing elements as noted in sentence 2 for grass, brush and forest type fires. The level of PPC required at incidents not specified will be determined by the Incident Commander and communicated to all personnel. The Incident Commander shall take into consideration the nature of the incident, the weather conditions, the hazards involved, the potential for metabolic heat build-up and any other relevant factors in determining the level of protection required.
5. All Company Officers and firefighters will wear PPC at all training drills, simulations and exercises of any kind where safety considerations dictate. During training drills not requiring full turnout gear, the minimum worn will include coveralls, helmets, safety boots and gloves. Note: It is recognized that there are some training sessions that do not necessitate the use of PPC (i.e. – classroom based training).
6. Protective clothing shall be worn in the manner in which it is intended and designed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and established training standards. Protective clothing shall not be altered in any manner without the express permission and authority of the manufacturer.

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PPC Interface Area's

7. PPC interface areas shall be worn such that they are close fitting and overlapping the adjoining PPC element. When in close proximity to actual fire or when wearing self-contained breathing apparatus the balaclava shall be worn under the coat and over the head and over the SCBA mask straps, fitted closely around the face shield to prevent any bare skin from being exposed. Helmet earflaps must be down and fastened securely, chin strap in use and properly adjusted with the turnout coat collar up to protect the neck and face area. All turnout zippers, clips, and Velcro flaps including the outside flap must be fastened securely, and the helmet adjusted for proper fit per manufacturer's instructions. Gloves shall be worn when engaging in firefighting, training, or any other situation where injuries to the hand may occur. The wristlet on the fire coat must be worn over the thumb, as designed, whenever gloves are worn.

Eye and Hearing Protection

8. When not wearing breathing apparatus, during any emergency response or training session, eye protection shall be worn any time there is a hazard to a firefighter from debris, flying projectiles etc. that may cause injury to the eyes. The helmet face shield, in addition to safety glasses or goggles, will be used any time that the need for eye protection is apparent such as overhaul, trash fires, grass fires, operating hand or power tools and in the vicinity of, or operating hose streams.

9. Appropriate hearing protection in the form of ear plugs or muffs shall be worn whenever there is exposure to elevated noise levels due to exposure from operating equipment etc. (SEE ALSO OG 219 – Hearing Protection).

Damage to PPC

10. Personnel who have defective, worn out or missing PPC must report it to their Company Officer IMMEDIATELY who will ensure that it will be repaired or replaced as soon as possible. Who in turn will notify the Deputy Fire Chief or designate.

11. All turnout gear and coveralls shall be kept clean. Bunker gear and coveralls which requires routine cleaning shall be washed in the commercial washing machine located at Station Six- Port Carling or Station Three- Bala. PPC requiring special cleaning due to contamination or other heavy stains shall be tagged and sent to a third party service provider for proper cleaning. (SEE ALSO OG 105 and 106).

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all members to comply with the provisions of this OG and particularly that Company Officers (supervisors) and firefighters (workers) ensure that they adhere to their duties in accordance with the provisions of this document and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

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DEFINITIONS:

“Element” means an individual component of the PPC ensemble (e.g. – each of the coat, trouser/suspenders, helmet, balaclava, boots, gloves, coveralls or SCBA face piece.)

“Interface Area” means an area of the body where the protective garments, helmet, gloves, footwear, or SCBA face piece meet. Interface area’s include, but are not limited to, the coat/helmet/SCBA face piece area; the coat/trouser area; the coat/glove area; and the trouser/boot area.

REFERENCES:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (RSO 1990, c. 0.1)
- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note GN 4-1, Firefighters Protective Equipment Regulation
- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note GN-4-07, Wildland Fires
- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note GN-4-08, Bunker Gear Inspection
- NFPA 1851 (2008 Edition), Standard on Selection, Care and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting
- NFPA 1971 (2007 Edition), Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting.
- MLFD OG 104, Wildland Fires
- MLFD OG 105, Personal protective Clothing Care and Maintenance