



Buxton Fire-Rescue

Administrative Policy

Subject: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (11)

Section/Number: Structural Fire Fighting PPE (2)

Date Approved: July 1, 2018

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Purpose:

The purpose of this administrative policy is to provide specific information and procedures for the issuance, inspection, maintenance and retirement of structural firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE). This procedure establishes a system to regularly inspect PPE and equipment assigned to employees and to set standards for the ongoing maintenance and laundering of PPE.

Scope and Application:

All employees issued or utilizing structural firefighting PPE shall be in compliance with this administrative policy.

The application of this policy is not solely based on department standards, applicable sections of the [Maine Revised Statutes, Title 26: Labor and Industry, Chapter 28: Minimum Safety Standards for Firefighters §2103. Standards for Equipment and Clothing](#) must be followed in order for the department and employees to be in compliance with labor laws.

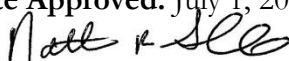
Responsibilities:

The department is responsible for providing fire fighters with protective clothing and equipment to safeguard them from injury when involved with firefighting activities. Inspection, care, and maintenance of structural firefighting PPE is the responsibility of all members of the department.

Issuance of Firefighting PPE:

Each firefighter will be issued a standard set of PPE including:

- A. Turnout jacket and turnout pants shall be coordinated, matching manufacturer and manufacturing time period, and be compliant with an NFPA Standard.
 - i. **Title 26, Chapter 28, §2103, 3. Protective clothing.** *Protective clothing consists of a coat and trousers. Purchases of new protective clothing by a fire department must meet or exceed the National Fire Protection Association standards. [2003, c. 570, §3 (AMD); 2003, c. 570, §7 (AFF) .]*
- B. Turnout boots must meet applicable OSHA and NFPA Standards.
 - i. **Title 26, Chapter 28, §2103, 5. Foot protection.** *Purchases of new boots by fire departments must meet or exceed the American National Standards Institute standard Z41.1 and 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1910, General Industry Standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and National Fire Protection Association standards. [2003, c. 570, §3 (AMD); 2003, c. 570, §7 (AFF) .]*



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- C. Firefighting helmets must meet applicable NFPA Standards.
- a. Black helmets shall be issued to support personnel, firefighters, and Lieutenants.
 - b. Red helmets shall be issued to Captains.
 - c. White helmets shall be issued to Chief Officers.
 - d. Helmet fronts shall be issued based on rank.
 - e. Goggles or face shield attached to the helmet. Safety glasses may be used instead of helmet mounted eye protection.
 - i. **Title 26, Chapter 28, §2103, 4-A. Helmet ensemble.** Purchases of new helmet ensembles by a fire department must meet or exceed National Fire Protection Association standards. [2003, c. 570, §3 (NEW); 2003, c. 570, §7 (AFF) .]

D. Structural Firefighting Gloves (NFPA approved label)

- a. **Title 26, Chapter 28, §2103, 6. Hand protection.** Hand protection consists of heat insulating gloves or mittens that are not readily flammable. Purchases of new hand protection by a fire department must meet or exceed National Fire Protection Association standards. [2003, c. 570, §3 (AMD); 2003, c. 570, §7 (AFF) .]

E. Firefighting Hood (Nomex or Carbon hood with bib with an NFPA approved label)

F. PPE Issuance shall be documented on the [Buxton Fire-Rescue Personal Protective Equipment Issuance Form](#) .

- a. Once PPE is issued, and before use a [Buxton Fire-Rescue Personal Protective Equipment Inspection Form](#) must be completed.

Personally Owned/Other Department Owned Personal Protective Equipment:

- A. If a member independently purchases, or utilizes another department's structural firefighter PPE, it must meet the requirements listed above in the "**Issuance of Firefighting PPE**" section of this policy.
 - a. Specifically, all items used must meet applicable standards including OSHA, NFPA, or ANSI.
- B. If personal or other department owned PPE is damaged, destroyed or otherwise made unacceptable for use, Buxton Fire-Rescue will replace the item as long as the use was previously approved and documented on the [AP.11.3 – Personal Protective Equipment Memorandum of Understanding](#).
- C. Personal or other department owned PPE shall be inspected on the same schedule that department issued gear is inspected.
 - a. Buxton Fire-Rescue will complete an inspection of the gear on a regular inspection schedule(s).

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- D. Personal or another department owned PPE shall be retired similarly to department issued PPE.
 - E. Members can use structural fire PPE from other departments while working for Buxton Fire-Rescue.
 - a. If a member uses another department's gear while working/responding for Buxton Fire-Rescue, the Chief from the department whose gear the member is using shall sign [AP.11.3 – Personal Protective Equipment Memorandum of Understanding](#) allowing the gear to be used.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- A. All issued PPE remains the property of Buxton Fire-Rescue.
- B. All approved structural fire PPE shall be used when fighting fire or responding to any incident requiring structure fire PPE. The use of PPE is outlined in [AP.11.1 – Hazard Assessment for Personal Protective Equipment](#) .
- C. All PPE shall be returned to Buxton Fire-Rescue within ten days of termination/separation from the department.
- D. PPE is to be used only for service related to Buxton Fire-Rescue.
 - a. Any other use must be approved by the Fire-Rescue Chief. Please refer to [AP.11.3 – Personal Protective Equipment Memorandum of Understanding](#) for authorization to use PPE while responding/working for another department.
 - b. All staff shall be financially liable for any damage done to PPE that did not occur during authorized use. This may be due to unauthorized use, due to improper care or storage, or any other situation where the turnout gear is not maintained, and the gear becomes not acceptable for use.
- E. No alterations or customizing shall be done without prior approval of the Fire-Rescue Chief.

PPE Inspections:

- A. Individual members shall conduct a routine inspection of their PPE after each use.
- B. The Chief or designee shall inspect PPE at least once per calendar year, or more frequently depending on use. In addition, any time a member notices a deficiency, immediate action to correct the deficiency is required.
- C. PPE shall be inspected and documented during the gear issuance process.
- D. PPE Inspection will be documented using the [Buxton Fire-Rescue Personal Protective Equipment Inspection Form](#) .

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PPE Cleaning & Drying:

- A. Turnout gear (PPE) will be laundered twice per year by department staff. The first round of gear washing will take place in March and the second round in September.
- B. PPE will be laundered after contamination.
 - a. Contamination happens after a firefighter uses PPE at an incident and it is covered with soot, unburned products of combustion, or any other combination of.
 - b. The first step in decontamination will happen at the emergency scene as identified in bullet # 3 of the [IAFC VCOS Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer](#):
 - i. “Following exit from the IDLH, and while still on air, you should begin immediate gross decon of PPE using soap, water and a brush (as weather conditions allow)” (IAFC VCOS).
 - ii. If soap and water are not available a charged hose line should be used with water to rinse contaminants off of PPE, SCBA, and equipment.
 - iii. If possible, PPE should not be worn in vehicles back to the station. It should be stored in an outside compartment or in the bed of a truck and brought back to the station for proper laundering.
- C. It is the firefighter’s responsibility to drop off his/her turnout gear (coat, pant, gloves, hood(s)) to be laundered. When doing so the following steps shall be taken:
 - a. Wear nitrile or equivalent gloves while handling soiled gear. In instances where the gear is completely covered the use additional gear may be warranted including a tyvex shirt.
 - b. Separate both the coat liner and pant liner from their outer shell.
 - c. Ensure that the liner is turned inside out to be washed.
 - d. Ensure the coat is zippered shut and all Velcro closures are properly secured.
 - e. Place all gear in a clear plastic bag and label with last name on provided tape, with marker.
- D. PPE (Coat, pant, gloves, and hood) will be washed utilizing the gear washer at Bar Mills Station. The washer is equipped with an automatic soap proportioner, follow directions on gear washer for correct detergent settings.
- E. Gear will be dried using the PPE dryer beside the washer at Bar Mills Station.
- F. Once the gear has been completely washed and dried the firefighter shall pick up the gear at the station and put the gear back together.

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- G. Firefighting helmets and boots shall be washed utilizing mild soap and water and brush as needed. This should be done at the same time the PPE is washed. If the ear flaps of a helmet can be removed they can be washed in the gear washer with the balance of PPE.
 - H. All washing/drying shall be documented in the gear washing log located on the gear washer. Once the gear washing log has been completed it shall be turned into the Chief's Office.

PPE Repairs:

If during inspection or during a washing cycle, gear is found to be damaged it shall be reported to the Training Deputy. Spare PPE is available and shall be used by personnel who need to have their gear sent for repairs.

All PPE will be repaired by the manufacturer or designee.

PPE Storage:

- A. All components shall be clean and dry before being stored out of direct sunlight.
- B. When transporting components, PPE shall be placed in a bag or protective case.
- C. PPE should be kept out of very high or very low temperatures and stored away from contaminants.
- D. Where possible, pants and coats shall be stored by hanging not folding.
- E. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure gear is kept in acceptable conditions at all times.

Retirement of PPE:

- A. Any turnout gear (pant or coat) more than 10 years old and having been routinely used shall be retired to non-structural use.
 - a. Non-structural gear may be used by junior or probationary firefighters and driver operators.
 - b. The gear shall be marked on the inside label with "Exterior Only" to ensure it is not issued to a structural firefighter.
- B. Any item that has been worn or damaged so that repairs are not cost-effective shall be retired. These shall not be reused.
- C. Any item that has been contaminated so that decontamination is not possible, or cost effective shall be retired. These shall not be reused.
- D. Any item that has been contaminated by chemicals, biological agents or radiological particulates shall be retired. These shall not be reused.
- E. Any item no longer of use to the organization for emergency operations but are not contaminated, defective or damaged shall be retired. These may be used for spare PPE or used for non-interior firefighters.

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- F. Any item used in an event of a serious injury or death of a firefighter shall be removed from service. These items shall be handled as evidence, establishing a chain of custody and tagged and stored appropriately while awaiting examination by experts.

References:

[Maine Revised Statutes, Title 26: Labor and Industry, Chapter 28: Minimum Safety Standards for Firefighters §2103. Standards for Equipment and Clothing](#)

National Volunteer Fire Council, Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Preventing-Cancer-poster.pdf>

NFPA 1851, Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting, 2014.

Policy History:

Original Approval Date: July 1, 2018
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