



**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS
GENERAL OPERATING GUIDELINES
POLICY 705 – POST FIRE DECONTAMINATION**

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Subject: Post Fire Decontamination

Background

Firefighters are 40% more likely to be diagnosed with cancer than the lay person.

Carcinogens are in some cases higher during overhaul, so the need for respiratory protection is constant during all phases of firefighting. Areas of most contamination are neck, jaw and groin area. Dermal and respiratory protection should be maintained as much as possible.

Although we cannot eliminate the risks of exposure, there are steps individuals can take to lessen the exposure.

Guideline

On Scene Operations

1. Fire personnel will remain in full PPE with SCBA as long as needed to decrease the potential for contamination. Full PPE and SCBA are especially important during Overhaul Operations where the presence of carcinogens and toxic gases are at their highest levels. This is considered the highest level of protection against contamination and all personnel should adhere to the use of their equipment.
2. During Investigation, the IC may authorize a decrease in PPE and the use of particulate filtration. The particulate filters must attach to the SCBA mask and provide rated protection against the identified elements at the incident. If filtration is not available, personnel will remain in Full PPE and SCBA during the Investigation phases of the incident.

Wet Gross Decontamination- Preferred

1. Wet Gross Decontamination will be performed when the company officer deems PPE has been heavily contaminated with visible byproducts of combustion or an odor of such.
2. The Engineer of the first arriving unit is responsible for setting up a designated decontamination line, cleaning agents for PPE and cleansing wipes. The decontamination line will be away from unsoiled equipment and set to idle pressure.
3. Firefighters will rinse off debris from PPE prior to doffing equipment. Heavily soiled materials will be sprayed with an approved cleaning agent prior to rinsing.
4. Cleansing wipes will be used to clean the face and hands according to manufacturer recommendations.

Dry Gross Decontamination- Alternative

1. Mildly contaminated PPE (as deemed by the company officer) or cold inclement weather are instances where Dry Gross Decontamination procedures will be used.
2. The engineer of the first arriving apparatus will provide a whisk broom and cleansing wipes in the decontamination area.



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3. Firefighters will remove all visible particulates from their PPE.
4. Cleansing wipes will be used to clean the face and hands according to manufacturer recommendations.

Upon completion of Incident

1. Once the PPE is decontaminated at scene, it will be placed in large trash bags. The bags will be secured outside the apparatus cab.
2. Prior to arriving back in quarters, units may need to respond to incidents in contaminated PPE. This will be done at the discretion of the company officer.

Upon Arrival in Quarters

1. Firefighters will shower as soon as possible in order to remove contaminants from the skin.
2. All bedding will be washed after use.
3. All firefighters should participate in a sweat producing workout within 24 hours in order to release the toxins stored within the pores of the skin. Once that workout is complete, the firefighter should immediately shower to remove contaminants from the skin.

PPE Handling and Cleaning

1. PPE will be immediately switched out with a clean backup set of turnouts. This must include a clean hood and pair of gloves.
2. All contaminated gear will be washed in accordance with manufacture recommendations. Turnout washers will be utilized in order to eliminate the chance of cross contaminating station washing equipment.
3. All gear will be handled with a minimum of medical grade gloves. Additional PPE will be determined based on the level of contamination. Additional PPE may include N95 masks and eye protection.
4. SCBAs will be cleaned in accordance with manufacture recommendations.
5. The interior and exterior of helmets will be cleaned to eliminate the presence of contaminants.
6. Any apparatus that was contaminated from products of combustion shall have the interior cleaned and exterior washed.

Date	Revision	SLO T/O Pres.	SLO Co. Chief Pres.
10/03/17	Updates approved by T/O and Co. Chiefs	<i>M. Miranda</i>	<i>S. Jalbert</i>