

Subject: **Protective Clothing**

Purpose: It is the intent of this policy that all members of the Northern Piatt County Fire Protection District are fully protected and prepared to engage in firefighting and other emergency response activities. It is also intended that no member of the Department cause a delay in fireground activities by not being safely and completely protected in approved turnout gear.

Scope: This policy shall apply to all Northern Piatt Fire Department personnel.

Definition

Full Protective Clothing: Shall consist of approved helmet with earflaps, chin strap, and Pull down visor/goggles. Shall also consist of turn-out coat, bunker pants, and boots, Nomex hood and gloves. May also consist of one pair of department issued extrication/work gloves.

Policy

Protective clothing worn by members of the Northern Piatt Fire Department shall be from a clothing list determined by and approved by the Fire Chief. No other apparel shall be permitted.

All Fire Department personnel shall wear whatever protective clothing is required to afford complete personnel protection while operating at any incident that could present a hazard to personal or co-worker safety.

All personnel shall wear the appropriate protective clothing en route to and during any emergency response. Exceptions to this rule may include:

- Emergency Medical Calls
- Special Duty Calls as determined by ranking officer present
- Excessive temperature/humidity

The Incident Commander or officers will be responsible for determining when any part of the protective clothing may be removed. He or she will also determine when personnel other than department personnel may enter the hazard area and to what degree of protection they must wear.

Full protective clothing with eye and face protection shall be worn when operating forcible entry equipment, extrication equipment and tools.

Full protective clothing (except hoods and gloves) shall be worn by all firefighting personnel when responding. All protective clothing shall be in place and properly worn prior to entering a structure fire or other hazard area. Exceptions to this will include:

- Command Chiefs/Duty Officers
 - Incident Command Officers shall not be required to wear full protective clothing while acting in the incident commander capacity. However, any entry into the fire structure or hazard zone will require the use of full protective clothing.
- Apparatus Driver/Operators:
 - Fire apparatus driver/operators during fire responses are required to wear a minimum of bunker pants/boots while responding. If engine driver/operators leave the cab of an engine for any reason, they are required to wear turnout coat or reflective safety vest. A helmet should be immediately available while operating at the pump panel. Any entry into a fire structure or hazard zone will require the use of full protective clothing. This policy does not apply to non-emergency responses.

When SCBA face pieces are not being worn and there is an apparent need for face protection such as during overhaul, when operating hand and power tools, fighting trash fires, grass fires, dumpster fires, car fires or any other fire not mentioned, face protection shall be utilized.

Department approved gloves shall be worn when engaged in firefighting, overhaul, training with hose and ladders, when using rope, and any other situation where injuries to the hands are likely to occur.

Inspection

Gear should be checked thoroughly after each use. It is the responsibility of the firefighter to check his/her own gear after each exposure to fire conditions. Inspect and make note of charred, burned, torn or badly abraded areas on the shell. These areas will need to be repaired. In addition, all gear is to be inspected twice yearly during monthly meetings.

Check the integrity of all major seams on the outer shell. Do this by pulling on the seams in a way comparable to the stress one might put on a seam when wearing the garment. The manufacturer should only make repairs to major seams.

Make a note of heavily soiled or stained areas on the outer shell. These areas will need extra cleaning when the gear is ready to be washed.

Inspect all hardware on the clothing, snaps, zippers and dees, suspender buttons, etc. Do this by gently pulling on buttons and rivets to make sure they are secure, opening and closing snaps and hook and dees. Any loose or missing hardware should be replaced.

Inspect all hook and loop (Velcro) used on the front closure, pocket closure, or moisture barrier/thermal liner attachment.

Check reflective trim for broken thread and stitching, rips, badly soiled areas or cracks with water vapor and debris under the coating. Check reflectivity by testing the trim in a darkened area with a flashlight held in front of your eyes at nose level. There should be bright reflection from the trim. Trim that has lost its nighttime reflectivity should be replaced. Sections of trim where stitching has broken or frayed should be restitched.

Look for worn areas at reinforced, high abrasion areas (elbows, knees, shoulders, etc.). Reinforcements that have worn through should be replaced.

Thermal Liner/Moisture Barrier. Check the seams for failure and the edges for wear and tear. Inspect the moisture barrier for burns or tears.

Boots. Inspect boots for cracking and foreign objects lodged in the soles. Check the inside liner to check for cracking and tearing.

Gloves and Hoods. Check for excessive wear and tear and/or dirt. Check for tears in both inside and outside lining.

Repairs

Notify a department officer of all protective clothing in need of repair. Do not attempt to repair the moisture barrier/thermal liner. Either the manufacturer or a qualified cleaning and repair company should do all repairs to the moisture barrier/thermal liner.

It is preferable, but not mandatory, that the manufacturer does repairs to the outer shell.

Replacement

Actual replacement time is determined primarily on the amount of use a piece of clothing receives. However, outer shells should be replaced when inspection reveals irreparable deterioration of, or damage to, fabric and seams. Moisture barrier/thermal liner should be replaced for the same reasons. Both shell and liner may be replaced independently of each other.

Washing

Heavily soiled protective clothing shall be washed as soon as possible after becoming soiled. All protective clothing shall be washed at least every six months.

By the order of: _____
Fire Chief

Date: _____

