

SECTION IX - FIREFIGHTER RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

9.1 GENERAL REGULATIONS CONCERNING SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)

9.1.1 Firefighters shall wear self-contained breathing apparatus under the following emergency conditions:

- while engaged in interior structural firefighting or search and rescue operations.
- while engaged in roof ventilation operations at structural fires.
- during all phases of firefighting and overhaul, except where deemed unnecessary by the incident commander such as for assignments incidental in nature (such leaf and grass fires, etc.).
- during emergency situations involving hazardous materials where fire department personnel may be exposed to such substances.
- while working in confined spaces where toxic products and/or an oxygen deficient atmosphere may be present.

9.1.2 Firefighters wearing SCBA shall be fully protected with the use of approved structural firefighting clothing that meets the requirements of the PEOSH Standards for Firefighters and NFPA 1971, "Standard on Protective Clothing for Structural Firefighting." Protective clothing shall include turnout coat, bunker pants, gloves, boots, protective hood, helmet, and PASS device.

9.1.3 Firefighters shall not wear SCBA under conditions that prevent a good face seal, such as while they have facial hair that interferes with the seal of the facepiece with the face or while wearing eyeglasses with temple bars that extend through the sealing edge of the facepiece.

9.1.3 Firefighters wearing SCBA should conduct a facepiece negative fit-check prior to entering any atmosphere which may expose the wearer to respiratory hazards. This may be accomplished by closing off the facepiece connection for the regulator and inhaling. If the facepiece leaks air in through the sides or any other location, it fails the fit-check and should be re-donned and retested or replaced with a unit which passes the test. The exhalation valve should also be tested for proper operation prior to entering any potentially hazardous atmosphere.

- 9.1.4 Firefighters operating with SCBA shall work in teams of at least two who are in communication with each other through visual, verbal, or physical means to coordinate their activities and are in close proximity to each other to provide assistance in case of an emergency.
- 9.1.5 Firefighters should not remove the SCBA at any time while exposed to the dangerous atmosphere warranting its use.
- 9.1.6 When firefighters are involved in operations that require the use of SCBA, a personnel accountability system shall be implemented for maintaining a constant awareness of the number and identity of personnel using SCBA, as well as their times and locations of entry into the hazardous atmosphere. Whenever possible, a standby crew with SCBA shall be available for search and rescue of firefighting personnel.

9.2 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION WITH SCBA

- 9.2.1 Only firefighters properly trained and certified as qualified SCBA operators in accordance with the current edition of Fire Department Policy #25 are authorized to use SCBA under emergency conditions.
- 9.2.2 Certified SCBA operators shall verify proper facepiece fit on an annual basis by performing a qualitative facepiece fit test as outlined in Paragraph 3.e of Fire Department Policy #25. The annual facepiece fit test shall be documented on the form included in the appendix to this section of the Standard Operating Procedures.

9.3 SCBA INSPECTION, CLEANING, AND STORAGE

- 9.3.1 After each use breathing apparatus shall be cleaned, inspected, and placed in "ready" condition in accordance with the procedures outlined herein. The user of the SCBA shall be responsible for ensuring that this is completed.
- 9.3.2 The following procedures shall be followed prior to placing an SCBA back in service after use:
- Inspect the unit for worn or aging rubber parts, worn or frayed harness webbing, or damaged components.
 - Remove the regulator from the facepiece, and carefully wash the facepiece assembly with warm water and soap and thoroughly rinse with clean water. Inspect the regulator for worn or missing parts.

- Disinfect the facepiece by one of the following methods:
 - a. Sponge it with solution of 70% minimum ethyl, methyl, or isopropyl alcohol.
 - b. Submerge it in a hypochlorite solution made with two tablespoons of chlorine bleach in one gallon of water.
 - c. Submerge it in an aqueous solution of iodine made with one teaspoon of tincture of iodine in one gallon of water.
- Rinse the facepiece thoroughly, and allow to completely air dry.
- Wipe dirt from the rest of the SCBA with a damp sponge or cloth.
- Inspect the backpack and harness. Make sure that all harness straps are completely let out and the cylinder is tightly fastened to the backplate.
- Fill the air cylinder or replace it with a full one, and make sure the high pressure line is fully coupled to the cylinder valve outlet.

9.3.3 If any defects or problems are found with the SCBA, it must be removed from service and tagged, with the problem noted on the tag.

9.3.4 SCBA shall also be checked, whether used or not, upon return from all emergency assignments and fire training sessions. The firefighter riding in the jump seat or other seat where SCBA is stored shall perform this check. The check shall consist of a visual inspection to ensure that the cylinder is full, the high pressure line is fully connected to the cylinder, all harness straps are in good condition and fully let out, and that the unit is properly stored.