



**UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY**  
**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**  
**Affiliation: Command Guidelines**  
**Subject: Post Fire Decontamination**  
**Number: 450-38**  
**Approved: 08/08/2023 By: AC Dustin Dern**  
**Last Reviewed: 12/08/2025 By: Capt. Chad Green**

## **PURPOSE:**

This standard operating guideline is intended to provide carcinogen exposure reduction for fire personnel following potential exposure in structure fires and other emergency response situations.

All personnel will take all measures necessary to protect themselves and others from the products of combustion or other contaminants. The Incident Commander will ensure all Officers and Acting Company Officers direct personnel to follow these decontamination procedures as soon as possible to limit exposure. Incident response to the following provides examples, but this is not a complete list of incidents to which this procedure may apply:

- Structure Fires
- Training Fires (Live fire training, flashover)
- Hazmat Runs
- Vehicle Fires

The Incident Commander or Company Officer may determine that these procedures should be applied to the following incidents, based on circumstance:

- Dumpster Fires
- Vegetation and Wildland Fires
- Technical Rescue and Emergency Vehicle Extrication
- Other details where it is determined decontamination is needed.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **1.0 Limiting Exposure**

- 1.1 During incident mitigation, limiting the number of firefighters to those necessary for effective containment and control should be the basis for crew assignments. Additionally, limiting duration of exposure should be a consideration.
- 1.2 Utilization of PPE, especially respiratory protection (SCBA) is essential.

### **2.0 Gross Decontamination and Elimination of Possible Contaminants: Personnel**

- 2.1 The Incident Commander (IC) should designate a decontamination sector after the "loss stopped" benchmark is reached, or all needed fire ground functions are assigned.



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- 2.2 All personnel who entered the hot zone or were exposed to the products of combustions or other contaminants should rotate through the decontamination sector.
- 2.3 Decontamination is required anytime gear is heavily exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants, or if a fire officer deems it necessary. Dry and then wet decontamination, as appropriate to the contaminants and the situation, should be initially done at the scene and before removal of PPE, especially SCBA.
- 2.4 If PPE becomes soiled by contaminants from the fire or other emergency incident, go through the following steps:
  - 2.4.1 Consider staying on air while going through the decontamination process. Airborne particles will remain in your immediate vicinity during the process.
  - 2.4.2 All loose debris will be brushed off with hand brooms.
  - 2.4.3 Areas with visible contaminants will be scrubbed with brushes (consider using Dawn or comparable liquid detergent on PPE, external SCBA parts and mask.) Only approved cleaning procedures should be used on internal SCBA parts.
  - 2.4.4 PPE should be rinsed off from top of the helmet down to remove as much contaminants as possible. Be mindful of contaminant runoff into drains or other areas of concern.
  - 2.4.5 It is recommended that heavily soiled PPE be bagged at the scene and logistics be notified for pick up and redistribution of clean PPE.
  - 2.4.6 If it is determined that an extensive decontamination process will be needed, (more than an Engine company can handle) request a Hazmat unit to respond.
- 2.5 "Fire Wipes" or "Baby Wipes", should be used on the hands, face, neck, and any exposed areas as soon as possible when exiting the structure.



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- 2.6 The IC should highly recommend mutual aid companies proceed through the decontamination sector if exposed to the products of combustions or other contaminants.
- 2.7 Prior to leaving the scene all personnel exposed to the products of combustion or other contaminants should be reminded to switch into a clean hood and pair of gloves. Company officers are responsible for ensuring this happens as soon as possible after firefighting operations are over.

### **3.0 Gross Cleaning and Elimination of Possible Contaminants: Equipment**

- 3.1 All fire equipment will be cleaned before placing back on the fire apparatus which includes but not limited to the following items:
- SCBA
  - SCBA Face piece using the proper cleaning agent (final completion performed back at station.)
  - All hand tools
  - Nozzles
  - Hose
- 3.2 While loading hose or equipment personnel should wear gloves, other than used structural firefighting gloves, to protect their hands from the products of combustion or being contaminated.

### **4.0 Procedures for Fire Stations**

- 4.1 Upon arrival at station the following procedures should be done to limit exposure to personnel, fire apparatus and the station:
- 4.1.1 Do not enter the living quarters of the fire station wearing PPE.
- 4.1.2 Minimize the time contaminated station wear is worn in the station.
- 4.1.3 Wash or wipe all surfaces of the apparatus using department issued cleaning supplies.



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4.1.4 Clean all SCBA face pieces following manufacturer or department procedures if not already completed at the emergency scene.

4.1.5 Replace equipment and or needed supplies.

4.2 Start decontamination procedure for PPE per department or manufacturer procedures. PPE should be washed immediately if it is contaminated to the point it could affect personnel safety. PPE contaminated by hazardous materials will be properly handled based upon the recommended decontamination procedures for the material involved in the incident.

4.2.1 Clean Apparatus Cabs and crew riding positions

4.2.2 All contaminated hoods and gloves will be washed.

4.2.3 After all equipment and supplies are replaced, all personnel will take a shower and put on clean clothing/uniforms. Ideally, this should be completed within 1 hour after returning to station.

4.2.4 Use proper PPE detergent and washing machines.

4.2.5 All fire companies will follow these procedures for incident responses outside its own response area even if not directed by the Incident Commander.

## **5.0 Fire Investigators**

5.1 Fire investigators should follow policies on PPE and documentation of any exposures while investigating fires. It is encouraged that the fire investigators have proper PPE and SCBA. Investigators should not be permitted to enter the scene of an IDLH atmosphere without the proper PPE. Actions should be taken to remove the IDLH atmosphere prior to the investigation beginning if the PPE is not available.