DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES

CHAPTER 4 – SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Section 900.000   Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment has been established and provided in accordance with the department's ability to adhere to acceptable standards of safety. In establishing an effective policy for the application of personal protective equipment, Texas Administrative Code, Title 37, Chapter 435.1 shall be strictly followed. In addition, the following general rules shall apply.

A. Standing while riding is strictly prohibited.
B. All required personal protective equipment must be donned before any vehicle is put in motion unless otherwise specified in other parts of this policy.
C. It is the responsibility of the company officer or senior crewmember to ensure that the PASS device of each member of that crew is activated prior to commencing any activity.

Personal protective equipment shall be worn, in varying degrees as specified in other parts of this policy by all personnel when engaged in activities outside of the assigned work site. For the purpose of this policy, activities outside of the assigned work site shall be grouped into two (2) categories: Emergency Response and Incident Operations.

901.000   Emergency Responses

A. Fire alarms
   1. Driver
      • Snugly fitted seat belt
   2. Passengers
      • Properly adjusted seat belt
      • Turnout coat
      • Turnout Pants /boots
      • SCBA if it can be donned while seat belted
      • PASS device
B. Rescue calls
   1. Driver
      • Snugly fitted seat belt
   2. Passengers
• Snugly fitted seat belt

C. Medical Responses
   1. Driver
      • Snugly fitted seat belt
   2. Passengers
      • Snugly fitted seat belt

Support Vehicles for all responses will require snugly fitted seat belts.

902.000 Incident Operations

Fire alarms or any dispatch which presents the possibility of physical injury to the responder such as structure fires, Haz mat incidents, motor vehicle accidents, etc., require the following:

A. Within the immediate perimeter, as defined by the incident commander, all personnel shall wear the following.
   1. Helmet with chinstrap secured to the chin and eye shield (or safety glasses, goggles) when required.
   2. Turnout coat with all snaps and buckles fastened.
   3. Turnout pants w/boots fully on, all closures fastened.
   4. Gloves
   5. SCBA according to the SCBA operating guideline.
   6. Nomex hood
   7. Activated PASS device
   8. Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) when operating within 25' of any open water.

Exceptions:
1. Exceptions will only be permitted when the incident is declared under control, and then only upon specific direction from the Incident Commander.
2. Only the PFD is required during water rescue operations. All other personal protective equipment is optional at the Incident Commander's discretion.
3. Seat belts may be temporarily loosened only when necessary to operate mobile radios.
4. Outside of the immediate perimeter.
5. Personnel assigned to the Command Post should wear the helmet and the appropriate vest.
6. Personnel exposed to other dangers such as vehicular traffic shall wear the helmet, and turnout coat/reflective vest.
7. Personnel not exposed to any other dangers are not required to wear PPE unless
otherwise directed by the Incident Commander.

B. Medical/Trauma incidents where the potential of contamination by splashes, sprays, spatter, blood or other body fluids exists as identified in the infection control guideline.

903.000 Use of PPE

A. All personnel shall review and become familiar with all instruction guides and manuals of all new and used PPE. This shall include but not limited to:
   1. Care and use
   2. Maintenance
   3. Warnings

B. The Village Fire Department shall also provide instructional classes to be integrated in the normal continuing educational classes.

904.000 Selection of PPE

A. A risk assessment shall be performed prior to the selection of PPE. Risk assessment shall include but not limited to the hazards encountered by fire fighters and based on the following:
   1. Types of duties performed
   2. Frequency of use
   3. Organizations experience
   4. Incident operations
   5. Geographic location and climate
   6. Current editions of NFPA

B. Based on the risk assessment the Village fire department shall evaluate the information on the strengths and weaknesses of the elements under consideration.

C. When deemed necessary a field test will be conducted. Also other field test done by outside agencies may be considered.

D. Purchase of PPE shall follow the purchasing guidelines of the Department.

E. Upon receipt of the PPE a qualified person or agent of the Village fire department shall inspect the PPE for proper fit, compliant to the specifications and shipping damage.

F. All unsatisfactory PPE that does not meet specifications, fit or is damaged shall not be put in service until the PPE is approved for use. These items shall be returned to the manufacture for replacement or an approved fix.

G. All PPE shall be compliant with the current NFPA 1971 Standard and rules established by the State of Texas.
905.000  Records

A. The Village Fire department shall compile and maintain records of structural firefighting protective equipment and elements.
B. The following records shall be kept:
   1. Person to whom the element is issued
   2. Date and condition when issued
   3. Manufacture and model name or design
   4. Manufacture identification number
   5. Month and year of manufacture
   6. Dates of findings of advanced inspections, cleaning or decontamination.
   7. Reasons for advanced cleaning or decontaminations.
   8. Dates of repair, who performed repair, and a brief description of repair.
   9. Date of retirement
  10. Date and type of disposal
  11. Village Fire Department inventory numbers.

906.000  Care of Turnout Gear

The following guidelines define the proper techniques for the care, cleaning, and storage of PPE issued by the Department. PPE issued by Village Fire Department is designed to provide limited thermal protection during firefighting operations and limited protection against sharp or falling objects. Each member is responsible for the proper care, cleaning, and storage of assigned personal protective equipment. The objective of this procedure is to standardize the procedure for proper cleaning and storage of protective clothing.

906.001  Coats and Pants

A. Examine bunker coat and pants and reflective trim after every use for tears, rips, burns, and other damage.
B. DO NOT remove the manufacturer's care recommendations, NFPA or any other tags from Department-issued protective clothing.
C. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations whenever possible. If the manufacturer's recommendations are not available:
   1. Machine-wash all turnout gear at least once every six months OR whenever there is visible contamination.
   2. Remove inner liner(s), turn gear inside out before washing.
   3. Wash with mild laundry detergent on gentle cycles in warm water in a machine not used for domestic purposes to reduce the risk of contaminants released from the turnout gear.
4. Hang turnout gear to air dry in a well-ventilated area and out of direct sunlight.

D. Store gear in a well-ventilated area and **out of direct sunlight**. If gear is wet, hang out to air dry in a well-ventilated area and **out of direct sunlight**. **Do not store wet or in the sun.**

**906.002 Gloves**

A. Examine gloves after every use for tears, rips, burns, and other damage.

B. Follow the manufacturer's care and storage recommendations. In addition to such recommendations, gloves should be cleaned upon return to the station after every fire, by the following method:
   1. Brush all residues from the glove with a soft bristle brush.
   2. Air-dry in a well-ventilated area and **out of direct sunlight**.

C. **DO NOT** remove the manufacturer's care recommendations, NFPA or any other tags from Department-issued protective clothing

D. At least twice annually, gloves should be machine washed, following the same procedure used for turnout gear, and machine dried.

**906.003 Helmets**

A. Examine outer shell and inner impact cap after every use for deformation, blisters, gouges, cracks, and other damage. Examine earflaps, chinstrap, and harness for tears, rips, burns, and other damage.

B. Clean face shields and outer shell with mild soap and water, wipe with a soft sponge or cloth. Use ethyl alcohol to remove tar. **DO NOT** use abrasives, solvents, paint or lacquer thinners, acetone, or any other chlorinated organic solvents.

**906.004 Protective Hoods**

A. Wash hoods as needed by hand with mild detergent and water. **DO NOT** scrub the hood with any brush as this may damage the Velcro closures.

B. Air-dry the hood in a well-ventilated area and out of direct sunlight.
**906.005 Boots**

A. Examine the outer surface after every use for blisters, tears, cracks, worn out soles, and other damage.

B. Clean outer surface with mild soap and water, wipe with a soft sponge or cloth. Use ethyl alcohol to remove tar. DO NOT use abrasives, solvents, paint or lacquer thinners, acetone, or any other chlorinated organic solvents.

**906.006 Suspenders**

A. Examine suspenders after every use for tears, rips, burns, and other damage.

B. Follow same instructions that apply for bunker gear for washing

**906.007 Safety Glasses**

A. Wash safety glasses with a warm mild, non-abrasive solution to clean.

B. Dry in a well-ventilated area out of direct sunlight or with a not abrasive cotton style towel. **DO NOT USE PAPER TOWELS.**

**907.000 Contamination**

A. Any PPE maybe contaminated by such items out of the ordinary of the usual dirt and soot.

B. PPE contaminated by chemicals, powders or solutions shall be thoroughly rinsed off at the incident to limit the contamination process.

C. The contaminate should be identified and decontamination procedures should be obtained via the manufacturer, shipper, or chemtrec.
   1. Additional decontamination procedures may be obtained via the PPE manufacturer.

D. If appropriate all PPE contaminated should be bagged up and returned to the station for inspection by an authorized personnel.

**908.000 Alterations of Gear**

A. Members shall not alter Department-issued gear without prior written approval of the Fire Chief.
B. Members should not alter any gear without approval from the manufacturer. Alterations may reduce the protective effectiveness of the gear and may void any warranty or claims of liability.

C. Members using non-approved altered gear are subject to being relieved from duty and other disciplinary action.

909.000 Storage

A. All PPE shall be stored in a well-ventilated area that accommodates the gear drying when damp or wet.

B. All PPE shall not be stored in direct sunlight and shall have limited exposure to station lighting.

C. All PPE shall be transported not in direct sunlight and in such a manner as to limit damage or contamination.

910.000 Repair

A. Repair of PPE may only be done by Village Fire Department personnel that have received training in repair of PPE garments.

B. Repair of PPE may also be done by an approved agent of the Village Fire Department using current NFPA Standards.

C. All agents of the Village Fire Department must be approved by the manufacture.

D. All repairs and alterations shall be done in a manner and using materials that are approved by the manufacture including but not limited to fabrics, thread, type, stitch, construction, hardware and hardware backings.

E. All PPE shall be cleaned thoroughly prior to repair.

F. All PPE shall be repaired to current standards within allowable budget that considers PPE age and cost effectiveness.

911.000 Inspections

A. Routine: Routine inspections shall be done after each use.

B. Routine inspections shall consist of:
   1. Soiling
   2. Physical Damage
   3. Damaged Trim
   4. Damaged Closure and Hardware
   5. Loss of face opening
   6. Shell Damage
   7. Missing Components
8. Shrinkage
9. Liner Inversion
10. Loss of flexibility
11. Loss of water resistance

C. Advanced: Advanced inspections shall be a thorough cleaning of the garments and garment elements. This cleaning is to be conducted every twelve months and handled through the department managed program. All advanced inspections shall be done via department trained personnel or through a verified ISP using current NFPA 1851 Cleaning Procedures.

D. After routine inspection, if the PPE is found to be defective, soiled or contaminated beyond normal every day wear, the garment shall be taken out of service and stored in a container that is disposable and that will prevent the spread of contamination.

E. All inspections shall be documented on the departments PPE program management binder.

912.000 Special Incident Procedures

A. In the event of serious fire fighter injury or fatality all PPE and clothing shall be:
1. Immediately removed from service and secured in a secure location with controlled and documented access.
2. Collected and non-destructively tagged placed in a paper or cardboard container.
3. Review of PPE shall be done by qualified members of the Village Fire Department or experts from an outside agency to determine condition thereof.
4. PPE and other equipment will be retained for a specific period of time dictated by the incident and will be determined on a case by case situation.

913.000 Retirement and Disposal

A. PPE ensembles and ensemble elements that are worn, contaminated, and or damaged to extent that the Village Fire Department deems the PPE not to be cost effective to repair or not possible shall be retired.

B. Any PPE equipment deemed not for use by the fire service shall be destroyed and disposed of in such a manner to assure that they will not be used for fire fighting or emergency operations.
C. PPE that is not damaged beyond repair or contaminated may be retired and donated to other departments. All equipment to be donated must be thoroughly inspected by the Village Fire Department prior to release and by the receiving department prior to use.

D. Structural PPE shall be retired 10 years from manufacture date. This includes bunker coats, bunker pants, bunker helmet, structural protective hoods, gloves, and boots.

E. Proximity PPE shall be retired 5 years from manufacture date for radiant reflective shells. This includes hoods, shrouds, coats, pants, and gloves.