

08-03 NOVA SCOTIA FIRE SERVICE – SAFETY – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

1. PREAMBLE

Protecting yourself is paramount to being of assistance to others. To assist firefighters in protecting themselves, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be supplied to every member and shall be worn by all members as outlined in this document.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard is to ensure that all personnel are prepared to commence emergency operations as soon as possible on arriving at an emergency scene while maintaining the highest degree of personal safety possible for all personnel.

3. SCOPE

This standard shall apply to all personnel while operating at the scene of any emergency incident, or engaged in training, or where any situation dictates wearing PPE.

4. BACKGROUND

Failure of personnel to properly use PPE has resulted in many unnecessary injuries on emergency scenes and during training. PPE is designed to prevent or minimize injuries when properly used and/or worn. It is the primary responsibility of each individual to adhere to this standard. Authority to deviate from this standard rests solely with the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is responsible for consequences resulting from any deviation they have authorized.

5. DEFINITION

Full PPE consists of: Helmet with face shield or approved eye protection, approved hood, bunker coat, bunker pants with bunker boots, and gloves, all properly worn and fastened, manufactured to, and meeting the applicable standard in effect at the time the equipment is purchased (an example of an applicable standard is NFPA 1971). Self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) shall be used whenever there is potential of exposure to hazardous atmospheres or where the atmosphere is suspect.

6. STANDARD

1. Under no circumstances shall any aspect of personal safety be sacrificed in order to increase the speed of emergency operations. Emergency operations shall not commence until sufficient personnel have donned all necessary PPE.
2. All members shall be seated wearing a seat belt while the vehicle is in motion, and if this prevents the donning of PPE, it shall be done when the vehicle stops.

3. All firefighting personnel shall wear full PPE during emergency operations involving fire, potential fire, explosion, potential explosion, or release of any type of hazardous material.
4. All appropriate PPE shall be donned prior to becoming involved in the emergency operation. Different PPE clothing is required for drivers, command personnel, medical first responders, etc.
5. Operators, while driving apparatus, will not wear bunker pants or boots as this could interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle. Once on scene, the operator will don the appropriate PPE.
6. Appropriate PPE shall be worn by all personnel operating power tools, hydraulic tools and forcible entry tools. Appropriate PPE is also required for all personnel in the immediate area where these tools are being used. Approved eye protection and hearing protection shall be worn where appropriate.
7. Firefighting gloves, including puncture and cut resistant approved extrication gloves where appropriate, shall be worn at all times when hand tools, power tools, hose, ladders, or any other equipment is used that could cause injuries to the hands. This shall include all work details, maintenance operations, and training exercises where potential for hand injury exists.
8. Helmets with chin strap in place shall be worn by all personnel operating at a location where there is a possibility that tools, equipment, or debris may fall from above. This would include any time when personnel are operating above or below grade such as during a trench rescue or high angle rope rescue.
9. The helmet face shield or approved eye protection shall be used any time the need for eye protection seems apparent, such as overhaul operations, when operating hand or power tools, or when involved in incidents where SCBA is not being worn. The face shield does not provide complete face/eye protection against flying particles, splash, gases, and vapours. (For known eye hazards, such as, but not limited to, cutting with power saws, chopping, drilling, and using extrication equipment, the face shield shall be worn with **additional eye protection** suitable for the hazard. (e.g. protective goggles or SCBA face piece.)
10. Personnel riding in the apparatus or engaged in any other activity where they may be exposed to excessive noise shall be responsible to don hearing protection.
11. Damage to PPE shall be reported to the officer in charge, or the person responsible for PPE in the department. Upon inspection, if the damaged article is deemed to be unsafe for use, the item must be replaced before the firefighter can engage in activities that would require the use of that component of PPE.
12. The Incident Commander may use his/her discretion to determine the appropriate level of PPE required for personnel operating at the incident where no specific guidelines have been established. The Incident Commander will be responsible to justify his/her decision, if challenged.
13. It is the intent of this standard that no member shall cause delay in any emergency operation by not being fully prepared to engage in the provision of emergency service or related activities in a safe manner.

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