

Purpose: Provide guidance on the reduction of contaminant exposure from hazardous or live fire by-products during training or certification tests.

Scope: This policy applies to all personnel who are directly involved or may become involved in training or certification tests where exposure to hazardous or by-products stemming from live fire exist. This includes but is not limited to instructional staff, students, certification candidates, evaluators, and support staff.

This policy applies to courses conducted in the PSFA Resident, Academy on the Road, Alternative Energy Emergency Response, Local-Level and PA Fire Service Voluntary Certification program.

Policy: Personnel involved in training or certification tests that involves and generates products of combustion shall be required to participate in a decontamination process upon exiting Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) area and properly doff PPE to reduce firefighter exposure to potentially hazardous by-products of combustion.

Procedures:

During Training

- Limit the number of personnel in an IDLH environment to the minimum needed to perform the evolution. All other personnel should be kept away from the training area(s) or live-fire certification skill area where direct exposure to or contact with hazardous by-products of combustion exists.
- Personnel leaving the IDLH environment shall perform a dry DECON by standing in front of a fire department fan for a minimum of 30 seconds (i.e., 15 seconds front and 15 seconds back). While in dry DECON, individuals shall remain on air.
- PPE will be doffed prior to reporting to REHAB. No PPE (i.e., TOG) permitted in REHAB.
- Appropriate wipes will be used to clean high-risk areas (i.e., face, head, neck, arms, wrists, and hands).
 - This practice **MUST** be done prior to ingesting any water or food.
 - This practice **MUST** be done prior to reporting to REHAB.
- If possible, exchange any soiled hood with a clean hood between evolutions.

Post Training

- Complete the dry DECON procedure as noted above (i.e., 30 sec) while on air.
- Perform a wet DECON with a low pressure/low gallonage water spray and scrub brush. Individuals **SHALL** remain on air during wet DECON.
- Doff PPE and place it in draw-string trash bag.
- Wipe high-risk areas of skin:
 - This practice **MUST** be done prior to ingesting any water or food.
 - This practice **MUST** be done prior to reporting to REHAB.
- NO PPE (TOG) shall be worn in REHAB.

- Transport bagged gear in non-passenger vehicle compartment (if possible).
- Change out the contaminated street/station clothing worn under the PPE as soon as practical.
- Shower as soon as possible after the training (shower within the hour).
- Launder PPE as soon as possible following the training. Consider wearing protective gloves when handling contaminated PPE.
- For training done in inclement weather, dry DECON the PPE then bag the gear. The PPE can be decontaminated back at the station.
- DECON SCBAs per manufacturer recommendations or with soap and water.
- Clean (e.g., wash, wipe-down, etc.) any equipment used in the training or test.

Notes:

- If specialty wipes are not available, soap and water can be substituted.
- Wet DECON can be enhanced with the use of mild detergent approved for use on PPE (TOG) by the manufacturer.

Definitions

Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (OSHA): an atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive or asphyxiant substance that poses an immediate threat to life or would cause irreversible or delayed adverse health effects or would interfere with an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.

Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (NFPA 1500): Any condition that would pose an immediate or delayed threat to life, cause irreversible adverse health effects, or Interfere with an individual's ability to escape unaided from a hazardous environment.

Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (NIOSH): Acute or short-term exposures to high concentrations of some airborne chemicals that can quickly overwhelm workers, resulting in a wide spectrum of undesirable health outcomes which may include irritation of the eyes and respiratory tract, severe irreversible health effects, impairment of the ability to escape from the exposure environment, and, in extreme cases death. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/idlh/> (nd)

Personnel: Any individual participating in a training session or certification test to include students, candidates, instructors, supervisors, evaluators, or other support staff.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE): Approved head protection (i.e., helmet), coat, pants, boots, Nomex hood, gloves, also known as Turn-out Gear (TOG).

References

Center for Disease & Control – National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/idlh/>

IAFC Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer. Retrieved from: <https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/resources/resource/best-practices-for-preventing-cancer-poster>

NFPA 1500: *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program*

NVFC Lavender Blue Ribbon Report: Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer (2018). Retrieved from: <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Lavender-Ribbon-Report-Final.pdf>

NVFC Lavender Blue Ribbon Report Update: Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer (2021). Retrieved from: <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Lavender-Ribbon-Report-Update-online.pdf>

OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard 1910.134 Subpart 1 PPE. Retrieved from: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134>

Philadelphia Fire Department Operating Guidelines

Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire Operating Guidelines

Safer Group Joint Operating Guideline “Post Fire Decontamination Procedures” (Cranberry Township): Retrieved from: <https://www.cranberrytownship.org/DocumentCenter/View/27893/SAFER-JOGs-January-2019?bidId=>

VFIS Cancer and the Firefighter: Minimum Actions to Take. Retrieved from: <https://www.vfis.com/Portals/vfis/fire-and-ems-operations/Cancer%20and%20the%20Firefighter-Minimum%20Actions%20to%20Take.pdf>